

WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT IN SALVATION & SERVICE

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INTRODUCTION

Issues: – If we are to serve the present age amidst the challenges of globalization, John Wesley’s his understanding of the witness of the Spirit and his doctrine of salvation require adjustments. ¹ Our historical context explains part of the reason.

From the last quarter of the 20th century we have seen a renaissance in Wesleyan and Methodist with critical editions of John Wesley’s works and the publication of first rate historical and theological studies. As we enter the 21st century, however, reasons for concerns have emerged. Historical studies can turn into historicism and biographical studies into hagiography. Theologically John Wesley rises in docetic fashion above the vicissitudes of history. The danger was evident as early as the 1977 Oxford Institute. We tried to process the contributions of liberation theologies within what Jose Miguez Bonino, called the “straightjacket” of the *ordo salutis*. ²

I complained then, and will reiterate it here – to process contributions from liberation theologies offered by African American, Latin American, and feminists within sanctification as understood traditionally, involved conceptual confusion and cultural imperialism. The potential contributions of the 19th century Holiness movements were also deflected by the narrow focus. ³ Conceptual confusion in Methodist historical and theological studies concerning of the phrases, “social holiness” and “scriptural holiness,” contributed to the regrettable moves. The complaint does not suggest we forget the quantum leap ahead in the global participation and gracious hospitality toward new voices at the historic 1977 Institute!

Proposal: – Jesus anticipated what can happen with traditions and what must be done. The Pharisees asked why his disciples “break the tradition of the elders.”

Jesus answered, “For the sake of your tradition, you make void the word of God.” (Mt 15:2 and 6. See too, Mark 7:13.)

While the doctrinal traditions of our elders clarify certain words and works of God, they can also muffle additional biblical witnesses to who God is and what God is saying and doing in our present age. It is therefore not adequate to say that we affirm the traditional doctrines and creeds, and that we approve the full Canon, without acknowledging that we can only operate with “a canon within the Canon.” Because we are creatures who are shaped by our traditions and by what God is saying and doing in our context, humility leads us to recognize that we are always operating with a limited vision of all that God has done, is doing, and will do. The point is therefore to seek that portion of the Canon at a given time which illuminates our situation and even corrects what we are doing, without rejecting the rest of the Canon. Those portions will become more appropriate in other circumstances.

This paper offers an example of critical and constructive analyses of our traditional doctrines about the witness of the Spirit and our doctrine about Salvation, and the associated notions concerning “scriptural holiness” and “social holiness.”⁴ An exploration into recasting traditional doctrines in order “To Serve the Present Age.”

Outline: – I will therefore begin in Part I by summarizing Wesley’s evolving views concerning the witness and work the Spirit. In Parts II, I will track five biblical leads to a better understanding of the witness to Jesus and believers. In Part III, I will describe how those identities and calling draw believers into a broader sweep of God’s saving mission. Part IV will explain how gifts of the Spirit fulfill our identities and responsibilities through five offices in the church and contribute to the Four Marks of the Church. In each Part, the paper assumes critical reflections on practices of ministry which created a cognitive dissonance with traditional doctrines. It will describes neglected biblical strands which recast, or better, resurrect doctrines so they will be in consonance with and offer correctives to practices today.

I

WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT IN JOHN WESLEY

Interactions with Moravians defined John Wesley’s understanding of the witness of the Spirit. The first crucial meeting occurred on February 7, 1736, the day after Wesley arrived in Georgia. August Gottlieb Spanenberg asked Wesley whether he had the witness of the Spirit. After he returned to England, Wesley had several important encounters with Peter Bohler, on March 5 and April 22, 1738.⁵

The Moravians convinced Wesley that he needed a witness of the Spirit with his spirit that he had a sure trust and confidence of Christ dying for his own sin, that he had been forgiven and reconciled to God's favor, that a new birth could happen instantaneously, and that when he was born of God, he would not sin.

These points appear in what Wesley reported about his experience on May 24, 1738, at a Moravian gathering in London, England.

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death. ⁶

Several points must be noted about this report. First, Wesley changed his mind on the content and value of his heart warming experience of the witness. Temptations and mood swings in the days that followed eventually convinced Wesley that he was not completely saved "from the law of sin and death" in that moment. Over time he allowed for instantaneous and gradual conversions, degrees of faith, and a distinction between actually being forgiven through faith and feeling the assurance for that forgiveness. Given his reliance on "faith active in love" (Gal 5:6), Wesley consistently called for evidence of faith in the fruit of the Spirit (E.g., Gal 5:22), especially obedience to the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor.

Second, further reflections altered Wesley's perception about his spiritual state prior to Aldersgate. Evidence appears in two passages in his *Journal, I*, entry for May 24, 1738. He says that around 1725, "I was persuaded that I should be accepted of him (God), and that I was even then in a state of salvation." Wesley added a footnote in 1775, reading, "And I believe, I was." In the next paragraph, concerning his condition in 1730, and Wesley states, "At this I was then not a little surprised, not imagining I had been all this time building on sand." Wesley added an additional footnote in 1775, reading, "Not so: I was right, as far as I went." ⁷ The two footnotes in 1775 partly explains the diminishing references to Aldersgate late in Wesley's life. ⁸

Third, Romans 8:16, which Wesley used most often to explain the witness of the Spirit, does not actually refer to a witness with our spirit that we indeed trust in Christ for forgiveness of our sin. This does not mean, however, that we must reject his appreciation for assurance of and confidence in one's faith. There are other biblical foundations to believe in such an assurance and confidence. ⁹

Fourth and finally, we can say something even more positive. Tracking the meaning of Romans 8:16 and the verses which follow provides biblical foundations to recast the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. The reformulation explains more adequately the transformation which occurred in John Wesley at Aldersgate. In addition, these verses explain the enormous impact of the Wesleyan revival in the early decades of the new republic in the US, and around the world in the centuries that followed!

II

WITNESS TO JESUS AND TO BELIEVERS¹⁰

A. WITNESS TO JESUS

John Wesley used Romans 8:16 as his anchor for the witness of the Spirit. “It is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”¹¹ He did not, however, include the next verse, “**if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.**” (Rom 8:17) That verse describes the message in the witness of the Spirit.

In order to understand the meaning of the witness that believers are **children who are heirs**, we will track the meaning through five sets of leads. First, in his baptism, the witness says that Jesus is a **Son**, and the **Beloved**, admittedly without a direct reference to an heir. Second, we therefore turn to Psalms 2 and 110 which biblical scholars feel contemporaries heard in the witness. Those Psalms draw the **connection between son and heir** as we see it in Romans 8:17. Third, we note that the witness at his transfiguration again says Jesus is the Beloved Son, but also adds he is **the Chosen**. Fourth, two passages from the Prophet Isaiah used during his ministry explain the meaning of the Beloved and Chosen. Those passages also add that Jesus is an **Anointed Servant**. Fifth, and finally, we will examine reference to suffering in Romans 8:17. That reference reflects yet another use of Isaiah concerning the **Suffering Servant**.

