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### John Wesley“S Liturgical Revision: A Pattern for Reshaping Worship for Post-Christian America

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JOHN WESLEY'S LITURGICAL REVISION:  
A PATTERN FOR RESHAPING WORSHIP FOR POST-CHRISTIAN AMERICA

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A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of  
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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By  
Lawrence A. Lacher  
May 2011

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
James L. Brauer                      Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
David R. Schmitt

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kent J. Burreson



Inspiration has many faces; but for me, there is one primary face.

“But what does it mean to ‘lead’ a celebration? To lead a celebration means two closely interrelated things. In the first instance, to lead in the sense of ‘to animate’ is to give spirit, vitality, expression, and authentic realization to an action. Second, it means to promote the involvement of a ‘community’ with all of its members so that it might become the conscious and active subject of this action.

**Domenico Sartore, C.S.J.**

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## PREFACE

Since God orders our lives, I am convinced that He has a liking for roller coasters. The rises and falls, twists and turns that have brought me to this investigation have caused my head to spin at times and my stomach to drop at others.

This project is the outgrowth of a pastoral concern. I have been a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene for twenty-seven years. During that time, not only has my denomination changed in nearly every way, so has American Christianity.

For those who may be unfamiliar with the Church of the Nazarene, it has just celebrated its own centennial, having been formally organized in October of 1908. Our founders were largely Methodists, but also came from various denominational backgrounds, rallying to the call to Christian holiness. If John Wesley is our father, the American Holiness Movement is our mother. The children of this marriage possess DNA from both of their parents, inheriting their parents' vision and optimism as well as a few quirks. Often we have struggled to decide which of our parents we most looked like.

Regardless, we are now grown children. We have felt the exhilaration that independence brings and have sought for a fresh identity that addresses the contemporary culture while maintaining doctrinal fidelity. We have outgrown the hand-me-down wardrobe of our predecessors and have been in the process of finding the "right look" that fits us today.

These past twenty-five years have been, for Nazarenes and many other American Christian denominations, a time of experimentation, globalization, rationalization and desperation. Despite all of our best efforts, our denomination has plateaued in North America and most denominations have declined.

During these decades, we have been counseled to respond to the changes in culture through mimicking the means of the mega-church by creating a marketing strategy that would attract a target audience so that we could reach people for Jesus. While churches have bulged through slick presentations and media implementation, we have watched with shock and dismay as Christian leaders have confessed one after another to infidelity to their call and to their church through one atrocity or another. We seem to be living within the pages of a Flannery O'Connor novel.

Our instinct within stormy times is to seek anchorage within a safe harbor. The safe harbor to which Nazarenes tend to retreat is the life and teachings of John Wesley. Such is the instinct that inspired this project.

My specific concern has been regarding how to turn a congregation of born again Christians into a worshipping congregation. Try as I may, I am not attracted by the lights, bands, cameras and theatrics that seems to be attracting so many American Christians. Something about them seems suspect to me. Perhaps I have simply inherited a suspicion of showmanship at some point. It is not that I am opposed to media. I am just convinced that the means must serve the message, not the other way around. When a worship service becomes a performance, it ceases to be directed Godward.

What has attracted my spirit to God, like a moth to the light, have been the practices of ancient Christians and of congregations rooted in the ancient rites and rituals of the Faith. There, for me, is something mysteriously wonderful about a Roman Catholic Mass or an Episcopal Communion service. Nazarenes had never taught me about Lent and Advent and the Stations of the Cross and a hundred other rites and practices that have nurture Christians for millennia. For those ideas, I had to eavesdrop on my Christian cousins, near and distant to learn about a way of worship that was deeper and richer and more visual and mysterious.

I came to a point that I needed to learn first hand of the worship practices of the ancients. Therefore, I chose a seminary that was deliberately and conscientiously rooted in the life and practice of historic Christianity and enrolled in order to be tutored. I expected the Lutherans to show me a path that had been forsaken by my denomination and direct me to the ancient practices of Christians so that I could bask in their light. And, in fact, they did. However, what I did not expect to discover was that my anchor, John Wesley himself, was also one who loved to bask in the light of the ancients, especially when it came to his commitment to worship.

At this point, I was overjoyed. It seems that my heart was seeking its Wesleyan DNA. Thus, I began to explore John Wesley's thinking and advices on the topic of worship and discovered that we have a rich, although neglected, heritage in historic Christian worship through our spiritual great-grandfather.

This project is an effort to hear the voice of John Wesley in regards to the topic of worship across the centuries. It is not the intention of this project to resurrect Father Wesley, but set our anchor in his heart. Wesley said himself that it was the worship of the Church of England that taught him Christian Perfection. As you read what follows, I invite you to imagine a way in which worship can be renewed and renewing for American Christians. I have looked to Wesley to find his counsel about the kind of worship that creates Christian people. To that end, I have abandoned the effort to draw a crowd through the means of the marketplace and have chosen, rather, to lead a congregation into the marvelous presence of God, who, in Christ invites us to bask in His love through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without a doubt, this project would have never come to pass without a long line of encouragers, teachers and helpers along the way. While it is not possible to list each one who helped me to reflect on the problems outlined in this work, I would be remiss if I did not express my appreciation to some who played critical roles in my development and in the development of what follows. These have steered me, encouraged me, corrected me, chided me, taught me and listened to me as I have sought to accomplish what I had never envisioned. Without their contribution this project would not have come to pass.

Foremost on the list must be my wife, Lisa, who always saw more in and for me that I dared to believe for myself. No doubt, she has paid the highest price for me to accomplish this work and I shall never be able to repay to her the debt I owe. In that same breath, I must express my gratitude to the members and friends of Roxana Church of the Nazarene who have shared their pastor with this work for far too many years in the belief that the work of the Kingdom was of greater importance than their individual preference for a more attentive pastor. Their prayers and patience could never be measured.

Besides these personal debts, I have accrued numerous academic debts as well. Foremost are those of Concordia Seminary who have helped to shape this work, and, in the course, have shaped me into a deeper thinker and more godly person. Among those, I must mention Dr. James Voelz who was the first one at the seminary to believe in me. As the dean of the graduate school upon my arrival, he expressed that the goal of administration is “to help people achieve their dreams.” His influence as an administrator and instructor has taken me to places I did not know existed. Foremost, however, among the faculty and friends of the Concordia community has been Dr. James Brauer who must have thought I was hopeless at times, but never let me lose

hope. This project exists because of his influence in shaping my thinking and imagination. Other faculty and friend at the seminary have contributed to my personhood as well as my scholarship in untold ways and cannot be mentioned one by one. Yet, I would be remiss not to express my thanks to Dr. Kent Burreson. Without his influence, this project would not exist. He is the one who opened my eyes to things that I never knew about historic worship and opened his hand to me in friendship. Finally, among those at the seminary for whom I am in debt is Dr. David Schmitt, who has challenged me to achieve clarity with passion in my writing. The project is certainly better for his contribution.

This project would never have taken shape had it not been for the opportunity provided to me by the Seminary to spend six weeks in Manchester, England for research. I am deeply grateful for the Nazarene Theological College in Manchester and their faculty and staff for receiving me into their family during that time. I am especially indebted to Dr. Herbert McGonigle who encouraged the visit and made the resources of the Wesley Center Archive available for my use. Similarly, I would not want to miss the opportunity to acknowledge Dr. Peter Nockles for his critical insights and for making the resources of the Rylands Library available to me.

Mostly, I am grateful to God, who believed in me before I believed in Him and still believes in me when it is difficult to believe in myself.

Ad Maiorem Gloriam Dei,

Lawrence A. Lacher

## ABSTRACT

Lacher, Lawrence A. "John Wesley's Liturgical Revision: A Pattern for Reshaping Worship for Post-Christian America." Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2011. 316 pp.

This project seeks to find a solution to the current malformation of Christian Worship in the American church through re-examining John Wesley's *Sunday Service for Methodists in North America* (1784) in order to extract the underlying pattern. That pattern is then proposed as a paradigm that allows for the contextualization of worship while retaining its historic shape, function and purpose.

John Wesley's liturgical advices are examined for several reasons. Since the writer is interested in helping those who worship within the Wesleyan heritage to develop a meaningful response to the problem of worship, Wesley is looked to as a heritage and starting point. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that Wesley had deep interest and training in liturgy and had specific intentions in proposing a liturgy for the Methodists in America. That liturgy has been neglected, both as a service to be followed and as a pattern to be extracted. This project reexamines the *Sunday Service* in light of Wesley's liturgical advices in order to extract a liturgical pattern for a post-Christian culture.

Wesley's personal liturgical history is reexamined to determine whether there is merit in looking to Wesley's liturgical advices as sound and authoritative. Having determined that John Wesley had quite specific training and opinions in liturgical studies, the *Sunday Service* is deconstructed in order to extract the underlying patterns. Furthermore, his experiential approach to Christianity is also examined in order to determine the non-literary aspects to be considered in designing worship for contemporary culture.

The study proposes a two-part matrix for designing Wesleyan worship within varying cultural contexts. Looking at the structure and character embodied in Wesley's *Service*, the dissertation projects ways in which Wesley's liturgical advices can continue to order Christian worship. The appendix carries examples of *ordered* services as well as copies of historical documents for the reader's examination.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE MALFORMATION OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IN AMERICA

A tug of war is taking place in American churches over how to conduct worship. Radical changes in worship style and design can be seen positively as part of a renewal movement. The same changes can also be viewed as fracturing congregations by forcing them into battles over worship. The issues impact all denominations as congregations compete to attract and retain members by trying to redesign worship that facilitates church growth while also trying to be faithful to a denominational heritage.

Denominational churches are struggling to retain membership while non-denominational and non-traditional churches seem to be attracting larger and larger crowds by reformulating the traditional patterns and practices of worship. The success of these non-traditional methods has caused pastors and denominational leaders to reexamine their own practice of worship. Steve Hoskins, in a paper presented to the Wesleyan Theological Society in 1997, stated what has become obvious to many denominational leaders, “As in many churches today, much of what passes for worship in Holiness churches takes its cues and rules straight from consumer-oriented marketing strategies.”<sup>1</sup> Seeing the lack of a liturgical base as the cause for an absence of any ability to reflect critically on our practice of worship, Hoskins counseled that a restoration of an authentically Wesleyan liturgy could serve as a corrective to the “amnesia” caused by our current lack of historical or liturgical roots. Hoskin’s counsel is worthy of exploration.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen T. Hoskins, “The Wesleyan/Holiness Movement in Search of Liturgical Identity,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Fall, 1997): 130.

Over the past fifty years a dialog seeking to *remember* the historic function and purpose of worship has gained momentum. Multiple denominations have entered into the conversation. The conversation has developed along the lines of some very basic questions: What composes authentic worship? Are there parameters that must be retained in designing worship that speaks to congregational needs ? Where would one find resources to reinvigorate worship? Where should the church look to discover anew historic patterns of worship? Can patterns of worship be identified that retain historic and denominational identity while continuing to be relevant and attractive? How does worship function to bring an individual into an authentic faith-encounter with Jesus Christ? In essence, how should Christians go about developing authentic Christian worship within their own cultural or denominational context?

### **The Goal of This Study**

This study is one among a number of attempts to explore the question, “How can worship be formed that connects to the life of the worshipper without discarding our Christian and denominational heritage?” The framework in which that question is being asked is within the Wesleyan denominational heritage. This study will propose an approach to worship that is faithful to an identity in the theology of John Wesley while allowing for cultural expression and adaptation of the worship service by the particular congregation. In so doing, it will offer a means through which worship can find an authentic cultural *voice* without abandoning the historic function of worship as a means of grace. Thus, while the focus is specifically upon the Wesleyan tradition, the pattern that emerges will be useful for any body of worshippers seeking an historically rooted and culturally relevant worship.

In order to assess the theology of worship (doxology) of John Wesley, he must be studied as a liturgist. While there are numerous histories and biographies of Wesley that have been written, there has yet to be a thorough study of Wesley's liturgical imagination and how his understanding of the liturgy shaped his life and ministry. The studies that describe his liturgical ideas do not project those preferences into the question of renewing the liturgy in the contemporary American context. Wesley's liturgical imagination is a neglected aspect of Wesley studies. This project will propose a means to understand Wesley's advices on worship in a way that should *inform* and *reform* the practice of worship in Wesleyan churches.

The liturgical advices of Wesley, like the rest of his theology, are not systematically explored in any single letter or tract which he wrote. As a practical theologian, his theology is imbedded in his practice and directives. In terms of worship, his most mature thinking on the topic was imbedded in the service book which he sent to America in 1784, *Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America* (or, *Sunday Service*). This document will become the window of insight into the convictions regarding worship which Wesley maintained, convictions that were an expression of a commitment to the historic practices of Christian worship and reflection upon the contemporary evaluation of the authenticity and effectiveness of those practices. My thesis is that extracting the underlying liturgical pattern from John Wesley's *Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America* reveals a thoughtful and deliberate revision of the service pattern from the *Book of Common Prayer* and provides a useful model for churches within the Wesleyan tradition to respond to the contemporary doxological crisis in America.

The reader should understand that the focus of this project is with the practice of worship expressed in the primary (Sunday morning) service of American churches and the theory that drives those practices. When discussing *liturgy*, *doxology*, or the worship *service* the focus will be upon the outward forms, rites and expressions of the worshipping congregation. It is understood that the conversation has numerous nuances that could be explored.

While Wesley argues for a broad definition of worship to include both the inward worship of the *spirit* (love for God, faith, adoration, and the like) as well as the outward expressions of our *devotion* including observance of the ordinances of public worship and the practice of good works,<sup>2</sup> the focus of this discussion is upon the primary service of the local church (Sunday morning).

Keeping in mind Wesley's direction to worship God in spirit and truth, formal worship accomplishes this goal through the external rites and rituals associated with the gathering of a congregation of people for a worship service as well as the effect that the service has upon the participant. Worship also functions as a means of grace when it offers *to* God praise and petition and receives *from* God faith, assurance, instruction, and empowerment for a life lived in relationship and obedience to Him. Thus, worship (specifically, the Sunday worship service) creates and sustains people of God.

The *Sunday Service for the Methodists of North America (Sunday Service)* will be the focal point for this investigation. Exploring the edits which Wesley made to the *Book of Common Prayer* will provide a clue to understanding what he considered to be unimportant to worship. The greater concern, which is unique to this project, is the final

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<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, John Wesley, "Matthew 5:13–16," in *Sermons I, 1-33* ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 1 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 543–45. Hereafter, (BE).

form of the *Sunday Service* and the pattern that it establishes for worship order. This focus invites the *Sunday Service* to instruct us in regards to the features of a well-ordered service in the Wesleyan tradition and to establish the means by which the order and character of Wesley's service can be reasserted within the context of a twenty-first century evangelical congregation. This discussion of Wesley's pattern for worship (*ordo*) seeks to understand the correct content, character and purpose of worship as Wesley understood it.

This study will be presented in four parts. Chapter one will establish the context and parameters for the project. Chapter two will take the reader back to the beginning to consider how John Wesley developed his liturgical imagination and expressed it in the *Sunday Service*. The *Sunday Service* itself will be the focus of chapter three revealing its underlying pattern. Finally, chapter four will draw upon that pattern to reveal a way to reshape the pattern and conduct of worship in multiple contexts.

The project seeks to explore Wesley's imagination for liturgy and to suggest an application of it to today's congregation. To accomplish this it draws on a model for assessing and adjusting practical theology proposed by Don S. Browning. He argues that the building of a practical theology is from practice to theory and back to practice. It is a process that he calls "deconstruction, reconstruction and consolidation."<sup>3</sup> Practical theology attempts to respond to a perceived crisis by reexamining "normative texts" and proposing a "new horizon." It is this fully orbed discussion that, according to Browning, distinguishes an approach to theological investigation that is influenced by Aristotle, Hans George Gadamer and Alasdair MacIntyre. It is the application of reason as

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<sup>3</sup> Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 6.

*phronēsis*. “Reason as *phronēsis* can be distinguished from *theoria* or theoretical reason, which is often thought to ask the more dispassionate, objective, or scientific question of What is the case?”<sup>4</sup> *Phronēsis* seeks the application of knowledge to solve or to respond to a specific issue or problem at hand.

This project seeks *phronēsis*, not *theoria*. A theoretical study would merely be descriptive. Its focus would be to discover the underlying history or theology of Wesley’s *Service* in an effort to describe the broader context of the service or in an effort to explain what he was doing.<sup>5</sup> The intent here is to extract the Wesley *ordo* and discover how it can be applied in contemporary worship settings.

While it is beyond the scope of this project to “field test” these suggested services, this study will demonstrate the applicability of the Wesleyan *ordo* by suggesting a sample of service orders that reflect both attention to the Wesleyan *ordo* and application within

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>5</sup> The most thorough *theoria* study is referenced throughout this work: James White, ed., *John Wesley’s Prayer Book: The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America with introduction notes and commentary by James F. White* (Cleveland, OH: OSL Publications). Other briefer summaries are found in Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) in which she studies the emergence of an American Methodist pattern for worship and its connections to Wesley’s *Sunday Service*; Lester Ruth, *A Little Heaven Below: Worship at Early Methodist Quarterly Meetings* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2000); Richard Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1995), 288–90; Jerald B. Selleck *The Book of Common Prayer in the Theology of John Wesley* (PhD diss., Drew University, 1984); William Nash Wade, *A History of Public Worship in the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from 1784—1905* (Ph.D diss., University of Notre Dame, 1981); Nolan B. Harmon, “John Wesley’s ‘Sunday Service’ and its American Revisions,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 39, part 5 (June 1974):137–144; Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London: Epworth Press, 1970), 234–55; J. Hambry Barton, “The Sunday Service of the Methodists,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 32, part 5 (March 1960): 97–99; Paul S. Sanders, *An Appraisal of John Wesley’s Sacramentalism in the Evolution of Early American Methodism* (Ph.D diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1954); Wesley F. Swift, “The Sunday Service of the Methodists,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 29, part 1 (March 1953): 12–20; Wesley F. Swift, “Methodism and the Book of Common Prayer,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 27, part 2 (June 1949): 33–40; Frederick Hunter, “Sources of Wesley’s Revision of the Prayer Book in 1784–8,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 12, part 6 (June, 1942):123–133; R. J. Cooke, *History of the Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church with a Commentary on its Offices* (Cincinnati: Jennings & Pye, 1900); T. B. Neely, “The Sunday Service,” *Methodist Review* (March–April 1893): 215–227.

specific cultural contexts (see Appendix One, *A Taxonomy of Ordered Worship* and Appendix Two, *Expanded Taxonomy of Ordered Worship*). Doing so will reveal the strength of using the *ordo* over approaches to liturgical renewal that are unguided or guided by only practical or sociological concerns. There is also freedom within the *ordo* to shape the liturgy in a spiritually significant and culturally relevant expression. This project will demonstrate a way to retain both an historical consciousness and a contemporary voice through worship that is properly ordered and fully-formed. It is an authentically Wesleyan approach, a *via media*.

In order to prepare for this exploration, this first chapter will orient the reader to the larger conversation concerning worship by sampling some of the critique that is typical of those who promote worship reform and renewal. Next, it will highlight several of the major solutions that have been offered to correct the flawed practice of worship. Within that context, John Wesley's advices for worship given to the American Methodists will be considered historically and formally. This first chapter will conclude by recognizing the culture in which the American church currently finds itself. Any reappraisal of an ancient *ordo* must recognize that the contemporary cultural context in America is unlike anything that has been encountered in the West since Constantine. To simply pluck a form of worship from an ancient prayer book and drop it into the contemporary context would be anachronistic and futile. While avoiding that mistake, there are ways that fidelity to John Wesley's liturgical imagination can inform the formation of worship that speaks to and in the contemporary context. Toward that end, a brief survey of the American cultural and doxological context will be outlined.

## **Toward Understanding the Problem**

A survey of the critique of the current practice of worship in America could locate itself within multiple denominational contexts. As will be discussed below, the idea that something has gone amiss in the practice of Christian worship in America has been recognized in mainline and younger denominations, in liturgical and in informal denominations. As denominations with historic identities and practices of worship try to reach the surrounding culture with the claims of the Christian gospel, they feel a pressure to make changes in worship. How much can or should worship be altered and what considerations should govern those changes?<sup>6</sup>

In America the governing factor for worship appears to be to attracting a ‘target audience’ to attend church. This process has become quite specialized fostering seminars and books that provide direction on how to design a worship event so that it attracts the greatest number of participants. While these efforts have been fostered under the call to fulfill the Great Commission and reach more people for Jesus, it has produced a brand of Christianity that is further and further detached from its historic forms of worship and has led people further and further from the very things that create, establish, and sustain authentic faith. Lacking any foundational function, foundational truths are also up for grabs. Steve Rabey, journalist and adjunct professor at Fuller Seminary, Colorado Springs, bemoaned, “Welcome to the wild new world of contemporary, post-Christian,

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<sup>6</sup> One such effort to help the designers of worship practice to ask the right questions has been offered by James L. Brauer, *Worship, Gottesdienst, Cultus Dei* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005). See esp. 41–86 for his discussion of the essentials of Lutheran worship. Brauer discusses the emergence of American patterns of worship 24–28. He assesses that the revivalist tradition has had the most influence on the development of worship practice in non-liturgical churches in America. Brauer, 27, notes, “In its most recent forms, the Revivalist tradition is marked by a concerted effort to show concern for the unchurched, to capture a religious market, and to project the personality of its minister. It is in this tradition that worship became a tool for reaching the unconverted.”



postmodern spirituality, where people are busily constructing their own elaborate and highly *individualized systems* of belief and ritual” (emphasis mine).<sup>7</sup>

It would be an insurmountable task to survey all of the literature that is focused on the problem of the practice of worship in America.<sup>8</sup> Many are sensing that, for all the tools and methodologies that are being applied, Christianity is losing influence and significance in North America. The situation has caused alarm within the ranks of numerous denominations and has inspired multiple efforts to reduce the losses being experienced and to reassert Christianity as true and viable for the coming generations.

The specific context for this investigation is American Evangelicalism. As such, the following survey offers some broad outlines regarding the critique of the practice of worship within Evangelical denominations, including Wesleyan denominations. The authors chosen for this survey have identified some primary concerns from their perspective within Evangelical denominations. These voices will reveal the depth and breadth of the crisis in worship practices. Their analysis reveals a general consensus that the source of the problem with worship can be traced to the very essence of American culture.

This section will demonstrate that American individualism has fostered a consumerist mentality resulting in denominational competition for members. This competition has produced a form of Christianity that looks to satisfy the perceived wants

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<sup>7</sup> Steve Rabey, *In Search of Authentic Faith: How Emerging Generations are Transforming the Church* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 31. Rabey’s study is an effort to describe contemporary trends in American worship that have emerged as a response to contemporary dissatisfaction with the kind of worship that has developed within the American context and is searching for a renewed approach.

<sup>8</sup> The critique, a sampling of which is included in the bibliography, is broad-based and prolific.

and needs of the congregation's potential customers.<sup>9</sup> As a result, the church has become a purveyor of goods and services for a consuming Christian.

This section will explore four consequences of this infatuation with attraction: division within the Body of Christ, truncation of the full counsel of Scripture to the singular concern with salvation, undermining the mission of the Church, and forms of worship that give expression to marketing concerns rather than worship that is founded on the historic patterns and purposes of Christian worship.

### **Marketing the Church**

Marketing to the individual is the first touch point of concern. As Christianity arrived in North America, many denominations took a turn away from their institutional frameworks and became focused upon the individual. John Wigger, professor of history at the University of Missouri, identified this individualization of Christianity saying, "In post-revolutionary years, American religion became so firmly under the sway of the laity that *popular beliefs and customs* became the very frameworks around which new churches were built" (emphasis mine).<sup>10</sup> He argued that it was this attention to the individual that gave American Christianity its unique shape. The popularization of religion, according to Wigger, was what gave Christianity in America vitality while it was being marginalized in Europe. "By allowing people to become the *final arbiters of religious taste*, evangelical Christianity not only survived the transition from colonial to post-revolutionary society, but even enhanced its image and appeal" (emphasis mine).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See for instance, Robert Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) and William A. Dyrness, *How Does America Hear the Gospel?* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989).

<sup>10</sup> John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven By Storm* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

This focus upon marketing to the *individual* actually aided American Evangelical Christianity in becoming one of the most vibrant expressions of Christianity in history. Competition for adherents caused churches to be aggressive, and intentional in reaching out to those yet unclaimed by their church. Methods such as camp meetings and revivals intentionally sought to reach the “lost” and draw them into the salvation that Christ has offered. Successful churches were those who learned to cater to the needs of the customer in an environment that is least offensive, least demanding, and most accommodating.<sup>12</sup>

American Evangelical Christianity is a thoroughgoing expression of the marriage of individualism and religion. Harold Bloom, noted literary critic assessed, “The essence of the American is the belief that God loves her or him, a conviction that is shared by nearly nine out of ten of us, according to a Gallup poll.”<sup>13</sup> Bloom’s social-historical analysis, has credited American revivalism for the shift of emphasis from community to individual faith. This shift has also narrowed the focus of Christianity to one issue, salvation—fitness for heaven. Thus, faith is something felt and experienced, not necessarily thought about or even lived.

Brian McLaren, who is a leader in the emergent church movement, gives voice to the rising frustration within contemporary American Evangelicalism when he writes

I wonder how many of us develop a kind of addiction to a spiritual feeling, a spiritual infatuation with God, a beautiful thing, a needful thing, but a thing that is not the real point. And I wonder if we worship leaders don’t become enmeshed in this addiction—the unwitting codependents of people addicted to spiritual infatuation, dealers in a kind of high.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> This point is made in parody by Tom Rabbe, *The Ultimate Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> Harold Bloom, *The American Religion* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1992), 17.

<sup>14</sup> Brian D. McLaren and Tony Compolo, *Adventures in Missing the Point: How the Culture—Controlled Church Neutered the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 212–13.

It appears that the American infatuation with an approach to worship that is shaped around attracting and satiating the many desires of a fickle populous is running its course. Church leaders are seeking for authenticity and transcendence. Worshippers are beginning to awaken to the fact that they will never be satiated unless they seek something more significant than their immediate happiness.

### **Competition Leads to Division**

This focus on attracting individuals has resulted in division within the Church of Jesus Christ. “By 2005, 217 distinct church traditions were identifiable in Canada and the United States, with some groups themselves characterized by liturgical pluriformity.”<sup>15</sup> The agenda for worship is being shaped according to the wants and desires of the crowd, rather than upon any historic or Biblical pattern that has been handed down through our history. The result of the rejection of historic forms of worship in American Evangelicalism has led to a pattern of worship that is built on attraction and evangelism, rather than on building people of faith. Whenever there is dissatisfaction in the ranks, division occurs. Robert Webber<sup>16</sup> comments

This is especially true of conservative Protestant churches. We are a succession of breakaways with a constant history of starting over again without attention to or respect for our parental history. Unfortunately, when it comes to worship, there is a terrible price to pay for this attitude. When we cut ourselves off from the rich treasury of resources and from the collective spirituality of God’s people throughout the ages, we diminish our vision of

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<sup>15</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, “North America,” *The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Worship* (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 586.

<sup>16</sup> At the time of his death, April 27, 2007, Webber was the William R. and Geraldyn B. Myers professor of ministry at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Ill. He was also the president of the Institute for Worship Studies in Jacksonville, Florida, and professor of theology emeritus at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. Webber was the author of more than forty books on worship.

God. We isolate ourselves from what God would do in the world through us, the church.<sup>17</sup>

Christianity is losing any sense of unity and has been replaced by niche spirituality. If a person is into hip-hop, he or she can find a church that does that. If the preference is rock and roll, there is a church for that. If the worshipper is politically liberal, there is a church that will court his or her liberalism. If the worshipper is conservative, there is a church for that. Christianity has become defined by style and not the substance of the gospel. The choices are prolific: Suits or blue jeans, organ or guitars, liturgy or informality, cross or no cross, coffee, soda, or beer? Whatever an individual wants from church, she can find, or create her own. What's one more denomination?

When Christian churches design worship by chasing one fad after another in order to remain relevant they reveal one fundamental problem. Relevancy is rarely significant.

Olsen repines concerning the state of Evangelicalism saying

As a result [of efforts to meet the needs of those outside the church], we become congregations that seek to be “relevant” to the seeker. “Come here,” we often say. “Here you will get your wants met. Here we will give you just what you think you need—whatever that is: entertainment, classes, kindness, child care, anything. Just come.”

And they do come. For a time they come shopping at the spiritual mall. As these modern shoppers seek out what they think they need, they find acceptance and belonging. For a time it works until the aerobics classes and the ‘mothers’ day out’ lose meaning. They come for a time until they are again forced to face the spiritual vacuum that lies just beneath the surface of their lives. Then they are lost again.<sup>18</sup>

There is a growing dissatisfaction with the methods-based approach to growing the church. It has become apparent to many that the focus on growing the church has superceded the importance of being the church.

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<sup>17</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Blended Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 11.

<sup>18</sup> Mark Olsen, *What is Evangelism?* vol. 3 of *Open Questions in Worship*, Gordon W. Lathrop, gen. ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1995), 6.

## Attraction Instead of Discipleship

What has emerged in the American context is a church that is better suited *to attract and entertain* than it is for discipling believers. The real issue, however, has nothing to do with how large or how small the church is, or, even how well it attracts new members.

The Americanization of Christianity has resulted in a significant erosion of the Church at its very core, altering both its ecclesiology and its practice. As noted by Eugene Peterson

America does not honor the quiet work that develops spiritual root systems and community stability. To avoid being swept along by the winds of change and conducting a ministry that is mostly improvisation, one must stubbornly dig one's heels into the ground... The glib criticism that pastors in the twentieth century are out of touch with the times is, to me, not credible. The times are the very things we are in touch with.<sup>19</sup>

Pastoral work, he maintains, must be done in the context of a worshipping community.

“Any pastoral act that is severed from the common worship slowly but certainly loses its biblical character.”<sup>20</sup>

The pastoral vocation has lost its identity in the quest to enable congregations to actualize. The historic office has been surrendered to contemporary models, seeking to satisfy rather than to sanctify, to grow churches rather than to grow souls. As a result, congregations have become stultified, unable to find nourishment in the things of God, so oriented to experience and entertainment that they have no time or palate to grow into Holy people. When the means of the marketplace are embraced for the sake of satiating the constant demands of the congregation, the church is fighting a losing battle against ever-changing tastes and trends. Don Saliers reminds, “Relevancy is often short-lived when sought through currently attractive techniques, rather than through mutual growth

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<sup>19</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

and edification.”<sup>21</sup> This degradation of the true purpose of worship is not unique to evangelicalism. The consumerist mentality has affected all American denominations because it has infected all Americans. Americans come to church with certain expectations that are developed by living in a culture that is constantly seeking to market to their tastes and wants in order to make a sale.<sup>22</sup>

Rather than being a purveyor of Divine light and truth the church has become a social institution that is intent on meeting needs, providing services and maintaining properties. Os Guinness notes that the church’s quest to be relevant and to meet people’s perceived needs places it in a cycle that will never be satisfied. To chase relevance is to become irrelevant and to seek to meet needs only creates neediness.<sup>23</sup> What we have labeled consumerism, Guinness discusses under the title of modernity saying

The impact of modernity in the United States means that the Christian faith has lost much of its integrity and effectiveness in shaping the lives of believers. The statistical indicators of faith are still high, but its social influence is down. A central fact of modern times is faith’s search for its own lost authority. A central challenge of modern times is faith’s need to recover its integrity and effectiveness.<sup>24</sup>

Without a consistent message, the church becomes caught up in method. The end result is that the method has become the message and the culture has quit listening to either.

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<sup>21</sup> Don E. Saliers, “Divine Means: Sunday Worship in United Methodist Congregations,” in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, ed. Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Nashville: Kingswood, 1996), 152.

<sup>22</sup> Olsen, *What is Evangelism?*, 8, observed, “Thus, churches commonly seek to attract people by meeting needs and by providing the ‘commodity’ most sought after (and revenue producing!). Sociological tools like market research, needs analysis, and program development become the primary evangelism resources. Creating a ‘user friendly’ environment by focusing exclusively on the ‘client’ or ‘consumer’ (potential members) becomes a first step for the evangelist. Congregations lure people with promises, both implicit and explicit, of a better life, more happiness, affirmation, new friends (who are just like you), and all the ‘how to’ courses you can imagine. Evangelicals promote a place where people are coddled, cared for, and affirmed. ‘Come to church,’ we say, ‘and find a place where all that is broken can be fixed. In the midst of a hostile world, come to a place where you are what is most important and everyone is nice.’”

<sup>23</sup> Os Guinness, *Dining With the Devil* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 61–67.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

Hauerwas and Willimon discuss another failure of American accommodationism: doctrinal demise. Churches are actually becoming less and less sure of what they believe and “Atheism slips into the church where God really does not matter.”<sup>25</sup>

By shifting the focus to attracting and meeting the needs of the individual Christianity has created an approach to Christian culture that was driven by the needs (or perceived needs) of the *consumer* rather than by the full counsel of the Gospel. The American competitive and consumerist spirit affected the message of the gospel. While the Americanization of Christianity created a certain potency, its trajectory has resulted in the erosion of Christian faith and practice as evidenced in the contemporary critique.

William Chadwick bemoans the ‘theology of increase’ as creating an unhealthy competition for “sheep” that capitulates to the methods of the marketplace and violates every hope of Christ for His Church. He coined the term “McChurch” to identify the attitude that numbers have become more important than ethics, morals, or biblical love. The pastoral work of discipling worshippers into mature believers has been truncated by an ‘attract and entertain’ agenda. “We have been living an illusion: we think we are about the Lord’s work and we preach reaching the lost, but in fact we are primarily attracting already-churched people.”<sup>26</sup> Chadwick has personally experienced the realities that he criticizes. He grew a large congregation in the Eastern United States using Church Growth techniques and sadly watched it decay as another pastor provided a better “show.” His great concern is that the Church in American society has lost its identity to American capitalistic techniques. “A secular-to-ecclesiastical assimilation is moving the

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<sup>25</sup> Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 94.

<sup>26</sup> William Chadwick, *Stealing Sheep* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 68.



church toward a capitalistic theology in which numerical and financial success has become the standard at the expense of ethics, biblical theology and moral values.”<sup>27</sup>

The same point is made by other authors. Brian McLaren observed, “Churches tend to become gatherings of self-interested people who gather for mutual self-interest—constantly treating the church as a *purveyor of religious goods and services*, constantly shopping and ‘trading up’ for churches that can ‘meet my needs’ better”(emphasis mine).<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon have given voice to this kind of critique from their perspective within the institutional (Methodist) framework, surmising that within a capitalistic environment, “The church becomes one more consumer-oriented organization existing to encourage individual fulfillment rather than being a crucible to engender individual conversion into the Body.”<sup>29</sup> Where God would work to make disciples who trust and obey, the church seems to settle for having customers and meeting their needs.

### **The Mission is Sacrificed**

This consumerist model has resulted, not only in the fracturing of Christianity and spiritual shallowness, but also in the deterioration of its mission. Glenn Wagner, a founding member of the Promise Keepers movement and former mega-church pastor decries the ineffectiveness of the Church in accomplishing its mission directly coinciding with the rise of this person-centered movement in the Church. While spawning mega-churches that attempt to apply sociological insight to the practice of ministry, the Church in America actually has one of the lowest growth rates in the world. The current growth

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>28</sup> Brian D. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 2004), 107.

<sup>29</sup> Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident*, 33.

of Christianity in America is not even keeping up with population growth. He asks, “Why, when we have available to us more resources than ever, are we no better at evangelizing the lost and instigating positive change in the church?”<sup>30</sup>

Not only have churches suffered internally from the decay of faith and practice caused by its efforts to appeal to the populous, the broader impact of Christianity on the culture has diminished as well. To say it another way, when the church designs its mission and message around its desire to attract through accommodation, it becomes a dismal failure both at being the church and at attracting the culture.

The net result of 250 years of accommodation is that Christianity has become marginalized in a vast segment of American society. “Nobody cares whether you’re in church, and the culture is more likely to backslap you if you are there than if you aren’t. The winds of history no longer fill Christianity’s sails, especially in the West.”<sup>31</sup> If there ever was a time when Christianity defined our lives and society, that time is quickly passing. America has become post-Christian, while the West has become post-Constantinian.<sup>32</sup> No longer is life and society ordered in reference to the Bible or to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christianity is quickly becoming a by-word for a world

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<sup>30</sup> Glenn E. Wagner, *Escape from Church, Inc.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 21.

<sup>31</sup> Leonard, Sweet, ed., *The Church in Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 17.

<sup>32</sup> Constantinian Christianity is commonly understood to refer to the time period which began with Emperor Constantine’s legalization of Christianity in 313 AD and its subsequently becoming the official religion of the Empire in 325 AD. From that time until the Declaration of Independence in 1776, it has been illegal in the West, not to be Christian. Furthermore, Church and State have represented two equal arms of authority vested in the Head of State (King). The formal separation of civil and religious authority that took place in America has developed into the contemporary situation in which there is no formal support of the Church by the government (in fact, much hostility exists between the two) and there is no longer an assumption or expectation that a person who lives in America would profess Christianity or attend church services of any religion or denomination—“post-Constantinian.”

that is passing away. “All sorts of Christians are waking up and realizing that it is no longer ‘our world’—if it ever was.”<sup>33</sup>

Similar critiques arise from A. Daniel Frankforter and Paul Basden.<sup>34</sup> While both of these authors are seeking to adapt the useful parts of the seeker movement into meaningful worship, Frankforter notes, “In practice, however, it is very difficult for a church to rely on the powers of the world without capitulating to them.”<sup>35</sup> He argues that co-opting the things of the world actually serve to root worshippers more deeply in the world rather than delivering them from the world. He criticizes contemporary worship as “an ecclesiastical equivalent of a novel or costume drama.” In language that draws to mind Morgenthaler’s critique,<sup>36</sup> Frankforter asserts that contemporary worship actually interferes with the true task of evangelism by allowing people to remain attached to “earthly pleasures” while believing themselves to be saved from them. In other words, rather than rescuing sinners from the world, consumerist models have allowed the culture to tell the church under what conditions it will be receptive to the gospel. Under these rules of engagement, the gospel no longer penetrates the culture, the culture permeates the gospel.

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<sup>33</sup> Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident*, 17. See also Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 71. They also argue that the Church in America has become a victim of modernity.

<sup>34</sup> See, A. Daniel Frankforter, *Stones for Bread* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), and Paul Basden, *The Worship Maze: Finding a Style to Fit Your Church* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Frankforter, *Stones*, 12.

<sup>36</sup> Sally Morgenthaler is a worship consultant, speaker, and writer. Formerly a church worship coordinator, she now leads seminars on worship throughout the US and Canada. She has contributed to numerous books and articles on worship and has lectured in a number of seminaries including Yale, Asbury, Fuller, Gordon Cromwell, et. al. See, Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999).

## **Worship Has Been Truncated**

While an important effect of worshipping should be the conversion of people to faith in Jesus Christ, contemporary worship has so focused on evangelism that the fuller purpose of worship has been truncated to serve the evangelistic purpose of worship, at least within contemporary Evangelical churches. Other historic functions of worship, such as development of Christian life and character have been submerged beneath the evangelistic mission of worship. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, Wesley understood worship to have a broader mission and effect, thus he demanded that his Methodists leave their preaching houses to attend the worship of the Established Church on the Lord's Day. This truncating of worship has caused it to devolve into a marketing event designed to sell the gospel, thus making worship more focused on the wants and perceived needs of the worshipper rather than on giving glory and honor to God.

Marva Dawn,<sup>37</sup> is one whose experience spans the spectrum of mainline and Evangelical churches. She has described the state of worship in this environment as a “Royal Waste of Time,” saying that, “much of what is happening these days in worship pulls us away from centering on God—or does not have enough substance to hint at the infinity of God's splendor.”<sup>38</sup> It is in its worship that the American brand of Christianity most expresses its consumerist culture. Worship is the place where churches make their strongest statement regarding who they are seeking and how they intend to attract the unchurched. The worship of most American churches has become the primary thrust of their marketing strategy.

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<sup>37</sup> Dr. Marva J. Dawn serves as Teaching Fellow in Spiritual Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, BC, Canada. She holds Ph.D. and M.A. in Christian Ethics and the Scriptures, University of Notre Dame, IN (1992, 1986).

<sup>38</sup> Marva J. Dawn, *A Royal Waste of Time* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 155.

Historically, *evangelism* became the paradigm for worship. Services designed to attract and convert the non-Christian, became the preferred pattern for Sunday worship. Perhaps the most stinging critique of the person-oriented service, is issued by William Chadwick.<sup>39</sup> Chadwick argues that all of the application of Church Growth methods has resulted in no net growth in the Church. What has happened, in fact, is that a few churches have become quite proficient at attracting *Christians* by providing a more entertaining environment for them. “[S]eeking the saved became most churches’ ‘evangelistic occupation.’”<sup>40</sup> He argues that the Church Growth methods have resulted in the creation of a generation of church shopping Christians. The net result has been increasing dissatisfaction and decreasing loyalty. Bigger and better churches grow while smaller and less proficient churches close. Success becomes a numbers game and the church becomes driven by charismatic personalities. “Today we have moving church bodies filled with church shoppers and ecclesiastical consumers, joining churches for personal gain and leaving them for the same reasons.”<sup>41</sup>

Sally Morgenthaler is one of the contemporary voices that has shaped a careful and thoughtful critique of the current trends in Evangelical worship. Her poignant critique is driven by the simple observation, “We should be less concerned about making churches full of people and more concerned about making people full of God.”<sup>42</sup> She observes that contemporary worship is upside down. Being market-driven and consumer oriented, contemporary worship, she argues, neither pleases God nor compels the unchurched.

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<sup>39</sup> Chadwick, *Stealing Sheep*.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>42</sup> Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism*, 17.

“We are not producing worshipers in this country. Rather we are producing a generation of spectators, religious onlookers lacking, in many cases, any memory of a true encounter with God, deprived of both the tangible sense of God’s presence and the supernatural relationship their inmost spirits crave.”<sup>43</sup>

Morgenthaler argues that true worship involves a supernatural encounter with God. It is this encounter that will accomplish effective evangelism, not just cultural appeasement. “Our failure to reach lost people for Christ in this country is not so much because of their brokenness, but because of ours.”<sup>44</sup> True seekers are not looking for something that entertains them. They can receive entertainment outside the church that is much more professionally done. They are seeking a community of people who are authentically and supernaturally connected to God through Christ.

In a bold move to challenge the Great Commission assumption that controls the seeker movement, Morgenthaler asserts, “The true goal of evangelism is to produce more and better worshippers.”<sup>45</sup> Built into this thesis is the idea that conversion has not taken place until the convert becomes a true worshipper of God. Again, Morgenthaler posits, “We must come to terms with this truth: Although evangelism is one of the central tasks of the church, it is worship that ‘drives’ evangelism, not vice-versa.”<sup>46</sup> It is her assertion that the current trends in worship actually interfere with true worship because they allow the participants to believe that they have worshipped when, in fact, they have not. “[I]t is hard to produce ‘more and better worshippers’ when a significant percentage of the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 41.

congregation is not worshipping.”<sup>47</sup> “Inspiration and worship are not synonymous,” she declares.<sup>48</sup> Making them so is the great error of the American worship paradigm. We live in a culture that breeds spectators and is fixated on the platform. “In too many cases, such service formats are immune to God’s presence, stripped of all but oblique references to Jesus Christ.”<sup>49</sup>

Basden, while being more sympathetic to the efforts of the contemporary worship movement, expresses his concern that worship does not become person-centered. “Worship is first and foremost for God.”<sup>50</sup> The core motif for Basden is the Great *Commandment* rather than the Great Commission. The love of God and neighbor are both the purpose of worship and the motivation for evangelism. “We must actively resist the temptation to manipulate people in worship services for our own purposes, especially if those purposes are determined by a church-growth strategy.”<sup>51</sup> Basden’s warning is that worship in service of individual persons is always misdirected. All and any form of worship must have as its ultimate purpose the exaltation of God and the devaluation of the person. It is not style of worship or music that Basden finds objectionable, but the intent. “[T]rue Christian worship calls us to declare the absolute worthiness of God and the *relative* worthiness of everyone and everything else.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>50</sup> Basden, *Worship Maze*, 31.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 17.

Lester Ruth would concur from a Wesleyan (Methodist) way of thinking that the goal of evangelism for the Methodists was incorporation into a worshipping community.<sup>53</sup> The study of Wesley in chapter two will verify Ruth's thesis. Worship was, for Wesley, the fulcrum of the Christian life. In worship, where the Word of God was rightly preached and the sacraments were rightly administered, the Christian was born into faith, nurtured by the Church and equipped for a life of service and obedience. Rightly formed worship was so essential to Wesley that he steadfastly resisted all attempts to get him to abandon the worship of the Church of England in deference to practice of the class meetings.

Webber offered a similar analysis of contemporary evangelicalism citing three failings of evangelical worship: loss of theology, no understanding of order, and rejection of symbolic speech.<sup>54</sup> He also credited the genesis of these deficiencies to the rise of revivalism as a primary paradigm for worship in America. "Revivalism, following the more subjective line of thought, introduced an evangelistic model of worship. In this approach worship was directed toward the sinner and the goal of conversion. Intellectual sermons were replaced by emotional evangelistic sermons and the Eucharist was replaced by the invitation."<sup>55</sup>

Worship, in evangelical churches, has been truncated by the agenda of the revivalist. In an effort to "reach the lost," evangelical churches have ceased to nurture the "found." The fully formed, historic worship of the Church has been replaced by a malformed worship that judges its effectiveness by its ability to attract, rather than to

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<sup>53</sup> Lester Ruth, "A Little Heaven Below: The Love Feast and the Lord's Supper in Early American Methodism." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Fall 1997):60.

<sup>54</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 99-100.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.



nurture. Without an historic rootedness, worship in America has taken its cues from society, rather than from the history of Christian tradition. In the end, the Church has become secularized, privatized and pluralistic.<sup>56</sup> Hauerwas and Willimon's description summarizes the state of the evangelical church in reference to their own Methodism

What we call "church" is too often a gathering of strangers who see the church as yet another "helping institution" to gratify their individual desires. One of the reasons some church members are so mean-spirited with their pastor, particularly when the pastor urges them to look at God, is that they feel deceived by such pastoral invitations to look beyond themselves. They have come to church for 'strokes,' to have their personal needs met. Whence all this pulpit talk about "finding our lives by losing them"?<sup>57</sup>

The church has devolved into a mere vendor of religious goods and services and the pastor has become "nothing more than a court chaplain."<sup>58</sup>

The essential problem with the American approach to worship is its tendency toward domestication.<sup>59</sup> It not only has domesticated the practices of worship to appeal to the mass audience, it has, in fact, domesticated the object of worship, making the worship of God merely the means by which we advance our personal health, wealth, and well-being. The purpose of worship has shifted from shaping people so that they might do the will of God, to manipulating God so that He would serve the will of the people. Representative of this domestication of God is the personal positivism of Norman Vincent Peale, the counsel of Oral Roberts to "expect a miracle" while singing "something good is going to happen to you," and the prosperity gospel of Jim Bakker.

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<sup>56</sup> See, Os Guinness, *Dining*, 48.

<sup>57</sup> Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident*, 138.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>59</sup> Helpful discussions of this point include Guinness, *Dining*, Craig M. Gay, *The Way of the (Modern) World* (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), and William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

Countless examples could be cited of ministries that have turned the worship service into a gathering of greedy Christians seeking another distribution from the bank of God's blessings so that their lives might be more fulfilled. Worship in America, for the most part, has become pathologically self-serving.

### **Efforts Toward Re-forming Worship**

What has been argued above is that worship, especially within the American Evangelical Movement has become dysfunctional. There is debate as to the nature of the dysfunction. There are those who argue that the dysfunction is in the style of worship while others argue that the dysfunction is in the loss of historic forms and biblical patterns for worship.

Toward one end of the spectrum are those who counsel that worship must accommodate changing cultural preferences in order to attract those who have been disenfranchised by the dated language and customs of traditional Christian worship. This approach will be discussed more fully below. However, it is important to recognize at this point that American Christianity, especially Evangelicalism, has been shaped by an accommodationist vision.<sup>60</sup> Historic patterns of worship have been constantly modified and simplified in an effort to attract and to retain converts. Evangelism became the primary purpose of the Sunday service as the agenda of the revivalist usurped the agenda of the liturgist. The formative task of worship became assigned to the Sunday School or to other small group settings, while the primary task of the primary worship service of the church was to attract the unchurched and to get them "saved."

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<sup>60</sup> Helpful discussions of this point can be found in Robert N. Bellah, et. al. *Habits of the Heart* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), Bloom, *The American Religion*, Dyrness, *How Does America Hear the Gospel?*, and William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah, eds. *Religion in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968) among many such studies.

To find a way to respond to the contemporary worship malaise, many have counseled for a return to historic and Biblical sources and paradigms. Feeling a disconnection from the historic roots of Christianity in the contemporary cultural setting, a number of efforts have been engendered seeking to recover an historic understanding of the purpose and use of worship.

The tension that is fueling the controversy seems to highlight two legitimate concerns. On the one hand, those who argue that worship must be attractive and engaging to those who have no Christian background argue that culturally relevant methods and language must be used in order to communicate (incarnate?) God’s message to a contemporary audience. On the other hand, there are those who argue that authentic worship is necessarily counter-cultural and capitulation to the demands of the intended audience will undermine authentic worship in critical ways.

Leonard Sweet illustrates the tensions that exist using a simple matrix. This matrix is a helpful way to visualize the tensions that are being discussed in this section:<sup>61</sup>

High Change In Message	3	4
Low Change In Message	1	2
	Low Change In Method	High Change In Method

The tension that Sweet highlights is the tension that exists between message and method

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<sup>61</sup> Sweet, *The Church in Emerging Culture*, 19.

(form and content). The most extreme response to culture would be an accommodationist approach (box number four). The accommodationist would be prepared to alter both the message and the method in order to attract an audience. The accommodationist becomes merely a mirror that reflects the culture back to itself. On the other end of the spectrum (box number 1) would be churches which seek to retain an unchanged pattern of worship passed down from ancient times (e.g. the Latin Mass or the Orthodox Liturgy). At this end of the spectrum, the worship service itself is the essential concern. It must be retained because of its intrinsic value and meaning. To alter worship would be to hamper its divine function to create and to sustain a people of faith. A more complete discussion of these options will unfold below.

### **Transforming the Method and/or Message**

One could quickly observe that the primary literature counseling evangelical churches about worship has recommended stylistic changes that would appeal to the unchurched. As examples, Leonard Sweet recommends that we learn to “kiss the culture”<sup>62</sup> while Tex Sample argued that worship must communicate through visualization and beat.<sup>63</sup> This approach to re-forming worship is reflected in the efforts of the church growth movement most fully expressed in the “Seeker Service.” Growth oriented churches purpose to attract Americans who were disenfranchised by traditional Christianity with “need oriented” or “event oriented” worship. The primary goal of these services is the attraction and evangelism of the unchurched. The agenda of attraction causes these proponents to alter both method (Sweet, box 2) *and* message (Sweet, box 4)

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<sup>62</sup> Leonard Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000).

<sup>63</sup> Tex Sample, *The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

resulting in, according to their critics, a form of worship that is neither faithful to the form or content of the Christian message. These methods can be understood as the most recent form of campmeeting or revivalist worship which was designed around an attractional event that would draw the unchurched to an unconventional “spectacle” in order to present the gospel and bring about the salvation of sinners.<sup>64</sup>

This approach to worship has received the sternest criticism in recent years while providing for the largest and fastest growing churches in America. Bloom argues that this consumer approach to worship is doomed from the outset. “A highly individualized, even eccentric religion of Enthusiastic experience will dwindle down into vapidty.”<sup>65</sup> Os Guinness provides an effective criticism that what has happened to Christianity in America is a reflection of what has happened to culture in general. We have lost all palate for authenticity or reflection, opting instead to worship that which entertains, titillates and affirms our need to feel good about ourselves regardless of all evidence to the contrary.<sup>66</sup>

While not discounting the idea the worship must communicate “in the language of the people” the argument here is that the dysfunction runs far deeper than issues of style. The problem is that, given its increasing attention to meeting the needs and gratifying the

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<sup>64</sup> For a few historical samplings, see, Bruns, Roger A., *Preacher: Billy Sunday and Big-Time American Evangelism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1992), Lyle W. Dorsett, *Billy Sunday and the Redemption of Urban America* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), Millard J. Erickson, *Evangelical Mind & Heart* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), and Charles A. Johnson, *The Frontier Campmeeting: Religion's Harvest Time* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955).

<sup>65</sup> Bloom, *American Religion*, 47.

<sup>66</sup> Os Guinness, *A Time for Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 47, “The emphasis now is on surface, not depth; on possibilities, not qualities; on glamour, not convictions; on what can be altered endlessly, not achieved for good; and on what can be bought and worn, not gained by education and formation. To be a person is therefore to be a project. It is up to each of us to create and wear our own “designer personality”—carefully crafting ourselves with resumes, skills, and appearances all chosen with the expertise and care of a Paris couturier designing a dress for a Hollywood actress on Oscar night. Character may be its own reward, but personality is what wins friends, gets jobs, attracts lovers, catches the camera's eye, and lands the prize of public office.”

desires of the worshipper, worship no longer functions as worship. Worship has become largely incapable of creating and sustaining a people whose object is to glorify God.

Brian McLaren represents a movement that is rejecting the church in America because of this dysfunction. Many in the emergent church movement have noticed what McLaren describes saying, “Perhaps our ‘inward-turned, individual-salvation-oriented, un-adapted Christianity’ is a colossal and tragic misunderstanding, and perhaps we need to listen again for the true song of salvation, which is ‘good news to all creation.’”<sup>67</sup>

McLaren sees Christianity as emerging into something beyond denominationalism, perhaps, even, beyond Christianity. He uses the terms “post-objective” and “intersubjective” to describe the emerging culture. It is his opinion that the Church must *emerge* in a completely new form if it is to engage the hearts and minds of post-modern generations. What he advocates is a willingness to look backward in order to go forward and to discover forms of worship that are less static and defined and more mysterious and ethereal in order to reach the coming generations.

The solution that McLaren embraces is to abandon the traditional church altogether as a project that cannot be salvaged and to begin anew. However well-intentioned these efforts may be, they too suffer from the same dysfunction. Lacking an orienting doxology and ecclesiology, they also have no choice but to create worship that satiates the desires of the population that they are trying to attract, producing merely the latest and greatest form of dysfunctional Christianity. While the accommodationist approach has led worship further and further away from traditional forms and patterns, an opposite

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<sup>67</sup> McLaren, *Generous Orthodoxy*, 93.

discussion has developed seeking a restoration of historic and biblical patterns as the best response to the pressures of changing culture and the loss of influence of the Church.

### **Retaining Both Method and Message**

The denominations that were first to the table in the liturgical renewal conversation sought to retain what was vital in their liturgies while giving the liturgy a fresh expression in language or presentation in order to revitalize the historic liturgy. Leading the charge were the more historically oriented expressions of Christianity: Roman Catholics, Orthodoxy and liturgical denominations.<sup>68</sup> The *liturgical renewal* movement is the contemporary expression of an investigation that has at least a century of history seeking to reestablish worship within a core theology and practice (doxology and praxis). Those who would loosely identify themselves within the liturgical renewal movement have sought to respond to the dysfunction of worship in America through a reconsideration of the nature and roots of Christian worship in order to repair or to re-order worship in a way that continues to vitally engage the culture while functionally retaining its historic frame and purpose, generally embracing boxes 1 and 2 of Sweet's analysis.

One would locate Orthodox Christianity in this category. Along with Orthodoxy, a number of liturgical churches have argued that the liturgy is to be maintained with all its ancient splendor (Box 1). What must be corrected is the impatience and ignorance of the worshipper. Alexander Schmemmann argued that it was not the liturgy that needed changing, but that worshippers needed better orientation to the liturgy so that they could

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<sup>68</sup> For excellent histories of the liturgical renewal movement among main line denominations see, Keith E. Pecklers, *The Unread Vision: The Liturgical Movement in the United States of America: 1926–1955* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998) and, John Fenwick and Bryan Spinks, *Worship in Transition* (New York: Continuum, 1995).

participate in it in a meaningful way. Critics of those traditions who hold on to ancient liturgical practices would suggest that they are no longer communicating their ancient message to a contemporary audience, thus disenfranchising the very culture that it is seeking to engage.

While the liturgical renewal movement can be traced to the beginning of the twentieth century, the key expression of its nature and goals is best expressed in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (CSL) of Vatican II.<sup>69</sup> This document provided a breakthrough in thinking for the liturgically minded. By proposing that worship must achieve the “full, active, conscious participation of the worshipper,” it argued for an approach to worship that retained historic forms while seeking to engage the worshippers in the rites and rituals so that they become participants (actors) in worship and not mere spectators (providing for significant changes in method, Sweet, box 2).

The work was initiated by Pope John XXIII in his call for a council in 1959. Vatican II, was called into session on December 25, 1961 with the goal to equip the Roman Catholic Church for ministry and mission in the twentieth century. It was not long before it was a foregone conclusion that the central reform needed would be within the liturgy. The opening paragraphs of the CSL set forth the principles of reform.

1. The liturgy enables the faithful to express in their lives and show forth to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the Church.
2. In the liturgy we have a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy.
3. While the liturgy is not the whole of the Church’s activity, and she must preach the gospel to unbelievers alike, nevertheless “The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all her power flows.” (I.10)

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<sup>69</sup> Vatican Council, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council and The Motu Proprio of Pope Paul VI with a Commentary by Gerard S. Sloyan* (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press), 1964.



4. In order for this to be achieved, the faithful must take part in its performance intelligently, actively and fruitfully.<sup>70</sup>

Finally adopted under Pope Paul VI, on December 4 1963, The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* produced an active conversation among Roman Catholics, main-line Protestants and Eastern Orthodox churches and leaders. The principles of the CSL have become the principles around which liturgical reform has rallied. The CSL provided for drastic changes within the Catholic liturgy, among which were the publication of the liturgy in the vernacular, a greater focus on preaching and Scripture, the introduction of music designed to allow the congregation to participate in the service, and the offering of communion of both kinds to all laity.

These principles have become the basis for an enlarging ecumenical conversation about the shape and purpose of worship. The question seems to be how to best retain the message without doing violence to the methods of worship which have served the Christian community faithfully for centuries. How can worship be revitalized in a way that is faithful to ancient patterns while speaking in a fresh voice?

### **Seeking Synthesis**

One voice that has sought to bring an ecumenical spectrum of worship into the conversation with Evangelicals is Robert Webber. He was among the first Evangelicals to suggest that the solution to the worship malaise would be found by listening with both ears, one tuned to those who sought to recapture the ancient forms and the other tuned to those who sought to speak with a contemporary voice. He characterized his approach saying, “As with spiritual renewals of the past, the worship renewal of the church today is

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<sup>70</sup> Fenwick and Spinks, *Worship in Transition*, 64. For an historical discussion of the development of these themes within the American context see, Pecklers, *The Unread Vision*, 43ff.

due largely to the *rediscovery of the insights of the framers of our faith and the resources they have left us*”(emphasis mine).<sup>71</sup> He was largely responsible for providing a collection of ancient practices that many churches are dabbling with in an effort to bring some sense of history and mystery to the Sunday service.<sup>72</sup> Webber intended to provide a fully-formed approach to worship, which will be discuss below. “We cannot confront this age with a truncated and reductionist faith and worship,” he said, “I don’t believe we can engage our contemporaries with a message that is either primarily intellectual or emotional.”<sup>73</sup> Instead, he advocated blending contemporary expressions with historic traditions in order to create a new worship synthesis that will be both “ancient and future.”

The question becomes, what is the best way to respond to the crisis, the culture, the gospel and the history of the Christian faith? Webber summarized some options under three approaches:

We now live in a transitional time in which the modern worldview of the Enlightenment is crumbling and a new worldview is beginning to take shape. Some leaders will insist on preserving the Christian faith in its modern form; others will run headlong into the sweeping changes that accommodate Christianity to postmodern forms; and a third group will carefully and cautiously seek to interface historic Christian truths into the dawning of a new era.<sup>74</sup>

His third option will prove most fruitful in reconstructing authentic worship. The approach that will be taken to the use of Wesley’s service in later chapters will endeavor to look both back to an historic foundation and forward to a contemporary application.

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<sup>71</sup> Webber, *Blended Worship*, 12.

<sup>72</sup> See, Robert E. Webber, ed. *The Complete Library of Christian Worship*, 8 Vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995).

<sup>73</sup> Webber, *Blended Worship*, 18.

<sup>74</sup> Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith*, 14.

What must be carefully held together in considering a solution are both a careful *theological orientation* and an ability to shape worship to *communicate to the culture*. Don Saliers argues, “The most recent period of liturgical reform and renewal has raised basic theological, pastoral, and spiritual issues for many churches.”<sup>75</sup> Liturgical reform requires something deeper than merely finding a style that seems to fit. A solution to the crisis in worship cannot be sought like looking for a new pair of shoes—are they fashionable, do they fit, are they comfortable and can I afford it? Questions of style and comfort really sidestep the question of the nature and purpose of worship. Thus, those who are seeking worship renewal through acculturation to the perceived needs and wants of the consumer have turned the focus of worship in the wrong direction. Worship is not purposed to satisfy and to entertain the worshipper. Worship is intended to create and nurture godly people. As Geoffrey Wainwright states, “Liturgical revision should serve the clarification and enrichment both of the Church’s vision of God and of its own life.”<sup>76</sup>

The approach to worship proposed in this project prefers the advice of the *Constitution* over the advice of the accommodationist or the traditionalist. The intention is to maintain an approach to worship that is fully grounded in the historic Christian faith, reflective of the traditions of worship that have been established since the origin of the Church (and before) while allowing it to speak in a fresh voice that communicates to the contemporary mind and heart the ancient truths of God. This approach would locate itself between boxes one and two of Sweet’s grid. It appears that Webber was advocating for the same sort of synergy saying, “My argument is that the postmodern world is a rich

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<sup>75</sup> Saliers, 145.

