

ECCLESIOLOGY FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF SCRIPTURE IN
WESLEYAN AND ASIAN
CONTEXTS

Lung-kwong Lo

“Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church?” is the title of Albert Outler’s article that originated from his lecture in the 1962 Oxford Institute.¹ The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in Baltimore in 1784, but the Wesleyan Methodists in Britain did not formally use the title “church” until 1897, despite the fact that the Wesleyan Conference urged parents to have their children baptized into “the church” in 1837.² The Methodist movement did not, in fact, intend to be a church and ended up becoming a separate church only through a series of unintended circumstances. This is one reason that Methodists have never claimed to be *the* church, as some other denominations do. Thus it is important and necessary for us as Methodists to continue our discussion of the doctrine of the church from biblical, historical, and contemporary perspectives in the present age of glocalization³ so that we may serve it more diligently and with relevancy.

John Wesley understands Christianity as “scriptural Christianity”; therefore it is not only legitimate but also essential to study the doctrine of the church from a scriptural perspective. A full-scale and exhaustive discussion of the topic is beyond the scope of this essay. Some analysis, however, based on previous studies

and from the perspective of my contexts, Wesleyan and Asian in general, Chinese in particular, may contribute to the ongoing conversation on the issues related to ecclesiology in the present age.

WESLEYAN AND ASIAN CONTEXTS OF THE PRESENT AGE

There are many ways of describing the present age. I prefer to use the term *glocalization* to describe the characteristics of both globalization and localization.⁴ While globalization emphasizes the universality of the world and its interdependent effects on all people in different places, localization reminds us that the cultural, political, economic, and sociological differences of each community are still significant and essential for the construction of identity and meaning of life for everyone.

In my case, Wesleyan contexts are both universal and local. The Methodist Church, Hong Kong, inherited the traditions of the American Methodist Episcopal Mission (MEM), which sent missionaries to Fuzhou, China, in 1847,⁵ and also the British Methodist Missionary Society, whose missionaries arrived in Hong Kong in 1851.⁶ In 1975, we brought together both American and British Methodism into a united church. After the union, we decided to have a president instead of a bishop, which we had had before 1975.

In fact, the Methodist missionaries followed a wider missionary movement to China that was begun by the first Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison of Morpeth (near Newcastle, northeast England), sent by the London Missionary Society. He left England in January of 1807 and arrived at Macao on September 4 via New York.⁷

Being part of the world Methodist family, we acknowledge that we inherited the richness of American and British Methodism in spiritual and physical terms. However, our own contexts have also made us different. While the number of Methodists is declining in both American and British contexts, many Methodist churches in Asia are growing.⁸ Asian Christians are, nevertheless, still a minority in the society. We live in a context of political struggle for a democracy that has to be developed from within our culture of

respecting the status quo of the powerful. We also live in a context of economic growth so rapid that it has made the gap between the haves and have-nots even wider. Our traditional cultures are under threat by globalization. Religious pluralism is the reality of our everyday life. As a Hong Kong Chinese Methodist, I have to take the experiences of Chinese Christians into account.

When all missionaries, including Methodist, left mainland China after 1949, the system of denominations was abolished. The church that was established in 1950 emphasized “three-self principles.” These principles were that churches should be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. Subsequently many missionaries adopted these principles to encourage churches in non-Western countries to develop from missionary-controlled churches to indigenous national churches.⁹ The church in China experienced a trial by fire during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76).¹⁰ However, the number of Christians did not decrease but increased rapidly during and following that period. The number in 1997 had increased fifteenfold compared to the number in 1949, when there were not more than 700,000. In 2006, the number of Protestants in China was not less than 20 million.¹¹

Thus this essay will discuss ecclesiology from the perspective of Scripture with these contexts in mind.

SCRIPTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHURCH

In his famous book *Images of the Church in the New Testament*,¹² Paul Minear identifies thirty-two metaphors and pictures as minor images of the church in the New Testament. Then he groups another sixty-four metaphors into four major images: the people of God, the new creation, the fellowship in faith, and the body of Christ. Minear’s study is probably still the most comprehensive work on how “the New Testament writers thought and spoke about the church.”¹³ However, Minear’s study originated from the Theological Commission on Christ and the Church, under the auspices of the Faith and Order Commission of WCC in 1954. Its concern, therefore, is “within the context of the Faith and Order Movement” with the unity of the church in mind. The study and

those images of the church are not discussed in the context of mission, even though Minear acknowledges the importance of mission. It "is the word that spans the total distance between God and the world's salvation. The whole dynamic of the church's life may be conveyed by this single word."¹⁴ In fact, early Christianity was consciously and deliberately a missionary movement. Mission was essential for its establishment and maintenance.

The context of mission as the prior context for our understanding of the doctrines of the church is essential not only to the early church but also to the contemporary church. Emil Brunner has rightly emphasized that "the church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning; where there is no mission, there is no church."¹⁵ According to our experiences in Asia, Brunner's statement is true. Furthermore, according to Outler, "Wesley defined the church as *act*, as mission, as the enterprise of saving and maturing souls in the Christian life."¹⁶ Methodism, at its best, has also seen the structure of the church as determined by the needs of Christian mission.¹⁷ Thus, to discuss our understanding of church in the context of mission is not only biblical but also consistent with the Wesleyan tradition and also true to the experiences of Asian Christians.

In this essay, Minear's images of "the people of God" will be modified to "the *minjung*¹⁸ of God," "the body of Christ" to "Word in flesh." Church as "the community of disciples" will be substituted for "the fellowship of faith," and "the temple of Holy Spirit" will replace "the new creation."

The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*, derived from the verb *ek-kaleo* (called out), which originally referred to the summons for an army to assemble. From the fifth century B.C.E. onward the word is used to denote the popular assembly of the competent, full citizens of the city (*polis*), which met at regular intervals to make fundamental political and judicial decisions (see Acts 19:32, 39, 41).¹⁹ It is noteworthy that the word always retained its reference to the assembly of the *polis* as a political phenomenon, except in two cases. It was not used for guilds or religious societies.²⁰

Moreover, in the Septuagint (LXX), *ekklesia* is used to translate the Hebrew term *qahal* some seventy-three times out of a total of one hundred twenty-three occurrences to denote "assembly, convocation, and congregation" or any group of people brought

together.²¹ It was used quite frequently to denote the people of Israel gathered together to hear God's Law at Sinai (Deut. 5:22; 9:10; 10:4) or from the mouth of Joshua (Josh. 8:35), or on other religious occasions (Num. 15:15). It could be used to represent Israel as a whole, even when it was not actually gathered in an assembly (Lev. 16:17). There are also a number of references to the "assembly of YHWH" (Num. 16:3; 20:4; Deut. 23:1-8; 1 Chron. 28:8; Neh. 13:1; Lam. 1:10; Mic. 2:5; see "the assembly of the people of God" in Judg. 20:2). However, the word is never used to render another Hebrew word, *edah*, which also means "congregation," but in the sense of the national unity of the people.²² The word *sunagoge*, which is used by Jews to denote their communities, has been used to translate both *qahal* (thirty-five times) and *edah* (one hundred thirty times).²³ This may be one of the essential reasons behind the earliest followers of Christ using *ekklesia* to denote the church as a religious gathering of a new group of people, that is, to distinguish themselves from both Greco-Roman religious associations and Jewish synagogues of their time.

