

Sean Hayden  
Oxford Institute of United Methodist Studies  
Ecumenism and Other Faiths Working Group

**By Faith Alone—But Whose?  
The Joint Declaration and Methodist Association in Light of the New Perspective(s) on Paul**

The WMC's association with the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ) last year came at a time of unprecedented ecumenical sensitivity. More than ever, Catholics and Protestants are recognizing the historical and dogmatic limitations of their respective confessional stances and showing great willingness to seek the unity of the Church and dissolve old controversies. Yet the hopeful agreement signified by the JDDJ has not been unrestrained within its ecumenical precincts.

And while insights from Pauline interpretation have helped move the dialogue forward, radical shifts in the discourse of Pauline theology, largely alienated from ecumenical concerns, also seem to some to threaten the message of the Reformation churches. The so-called New Perspective(s) on Paul (NPP) and the *pistis Christou* debate appear to call into question certain fundamental features of Luther's doctrine of justification, and their exponents (specifically, Dunn and Wright) have received scathing and sometimes all too personal criticism.<sup>1</sup> This paper will take a more appreciative view, attempting to draw positive ecumenical consequences from interfacing the JDDJ with recent NT studies. It will focus mainly on the historical roots of Catholic-Lutheran division, indicating first the core of ecumenical struggle surrounding cooperation in grace before examining how the NPP might offer new and more comprehensive ground for unity. I will conclude with a note on the proximity of the 'Wesleyan synthesis' to the revised understanding of justification sketched in this exchange. But first, a comment on the complications faced in negotiating such a discordant, polyphonic conversation.

On the face of it, a rather straightforward exercise in biblical, historical, and ecumenical theology is under way here: we are asking a question about how substantive reinterpretation of St. Paul could shore up the historical divisions of Catholics and Lutherans, but also Methodists, showing how key doctrinal differences are based on exegetical missteps and leading the co-signers to a higher unity by centering the doctrine of justification around another point than the one on which they continue to have an uneasy agreement (namely, cooperation). Yet this involves two further and slightly more imposing tasks. *On the one hand*, an exercise in ecumenical hermeneutics. How are we to understand the statements of the JDDJ with reference to the ecumenical dialogue, the official and unofficial statements of both Catholics and Lutherans, the theological and exegetical contributions and criticism arising outside but contemporaneous to the main stream of ecumenical conversation, and then finally the vexed historical developments of the doctrine during and after the Reformation period?<sup>2</sup> More pointedly, the JDDJ is not a treatise; it offers spare argumentation for its assertions,

---

<sup>1</sup> A tiny sampling of the relevant literature would include: Sanders, E.P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. (London: SCM, 1997) and *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). Dunn, J.D.G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); *The Justice of God: A Fresh Look at the Old Doctrine of Justification by Faith* (Carlsisle: Paternoster, 1993); *Romans*. WBC. (Dallas: Word, 1988); the essays collected in *The New Perspective on Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005). Wright, N.T. *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2005) Hays, R.B. *The Faith of Jesus Christ*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). The critical responses to these texts are too numerous to mention here.

<sup>2</sup> The literature is expansive, but the following played into the development of this paper. First, the major American and German studies, *Justification by Faith: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII*. Ed. Anderson. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985) and *The Condemnations of the Reformation: Do They Still Divide?* Ed. Lehmann and Pannenberg.

but relies instead on the decades of interpretive backwork leading up to it. So if one wants to locate the supposed historical origins of schism and exegetical basis of the dis/agreement of the JDDJ, then we have numerous documents to work through. Even the landmark studies, such as those produced by American and German working groups, fail to agree entirely on their accounts of the historical predicament and present areas of doctrinal interest, either with each other or the JDDJ. The content and arrangement of less prominent ecumenical papers complicates picture of what, exactly, is at stake, the particulars of divergence. The most important instance of shared exegesis, Reumann's *Righteousness in the New Testament*, leaves room for both parties to stand their old ground without coming around to some of Reumann's rather remarkable insights and suggestions. None of this is an indictment of ecumenical scholarship, which has been patient and rigorous at every turn, but it does indicate the difficulties presented by its internal diversity and energy. *On the other*, there is the equally polyphonous chorus known as the New Perspective(s) on Paul. Sanders, Dunn, and Wright by no means speak with one voice, and since I include broadly in the NPP exponents of the *pistis Christou* debate such as R. Hays and Luke Johnson, any exchange between the JDDJ and the 'NPP' would have to first stabilize this side of the discussion as well. Suitably resolving these challenges is obviously out of the question here, and the paper retreats to a comfortable distance from some of the particulars. So I throughout presume a unified, composite (and no doubt idiosyncratic) reading of the NPP, only partially defended in the footnotes (a significant number of which were finally trimmed to streamline an already cumbersome paper). Nor are the internal complexities of the Lutheran and Catholic positions sufficiently entertained, but I resort to what I hope are safe generalities, recognizing their limitations. The entire argument bears a tentative and preliminary character, mapping a line of inquiry to be pursued, rather than firm conclusions. Because we can understand Wesley as something of a synthesis between Luther and Trent—agreeing largely with Luther on justification, but stepping back towards Catholicism on regeneration—to dissolve or reframe the terms he combines will mean rethinking Wesleyan soteriology as well. And since Wesley is an inheritor of the Reformation dilemma (rather than its source) and we are interested here in assessing its origin, reference to him is spare in the body of the paper, but I have prepared some concluding remarks in that direction and in the spirit of the conference theme. With these reservations up front, let us proceed by appropriately framing the division at the heart of the JDDJ and then considering the potential opened up by shifting the question of justification to another site.