<sup>76</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 354.

cultural context for the recovery of a classical view of the church... This approach to the church as a 'metaphysical presence' is the strongest kind of apologetic to the reality of God in a postmodern world."<sup>77</sup> Webber promoted a return to worship that was highly ritualized, deeply symbolic, layered with mystery, and grounded in metaphysical realities.

### **Toward Re-forming Worship for Wesleyans**

The contemporary discussion regarding worship reveals a uniting of two streams of liturgical consciousness. In the CSL, those who advocated maintaining an unaltered form of worship have realized that worship must be comprehensible and meaningful to the worshippers or it ceases to function as worship. In Webber's analysis, those who have maintained a form of worship shaped by the concerns of culture are realizing the need for more deliberate attention to historic forms of worship to provide depth, mystery, and theological richness to worship.

These tensions are not merely concerns regarding how worship is to be best ordered. Rather, the concern expressed by those who are seeking a more meaningful practice of worship has to do with how and whether the worship of an individual congregation is functioning to establish people of faith and to propagate Christians who have a mature theological perspective. The common shorthand for discussing this question has been framed as a reflection on Prosper of Aquitaine's dictum popularized into the couplet: *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of prayer establishes the law of belief). Prosper of Aquitaine was a fifth century monk, secretary to Leo the Great, and a supporter of Augustinianism over against Semi-Pelagianism. His argument for the

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<sup>77</sup> Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith*, 91.

necessity of grace for conversion points to the historic and universal language of the liturgy which calls worshippers to pray for the salvation of infidels and Jews.<sup>78</sup>

The dictum is commonly applied as short-hand way of saying that what is done in worship creates what the worshippers believe.<sup>79</sup> Those who worship in a free-church tradition, then, may struggle to create Christian identity if the content of doctrine arises from the practice of worship, those who are generally careless about practice of worship hamper their ability to maintain, to declare, and to propagate core beliefs.

This malformation of worship was the underlying concern of Wesley when he had the *Sunday Service* delivered to America. However, Methodism, birthed in the soil of American independence, had no appreciation for Wesley's studied counsel on proper worship. The fully-formed approach to worship the nurtured John Wesley was exchanged for the evangelistic service designed to attract and convert, but not designed to nurture, form, and inform Christian faith and development.

### **Wesley's Intended Pattern of Worship Reconsidered**

It will be shown that John Wesley's *Sunday Service* was a thoughtful and studied revision of the liturgy of the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) intent on correcting the flaws of the English liturgy while restoring the spirit and pattern of Early Christian Worship. Attention to *The Sunday Service* can provide a lens through which to view the liturgical imagination of John Wesley. By assessing his understanding of the place,

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<sup>78</sup> Paul DeClerck, "Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi: The Original Sense and Historical Avatars Equivocal Adage," *Studia Liturgica* (1994): 178–200, 181.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., DeClerck argues that the adage has been corrupted from its original use. Prosper of Aquitaine coined the phrase with reference to Cyprian who first used the phrase, *lex orandi* to refer to the Lord's Prayer as the proper prayer of the Church. For the prosper, the *lex orandi* or the *lex supplicandi* refer to the command to pray certain kinds of prayers, not to the liturgical text itself. DeClerck argues that the usage of the adage has been considerably expanded from the original intent of Prosper to make reference to the entire liturgy.

purpose, and function of worship, an approach to worship renewal can be formulated which is responsive to changing cultural dynamics while retaining fidelity to Wesley's own passion and vision for the Church.

Wesley intended for the *Sunday Service* to be a reflection of his mature thinking on the form and function of worship, which would become a pattern for worship in the Methodist churches in North America. By proposing the service, he intended to shape American Methodism into an authentic Christian community. His service was provided along with the authority for ordination, a hymnbook, and Articles of Religion with the explicit purpose of establishing the Methodist Church in America. Wesley's reasoning was built upon the model of the early Church, concluding that America needed the same sort of pioneer missionary work that the early Church had to do when establishing Christianity in pagan lands. For reasons that will be discussed below, Wesley concluded that Methodism was free to develop as an independent expression of Christianity in America, but it was not free to jettison the historic faith or forms of worship that had been passed down to it. It was his intention that Methodism in America would retain all of the greatness of authentic Christianity without all of the political and ecclesiastic flaws. His hope was to establish an *authentically* New Testament church.

The intended pattern for worship, however, did not transfer to the Methodist of North America, except in a nostalgic way. Within Methodism and in American Christianity as a whole, the patterns of worship expressed intentional independence from the European models and historic forms in preference for simpler forms of worship that were modeled upon the preferences of the populace and the "New Testament pattern."

The pattern of worship that took root within the Methodist Church and its offspring was a convergence of the Methodist society meeting and the frontier campmeeting pattern.

It is commonly understood that within ten years of its arrival in 1784, the *Sunday Service* was completely abandoned. The order of worship that took root within Methodism and within America was more akin to Wesley's class meetings (see footnote 83). Westerfield Tucker argues that American Methodist worship was more influenced by the revivalism of Charles Finney<sup>80</sup> than by the liturgical imagination of John Wesley.

For some Methodists, what became identified as the revival style of hymn singing, ardent prayer, and fiery preaching that flourished in the frontier exemplified the basic and most fruitful means of winning souls. This often meant adopting of a practical approach so that worship reached its commonly understood goal: the conversion of heart and mind, which often was dramatically confirmed by kinetic and vocal responses in the pew or at the altar rail... The shape of the Lord's Day worship, according to this thinking, was determined by the worship leader's assessment of the spiritual needs of the community, not by some prescribed order, though the general pattern was to progress from the 'preliminaries' (e.g., singing, prayers, testimonies), to a 'message,' followed by an invitation to commitment.<sup>81</sup>

Her description of the worship pattern of the American Methodists demonstrates the fact that the fully-formed and historic pattern of worship that Wesley sought to maintain was truncated for the purpose of saving souls. In Wesley's own practice, evangelism took place in society meetings and personal encounters with sinners through ministries of compassion. Once restored to a right relationship to God through Christ, Wesley steadfastly insisted that the convert participate in the regular Anglican worship in order for the Christian to be formed by the rites, prayers, scriptures, and sacraments of worship.

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<sup>80</sup> Charles G. Finney was a nineteenth century Presbyterian revivalist whose methods popularized tent-meeting revival services. He was known for using emotional challenges to draw listeners to make a decision of their wills to respond to his gospel message. He is often called, "the father of modern revivalism."

<sup>81</sup> Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship*, 11–12.

For those who wanted to pursue a deeper walk still, Wesley established the class meeting as place for further training in the way of holiness and spiritual accountability. The revivalist pattern had no place for these more complicated aspects of Christian worship incorporated into the *Sunday Service*.

One must be careful to understand that John Wesley intended to be and believed himself to be a faithful Anglican to the end of his life. While there are those who would argue, not without reason, that Wesley's actions in 1784 providing a Prayer Book for the Methodists in America and providing for the ordination of American priests was tantamount to a declaration of independence from the Church of England. Wesley's efforts can also be interpreted as his good faith effort to retain the substance of Anglicanism within Methodism.<sup>82</sup>

The fact is, by 1784, Wesley had already lost control of American Methodism and it was already on course to separation. Conversely, Methodism in Britain has never yet formally separated from the Church of England. Wesley was an Anglican. That very fact that Wesley was an Anglican may have led to the rejection of his liturgy by the Americans. By 1784, in the wake of the Revolution, no one in America was inclined to accept anything British. The only Wesley-appointed lay minister who had remained in America through the war was Francis Asbury and he solicited more loyalty from the American Methodists than did Wesley.

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<sup>82</sup> Robert F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Epworth Press, 1945), 116, "Without doubt, John Wesley loved the communion of the Anglican Church; he enjoyed its liturgy, accepted the doctrines, believed the mode of government to be in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament. He never thought of providing a substitute for, or creating a rival to, that Church; nor did he contemplate a reform of its hierarchical system. Throughout the whole of his life he remained in association with the Established Church of England and constantly sought to bring others into communion with it."



American Methodism was always more Asburyan than Wesleyan. Even when Thomas Coke arrived with instructions and authority from Wesley to appoint Asbury as “co-superintendent” (soon changed to “Bishop” over Wesley’s disapproval) and to use Wesley’s *Prayer Book*, Asbury refused to agree unless it was agreed to by a vote of the Methodists. The “Christmas Conference” of 1784 did offer its agreement, but demonstrated something much more significant: American Methodism would be ordered by the will of the people. Religion would be ordered by the wants and desires of the “common folk,” not the liturgical vision of John Wesley.

Wesley’s vision for America was never realized. He was unsuccessful in creating an American Anglican Church that would be free of all of the political and moral subversion of the English church, yet would continue to worship in the fullness of the historic forms that had been preserved in the best expressions of Anglicanism. “John and Charles Wesley’s theological and spiritual grounding in the 1662 Prayer Book and the treasury of Charles’ Eucharistic hymnody, did not transfer into the emerging American nineteenth century; but the informal, enthusiastic side of the Methodist movement flourished.”<sup>83</sup>

James White, late Methodist scholar and professor of liturgics at Notre Dame University, observed that, “Wesley’s pattern for the Christian life is based on a community gathering each Sunday for morning and evening prayer, and celebrating the Lord’s Supper ‘on every Lord’s Day.’”<sup>84</sup> Wesley himself communed at least four times per week throughout his life. He was convinced that the Eucharist was the most basic

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<sup>83</sup> Saliers, “Divine Means,” 139.

<sup>84</sup> James F. White, ed. *John Wesley’s Prayer Book: The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America with introduction, notes, and commentary by James F. White*, (Cleveland: OSL Publications, 1991), 9.

expression of “primitive Christianity.” Yet, this Eucharistic orientation quickly lost out in American Methodism. “The separation of the Eucharist from the pattern for Sunday morning worship and the transformation of the Sunday liturgy into largely an extempore service undoubtedly reflected the practice of Sunday worship for almost all Methodists.”<sup>85</sup>

While it could be argued that the absence of Eucharist was due to the fact that the majority of Methodist ministers were lay ministers and did not have the authority to administer the sacraments, Westerfield Tucker is closer to the mark when she comments,

Placed alongside the issues of uniformity and freedom in practice was another persistent yet related matter: the avoidance of formalism in worship that potentially could stifle the Spirit... Simplicity was preferred, since the unadorned gospel message was best represented to plain folks by simple means... For some Methodists, what became identified as the revival style of hymn singing, ardent prayer, and fiery preaching that flourished in the frontier exemplified the basic and most fruitful means of winning souls. This often meant adopting of a *practical approach* so that worship reached its commonly understood goal: the *conversion* of heart and mind, which often was dramatically confirmed by kinetic and vocal responses in the pew or at the altar rail (emphasis mine).<sup>86</sup>

What is seen in her description of American Methodist worship is the submission of worship to the agenda of evangelism. In so doing, Methodist worship became truncated, especially within the denominations that were birthed out of it. If the goal of worship is merely conversion, the sacraments could be laid aside as well as the catechetical and confessional aspects of worship (liturgy). Over time, the model of the evangelistic service

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<sup>85</sup> Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship*, 9. Lester Ruth in *A Little Bit of Heaven Below* argues that the Eucharist was more central to Methodist worship than this assessment would indicate. His historical analysis offers that the Quarterly Conference Meetings were particularly significant as the place where the sacraments could be offered by the few ordained clergy who were available. These eucharistic celebrations were given with great care and seriousness, requiring tickets for participation. Nevertheless, the shape of the Conference Meeting, as discussed below, was primarily formed as an evangelistic crusade and the practice of quarterly communion became the practice within Methodism and her heirs.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

became dominant and worship became merely an entry point into Christian life, with no expectation of nurture attached. Methodist worship became myopic, with the irregular service (the Methodist preaching service) becoming the regular service and the regular service (the formal liturgy) becoming, at best, an irregular service. By so doing, the whole of Christian life became focused on conversion. As a result, the church became broader, but shallower, spiritually.

Westerfield Tucker maintains that the Wesley's liturgical text stands as the basis for subsequent Methodist liturgical development.<sup>87</sup> However, she recognizes, elsewhere, "What might be called the Americanization of Methodism can be seen in all aspects of its life, and especially in the shape and content of its worship. The revisions made to Methodist Sunday worship throughout its history make this abundantly clear."<sup>88</sup> Even further removed from Wesley's desires are American Holiness churches which would like to be considered Wesleyan, at least theologically. They have fared even worse in reference to having an ordered worship. One critic from within the movement simply affirms what we have seen is true about much of American Evangelical Christianity, "As in many churches today, much of what passes for worship in Holiness churches takes its cues and rules straight from consumer-oriented marketing strategies."<sup>89</sup>

### **Reappraising the *Ordo***

It has been argued above that the net result of the rejection of historic forms of worship in American Evangelicalism has led to a pattern of worship that is built on

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<sup>87</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, "Form and Freedom: John Wesley's Legacy for Methodist Worship" in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, 18.

<sup>88</sup> Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship*, 4.

<sup>89</sup> Hoskins, "In Search of Liturgical Identity," 130.

attraction and evangelism, rather than on building people of faith. The alarm has been sounded across denominational lines. The concern is not unique to Wesleyanism, it is a concern that has driven scholars back to a reflection on how theology emerges from liturgy and how liturgy forms Christian life.

How might Father Wesley counsel if he were a part of the contemporary conversation? What would he recommend as correctives that might enable restoration and propagation of the faith? How can worship be ordered so that Wesley's emphasis upon Experimental (experiential) Christianity and Christian Perfection are maintained, proclaimed, explained, and sustained within our traditions? Is there a Wesleyan *ordo*<sup>90</sup> that can shape our worship practices? How does Wesley conceive of worship's ability to shape faith and Christian character?

### **Reconsidering the Foundations in Order to Move Forward**

It is the argument of this project that attention to Wesley's *Sunday Service* will provide the building blocks for a worship service that is attractive to a contemporary consciousness while maintaining the historic shape and function of worship, avoiding the Modern fallacy of creating consumer-driven, market-oriented worship. The Wesley pattern is intentionally grounded in historic Christian worship and is specifically shaped to transfer the faith, both content and experience from one generation to the next. Because Wesley's pattern is an historic one, the church that follows it will be assured that it is not abandoning the wisdom of the ages in designing a worship service that truly operates as a Means of Grace.

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<sup>90</sup> *Ordo*, or "form of worship," refers to the rites, texts and rituals of worship and how they work together to express theology and create a faith community.

From an historic and Wesleyan consciousness, worship must be deliberate and thoughtful if it is to function correctly. Hauerwas reminds that, “Worship is about shaping the affections.”<sup>91</sup> Wainwright counsels, “Worship is better seen as the point of concentration at which the whole of Christian life comes to ritual focus.”<sup>92</sup> Specifically, for Wesley, worship was about forming a person into a *Christian*, a person whose affections are fully fixed on Christ and whose heart has been cleansed from indwelling sin. Henry Rack reminds us, “for Wesley the true goal of the Christian life is sanctification, holiness, even to the point of perfection.”<sup>93</sup>

A paradigm can be discovered within the *Sunday Service* by which worship can be crafted to respond to the challenges of post-Christian culture. The application of this paradigm to the form, content, and structure of worship will enable the church to transmit the core of the Christian faith (in the Wesleyan tradition) within a framework that will provide a worldview potent enough to empower the Christian to maintain the faith in the midst of a hostile environment. Careful analysis of Wesley’s *Sunday Service* will reveal a deliberate restructuring of the pattern and processes of worship which was designed to orient the hearts, theology, and lifestyle of the Methodists.

Wesley’s liturgical pattern has been ignored in the development of patterns of worship for Methodists or the churches that have risen from the movement. For those who seek to continue to follow the insights and spirit of the Oxford Methodists, a liturgical paradigm<sup>94</sup> can be extracted from John Wesley’s *Sunday Service for the*

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<sup>91</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *A Better Hope* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2000), 157.

<sup>92</sup> Wainwright, *Doxology*, 8.

<sup>93</sup> Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 395.

<sup>94</sup> In discussing the liturgy, I am focusing on its internal structure and external forms. What I am not

*Methodists in North America*. This pattern can be used to provide an orienting paradigm for construction of a Sunday service within the contemporary American setting.

Any Wesleyan body that wished to return to Wesley's liturgy would have ample resources available. Reprints of the original *Service* are available to the contemporary reader as are numerous variations which have been retained in the Methodist *Book of Discipline* and in other publications. This study proposes to seek another path—to revisit the source document in order to recapture its usefulness to our contemporary setting. The liturgy can become a treasure map toward understanding Wesley's own liturgical intent and imagination. From such an exploration the essence of ordered worship will be discovered. Extracting that essence will provide a rubric that can be maintained while allowing for creative application so that worship continues to speak to and for a contemporary congregational setting, regardless of the cultural interfaces.

Ordered worship in a Wesleyan spirit can provide both form and freedom. This process proposes to capture both the form of ordered worship in reference to Wesley's *Sunday Service* and the spirit of Methodist worship in reference to the preaching services of the early Methodists. In so doing, what was never brought together in American Wesleyanism will be unified—an historic *ordo* with an experiential impact for the worshipping congregation.

### **Rebuilding the *Ordo* in an Hostile Environment**

The task that has been proposed is necessitated by the decay and confusion regarding the nature and practice of worship in America. More and more, the counsel of

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focused upon in this study is the way in which the grace of God functions within the liturgy or attaches itself to the liturgy to create faith. While worship is a primary means of grace in Wesley's thinking, it is not our intent in this study to consider the way that it functions as a means of grace. My focus is on how the structure of worship expresses the underlying theology.

serious-minded Christians and scholars to return to a more historically informed worship is being heard. Robert Webber summarized the opinions of many saying,

In the postmodern world evangelical worship is faced with the challenge and opportunity to bring the traditions of worship together in a creative way. From the ancient church, we derive the emphasis on the content and the fourfold order; from the Reformation, we obtain the emphasis on the Word; from free church history, we receive the Christocentric emphasis; and from the younger contemporary churches of our time, we inherit the sense of the Spirit and of intimacy. Worship renewal in the twenty-first century that draws from the Scriptures, and from the rich treasuries of history, will be concerned for contemporary relevance.<sup>95</sup>

What Webber recommends is precisely the intent of Wesley himself, to bring the best of worship tradition and practice to bear, offering a form of worship that would faithfully communicate the faith and develop authentic Christianity. Others see value in this approach.

Marva Dawn is more succinct saying, “The Christian community, to be a genuine gift to the postmodern world, must deliberately be an alternative society of trust and *embodied faithfulness to our story and its God*” (italics mine).<sup>96</sup> Again, we hear the call for an historically grounded, ritually significant, and culturally relevant worship that will both engage and challenge the mind and culture of the postmodern. Larry Hutrado counsels,

We modern, westernized Christians could well do with lifting our liturgical eyes beyond the alternatives of either shallow notion of ‘relevance’ or the frozen formality against which demands for ‘relevance’ are often raised, and beyond the alternatives of either merely human elegance or austere plainness, to an approach to worship that makes us conscious of its ‘vertical’ reality and significance.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Webber, *Ancient–Future Faith*, 99.

<sup>96</sup> Dawn, *Royal Waste*, 55.

<sup>97</sup> Larry W. Hutrado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 114.

Hutrado's comment is reminiscent of what was said above, that relevance is rarely significance. An approach to worship that is more theologically and historically reflective, will more effectively accomplish its goal of creating and sustaining Christian life while experiencing the fullness of the Christian gospel and the outpouring grace of God.

One must ask before moving on, why is the situation different? Why is it that an approach to worship that has sufficed to produce arguably the world's most vibrant expression of Christianity, no longer adequate to sustain the Christian faith?

Of course there are those like Os Guinness and Harold Bloom who would suggest that the American form of Christianity has never been adequate and that we are only now reaping the fruit of over two centuries or neglect. Bloom argues, "the American Religion, for its two centuries of existence, seems to me irretrievably Gnostic. It is a knowing, by and of an uncreated self, or self-within-the-self, and the knowledge leads to freedom, a dangerous and doom-eager freedom: from nature, time, history, community and other selves."<sup>98</sup>

Guinness argues that the person-centered approach to worship that is definitively Modern and definitively American has cast American Christianity off from any moorings. He would argue that the American form of Christianity is a failed experiment. "Losing touch with transcendence, secular people... lose a reference point with which to judge themselves and... end up confusing health with happiness and happiness with

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<sup>98</sup> Bloom, *American Religion*, 49.



health.”<sup>99</sup> Guinness would argue that American Christianity is more secular than it is Christian.

Regardless of where the blame is laid, it is clear that the American culture, once a warm and welcoming environment for Christianity, is becoming indifferent at best or, even, hostile to Christianity. Dan Kimball is not announcing anything profound when he notes, “Almost every time Christians are portrayed on television or in the movies, they appear somewhat unintelligent, mindless, even cultish, usually engaging in angry crusades to wipe out the evils of society and convert people to their point of view.”<sup>100</sup> He notes that Christianity is no longer the prevailing religion in America. Instead, the current generations of Americans are growing up in an environment in which they are invited to choose from among many gods and spiritualities, all declared legitimate. Christianity, in the culture of suspicion and deconstruction is considered to be condemning, bourgeois, and out of touch with reality. “In recent years, teens and young adults have grown up in a world of post-modern, post-Christian values and perspectives. They simply have no Judeo-Christian roots to return to.”<sup>101</sup> Hauerwas and Willimon surmise, “Paganism is in the air we breathe, the water we drink. It captures us, it converts our young, it subverts the church.”<sup>102</sup>

What has shifted significantly is that America no longer provides support for Christianity within culture. Dan Kimball provides a useful summation of this cultural shift

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<sup>99</sup> Guinness, *Dining*, 34.

<sup>100</sup> Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 81.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>102</sup> Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident*, 151.

In the modern era (A.D. 1500-2000), someone raised in America (after its birth as a colonized nation) would receive a primarily Judeo-Christian upbringing. For the most part, everyone grew up in an atmosphere that taught the values of the Judeo-Christian faith. Even if one was not a Christian, he probably agreed with most biblical values and ethics, tried to live by the Ten Commandments, understood many of the basic Bible stories, and knew what it meant that Jesus died for sins. When someone in the modern era thought of 'God,' generally the Judeo-Christian God came to mind.<sup>103</sup>

This lack of cultural undergirding of Christianity places more stress upon the Sunday worship service to provide everything that the Christian will need for knowing and living out his or her faith within a hostile and contrary environment. Webber was among those who suggested that the coming challenge to Christianity will be much more like the Apostolic age than anything that we have experienced since Constantine. In the same way that the earliest Church did not accommodate, but confronted the culture, "Christians in a postmodern world will succeed, not by watering down the faith, but by being a countercultural community that invites people to be shaped by the story of Israel and Jesus."<sup>104</sup> He argued, "In the postmodern world the most effective churches will be led by those who turn their backs on the corporate market-driven views of the church and return to the theological understanding and practice of the church as the community of God's presence in the world."<sup>105</sup>

Margaret Kelleher offers a vision of what we believe a restoration of a Wesleyan *ordo* would help to accomplish.

The message of Christ is proclaimed through symbols, language of various kinds, the arts, relationships, and the lives and deeds of those who make up the church. Liturgy, as the ritual performance of local assemblies, incorporates all of these and thus plays a significant role in the ongoing genesis of the Church. The liturgical worship of any local community

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<sup>103</sup> Kimball, *Emerging Church*, 58.

<sup>104</sup> Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith*, 7.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-82.

discloses a vision of what it means to live as a Christian. It does this through the symbols, language, actions, interactions, relationships that constitute the ritual performance. In other words, liturgy offers people a horizon, a world in which to live.<sup>106</sup>

Worship should provide a world out of which the Christian lives that is potent enough to anchor his or her life in the midst of conflicting worlds and value structures.

The intent here is to offer an approach to Sunday worship that will be fully formed, theologically informed, ritualistically significant, and symbolically potent enough to empower Christians to live out their faith within a hostile surrounding culture, finding more meaning within the culture of faith than is available within secular culture. By examining Wesley's own personal history and the influences that impacted his life, it will be demonstrated that he was a highly trained and thoughtful liturgist who understood the liturgical issues of his day, the essence of the Anglican liturgy, and the history of the development of Christian liturgy with special reference to the Early Church. Using the liturgical imagination of John Wesley as our window, a liturgical pattern will come into clearer focus that can retain the purpose and practice of historic worship while effectively communicating to multiple generational and cultural contexts. Attention to Wesley will orient us to the nature and purpose of Christian worship and the way that worship can be shaped to form and transfer the Christian faith, as understood theologically by Wesley, within a vibrant community of Christians.

Having understood the nature of the problem with worship and the various approaches that have been offered, this project will turn to Wesleyan roots to understand that John Wesley was a liturgist worthy of our attention. After coming to an

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<sup>106</sup> Margaret Mary Kelleher, O.S.U., "The Liturgical Body: Symbol and Ritual" in *Bodies of Worship: Explorations in Theory and Practice*, Bruce T. Morrill, ed. (Collegeville: MN Liturgical Press, 1999), 65–66.

understanding of Wesley's liturgical intentions, the liturgy which he produced will be examined to extract the underlying themes and purposes of the liturgy. Finally, an approach to ordered worship which will be faithful to Wesleyan roots and useful in contemporary contexts will be developed and illustrated in a way that can be transferred into multiple cultural and congregational contexts.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONTEXTUALIZING WESLEY'S LITURGICAL IMAGINATION

As discussed in the previous chapter, the focus of this study is to discover a pattern of worship that can help respond to the problems arising from the contemporary practice of worship in America, especially in reference to Wesleyan denominations. This study will evaluate the pattern of worship that is enfolded in John Wesley's *Sunday Service* as a means to understanding his attitude to and approach to worship. It will argue that a restoration of the pattern of worship in the *Sunday Service* would ensure fidelity to historic patterns of Christian worship, respond to the concerns that have risen in American Wesleyan Evangelicalism as outlined in the previous chapter, would undergird worship with a form that would allow it to function properly as Wesley understood, and would allow for creative freedom in shaping worship to fit the culture of the specific worshipping community. Such an assertion solicits a key question: "Why should any attention be paid at all to Wesley's advices on worship?" Responding to that question is the subject of this chapter.

While it has been readily acknowledged that John Wesley shaped a movement that gave particular theological and social expression to Christianity, he has rarely been read as a liturgist. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, his advice on worship order was quickly laid aside in America, and, in fact, has little impact on his theological offspring in any part of the world today. The numerous attempts, even within Methodism, to reassert his *Sunday Service* as a pattern for worship have fallen on ears that have been as deaf as those of the eighteenth century. Neither has Wesley's contribution to liturgy been explored by those who identify with the liturgical renewal

movement. It is true that the *Sunday Service* itself has been republished from time to time and that the edits that he made to the *Book of Common Prayer* have been enumerated. However, he has never been studied as a liturgist.<sup>1</sup>

In light of the lack of references to Wesley as a liturgical authority, it might be tempting for the reader to dismiss this study as misdirected. However, what will be argued in this chapter is that Wesleyans have been too quickly dismissive of Wesley on this point. Rather, a careful study of Wesley's academic and liturgical background and careful attention to his advices and counsel on worship will reveal that he is qualified to speak with authority on the matter of worship. His liturgical insights were carefully weighed and deliberately applied in the *Sunday Service*. Through the *Sunday Service*, it was Wesley's intent to direct the worship of his movement into a specific pattern that reflected scripture and historic Christianity.

This chapter invites the reader to weigh the evidence regarding Wesley's liturgical expertise. Careful consideration of his liturgical context and personal history in relationship to the liturgy will reveal that Wesley was both a scholar of the highest rank and a qualified liturgist. He made a lifelong quest to study the practice of Christian worship from the Scriptures, the early Fathers, East and West, and his own Anglican traditions. Throughout his life, he thought about and experimented with various orders of worship, having often been invited to weigh in on the topic by his own Methodists. The *Sunday Service* that he produced, first for America, then for Ireland, Scotland, and Britain were deliberate and thoughtful efforts to design worship for Methodists that would constitute the movement after his death as a true *church within the Church*.

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of these studies refer to footnote 5 of chapter one.

Wesley understood worship to be the *key formative element* in the life of a Christian. It is in worship that one encounters the grace of God through the preaching of the Word, reading of scriptures, proclamation through song, and the administration of the sacraments. That grace draws people to faith and a life of holiness. Worship is understood to be a primary and ordinary *Means of Grace*.<sup>2</sup> Christian life is informed and nurtured through worship. Worship is the place where faith is received, developed, expressed, and transferred. The fact that a full worship service was often laid aside by Methodists in England in preference for the preaching service of the society meeting was a source of great displeasure and consternation for Wesley throughout his lifetime.<sup>3</sup> His preference for a particular approach to worship was not merely a reflection of his desire to remain faithful to his Mother Church, but a weighed and studied conclusion regarding what constituted proper worship.

The first task in this chapter will be to explore the elements that inform Wesley's doxological context. A brief survey of the way in which the liturgy was developed in the Church of England and the process by which it came to be used by Wesley is needed in order to gain a full picture of the way in which the liturgy impacted Wesley. His Oxford education would have

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<sup>2</sup> "Means of Grace" is understood as the vehicle through which God's grace reaches out to people to bring them to faith and holy living. Wesley's definition is as follows, "By 'means of grace' I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace." John Wesley, "The Means of Grace," in *Sermons I, 1-33* ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 1 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 381.

<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Worship* (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 521, "Many of his followers and his lay preachers, however, saw no reason to supplement what they did as Methodists with worship at the Established Church, and thus the preaching service format became for many their only act of public worship. This was particularly true in the American colonies, where services of a more informal nature quickly developed." The preaching service that became normative for Methodists was the kind of service that they encountered in the field and preaching house services where they first encountered the gospel. These services were simple in design and included congregational singing, prayer, testimony (from time to time) and an exposition of the scriptures (sermon). The contrast between the ordinary Methodist service and Wesley's understanding of worship will be discussed below in general and more fully in the next chapter. In sum, however, it can be noted here that the preaching service lacked Eucharist, historic prayers, confession of sin, creedal elements, and broad exposure to scripture.

made him very familiar with the history and theology of the liturgy of the Church of England and competing attempts to redesign the liturgy in England. Thus, exploring this background will help the reader to grasp his core understanding of the nature and function of worship. That developing understanding will unfold through an investigation of Wesley's personal history from the standpoint of his developing doxology. His life history will demonstrate that he was a careful and deliberate liturgist who was qualified to address the liturgical concerns of his age. Wesley understood worship to function both to bring a person to faith and to transfer doctrine from generation to generation. His worship resources demonstrated a deliberate effort to shape the liturgy theologically through hymnody, prayers, confessions, and scripture selections.

Secondly, it will be important to assess the reasons that his advices were not heeded in America. An evaluation of American Methodism will reveal that the tide of Americanism was too strong for Wesley's liturgy. His *Sunday Service* had little, if any, impact on the development of worship forms for America. They were shaped more by the design of Wesley's preaching service than by fidelity to the Church of England or the forms of worship in the Prayer Book. A number of factors that contributed to this neglect will be discussed.

The third part of this chapter will explore the essential characteristics that must be addressed in formulating a Wesleyan approach to worship. Wesley drew his opinions concerning proper worship from his own study of the liturgical history and practice of Christianity. His thinking was informed by his own historical and theological study of worship. The final product of his reflections on worship was expressed in his own *Sunday Service*, produced initially for the Methodists of North America, and later for the Methodists throughout the British Isles. The final section of this chapter will provide a summary of his sources and insights in preparation for a closer discussion of the *Service* itself in chapter three. It is not the intent of this study to suggest that Wesley's *Sunday Service* should be revived as the correct form of worship. Rather, it is the



intent to allow the *Sunday Service* to become a point of reference for developing worship that captures his doxological imagination for contemporary cultural settings.

### **John Wesley in Doxological Context**

Wesley lived during a century of both confluence and clash between the Church, the Crown, the classroom, and the culture. His life and ministry sought to navigate among these perilous forces to maintain a Christianity that was scriptural, personal, authentic, historic, and faithful to God, to the Crown, and to the alienated citizens throughout the United Kingdom. He ministered both within and in opposition to the forces that defined English life and society in the eighteenth century. Those forces are intertwined with the *Book of Common Prayer*, which expresses both the religious and political controversies that shaped Wesley's England. It also shaped the political and spiritual formation of John Wesley. Thus, one cannot understand the liturgical imagination of John Wesley without understanding something of the development of the English Prayer Book.

### **The Liturgical Vision of The *Book of Common Prayer***

Wesley and his liturgical consciousness must be understood within the historical and theological struggles that produced English society and her *Prayer Book*. Richard Heitzenrater reminds those who would study Wesley that he cannot be studied in the abstract. He is a man of his times and culture.<sup>4</sup> The conflict and reform of the Church unleashed by Henry VIII through Thomas Cranmer never did produce what Cranmer had envisioned: a unified Church that was both fully Protestant and fully Catholic while avoiding the extremes and pretenses of either.

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<sup>4</sup> Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 2, "The ideas and forces that gave shape and direction to early Methodism are by and large manifest in the various upheavals of Reformation England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." Heitzenrater is a renowned Wesley scholar who will be referenced often in this work. He is currently the William Kellon Quick Professor of Church History and Wesley Studies at Duke Divinity School and author of numerous works on John Wesley. Currently, he

Nevertheless, it was Cranmer's vision to establish the Anglo-Catholic Church with a proper liturgy that would be reflective of the best in liturgical thinking going back to the ancients and welcoming to the theology of the Continental Protestants.

In 1534, Henry imposed the Act of Supremacy declaring the Church in England to be independent from the authority of the Pope and placed it squarely under the authority of the English Crown. This declaration necessitated the creation of a Prayer Book for the English people. It was now the responsibility of the Archbishop of the Church in England to become the Shepherd of the Church.

To arrive at such a rite, Cranmer mined the liturgies of the primitive church and the doctrines of the Reformers. His intent was to create a new unity of faith and practice that could unify, not only the English Church, but also, the Church as a whole.<sup>5</sup> Certainly his own mind and perspective were clearly leading the project, but Cranmer was always thinking in dialog with others, both living and from the past, both present with him and on the Continent.

It became the duty of Henry's son, Edward VI to finalize the English rite. In the Act of Uniformity of 1549, Cranmer along with other most learned Bishops and scholars were authorized to complete this grand project.

[A]nd thereupon having as well eyes and respect to the most sincere and pure Christian Religion taught by the scripture, as to the usages of the Primitive Church, should draw and make one convenient order, rite and fashion of common and open prayer and Administration of the Sacraments to be had and used in his Majesty's realm of England and in Wales....<sup>6</sup>

The result of their collaboration was the *Book of Common Prayer* (1549 and 1552). Here,

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is the editor of the Bicentennial Edition of the Wesley Journal.

<sup>5</sup> Francis E. Hutchinson, *Cranmer and the English Reformation* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1951), 94: The English litany "is undoubtedly Cranmer's own composition; he drew upon the Sarum Processional, the Roman Breviary, a Latin litany of Luther's, and a collect from the Latin version of the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, together with some additions of his own."

Cranmer sought to provide a simplified and accessible pattern of worship that proclaimed Reformation principles under scriptural authority.<sup>7</sup> He was also concerned with providing a rite that was uncluttered with the lives of the saints and legends, but was based solely on scripture.

The 1552 edition prayer book is the most expressive of the mind and imagination of Cranmer himself. His vision was for a unified liturgy of the Reformation that would take the best of Calvin, Luther, Zwingli, Orthodoxy, and Catholicism and create a new synthesis that would serve all Christians.<sup>8</sup> He maintained this passion for unity to the end of his life as represented in a letter written to Calvin in 1552 in which he advocated a Protestant response to the Council of Trent to establish doctrinal (if not, liturgical) unity among all Reformers of the Church.<sup>9</sup>

Cranmer's method in developing doctrine and liturgical practice was to appeal to scripture, the fathers (by which he meant the Ante-Nicene fathers), and reason in that order.<sup>10</sup> This rule represents Cranmer's ecumenical approach as well. He was interested in renewing the true faith of the primitive Church as revealed in scripture. To express that faith, he read the early Greek and Latin fathers closely and evaluated their teaching and practice against the scriptures . Finally, he consulted "learned and pious men" of his day and their reflections upon doctrine and practice . This pattern became engrained in the English approach to religion. It is duplicated in Wesley with the addition of an appeal to *experience* which he meant to be understood in a scientific way (read, *experiment*), not in an emotional way.

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<sup>6</sup> *The First Prayer Book of King Edward VI* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1886), iv.

<sup>7</sup> Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England from Cranmer to Hooker 1534–1603* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 175, "The first reason given in the preface to the First Prayer Book—and it is a substantial one—for the issuance of the Book of Common Prayer was that a Scriptural and primitive form of worship should be available in the vernacular English."

<sup>8</sup> Davies, 26, notes that this ecumenical vision of the Church is first expressed in the *Bishop's Book* of 1537 where Cranmer "affirms that all these differently governed churches are 'one holy Catholic church.'"

<sup>9</sup> *Writings of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Cranmer* (London: The Religious Tract Society, n.d.), 268–69.

<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Thomas Cranmer, Theologian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 22.

Having determined the true Catholic faith, Cranmer sought to make this faith available to the common people so that they could fully participate in it personally and be shaped by it ethically. He saw in this method hope for true national reform that would end the abuses of the Roman Church, the oppression of the poor and the hypocrisy of the priesthood . Anything that interfered with this pure and simple expression of faith was eliminated—the veneration of the saints, the decorations of the churches, and the control of the papacy. Thus, the *Book of Common Prayer* was both a guide to corporate liturgical practice as well as a book to be read daily at home with one’s family. It was designed for daily use.<sup>11</sup>

Cranmer’s death was occasioned by the ascendancy of Henry’s eldest daughter, Mary, to the throne, following the early death of Edward VI. Mary was determined to abolish the English Protestant Church and restore the nation to Catholicism. Her marriage to Spanish Prince Philip only strengthened her resolve. Her zeal in this quest earned her the moniker, “Bloody Mary,” having ordered three hundred people to be burned at the stake during her short reign (1553–1558). During her reign, persecuted Protestants left England for the Continent in droves, which only brought them more under the influence of the Continental Reformers, particularly the Calvinists.

Her successor was her half-sister, Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth reigned from 1558–1603 and was determined to bring peace and unity to her realm beginning with the Church. Elizabeth signed the “Act of Supremacy” in 1559 making her the Supreme *Governor* of

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<sup>11</sup> Judith Maltby, *Prayerbook and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 24–30, discusses the publication record of the Book of Common Prayer from 1549–1642. Records indicate that over half a million books were printed during these years of quite small print, suggesting that these books were designed for home use. She further reveals that a number of family Bibles have been found from this period to have the Prayer Book bound with the scriptures. It was a common practice of the day, she explains, to purchase books unbound and to bind together various texts for economy of binding and of use. She cites the Cheshire petitioners to parliament in 1641 maintaining, 27, “that scarce any Family or Person that can read, but are furnished with the Book of Common Prayer....”

the Church (a minor capitulation to the Puritans) and establishing standards for liturgy and doctrine. She required churches to use the newly revised *Book of Common Prayer*, and required the clergy to ascribe to the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* and the “acceptable teachings” of the *Book of Homilies* which were to be read regularly from pulpits in the realm.<sup>12</sup>

With the ascendancy of Elizabeth, Marian exiles returned from the Continent with the Geneva Bible and Calvinism firmly in hand. The English Calvinists, known as *Puritans* embarked on a campaign to reform the Church to scriptural standards. Seeing no Biblical support for vestments, archbishops, or other ecclesiastical expressions of authority, they sought to restore the Church to its most primitive form.<sup>13</sup> In an effort to hold the Church and all these factions together, the Elizabethan Settlement was signed in 1559 to define the nature of the relationship between the Crown and the Church.<sup>14</sup>

The *via media* is never an easy road. The English Church self-consciously sought to find the middle ground between Catholicism and Protestantism throughout its history. To the extent that it was successful, it succeeded in making many unhappy. Bryan Spinks assessed, “Although for Catholics the Church of England was a Protestant church, for some English Protestants it was still too close to the Roman Church for comfort.”<sup>15</sup>

The *Settlement* created tension on both sides and resulted in Elizabeth’s excommunication by the Pope in 1570. The task of creating ecclesiastical unity fell, then, to theologian, Richard Hooker. Hooker undertook the task of providing an exposition of church polity and doctrine

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<sup>12</sup> Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* “The task of the religious settlement under Elizabeth was to establish a balanced approach that would protect the national church, formed (if not fully ‘reformed’) under Henry, from the traditional ‘catholic’ claims of Rome on the one side and from the more radical ‘reform’ tendencies of the Puritans on the other, a stance traditionally expressed at the *via media* (‘middle way’) between Rome and Geneva.”

<sup>15</sup> Bryan D. Spinks, “Anglicans and Dissenters,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Worship*, Geoffrey

which became the definitive exposition of the Elizabethan Settlement . His work became the definitive canon of Church Law known as, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* . Often, Wesley himself would refer to Hooker to justify his own faith and practice .

It was Hooker who renewed and defined Cranmer’s threefold appeal to authority: *Scripture*: seen as a guide to truth, but not in a Puritan way;<sup>16</sup> *Tradition*: especially the earliest centuries of the Church as a window on ancient practice; and, *Reason*: which provided the means by which scripture and tradition could be scrutinized by thoughtful people.<sup>17</sup> Yet, regardless of Elizabeth’s intentions and Hooker’s careful explications, the constant tensions between the Established Church and the competing expressions of Protestantism would continue to plague both church and society in England creating the framework for civil disunion for the next two centuries.

Elizabeth’s death in 1603 occasioned the succession of her cousin James IV (Stuart) of Scotland to the English throne as James I . The Protestants were in hopes that James would align the Church more closely with Presbyterian forms . James, however, was more intent on aligning the Scottish rite (Presbyterian) with the English and produced a modified *Book of Common Prayer* in 1604.<sup>18</sup> James steered the Church in a “high church” direction . The “conformity” that James demanded, however, provided room for the Puritans to incorporate their own aspects into

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Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, eds. (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 500.

<sup>16</sup> Puritans read scripture as an absolute directive for church doctrine *and* practice. The Bible was to be followed in all things relating to religious practice. For instance, clerical offices could only be those defined in the New Testament and worship practice must conform exactly to the practice of New Testament Christians. Anglicans read Scripture as the authority in all matters of Faith. Issues of polity and ritual practice were also informed by reference to the practice of the Early Church (tradition). Both the interpretation of Scripture and Canon Law were open to inspection using the faculties of reason within the context of the ecclesiastical community.

<sup>17</sup> Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Bryan D. Spinks, *Sacraments, Ceremonies and the Stuart Divines* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2002), xiii, “James attempted to bring the two churches (Presbyterian and Anglican) into some sort of uniformity by a one-sided ecclesiastical osmosis.” Spinks understands James I to be an astute monarch who was politically and spiritually motivated to try to orchestrate a reunification of Christianity in England.

worship including longer sermons and a call for personal piety.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, numerous Puritans could find no comfort in James' conformity and emigrated to Holland and to America. Many who were opposed to his formalism emigrated while those who supported his reforms became known as *Jacobites* (supporters of James II)<sup>20</sup> or *Laudians* (so named after the archbishop William Laud).

James' death in 1625 brought his son Charles I to the throne. Charles believed that Puritanism represented disorder and a threat to the security of the throne.<sup>21</sup> He was intolerant of any who would seek anything other than liturgical uniformity. His policies increased political tensions. Liturgical disunity was assumed to indicate hostility to the authority of the throne.<sup>22</sup> Charles' archbishop, William Laud, wanted to establish the Church on firm scriptural and apostolic ground, looking to the patristic Fathers as his authority for the interpretation of scripture, especially in liturgical matters. Thus, the authority of the Latin Fathers was suppressed by the greater authority of the Greek Fathers.<sup>23</sup>

Tensions continued to grow during the century between the Stuarts, who were decidedly moving the country in a formal direction, and the populace, which was seeking more religious freedom, less monarchical control, and less formalism in worship. These tensions polarized Great Britain into two camps. On the one side were the supporters of the Established Church

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<sup>19</sup> Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 10, "The religious peace of Jacobean England rested upon the promotion of popular Anglican conformity, as Puritans were won over to the established Church by James I's conscious policy not to force conformity or conscientious issues."

<sup>20</sup> While *Jacobitism* also refers to loyalty to the Stuart dynasty, it is often a shorthand way of distinguishing those who supported high church traditions against those who were more sympathetic to Puritan or low church traditions. See, Wainwright and Westerfield Tucker, *Oxford Dictionary of Christian Worship*, 502. For a more accurate discussion, see, Bryan D. Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reform* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 106 where he notes that not all Jacobites were also Nonjurors or High Churchmen.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, "There is little wonder therefore that he helped to create much of the opposition which faced him in 1640 and singularly failed to distinguish between Puritanism and disloyalty to the Crown, ...."

(Anglican) who sought liturgical conformity, formal worship established on scripture as interpreted through the lens of the Greek Fathers, Arminian freedom of the will, and loyalty to the Crown . On the other side were Puritans who sought freedom to pursue simple scriptural worship and Calvinist determinism. The Puritans were not disloyal to the Crown, but were being marginalized by Royal ecclesiastical policy. These tensions became expressed in the multiple alternate liturgies that appeared during the seventeenth century. Most noteworthy was the liturgy drawn up by the Presbyterians in Scotland with the assistance of Laud which was soundly rejected by the populous, putting in motion the events that lead to the English Civil war in 1642.

Events which unfolded during the second half of the seventeenth century included a civil war, a civilian government, a return to the monarchy, and the ascension of the Protestants, William and Mary, to the throne in 1689. This turmoil, which was fundamentally about the power of the Crown, implicated the Church as well. In an effort to reel in the separatist groups the crown made it illegal throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to hold any public meeting outside of the church or prescribed church hours.<sup>24</sup> The constant battles over Church polity and doctrine simply wore the people out. As the century progressed, the state of the Church and the spiritual condition of the masses continued to degrade.

Throughout this period, worship was continually in flux. There was an attempt to resolve liturgical plurality by royal warrant in 1661, known as the Savoy Conference. Spinks outlines the multiple efforts that were undertaken during the next twenty years to harmonize the liturgies of England into a national Prayer Book that could be embraced by English Christians representing all parties. The names of note involved in this effort toward reform include Presbyterians Edward

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>24</sup> Maximin Piette, *John Wesley and the Evolution of Protestantism* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937), 136.



Reynolds, Richard Baxter, Anthony Tuckney, and John Lightfoot and Episcopals Gilbert Sheldon, Robert Sanderson, John Cosin, and John Pearson.<sup>25</sup>

The new Book of Common Prayer was published in 1662 as the official revision to be used throughout the realm.<sup>26</sup> This book reflected the work of Wren and Cosin to provide tests and rubrics that were considerate of all the parties involved. The preface of the book that was signed by Convocation in 1661 and given royal assent in 1662 provides the goal of the new Prayer Book.

Our general aim therefore in this undertaking was, not to gratify this or that party in any their unreasonable demands; but to do that which to our best understanding we conceived might most tend to the preservation of Peace and Unity in the Church; the procuring of Reverence and exciting of Piety, and Devotion in the Publick Worship of God; and cutting off occasion from them that seek occasion of eavil or quarrel against the Liturgy of the Church.[sic]<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the clear intent of the new prayer book was to put an end to the wars over worship by bringing together a Prayer Book that was a true *via media*. “Moderation was regarded by the authors as the outstanding virtue of the new liturgy.”<sup>28</sup>

However, even with this attempt at liturgical uniformity, the new *Book of Common Prayer* encountered pockets of resistance, especially in Scotland, despite the fact that nonconforming clerics were removed from their pulpits and their livings.<sup>29</sup> Nonconformity flourished during this period, despite official efforts to purge the nation of separatism. These movements resulted in

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<sup>25</sup> See, Bryan D. Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason*, 8–15 where he discusses the particularly influential editions of Bishop Matthew Wren and John Cosin, Bishop of Durham.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 11. Here Spinks outlines the specific alterations that were included in the Book. Most significantly is the rejection of a doctrine of corporal presence in the Eucharist in preference for “a real but spiritual presence.”

<sup>27</sup> Preface to *The Book of Common Prayer* (1661 repr., Cambridge: John Hayes, 1675), np, quoted in Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason*, 11. Below, Spinks offers a list of the small change presented in the Book.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

diminishing the stature and authority of the Church of England, creating a groundswell of hostility between the clergy of the National church and the common parish folks that it sought to serve.<sup>30</sup>

The next liturgical crisis would be spurred by the ascension of the Roman Catholic, James II to the throne on February 6, 1685. His efforts to revive the place of Roman Catholicism in England created a common enemy for both national churches resulting in his disposition by William of Orange in November of 1688. These twin crises facilitated a final attempt at negotiating a comprehensive worship.<sup>31</sup> The effort appeared hopeful for a short time, “However, with the flight of James and the arrival of William and Mary, the need for comprehension on both sides quickly evaporated; ... the 1662 rite remained the liturgy of the Church of England, without further comprehension for Dissenters.”<sup>32</sup>

William and Mary sought to bring the religious factions to a truce as Parliament passed the *Act of Toleration* on May 24, 1689. The Act “tolerated” those who would not subscribe to the Church of England and the Thirty-Nine Articles (*nonconformists*) under the following conditions: (1) their meeting houses must be registered with the government; (2) their preachers must be licensed; (3) meetings for worship must be held in registered houses, not in private homes; and, (4) Roman Catholic and Unitarian groups were not included (they were illegal).<sup>33</sup> While the Act created an environment of toleration for nonconformist groups it confirmed the Church of England as the reigning Church in England. Through the Act of Toleration, the Crown sought to control both camps of opposition to royal authority: the Jacobites (Laudites) who

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<sup>30</sup> See, Donald A. Spaeth, *The Church in an Age of Danger* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000), 170–82, for a helpful discussion of English nonconformity.

<sup>31</sup> See, Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason*, 47–78.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>33</sup> Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, 17.

refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the reign of William and Mary, and the Nonconformists (Puritans, Presbyterians, Baptists, et. al.) who refused to accept the ecclesiastical authority of the Church of England.

All clergy were required to sign an oath of allegiance to the Crown, recognizing William and Mary as legitimate rulers of England. Those who refused to sign this oath are known as nonjurors . Even though most nonjurors were loyal Anglicans, refusal to sign meant they would lose their livings and their positions in the Church. The nonjurors and the nonconformists, became an underclass within English society. “Many privileges of English citizenship thereby became dependent on conformity to the official doctrines of the Church—subscription to the *Thirty-nine Articles* was required of all who matriculated at the universities, of all who held public office, of all who held commissions in the armed forces, and of all who wished to vote in elections.”<sup>34</sup>

The fundamental problem of the realm by the end of the seventeenth century, however, was one that could not be addressed politically.<sup>35</sup> What was apparent by the end of the seventeenth century was the fact that the general tenor of society, from the Crown, to the Church, to the classroom, and the culture was one of spiritual lethargy and moral laxity.<sup>36</sup> Those who sought to address this moral turpitude often turned to the models and programs of the Pietists to help them

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Piette, *John Wesley*, 180, “[T]here is abundant evidence that neither the State Church nor the Dissident groups, officially recognized by the Act of Toleration in 1689, were in a position to apply the remedy of which the moral laxity of the country stood so much in need.” See also, 182.

<sup>36</sup> Spaeth, *The Church in an Age of Danger*, 8–14, reveals that historians of this period are divided into two camps, optimism and pessimism. The pessimists have been the dominant group until recently. This group, represented in this discussion, has focused attention on the moral and spiritual decay of this century. The optimists have demonstrated that the Anglican clergy of this period faithfully performed their duties and that the laity were not as irreligious as often claimed. Spaeth observes, 12, “The gulf between Church and the people grew larger in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.”

to devise a plan to restore the authority of the Bible for the Christian life and to live a life of purity (holiness), such that would be pleasing to God.

The Puritans, having given up on the established Church, sought to establish their movement on the basis of Scripture alone. The Bible became a manual for church life and structure. Their intent was to duplicate Biblical Christianity as nearly as possible. Scripture was read as the revelation of the total will of God. The Puritans maintained that Scripture must be followed in all areas of faith and practice. The Biblical text superseded all *man-made* traditions. The only means to restore true Christianity was to return to the source and to follow it exactly.

Anglicans, following Cranmer and Hooker, sought to establish their practice on the basis of Scripture, tradition, and reason. Scripture was seen as the primary source for understanding the nature and practice of the Church, but it must be read through some set of interpretive lenses. The goal was to understand what the Church was intended to be.<sup>37</sup> Yet, regardless of the purity of intent and the antiquity of the sources, Anglicism was under the authority of the Crown. Thus, the ideal Anglo-Catholic Church was never realized. The Anglican Church often struggled within its dual mission to be servant of the Faith and servant of the Crown.

By the end of the seventeenth century, another movement toward establishing a true spiritual community was expressed in the formation of religious societies. Started by Anthony Horneck in 1670, the purpose of the societies was to change the moral character of English society one person at a time. These societies were not intended to attract vast numbers of people through evangelistic campaigns. Rather, they were gatherings of like-minded persons of spiritual

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<sup>37</sup> H.R. McAdoo, *The Spirit of Anglicanism: A Survey of Anglican Theological Method in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1965), 317, "They did not begin with the present situation and work back to the Fathers, but took as their starting point the primacy of Scripture. This, they maintained, was best understood and interpreted in the first centuries and therefore the writers of that period nearest to the Scripture revealed the teaching and practice of the Church at the beginning, and this should be the pattern of subsequent ages." See also, Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reform*, 108, "Here the appeal was to the Classical period of the Church of the first

earnestness who sought to discover and to promote the path to Christian maturity.<sup>38</sup> The religious society was the model that John Wesley would seek to follow with his Methodists.

While both the Puritans and the Churchmen were addressing the problem of moral laxity from different angles, their solutions looked fairly similar.<sup>39</sup> Both groups (the Pietists and the Societies) saw personal holiness as the solution to the moral decay of English society at large. Naturally, those who were committed to such a rigorous Christian lifestyle were often accused of trying to earn their salvation by works, in contrast to the Protestant doctrine of *Justification by Faith*. Their accusers applied labels such as *Catholic*, *Pelagian*, *Pietist*, *Nomian* (legalist), or *Arminian* to these groups, bands, and societies of Christians. By the end of the century, the terms *Arminian* and *New Methodists* seemed to have the most traction.<sup>40</sup>

While there were vast differences separating these groups, their intent was similar: to restore the moral strength of English culture. These efforts took different paths; but, they were united by a unity of purpose. Those who were concerned about the spiritual condition of their own life or of society at large were seeking a solution through holy living and moral discipline.<sup>41</sup>

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four or five centuries and to its worship.”

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 11, “The stated purpose of the societies was to promote ‘Real Holiness of Heart and Life.’ To this end, the meetings were designed primarily to provide mutual encouragement in the development of devotional piety based on the study of the Bible and other works of devotion, and to provide assistance in the promotion of a life of personal holiness and morality.” See also Richard M. Cameron, *The Rise of Methodism: A Source Book* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), especially 145–152 where he quotes some seventeenth century society members regarding the purpose and formation of these societies.

<sup>39</sup> H. R. McAdoo, *The Spirit of Anglicanism: A Survey of Anglican Theological Method in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1965), 327, “In fact, the devotional works of the period display a remarkable unanimity of method in combining moral theology, prayer, meditation and sacraments, in such a way that devotional practice and practical divinity are seen to be two aspects of the same thing.”

<sup>40</sup> Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 18, “In spite of certain theological differences, therefore, the possibility existed of an alliance among many of the Puritans, Nonconformists, and Arminians on the matter of improving the spiritual temper and moral fiber of society. The reaction to the spiritual lethargy and moral laxity of the Restoration period was to be a revival of emphasis on piety and holy living among small groups of Christians dotting the English countryside.”

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 19.

What this brief survey of two centuries of English ecclesiastical and political history has sought to illustrate is the fact that reformation of Christianity in England constantly suffered from multiple stresses. Tied together were issues of loyalty. The simple Reformation tension between loyalty to the Scriptures vs. loyalty to the Church was not so simply resolved in England. The Established Church in England sought to be both Catholic and Protestant while being a tool of the Crown to express and to enforce loyalty to the realm. In these centuries, those who sought to reform the liturgy for spiritual and theological reasons constantly had to navigate around the political agenda of the Sovereign. On the other side of the controversy were those who sought to embrace the spirit of Reform. These groups worked to establish communities of faith that were independent of the Crown and expressive of one or another form of the Reformations that were taking place on the Continent. Those who embraced these independent movements were also embracing an emerging sense of the dignity of the common-man built upon the theology that fueled the Reformation.

These Reformation groups were primarily concerned with personal piety, Biblical authority, and individual dignity, seeking to incorporate these ideals into their liturgies. The Crown was more interested in maintaining national unity and royal authority, agreeing only to the liturgical concessions that were demanded in order to maintain hierarchical control.<sup>42</sup>

By the time John Wesley entered the world in 1703, forces of culture, Church, and Crown were prepared for a dramatic clash. He would be shaped spiritually and academically by the convergence of these forces. His efforts to reform Christianity caused him to try to navigate these treacherous waters that had been stirred into a foment in the previous century and had only begun

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<sup>42</sup> See, Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 295–305.

to find calm in the years preceding his birth. He and others<sup>43</sup> would seek the establishment of “real religion” without inciting the political overtones of the seventeenth century.

### **Wesley’s England: Spiritual Chaos**

The England into which John Wesley was born in 1703 was an England that was experiencing the trials of the convergence and clash of social, political, academic, and religious turmoil. The beginning of the eighteenth century saw the condition of the Church and the condition of English society to be at a very low ebb. Selleck, for example, says that the church was in a deep state of disrepair physically which represented its spiritual condition. Roofs were falling in, windows were broken and floors were returning to dirt.<sup>44</sup>

A century and a half after Henry seceded from the Roman Catholic communion, the tensions between faith, culture, and politics were no closer to resolution. For fifteen decades, blood had been shed, prisons had been filled, wars had been fought, and the multitudes drifted, finding no peace, nationally or spiritually. The government focused on keeping an outward peace under one official Church while other expressions of Christianity were loosely tolerated. Religion became either tepid or inward in order to avoid more controversy. The only real sin was *enthusiasm*—religious extremism.<sup>45</sup>

It was a time when religious leadership tolerated moral laxity in clergy and when people received little spiritual guidance for Christian life. This situation led to social decay and new intellectual attacks on fundamental beliefs. The national church was in need of revitalization.

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<sup>43</sup> See, Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason*, 159–92 for a broader discussion of the English Evangelical revival.

<sup>44</sup> Jerald B. Selleck, *The Book of Common Prayer in the Theology of John Wesley* (PhD diss., Drew University, 1984), 50.

<sup>45</sup> Anthony Armstrong, *The Eighteenth Century, Methodists and Society 1700–1850* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 20, “To the eighteenth century churchman, enthusiasm had two meanings: zeal was one, and the other was Johnson’s dictionary definition — ‘a vain belief of private revelations: a vain confidence of divine

Some offered dissenting theologies; others called for stronger attention to inherited teachings and practices, including ancient forms and earlier versions of the *Book of Common Prayer*.<sup>46</sup>

The Puritan influence tended to whitewash everything, removing all ornamentation from the church. Parliament was unwilling to invest resources in the maintenance of the churches. And both people and liturgy were suffering from woeful neglect. Mitchell is succinct in commenting, “[R]eligion was a very dry root out of a very dry land; it was spiritually paralyzed with a paralysis that shocked historians and preachers alike.”<sup>47</sup> Piette concurs noting the observation of outsiders, “In good society it was fashionable to affect an entire contempt for all religion. Hence Montesquieu and Voltaire single out England as the most ‘irreligious’ country.”<sup>48</sup>

This condition within the church was a direct result of the neglect by a politically oriented clergy. Whiteley reports that unqualified men were elevated to high ecclesiastical positions as political favors. Often these men were not only unqualified, but uninterested in the positions that they held, except for the substantial incomes attached.<sup>49</sup> Carter surmised, “It is scarcely possible in the present day to realise [*sic*] the fearful extent to which godliness and vice had been carried

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favour or communication.’ Both were anathema.”

<sup>46</sup> John Wesley stood in the second group, arguing for reform but without abandoning the Anglican community. His context forced him to become aware of key arguments about worship and of examples of ancient Christian practice.

<sup>47</sup> T. Critchton Mitchell, *Mr. Wesley: An Intimate Sketch of John Wesley* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1957), 13. Mitchell (1916–1996) was a prominent member of the Church of the Nazarene in Great Britain, eventually serving as lecturer at the European Nazarene Bible College in Büsingen, Switzerland (1970–76) and the Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs, CO (1976–1990). He was a lecturer in church history with a special interest in the Wesleys. See, T.A. Noble, *Called to Be Saints* (Manchester: Didsbury Press, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> Piette, *John Wesley*, 112. See also, J. H. Whiteley, *Wesley’s Anglican Contemporaries, Their Trials and Triumphs* (London: Epworth Press, 1939), 25, “As a whole it (English society) was so frankly irreligious or atheistic that even a Voltaire was slightly shocked and said: ‘there is just enough religion left in England to distinguish Tories who had a little from Whigs who had none.’ Montesquieu was equally censorious, and summed up his observations on English life with the conclusion the ‘there was no religion in England. Everyone laughs if one speaks of it... in France I pass for having too little religion; in England for having too much.’”