Because the five leads might confuse readers with the trees, so they cannot see the forest in the cumulative titles and tasks Jesus received as the **Beloved, Son, Heir, Chosen, and Anointed, Suffering Servant**, I offer an outline of the steps.

- A.1 The Witness in Baptism that Jesus is the Beloved Son
- A.2 The Meaning of the Witness to be a Son and an Heir
 - 2.1 Psalms 2:7-10
 - 2.2 Psalms 110:1-6
- A.3 The Witness at the Transfiguration as the Beloved and the Chosen
- A.4 The Meaning of the Beloved as the Chosen, and the Anointed as a Servant
 - 4.1 Matthew 12:18-21 (Is 42:1-4)
 - 4.2 Luke 4:18-19 (Is 61:1-2; 58:6)
- A.5 The Suffering Servant Fulfills God's Call. (Is 52:13-53:12)

While other biblical passages could be cited to explain the meaning of those titles for Christians, we will only examine the five leads which refer to Jesus, and summarize what they mean for believers in Section B.

A.1 The Witness in Baptism that Jesus is the Beloved Son

In the first set of leads, we note that all three Synoptic Gospels record the same witness when the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus.

Matthew 3:17	Mark 3:11	Luke 3:22
17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son , the Beloved , with whom I am well pleased.	11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son , the Beloved ; with you I am well pleased."	22 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son , the Beloved ; with you I am well pleased."

A.2 The Meaning of the Witness to be a Son and an Heir

While the witness to Jesus as the **Beloved Son** is not immediately linked to an **Heir**, we turn to echoes of two Psalms heard in the witness at his baptism. The biblical passages in the second set of leads will appear on the left margin and the meaning on the right margin. Examples of the use of these Psalms in the New Testament are noted in parentheses and in an End Note.

The Bible Passages

- A.2.1 Psalm 2:7-9 (Acts 13:33)
- A.2.2 Psalm 110:1-6 (Acts 2:32-36; 5:31; 7:55 ¹²)

The Meaning

**SON AS HEIR and PROMOTER
of the Reign and Realm of God**

A.2.1 Psalm 2:7-10

- 7 I will tell of the decree of the LORD:
today I have **begotten** you. **SON**
- 8 Ask of me, and I will make the **nations your heritage**,
and the ends of the earth your possession. **becomes an HEIR of the nations**
- 9 You shall **break** them with a rod of iron,
and **dash** them in pieces like a potter's vessel." **(Reign and Realm of God),**
by breaking and
dashing the nations.

A.2.2 Psalm 110:1-6 ¹³

- 1 The LORD says to my **lord**,
sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies your footstool." **“lord “ (as son is an “Heir Apparent”)**
is seated at right hand
of the LORD.
- 2 The LORD sends out from Zion your mighty scepter.
“Rule in the midst of your foes.
- 3 **Your people will offer themselves willingly**
on the day you lead your forces
on the holy mountains.
From the womb of the morning,
like dew, **your youth will come to you.”** **“lord “ (son) is sent forth**
with a scepter to rule amidst the foes.
People will offer themselves,
including the youth.
- 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind,
"You are a **priest forever**
according to the order of **Melchizedek.**" **PRIEST rules forever by means**
of righteousness (Melchizedek)
[and brings peace – King of Shalom],
by prevailing over
the enemies (vs 1) of God
who will reign
over the nations.
- 5 The **Lord is at your right hand**;
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.
- 6 **He will execute judgment among the nations**,
filling them with corpses;
he will shatter heads
over the wide earth.

It does not surprise us that the words “begotten” and “heritage,” or the idea of a son and heir, appear together. (Ps 2:7-8) ¹⁴ The widespread practice of the law of a primogenitor meant the (first, or only) **son was the heir**. In the case of royalty, a son was seated at the right of the Monarch. (Ps 110:1) *Seated*, meant the son “already” shared a measure of the reign, but *seated at the right hand*, meant the son is an heir-apparent, and therefore “not yet” fully in charge. In this case, the reigning Monarch does not die to pass on the heritage! Rather, the son must fulfill assignments to become an heir. Mention of violent actions are difficult for us to read today. (Ps 2:8; 110:1, 5-6) We can, however, attempt to surmise what the imagery meant without adhering literally to the action expected of the son. The son spreads the reign and realm of the Monarch, as Jesus urged disciples to “strive first for the kingdom of God.” (Mt 6:33)

A momentary historical comparison underscores the focus on an assignment. The battle cry for orthodoxy in the early 20th century highlighted the divine source and

subsequent divine substance of Son of God. The biblical text we have examined about the Son, however, is not preoccupied with the **metaphysical source nor substance** of the Son, but looks to the **future scenario** of the Son’s historical assignment and the eschatological prospects. Jesus as the Son of God therefore announced the reign and realm of God is moving in on creation and called for repentance and faith to allow God’s presence to be, in some measure, tangibly realized in the hearer. (Mark 1:15). As signs of its coming into this world through him, Jesus offered miracles by feeding the hungry and healing the sick. At the same time, however, Jesus pointed ahead to the fulfillment of God’s reign and realm. (E.g., Mark 13)

Although the assignment in Psalms 2:8 and 110:6 are frightfully violent, it becomes more manageable in the light of Psalms 110:4. Unpacking the title, “priest . . . in the order Melchizedek,” explains why. The reign (*melchi* in Hebrew refers to the reigning royalty) of the priest is characterized by righteousness (*zedek*, in Hebrew means to righteousness). If we follow the pattern in the Hebrew Scriptures, this priestly reigns with righteousness *and* justice.¹⁵ The writer of Hebrews saw Jesus Christ fulfilling what was hoped for in the **Priest** after the Order of Melchizedek who reigns forever as the “**king** of Salem [Shalom], that is “king of peace.” (Heb 5:5-6; 7:1-2)¹⁶ With this biblical background, we are not surprised that we look to Christ for **peace with justice** (and righteousness).

A.3 The Witness at the Transfiguration as the Beloved Son and Chosen

A third lead appears at the transfiguration when a voice is heard saying that Jesus is a Son and Beloved, and adds that he is also the **Chosen**.

Matthew 17:5	Mark 9:7	Luke 9:35
“This is my Beloved ; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!”	“This is my Son , the Beloved ; listen to him!”	“This my Son , my Chosen ; listen to him”

A.4. Meaning of Beloved as a Chosen and Anointed Servant in His Ministry

In the fourth set of leads, we are not directly examining the witness of the Spirit as in his baptism nor a voice addressed to Jesus at his transfiguration. We examine biblical passages used to explain the titles and tasks Jesus has as the **Beloved who is Chosen**. The titles of an **Anointed** and **Servant**, however, are added in these references. We will proceed through the following steps.