---

(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989). Other relevant official ecumenical documents include those collected in the second volume (and to a lesser extent, the first) of *Growth in Agreement II*. Rd. Gros, Meyer, Rusch. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000). The ecumenical dialogue of the following studies also contributed. *Justification By Faith: Do the Sixteenth Century Condemnations Still Apply?* Ed. Lehmann, Root, Rusch. (New York: Continuum, 1997). *Justification and the Future of the Ecumenical Movement: the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. Ed. Rusch. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003). Among contemporary theologians, Wolfhart Pannenberg exercised special (if hidden) influence. *Systematic Theology*, vol 3. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); "Theses to the 'Joint Declaration' About Justification." *Pro Ecclesia*, 7 Spr. (1998: 135-137); "A First Step Towards Restoring Ecclesial Communion." *Dialog*. 36.1. 62-63. E. Jüngel's criticisms of Pannenberg and the JDDJ also had some bearing. *Justification: The Heart of the Christian Faith*. (New York: T&T Clark, 2001). I should also gesture to texts by Küng, O. Bayer, and A. McGrath though I have not had time to digest them. Finally, selected essays from the two volumes *Justification: What's At Stake in the Current Debate*. Ed. Husbards and Treier. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004) and *Justification in Perspective*. Ed B. McCormack. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006) offered very useful pieces. For what little Methodist perspective is developed here, Wainwright, G. "The Lutheran-Roman Catholic Agreement on Justification: Its Ecumenical Significance and Scope From a Methodist Point of View." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 38.1. (2001: 20-42). Klaiber, W. *Justified Before God: A Contemporary Theology*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), plus the paper for this conference. Also, T. Runyon's text cited below. And this entirely omits the contested history of 20<sup>th</sup> c Luther interpretation and the controversies regarding nature and grace surrounding Vatican II!

Thoroughly addressing the question posed by this paper would require a careful review of the history of the doctrine leading up to the Reformation, viewed against the background of a corrected understanding of St. Paul and tracing the modifications of the Christian message as it spread into the Greco-Roman world. This is obviously out of the question here, and little could be added in this space to the historiographies already available. Instead of offering an overly abbreviated and unilluminating repetition, I wish only to assert three historical *assumptions* of this paper.

First, the tensions driving the Reformation are easily traceable to Augustine. The Middle Ages in route to the Reformation were, theologically, an era of *Augustinianisms*, and this was true for Luther and his Catholic interlocutors as well. Krister Stendahl long ago commented on how the ‘introspective conscience’ of Western Christianity, particularly in Augustine and Luther, decisively shaped its soteriological formulae in a way that obscured much of St. Paul’s theology.<sup>3</sup> The question upon which Augustine fastened his theology, and which he bequeathed to the West, was that of the relation between will and grace, of how one is able to satisfy the demand to be just, how one is made just. Augustine did not first come upon this question strictly through reflection on Romans, but began instead with the problem of evil. Contra the Manicheans, evil is not a primal feature of creation, but originates in the will’s failure to choose the Good. This was the hermeneutic context for his early Romans commentaries, and moved quite naturally from the will’s failure to its uplifting by grace. Stendahl was correct that this foregrounds a secondary issue of Pauline theology—the will, rather than the inclusion of Gentiles in the covenant—and leads to some distortion. How much will occupy us momentarily. What bears notice in Augustine here, beyond this interpretive slip, is the fact that he never satisfactorily resolved the predicament he began with, but always found himself caught between will and grace, freedom and election. Where he early on made a decision in favor of the sovereignty of grace over the will, he constantly battled the arbitrariness of that grace, its compatibility with freedom, and its potential mitigation of human responsibility, points displayed in the Pelagian controversy and the exchanges with Julian at the end of his career. The latter was *preeminently a pastoral affair, and the Augustinian problematic moves as much on this level as on that of dogmatic technicalities*, a fact that cannot be overlooked when treating the either/or of Protestant and Catholic takes on the will’s role in justification.

Second, despite innovations from Aristotelian philosophy and the increasingly juridical context of *iustitia*, Medieval Catholicism continued broadly Augustinian considerations of the ‘ontological’ *transformation* of the will by grace. The formulations in this regard were *highly diverse and connected in various ways, some more critical than others, to the penitential system and the practices of the church*, entangled as they were in the political apparatus of a declining imperial culture.

Finally, Luther’s critiques of Catholicism by no means cover all the theological options of his day, but he *singled out a notion of the correlation between will and grace that he found hypostatized in the corruption of the sacramental system*, above all in the selling of indulgences, priestly payoffs, and private masses. He located its theological articulation in the *via moderna* of Biel and Ockham, to which he was exposed in his Augustinian order, and the sense of cooperation in justification that he chastised there—one that permitted the accumulation of merit based on action *without* divine assistance, a ‘doing what lies within one’ as sinner—hardly represents the main thrust of Catholic theology at the time. The lesson is that, once more, when dealing with the historical divisions and condemnations, we have to remember that *the divorce was as perhaps more over practices than beliefs, or beliefs insofar as the supported or epitomized corrupt practices*—an exercise in pastoral as well as dogmatic theology. It was Luther the concerned priest, not just Luther the exegete, who rejected what he understood to be the Catholic representation of

---

<sup>3</sup> Stendahl, Krister. ‘The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West’ in *The Writings of St. Paul*. Ed. Wayne Meeks. (New York: Norton, 1972).

justification, and this twofold perception is what led him to eliminate any place for the will in justification. We can, in fact, comprehend the basic features of Luther's theology of justification (its forensic character, imputation, alien righteousness, the passivity of faith, etc.) as one and all measures to secure grace against human effort and Christian conscience from a God vengeful upon the weak. The will, then, *negatively* defined his doctrine of justification, and the cumulative force of these historical snapshots is to show that the question of the will (or cooperation in grace) is probably the defining issue of the Reformation, so too of the ecumenical movement.

Now I would like to venture a thesis which I simply cannot justify at present, but nonetheless want us to entertain: so long as the doctrine of justification and the ecumenical dialogue move within the parameters set by Augustine, i.e., within a theoretical context determined (implicitly or otherwise) by the question of non/cooperation of the will with grace, the problems of the Reformation era will remain insoluble. For if the paramount soteriological decision is between an emphasis on cooperation or passivity, then we have here a strict either/or that can only continue to fund divisions, at least on the present terms. In other words, if that antithesis is maintained as the controlling issue—and the ecumenical discussion does seem to tilt in this direction—then the very meaning of salvation, so too of the church, will remain bound to its antithetical potential, thus liable to division without further ground for adjudication. The danger arises that the uneasy reconciliation of these options will inevitably break loose again on some other front and generate new separations, leaving new fences to mend and the real problem unsolved. The achievement of the JDDJ stands under this risk, as the protests from so many quarters make plain. The open letter from German Lutheran theology faculty, along with the vitriolic responses of many Reform and evangelical theologians, force the conclusion that the JDDJ is not an unrestrained step towards unity, however much we must hope for the agreement it signifies on the most crucial article of the Christian faith.