<sup>49</sup> Whiteley, *Anglican Contemporaries*, 21, “Pluralism was as pernicious to the Church and as rampant as was nepotism. In his *Legacy to Parsons*, Cobbett declared that 332 parsons held 1,469 parishes and that another 500 clergymen had 1,524 livings. A mid-century Archbishop of York declared that half his incumbents were non-resident; a condition that was probably general throughout the country and century.”



by the middle of the eighteenth century...”<sup>50</sup> He went on to describe the clergy as deistic, morally reprehensible, and disinterested in attending to the duties of their offices or the needs of their congregations.<sup>51</sup>

While it can be argued that there were numerous conscientious clergymen of high caliber,<sup>52</sup> in general the desertion of the church by its pastors led to the desertion of the people. The Church had become empty, not only of spiritual vitality, but of a congregation or a parson as well. By mid-century, Archbishop Secker mournfully observed that “immorality and irreligion were grown beyond ecclesiastical power.”<sup>53</sup> The primary interest of clergy and people was simply not to return to days of religious fervor which had brought so much misery to the English over the previous two centuries.<sup>54</sup>

The lack of spiritual leadership produced a harvest of social decay. The world that Wesley served was characterized by drunkenness, political corruption, starvation, and death. In an effort to retain social order, one hundred sixty crimes were punishable by death.<sup>55</sup> Piette reports, “The *Fortieth Annual Report of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners*, appearing in 1735, tells us that the total number of actions taken for debauchery and profanity in London and

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<sup>50</sup> C. Sydney Carter, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Church Book Room Press, 1948), 50.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Piette, *John Wesley*, 109, “Latitudinarianism was a temper of mind very prevalent at the time when John Wesley was born, a kind of religious indifference which reduced to an infinitesimal minimum the sum of revealed truths required for membership in the Church. Surely, it was thought, the part which doctrine and belief had played in England from Henry VIII to William III had been on too exaggerated a scale.”

<sup>55</sup> John Pudney, *John Wesley and His World* (Norwich: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 62. See also, Garth Lean, *John Wesley, Anglican* (London: Blanford Press, 1964).

Westminster reached the considerable figure of 99,380.<sup>56</sup> Those convicted were thrown into filthy, disease-infested prisons with every sort of criminal element.

Outside the prisons the conditions were not much better for the average person. Disease, poverty, homelessness, filth, and desperation produced every accompanying social ill. All of these issues were ignored by Crown and clergy alike.<sup>57</sup> Piette describes the common person in England as, “Without a ray of happiness to brighten their lives: ... their lot, one of utter misery and wretchedness.”<sup>58</sup> It is clear from the records of the day that much of the population suffered from lack of sustenance, physically, socially, and spiritually. Many of the clergy were drunkards. It was not unusual for them even to be drunk in the pulpit.<sup>59</sup> Numerous pulpits did not even have someone to fill them.

Those who were privileged enough to pursue a proper English education were also drawn away from the Church and its confessions of faith. The rise of deism, naturalism, and Unitarianism in the eighteenth century led to the rationalization of faith. Those who defended the faith of the Church did so on rational grounds.<sup>60</sup> While England became more and more intellectual, religion had to defend itself or to capitulate to the scientific method .

The result of English rationalism at its worst was to discount anything that could not be observed by the senses, described by formulas, and cataloged for future reference. Any appeal to “irrational” experience was immediately suspect or regarded as the ignorant experience of the stupid . Religious extremism was to be avoided at all cost. The Anglican *via media* became a

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<sup>56</sup> Piette, *John Wesley*, 189.

<sup>57</sup> Mitchell, *Mr. Wesley*, 11 and Piette, *John Wesley*, 113.

<sup>58</sup> Piette, *John Wesley*, 114.

<sup>59</sup> Robert L. Tucker, *The Separation of the Methodists from the Church of England* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1918), 14.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 101, “Reason wished to become the measure and test of all truth. The consequences of this mistake were not slow in becoming plainly visible and in a most disastrous form.”

standard to promote the status quo: lethargy and stagnation among many.<sup>61</sup> This stagnation was not universal, however. Both within the Established Church and within nonconformist communities, the century produced many who were deeply pious, creative, and assertive in their determination to maintain vibrant Christian faith and witness.<sup>62</sup>

Efforts to defend Christianity against the onslaught of rationalism called upon the Church to assert rational defenses for its beliefs. Sermons often became dry defenses of historic creeds.<sup>63</sup> Generally, the pulpit became less connected to the lives of the people that it was seeking to serve. The Established Church seemed more and more distant from the physical and spiritual needs of its citizens and the dissenter churches were becoming a threat to social peace.<sup>64</sup>

The failure of the Established Church to meet the spiritual and societal needs of the people in England gave rise to numerous efforts to revitalize the Church and the people. These efforts tended to move in one of two directions. There were those who saw the failure of the Established Church and chose to reject it outright, opting for nonconformity or the rejection of Christianity altogether.<sup>65</sup> The other approach to revitalization, the one that Wesley was most drawn toward,

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<sup>61</sup> Selleck, *Common Prayer*, 48, “The eighteenth century was a formal and prosaic era that valued serenity and moderation above all virtues. It suspected all who claimed a spiritual power, divine guidance, fanatical extravagance, or unauthorized departure from the rightful bounds of reason. Thus the word, enthusiasm, expressed certain types of thoughts and feelings rather than practice.”

<sup>62</sup> Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason*, 4, “[A]lthough there were certainly lamentable episodes and lamentable ministries (as in any age), the Gregorian Church was in many ways alive and healthy, and responded well to the challenges it faced in a changing society and *weltanschauung*.”

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 194. Spinks records common assessment of English worship is recorded by a German visitor who reported, “The Common-Prayer book contains some very excellent prayers; but as they are read all the year round, without much devotion and in a hasty manner, with a voice not always sufficiently loud and intelligible, it is no wonder, that the congregation should appear rather tired, and without many signs of fervent devotion.”

<sup>64</sup> Paul S. Sanders, *An Appraisal of John Wesley's Sacramentalism in the Evolution of Early Methodism* (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1954), 14, “Religion was more and more reduced within the bounds of reason and the supernatural revealed religion that Christianity historically would appear to be was undermined by the natural theology of the rising of Deism. The theological tone of the early eighteenth-century can be summarized in the bitterly ironical words of John Howe, ‘There shall be a God, provided he be not meddlesome.’”

<sup>65</sup> Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason*, 159–62 describes the evangelical revival as crossing both national and ecclesiastical boundaries.

was one that sought to restore the Church of England to her best and truest self. Those in this camp were convinced that the Church of England was properly constituted, but poorly executed. They were quick to criticize the moral and political corruption of the Church, but believed that the Church could be corrected in reference to her own doctrines and usages.

Those in this group believed they were being authentically Anglican in their approach. They sought to defend and to correct the “mother Church” through reference to the history of Christian practice, particularly its earliest centuries and the construction of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Mark Noll identified four key common aspects of evangelicalism:

- Conversion, or “the belief that lives need to be changed.”
- The Bible, or the “belief that all spiritual truth is to be found in its pages.”
- Activism, or the dedication of all believers, including laypeople, to lives of service to God, especially as manifested in evangelism (spreading the good news) and mission (taking the gospel to other societies).
- Crucicentrism, or the conviction the Christ’s death was the crucial matter in providing atonement for sin (i.e., providing reconciliation between a holy God and sinful humans).<sup>66</sup>

Wesley believed he could embrace the tenets of the evangelical revival without rejecting his identity as an Anglican. For many reasons, not all spiritual, it would have not been easy for Wesley to conceive of himself as anything other than a loyal Anglican.

Bound up in the use of the *Book of Common Prayer* were issues of patriotism and fidelity to the Crown. Those who rejected the Prayer Book, were regarded as persons who had rejected their Englishness. Kenneth Wilson described the situation saying, “Wesley was born at a time when Anglican piety has become inextricably bound up with the Prayer Book in a way it had not been before. The Liturgy was both the badge and test of loyalty, and any failure to use it might

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<sup>66</sup> Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers

cast doubts upon a person's patriotism."<sup>67</sup> It could be argued, then, that fealty to the *Book of Common Prayer* was less a matter of concern for the spiritual health of the realm as it was as issue of maintaining political loyalty.

However, to make the argument that interest in the *Book of Common Prayer* was merely a political issue would be to undervalue the dynamic of the eighteenth century. Clearly, there were groups of Christians, both within and outside the established church, who were distressed over the social and spiritual health of the nation. Those who sought to address the situation from within the Church often sought to reformatify the *Book of Common Prayer* through reformatification of an earlier form or by attaching rites, rituals, and prayers from even more ancient liturgies.<sup>68</sup> Other groups sought to reimagine worship in response to Enlightenment principles. Spinks summarizes the liturgical dynamic of Georgian England saying, "The Nonjurers authored exotic liturgies for small congregations and Newtonian and Lockean theologians created blueprints for liturgies which expressed cutting edge theology."<sup>69</sup>

Both Anglican and dissenting groups were seeking to establish the authority of their constitution and worship by reference to the most ancient Christian practices. It was maintained that those Christians who lived closest to the time of Christ and the disciples had the least compromised form of worship. Wainwright summarizes the attitude of this time by simply noting that their motto could have been *ex orientibus lux*.<sup>70</sup>

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Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2003), 19 as quoted in Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason*, 160.

<sup>67</sup> Kenneth A. Wilson, "The Devotional Relationship and Interaction between the Spirituality of John Wesley, the Methodist Societies and the Book of Common Prayer" (PhD diss., Queen's University, Belfast, 1984), 270.

<sup>68</sup> Spinks, *Liturgy in an Age of Reason*, 136–39 discusses the liturgical revisions of William Whiston who built his case for revision on the Arian *Apostolic Constitutions*, as a restoration to uncorrupted primitive Christian beliefs and practices.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>70</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 332. Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reform*, 123, notes that, Thomas Deacon who had

While it would be a misreading of English history to suggest that the ecclesiastical conflicts and the spiritual decay of England were the only significant phenomena of the eighteenth century in England, or even the most significant aspect of the eighteenth century, what can be established is the fact that religious life of eighteenth century England was bound up inextricably with the social, political, intellectual, and ecclesial controversies that engulfed the nation during this century of extraordinary transformation in thought, in action, in political reach, and in social structure. As England moved through the industrial, intellectual, political, and social revolutions for a century, she would arrive at an entirely new sense of herself and her place in the world.

It was by no accident, and by some sense of necessity, that Methodism arose in the midst of such forces to have such a significant force in the maintaining of civil society in England and in forming a Christian society in America. Methodism arose out of the currents of multiplied forces crashing on the spiritual shores of the nation.<sup>71</sup> It is as though John Wesley was born for, or, perhaps, formed by, such as time as this.

### **John Wesley's Liturgical Biography**

The national spiritual chaos of his time led Wesley to imagine solutions to moral laxity and inadequate religious sustenance that could be accomplished within the confines of the Anglican Church and its Prayer Book. His personal background and spiritual journey gave him the unique ability to reflect on all the practices of Christianity, ancient and modern, and to imagine a way to shape all that he received in a way that would address the spiritual emptiness in England. John

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significant influence on John Wesley noted in his *Compleat Collection of Devotions*, 'that the best liturgical method for the Church to follow was that of the ancient, universal church to the end of the fourth century...'

<sup>71</sup> Robert F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Epworth Press, 1945), 183, "The failure of the Established Church to provide for the spiritual needs of the new populations (which were flooding the cities) gave Methodism an opportunity. The personnel of the Establishment, with few exceptions, seemed placid, perhaps, indifferent, in regard to the changes industrialism (to name one instance) was bringing."

Wesley's response to the moral, social, and spiritual crisis that was defining his England is best understood within the broader social, political, academic, and spiritual frameworks of his life.

The difficulty in reading Wesley's personal history is to decide where to place the weight of his response. Clearly, it was never Wesley's intent to form the Methodist Church. The question that must be asked is, "Why did he back away from the obvious path that was open to him?" The following biographical sketch will demonstrate that his reasons for declining all efforts to secede from the Church of England were theological reasons, not political or personal. His determination to retain his connection to the Church of England was born out of his deep and intimate study of Scripture, of the history of Christian worship, and of the means and methods of Protestantism. While he had deep affection and appreciation for Continental Protestantism, and personal roots within the English Dissenter movement,<sup>72</sup> his choice to remain Anglican was a liturgical choice. It is this liturgical aspect of Wesley's theology and personal commitment that has been neglected by his spiritual heirs and bears closer consideration.

John Wesley was regarded in his own time and setting both as a careful and deliberate thinker and as somewhat of an expert in liturgy. This expertise was developed through the various stages and experiences of his life which produced in him a desire to be a true and honest Christian personally and to teach others how to become such themselves. His efforts in both of these projects developed through various stages and deepening understandings and experiences. A study of his life reveals one who had an unusual intelligence and an unwillingness to trifle about anything, especially about spiritual things. In order to equip his Methodists to experience this deeper life of faith, Wesley organized them into bands and societies and provided copious

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<sup>72</sup> Robert Monk offers a thorough discussion of the Puritan roots of John Wesley. See, Robert C. Monk, *John Wesley, His Puritan Heritage*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1999), 8–12. However, he also notes that Methodism is not in any way an English Puritan church, 3.

written materials for teaching and training, both layman and lay-preacher. In light of the rest of his life and work, careful attention should be given to his design for worship.

That design for worship did not appear until late in his life. He had often resisted repeated requests to produce his own modified liturgy; but, it was not until 1784 that he complied. He produced a service book for the Methodists, first for America, then for the British Isles. His *Sunday Service* reflects the mature thinking of a qualified, thoughtful, and deliberate liturgist seeking to establish his Methodists as a true and historic church using the best of liturgical thinking and ecclesial scholarship.

This section will demonstrate how Jackie Wesley, the parson's boy, became John Wesley the liturgical expert. The process will follow a biographic journey. Through that journey, the particular influences that impacted Wesley's liturgical development will be highlighted in a way that has not been done in other studies of Wesley's life. The neglect of that study has produced an incomplete picture of the passions and theology of John Wesley himself. Due to that neglect, those who declare themselves to be Wesleyan have misunderstood him in an essential way.

Although Wesley's theology and class method have not lacked attention in more than two centuries of Wesley scholarship, his advices for worship have been overlooked. At this point, Wesley himself would have been horrified because he understood theology to belong to the worshipping congregation, not to be dissected in the abstract. Thus, his plan for the worshipping church is the key aspect to truly understanding and following John Wesley, the man, the pastor, and the theologian.

### **Familial Influences**

From his childhood, John Wesley was immersed in the dialog between the quest for spiritual seriousness evident in the Dissenters in England and the love of the liturgical structures within Anglicanism. Indeed, the Wesley home was the perfect melding of the two sides of the



issue. While on the one hand, his formative years were spent within the Anglican Church; on the other hand, his parents had close familiarity with and deep sympathy for those who had left the communion of Anglicanism seeking personal faith and more serious spirituality. The experiences of childhood engrained Anglican loyalty and Dissenter sympathy in all of the Wesley children. John Wesley's developing spirituality can be read as the journey toward coming to peace and harmony between the left and right halves of his spiritual identity. It is this internal battle, spiritually and intellectually, with the structure of Anglicanism and the personal piety of the Dissenters, that becomes the caldron that forged Wesley's liturgical imagination expressed within what became known as Methodism.

John Wesley was born in the Epworth parsonage on June 17, 1703. He was the thirteenth child born (seventh to survive) to Samuel and Susanna (Annesley) Wesley.<sup>73</sup> He was baptized with the name John Benjamin Wesley, but known in his home as Jacky. His father has been described as a staunch Anglican, deeply committed to the Established Church. Yet, Samuel's Anglicanism was not the vacuous Anglicanism typical of the age. Samuel was an Anglican cleric truly seeking the depth of personal piety that could be accessed through the rites, liturgy, and structures of the Church. Samuel was an Anglican because he believed that the English Church was the path to authentic Christian spirituality.

It might come as a surprise to learn that both of John's grandfathers were Dissenters as was his mother, Susanna, up to the age of thirteen. While rehearsing those details is not germane to this investigation, it is significant that both his parents made a decision to return to the Established Church and to support it in spite of the fact that life at Epworth was anything but idyllic. The Epworth rector (Samuel) seems to have been despised by his flock for his High

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<sup>73</sup> T. Crichton Mitchell, *Mr. Wesley*, 20. Telford numbers him fifteenth of nineteen children, John Telford, *The Life of John Wesley* (New York: Eaton & Mains, n.d.), 11.

Church sensibilities. They lived on the edge of starvation and were burnt out of their home on more than one occasion. Samuel, as a result, found himself unable to care for the needs of the family and wound up in debtors prison quite regularly.<sup>74</sup>

In this state of affairs, it fell to Susanna to provide for the nurture of her household entirely on her own for much of their lives. Susanna's influence in the spiritual life of her son has been attested to by many. That influence is reflected in the very essence of Methodism.<sup>75</sup> It was Susanna who instilled in her children both a love for the Prayer Book and a desire for personal communion with God.

Her preparation for this task came from her own foundations gained in the Annesley home, which was a center for Nonconformity. Although Susanna, like all girls of her age, was not permitted formal education, she learned well the disciplines of theological inquiry and disputation in the parlor of her own home. Hers was an exemplary Puritan household. However, she rejected the stern Calvinism of nonconformity at the age of thirteen by joining the Church of England. Nevertheless, it is clear that the spiritual disciplines and commitment to a devout and holy life based on the scriptures were Puritan sensitivities that were deeply instilled within her. Through her these sensibilities were transferred to her children.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Mitchell, *Mr. Wesley*, 19.

<sup>75</sup> John A. Newton, *Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1968), 185, "It is no mere genealogical figure of speech to describe Susanna as the mother of Methodism, as if simply to underline the obvious fact that John and Charles Wesley, as her sons, were greatly indebted to her in respect of both character and training... Yet *mother* is correct, for in a real sense it was she who founded Methodism in Epworth rectory where we may see in germ the Methodist pattern of discipline and pastoral oversight, with their careful framework of ruled for Christian living."

<sup>76</sup> Lean, *Anglican*, 6. See also, Telford, *The Life of John Wesley*, 9. Telford assesses, "She was familiar with the whole controversy between the Nonconformists and the Church of England, and... had calmly weighed the points at issue and cast in her lot with the Church. She was only thirteen years old at the time when she made this important decision."

The Wesley children were raised by their mother with strict discipline. She believed that controlling the will was essential to overpowering sin in one's life.<sup>77</sup> Regarding Susanna's management of the household, Monk argues, "[T]he general character of the home with its emphasis in genuine piety, biblical training, and rigid discipline that left no time for 'light' diversions, is strikingly similar to Puritan prototypes."<sup>78</sup> Yet, while these Puritan values were embraced, there can be no doubt that the Wesleys were raised to revere the Anglican Church.<sup>79</sup> Every assessment of the Wesley home regards it as strict, austere, disciplined, and loving. It was a place where the Prayer Book was read daily, where Scripture was both read and reflected upon, where prayer was central to the Christian life, and where learning to discipline one's life and passions in accordance to God's will and Word was demanded.<sup>80</sup>

The devotion to Anglican Churchmanship did not come without a price. "Samuel Wesley made himself many enemies by the prominent share he took in the controversy between the High Church party and the Dissenters."<sup>81</sup> On several occasions the Epworth rectory or the parson's crops were set ablaze in the controversy. The most famous of those occasions took place on February 9, 1709. John was only six years of age when the rectory caught fire again. With all of the children safely extricated, "Jacky" (as John was called) was nowhere to be found. At last, he was seen calling for help from a second story window. Quick thinking and a human ladder secured his rescue at the very moment that the roof collapsed.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>78</sup> Monk, *Puritan Heritage*, 12.

<sup>79</sup> Selleck, *Common Prayer*, 66, "The Book of Common Prayer was fundamental to both the content and the plan of education at the Epworth rectory. Susanna's adherence to Anglican forms and Samuel's orthodox, scholarly, and disciplines churchmanship all have their part in the strict regulation of John's life and his modest life style."

<sup>80</sup> See, Telford, *Life*, 14, for a typical summation.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>82</sup> The event bears mention because it seems to have created a sense of divine destiny and favor in the mind and heart of young John. Ibid., 18, "In one of his early prints a house in flames is represented below his portrait, with the

If life in the Wesley home before the fire was disciplined, following the fire it was even more so. Telford reports

After the Parsonage was rebuilt Mrs. Wesley began a strict reform. The children had grown careless about the Sabbath, had learned several songs and bad things “which before they had no notion of.” They had lost their good manners, and had acquired “a clownish accent and many rude ways.” Before the fire no children could be found more obedient to their parents, or better disposed toward religion. Mrs. Wesley felt that she had a difficult task, but she set herself bravely to recover the lost ground. Several new features were now introduced into the training. Psalms were sung both at the opening and close of school... [A]ll the children formed themselves into pairs to read over the Evening Psalms, with a chapter from the New Testament. Before breakfast the Morning Psalms and a chapter of the Old Testament were read in the same way.<sup>83</sup>

He also notes that Susanna determined to pay special attention to the spiritual development of John, feeling that his deliverance was Providential; God must have particular plans for this “brand.” From age six to ten, it is clear that Jacky would be immersed in all the discipline that could be derived from a staunch Puritan and all the religion that could be extracted from a staunch Anglican.

## **Education**

That *brand* would leave the rectory at the age of ten to enter his formal education at Charterhouse, London. With the exception of the service he would render to his father as curate of Wroote some years later, John would never live in Epworth again. At this point in his life, his future lay in mystery. Certainly, no one assumed that John would enter into holy orders or that he would be such a force in the English revival at this point in his life. His next few years gave no indication of his destiny either. Jacky was, in every sense, an ordinary schoolboy. He read his prayers daily and worshipped under the best of Anglican traditions. He was deliberate in his

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words, ‘Is this not a brand plucked out of the fire?’”

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 19.

studies, mastering Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Small of stature, he was not free of the abuses of the elder students, but had learned well the lessons of patience in affliction from his home life. Wesley's own account of these years suggests that he had grown dull of spirit and conscious; but, he maintained his disciplines, out of habit if not out of desire .

In the end, he mastered his subjects well enough to earn an appointment to Christ Church College at Oxford which he entered on June 24, 1720.<sup>84</sup> Piette offers the assessment of these years that is commonly understood saying, “[W]e believe it reasonably certain that, neither in his London school, nor during the first five years of his university life, was John Wesley distinguished from the rest of his companions to any remarkable degree either by piety or by sin.”<sup>85</sup>

Where John did begin to distinguish himself in these years was in his thirst for knowledge. While his interests were broad, as demonstrated by his writings, his particular focus began to narrow during his years at Oxford toward Biblical and liturgical studies.<sup>86</sup> Albert Outler surmised, “At Charterhouse and Christ Church he experienced a basic reorientation... to the tradition of Christian humanism, twin-rooted as it was in the classics and the Scriptures.”<sup>87</sup> Vivian Green concurred noting, “In 1720 John Wesley was now seventeen and on the verge of manhood . He was eager and enthusiastic, scholarly minded and pious by inclination. Unless he had reacted against the atmosphere of his home he would hardly have been otherwise.”<sup>88</sup> Oxford University in 1720 was not, by any stretch of the imagination, at the height of its distinction.

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>85</sup> Piette, *John Wesley*, 244.

<sup>86</sup> See, Ted A. Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 23–33.

<sup>87</sup> Albert Outler, “The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition,” *The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition*, ed., Kenneth E. Rowe (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1976), 19.

<sup>88</sup> V. H. H. Green, *The Young Mr. Wesley* (London: The Epworth Press, 1963), 63.

Mitchell's assessment is a typical version of the situation there, "Wesley entered Oxford at the age of seventeen and found it to be morally, spiritually and academically bankrupt."<sup>89</sup> Piette shares in that assessment, suggesting that Wesley's tutors, George Wigan and Henry Sherman were what saved him from the general intellectual neglect of the University.<sup>90</sup> Green is more generous, having produced both a history of Oxford and a biography of Wesley's early years. He argues that it would be absurd to conclude that Oxford was merely a den of licentious excess. Doubtless, Oxford was as given to the excesses of youth as any contemporary American University, and many of the lecturers were *in absentia*; yet, Green concluded that an excellent education was still available at Oxford for those students who wished to seek it.<sup>91</sup> Despite its lowered academic and spiritual condition, Oxford, "continued to fulfill many of its essential functions in an adequate fashion."<sup>92</sup> As such, Oxford functioned as the bastion of the Established Church, ensuring that all of its students were well-versed in the doctrines and practices of the Church, including the political overtones.

Some general observations can be made of the curriculum to which Wesley would have been exposed at Oxford which would provide a glimpse of his academic frameworks. Rack notes that the university functioned in a practical sense as a seminary for the Church of England. "High Church orthodoxy was maintained not only against Dissent but also against heterodoxy."<sup>93</sup> He agrees that the university was not as vacuous and licentious as it is often characterized, but that it functioned to train clergy to defend the Church against the religious and political opinions of

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<sup>89</sup> Mitchell, *Mr. Wesley*, 29.

<sup>90</sup> Piette, *John Wesley*, 238.

<sup>91</sup> Green, *Young Mr. Wesley*, 38.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>93</sup> Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 68.

Roman Catholics and Dissenters. In accomplishing that mission, Oxford students focused on patristic studies as well as the theological teachings of Hooker and Laud.<sup>94</sup> Wesley's academic plan would have included three to four years of lectures, scholastic disputations, and oral examinations over classical authors, logic, rhetoric, morals, and politics.

The secular portion of his education at Oxford would have been through the study of classical literature and philosophy.<sup>95</sup> An Oxford education favored the philosophical worldview of Aristotle over Plato.<sup>96</sup> Locke's empiricism was taking hold at Oxford while Wesley was a student and the young scholar became adept at both inductive and deductive forms of logical investigation. Green summarizes his experience saying, "At Oxford he read enormously, and then grew disgusted with the various systems, one after the other."<sup>97</sup> His later preaching and writing demonstrated that he was well trained in the classics and philosophy, yet discriminating in his evaluation of them.

Unfortunately, the habits of recording his every thought and activity, for which Wesley is distinguished, did not develop until 1725. Therefore, there is little direct reflection by John regarding his development as a scholar. Lean's assessment of these years is that they were years of greater and greater spiritual seriousness, more self-reflection, and a desire to rid himself of all that might be displeasing to God.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps the best summation of these years can be read in Cameron whose analysis of Wesley's own reflections on his Oxford experience lead him to conclude

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<sup>94</sup> Green, *Young Mr. Wesley*, 34.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 74, "He pursued the standard classical literature of his day, including Culver's book on *Italia Antiqua*, and the *Aeneid* of Virgil, the *Satires* of Juvenal, and the work of Xenophon, Cornelius Nerpos, Epictetus, and Anacreon.

<sup>96</sup> Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 64.

<sup>97</sup> Piette, *John Wesley*, 267.

<sup>98</sup> Lean, *Anglican*, 1964.

John Wesley did nothing during his undergraduate years to draw notice to himself in any conspicuous fashion. He did set himself, with somewhat more than average persistence and ability, to take advantage of his academic opportunities... At least he had sufficient seriousness of purpose to chide himself with a propensity to trifle away his time... We would say that he manifested an unusually tenacious loyalty to his early religious training. Nevertheless the most apt contemporary description we have is couched in primarily secular terms: “He appeared the very sensible and acute collegian—a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments.”<sup>99</sup>

What this review of his early years at Oxford reveals is a budding scholar whose proclivity was toward the Established Church, both by background and training. He was being taught to be a “defender of the faith” and an able practitioner.

Following the advice of Jeremy Taylor’s *Rules for Holy Living and Dying*, Wesley began to keep a careful diary in 1725, logging the way in which he spent each hour of his life. The diary is written in code and shorthand, and was the source for Wesley’s remembrances which were published by Wesley himself in his Journal.<sup>100</sup> What they reveal is a deliberate effort on Wesley’s part not to trifle away a single moment and to be engaged in profitable work and conversation every waking moment of every day.

By 1725, Wesley was focusing his mind and heart toward holy orders. At the age of twenty-two, Wesley consulted his father about entering the ministry.<sup>101</sup> One can extract from

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<sup>99</sup> Richard M. Cameron, *The Rise of Methodism: A Sourcebook* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 43. See the entire discussion, 39–86. The description of Wesley is of one Mr. Badcock, in *Westminster Magazine*, 1774 and is quoted in John Whitehead, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.* (Philadelphia: William S. Stockton, 1845), I: 235. Whitehead’s quote ellipses after the word *collegian*, “baffling every man by the subtleties of logic, and laughing at them for being so easily routed;” as referenced in Telford, *Life*, 33.

<sup>100</sup> These diaries were quite inaccessible until Richard Heitzenrater discovered that there was a key to the shorthand method preserved in Benjamin Ingram’s personal diary. Ingram, being a novice in the society, notated the “standard shorthand” for his own reference. Heitzenrater applied the Ingram key to Wesley’s diaries unlocking a picture of the daily routine of our subject. While publication of the 1725–1734 diaries is still pending, the decoded diaries for 1735 and beyond are available and accessible for study in *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*.

<sup>101</sup> Telford, *Life*, 37. Though, perhaps he was motivated by his mother’s plea written Sept. 10, 1724, *Letters I, 1721–1739*, ed. Frank Baker, vol. 25 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 149, “I heartily wish you were in Orders, and could come and serve one of his [Samuel’s] churches.



Samuel's response, John Wesley's motivations for entering into Orders was to have a means of earning a living and to live a stricter life.<sup>102</sup> His father urged caution and careful consideration maintaining that the best reason to enter Orders was, "the glory of God, and the service of His church, in the edification and salvation of our neighbour."<sup>103</sup> John was ordained, deacon, in that same year and commenced his advanced studies. Green describes these years saying,

The greater part of his time was spent in further study . Indeed the extent of his reading reveals a picture of University life in the early eighteenth century very different from that usually portrayed. There are few days when he did not devote some hours to the study of the Greek Testament, and the biblical bent of his interest can already be discerned. But he was also engaged in reading and making notes on the somewhat heavy lumber of contemporary theological works; the sermons or Bennet, Norris, Smalridge, and Atterbury, Hickes on Schism, Watts on Predestination, Ellis on the Thirty-nine articles, Fiddes in Morality, Hutcheson's *Enquiry into Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, books by Whiston, Berkeley, and Wake.<sup>104</sup>

During these years he would develop the skills that he relied upon all of his life . He was becoming a Biblical and theological scholar. He was also being equipped in every way to be a servant of the Established Church.<sup>105</sup>

Wesley also spent time in reading and reflecting upon Thomas a' Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* and Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying* in correspondence with his mother.<sup>106</sup> What

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Then I should see you often, and could be more helpful to you than 'tis possible to be at this distance..."

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 157. John Wesley's original letter to his father has not survived, so the conversation must be redacted from the responses that he received.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* He advises at the end of this letter, 158, "By all this you see, I'm not for you going over hastily into Orders." Perhaps once more, the counsel of his mother was more significant. In her correspondence of February 23, 1725 where she encouraged, 160, "Now that I mention this, it calls to mind your letter to your father about taking Orders . I was much pleased with it, and liked the proposal well. But 'tis an unhappiness most peculiar to our family, that your father and I seldom think alike. I approve the disposition of your mind... ."

<sup>104</sup> Green, *Young Mr. Wesley*, 73.

<sup>105</sup> Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, 9, "'Christian antiquity' was in fact the focus of intense study and debate in the British Christianity of John Wesley's age, and had been for at least a century. By the time Wesley arrived in Oxford in 1720, the University's libraries were replete with scholarly editions of ancient Christian works, learned histories of the early Christian centuries, and a host of tracts and books claiming 'Christian antiquity' and 'the Church Fathers' to be on their sides in the many-faceted inter-Christian polemics of that age."

<sup>106</sup> See, letters dated May 28, 1725; June 18, 1725; July 29, 1725; and Susanna's responses dated June 8, July

appears to be taking place in Wesley's mind and heart is the wedding of the deep piety of his mother and the high liturgy of his father and the university.<sup>107</sup> His own unique liturgical imagination was beginning to develop.

Wesley's election, in 1726, to a fellowship at Lincoln College, verifies that he had unique scholastic abilities and a growing reputation as a scholar. Had he so chosen, he could have distinguished himself among the most renowned scholars of his century. There were eleven fellows of Lincoln College at the time of his election.<sup>108</sup> His fellowship was reserved for natives of Lincoln county and was not easily obtained, but John was unanimously elected on March 17, 1726.<sup>109</sup> The Fellowship provided an annual stipend, the position of lecturer on the faculty, and the esteem of being included in an elite company. This fellowship was for life, providing that the fellow remained both a priest in the Church of England and celibate .

Clearly, he had achieved academic distinction. Whiteley, says of Wesley at this point in his life

He was one of the ablest scholars of his generation as is evidenced by his masterly translations of poems from German, French and Spanish sources. . . . His *Notes on the New Testament* again indicate his excellent scholarship, and show that he had a sounder knowledge of Greek than that displayed by the translators in 1611.<sup>110</sup>

Around this same time, John received a letter from his father (Jan. 26, 1725) inviting the young

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21 and August 18, 1725, *Works* (BE) 25: 167–180. These letters demonstrate John's awakening struggle with a life of piety and Susanna's familiarity with these texts and her able comprehension of the theological topics discussed. A reply from Rev. Samuel Wesley, dated July 14, 1725 summarizes the matter succinctly saying, 171, "[M]ortification is still an indispensable Christian duty."

<sup>107</sup> Heitzenrater, *John Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 31, "Wesley's search during this period for a meaningful understanding of the demands of Christian living eventually led him to tie together the perfectionism of the pietists, the moralism of the Puritans, the devotionism of the mystics in a pragmatic approach that he felt could operate within the structure and doctrine of the Church of England."

<sup>108</sup> Green, *Young Mr. Wesley*, 90.

<sup>109</sup> Telford, *Life*, 42.

<sup>110</sup> J. H. Whiteley, *Wesley's England*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: The Epworth Press, 1954), 20.

scholar to assist his father in completing an “octavo, in the Hebrew, Chaldee, Seventy,<sup>111</sup> and Vulgar Latin.” John’s task was to collate the Hebrew of the Polyglot with the Vulgate.<sup>112</sup> Green’s list of the books which he read between 1725 and 1734 lists works in English, Latin, Greek and French. There were four hundred different titles from classics, to plays and poetry with the vast majority being on subjects of religion.<sup>113</sup> His focus began to narrow, however, writing to his mother on January 24, 1727 that he would commit himself to a deliberate scheme of studies toward the end that he be made a “whole Christian.”<sup>114</sup>

On August 4, 1727, Wesley, having matriculated with his M.A., left Oxford to fulfill his parent’s wish as curate to his father,<sup>115</sup> taking on the responsibility of Wroote in the marshes five miles from Epworth. He remained there until November 1729 when he returned to Oxford following a summons by Dr. John Morley with the decision of the college that “the junior fellows who should be chosen as moderators shall in person attend the duties of their office...”<sup>116</sup> Telford reports of Wesley, “As a tutor he was singularly diligent and careful, and laboured earnestly to make those under his charge both scholars and Christians.”<sup>117</sup>

This return to Oxford proved to be most providential to the life and ministry of John Wesley. For the next six years of his life, Wesley lived the life of a scholar. He tutored students, moderated disputations, and lectured six days per week. These were the ordinary duties of a

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<sup>111</sup> Samuel’s term for the *Septuagint*.

<sup>112</sup> Samuel Wesley, “Letter to John Wesley (January 26, 1725),” *Works* (BE), 25:158.

<sup>113</sup> Green, *Young Mr. Wesley*, 289–302.

<sup>114</sup> John Wesley, “Letter to Mrs. Susanna Wesley (Jan. 24, 1727),” *Works* (BE), 25:208–09.

<sup>115</sup> Susanna Wesley, “Letter to Jacky (April 22, 1727),” *Works* (BE), 25:216.

<sup>116</sup> John Wesley, “Letter to Mrs. Susanna Wesley (February 28, 1730),” *Works* (BE), 25:240.

<sup>117</sup> Telford, *Life*, 55.

Lincoln College Fellow. His more extraordinary involvement in these years has been well chronicled, as he joined and ascended to the leadership of the Oxford Methodists.

It is not the focus in this project to review the details concerning the “Holy Club” at Oxford. In summary, it was the intent of this band of serious-minded Christians to function under the well-established rules of a “society” within the Church of England. This band of brothers was to study the scriptures and to encourage each other to love and good works. Among the spiritual practices that they took seriously was the practice of worship. They fasted twice each week and received the Lord’s Supper at least weekly. They read their Bibles in the original languages, prayed, discussed the lives of great Christians, and did acts of charity including the giving of alms and visiting prisons.<sup>118</sup>

Benjamin Ingram was one of these Oxford Methodists. Much of what is known of the practices of the Holy Club was recorded in Ingram’s journal. His record reveals that the group was actively engaged in the study of worship. They were also interested in the study of Christian antiquity including, “The writings of the Early Fathers of the Church appear frequently, as do works about them by Cave, Deacon, and Reeves.”<sup>119</sup> Ingram’s record demonstrates Wesley’s interest in aligning contemporary worship practice with that of the Church Fathers. While England, as a whole, was slipping into Latitudinarianism and liturgical and ecclesial

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 59, “At first the four friends met every Sunday evening, then two evenings a week were passed together, and at last every evening from six to nine. They began their meetings with prayer, studied the Greek Testament and the classics, reviewed the work of the past day, and talked over their plans for the morrow... After prayers, the chief subject of which was charity, they had supper together, and John Wesley read some book. On Sunday evening they read divinity. They fasted on Wednesday and Friday, and received the Lord’s Supper every week, coming to Christ Church when the Sacrament was not given in their own colleges. A system of self-examination brought all their conduct under searching review. On Sunday they examined themselves as to the “Love of God and simplicity,” on Monday on “Love of Man.”

<sup>119</sup> Richard P. Heitzenrater, ed. *Diary of an Oxford Methodist, Benjamin Ingram, 1733–1734* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985), 14.

haphazardness under the Hanoverian kings,<sup>120</sup> this little band of scholars and churchmen were carefully studying the “early Fathers, for what must have been the doctrinal, liturgical and constitutional life of the Primitive Church.”<sup>121</sup>

Ingram had become a member of the Holy Club in 1731. The society was growing, attracting John Clayton, who would influence Wesley’s interest in the Primitive and Eastern Church.<sup>122</sup> It was Clayton who introduced Wesley to Thomas Deacon<sup>123</sup> in 1733. Deacon recognized Wesley’s scholarship and expertise, enlisting his services in preparing his *Complete Collections of Devotions, taken from the Apostolical Constitutions, the Ancient Liturgies and the Common Prayer Book for the Church of England*. “Wesley returned from this visit thoroughly fired with zeal both for the ancient church and for the ‘stations,’ which he continually urged upon his friends and pupils. . . .”<sup>124</sup> Clearly, Wesley equated his efforts to be a “real Christian” with a desire to worship correctly and authentically.

### **From Oxford to Aldersgate**

His experience in the Holy Club began to order John Wesley’s affections . He began to minister in prisons, give alms to the poor, and discipline his personal life for the sake of others . Finally, in October 1735, four members of the Holy Club, John and Charles Wesley, Benjamin Ingram, and Charles Delamotte, left the security of Oxford to be missionaries to the “Indians” in Georgia. “Our end in leaving our native country,” wrote Wesley, “was not to avoid want (God having given us plenty of temporal blessings), nor to gain the dung or dross of riches or honour;

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<sup>120</sup> See, Carter, *English Church*, 21–29 for a description of the religious and intellectual environment of early eighteenth century England.

<sup>121</sup> Piette, *John Wesley*, 284.

<sup>122</sup> Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London: Epworth Press, 1970), 32.

<sup>123</sup> Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason*, 105, refers to Deacon as “the peaceable Nonjuring Usager.”

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 31. See also, Campbell, *Christian Antiquity*, 23–33.

but singly this—to save our souls, to live wholly to the glory of God.”<sup>125</sup> While his stated purpose is clear, it can also be surmised by his pastoral practice in Georgia, that the means by which he intended to accomplish such a lofty aspiration was through establishing and perfecting the chief means of grace—worship.

The Georgia mission afforded an opportunity for Wesley to practice and test his developing liturgical sense. “When Wesley went to Georgia, under the auspices of the SPCK,<sup>126</sup> his pastoral and liturgical practice reflected the most austere high church attempts to restore the discipline of the ‘primitive Church.’ His reading at this time included Fleury’s *Manners of the ancient Christian*.”<sup>[sic]</sup><sup>127</sup> There is significant evidence that his intent was to use the Georgia mission as an opportunity to establish the best worship practices of historic Christianity.<sup>128</sup> Campbell argues that Wesley’s readings and practices reveal that it was Wesley’s intent to restore the practices of the ancient Church in an environment which he perceived would be similar to the environment of the Early Church. Frank Baker affirms Campbell’s assessment noting,

As Wesley headed for the Georgia colonies, he was quite excited about the prospect of establishing an Apostolic form of worship among the unspoiled Indians . In preparation for debarkation in Savanna, Wesley outlined what he had come to believe to be genuine apostolic procedure . At a later time he struck through certain words and phrases here shown in italics:

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<sup>125</sup> John Wesley, “An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley’s Journal, from his Embarking for Georgia to his Return to London,” *Journals and Diaries I (1735–38)* eds. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990):136–37.

<sup>126</sup> “Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.”

<sup>127</sup> W. M. Jacob, “John Wesley and the Church of England, 1736–1740,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University of Manchester* (Summer and Autumn 2003): 60. Telford specified his sponsor to be The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) who allowed him fifty pounds per year for the work; see, Telford, *Life*, 75.

<sup>128</sup> Campbell, *Christian Antiquity*, 37, “What emerges from a close examination of John Wesley’s study and work in Georgia, then, is that his original inspiration for the mission was a religious vision of the renewal of ancient Christian practices and institutions in the primitive North American environment. His vision, at this point, was colored by his encounter with the Manchester sect, and by their stress upon the Apostolic Canons and Constitutions and the consensus of ancient conciliar teachings.”

“I believe [*myself*] it a duty to observe, so far as I can [*without breaking communion with my own Church*]:

1. To baptize by immersion.
2. To use Water, oblation of elements [and?] alms, invocation a prothesis [sic], in the Eucharist.
3. To pray for the faithful departed.
4. To pray standing on Sunday and in Pentecost.
5. To observe Saturday, Sunday and Pentecost as festival.
6. To abstain from blood and things strangled . I think it prudent (our own church not considered):
  1. To observe the stations.
  2. Lent and Holy Week.
  3. To turn east at the Creed.”<sup>129</sup>

Clearly, he was aligning his personal spiritual practice and his pastoral practice with that of the earliest Christians. One must conclude that Wesley was convinced that the best way to establish a New Testament Church in the New World was to establish an Early Church liturgy. His commitment here demonstrates rejection of the Puritan approach to how Scripture instructs Christians to worship.

His reading in the Georgia years demonstrates that he was interested in a broad investigation of liturgical practices. Harrison cataloged a list of books that Wesley read from 1735 to 1738, “Five of these writers were Non-Jurors, three were Roman Catholics, and the others, (with the exception of the German books) tended to the views of the Anglo-Catholic School.”<sup>130</sup> Harrison observed that this list of books demonstrate that Wesley was exploring alternate liturgies under the influence of the non-jurors (Dissenters). His continued interest in this

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<sup>129</sup> Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, 40–41.

<sup>130</sup> A.W. Harrison, “Wesley’s Readings During the Voyage to Georgia,” *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (June, 1921): 26. Baker’s footnotes to this passage (352–53) detail the influence that Deacon’s liturgy had on Wesley at this time. The *prothesis* is described as a side table for the preparation of the elements which was introduced from the Eastern Church by the Non-Jurors.

project is indicated by the fact that eight of the books that Wesley read during this time were republished by him in some other form.<sup>131</sup>

Non-Jurors advocated a return to a *corrected* liturgy. Their model was the 1549 Prayer Book which they cherished for its dense ritualism and its mixed chalice.<sup>132</sup> John Clayton was among the leaders of this movement which held Wesley in its sway during the early years of his ministry. Early in Wesley's career, especially during his Georgia mission, he sought to create a ritually rich liturgy based on ancient texts. Later in life, he would reject this super-ritualism, but he maintained a penchant for a well-ordered rite.

This work continuously occupied Wesley's attention. His private diary reveals, for instance, on March 5, 1736, he spent nearly two hours (7-8:40 a.m.) revising the Prayer Book,<sup>133</sup> "presumably to bring the 1662 book in line with the First Prayer book of King Edward VI, 1549."<sup>134</sup> The 1549 prayer book was the standard preferred by the non-jurors, especially those in Manchester where Thomas Deacon had great influence because it represented the Established Church before all of the compromises and corruptions that were reflected in the later liturgies.<sup>135</sup>

As discussed above, Wesley's motivations for going to Georgia were spelled out in a letter written to John Burton, October 10, 1735: to save his own soul and to preach to the heathens ("Indians").<sup>136</sup> At this point in his life, Wesley was still equating salvation with the achievement of personal holiness. Neither goal was realized. Instead, Wesley became embroiled in ecclesiastical controversies caused, in part, by his rigid liturgical practice.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>132</sup> See, Sanders, *Sacramentalism*, 9–10 and 36.

<sup>133</sup> John Wesley, "MS Journals and Diaries (February 28–March 6, 1736)," *Works* (BE), 18:363.

<sup>134</sup> Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, 41.

<sup>135</sup> Campbell, *Christian Antiquity*, 37.

<sup>136</sup> John Wesley, "Letter to Revd. John Burton (Oct. 10, 1735)," *Works* (BE), 25:439.



His ministry in Georgia was primarily among established churches where he provided Communion, catechetical instruction, baptism, and other rites of the church, traveling on a circuit through the Georgia Colony. He also found opportunity to minister among German and Jewish immigrants and to the “Negros” on the plantations . By October 7, 1737, he confessed to his friends that he believed that God was calling him back to England citing, “The reason for which I left it had now no force, there being no possibility as yet of instructing the Indians; neither have I as yet found or heard of any Indians on the continent of America who had the least desire of being instructed.”<sup>137</sup>

In his work within the Church and his efforts to restore proper church order in an environment that had become lax produced controversy that resulted, ultimately, in legal charges being filed against him. The charges filed by Mrs. Sophia Williamson (nee, Sophy Hopkins) were the outcome of her embarrassment at being denied Communion for not registering in advance. The charge assessed damages at one thousand pounds sterling.<sup>138</sup> Wesley was exonerated of all the charges on September 2, 1737.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, the incident and the exoneration reveal that Wesley’s strict enforcement of the Church’s rubrics was the source of irritation for many of the colonists.

Speaking of Wesley’s experience in Georgia, Lean says that Wesley ran into quite a bit of resistance trying to apply the disciplines of primitive Christianity to these colonists who were, for the most part, released to Georgia from debtor’s prisons. “And soon it became clear that the

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<sup>137</sup> *Works* (BE), 18:193.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 18:187–88. Wesley records that Sophy’s uncle, Mr. Causton, was claiming publicly that Wesley’s denial was merely out of spite since Sophy had rejected his proposal of marriage (a misrepresentation of the facts that do not bear repeating here).

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 191–193. Here Wesley records the findings of the grand jury.

method of the Holy Club lacked the dynamic necessary to affect hard-bitten men and women of the world.”<sup>140</sup>

After continued badgering by the Williamsons and Mr. Causton, Wesley left America on Thursday December 22, 1737 on board the *Samuel*. Aboard the ship, Wesley continued to serve as chaplain of the ship, with heaviness of heart. He confessed, in his journal, to lack of faith, to pride, and to lack of spiritual seriousness, praying on January 8, 1738, “‘Lord save, or I perish!’ Save me....”<sup>141</sup> This darkness clung to his spirit until May 24, and his, now famous, moment of clarity: his evangelical conversion at the meeting on Aldersgate Street. His journal records his heart warming moment, “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.”<sup>142</sup>

In the months between leaving Georgia and Aldersgate, it is clear that Wesley was forced to reevaluate his assumption that salvation could be achieved through the perfection of liturgical practice. His partner in this reevaluation was Peter Böhler who was a Moravian and counseled Wesley on many days about the nature of saving faith. In this reassessment, Wesley began to rethink what he understood to be the essence of salvation itself. This change in thinking could be described as a shift from understanding that salvation was something achieved through works to the realization that salvation is a gift received by faith. As a corollary to this shift, he changed from believing that salvation was something that one grew into over time to salvation received instantaneously by faith.

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<sup>140</sup> Lean, *Anglican*, 29.

<sup>141</sup> *Works* (BE), 18:209.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

### **Aldersgate to The Leeds Methodist Conference (1755)**

One might suppose, with Wesley's evangelical conversion under the influence of the Moravians, that he would abandon his efforts to reform the Church by the restoration of pure liturgical practice and follow the Moravian path of simplicity in faith and worship. Indeed, he seems to have considered that path, having made a trip to the Moravian home base, Herrnhut . The trip began in June and the party arrived August 1, 1738. However, what develops in this period of Wesley's life is a realization that liturgy and spirituality were not opposed to one another. Rather, he came to the understanding that the Church had been a faithful mother which provided the framework for his evangelical spirituality. That framework had been found in the liturgy itself. And, while there was much to be said negatively about the practice and faith of the Church, it was still a properly constructed vessel for carrying and transferring Christian faith.

It is without doubt that Wesley was impressed deeply by what he observed at Herrnhut . His journal records sermons and personal accounts of Moravians, attesting to their understanding of the justification that comes only by faith. He recorded the constitution and organization of the Moravian Church, publishing it in his Journal. His own understanding of justification mirrors the preaching of Count Zinzendorf himself, whose outline he recorded from a message Zinzendorf preached in Frankfurt on July 12, 1738.<sup>143</sup>

After two weeks in Herrnhut, Wesley's began the long journey back to England, arriving on September 16. Upon his return, he began preaching the Moravian doctrine of justification by faith alone. This doctrine was so offensive in England, that most pulpits became closed to him after he preached there once. Yet, while the clergy regarded the Wesleyan doctrines to be offensive, the common people of England embraced it freely, forming themselves into societies

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 261.

and bands at the direction of Wesley where they would study the scriptures, hear preaching, and encourage one another in faith. With the movement expanding, however, Wesley strictly forbade separation from the Church. While being critical of the Church's spiritual lethargy, Wesley remained loyal to its liturgy. Carefully outlining the debate regarding the way in which his conversion affected his attitude toward the Church of England, Sanders concluded,

He remained a High Churchman all his life, combining in his theology, worship, life and work what seemed to him the best of both Catholic and Evangelical thought . His mature position was not uncritical, but it remained at heart the Catholicism of classical Anglicanism, interpenetrated by a warm Evangelicalism which undoubtedly gave his churchmanship a new direction, but was far from either destroying it or existing in opposition to it.<sup>144</sup>

It was never Wesley's intent to usurp the authority of the Church, but to augment it, to purify it, and to increase its effectiveness.<sup>145</sup>

By 1739, Wesley's radical message had resulted in his being barred from virtually every pulpit in England. So, reluctantly following the example of George Whitfield, Wesley took his message directly to the people through field preaching. These toiling masses in England were unreached by the Church, both because they were unwelcome and because the Church was unconcerned about their spiritual state. His resort to field preaching was not done in rejection of the Established Church. Rather, he was clearly more concerned about the souls of the English than he was for his own reputation.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Sanders, *Sacramentalism*, 65.

<sup>145</sup> Whiteley, *Wesley's England*, 15, "All this religious revolutionary wanted was for his mother Church to realize her duty to individuals, and so to make religious life more vivid by the spread of the Gospel, to be a vigilant guardian of order and morals and one that was prepared to do her duty to all individuals however poor and lowly."

<sup>146</sup> Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, 3, "Wesley came to see his own life's task as that of 'spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land,' preferable through the agencies of a spiritually renewed national church, among which agencies he hoped would be gratefully included his own societies and preachers. This challenging task was to be carried out within the church if possible, but outside if necessary."

It was his willingness to preach outside the bounds of the Church building that brought upon him the disdain of many, both within the Church *and* Dissenter groups. England's long tumultuous history of religious controversy had died down to an uneasy truce. Preaching was allowed only within Anglican pulpits and registered preaching houses. Once the Methodists began preaching outdoors, they were said to be neither Anglican nor Dissenter. "In general, the Methodists were said to break Church law, for they did not observe the Rubrics and Canons . The Canons, so the argument ran, forbade field preaching."<sup>147</sup> These practices resulted in the charge of *enthusiasm*<sup>148</sup> being leveled against the Methodists.

As early as February 1740, he was accused by the Ordinary<sup>149</sup> of Newgate of "turning Dissenter." This charge he rebuffed in the strongest terms.<sup>150</sup> Wesley always saw himself as a loyal son of the Church, forbidding Methodist meetings during church hours and insisting that the Methodists attend services and receive the Sacrament within the Church of England. He was so deeply committed to remain faithful to the Church and its liturgy that his final break with the Moravians, who had taken control of the Fetter Lane Society in London, came over the need to observe the ordinances.<sup>151</sup> The Moravians were teaching that the heart of faith was no longer bound to the ordinances of the Church.

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<sup>147</sup> Robert L. Tucker, *The Separation of the Methodists from the Church of England* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1918), 65.

<sup>148</sup> This word is not to be understood in the contemporary meaning, but in a technical sense. Enthusiasm was an accusation of establishing religion outside the law and in opposition to the Act of Toleration. Such a practice would risk a return to the religious civil wars that plagued England for the two previous centuries. It is difficult for an American reader to grasp the seriousness of such a charge or the reason for the vitriolic response to the Methodist's open-air meetings given our multi-denominational heritage. Such a charge, had it been substantiated, could have been cause for gruesome execution. The general disinterest of the Hanoverian kings to religious issues may have saved the Methodists from bloody extermination.

<sup>149</sup> An ecclesiastical authority equivalent to a Bishop.

<sup>150</sup> John Wesley, "An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from August 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739," *Journals and Diaries II (1738–43)* eds. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 19 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 138.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 146–148.

Wesley did not endorse the Societies and meeting houses as an alternative place of Christian worship.<sup>152</sup> These structures were designed for spiritual exhortation, encouragement, and development. Wesley's preaching and teaching outside of the Church was intended to be a means to increase a person's connection to the Church. These means were designed to funnel people into the fullness of ritual and life within the Established Church.<sup>153</sup> Kenneth Wilson observed that it was Wesley's commitment to the *Book of Common Prayer* that constantly shaped his ministry. "Wesley never tired of insisting that converts of the Revival must go to the Church of England Services, else their spiritual diet would be unbalanced."<sup>154</sup> He also observed, "He constantly urged those who had been awakened by the Revival to develop a liking for Prayer Book worship."<sup>155</sup>

When Wesley published his rules for Methodist Societies in 1743, he included the third rule, "By attending upon all the ordinances of God," by which he meant attendance at public worship services, the ministry of the Word, the Lord's Supper, and private devotional practices.<sup>156</sup> This rule was repeated in the directions given to the Band Societies (as they were called) on December 25, 1744 and remained the rule throughout Wesley's life. In 1748, he wrote to Methodists in Wales exhorting them not to turn away from the Church of England saying, "How much less should any one of us bring an accusation against the Church of England, all of

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<sup>152</sup> Whiteley, *Wesley's England*, 14, "Throughout his lengthy preaching career, he always showed a deep sense of the spiritual value of liturgical worship, of symbol, of sacrament, and always spoke of these with the understanding born of experience. He never formulated a new doctrine that his mother Church could not have accepted, and he was never at variance with the bishops on theological grounds."

<sup>153</sup> Heitzenrater, *John Wesley and the Oxford Methodists*, 22, "The design of the religious societies of the early eighteenth century 'to promote Real Holiness of Heart and Life' was characterized by a high-church piety that depended upon an intense study of Scripture and other works of practical divinity, that demanded personal moral discipline, and that expressed itself in charitable acts toward the disadvantaged elements of society."

<sup>154</sup> Kenneth A. Wilson, "Devotional Relationships," 284.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>156</sup> *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*, ed. Rupert Davies, vol. 9 of *The Bicentennial Edition*

*whose doctrines we subscribe and hold, whose Common Prayer Book we love, and in communion with whom we have received so many blessings from God.”(emphasis mine)<sup>157</sup>*

Again, he affirmed his commitment to the Established Church in a letter to “The Rev. Mr. Bailey of Cork” in which he stated plainly, “I choose to stay in the Church.”<sup>158</sup>

This fidelity to the Church of England and the Prayer Book was not born out of an unwillingness to evaluate and to reflect upon the rubrics and usages of the Church. Wesley was in constant conversation with those who sought to improve the Prayer Book, toward the goal of reuniting the fractured church. One of those partners was Thomas Deacon, with whom Wesley maintained a continual communion.<sup>159</sup> His personal reading included numerous works on the history, nature, and function of Christian liturgy.<sup>160</sup> Included in those readings were works that created sympathy in Wesley for the Dissenter point of view, including, *Abridgement of Mr. Baxter’s History of his Life and Times and John Jones, Free and Candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England.*

Frank Baker assessed that, as a result of reading these books, Wesley became receptive to the Dissenter point of view regarding worship, allowing for a more Catholic spirit among Christian groups insisting that forms of worship were a matter of preference.<sup>161</sup> Similarly, W.M. Jacob argued that Wesley was taking deliberate and irrevocable steps of separation from the

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*of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 73.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 308.

<sup>159</sup> Deacon produced a nonjuror’s liturgy in 1734.

<sup>160</sup> Richard Heitzenrater, *John Wesley and the Oxford Methodists*, 493, cataloged a list of books that Wesley read between 1725–1735 containing nearly 700 titles. Many of the books and essays in the list reference pietistic practices, however, forty–one of the titles listed are explorations of the liturgy of the Church including the Early Fathers, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Dissenter practices. Arthur Christian Meyers, Jr., “John Wesley and The Church Fathers” (PhD diss., St. Louis University, 1985), 21, cataloged Wesley’s use of the Church Fathers and found that he referenced in his writings thirty-one of the anti-Nicene Church Fathers.

<sup>161</sup> Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, 235–255.

Church of England.<sup>162</sup> Yet, Wesley's own practice and instruction argues against these assessments. By the time of the Methodist Conference in 1755, Wesley was resolute that those who would align with Methodism must join the Church of England.<sup>163</sup> Rack's summary of Methodism is closer to the mark.

Methodist organization, which was described earlier in terms of a system of evangelism and pastoral care, can also be seen as a vehicle for worship and devotion . Though its formal objective was the pursuit of holiness, it also gave much scope for spontaneous expression of feeling, lay participation and various human values of fellowship, community and personal group identity . Apart from field preaching, the main preaching services were held early in the morning and in the evening on Sundays and weekdays to *avoid clashing with Anglican services* (emphasis mine).<sup>164</sup>

So, while Wesley embraced the freedom and lay participation of the Methodist preaching service, he was still committed to the importance of Sunday worship within the Established Church. This loyalty was not born out of loyalty to the Crown, but was born out of a studied understanding of the nature and purpose of Christian worship. Wesley was convinced that the path to fully mature Christianity led through the kind of worship expressed in the Anglican liturgy.

As the movement grew, pressure to separate from the Church of England grew with it. The issue came to a head with the Methodist Conference at Leeds which began on May 6, 1755. It was at this time that the Methodists put the issue of separation behind them for the foreseeable future. Wesley recorded in his journal simply, "Whatever was advanced on one side or the other was seriously and calmly considered. And on the third day we were all fully agreed in that

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<sup>162</sup> Jacob, "John Wesley and the Church of England," 71.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>164</sup> Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 410



general conclusion, that (whether it was *lawful* or not) [to separate from the Church of England] it was no ways *expedient*.”<sup>165</sup>

Wesley’s commitment to the Church of England was neither ignorant nor thoughtless. Baker provides a useful description on Wesley’s thoughts on the *Book of Common Prayer* which he presented at the Leeds Conference.

Wesley’s own objections to the Prayer Book were specified in the document which he read to his preachers at the 1755 Conference [Ought we to Separate]

Nay, there are some things in the *Common Prayer Book* itself which we do not undertake to defend: as in the *Athanasian Creed* (though we firmly believe the doctrine contained therein) the *damnatory clauses*, and the speaking of *this* faith (that is, these opinions) as if it were the grand term of salvation; that expression, first used concerning King Charles the Second, ‘our most religious king’; the answers in the Office of Baptism which are appointed to be made by the sponsors; the Office of Confirmation; the *absolution* in the Office for visiting the sick; the thanksgiving in the *Burial Office*; those parts of the Office for *Ordaining Bishops, Priests and Deacons*, which assert or suppose an essential difference between bishops and presbyters; the use of those words in *Ordaining Priests*, ‘whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted’. One might add (though these are not properly part of the Common Prayer), Hopkin’s and Sternhold’s *Psalms*.

All these faults Wesley was later able to put right in his own *Sunday Service*, and they form indeed the backbone of his revision.<sup>166</sup>

Thus, while Wesley and the Methodists agreed that some pruning of the Prayer Book would be useful, they were still fundamentally committed to the doctrines and ordinances of the Church, believing them to comprise the essential elements of worship that pleased God and developed Christian faith and character.

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<sup>165</sup> John Wesley, “An Extract of the Rev. Mr. Wesley’s Journal, from February 16, 1755, to June 16, 1758,” *Journals and Diaries IV (1755–65)* eds. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 21 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 10.

<sup>166</sup> Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, 236. See also, James F. White, ed., *John Wesley’s Prayer Book: The Sunday Service of the Methodists of North America with introduction notes and commentary by James F. White* (Cleveland, OH: OSL Publications, 1991), 7.

## The Shape of the Maturing Movement

As Methodism matured, it expanded exponentially. Soon the movement was embraced in all of the British Isles and in America. While Wesley continued to insist on not holding meetings during church hours so that the Methodists could attend “all the ordinances of God” in the Church of England (or in the Presbyterian Church in the case of Scotland), the movement was becoming more and more detached from traditional worship patterns. “It was the variety and relative informality and high degree of ordinary lay participation which attracted those disliking the formality and parson-dominated religious culture of official Anglicanism.”<sup>167</sup>

Wesley, however, insisted that Methodism was the door *into* the Church. Writing to his brother Charles (June 28, 1755) regarding the timing for separation, he declared, “‘Not yet’ is totally out of the question. We have not one preacher who either proposed or desires or designs or (that I know) to separate from the Church ‘at all.’”<sup>168</sup> Yet, it became increasingly clear that the Church did not have room for the Methodists and many ordinary Methodists did not have any regard for the Church.