In the New Testament, *ekklesia* appears only three times in two verses of the Gospel of Matthew (16:18; and twice in 18:17) and not at all in the other canonical Gospels. However, it occurs one hundred fourteen times in the New Testament; sixty-two instances are in the Pauline letters (five in Romans; twenty-two in 1 Corinthians; nine in 2 Corinthians; three in Galatians; nine in Ephesians; two in Philippians; four in Colossians; two each in 1 and 2 Thessalonians; three in 1 Timothy; one in Philemon); another twenty-three in Acts; twenty in Revelation; and six in non-Pauline letters. Paul must be among the earliest to use the word to shape the concept of church as the congregation of God (*ekklesia tou theou*) in 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:4; 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6; also Acts 20:28; *ekklesia tou christou* only in Rom. 16:16; and *ekklesia en christo* only in Gal. 1:22), which corresponds with *qahal* (YHWH),²⁴ a counterpart of the Sinai congregation (see 1 Cor. 10:1-5; Heb. 12:18-24). In other words, the idea of "congregation/people of God"²⁵ in the Old Testament is not restricted to old Israel but is now used to identify the New Testament congregation/people of God as well. In the early church, *ekklesia* could refer to the entire community of followers of Christ (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:28; Acts

20:28) and also, especially in the plural (*ekklesiai*), to communities of followers in a specific location (Matt. 18:17; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:4; 2:14; 1 Cor. 1:2; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33, 34; 16:1, 19; 2 Cor. 1:1; 8:1, 19, 23, 24; 11:8, 28; 12:13; Gal. 1:2, 22; Rom. 16:4; and house church in Rom. 16:5). The church as the total community is not a mere aggregate of individual congregations; rather, the local church is the universal church in its local manifestation.²⁶

From the above brief account of the meaning of *ekklesia*, I summarize as follows:

1. The term has its root in the gathering of qualified citizens of the polis who are called out to make communal decisions. In other words, the citizens gathered were called to be accountable to one another with commitment.
2. The term has its root also in the LXX to indicate the assembly of the people of God in the Old Testament. This indicates that the church inherits and shares the spiritual richness of Israel, and the term also represents a dynamic gathering rather than a static organization.
3. Early Christians use it to identify themselves in order to distinguish themselves from both Greco-Roman and Jewish associations. The church is both in continuity and in discontinuity with the Jewish communities of its time.
4. The term is used to denote both local congregations and a total entity. In other words, it also refers to an implicit tension between local and universal.

These characteristics of *ekklesia* are echoed in the early stages of the Methodist movement, for example:

1. Methodism had been a movement inside the Church of England for not less than a hundred years by the time it became a distinctive church in Britain. The Methodist Church has a nuanced relationship of continuity and discontinuity with the Church of England.²⁷ It is obvious that The Methodist Church has inherited the traditions of the Church of England, especially those that distinguish its doctrines, worship, and sacraments.²⁸
2. The precise origins of the identity of the term *Methodist* are unclear. Wesley's followers were vaguely identified as "the

people called Methodist.” The early Methodists were a fluid group of people; many were from the poorest part of the population with distinctive characteristics.²⁹

3. The early Methodists were grouped into classes that emphasized a particular form of *discipline* or accountability as a distinct element of Christian fellowship. This discipline not only made Methodism distinctive but also, in fact, helped the rapid expansion of Methodism in America.
4. The Methodist Church has been organized into conferences, districts, and circuits since its early days. The distinctive work of the Methodist office of elders is the *itinerant* ministry. Basically, the accountability of the elders goes to the conference (or bishops in the United States) first, then the local churches. The ecclesiology of The Methodist Church accepts that the conference represents the connectedness of the total entity of The Methodist Church; all local Methodist churches share the burdens and resources together through the connection of the conference.³⁰ Local Methodist churches are The Methodist Church in its local manifestation. The Methodist Church is a church of *unity in diversity*.³¹ The itinerancy of The Methodist Church is *centralized* and yet *decentralized (localized)*, which has also contributed to the expansion of Methodism in many places, especially in the expanding American frontier in the 1800s.³²

Nevertheless, in discussing the use of the phrase “the people of God” as an image of the church, Minear has rightly pointed out that “the modern reader . . . is in the habit of using the word ‘people’ in the most casual and vague way to indicate human beings in general.”³³ *People* becomes a mass of people without faces.

In the LXX, the word *laos* (people) occurs about two thousand times. It often signifies the people in contrast to the ruler or ruling class (see Gen. 41:40; 47:21; Exod. 1:22; Jer. 23:34), and in the overwhelming majority of cases is a translation of the Hebrew *cam* and means Israel as the chosen people of God. About ten times, Israel is called the “people of YHWH”; in another three hundred cases there are forms with a pronominal suffix (e.g., *cammi*, “my people”), where the suffix refers to YHWH.³⁴ In the New Testament, *laos* occurs one hundred forty-one times, eighty-four being in

Luke–Acts and fourteen in Matthew, twelve in Pauline letters, thirteen in Hebrews, and nine in Revelation. It may be affected by LXX that *laos* often follows a previous reference to *ochlos* (crowd) and carries the same meaning (e.g., Luke 7:24, 29; 8:42, 47; see also Matt. 27:25-26; Mark 14:2), or stands instead of *ochlos* in a parallel passage (e.g., Luke 19:48; see Mark 11:18; Luke 20:45; Matt. 23:1). When *laos* is used on its own, it can also mean crowd, the common people (Luke 1:10; 7:1; 20:1, 9; Acts 2:47).

As in the LXX, *laos* can mean the people in contrast to the ruling classes (Luke 22:2; 23:5; Acts 6:2), or in a cultic setting the broad mass of people as opposed to the priest (Heb. 5:3; 7:27), or again, the ordinary people as opposed to the few witnesses of the resurrection (Acts 10:41; 13:31). Furthermore, Israel is described as the *laos* (the *laos Israel*, Acts 4:10; 13:17; *houtos ho laos*, “this people,” in Old Testament quotations at Matt. 13:15 [Isa. 6:10]; 15:8 [Isa. 29:13]; Acts 28:26-28 [Isa. 6:9-10]; Rom. 9:25-26 [Hos. 2:23; 1:10]; 10:21 [Isa. 65:2]; 11:2 [1 Sam. 12:22; Ps. 94:14; and Lam. 3:31]; 15:10-11 [Deut. 32:43]; 1 Cor. 10:7 [Exod. 32:6]; 14:21 [Isa. 28:11-12]; 2 Cor. 6:16 [Lev. 26:12; Exod. 29:45; Ezra 37:27; Jer. 31:1]). In Hebrews, especially, statements of the Old Testament cultus, seen as types of Christ, are transferred to the church.³⁵ Similarly, in 1 Peter 2:9 (Exod. 19:5-6) and in Revelation 18:4 (see Jer. 51:45) and 21:3 (see Zech. 2:10; Ezek. 37:27), the Old Testament passages are applied to the church as the new people of God (*laos theou*).³⁶

When we use the image of church as “the people of God,” the first question we should ask is, *Who are the people?* As for the “people” of God in the Old Testament, their characteristics were specific and clear. They were the descendants of a wandering Aramean (Deut. 26:5), slaves in Egypt, saved by the covenant God who led them through the wilderness and toward the promised land (Exod. 6:1-8; 19:4-6; Deut. 26:6-8). However, when we define the church as people of God, we are seldom aware of the fact that worldwide Christianity has a greater number of adherents than any other religion, with the majority of them residing in politically and economically powerful countries in the West.³⁷ National churches in many European countries represent colonial and imperialistic powers that invaded many countries in Africa and Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some “Christian” political leaders like to

use religious slogans and terms to propagate their political ideologies. In other words, in modern times, Christians in many countries are the majority identified with the ruling power, not with the common people.