The Biblical Passages

the Meaning

A.4.1 Matthew 12:18-21, from Isaiah 42:1-4 **BELOVED as a CHOSEN and SERVANT, ANOINTED**
 A.4.2 Luke 4:18-19, from Isaiah 61:1-2; 58:6 **for kindness, justice, and liberation**

**A.4.1 The Meaning of the Beloved as the Chosen, and Anointed as a Servant
 Who Practices KINDNESS and Promotes JUSTICE
 Matthew 12:18-21, from Isaiah 42:1-4**

In Matthew 12:18-21, we are examining the first of two passages in the fourth lead. It explains the identities and assignments of Jesus which emerged during his ministry out of the mounting opposition. By this point in the narrative, Jesus had violated traditional religious taboos when he fed and healed people on the Sabbath. His opponents conspired to destroy him. The writer appeals to Isaiah 42:1-4, one of the so-called Servant Songs, to claim it is the Spirit who is behind the ministry of Jesus.

The Bible passage	The Meaning
Matthew 12:18-21, from Isaiah 42:1-4	
18 "Here is my servant , whom I have chosen , my beloved , with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him , and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles .	CHOSEN SERVANT as God's BELOVED is ANOINTED with the Spirit, proclaims justice,
19 He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.	
20 He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory.	practices kindness, brings justice,
21 And in his name the Gentiles will hope."	and generates hope among the Gentiles.

Stated succinctly the anointing of the Spirit meant Jesus is a Beloved, the Chosen and Anointed Servant who advocates and achieves justice and also practices kindness, and thereby spreads God's reign and realm. This fulfills what is expected of the son in Psalms 2 and 110, above A.2.1 and A.2.2.

**A.4.2 The Meaning of the Anointed Servant who
 Practices KINDNESS, and Proclaims and Brings LIBERATION
 Luke 4:18-19, from Isaiah 61:1-2; 58:6**

We are examining the second passage in the fourth set of leads when we turn to the public statement Jesus makes at the beginning of his ministry according to Luke's Gospel. Jesus read a passage from Isaiah and claimed among those who knew him from childhood that the biblical passage was fulfilled in himself. The crowd was scandalized. Familiarity breeds contempt. "The prophet is not without honor except in his country." Even worse, when he added he would not perform miracles among them, but will do so among the Gentiles, they were outraged. They took him to a brow of a hill near Nazareth

to throw him to his death. He escaped miraculously and postponed a much more cruel death on the cross. As before, we will examine the biblical passage on the left and consider the meaning on the right.

The Bible Passage

The Meaning

Luke 4:18-19, from Isaiah 61:1-2; 58:6

**Practices KINDNESS,
Proclaims and Brings JUSTICE**

18 “The **Spirit of the Lord is upon me,**
because he has sent me
to proclaim release to the captives and
recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
19 **To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”**

The ANOINTED

proclaims liberation,
practices kindness,
brings liberation, and
announces the Year of Jubilee has arrived.

The Anointed proclaims and achieves liberation and also practices kindness by healing the sick.

A.5 The Suffering Servant Fulfills God’s Call

The fifth lead draws our attention to **suffering** in Romans 8:17 and to the echoes of yet another Servant Song in Isaiah.

The Bible Passage

the Meaning

16 it is that very **Spirit bearing witness with our spirit**
that we are children of God,
17 and **if children, then heirs, heirs of God**
and joint heirs with Christ
—if, in fact, **we suffer with him** so that we may also be glorified with him.

CHILDREN
as joint HEIRS with Christ, in a
costly struggles

How do we understand the condition of suffering when it says, “If, in fact, **we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him**”? (Rom 8:17) The reference to suffering of Christ is understandable, given the opposition Jesus encountered and the crucifixion he suffered. The Servant Song from Isaiah 52:13-53:12 explained for the early Church the humiliation, abuse, and death Christ suffered for our salvation. One feature of his suffering is “his anguish” and “intercession.” (Is 53:11, 12) Those words explain the connection of suffering in Romans 8:17 with intercession in Romans 8:22-23, 26.

The Bible Passage

The Meaning

22 We know that the **whole creation**
Has been groaning in labor pains until now;
23 and not only the creation, but **we ourselves,**
Who have the first fruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly while we wait for adoption,
the redemption of our bodies. . . .
26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness;
for us do not know how to pray as we ought,
But that very **Spirit intercedes**
with sighs too deep for words.

*By groaning inwardly in labor pain
(in anguish, with pathos),*

*the Spirit intercedes through us
with a sigh too deep for words*

We can call these sighs and groans the “**third**” **gift of tongues**, following the first gift of speaking intelligibly in someone else’s language (Acts 2), and the second gift of tongues with supra-rational outbursts because God is not contained in intelligible words. (E.g., 1 Cor 12 and 14) The third gift draws us into the suffering of others. We begin in “pre-intelligible” sighs and groans too deep for words. The hills may be “alive with the sound of music,” but they are also writhing with sighs and groans, for example, from shallow graves of individuals and mass burials of hundreds, even thousands, around the globe. They recall Abel’s blood crying out from the ground. (Gen 4:10) Paul claims those cries come from labor pains for the birth of a new world reverberating throughout creation, including believers. As those sighs and groans too deep for words come coursing through us, the Spirit eventually enables us to render them intelligible in our intercessions to God. (Rom 8:22-23, 26)

Some Korean theologians called this anguish *Han* which was evident in cries for vindication because of the injustices inflicted on the masses by colonialism from abroad, or dictators from their own people. An example was introduced to the world at the 9th Assembly of the WCC, 1991, in Canberra, Australia. Relying on her Christian and Shamanistic heritage, Dr. Hyung Kyung Chung delivered one of the Opening Messages on the theme, “Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation.” She was something of a mid-wife, drawing out the sighs and groans of labor pains from every continent, and, as a priest, naming and lifting the people’s *Han* to God. After she completed those prayers, she ignited the parchment with the cries she offered. The sparks and smoke rose above her, just as the prayers of the saints rise like smoke from incense to God in the Apocalypse. (Rev 8:3)

Consternation exploded after that session. The Orthodox threatened to walk out of the Assembly and withdraw their membership. Schedules were scrapped to address the disruptions. When Dr. Chung returned to Korea she was removed from a teaching position; her life was threatened.

Over time, however, those unintelligible sighs and groans out of pathos and anguish, pulsating in South Korea during human rights struggles, gave birth to intelligible utterances and comprehensible actions in protests and rebellions, in elections and

legislation. Dictators were toppled. Similarly, the other two gifts of tongue are finally expected to be comprehensible and to produce an orderly, inclusive community. (Acts 2:4-8; 1 Cor 14:6, 13, 27, 33)

B. WITNESS TO BELIEVERS

The five leads we have tracked explain what is meant when the Spirit bears witness to believers that they children of God. The witness of the Spirit is something far more than “warm fuzzies.” Because Romans 8:17 says believers are joint heirs with Christ, then we can assume that the identities and calling of **Children of God** and **Heirs**, and the attending identities of **the Beloved** and **the Chosen**, the **Anointed** and **Suffering Servants**, apply to believers as well. Through the anointing and witness of the Spirit, believers are led, as Jesus was, into **wondrous acts of kindness, courageous efforts for justice, and costly struggle for liberation which generate hope for the Gentiles** (outsiders or marginalized).

