

New Creation as Myth and The Recovery of the Political Image of God

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In John Wesley's thought, New Creation as *the reconstitution of all things* refers to a future condition of perfection for the entire fallen creation—for humankind, the other animals, the inanimate elements, their integral relationships—a transformation out of the corruption of sin and into the full realization of the intention and purposes of God.¹ It is a symbol that offers hope for the realization of transforming dreams formed out of the promises of God for healing and wholeness and driven by the conviction that God moves relentlessly and effectively to establish their reality in time and space, and even more perfectly in the world beyond time. This vision is a driving force for reformers, liberationists and revolutionaries. It is a comfort and inspiration to everyone who yearns for a new quality of existence.

These beautiful sentiments notwithstanding, the concept of New Creation represents a major failure in John Wesley's theological thinking. In the first place, Wesley failed to confront the fact that the promise of *totality* is unrealizable without dissolving the divine-human synergy of free grace and free response at the heart of his evangelical message. If *all things are reconstituted*, then *all persons are saved*—a result made possible only if sovereign grace overrides the resistance Wesley observed and recorded in the populations to whom he preached. Conversely, if *not all persons are saved* (Wesley's expectation), then *not all things are reconstituted*. Wesley cannot have it both ways. His theology of salvation is a universalism of opportunity that protects freedom of response; his expectation of New Creation is a universalism of result that requires the suppressing of freedom. In the second place, and following on the first observation, Wesley does not work out the role of human participation in the process of New Creation. He opens the possibility of such a role in "The General Deliverance" (Sermon 60), where he sketches the notion of human being and vocation in the *political image of God*, but never develops it. In "The New Creation" (Sermon 64), the total

reconstituting of all things is portrayed as wholly a work of sovereign grace. Wesley's imaginings of a new world to come are bizarre and fantastic, but even leaving aside those problems, his employment of the symbol of New Creation fails on theological grounds. Without some resolution of these basic theological issues, the symbol of New Creation is largely irrelevant to the applications to social theology and social action for which it seems otherwise so admirably suited.

There are ways to deal with these problems, but they constitute an agenda for the further development of Wesleyan theology, rather than a simple reliance on Wesley's own thinking in a move from symbol to enthusiastic engagement. In the first place, Wesleyan theology and social ethics must heed Reinhold Niebuhr's advice to take such symbols "seriously but not literally." Much of what Wesley wrote on New Creation is literal nonsense. However, the symbol deserves to be taken seriously because it has socially critical, envisioning, and energizing possibilities for informing and shaping Christian vocation—and indeed human vocation—in a world that desperately needs renewal and recovery of potentiality and purpose.² Taking it seriously but not literally means to change it from a pictorial imagining of what God is going to do in the future to a mythic representation of God's present and ongoing activity. The change to mythic representation of New Creation connects it more directly to a disclosure of human nature and purpose than does its use as a futurist symbol. It also brings the symbol of New Creation into closer accord with Wesley's existential understanding of the Kingdom of God as "the immediate fruit of God's reigning in the soul."³ Moreover, the mythic construal of New Creation does not threaten the synergy of divine action and enabled but free human response. It does not mandate a set of results than can be achieved only through coercive sovereignty, but establishes the synergy in the construction of the myth itself.

Once this change in mythic representation is made, it brings into focus another meaning of New Creation, namely, *the new creature in Christ*, a sinful person reborn through the prevenient and forgiving grace of God and launched into a sanctifying life of responsive love. This second meaning of New Creation addresses the second theological problem in Wesley's use of the symbol, namely, his failure to identify and explore a role for human participation in the work of New Creation. Wesley failed in large part because

he allowed his theological development to fixate on the recovery of the *moral image of God* through the order of salvation, and did not expand his understanding of his own concept of the *political image of God*. The significance of the *political image of God* is that the new creature in Christ becomes the agent of divine recreating activity. It brings this fundamental dimension of its nature to expression by entering fully into God's work of governing the creation, and thereby sharing necessarily and effectively in the work of making the Creation new. Moreover, it pursues this vocation with an awareness of power relations and realities not readily visible in the much more prominent Wesleyan concept of the *moral image of God*.

In what follows, I shall explore in preliminary fashion some elements of this agenda for Wesleyan theology in engaging the symbol of New Creation. First, however, I shall explain further the threat to the divine-human synergy implied in Wesley's literal renderings of the symbol.