Though the name “Methodist” has been used to identify the followers of John Wesley or converts enrolled in Wesleyan Methodist Societies, which originated at Oxford in the year 1729, John Wesley did not really like the name and rarely used it without careful qualification.³⁸ He preferred to use the long name of “the people called Methodist.” The Methodist movement started among the university students of Oxford, but many of the people who later joined were poor, people from the grassroots of society, or marginalized people, including widows, orphans, prisoners, and coal miners.³⁹

A BBC television series, broadcast in 1995–96, named the twentieth century as the “people’s century.”⁴⁰ For Americans, the ideal of a government “of the people, by the people, for the people” was spelled out in the previous century in President Lincoln’s 1863 Gettysburg Address. This understanding sees “people” as all the citizens of the nation and thus has become an ideal for many people in the world.

In Asian contexts, “people” represented those who are powerless and had always been treated as the objects, not the subjects, of history. The Communist parties of China, North Korea, and Vietnam promoted the so-called people’s movement in their revolutions and national buildings. They called their government the People’s Republic. The word *people* has become a Communist word. For them, *people* means the proletariat. However, an understanding of people’s power that bears no relationship to communism has exerted great influence of late in some Asian countries and regions, including the Philippines (1986), mainland China (1989), and even Hong Kong (2003). *People* in Asia is a dangerous and politically sensitive term for powerless people. In spite of this connotation, Korean theologians coined their contextual theology as *minjung* (people) theology in the 1980s.

One of the forerunners of *minjung* theology, David Kwang-sun Suh, says,

Minjung is a term which grew out of the Christian experiences in the political struggle for justice over the last ten or more years. Theology

of *minjung* or *minjung* theology is an accumulation and articulation of theological reflections on the political experiences of Christian students, laborers, the press, professors, farmers, writers, and intellectuals as well as theologians in Korea in the 1970s. It is a theology of the oppressed in the Korean political situation, a theological response to the oppressors, and it is the response of the oppressed to the Korean church and its mission. . . . It was a search for a contextual theology in Asia.⁴¹

In fact, the search has not been completed; different kinds and forms of *minjung* theology are still developing in different parts of Asia.⁴² In this context, *minjung* as “people” transcends the boundaries of social classes and backgrounds but represents people who are aware of and who experience different kinds of oppression in their life situations. The struggle for an equal share of love, justice, and power in society is the direction of their endeavor. The main concern is how to let “people” be the subjects, rather than objects, of history. Thus, to understand the church as “*minjung*/people” of God, composed of those called by God, identifies the “church” with the *minjung* of society and those whose lives find direction under God’s lordship. This context of mission is vital for our understanding of ecclesiology in Asian contexts.

CHURCH AS THE CONGREGATION IN THE WILDERNESS (ACTS 7:38)

In our discussion of the term *ekklesia*, I indicated that Paul probably was one of the earliest followers to shape the concept of church as the congregation of God in association with the *qahal* counterpart of the Sinai congregation. According to Davies and Allison, the connection of church and the congregation of God in the Old Testament is also perceived in the Gospel of Matthew.⁴³ There are numerous parallels between Jesus and Moses in Matthew, suggesting that the church had its origin in a new exodus.⁴⁴ However, the image of the church as “the congregation in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38) is not found in Minear’s book (Acts 7:38 is not even in the index).⁴⁵ In fact, it does not attract the attention of many scholars.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, C. K. Barrett has rightly pointed out

that "it is very doubtful whether Luke wrote, or any early Christian read, this verse without thinking of the Christian *ekklesia*, of which he would see a foreshadowing in the ancient people of God."⁴⁷

In Acts, *ekklesia* occurs twenty-three times: sixteen times in Acts 1–15 (omitting the problematic addition in 2:47),⁴⁸ and seven times in Acts 16–28. Three of the latter occurrences (19:32, 39, 41) clearly denote the assembly of citizens as the *polis* of Ephesus but not the church. The understanding of the term *ekklesia* in Acts, the only New Testament book that gives an account of the birth of the church at Pentecost (chap. 2) and also describes the life of the early church (2:42–47; 4:32–35), is crucial for our discussion. Among the twenty relevant occurrences, eight denote the community in Jerusalem (5:11; 8:1, 3; 11:22; 12:5; 15:4, 22; 18:22). As the gospel spread from Jerusalem into the world, this term came to be applied to other local Christian groups, such as Antioch with four occurrences (11:26; 13:1; 14:27; 15:3) and Ephesus with one (20:17). The other three denote the group of converts resulting from Paul's first missionary journey (14:23; 16:5), and of these, one denotes those in Syria and Cilicia (15:41). In Acts 9:31 the term is used to refer to the church through the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria. However, in 20:28 the term refers to the church of God, obtained by the blood of God's own Son. Barrett suggests that *ekklesia* is here "the worldwide company of the redeemed, *ecclesia catholica*."⁴⁹

Among these twenty occurrences, only the reference occurring in 7:38 is related directly to the people of God in the Old Testament. In addition, however, Stephen's sermon (7:2–51) elicits a number of corollaries drawn from the phrase "congregation in the wilderness" that allude to the close relationship between the early Christians' understanding of church and the Old Testament people of God:

1. The image depicts a community of people who are helpless, poor, isolated, and in a quest for their future. They are on their own and can do nothing but depend on God for their living and future. Their destiny is tied up together. They are bound to seek their future and destiny as a community. In other words, they are a congregation of life and death. No individuals can survive if they leave the congregation.