The charge that the Methodists were *de facto* Dissenters (or enthusiasts) was one that both of the Wesleys sternly protested. They were sternly opposed to any suggestion that the Methodists withdraw from the Established Church. Methodist worship was not fully formed worship. It was a devotional service at best.<sup>169</sup> John Wesley was still insisting that he was a faithful Anglican in the Leeds Conference of 1776.

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<sup>167</sup> Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 410.

<sup>168</sup> John Wesley, “Letter to The Revd. Charles Wesley (June 28, 1755),” *Letters II 1740–1755*, ed. Frank Baker, vol. 26 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 565.

<sup>169</sup> Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 416, “In 1766, attempting to refute the charge that Methodists were Dissenters, Wesley emphasized that they were still church attenders. To those who claimed that Methodist worship was ‘public worship’ he allowed this only ‘in a sense.’ It does not supersede church worship, for it presupposes connection with Methodist preaching. Methodist worship therefore lacked the ‘grand parts of public prayer,’[sic] nor is it connected with the Lord’s Supper.”

But some may say, ‘Our own service is public worship.’ Yes, *in a sense*; but not such as supersedes the church service. We never designated that it should... . It presupposes public prayer, like the sermons at the university... .

If it were designed to be instead of church service, it would be essentially defective; for it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer; depreciation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving . Neither is it, even on the Lord’s day, concluded with the Lord’s supper.<sup>170</sup>

As noted above, as early as 1755, the shape of what would become the revised *Sunday Service* was already in place. Nevertheless, he steadfastly resisted publishing a revised liturgy . Doing so would have created the means for the very separation that he resisted. He understood that giving the Methodists an alternate liturgy would give them the option of establishing Methodist services on Sunday which would create a new form of Dissenter Christianity.

It is not the case that he was not publishing. Wesley’s publishing was an enterprise unto itself. Besides his *Journal*, Wesley published countless tracts and treatises, revisions of multiple Christian books, primarily in the area of spiritual literacy, a series of fifty-two standard sermons, primarily to be used by his lay preachers to ensure doctrinal fidelity, and a *Christian Library*, consisting of what Wesley considered to be the essential Christian knowledge, freely edited by his hand, and intended for his Lay Preachers. The original release of the *Christian Library* was in 50 volumes published between 1749-1755.

Wesley’s publication was designed to express his doctrines, reply to his critics, inform his followers, resource his preachers, and teach piety to the masses in England. In his preface to the library, Wesley wrote, “I have endeavoured to extract such a collection of *English divinity*, as (I believe) is all true, all agreeable to the oracles of God: and is all practical, unmixed with controversy of any kind; and all intelligible to plain men: such as is not superficial, but going

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<sup>170</sup> Sanders, *Appraisal*, 64.

down to the depth, and describing the height of Christianity.”<sup>171</sup> His involvement in educating the working classes and children was a means of helping them to rise from their stations and to comprehend the Word of God. Burton surmises, “John Wesley was a sponsor of literacy, not only for his preachers but also for the British labouring classes.”<sup>172</sup>

At his death in 1791, Wesley was the author of 351 titles and owner of 254,512 book volumes.<sup>173</sup> He was an expert in linguistics, liturgics, and Church history, as well as government, logic, philosophy, medicine, and classics. He was one of the great Patristic Scholars and church historians of his time.<sup>174</sup> Mitchell calls him a “scholar of highest rank” who could have “graced any chair of divinity or the highest pulpit in the land.”<sup>175</sup> Constantly seeking perfection, personally, organizationally, and ecclesiastically, he read widely, borrowed copiously, edited freely, and synthesized from the best that Christianity had produced to guide his Methodists toward the highest possible spiritual life, here in this world and in the world to come.<sup>176</sup>

Yet, with all that he published, Wesley steadfastly resisted the publication of an abridged Prayer Book. Among other reasons, he understood that such a publication would be tantamount to a declaration of separation from the Church of England and he was steadfastly opposed to such a separation. It was John Fletcher who first urged him to attempt his own revision in 1775, although there is evidence that he was constantly in conversation with the revisionists and

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<sup>171</sup> John Wesley, ed., *A Christian Library*, vol. 1 (London: T. Cordeux, 1809), ix. The 1809 edition is the oldest extant.

<sup>172</sup> Vicki Tolar Burton, “‘Something for the people to read’: John Wesley’s book inventory (1791),” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, (Summer and Autumn 2003): 227.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>174</sup> Meyers, “Wesley and The Church Fathers,” 13.

<sup>175</sup> Mitchell, *Mr. Wesley*, 33.

<sup>176</sup> Monk, *Puritan Heritage*, 1–2.

contemplating his own approach to revision.<sup>177</sup> Nevertheless, the Methodists were Anglicans, and Wesley was insistent that they remain so.

When he finally acquiesced in 1784, publishing *The Sunday Service for the Methodists of North America* followed by similar revisions for Ireland, Scotland, and Britain, it was with a sense of his own impending demise and his desire to keep Methodism Anglican. When he did produce his own abridgement, he was cognizant of the entire history of Christian worship, ancient and modern, and sought to produce a liturgy that would be fitting of his movement—a work that would undergird the faith and life of the Methodists.<sup>178</sup> White observed, “The efforts of all these disparate group—Puritans, comprehensionists, non-jurors, scholars of ancient liturgies, and theological liberals—were known and read by Wesley. Evidences of his familiarity with a variety of sources appear in his revision, indicating that it is a well-researched effort, not personal whim.”<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, while this abridgement facilitated the separation of the American Methodists from the Church of England, English Methodism has never formally separated from the Church. Notwithstanding the formal relationship, by 1788 the Methodists in the British Isles were holding their own services *during church hours*.

This historical review of the forces that shaped Wesley’s doxological imagination reveals that he was fully engaged in the liturgical crisis of his day, yet not conflicted about his place within that controversy. Having been formed intellectually both at his mother’s knee and in Oxford’s hallowed halls, Wesley was fully engaged in the history, theology, and practical concerns regarding the shape of worship in the Church of England. His personal concern for holiness and the spiritual health of those to whom he ministered, caused him to develop a deep

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<sup>177</sup> Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, 238.

<sup>178</sup> Chapter three will explore how his liturgy might become a source for contemporary renewal of worship practice.

fellowship with classic and contemporary liturgical texts. His deep concern for spiritual maturity caused him to return again and again to insist that his Methodists participate in the Sunday worship of the Church of England.

This insistence was neither blind nor deaf. He observed and understood the problems that plagued the Church. His hope was that his Methodists would infiltrate the Church with a good dose of “real religion,” thus purifying and restoring it to its best self. Similarly, his rejection of Dissenter and “enthusiast” worship was a doxological decision. It was not that he was merely asserting his loyalty to the crown. He truly believed the liturgy of the Church of England to be the most fully developed and most correctly constructed worship in the history of humanity. Rejection of the Church and its ordinances could only be done at the peril of one’s immortal soul.<sup>180</sup>

### **Wesley and American Methodism**

It has already been mentioned that Wesley’s liturgy was not appreciated in America. If it was true that Wesley’s entire experiential theology is best intoned in his *Service* it comes as quite a surprise to discover that it was quickly set aside and, for all practical purposes, lost to his American children. Understanding the factors that contributed to its demise is an important consideration before suggesting that setting the liturgy aside may have been a tragic mistake.

As has been noted, the situation in America was *never* within Wesley’s control. American Methodism was established through the prolific preaching of George Whitfield. Whitfield espoused a Calvinistic form of Methodism to which Wesley sternly objected. The disagreement

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<sup>179</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 6.

<sup>180</sup> See, for example, John Wesley, “A Word to a Sabbath Breaker,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols., 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, reprint (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), 166, (hereafter, *Works* (JE)) where Wesley advised the “Sabbath-breaker,” “You have heard of God’s judgments against the profaners of this day. And yet these are but drops of that storm of ‘fiery indignation, which will’ at last ‘consume his adversaries.’”

between them was largely ignored, however, when Whitfield focused his attentions on America and the Wesleys on England.

While Whitfield's preaching was effective and attractive, he lacked the organizational structure or the publication support to establish his new converts. Methodism, by the end of the 1760's, diffused in the colonies. For the most part, American Methodists were just a few societies and preaching houses, but no cohesive structure or network.<sup>181</sup> William Sweet proposed that Wesley had no designs of expanding the movement to America until some of his preachers went there voluntarily and asked for help.<sup>182</sup> It was Robert Strawbridge, not John Wesley, who was instrumental in establishing dozens of Methodist Societies in America, beginning in the 1760's.

The success of Strawbridge prompted the appeal to Wesley to send over some of his preachers, which Wesley obliged, sending over eight itinerants in matched pairs between 1769 and 1774. Baker's analysis suggests that a rift began to build between the American Methodists led by Asbury in the North and the Wesleyan Methodists who were being served by Strawbridge and his aides in the South.<sup>183</sup> American Methodism, at best, was only loosely and ideologically tethered to Wesley.

Baker argues that Methodism would have never developed beyond a "dwindling revivalist sect" had not the itinerants been sent by him.<sup>184</sup> Even with this infusion, Gross observed that American Methodism suffered from the lack of ordained clergy to administer the sacraments.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Dee E. Andrews, *The Methodist and Revolutionary America, 1760–1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 38.

<sup>182</sup> William W. Sweet, *Religion of the American Frontier*. vol. 4 of *The Methodists* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), 3.

<sup>183</sup> Frank Baker, *From Wesley to Asbury* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1976), 38.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>185</sup> John O. Gross, *The Beginnings of Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1961), 48, "The preachers could

It appears, however, that Wesley did not perceive this situation as problematic due to his continual insistence that Methodism was not a separation movement; but, the stresses toward separation continued to grow in America.

Joseph Pilmore may have been the one who helped Wesley to understand the gravity of the situation, writing to him in 1770, “The chief difficulty we labour under is want of ordination, and I believe we shall be obliged to procure it by some means or other. It is not in America as it is in England, for there is no church that is one Established more than another. All sects have equal authority with the Church of England.”<sup>186</sup>

In 1772, Wesley appointed Francis Asbury as his formal assistant in America. Asbury was uniquely suited to the American situation both by his organizational abilities and by his personal constitution. He carefully gathered the scattered Whitfieldian Methodists and formed them into Wesleyan Methodist societies, carefully preserving Wesley’s Rules and structures.<sup>187</sup>

In 1773, reinforcements arrived in the person of Thomas Rankin. Rankin called together the first General Conference of Methodists in America in August. Baker summarizes the new situation, “By this the authority of Wesley and the British Conference was explicitly extended to America, and their doctrine and discipline as contained in the British *Minutes* was accepted as the American norm. Any preacher who proved disloyal to the *Minutes* was no longer to be regarded as in connection with Wesley.”<sup>188</sup> This decision was affirmed and extended to all lay preachers at the second conference in May 1774.

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not baptize their converts or administer the Lord’s Supper to them. For the sacraments American Methodists had to look to the clergy of the established church, a group often out of sympathy with their efforts.”

<sup>186</sup> Baker, *From Wesley to Asbury*, 90.

<sup>187</sup> Andrews, *Methodists and Revolutionary America*, 44–47.

<sup>188</sup> Baker, *From Wesley to Asbury*, 95.



Nevertheless, the 1770's was a time of tension between the asserted control of the absentee Wesley and the pioneer preachers who preferred formless revivalism to organized churchmanship.<sup>189</sup> Loyalty to Wesley was put to the test with the coming of the War of Independence in 1776. The outbreak of war caused all of Wesley's preachers, but Asbury, to return to England. In staying, Asbury became the leader of American Methodism. Its future would be determined more by his leadership than by anything that Wesley said or did.

The Revolutionary War created a crisis for the Methodist societies. Their connection to Anglicanism and Wesley's own opposition to independence for the American colonies brought persecution upon the Methodists and their ministers (who were Anglicans and lay preachers). Many Methodists scattered to the frontier across the Appalachians. By the end of the War, Methodists were detached from the Anglican Church, both politically and physically. Most Anglican priests had retreated back to England. Those who remained were too far distant to provide sacraments for the Methodists and were in the process of separating themselves from Anglicanism by forming the American Episcopal Church. It became apparent that Methodists would have to turn to Calvinist denominations for their sacraments if some action were not taken.

These events forced Wesley to take action to provide ordination for ministers in America. In 1784, he determined to assign America as a new presbytery, following the New Testament pattern, and ordained Thomas Coke as Bishop to the presbytery of America. Coke arrived in America in October of 1784 with Wesley's *Sunday Service* and authority to ordain ministers for the mission area. The Christmas conference (December 24, 1784 to January 1, 1785) resulted in

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 85-86.

the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America with Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury elected, unanimously, as superintendents.<sup>190</sup>

John Wesley took this action over the stern objection of his brother, Charles. In a letter written April 29, 1785 to Dr. (Thomas Bradbury) Chandler, Charles gave an account of his life and ministry as Dr. Chandler prepared to go to America and he, (Charles) prepared to go “for a more distant country.” Here Charles affirmed his and John’s steadfast fidelity to the Church of England and his (Charles’) personal horror at John’s willingness to ordain Bishops and Elders for America. John made this decision without talking to Charles, although Charles was “at his elbow” in Bristol .

Charles reported that he had been warned by Lord Mansfield that ordination amounted to separation. He had assured Mansfield that John would not act without forsaking the “principles and practices of his whole life.” He declared that John’s action, “contrary to all his Declarations, Protestations and Writings” had harmed all of his friends and will “blot his name.” Charles asked, “What will become of those poor sheep in the wilderness, the American Methodists ? How have they been betrayed [*sic*] into a separation from the Church of England!” He declared that he had assurance from Seabury<sup>191</sup> that, had they been patient, Seabury would have provided a “REAL, Primitive, Bishop.” Charles closed the letter lamenting that this action by John would cause the entire movement to come to nothing following his death.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, 288, “With these three clergymen [Thomas Coke, Thomas Vasey, and Richard Whatcoat], Wesley sent to America a plan for setting up a Methodist church separate from the Church of England. The new organization would have all *the essential ecclesiological features* of a ‘church’ denomination: an ordained clergy to administer the sacraments, an official service book containing the liturgy, and doctrinal standards in the form of Articles of Religion (emphasis mine).”

<sup>191</sup> Bishop Samuel Seabury was the first Episcopal Bishop in America.

<sup>192</sup> Charles Wesley, “Letter to Dr. (Thomas Bradbury) Chandler,” *Methodist Archives* (Manchester: John Ryland’s Library, April 29, 1785).

Indeed, Pilmore reported in a letter to Charles December 17, 1785 that he had been ordained as an Elder in the Episcopal Church and assured that the Methodists in New Jersey and New York were happy to receive him into their pulpits. His assurance to Charles was that he “had some conversations with the principle Methodists in N. York respecting the new plan, and am happy to find that they are by no means prejudiced against the Church, but rather desirous to prevent a Schism if possible.”<sup>193</sup> Yet, his ordination was unique. While Seabury was prepared to ordain all “qualified” Methodists, it was also true that most of Wesley’s preachers would never meet the qualifications for ordination as Episcopal priests. Additionally, “Of the forty-two circuits reported at the conference in the spring of 1784, thirty-four were located in Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland, and eight in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. The total membership in Methodist societies was 14,988, and, of this number, only 2,589 were to be found north of Maryland.”<sup>194</sup> Regardless of what agreements had been reached in New York, the remaining colonies had no hope of being served by an ordained clergy without Wesley’s intervention.

The decision to ordain elders for America was *the* act that created separation from the Church of England. Wesley had a well-reasoned argument for taking such an action, based on a careful reading of the New Testament and a willingness to assert the authority of Scripture over Canon law; but, the Church would maintain that he had no authority to ordain. “No presbyter could usurp the office of a bishop, and continue a member of the Church of England; ... it was not his words of loyalty, but his deeds that counted.”<sup>195</sup> And, even if Wesley’s intention was to serve an American Episcopal Church with an ordained Methodist clergy, the Christmas

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<sup>193</sup> Joseph Pilmore, “Letter to Charles Wesley,” *Methodist Archives* (Manchester: John Ryland’s Library Collection, December 17, 1785).

<sup>194</sup> William Sweet, *Religion of the American Frontier*, 11.

conference of 1784 put an end to that ambition by creating an independent church: The Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

By vote of those in attendance at the Conference (not by the authority of Wesley), Wesley's Prayer Book was adopted as were the Twenty-four articles of religion formulated by Wesley from the Thirty-nine of the Church of England as well as Charles' hymbook. Richard Whatcoat provided a summary of the meeting for which no *minutes* exist.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> we rode to Baltimore; at ten o'clock we began our Conference, in which we agreed to form a Methodist Episcopal Church, *in which the Liturgy* (as prescribed by Mr. John Wesley) *should be read*, and the sacraments administered by a superintendent, elders, and deacons, who shall be ordained, by a presbytery, using the Episcopal form, as prescribed by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's prayer book. Persons to be ordained are to be nominated by the superintendent, elected by the Conference, and ordained by imposition of the hands of superintendent and elders; the *superintendent has a negative voice*.<sup>196</sup>

"Mr. Wesley's Prayer Book" had been delivered unbound by the hand of Thomas Coke with the following description,

I have prepared a Liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England, (I think, the best constituted national Church in the world,) which I advise all the Travelling Preachers to use on the Lord's day, in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the Elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.<sup>197</sup>

It was unbound in order to avoid book tariffs. Not only was it unbound, but there were not clear instructions for its use. A morning prayer service was present followed by a form for communion service. It is apparent that Wesley intended the services to be used together, given his insistence on weekly communion, yet there are no instructions or internal rubrics regarding how the two services were to be joined. Apparently, Wesley assumed that the Methodists were well versed

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<sup>195</sup> Robert Tucker, *Separation*, 94.

<sup>196</sup> William Sweet, *Religion of the American Frontier*, 20–21

<sup>197</sup> John Wesley, "Letter to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and Our Brethern in North America," (September 10, 1784),

enough in English liturgy to accomplish the joining without any further instruction. However, what was retained of the service book was the service of morning prayer. The communion service soon became a separate and occasional service in the Methodist service book.<sup>198</sup>

Wesley's prayer book was intended to establish the form and character of the new church,<sup>199</sup> but it quickly fell into disuse within ten years of its adoption. Yet, it was Wesley's intent that his *Sunday Service* be the standard liturgy for his American children. Kenneth Wilson concurs with the assessment here that the *Sunday Service* was intentionally designed and produced by Wesley for the purpose of wedding the American Methodists to their Anglican roots.<sup>200</sup>

Clearly, it was Wesley's intention to shape the American Methodist Church by and through his provided liturgy. This liturgy was neither an abridgement of convenience, nor an unreflective retention of the English rite. Wesley believed that his liturgy would serve as the source of an American New Testament Christianity, freed from liturgical misdirections and abuses of the past. His American liturgy would establish American Methodists with the best possible formula for the infant church. His liturgy would provide all of the spiritual nutrition necessary for the

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in *Works* (JE), 13:252.

<sup>198</sup> The history of the Methodist service book will be discussed more fully in chapter three.

<sup>199</sup> See, Sanders, "Sacramentalism," 229, and Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, 254.

<sup>200</sup> Wilson, *Devotional Relationships*, 344, "It would seem to be the case, then, that Wesley's *Sunday Service* arose out of the overriding needs of Methodism, especially in America, and that it was fashioned in agreement with the personal liturgical insights of Wesley himself. Despite the fact that the "Abridgement" had profound theological, liturgical and ecclesiastical significance, the actual work of revision was, in the opinion of Baker, a relatively simple physical task. This is not to suggest that Wesley gave little serious thought to it, for we have already suggested that he had pondered the idea for about thirty years. Part of Wesley's skill is seen by the fact that he would have carried around with him a copy of the *Book of Common Prayer* and crossed out the passages which he did not wish to include, at the same time inserting new words and phrases here and there. This was his normal way of abridging books for publication. Wesley's main aims were to prevent the American Methodists from forsaking their Anglican roots, and to meet their liturgical needs."

development of mature and holy Christians, unmolested by centuries of European and ecclesiastical abuses.

Wesley's liturgical imagination was expressed most fully in the *Sunday Service*. To understand him as a liturgist, one must extract his advices from this liturgical text. He offers no other summary of his liturgical advices. Yet, it was clearly the case that his intent was to establish the Methodists of America on the best possible liturgical footing, drawn out of a rich conversation with ancient and contemporary liturgists and forged through his own spiritual and ecclesiastical consciousness. Free from political and ecclesiastical constraints, Wesley was free to design worship in whatever way would best suit his desire for his Methodists to grow toward Christian Perfection. Having evaluated all other options, he chose to retain the basic shape and voice of the English liturgy, making minor changes to clarify that voice.

### **The *Sunday Service* as a Liturgical Directive**

The *Sunday Service for the Methodists of North America* was a thoughtfully edited edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* prepared by one who was uniquely qualified to perform such an edit. It was intended to provide a liturgical framework in which the emerging Methodist Church of North America could develop as a truly Biblical and Anglican Church . Wesley relied on both ancient liturgies and key versions of the Book of Common Prayer filtered by his scholarship, imagination and spiritual concern for his followers. His edition retained the best of historic Christian rubrics, traced to the earliest days of Christian usage, while it discarded that which was destructive or useless.

The forces that shaped American Methodism warred against Wesley's vision for the movement from the very beginning.<sup>201</sup> Having never been a leader of Methodism in America,

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<sup>201</sup> These circumstances will be discussed more fully in the next section of this chapter.

John Wesley never wielded control of the American form of the movement. In America, Methodism was a people's movement that expressed American individualism and independence. Free from the bitter ecclesiastical history of the Continent, and, especially, Great Britain, Methodists in America were free to develop as *they* saw fit.

The American situation caused a crisis that forced Wesley to respond in a way that he did not wish. The distances between people and churches, the lack of educated Methodist ministers, and the hostility or elitism of Episcopal Ministers in America worked together to create a liturgical crisis to which Wesley was forced to respond. The American situation resulted in Christians who had gone years without anyone to deliver the sacraments and lacking properly ordered worship. This crisis forced Wesley to respond. He was alarmed that his Methodist sheep would wander the American wilderness without shepherds.

Reasoning that America was a pioneer field resembling the expansion of Christianity in the first centuries, Wesley assumed authority to establish the Church in America under the auspices of Methodism. Against the stern rebuke of his brother, Charles, among others, Wesley provided three things that were essential to authentic Christianity: an ordained clergy, a proper liturgy (with attached hymnbook), and Articles of Faith. The new church embraced ordination with thanksgiving. The Articles of Faith were gladly received. The hymnbook for worship was a delight to Methodism's American cousins. But, the liturgy was quickly set aside like an English suit of armor: it did not fit well, it was too constricting for moving about in untamed wild spaces, and it was too heavy to carry around.

This decision to ignore Wesley's *liturgical* advices was the critical error that has resulted in the crisis of Evangelical worship discussed in Chapter One. That decision revealed the American preference for freedom from authority, preference for what is new over what is old, and right to self-determination. By rejecting Wesley's liturgical advices, American Methodism did the very

thing that Wesley was so steadfastly opposed to when he assessed the worship practices of the Dissenting English churches. They rejected the deep, tested, and fully formed worship of the Church (universal) for a truncated and uninformed approach to worship.

It is not the intention of this project to evaluate the edits that Wesley made to the *Book of Common Prayer* in the *Sunday Service*. They have been explored in credible ways by qualified scholarship.<sup>202</sup> Their findings will suffice to highlight the kind of thinking that was behind these edits. The primary concern for this study is with what was retained and passed on to the Methodists as a pattern for the worshipping church. Before trying to analyze and assess the pattern for worship that Wesley's imagination wanted to provide his American children, which is the task of Chapter Three, it is good to survey what scholarship has said regarding the sources and application of his editing pen, the liturgical advices that can be found in Wesley, both in the *Sunday Service* as well as in his other writings will be outlined. Such a survey will demonstrate that the *Sunday Service* was a deliberate effort to establish the American Methodists on a proper liturgical footing.

### **Sources for Wesley's Liturgical Consciousness**

The most thorough study of the *Sunday Service* was produced by James White in honor of the bicentennial of American Methodism. His republication of the service with commentary provides a thorough evaluation of the sources and strategies of the service. White's monumental work is augmented by the work of a number of scholars which will be discussed below. Together they affirm White's assertion that, "Every page of the *Sunday Service* bears marks, not of a casual reviser but of one who had read or heard the prayer book daily throughout eight decades,

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<sup>202</sup> See list in chapter one, footnotes 5 and 6.



and who is determined to retain all that wore well and to discard only that which proved inadequate in his own experience.”<sup>203</sup>

It has been demonstrated above, in consideration of the educational background of John Wesley, his continual scholarship, and dialog within the liturgical conversation, that the *Sunday Service* was not a thoughtless edit for the sake of accommodating the American scene. The fact that American Methodism neglected and rejected the service demonstrates its lack of understanding about the purpose and import of the document. American freedom and individualism became the driving force for Methodist worship, not an objective doxological theology.

Kenneth Wilson’s study revealed that his sources for this revision include the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, Deacon’s *Complete Collection of Devotions*, Erasmus’ and Cranmer’s homilies, as well as ancient liturgies including Cyprian and Chrysostom.<sup>204</sup> Wesley’s revision would have been consistent with his own approach to Christianity, “From a child I was taught to love and reverence the Scriptures, the oracles of God; and, next to these, to esteem the primitive Fathers, the writers of the first three centuries.”<sup>205</sup> Westerfield-Tucker and Selleck argue that his deference to the earliest centuries of Christianity was a deliberated choice regarding what approach to worship was most

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<sup>203</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 3. Similarly, Sanders, *Sacramentalism*, 246–47, assessed, “It can hardly be doubted that the Sunday Service was produced in conformity with Wesley’s own deepest evangelical convictions.”

<sup>204</sup> See, Wilson, *Devotional Relationships*, 328. Outler in Kenneth Rowe, *Christian Tradition*, 23, “Here, then, was an Anglican who was prepared to surrender the Anglican cause against the Puritans and Dissenters on many counts... And yet he was still a staunch and self-conscious Anglican, determined to graft his evangelical message onto its Anglican rootstock.”

<sup>205</sup> John Wesley, “Farther Thoughts on Separation from the Church,” in *Works* (JE), 13:272.

faithful to the practice of the Apostles and most helpful for the development of truly Christian people.<sup>206</sup>

Wilson's assessment, however, places the ultimate source of Wesley's liturgical imagination not in his reflection on the works of others, but within his own synthesis of scholarship and spiritual concern for his Methodists.

Baxter's suggested revision in 1661 and that of Jones and others in the middle of the eighteenth century were known to Wesley. However, his personal feeling for what constitutes correct worship perhaps influenced him more than these external forces. The value of the 1784 revision is that it reveals Wesley's liturgical predilections and shows that while he was aware of the Puritan demands of 1661, he still remained closer to the *Book of Common Prayer* than Baxter had done.<sup>207</sup>

That is to say, Wesley had his own opinions as to how best to correct the Prayer Book. While he was informed and sensitive to those who had recommended revisions, both past and contemporaneous, Wesley had his own mind on the subject. His revisions were expressions of his own liturgical imagination, formed through personal study, personal life history, his own spiritual journey, his mature theology, and his active conversations with revisionists. Frank Baker puts the conversation into perspective saying,

Wesley's primary concern was for the Gospel; a close second was the revival of the Primitive Church in England, with its preaching liturgy and sacraments. On the one hand, Wesley expressed a lofty appreciation of and preference for the sacraments . On the other hand, he did not feel himself bound to or limited by the liturgy and was able to draw from the worship tradition of the Dissenters.<sup>208</sup>

Wesley's fidelity to the *ordo* of the *Book of Common Prayer*, then, was not nostalgic or mechanical. He believed that the BCP represented the best tradition of Christian worship which

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<sup>206</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 4 and Jerald Selleck, *Common Prayer*, 93. See also, Frederick Hunter, "Sources of Wesley's Revision of the Prayer Book in 1784-8," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (June 1942): 123-133 where he proposed that the key to unlocking the agenda for abridgement lay in the Savoy Conference of 166.

<sup>207</sup> Wilson, *Sacramentalism*, 352.

<sup>208</sup> Selleck, *Common Prayer*, 93.

was proven according to the quadrilateral: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Certainly he was open to the removal of some of the excesses, theological errors, and offensive aspects; but, he recognized in the BCP an *ordo* which, if faithfully followed, would allow worship to function both as a means of grace and as a pattern for Christian life and service.

Baker identified four motives behind Wesley's revisions: his sensitivity to the critiques of the Puritans; his desire to retain American Methodism within the fold; his sensitivity to American frontier conditions; and, his sense that the Sunday Service would have to bear the entire weight of worship for the colonies. Simply, "He was attempting to furnish a full-orbed church life for the American Methodists."<sup>209</sup> At this point in the discussion, then, it will be helpful to consider the specific revisions and how they reflect Wesley's overarching desire to establish American Methodism as the best example of Anglican Christianity.

### **Wesley's Liturgical Revisions**

Since Chapter Three will analyze the service only an overview of what was set aside by the American Methodists is provided here (see Appendix Three for additional details about the *Sunday Service*). Westerfield Tucker offers this brief synopsis of the *Sunday Service* when she writes: "Designed as a service book for Methodist corporate worship, the *Sunday Service* included for Lord's Day usage a lectionary, proper collects, services for morning and evening prayer, an edited and abbreviated Psalter, an order for holy communion, and orders for baptism (for infants and those of 'riper years')."<sup>210</sup> It will be helpful to identify particularly what was eliminated, what was added and emphasized, and what were the fundamental criteria . This

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<sup>209</sup> Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, 247.

<sup>210</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, "Form and Freedom: John Wesley's Legacy for Methodist Worship." In *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, ed., Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1996), 17. For a complete discussion see, 6–8.

summary will give insight to Wesley's theological thinking that drove his imagination for worship and an authentic experience of God.

The alterations that Wesley made were not deletions for the sake of convenience, or an effort to make the service more user-friendly, or to give a greater appeal to the masses.<sup>211</sup> They were intended by Wesley to establish the Methodists of North America with a purified Anglican liturgy and a corrected Anglican theology with a view to establishing American Methodism as a true Anglican (or Christian) Church in America. Affixed to the *Sunday Service* was a rectified version of the Anglican Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, reduced to twenty-four and a psalm-book, *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for the Lord's Day*.<sup>212</sup>

What were eliminated were those parts of worship that were offensive or turned the attention of the worshipper away of Christ.<sup>213</sup> Wesley removed references to Saints, Holy Days, and royalty (references to royalty are retained in the British versions). He even deleted the christological festivals such as Epiphany, Lent, and Maundy Thursday to focus on the birth and resurrection narratives. Readings from the Apocrypha were eliminated as well as much of the portions of the Psalter referencing curses, wrath, killing, war, description of the wicked, and so forth. Theologically, his stamp is seen in the removal of the word "absolution," the removal of any language in the baptismal and Eucharistic rites suggesting regeneration is effected by participation, and many signs of priestly power, including vestments. These deletions demonstrate Wesley's desire to shorten the service as well as his desire to focus the service on the person and work of Jesus Christ, returning the service to its most original and historic

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 289 where Heitzenrater offers a summary of the alterations that Wesley made. James F. White also discusses these alterations at some length in *Prayer Book*, 16–37. See also, Selleck, *Common Prayer*, 182 and Baker, *John Wesley and The Church of England*, 234–55.

<sup>212</sup> Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, 289–90.

<sup>213</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 10, "The whole focus of the book is highly christological." What follows is from

function. “By relying upon the perceived apostolicity of the Prayer Book of 1662, and by removing extraneous material that obscured the purer elements, Wesley believed that he was giving the American Methodists the best liturgical document the church had to offer.”<sup>214</sup>

More significant than the deletions, are the additions and emphases that Wesley built into his Prayer Book. Those additions are seen both in the liturgy itself, the instructions accompanying the rubrics, and in the hymnbook that was attached.

The service reflected Wesley’s love of Eucharist. Clearly, he believed Communion to be a chief means of grace and he instructed that it be celebrated weekly (weekly Communion was no longer the practice of the Church of England). Baker surmised that it is in this emphasis on Communion that we see Wesley’s most fundamental commitment.

The whole approach of Wesley to Holy Communion furnishes a remarkable blend of loyal allegiance to the order and rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer*, supplemented by a deliberate attempt to recapture the liturgy of the apostolic church, as in the use of the mixed chalice of wine and water, and even (by way if the hymns) of the epiclesis or prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit otherwise preserved only by the Eastern Church.<sup>215</sup>

While Baker’s assessment is correct, it is incomplete. Wesley had both a desire to recapture an authentic liturgy *and* to make worship a *work of the people*. Thus, the *Sunday Service* was intended to be an experiential service, integrating song, scripture, preaching, and Communion into a vibrant expression of the worshipper’s participation in the eschatological present. Hymns replaced choral singing. They were intended to be singable and unison, carrying Methodist theology in hymnic form. They functioned as agents of evangelism and catechesis.

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White’s analysis of the *Sunday Service*, 9–36.

<sup>214</sup> Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship*, 6.

<sup>215</sup> Baker, *John Wesley and The Church of England*, 86.

Westerfield Tucker identified five fundamental criteria driving Wesley's revisions: Scripture, Antiquity, Fidelity to the Established Church, Reason, and Experience.<sup>216</sup> To her list should be added Henry Knight's observation of the centrality of the Eucharist for Wesley.<sup>217</sup> Additionally H. Ray Dunning's observation that everything about Wesley was designed to have a soteriological impact should be considered, "What I would suggest is that Wesley took the multiple traditions which he inherited and sought to appropriate them in a creative eclecticism to which his soteriological focus gave coherence."<sup>218</sup> Wesley's liturgical consciousness and his evangelical mission were merged into one document designed to structure Christian worship: *The Sunday Service for the Methodists of North America*.

What becomes apparent through this historical investigation is that worship, for Wesley, was essential to Christian life. It was a means of grace, a means of spiritual formation, and a means by which the Christian participated in Divine realities. Albert Outler described Wesley's theology as rising from one who had, "an ecclesial vision of a sacramental community as the nurturing environment of Christian experience."<sup>219</sup> From Wesley's *Christian Library* Wesley's opinion on worship is expressed through the pen of Bishop William Beveridge, "Worship being that which is contained in the very notion of a Deity; which is, that he is the Being of all beings, upon whom all other things or beings do depend."<sup>220</sup>

Worship, then, was intended to produce an authentic experience of the presence of God . The *forms* of worship were intended to produce the *product* of worship . Worship did not consist

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<sup>216</sup> Westerfield Tucker, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, 19.

<sup>217</sup> Henry H. Knight III, "Worship and Sanctification," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, (Fall 1997): 11.

<sup>218</sup> H. Ray Dunning, "Toward a Wesleyan Ecclesiology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Spring 1987): 113.

<sup>219</sup> Albert Outler, "The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition," 13.

<sup>220</sup> John Wesley, "An Extract for Thoughts on Religion by Dr. Beveridge," *A Christian Library* vol. 20, (London: T. Cordeux, 1820), 357.

in the outward forms, but in the experience of the presence of God that these forms mediated. In the words of Lutheran theologian, John Arndt, Wesley counsels in his *Christian Library*,

This then is the *third* part of the inward spiritual worship, a real and experimental knowledge of *grace*, with an intimate sense of the full and meritorious satisfaction of Jesus Christ, issuing from the knowledge of God; which knowledge, in like manner, is the source of repentance, as repentance is of remission of sins: which, though three, yet are indeed but one, and are sustained as on a foundation by the solid knowledge of God.<sup>221</sup>

Similarly, Wesley's *Service* reveals his desire that Methodist worship would function to declare the gospel through Scripture, word, and sacrament to the end that the saving and sanctifying grace of God would be proclaimed, encountered, experienced, and expressed by those who gathered for worship.

Selleck noted that Wesley's attitude toward worship was rooted both in the historic function of worship and in Anglican theology. "Like Hooker, he understood the liturgy as a faith-event in which 'the very simplest and rudest... least articulate and verbal can experience and celebrate the mercies of God.'"<sup>222</sup> In light of Selleck's observation, then, it can be seen that the edits of the prayer book were intended to make it accessible to all people and experientially functional.<sup>223</sup> White surmises, "The *Sunday Service*, then, is basically the work of one determined to preserve [*The Book of Common Prayer*] for others by adapting it to their changed

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<sup>221</sup> John Wesley, "An Extract of John Arndt's True Christianity," *A Christian Library*, vol. 1 (London: T. Cordeaux, 1809), 211.

<sup>222</sup> Selleck, *Common Prayer*, 16.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 202: "The *Sunday Service* was to be for them a standard by which experimental piety was measured and to which it was wedded. . . . Wesley's intention was to provide the Americans with a workable order, and he relied on the best resource he had available—the Book of Common Prayer. His abridgement demonstrates his love and devotion to that book, but it also gives evidence to that fact that love and devotion were neither blind nor uncritical."

circumstances.”<sup>224</sup> The *Sunday Service* was Wesley’s most direct attempt to establish a Methodist Church that would be faithful to the vision and experience of its leader.

This investigation has revealed Wesley’s qualifications, intent, and deliberation in producing the *Sunday Service*. Had the first recipients known their ‘father’ very well, they would not have laid aside his advices so quickly. Regardless of that historical blunder, and, perhaps, due to that blunder, the need to reassess the practice of worship in Wesleyan churches going forward is evident, as chapter one surmised. The liturgy that he had delivered to America was an effort to express his experiential faith in such a way as to lead a congregation of believers to continue to know and propagate that faith.

Wesley’s edition of a Prayer Book was an intentional effort to guide the American Methodists toward worship that would be fully formed and informed in reference to the entire history of Christian worship. His liturgical revision expressed his convictions that there was a form of worship that best reflected the practice of Christianity and that form, including scripture, prayer, and sacraments would most effectively function as a means of grace—a vehicle that would facilitate the reception of the gracious activity of God in the life of the believer. However, his advices and reflections on worship reveal that worship did not function in the abstract, *ex opera, operato*.<sup>225</sup> Rather, worship only accomplishes its purpose when the worshipper is fully engaged in it . It was Wesley’s intent to merge the objective form with the subjective experience of worship in such a way that the worshipper would sense and express the presence of Christ in worship and be transformed into a life of faith and service through worship. Wesley understood “true” worship to be a spirit and truth encounter with God.

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<sup>224</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 3.

<sup>225</sup> “By the work performed.” This phrase is used critically of an approach to the sacraments that suggest that they function to convey the grace of salvation with or without the conscious apprehension or involvement of the worshipper.



This chapter has shown why Wesley's advices on worship should be explored and taken seriously. It is clear that he tried to retain fidelity to an historic pattern of worship in his response to the needs of his American descendants. The pattern of worship that he presented in the *Sunday Service* retained the best practices of Christian worship while removing that which was extraneous or unhelpful for spiritual enlightenment and Christian formation. Wesley was informed through his personal history, his study of and training in the use of the *Book of Common Prayer*, and his personal study of the history of Christian worship, especially in reference to the ante-Nicene Church. Wed to his understanding of the nature and function of Christian worship, was his own personal encounter with God—his heart faith. He understood that worship could be so formed to appeal both to the intellect and to the affections. Properly ordered worship functioned both to form Christian understanding and Christian faith. His *Service Book* was a deliberate effort to provide for the Methodist church in America a pattern of worship that preserved the best of historic Christian worship to be applied in a new and dynamic situation.

Christianity in America, however, has been shaped more by the emotivism that was typified by the frontier campmeeting style of worship. Because they did not understand the need for worship that was properly constituted and fully formed, Americans focused on the evangelical passion of Methodism while setting aside much of the liturgical vision of John Wesley. As a result, Christianity that has been divorced from the full counsel and imagination of Wesley has drifted along a trajectory that has created a crisis in worship as discussed in Chapter One. Wesley's service offers a solution to be considered as a corrective to the over-personalization of contemporary worship. It is built upon principles that offer proper ordering of worship while offering the freedom that comes with an existential encounter with God. Giving careful attention to the advices for worship that are enfolded in the *Service* offers a way to

reassess worship within the contemporary American setting. Chapter Three will consider ways in which Wesley's advices can be extracted and applied to the current liturgical questions. In so doing, a pattern of ordered worship will be offered that provides a meaningful way to apply Wesley's liturgical imagination to the dynamic cultural circumstances of contemporary Christianity.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITURGICAL RENEWAL: A WESLEYAN APPROACH

Chapter one identified a doxological crisis in the American church that crosses all denominational boundaries, focusing on evangelicalism and, more specifically, on Wesleyan denominations. Chapter two made the case that Wesley was a qualified, thoughtful, and deliberate liturgist whose liturgical advices were never taken seriously nor enmeshed within his movement. Numerous forces led to that neglect; however, given the current consensus that the practices of worship should be reevaluated, this study returns to Wesley's advices with the anticipation that they can help cure the current disordered liturgical practice in America.

Wesley's liturgical thinking can be both faithful to his own ambitions for his spiritual children and fruitful for re-forming worship within a post-Christian context. This chapter will show that extracting the underlying pattern from John Wesley's *Sunday Service for the Methodists of North America* reveals a thoughtful and deliberate revision of the service from the *Book of Common Prayer*. There is, then, a Wesleyan approach to liturgical renewal that can guide his descendants. It grows from doxological essentials that are discovered in his life and work, as chapter two has discussed, namely, that proper worship is a primary means of grace, the foundation of Christian life, and shaped by historical precedent. These essentials are provided in his *Sunday Service* and his various advices on worship. They reflect Wesley's commitment to worship God in spirit and truth.

This chapter will explore his advices more directly as they related to the analysis of the *Service* and its application to the contemporary practice of worship. This analysis will demonstrate a way in which Wesley's advices can be applied in a variety of cultural worship

settings producing an ordered approach to worship that has both structural components that are formed and informed by the historic practices of Christian worship while retaining the spirited character that characterized Methodist worship both in Great Britain and in America. However, before engaging in that discussion directly, this chapter begins by evaluating some recent models for worship renewal offered within the Wesleyan circle.

### **Some Prescriptions for Change**

Chapter One discussed the crisis in American Evangelicalism and identified problems in responding to the individualism of American society by marketing the church. It showed how attracting new people too often leads to divisions in the Body of Christ, entertaining worship that is driven by needs of the consumer, sacrificing faith and practice so individuals can remain attached to their old ways, and truncating worship to one task, namely, seeking the lost. Such domesticating of worship for the sake of appeal hardly addresses the fullness of worship's task. Yes, it is designed to draw people to faith, but also to mature and equip disciples. The call for change has raised some key questions. How are those within the Wesleyan tradition to respond to current trends in worship and retain a truly Wesleyan approach to worship? Is there a way to shape the worship service (*orandi*) so that it gives clear expression to a Wesleyan faith essentials (*credendi*) that challenge people to faith and holiness?

Consider how one author invites Wesley's followers to re-imagine Methodist worship within this contemporary American (post-Christian) context. Andy Langford describes the present challenge saying, "Too often, we in the church simply walk through our worship without understanding its divine energy..." and concludes, "Today, congregations in North America face a profoundly unchristian culture. Yet, this culture seeks a foundation that the church alone can provide. The task before the church is whether it will use the power of God's grace through

worship to explode within our society the love of Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> His analysis will provide a way to see the benefits of this chapter’s approach to the Wesleyan doxological imagination. It can stand as a representative view that is informed and oft repeated but flawed when compared to Wesley’s liturgical imagination and prescriptions.

Langford offers a typical way to discuss the primary streams of worship as they are experienced in America. He identifies three streams of worship tradition: liturgical, praise and worship, and seeker.<sup>2</sup> The form of worship that was handed down in Wesley’s *Sunday Service* would be described by Langford as liturgical. He characterizes liturgical worship saying,

Liturgical worship tends to be formal. The goal of worship is hearing and seeing the Word in rational and reasonable ways, and toward that end—based in its Old English word origin ‘weorth-scipe’—to honor or esteem the wholly other God. Grounded on the lectionary and specific liturgical texts, Baptism and Holy Communion stand at the heart of the community’s life.<sup>3</sup>

This characterization of liturgical worship is not uncommon; it often causes people to conclude that liturgical worship is dry, formal, and of no real value to the needs of a contemporary person. Indeed, it was this kind of evaluation of liturgical worship that caused Wesley’s *Service* to be set aside by the pragmatic Methodists.

While Wesleyan worship *is* liturgical, it will become evident that it is not *merely* liturgical in Langford’s way of categorizing. Wesley deliberately embraced a liturgical approach to worship. While some might argue that Wesley could have imagined no other form, such a contention is neither historically nor biographically aware. Wesley, as noted above, lived in a sea of worship choices and studied the entire tradition of Christian worship. He was often pressed by Dissenter friends and associates to embrace a freer form of worship that would be more

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<sup>1</sup> Andy Langford, *Transitions in Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 15. Langford served as editor of *The Revised Common Lectionary* and as general editor of *The Methodist Book of Worship*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. See his appendix for a table comparing his three categories.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

accessible to the “plain folk” his movement attracted. On numerous occasions he was pressed to approve the Methodist meeting for use as Sunday worship. He steadfastly rejected these petitions in favor of liturgical worship. His *Sunday Service* was designed to establish for the American Methodists a liturgical pattern of worship, but not the dry and formal variety that Langford’s definition would indicate.

Langford is not hostile to the liturgical service. Rather, he indicates that liturgical worship is the only “complete” form of worship since liturgical worship is understood as a three-stage process that involves introducing seekers to Jesus, inviting them into community with Christ and the Church, and forming them into people of God. What he terms Praise-and-Worship style services and Seeker services have the goal of conversion and are designed primarily to introduce worshippers to Christ. They depend on other aspects of congregational life to provide nurture and identity.<sup>4</sup>

Langford says liturgical worship is designed with already-committed-followers in mind. It can be so countercultural to contemporary unchurched Americans as to disenfranchise those they are trying to reach. Because liturgical services are designed to prepare the worshipper for participation at the Table, Langford characterizes these services as consisting of extensive reading of scripture, traditional music, and didactic sermons that do not connect to the lives of the worshippers. He goes on to say that, while several denominations are seeking ways to reinvigorate a liturgical form of worship, “The difficulty is that each of these models of

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 21, “The particular evangelistic task, or the central goal, of the Liturgical service is distinctly different from that of Praise and Worship or Seeker services. The total evangelistic task of worship may be described as a three-stage process from introducing seekers to Jesus to inviting new hearers into community and then ultimately incorporating believers fully into Christ’s ministry. Descriptively, this process is like steps leading to a porch that then leads into a house. Whereas Seeker services are basic introductions to God (the steps), and Praise and Worship teaches new converts (the porch) who are then baptized (the door), Liturgical services nurture and strengthen believers (who live within the household of God).”

incorporation still attempts to bring seekers and new hearers into the language base, beliefs, and practices of established believers without enough cultural adaptation.”<sup>5</sup>

According to Langford, the traditional Protestant preaching service is a sub-category of the liturgical service and recognized as the preferred form of Methodist worship. His description of the preaching service would sound familiar to most who worship in the Wesleyan tradition.

These services emphasize the centrality of the scriptural Word and personal experience of God. This liturgy begins with a time of preparation that contains Scripture readings, prayer, the offering, and ministry announcements. The music consists of gospel songs and hymns accompanied by piano or organ. Following these “preliminaries,” the highlight of the service is the sermon—originally intended to be, but increasingly less of, an exposition of Scripture—by the worship leader, who is often called “Preacher.” At the end of the sermon, during the closing hymn, the preacher invites people to be followers of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

He would consider the Preaching service to be a low form of a liturgical service. However, he expresses a common critique of either the *high* or the *low* form of a liturgical service: “Ruled by the tyranny of tradition, the smell most often associated with Liturgical worship is not incense but mold and mildew.”<sup>7</sup> Langford considered liturgical worship too outdated, failing to serve the uninitiated.

Characterizations like his may elicit several questions. Can worship that is faithful to the spirit of Wesley’s liturgical design be rescued from the mold and mildew to speak with a fresh voice to those who are ignorant of the church and the story of salvation? Is there a way to harmonize evangelism and formation within the context of an *ordered* Sunday service? Is it possible to allow worship to speak with a contemporary, ethnic, and contextualized voice without sacrificing its form, depth and intent? Can worship that is faithful to the liturgical spirit of John Wesley be conducted using various forms of music in non-traditional worship spaces?

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 24.

Can worship be welcoming, engaging, and winsome for those who have no background in the Christian faith?

Langford says the key to answering these questions is found in what the worshipper *experiences* within the context of worship. Citing authors like George Hunter, Robert Webber, Wade Clark Roof, Tim Wright, and Martin Marty, Langford concludes, “Worship is the key to reaching the newer generations. Seekers or pre-Christians come first to corporate worship to see if the church has something to offer.”<sup>8</sup> That *something* can be presented liturgically, with a sense of mystery and awe, as long as it is welcoming, engaging, experiential, and useful. Langford says, “[T]hese new generations are looking for worship that is expressive, interactive, open to a variety of family models, willing to help shape values, and accepting of informal dress. They welcome culturally and racially inclusive congregations in which women are respected and everyone participates at whatever level he or she desires.”<sup>9</sup>

While he correctly reminds that, for Wesley, worship was a primary means of grace, expressing “God’s reality and presence in ways through which people can both hear and respond to the gospel,” Langford under-appreciates how fullness of worship can lead the participant down the entire path of the Christian life when he says, “The goal for every worship service is to effect a new relationship between God and each individual present.”<sup>10</sup> But, such a focus could be considered accurate only in its broadest sense; it is a reductionistic view of what can be experienced in worship.

If worship in the Wesleyan tradition is seen *only* as the means by which people enter into the experience of justifying grace, then the mistake that the Methodists made in 1794 is repeated. Worship, for Wesley, is the means by which a person enters into the life of Christ, grows into

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 62.



maturity in love for God and neighbor, and is equipped to live out his or her relationship with God in response to those outside the church. His passion and purpose was to bring people into the life of Christ by providing a way for them to enter into a continuing life with God and other disciples. The Church with its liturgy was Wesley's *alma mater*, not only birthing him, but also, nursing, training, and sending him to serve Christ in the world. Because the contemporary conversation too often narrows the purpose of worship, it misses John Wesley's vision and advice.

### **Wesley's Doxological Essentials<sup>11</sup>**

The nature and structure of worship has been under-appreciated by many in the Wesleyan theological tradition. Wesley himself would not have conceived of the current separation of his theology from his doxology. As is evident from the discussion in chapter two, it is not the case that he was merely stuck in his own ecclesiastical orientation. Rather, Wesley believed it dangerous and disastrous to attempt to establish a Christian church without properly formed Christian worship. There are three fundamental concerns that lie behind Wesley's design for public worship and shape his own liturgical imagination. Wesley understood that worship was a primary means of grace, thus concluding that improperly formed worship would interfere with the worshipper's ability to encounter the graces of God. He also understood that worship was the foundation of a Christian's life. Worship forms and informs a life of faithfulness and service. Additionally, worship is shaped by the whole history of Christian worship. He designed his *Service* out of his personal exploration and reflection upon the whole sweep of Christian worship as a representation of the best practices of worshipping Christians from the Apostles to his own period in history.

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<sup>11</sup> See, chapter two above, 122–130.

## **Worship is a Primary Means of Grace**

When correctly formed, worship functions as the primary means by which a Christian would encounter the grace of God in his or her life. Furthermore, the shape of worship provides the foundation for Christian spiritual life. Christian life is formed and informed by regular exposure to the rites and rituals, as well as the scriptures, sermons, and seasonal rhythms of ordered worship. The worship that Wesley recommended was a form that was faithful to the best practices of Christians throughout history and functioned to maintain the individual worshipper's place in the Church Universal. From the perspective of John Wesley, the current status of worship as discussed in chapter one is the result of sublimating the primacy of worship beneath the agenda of evangelism.

While he was conscientiously evangelistic, Wesley understood worship to have a broader task than simply the conversion of the unsaved or the encouragement of the saved. He understood worship to be the *primary* means by which the grace of God was encountered and by which worshippers were formed into the people of God. Worship in the Wesleyan tradition will draw people into the life of Christ through objective proclamation and through personal encounters of grace in order to equip them to live in and by the love of God in the world beyond the sanctuary.<sup>12</sup>

Wesley's attitude toward worship is reflected in a letter written to Richard Morgan on January 15, 1734.

I take religion to be, not the bare saying over so many prayers, morning and evening, in public or in private; not anything superadded now and then to a careless or worldly

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<sup>12</sup> See, Paul S. Sanders, *An Appraisal of John Wesley's Sacramentalism in the Evolution of Early Methodism* (PhD diss, Union Theological Seminary, 1954), 59. His appraisal of Wesley's approach to worship is consistent with the approach in this project. "Wesley's life— long resistance to the separation of his societies from the Anglican Church was therefore dictated by something far more significant than a blindly tenacious conservatism. It was dictated by an intelligent religious appreciation of the Christian Church as the means of grace. It was rooted and grounded in a profoundly *soteriological* evaluation of the Church. If we think only of the Church as the believing community of the justified, it is then preeminently true that apart from the Church there is no such thing as Christian experience."

life; but a constant ruling habit of soul, a renewal of our minds in the image of God, a recovery of the divine likeness, a still-increasing conformity of heart and life to the pattern of our most holy Redeemer.<sup>13</sup>

To be clear, then, the worship service was not in and of itself the essence of a disciplined Christian life, but the foundation of a disciplined Christian life. Wesley understood that worship as the heartfelt expression of a person seeking a devout and holy life. Worship was what oriented and gave shape to that developing spirituality. To borrow anachronistically from the *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy*, worship was understood as the “fount and summit” of the Christian life.<sup>14</sup>

While it is clearly arguable that the worship service is only one aspect of the Wesley program of Spiritual Formation, it is his understanding of worship that has been underappreciated and neglected. His commitment to small accountability groups is evident and significant and has been studied often. Nevertheless, despite his development of Methodist Bands, Societies, and preaching houses, Wesley insisted that Methodists participate in Anglican worship services. He was clearly convinced that the neglect of the full order of Anglican worship would result in the malformation of the Methodists’ souls.

Historically, however, it is clear that the Methodist Society meeting became the dominant model of Methodist worship in America. A number of factors can be identified which blended together to undermine liturgical worship. Among those factors was the popularity of folk religion expressed in the campmeeting movement.<sup>15</sup> Poorly educated Methodist preachers, the frontier conditions of America, distaste for the complicated English liturgy, the lack of ordained clergy,

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<sup>13</sup> Richard M. Cameron, *The Rise of Methodism: A Source Book* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 72.

<sup>14</sup> See chapter one, fn 69.

<sup>15</sup> William W. Sweet, *The Methodists*, vol. 4 of *Religion of the American Frontier* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946.), 68, offers a simple description of the movement. “Though originating among frontier Presbyterians in the James McGreely revivals in Logan County, Kentucky, in the latter years of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth centuries, the campmeeting soon became to a large degree a Methodist institution.”

and the dominance of Dissenter denominations in America, created an environment that was apathetic, if not hostile, to Wesley's liturgical advices.

Yet, with the rejection of Wesley's liturgical advice went the rejection of something that was essentially Wesleyan. Wesley's vision of the Christian life is firmly grounded in the God-given means of grace: prayer, sacrament, and scripture. His liturgy retained an historically tested, Biblically faithful, and theologically grounded pattern for worship. Baker argues, "The key to Wesley's scheme for America was to be found in his careful revision of *Book of Common Prayer*. This was a deliberate attempt to make the best of both worlds by acknowledging the need for a new church on American soil, yet striving to keep it as near as possible to the best pattern which he knew—the Church of England."<sup>16</sup> Neglect of his *ordo* neglects something that is as quintessentially Wesleyan as his doctrine of Christian Perfection.

Wesley's opinion regarding the liturgy of the Church of England being the "best constituted" was not a reflection on what was comfortable or useful personally. As Chapter Two showed, this was a studied opinion by a qualified liturgical historian who was deeply committed to the retention of a Biblical and historic pattern of worship as central to the formation of authentic Christian spirituality.<sup>17</sup> It was a primary means of grace.

### **Worship is the Foundation of The Christian Life**

This primary means of grace was found in a well-ordered public worship of the church. Proper worship could be supplemented with other Christian gatherings. Wesley could imagine it no other way. For him, Sunday worship, properly ordered, was the foundation upon which Christian lives were to be built.

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<sup>16</sup> Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London: Epworth Press, 1970), 242.

<sup>17</sup> Sanders, *Sacramentalism*, 7. The internal quote is from Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols. (London: 1878), 1:135, "The church for which he (Wesley) was perennially concerned was neither the politico–ecclesiastical Establishment, nor was it the Evangelical Church of the Reformation and of the nineteenth–century Low Churchmen and Methodists. He 'took of his model in doctrine and worship the Primitive Church before its divisions into East and West.'"

Kenneth Wilson showed that the liturgy provided the framework for Wesley's own spirituality.<sup>18</sup> Thus, while it has been observed that Wesley's prayer book provided, at least, the theological framework for the American Methodists, it would have been impossible for Wesley to imagine his theology being separated from his liturgy.<sup>19</sup> Ernest Rattenbury surmised, "The Eucharist and the Word of God were the main sources of his spiritual nature."<sup>20</sup>

While it is evident that Wesley invented, refined, augmented, and utilized a number of means to aid in the establishment, perfection, and maintenance of the Christian life, none of these means were designed to replace the work of the church at worship. The worshipping church was the foundation for all of Wesley's doctrine and practice.<sup>21</sup> Kenneth Collins affirms this understanding saying, "In a real sense, for Wesley, the church is the ark of salvation, the chosen vessel that enables the community to travel through the tempests and trials of life in order to land safely on the happy shore."<sup>22</sup> Rattenbury discusses Wesley's commitment to proper worship as essential to Christian life and spirituality. His assessment argues

In a word, Wesley regarded his own evangelistic and fellowship services not as substitutes but *supplements* to ordered public worship, and this no doubt accounts of his advice to his American preachers when he founded the American Methodist Church, and also for his counsel to preachers in English preaching houses in 1786: 'we advise everyone who preaches in Church hours to read the Psalms and the Lessons with part of the Church prayers.'<sup>23</sup> (emphasis mine).

It is clear that Wesley could not imagine or tolerate a situation in which an independent

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<sup>18</sup> Kenneth A. Wilson, *The Devotional Relationship and Interaction between the Spirituality of John Wesley, the Methodist Societies and the Book of Common Prayer* (PhD diss, Belfast: Queen's University, 1984), 277.

<sup>19</sup> John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven By Storm* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 19, see also, Wesley Swift, "Methodism and the Book of Common Prayer," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (June 1949), and Kenneth Wilson, *Devotional Relationship*, 326.

<sup>20</sup> Ernest J. Rattenbury, *Vital Elements of Public Worship*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Epworth Press, 1954), 78.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 75, "Whatever can be said about the subjectivity of Wesley's experimental doctrine, there can be no doubt of his belief in objective worship and that Grace was given through the Ordinances of the Church which is a social organization."

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 237.

<sup>23</sup> Rattenbury, *Vital Elements*, 81.

congregation or church might be established on the basis of anything other than proper worship.

### **Proper Worship was Shaped by Historical Precedent**

The essentials of public worship were shaped by the history of Christian worship and necessary to maintain the church. The weight of scholarship would agree that Anglican worship was most expressive of Wesley's desire to maintain the truest historic form of Christianity—the source for the development of vital Christian life.<sup>24</sup> In the end, however, his desire to establish Methodism as a society within Anglicanism failed and his effort to create an American Episcopal Methodism failed as well. Thus, while the Wesleyan movement continues to be loosely tethered to its founder theologically, it has failed to fulfill Wesley's doxological vision as seen in the *Sunday Service* he prepared for America.

This vision is made clearest in White's study, which highlights the fact that Wesley's liturgical design for America was simplified by frontier Americans in order to be accessible. He points out that since it was Wesley's intent that worship would be participatory, American worship was simplified so that it could be accomplished in church buildings lacking the most rudimentary of instruments or symbolic architecture.<sup>25</sup> This accommodation became the standard form of worship as Methodism developed resulting in an unhealthy truncating of properly ordered worship. Wesley could not imagine a church without this historic worship, even if with a simplified form of it.

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<sup>24</sup> The list of scholars whose publications affirm this contention contains many of the most significant Wesleyan historians and theologians including, James S. White, Ernest Rattenbury, Kenneth Collins, Donald Saliers, Jerald Selleck, Robert Wearmouth, Geoffrey Wainwright, Lester Ruth, Karen Westerfield Tucker, Ted Campbell, Richard Heitzenrater, Kenneth Rowe, Frank Baker, Randy Maddox, Robert Staples, et. al.

<sup>25</sup> James F. White, ed., *John Wesley's Prayer Book: The Sunday Service of the Methodists of North America with introduction notes and commentary by James F. White* (Cleveland, OH: OSL Publications, 1991), 2.

## Restoring What Was Misplaced

Wesley's view of proper worship put the primary means of grace at the center of spiritual life and made liturgy (Eucharist and the Word) the foundation of Christian life. He could not imagine a church without a historic liturgical design. These essentials are necessary for a proper pattern of worship and the key to avoiding unhealthy worship.

Methodism, the greatest movement in American Christianity, set the church in America on a trajectory that has produced the angst that is being experienced at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Multiple denominations have sensed the need to revisit the question of worship as a means to save American Christianity from its self-absorbed personalism. The resurgence of courses at colleges and seminaries, departments, forums, societies, ecclesiastic commissions, publications, and workshops are all focused on the same question, "What has gone wrong with our practice of worship and how can we fix it?"

By establishing an objective standard for worship design, the direction of the conversation can be changed from, "How can worship be shaped to make people come," to "How can people be shaped by coming to worship?"

Identifying a standard is not proposing that the way to correct the errors of our past is to return to a Wesleyan *Book of Common Prayer*. As attractive as that idea may be, it is simply not practical to believe that it works. In most Wesleyan denominations there is simply neither history nor authority that could create or institute such a radical change in their *ordo*. Besides, even if *lex orandi* is constitutive of *lex credendi*,<sup>26</sup> neither *orandi* nor *credendi* necessarily lead to *vivendi*. Wesley, himself, noted that many of the ministers of "the best constituted national Church in the

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<sup>26</sup> See the discussion in chapter one, 36.

world” were drunks and immoral. “Wesley was very clear in his conviction that no nation had fallen from the first principles of religion quite as low as England.”<sup>27</sup>

Yet, for those who seek to be faithful to the theological and practical heritage of John Wesley, the effort to explore the thought and practice of Wesley can produce meaningful practical ideas that can provide both authentic worship and true renewal. A conscientious return to a Wesleyan *ordo* is the irreducible foundation for the declaration, inculcation, expression, and transference of the Wesleyan theological core—experiential Christianity and Christian Perfection.