Freedom and the Limits of *New Creation*

New Creation as hope for the total reconstitution of all things in an even richer synthesis than original creation is either solely a work of efficacious divine grace or a cooperative (synergistic) venture of God and humankind. If the former, the human agency of the new creature in Christ is irrelevant, and freedom to participate is annulled. If the latter, human freedom to respond to the gracious gift opens the possibility that some persons—perhaps most—will reject it. In that case the literal hope for total reconstitution will not come to fruition.

In his sermon, "The General Deliverance," Wesley argues that nothing in what human beings call "nature" is the same now as it was in God's original creation.⁴ It is not better; it is far worse. Creation has undergone a negative transformation. Perhaps most noteworthy is that "nature" has acquired a violent and predatory character it did not have at its origins. Living things devour living things in order to survive. Also, in Wesley's view, the animals have lost capabilities they possessed originally, such as greater strength and speed, and more extensive powers of understanding and reasoning. Even their shapes

and appearances have changed—for the worse, Wesley assures us. The same is true also of “inanimate nature, wherein all the elements seem to be out of course, and by turns to fight against man.”⁵ If the despoiling of God’s original design has been so profound and so radical, what is required is a reconstitution of *all things*—a “general deliverance,” a recovery and renewal of the entire creation—not solely a project for the salvation of human souls.

There is no doubt that John Wesley believed such a total renewal and transformation of the fallen creation would occur. At times he saw the realization as the end of a process already begun in history, as for example in his sermon, “The General Spread of the Gospel.”⁶ At other times, as in “The New Creation,” he saw it as an extra-temporal event, radically discontinuous from historical experience.⁷ What is not clear is whether he gave serious and systematic thought to how it would come about, and whether process and expectation created serious conflicts with other aspects of his theology. In the sermon on “The New Creation” there is hardly a hint of human participation. The grand design, complete with upgrading of non-human animals, the leveling of mountains, and the ending of rain—everything revised for human and animal comfort—is executed by divine will. There seems to be no room for free human agency. Moreover, the resulting universal rescue and restoration allow no room for any exercise of freedom to decline to be rescued and restored. He includes “an unmixed state of holiness and happiness far superior to that which Adam enjoyed,”⁸ but without acknowledging that his synergy of divine grace and enabled free response could be maintained only with risk to this universalist result.

By contrast, Wesley’s sermon on “The General Deliverance” implicitly identifies humankind as the central agent of renovation—in reversal of its role in producing chaos and corruption. Wesley believed that all the afflictions of God’s creation entered it by way of human sin. In the ontological arrangement named by him “the scale of beings” (known otherwise as the “great chain of being”), humankind is not simply one element of creation gathered together with the other elements—or even simply placed above them. It exists in integral relation with them. More importantly, it is the functional center of creation’s organization. This placement has two intentional implications of great consequence. One is that humankind is the channel of communication between God and

the other creatures. It is the means by which divine blessing and provision reach everything else. The other is that humankind is the appointed agent of divine governance over all other creatures. Human beings are created to image God politically, to have dominion (not domination) over the world, to be God's stewards, to protect and enable the flourishing of all else that God has given. Implicit in this scheme is the consequence that if humankind gets out of proper relationship to God, the rest of the "chain of being" also becomes misaligned and is thrown into chaos, confusion and ineptitude. The flow of blessings to the other creatures is shut off, because human beings no longer communicate them. The ordering processes of "nature" (and human society) are set in disarray, because "man" the governor now rules as an exploiter, not as a steward, as an enemy, not as a friend. The doctrine of the Fall of Humankind therefore explains and illuminates the violent and dysfunctional character of all created things and their relationships. In Adam the representative, the human race turns away from God. It loses the moral image of God, on the presence of which depends all right relatedness. Without the moral image human beings fall out of right relationship with one another, but they also spread the effects of their disobedience and their loss of foundational and guiding love to the rest of creation.

Given this relational scheme, one would expect the process to be reversed through the order of salvation. If humankind fell through the First Adam, and brought all the rest of creation down with it, could not the evil done to creation be overcome with equal completeness through the redemptive mission of the Second Adam (Christ), saving humankind and enabling it to fulfill its divinely appointed agency? For some unknown reason, Wesley does not grasp and enforce the logic of his own scheme. He urges human beings to be tender towards the lesser animals as God is tender towards themselves. However, he does not activate the concept of political image as a means of instructing humankind individually and corporately in the role of God's agent in the reconstitution of all things. The focus of evangelism essentially is the recovery of the moral image. The groaning of the *kosmos* for new birth will come to fruition through the sovereign energies of divine grace, but apparently not with responsible human participation in the labor.