But is cooperation the real bone of contention in the JDDJ? In the seven theses explicating the common understanding of justification, the tension between different conceptions of the will's function surfaces repeatedly. 4.1, regarding 'Human Powerlessness and Sin in Relation to Justification,' turns immediately to cooperation in the respective sub-paragraphs. For Catholics, cooperation "in preparing for and accepting justification by consenting to God's justifying action" is "an effect of grace, not an action arising from innate human abilities" (§ 20), whereas for Lutherans, "human beings are incapable of cooperating in their salvation because as sinners they actively oppose God and his saving action" (§ 21). Although Lutherans "do not deny that believers are fully involved personally in their faith," the emphasis falls here on a passivity consistent with Luther's primary commitment to bracket off the operation of grace from any contamination by the will. The priority of grace is shared, but an ambivalence persists towards the degree of human participation in the reception of that grace. Similarly, both parties in 4.2 ('Justification as Forgiveness of Sins and Making Righteous') assert that "justification remains free from human cooperation and is not dependent on the life-renewing effects of grace" (Lutherans) and that "God's gift of grace in justification remains independent of human cooperation" (Catholics). Why the fretting over cooperation, if they agree that justification is not contingent upon effort or renewal?

It seems that, despite the Catholic admission (as old as Trent) that grace has absolute priority in justification, the substantive difference still lies in the relation of grace to justifying faith. This matters a great deal, since the form of justifying faith shapes directly just how the priority of grace is conceived. Luther could regard faith as utterly passive, since its only task was to receive the promise of forgiveness and the alien righteousness of Christ, from which followed good works. Catholics, by contrast, hold, as they always have, the vacuity of justifying faith without love.<sup>4</sup> These distinctions are expressed in article 4.3, 'Justification by Grace and Through Faith,' which

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Condemnations*, 32ff.

reinforces that “whatever in the justified precedes or follows the free gift of faith is neither the basis of justification nor merits it” (§ 25). Catholics are especially careful to reiterate this fact: “While Catholic teaching emphasizes the renewal of life by justifying grace, this renewal in faith, hope, and love is always dependent on God's unfathomable grace and contributes nothing to justification about which one could boast before God” (§ 27). The *Condemnations* study sheds some light here, as a consistent worry returns regarding the diminishment either of grace (Lutherans against Catholics) or of God's gift to human life (vice versa).<sup>5</sup> Yet with the primacy of grace conceded, the differing interpretations of grace as adhering to the soul and as *extra nos* are not mere emphases, but “a clear difference, indeed an antithesis in the interpretation of the actual matter under discussion,” even if both are scripturally well-founded (*Condemnations*, 49). To this difference corresponds another regarding faith as trust or as ‘animated by love.’<sup>6</sup> In the *Justification by Faith* study, Catholics, “convinced that justification removes whatever is hateful to God in the justified, hold that the good works of the righteous give a title to salvation itself in the sense that God has covenanted to save those who, prompted by grace, obey his will” (54). This naturally rouses Lutheran suspicions of a “Pelagian distortion.” But is the cooperation rejected by Lutherans—faith animated by love and the heart transformed by grace—the same as that rejected by Luther? Catholics certainly submit that justification depends on nothing that we do of ourselves, but Lutherans not only refuse that justification *depends* on what God does in us, but are cautious towards the prospect that justification is what God *does* in us, the process of transformation. This simply leaves too much space for the will. In any case, a review of further passages in the German and American discussions and the JDDJ itself should confirm what this brief examination suggests and what should not be a controversial point in any case: that ‘cooperation’ or the will was and is at the heart of Catholic-Lutheran (and so Wesleyan) division.

Any understanding of justification will have to ponder the relation between divine action for and in us, between grace and human response, be it as a passive trust, a minimal cooperation, or an active obedience. The will always appears at the center of such considerations, but should it be the pivot upon which a theology of grace or justification turns? This was true for Augustine, Medieval Catholicism, Luther, and the ecumenical dialogue, and the best thus far (and probably potentially) accomplished around this epicenter of ecumenical angst is a trembling ‘differentiated consensus.’ A remarkable feat, but is there not some more stable territory upon which to build?

One might ask, then, concerning the possibility of centering the question of justification around some issue other than the will, such that the preceding antithesis can be viewed as a matter of pastoral emphasis and not, so to speak, as a theological litmus test and root of schism. I gestured towards the idea that something like this was implicitly true for Augustine and Luther, whose doctrines were shaped by pastoral engagement. Assuming that Catholicism always meant to repudiate works-righteousness, that the confusion surrounding that accusation has cleared, and that

---

<sup>5</sup>Cf. 43 “The Protestant view can even today still give rise to the misunderstanding that God justifies a person quite arbitrarily, without that person's being affected or involved...The Catholic viewpoint can even today still give rise to the misunderstanding...that divine grace which is the presupposition for justification is really no more than a matter of course.” And: “The response of faith is itself brought about through the uncoercible word of promise which comes to human beings from outside themselves. There can be ‘cocoperation’ *only* in the sense that in faith the heart is involved, when the Word touches it and creates faith. Catholic theology begs its Protestant discussion partner to concede that this is the meaning of the Catholic doctrine also. On the other hand, it itself admits that the word ‘cooperation is open to misunderstanding” (47). In the *Justification by Faith* study: “[Lutherans] suspect that in making a distinction between dead faith and living faith Catholics teach by implication that believers can move themselves from a state of sin to righteousness...[and] fears are increased when they find Catholics speaking of sinners actively cooperating in their own justification” (53). Also JDDJ, §38-9 on the emphasis of responsibility vs. grace.