What is proposed below is a way to use the *Sunday Service* as a point of reference for shaping the practice of worship for Wesleyans. In so doing, a fourth category must be added to the three outlined by Langford above (namely, liturgical, praise and worship, and seeker). Call it “Ordered Worship.”<sup>28</sup> Using Wesley’s liturgical advices along with the *Sunday Service* pattern, an *ordered* approach to worship will be demonstrated which maintains the heart of Wesley’s liturgical imagination while recognizing the multifaceted cultural and ecclesial contexts in which worship is conducted in America. This approach shifts the focus away from how worship *attracts* to the way in which worship should *function*.

Using Langford’s analysis, a truly Wesleyan *ordo* must offer *entrance* into the life of Christ, facilitate Christian *formation* leading to a life of holiness and service, and provide the *context* out of which the believer establishes her or his *identity* within a secularized culture. Following the lead of others in the Methodist tradition such as Knight, Blevins, Hoskins, Maddox, White, Ruth, and Westerfield Tucker, this study understands that worship, conducted in

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<sup>27</sup> Robert L. Tucker, *The Separation of the Methodists from the Church of England*, (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1918), 11.

<sup>28</sup> I am offering this term to encapsulate the approach to worship that I find in Wesley. Where this term is used below, the reader should understand it as the author’s term to set Wesley’s approach to worship apart from other approaches discussed.



a Wesleyan way, has the ability to create Christians of a Wesleyan heart. Worship is the place where love for God is enacted within the context of the eschatological community seeking to be engaged in the activities of praise, remembrance, and infilling so as to be transformed into actually holy people. “Thus, to love the God revealed in Jesus Christ has a profound *formative* effect on who we are—it is what makes us Christian in the Wesleyan sense of holiness of heart and life”(emphasis mine).<sup>29</sup>

Wesley’s sermon, numbered twenty-four, discourse IV, in his series on the *Sermon on the Mount*, is a thorough discussion of his understanding of true Christian worship.<sup>30</sup> In this sermon, Wesley argues against those who would suppose that the purest form of worship involves withdrawing from society altogether. Building on the text from Matthew 5:13-16, Wesley says that salt and light must be tasted and seen to have any value. True Christianity cannot be hidden or withdrawn from the world.

As the sermon unfolds, Wesley refers to Jesus’ words recorded in John 4:24, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth”(NKJV). He questions and responds,

What is it to worship God, a Spirit, in spirit and in truth? Why it is to worship him with our spirit; to worship him in that manner which none but spirits are capable of. It is to believe in him, as a wise, just, holy Being, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and yet merciful, gracious, and long-suffering; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; casting all our sins behind his back, and accepting us in the Beloved. It is, to love him, to delight in him, to desire him with all our heart, and mind, and soul and strength; to imitate him we love, by purifying ourselves even as He is pure; in thought, and word, and work. Consequently, one branch of worshipping God in spirit and truth is, the keeping of his outward commandments.<sup>31</sup>

Wesley defines the worship of God in the broadest possible terms as having to do with the

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<sup>29</sup> Henry H. Knight III, “Worship and Sanctification,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Fall, 1997): 13–14.

<sup>30</sup> John Wesley, “Upon the Lord’s Sermon on the Mount: Discourse the Fourth,” in *Sermons I: 1–33*, ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 1 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 531–49.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 544.

totality of life. Worship involves true faith, authentic affection, and a life of obedience leading to holiness. In this broadest sense, the entirety of Christian life is or ought to be an offering of worship to God, not merely the Divine Service.

As the sermon continues, Wesley argues against those who would approve of this broad definition of worship as a reason to reject the need for Christians to gather for a liturgical service of worship. He offers their point of view: “We attended all the ordinances; but were no better for it; nor indeed anyone else;....”<sup>32</sup> While he agrees that many have abused the ordinances of the Church to their detriment, thinking that faith in Christ was equivalent to participation in the ordinances of worship, Wesley responds that people must be careful not to mistake means for ends. “But let the abuse be taken away, and the use remain. Now use all outward things, but use them with a constant eye to the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness.”<sup>33</sup>

What follows takes Wesley’s advice. A faithful means of grace is sought by which Christians may be taught to know God, to experience His graces, and to serve Him in the world. Recognizing that the ends toward which the means attend are an experiential faith expressed in a life of personal holiness and Christian service, this study seeks to renew the “uses” while cautioning against the “abuses.” Wesleyan worship must be comprised of both character and structure. The worship malady which has produced such fracturing in doxological practice is the tendency to err to one extreme or the other, Evangelical churches tending to err on the side of spirit over truth and main line churches tending to err on the side of truth over spirit.

### **Seeking a Wesleyan Pattern for Worship**

Encouraged by the Liturgical Renewal Movement or frustrated by the emptiness of contemporary approaches to worship, a number of Wesleyan scholars, both within and without

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 545.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

Methodism, have offered their analysis of the essentials to worship in a Wesleyan theological framework. The primary contributors to this conversation will be assessed below in order to identify common themes which must be considered in reconstructing a Wesleyan approach to properly ordered worship.

Karen Westerfield Tucker identified five fundamental liturgical criteria at work in Wesley's thinking.

The primacy of *Scripture*; the normativity of Christian *antiquity*, especially the first three centuries of the Church's life; the example of the Church of England and its *liturgy*; the use of human *reason*...; and the necessity of evangelical *experience* or 'experimental' religion....(emphasis mine)<sup>34</sup>

Her list is attentive to the various features of the Wesley service. Her observations could be summarized by noting that Wesley's service was an attempt, nearly two-hundred years before Webber coined the term, to provide an *Ancient-Future* approach to worship. Her assessment reveals Wesley's fidelity in worship design to what has become commonly known as the *Wesleyan Quadrilateral*: Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience. These criteria, which seem abstract constructs, are clearly compatible with the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in worship.

Henry Knight III reflects his conversation with the contemporary liturgical renewal movement offering that worship in the Wesleyan mode must be both anamnestic and epiclesis: "it not only remembers who God is but encounters the living reality of that God through the Spirit."<sup>35</sup> Knight and Dean Blevins both highlight the *anamnestic* (remembering) character of worship.<sup>36</sup> Dean Blevins furthers the discussion by focusing on the liturgical action of *epiclesis*

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<sup>34</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1996), 19.

<sup>35</sup> Knight, "Worship and Sanctification," 14.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. See also, Dean Blevins, "A Wesleyan View of the Liturgical Construction of the Self," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, (Fall 2003):7– 29.

(the invocation of the Holy Spirit). For both Blevins and Knight, these liturgical activities have a formative result. Blevins discusses the potential of these liturgical actions to form a Wesleyan construction of the self that arises out of a eucharistic centering of life. He is in agreement with Knight saying,

I am suggesting that in worship we encounter the God revealed in Jesus Christ, who is present by way of the Holy Spirit, and made known to us through faith, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we do not simply know more about God, we come to know God ever more deeply; and this God is not simply an amorphous feeling, but a God who has a distinctive character revealed in Scripture.<sup>37</sup>

Knight and Blevins serve within the Church of the Nazarene and have seen in Wesley's service a way to recapture worship for the Nazarenes that has never been attached to Wesley's forms or ideals. Their assessment is critical of the way that Nazarene worship has ignored and become detached from historical forms and sacraments, suggesting that one does not have to abandon the presence of the Spirit in order to celebrate the presence of Christ.

Tucker takes a further step and goes so far as to say that Wesley believed that the Eucharist was essential to the function of worship as a means of grace.<sup>38</sup> Wesley's worship promotes a Eucharistic priority. The ordination of priests and appointment of Bishops in America was finally necessitated by Wesley's concern that the worshipping community be a sacramental community. He had instructed the American Methodists to receive the Lord's Supper every Lord's day.<sup>39</sup> In this way they would most fully remember and encounter grace.

It must be understood at the outset that the purpose of worship in a Wesleyan mode is not oriented around the individual. For Wesley, the *telos* of worship "is the honor of God, and the

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<sup>37</sup> Knight, "Worship and Sanctification," 14.

<sup>38</sup> Robert L. Tucker, *Separation*, 35, "He asserted that the Lord's Supper was a means of grace and that no grace could be obtained without it."

<sup>39</sup> John Wesley, "Letter to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and Our Brethern in North America." (September 10, 1784), in *Works* (JE), 13: 252.

edification of the Church.<sup>40</sup> Worship, in a Wesleyan way of thinking, has a theological orientation and an ecclesial product. Worship reorients the person to a new identity in God and the Church.<sup>41</sup> Don Saliers expresses this idea saying, “[C]orporate worship of God is not a means to something other than what it is: the glorification of God and the sanctification of all that is creaturely.”<sup>42</sup> To accomplish these purposes, he identifies four principles for the construction of a Wesleyan form of worship:

1. Worship presents the grace of God offered in Jesus Christ, made alive in the Holy Spirit.
2. Worship is grounded in the whole of the Bible.
3. Liturgy must always link us to mission (social holiness).
4. Word, sacrament and vital experience must be integrated in worship.<sup>43</sup>

Sailers’ list seems similar to Westerfield Tucker, but seems to emphasize what worship accomplishes in the life of the Christian, rather than its overall structure.

In addition to Wesley’s confidence in and use of the *Prayer Book*, the primary characteristic of worship in the Wesleyan mode is its density, or fullness, having many layers of expression happening simultaneously. Drawing from the observations cited above, several key characteristics of Wesleyan worship can be offered here. Wesley’s design for worship maintained an *historic* approach to worship that was formed by the earliest Christians and proven by centuries of Christian practice and deliberation. Yet, his own edits of the *Book of Common*

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<sup>40</sup> John Wesley, “A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome with a Reply Thereto,” in *Works* (JE), 10:102.

<sup>41</sup> Randy Maddox, “Wesley’s Prescription for Making Disciples of Jesus Christ: Insights for the 21st Century Church,” Prepared for the United Methodist Council on Bishops’ *Taskforce on Theological Education and Leadership Formation*, (Seattle Pacific University, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> Don E. Saliers, “Divine Means: Sunday Worship in United Methodist Congregations,” in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, ed. Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Nashville: Kingswood, 1996), 153. This priority is also referenced by Henry Knight in “Worship and Sanctification,” where he credits the idea to James White from *Introduction to Christian Worship*.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

*Prayer* and his inclusion of Charles' songs indicate his desire that all worshippers be able to *participate* in the service. Analysis of his service book will reveal Wesley's intent that worship would proclaim *scripture* throughout as well as his intention that *Eucharist* be celebrated weekly. While Wesley is better known for his design for Class Meetings, it is apparent in the analysis of his design for worship that he believed worship to be the primary *formative/catechetical* event in the life of a Christian.

However, as will be revealed in Wesley's reflections on worship, Wesley was not impressed by worship that was dull and repetitious. Wesleyan worship was *experiential*. Lester Ruth noted that there was a sense of the immediate presence of Christ in worship providing an *eschatological* nearness. Thus, worship was a *celebration* in an affective sense.

While many re-formers of worship have sought understanding in a return to the roots of Christian worship, however they are defined, Wesleyans need search no further than Wesley himself. He had already done the work of careful analysis of Biblical and historic patterns of worship and applied them to express his theology and ecclesiology with the *Sunday Service*. The product of his analysis can still provide a way for contemporary planners of worship to design ordered worship built around his structural pattern while being aware of the need to retain a certain character expressive of the experience of the presence of God personally and corporately. This discussion will focus first on its structure, then on its character. Wesley's worship structure is attentive to worship being historic, liturgical, scriptural, Eucharistic, and shaped by preaching and prayer. The character of Wesleyan ordered worship includes experience, participation, exuberance, formation, and music. Taken together, these elements provide for a fully formed pattern of worship that can inform and form an approach to worship within contemporary culture that is both faithful to Wesley's liturgical vision and responsive to social and cultural changes within the contemporary setting.

## **The *Sunday Service* Pattern for Sunday Worship: An *Ordered* Approach**

The density of Wesleyan worship practices challenges some of the popular assumptions and counsel regarding contemporary worship. Wesleyan worship presses against the contemporary preference for minimalism. However, worship is not designed to entertain Christians but to offer to God the glory that He is due, to create the Church, and to transform individuals into people of actual righteousness and holiness. Wesleyan worship places exceedingly high demands on itself and cannot be created thoughtlessly or haphazardly. Ordered Worship is quite demanding.

Wesley's pattern of worship was built on the liturgical pattern of worship practiced by the Church of England and historic Christianity. However, as Langford has observed, often liturgical worship is dull and un-engaging to the worshipper. While liturgical worship captures the form of historic Christian worship, it can often be expressed without passion or conviction. Any worship service will fail to ignite the spirit and interest of the worshipper if it lacks passion. This lack of passion is one reason American Methodists rejected liturgical worship preferring a *spirited* style of worship instead. American Methodist worship was characterized by enthusiastic outbursts of unbridled emotion. This emotive pattern has shaped much of American worship and finds its expression in contemporary models. These emotive patterns focus on the felt needs and passions of the worshipper more than drawing the worshipper into the presence of God in complete submission to His will. Wesley, however, did not understand why liturgical worship should not also be passionate worship. Rattenbury observed, "Always behind the burning experience and Apostolic love of souls, which characterized this great man, there stands his institutional religion. He never failed to urge its importance to his followers, although he partially failed to make them see it."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Rattenbury, *Vital Elements*, 76.

The analysis of Wesley's *Sunday Service* given below is aware of this tension between form and passion in worship. To gain a full understanding of Wesley's liturgical vision (Ordered Worship) one must give attention both to the structure and the character of worship. While the structural elements can be easily extracted from an analysis of the *Sunday Service* itself, an understanding of the character by which that worship was expressed requires a broader understanding of Wesley's own counsel on worship as well as the practice of worship by first generation Methodists. Wesley's unique contribution to the practice of worship was his ability to imagine worship that was spirited that did not have to sacrifice historic structure at the same time. A service that merely maintains the features that are outlined here will fall short of Wesley's vision for worship. To be consistent with Wesley's liturgical imagination, one must maintain both halves of fully-formed worship, its structure and character.

### **The Structure of a Wesleyan Service**

Careful analysis of Wesley's *Sunday Service* and other commentary on worship, reveals that Wesley preferred worship that was historic, liturgical, eucharistic, scriptural, and shaped by preaching, and prayer. Those structural elements are found within the *Sunday Service* as Wesley's recommended form of worship for his Methodists. The discussion of those elements below will proceed by identifying where those elements appear within the *Service* itself. Those appearances will be compared to Wesley's other advices on worship where there are comparable discussions within his writings. In order to assess the efficacy of the advices found in the *Service* for the contemporary discussion, then, each advice will be tested against the advice found within leaders of the contemporary liturgical renewal movement that have framed the conversation found in Chapter One.

Wesleyan worship is *historic*. It is clearly rooted in historic Christian worship. Wesley, himself, was conscientious about his use of the *Book of Common Prayer*, creeds, prayers, and



rubrics drawn from the entire tradition of Christian worship, particularly from the earliest centuries.<sup>45</sup> Piette reminds that Wesley's intent was to align his pattern of worship to the usage of the earliest Christians. Believing that the most authentic form of worship was practiced by those closest to Jesus and the disciples historically, Wesley sought "to conform his liturgical practice to the most ancient usages."<sup>46</sup>

Besides the liturgy itself, which will be discussed below, Wesley retained historic collects (unison prayers) in his *Sunday Service*. Even though he allowed for extempore prayer to be used in worship, he personally enjoyed praying with the Ancients through the collects. His own publication included an extensive list of daily and situational prayers for individuals, families and children.<sup>47</sup> Extempore and heart-felt prayer was recommended for private worship.<sup>48</sup> He encouraged the use of collective prayer in worship, including the weekly praying of The Lord's Prayer. Extempore prayer was preferred on days other than Sunday.<sup>49</sup>

The other historical elements in the *Sunday Service* include the recitation of *The Apostles' Creed* on a weekly basis, a pattern for the weekly reading of Scripture that is based upon historic usage, and the observance of the Christian calendar, especially in reference to the work of Christ. Thus, even though Wesley deliberately shortened and edited the *ordo* of the *Book of Common Prayer*, he intended to reflect in his service the historic practices of Christian worship.

The contemporary conversation expresses a similar concern for historic worship. Recent studies such as those conducted by James White, Larry Hurtado, Paul Bradshaw, and Alexander

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<sup>45</sup> H. Ray Dunning, "Toward a Wesleyan Ecclesiology." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Spring 1987): 113, "Wesley took the multiple traditions which he inherited and sought to appropriate them in a creative eclecticism to which his soteriological focus gave coherence."

<sup>46</sup> Maximin Piette, *John Wesley and the Evolution of Protestantism*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937), 283.

<sup>47</sup> John Wesley, "A Collection of Forms of Prayer, for Every Day in the Week," *Works* (JE), XI: 203–272.

<sup>48</sup> John Wesley, "The More Excellent Way," in *Sermons III: 71-114*, ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 3 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 268.

<sup>49</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 9.

Roberts and James Donaldson have confirmed the fact that the most ancient form of Christian worship had greater similarity to liturgical worship than to contemporary free worship. Wesley's own interest was in the worship and scholarship of the Eastern Church. No doubt, Wesley would concur with the observation of Schmemmann: "It should be noted here in passing that the confirmation of this structural dependence of Christian upon Hebrew worship destroys the argument of those who are inclined to deny the existence of any 'order' whatever in the early Church."<sup>50</sup>

Largely due to the influences of Robert Webber and the liturgical renewal movement, there has been a resurgence of interest in historic patterns and practices of worship. Webber promoted an *Ancient-Future* pattern of worship and provided resources that would make available a variety of worship practices for a broad audience to use cafeteria-style.<sup>51</sup> Studies such as those by Frank Senn and Wainwright with Westerfield-Tucker indicate renewed interest in liturgical practices.<sup>52</sup> Interest in the ancient practices of the Church has been growing in contemporary worship. Attendance to the Wesleyan pattern of worship can offer the means by which these ancient practices can be evaluated and utilized while maintaining fidelity to the Wesleyan spirit.

Secondly, it should be noted that Wesleyan worship is also *liturgical*. To say that a worship service is liturgical is saying much more than that it follows a customary pattern of rites and rituals. Liturgy involves much more than a specific form. A liturgical service intentionally embodies the theology and spirit of the church with the intention of forming a world in which the worshipper locates himself or herself, gaining understand, meaning, purpose and mission for life. From the Orthodox tradition, Alexander Schmemmann argued that the separation of theology from

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999); *Worship Old and New*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); *The Complete Library of Christian Worship*, 8 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995).

<sup>52</sup> See Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Augsburg Fortress, 1997) and Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen Westerfield Tucker, *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford: University Press, 2006) for example.

liturgy which is characteristic of the West does violence to both.<sup>53</sup> That is to say, the most historic form of worship is liturgical because worship is intended to embody the theology of the Church. *Orandi* expresses *credendi*.

Those who would argue that every service is liturgical do so by an under-appreciation of the nature of liturgy. This argument supposes that *liturgy* is the same as *order*. While it is true that a liturgical service has a certain order to it, the order is not the liturgy. The liturgy orders the service and, at the same time, supersedes the order. Wainwright offers such a perspective on liturgy saying:

In characteristically modern terms, it might be said that liturgy affords the opportunity for human beings to ‘discover meaning’ and ‘make sense’ of their lives and the world—provided always that the anthropological and cosmological categories be embraced within a divine transcendence that, according to the Christian faith, is the gracious being and action of the Triune God.<sup>54</sup>

The rites, rituals and ceremonies of a worship service are shaped by its liturgical intent.

Wainwright explains that liturgy “is properly the symbolic focus that both gathers up and irradiates the whole of life, at the very heart of worship is the relationship between human beings and God.”<sup>55</sup> Liturgy results from a conscious and thoughtful plan to wed theology and Christian life within the symbolic and ritual representations of the faith, both in what is expressed and what is done within the context of a worship service.

In saying that Wesley’s service is liturgical, *liturgical* is understood in this narrower sense. Wesley’s use and modifications of the liturgy reflect his understanding of it as being constitutive of Christian faith and life. In arguing for his position on justification by faith and not by works, Wesley wrote “To a Gentleman at Bristol” on January 6, 1758, “These are undoubtedly the

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas Fisch, ed. *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990), 14.

<sup>54</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, “Christian Worship: Scriptural Basis and Theological Frame,” in *Oxford Dictionary of Christian Worship*, 27.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

genuine principles of the Church of England. And they are confirmed, as by our *Liturgy*, Articles, and Homilies, so by the whole tenor of Scripture” (emphasis mine).<sup>56</sup> Here, Wesley is not suggesting that the liturgy is constitutive of orthodoxy. Scripture, of course, is the basis for all doctrine (as supported by the quadrilateral). In this case, he cites the liturgy to support the fact that his own teachings are in no way different from the teachings of the Church. In that way, the liturgy becomes a reliable witness to the faith of the Church, grounded in Scripture, codified in the Articles of Faith, declared in the Homilies, and confessed in the Liturgy.

Wesley’s *ordo* for a regular Sunday service is as follows:<sup>57</sup>

#### 1) Morning Prayer

- Call to Worship (*Versicles*)
- General Confession and absolution
- The Lord’s Prayer
- *Versicles*
- Reading of the Appointed Psalm(s)
- *Gloria Patri* (following each Psalm)
- Reading of the Old Testament Lesson
- *Te Deum Laudamus*
- Reading of the New Testament Lesson
- *Jubilate Deo*
- The Apostle’s Creed
- Salutation
- *Curia*
- Collect of the Day
- Collect for Peace
- Collect for Grace
- Prayer for Supreme Rulers with General Supplication
- Benediction

#### 2) The Ante-Communion

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<sup>56</sup> John Wesley, “To a Gentleman at Bristol” (January 6, 1758), in *The Letters of John Wesley*, ed. John Telford, 8 Vols. (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), 3:245. Hereafter, *Letters*.

<sup>57</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 7–8, offers a similar outline noting, “Wesley furnished no directions regarding the integration of Morning Prayer and the Ante-Communion, which is a surprising omission or oversight, given Wesley’s assumption that morning prayer with the Lord’s Supper service was to be the normative Sunday form. It seems unlikely the Wesley would have encouraged the customary Anglican practice of proceeding through the morning prayer and Communion liturgy given his concern to avoid the ‘vain repetitions’ that had been a criticism of the Prayer Book liturgy voiced from as early as the sixteenth century.” Despite her misgivings, we have provided both services stacked together as one continuous *ordo*. She notes that in the absence of communion the Ante-Communion up to the offertory would have been inserted into the Morning Prayer service just prior to the benediction.

- The Lord’s Prayer
  - Collect for Purity
  - The Recitation of the Ten Commandments
  - Prayer for Our Rulers/ Government
  - Collect of the Day
  - Epistle Reading
  - Gospel Reading
  - Sermon
  - Collection (with scriptures read)
- 3) The Communion
- Prayers for the Church
  - Invitation to the Table
  - Prayer of Confession
  - Prayer for Absolution
  - Scripture words of Assurance
  - Introductory Dialog
  - Proper Preface with *Sanctus*
  - Prayer of Humble Access
  - Prayer of Consecration
  - Distribution of the Elements
  - The Lord’s Prayer
  - Prayers of Oblation/Thanksgiving
  - *Gloria in Excelsis*
  - Benediction<sup>58</sup>

To say that Wesley preferred liturgical worship is not to say that he preferred formality in worship. It is to say that Wesley sought to *participate* in this Divine reality in worship. When the worshipper transcended the confines of this world through worship, then worship became a Means of Grace, connecting the worshipper with the gracious presence of God. Worship invites us to dwell for a time on the threshold of a greater reality than that reality that confronts us daily and, by standing on that threshold, our world is transformed. Vogel summarizes this point saying, “The liturgy both *manifests* and *engenders* the faith of the Church. It speaks both to us and for us”(emphasis mine).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 125– 139.

<sup>59</sup> Dwight W. Vogel, *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 8.

It is worth being reminded that Wesley stalwartly maintained that Methodist services were not proper worship services.

But some may say, “Our own service is public worship.” Yes; but not such as superseded the Church Service; it presupposes public prayer, like sermons at the University. If it were designed to be instead of the Church Service, it would be essentially *defective*; for it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer, deprecation, petition, intercession and thanksgiving (emphasis mine).<sup>60</sup>

This point was simply not understood by the Methodists, British nor American. The Methodists were attracted by the informality and emotional energy of the Methodist preaching service. They were unable to imagine a way in which the passion of the Methodist meeting could be expressed in the Sunday service of the Church of England with its dry formality. Wesley, on the other hand, found the Methodist preaching service to be less than personally satisfying because of its lack of theological depth and order. His *Sunday Service* was his effort to show how the two sides of worship could find the perfect union.

In a letter written to William Law, Wesley objected to Law’s emphasis on inward worship over public worship. He asked, “But how can a man ‘leave himself wholly to God’ in total neglect of His ordinances? The old Bible way is to ‘leave ourselves wholly to God’ in constant use of the means He hath ordained.” Continuing his objection, Wesley argued, “This is most true, that all the externals of religion are in order to the renewal of our soul in righteousness and true holiness.”<sup>61</sup> It was from the ordinances of the church (liturgical worship, Communion, Baptism) that Wesley received much spiritual nourishment. Writing in 1785, Wesley confessed, “I still attend all the ordinances of the Church, at all opportunities. And I constantly and earnestly desire all that are connected with me to do so.”<sup>62</sup> In the same letter, he supported the twentieth

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<sup>60</sup> John Wesley, “Minutes of Several Conversations Between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Others from the Year 1744, to the Year 1789,” *Works* (JE) 8:321–22.

<sup>61</sup> John Wesley, “Letter to William Law” (January 6, 1756), *Letters*, 3:366–67.

<sup>62</sup> “Letter to Coke and Asbury,” (1784), *Works* (JE) 13:252.

Article of Religion as “a true and logical definition containing both the essence and properties of a church.”<sup>63</sup>

Within the contemporary setting, there are a number of scholars in the Wesleyan tradition and in evangelicalism generally that encourage a return to a more liturgical approach to worship.

Rob Staples described this tension in the modern Wesleyan movement:

Revivalism stressed the religion of inward experience, of John Wesley’s ‘warmed heart.’ When such ‘heartfelt’ religion became a reality in people’s lives, they saw less need for churchly structures and liturgies. Structured worship services were sometimes spurned as a sign of ‘formalism’ in which the Holy Spirit was not given room to operate freely.<sup>64</sup>

Staples outlined the tension that exists in Wesley, and in Wesleyan denominations, between ‘spirit’ and ‘structure.’ For Wesley, an experienced faith did not undervalue the importance of structured worship. “John Wesley saw the danger of a one-sided emphasis on the ‘religion of the heart’ even as he strongly insisted that it was *one* valid component of a vital faith.”<sup>65</sup>

Schmemmann offered a clearer understanding of liturgical intent for those who come at the question from a Western mindset. “The *leiturgia*,” he explains, “therefore is not a cultic action performed in the Church on its behalf and for it; it is the action of the Church itself, or the church *in actu*, it is the very expression of its life.... [T]he *ecclesia* exists in and through the *leiturgia*, and its whole life is a *leiturgia*.”<sup>66</sup> Elsewhere he notes, “What is more serious, however, is the fact that the liturgy—central as it may be within the activities of the Church—has ceased to be connected with virtually all other aspects of the Church’s life; *to inform, shape and guide the*

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Rob L. Staples, *Outward Sign and Inward Grace: The Place of Sacraments in Wesleyan Spirituality*, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1991), 22.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>66</sup> Fisch, *Liturgy and Tradition*, 17.

*ecclesiastical consciousness as well as the “worldview” of the Christian community*” (emphasis mine).<sup>67</sup> The liturgy should embody and enact the faith of the community.

Reducing a worship service to its form or attraction produces a service that is no longer liturgical. It no longer produces a world in which the Christian is located. The Sunday service becomes an *event* which people *attend* rather than a world out of which people draw their life and identity. When worship is merely seen as an event, its purpose is to offer a product in order to gain an audience who gather in celebration of their achievements.

As liturgy, a worship service orients the worshipper to his or her source of meaning by inviting the worshipper to participate in the world and life of the One being worshipped. The worship service becomes the point of contact between the graces of God and the needs of the worshippers. In worship, the worshipper receives grace, offers praise, and comes to understand himself or herself in relationship to God. Liturgical worship invites the worshipper to *participate* in that alternate reality inhabited by God and His people. In this way, worship becomes *leiturgia*, the work of the people as they are transfixed and transformed by participating in a Divine reality.<sup>68</sup> This idea of worship is expressed by Evelyn Underhill saying,

Hence the corporate worship of the Church is not simply that of an assembly of individuals who believe the same things, and therefore unite in doing the same things. It is real in its own right; an action transcending and embracing all the separate souls taking part in it. The individual as such dies to his separate selfhood—even his spiritual selfhood—on entering the Divine Society: is “buried in baptism” and reborn as a living cell of the Mystical Body of Christ.<sup>69</sup>

Said another way, in worship “[w]e are engaged in sign-acts that manifest and embody the presence of God and transform us.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 51

<sup>68</sup> Senn offers a helpful etymological discussion of this term, *Christian Liturgy*, 34.

<sup>69</sup> Evelyn Underhill, “The Principles of Corporate Worship,” ch. 5 of *Worship* (Harper & Brothers, 1937), 84–7 as excerpted in *Primary Sources*, 49–50.

<sup>70</sup> Dwight W. Vogel, “Liturgical Theology: A Conceptual Geography,” in *Primary Sources*, 7.



Additionally, a liturgical service is one which intentionally embodies the theology of the community in the rites and rituals of the service. By so doing, the faith of the community is both declared (*kerygma*) within the community and transferred (*didache*) from generation to generation. As observed in the previous chapter, worship was the source of Wesley's theology. His theology was a liturgical theology. It was derived from the liturgy and expressed through the liturgy. His liturgy was not merely his effort to provide a proper form for a worshipping congregation, it was the means by which his theology was to be declared, retained, and transferred to succeeding generations.

Edward Kilmartin provides historical analysis demonstrating that the historic use of liturgy was the means by which the faith of the community was embodied and retained.<sup>71</sup> Discussing the couplet *lex orandi, lex credendi*, he concludes, "The authentic liturgical traditions are not simply one among many sources of knowledge of faith, but *the source and central witness* of the life of faith and so of all theology."<sup>72</sup> In this way of thinking, the liturgy is not to be considered merely an order in which worship takes place, the liturgy actually contains the essence of faith and the means by which it is given expression in the community. It is not to be jettisoned lightly.

In his *Service*, Wesley provided a fully formed and formative document that gave liturgical expression to Methodist faith while functioning as an authentic Means of Grace. He accepted the ecclesiology of the Articles of Faith, defining the church as "a congregation of faithful people among whom the word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered."<sup>73</sup> It was his

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<sup>71</sup> Edward J. Kilmartin, "Theology as Theology of Liturgy," ch. 6 of *Christian Liturgy and Practice*, vol. 1, *Systematic Theology of Liturgy* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1988), 93–99, excerpted in *Primary Sources*, 103–109.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 254. Wesley refers to the Article on the church as the twentieth article. In actuality, the nineteenth Article of Religion from the 1662 version of the Book of Common Prayer references the church. *Common Prayer and the Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church* (Cambridge: John Baskerville, 1762) as reproduced at <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1662/baskerville.htm> (accessed November 23, 2006). The Article reads, "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance,

seriousness about this definition coupled with his own personal experience that caused Wesley to recommend that every Lord's Day service included the Lord's Supper.

Wesley's commitment to the celebration of the *Eucharist* was so fundamental that it was behind his rationale for the ordination that facilitated the separation of the Methodists in North America from the American Episcopal Church. Even though Wesley allowed for and encouraged lay preaching, he was resolute that the sacraments of the church could only be conducted by a properly ordained member of the clergy.

In America, two factors stood in the way of having ordained clergy in Methodist societies. In the one case, the distance between Methodist societies and the nearest Episcopal Congregation made it impossible for Methodists to worship with their Episcopal cousins. Secondly, while there were those who had committed to ordain Methodist preachers (notably, Bishop Seabury), they would only ordain those who had received a proper ecclesiastical education. Clearly, such credentials were entirely out of reach for most Methodist lay preachers. Thus, the crisis that brought about separation was the lack of availability of the sacraments to the Methodists in America. By ordaining Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey, Wesley demonstrated that his commitment to the Lord's Supper was deeper than his commitment to the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Robert Tucker argued that Wesley's ordination of lay preachers to administer the sacraments was a return to the practice of the early church.<sup>74</sup> Tucker continues that it was the act of ordination that finally made a clean break between Wesley and his Church. Not being a Bishop himself, the Church maintained that he had no authority to ordain. "No presbyter could usurp the office of a bishop, and continue a member of the Church of England;... It was not his words of loyalty but his deeds that counted."<sup>75</sup> Wesley's concern for Eucharist being present in

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in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

<sup>74</sup> Tucker, *Separation*, 85.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

each and every worship service overrode every other issue for him. It was more important than his own reputation or standing within the Church.

Wesley reasoned that there was no scriptural difference between the office of Bishop and the office of presbyter, thus concluding that he was within his rights, and responsibility, to ordain such as could provide for the delivery of the sacraments to his Methodists. Writing to Coke, Wesley declared

Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced me many years ago, that Bishops and Presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace' sake: but because I was determined , as little as possible to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.

But the case is widely different between England and North-America. Here there are Bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish ministers. So that for some hundred miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here therefore my scruples are at an end: and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right, by appointing labourers into the harvest. (*sic*)<sup>76</sup>

Wesley assumed, then, apostolic authority for the new field in America. Reasoning that there was no national Church in America to establish canon law, especially following the war of independence, he acted on his own Biblical authority to establish the Methodists in America on proper grounds: an ordained clergy, a proper liturgy, and a clear doctrine.

On the point of ordination, John and Charles were in complete disagreement. In a letter written to Dr. Chandler on April 29, 1785, Charles gave an account of his life and ministry as Dr. Chandler prepared to go to America and he, (Charles) prepared to go “for a more distant country.”<sup>77</sup> In this letter, he affirmed his, and John's, steadfast fidelity to the Church of England

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<sup>76</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 38–9. Wesley provides a similar argument in detail in a treatise entitled, “Separation from the Church,” written on August 30, 1785. Again, he argued that his decision to provide the means for separation was driven by his concern for administration of the sacraments to those who “had none to administer the Lord's supper, or to baptize their children.” *Works* (JE), 13:255–56.

<sup>77</sup> Charles Wesley, “Letter to Dr. (Thomas Bradbury) Chandler,” (April 29, 1785) *Methodist Archives*

and his (Charles) personal horror at John's willingness to ordain Bishops and Elders for America. John made this decision without talking to Charles, although Charles was "at his elbow" in Bristol. Charles reports that he had been warned by Lord Mansfield that ordination amounted to separation. He had assured Mansfield that John would not do that without forsaking the "principles and practices of his whole life." He declares that John's action, "contrary to all his Declarations, Protestations and Writings" had harmed all of his friends and will "blot his name." Charles asks, "What will become of those poor sheep in the wilderness, the American Methodists? How have they been betrayed into a separation from the Church of England!" (sic). He says that he had assurance from Seabury that, had they been patient, Seabury would have provided a "REAL, Primitive, Bishop." He closes the letter lamenting that this action by John would cause the entire movement to come to nothing following his death.

Wesley's advice to the American Methodist preachers was to use his liturgy on the Lord's Day and "the elders to administer the Supper on every Lord's day."<sup>78</sup> The *Sunday Service* contained an order for morning prayer and evening prayer for the Lord's Day, an order for the Lord's Supper, Baptism of Infants, Baptism for those of "riper years," Marriage, Communion of the sick, Burial of the Dead, Ordination and twenty-four Articles of Religion. He offered two forms for Sunday worship due to the reality that so many American preachers were lay preachers. Most American Methodist congregation were served and continued to be served by irregular clergy. As a result, the irregular service became the norm for Methodist worship and the standard worship for most American Christian congregations.

When the literature notes that Wesley's *Service* was set aside by 1794, it is referring to the order for Morning Prayer from the *Sunday Service*. Efforts to renew Methodist worship

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(Manchester: John Ryland's Library).

<sup>78</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 39.

according to the *Sunday Service* pattern have all used the Morning Prayer order as their point of reference. In fact, Wesley's *intended* order for worship never became the regular pattern of worship for American Methodists. The Communion order remained unaltered in the Methodist Book of Worship until the 1960's. Nevertheless, the fact is that Wesley's "regular" service became the "occasional" service and Wesley's "irregular" service became the basis for "regular" for American Methodists.

Lester Ruth argued that the local Methodist church functioned as a society in America and the Conference meeting functioned as the church service.<sup>79</sup> He noted that Conference meetings always included a celebration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, due precisely to the fact that these meeting were the one place where ordained preachers were sure to be present. Arguing against those who criticize early Methodist worship for its shallowness, Ruth examined the worship practices of the Quarterly Conference Assembly via journals, letters and reports to conclude:

[T]hey exhibited a deep piety toward the Lord's Supper, a spirituality in continuity with Wesley in thought and practice. And instead of squandering their inheritance of hymnody and the Christian calendar, they supplemented and adapted what they received. In sum, early Methodists participated in what is now understood as inculturation.<sup>80</sup>

However, even within the conference meeting, following a specific *ordo* was never a concern. Even Ruth notes, "Many exceptions to the order can be found due to the fluidity and extemporaneity with which American Methodists approach their worship. Each element of the order was a semiautonomous ritual unit that could be moved at discretion.... The Lord's Supper was probably the unit that was moved most frequently."<sup>81</sup> Whether in the Conference Meeting or

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<sup>79</sup> Lester Ruth, *A Little Heaven Below: Worship at Early Methodist Quarterly Meetings* (Nashville: Kingswood Book, 2000).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

in the local church, the driving concern was not to maintain ordered worship, but to provide for the conversion of sinners. All other concerns were servants to the primary purpose of each Methodist gathering—calling sinners to respond in faith to the gospel.

Regardless of the practice at the Quarterly Conference, weekly communion was never the practice of Methodists in America. Even into current practice it is noted: “Despite some recovery of the connection between word and sacrament in the twentieth century, Methodists have generally understood the Lord’s Supper almost to be an occasional service rather than an integral component of Sunday practice....”<sup>82</sup> The standard service for American Methodists was based on the form for Morning Prayer, but Wesley’s Service offered an abridged Morning Prayer service “to be used in conjunction with the Lord’s Supper.”<sup>83</sup>

At least one contemporary voice among Wesley’s followers has argued for the weekly celebration of the Eucharist. Even though the Lord’s Supper was constitutive of Christian worship in the earliest centuries<sup>84</sup> and encouraged by Wesley for the Methodists to participate weekly, the practice of weekly Eucharist was never a reality in America for Methodists or her children. Some Wesleyan descendants, The Church of the Nazarene, requires celebration of the Supper only quarterly.<sup>85</sup> Hauerwas (from within Methodism) assesses the reason behind this attitude toward the Supper saying:

The Eucharist is usually not considered an essential aspect of Christian worship by those concerned with church growth. Evangelism means getting people to church, because unless we go to church, it is assumed, our lives are without moral compass. Thus the assumption that lack of attendance at church and our society’s “moral decay” go hand and hand. What such people fail to see is that such decay begins with the assumption that worship is about “my” finding meaning for my life rather than the

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<sup>82</sup> Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship*, xiv.

<sup>83</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 23. In the pages that follow, White provided a complete description of the alterations for Wesley’s service and his sources.

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, Rattenbury, *Vital Elements*, 78–80.

<sup>85</sup> Church of the Nazarene, *Manual 2005–2009* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2005), 186.

glorification of God. Such evangelism is but another name for narcissism. Christian worship requires that our bodies submit to a training otherwise unavailable so that we can become capable of discerning those who use the name of Jesus to tempt us to worship foreign gods. Without the Eucharist we lose the resource to discover how those gods rule our lives.<sup>86</sup>

Hauerwas, then, equates the loss of a Eucharistic priority in worship to the increasing person-centered approach to worship which has been identified in chapter one as one of the primary flaws in the American approach to worship. The discarding of the Eucharist is evidence of a shift in the agenda of worship from the glorification of God to the edification of the worshipper.

Other Wesley followers see such frequency as useful for attaining Christian Perfection. Rob Staples shared this concern from within the Church of the Nazarene as early as 1991. He connects the Lord's Supper to Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection calling it "the sacrament of sanctification."<sup>87</sup> Of the Supper he writes:

The Eucharist may be understood as that means of grace, instituted by Jesus Christ, to which we are invited for repentance, for self-examination, for renewal, for spiritual sustenance, for thanksgiving, for fellowship, for anticipation of the heavenly kingdom, and for celebration of our pilgrimage toward perfection in the image of Christ. All these are involved in our sanctification, and all these are benefits available to us at the Lord's table.<sup>88</sup>

This sanctifying work takes place in the Eucharist in the "dynamic presence" of Christ. Staples argued that Wesley's understanding of the way in which Christ is present in the Supper is an Anglican approach that is neither Calvinistic nor Lutheran. Christ is present in the Eucharist not as a result of His physical connection to the elements themselves, nor because of the power of our remembrance. Christ is a real and living presence acting on the recipient and working through the means in order to operate on and for the worshipper.<sup>89</sup> Rattenbury described the

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<sup>86</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *A Better Hope* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2000), 159.

<sup>87</sup> Staples, *Outward Sign*, 201.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 202–03

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

Eucharistic consciousness of the Methodists saying, “We cannot partake of the Cup without realizing that one day we shall drink it with our Saviour when He drinks it anew in the Kingdom of His Father.”<sup>90</sup>

Staples urges more frequent celebration of the Table without recommending how frequent. He also offers some helpful directions to guide the Communion practice of the church. He emphasizes the anamnetic aspect of the Supper as essential to Wesley’s use saying, “The entire work of God from creation to the eschaton is remembered in the Eucharist. We remember not only backward but forward as well; we remember the promise of the Second Coming.”<sup>91</sup> Those who neglect the Eucharist are liable to forget their essential identity as Christians. Therefore, it is essential that an attempt to restore a Wesleyan *ordo* to worship would involve a Eucharistic character to all worship services.

Staples and others acknowledge that the institution of weekly communion in Wesleyan churches is not likely. Pastors who would seek such a restoration would find themselves pressing against a long tradition of occasional Communion. Nevertheless, there are a number of Wesleyan congregations that are experimenting with offering an optional weekly service of Word and Table.<sup>92</sup>

Another option might be to imagine ways in which a service can be Eucharistic whether or not the actual elements of Communion are present or received. At a minimum, a Wesleyan service should remember and declare the passion, presence, and Coming of Christ as essential to its celebration. Through confessional praying, scripture, and in the text of the songs sung, the person and work of Christ ought to be remembered in every service. This remembrance can be

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<sup>90</sup> J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley* (London: The Epworth Press, 1948), 62.

<sup>91</sup> Staples, *Outward Sign*, 234.

<sup>92</sup> See an example of this type of service in the appendix, “Sample Services.”



augmented through the presence of imagery (physical and visual) that acknowledges and affirms the community's dependence on the work of Christ for their salvation. Every Christian congregation draws its identity in reference to the person and work of Christ. Identification with Christ constitutes what it means to be Christian. Salvation comes in response to remembering the person and work of Jesus. In celebration of Him, true Christian fellowship is created, both now and in eternity.

*Scripture* was also prominent in Wesley's pattern for worship. Wesley's regular Sunday service called for the reading of a gospel passage and an epistle passage. The service also included reading of the Ten Commandments and selected scripture passages on mercy to be read during the collection. Affixed to his service orders, Wesley included a list of proper lessons, "to be read at Morning and Evening Prayer, on the Sundays throughout the year." These "proper lessons" were drawn from the Old Testament and were linked to the seasons of the Christian calendar.<sup>93</sup> There also appear readings for Christmas, Good Friday and Ascension Day, as well as readings from the Psalms to be used for worship on "certain days," Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, and Whitsunday. He eliminated post-Christmas readings for St Stephens's Day, St. John the Evangelist's Day, Innocent's Day, The Circumcision of Christ, Epiphany, and Lent, numbering his weeks in reference to Christmas until the Sunday before Easter (not "Palm Sunday"). He also eliminated the daily readings during Holy Week, except for Good Friday and the daily readings for Easter week. All other Saint's Days are eliminated throughout the year.

Wesley instructed, "Let the second lesson in the morning be a chapter out of the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles; and the second lesson in the evening be a chapter out of the Epistles, in regular rotation; excepting where it is otherwise provided." Excepting his

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<sup>93</sup> See appendix (295–96) for a complete list of prescribed scripture readings as appears in: John Wesley, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists of North America* (London: The Methodist Episcopal Church, 1784).

deletions of special days, Wesley retained the list of gospel and epistle readings from the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Wesley's worship plan, then, included two services on Sunday—Morning Prayer with the service of the Lord's Supper and Evening Prayer. His morning and evening services on Sundays replaced the daily services prescribed in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The abridgments that he proposed were designed to accommodate his Sunday service with the Lord's Supper design.<sup>94</sup> The main ingredient for each of these services was reading of and reflecting upon scripture. It is clear that there was a great deal more public reading of scripture in Wesley's *ordo* than there is in contemporary practice within most American Evangelical churches.<sup>95</sup>

Wesley also edited the portions of the Psalter to be read in worship to remove several chapters as well as individual verses that he deemed inappropriate for public worship. White references William N. Wade's list of deleted portions to include: "curses, wrath, killing, and war; descriptions of the wicked, lack of faith, or special circumstances; at odds with salvation by faith; concerns exclusively historical or geographical, especially pertaining to Jerusalem; and references to the use of instruments of dance in worship."<sup>96</sup> Lest, however, one conclude that Wesley had little regard for the Psalms, White recalled, "They were a major ingredient in his personal formation, and he intended to transmit such a tradition, reformed to make it even better."<sup>97</sup>

Wesley also followed the Puritan tradition of not reading selections from the Apocrypha in public worship. While the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* regarded the Apocrypha as non-

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<sup>94</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 23.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, "Scripture there was in abundance in Wesley's services: a lesson from the Old Testament was provided for each Sunday both for morning and evening prayer in his table of proper lessons; abundant psalmody was arranged over a thirty-day period; and the liturgical epistles and gospels were retained as provided in the BCP. A note suggests that a gospel chapter be read at morning prayer and an epistle chapter at evening prayer. By far the largest portion of the book are devoted to selections from Scripture."

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 18

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

canonical but to be read for examples of faith and instruction (Articles of Religion, IV), Wesley's list of scriptures (Article V of his service book) does not include any readings from the Apocrypha. Only one reading from the Apocrypha, Tobit 4:8-9, is retained as an offertory sentence at Eucharist.

White offers a useful exposition concerning the specific adaptations that Wesley made of scripture lessons for worship.<sup>98</sup> He notes that Wesley's list of holy days has been drastically reduced to focus on the works of Christ. He also outlines several changes in specific passages to be read from the prescription of the *Book of Common Prayer* concluding, "The only clear pattern in Wesley's alterations of lessons seems to be the desire to find more edifying passages in place of some less so,...."<sup>99</sup>

This attention to scripture ought to be retained in contemporary Wesleyan congregations. As Wesley was "a man of one book," so the church that follows his lead ought to be a church of one book. Songs, prayers, congregational readings, and preaching ought to proclaim the scriptures clearly. A restoration to the use of Old Testament, Gospel, and Epistle readings in worship services would be in order. Certainly, Word-oriented preaching is demanded. Wesleyan preaching should expound and expose the Word of God. Preaching that used God's Word as a proof text for the topic of the day is inappropriate within a Wesleyan context. The custom of using the Word of God to illustrate a preacher's self-help psychology or political agenda is entirely inappropriate within a Wesleyan context.

*Preaching* in American Methodism also drifted from the vision that Wesley had for it in preference for the style of the American evangelists. Outler described Wesley saying, "He also understood himself as an Anglican theologian with a special mission to teach the masses, with

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 22–23.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 23.

content for his teachings to be judged by the immemorial Anglican canons of ‘Scripture, reason, and Christian antiquity.’”<sup>100</sup> The focus of that mission was to teach the scripture way of salvation to all who would hear it. Preaching “was the principal means of gathering converts into Christian fellowship and nurturing them in it.”<sup>101</sup>

While the knowledge of Wesley’s preaching comes primarily from reading his published sermons, there is evidence that his actual preaching was more extempore. He came, reluctantly, to the conclusion that preaching, “to be effective, must be an interpersonal encounter between the preacher and his hearers.”<sup>102</sup> In opposition to the highly picturesque and literate style of prose that characterized homilies of the English Church, Wesley chose to deliver, “plain truth for plain people.”<sup>103</sup> In this effort, Wesley was following the path laid out by Dissenter pulpits, while maintaining his own deliberate rhetorical style. Despite this desire to reach the people, “He strove mightily to improve his preachers’ pulpit style and general manners, and he deplored excess of any sort. Late in life he would lash out against the superficiality of so-called gospel sermons.”<sup>104</sup>

In reflecting on his preaching, it is important to remember that Wesley was not a parish pastor, but an itinerant evangelist. He preached to each audience as though he would only have one opportunity to show them the way of salvation. His sermons worked conjointly with his system of Christian nurture provided for in the Methodist societies and bands. Wesley’s field preaching brought the Church to the under-classes in the mines and moorfields, while his societies provided for their spiritual nurture. Wesley’s preaching was not meant to be the

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<sup>100</sup> *Works* (BE), 1:12. Outler’s introduction to the republished collection sermons is comprehensive, providing insight into the entire corpus, published and unpublished, of Wesley’s sermons.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>103</sup> John Wesley, “The Preface” *Sermons on Several Occasions in Three Volumes*, vol. 1, in *Works* (BE), 1:104.

<sup>104</sup> *Works* (BE), 1:26–27.

“ordinary” preaching of the parish church, but to be the “extraordinary” preaching of the evangelist.

Yet, his preaching was carefully doctrinal. His first publication of his own sermons in 1746, was designed to clarify the doctrines which he had been teaching up to that point. Outler wrote that this publication was occasioned by the success of the Methodist movement which grew through incorporating more and more lay preachers. The natural result was doctrinal pluriformity which was addressed through Conference gatherings designed to provide an arena for coming to doctrinal agreement.<sup>105</sup>

Two distinct duties of preaching are apparent in the practice of John Wesley—leading people to faith in Christ and teaching them the way that a Christian must believe and live. Wesley’s sermons along with his *Explanatory Notes* (Old and New Testament commentary) provide the textual definition of Wesley’s doctrines. The definitive sermons were published by Wesley at various times under the title, *Sermons on Several Occasions* (vols. I-VIII). Additional sermons were also published in *The Arminian Magazine*. The entire collection of published sermons attributable to Wesley has been preserved by Outler in the Abingdon edition of the *Works*. Wesley’s preaching was firmly developed from scripture and focused in and by his theology. “The constant goal of Christian living, in his view, is sanctification (‘Christian perfection’ or ‘perfect love’); its organizing principle is always the *order of salvation*; the divine agency in it all is the Holy Spirit.”<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 40. “Increasingly, however the need for more and more doctrinal guidance became evident, and again Wesley responded, not with a creed or a confession, or even a doctrinal treatise, but with something analogous to a set of Methodist ‘Homilies’—not in this case ‘appointed to be read in churches’ (as Cranmer’s had been) but rather to be studied and discussed by the Methodists and their critics. This decision that a cluster of *sermons* might serve as doctrinal standards for a popular religious movement is a significant revelation of Wesley’s self-understanding of his role as spiritual director of ‘the people called Methodists.’”

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 57.

Outler outlined four sources of Wesley's homiletical theology: scripture, the classics, Christian antiquity, and contemporary culture.<sup>107</sup> His use of scripture weighs heavily toward the gospels, but the rest of the New and Old Testament receives much attention with the exception of Ezra, Esther, Song of Solomon, Obadiah, Nahum and Zephaniah. Of the Old Testament references, the Psalms and Isaiah provided the most number of texts. His reference to Christian Antiquity drew much from the pre-Nicene Fathers, particularly in the East. And, while seeking to communicate to an audience of "plain folk" his knowledge of classics peppers his preaching as well as his observations of the contemporary culture around him. Describing his sermons, Outler says:

The typical Wesley sermon begins with a brief proemium promptly followed by an expository 'contract' between the preacher and the reader ('I am to show...', etc.). The reader is thus entitled to judge between the preacher's intention and his performance. And always, it is the 'application' on which the whole effort is focused; this makes most of the sermons intensely personal and practical. Wesley was content that others might be more exciting if he could be more nourishing.<sup>108</sup>

Westerfield-Tucker describes the heritage of preaching that American Methodists received saying:

Preaching always held a central place in Methodist worship and work, and was by most Methodists considered *the* essential component of a worship service. The primary intention of Methodist preaching was never exegetical accuracy, but rather the need to inflame stone-cold hearts and rekindle the lukewarm by the power of the gospel, through the agency of the Holy Spirit.<sup>109</sup>

That preaching was reflective of the style and method of George Whitefield who was well-known in America. His preaching is described as zealous and courageous, with the ability to communicate the gospel in terms that his audience could both feel and understand.<sup>110</sup> The

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 69–96.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>109</sup> Westerfield– Tucker, *American Methodist Worship*, 36.

<sup>110</sup> Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: God's Anointed Servant in the Great Revival of the Eighteenth*

preaching of George Whitefield became the pattern that became normative for American Methodism. His biographer Arnold Dallimore says, “For a hundred years his style of direct application was practiced in the overwhelming majority of Protestant pulpits.”<sup>111</sup>

Methodist preaching in America was shaped by the *evangelical* intent of John Wesley. Westerfield-Tucker describes American Methodist worship saying,

For some Methodists, what became identified as the revival style of hymn singing, ardent prayer, and fiery preaching that flourished in the frontier exemplified the basic and most fruitful means of winning souls. This often meant adopting a practical approach so that worship reached its commonly understood goal: the conversion of heart and mind, which often was dramatically confirmed by kinetic and vocal responses in the pew or at the altar rail.<sup>112</sup>

Tucker’s analysis is confirmed by Lester Ruth who, while arguing that the Quarterly Conference Meeting was the venue where Methodist worship took place in frontier America, also notes that the preaching at these meetings was revivalistic. Methodist preaching in America was more akin to the style of George Whitfield than that of John Wesley. Ruth distinguishes between ‘sermon’ and ‘exhortation’ that normally followed the sermon with an appeal for the hearer to respond to the sermon by coming forward for prayer.

Lester Ruth summarized the advices of Edward Dromgoole regarding sermon construction noting, “A sermon should begin by instructing the understanding. Then the preacher should arouse the imagination and appeal to the conscience. The ending should excite the affections.”<sup>113</sup> By studying the texts of extant Methodist sermons of the time, he surmised:

The typical Methodist sermon was a topical exposition of a very short biblical passage (two to four verses). The text could be as short as one word. “Mercy” was the text for one particularly moving quarterly meeting sermon, for example. These early Methodist preachers might choose their text well in advance of preaching or at the

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*Century*, (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1990), 200.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Westerfield– Tucker, *American Methodist Worship*, 11.

<sup>113</sup> Ruth, *A Little Bit of Heaven*, 56.

very moment they stood up to preach. Delivery was almost always extemporaneous. The result was that a Methodist sermon was most often an exposition of the doctrine of salvation. Indeed, the *Discipline* urged preaching the full scope of the order of salvation in every sermon. Because Methodists considered grace immediately available whenever they preached, sermons usually ended with an “application.”<sup>114</sup>

This kind of preaching was nothing like Wesley’s own clear expositions of Biblical passages designed to reveal and apply the Biblical text for the hearers.

American Methodist preaching embraced an evangelistic model akin to the itinerant mission of father Wesley on the one hand and modeled upon the ‘enthusiastic’ model that Wesley sought to discredit. Certainly, Wesley’s meetings were known for emotional outbursts similar to those of the American Methodist meetings, but these outward demonstrations were considered to be *extraordinary* expressions by Wesley. They were *ordinary* and sought for expressions of the Americans. As such, American Methodist and revivalist preaching was strong on personality and weak on Biblical or theological exposition. It was driven by the need to elicit a response from the hearer. Its success was judged by the number of emotional outbursts and the numbers of souls at the altar seeking salvation or sanctification.

How might one apply the preaching principles of an itinerant evangelist to the contemporary pastoral work of parish ministry? In the preface to his first volume of *Sermons on Several Occasions*, which serves as the preface for all the following volumes according to Dr. Outler, Wesley described his hermeneutical methodology which produced sermons *ad populum*. He refused to infuse his preaching with multiple quotations and illustrations. He steadfastly refused to follow the rhetorical devices popular in his day, saying:

I design plain truth for plain people. Therefore of set purpose I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasonings, and as far as possible from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scriptures. I labour to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood, all which are not used in common life; and in particular those kind of technical terms that so

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 56–57.



frequently occur in bodies of divinity.... Nay, my design is in some sense to forget all that ever I have read in my life. I mean to speak, in general, as if I had never read one author, ancient or modern (always excepting the inspired).<sup>115</sup>

Instead he wrote, “I have accordingly set down in the following sermons what I find in the Bible concerning the way to heaven, with a view to distinguish this way of God from all those which are the inventions of men. I have endeavoured to describe the true, the scriptural, experimental religion, so as to omit nothing which is a real part thereof, and to add nothing thereto which is not.”<sup>116</sup> In this effort, then, he is determined to be “*homo unius libri*.”

Preaching that is faithful to Wesley’s vision for authentic Christian worship is Biblical, doctrinal, personal, practical, accessible, and ordered by soteriology. Outler concurs with Dunning saying that Wesley’s theology is an ellipse ordered by the twin foci of justification and sanctification.<sup>117</sup> Justification is the crisis moment at which a person enters into relationship with God and sanctification is the continual growth into Christlike holiness, distinguished both by a moment of transformation (Entire Sanctification) and by a life of growth (perfecting perfection). Wesley firmly taught that the righteousness of God is both *imputed* to us through faith by the sacrifice of Christ *and imparted* to us by the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Holiness is both applied and actual.

While evangelistic preaching is certainly in order within a Wesleyan *ordo*, it would be a mistake to reduce all preaching to evangelism. Wesley’s collection of published sermons demonstrate that his concerns bridged the entire span of Christian life and living. Since the

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>116</sup> John Wesley, “The Preface,” in *Sermons on Several Occasions in Three Volumes*, in *Sermons I, 1-33* ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 1 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 106.

<sup>117</sup> Outler, *Works* (BE), 1:80–88. The discussion on these pages provided an excellent summary of Wesley’s theology in relationship to Calvinism and Catholicism. Outler argues that Wesley’s study and affection for the Eastern Fathers provided a third branch of Protestantism (my term) that avoids Pelagianism on the one hand and determinism on the other. In Wesley’s soteriology, it is the Eastern understanding of the Holy Spirit that provided the solution to the Western conundrum.

sanctification of believers was the *telos* of justification, preaching is designed to instruct and to draw the listener toward faith and holy living. The goal of Christian experience is not merely to come to faith in Christ, but to live out that faith as a living expression of love for God and love for neighbor. Preaching must be neither manipulative nor academic. It must be practical, applicative to the life of the hearer, and understandable. It must remember that its purpose is not to entertain the crowd, but to lead the hearer to “An immediate and constant fruit of this faith whereby we are born of God, a fruit which can in no wise be separated from it, no, not for an hour, is power over sin: power over outward sin of every kind;.... and over inward sin;....”<sup>118</sup>

Finally, the Wesley service was a *prayer* service in the historic sense of *orandi*. Multiple prayers shape his service. These prayers include confession, absolution, and prayers for national peace, grace to live above sin, prayer for national rulers, and The Lord’s Prayer. Prayer drives the agenda of the morning service providing both the shape of the service and the fundamental theology of the service, as it did in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

While Wesley allowed for extempore prayer, especially in his preaching services, his preference was for corporate prayer in worship to encourage participation by all the people. The one exception is noted at the close of the Communion service where the rubric reads, “Then the Elder, if he see it expedient, may put up an Extempore Prayer,”<sup>119</sup> which is then followed by the benediction. Clearly, it is the design of the service that Christian identity is formed through the repetition of prayers and collects.

As stated above, the shape of the liturgy involves confession, petition, deprecation, intercession, and thanksgiving. It was the use and placement of prayers that provided this shape for Wesley’s service. The service opens with a general confession. This confession postures the

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<sup>118</sup> John Wesley, “The Marks of the New Birth,” *Works* (BE), 1:419.

<sup>119</sup> See appendix, 292.

worshipper as an “offender” of God through things done and things left undone. This prayer of confession is identical to the one found in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. Wesley began each Sunday service with a general confession of his failings.

The general confession is followed by a prayer for absolution. In this prayer, Wesley departed from the *Book of Common Prayer* form, replacing it with the collect for the twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity from the *Book of Common Prayer* praying that, “we may be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our *frailty* we have committed” (emphasis mine). In this absolution, it should be noted that the minister petitions God to absolve the people; he does not offer absolution himself, “In the stead and on behalf of Christ.” It should also be noted that the language is carefully chosen so as not to contradict Wesley’s doctrine of Christian Perfection by emphasizing offenses and frailties over against, “Sin properly so-called,” which Wesley defined as “a voluntary transgression of a known law” of God.<sup>120</sup> This opening prayer-act is completed in the unison praying of The Lord’s Prayer.

The petitions follow the scripture readings and the confession of the *Apostle’s Creed*. The petitions include the collect of the day, a prayer for peace (defense from national enemies), a prayer for grace (personal safety, guarding from sin, and direction to do the will of God), and a prayer for national rulers. The first two are identical to the petitions of the *Book of Common Prayer*, the third replaces prayers for the king, royal family and clergy with a prayer for the “Supreme Rulers of these United States.” This series of prayers ends with the prayer of St. Chrysostom from the *Book of Common Prayer*, but does not bear the title.