Further, the Spirit leads believers into labor pains, with sighs and groans too deep for words, and enables us overtime, to give birth to intelligible messages and tangible deeds, to **intercede with others** in their longing for liberation astir throughout creation.¹⁷ We become **priests** who pray and prevail as **Heirs of the reign and realm of God** (Rom 8:22, 26), albeit proleptically, if only in signs. Through all of this, believers have become “more than conquerors” through the God who loves them. (Rom 8:37).

I return to the points I started with in Part I. The claim of assurance and confidence that one trusts in Jesus Christ for his/her salvation is not based on Romans 8:16, but on other biblical passages.¹⁸ The understanding of the witness of the Spirit we have tracked from Romans 8:16 and following, explains more helpfully what happened to Wesley at Aldersgate. The anointing and witnesses of the Spirit empowered John Wesley to fulfill the identities and calling he received to practice kindness, advocate justice, and advance liberation, for example, of slaves. Generations who followed Wesley have done likewise, however much they may have been opposed and even suffered.

In Part III, we turn to the larger stories in which Wesleyans have fulfilled their, and then in Part IV, to the office in the Church they assumed for the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

III

FULFILLING OUR IDENTITIES AND CALLING: Ezekiel 36:22-36

We fulfill our identities and calling as we participate in the larger sweep of God's saving and sanctifying mission. Critical reflections on practices of ministry led to a cognitive dissonance with traditional doctrines of that mission.¹⁹ Those practices can be reduced to three clusters of efforts, namely, (1) participating in liberation movements, (2) building unity in communities of faith and the world, and (3) creating liveable space in the human and natural ecology. The cognitive dissonance prompted a long search for biblical parallels which explained what was happening. A vivid parallel emerged in Ezekiel 36:22-36. It clarified, but also corrected, practices.

The main petitions in the Lord's Prayer follow Yahweh's promises in Ezekiel. It will therefore summarize major points in this description of the drama in which we fulfill our identities and responsibilities.

A. SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS (36:22-23a)

In Ezekiel's promise of salvation for the Babylonian captives, Yahweh said, "**I will sanctify my great name**, which has been profaned among the nations" (36:23a). What immediately catches our attention is the holiness at issue is not human holiness, but the holiness or sanctity of the divine name, Yahweh. It is not enough to say that Holy means being separate or distinct from all other creatures and gods. If we follow the way the Holy functions in the biblical text, we set this One apart from all others, and speak of the Holy One in much more active terms. God is a living God. This Holy One is offended, and even outraged, by sin, evil, and death. Furthermore, this God goes on the offensive against these desecrations in creation and is creating a new goodness, dignity, and sanctity throughout creation. What is at issue therefore is the distinctiveness of this God who is the Holy One and can therefore be trusted to liberate the Babylonian captives as this God did for the Hebrew slaves.

By comparison, we have humanized holiness. Yes, God expects holiness from us. "You shall be holy for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). What has happened, however, is that we have reduced "scriptural holiness" to human holiness, personal or social, and only recently added the sanctity of creation. Furthermore, the holiness we have in mind for people is, most often in the vernacular, purity in motivations and pious acts, and not the demonstration that God is the Hallowing One as we saw in the Scriptures. We will return

to additional critical and constructive reflection on “scriptural holiness” and “reforming the continent” when we analyze the notion of “social holiness” in relation to the History of Salvation. (Below, page 16)

From now on, “scriptural holiness” should first refer to the distinctive Holiness of God, and only by inference, to holiness in creation. The first command is to have no other gods before us, including our moral purity or superiority. Ezekiel is reminding us continually to set the Holy One before us in whatever we pursue. ²⁰

An observation on the Lord’s prayer indicates where we are in the reflections. After we address God, we first pray, “Hallowed be thy name.” What God promises to do further will establish the sanctity of that name.

B. EVANGELISM IN THE HISTORY AND ORDER OF SALVATION (36:23b)

Yahweh promises, “**the nations (Gentiles) shall know that I am the Lord.**” (Ez 36:23b) To know the Lord is a prominent theme in Ezekiel. He had in mind people coming into an intimate, interactive, and sometimes painfully transforming relationship with God – an apt description of the outcome of evangelism.

Yahweh says the Gentiles will come to know Yahweh when “**I display my holiness before their eyes.**” (Ez 36:23c) What Yahweh displays occurs in the History and the Order of Salvation. The evangelistic consequences do not come from theories about church growth, nor techniques in evangelism. Evangelistic consequences are by-products of God’s saving work. Indeed. Paul plants the seeds, and Apollos waters them, but God gives the increase. (1 Cor 3:6)

C. HISTORY OF SALVATION (36:24)

The History of Salvation is the first course of divine activity which will vindicate the Holy One and lead outsiders to know Yahweh. Ezekiel’s version of the History of Salvation is so succinct we can quote it directly. Yahweh says, “I will

take you from the nations,
gather you from all the countries, and
bring you into your own land” (36:24).

The same three words appear together in no less than seven places in Ezekiel! (See, Ezek 20:34-35, 40-42; 34:13, 22-25; 36:24; 37:21; 39:27-28.) The frequency suggests that they might have functioned as Ezekiel's credo of God's saving work in history, or as clue words which brought to mind clusters of events in three stages. They summarize what Yahweh will do for the Israelites. ²¹

Take refers here to Yahweh staging liberation from captivity, as Yahweh delivered Hebrew slaves from their bondage;

Gather refers to reuniting the scattered tribes, as they were united at Sinai in a covenant with one another and with God; and

Bring refers to Yahweh bringing the scattered people home to rebuild a liveable space in society and in nature, and thus with enough to eat, as was done for the children of Israel in the promised land.

If doctrinal translations help, we can speak of **taking** or liberation as **Redemption** or Deliverance; **uniting** as **Reconciliation**; and **bringing** or building liveable space as **Re-creation** or New Creation. ²²

As noted in Ezekiel 26:23b, the Gentiles, nations, and outsiders will come to know Yahweh through this History of Salvation. To illustrate the point, parallels to the History of Salvation in Ez 36:24 can be drawn from the latter half of the 20th century when we saw (1) liberation or decolonization which restaged the taking; (2) uniting people into a new nation recalled the gathering; and (3) nation building or creating liveable space reminded us of bringing the exile home to rebuild their devastated land. We saw Methodists participate in these developments in Africa, Korea, the Philippines, Eastern Europe, and in Southeast Asia. According to God's promise in Ex 36:23b, we have seen rapid growth in church membership in each case! ²³

God is acting through human agencies in the History of Salvation. Yahweh says, "**when through you I display my holiness before their eyes.**" (Ez 36:23c) Some critics, however, said liberation theologies which supported the "revolution of rising expectations" had succumbed to "godless Marxism." They were suggesting a secular or evil spirit stirred up these efforts, as the scribes said about the ministry of Jesus. (Mk 3:22) If the neglected witness we examined in Ez 36:22-36 describes the activities of God in the late 20th century movements that toppled classical European colonialism and challenged neo-colonialism from East and West in the Cold War, the charge becomes blasphemous. (Mt 12:31; Mk 3:28) Although violence was part of the movements (as in Ps 2:9 and 110:6), the divine stirring could not be reduced to evil spirits and secular efforts in a profane history. Those efforts were integral to God's saving acts in history. A holy or hollowing history has occurred – what Germans call *Heilsgeschichte*.