2. In Stephen's speech, Moses is the most important figure (vv. 20-44 among fifty-three verses). Apparently, the rejection of Moses by his people and his vindication by God suggest to Stephen a foreshadowing of the rejection and vindication of Jesus (Acts 2:22-23; 3:12-15; 4:10-11; 5:28-32).⁵⁰ Moses prophesied the coming of a prophet like himself (v. 37; see 3:22). The parallel of Moses and Jesus is clearly indicated in the Gospel of Matthew as referred to above. In the speech, the exodus is the paradigm adopted to indicate the mission of Jesus.
3. The promise given to Abraham, we are reminded, is fulfilled in the time of Moses (7:17), thereby modeling the coming of Jesus as the new Moses.
4. Moses was depicted as "the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living oracles to give to us" (v. 38). This description likely refers to the transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:28-34) and the first preaching of Jesus according to the Gospel of Luke (4:16-21).
5. In the speech, Stephen critiques not the law but the temple alone (vv. 46-50).⁵¹ He seems to indicate that the "tent of testimony in the wilderness" (v. 44) and "congregation in the wilderness" are the patterns closer to God's expectation than the temple. The "congregation in the wilderness" suggests the movement of people rather than a static institution like the temple. This understanding is in line with the concept of *ekklesia* in the early church.
6. The "congregation in the wilderness" is the people of God formed by God's mighty acts performed in Egypt, and this congregation is moving from Egypt to the promised land under the direction of God.⁵² However, sometime during their journey they grow rebellious (groaning) and are influenced by the religions of neighboring peoples (worshiping alien gods). This image parallels the church in the New Testament, in that, by the shedding of Christ's blood, God formed and set apart a people, racially and culturally mixed. They faced various temptations from Greco-Roman society. They also became a congregation living among alien peoples and religions rather than a static institution.

John Wesley's sermon "The Wilderness State" (1760), which alludes to the image of Israel in the wilderness, argues that grumbling against God is indicative of the ultimate spiritual problem: lost faith in Christ.⁵³ In his sermons "Wandering Thoughts" (1762) and "Heaviness through Multifold Temptations" (1760), he identifies and categorizes a range of spiritual problems or illnesses that the believer might face in the quest of sanctification: temptation, fear, false security, boasting of religious accomplishments, forms of religious depression. Sanctification is not a lonely quest. It is a quest undertaken in company, with the whole system of Methodist class meetings, societies, bands, and other groupings as means to assist the seeker and the believer.⁵⁴ In other words, it is not an individual quest but is carried out by a congregation, bound together, moving toward their communal destiny like the "congregation in the wilderness." Moreover, in the Wesleyan pattern, sanctification is "a process in which believers seek the sanctification of the world around them. John Wesley himself encouraged the Methodists to take part in a wide range of *movements* for the betterment of social conditions."⁵⁵ After Wesley's time, Methodists involved themselves in efforts to improve conditions for laborers, women, and children; to end gambling; to control consumption of alcohol; to combat racism; to act against nuclear proliferation; and to respond to the issues of global warming in the present age.

The image of the "congregation in the wilderness" is especially valuable for Asian Christians—we live as a minority in a multireligious and multicultural world—as we seek an understanding of the doctrine of the church. The "congregation in the wilderness" correlates with the *minjung* of the society; and this image raises the awareness of the *minjung* to our own journey in the wilderness, which is unfriendly and even hostile to our movement toward the promised land of love, justice, and equity. The church in Asia bears the burdens and richness of the missionary history of the past. We face complaints, accusations, and challenges from our members and also countrypeople. We search out our own identity and destiny. We will learn how to be bound together as a church to face many difficult challenges. Our major challenge is the tension between the Christian tradition and our cultures: the issue of religious syncretism (an issue of the relation of gospel and religions)

and disorientation from our national identity (an issue of gospel and cultures).⁵⁶

CHURCH AS THE COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES (THE FELLOWSHIP IN FAITH)

The image of the church as “the fellowship in faith” suggested by Minear is not only too general, but it is also not a phrase used in the New Testament, although “the faithful” occurs.⁵⁷ Therefore, I suggest combining the images of “disciples”⁵⁸ and the “witnessing community”⁵⁹ to become “the community of disciples” as a major image of the church.

As mentioned above, other than in the Gospel of Matthew, the term *ekklesia* does not appear in the canonical Gospels. The church, however, begins in the Gospels with Jesus’ followers, specifically those referred to as disciples. Jesus called a group of “twelve” disciples as a core to accompany him. The “twelve” and “disciples” seem to be identical in Matthew 10:1 and Mark 3:14; nevertheless, the term *mathetes* (disciple) does not occur in Luke 10:1-20, in which seventy (-two) were also appointed by Jesus and sent to the same ministry as the “twelve” (9:1-6; see Matt. 9:37-38; 10:5-15, 40; 11:21-23; Mark 6:7-13).⁶⁰ Mark gives evidence of disciples with Jesus before the “twelve” were chosen (2:15, 16, 18, 23; 3:7, 9; 4:34; 5:31; 6:1); this implies that there was an undefined group of disciples outside the circle of the “twelve.”⁶¹ Matthew specifically speaks of them (8:19, 21) and alludes to a wider circle of disciples (10:24-25, 42). He even acknowledges through the verb *matheteuo* the discipleship of Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57). Luke indicates that Jesus chose the “twelve” from among a much larger number of disciples (Luke 6:13, 17). In the Gospels, one of the tasks of Jesus was to call people to follow him (Matt. 8:18-22; 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 9:57-62; 18:18-30), and he also told those surrounding him or traveling with him that if they did not commit themselves, they could not be his disciples (Luke 14:25-33; see Matt. 10:37-38).

In Acts 1:21-26, the disciples, now numbering eleven (apostles, 1:26) after the death of Judas, have to choose “one of the men who

have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection . . . to take the place in this ministry and apostleship.” John further suggests that many disciples of Jesus left him after hearing his teaching (John 6:60-69); but the twelve stayed on.⁶² In 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Paul mentions that when Jesus was raised from the dead, he appeared to Peter, the twelve, and then five hundred brothers, James and all the apostles, and then himself. The above evidence points to the existence of a community of disciples, not only the “twelve,” who were followers of Jesus.

In the New Testament, all 261 references to *mathetes* are found in the Gospels and Acts but primarily in the Gospels; only 10 percent of the references occur in Acts. The other word, *akolouthein* (to walk behind, to follow), is also frequently used in the New Testament as a specialized term for following Jesus. Among the ninety occurrences, seventy are found in the Gospels, the rest in Acts (four times), Revelation (six times), and 1 Corinthians (once). This also indicates that discipleship is closely associated with Jesus himself. In Matthew 28:16-20, the Great Commission, the eleven disciples were sent to make disciples among all nations. And it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians” (Acts 11:26). In other words, discipleship is important not only in the time of Jesus but also from the early church onward. Luke-Acts is the bridge between the time of the Gospels and the early church.⁶³ Even though the familiar use of *ekklesia* does not exist in the time of Jesus, the community of disciples is the prototype of it. Thus the image of the community of disciples is appropriately considered a major image of the church. Although Minear does not list this image in his four primary images, he acknowledges, “Each Gospel pericope became a paradigm with a message for the church because each Christian had inherited a relationship to Jesus similar to that of James and John and the others.”⁶⁴

The essentials needed to participate in the community of Jesus’ disciples have been clearly spelled out in the Gospels; they could be summarized as follows:

1. Jesus' calling, and not one's motivation, initiates discipleship.⁶⁵ Jesus confronts those he encounters—in passing, in shared travels, or in sustained relationships—demanding total submission of their lives to him. The sense of calling and the recognition of the lordship of Jesus are essential to discipleship.
2. The conditions of following him are clear. Jesus demands a total break with the past, including the leaving of families and vocations (e.g., Mark 1:16-20; 2:14; Matt. 8:21-22; Luke 14:25-27).
3. Following Jesus demands a radical renunciation of control over one's possessions, requiring a sharing with poor persons rather than an increase in acquisitions (Mark 10:21; Matt. 19:21; Luke 18:22).
4. Discipleship also demands denial of oneself in order to take up the cross and follow Jesus. This means to follow Jesus to the death (Mark 8:34-35; Matt. 10:38-39; 16:24-25; Luke 9:23-24).
5. Discipleship includes the expectation that the disciple will serve rather than be served (Mark 10:41-45; Matt. 24-28).
6. Discipleship also means entering into a lifelong relationship with Jesus (Mark 3:14); that is, disciples are to be in union with Jesus as the branches are with the vine (John 15:1-5; 17:20-26).
7. Disciples are not only called to follow Jesus but are also commissioned to proclaim the gospel (Mark 3:14), to be his witnesses (Acts 1:6-8), and also to exercise his power (Matt. 9:37-38; 10:5-15, 40; 11:21-23; 28:18-20; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6).⁶⁶ Jesus prayed for his disciples and sent them out, as he had been sent by God (John 17:18; 21:22).
8. Jesus' mission is to bring the kingdom of God into this world; his disciples also participate in this kingdom mission.⁶⁷
9. Disciples are called as individuals⁶⁸ but follow Jesus only communally. In other words, Jesus calls individuals to a community with Jesus as the Master.⁶⁹

The above findings are most significant for our Wesleyan traditions. According to Ted Campbell, "Disciplined accountability in small groups has been a distinctly Methodist nuance of the under-

standing of 'church,' and the original stress of the Methodist *Discipline* was on the distinct form of accountable discipleship."⁷⁰ This had in fact made the Methodist movement an alternative account of Christian fellowship within the Church of England.

In the Asian context, especially in China, understanding and experiencing the meaning of discipleship were of utmost importance for the rooting and growing of the church from its inception. Missionaries came to China in the nineteenth century when China was not yet ready to be opened to the world. The blood of the missionaries was the seed of the church just as truly as was that of the martyrs for the early church. The growing number of Christians in mainland China during the Cultural Revolution witnesses to this truth: Jesus' call to discipleship is costly but shows its power when the situation seems to make people feel powerless. In fact, this was also the experience of the people who participated in the independence movements in many Asian countries. The cost of life is paid for something more valuable than life. As Bonhoeffer said: "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."⁷¹ And as Confucius said, "One could die just as light as a feather, but one could die as heavy as Taishan" (a famous big mountain in north-east China near the native county of Confucius).⁷² So, dying for Christ gives value to one's life. This remains true for the present age: "Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church."⁷³ Only an understanding of grace as responsible grace is a blessing to the church. The understanding of the church as a community of disciples willing to die for Jesus is crucial in Asian contexts.

CHURCH AS THE WORD IN FLESH (THE BODY OF CHRIST)

The exact phrase "the body of Christ" occurs only four times in the Pauline letters (*to soma tou Christou*: Rom. 7:4; 1 Cor. 10:16; Eph. 4:12; *soma Christou*: 1 Cor. 12:27). However, there are seventeen other equivalent expressions, such as "the cup of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:27); "his fleshly body" (Col. 1:22); "his body of glory" (Phil. 3:21); "his body" (Eph. 1:23; 5:30; Col. 1:24); "my body" (1 Cor. 11:24); "the body" (1 Cor. 11:29; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19); and "one body" (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:13; Eph. 2:16; 4:4;

Col. 3:15). Among them, only two passages in Colossians directly relate “the body” (1:18) and “his body” (1:24) to the church. All other occurrences do not express directly that the church is the body of Christ. However, there is no doubt that the image of the body is the dominant theological image in Pauline ecclesiology.

For Paul, this image is mainly used in (1) sacramental language, that is, the broken bread (1 Cor. 10–11, especially 10:16-17; 11:24-29),⁷⁴ (2) to denote the unity of a community despite the diversity of its members, that is, church (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:14-26; Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:11-16), and (3) to denote the unity of Christ as the head of the church and church as the body of Christ (Col. 1:18; see 1 Cor. 12:13).⁷⁵

In the Christian tradition it has been customary to speak of the church as the extension of the incarnation.⁷⁶ This has often led to the mistake of extending this understanding of church to make church identical with the kingdom of God on earth. However, Bonhoeffer says: “The Body of Christ takes up physical space on earth. That is a consequence of the Incarnation,”⁷⁷ and J. A. T. Robinson also traces a connection between John 1:14, 16 and Colossians 1:19. The fullness with which Christ is filled by God is now filling those who are “in Him.”⁷⁸ In recent discussions of the understanding of church, Graham Ward, a young representative of radical orthodoxy, also suggests that there is a relationship between the body of Christ and the incarnation in the series of events of the earthly Jesus, including transfiguration, Eucharist, death, resurrection, and ascension.⁷⁹ Thus it is better to see the church metaphorically as the Word in flesh than to see the church, the body of Christ, as the extension of incarnation.

The choice of using the phrase “Word in flesh” instead of “Word became flesh” is intended to indicate that the church is not the extension of incarnation but the concrete expression of incarnation in our present age. The invisible becomes visible;⁸⁰ the abstract becomes concrete. The church should understand itself as the witness of Jesus Christ’s continued presence in the world. We are not Jesus Christ himself, but we are by God’s grace sent by him to do what he would do and even greater works (John 14:12). For he who comes from God (see 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6; Eph. 1:4; Col. 1:16; John 1:1-18; Heb. 1:1-4) accepts humanity by taking upon

himself our human nature, “sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3-4), and human form (Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:6-8).⁸¹ By its very nature, the church is not a building, not an organization, not a static established institution, but the body of Christ signifying that Jesus is still living among us. So the body of Christ exists as a people’s movement, as a moving congregation in the wilderness heading toward the promised land, a community of disciples who are willing and ready to follow Jesus unto death. The church exists only if it is a living entity, living among *minjung* full of grace and truth as Jesus Christ is living in this world. Because Jesus Christ is risen and ascended to heaven, it is the church in following Christ that acts with him to bring grace and truth to the world (John 1:14) and to witness his presence in the world.

The church not only exists by mission but is by nature missionary. The very existence of the church is based on the calling of Christ, and it is sent into the world by Christ (John 17:18; 21:22). From the very beginning, the zeal of preaching the gospel created the Methodist movement. If Methodism cannot maintain this missionary zeal, Methodism will not continue to exist.

The church in Asia has been understood variously as imperialist invaders, colonists, capitalists, preachers, educators, medical doctors, social workers, and activists. Asians are in general pragmatic people, looking for actions rather than words. Thus the church seen as the Word in flesh indicates that the Word should be manifested by the church in proclamation as well as service-in-action. The concept of church as Word in flesh is therefore essential for furthering an Asian understanding of Christianity and the church.