Perhaps it is just as well that Wesley did not pursue his own line of argument. Along that road one quickly discovers the limit to certainty of the reconstitution of all things. Divine grace is enabling and empowering, but not coercive. In John Wesley's

preaching, the possibilities of rejecting the offer, and the consequences of rejecting it, are made explicit. In his experience, many—perhaps most—do not accept it. The bent to sinning deriving from original sin compounded by the weight and force of actual sin often proves more compelling than the divine favor. Some dead souls are awakened; others are not. If that is so, however, there can be no reconstitution *of all things*. Persons who do not accept will not have a place in the “reconstitution,” unless the divine will becomes coercive to a degree that Wesley’s theology will not allow. Moreover, to the extent that the deliverance of the groaning creation depends upon the recovery and renewal of all humankind, at least some of the work of deliverance will not be accomplished because the workers were not willing.

We need not pause to examine the scientific accuracy of Wesley’s claims, for none of them makes any sense in the light of what we know today. The point is that the reconstitution of all things as a literal future hope is not a tenable prospect apart from dissolving the synergy of free divine grace and free human response and conceptualizing the result as totally a work of God. But if that synergy is dissolved, then Wesley’s evangelical theology is no more.

New Creation as Myth of Disclosure

The relevance of the symbol of New Creation consists in its mythic representation of the purposes of God in creation and redemption, not in the promise of a literal overcoming of everything dysfunctional in the kosmos (the fallen creation) and the perfect and permanent establishment of “true happiness and holiness.” New Creation as myth discloses the nature of God’s work in the present order/disorder and thereby defines Christian vocation (and indeed human vocation) as participation in the divine work.

Transforming the myth of New Creation from one of literal future expectation to one of disclosure of reality must proceed as an exercise in Wesleyan theology, and not become simply a borrowing of mythic elements from other sources. In particular, it must respect and reinforce the synergy of grace and freedom, and cohere with other elements

of Wesley's theology of salvation. The following points suggest a line of development that fulfills these requirements.

1. The first point to examine is Wesley's claim that creation in its entirety has fallen, and that this condition is a result of the sin of humankind. Today we could not—as he did—confidently regard the problematical aspects of the natural order as effects of human sin without accepting the Creationist argument that the universe is no more than ten thousand years old. We now know that what human beings call “nature” was violent, predatory, and destructive long before the human species emerged to take its place among the other creatures. These phenomena are not the fault of humankind. The effort to protect God from responsibility for them is not managed so simply. Moreover, much of what Wesley regarded as a departure from original creation, such as the appearance and capabilities of animals, and natural forces such as floods and earthquakes, may be simply the way nature was intended to be and to look and to work. If so, a New Creation does not require the radical transformations that appear in Wesley's fanciful speculations.

Nevertheless, every human engagement with “nature” infects and distorts it. In that respect we can say that the natural order is drawn into the fallen order whenever human beings interact with it. That is so even when human beings make what they consider to be beneficial, constructive, and necessary uses of other parts of the created order—when they kill wildlife for food, build dams, extract ore, clear forests, and so forth. These actions are not inherently bad, but they always express some morally ambiguous anthropocentrism. Whatever their justification, they involve a human projection of sin into the non-human aspects of the creation, and in doing so they incorporate those aspects into the fallen order. Even when one attempts to discover and relate to “nature in its purity,” one makes it somewhat impure in the process. Wesley's saddling of humankind with the blame for everything he thought wrong in nature certainly is excessive and unwarranted. Nevertheless, it is only through human sin that God's design is corrupted and spoiled.

This incarnation of human sinfulness in the rest of creation goes beyond our ability to perceive and experience it, and certainly beyond our ability to study and analyze it scientifically. The human penetration of other aspects of God's ordering is deep, progressive, unrelenting, and unpredictable. In that respect, human beings must

always consider the indeterminate character of creation whenever and wherever they confront it. Therefore the notion of this order as fallen order must be an element in the myth of the New Creation. Also, the transformation of the deformation of nature must begin with human conversion to the creating intentions of God.