The order for Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and the Litany are followed by a section of ninety-eight pages containing Sunday Collects with Epistle and Gospel readings. The collects of the day reveal a consistent pattern of deprecation. Each one confesses the need to become more

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<sup>120</sup> See for instance, John Wesley, “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection,” *Works* (JE), 11:396.

like Christ. Each one pleads for God's help that the worshipper might achieve spiritual growth. Several seek for God to provide aid against temptations or frailties. Most reference a Christ event as the basis for the petition. All are one sentence or idea. A few seek safety or protection. With a blessing, the "Morning Prayer" service is concluded.

Clearly, it is not yet a fully-formed service. The service must be continued with a Communion service, if it is to complete the cycle of prayer prescribed for worship: deprecation, intercession, and thanksgiving. Deprecation takes place in the Communion service through the opening collect and the reading of the Ten Commandments. The collect reads in part, "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee and worthily magnify thy holy Name...." This prayer is prayed while kneeling and, continuing to kneel, the Elder is to "rehearse distinctly all the Ten Commandments: and the People still kneeling shall, after every Commandment, ask God Mercy for their Transgression thereof in Time past, and Grace to keep the same for the Time to come...." Once again, the posture of worship is the posture of humility.

Following the deprecation is another set of collects of intercession, including prayers for all princes of the earth, national governors, and the collect of the day as prescribed in the rubrics. Following these prayers come scripture readings, the sermon, and the collection. The service concludes with what is known as the Great Thanksgiving—the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It was Wesley's opinion that a worship service without Communion was deficient by definition.

Wesley published, "An Extract from The Whole Duty of Man" in his *Christian Library*. In this essay, the five great parts of prayer (*orandi*) are listed as confession, petition, deprecation, intercession, and thanksgiving. "These are the several parts of prayer, and all of them to be used both publickly and privately. The publick use of them is, first, that the church, where all meet to

join in those prayers wherein they are all in common concerned”(sic).<sup>121</sup> Selleck identified “the four elements (deprecation, intercession, petition, thanksgiving) essential to Anglican worship and the weekly celebration of the Eucharist remained as a central ingredient in Wesley’s concept of Christian worship and were thus embodied in the *Sunday Service*.”<sup>122</sup> The worship service was intended to be shaped by its prayers. Other elements of worship were chosen as preparations or responses of the worshipper to the primary agenda of worship. It was a prayer service.

What can be noted about Wesley’s *ordo* in contrast to the contemporary practice of worship in Wesleyan church is the agenda of prayer. Each portion of the Wesley service (to say nothing of the *Book of Common Prayer*) was shaped as a prayer-act. The entire service was a prayer service. Every activity of the service was understood to be an aspect of the community gathering for prayer. Wesleyan worship must be centered on God, not on the worshipper. It is designed to usher the worshippers into the presence of God, because they are in need of mercy and in order to receive mercy. It is from this prayerful posture that worship functions as a means of grace. It is not the fact that the people gathered that opens up the reservoir of grace, but because they prayed.

The prayers that Wesley recommended were collective prayers. Prayers were designed to be confessed, not merely heard. Wesley understood the power of the collects to place on the lips and in the hearts of people the things that they needed to confess to God and the things that they needed to receive from God. Public prayer provided a means of formation and integration, both into the life of the community of faith and into the Christian communion as a whole.

The contemporary practice of prayer in worship would benefit from the corporate act of praying together. Certainly the frequent repetition of “The Lord’s Prayer” by Wesleyan

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<sup>121</sup> John Wesley, “An Extract on The Whole Duty of Man,” *A Christian Library*, vol. XII (London: T. Cordeux, 1820), 71–75.

<sup>122</sup> Jerald B. Selleck, *The Book of Common Prayer in the Theology of John Wesley* (PhD diss, Drew University, 1984), 339–340.

congregations would be a good starting point. Music can also provide a means for praying together, when the text of songs are themselves prayers. Prayers might be projected on screens in most contemporary American churches or displayed in other ways. Creative use of visual media could provide opportunity for the congregation to see together or to read together ancient and contemporary prayers as an act of worship. During solemn services, prayers can be provided in printed form for contemplation during services of Communion or vespers. Many creative options are available to expose the contemporary congregation to the “prayers of the Church” handed down through the centuries. Certainly, at a minimum, a pastor’s prayer before the congregation ought to prompt the inward participation of the congregation in prayer.

Most importantly, however, the sense of *orandi* should be recovered in Wesleyan services. When properly understood, the entire worship service is a time of prayerful communion with God. This communion is achieved when a deliberate effort is made to remind worshippers that a worship service is to be directed on the vertical plain. Worship is for God’s sake, for the sake of what He receives from His people and for the sake of what He delivers to His people who are gathered in Him. Worship becomes a Means of Grace when the Giver of Grace is the subject of worship. Intent on keeping this proper focus, Wesley provided a God-centered pattern of worship.

Wesley understood worship to be a service that was performed by the people for the sake of encountering the presence of God. The *ordo* operates to keep the focus on the person and work of God in Jesus Christ. Once detached from that mooring, the focus of worship often becomes placed on what will attract and retain a crowd. The worship of God can become sublimated by the felt needs of the individual. Indeed, the very effort to design worship around the felt needs of those that are being attracted, a worship service can actually bypass the real need of the worshipper— to encounter the grace of God in Jesus. Attention to these Wesleyan

structures is the first step in keeping worship focused on who God is and what He has done and is doing in the world through the Incarnation. Wesley understood that properly structured worship should actually facilitate worship that was high spirited. It was the celebration of the person and work of God that motivated Wesley to a profound sense of personal joy and authentic emotion in worship. These emotive aspects of worship are considered to be more quintessentially Wesleyan. However it was the historical blunder that separated the parts of worship that produced emotion from the aspects of worship that declared truth by means of a structure that was historic, liturgical, scriptural, Eucharistic, and shaped by prayer and preaching. While the character of Wesleyan worship is considered below, it should always be kept in mind that in Wesley's imagination what unfolds below must be wed to what has been discussed above in order for worship to be fully-formed and properly ordered.

### **The Character of Wesleyan Worship**

It is impossible to extract Wesley's concern for spirited worship by studying the text of the *Sunday Service* alone. One must have a broader appreciation of John Wesley's own heart and experience within worship to appreciate the way in which he intended his services to be conducted. The Methodists in America did not know that John Wesley. When they received the *Service* they did not appreciate the living quality of the document. Reading only the text of the document, they did not understand how it might be conducted with passion and enthusiasm. Perhaps they would have been more accepting of the document had they read Wesley's description of an ideal Sunday service in a letter "to a friend," written September 20, 1757:

The longer I am absent from London, and the more I attend the service of the Church in other places, the more I am convinced of the unspeakable advantage which the people called Methodists enjoy. I mean, even with regard to public worship, particularly on the Lord's day. The church where they assemble is not gay or splendid, which might be a hindrance on the one hand; nor sordid or dirty, which might give distaste on the other; but plain as well as clean. The persons who assemble there are

not a gay, giddy crowd, who come chiefly to see and be seen; nor a company of goodly, formal, outside Christians, whose religion lies in a dull round of duties; but a people most of whom do, and the rest earnestly seek to, worship God in *spirit and in truth*. Accordingly, they do not spend their time there in bowing and courtesying, or in staring about them; but in looking upward and looking inward, in hearkening to the voice of God, and *pouring out their hearts before him*.

It is also no small advantage that the person who reads Prayers (though not always the same, yet) is always one who may be supposed to *speak from his heart*, one whose life is no reproach to his profession; and one who performs that solemn part of divine service, not in a careless, hurrying, slovenly manner; but seriously and slowly, as becomes him who is transacting so high an affair between God and man.

Nor are their solemn addresses to God interrupted either by the formal drawl of a parish clerk, the screaming of boys, who bawl out what they neither feel nor understand<sup>123</sup>, or the unseasonable and unmeaning impertinence of a voluntary on the organ. When it is seasonable to sing praise to God, they do it with the spirit, and with the understanding also; not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Hopkins and Sternhold, but in psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry; such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian, than a Christian to turn critic. *What they sing is therefore a proper continuation of the spiritual and reasonable service*; being selected for that end (not by a poor humdrum wretch who can scarce read what he drones out with such an air of importance, but) by one who knows what he is about, and how to connect the preceding with the following part of the service. Nor does he take just “two staves,” but more or less, as may best *raise the soul to God*; especially when sung in *well-composed and well-adapted tunes*, not by a handful of wild, unawakened striplings, but by a *whole serious congregation*; and these, not lolling at ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, drawling out one word after another, but all standing before God, and *praising him lustily and with a good courage*.

Nor is it a little advantage as to the next part of the service, to hear a *Preacher whom you know to live as he speaks, speaking the genuine Gospel* of present salvation through faith, wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost; declaring present, free, full justification, and enforcing every branch of inward and outward holiness. And this you hear done in the most *clear, plain, simple, unaffected language; yet with an earnestness becoming the importance of the subject, and with the demonstration of the Spirit*.

With regard to the last and most awful part of divine service, the celebration of the Lord's supper, although we cannot say that either the unworthiness of the Minister, or the unholiness of some of the communicants, deprives the rest of a blessing from God; yet do they greatly lessen the comfort of receiving. But these discouragements are removed from you: You have proof that he who administers fears God; and you

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<sup>123</sup> Undoubtedly this reference is to the choral music of a boys' choir. Wesley recommended against choir music because it inhibited the participation of the congregation.



have no reason to believe, that any of your fellow-communicants walk unworthy of their profession. Add to this, that the *whole service is performed in a decent and solemn manner, is enlivened by hymns suitable to the occasion, and concluded with prayer that comes not out of feigned lips.*

Surely then, of all the people in Great Britain, the “Methodists” would be the most inexcusable, should they let any opportunity slip of attending that worship, which has so many advantages, should they prefer any before it, or not continually improve by the advantages they enjoy! What can be pleaded for them, if they do not worship God in spirit and in truth; if they are still outward worshippers only, approaching God with their lips while their hearts are far from him? Yea, if, having known Him, they do not *daily grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!* (emphases mine).<sup>124</sup>

In this letter, Wesley demonstrated his understanding that what was wrong with Anglican worship was not its structure, but its performance. With all that has been said about the importance of a well-ordered service, it should not be forgotten that Wesley preferred worship that came from the heart. Worship was an expression of a “heart strangely warmed” in response to a God of love and grace. Worship must be properly *structured* to facilitate Christian faith and life, but it should also be properly *expressed* from leaders who understood experientially what the rites and rubrics were declaring. Assessing his evaluation of this ideal Methodist worship service, one can quickly identify the characteristics that set Methodist worship apart from their Anglican counterparts. In reading the letter, it should be noted that Wesley’s evaluation was of the Lord’s day worship (Sunday worship), which would have been conducted according to the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer*. However, what set Methodist worship apart was not so much what was done in worship, but the way in which leaders and people did it.

In Wesley’s letter (above) italics have identified phrases that show what he considered “the unspeakable advantage” of worship among the Methodists. The characteristics he promotes can be summarized with the words experiential, participatory, exuberant, formative, and engaging music.

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<sup>124</sup> John Wesley, “A Letter to a Friend” (September 20, 1757), *Works* (JE) 13:216–218.

Experiential refers to the kind of heart-felt worship that Wesley encouraged using terms like, “spirit and truth,” “speaking from the heart,” “lusty” singing, and “earnestness.” Saying that Wesleyan worship is to be experiential is a way of expressing that worship should be the expression of a person who had a real and living encounter with God through Christ’s presence in their heart—an encounter that found ardent expression in worship. From the leaders to the participants, Wesley celebrated a worship service that facilitated people “pouring out their hearts before [God].” It was a special advantage when the worship service was led by those who had own personal experience with God. Wesley was delighted to hear prayers spoken “from the heart,” earnest preaching, and one who administered the Sacraments who was worthy and “fears God” in the midst of a worthy congregation of serious Christians. Such preaching was to be done in “clear, plain, simple, unaffected language” with “earnestness” and “the demonstration of the Spirit.” Wesley considered authentic worship to be the expression of the hearts of a congregation and clergy who had an authentic personal encounter with God through Christ and expressed the joy of that encounter through the rites and rituals of the worship service. What he most deplored was a service that was merely bawled out by screaming boys and parish clerks who “neither feel nor understand.”

His emphasis on participation is evident when he speaks particularly of music. Throughout the letter, Wesley frowned upon the use of choirs and songs that interrupted the worship with tunes and language that were incomprehensible to the worshipper. Instead, he applauded the use of hymns that the congregation could sing together using both words and tunes that were meaningful to the worshipper. The letter as a whole described a service that facilitated the participation of those who “earnestly seek to, worship God in spirit and in truth.” Singing was done with “spirit and understanding” by the “whole serious congregation.” It is deliberately

chosen to “raise the soul to God” with the congregation standing and in active, conscious participation.

Exuberance is not to be understood as emotionalism. Wesley noted the need for both seriousness and lusty singing. He sought both “reading from the heart” and due seriousness in reading. Thus, exuberance is not a description of emotional outbursts, but a description of which might be described in another denomination and time as “full, conscious, and active” participation in worship. Worshippers came to worship with a sense of joy and anticipation (“earnestly seek to worship”) and were consciously engaged in the act of worship (“hearkening to the voice of God,” “pouring out their hearts to him”).

The formative quality of worship is emphasized particularly when Wesley speaks of preaching, “declaring present, free, full justification, and enforcing every branch of inward and outward holiness. And this you hear done in the most clear, plain, simple, unaffected language....” The issue also appears in his discussion on the attitude in which the Methodists approached worship, “in looking upward and looking inward, in hearkening to the voice of God, and pouring out their hearts before him.” It was important for worship to lead Methodists to “daily grow in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Clearly, the goal of Methodist worship was to form the character of a Methodist in response to his or her encounter with God through worship.

Wesley wanted engaging music. His sternest comments in the letter above, however, were on the topic of music. He chastised the Anglican practice of using boy’s choirs to sing in incomprehensible melodies while applauding the Methodist habit of singing that was “a proper continuation of the spiritual and reasonable service” with the end being to raise the soul to God. He complimented the use of simple tunes and verse that would be sung by the entire assembled congregation in a way that allowed them to express their faith and their joy. He encouraged the use of “well-composed and well-adapted tunes” that would facilitate the whole congregation’s singing

of “psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry.”

This section will explore these issues of character more fully. Character is not to be separated from the structure of worship; however, the character demonstrates the way in which the Methodist *experience* of God was *incarnated* in the practice of worship. His emphasis on character cannot be directly identified in the *Sunday Service* itself; although, where the *Service* demonstrated a concern for these issues, it will be noted in the analysis below.

Wesley could be quite critical of those who believed that faithful attendance at Sunday worship merely as an outward form. He accused such persons as using “outward forms as commutations for inward holiness” thinking that participation in worship, giving of alms and living soberly was equivalent to being a Christian person.<sup>125</sup> While he esteemed the ordered worship of the Anglican Church, he was well aware that order without “the knowledge of the love of God” is a “worthless shadow.”<sup>126</sup> He asked, “What is the purpose of *ecclesiastical order*? Is it not to bring souls from the power of Satan to God? And to build them up in his fear and love? *Order*, then, is so far valuable as it answers these ends; and if it answers them not, it is worth nothing.”<sup>127</sup> Order was only effective when it had a personal impact on the worshipper.

Wesleyan worship embodies this living reality *within* an ordered structure. Because of these emotive aspects, Methodist worship was often criticized for its enthusiasm. Enthusiasm was not valuable, however, unless it produced authentic faith. Wesley said, “I detest all zeal which is any other except the flame of love.”<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, he explained, “The end of the commandment is love—of every command, of the whole Christian dispensation. Let this love be

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<sup>125</sup> See, John Wesley, “Letter to John Smith,” (June 25, 1746), in *Letters II: 1740–1755*, ed. Frank Baker, vol. 26 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 200. Baker identifies “John Smith” as an unnamed, but well-informed clergyman with whom Wesley carried on a correspondence of twelve letters in 1745–46.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

attained by whatever means, and I am content; I desire no more. All is well if we love the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves.”<sup>129</sup> The product of authentic Wesleyan worship is love set aflame.

The analysis of the character of Wesleyan worship below must take a broader view of Wesley's advices on worship that what is enmeshed in the *Sunday Service* itself. Using the letter quoted above and other advices and directives on worship found within Wesley's writings and practices, this study has identified personal, participatory, exuberant, formative, and engaging music as the key characteristics that are prototypically Wesleyan. The discussion of these characteristics will proceed along a similar approach as the discussion of the structure above. While the *Service* itself provides only minimal insight into these characteristics, there is ample material within Wesley's own practice and advice regarding worship to substantiate the importance that he placed on the presence of these characteristics in worship. The essential argument that this study makes is that it is in the retaining of the dynamic interplay between the character elements below with the structural elements above that the unique liturgical imagination of John Wesley is expressed. In restoring that dynamic interplay, the contemporary worship planner will find a way to restore an approach to worship that is properly and fully *ordered* while having freedom to create worship that speaks and functions in culturally sensitive ways.

Wesley thought that worship ought to be experiential, that is, to bring the worshipper into *personal* experience of the presence of God. While he steadfastly rejected enthusiasm, he was equally insistent that faith in Christ should produce an inner awareness of peace with God and the presence of the Holy Spirit. His experience on Aldersgate Street is typological for Wesley. He entered into a personal fellowship with a God who loved him. In a sermon entitled,

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 203.

“Justification by Faith,” Wesley affirmed the importance of a personal encounter with God saying, “Justifying faith implies, not only a divine evidence or conviction that ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,’ but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for *my* sins, that he loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.”<sup>130</sup> In his sermon, “Scriptural Christianity,” he emphasized this personal aspect of Christianity defining Christianity not as “a set of opinions” but what “refers to men’s hearts and lives.”<sup>131</sup> Christianity was a personal encounter with the Living God.

This personal faith was often experienced with accompanying emotion. As Methodists were freed from formal religion to grasp the reality of heart religion, there were often outbursts of emotion in Methodist meetings. Wesley was always clear to maintain that it was not the emotional outbursts that were constitutive of experiential faith, but the assurance of faith, peace with God, and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Wesley wrote, “But when he is born of God, born of the Spirit, how is the manner of his existence changed! His whole soul is now *sensible* of God, and he can say by sure *experience* ‘Thou are my bed, and about my path;’ I *feel* thee in ‘all my ways.’”(emphasis mine).<sup>132</sup> Faith was not mere assent to the creeds, it was a personal fellowship with God. While Wesley was not the only reformer to have a heartfelt encounter with Christ as the central moment in his theological and spiritual development, it was Wesley who saw this inner experience as *normative* and *necessary* to authentic Christian faith. This inner awareness, often referred to as “the witness of the Spirit” became a litmus test of Wesleyan spirituality.

This awakening witness is first realized by the sinner who is becoming aware of his or her need as “an emotion of soul which he cannot describe....”<sup>133</sup> As the *legal* state becomes the

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<sup>130</sup> John Wesley, “Justification by Faith,” *Works* (BE), 1:194.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>132</sup> John Wesley, “The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God,” *Works* (BE), 1:434.

<sup>133</sup> John Wesley, “The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption,” *Works* (BE), 1:256.

*evangelical* state, this state of saving faith is evidenced by the removal of both the guilt and power of sin. “Here end remorse, and sorrow of heart, and the anguish of a wounded spirit. ‘God turneth his heaviness into joy.’”<sup>134</sup> Wesley consistently directed his Methodists to evaluate their spiritual condition according to this inner sense, this ‘emotion of soul,’ which is the experience that defines saving faith. “This, then, is the very essence of his faith, a divine *ελεγχος* [*sic*](*evidence* or *conviction*) of the love of God the Father, through the Son of his love, to him a sinner, now accepted in the Beloved. And, ‘being justified by faith, he had peace with God,’ (Rom. v. 1,) yea, ‘the peace of God ruling in his heart;’....”<sup>135</sup> Without this kind of faith, “a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that, by the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God; whereof doth follow a loving heart, to obey his commandments,” a person, was, at best, according to Wesley, an “almost Christian,” as opposed to “an altogether Christian.”<sup>136</sup>

In designing worship around this priority one must seek to find the balance between structure and experience. It is an easy thing to provide a contrived experience for the worshipper without clearly understanding the underlying faith that experience expresses. The human tendency is to appeal to personal emotion as a way to attract a crowd. Certainly, the revivalist tradition became expert at doing just that. In the design of a truly Methodist worship service, however, the planners will be cognizant of both what the worshipper feels and what the service declares. In Wesley’s words from the letter above, “What can be pleaded for them, if they do not worship God in spirit and in truth; if they are still outward worshippers only, approaching God with their lips while their hearts are far from him?” The balance to maintain is in providing a worship service that has content while speaking to the heart. The worshipper is to grow in grace

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>135</sup> John Wesley, “Scriptural Christianity,” *Works* (BE), 1:161–62.

<sup>136</sup> John Wesley, “The Almost Christian,” *Works* (BE), 1:139.

and in knowledge of God. Worship must not become wooden and formal; yet, it must also not be merely joyous and emotional. It should be an exercise in loving God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Wesleyan worship is also *participatory*. The *Sunday Service* clearly calls for every feature of worship, except the sermon, to be a shared experience between the leaders and the congregation. While Methodist Christianity was personal, it was not individual. “The goal of evangelism was incorporation into a worshipping fellowship.”<sup>137</sup>

In this spirit, Wesley’s service book was accompanied by *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for the Lord’s Day* which could be sung to “well-composed” and “well-adapted” tunes by the entire congregation to facilitate participation. “Wesley’s distaste for anthems as appropriate for ‘joint worship; is evident in his act of discarding the rubric: ‘In Quires and Places where they sing, here followeth the Anthem’ from both morning and evening prayer.”<sup>138</sup> The entire shape of his service is designed to heighten the participation of all the assembled worshippers.

One can find this definition of participation reiterated in the contemporary discussion of worship when, for example, Schmemmann (from the Orthodox perspective) offers the theological underpinnings of this historic understanding of worship saying:

The Church as life and grace is realized through her worship. The Greek word for worship — *leiturgia* — means more than common prayer: it means corporate action, in which every one takes an active part, is a participant and not only an "attendant." The nature of this action is both *corporate* and *personal*. It is *corporate* because through the unity and faith of its participants it realizes and fulfills the reality of Church, i.e. the presence of Christ among those who believe in Him. It is *personal* because this reality is every time conveyed to *me*, given *me* for *my* personal edification, for my own growth in grace. Thus in worship I am both an active "builder" of the Church — and

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<sup>137</sup> Lester Ruth, “A Little Heaven Below: The Love Feast and the Lord’s Supper in Early American Methodism.” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Fall 1997): 60.

<sup>138</sup> White, *Prayer Book*, 10.



to be this is my Christian duty — and I am also its "beneficiary" — for the whole of the Church's treasure is offered to me, is a Divine gift to me.<sup>139</sup>

Participating in worship, then, has a dual result. By the participation of each individual worshipper, the whole church is edified. In the other direction, it is through active and conscious participation in worship that the individual worship encounters and experiences God.

Hauerwas is a contemporary Methodist who agrees with this point saying, "The way the church 'wins converts,' therefore, is by making us faithful worshippers of the God who alone is worthy of worship."<sup>140</sup> Similarly, Webber advised:

Churches that want to experience God's transforming power in their worship must not overlook the importance of each individual's wholehearted participation. Such participation is necessary to worship renewal. In fact, it can be said that worship which does not demand such personal involvement on behalf of every believer is not worship renewal. Worship is never something done to us or for us, but always by us.<sup>141</sup>

A worship service is not to be conducted as a performance for an audience. Worship only takes place to the extent that the community gathered becomes active participants in the act of worshipping God.

Much contemporary worship allows the congregation to become the audience. They are invited to worship as they might be invited to a stage show. They are to watch, applaud if they like, and participate only if they want. Nothing is expected or demanded of the audience. Wesleyan worship is unapologetically demanding of the congregation. To reference Webber again, "The church is simply not an aggregate of individuals who happen to come together at a given time to worship in their own individual way. The church is a community, a household of

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<sup>139</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *Liturgy and Life* (New York: Department of Religious Education Orthodox Church in America, 1974), 23.

<sup>140</sup> Hauerwas, *A Better Hope*, 157.

<sup>141</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Blended Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 84

faith, brothers and sisters in Christ, the body of Christ.”<sup>142</sup> By participating in worship, the worshipper gains identity within the community of faith.

The practice of worship today should be designed to engage the congregation in “full, active, conscious participation” in every aspect. Wesley would have even eliminated choir anthems and special songs sung by individuals or groups. Planners of worship should be deliberate in designing as many aspects of worship as possible to be conducted jointly between the leader and the congregation. An observer is not a worshipper. To the extent that a person is not participating in worship, that service is not a worship service, at least for that person.

The experiential quality of Wesley’s doxology discussed above focuses upon the inward character of worship as impacting the worshipper on a personal and affective level. The outward expression of that impact is often *exuberant*. Wesleyan worship should be expressive, emotional, and powerful. The presence of God is realized in the eschatological present producing tangible evidence of this encounter.

Many contemporary Wesleyans would shudder at the emotional outbursts of their great-great grandparents during the early days of American Methodism as well as in Wesley’s England. Wesley never wanted to be construed as an enthusiast; but, “for many Methodists these experiences were essential. Their conversion would not have been complete without some exceptional manifestation...Rightly or wrongly, the average Methodist valued such an experience as a necessary assurance of salvation.”<sup>143</sup> Wesley, as seen in the letter above, was quite critical of those who conducted the liturgy with no heart. His experience of the liturgy was quite moving.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>143</sup> Robert Tucker, *Separation*, 23.

The Methodist worship that Wesley preferred included *lusty* singing and sincere preaching with the *evidence of the Holy Spirit*. While Wesley steadfastly opposed emotionalism as a condition of or contrivance of authentic worship, it was clear that people who had an authentic encounter with the living God in worship will necessarily find outward expression in praise and celebration. While the presence of emotion is no guarantee that authentic worship is taking place, the absence of emotion is a likely indication that the worshipper is not engaged in the service at all. An authentic encounter with God is generally a deeply moving event. Yet, a contrived emotional experience must not be exchanged for an authentically emotive encounter with Christ.

Lester Ruth's careful study of early American Methodist worship, characterized it in eschatological terms. Their worship was an experience in which the eschatological consummation of the kingdom of God was also a present realization within the worshipping community. "In their estimation, their fellowship, specifically in worship, revealed the power and promise of heaven; it was even a participation in heaven."<sup>144</sup> A Wesleyan service participates in the glory of Heaven. "'Heaven' not only embraces the various expressions of the self," notes Blevins, "but transforms them into a new constellation marked by God, just as the worshipping community is transformed into one voice, one heart for God."<sup>145</sup> A worship service connects heaven and earth in the eschatological present. It is a service filled with promise and expectation, conducted in the actual presence of God who has come through Christ in the Lord's Supper. "Through the Lord's Supper, they sensibly experienced the joys of heaven, but what they experienced is but a taste and pledge of what will be, of 'That Fullness of Celestial Love'."<sup>146</sup>

Within worship, the worshipper's identity in Christ is expressed in the rubrics and in the language of worship. Early Methodist services were quite enthusiastic because of this sense of

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<sup>144</sup> Lester Ruth, "A Little Heaven Below," 72.

<sup>145</sup> Blevins, "Liturgical Construction," 24.

<sup>146</sup> Rattenbury, *Hymns*, 73.

promise and fulfillment. Heaven was present in the worship experience of the Methodists. “They had so much joy in contemplating heaven because they knew so much by experience about it. To them it was not a problem or a query or a subject for discussion; it was their goal and experience.”<sup>147</sup> Here, worship becomes more than remembrance, it is encounter.

To the “sabbath-breaker,” Wesley counseled, “spend this day as thou hopest to spend that day which shall never end.”<sup>148</sup> As an indication of his own ecclesiology, Wesley counseled, “The King of heaven now sits upon his mercy-seat, in a more gracious manner than on other days, to bestow blessing on those who deserve it.”<sup>149</sup> It was in Sunday worship (with Eucharist) that Wesley perceived this meeting of heaven and earth. When that encounter took place within the worshipping congregation, Methodists became exuberant. “Methodists gloried in proclaiming as loud as they could, sometimes literally at the top of their voices, that God was present in their worship, that in public prayer God bestowed grace upon the gathered community.”<sup>150</sup>

In describing worship at American Methodist Quarterly Meetings, Ruth connects Wesley’s own theology of experience to the practice of the worshipping community:

Methodist theology stressed subjective experiences of grace or “experimental religion.” This stress made visitations of God at Methodist worship extremely desirable, even necessary. These visits were the times when people experienced salvation. God’s presence was experienced as grace that saved by overwhelming worshippers with divine and personal love. Although this phenomenon was not restricted to preaching services (or, for that matter, preaching services at quarterly meetings), these services proved a reliable source for apprehending the dynamics of the “work of God.”<sup>151</sup>

The personal, exuberant, eschatological, experience of the presence of God was the typical and prototypical Methodist experience at worship.

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>148</sup> John Wesley, “A Word to a Sabbath-breaker,” *Works* (JE), 11:165.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Lester Ruth, *A Little Heaven*, 14.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 67.

For Wesley, authentic worship was and is the primary locus of the presence of God in the world, doing all that the grace of God has to offer, saving sinners, producing righteousness, and drawing them toward holiness. Worship was a “Love Feast.” It was a place where our love for God found its source, its fullness, and its best expression. Blevins offers that here, “[h]oliness of heart and life becomes more than an ethical ideal; it becomes the trajectory of the liturgical life, lived out daily in participation with God.”<sup>152</sup> Henry Knight expresses this idea as well saying: “I will argue that worship which glorifies God at the same time sanctifies persons through forming and shaping distinctively Christian affections.”<sup>153</sup> Methodist worship, then, embodies both a theology and an experience.

Methodist worship engages the heart and affections. It is this synthesis that saved Methodism from the vagaries of dull formal religion on the one hand and the excesses of enthusiasm on the other. American Methodists did not appreciate this synthesis. The ordered worship that Father Wesley provided in the *Sunday Service* did not meet the emotional needs of frontier America. They did not understand the emotional content of the prescribed rites and prayers. To the Americans, these prescriptions reeked of the dead formalism that they were escaping with their new-found freedom. As a result, the Wesley *ordo* was rejected for something more akin to the Methodist preaching service *ordo*.

The struggle is not unique to Methodism. Part of the motivation for the liturgical renewal movement of the twentieth century was the desire to restore the epiclectic character to the worship *ordo* in a number of main-line denominations. In *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, “[t]he liturgy ... is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may *express* in their lives and *manifest to others* the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church” (emphasis mine).<sup>154</sup> Romano

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<sup>152</sup> Blevins, “Liturgical Construction,” 28.

<sup>153</sup> Knight, “Worship and Sanctification,” 7.

<sup>154</sup> Alceste Catella, “Theology of the Liturgy,” *Fundamental Liturgy*, vol. II of *Handbook for Liturgical*

Guardini wrote of this essentially exuberant aspect of liturgical worship saying, “The liturgy offers something higher. In it man, with the aid of grace, is given the opportunity of realizing his fundamental essence, of really becoming that which according to his divine destiny he should be and longs to be, a child of God.”<sup>155</sup> This kind of engagement of the soul in worship was what produced exuberance in Wesley and a sense of the presence of the eschaton for his Methodists.

Contemporary Methodists demonstrate this aspect of Methodist consciousness remains. Wainwright argued, “Christian ritual is thus marked by eschatological tension. It brings to focus the character of the historical Church as a pilgrim community on its way to becoming the people of God’s final kingdom.”<sup>156</sup> Tex Sample observes, “Worship is the celebration and dramatization of God’s story. It is the glorification of God as Gracious Creator, Redeemer, and Ongoing Presence in that story.”<sup>157</sup> These aspects of worship give it its affective character. It is experiential, exuberant, and participatory.

Wesley also understood worship to be a *formative* event. He was convinced that regular participation in the rubrics of worship had the power to create Christian life and character.<sup>158</sup> Wesley wrote of his Methodists in his essay, *Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained*, “I know all of them are deeply sensible, the ‘doctrines they have been used to hear’ daily are none other than the genuine doctrines of the Church, as expressed both in her Articles and Service.”<sup>159</sup> His theology was a liturgical theology; so, his liturgy embodied his theology.

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*Studies*, ed. by Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 13.

<sup>155</sup> Guardini, Romano, “The Playfulness of the Liturgy,” in *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology*, 42.

<sup>156</sup> Wainwright, *Doxology*, 121.

<sup>157</sup> Tex Sample, *The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 107.

<sup>158</sup> For an excellent discussion on this point, see Wesley Tracy, “Uniting Worship, Preaching and Theology,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Spring, 1998): 32–57. In this article, Tracy proposes that the source of Wesley’s doctrine of perfect love was not his pietistic practices but his participation in the Church’s liturgy.

<sup>159</sup> John Wesley, “The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained (1746),” in *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*, ed. Rupert E. Davies, vol. 9 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 186.

Ordered Worship teaches. For the uninitiated, it provides catechesis. For the convert, it offers the ongoing shaping of life and faith (mystagogics). In more recent years, Schmemmann reminds that, historically, the entire content of faith, scripture, doctrine, and life were transmitted through the liturgy.<sup>160</sup> He says, “‘Liturgical Catechesis’ is not just an interesting custom of the ancient Church, but the traditional method of religious education, an organic part of the very nature of the Church and its conception of spiritual ‘enlightenment.’”<sup>161</sup> Worship, then, must be thoughtfully designed to form the worshipper into a Christian person through regular and repeated exposure to the service.

This formation that takes place in worship is not merely, or even, primarily, didactic. The formation is intended to create Christian identity, Christian vocation, and Christian maturity. “The little story I call my life is given cosmic, eternal significance as it is caught up within God’s larger account of history.”<sup>162</sup> While it is clear that worship is not the only formative aspect of the church,<sup>163</sup> the formative potential of the worship event has been sadly neglected in the American Evangelical tradition. With the development of small groups and Sunday schools, much of the historic content has been deleted from worship. Maria Harris challenges the curricular mission of the church saying,

The heritage of scripture, tradition, the lives of our ancestors in the faith, creed, gospel, prayer, sacrament and law is often taught better through worship or preaching than through classroom instruction.... In other words, incorporating all the forms of ministry into our educational lives enables us to make that education a *priestly* one: a work of remembering, hallowing and blessing.<sup>164</sup>

Harris advises that churches reconsider the worship service as its primary curriculum. Through

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<sup>160</sup> Schmemmann, *Liturgy and Life*, 9.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>162</sup> Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 55.

<sup>163</sup> Maria Harris, *Fashion Me a People* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989). Here she identifies five formative (fashioning) elements in the church: koinonia, leiturgia, kerygma, didache, and diakonia.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 44–45.

the worship service, the work of transferring the content of the Christian life is accomplished.

Ordered Worship accomplishes this function so much more naturally than contemporary forms. Built on the rubrics of Scripture, creed, and confession these aspects of formation are more fully apparent. A restored consciousness to the celebration of the Christian seasons, symbols, and sacred actions would add a depth and quality to our worship experience that can form and inform. This kind of restoration of historic Christian worship, as Dean Blevins has pointed out, can have a particularly powerful impact on the development of the post-modern person.<sup>165</sup> Wesleyan theology engenders tremendous hope. Built into Wesley's unique perspective is the prospect of real change in the life of the believer, not just a relative change. Worship is one of the primary places in which that personal transformation takes place. Worship shapes the Christian in "righteousness and true holiness."<sup>166</sup>

Christians are intentionally *made* through carefully ordered worship. Wainwright observes, "Our communion with God moulds us into the persons God intends us to be in his eschatological purpose. It also clarifies our vision concerning the place of our world in God's intention and so helps us to perform our everyday work upon the material creation conformably with God's purpose."<sup>167</sup> Schmemmann offered a similar view of the potential of worship saying,

For it is precisely in and through her liturgy – this being the latter's specific and unique 'function' – that the Church is *informed* of her cosmic and eschatological vocation, *receives* the power to fulfill it and thus truly *becomes* 'what she is'—the sacrament, in Christ, of the new creation; the sacrament, in Christ, of the Kingdom. In this sense the liturgy is indeed 'means of grace,' not in the narrow and individualistic

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<sup>165</sup> Blevins, "Liturgical Construction," 7–29. This is a compelling discussion that provides a basis for hope for Wesleyans in the postmodern consciousness. A restoration to our roots may actually be a means for reaching postmoderns with the gospel of Christ.

<sup>166</sup> Hauerwas, *A Better Hope*, 161, "For such worship creates a people who by necessity are on the move, forced to wander among the nations, home nowhere yet everywhere. Such a people are bound to attract followers, because the God who has called them from the nations is so beautifully compelling. That is, after all, why we believe that there is nothing more important in a world that does not believe that there is nothing more important in a world that does not believe it has the time to worship God than to take time to worship God truthfully."

<sup>167</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 26.



meaning given this term in post-patristic theology, but in the all-embracing meaning, as means of always making the Church what she is – a realm of grace, of communion with God, of new knowledge and new life.<sup>168</sup>

Undoubtedly, Wesley's understanding of the power and importance of the worship service was similar to Schmemmann. His own study of liturgy and the Eastern Fathers, seems to have informed his perspective on the way in which participation in worship should form and inform Christian life.

From a Wesleyan perspective, worship should be ordered by his theological twins, justification and sanctification. Worship must provide entry points for new converts to hear the gospel message *while* equipping Christians for a life of holiness and Christian service. The perfect place for this theology to be expressed is within the worshipping community as it gathers to give voice to their love for God and neighbor as both recipients of Divine love and agents of that love. It is through the primary means of grace, prayer, study of scripture and participation in the Supper, that God most clearly makes Himself known and calls sinners to Himself. It is through these means, that God forms sinners into saints.<sup>169</sup>

The single most characteristic feature of Methodist worship under Wesley's leadership and as it matured into an independent church in America, however, was its *engaging music*. The Wesleys were deliberate regarding their hymns. The hymns of Charles were used to proclaim the theology of John and to make it portable. The most fully developed collection of hymns for Methodists was published in 1780. The main purpose of the hymnbook was to serve as "a primer of theology for the Methodist people and a manual for both public worship and private

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<sup>168</sup> Fisch, *Liturgy and Tradition*, 57– 58.

<sup>169</sup> For Wesley's thoughts on the Means of Grace see his sermon by that title, *Works* (BE),1:376–397.

devotion.”<sup>170</sup> The hymnbook completed the triad of doctrinal sources for the Methodists which also included Wesley’s sermons and his *Expository Notes on the New Testament*.

The *Collection* consisted, almost exclusively, of Charles’ hymns (487 of 525) with a few written or translated by John added to the mix. Of this collection of hymns John wrote, “It is large enough to contain all the important truths of our most holy religion, whether speculative or practical; yea, to illustrate them all, and to prove them both by Scripture and reason.”<sup>171</sup> Its intention was to expound doctrine, teach scripture and aid in the development of Christian piety. “It is in this view chiefly,” wrote John, “that I would recommend it to every truly pious reader: as a means of raising or quickening the spirit of devotion, of confirming his faith, of enlivening his hope, and of kindling or increasing his love to God and man.”<sup>172</sup>

The arrangement of the hymnbook was driven by theological concerns. “Hymns, more than any other single source except the Bible, were means by which the ordinary Methodist could obtain knowledge of what Wesley and Methodism taught.”<sup>173</sup> The table of contents provides an outline of Wesley’s *via salutis*. Its five part structure was designed to exhort the sinner to return to God, through an experience of saving grace, culminating in a fully-formed Christian life of holiness. The fifth section contained hymns for specific occasions. “[T]he whole accent lies on ‘scriptural Christianity.’ The Bible, the whole Bible, nothing but the Bible—this is the theme of John Wesley’s preaching and the glory of Charles’s hymns.”<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Franz Hildebrand and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds., *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*,” vol. 7 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 1.

<sup>171</sup> John Wesley, “The Preface,” *A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People Called Methodists*, in *Works* (BE)7:74.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>173</sup> Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 414.

<sup>174</sup> *Works* (BE), 7:3.

Charles' hymns were glorious indeed. It was Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley that revolutionized English hymnody.<sup>175</sup> Charles composed his hymns in the common meter of popular music. "While these 'merry metres'[sic] swing with an easy movement, they show great technical ability and could not have been used by any but a master of prosody without becoming really offensive."<sup>176</sup> Charles took the vulgar short meter of the common Englishman and enabled it to give voice to the most profound of sacred truth. This process was carefully edited by John who provided theological oversight of Charles' verse. John's preference for singable tunes is displayed in his 1761 publication of *Select Hymns with Tunes Annexed* [sic] which included his essay *The Gamut, or Scale of Music*, as a training manual to compliment the *Tunes*.<sup>177</sup>

"It is well known that before the Methodist revival there was little singing of hymns in public worship in Britain...."<sup>178</sup> What singing was done in worship was thoroughly offensive to John. "He complained of 'complex tunes' and 'long quavering hallelujahs,' repetitions and different words sung at the same time: 'the horrid abuse which runs through all modern church music,' an offence to common sense and religion which indeed has 'no more religion in it than a Lancashire hornpipe.'"<sup>179</sup> He advised his Methodists to learn his tunes by memory before learning any others and for all to join in singing with the congregation. Furthermore, he advised, "sing lustily and with good courage," "Sing modestly," not bawling out above the congregation, "Sing in time," and "above all, sing spiritually."<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Ernest J. Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (London: The Epworth Press, 1948). Rattenbury offers a thorough discussion regarding the standard for liturgical hymnody up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the way in which the meters of Charles' hymns facilitated more vibrant singing. He maintains that it was Charles who wrote his hymns to be sung to folk tunes and "jigs."

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>177</sup> See, *Works* (BE), 7:738–764.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>179</sup> Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 415.

<sup>180</sup> *Works* (BE), 7:765.

While John may have been the theological genius of Methodism, it was Charles who transferred Methodist teaching to the Methodists. “He expressed in attractive and forceful verse what sometimes John wrote in laboured syllogisms.”<sup>181</sup> Rattenbury argues that the hymns of Charles were likely more influential than either John’s *Sermons* or *Expositions* because they were read and sung by all Methodists with tunes that allowed the words to penetrate their hearts. So thorough was Charles’ use of scripture and allusion to scripture that one could reconstruct most of the Bible with nothing but his 6,500 hymns. John understood how important these hymns were to the conversion of the nation. Rattenbury continues,

Christianity, John Wesley said, is a social religion; hence Methodism needed social hymns. Full salvation, in Wesley’s view, was perfect love; the Methodists, therefore, not merely as individuals, but as bands of loving companions—as Societies—sang their way to Zion. ... The hymns that the Methodists sang, like all effective hymns must be, were emotional, but their content throughout was scriptural and doctrinal. They did not merely stir emotion, but caused their singers to contemplate religious truth and meditate upon it.<sup>182</sup>

Mitchell summarizes the importance of these hymns saying, “Thousands of [illiterate Englishmen] came to know hundreds of Wesley’s hymns ‘by memory’ and were thus introduced into the treasure of evangelical truth.”<sup>183</sup> Through singing, both minds and hearts were converted.

The contemporary worship planner must keep in mind that music is expressive both of what the Christian confesses and what the Christian has encountered. Because music has a way of entering the heart directly, what is sung often becomes what is learned and confessed. While Methodist singing elicited strong emotion, the Wesley’s were extremely careful regarding the text of the song and the tune that carries the text. Music that is fun to sing and emotionally engaging, may, in fact, be dangerous because of the damage it can do to a Wesleyan *credendi*.

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<sup>181</sup> Rattenbury, *Evangelical Doctrines*, 61.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>183</sup> T. Crichton Mitchell, *Mr. Wesley: An Intimate Sketch of John Wesley* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1957), 92.

Particularly with reference to a Wesleyan understanding of sin, salvation, Christian perfection, and the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer, the songs that are sung can damage the faith that is proclaimed if they are not carefully chosen with regard to their text.

The current trend toward the abandonment of hymns in the contemporary model of worship is cause for concern. It is not the tunes that are the problem. One would assume that the Wesley's would have written their songs with common tunes in mind if they were writing today. Contemporary "jigs" would not have been summarily rejected providing that they were memorable and singable tunes. However, the Wesleys used hymns to encapsulate great theological truths while forming and giving shape to the Christian life. It is difficult to imagine what great truths can be capsulated in a few words sung repetitiously.

As much as, perhaps more than, anything done in worship, music shapes the belief system of the worshipper. Music makes doctrine portable. What is sung becomes the primary container of what is confessed. John understood the power of music to shape the religious consciousness of his Methodists. The Methodist hymnal was a source of primary theology for the movement.

A Wesleyan, then, should be extremely judicious about the choice of music incorporated in a worship service. The tunes facilitate the participation of the entire congregation and must be easy to learn and to repeat for the worshipper. The text of the songs that Wesleyans sing is even more critical. Songs ought to be eliminated from the *repertoire* that teach doctrine that is inconsistent with what Wesleyans confess. Moreover, songs should be deliberately chosen and composed that teach the confessions of Wesleyan Christians. Salvation by grace through faith, Christian Perfection, holiness, love for God, love for neighbors, and completion in Christlikeness are among the important themes that should be proclaimed in the singing of Wesleyans. The singing of Wesleyans ought to be directed toward the activity of God in a primary sense and its impact and apprehension on the individual only in a secondary sense. The music carries the

message and attains to a proper end, “the love of God and the love of neighbor” which is the end of all true religion.

This chapter has assessed Wesley’s *Sunday Service* along side the advices on worship that can be found in Wesley himself. Using those sources, several characteristics have been extracted that reflect Wesley’s commitment to worshipping God with one’s heart and mind. This analysis has determined several structural components of ordered worship, namely: historic, liturgical, prayer, scripture, preaching, and Eucharistic. It has also demonstrated the unique character of Methodist worship namely: experiential, participatory, exuberant, formative, and employing engaging music. The analysis has shown that Wesley’s liturgical imagination comprehended an approach to worship that was both fully-formed and personally expressive. It is in the ability to retain both halves of the agenda for worship that Wesley revealed his liturgical expertise and his sensitivity to the concerns of the Dissenters of his time.

Wesley’s liturgical advices have been evaluated in light of studies of the *Service* and on Methodist worship drawn from the foremost Wesleyan thinkers in the area while sampling the broader conversation regarding worship using those scholars highlighted in the first chapter. In light of that dialog, it does not conclude that proper worship can be regained through the reintroduction of Wesley’s *Sunday Service*. The categories described enable the reader to visualize the critical aspects of a Wesley Ordered Worship service to which we must attend in designing a fully ordered service for a contemporary culture. A “Taxonomy of Ordered Worship” is presented in the appendix that demonstrates the ways that one might take the insights of this chapter and interpret them into an actual service design. The argument here is that it is possible to design a worship service that contains the entirety of Wesley’s counsel on worship without reasserting the *Sunday Service* as *the* proper service order.

As illustrated in the appendix, “Sample Services,” the aspects of Ordered Worship that were critical to the thinking of John Wesley, as revealed in his thought and model service, can effectively be transferred as a means of ordering worship regardless of the particular style in which it is presented. These services illustrate the way a worship service actually functions to form Christian faith and life. The final chapter will consider the way in which ordering worship by the Wesleyan categories that has been extracted will be faithful to the liturgical imagination of John Wesley while providing a means to respond to the contemporary stresses in worship.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ORDERED WORSHIP AS A RESPONSE TO DOXOLOGICAL CRITIQUE

The contemporary crisis with worship that tries to speak to American culture without giving significant attention to standards that reflect the practice and purpose of Christian worship in its history can find a path to good solutions in the liturgical imagination of John Wesley. His advice for the structure and spirit of Christian worship was based on life-long consideration of key issues and his liturgical insights still speak to those who want evangelism and doxological standards to coexist. This Wesleyan pattern, which can be labeled “Ordered Worship,”<sup>1</sup> has distinct advantages and ably serves to form the community of faith that centers itself in Christ. It is indeed true that extracting the underlying liturgical pattern from John Wesley’s Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America reveals a thoughtful and deliberate revision of the service pattern from the Book of Common Prayer and that it is a useful model for churches within the Wesleyan tradition to respond to the contemporary doxological crisis in America. This chapter will discuss how Ordered Worship forms and informs a Christian life. But first, recall what has been established in the previous chapters and why Ordered Worship is necessary for shaping Christian living.

Chapter one looked to Wesley to provide a way to respond to the critique of contemporary American worship. It was argued that worship in America has been shaped more by American cultural concerns than by careful consideration of the history, practice, and purpose of Christian

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<sup>1</sup> The term *Ordered Worship* emerged in chapter three to describe the distinctive approach to worship design found in John Wesley. In this chapter it is applied to describe the approach to worship that is recommended for twenty-first century designers of worship.



worship. As a result, much of what is practiced as worship in the contemporary American church is flawed in that it is more responsive to the wants and desires of the worshipper than the action of God who is to be worshipped. The agenda for worship has been driven more by the need for attraction and evangelism than by the desire to form people of faith. It examined various efforts toward re-forming worship for contemporary Americans and suggested that by looking to Wesley's advices on worship one finds a guide to reform. He provides a doxological standard that should be retained regardless of the specific expression that the worship service takes.

Chapter two demonstrated that it is legitimate to look to John Wesley's directives regarding worship. While Wesley was responsible for leading the revival in personal religion that had such a significant impact on the development of Christianity in England and America, he was consistently and thoughtfully committed to the retention of a form of worship that reflected his study of the history of Christian worship. His loyalty to the ancient forms of worship was not simply a reflection of his personal preference or his nostalgia for the Established Church. It was not even his resistance to the establishment of a movement that would be perceived as a separation from the Church of England that drove his loyalty to the worship of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Wesley's loyalty to the form of worship that was retained in the *Prayer Book* was a studied opinion concerning the way that worship was intended to create, retain, and transfer Christian faith from generation to generation. The worship pattern that he advised in the *Sunday Service* was intended to pass that pattern on through the Methodists in America to a pioneer Christian field so that Christianity in America could retain its vital connection to the Christianity established by the Apostolic Christians.

Chapter three invited the reader to consider reimagining the practice of worship based upon an historic understanding of the function and purpose of worship that was reflected in John Wesley's advices for worship to the Methodist of North America. It suggested that a renewed

approach to worship that is both culturally adaptable and functionally superior can be produced by extracting the functional categories out of Wesley's *Sunday Service*, while being sensitive to the experiential impact of worship that was essential to worshipping Methodists. The appendix has provided some resources to highlight these categories and the key questions that arise out of them as well as some examples of how these categories can be applied to various worship forms and settings. These examples reveal that it is possible to create worship that is culturally adaptable and responsive to changing societal norms, while retaining essential elements that are needed for worship to accomplish its historic and doxological intent.<sup>2</sup>

This final chapter invites the reader to consider the advantages that Ordered Worship in the Wesleyan pattern offers over the current practices of worship. It is built on a basic assumption that has risen out of the language of the liturgical renewal worship: *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this study, the triad will be understood in this way: what is done in worship becomes what is believed and lived by the worshippers. The reason that the pattern and practices of worship are so important to evaluate is that it is worship that forms and informs Christians more than anything else in Christian experience. *Worship* is constitutive of faith and life. The Wesleyan *orandi* is the fundamental shape and expression of both its *credendi* and its *vivendi*. Thus, a utilitarian approach to worship has definite consequences. Properly and intentionally Ordered Worship, can provide the framework for creating, retaining, and

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<sup>2</sup> The appendix contains a "Taxonomy of Ordered Worship" which details the way in which the categories that rise from the study of the *Sunday Service* could be applied to the design and evaluation of a worship service. That taxonomy has been expanded to suggest a way in which these key concerns might be addressed within a contemporary worship design. The appendix also offers some sample services of varying design and evaluates them in reference to the Taxonomy so that the reader may how applying the insights drawn from the *Sunday Service* might be helpful and useful in contemporary worship practice. These resources are examples of how the insights of Chapter Three might be applied within the dynamic contemporary context.

<sup>3</sup> These concepts will be developed more fully below.

mobilizing people of faith for generations to follow.<sup>4</sup> It is a better response to the present doxological crisis.

William Dyrness has identified one important consequence for those who did not take up Wesley's advice; they have settled for a truncated Gospel. Dyrness outlined the way in which the Gospel has been domesticated by the American cultural milieu.<sup>5</sup> Throughout his work, Dyrness shows that the American Gospel became expressed in terms of the American spirit of industry, frontierism, hopefulness, destiny, and practicality. In his assessment, American idealism disconnected American Christianity from its roots.

For the emphasis on newness, on finality, however biblical the language as it came to be used in America, was ultimately defective. It clearly prepared the way for Emerson's fatal division of the party of hope from the party of memory. How tragic that a people who bore and embodied the great story of God's love for the world should do so much to cut out their own story from the larger whole.<sup>6</sup>

Worship in America has been shaped by American optimism that God was doing something new in this new land. Old wineskins could not contain the new wine. Thus, forms of worship that reflect the long history of Christian worship were summarily dismissed. Dyrness explained, "The way Americans deal with the past is a function of our approach to life. Fundamentally, we have two ways of dealing with it: we idealize it or, when it is impossible, we forget it."<sup>7</sup> This separation from our Christian roots has resulted in an alteration of the gospel that now impedes

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<sup>4</sup> Charles V. Gerkin, *An Introduction to Pastoral Care* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997) offers a meaningful theoretical basis that supports this idea. He understands that pastoral care functions to locate the people of God within the narrative of God's activity that is expressed in Scripture and continued in their own lives and experience. The pastor helps a person's individual story find meaning within the larger story of God's activity. Noting that, 35, "The recovery of liturgy and ritual as primary ways in which the Christian community cares for its own." Gerkin's work supports the idea that is being developed in this chapter that attention to worship is one of the primary means that Christian identity is formed and maintained.

<sup>5</sup> William A. Dyrness, *How Does America Hear the Gospel?* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

its receptivity. “At this point Americans most intensely resist the gospel. Not only have they harbored the illusion that they can develop their innate potential for good, but they also invariably have had the resources to pursue this illusion.”<sup>8</sup>

The result of this truncated gospel in America has been spiritual decay and impoverishment. “Underlying our surface optimism, there is an abyss of emotional hunger and suffering in our culture.”<sup>9</sup> Dyrness’ prescription for healing the cultural angst of America is to reassert the gospel story in such a way that Americans can locate themselves in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In so doing, they may see themselves as sinners in need of a Savior and as needy people in search of grace. This perspective is key to the formation of Christian faith and life.

### ***Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi: How Worship Shapes Life***

A renewal of worship following the pattern of Ordered Worship will provide a means for accomplishing the kind of reorientation that Dyrness advocated. Properly ordered worship will reconnect Christians with their roots in the Christian story (metanarrative) and community while allowing for worship to be expressed through contemporary language and forms that are culturally communicative. Properly ordered worship has the ability to speak in the voice of the local culture, whatever the parameters of that culture entail, while constantly drawing the worshipper to find his or her identity in the work of God, manifested in scripture, completed in Christ, and fulfilled in the world through committed and obedient disciples of Christ. Ordered Worship can be responsive to the local culture, while maintaining its connection with the larger story of redemption.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 148.

Christian identity and obedience grows from engaging the mind and heart with the divine story; fitting this process to a particular congregation of people requires some creative thinking. An image that Tisdale applied to the task of preaching would be a way to characterize the work of the worshipping congregation.

The preacher's role in the dance of local theological construction is a dual one. The preacher, on the one hand, is a dance partner, engaging the other partners and being engaged by them in the rigorous discipline and unmitigated joy of dance. On the other hand, the preacher is also charged with the task of imaginative choreography—bringing biblical texts, church tradition, and congregational context together into one proclamation of local theology and folk art that is integrative and capable of capturing the imaginations of its hearers. At its best, the Sunday morning sermonic dance inspires others, making them want to put on their own dancing shoes and join the steps of faith.<sup>10</sup>

This dance does not have to be performed in wooden shoes to baroque music. It is a dance that can be enjoyed in the “music” that best fits the local culture. There is a way to contextualize worship so that it meaningfully communicates to people in many different “cultures”<sup>11</sup> while retaining its authentic form and purpose. Ordered Worship can protect the church from allowing culture to set the agenda for worship. Culture might enjoy the dance for the sake of dance, whirling around and around, but not getting anywhere. The wise worship leader will realize that there is a point to the dance beyond merely drawing people to the party. As Eric Stoddart has observed, “*How I and my community worship has implications for the personhood of each one of us*”(sic).<sup>12</sup> What is done in worship creates Christian identity, forms Christian belief, and

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<sup>10</sup> Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 93.

<sup>11</sup> I am using the term “culture” here to mean both spoken languages as well as the like of cultural expression that Tisdale highlighted. I am recognizing here that there are many cultures and sub-cultures throughout America and that each of these cultures will inform the way a particular congregation worships by determining the songs they sing, the style in which they sing them, the instruments they use, the clothes they wear, the way the church is decorated, the traditions that are observed, the translation of the Bible they accept, and a multitude of other considerations.

<sup>12</sup> Eric Stoddart, “What is Our Liturgy Doing to Us? The After-effects of Worship,” *Studia Liturgica*, (2005 number 1): 101. Stoddart offers a model by which the liturgical designer may think about the impact that worship is having on the self-concept of the worshipper. His model provides a means for assessing the outcomes of liturgy

produces Christian life. Applying the Wesley pattern for worship in the way that is demonstrated here allows for flexibility without abandoning the proper form and function of worship.

Stoddart's essay reflects the maturing conversation that rises from the work of Kevin Irwin who shaped the issue in the language of Prosper of Aquitaine's couplet: *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*. Irwin argued for the establishment of a *theologia tertia*, "the ethical and spiritual dimensions of liturgy"—*lex vivendi*.<sup>13</sup> Irwin suggests, "Such an understanding of liturgical theology can help to reunite the doing of liturgy with living Christianity, lest the craft of liturgy be understood as only engaging in Church ceremonial."<sup>14</sup> Focus on *vivendi* sees the concern of liturgy "with Christian conversion understood as a response to the challenge of the gospel, ratified in cult and reflected in life."<sup>15</sup> In his emphasis on *vivendi*, Irwin helped to focus the liturgical discussion on the outcomes of worship. He taught us to ask not only, "What is the liturgy doing?" but, "What is the liturgy doing in and to the life of the worshipper?" His interest is in the way that liturgy "derives from and impacts on all of human life."<sup>16</sup>

Irwin's model of the dynamic interplay between the liturgy and Christian life is helpful.<sup>17</sup> He suggests that we think of this relationship as three concentric circles. Liturgy is the center and smallest circle. It consists of the things we do as acts of worship. As the center circle, it is the context from which and toward which the Christian life develops. The second, larger circle, is

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(formal or informal) in the construction of self-identity for the worshipper. While admitting its limitations, Stoddart suggests that designers of worship ought to give more conscientious attention to the effect that worship has in developing the identity of those who are regularly exposed to it.

<sup>13</sup> Kevin W. Irwin, *Context and Text* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 55. Irwin attributes this emphasis to the pioneering work of Beaudin, Guardini, and Vagaggini.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 56

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 312. While I rely on Irwin for the basic structure, I have developed his points with my own ideas interlaced.

the circle of prayer. While prayer (*orandi*) is something that is accomplished through worship (understood as the entire action of the worship service), the maturing Christian will find many personal times for prayer and reflection beyond the bounds of the worshipping community.

The largest circle is spirituality. While spirituality includes prayer and worship, it “implies how one views all of life from the perspective of Christian revelation and faith and how one’s life values and actual daily living are shaped by that revelation, enacted in the celebration of the liturgy.”<sup>18</sup> Spirituality is Irwin’s *vivendi*. Nurtured by liturgy and prayer, the Christian lives his or her life as a reflection of his or her liturgical consciousness. Worship gives both meaning and motivation to the life of the worshiper. The act of worship, the liturgical event, becomes the lens through which the worshipper understands himself or herself as a child of God and a person in community. Worship becomes the context out of which the Christian lives his or her life. An individual life is “located” within the story of God in and through worship and is given identity, purpose, and mission through worship.<sup>19</sup>

Properly ordered worship, then, orders the life of the worshipper within the soteriological activity of God in Christ who, in and through the worshipper, is reconciling the world to Himself. It enables the worshipper to define his or her life in relation to the larger story of God while seeing himself or herself as a participant in the story. The worshipper becomes an actor and enactor through which the work of God in Christ continues, both as it is received by the worshipper and as it becomes enacted in the life of the worshipper beyond the liturgical event. Irwin expresses this idea saying, “[P]articipating in the liturgy implies a fidelity to this ritual

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> See chapter three, pages 157–61 where Wesley’s understanding of worship as forming the foundation for Christian life is discussed.

enactment that necessarily includes living a life in conformity with what the liturgy enacts—the kingdom of God among us here and now.”<sup>20</sup>

Using Irwin’s model, the way in which what is done in worship shapes the rest of Christian life can be visualized. Thus, the center circle, the liturgy (public service of worship) becomes the “fount and summit”<sup>21</sup> of the Christian life. As fount, worship provides the context for Christian living by being the basis for the formation of a Christian life. Worship establishes the faith of a Christian through the Divine encounter of Word and Sacraments, while giving shape to that faith through the rites, rituals, and confessions of the liturgy.

As summit, worship becomes the destination toward which the Christian is living his or her life. Worship takes place in the eschatological present as a preparation (foretaste) for eschatological fulfillment. The life of the Christian is lived in preparation for and as an existential encounter with God who meets us in worship and who will offer entrance to Heaven. The two larger circles, prayer and spirituality, are formed by and for the sake of worship. The fullness of worship takes place when the liturgy so permeates Christian life that life itself is worship. This result is the goal of worship for Wesley as well.<sup>22</sup> It is worship, broadly defined—the Christian living in unbroken fellowship with God through Christ and untarnished love toward one’s neighbor. This fellowship is the Christian Perfection or Perfect Love that Wesley so tirelessly proclaimed as the *telos* of salvation.