<sup>6</sup> *Condemnations*, 50ff.

the JDDJ at least begins to move Catholics, Lutherans, and Wesleyans alike past the overdrawn oppositions of the Reformation, is it possible to move the discussion of justification elsewhere and see these varying accents as just that? A matter of pastoral emphasis: this is how it stood for Paul. The Christian might need reminding that the power of sin was broken, that Christ lived in them, and that their death and new life were already real and complete; or that their gifts and works and allegiances were nothing in themselves, but the work of Christ and the Spirit in them alone; or that they were to struggle against the powers of this world and the sin that still persisted in them; or that their salvation was finished, was in process, was yet to come. He could write to the various churches and dwell upon one or another emphasis because the message of justification did not stand or fall with them, but was the ‘doctrinal’ or liturgical or communal context for their pastoral deployment. This holds because justification was, as Stendahl and the NPP recognized, not principally about the success or failure of one’s works before God, but about the inclusion of the Gentiles in a new covenant. Justification marks out a new community already based on the presence of the living Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit as ushering in the Kingdom of God. Belonging to this new covenant community, the ‘Body of Christ,’ and not the success or failure of the individual will, is the key to salvation. Two points bear special attention here: first, the (primarily) social dimension of justification by faith and, second, the temporal structure of justification. If these two aspects of Paul’s thought are properly understood, the preceding antithesis can be set within a more encompassing framework, their apparent opposition subtended by a higher unity. Put differently, the battle lines of the Reformation were drawn so as to stage the disputes over the meaning of the church in a highly ambiguous and secondary aspect of Paul’s theology. This does not mean, however, that the foggy, mountainous terrain of the will’s relation to grace did not need the kind of survey and exploration that it received from Augustine to Wesley but only that they finally marked out the borders of the gospel in the wrong region. The NPP could offer a revised map to end this civil war.

The *social dimension* of justification—the key contribution of the NPP—does not dissolve the problem of the will, but subordinates it within the theological architecture such that it need no longer serve as cause for ecclesial divisions and ecumenical strife. Paul’s understanding of justification focuses not primarily upon the ontological transformation of the will, nor even upon forgiveness, much less the overcoming of a ‘works righteousness.’ Rather, righteousness by faith is the means according to which—and here is Paul’s central interest—God extends covenant promises to Jew and Gentile alike. It is first and foremost the demonstration of God’s righteousness as God’s impartiality, love, and justice in opening a new covenant for all who stand under the power of sin and the condemnation of the Law. The doctrine is theocentric and answers a pressing question about God’s character with God’s action on behalf of humanity. The weight falls squarely on the subjective genitive, the *dikaio synē tou theou* marking that quality of God revealed by the cross and its ‘revaluation of all values.’<sup>7</sup> We need not exclude the objective sense altogether, since this act is ‘for us’ and in a manner of speaking communicates that righteousness to us as a gift.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, as J.

---

<sup>7</sup> Hays, 282-282: “... it should be beyond dispute that the ‘righteousness’ in question in [Rom] 3:21-22 is God’s own righteousness (subjective genitive)... Paul is framing an argument concerning a theodicy, insisting that God’s way of dealing with humanity through the gospel is a manifestation of his justice, not an arbitrary dissolution of his promises to Israel.” Neither Dunn nor Hays particularly focus on God’s righteousness as an expression of impartiality, but it almost goes without saying and follows directly from God’s Oneness. See especially Dunn, *The Justice of God*, where he applies justification to political circumstances such as nationalism or racism. See also Wright, *Paul*, 29-30.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Reumann, *Righteousness in the New Testament*. After exile, righteousness becomes associated with “God’s vindicating action” as the precondition of humanity’s righteousness and within the covenant (16). The Greek translation of *sdq* into *diakōsynē*, claims Reumann, skews it towards a sense of distributive justice and polarizes justice and mercy (an opening for the ambiguities of the Reformation). Reumann recognizes no uniform usages of the ‘righteousness of God,’ recommending that while the thrust of Rom 1:17-3:20 is towards God’s impartiality (!), and that faith includes

Dunn indicates, isolating one or the other sense is quite misleading and “allows nothing for the dynamism of relationship which can embrace both senses—God’s activity in drawing into and sustaining within covenant” (*Romans*, 41). Grace refers here first not to a quality bestowed upon the soul, nor to forgiveness as such, but to God’s freely clearing a path where all was shut up in sin, encompassing in God’s own righteousness the totality of God’s redeeming work. This does include the effects upon individuals, their desire and volition, as they are endowed with the Spirit in baptism, but more essential is the establishment of a new community, an extension of the covenant promises to a cruciform ecclesia whose power (the ‘spirit of holiness’) is communicated by its resurrected Lord whose form it bears.

Already we can see that if Paul’s theme in justification is the righteousness of God, the historical preoccupation of the church with our righteousness cannot be far behind, since the act which “proves God’s love toward us” (Rom 5:8) is precisely the possibility of our being rightly related to God and neighbor. The justifying faith by which such righteousness is possible responds to God neither assent nor knowledge (*assensus, notitia*) nor even as passive trust (*fiducia*) but as obedience, a fact expressed in the practices of Eucharist and baptism. Baptism symbolizes (actualizes!) that “obedience unto death” as it mirrors the servant death and resurrection (justification) of Jesus. Eucharist depicts and enacts the eschatological feast of the reign of God, the obedience of all persons in mutual love for one another, the oneness of all people founded on the oneness of God. More specifically, as the communion of Jews and Gentiles, this ecclesia is stamped with the form of the cross, which brings forth from the nationalistically limited covenant of circumcision and letter the new and universally open covenant of Spirit and faith. Eucharist is the central figure of the new covenant, the epitome of *koinonia*, for it gathers Jew and Gentile, male and female, free and slave, rich and poor around a single table in the realization that when that most fundamental of all distinctions before God falls—that between Jew and Gentile, righteous and sinner, elect and despised—every other distinction as a ground for boasting falls with it (Gal 3:28). Nation, race, sex, class, wealth—contrary to the wisdom of the world, their vanity avails no refuge or advantage. To boast in them is to mock God and seek a righteousness of one’s one, and where they exist as a witness against God’s impartial justice, God’s creatorship, the church displays a counter-testimony (the sharing of possessions was thus a critical feature of the early church, one woefully lacking and misunderstood today). The “obedience that is faith” (Rom 1:5) functions as the character of that counter-community and is the hallmark of its vocation. We will take a second look at grace and the meaning of this covenantal community in a moment.