2. As I have noted previously, Wesley's idea of a New Creation, as set forth in the sermon by that name, is that of an extra-temporal shaping of something largely different in most respects from what exists in time. Wesley is so negative towards creation in its present condition, and his proposal so discontinuous with history, that he speaks of "the universal restoration which is to succeed the universal destruction."⁹ This sentiment is quite different from the one set forth in "The General Deliverance," where he seems to envision a transformation moving within time and speaks of the animated creation being delivered "(not by annihilation: annihilation is not deliverance) 'from the' present 'bondage of corruption, into' a measure of 'the glorious liberty of the children of God.'"¹⁰ If we take the latter as more characteristic of Wesley than the former, which I do, we conclude that a creation that is genuinely new is not one fashioned *de novo*, but a transforming emergence to wholeness of what is present but obscured and deformed in the present fallen creation. The process of inquiry to inform moral action and Christian vocation, then, is to discern the divine intention for humankind and the world in and through the fallen creation.

This process is different from one that imagines a new creation discontinuous from time and history, or one that posits a natural law available to reason and not distorted fundamentally by a will turned away from God. There are elements of both of those options in Wesley's thinking, but his principal approach is one that works contextually. In empirical terms, he tends to deal practically with the situation in which he finds himself, analyzing alternatives in terms of reason, common sense, and historical impact, rather than working from ideals and first principles. In theological terms, he conceptualizes fallen creation in a context of grace, and looks for the clues and openings provided by grace while remaining sensitive to implications of the creation as fallen.

Given these contexts, Wesley is inclined to trust reason when the issue is discernment of fact or comparison of policy alternatives. When the issue is theological discernment, he looks for definitions of reality that inherently are rational but not self-

evident to reasoning. Becoming aware of them depends on divine disclosure to faith. One of these definitions is the nature of the human being as the political image of God. Wesley set this definition out in his three-fold characterization of how humankind images the divinity, but thereafter paid little attention to it. However, as I shall argue later, the activation of the myth of New Creation depends fundamentally on the recovery of this concept.

3. A mythic interpretation of New Creation gives special prominence to the doctrine of prevenient grace. The initiative of renewal and recovery in the fallen order is of God, as is the dynamism of the process. It is God who does a new thing, who goes before to open a way, to design a future, to press against all forces in opposition. Human beings cannot of their own will and by their own understanding emerge in newness from the fallen creation. In its initiating mode, at least, prevenient grace is irresistible. It forces awareness, breaks down defenses, opens closed doors. Yet it also maintains the synergy of divine willing and human freedom, because it does not coerce a particular result. In this respect it embodies both the promise and the limitation of New Creation: it is universally available, but not universally efficacious.

Prevenient grace opens the possibility of knowing the original design of God for a creation that has undergone the distorting power of sin. The creation as present to experience is never known in its pristine character. There is no direct rational grasp of noumenal reality, no trustworthy inferences from its phenomena. What God has made and what God intends are matters for divine disclosure, not for human reasoning. Prevenient grace is both the agent of the enabling of knowing and the means of communicating what needs to be known.

No one can truly say
That Jesus is the Lord,
Except thou take the veil away
And breathe the living word.

This mode of grace is essential to the meaning and efficacy of the myth also because of the persistence of sin until the end of time. New Creation in historical

experience is never a terminal achievement—finished, perfect, irreversible, invincible. It is a point of tension, a resolution of love and obedience always positioned against its opposites, and always threatened by the “bent to sinning.” The grace of God that goes before supports this resolution, exposing the threats and providing strength to resist. This work of grace is especially important when forces emerge in history to establish themselves under the banner of New Creation, and presume to have resolved the inner tensions of human nature and history. They proclaim a new and permanent order of justice, a new formation of humankind, a new society unsullied by the exploitation and oppression of the old, and they enforce their visions with power. Prevenient grace arrives then as a critical principle to expose the pretensions and abuses, and as an enabling presence in the forces of opposition—at least until the opposition establishes its own vision of New Creation and in its turn enforces it with power.

It is clear from these reflections that prevenient grace does not underwrite the myth of New Creation as a theory of progress. What is “new” is a realization of love and justice in a moment of the activity of faith, not an accumulation of goodness moving towards temporal fulfillment in the City of God. As John Wesley understood very well, the “old” always presses against the “new.” With any relaxation of faith, and without the presence of prevenient grace, the “old” will reassert itself.