As Irwin outlines his thesis, he views this aspect of the liturgy to be its eschatological consciousness. Liturgy provides the basis from which the worshipper lives life as an expression

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 331.

<sup>21</sup> Vatican Council, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council and The Motu Proprio of Pope Paul VI with a Commentary by Gerard S. Sloyan* (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press, 1964), 35, where the liturgy is referred to as the “summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all her power flows.”



of the presence and the coming of Christ. As such, liturgy produces social justice, mission, service, and love.<sup>23</sup> Irwin establishes the importance of thinking about the way in which worship is conducted. Worship both forms and informs Christian life. As Christians worship, so shall they believe, and so shall they live. Applying Wesley's advice for ordering worship will address all three of Irwin's concerns: *orandi*, *credendi*, and *vivendi*.

Irwin offered the kind of broad solution to the American depravity of worship that Dyrness understood was needed. Worship practices that restore the fullness of worship established by historic practice can offer a way for Americans to align their personal history with the whole scope of salvation history. As a result, they will see themselves in light of a broader narrative than the one that establishes their national identity. Worship can provide the means through which individuals embrace a spiritual identity that is founded in the work of God through Jesus. Once that broader narrative is embraced, it will provide a foundation for living in culture as part of a unique people—the people of God. The American angst described by Dyrness cries out for the kind of foundation and significance that can be found in the Ordered Worship approach.

### **The Advantages of Ordered Worship**

Ordered Worship can speak in the voice of the specific culture in which it is enacted (incarnated) while retaining the essential shape and contours of historic Christian worship. This model provides both form and freedom in worship, maintaining both the objective and subjective aspects of worship which are both essential to Wesley's understanding of worship. This approach to worship is both historic and contemporary, both contextualized and rooted in the greater

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<sup>22</sup> See, chapter three, 161.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 332, "This is to argue that liturgy is intrinsically *pastoral* (and reflection on it is essentially a pastoral discipline) in the sense that it concerns people engaged in liturgy in specific ecclesial and life contexts. Liturgical actions are meant to draw people more fully into the mystery of Christ experienced through the liturgy, one effect of which is to enable believers to live more fully the Christian life experienced in the liturgy."

Christian story. Ordered Worship achieves the dynamic harmony that Wesley was seeking with the *Sunday Service* between the content of a worship service and its existential impact on the worshipper.<sup>24</sup> It has great advantage in moving worshippers from forgetfulness to remembrance, from rootlessness to belonging, and from the shallows to the depths.

It is understood that this present study applies Wesley's *Sunday Service* in a way that neither Wesley nor the American Methodists would have imagined or recognized. Instead, the *Sunday Service* has been read as a tutor for discovering again the essential elements of fully-formed worship while seeking a means to apply those elements without rigid conformity to the rites and rituals of the past. The reader should not be too quickly dismissive of this approach to worship re-formation, as were the early American Methodists, but ought to consider that the Ordered Worship approach offers several advantages over much of the current practice of worship within American Evangelicalism while offering a response to the contemporary critique of worship that is proffered both by those interested in liturgical renewal and by those who express concern regarding the loss of influence or significance of Christianity in America.

### **From Forgetfulness to Remembrance**

Worship should locate the individual Christian within the larger story of the community of faith. Webber argued, "In worship, we need to recite and enact salvation history so that we can experience God's salvation in a personal way."<sup>25</sup> This engagement of the worshippers in the retelling of the ancient story invites them to understand their own personal stories in light of the divine narrative. Each individual life draws its meaning and significance by becoming a part of

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<sup>24</sup> Ernest J. Rattenbury, *Vital Elements of Public Worship*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (London: The Epworth Press, 1954), 77, "In the background the Church with its services and objective worship were always in his [Wesley's] mind.... He was both sacramental and evangelical because he believed in both objective and subjective religious worship, and knew that an exclusive use of either one or the other meant the weakening of Christianity."

<sup>25</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Blended Worship* (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 94.

the narrative of salvation history. That narrative makes the individual both a part of the biblical story and a part of the story of the Church, worshipping, serving, and proclaiming the gospel.

Speaking with a Wesleyan voice, Henry Knight called for an *anamnetic* approach to worship that recalls the worshipper to his or her place within the Divine history. Knight identifies hymns, prayers and Eucharist as primary means for drawing the worshipper into a spirit of thanksgiving and praise and for keeping God as the object of worship. “Authentic worship, then, is not only anamnetic but epicletic; it not only remembers who God is but encounters the living reality of that God through the Spirit.”<sup>26</sup>

In a similar discussion, Stephen Hoskins suggested that liturgy is the cure for spiritual amnesia. Through liturgy, we remember who we are within the history of God’s saving activity.<sup>27</sup> Hoskins’ point is made in a more theologically discrete way by Schmemmann who expresses a liturgically oriented theology saying,

For the faith which founds the Church and by which she lives is not a mere assent to a ‘doctrine,’ but her living relationship to certain events: the Life, Death, Resurrection and Glorification of Jesus Christ, His Ascension to heaven, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the ‘last and great day of Pentecost’—a relationship which makes her a constant ‘witness’ and ‘participant’ of these events, of their saving, redeeming, life-giving and life-transfiguring reality.<sup>28</sup>

Schmemmann helps us to understand that rehearsing the divine drama is not merely done in order for the facts to be transmitted faithfully from generation to generation, but in order to graft the worshipper into the story in such a way that the biblical narrative becomes his or her personal history. Worship makes us a “witness” and “participant” of the ancient events through the way that it interacts and engages with the life of the contemporary worshipper while making the

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<sup>26</sup> Henry H. Knight III, “Worship and Sanctification.” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, (Fall 1997): 14.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen T. Hoskins, “The Wesleyan/Holiness Movement in Search of Liturgical Identity.” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, (Fall 1997): 121–139.

<sup>28</sup> Fiesch, *Liturgy and Tradition*, 54

ancient story relevant to the worshipper.

Ordered Worship provides a means by which the benefits of historic and liturgical worship can be maintained while allowing worship to speak in a voice that will be understandable and meaningful to a contemporary audience. This approach allows for the contextualization of worship while providing the structure which will enable worship to order the context rather than allowing the context to order the worship. In so doing, we have sought to be attentive to the advice of Methodist Scholar, J.E. Rattenbury whose prescription for worship included: (1) restoring the worship orientation of the early church (keeping God the object of worship); (2) cultivating a sense of the difference between public and private worship; (3) giving attention to the objects of objective worship; (4) emphasizing the great historic realities of Christianity; (5) restoring the centrality of the Word, and; (6) leaving room for subjectivity, involvement and expression of the individual.<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting that the Emergent Church movement seeks a restoration to rooted Christianity. As observed in Chapter One, McLaren and other leaders of the emergent movement argued for a restoration of historical connections its heritage in Christian worship. The return to ancient practices of worship including the use of candles, chanting, and the regular observance of Eucharist are an effort to provide roots and significance to worshippers who feel adrift culturally. One resource that the Emergent Churches have turned to is Robert Webber. Webber was among the first to collect historic resources to be used in this return to Christian history for the popular audience. The academic community has produced numerous resources and conversations reflecting a concern for the reestablishment of historic forms and resources for worship. Through mining these resources, contemporary worshippers are invited back into the historic narrative of

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<sup>29</sup> Rattenbury, *Vital Elements*, 90–98.

the biblical community of faith in worship throughout the centuries. They remember their identity in the divine narrative.

By uncovering the historic order within Wesley's *Service* an approach has been offered by which Order and imagination can come together to find a new synthesis. Giving attention to the historic functions of worship will allow the contemporary congregation to experience and to be shaped by a pattern of worship that has nurtured Christians for centuries. Attention to the shape of the Christian year, frequent Communion, greater use of scripture and confessional praying, will allow Christians to see their individual experience within the context of the whole history of God's saving activity in Christ. Through this attention to historic worship, the congregation sees itself as a part of a greater narrative, finding new identity within the historic community of faith.

Yet, within this historic order, this approach allows for the exercise of liturgical imagination on the part of the worship leader. Admittedly, this kind of worship is more demanding on the part of the leaders of worship. Yet, accepting the challenge to formulate worship for and within one's own community of faith provides the opportunity for freedom within form and exuberance with purpose. Designing worship within an historic structure with attention to deliberately chosen language and confessions provides the means to enable the worshippers to remember their identity. This identity must be shaped in relation to Christ in opposition to the efforts of culture to form identity for them.

The Wesley order, as presented, provides a rationale for choosing various elements of the service. For example, music must be chosen with an eye toward a song's theological content *and* its singability. Since participation demands that the worshippers be able to participate actively in all aspects of the service, whatever is sung must invite the worshipper to participate in some way. Furthermore, since music provides the most memorable part of the worship service, the worship

leader must choose songs that will make the theology of the community portable. To sing poor theology is to teach poor theology; *orandi* shapes *credendi*.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond music, however, the worship planner will remember the power of images and ritual action to shape the imagination and experience of the worshipper, especially for contemporary society. While much of Protestantism has avoided icons as a part of worship experience due to the fear of abuses, it is readily observed that contemporary culture likes to rely on the power of the visual to shape consciousness. Catherine Bell and Robert Webber are among those who have helped to remind us of the power of ritual action to form identity and to create an experience that is more profound than words can express.

Thus, while Ordered Worship includes a sermon, it recognizes that worship is more than simply the occasion for preaching. The sermon remains significant in this ordered approach, but it finds its place within the broader liturgy or pattern of both the individual service and within the Church year. To say it another way, the agenda of worship begins to order the agenda for preaching, instead of the agenda of preaching ordering the agenda of worship. The sermon finds its place within the broader purpose and pattern of worship.

In that case, whether the preacher finds his or her direction from a published lectionary or chooses to select his or her own specific texts for worship, the overlying pattern is ordered by the historic story of God's work of salvation completed in Jesus Christ.<sup>31</sup> The purpose of Ordered Worship, then, is to help the worshiper to live his or her life within the broader pattern of God's salvation story (incarnationally). The true purpose of worship is fulfilled when the worshiper finds himself or herself participating in the reality of God's activity in the world. The structure of

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<sup>30</sup> See chapter one, fn 78.

<sup>31</sup> For Wesley's calendar of scripture readings, see appendix five.

worship provides the means by which the worshipper “remembers” and identifies with the broader narrative of salvation.

Rattenbury counseled, “Revision of worship-forms calls, however, not only for improved ritual and new or selected liturgical prayers, but even more for careful thought on the deeper problems of worship. An improvement of technique, though of some temporary value, will quickly prove disappointing and ultimately useless unless objectivity is restored to Protestant worship.”<sup>32</sup> Attention to the Wesley order, as described in the previous chapter and in the appendix,<sup>33</sup> will fulfill Rattenbury’s hope for a reimagination of worship that *remembers* as well as *responds*. Ordered worship allows for objectivity and creativity, connecting past to present, culture with Christ, and the individual with the broader community of faith. In so doing, it is world-creating and identity-forming for all who participate in such ordered and thoughtful worship.

### **From Rootlessness to Belonging**

The previous section discusses the way in which ordered worship creates identity for the worshipper by locating his or her personal story within the divine narrative and the historic worshipping Church. That identity is found within the story of God’s salvation. As such, the worshipper is invited to find his or her individual identity in his or her relationship to the community of faith. At this juncture, the importance of belonging bears closer consideration within the context of ordered worship before it is set aside.

If anything, the importance of creating a connection for the individual worshipper to the entire community of Christianity is becoming more important in the context of current cultural

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<sup>32</sup> Rattenbury, *Vital Elements*, 92.

<sup>33</sup> Note, especially, the materials from Wesley that are provided in appendix four, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists of North America*, appendix five, *A Table of Scripture Readings*, and appendix six, *1903 Sunday Service*.

shifts, not less important. In discussing Emergent Churches, Gibbs and Bolger interviewed numerous emerging congregations in the US and Britain. Typical of their discoveries, they report,

Jonny Baker (Grace, London) expresses his desire for an inclusive faith. “The danger with the church is that it gets too tribal. I’m not interested in that, I want to be connected to Christ and the body of Christ, both through history (the communion of saints) and globally (the worldwide church), so it is enough for me to be Christian, a follower of Christ.”<sup>34</sup>

This thinking has created a movement toward removing denominational labels and merely identifying with Christians everywhere. Christians are not seeking a denominational community, but Christian community.

Historically, liturgy has functioned to establish Christian identity. “The liturgy provides something we have needed all along, a way, a good way to see if our experience/expressions of the faith match true Christian identity.”<sup>35</sup> Where this way of ordering worship was abandoned by American Evangelical Churches, evangelism too easily became driven by personality and showmanship than by a desire to create Christian community. As a result, many American Christians are rootless, uncommitted, consumers of religious goods and services.<sup>36</sup>

So it is, perhaps, not surprising that Gibbs and Bolger have noted a desire to return to Christian roots. “The discovery of liturgy and the ancient prayers of the church reflects a desire to be rooted during a time of profound cultural upheaval. It also expresses a desire to express devotion in a variety of forms.”<sup>37</sup> Others have made a similar observation. Collins argued that this task of connecting an individual to their fullest identity in Christ is exactly the goal of

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<sup>34</sup> Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 38.

<sup>35</sup> Hoskins, “Liturgical Identity,” 134.

<sup>36</sup> See, chapter one, 8–26

<sup>37</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 226.



conversion for a Wesleyan. “As with their Hebrew antecedent, the Greek terms *epistrephein* and *matanoien* involved responding to an evoking, calling God—a God who invited men and women not only to participate in a much larger story but also to be known, in a covenantal way, as nothing less than people of God.”<sup>38</sup> This insight was also the goal toward which Webber’s writings sought to lead the Church when he argued,

In other words, in worship our relationship with Christ is established, maintained, and repaired. Christ meets us in our act of celebrating his death and resurrection. In this worship encounter, the Spirit brings us the very real benefits of Christ’s death—salvation, healing, comfort, hope, guidance, and assurance. Through this encounter, order and meaning come into our lives. Through worship, a right ordering of God, the world, self, and neighbor is experienced, and the worshiper receives a peace that passes understanding.<sup>39</sup>

Likewise Fenwick and Spinks maintained that the liturgical renewal movement itself has as its goal the restoration of this kind of Christian identity when they wrote, “True worship and sacramental participation should restore humanity to its true status in Christ, and this should have a visible outworking in society.”<sup>40</sup> The shape of our worship becomes the shape of our self-identity as Christians. “Worship creates community and outreach, not the other way around; it is the core ministry of the church out of which all others flow.”<sup>41</sup>

As has been noted above, the conversion for Wesley involved drawing a person into a worshipping community. In America the agenda for worship was turned backward in America when worship was conducted for the purpose of converting. This focus on a personal turning point redefined relationships, making the self too central. For example, Harold Bloom demonstrated that the campmeeting movement turned worship on its head and made the goal of

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<sup>38</sup> Kenneth J. Collins, *Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 9.

<sup>39</sup> Webber, *Blended Worship*, 92.

<sup>40</sup> John Fenwick and Bryan Spinks, *Worship in Transition* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 10.

<sup>41</sup> Robb Redman, *The Great Worship Awakening: Singing a New Song in the Postmodern Church* (San

worship to be centered on the individual, not the community. He opined that the American religion is “Orphism.” “Orphism was an esoteric mystery cult whose central teaching was the potential divinity of the elitist self. A religion of quasi-shamanistic ecstasy, it preached the extraordinary idea that the redeemed or resurrected human life would be an eternal intoxication.”<sup>42</sup> This powerful appeal to self has created orphan churches filled with orphaned and disconnected Christians who have accepted the idea that the goal of conversion is to feel better about one’s self.<sup>43</sup>

Clearly, it was Wesley’s intent in providing the *Sunday Service* to keep his Methodists within the historic Christian communion. As noted above, Wesley was deliberate in rejecting the idea that his preaching services were worship services and insisted that his Methodists attend Sunday worship in England.<sup>44</sup> He understood the preaching service to be a supplemental service and the evangelistic service to be a gateway service providing a means for those outside the church to find entry into the community of Christian fellowship. No doubt, he would be greatly distressed to see that his irregular service became the regular service for Methodists and their offspring and his regular service became an occasional service at best or a monument to be visited to remind his children of days gone by.

Fortunately, younger Americans show signs of desiring a stronger sense of community. The American obsession with individual liberty and fulfillment has fractured families and societies to the place where Gen Xer’s, “regardless of their upbringing, place a premium on

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Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 113.

<sup>42</sup> Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

<sup>43</sup> Perhaps the fullest expression of this dysfunction is expressed in Phillip Rieff *Triumph of the Therapeutic* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), and Robert Bellah *Habit’s of the Heart*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), both of which make the case that American Christianity developed a message of individual fulfillment as the goal of Christian conversion.

friends, companionship and community.”<sup>44</sup> Rabey sees hopefulness for Christianity in moving toward community. “Thankfully,” he notes, “there is ample evidence that many of the emerging post-boomer leaders are placing a priority on community, which they believe is the only antidote to the aloneness and alienation many of them have experienced in their families and larger society.”<sup>46</sup>

Worship planning in today’s circumstances needs to take into account the community and identity aspects. Ordered Worship is one means to harmonize both ancient practices and contemporary expressions of worship. This harmonizing provides the rationale for making choices among worship options while allowing the freedom to shape those choices in a way that speaks meaningfully to the specific congregation. In so doing, the careful worship planner will be able to help the congregation to identify with the entire scope of Christian worship while retaining the theological and doxological expressions that are specific to its own tradition. What is proposed is not simply the kind of cross-fertilization that Robert Webber observed was taking place between worship traditions.<sup>47</sup> This Ordered Worship approach offers a means for evaluating which traditions to choose and how to apply those choices within a given service.

Clearly, more types and styles of worship are available to the average congregation than ever before. Resources are available from the ancient East and West, from obscure communities and leading communities, reflecting Jewish roots and specific cultural adaptations, all the way through to the most contemporary expressions of cultural worship including hip hop, African, Latino, gospel, and Rock and Roll styles. Scripture is available in multiple translations and

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<sup>44</sup> See, chapter two, 105–107.

<sup>45</sup> Steve Rabey, *In Search of Authentic Faith: How Emerging Generations are Transforming the Church*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>47</sup> Webber, *Blended Worship*, 66

languages. Electronic resources from You Tube to media clips, lights, cameras, and action are available to be incorporated into services that seek to communicate an ancient story to the contemporary culture. How is one to make choices from all that is available to the worship leader?

The Ordered approach and matrix is designed to facilitate the making of those choices.<sup>48</sup> Careful attention to the structure and character of a Wesleyan worship service with a constant eye to the key Wesleyan theological themes will allow the worship planner to facilitate a sense of belonging for the worshipper in which he or she is brought within the larger Christian community and the greater story of God while communicating in a *language* that can be understood by the worshipper.<sup>49</sup>

This effort to communicate the gospel in the language of the people is essential to the Protestant heritage and an expression of God's own incarnation. With this model, liturgical imagination is free to run within established boundaries so that worship functions to create a community of Christian people, drawing from and living out of their identity found in worship.

### **From The Shallows to The Depths**

The first chapter observed that much of the contemporary critique of worship practice revolves around the emptiness of our “consumer driven, market-oriented” approach to worship. It highlighted the critique of Morgenthaler who argued that the current worship practices of Christianity produces generation of religious spectators who have little sense of an authentic

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<sup>48</sup> Appendix one, *A Taxonomy of Ordered Worship* shows key questions around structure and character of worship. Appendix two, *Expanded Taxonomy of Ordered Worship*, shows how these questions can help identify good options for the worshipper planner. Appendix three, *Sample Services*, offers examples of how such decision-making can apply to a Traditional Service and to Contemporary Services (Liturgical and Emergent). These materials are included to demonstrate not so much exactly how it should be done, but what the implications of John Wesley's imagination and advice might have for solutions that fit today's circumstances.

<sup>49</sup> I am using “language” here in a broad sense to mean communication. As such it involves both spoken language and cultural forms and images that create meaning for the community of faith.

encounter with God in His fullness. Peterson, it was noted, is another of the voices who mourns the impoverishment of the contemporary practice of Christian ministry. Attention was also given to Hauerwas bemoaning the shallowness of American Christianity. Shallow, impoverished, and inauthentic worship, identified in these critiques, is not adequate to form the faith or the life of a Christian.

Much of the contemporary effort at worship reform has been intended to restore the power and depth of authentic worship. Henry Knight typifies the Task.

I am suggesting that in worship we encounter the God revealed in Jesus Christ, who is present by the way of the Holy Spirit, and made known to us through faith, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we do not simply know more about God, we come to know God ever more deeply; and this God is not simply an amorphous feeling, but a God who has a distinctive character revealed in Scripture.<sup>50</sup>

Worship has the task of providing more than an emotional encounter with God. It has to reveal God in His fullness. The Wesleyan *ordo* was designed to allow for experiential encounters with God in worship without abandoning the fullness of historic worship. Those who seek to order their worship by this model may find the task to be challenging, but should also find the challenge to be rewarding. Wesleyan worship requires more thought and intention than most pastors or worship leaders are accustomed to giving to worship.

Historically, liturgists have undertaken the difficult pastoral work of designing worship that embraced the depths. They have provided the thoughtful and deliberate work of designing worship that would faithfully transmit the core history and faith of the Christian community within a form that provided for the transference of that faith to the worshipping congregation over time. Discussing the *lex orandi, lex credendi* couplet, Webber observed, “In the early

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<sup>50</sup> Knight, “Worship and Sanctification,” 14.

church, this meant that the experience of worship was a priority. In the community of faith, one's behavior was influenced by the communal experience of worship."<sup>51</sup>

Such intentionality in worship was abandoned by frontier-spirited Americans. Rattenbury described the American vision of the church as "a voluntary association of well-meaning Christians who are looking for mutual guidance, and a medium of expression for their common feelings" who have aligned themselves with congregations which are no more than voluntary associations and democratically controlled organizations shaped merely by taste or convenience.<sup>52</sup> He remarks that such a view of the church is untenable.

The understanding of Ordered Worship offered here is an approach to worship that deliberately and conscientiously swims against such a current. Ordered worship, as has been described, is focused and intentional in its desire to give depth and breadth to the experience of worship. Not only is such an approach to worship a pastoral responsibility, it will actually draw people to it. Kimball observed, "The things that seeker-sensitive churches removed from their churches are the very things nonbelievers want to experience if they attend a worship service."<sup>53</sup>

Webber affirmed this understanding of effective worship. "Characterized by a good balance of order and freedom, these services actively draw worshippers into full, conscious, and deliberate participation, engaging the whole person in worship."<sup>54</sup> The ordered pattern for worship provides the matrix through which the worship designer can draw in appropriate music, symbols, gestures, elements, scriptures, media, drama, and a variety of other elements in a way that is faithful both to the history and function of worship while providing a deeper and more

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<sup>51</sup> Webber, *Blended Worship*, 89.

<sup>52</sup> Rattenbury, *Vital Elements*, 101.

<sup>53</sup> Dan Kimball, *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 115.

<sup>54</sup> Webber, *Blended Worship*, 61.

profound experience of worship for the participants. Gibbs and Bolger verify the importance of such design saying, “[S]ociological insights concerning Gen-Xers reveal that when the mystery, the visual, the ritual, the touch, and the beauty are removed, little is left. Thus, the modern church of their Boomer parents does not satisfy the yearnings of the under-forties, and that is why Gen-Xers increasingly participate in churches with pre-Reformation histories.”<sup>55</sup>

What is provided in the outlines of the previous chapter and the taxonomy in the appendix<sup>56</sup> promises to be difficult work. While the *Taxonomy* offers a simplified approach to visualizing Ordered Worship, it may not be a simple task. Ordered Worship asks the worship leader to be deliberate, conscientious and creative in applying the various elements available to a contemporary planner toward creating worship that is demanding of the worshipper and engaging at the same time.

Ordered Worship offers a layered experience of worship that invites the worshipper to encounter Christ consistently on several levels: some verbal, some visual, some overt and some covert, some ritualistic and some kerygmatic, some direct and some indirect. Such attention to depth and detail will actually engage the contemporary culture in an approach to worship that will provide a *Weltanschauung*—an understanding of the world and one’s place in the world in reference to who God is and what He is doing.

Not only will such worship have an impact on the individual worshipper, it will also have an impact on the church as a community of faith. After all, worship is not designed to serve the individual. Worship creates a community—a covenant community, related to each other because of a relationship to God and related to God through how He is acting in and through the

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<sup>55</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 21–22.

<sup>56</sup> See appendix one and appendix two.

community. In the next section, the way in which Ordered Worship will shape and impact the church as a community of Christians will be explored.

### **Ordered Worship and the Community of Faith**

Wesley's catholic spirit is well-documented. In his sermon titled—"Of The Church" he clearly outlined his approach to distinguishing between the "universal church" which includes all believers, and particular churches which are defined in the Anglican Articles of Religion as "a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered."<sup>57</sup> In this sermon, Wesley distinguished between membership in a specific church and membership in the universal Church. True members of the Church are distinguished not by membership, baptism, or position, but by *living faith* and *holy living*. The purpose of the Church as an organization is realized when the individual members of the church attain to authentic Christian lives. He concluded the sermon saying,

In the mean time, let all those who are real members of the Church, see that they walk holy and unblamable in all things. "Ye are the light of the world!" Ye are "a city set upon a hill," and "cannot be hid." O "let your light shine before men!" Show them your faith by your works. Let them see, by the whole tenor of your conversation, that your hope is laid up above! Let all your words and actions evidence the spirit whereby you are animated! Above all things, let your love abound. Let it extend to every child of man: Let it overflow to every child of God. By this let all men know whose disciples ye are, because you "love one another."<sup>58</sup>

In another sermon, Wesley emphasized the corporate nature of Christian faith saying, "It is the nature of love to unite us together; and the greater the love, the stricter the union."<sup>59</sup> In that sermon, Wesley affirmed in the strongest language possible both his fidelity to the Church of England and his opposition to those who separate from church or society on a whim. Clearly, for

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<sup>57</sup> John Wesley, "Of the Church," in *Sermons III: 71–114*, ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 3 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 51.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 56–57.



Wesley, it is inconceivable to imagine a Christian person who was not also deeply committed to a church (an individual congregation).

Collins provides a helpful summary of Wesley's opposition to individualized and solitary religion.<sup>60</sup> Referencing Wesley's sermon, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: Discourse IV," Collins surmises, "Wesley so disapproved of solitary religion because it fails to provide its practitioners with the necessary environment for the promotion of such Christian tempers as mildness, gentleness, longsuffering, and peacemaking."<sup>61</sup> In a footnote to his discussion on this topic, Collins noted, "[Rupert] Davies writes that Wesley 'knew of no holiness that was not social holiness, but we must not take this to mean that it was a holiness devoted to changing the social order; Wesley's holiness was social in the narrow sense that *it related to personal relations with other people, especially those in the fellowship of believers*'"(emphasis mine).<sup>62</sup>

Worship, then, is to be thought about in terms of its impact on both the individual and the community. Wesley's understanding of the church was that it provided a long-term relationship of Christians who are experiencing and practicing their faith within the church and, through the church, in the world. Ordered Worship assumes an enduring relationship with the worshipper. It is designed to provide repeated exposure to the truths and practices of faith with the goal of creating Christian persons. In Wesley's words,

In divine worship, (as in all other actions,) the first thing to be considered is the end, and the next thing is the means conducing to that end. The end is the honor of God, and the edification of the Church; and then God is honored, when the Church is

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<sup>59</sup> John Wesley, "On Schism," *Works* (BE), 3:64.

<sup>60</sup> Kenneth Collins, *A Faithful Witness: John Wesley's Homiletical Theology* (Wilmore, KY: Wesley Heritage Press, 1993), 177–79.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, footnote 10.

edified. The means conducing to that end, are to have the service so administered as may *inform the mind, engage the affections and increase devotion* (emphasis mine).<sup>63</sup>

In this statement, Wesley urges an approach to worship that accomplishes its work on three levels, the intellect, the heart, and in service. The product of worship is a faithful Christian, who knows God better and is motivated to serve Him in the church and in the world through a heart of love for God and neighbor.

### **From Worship-as-Event to Worship-as-Formation**

Ordered Worship invites a shift in thinking from the Sunday service as an individual event, to the Sunday service as one moment in the life of the church's vocation to find, found, and form Christian persons. Its concern mirrors that of Wesley, that worship should be framed so that it functions to shape worshippers into fully formed Christians. Such an ordered approach will accomplish the purpose of worship as outlined by Henry Knight III who declared to the Wesleyan Theological Society, "I will argue that worship which glorifies God at the same time sanctifies persons through forming and shaping distinctively Christian affections."<sup>64</sup>

Redman observed that Protestants are not very good at thinking about worship from this perspective. Too often Protestants, especially in North America, have thought of worship as their primary evangelism strategy. Their worship services have been designed to present Christ as Savior and to invite sinners to accept Jesus as their personal Savior. From that perspective, the design of worship, like the design of campmeeting and revival services, was to attract worshippers through some spectacle in order to draw them close enough to hear the good news.

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<sup>63</sup> John Wesley, "A Roman Catechism Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome with A Reply Thereto," *Works* (JE), 10:102.

<sup>64</sup> Knight, "Worship and Sanctification," 7.

Ecclesiastical theory for evangelical Protestant churches has been developed around attractional strategies and marketing insights in order to draw people into the building so that they can hear the gospel. Marva Dawn protested, “The last thing that churches should do if they want to worship well is conduct a survey asking members what they *want* for worship. What the people want might not be good for them, and our churches are in the business of forming Christians, not catering to consumerist choices.”<sup>65</sup> Redman describes the real task before us saying, “The Liturgical Renewal movement challenges Protestants to think biblically, historically, ecumenically, and pastorally about worship, which is not something they’ve done in the past.”<sup>66</sup>

What has been distilled out of Wesley’s *Sunday Service* is a way to think about worship that is formed biblically, historically, ecumenically, and pastorally. Giving attention to the structure and character of worship as outlined in the previous chapter and the taxonomy in the appendix will allow the worship designer to imagine worship that is designed to form Christian people over a period of time, not just to attract people to a special event. At the same time, the counsel of Webber is worthy of consideration when he reminded,

Worship renewal is not primarily changing the order of worship, introducing new elements, or even celebrating the Eucharist more frequently. Worship is the church celebrating the Gospel. It is the people of God gathered to become the body of Christ and to experience their own death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Through that kind of worship experience, God teaches his people how to live out the pattern of dying to evil and being resurrected to Christ, providing continuous renewal for believers.<sup>67</sup>

A structure is offered in which the worship designer may shape the intellect and affections of the worshipper toward forming identity in Christ, as opposed to shaping the presentation of

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<sup>65</sup> Marva Dawn, *A Royal “Waste” of Time* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 195.

<sup>66</sup> Redman, *The Great Worship Awakening*, 86.

<sup>67</sup> Webber, *Blended Worship*, 74.

Christ to help the worshipper to come to a more positive self-identity. Thus, the deliberate shaping of worship to connect to historic worship through prayers and creeds of the ancient church, as well as the use of ancient iconography will allow the worshipper to identify himself or herself within the Church catholic. Following the pattern of the liturgical year will help the worshipper to be identified within the story of God's saving activity both on the worshipper's behalf and on the world's behalf. Deliberate and conscientious use of scriptures attentive to, if not specifically drawn from, the liturgical cycle of the year will help the worshipper to be informed by the scriptures and formed through hearing and responding to them. Frequent celebration of the Lord's Table continually reminds the worshipper of the foundation of his or her own faith and the fact that he or she is a part of a larger confessing community of Christians.

It is understood that Christians are formed and informed by the whole scope of participation in the life of a church. Marva Dawn is correct when she cautions, "Of course, strong Christian character cannot be formed if the worship hour is the only time the Church has to nurture it, but worship's subtle influence on character dare not be misdirected."<sup>68</sup> For example, she continues, "If we sing only narcissistic ditties, we will develop a faith that depends on feelings and that is inwardly curved instead of outward-turned."<sup>69</sup> Thus the *ordered* approach is a way to keep the focus of the worship service, outward and upward. It is a means by which a worship service can be considered objectively based on how the service is functioning to form Christian consciousness. It is not that a worship service cannot be contextualized to the specific culture of the congregation; rather, there is a way to contextualize to the congregation without allowing the desires and preferences of the congregation to establish the agenda for worship.

Hauerwas shapes the question as follows.

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<sup>68</sup> Dawn, *Royal*, 68.

The question, then, is not choosing between “contemporary” or “traditional,” to change or not to change, but rather the faithful character of our worship, insofar as such worship shapes the truthful witness of the church to the world. The problem with churches that make “evangelism” (that is, the continuing acquisition of new members) the purpose of their worship is not whether the worship is contemporary. The question is whether they are worshipping the God of Jesus Christ.<sup>70</sup>

Kimball argued similarly saying, “The emerging church must value worship over the quality of the program or the ‘goods and services’ we deliver.”<sup>71</sup>

Worship must be thought about as worship, not as a means of attracting or marketing, but as the moment when gathered people connect with divine reality. As discussed in chapter one, a shift in thinking is being proposed from the purpose of worship being evangelism to the purpose of evangelism being to incorporate a person into a worshipping community. Worship functions to create a community of faith. Rattenbury described such worship.

Any sort of objective worship implies not only the true presence of Christ among His people, but that the Church is the corporation through which He works, and is endowed with the riches of His Grace. In our worship in the Church, not only is something done by us, but something is given. Our union is with the Lord our Head. The Church is more than a human society, and its life is different and higher than the sum of its human constituents. That life is the life of God: it *is* the Holy Ghost.<sup>72</sup>

Ordered Worship is intended to create such a community. Wesley’s intention was to retain a form of worship that would result in forming a community of faithful Christians, who love God and neighbor. This kind of worship must call the worshipper to lose the focus on self-interests and find a place within the economy and purpose of God. It invites him or her to see life in relationship to the larger story of the plan and purpose of God in the world. It invites the worshipper to be ordered by the soteriological agenda of God who is in Christ reconciling the

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>70</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *A Better Hope* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2000): 159.

<sup>71</sup> Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 115.

<sup>72</sup> Rattenbury, *Vital Elements*, 102

world to Himself.

Wesley's approach to worship was broader than an individual Christian or an individual congregation. He understood the task of worship to create true Christian community. Dunning reminds, "Wesley seems to have captured the central emphasis of the New Testament that the church is a community of people called into being by God for the purpose of carrying out His redemptive mission in the world."<sup>73</sup> Ordered Worship orders the life of the worshipper to God's purpose, it does not order God's purposes to the life of the worshipper. The church can no longer allow itself to be seen as a provider of religious goods and services; it must see its task as creating meaning and purpose within a chaotic world both for and through those who gather together as God people.

### **From Person-Centered-Worship to God-Centered-Worship**

As early as 1954, Rattenbury was proposing significant reshaping of Methodist worship. His prescription for reformulation of worship included six points.

1. Restoring the worship orientation of the early church (keeping God the object of our worship).
2. Cultivating a sense of the difference between public and private worship.
3. Giving attention to the objects of objective worship (symbol and instruction).
4. Emphasize the great historic realities of Christianity (Eucharist as the reminder of the presence of Christ).
5. Restore the centrality of the Word.
6. Leave room for subjectivity, involvement and expression of the individual.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> H. Ray Dunning, "Toward a Wesleyan Ecclesiology." *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, (Spring 1987): 116.

<sup>74</sup> Rattenbury, *Vital Elements*, 90–98.

Together, these six emphases put the subjective aspects into an objective framework that focused on God.

Ordered Worship fulfills Rattenbury's prescription while maintaining fidelity to Wesley's vision for Methodist worship. Following this pattern objectifies worship. It focuses away from the individual and back upon God who is the rightful object of worship. This change will require monumental effort for Americans who have been steeped in the importance of the individual throughout its history; but, only such a shift in thinking and emphasis will salvage American Christianity from the morass of consumer-oriented, entertainment driven, and self-pleasing as discussed in chapter one. Dawn reminds us of the current state of Protestant worship saying, "We allowed modernity to turn us toward entertainment in worship and toward ministry to people's 'felt needs' instead of offering them what is truly needful."<sup>75</sup> Elsewhere she counsels,

Our world is desperate for God. In the face of growing postmodern despair and chaos, the escalating gap between rich and poor, the intensifying violence and global political and economic confusions, our world desperately needs worship services where God is encountered in as much of his fullness as possible.<sup>76</sup>

This model does not disregard the culture or context of the worshippers. Quite to the contrary, it offers a Wesleyan way to vitally engage the worshipper. This aspect of worship has been described as the *character* of Wesleyan worship. In this way what Redman suggests is accomplished when he reminds, "Worship must be focused on God yet accessible for people."<sup>77</sup>

There must be a balance. Senn describes the two corrupt ends of worship: "worship that is used as a tool to accomplish human ends (utilitarianism)<sup>78</sup> and worship that is done only for its

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<sup>75</sup> Dawn, *Royal*, 50.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>77</sup> Redman, *The Great Worship Awakening*, 176.

<sup>78</sup> Utilitarian worship results in the five errors discussed in chapter one, 10–26.

own sake, ‘for the glory of God alone,’ as is often claimed (aestheticism).”<sup>79</sup> Worship, he counsels must be simultaneously God-directed and people oriented. In some sense, then, worship can be *both* person-centered and God-centered. The issue is the direction of worship. In Ordered Worship, the purpose is to align the person with God, not to draw God down to serve the individual. Many critics of the contemporary practice of worship in America would argue as Os Guinness does that it is currently misaligned.

Thus few would disagree that the church-growth teaching represents a shift from the vertical dimension to the horizontal, from theological to practical, from the prophetic to the seeker-friendly, from the timeless to the relevant and contemporary, from the primacy of worship to the primacy of evangelism, and from the priority of Christian discipleship in all of life to the priority of spiritual ministries within the church.<sup>80</sup>

Wesley’s contribution to the liturgical conversation was in his ability to conceive of an approach to worship that both engaged the affections and honored God. His *Sunday Service* was perhaps rejected by American Methodists because they either did not appreciate the power of his *Service* to accomplish both missions, or because they did not understand Wesley’s intense commitment to a God-honoring worship when their person-centered approach seemed to be so attractive to frontier Americans. The point is simply that one must maintain both the structure and the character of worship, both spirit and truth, if worship is going to be fully formed. Without this attention to the fullness of the Wesley *ordo* worship suffers from a fundamental dysfunction.

Gibbs and Bolger argue that a proper structure and character to worship will actually attract postmodern Americans. Evangelism does not have to be abandoned in order to have Ordered Worship. “The gospel of emerging churches is not confined to personal salvation... Emerging

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<sup>79</sup> Frank Senn, “What is Leadership in Worship and Evangelism?” in *How Does Worship Evangelize?* vol. 3 of *Open Questions in Worship*, Gordon W. Lathrop, gen. ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 15.

<sup>80</sup> Os Guinness, *Dining with the Devil* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 84.



churches are no longer satisfied with a reductionistic, individualized, and privatized message.”<sup>81</sup> Rabey agrees that the younger generations (known as Busters) will not be turned off by a dense and spiritual approach to worship because these younger generations are drawn to mystery and awe in worship. In other words, the postmodern generations have embraced the idea that there are realities that are intangible. They do not need to be able to understand instantly everything that they encounter in worship. They expect that worship will have an aspect of wonder. These intangible spiritual realities are often featured in old practices.

Webber has provided resources for mining ancient practices and liturgies for use in contemporary worship.<sup>82</sup> Churches are experimenting with incorporating prayers, symbols, liturgies and practices that are drawn from the deep well of Christian practice. This approach to ordered worship provides some sense and reason for choosing from among all the available resources for any given worship service. Rabey affirms the potential of this kind of process by observing that while few Gen X churches follow a specific form of worship, many congregations are increasingly incorporating older liturgical elements, along with visual trappings like candles and icons, that are designed to set a mood for *encountering the mystery of God*.<sup>83</sup>

A Wesleyan form will supply the structure in which liturgical imagination can experiment and play. Such a structure provides a way to retain faithful and consistent God-ward worship while offering freedom to find styles, voices, means and methods that will communicate the fullness of the Divine mystery to the worshipper. In so doing, worship can be continually focused in both directions, while drawing the worshipper toward God as the orienting principle for their lives. This God-centered approach offers the means for ordering the life and world of

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<sup>81</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 63.

<sup>82</sup> Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship*, 8 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995).

the worshipper in relationship to God and in opposition to secular society. Such fully-formed worship can become the means for helping the worshipper to escape the pathology of present concerns in order to soar in the promises and presence of God—an eschatological present.

### **From Need to Creed**

Throughout the discussion in this chapter this final advantage of Ordered Worship has been assumed. References to Wesley’s advices on worship have explored the issue of the way that worship forms and informs Christian faith from several angles. Before we conclude this discussion, we look to make explicit what has been implicit.

Ordered Worship is objective worship. Its focus is not upon the personal needs of the worshipper in any direct sense. Ordered Worship understands that the best way to respond to the need of the worshipper is to orient his or her life to the truth to be found in God. In this sense, worship calls the worshipper to confess his or her faith (*credendi*) and to seek definition for life within that confession. Ordered worship is formed by the faith confessed and forms the faith that is confessed.

One conscientious effort to do liturgical theology within the Methodist framework is Wainwright’s *Doxology*. He conceives of worship in the way that is being discussed here when he writes, “Worship is seen as a proper mode of attaining and expressing agreement in the Church’s doctrine and community life.”<sup>84</sup> From the broader evangelical context, Webber expressed it this way, “Worship informs the church’s teaching, gives shape to its evangelical mission to the world, and compels the church to social action. Worship is the context in which the true fellowship of Christ’s body is realized and where those who participate can find real

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<sup>83</sup> Rabey, *In Search of Authentic Faith*.

<sup>84</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 7.

healing.”<sup>85</sup> Worship helps the individual to reach beyond his or her own life and situation to become situated within the historic Christian community.

Webber’s insights highlight the reciprocal relationship between worship and faith. Worship is either formed by the church’s teaching or it forms the church’s teaching. Worship either shapes the worshipper or is shaped by the worshipper. If the focus of worship is upon the needs and preferences of the worshipper, the faith of the community will be shaped in reference to those needs. As noted in chapter one, the church that is formed in reference to the felt needs of those it is seeking to attract, becomes a psycho-social community that is addicted to pleasing people and providing a feeling of goodwill and happiness.<sup>86</sup> The pathology created by such an approach to worship has created a nation of church-hoppers who have no ability to articulate their faith or to understand the implications of fidelity to their faith in the way that it brings order to their lives.

Wesleyans can continue to confess that which Christians have confessed for centuries as expressed in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds. Furthermore, they should seek to find ways to build into their regular practice of worship a commitment to Christian Perfection as expressed in Wesley—love toward God and neighbor and holiness of heart and life. As noted above, these doctrines that are considered unique to Wesley are nothing more than taking seriously the things that the Church had taught him to confess through Scripture readings, collects, and creedal confession. These essential doctrines are such as should be incorporated into consistent routines of the congregation at worship.

Fidelity to the pattern of the Christian year actually provides a way to shape the faith-formation of the congregation. By helping worshippers to define their own story in reference to

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<sup>85</sup> Webber, *Blended Worship*, 18.

the story of God, worship leaders have the outlines already established for teaching the Christian faith through repeated exposure to the great themes of salvation (*anamnesis*). Maintaining focus, as Wesley counseled, on the great works of God in Christ at Advent and Easter and upon the nature of God, celebrated at the baptism of Christ, Trinity and Whitsunday (Pentecost) have the ability to order secular time in accordance with the person and work of God in Christ rather than allowing the secular ordering of time to seize the agenda for forming the consciousness of the worshipper.

Frequent recitation of the great creeds of the Church, celebration at the Lord's Table and carefully crafted "extempore" prayers provided a means by which the congregation can be taught and reminded of their confession. Allowing the great themes of faith to form the agenda for preaching rather than preaching to the felt needs of the church, can offer a deeper foundation for Christian faith and life. Webber noted this trend toward grounded worship.

Worshipping churches are maintaining the centrality of the Word in worship and are adding to the Service of the Word the great response of thanksgiving at the Table, a response to the Word which goes back to the very beginning of Christian worship. Here the church praises and gives thanks to God for the work of Christ who dethroned evil at the cross and who now in worship gifts the worshiper with victory over sin by the power of the Spirit.<sup>87</sup>

Ordered Worship is not restricted to a specified liturgy, ancient or modern. Rather, the liturgy is allowed to instruct as to the nature and function of healthy worship, while allowing the worship planner the opportunity to access his or her own imagination in designing a service that is culturally relevant while still being historically and doctrinally grounded.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> See, chapter one, 24–25.

<sup>87</sup> Webber, *Blended Worship*, 43.

<sup>88</sup> William A. Dyrness, *Senses of the Soul*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, Publishers, 2008), 159–72, discusses the idea that what is done in worship creates a "vernacular theology." What is done in worship informs an "intuitive" theology that forms and informs religious imagination. How a congregation worships informs their Christology and their spirituality. 170, "Worshippers take the pieces of their experience and put them together with

This approach to worship is sometimes referred to as *vintage* worship. “Vintage worship gatherings are for believers to fully worship our God and be instructed, equipped, and encouraged, even to a deeper level than ever before. This same very spiritual, experiential worship gathering can be a place where nonbelievers can come and experience God and learn about the practices and beliefs of Christians firsthand.”<sup>89</sup> This movement is healthy for the church in many ways, but that it needs an order in which to be shaped. Webber argued that this approach to worship would become more and more relevant in post-modern and post-Christian America<sup>90</sup>

Gibbs and Bolger have identified this trend in Emerging churches toward both formed and formal worship. “Among emerging churches, liturgies are welcomed, provided that they are made culturally accessible with adequate explanation and relational authenticity. In emerging churches, liturgy is not a straightjacket that inhibits and controls but a rich resource that nourishes and stimulates.”<sup>91</sup> Formed and formal is acceptable, as long as it also connects to the worshipper on an emotional level. “Emerging post-Christian generations... long to *experience* a transcendent God during a worship gathering, rather than simply learn about him,” argues Dan Kimball. “They want to see the arts and a sense of mystery brought into the worship service, rather than focusing on professionalism and excellence.”<sup>92</sup>

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these worship practices in their attempts to make narrative sense of their life.”

<sup>89</sup> Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 115.

<sup>90</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 70, “I learned from the early Fathers that the church is intrinsically connected with Christ and his victory over the power of evil. The church is to be regarded as a kind of continuation of the presence of Jesus in the world. Jesus is not only seated at the right hand of the Father, but is visibly and tangibly present in and to the world through the church. This is an incarnational understanding of the church. It is a unique community of people in the world, a community like no other community because it is the presence of the divine in and to the world. This concept of the church has specific relevance to the world of postmodernism.”

<sup>91</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 224.

<sup>92</sup> Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 121.

Wesley's focus on Spirit *and* truth certainly accommodates this need. Maintaining the balance between the objective means of grace and the subjective impact of those means provides the balance through which creedal identity can reach the deepest needs of the worshipper. "Emerging churches have at their disposal three primary tools to dismantle and re-create the church: the gospel, sacralization, and the life of the community."<sup>93</sup> Now, emerging Wesleyan churches have a fourth tool available to them, a way to think about worship that is authentically Wesleyan and functionally flexible using the approach that has been described.

### **Conclusion: The Ordered Worship Way to Renewal**

As early as 1954, Ernest Rattenbury was counseling Methodist churches to a revision of worship. His comments were an early insertion into a developing conversation within American Christianity seeking to re-form worship to restore its divine character, its historic function and its personal impact upon the worshipper. The objectivity that Rattenbury advocated regards the first two of these aspects. Objective worship keeps the focus of worship upon God. He is the object of worship and His activity in Christ is the objective content of worship. This kind of objectivity is the historic function of worship. In worship, the worshipper encounters God, thus encountering the gifts of God, grace and faith.

A similar goal was the object of the study on worship conducted by Vatican II. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* encapsulated Roman Catholic thinking on worship which had been critically developing for nearly a century. These conclusions, published in 1963, included the following,

1. The liturgy enables the faithful to express in their lives and show forth to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the Church.

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<sup>93</sup> Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 88.

2. In the liturgy we have a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy.

3. While the liturgy is not the whole of the Church's activity, and she must preach the gospel to unbelievers and believers alike, nevertheless 'The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all her power flows.'

4. In order for this to be achieved, the faithful must take part in its performance intelligently, actively and fruitfully.<sup>94</sup>

The *Constitution* crafted that its directives as the base-line for revisions to worship that arose mainly from the liturgical renewal movement. That movement, awakened a conversation that was seething just below the surface in many Protestant churches, main line and evangelical, which were seeking a way to reinvigorate worship in reference to historic patterns and usages. In chapter one, we identified several critics of American Christianity's subjectivity, who echoed the concerns of Roman Catholics and liturgical Protestants in reference to worship.

Within Evangelical circles, it was perhaps Robert Webber who called out most clearly for such a reformation of worship forms. Taking his cues from the liturgical renewal movement, he advised free churches to follow closely.

What is happening in these liturgical churches is very simple and basic. People are discovering that liturgy was never meant to be a closed order with no room for spontaneity. Instead of being a closed and fixed order, liturgy is really a guide. Taking the worshiper by the hand, the liturgy leads the worshiper through a joyous Entrance, a meditative hearing of God's Word, a celebratory experience of the Table, and a sending forth into the world. This more open liturgy renews the worshipers' Christian experience as they consciously and deliberately participate in worship. This participation makes the celebration of God's saving deed in Jesus Christ real, personal, and joyous.<sup>95</sup>

Webber taught that worship must be objectively ordered with a subjective impact. "Worship is essentially the voice of the Gospel meeting the voice of humanity in all of its struggles, failures,

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<sup>94</sup> Fenwick and Spinks, *Worship in Transition*, 64.

<sup>95</sup> Webber, *Blended Worship*, 55–56.

sins, and painful disorientations.”<sup>96</sup> The issue that must be kept in mind is that the needs of the people can never be the organizing principle for worship.

The American culture of individualism coupled with the need of churches in America to compete for converts has created an environment of consumerism.<sup>97</sup> Services are designed to attract and to retain the crowd. Their goal is to serve the felt *needs* of the congregation rather than addressing their greatest *need*. Webber’s solution was fairly simple.

Those people responsible for planning worship need to keep this Christocentric purpose of worship foremost in their minds. Planners must always ask: Does the content of worship adequately re-present Christ? Will the work of the people be a true celebration of the living, dying, rising, and coming again of Jesus Christ? Is the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of all creatures and of the entire universe celebrated in worship?<sup>98</sup>

The advices of the *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy*, Rattenbury, Webber, and so many others is being embraced by those who are seeking to design worship for generations of Americans that are being raised in a post-modern and post-Christian reality. Tex Sample is a more recent voice among Methodists who has argued for relevant worship that is still faithful to the sweep of scripture. He recommends attention be given to the Lectionary while, at the same time, recognizing the contemporary “beat” that must be embraced to worship in the digital world.<sup>99</sup>

Worship must impact both the intellect and the heart of the worshipper. Wesley encouraged it to be done in spirit and truth. Rattenbury’s recommendations also seek this balance.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>97</sup> William A. Dyrness, *Senses of the Soul* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 156, argues that it is actually the other way around. He says that American pragmatism is actually derived from Protestant (particularly Puritan) roots. He continues saying, “Whatever the causal factors, there may well be a relationship between these cultural currents and Protestant attitudes toward worship....”

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>99</sup> See, Tex Sample, *The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), esp. 107.



We need the objective and the subjective, the corporate and the individualistic, historic anchorage and free expressing of ideas in Christian worship. Hence the great need of the Church is a balanced worship which possesses the excellencies of both tendencies and is not narrowed by the exclusion of either.<sup>100</sup>

Ordered Worship, as outlined in this study, provides for fulfilling the advices of fully-formed worship. Since Wesley is a qualified and worthy tutor regarding worship who carefully regarded theology and Christian practice, his most mature advice on worship has been studied in order to uncover its underlying structure and purpose. The concern of this project is discover a form that will maintain Wesley's objectivity while providing freedom for cultural adaptation, vital communication, and spiritual playfulness in the construction of Sunday worship.

It is not argued that worship is the sum total of the expression of Christian life, nor is worship the only contribution to the formation of the Christian life. But, without a doubt, Wesley would concur with Vatican II, that worship is the *fount and summit* of Christian life and the place where the Christian most closely experiences the eschatological presence of the coming Kingdom of God. In that case, worship must be the place where the most intentionality is paid to forming Christians and shaping their reality according to the Divine activity, past, present and future.

The suggested model for Ordered Worship is an attempt to provide a roadmap for those who are seeking to find the right path to restore objective, Christ-centered worship. While the leader of worship will still have to provide the specific content of a given service, the taxonomy charts in the appendix offers the structural outlines so that congregational worship can be shaped in such a way that it responds to the immediate terrain while providing a true compass leading to the right destination. Using such a tool can restore the sense of adventure to the journey while providing a means of getting back on the right road leading to the right destination.

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<sup>100</sup> Rattenbury, *Vital Elements*, 69.

The goal is to lead the people to a worship that is intent on pleasing God, remembering His soteriological activity and providing opportunity for the worshipper to become a part of God's eschatological purpose. Such worship will provide for celebration and reflection, contrition and thanksgiving, remembrance and anticipation. In a Wesleyan context, such worship will be an expression of love, flowing from God, flowing out to each other and the world, and flowing back to God through lives of obedience and service.












It will have density, gravity, and exuberance. It will speak in historic shape and in a contemporary voice. Such worship is worship in Spirit *and* in truth. Worship without both concerns will be deficient. Ordered Worship is not necessarily easy to plan or designed simply to be attractive. It is the kind of worship that is faithful to God and to His people, thus, fulfilling the pastoral vocation. Ordered Worship, faithfully encountered by God's people, will result in transformed lives and lives that are grounded in and defined by the Divine activity and purpose. What John Wesley imagined, advised, and provided to his followers is still useful and pertinent in the contemporary context.

This study has explored the question, "How can worship be formed that connects to the life of the worshipper without discarding Christian and denominational heritage?" It has proposed an approach to worship that is faithful to an identity in the theology of John Wesley while allowing for cultural expression and adaptation of the worship service by the particular congregation. Because the purpose and function of worship had been diluted within the American Christian experience many have been driven to reexamine the history and function of worship. These chapters have shown that John Wesley was a careful and deliberate liturgist whose advices on worship were misunderstood and quickly set aside by his theological offspring. Instead of advocating for a restoration of Wesley's worship service, it has been proposed that one can extract his *Sunday Service* which can provide for re-ordering worship in a way that is both

culturally applicable and historically significant. Thus, Wesley's underlying liturgical pattern, a thoughtful and deliberate revision of the service pattern from the *Book of Common Prayer*, provides a useful model for churches within the Wesleyan tradition to respond to the contemporary doxological crisis in America.




## APPENDIX ONE

### A TAXONOMY OF ORDERED WORSHIP

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>SYMBOL</b>	<b>KEY QUESTION</b>
<b>Structure</b>		
Historic		<i>How does the service help the worshipper to understand himself/herself as participating in the Church Universal ?</i>
Liturgical		<i>How does the service intentionally embody the theology of the community ?</i>
Scripture		<i>How does worship express the Bible as the basis for Christian faith and life and call the worshipper to order his or her life in accordance with its teachings?</i>
Prayer		<i>How does the service structure emphasize the priority of prayer?</i>
Preaching		<i>How is preaching related to the scriptures and to the rest of the worship event ?</i>
Eucharist		<i>How does the service present the life and passion of Christ as the event that constitutes coming together for worship?</i>
<b>Character</b>		
Experiential		<i>How does the service draw the worshipper into a personal encounter with Christ?</i>
Participatory		<i>How do the elements of worship increase full, active, conscious participation by the worshippers?</i>
Exuberance		<i>How is the spirit of worship conveyed?</i>
Formation		<i>How does the service participate in the long-range goal of developing Christian faith and life?</i>
Engaging Music		<i>How does music facilitate participation and doctrinal transference?</i>




## APPENDIX TWO

### EXPANDED TAXONOMY OF ORDERED WORSHIP

FEATURE	SYMBOL	KEY QUESTIONS	SUGGESTED OPTIONS
<b>Structure</b> Historic		<p><b>How does the service help the worshipper to understand himself/herself as participating in the Church Universal?</b> Does the worship service inform the congregation of its participation in historic forms of worship? Does the service draw from and incorporate ancient practices and symbols?</p>	Recite prayers and confessions of historic figures, giving some background information. Recite creeds regularly. Use visual images drawn from ancient churches.
Liturgical		<p><b>How does the service intentionally embody the theology of the community?</b> Does the service have a deliberate structure intended to form and inform? Is the service shaped to proclaim theological truth repeatedly? Does the service remind the worshipper of his/her place within the historic community of faith? Does the service invite the worshipper to focus on God and away from himself or herself? Is the service shaped in order to give expression to the prayers of the people?</p>	Shape the worship of the congregation giving attention to the Church year, especially the seasons of Advent, Easter (Lent) and Pentecost. Maintain the focus upon Christ in every service. Keep worship <i>objective</i> , not subjective. Use or write confessions to be repeated by the congregation regularly. Keep prayer central to the service—let the service be shaped by prayer (deprecation, petitions, intercession, thanksgiving). Use music or scripture to facilitate congregational corporate praying.
Scripture		<p><b>How does worship express the Bible as the basis for Christian faith and life and call the</b></p>	You may choose to follow the pattern available in the common lectionary. If not using the

		<p><b>worshipper to order his or her life in accordance with its teachings?</b></p> <p>Does the service allow for multiple scripture readings? Are the scripture readings drawn from the Old Testament, epistles and gospels? Is scripture presented as the foundation for all that is said and done? Is there a balanced use of scripture that provides for the congregation to be exposed to the “whole counsel” of the Word each year?</p>	<p>lectionary, plan your worship calendar around the great themes of the faith (and not around the great needs of the congregation). Choose complementary scriptures to support the theme of the day. Have scripture read by lay readers, sung, read responsively or read in unison by the congregation. Scripture may also be displayed on screens during preparation for worship or Communion. Make sure scripture readers are clear, articulate and make the reading interesting. Choose ways to highlight the reading of scripture as very important.</p>
Prayer	↓↑	<p><b>How does the service structure emphasize the priority of prayer?</b> Do the prayers merely list the petitions of the day, or do they guide the worshipper through confession, deprecation, intercession and thanksgiving?</p>	<p>Pray often during the service. Use songs to vocalize prayers. Project prayers on the screen or post prayers around the room. Give opportunity for corporate prayers and private prayers. Offer petition and response as a form of praying together.</p>
Preaching	💡	<p><b>How is preaching related to the scriptures and to the rest of the worship event?</b> Is preaching understood as a part of the total worship service and not the <i>raison d’être</i> for the service? Is preaching clearly Biblical? Does preaching form and inform the congregation, helping it to establish and to maintain its identity in the work of God in Christ? Does preaching seek a response of commitment from the hearer? Is preaching ordered by reference to scripture and Biblical themes, rather than in reference to the psycho-social needs of the congregation? Is preaching <i>kerygmatic</i>; does it declare the work of God in drawing, saving</p>	<p>Choose approaches to preaching that most effectively communicates to the congregation. Do not neglect preaching, but use skill and imagination to develop meaningful messages that engage the mind and affections of the listeners. Make sure that the entire service communicates the message, not just the sermon. Augment preaching with visual and dramatic elements, but never allow those elements to diminish the gravity of the preaching of the Word of God.</p>

		and sanctifying people in Christ?	
Eucharist	✝	<b>How does the service present the life and passion of Christ as the event that constitutes coming together for worship?</b> Does the service celebrate the sacrifice of Christ? Does the service seek to establish the worshipper's identity in the activity of Christ?	The primary way to accomplish this aspect is to celebrate the Lord's Supper in each service. Wesley's preference would be for such a practice. Nevertheless, a service can be Eucharistic without actual serving of Communion. Music that confesses the sacrifice of Christ is a primary means to accomplish Eucharistic worship. Visual displays that focus on the sacrifice of Christ may also accomplish this aspect. Displaying the cross or other symbolic images will provide a eucharistic focus as well.
<b>Character</b>			
Experiential	☩	<b>How does the service draw the worshipper into a personal encounter with Christ?</b> Does the service give opportunity for individuals to encounter Christ through faith? Is there room for personal responsiveness? Is their freedom in the service for expressing the presence of Christ? Is there an expectation that Christ is personally present in the service?	Often music can be used to give personal expression to God (ex. "I love You, I worship You, etc."). Allowing for freedom of expression (testimony, "amens" raised hands, clapping) can increase the sense of personal experience. Opportunities for response allow the worshipper to make a personal application of the message of the morning. Times for private prayer or quiet reflection can also allow the worshipper to experience the service on a personal level.
Participatory	👥	<b>How do the elements of worship increase full, active conscious participation by the worshippers?</b> Is worship something done <i>by</i> the congregation and not <i>for</i> the congregation? Is the congregation fully, actively and consciously engaged in all acts of worship? Does the congregation understand	Music is the most obvious place where the congregation participates in worship. Songs should be singable by a group, not performed for the group. Give the congregation opportunities to respond audibly in prayer and scripture reading. Seek to involve more than just the auditory sense for the worshipper. Make the place

		<p>what is happening in worship? Does worship invite to congregation to be an active part rather than to be passive while watching worship take place?</p>	<p>of worship rich with symbolism through banners, statuary, artwork, architecture and other means.</p>
Exuberance		<p><b>How is the spirit of worship conveyed?</b> Do the leaders of worship display enthusiasm regarding the worship service? Is there a sense of the immanent presence of God in worship? Is their freedom for congregational expression within the Biblical limitations of modesty and order? Do the worshippers arrive in anticipation of a divine encounter?</p>	<p>Worship leaders should smile, and perform well the various acts of worship. Readings should be read with passion and pathos. Prayers should be read or spoken with attention to engaging both the mind and affection. The leader must take time to inform the congregation regarding what they are singing, saying and doing and welcome responses, vocal and otherwise. The worship planner should make use of culturally appropriate means, media and sounds to connect the worshipper to the message of worship.</p>
Formation		<p><b>How does the service participate in the long-range goal of developing Christian faith and life?</b> Does repeated, long-term exposure of the worshipper to Sunday services cause that person to grow in faith and knowledge? Do the services provide the framework for Christian living? Do the services engage the mind and affections powerfully enough to provide a potent alternate world in Christ from which the worshipper may draw his or her identity?</p>	<p>Think of worship not as an individual service, but as a long-term relationship that is being built between the worshipper and God. Make use of the Christian calendar to provide a structure for constantly renewing the worshipper in the faith. Use repeated litanies to provide a means to teach and reteach core beliefs. Make sure that all things said and sung go through a process of theological evaluation to ensure that the confession of the community is constantly supported and not undermined. Design the preaching calendar to teach the whole counsel of scripture, rather than focusing only on conversion.</p>
Engaging Music		<p><b>How does music facilitate participation and doctrinal transference?</b> Is the style of music accessible for the worshipping community? Can the congregation participate in the singing? Do the songs support</p>	<p>Choose a style of music that does not alienate any of the worshippers. Choose tunes that can be sung by a group of people. Choose songs for their content, not just their appeal. Rewrite songs that teach errant theology.</p>



		<p>correct theology? Do the songs intentionally teach the confession of the congregation? Do the songs provide both something to think and something to feel? Are the songs chosen supportive of the entire worship service? Are the songs focused on God and not the worshipper?</p>	<p>Introduce new songs slowly so that songs can be learned and memorized by the congregation. Chose songs that focus the attention of the worshipper away from himself or herself and onto God and neighbor.</p>
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## **APPENDIX THREE**

### **SAMPLE SERVICES**

With this project, we have deliberately sought a way to bring Evangelical Wesleyans back into the fold of the worshipping Church universal. In so doing, we have proposed a return to the heart and mind of Wesley who sought desperately to retain Methodism within the communion of Anglicanism precisely because he believed in Anglican worship. Methodist worship, in Wesley's own estimation, was deficient on several levels. Indeed, the great struggle that Wesley had with separation from the Church of England, was that he believed such separation would do violence to the Methodist movement as a worshipping community.