CHURCH AS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (EPHESIANS 2:22)

Among the ninety-six images of the church provided by Minear, only two are related to the Holy Spirit: “communion in the Holy Spirit” and “spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15). The phrase “communion in the Holy Spirit” does not exist in the New Testament, and it is doubtful whether we should consider the image of “spiritual body” to be directly related to the church. In 1 Corinthians 15, the

issues discussed relate not so much to the understanding of the church as to the bodily resurrection of the dead and the form of the bodies that the dead will take when they rise from the tomb.⁸² However, the position and the role of the Holy Spirit are essential in our understanding of the church.

When we see the church as “the temple of the Holy Spirit,” it seems quite contradictory. Our image of temple would be the static building that stood in Jerusalem, while the Holy Spirit signifies movement and power. Nevertheless, the combination of these two is not only supported by the New Testament; it is also a very important image of the church.

In Acts, the first congregation of God is gathered after Peter’s speech on the day of Pentecost. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit and fire upon all flesh in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy stresses the dependence of the church upon this gift of God for its unity, its mission, its power, and its worship.⁸³ Paul says, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16; see 1 Cor. 3:17; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16-7:1). Paul’s use of the temple (*naos*) to denote the church demonstrates that, as a Jew, he believes that the church is the dwelling place of God. In 2 Corinthians 6:16-18, Paul quotes several Old Testament passages in catena form⁸⁴ to emphasize that the church is also the people of God in continuity with the people of God in the Old Testament. Furthermore, the temple in Jerusalem is the place for offering sacrifice. However, for Paul, there is no sacrifice in this temple; the sacrifice is the living sacrifice of our bodies (Rom. 12:1-2) with the aroma of Christ (2 Cor. 2:15).⁸⁵ The sacrificial nature of Christian life and practice, the process of sanctification, is in the mind of Paul.⁸⁶ It is noteworthy that for Paul, the temple is the temple of God or God’s Spirit and never the temple of Christ. However, the relationship of Christ to the temple is found in the metaphor of church as a house (*oikodome*) or temple under construction with Christ as the foundation (1 Cor. 3:11) and the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20),⁸⁷ while Paul is a founder and builder (1 Cor. 3:9-10; 2 Cor. 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; Rom. 15:20). The readers of Paul’s letters are reassured that what they do helps build one another up toward the ideal of a community whose mutual concern wholly expresses the spirit and love of Christ (Rom. 14:17-19; 15:2; 1 Cor. 10:24;

Eph. 4:29; Phil. 2:4; 1 Thess. 5:11).⁸⁸ The image of the temple is also connected to the image of the body (*soma*) of individuals in 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 2 Corinthians 7:1.

In Ephesians 2:20-22, the image of church as the temple is clearly used for doctrinal instruction, and the image is fused with that of the building. Following the discussion in the preceding verses (vv. 11-19), the image denotes that the temple is not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles. This temple is being built for all people, including those considered strangers and aliens in the past.

In 1 Peter 2:4-10, the church of the New Testament is understood as inheriting the promises, enjoying the privileges, and conducting the function of the people of God of the Old Testament. The titles for Israel as used in Exodus 19:5-6 are now used for the church as well. The “spiritual house” with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone laid by God at Zion (vv. 4-7) clearly depicts the image of the temple. In 1 Peter, a spiritual sacrifice will be offered in this spiritual house.

In 1 Corinthians, the major role of the Holy Spirit is related to the spiritual gifts that are used in the upbuilding of the church (1 Cor. 14). Thus the image of the church as the temple of the Holy Spirit correlates with the above findings as follows:

1. The temple is the dwelling place of God’s powerful Spirit rather than simply a static building.
2. The church is in continuity and discontinuity with the congregation of the people of God in the Old Testament.
3. The oneness of the church is significantly emphasized.
4. The temple is depicted as a building in progress and the members as living stone, which indicates that the church is a movement and the members are the participants. The spiritual gifts of each individual are used to build up the church.
5. The lives of the members, not animals, are the sacrifice to be offered to God.

These corollaries are also related to the Wesleyan understanding of the church as discussed above.⁸⁹ As Asian Christians, however, we are facing challenges from all directions, including globalization, social and political oppression, religious pluralism, and the

decline of our cultures that are threatened by modernization. To understand church as the temple of the Holy Spirit is to see our church as a church in the power of the Spirit rather than a church mainly associated with observance of rituals and devotion to a faith concerned with the salvation of individual souls.⁹⁰ The church under construction is not an empire; neither is it an institution nor an organization. The church is a community of worshiping people who are willing to offer the living sacrifice of our bodies and be empowered by the moving Spirit to overcome difficulties and hardship in following Jesus, and to participate in the struggle with the *minjung* to break the power and principalities of the world.

CONCLUSION

This study has identified an Old Testament origin for the images of “the *minjung*/people of God,” “the congregation in the wilderness,” and “the temple of the Holy Spirit.” The images of “the community of disciples” and “the Word in flesh,” on the other hand, are unique in the New Testament. In other words, the church in the New Testament is in continuity and discontinuity with the Israel of the Old Testament. While “the *minjung* of God” and “the congregation in the wilderness” emphasize the differentiation of God’s people from other people in order to be in solidarity with the poor and the weak, the image of “Word in flesh” emphasizes the active participation of the church as the body of Christ in the world. The image of “the community of disciples” emphasizes a community with commitment and mission that is called and sent by Jesus, who was sent into the world by God. “The temple of the Holy Spirit” emphasizes the participation of each member in the process of the building up of the temple with their lives as the living sacrifice, empowered by the Spirit. The commonality of these five images is that the church is a group of people called to form a life-and-death community, which requires a movement rather than an organization or institution. This community’s mission is to manifest the Word in proclamation and service-in-action, which is initiated and accompanied by the Holy Spirit toward the common goal set by God among the *minjung* in this world. The close relationship

between the members of the church and the triune God is the basis of the community.

The Methodist movement was started as a reform movement inside the Church of England. It has parallels with the early Christian movement in Judaism. The danger of Christianity is that it loses its calling and mission given by God when it boasts its special status in relation to God.

In the Scriptures, in our Wesleyan tradition, and in the experiences of Asian Christians, the church is the church in mission (or in Outler's phrase: *a movement with a mission*),⁹¹ which commits itself to the poor of the present age. From a scriptural perspective, this ecclesiology is fluid and multifaceted, for the church does not exist for itself but makes adaptations in different contexts to enhance its mission. How to keep the church as a dynamic missional church in our present age is our greatest challenge. So do Methodists have a doctrine of the church? If by a doctrine of the church, we mean a consistent and coherent but lively understanding of the church, then, yes, we do have one. But if we are looking for a static, fixed, and highly structured doctrine of the church, we would be better off if we did not have one.