4. Divine forgiveness through the merits of Jesus Christ is the meaning of justification in Wesleyan terms. It is offered to all and to everything, and thereby becomes the basis for the reconstitution of all things. Justification, understood thusly, is an accomplished fact—not something waiting to happen. The deed of God is complete in Christ. That is the presupposition of all evangelism and all Christian social action. However, justifying grace is resistible grace. New Creation becomes effective in history when and only when a person accepts God’s gift. At that point, and not before, there is a new creature, a new birth. One who thusly is born anew then enters into partnership with God in the work and process of restoring wholeness to the fallen creation.

5. The renewal of creation and the further development of what has been renewed depend on the presence of a factor that is not itself an element of creation. I refer to the moral image of God. John Wesley delineated the image of God in three ways—as natural, political, and moral. All three are necessary to the human imaging of God, but only the

first two are aspects of *created* human nature. The moral image of God is not ingredient in human nature; it depends on the right relationship to God. It is a reflection and experience of the love of God. When the relationship is broken—when human beings turn away from God—the moral image is not simply damaged; it is lost. However, when that happens—and its happening is the meaning of the Fall of humankind—the creation ceases to function according to the divine plan. The natural and political images remain, but they function principally to sustain and direct human beings in their life away from God. In Wesley’s view, the entire creation becomes dysfunctional, and suffers throughout from the loss of something that is not part of creation.

The necessary inference from this argument is that a New Creation cannot be a self-contained entity complete within itself. The recreation of the fallen creation does not work apart from the restoration of the right relationship to God, and this relationship must be re-established through human experience of the presence and power of God. New Creation is not finished when human persons are born anew and learn to love as God loves, but it must begin there. Christian evangelism and Christian social action have the same starting-point.

The Recovery of the *Political Image of God*

The activation of the myth of New Creation depends on the recovery of the political image of God, not only on the recovery of the moral image of God.

In previous writings I have explored the implications of the political image of God for a Wesleyan theory of political institutions and for a Wesleyan political language.¹¹ For this occasion I have approached the political image by way of inquiry into the viability of John Wesley’s understanding of New Creation. My argument is that taking New Creation seriously although not literally, and therefore reconceptualizing it as myth, cannot be a successful effort without assigning an integral role to the concept of the political image. It will not suffice to focus so exclusively on the moral image of God, as Wesley himself does. It is necessary, of course, to stress the recovery of the moral image, because the renewal of creation begins at that point. However, the beginning of renewal

is not the whole of the process, and the process has dimensions not inherent in the nature of love and it makes demands that love alone cannot fulfill.

To pursue this argument, one must return to Wesley's claim that humankind stands at the top of creation, but also in a functional sense at the center of creation. It is the link between God and all else that God has made. This linkage has the two features of communication and governance. In the former, humankind is the channel of blessing to the rest of creation. In the latter, it has dominion over creation—not to exploit it but to protect it, nurture it, and assist it to develop to the fullness of its possibilities. This role of governance is the *political image of God*, so called because it images the care and direction God gives to what God has created. If it is true, as Wesley insists, that humankind holds this position and plays this role in the grand scheme of things, then no effort of renovation and restoration can work except through the recovery of this mode of human agency. The myth is useless as a guide to reconstitution apart from its implementation through the political image.

The first thing to note in this regard is the attention it requires to social structure and power. An ethic built on love is aware of such matters, but is not sure what to do about them—whether to turn away in pacifist and other-worldly rejection or to engage them as contexts and occasions of loving service. For human agency through the political image, by contrast, they are central operative realities. The role of governance works in and through structures and with the instruments of power. Its moral inquiry is inherently a political ethic. The second thing is that the political image makes the myth of New Creation operative in particular directions of practice and policy. It moves them from domination to responsible dominion, from exploitation to stewardship, from egoistic anthropocentrism to reciprocity. In the exercise of power, and where free response and cooperation are possibilities, it moves from coercion to consent. Each of these directions can be explored more fully in order to develop the specificity of the political image in New Creation; however, the listing of them will suffice to indicate the kind and quality of the changes.

The third thing to note is that the recovery and exercise of the political image are themselves of the essence of the reconstitution of humankind. The political image *is humankind as created*. Human beings are created to work in partnership with God and as

agents of God in the proper governance of the world. It is a corporate responsibility because it is definitive of human nature. Any move towards New Creation, or towards the reconstitution of all things, requires the recovery of humanity both as a constituent element of creation and as the central and coordinating agent in recreating and reconstituting. The recovery of humanity necessitates the recovery of the political image of God.