First, however, we can bring the nature of faith into crisper focus against the background of the Law as portrayed in Paul and the Gospels. As the NPP has argued impressively, Paul did not indict Judaism for a ‘works righteousness’ bent on earning salvation through good deeds to satisfy a vengeful God. Instead, the limitations of the Law lay in 1) its power only to discipline and condemn sin in the flesh, rather than offer the freedom and life it promised<sup>9</sup> and 2) its liability to become a ground for boasting and self-justification, since it a priori excludes some from God’s favor and includes others.<sup>10</sup> Paul even seems to suggest that one could keep the letter of the Law, the *ergon nomou* such as circumcision and rituals of purity, but fail to fulfill its spirit, acquiring a

---

obedience (!) (70), *dik. t. theou* also expresses a “dynamic power from God effecting, through Christ’s cross, forgiveness, justification...” (68).

<sup>9</sup> Cf Hays, Richard. *The Faith of Jesus Christ*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). 178ff. Galatians 2:20-1, 3:13, 3:21.

<sup>10</sup> While J.Dunn seems at times to have absorbed too much of Sanders’ apologia to Judaism (i.e., over emphasizing Jewish-Christian continuity), he does recognize that the ‘works of the law’ which do not justify, among them circumcision, is expanded in Paul to human effort in general. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 52. This in turn points past Dunn to the capacity of the Law for self-justification which in part forced Paul to find in Christ its limitation and a new covenant.

deadly false righteousness (His “robust conscience” has been a recurrent theme in the NPP since Stendahl).<sup>11</sup> In contrast to works of the Law, faith obeys the law of love, looks past the apparent righteousness of social and religious identities to cast its lot with the poor and despised, recognizes that it has no possession of its own, and trusts in God to vindicate the folly of its risk. Trust enters as a necessity in the face of obedience to a dangerous and surd vocation. Jesus evinces this pattern of faith in his relation to the poor, the sick, unclean, and marginalized, his interpretation of scripture, and his direct interaction with the temple authorities, each implying the equality of all persons before God and fidelity to the law of love as the measure of righteousness (rather than works of the Law, such as circumcision). Christ’s death upon the cross as one cursed by the Law merely summarizes his entire existence as one apparently at odds with the Law and conventional wisdom. The conflict of his mission with the Jewish authorities and the intimacy with the Father thrust an ambivalence upon his relation to the God they both claimed to represent, amounting to a seeming contradiction between himself and Torah—a contradiction which the cross resolves on the side of Torah (a crucified Messiah is an absurdity), but which the resurrection resolves on the side of Jesus Messiah.<sup>12</sup> Through the resurrection God *justifies* Christ by virtue of his faith as trusting obedience to his Messianic vocation, a call enfolding a promise of vindication, just as for Abraham. Christ, the New Adam and our *brother*, is the paradigm of obedience to God (Rom 5).

At this point, Luther’s race to the fore, and the scales do seem to tilt in the direction of Catholicism’s triad of justification by faith, hope, and love (cf. JDDJ § 4.2,4.7). If we are justified by obedience to love’s infinite demands in the trust that God will reward those who persevere, how can anyone stand before God? Do we not each fail continually, “in thought, word and deed, but what we have done and left undone,” to fulfill that call of grace? Paul showed in Rom 1:18-3:20 that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” Greek and Jew; all are law-breakers, whether of conscience or Torah. But the question of *can* we be obedient, the mere possibility, is addressed only to those outside the new covenant; the ‘but now’ of Rom 3:21 declares this contrast. I have already designated a crucial difference of the NPP at this point, that the will takes a backseat to Jew-Gentile relations, but now it is time to deepen it. Luther (or Lutheranism) will declare that where our obedience fails and we necessarily oppose God grace intervenes as forgiveness and the imputation of Christ’s merits, the goods won in his death upon the cross. We stand only because Christ stands for us. Catholics did and do maintain that we stand only when grace changes us, makes us righteous through the Spirit (We shall have to ask finally if these are so incompatible). In the perspective advocated in this paper, grace means God’s establishing a community whose charter (the cross) prohibits every form of self-justification and which is equipped with the power to fulfill its vocation in the Holy Spirit. The two together—the removal of the Law’s curse and condemnation, as well as the breaking of creation’s bondage to decay—make righteousness possible for Paul. Contra Luther, Paul does not seem especially anxious regarding our ability to fulfill the terms of either covenant—that would be to deny the power of the Holy Spirit. True, his letters are shot through with the practical proof that sin is still a reality for the church, but that is not something he or any other NT witness fails to contest. His interest is not *whether* we can overcome sin and obey, but only *how* it is now possible.

Abraham provides the paradigmatic illustration of justifying faith as one who trusted in God, obeyed, and was reckoned as righteous, on analogy with Jesus “who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (Rom 4:25). But even if Abraham can convincingly be

---

<sup>11</sup> Contra the classical Western reading, Paul expresses great satisfaction with his performance under the Law. Cf. Gal 1:14, Phil 3:6. Exponents of the NPP sometimes understand this too much as an expression of Paul’s continuing affinity with Judaism, rather than the kernel of that “righteousness of [his] own” (Phil 3:9) which Christ exposes as a deadly sham.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Beker, J.C. *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 182ff and Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Jesus—God and Man*.

held as a model of obedience (e.g., in the offering of Isaac),<sup>13</sup> Luther's exegesis confronts us with another problem. How could "faith in Christ" as the basis of justification ever suggest obedience as its primary content? This surely amounts to syntactical strain, much alleviated if we read *pistis Iesou Christou* as faith *qua* "trusting in" Christ, a connotation readily available from both the Abraham passages in Romans and Galatians and the overall sense of *pistis*. And then again there is also the properly Pauline question of how we could be obedient, given the dominion of sin over us, in addition to Luther's worry regarding works-righteousness (which is real enough, even if it is not particularly Pauline).