Despite decades, or perhaps even more than a century of biblical scholarship on histories of salvation in the Bible, theologians are yet to appropriate those contributions for a Doctrine of Salvation. The immediate reason to highlight the broader sweep of the History of Salvation for a doctrine of salvation is to make sense of the courageous faith and costly struggles reminiscent of the History of Salvation in the last half of the 20th century.

One might say that we have moved from the overarching petition at the beginning of the Lord’s Prayer, “hallowed be thy name” (Mt 6:9b; Ez 36:22-23a) and moved on to the ways the Name will be hallowed, viz., “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Mt 6:10) The History of Salvation describes the first concrete way the reign and realm of God is coming on the earth, as Yahweh takes, gathers, and brings Israelites into liveable space. (Ez 36:24) It therefore becomes possible to pray for a very specific and tangible end result, viz., “daily bread.” (Mt 6:11; Ez 37:29-30, 33-36)

D. THE ORDER OF SALVATION (36:25-27)

The second way the Gentiles will come to know the Lord is through the Order of Salvation. We are much more familiar with this way of people coming to know the Lord. Wesleyan theologians have given the Order of Salvation a sacrosanct status by using a Latin title, *ordo* or *via salutis*. Understandably. Scholars frequently say the Order of Salvation is at the heart of John Wesley’s theology.²⁴ We find a neglected version of the Order of Salvation in Ezekiel, when Yahweh promises to (1) “**sprinkle clean water**” and (2) to give them “**new heart**” and put a “**new spirit**” within them, so that they will (3) **follow [Yahweh’s] statutes** and be careful to **observe [Yahweh’s] ordinances.**” (Ez 36:25-27) Ezekiel’s sequence, unlike Jeremiah’s, follows the Wesleyan Order of Salvation.

25 I will sprinkle clean water	Justification
26 A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit	Sanctification
27 I will . . . make you follow my statute . . . observe my ordinances	Perfection ²⁵

While the Order of Salvation is biblical, we now see it is based on a canon within the Canon. It is only a portion of the wider sweep of God’s salvific acts in the History of Salvation. Our captivity to the *ordo salutis* muffled and nullified neglected witnesses in the Bible to the History of Salvation.²⁶

Nevertheless, we have new reason to respect the Order of Salvation. One of the saddest evils in the late 20th century movements occurred when liberators betrayed their own people, exploited and oppressed them, and engaged in appalling accumulation of personal wealth. They fulfilled George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The revolutionary turned into a pig. Nelson Mandela represents an extraordinary exception. While he never lost his passion for (1) liberation, (2) unity of blacks and whites, and (3) building the infrastructures to create a new nation, Mandela did not neglect the personal transformation required of himself, perhaps learned in his early exposure to British Methodism in South Africa.

We have, as it were, turned to the next specific petition in the Lord's Prayer under the broader petition, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven." We say, "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us" (Mt 6:12). Beyond forgiveness, however, are sanctification and perfection. Hence, we pray, "And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from evil" (Mt 6:13). In our liturgical practices, we bring the prayer under the reign and realm of that God, by affirming: "For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours forever and ever. Amen." (Following Mt 6:13 in some ancient texts.)

E. IMPLICATIONS FROM PART III

We have sketched what happens in the History of Salvation and the Order of Salvation. They are two distinct stories with qualitatively different events occurring in each work of salvation. The distinction between two processes provides a framework which explains the complaint in the Introduction (Above, pages 1-2) about subsuming the potential contributions from liberation theology and the 19th century holiness movement under sanctification.

The complaint claimed fuzzy thinking and conceptual confusion were involved in the cultural imperialism which occurred at the 1977 Oxford Institute. The fuzziness and confusion appear in such traditional concepts as "sanctification," "social religion," and "social holiness," and, as already noted, in "scriptural holiness." (Above, page 12) All of these concepts were originally related to personal salvation in the Order of Salvation.

In a very telling line, Wesley says, "When I say [Christianity] is essentially a social religion, I mean not only that it cannot subsist as well, but that it cannot subsist at all, without society – without living and conversing with others."²⁷ Wesley's references to social religion or social holiness very clearly have individuals in mind as the subject and objects of the activity. Even if it is a crowd of people involved, it is the aggregate of

individuals and not what we mean today about social groups with varying degree of coherence as a distinct body. Wesley's appeal to social religion and social holiness are linked to his extensive use of the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor in society, again with individuals in mind. In that sense, he agreed with the Bible. We categorically could not exclude loving neighbor from loving God. (1 Jn 4:20) Again, with individuals in mind, Wesley frequently spoke of "faith active in love" (Gal 5:6) because the individual's "faith without work is dead." (James 2:17, 20, 26)

As the outreach of Methodists increasingly participated in social transformation, "social religion," "social holiness," and "scriptural holiness" were stretched to cover these efforts. We did so without acknowledging or articulating changes involved in the uses of these words. We should have. The components and dynamics involved in personal sanctification compared to the recovery of sanity in social interaction or sanctity in neighborhoods and communities are very different. For example, when we seek justice when labor unions bargain with corporations, when churches and other groups challenge the "military-industrial(and-political) complex," and when African Americans struggle to overcome a White Supremacist society, we are clearly dealing with different components and dynamics in those efforts than when we seek sanctification or renewal of God's image in the mind, heart, or choices of individual. Because we can draw analogies and similarities when sanctification occurs in individuals and in society, we can use the same term, sanctification, but we need to be clear about the differences categories and shifts in substance involved.

Without naming adjustments required in our understanding about sanctification at the 1977 Oxford Institute, it was appropriate to assume that we were processing the contribution of liberation theologies and reform movements in holiness revivals under the old understanding. It is impossible to process those contributions in old personalized categories. It is also fair to say cultural imperialism is committed when we force others with their contributions to fit into our old molds, without necessary adjustments on our part.

The implications should be clear about the components and dynamics in the transformation of various dimensions of inorganic and organic matter in nature. Whether we are saving soil from erosion, protecting endangers species from extinction, reversing disastrous consequences of climate changes, or longing for the eschatological vision of a new heaven and new earth, the factors, interactions, and processes involved in these efforts, which we can associate with the History of Salvation, are very different from those involved in the Order of Salvation.

If we operate with a distinction between the Order of Salvation and the History of Salvation, we have a framework to clarify substantial conceptual shifts involved when we speak of sanctification and holiness in reference to individuals, society, and nature.

Drawing those distinctions will promote clarity in our discourse and integrity in our practice of ministry.

PART IV

FIVE OFFICES IN AND FOUR MARKS OF THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

We have examined the witness of the Spirit concerning the identities and assignments of believers in Part II, and God's salvific mission in which they fulfill those responsibilities in Part III. In Part IV, Section A, we will consider how the identities and calling function concretely with the gifts of the Spirit through offices in the Church, and in Section B summarize how they contribute to the Four Marks of the Church. Ephesians 4:11 outlines the functions of the gifts of the Spirit; the Four Marks of the Church in the Nicene creed offer possibilities to create a Church "To Serve the Present Age."