One must stress the centrality of the political image of God to the myth of New Creation lest one be tempted to capture it for important but less thoroughgoing applications. Obviously, for example, the political image is pertinent to and strongly supportive of issues of environmental concern. I would expect it to be used in this application, and I use it thusly myself. However, in current political discourse and action “environmental concern” tends to be listed as one issue among many. The import of *political image* as I have interpreted it is to environment in its widest sense, that is, to the wholeness and health of the entire creation. In that respect, “environment” comprehends all other issues. The political image of God as the fundamental definition of human nature and human vocation is the theological basis for understanding everything political and indeed everything in the relationship of humankind to the rest of creation. Because it represents responsible human agency working in a context of prevenient and enabling grace, it maintains the divine-human synergy. The myth of New Creation must have this image at its center.

Conclusion: *New Creation* and Historical Expectation

The same considerations that call into question the totality of reconstitution of the fallen creation also call into question the possibility of such fulfillment in human history.

John Wesley’s sermon on “The New Creation” appears to be an abandonment of historical fulfillment, inasmuch as he puts total reconstitution beyond time and omits to discuss the human effort that elsewhere he makes both ingredient and agent of the consummation. Other writings—those that do account for conversion and new birth—fail

to notice that the rejection of the divine gift by some persons undercuts the promise of his optimistic forecasts. As I have argued previously, there is no possibility of bringing this vision to fruition apart from dissolving the synergy of divine grace and human freedom that is foundational to Wesley's evangelical theology.

Changing from a literal to a mythic understanding of New Creation retains the synergy and makes the symbol serviceable for Christian discipleship and vocation, for Christian ethics and action, but it does not restore the hope for a resolution of all the ills that beset what God has created. The mythic understanding acknowledges the reality of sin and its persistence until the end of time. It engages the fallen creation dialectically, drawing on the disclosure of the Creator's intention in the context of grace, and informing the content of faith active in love. It evokes achievements of such faithful and loving action, and extends them in space and time through structures governed and power employed in the political imaging of God. However, it offers no assurance that such achievements in history will not turn into new forms of egoism and oppression. It offers no support to liberal dreams of progress, to Marxist expectations of salvation through the ending of the dialectic of class warfare. It operates at times through reform, revolution, and liberation, but is wary of their temporal realizations of the Kingdom of God. It trusts the prevenient grace of God to open history to something new, and then to open it again and again. To use the symbol of New Creation as myth is to live by faith in God in a fallen order kept in being by its existence in a context of grace, and by faith to seek the newness allowed by grace in that order through the exercise of vocation in the political image of God.

¹ "Reconstitution of all things" is only one meaning of New Creation in John Wesley's thought. He thought of New Creation also in terms of the fulfillment of Old Testament messianic prophecies, the prevalence of early church patterns of fellowship and ownership, the universality of "true happiness and holiness," and the Christian as new creature in Christ. It would be useful for this session of the Oxford Institute for Methodist Theological Studies, which has chosen "New Creation" as its theme, to commission a paper dedicated to a critical study of Wesley's views on the topic.

² These implications are developed in Theodore Runyon's *The New Creation; John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville; Abingdon Press, 1998). See especially chapter 6, "Wesley for Today."

³ Sermon 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 1:224.

⁴ Sermon 60, *Works*, 2:436-50.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I.6, 2:442.

⁶ Sermon 63, *Works* 2:436-99.

⁷ Sermon 64, *Works* 2:500-10.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Sec. 18, 2:510.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Sec. 7, 2:503.

¹⁰ Sermon 60, *Works*, III.1, 2:445.

¹¹ In November, 1990, I presented a paper titled "Political Order in the *Ordo Salutis*: A Wesleyan Theory of Political Institutions" to the Wesleyan Studies Group of the American Academy of Religion. This paper explored the concept of the political image of God in relation to the problem of political institutions. It was published later in *A Journal of Church and State* 37 (1995): 537-54. At the Tenth Oxford Institute for Methodist Theological Studies (1997), I presented a paper on "The 'Political Image' and Wesleyan Political Language" to the Working Group on Political Economy. This paper later was incorporated into my *Politics in the Order of Salvation: Transforming Wesleyan Political Ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001).

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