Both of these questions receive their answer from the same exegetical insight, namely, that we are justified not by faith *in* but by the faith *of* Jesus Christ. So as to the question of how 'faith in Christ' is possible as obedience *exegetically*, the answer is simple: it isn't! Hays and others have made their case decisively that the subjective genitive renders a far more coherent reading of Paul.<sup>14</sup> As to the question of how faith is possible as obedience theologically, anthropologically, ontologically, the *dual* response is the (Trinitarian) unfolding of grace in the economy of incarnation/atonement and pneumatological blessing. Paul straightforwardly responds to the query in this fashion in Romans 3-8. First, incarnation and atonement. Rom 3:21-31 argues that we are justified by the faith of Jesus Christ. Let me recite briefly Paul's logic. Apart from works of the law (i.e., circumcision) and all self-righteousness, the righteousness of God is made manifest "through the faith of Jesus Christ unto all those having faith" [*dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou, eis pantas tous pisteuontas*].<sup>15</sup> Compared with the thesis statement of 1:16-17, that the righteousness of God is being revealed in the gospel "from faith, unto faith" [*ek pisteōs, eis pistin*], we have a clear parallel and now the necessity of clarifying the *ek/dia*, and then the *eis*.

Asserting afresh the universality of sin, Paul rejoices that sinners are "justified by [God's] grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as expiation through [the] faith [that is] in his blood." What a weight of theology hangs on these verses! Such grace is—grace! It originates entirely with God, is utterly sovereign and unconditional, leaving no room for human attainments. Such grace is—a gift! It is not only sovereign, but free, and free to us, to those who hate and slander God a gift, a mark of favor and friendship and love. Such grace, such a gift—is Christ, the Messiah sent to redeem us! But how? By what miracle has death's tide been split and a way made through the wilderness? By a rite ancient and familiar, through the machinery of God's covenant with Israel, by a death, an expiation. The 'putting forward' of a *hilastērion* irrevocably summons up the sacrificial cult of ancient Israel, in which Christ is cast as the mercy seat, the place of atonement, and the site of God's glory. But this atoning death is qualified, occurring "through [the] faith [that is] in his blood" [*dia [tēs] pisteōs en tō haimati autou*], that is, through Jesus' faithful act of dying, a death of obedience (Rom 5).<sup>16</sup>

The perennial mystery of atonement makes its entrance here to endlessly cloud the question of justification. How does Christ's death remove sin? Only by responding, however inadequately, to this question can we move forward securely to grasp how Christ's death is for us, and so to the

---

<sup>13</sup> Hays, 175-176.

<sup>14</sup> I would only invite skeptical parties to read carefully the exchange between Dunn and Hays in the appendix to the second edition of *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, where I found Hays utterly convincing and was won to his position. See also Johnson, L.T. "Romans 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus," *CBQ* 44 (1982) 77-90. Stowers, S.K. 'Ek pisteos and *dia tes pisteos* in Romans 3:30." *JBL* 108 (1989) 665-74; idem. *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles*. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1994). Williams, S.K. "Again Pistis Christou." *CBQ* 49 (1987) 431-47. Campbell, D. "Romans 1:17—a Crux Interpretum for the PISTIS CHRISTOU Debate." *JBL* 113 (1994) 265-85.

<sup>15</sup> See again the references to Hays, Campbell, Johnson, and Stowers above.

<sup>16</sup> See again Rom 4:25, but also 3: 25 and L.T. Johnson's helpful suggestion that "*dia tēs pisteōs in tō haimati autou*" be read as a hendiadys equivalent to "Jesus' faithful death," a death of obedience upon the cross. *Reading Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary*. (NY: Crossroads, 1997). 59.

nature of our faith (the *eis* following the *ek/dia*). To this end, I offer a hesitant and tenuous reply, though without engaging (explicitly) the likes of Augustine, Anselm, Abelard, and Aulèn. To the apparently bottomless riddle of how Jesus' death takes away sin, I believe any answer which attempts to connect this via a calculative logic with some form of payment, ransom, substitution or satisfaction is bound to fail, just as every attempt in history has come up short. So if not an explanation that places the Christ-event in the cultic economy, then what? A more satisfactory (?) understanding follows Paul's looser narrative or dramatic or experiential logic. As he stands on the other side of the resurrection and in the ecstasy of the Holy Spirit, Paul draws two immediate conclusions. 1) Jesus is resurrected Lord, which means that (at least the extant interpretation/practice of) Torah, that he appeared to contradict, is abrogated along with its condemnation.<sup>17</sup> The paradox of a crucified Messiah throws a wrench in the sufficiency of the Law (Gal 3:13-14). 2) As eschatologically enthroned Lord, Christ is fulfilling the promise to Abraham and the prophecy that God will write the covenant upon human hearts and pour out Spirit upon all flesh, releasing creation from the burden of sin. The primal Christian experience is one of power and freedom—from the law and sin, freedom to love God and neighbor.<sup>18</sup> This has transpired through the death of a man on our behalf, and the most natural way for a Jew in the first century to comprehend this fact is via the language of sacrificial atonement. If we consider, further, that the disciples had no reason in advance to regard Jesus' death as salvific, that their dispersion and fear at the hour of his crucifixion forecloses any such expectation, and that the cry of dereliction from the cross could only in retrospect allude to the pending vindication of Psalm 22, then this interpretation gains a little plausibility.<sup>19</sup> In fine, the *ek/dia pisteōs* through which the righteousness of God is revealed and by which we are justified is Jesus' own faith as an obedience unto death that redeems us from sin and the curse of the Law through his resurrected life. The dramatic retrospect of atonement, however necessary for comprehending that event, does not require theorization in relation to justification as traditionally thought.