A. FIVE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT FOR OFFICES IN THE CHURCH: Ephesians 4:11

1. APOSTLES

The gifts of apostolicity enabled disciples to become apostles who fulfill the Great Commission Jesus delivered: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." . . . (*Mt 28:19) Similarly, in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus said to the disciples, "As the Father has sent me [into the world], so I send you." (Jn 21:21) They were to be "witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) In order to fulfill their call, the Holy Spirit came with a mighty wind. Divided flames of fire rested on each of the disciples, depicting the first gift of the Spirit which equipped them to speak intelligibly in a second language beyond their own. (Acts 2:1-3)²⁸ The gift to speak another language has become urgent for the church today where global migration makes nations and neighborhoods multilingual.

Apostolicity appeared in Wesley and his followers when they went forth to share the good news in word and deed. Nathan O. Hatch speaks of the centrifugal missionary

movement Wesley launched. The *Doctrine and Discipline* (1798) of the Methodist Episcopal Church states: “*Our grand plan*, in all its parts, leads to an *itinerant* ministry. . . Everything is kept moving as far as possible; and we will be bold to say, that, next to the grace of God, there is nothing *like this* for keeping the whole body alive from the centre to the circumference, and for the continual extension of that circumference on every hand.”²⁹

Because apostles are “sent forth,” a “from” and a “to” are implicit in who they are. Preoccupation with what apostles are sent “from” without sufficient attention “to” whom they are sent, will send apostles “back” to the past; preoccupation with what apostles are sent “to” without sufficient attention to “from” whom and what they are sent, will send apostles “away” from the faith. The former danger occurs when the word “apostolic” refers essentially to the “faith once delivered,” as in most ecumenical discussions; the latter danger occurs when apostolic means going into the world and being relevant, but losing our distinct identity.

The “to” and “from” of an apostle appear in the Great Commission. When he told disciples to go into the world, Jesus reminded them he would be with them always. (Mt 18:20) Similarly, Jesus sent disciples into the world, but he promised to be with them personally in the Holy Spirit. (Jn 21:21-22 and 14:15). Yet again, Jesus said he left his disciples “in the world” (Jn 17:11), but prayed they would not be of the world. (Jn 17:15)

Evidence of going where we are sent and also knowing where we come from as apostles in the world, is evident in the ministry of prophets.

2. PROPHETS

Prophets fulfill their call by telling three stories. They

1. describe what is happening in the world; and
2. tell forth and demonstrate symbolically who God is and what God is saying and doing in what is happening, both by way of judgment to end evil, and in mercy to bring salvation; therefore, they ³⁰
3. clarify how we can join God by word and tangible signs which represent eruptions of God’s grace in history and points to the culmination yet to come. ³¹

The first two stories prophets tell reflect most directly the dual qualities in the apostles. Daniel will illustrate the prophetic ministry (1) Because prophets like apostles are clear where they are sent to, they enter into unique historical situations and can therefore see what is happening. In Daniel’s case, he out mastered the language of his captors and understood their culture more deeply than they did, therefore he could tell

what was happening. (2) Equally, because they are aware where they are coming from, prophets can bear witness to who God is and what God is saying and doing in that situation. Because Daniel continued his distinct dietary practices and life of prayer in a foreign land, he could therefore read “the handwriting on the wall” what God was doing. (3) Prophets specify how we can join God in what is underway. Daniel told the emperors what they should prepare to do.

Prophecy has sadly been reduced to a pathetic parody in some quarters. Self-styled false prophets only dwell on the first story with negative criticism, name calling, and blame games, but offer little, if any, message of hope with the good God can do in the situation through us.

The classic and succinct instance of a true prophet appears in Isaiah.

1. “In the year King Uzziah died,
2. “I saw the Lord high and lofty, . . . [cleansing God’s people].”
3. “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” (Is 6:1-8)

The three stories appear in Joseph’s life. He says,

1. “You sold me here”; [but]
2. “God sent me before you to preserve life.” (Gen 45:5) Or, further, (1) “Even though you intended to do harm to me, (2) God intended it for good, in order to preserve a number of people” (Gen 50:20); therefore
3. “Hurry, go tell Dad what has happened to his son and bring him back to escape the famine.” (Gen 45:9, adapted)

We see other dramatic examples in Luke 1:5ff; 2:1ff; and 3:1ff. In the opening to three succeeding chapters (1) Luke names a progressively larger number of alien rulers who reign with an increasingly broader scope, and in chapter 3 adds religious leaders in cahoots with foreign powers. (2) But in each case, Luke reports what God is saying and doing, culminating in Luke 3:4, with only “a voice,” not legions of God’s forces, “in the wilderness,” and not in the capital cities of Rome or Jerusalem. (3) Then Luke tells us in the following chapters how we can join what God has launch in Jesus Christ through repentance and faith.

John Wesley could practice prophecy because he was a keen observer of the “signs of the time” through his innumerable contacts, but also because of his extensive reading in all kinds of books. Wesley saw what was happening in individuals and institutions, even if we did not have much to say about ideologies, e.g., mercantilism. Because he was moved by a Holy God, he was not only angered by sin and evil, but also saw what God was doing and could do. Finally, he always turned practical in his sermons

and essays. Two examples appear in his “Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions” and his “Thought upon Slavery.” ³²

Gift of prophecy appropriately sends us forth to rectify a multitude of sins and evils in a vast variety of settings by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and bringing peace through justice. But we are not overwhelmed by the innumerable challenges we address, nor overcome by the resilience and unending outbreak of sin and evil. The reason appears in the gift of the evangelist.

3, 4, & 5. EVANGELISTS, PASTORS, AND TEACHERS:

The work of evangelists has integrity in Ephesians 4:11 because we are first apostles and then prophets in the world before being evangelists. The unique ministry of an evangelist is to “offer Christ” to persons in those situations and create settings where people can accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Evangelists do so because the fulness of the godhead dwells in Christ bodily. (Col 1:19). This does not mean we will dump the whole load in every instance, but we introduce Christ in whom God has launched activities which give coherence to the dizzying diversity of our efforts. Furthermore, because the gates of hell cannot prevail against Christ, we are carried ahead despite set backs and suffering we encounter. What Christ has done also points us to the consummation of salvation which will restore the sanctity of all that has been desecrated.

The gifts of pastors and teachers were exercised incrementally among Methodists. They began with individuals, then created classes and bands, and progressed successively to societies, districts, and the conference. Wesley saw all this happening in the Church of England, as part of the Church Universal. The principle here is to “be apart from” others and yet “be a part of” a larger whole.

A “Priesthood of All Believers” occurred in those settings. Leaders and members followed the Apostle Paul’s counsel, as pastors and teachers, to “encourage one another and build up each other” (1 Thes 5:11) through worship and nurture, in conferencing and covenanting in order “to equip the saints for work of ministry” (Eph 4:11). They went forth with greater sensitivity and better competence as apostles, prophets, and evangelists, and then returned with others to be pastors and teachers to each other in order to process what they did and had happened, in order to go forth again as apostles, prophets, and evangelists, only to return . . . and continued the spiral.