- (related only to sinners) and the Catholic view of “effective” righteousness that transforms sinners, cannot be sustained by reference to Pauline texts, says Douglas Harnick. The Reformation was wrong to buy into a view of justification that excludes sanctification. See Douglas Harnick, *Paul among the Postliberals* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003), 57. Of course such sentiments are music to the ears of Arminians.
14. Barbara Brown Taylor, *Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2006).
 15. Wesleyan Thomas Oden, in his *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 8, charges the contemporary mainline church with pastoral care that has become mere “antinomianism.” “Antinomianism is the weird, wild, impulsive, unpredictable sleeping partner of much contemporary pastoral care. It mistakes the gospel for license, freedom for unchecked self-actualization, and health for native vitalism.” Our once pushy sanctificationism has been tamed to be nothing more than therapy. We’ve lost interest in society and have climbed into the almighty, autonomous self. We’re Wesleyans, and ministry ought to have a considerably larger view of what is possible under God—nothing less than “reform of church and spread of holiness throughout the land.”
 16. Twelve of the original forty-four sermons were a series on the Sermon on the Mount—now Sermons 21–33, *Works*, 1:466–698. See also his equation of Christ’s law with the Sermon on the Mount in his “Letter to an Evangelical Layman” (20 Dec. 1751), §3, *Works*, 26:482.

3. Ecclesiology from the Perspective of Scripture in Wesleyan and Asian Contexts

1. Albert Outler, “Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church?” in *The Doctrine of the Church*, ed. Dow Kirkpatrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), reprinted in Thomas C. Oden and Leicester R. Longden, eds., *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage: Essays of Albert C. Outler* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 211–26.
2. See A. W. Harrison, *The Separation of Methodism from the Church of England* (London: Epworth, 1945), 60, 61, and John M. Haley and Leslie J. Francis, eds., *British Methodism: What Circuit Ministers Really Think* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2006), 1–19.
3. For the meaning of *glocalization*, see the following section.
4. See Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), and *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Picador, 2007), 420–26.
5. J. D. Collins and Dr. and Mrs. Moses White were the earliest missionaries of the MEM to serve in China.
6. George Piercy, a farmer and a local preacher of Pickling Methodist Church in Yorkshire, was the first British Methodist missionary to serve in China via Hong Kong. The Methodist Church in Hong Kong was started by Chinese Methodists from Guangzhou and Foshan who started class meetings and worship in Hong Kong in 1882.

7. Macao is 60 kilometers away from Hong Kong Island. It became a Portuguese colony in 1557 and returned to China in December 1999.
8. The Methodist churches in Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, India, and the Philippines are growing. New Methodist churches are being developed in Cambodia and Vietnam.
9. In 1950, a Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) was launched in Beijing with the strong support of the Communist government, which had successfully broken all Western ties to Chinese churches.
10. Many books have been published in English on the Cultural Revolution, e.g., Barbara Barnouin and Changgen Yu, *Ten Years of Turbulence: The Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 1993).
11. According to K. H. Ting (1984), "A Rationale for Three-Self" collected in *A Chinese Contribution to Ecumenical Theology: Selected Writings of Bishop K. H. Ting*, ed. Janice and Philip Wickeri (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 66, there were not more than 700,000 before 1949. However, it is difficult to count the number of Christians in contemporary China with reliable evidence. According to the report of the Amity Foundation and a study of Tony Lambert, the figure in 2006 is not less than 20 million. The figures do not include Catholics and those who worship in nonregistered house churches.
12. Paul Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961).
13. *Ibid.*, 11. For other studies related to a similar concern, see Rudolf Schnackenburg (1965), *The Church in the New Testament*, trans. W. J. O'Hara (London: Burns & Oates, 1981); R. J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); also Hieromonk Alexander Golitzin, "Scriptural Images of the Church: An Eastern Orthodox Reflection," in *One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic: Ecumenical Reflections on the Church*, ed. Tamara Grdzeldze, Faith and Order Paper, no. 197 (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 255–66.
14. Minear, *Images*, 63.
15. Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1931), 108; see also Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1959), 1002.
16. Outler, *Wesleyan Heritage*, 219, emphasis his.
17. See Haley and Francis, *British Methodism*, 237.
18. *Minjung* is a Korean word, a combination of two Chinese characters: *min* and *jung*. *Min* may be translated as "people" and *jung* as "the mass." Thus, *minjung* means "the mass of the people" or just "the people." See discussion in Yong Bock Kim, ed., *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (Singapore: CCA, The Commission on Theological Concerns; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1981), and David Suh, *The Korean Minjung in Christ* (Hong Kong: CCA, 1991).
19. I. Howard Marshall, "New Wine in Old Wine-Skins: V. The Biblical Use of the Word 'Ekklesia,'" *Expository Times* 84 (1973): 362, and Peter O'Brien, "Church," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 123.
20. L. Coenen, "Church, Synagogue," in *The International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Exeter: Paternoster, 1975), 291.

21. Marshall, *Expository Times*, 350.
22. O'Brien, *Dictionary of Paul*, 124.
23. *Sunagoge* is used more frequently in Genesis-Numbers and the Prophets; see W. Schrage, *sunagoge* in *TDNT*, vol. 7 (1971), 798–841. He suggests that the frequent use of *sunagoge* for translating both words in the Pentateuch is probably due to the desire of the translators to link the contemporary Jewish synagogues with the “synagogue” that received the Law (802).
24. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1952), 1:38, followed by many scholars, such as W. D. Davies and Dale Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2, *Commentary on Matthew VIII–XVIII*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 629.
25. *Ekklesia* occurred mostly in Pauline letters; the term “people of God” occurred as “his (God’s) people” only once in Romans 1:1 (*laos autou*). For discussion of the use of *laos* in the New Testament, see below.
26. See Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1958), 287–88.
27. The experiences of Methodists in the early stage are similar to the situation of the relationship between Jews and Christians in the early church; see Morna Hooker, *Continuity and Discontinuity: Early Christianity in Its Jewish Setting* (London: Epworth, 1986), 11–12.
28. See Ted Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 20, 25, 64, 77, 116; and Haley and Francis, *British Methodism*, 20–22, 82.
29. See Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).
30. See Russell E. Richey, “Introduction,” in *Connectionalism: Ecclesiology, Mission and Identity*, ed. Russell E. Richey, Dennis Campbell, and William B. Lawrence (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 3–7.
31. See John Wesley’s Sermon LXXV, “On Schism.”
32. See Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine*, 68.
33. Minear, *Images*, 67–68.
34. See H. Bietenhard, *laos* in *The International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Exeter: Paternoster, 1971), 795–800, see especially 798.
35. See discussion in E. Käsemann, *The Wandering People of God: An Investigation of the Letter to the Hebrews*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville and Irving L. Sandberg (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1957).
36. Bietenhard, *International Dictionary*, 799–80.
37. According to the calculation of the numbers of adherents of major religions in the world in 2000, the estimation of Christians was 32.3 million (including Catholics, Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox); Muslims, 19.2 million; and Hindus, 13.7 million.
38. See Haley and Francis, *British Methodism*, 6.
39. See discussion in Richard Heitzenrater, ed., *The Poor and the People Called Methodists, 1729–1999* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2002).
40. See Hodgson, *People’s Century: From the Dawn of the Century to the Eve of the Millennium*, BBC television series, combined ed. (Godalming: Colour Library