But there remains the matter of our obedience or faith, how exactly his faith (*ek/dia*) is for us (*eis*), since God offers Christ “to prove...that he is righteous and that he justifies the one who shares the faith of Jesus” (Rom 3:26; Hays, 284). So we are justified by the faith of Jesus Christ in the further sense of having it ourselves, living his life and dying his death: : “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (Rom 6:4-5) and “it is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me; the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20). Likewise, we are to have the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5), the spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9), to put on Christ (Rom 13:14), to let Christ dwell in us richly. Do such modifications overcome many of the (exegetical) tensions between ‘trust’ in God and ‘love’ (or obedience) to which Lutherans and Catholics respectively appeal for their differing positions on justification, even in the JDDJ? Trust only achieves its full character in the context of obedience to the vocation of a love that risks shame and death. Luther understood too thinly the promise to which faith responds as one of mercy and

---

<sup>17</sup> I cannot address the embarrassment of supercessionism here, but I doubt it can be avoided so easily as, e.g., Sanders and Dunn imagine, even if Christian theology can and must escape it.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., Johnson, Luke T. *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension of New Testament Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> Martin Hengel similarly looked for the basis of the idea of atonement in a “primal event” going back as far as “the foundation of [Peter’s] experience of faith,” rather than in Paul or the Hellenists (53, 59). While Hengel roots it loosely in the resurrection, he seems also to ground the experience of forgiveness in the eschatological turning of the ages as the end of the Law and sacrificial cult, that is, in the permanence of Christ’s atoning power as opposed to the necessarily repeated cult activity. (67-69). He thus presupposes the idea of atonement, i.e., Christ’s death taking away sin, already in his chosen foundation. Were he to focus on the experience of power in the resurrection, he might find a similar interpretation of Jesus’ death. Hengel, M. *The Atonement. The Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament*. (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1981).

forgiveness, before which we could only trust that God would extend to us the merits of Christ's death. Trust takes as its first object not God's mercy, but God's loving justice and willingness to vindicate those who turn in love to God and neighbor and follow God's call; it is figured best in the obedience unto death (and resurrection) that occurs in baptism. 'Works righteousness' does not pose a threat due to the sovereignty of grace and the universal availability and equalizing character of the new covenant, in addition to the fact that the obedience we live is not even ours, but Christ's. Our works are his works.

The question of cooperation returns now, but without some of its volatility, for it is scarcely the center of Paul's theology of justification. And are the old oppositions not less taut from this angle? First and most importantly, the possibility and actuality of our obedience depends not on our working and willing, but on Christ in us through the Holy Spirit. The JDDJ already reflects some agreement on this point. When Paul writes that "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me," it is not hyperbole. Protestants may protest here. Have we not forfeited *solus Christus*? Does justification not depend now on our exertion and cooperation, going even behind the consensus of the JDDJ? No. Only grace justifies, and the grace is Christ's death, only faith justifies, and the faith is Christ's obedience. But, some will insist, does God base justification solely on the righteousness of Christ (Lutherans)? Yes! Does God also base justification on a righteousness in us, or is justification not at least this transformation (Catholics)? Yes! Good Lutherans, Wesleyans, and Protestants of all stripes may worry that the gap between themselves and Catholics has been narrowed far too much, but is nonetheless infinitely deep, and that this has only blurred it over and set a trap for all. Truly, the distinctions have become even more delicate, but I hope the Protestant insight is maintained (I expect we'll debate this). By understanding justifying faith as the faith of Jesus, the apparent difference between righteousness adhering to the soul and *extra nos*, between infusion and imputation, recedes (vanishes?). The righteousness of Christ, his obedience, is indeed alien, yet lives in us through the Holy Spirit as sheer gift. The matter of our cooperation is lost in the mystical union of the believer with the Spirit in love.

Nonetheless, justification occurs in a very real sense 'according to works,' not of the Law but of love.<sup>20</sup> Again, these are the works of the Spirit in us (not ours) and are meaningful only insofar as they belong to a total life's context of response to the call of God and covenantal relation with Christ, rewarded by his mercy and justice with resurrection, adoption, and forgiveness. God gives the impetus (Word), the means (Spirit), and the end (justification); humans have only to accept that gift, let it work in them, and follow the leading of the Spirit to love and good works. Despite the fact the meaning of justification inclines for the moment towards Catholicism, we can still press the reformers' plea as legitimate: does justification depend on anything God does in us, on our cooperation with Christ and the Spirit? The eschatological structure of justification and its irresistible reference to obedience make a 'yes' inescapable, I think. That affirmation is only fidelity to scripture. If Protestants cannot be satisfied with a fusion of the (Catholic) transformation of the will by the Spirit with the (Protestant) meritorious union of the believer with the

---

<sup>20</sup> Consider the following provocative statement from the American dialogue. "In brief, it seems that Paul's eschatological outlook enabled him to speak of both judgment in accordance with works and justification by faith apart from works of the Law" (*Justification by Faith*, 63). Wright expounds this with special clarity by noting the proleptic structure of justification (initial and final justification being equivalent) and its character as a "positive verdict" according to which "moral and physical effort will count to [one's] credit on the last day, precisely because they are effective signs that the Spirit of the living Christ has been at work in him...Justification by faith is the anticipation in the present of the justification that will occur in the future, and gains its meaning from this anticipation. What Augustine lacked, what Luther and Calvin lacked, what Regensburg lacked as a way of putting together the two things it tried to hold onto was Paul's eschatological perspective, filled out with the biblical fusion of covenantal and forensic categories" (idem, 255).

righteousness of Christ (still alien and arguably *extra nos*), then perhaps one final consolation can be proffered by turning to baptism.

In baptism we have the second aspect of grace as the possibility of obedience (the first was atonement) and the temporal dimension of justification. It is also the least understood and maybe the most important. The too frequently unapprehended element of both justification and baptism is their *proleptic* structure, the tension of Already/Not-Yet. Protestants have tended to view justification as a *pronouncement* at the *beginning* of Christian life, dependent only upon one's trust in the mercy of God through Christ, from which good works follow as effect. Catholics have tended to view justification as the *process* by which we are *made* righteous, infused with grace to love God and neighbor, even though these works of love are not the basis of justification. The tension between justification as making or declaring righteous, between faith as love and as trust, threatens the stability of the JDDJ. A proleptic final justification according to works can ease this friction, since justification is, paradoxically, both *grounded upon* good works, as the final vindication of those who trust and obey God, and the *cause of* good works, as the proleptic dying to sin and rising to new life in the Spirit that makes possible and effects those good works in the first place.<sup>21</sup> God's decree of justification anticipatorily creates its own basis, 'crowns his own works,' and in this sense it by no means depends on what God does in us. Protestants and Catholics can therefore be seen to stress two aspects of one event superficially broken apart, sundering the temporal unity-in-tension of justification. Whether sinners are increasingly made righteous or always *simul iustus et peccator*, and many similar antitheses, might find their solution in the peculiar temporal meaning of justification, more or less lost to both Medieval Catholicism and the Reformers.