B. FOUR MARKS OF THE CHURCH

The gifts of the Spirit outline ministries which create a Church with the Four Marks. The Four Marks in the Nicene Creed are rearranged for purposes of this paper as Apostolic, Holy, Catholic, and One and move successively through two polarities.

**Because the Church is Apostolic
and yet Holy, it is
therefore Catholic
and yet One.**

Because the Church is Apostolic, it goes into an ever expanding scope for its ministries, even “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8) and “to the end of the age.” (Mt 28:20) ³³ **And yet, the Church is Holy** because, through their offices as prophets, evangelists, pastors and teacher, they set in motion a hallowing salvation wherever they go. ³⁴ **Therefore, the Church is Catholic** because of the ever growing diversity and comprehensive range of holiness. ³⁵ **And yet, the Church is One**, partly in the sense we have seen in the Wesley’s principle of each part “being apart from,” or distinct and diverse, and yet “being a part of a larger whole,” or inclusive and One. ³⁶

The Marks of the Church are not static qualities but more like description of a body of people, the Body of Christ, which is active and on the move. We therefore see the Church moving through the Four Marks through a continuing spiral with the appropriate changes in scope and trajectories as the situation requires, just as we saw with the five gifts for the offices fostering a spiral.

CONCLUSIONS

The moves we have followed have led us to **recover neglected biblical traditions** in order to **recast traditional doctrines**. En route, we discovered reasons to **respect our tradition** or perhaps more accurately **resurrect our tradition**. We have had to die to certain idolatries and fetishes, and rise to newness in our life of faith. (Rom 6:3-4)

In summary, believers fulfill their identities and assignments as Beloved Children of God, and as Chosen and Anointed Suffering Servants who are becoming Heirs to God’s reign and realm in the Church and throughout the world. They promote the History and the Order of Salvation, live out the five fold gifts of the Holy Spirit in offices for ministry through the Church, and thus promote the Four Marks of the Church. In this way, this line of critical and constructive reflections on doctrinal traditions can help us live out the

vision of the 2007 Institute, "To Serve the Present Age," amidst the dizzying diversity and challenges in globalization.

Questions will appropriately be raised concerning the procedure and the appropriateness of the biblical foundations for resurrecting the doctrines.

However, it may be judged, the paper has proceeded with the words of Fred Pratt Green in mind.

The church of Christ in every age,
beset by change but spirit led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead. UMH, 589.

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END NOTES

1. This paper is part of a larger project which proposes to broaden doctrines we associate with John Wesley in order to promote unity in God's mission. The project will follow the procedure pursued here, by reflecting critically on experience in relation to doctrine, exploring neglected biblical and theological traditions which can bring congruence between experiences and traditional doctrine, and recasting the doctrine for faithful ministries.
2. Theodore Runyon, Editor, *Sanctification & Liberation: Liberation in Light of the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), p. 55.
3. Timothy Smith refers to "liberation" in his essay for *Sanctification & Liberation*. In his earlier landmark history, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), however, the concept did not play a role because reform was dominant focus and liberation had not entered the theological vocabulary.
4. For "scriptural holiness," see page 12; for "social holiness," see pages 12 and 16-17.

5. For convenience, I have gathered here descriptions of these interactions from John Wesley's *Journal and Diaries I (1735-1738)*, *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol 18, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), edited by W. Reginald Ward and Richard Heitzenrater. This source will be noted as *Journal, I*, and pagination indicated. I have highlighted crucial words and phrases which are reflected in Wesley's Aldersgate experience.

Spanenberg asked Wesley, on February 7, 1736, in Georgia,

'Have you the witness within yourself? **Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?**' I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" I paused, and said, 'I know he is the Saviour of the world.' 'True', replied he, 'but **do you know he has saved you?**' I answered, 'I hope he has died to save me.' He only added, 'do you know yourself?' I said, 'I do.' But fear they were vain words. *Journal, I*, p. 146.

After returning to England, he visits with Peter Bohler several times. During his encounter on Sunday, March 5, 1738, Wesley was "**clearly convinced of [his] unbelief**, of want of 'that faith whereby alone we are saved,' with the full, Christian salvation." *Journal, I*, p. 228.

Later, on April 22, Bohler raises the ante.

I had now no objection to what [Bohler] said of the nature of faith, viz., that it is (to use the words of our Church), "**A sure trust and confidence** which a man hath in God, that **through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God.**' Neither could I deny either the happiness or holiness which he described as fruits of living faith. '**The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,**' and 'He that believeth hath the witness in himself,' fully convinced me of the former; as '**Whatsoever is born of God doth not commit sin**', and 'Whosoever believeth is born of God,' did the of the latter. But I could not comprehend what he spoke of *an instantaneous work*. . . I searched the Scriptures, . . .but to my utter astonishment, found scarce any instance of other than *instantaneous conversions*. *Journal, I*, p. 234.

In his lengthy *Journal* entry for May 24, covering pp 242-250, Wesley records an undated meeting with Bohler, possibly the one which occurred on April 22. Bohler came with three others who

testified of their own personal experience that a true, living faith in Christ is inseparable from **a sense of pardon for all past, and freedom from all present sins**. They added with one mouth that this faith was the gift, the free gift of God, and that he would surely bestow it upon every soul who earnestly and perseveringly sought it. *Journal, I*, p. 248.

6. *Journal, I*, p. 250.

7. *Journal, I*, p. 245. We should observe that the two footnotes Wesley added in 1775 came after the five sermonic essays affirming the witness of the Spirit written between 1756-1767. The five sermonic essays included, "The Witness of the Spirit" I and II, "The Witness of our Spirit," "On Sin in Believers," and "The Repentance of Believers" in *Sermons I 1-33, The Works of John Wesley Vol I*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), edited by Albert Outler, pp. 267-352.

8. These observations and evaluations appear in a rich collection of essays, *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1990), edited by Randy L. Maddox.

9. In his comprehensive study, *The Doctrine of Assurance: With Special Reference to John Wesley* (London: Epworth Press, 1952), Arthur S. Yates mentions several other biblical foundations for assurance and feeling of certainty that one believes. On the uses of words, Yates mentions *asphalein*, "confidence" and "security," as in Acts 5:23 and 1 Thes 5:3; *pistis*, meaning "pledge" or "guarantee" in Acts 17:31; *symartureo*, "to bear witness with" as in Romans 2:15 and 9:1; *plyrophia*, "to be fully persuaded, to be fixed or firm" as in Rom 4:21; 14:5; and Col 4:12; and *hypostasis*, "assurance" as in Heb 11:1, 36. (Yates, p. 109-110)

In addition to words, Yates mentions biblical passages which affirms assurance and certainty, e.g., 1 Th 5:3 2 Cor 2:5 (121-122); Heb 6:11 and 10:22 (128-132); and 1 Jn 2:3, 5; 3:14, 24 (123-124, 126). Yates noted that Wesley used a few of these passages, especially in responding to accusations of fostering "enthusiasm."