Without a doubt, American Methodist worship patterns became the dominant worship pattern in America. The preaching service with the campmeeting flair became the most successful pattern for attracting, converting, sanctifying and challenging Americans to a life of faith and holiness. The Methodist pattern of worship that emerged was more akin to Dissenter worship than Wesley would have been comfortable with. It could be argued that the very pattern of worship that Wesley feared and fought became dominant, despite his counsel to the contrary.

Yet, one might argue, as many have done, that this preaching service pattern of worship is Biblical (I would not make that argument), attractional, and effective in spreading the Gospel both locally and in Christian missions. Clearly, there is merit to those arguments, at least quantitatively. Such an approach to worship has spawned ever newer approaches (revivalism, church growth, contemporary, seeker, to name the dominant ones) that are designed to market the church to its customers and attract greater crowds through consumer-driven approaches.

For nearly a century, the voices calling for a renewed reflection on what we are doing in worship have been growing. What is now known as the liturgical renewal movement began within Roman Catholicism culminating in the production of the *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy*, by Vatican II. That document encapsulated two key ideas which have been embraced by the liturgical renewal movement. Worship (liturgy) is to be understood as the “fount and summit” of the church’s life. Worship ought also to be designed so that worshippers achieve “full, active, conscious” participation. Robb Redman offered a useful summary of the aims of the liturgical renewal movement saying, “The main aims include restoring the centrality of Christ to worship; restoring the centrality of the Bible to worship; introducing the Christian year and lectionary; encouraging richer sacramental practice; and promoting fuller congregational participation in worship, particularly in music.”<sup>1</sup>

This effort to draw a pattern for ordered worship from Wesley’s *Sunday Service* and from his advices on worship to the Methodists is an intentional attempt to hear both the criticism of the current practice of worship in evangelical churches in America and the counsel of those who have been seeking a deeper, more authentic, and historically rooted approach to worship. That approach seeks to be aware of the counsel encapsulated in the triad: *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*. I am suggesting that the planners of worship must be aware both of the historic patterns of worship *and* of the power of worship (*orandi*) to define Christian faith (*credendi*) and to inform Christian living (*vivendi*).

One idea that has continued to impress me as I have studied this issue is that designing worship is not for the lazy or the uninformed. Forming worship takes serious and deliberate work. It is the most important pastoral task of the church. Historically, this work has been left to

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<sup>1</sup> Robb Redman, *The Great Worship Awakening* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 81.

experts, liturgists, who painstakingly designed liturgies and lectionaries to be used as pattern of worship by those who were less inclined or equipped for such careful work . Within evangelical churches, however, including those of the Wesleyan stripe, liturgies were summarily rejected because they were dry, controlling and smacked of Catholicism or Anglicanism. Americans wanted their freedom, and that freedom meant freedom to worship as they pleased.

The reader of this project may be tempted to return to those same sentiments. My hope is that you have been persuaded to think otherwise. In this project, I have sought to assemble a number of representative voices who would challenge us to flee from contemporary consumer-driven approaches to worship and to embrace a more historically informed approach to worship. Os Guinness has been among the harshest critics of American Christianity accusing it of becoming enslaved to culture and of being more neo-gnostic than Christian.<sup>2</sup> Guinness perceives that the essential problem with American Christianity is that its focus is upon the worshipper and not upon the One worshipped. The goal of the church is to attract and please the audience, rather than to invite the worshipper into a holy encounter with the Divine. This shift has both emasculated the church and undermined the role of the pastor. “After all, when the audience and not the message is sovereign, the good news of Jesus Christ is no longer the end, but just the means.”<sup>3</sup>

To the contrary, we have noted that numerous evangelical, including Methodists and other Wesleyans, have counseled a return to a liturgical consciousness. Robert Webber was largely responsible for inviting evangelicals back into the conversation and found that there were many who were attracted by his offer to help them to discover a deeper and fuller experience of

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<sup>2</sup> See, Os Guinness *Dining with the Devil* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), for example, esp. 25–29 where the author lists several deficiencies of the Church Growth movement.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

worship. He counseled, “The church must be about evangelism, but it must also be about worship—and worship is not primarily focused toward the people. Rather, worship is the people’s celebration of the living, dying, and rising of Christ, a celebration which is offered to God’s glory.”<sup>4</sup> Westerfield-Tucker offered, “Thus how and where a people worship, the *ordo* they select for Sunday or occasional services, and what they say (and who says it) speak volumes about the corporate piety and their diachronic and synchronic Christian (and denominational) identity.”<sup>5</sup>

While I have argued that properly ordered worship has a specific density and requires some deliberate thoughtfulness to construct, I have offered a means by which *any* style of service can be properly ordered. It is not my intent to suggest that the only *proper* worship is liturgical, or emergent, for that matter. To the contrary, I am arguing that one of the tasks of the worship planner is to design worship that communicates to and functions for their congregations. Luther sought the same when translating the Latin Mass into German; and, Vatican II sought the same in translating the Latin Mass into the vernacular. The goal is for the worshipper to be fully, actively and consciously engaged in worship. Worship is “the work of the people.” All worship should be thoughtfully and deliberately designed to engage the heart and mind of the worshipper with the goal of forming their faith and life in reference to who God is and what He has done and is doing through Christ and His Body. As such, the goal of worship is to make Christians—in the fullest sense of that term. My hope is that the samples offered here will spark the readers interest and imagination and provide the means by which you may enable your congregation to worship in Spirit and in Truth.

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Webber, *Blended Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 91.













<sup>5</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 270.

## **A Traditional Service**

The term, “traditional” is often applied to describe a specific style of worship in contrast to “contemporary.” When these terms are used in this way, they are referring to stylistic concerns which include music, instrumentations, the look of the room, the use of a choir and a pastor who is either suited or wearing vestments. In terms of the actual flow and elements of worship, traditional services and contemporary services are virtually identical (excepting “seeker” services and “emergent” services).

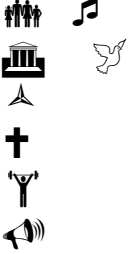





For our purposes, we will understand traditional to mean “ordinary” and “formal.” As I have outlined in the main body of this project, the ordinary service for Methodists, their Wesleyan cousins, and for most evangelical churches in America is the preaching service without the Lord’s Supper. These services generally fall into two halves, worship and preaching. In this pattern, the worship portion of the service is understood as preparing the hearers to hear the message of the sermon. The sermon, normally leads to some call for response.

We have argued that, by definition, this approach to worship is deficient. Wesley understood it to be that way, and the history of Christian worship would verify that it is incomplete. Thus it will be a sufficient test of the Taxonomy to *order* the traditional service so that it is fully-formed, even without the celebration of the Table. For the purposes of this example, we will not choose our scripture portions with reference to a lectionary.



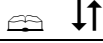

SERVICE ELEMENT	TAXONOMIC SYMBOL	COMMENT
<b>Theme of the Day: Pentecost</b>	 	While many evangelical churches do not make use of liturgical drapes, this service would be a good time to focus on the coming of the Holy Spirit with banners, drapes or pictures. A video screen would be useful for projecting pictures depicting the coming of the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire. Since Pentecost is a festal day, and should be for holiness churches, it would be appropriate for the choir to be specially robed. Marching banners in ahead of a singing choir can draw the attention of the congregation to this special season.
<b>Call to Worship: Joel 2: 28–29</b>		
<b>Invocation</b> Prayed by pastor, worship leader or in unison by the congregation: “O Lord, you taught us: if we, being evil know how to give good gifts, how much more would the Father in heaven send the Holy Spirit to those who ask.” We come before you today, asking for your Spirit to be poured out upon this congregation, cleansing our hearts from sin, fixing our thoughts upon You and making us to worship You in the splendor of holiness. Amen.”	  	This prayer includes a general confession of sin while proclaiming a Wesleyan theology of imputed and imparted holiness. It is also a way to pray the Word and remind the congregation of the teachings of Christ.
<b>Choral Invocation:</b> “Holy Spirit Rain Down” <sup>6</sup> Sung by choir, praise team or congregation.	   	This song functions as a prayer as well. Often music touches the heart as well as the mind.
<b>Scripture Reading</b> Read responsively by congregation: “The Spirit of Truth.” # 397 <sup>7</sup>	 	This reading draws its text from John 14: 16–21, 23–24, 26. It is the gospel reading for the day.

<sup>6</sup> Russell Frager, “Holy Spirit, Rain Down” (Mobile, AL: Hillsong Publishing, 2003) in *All the Best Songs of Praise and Worship*, 2 gen. ed. Marty Parks (Kansas City: Lillenas, 2005), 136.

<sup>7</sup> This and all readings and songs from, Tom Fettke, sr. ed. *The Celebration Hymnal: Songs and Hymns for Worship* (Mobile, AL: Word Music/Integrity Music, 1997) unless otherwise noted.

<p><b>Congregational Singing</b>  “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty.” #3  Recitation of the Apostle’s Creed (unison)  “Jesus Shall Reign.” #375  “Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart.” # 390</p>		<p>This section celebrates the Trinity . It also moves from objective to subjective twice. The songs and creed give opportunity for confession and connection to historic Christianity.</p>
<p><b>Pastoral Prayer</b>  This prayer is prayed extempore by the pastor or worship leader.</p>		<p>While this prayer is extempore, it is advisable for the pastor to structure the prayer so that it maintains the theme of the morning. While this is the time to pray for the needs of the members of the congregation, prayer seeks to align the life of the one praying with the purposes of God, not to get God to do the bidding of those who pray. This prayer is prayed on behalf of the congregation, therefore the language of the prayer ought to be plural and inclusive. It is appropriate to finish this prayer with praying The Lord’s Prayer in unison.</p>
<p><b>Choral Anthem:</b> “The Comforter has Come.”</p>		<p>In this, and all choral reading, it is important that the lyrics be understood and those who sing appear to be sincere. Those who lead the congregation must always remember that they are not performers, they are worship leaders.</p>
<p><b>Passing of the Peace</b>  <i>The Peace of Christ be with you. And also with you.</i>   The congregation will take a moment to greet one another in the peace of Christ.</p>		<p>The practice of the “kiss of peace” is an ancient practice of the Church . This moment is part of the response to the opening worship segment that is concluded in prayer and celebrated with the choral anthem. This first half of the service has an <i>anamnetic</i> focus, calling the congregation to recall and to give thanks for the work that God has done on their behalf.</p>
<p><b>Offering:</b>  Offertory sung by a soloist or played by the organ or piano.</p>		<p>Offertory song should retain the theme of the service of life in the Spirit.</p>
<p><b>Scripture Reading:</b> Romans 8:1–11  Read by the pastor or, better, a lay worship leader. Following the reading, prayer should be said for the ministry of the Word.</p>		<p>This sermon text will afford the pastor opportunity to discuss the meaning of a Spirit-filled life or the doctrine of Entire Sanctification.</p>



<b>Sermon:</b> “What a Difference!”		It is anticipated in preaching that the worshipper is hearing from God as well as the preacher.
<b>Prayer</b>		Often the message will be concluded with a call to response.
<b>Benediction:</b> Jude vss 24–25		
<b>Recessional Hymn:</b> “Holy is the Lord.” #75		This final hymn declares the holiness of God and invites the congregation to live obedient and responsive lives.

## Some Notes Regarding Contemporary Services

Contemporary worship will not be treated separately since the outlines of a contemporary service generally follow the pattern of the traditional preaching service. *Contemporary* describes the *style* of a worship service rather than the pattern or order of the service. Thus, contemporary services tend to have more music with fewer words. The instrumentation is with guitars, keyboards and percussion, rather than with pianos and organs. Staging often uses theatrical lighting and professional video graphics, with fewer Christian symbols. Ministers and platform personnel dress in street clothes rather than suits or robes. Often drama or dance is incorporated into the service. Contemporary services tend to have a higher energy level and a higher volume.

Contemporary worship is attempting to present the message in the *language of the people*. Tex Sample characterized contemporary worship as *spectacle*. He encouraged churches to embrace spectacle as a means to connect to the culture and to speak in their language.

Electronic culture can be characterized in terms of engaging their world through image, sound as bear, and visualization with all three of these understood in terms of the shape they have taken especially in the last fifty years. These have powerfully affected Boomers, Xers, and now Millenials. Out of a social, economic, and cultural milieu where image, beat, and visualization have become so important, certain indigenous practices form.”<sup>8</sup>

Spectacle is merely the means of making the gospel indigenous to the culture, Sample maintains. Using electronic instrumentation and visual effects are equivalent to the missionary using the forms of native culture to communicate the gospel. They are a means by which the gospel can be incarnated into the culture to which we are trying to communicate.

This project attempts to take the incarnational aspect of the gospel seriously. When God chose to speak in Christ, He used a particular time and culture in which to do it. Jesus stood within culture, with all of its local customs and trappings, in order to communicate. Of course,

one of the things that he communicated was critique of the culture. But, a careful reading of the New Testament will reveal that he was as critical of detached religious culture that no longer had any regard for the “sinner” as he the habits and practices of those sinners. Redman struck the right balance saying, “How we engage popular culture should reflect our core theological beliefs and avoid the extreme of taking our cultural surroundings either too seriously or not seriously enough.”<sup>9</sup>

Redman’s particular interest is in thinking about the Seeker Service. We would observe that the seeker movement is merely the most recent version of the campmeeting service, designed to attract people through the use of spectacle in order to introduce them to the gospel. “Seeker services create ... an alternative environment in which to hear the gospel by using styles of music and communication that seekers already know.”<sup>10</sup> Redman notes in his study that these services are often not regarded by the leaders themselves as worship services. They are, perhaps, equivalent to the Methodist outdoor meeting, intended to bring people to conversion with the intent of leading them back into the Church. By themselves they are deficient by definition. “The general consensus among ministry experts and seeker church staffers, however, is that seeker churches face a significant challenge moving people to deeper discipleship.”<sup>11</sup>

It may be that the spectacle service has run its course. The emerging movement in Christian worship is toward more historic patterns and expressions—toward *vintage* worship (discussed below). Redman observed that the “seeker service is most meaningful to those with a residual impression of Christianity. Those who have never attended church do not appreciate the

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<sup>8</sup> Tex Sample, *The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 85.

<sup>9</sup> Redman, *Worship Awakening*, 166.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

accommodations the seeker service makes because they have no residual experience by which to evaluate it.”<sup>12</sup>

The trap that many a contemporary styles of worship fall into is that they are more concerned about attracting and entertaining a crowd than in inviting people into a Divine encounter. We have observed that these attractional methods run deep in the blood of American Christians, having given shape to our entire ecclesial development. What is offered in the ordered approach to worship is a means by which to re-form any worship style so that it functions as a *worship* service instead of merely a gathering in the name of Jesus.

Using the advices that we have given throughout this project, there are a few cautions that should be given to the designers of contemporary worship. The first advice is to design the service for participation. Participation is not merely people standing and clapping, although that is one form of participation. Participation invites the congregation to sing and pray and read together so that the service becomes a corporate expression, not merely an event to be attended.

Secondly, be careful about the text of songs. Scrutinize all songs for their theological content . Do not get trapped into singing only short, pithy ditties. Sing song that teach core theology . Sing songs that are about God, not songs that are filled with self-expression . Songs should give rise to faith, not merely foot-tapping. Sing songs that have God as the subject, not the worshipper.

Thirdly, keep the service focused on God through prayer and His word. Make sure the scriptures are read and reflected upon. While it is useful to make application of Biblical truth to the life-issues of the worshippers, preaching is not for self-help or pop-psychology or political persuasion. Make the entire service speak the message, not merely the sermon. Do not allow the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 20.

worship service to degenerate into an occasion for the preacher to perform oratorically for the congregation. Make sure that the preached Word is a part of the total worship event.

Finally, make sure that Christ is proclaimed through Word, symbol and sacrament. Use worship to give order to life, not the other way around. Invite people to find their identity in Christ. Do not offer Jesus as a “fixer of problems.” Offer Jesus as a Savior and Redeemer. Never devalue God or the worship of God for the sake of drawing a crowd. Speak in the language of the people, yes; but do not allow worship to become *merely* spectacle.

## **A Liturgical Service**

Liturgical services lend themselves most easily to the form of ordered worship. They are already ordered. Where liturgical services tend to fail is with the way they are voiced. Wesley's worship required truth and spirit. It was order with exuberance that made worship so powerful for Wesley.





Since so much of a liturgical service is read, it easily falls into the dull intonation of a disinterested reader. In all services, public readings must be heartfelt. Those who lead unison readings must, as well, lead in such a way as to call to worshipper to "full, conscious, active participation" in the litany and collects. The burden upon those who prefer liturgical worship is to keep the worshippers awake and fully engaged so that the service becomes a personal expression and a corporate affirmation of a vital relationship with a living God.

Often liturgical services are also uninspiring in their use of song . Singing must both inform the mind and inspire the heart. Wesley was so critical of the "bawling" of the choirs in English churches. Often we equate formality in structure with the need to sing lofty, unintelligible music. Music in a liturgical service must still be chosen with the idea of inspiring the worshipper to give "lusty" praise to God.


The service chosen for review under this topic is one conducted by Duke Divinity School in Home Memorial United Methodist Church in Clayton North Carolina.<sup>13</sup> This service was conducted on Tuesday, April 29, 2008. It is a typical Wesleyan service of Word and Table.

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<sup>13</sup> Home Memorial United Methodist Church, "Word and Table Service," (April 29, 2008),  
(continued next page)

SERVICE ELEMENT	TAXONOMIC SYMBOL	COMMENT
<p>Welcome Prayer of Invocation Prelude</p> <p>*Call to Worship:</p> <p>I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a holy and living sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.</p> <p><b>For as in one body we have many members, so we who are many are one body in Christ.</b></p> <p>O Lord, you have searched us and known us.</p> <p><b>You know when we sit down and when we rise up; you discern our thoughts from far away.</b></p> <p>For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.</p> <p><b>I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.</b> (From <i>Romans 12 and Psalm 139</i>)</p> <p>*Hymn of Praise: "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"</p> <p><i>Prayers of the People</i></p> <p>God the Father, Giver of Life, your will for all people is health and salvation.</p> <p><b>We praise you and thank you, Lord.</b></p> <p>God the Son, you came that we might have life, and might have it abundantly.</p> <p><b>We praise and thank you, Lord.</b></p>	      	<p>These opening moments of the service can set the tone for the entire experience of worship through connecting with the congregation on a personal level and setting a tone of expectancy.</p> <p>This responsive reading is another way to bring the public reading of scripture into the service, involving the congregation. It can be done exuberantly if the leader sets the tone and is part of the formation element of the service through what it teaches.</p> <p>This song teaches theological truth through an exuberant song . It forms and invites participation.</p> <p>A liturgical service is a prayer service. This prayer invites the congregation to participate in an historic pattern of petition-response. It functions for formation because it teaches people how to pray and about what to pray privately. There are also numerous scriptural allusions out of which the prayer is</p>

<http://www.duke.divinity.edu/docs/health/boc/wordandtable.doc> (accessed August 10, 2010).

<p>God the Holy Spirit, you make our bodies the temples of your presence.</p> <p><b>We praise you and thank you, Lord.</b></p> <p>Loving God, we hold now in your healing presence those who suffer pain and ill-health, with their families, friends, and those who care for them. Hear us as we share their names with you . . .</p> <p><b>May they know the healing of Christ.</b></p> <p>We hold in your healing presence those who suffer in mind and spirit, and those who care for them. Hear us as we share their names with you . . .</p> <p><b>May they know the wholeness of Christ.</b></p> <p>Loving God, we hold in your healing presence the suffering people of our world, and the places where people are experiencing division, injustice, and violence . . .</p> <p><b>May they know the deep peace of Christ.</b></p> <p>Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those struggling to overcome addiction or abuse, those supporting and working with them, and all whose suffering has distanced them from those who love . . .</p> <p><b>May they know the freedom of Christ.</b></p> <p>We hold in your healing presence those facing bereavement. We also pray for those who have died . . .</p> <p><b>May they know the everlasting hope of Christ.</b></p> <p>Loving God, we give you thanks for health restored and prayers answered, which we remember and celebrate now . . .</p> <p>We hold in your healing presence and peace those whose needs are not known to us, those who are entrusted to are care, and those who are close to us . . .</p> <p><b>May they know the grace of Christ.</b></p> <p>May your wisdom, compassion, and power, God, guide nurses, doctors, emergency workers, pastors, and all who minister to those who are suffering. We pray for these servants now . . .</p>		<p>drawn.</p>
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<p><b>May they know the touch of Christ.</b></p> <p>Let us pray aloud together:  <b>God of compassion and love,  we offer you all our suffering and pain.  Restore to wholeness whatever is broken by human sin.  Give us strength to bear our weakness,  faith in your redemptive power,  and love at all times, and in all places.  Accept and fulfill these petitions, we pray,  not as we ask in our ignorance,  nor as we deserve in our sinfulness,  but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.</b></p> <p><b>*Hymn:</b> "There is a Balm in Gilead"</p> <p><b>Scripture Reading:</b> I Corinthians 12: 12-27</p> <p><b>Litany of the Body</b>  The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. (Matt. 6:22)</p> <p>Christ will be exalted now, as always, in my body. (Philp. 1:20)</p> <p>For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body.(Eph. 5:29)</p> <p>Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. (Philp. 4: 1)</p> <p>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. (I Thess. 5:23)</p> <p><b>*Hymn of Proclamation:</b> "O Christ the Healer"</p> <p><b>Gospel Reading</b> Mark 15:42–16:8</p> <p><b>Sermon</b> "The Body of Christ is My Body"</p>	<p>↓↑        </p> <p>              </p> <p>              </p>	<p>This prayer brings a eucharistic element into its expression by confessing the redemption of Christ. It also forms a confession and humbling (depreciation), while inviting all to participate. The language aids in spiritual formation.</p> <p>This song is rarely sung with exuberance but functions as a prayer and helping in spiritual formation. It is also a scriptural allusion.</p> <p>This litany serves a number of functions . There are numerous scriptural references which are always part of spiritual formation. It invites participation as well. It also declares in scripture the message that will be preached later, so it participates in the preaching of the word as well.</p> <p>The scripture reading is the passion narrative, thus has eucharistic overtones.  As noted above, preaching should</p>
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## Invitation and Prayer of Confession

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another.

Therefore, as we prepare to receive God's gift of grace anew, let us open our lives to God's healing presence and forsake all that separates us from God and neighbor.

Let us be mindful of our personal evil as well as the communal sins of family, class, race, and nation.

Let us confess to God whatever has wounded us or brought injury to others, that we may experience God's mercy afresh and know our reconciliation with God and one another.

*(Time for silent confession and prayer)*

Let us confess our sins together before God and one another.

**Merciful God,**

**We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.**

**We have failed to be an obedient church.**

**We have not done your will,**

**we have broken your law,**

**we have rebelled against your love,**

**we have not loved our neighbors,**

**and we have not heard the cry of the needy.**

**Forgive us, we pray.**

**Free us for joyful obedience,**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Please stand.*

Hear the good news:

Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;

that proves God's love toward us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are

forgiven! Glory to God. Amen.








## The Passing of the Peace



facilitate a conversation between God and the hearer.

This prayer provides a liturgical pattern focused on the work of Christ. It invites the participation of the congregation and teaches confession for congregational members.

While not the sermon, this declaration of absolution functions kerygmatically.

<p>"The Peace of Christ be with you."          "And also with you."</p>		
<p><b>*Doxology</b> ("Praise <i>God from whom all</i> blessings flow...")</p>		
<p><b>*The Great Thanksgiving</b> (Hymnal, pg. 9)</p>		
<p><b>Holy Communion</b></p>		
<p><b>Prayer of Gratitude and Commission</b> (Hymnal, pg. 11)</p>		
<p><b>*Hymn of Dedication</b>"One Bread, One Body"</p>		
<p><b>*Benediction</b></p>		<p>Wesley often had his most profound experience of the presence of Christ in communion. We understand that Christ is present in the celebration of Eucharist.</p>

## **An Emergent Worship Service**

By definition, emergent worship is still emerging. It would be a mistake to think of emergent worship as a style of worship. It is more of an approach to worship. Emergent worship is focused upon building a community of committed Christians who worship together as an expression of their common life in Christ. As such, emergent worship is the first true post-Constantinian approach to worship. It seeks neither organization nor affiliation. It seeks community.

The ecclesiology of this movement can be summarized in the words of Gibbs and Bolger,

The church is primarily a *people*, not a *place* to meet. It is a movement not an institution. Drawing on the understanding that secular space no longer exists, church is a seven-day-a-week identification, not a once-a-week, ninety-minute respite from the real world. The church lives<sup>14</sup> as a committed community *in* this world, which desperately needs redemption.

Given this understanding, worship in emergent churches is designed to appeal to the way in which postmoderns view their place in the world. Worship in these churches is not longer built on attraction and entertainment models. Rather, worship is the response of the entire community to the questions that rise from faith and experience. Worship is not a platform performance . It is something to be experienced by the worshipper through all their senses, including their spiritual sense. Dan Kimball described his aspirations for emerging worship saying,

Our hope is that the emerging church will break out of the consumer Christian mentality. Our aim in making a worship gathering more experiential is that people would participate in the service rather than remain spectators. Experiential and interactive worship, in addition to the teaching that occurs, is a refreshing practice that resonates with those being raised<sup>15</sup> in this culture and returns to something more like what an early church gathering was like.

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<sup>14</sup> Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2005), 90.

<sup>15</sup> Dan Kimball, *Emerging Worship*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan), 112.

Marva Dawn describes the shift from modern to postmodern in its impact on the church saying,

Whereas the modern world rejected Christianity's claims because they could not be scientifically proven, now postmodernity has opened people up to recognizing other kinds of knowledge and uses of reason. We can address the epistemological barriers to faith... by accepting the suprarational mystery of God and the community-attested Revelation by recognizing the reasonableness of the Christian story as the best answer to the existential question of who we are and why we exist, of what is wrong with the world and what can be done about it.<sup>16</sup>

The worship service that will be described below is one attempt to respond to the apparent shift in culture. As with most emergent services, it uses both aural and visual ways of communicating. It is a *vintage* worship service in blue jeans. It is both directed and unregulated. It is a corporate experience and a personal experience. It incorporates silence, the arts, word and table as necessary parts of the gathering. It welcome all ages, including children as an integral part of the gathering. It is directed, not led. Worship is coaxed, not demanded.

Covenant Christian Church of Des Moines, Iowa does not refer to their Saturday night service as an emergent worship service. They did not set out to attract young adults, or postmoderns, boomers or busters. They sought to make worship available to people who might not be available to worship on Sunday morning or who were not interested in a traditional worship service. Their Sunday service is more liturgically oriented. The Saturday night service is known as *Route Two*—another way to get there.






Before outlining the service itself we must visualize the way the room is set for worship. The seating is arranged in a  $\frac{3}{4}$  circle, leaving a large open space in the middle of the room and space behind the seating. At the front of the room is a piano and a projection screen. In the center of the room stands the Communion table set with bread and wine and lit with multiple candles of







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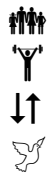
<sup>16</sup> Marva J. Dawn, *A Royal "Waste" of Time* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 48.

varying heights. On the outside edge of the room are four support pillars. Prayers drawn from ancient liturgies are posted on the pillars. Other stations include a prayer wall where prayers can be posted with post-it-notes (In front of this wall sits a small table with a white vase where private prayers may be placed.). Another station is a place where a prayer bench is set up for the petitioner to receive “hands on” prayer from the pastor. The last station is a wall with white butcher paper and markers for artwork.

The worshippers arrive in casual dress. Coffee and water are available upon entry and a corner area contains bean bag chairs for the children where they receive books and crayons to occupy themselves during worship. Lighting is subdued as the worshippers gather to contemporary praise music or piano music. The service takes place from 5:30–6:30 p.m.

SERVICE ELEMENT	TAXONOMIC SYMBOL	COMMENT
<p><b>Prelude</b> As people gather, praise music plays quietly . On the screen are images of artwork drawn from the ancient Church.</p>		<p>The informality of the gathering invites openness and excitement. The visuals are provided by the arrangement of the room, subdued lighting and projected images that give a sense worshipping in the presence of the ancients.</p>
<p><b>Welcome</b> The pastor stands in the midst of the congregation to welcome people to worship.</p>		<p>The purpose of the welcome is to create community and open communication in a friendly atmosphere.</p>
<p><b>Congregational Singing</b> Normally three or four songs are sung, both praise choruses and hymns.</p>		<p>Songs are carefully chosen as a mix of old and new. They are also chosen for their connection to the theme of the service.</p>
<p><b>Greeting Time</b> The congregation is instructed to greet one another and are given a topic to explore that will connect with the message later, such as, “When did you last see God in your life?”</p>		<p>This time is connected to the preaching as well as to the building of excitement and community. Given a topic about which to talk both “breaks the ice” and puts the congregation into the frame of mind for hearing the message. The topic is designed to help the congregation to merge their secular and sacred spaces.</p>
<p><b>Scripture Reading</b> The scripture is projected</p>		<p>The weakness of this service is its lack of scripture readings. There are scripture</p>

<p>on the screen and is normally read in unison. The greeting time topic and sermon are connected to the reading.</p>		<p>readings displayed during other parts of the service, but, in general, the reading of scripture offers only the short text for the sermon.</p>
<p><b>Message (part a)</b> The pastor speaks interactively using questions to which the congregation responds. Often he uses poetry or an artwork illustration. He stands in the center of the congregation.</p>		<p>The message is anything but traditional preaching. It is done in dialog with the congregation as is understood as a part of the larger agenda to worship.</p>
<p><b>Prayer Song</b> This song is intended to be meditative and to quiet the congregation for prayer.</p>		<p>This song quiets the heart for prayer and functions as lyrical prayer for the congregation. It is a very general confession.</p>
<p><b>Invitation to Meditation Time</b> The pastor explains that the meditation time will give opportunity for the worshippers to visit two or three of the “stations.” They may receive Communion during the meditation by serving themselves at the center table.</p>		<p>The invitation has to teach the congregation what is expected in the meditation time. It becomes an opportunity for training in spiritual practices.</p>
<p><b>Words of Institution</b></p>		<p>This particular church has a Calvinistic view of the sacraments, so words of institution do not follow any formula, but generally involve a reading that reminds the congregation of God’s love or sacrifice.</p>
<p><b>Meditation Time</b> The worshippers visit the various prayer stations for a time of personal reflection. Descriptions of the stations are listed on the screen. This portion of the service lasts 8–12 minutes and is called to a close by the ringing of a bell.</p>		<p>The meditation time becomes an amalgamation of sights, sounds, sensory input and personal interaction. It is extremely participatory and a useful approach for postmodern people. The specific ancient prayers give a sense of history and formation to the time. The only praying that happens in this service, however is here. Thus the service is not shaped by its prayers. Eucharist is served at this time, but it is optional and downplayed. It is difficult to declare it kerygmatically.</p>

<p><b>Message (part b)</b> The pastor concludes his message interactively, moving from text to application.</p>		<p>See comments above. The conclusion of the message is designed to connect the experience of worship to the life of the worshipper . In that way, worship becomes the context out of which the worshipper lives life.</p>
<p><b>Song of Praise</b> Worship concludes with a final praise song.</p>		<p>This closing song is an opportunity for praise. It functions as a final thanksgiving.</p>
<p><b>“Circle of Hands”</b> The congregation forms a ring around the room holding hands for a final prayer and blessing.</p>		<p>The circle gives a sense of unity and community to the group as a place from which to draw strength for the challenges of the week. As such it builds Christian identity.</p>



## APPENDIX FOUR

### THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS IN NORTH AMERICA (1784)

#### The ORDER for MORNING PRAYER, Every Lord's Day.

*At the Beginning of Morning Prayer, the Minister shall read with a loud Voice some one or more of these Sentences of the Scriptures that follow: And then he shall say that which is written after the said Sentences.*

**W**HEN the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. *Ezek. xviii. 27.*

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. *Psal. li. 17.*

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him : neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws which he set before us. *Dan. ix. 9, 10.*

I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. *Luke, xv. 18, 19.*

Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord for in thy fight shall no man living be justified, *Psal. cxliii. 2.*

Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us, in sundry places, to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness, and that we should not dissemble-or cloke them before the face of Almighty God, our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me:

#### *A General Confession*

*To be said by the whole congregation, after the minister, kneeling:*

Almighty and most merciful Father; we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us. But thou,

O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, who confess their faults. Restore thou them that are Penitent; according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life; To the glory of thy holy name. *Amen.*

*Then the Minister shall say:*

O Lord, we beseech thee, absolve thy people from their offences that, through thy bountiful goodness, we may be delivered from the bonds of those sins which by our frailty we have committed. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

*The people shall answer here, and at the end of all other prayers, Amen.*

*Then the Minister shall say the Lord's Prayer; the people also repeating it with him, both here and wheresoever else it is used in Divine Service:*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*Then likewise he shall say:*

O Lord, open Thou our lips.

*Answer.* And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

*Minister.* O God, make speed to save us;

*Answer.* O Lord, make haste to help us.

*Here all standing up, the Minister shall say:*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

*Answer.* As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, *Amen.*

*Minister.* Praise ye the Lord.

*Answer.* The Lord's Name be praised

*Then shall follow the Psalms [see section of Psalms, pages 13,14], in order as they are appointed. And at the end of every Psalm shall be repeated:*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end . *Amen.*

*Then shall be read distinctly, the First Lesson taken out of the Old Testament, as is appointed in the Table of proper Lessons: He that readeth, so standing, and turning himself as he may be best heard of all, And after that shall be said the following Hymn:*

WE praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.

To thee all Angels cry aloud: the Heavens, and all the powers therein.

To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry,

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;

Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.

The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee.

The noble army of Martyrs praise thee.

The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee;

The Father of an infinite Majesty;

Thine honourable, true, and only Son;

Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

Thou art the King of glory, O Christ;

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

When thou tookest upon thee to deliver, man, thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.

When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

Thou sitteth at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.

We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge.

We therefore pray thee, help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.

Make them to be numbered with thy Saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage.

Govern them, and lift them up for ever.

Day by day we magnify thee;

And we worship thy name ever, world without end.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.

O Lord, have mercy upon us: have mercy upon us.

O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trust is in thee.

O Lord, in thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded.

*Then shall be read in like manner the Second Lesson, taken out of the New Testament: and after that, the following Psalm:*

Be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

*Then shall be said the Apostle's Creed by the Minister and the People, standing.*

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell: The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into Heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The Holy Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of Sins; The Resurrection of the Body, And the Life everlasting. Amen.

*And after that, the Minister shall pronounce with a loud Voice,*

The Lord be with you;

*Answer.* And with thy spirit.

*Minister.* Let us pray. Lord, have mercy upon us.

*Answer.* Christ have mercy upon us.

*Minister.* Lord, have mercy upon us.

*Then shall follow three Collects; the first of the Day which shall be the same that is appointed at the Communion; the second for Peace; the third for Grace to live well; all devoutly kneeling.*

*The second Collect, for Peace.*

○ God, who art the author of peace, and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*The Third Collect, for Grace.*

○ Lord our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin; neither run into any kind of danger: but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Then these Prayers following are to be read.*

*A Prayer for the Supreme Rulers.*

Lord our heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; Most heartily we beseech thee, with thy favour to behold the Supreme Rulers of these United States, and so replenish them with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that they may always incline to thy will, and walk in thy way; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord, to make our common supplications unto thee, and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name, thou wilt grant their requests; Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them: granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth,

and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

2 Cor. xiii 14.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all evermore. *Amen.*

*Here endeth the Order of Morning Prayer.*

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## **The Order for the Administration of the LORD'S SUPPER.**

*The table at the Communion-time, having a fair white Linen Cloth upon it, shall stand where Morning and Evening Prayers are appointed to be said. And the Elder standing at the Table, shall say the Lard's Prayer with the Collect following, the People kneeling.*

**OUR** Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy be done on earth, as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

*The Collect.*

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name, through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Then shall the Elder turning to the People, rehearse distinctly all the TEN COMMANDMENTS: and the People still kneeling shall, after every Commandment ask God Mercy for their Transgressions thereof for the Time past, and Grace to keep the same for the Time to come,*

*Minister.*

GOD spake these words, and said, I am the Lord thy God: Thou shalt have none other gods but me.

*People.* Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

*Minister.* Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love me, and keep my commandments.

*People,* Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

*Minister.* Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.

*People.* Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law,

*Minister.* Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

*People.* Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

*Minister.* Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

*People.* Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

*Minister.* Thou shalt do no murder.

*People.* Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

*Minister.* Thou shalt not commit adultery.

*People.* Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

*Minister.* Thou shalt not steal.

*People.* Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

*Minister.* Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

*People.* Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

*Minister.* Thou shalt not Covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his.

*People.* Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these thy Laws in our hearts, we beseech thee.

*Then shall follow this Collect.*

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, we are taught by thy holy word, that the hearts of the Princes of the earth are in thy rule and governance, and that thou dost dispose and turn them as it seemeth best to thy godly wisdom; we humbly beseech thee so to dispose and govern the hearts of the Supreme Rulers of these United States, our Governors, that in all their thoughts, words, and works, they may ever seek thy honour and glory, and study to preserve thy people committed to their charge, in wealth, peace, and godliness. Grant this, O merciful Father, for thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Then shall he said the Collect of the day. And immediately after the Collect, the Elder shall read the Epistle, saying, The Epistle [or, The Portion of Scripture appointed for the Epistle] is written in the — Chapter of — beginning at the — Verse. And the Epistle ended, he shall say, Here endeth the Epistle. Then shall he read the Gospel, (the People all standing up) saying, The holy Gospel is written in the — Chapter of — beginning at the — Verse.*

*Then shall follow the Sermon.*

*Then shall the Elder say one or more of these Sentences.*

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. *Matth.* v. 16.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. *Matth.* vi. 19, 20.

Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them; for this is the law and the prophets. *Matth.* vii. 12.

Not every one that faith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. *Matth.* vii. 21.

Zaccheus stood forth, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore him four-fold. *Luke,* xix. 8.

Who goeth a warfare at any time of his own cost? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? i Cor. ix. 7.

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your worldly things? i Cor. ix. n.

Do ye not know, that they who minister about holy things, live of the sacrifice? And they who wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord also ordained, that they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel. I Cor. ix. 13, 14.

He that soweth little, shall reap little: and he that soweth plenteously, shall reap plenteously. Let every man do according as he is disposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.

Let him that is taught in the Word, minister unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. Gal. vi. 6, 7.

While we have time, let us do good unto all men, and especially unto them that are of the household of faith. Gal. vi. 10.

Godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. I Tim. vi. 6, 7.

Charge them who are rich in this world, that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may attain eternal life, I Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

God is not unrighteous, that he will forget your works and labour that proceedeth of love; which love ye have shewed for his Name's sake, who have ministered unto the saints, and yet do minister. Heb. vi. 10.

To do good, and to distribute, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Hebr. xiii. 16.

Whoso hath this world's good, and feedth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? I John, iii. 17.

Be merciful after thy power: If thou hast much, give plenteously: If thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little: for so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity. Tob. iv. 8,9.

He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and look what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again. Prov. xix. 17.

Blessed is the man that provideth for the sick and needy: the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble. Psal. xli. i.

*While these Sentences are in reading some fit person appointed for that purpose shall receive the alms for the poor, and other devotions of the people in a decent Basin to be provided for that purpose; and then bring it to the Elder, who shall place it upon the Table.*

*After which done, the Elder shall say,*

Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on earth.

Almighty and everliving God, who, by thy holy Apostle, hast taught us to make prayers and, supplications, and to give thanks for all men; We humbly beseech thee most mercifully [\* to accept our alms and oblations and] to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy Divine Majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually accepting the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord: and grant that all they that do confess thy holy Name, may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love. We beseech thee also to save and defend all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors; and especially thy Servants the Supreme Rulers of these United States; that under them we may be godly and quietly governed: and grant unto all that are put in authority under them, that they may truly and indifferently administer justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion and virtue. Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all the Ministers of thy Gospel, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments. And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and especially to this Congregation here present; that with meek heart and due reverence they may hear and receive thy holy word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. And we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them, who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. And we also bless thy holy Name, for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

<p><i>* If there be no alms or oblations, then shall the words [of accepting our alms and oblations] be left unsaid.</i></p>
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*Then shall the Elder say to them that come to receive the Holy Communion.*

YE that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

*This shall this general Confession be made by the Minister in the Name of all those that are minded to receive the Holy Communion, both he and all the people kneeling humbly upon their knees, and saying,*

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we from time to time most grievously have committed, By thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; For thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; And grant, that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, To the honour and glory of thy Name, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Then shall the Elder say,*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy great mercy hast promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto thee; Have mercy upon us pardon



and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Then standing the Elder shall say.*

Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to him:

Come unto me, all ye that are burdened and heavy-laden, and I will refresh you. *Matth. xi. 28,*

So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life, *John iii. 16.*

Hear also what St. Paul saith:

This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I *Tim. i. 15.*

Hear also what St. John saith:

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins, I *John, ii. 1, 2.*

*After which the Elder shall proceed, saying?*

Lift up your hearts.

*Answ.* We lift them up unto the Lord.

*Elder.* Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

*Answ.* It is meet and right so to do.

*Then shall the Elder say,*

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.

*Here shall follow the proper Preface, according to the Time, if there be any especially appointed or else immediately shall follow;*

Therefore with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. *Amen.*

*Proper Prefaces.*

*Upon Christmas-day.*

Because thou didst give Jesus Christ thine only Son to be born as at this time for us, who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made very man, and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin. Therefore with Angels, &c.

*Upon Easter-day.*

But chiefly we are bound to praise thee for the glorious Resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord: for he is the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us and hath taken away the sin of the world; who by his death hath destroyed death, and by his rising to life again, hath restored to us everlasting life. Therefore with Angels, &c.

*Upon Ascension-day,*

Through thy most dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; who, after his most glorious Resurrection, manifestly appeared to all his Apostles, and in their sight ascended up into heaven,

to prepare a place for us; that where he is, thither we might also ascend, and reign with him in glory. Therefore with angels, &c.

*Upon Whitsunday.*

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; according to whose most true promise the Holy Ghost came down, as at this time, from heaven with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the Apostles to teach them, and to lead them to all truth; giving them both the gift of divers languages, and also boldness, with fervent zeal, constantly to preach the Gospel unto all nations, whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error, into the clear light and true knowledge of thee, and of thy Son Jesus Christ. Therefore with Angels, &c.

*Upon the Feast of Trinity.*

Thou art one God, one Lord; not one only person, but three persons in one substance. For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality. Therefore with Angels, &c.

*After each of which Prefaces shall immediately be said,*

Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. *Amen.*

*Then shall the Elder kneeling down at the Table, say, in the Name of all them that shall receive the Communion this Prayer following; the People also kneeling.*

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. *Amen.*

*Then the Elder shall say the Prayer of Consecration as followeth:*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption who made there (by his oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death until his coming again; hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee, and grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood: who, in the same night that he was betrayed \* took bread; and when he had given thanks he brake it and gave it to his disciples +, saying, Take, eat; ‡this is my Body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. Likewise after Supper § he took the Cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for this || is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins: Do this as oft as ye shall drink it in remembrance of

me. Amen.

*Then shall the Minister first receive the Communion in both kinds himself, and then proceed to deliver the same to the other Ministers in like manner, (if any be present) an after that to the People also, in order into their Hands. And when he delivereth the Bread to any one, he shall say,*

The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in they heart by faith with thanksgiving.

*And the Minister that delivereth the Cup to any one shall say,*

The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

*If the consecrated Bread or Wine be all spent before all have communicated, the Elder may consecrate more, by repeating the Prayer of Consecration.*

*When all have communicated, the Minister shall return to the Lord's Table, and place upon it what remaineth of the consecrated Elements, covering the same with a fair Linen Cloth.*

*Then shall the Elder say the Lord's Prayer, the People repeating after him every Petition,*

OUR Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy Will be done on Earth, As it is in Heaven: Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

*After which shall be said as followeth:*

Lord and heavenly Father, we thy humble servants desire thy Fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching thee to grant that, by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion. And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee that all we who are partakers of this holy Communion, may be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction. And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. Amen.

*Then shall be said,*

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good-will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord

\* Here the Elder is to take the Patten into his Hands:  
+And here to break the Bread:  
‡And here to his Hand upon the Bread.  
§Here he is to take the Cup into his Hand:  
|| And here to lay his Hand upon every Vessel (be it chalice or Flaggon) in which there is any Wine to be consecrated.

God, heavenly king, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy, thou only art true Lord, thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. *Amen.*

*Then the Elder, if he see it expedient may put up an Extempore Prayer; and afterwards shall let the People depart with this Blessing:*

May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus

## APPENDIX FIVE

### TABLE OF SCRIPTURE READINGS FROM WESLEY'S *SUNDAY SERVICE*

Sunday	Morning Proper	Epistle	Gospel
Advent 1	Isaiah 1	Rom. 13: 8–14	Matth. 21: 1–13
2	5	15: 4–13	Luke 21: 25–33
3	25	1 Cor. 4: 1–5	Matth. 11: 2–10
4	30	Phil. 4: 4–7	John 1:19– 28
Christmas		Hebrews 1:1–12	John 1: 1–14
Sunday's After Christmas— 1	37	Gal. 4:1–7	Matth. 1: 18–25
2	41	Rom. 12: 1–5	Luke 2:41–52
3	44	Rom 12: 6–16b	John 2: 1–11
4	51	Rom.12:16c–21	Matth. 8: 1–13
5	55	Rom. 13: 1–7	Matth. 8:23–34
6	57	Col. 3:12–17	Matth.13:24–30
7	59	1 John 3:1–8	Matth.24:23–31
8	65	1 Cor. 9: 24–27	Matth. 20: 1–16
9	Genesis 1	2 Cor. 11:19–30	Luke 8: 4–15
10	3	1 Cor. 13:1–13	Luke 18: 31–43
11	7	2 Cor. 6:1–10	Matth. 4: 1–11
12	19 to vs 30	1 Thess. 4: 1–8	Matth.15:21–28
13	24	Eph. 5:1–14	Luke 11: 14–28
14	39	Gal. 4: 21–31	John 6: 1–14
15	43	Heb. 9: 11–15	John 8: 46–59
<i>Sunday before Easter</i>			
1 Lesson	Exodus 9	Phil 2: 5–11	Matth. 27: 1–54
2 Lesson	Matth. 26		
<i>Good Friday</i>		Heb. 10: 1–25	
<i>Easter— day</i>			
1 Lesson	Exodus 12	Col. 3: 1–7	John 20: 1–10
2 Lesson	Rom. 6		
<i>Sundays after</i>			

<i>Easter</i>			
The first	Numbers 16	1 John 5: 4–12	John 20: 19–23
2	23–24	1 Pet. 2: 19–25	John 10:11–16
3	Deuter. 4	1 Pet. 2: 11–17	John 16: 16–22
4	6	James 1:17–21	John 16: 5–15
5	8	James 1:22–27	John 16: 23–33
<i>Ascension Day</i>		Acts 1:1–11	Mark 16: 14–20
<i>Sunday after Ascension day</i>	Deuter. 12	1 Pet. 4: 7–11	John 15: 26–16: 4a
<i>Whitsunday</i> 1 Lesson 2 Lesson	___ 16 to vs. 18 Acts 10 ver. 34	Acts 2: 1–11	John 14: 15–31a
<i>Trinity Sunday</i> 1 Lesson 2 Lesson	Genesis 1 Matth. 3	Rev. 4:1–11	John 3: 1–16
<i>Sundays after Trinity</i>			
The first	Joshua 10	1 John 4: 7–21	Luke 16: 19–31
2	Judges 4	1 John 3:13–24	Luke 14:16–24
3	1 Sam. 2	1 Pet. 5: 5–14	Luke 15: 1–10
4	12	Rom. 8: 18–23	Luke 6: 36–42
5	15	1 Pet. 3:8–15a	Luke 5: 1–11
6	2 Sam 12	Rom 6:3–10	Matth. 5:20–26
7	21	Rom. 6:19–23	Mark 8: 1–9
8	1 Kings 13	Rom 8:12–17	Matth. 7:15–21
9	18	1 Cor. 10:1–13	Luke 16: 1–9
10	21	1 Cor. 12:1–11	Luke 19:41–47a
11	2 Kings 5	1 Cor. 15:1–11	Luke 18:9–14
12	10	2 Cor. 3:4–9	Mark 7:31–37
13	19	Gal. 3:16–22	Luke 10:23–37
14	Jerem. 5	Gal. 5:16–24	Luke 17:11–19
15	35	Gal. 6:11–18	Matth. 6:24–34
16	Ezekiel 2	Eph. 3:13–21	Luke 7:11–17
17	14	Eph. 4:1–6	Luke 14:1–11
18	20	1 Cor. 1:4–7	Matth.22:34–46
19	Daniel 3	Eph. 4:17–32	Matth. 9: 1–8
20	Joel 2	Eph. 5:15–21	Matth. 22:1–14
21	Habak. 2	Eph. 6: 10–20	John 4:46–54
22	Prov. 2	Phil 1:3–11	Matt. 18: 21–35
23	11	Phil. 3:17–21	Matth.22:15–22
24	13	Col. 1:3–12	Matth. 9:18–26
25	15	Jer. 23:5–8	John 6:5–14

APPENDIX SIX

1903 *SUNDAY SERVICE*

**THE SUNDAY SERVICE**

OF THE

METHODISTS IN NORTH AMERICA

PREPARED BY

JOHN WESLEY

1784

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PRINTED BY

HENRY C. JENNINGS AND SAMUEL H. PYE

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FOR THE

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CHICAGO, U.S.A.

*June 14, 1903*

## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

This is a reproduction of the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer taken from "The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America," prepared by John Wesley in 1784. A few changes have been made to fit the service to its intended use: (1) The third and fourth of the opening scripture sentences are substituted for others; (2) the canticles have been pointed for chanting and these, with the collects, are printed in parallel columns to save repeating the rest of the order, which is identical for both services; (3) a collect "of the day" has been inserted for morning and evening services, since it was impracticable to reproduce all; (4) only a few selections from the Psalter [in the text of the Authorized Version] are given for the same reason; (5) the prayer for the President of the United States from the Protestant Episcopal Book of Common Prayer has been substituted for Mr. Wesley's Prayer for Supreme Rulers, which is, however, printed in parallel column; and (6) the prayer "for Ministers of the Gospel," that "for All Conditions of Men" and "A General Thanksgiving," which were omitted from the American Service, have been restored as appearing in "The Sunday Service," prepared by Mr. Wesley in the same year for the use of the British connexion.



## THE ORDER FOR MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

¶ *At the beginning of Morning and Evening Prayer, the Minister shall read with a loud voice some one or more of these sentences of the Scripture that follow: And then he shall say that which is written after the said sentences:*

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. (Ezek. 18:27.)

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God thou wilt not despise. (Psalm 51:17.)

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of the Father. (Matt. 7:21.)

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. (Micah 6:6,8.)

Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us, in sundry places, to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness, and that we should not dissemble or cloke them before the face of Almighty God, our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me:

*A General Confession.*

¶ *To be said by the whole congregation, after the minister, kneeling:*

Almighty and most merciful Father; we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, who confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent; according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life; To the glory of thy holy name. *Amen.*

¶ *Then the Minister shall say:*

O Lord, we beseech thee, absolve thy people from their offences that, through thy bountiful goodness, we may be delivered from the bonds of those sins which by our frailty we have committed. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

¶ *The people shall answer here, and at the end of all other prayers. Amen.*

¶ *Then the Minister shall say the Lord's Prayer; the people also repeating it with him. both here and wheresoever else it is used in Divine Service:*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

¶ *Then likewise he shall say;*

O Lord, open Thou our lips.

*Answer.* And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

*Minister.* O God, make speed to save us;

*Answer.* O Lord, make haste to help us.

¶ *Here, all standing up, the Minister shall say:*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

*Answer.* As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. *Amen.*

*Minister.* Praise ye the Lord.

*Answer.* The Lord's Name be praised.

¶ Then shall follow the Psalms [See selection of Psalms, pages 13, 14], in order as they are appointed . And at the end of every Psalm shall be repeated:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

¶ Then shall be read distinctly, the First Lesson taken out of the Old Testament, as is appointed in the Table of proper Lessons. He that readeth, so standing and turning himself as he may be best heard of all. And after that shall be said the following Hymn :

[MORNING SERVICE.]

*Te Deum Laudamus .*

1. We praise thee O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
2. All the earth doth worship thee: the Father ever lasting.
3. To thee all Angels cry aloud: the Heavens, and all the Powers there in;
4. To thee Cherubim and Seraphim: continually do cry,
5. Holy Holy Holy: Lord God of Sabaoth;
6. Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of thy glory.
7. The glorious company of the Apostles: praise thee.
8. The goodly fellowship of the Prophets: praise thee.
9. The noble army of Martyrs: praise thee.
10. The holy Church throughout all the world: doth acknowledge thee;
11. The Father: of infinite Majesty;
12. Thine alone true Son;
13. Also the Holy Ghost: the Comforter.
14. Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ.
15. Thou art the ever lasting Son: the Father.
16. When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man: thou didst humble thyself to be born of a Virgin.
17. When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death: thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all

[EV] be lievers.

18. Thou sittest at the right hand of God: in the glory of the Father.

19. We believe that thou shalt come: to be our Judge.

20. We therefore pray thee help thy servants: whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.

21. Make them to be numbered with thy Saints: in glory ever lasting.

[EVENING SERVICE.]

*Cantate Domino.*

Psalm xcvi.

1. O sing unto the Lord a new song: for he hath done marvelous things.

2. With his own right hand \* and with his holy arm: hath he gotten him self the victory.

3. The LORD declared his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen.

4. He hath remembered his mercy and truth toward the house of Israel: and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God.

5. Show yourselves joyful unto the Lord all ye lands: sing, rejoice and give thanks.

6. Praise the Lord upon the harp: sing to the harp (sic) with a psalm of thanks giving.

7. With trumpets also and shawms: O show yourselves joyful before the LORD the King.

8. Let the sea make a noise and all that therein is: the round world, and they that dwell there in.

9. Let the floods clap their hands\* and let the hills be joyful together before the LORD: for he cometh to

| judge the | earth.

10. With righteousness *shall* he | judge the | world  
and the | people | with • = | equity.

Glory be to the *Father* | and to the | Son: *and* | to the  
| Holy | Ghost;

As it was in the beginning\* is *now*, and | ever |  
shall be; *world* without | end • = | A • = | men.

22. O *Lord*, | save thy | people: *and* | bless thine |  
herit | age.

23. *Gov* | = • ern them: *and* | lift them | up for |  
ever.

24. *Day* | by • = | day: *we* magni | fy • = | thee;

25. *And* we | worship • thy Name: ever | world  
with | out • = | end.

26. *Vouch* | safe O | Lord: to *keep* us this | day with  
| out • = | sin.

27. O *Lord*, have | mercy • up | on us: *have* | mercy  
• up | on • = | us.

28. O Lord, let thy *mercy* | be up | on us: *as* our |  
trust • = | is in | thee.

29. O Lord, in *thee* | have I trusted: *let* me | never |  
be con | founded.

*Then shall be read in like manner the Second Lesson, taken out of the New Testament; and after that the following Psalm:*  
the | Holy | Ghost;

[MORNING SERVICE.]

*Jubilate Deo.*

St Luke i :46.

As it was in the beginning \* is *now*, and | ever |  
shall be: *world* without | end • = | A • = men.

1. O be joyful in the *Lord* | all ye | lands: serve the  
LORD with gladness \* and come *before* his | presence |  
with a | song.

2. Be sure that the LORD he is God \* it is he that hath  
made us *and* not | we our | selves: we are his people,  
*and* the | sheep of | his • = | pasture.

3. O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving \*  
and *into* his | courts with | praise: be thankful unto  
*him*, and | speak good | of his | Name.

4. For the LORD is gracious \* his *mercy* is | ever |  
lasting: and his truth endureth from *gener* | ation • to  
| gener | ation.

Glory be to the *Father* | and • to the | Son: *and* | to

[EVENING SERVICE.]

*Deus misereatur.*

Psalm Ixvii.

1. God be merciful *unto* | us and | bless us: and  
show us the light of his countenance \* *and* be | merci •  
ful | unto us;

2. That thy *way* may be | known up • on | earth: thy  
*saving* | health a | mong all | nations.

3. Let the people *praise* | thee O | God: *yea* let | all  
the | people | praise thee.

4. O let the nations *rejoice* | and be | glad: for thou  
shalt judge the folk righteously\* and *govern* the |  
nations • up | on • = | earth.

5. Let the people *praise* | thee O | God: *yea* let | all  
the | people | praise thee.

6. Then shall the *earth* bring | forth her | increase:  
and God, even our own *God*, shall give • = | us his |  
blessing.

7. *God* shall | bless • = | us: and all the *ends* of the |  
world shall I fear • = | him.

Glory be to the *Father* | and • to the | Son: *and* | to  
the | Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning \* is *now*, and | ever |  
shall be: *world* without | end • = | A • = | men.

¶*Then shall be said the Apostles' Creed by the Minister and the People, standing:*

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the Life everlasting. *Amen.*

¶*And after that, the Minister shall pronounce with a loud voice:*

The Lord be with you;

*Answer*—And with thy spirit.

*Minister*—Let us pray. Lord have mercy upon us.

*Answer*—Christ have mercy upon us.

*Minister*—Lord have mercy upon us.

¶*Then shall follow three collects—the first of the Day, which shall be the same that is appointed at Communion; the second for Peace, the third for Grace to live well; all devoutly kneeling:*

*First Collect, of the Day\**

MORNING SERVICE.

Grant to us Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as are rightful, that we, who can not do anything that is good without thee may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

EVENING SERVICE.

Almighty and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope and love; and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Second Collect, for Peace.*

MORNING SERVICE.

O God, who art the author of peace, and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*The Third Collect, for Grace.*

MORNING SERVICE.

God, who art the author of peace, and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

\* For others, see Collects of the Day, page 7.

¶ *Then these prayers following are to be said:*

*A Prayer for the Supreme Rulers.*

[From Wesley's Service]

O Lord our heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; Most heartily we beseech thee, with thy favor to behold the Supreme Rulers of these United, and so replenish them with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that they may always incline to do thy will, and to walk in thy way; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

[From the Book of Common Prayer]

O Lord, our heavenly Father, the high and mighty ruler of the universe, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth, most heartily we beseech thee with thy favor to behold and bless thy servant the President of the United States, and all others in authority; and to replenish them with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that they may always incline to thy will and walk in thy way; endure them plenteously with heavenly gifts; grant them

EVENING SERVICE.

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass out time in rest and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

E EVENING SERVICE.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord, and by thy great mercy, defend us from all perils and dangers of this night for the love of thy only Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

in health and prosperity long to live; and finally, after this life, to attain everlasting joy and felicity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### *A Prayer for the Ministers of the Gospel.*

Almighty and everlasting God, who alone workest great marvels; Send down upon all the ministers of thy Gospel the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and, that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

### *A Prayer for All Conditions of Men.*

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men, that thou wouldst be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray thee for the good estate of the Catholic Church; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness, all those who are anyways afflicted or distressed in mind, body or estate [\*especially those for whom our prayers are desired]; that it *any desire the prayers* may please thee to comfort and relieve them according to their several necessities; giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions; and this we beg, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

*\*This to be said when any desire the prayers of the congregation.*

### *A General Thanksgiving.*

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men; [\* particularly to those who desire now to offer up their praises and thanksgivings for thy late mercies vouchsafed unto them]. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

*\*This to be said when any desire to return thanks.*

Almighty God, who hast given us grace, at this time, with one accord, to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name, thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

2 Cor. xiii: 14.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all evermore. *Amen.*

¶ *Here endeth the order of Morning and Evening Prayer.*

*Collects, of the Day.*

¶ *The Collects not designated for a particular occasion are suitable for any occasion,*

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people who call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*For Christmas Day.*

Almighty God who hast given us thy only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin, grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, through the same, our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

*For Easter Day.*

Almighty God, who, through thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, we humbly beseech thee that, as by thy special grace preventing us, thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

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