I have attempted to show here how we might begin to understand the possibility of a greater reconciliation between Catholic and Protestant views of justification through recourse to the NPP. This meant recognizing cooperation or the will as the darksome point around which the historical disputes regarding justification and the neuralgia over the JDDJ orbit, admitting that synergy is not in fact Paul's concern, and then noting that the social and temporal dimensions of justification in the NPP recommend restructuring that doctrine such that many of the antitheses enshrined in the older formulations are alleviated. I wish to make at least one point crystal clear: on this reading, and despite its apparent disagreement with the JDDJ, the unity achieved by that document is wholly underwritten by the perspective laid out here. Moreover, the WMC association is affirmed as well. Even so, and by way of conclusion, I would like to offer some further reasons for Methodists to embrace the NPP and raise a few of the many remaining questions surrounding this proposal. Methodism and (a version of) the NPP are in accord: 1) to the extent that Wesley's desire to synthesize a Lutheran sense of justification with a Catholic sense of regeneration finds in the NPP substantial support; and 2) to the extent that it strengthens the connection of justification to distinctively Methodist piety, polity, and social principles.

For a paper on Methodist association with the JDDJ, Wesley has been strikingly absent. As I said, this omission seemed acceptable because I first wanted to reframe the terms upon which he depended for his own unique synthesis of justification and sanctification. How does this appear in light of the NPP? Critics often argue that the NPP is 'anti-protestant' or 'anti-Lutheran,' siding too heavily with Catholic theology. Frequently, these charges are leveled against straw-men and mere caricatures. But if there is something to the accusation, does it mean that Methodism's distinctive soteriology is rent asunder? To the contrary, we may find an even stronger bonding of the two

---

<sup>21</sup> Karl Holl had already developed a very similar interpretation of Luther at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See Braaten, Carl. *Justification: the Article by Which the Church Stands or Falls*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 10-14. and McGrath, A. *Justitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 197-198.

features Wesley wished to hold together, albeit with some alterations. Whether or not it is still sufficiently 'protestant,' i.e., whether the Reformation insight into justification *sola fide, sola gratia*, is safeguarded, depends entirely upon how we *today* conceive that contribution in the first place. We can, of course, cling to the letter, insist on (non-scriptural) terminology like 'imputation' or general Aristotelianism, and watch history mock our pretensions. Alternatively, Protestants and Catholics alike can with humility admit the need for perhaps substantial reinterpretation of the gospel message as developed on both sides following the Reformation. It is very difficult to imagine that 20<sup>th</sup> century Pauline interpretation, not to say the NPP, should give us all pause before dogmatically asserting the necessity of the specific formulations of grace and faith as they first appeared in our respective traditions. What, we might ask, is the spirit of the Reformation? Is there still good reason to be protestant (or, for that matter, Catholic)? In the sketch above, there is clearly a strong emphasis on regeneration, good works, and ecclesial mediation (of a sort)—elements characteristically Catholic and, among Protestants, Wesleyan. But is justification collapsed into sanctification, forgiveness into making righteous, God's act for us into God's act in us? If not, then Wesley would indeed be closest to this revised position, and those of us who already find his doctrine of grace most faithful to scripture will need only to fine tune our present conception. How is the Reformer's doctrine preserved here? Is the righteousness by which we are judged not Christ's? Do we not receive it as unmerited gift? Or has the NPP (here) finally elided the two? Could the real question here be how to appropriately relate the language of justification to that of atonement, a perpetually ambiguous theologoumena? Do the scope of justification in Wesley and its pneumatological richness also have parallels in the NPP if we choose to focus on the universality and resistability of prevenient grace? How might Wesley help us to think more thoroughly about the perplexing issue of election in this new exegetical and cultural climate? As Ted Runyon suggested, might this not be a necessary consideration for ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue and mission?<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, the NPP rivets Methodist piety, polity, and social principles to the doctrine of justification in way that Wesley surely would have appreciated, but could not quite afford because of his Lutheran inheritance. As to *piety*, the Christ-mysticism that permeates such a new perspective on justification (NPJ) pares well with Wesley's Moravian pietistic heritage and appreciation of experience as a theological category. The communal mediation of justification also points to a need for the means of grace, a further common link between Wesley and pietism. But it is the form of this community which so highly recommends the Methodist *social principles*, above all witness to the blasphemy of social and economic inequity and marginalization. The logic of Wesleyan stances against racial and social discrimination, the aim of solidarity, and the economic dictum of 'earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can,' follow directly from the impartial righteousness of God depicted in the cross and cost of justifying faith.<sup>23</sup> It is this latter point, the sharing of possessions, which was common both to early Methodism and the church in the book of Acts, that grounds the need for a connectional *polity*. By such means we might ensure the responsible sharing of goods (around the world, even!), as well as the unity of the gospel message, the clergy, and the church required to safeguard her preaching and practice. In a time of spiritual deprivation and confusion, subjection to market exploitation, widespread waste and hunger, loneliness and disillusionment, not simply the gospel of justification to the wretched of the earth, but its unique Methodist expression sees admirably equipped to serve the present age. Such, to be sure, is its calling to fulfill.

---

<sup>22</sup> Runyon, Theodore. *The New Creation. John Wesley's Theology Today*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998). 33ff.

<sup>23</sup> For background, see *The Poor and the People Called Methodists*. Ed. R. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002) and Johnson, Luke. *The Sharing of Possessions: Mandate and Symbol of Faith*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985).