- Direct, 1998). Note, however, that the book is decidedly West-centered; the people's movement in the Philippines in 1986, three years earlier than the 1989 people's movement in the Eastern Bloc of Europe, brought down the long rule of the dictator Marcos (1965–86) but was not even mentioned in the book. The student movement, which became a widely influential people's movement in China (May–June 1989), had tremendous impact on the development of China and probably also of the Eastern Bloc but is mentioned in fewer than five lines (480).
41. David Kwang-sun Suh, "Minjung and Theology in Korea: A Biographical Sketch of an Asian Theological Consultation," in *Minjung Theology*, ed. Yong Bock Kim, 18.
 42. See Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, *Presence of Christ among Minjung: Introduction to the UIM in Korea* (Seoul: Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, 1981); The Commission on Theological Concerns, CCA ed., *Towards the Sovereignty of the People* (Singapore: CTC-CCA, 1983); Po-ho Huang, *An Introduction to Gospel and Culture: A Theology Nourished in Culture* (in Chinese, Tainan: Yen Kwang, 1987), and *An Interpretation of the Confession of Taiwan Presbyterian Church: A Faith Rooted in the Native Soil* (in Chinese, Tainan: Yen Kwang, 1991).
 43. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2, *Commentary on Matthew VIII–XVIII*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 629.
 44. *Ibid.*
 45. Minear admits that "too little theological attention has been given to this mode [exodus] of perceiving the character of the church." *Images*, 272, n. 10.
 46. John Wesley (1754) does not discuss this phrase in his explanation of this verse (420), and in the extant sermons he had neither preached on this verse nor referred to it in the footnotes; see Frank Baker, ed., *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 670. However, the KJV, RSV, and the 1899 version of the Catholic Bible (London: R. & T. Washbourne) all translate the phrase as "the church in the wilderness"; there is a footnote in the RSV to denote "church" or "congregation."
 47. C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 1:365.
 48. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: UBS, 1971), 304–5.
 49. C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 2:lxxxviii.
 50. Barrett, *Critical Commentary*, 1:337.
 51. *Ibid.*, 338–40.
 52. Barrett, *Critical Commentary*, 2:lxxxviii.
 53. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1999), 59f.
 54. *Ibid.*, 60.
 55. *Ibid.*, emphasis mine. Campbell mentions the case of William Wilberforce, who was encouraged by Wesley to continue the effort to end human slavery in British territories.

56. See my discussion in Lung-kwong Lo, "The Nature of the Issue of Ancestral Worship among Chinese Christians," *Studies in World Christianity* 9, no. 1 (2003): 30–42.
57. Minear, *Images*, 139–43.
58. *Ibid.*, 145–48.
59. *Ibid.*, 152–55.
60. For the variation of seventy and seventy-two, see John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 35b, *Luke 9:21–18:34* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 549–50.
61. Martin Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers*, trans. James Greig (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1981), 81, n. 163.
62. In 6:67, "the twelve" is mentioned for the first time in John.
63. C. K. Barrett, *Luke the Historian in Recent Study* (London: Epworth, 1961), suggests that Luke–Acts offers us two pictures of the church, one consciously, which may not be an accurate picture of the church of the first few decades in its relationship with Jesus himself, and another unconsciously, which does reflect the church of his time (24–25).
64. Minear, *Images*, 146. Furthermore, he says, "This connection is explicitly recognized within the Gospels themselves." He quotes Matthew, chaps. 5–7; 10:24–25; 19:13–30; Luke 9:57–61; 14:26–33; John 8:12; 10:4–5; 13:24–26.
65. Hengel, *Charismatic Leader*, 72–73.
66. See *ibid.*, 78–79.
67. *Ibid.*, 73. Regarding the controversial relationship between the kingdom of God and the church, note as phrased by the famous statement by Loisy that "Jesus foretold the kingdom; and it was the church that came." Alfred Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church (L'Évangile et L'Église)*, trans. Christopher Home (London: Isbister & Co., 1903), 166.
68. Hengel, *Charismatic Leader*, 61–63, 71–72; also James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus' Call to Discipleship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 92.
69. See Dunn, *Jesus' Call*, regarding the corporate dimensions of discipleship (92–94).
70. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine*, 65. See also the discussion of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Dogmatic Inquiry into the Sociology of the Church*, 3rd ed., trans. R. George Smith (London: Collins, 1963), especially its emphasis on church as a community of being "with one another" and "being for one another" (126–36, especially 129).
71. See D. Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. H. Fuller (London: SCM, 1959), 79.
72. A quotation from the famous Chinese historian Qian Si-ma, "A Letter Sent to Ren On."
73. Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, 35.
74. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 550.
75. Ronald Y. K. Fung, "Body of Christ," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 81.
76. Dunn, *Jesus' Call*, 93.

77. Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, 223.
78. J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (London: SCM, 1952), 68.
79. Graham Ward, "Bodies: The Displaced Body of Jesus Christ," in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London: Routledge, 1999), 163–81.
80. John Webster, "The Visible Attests the Invisible," in *The Community of the Word: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology*, ed. Mark Husbands and Daniel Treier (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 96–113.
81. See also Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, 213.
82. See Minear, *Images*, 197.
83. *Ibid.*, 133.
84. Leviticus 26:12; Exodus 29:45; Ezekiel 37:27; Jeremiah 31:1; Isaiah 52:11; Hosea 1:10; Isaiah 43:6.
85. See also Philippians 2:17; 4:18; Colossians 1:12.
86. R. J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 92, 106–7.
87. In Ephesians 2:20, the foundation is the apostles and prophets.
88. James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1975), 295.
89. Scott J. Jones, *United Methodist Doctrine: The Extreme Center* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), criticized the lack of a developed relationship between the Holy Spirit and the means of grace, and noted that United Methodist ecclesiology would benefit from the further expansion of the doctrine of Holy Spirit. See 115–16.
90. See C. S. Song, *Jesus in the Power of Spirit* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994), 5–7.
91. Outler, *Wesleyan Heritage*, 224.

4. Work on Earth and Rest in Heaven

1. White in Kenneth G. C. Newport and Ted A. Campbell, eds., *Charles Wesley: Life, Literature and Legacy* (London: Epworth, 2007), 515–31.
2. Richard P. Heitzenrater in ST Kimbrough, ed, *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 181–82.
3. White in Newport and Campbell, *Life, Literature and Legacy*, 526.
4. Lloyd in Newport and Campbell, *Life, Literature and Legacy*, 1–17.
5. Gareth Lloyd, *Charles Wesley and the Struggle for Methodist Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 79, and in his article in Newport and Campbell, *Life, Literature and Legacy*, 12.
6. Lloyd, *Charles Wesley and the Struggle for Methodist Identity*, 242.
7. Angela Shier-Jones, *A Work in Progress: Methodists Doing Theology* (London: SPCK, 2005), 268–72.
8. Armand Larive, *After Sunday: A Theology of Work* (New York, Continuum, 2004), 3.
9. Chilcote in Paul W. Chilcote, ed., *The Wesleyan Tradition: A Paradigm for Renewal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 34.
10. *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition (hereafter *Works*), vol. 7, ed. Franz Hildebrandt (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 5; Hildebrandt quoted