At the 1744 Methodist Conference, Wesley relied on the previous verse, viz., Rom 8:15, concerning our adoption and ability to cry out, "Abba." (Cited by Yates, p. 63) This does not relieve the problem. That we can cry to God as Abba, or Father, may be the consequence of the witness that we are a child of God, but this is not the ground for affirming that we have a witness that we believe in Christ, and are therefore

children of God. Hence the additional words and passages concerning assurance and confidence become important.

10. In the interest of abbreviating an earlier version of this paper presented in the Systematic Theology Working Group, the following were deleted: (1) experiences in ministry which caused a cognitive dissonance with the traditional understanding of the witness of the Spirit, and (2) the biblical foundations for the late 20th century ecumenical consensus on the distinct role of the anointing of the Spirit in the sacrament of baptism. They sent me in another direction for an understanding the witness of the Spirit. We turn to five sets of leads in Part II A, "Witness to Jesus," in this version of the paper.

11. As noted earlier, there is no reference in Romans 8:16 to the witness of the Spirit with his spirit that he did indeed trust in Christ who died for his sins and forgives his own sins. If being a child of God required this trust, then the witness is at best only inferred. This raises a question how we read "child of God" – in creation, after believing, or as another step in the process of initiation with an anointing of the Spirit, or somehow relevant in different ways to all of those settings.

12. It has been noted that Acts 7:55 is the only place in the Bible when Jesus is "**standing**" and not seated at the right hand of God. In the protocol of the royal court, the subordinate stands to honor someone who is higher in position, as we do today in our courts when we stand to demonstrate our respect for the judge and all that he/she embodies. It is therefore truly amazing that Jesus stood up to welcome Stephen, the first martyr, into God's presence!

A parallel appeared in Central American during the costly Cold War struggles. Resisters gathered for planning, Bible study, and prayer. When they took "attendance," they rose from their chairs. As they stood in attention, they named those who had disappeared, and virtually shouted in defiance, "Presente"!

13. In his book, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1985), Fred B. Craddock, says, "Psalm 110 alone receive more than thirty-five interpretations by New Testament writers"! (p. 129)

14. For example, Jer 49:1; Mt 21:38 (and parallels in Mk 12:6-7 and Lk 20:13-14); Gal 3:7; Heb 1:2 and 1:7.

15. Jose Forfinio Miranda called the conjunction of righteousness and justice to our attention in his *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1974).

16. The combination of priest and king is crucial to the identity of Christians (Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6) as it was in David the King with the biblical prayer book in the Psalms attributed to him. Hence the role of prayer and reigning over sin, evil, and death will be evident in this exploration.

17. From the perspective of Romans 8:22-26, John Wesley was interceding in intelligible words and tangible deeds as he slogged his way through melting snow, at age 81, collecting money for the poor.

18. Seen above, End Note 9.

19. In the interest of further abbreviating the paper, a fuller description of the practices and a wider range of issues have been deleted from the version of this paper which was presented to the Systematic Theology Working Group.

20. Although Acts 2:25 read, “see” the Lord before us, based on the LXX, the original in Hebrew from Psalms 16:8 reads, “set” the Lord before us. Therefore we are responsible to set the Lord before us, if we are to see the Lord before us.

21. The closest outline to this History of Salvation in Hebrew Scriptures appears in *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981, 2nd Edition, 1994) by Elmer A. Marens. He finds four stages in the History of Salvation told in Exodus 5:22-6:8. He sees knowing Yahweh, the evangelistic note in Ex 36:23b, as a separate stage in the story beyond the taking, gathering, and bringing the people into the promised land which I am calling “liveable space” and includes the human and natural ecology. Of those I have examined, no major commentary on Ezekiel points out the pervasiveness of the three stages used in this paper, nor does any other theology of Hebrew Scriptures outline God's salvific acts in these three or four stages.

22. Notice the sequence moves from Redemption to Reconciliation. After his typical lengthy review of the Bible, Karl Barth decided that he would treat Reconciliation before Redemption. His sequences reverses what we notice in Ezekiel. This should not

surprise us, since so much of the history of theology in the West has been preoccupied with reconciliation, such as the work of Christ virtually reduced to a Mediator achieving at-one-ment.

This reflects an unnoticed consequence of the Constantinian settlement when the operation of intermediaries through the Roman hegemony between God and creation had been overcome. Once redemption from the “principalities and power” of Rome was accomplished, then reconciliation with God becomes the primary religious task. To live with the Constantinian settlement without noticing other “principalities and powers” have emerged between God and creation is to do theology with a “false consciousness.”

The same false consciousness applies to the situation in the US. Most theology is done with a post-Revolutionary War context because the Royalty and Parliament which dominated the colonies no longer prevail. Middle class theologians in the US, regardless of gender or color, live above the poverty line, but fail to acknowledge that they live under “power-line.” Doing so fails to acknowledge the new intermediaries which have emerged over the US through transnational corporations, primarily in financial institutions. Their hegemony is reinforced by political structures and their supporting casts in coercive measures from the police to the armed forces, and sanctioned by the media, institutions of higher education, and think tanks.

If these power analyses are basically sound, then the history of salvation which called for a new redemption before a new reconciliation proclaimed by Israel’s prophets in the 6th - 5th centuries BCE become more appropriate than the prophets during Israel’s nationhood.

To return to the example of Karl Barth, he was so consumed with Reconciliation in Volume IV he never turned to Redemption in his projected Volume V. Euro-American theologians have found it difficult, if not impossible, to establish Redemption as a separate, much less a prior divine act before Reconciliation. Recovering the story which moved from exodus to covenant, redemption to reconciliation, still has an uphill struggle among many Euro-Americans.

23. Parallels could also be drawn with (1) the American Revolution which overcame colonialism, (2) the Constitution which united the nation, and (3) nation building. Latest historical studies make it possible to establish US Methodist participation in all three phases and contributed to its rapid growth in the early 19th century.

24. There is a further historical reason to appreciate the contribution John Wesley made. Martin Luther regained an appreciation for justification by God's grace through faith, and John Calvin re-established a place for sanctification, but John Wesley dared to propose perfection which is the biblical culmination of the process. No small contribution!

25. What is curious and ironic is the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:33-34 and cited in Hebrews 8:10-12, creates quite a jumble of the normative Order of Salvation. Even if we say forgiveness and sanctification are so closely linked, they are distinguishable in thought, but not in experience, the orthodox articulation of the Order of Salvation moves from forgiveness (justification) to sanctification, and then perfection. Why call it an **Order** of Salvation, unless a sequence is implied.

In any case, Jeremiah's new covenant moves from

(1) what sounds like **sanctification** in Jeremiah 31:33b, "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts";

(2) to what sounds like **perfection** in verse 34a, "No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest"; and

(3) to justification or **forgiveness** of sin in verse 31:34b, "for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more."

Or, is the "for" concerning forgiveness in 31:33b suggesting a condition which comes prior to something else, either sanctification or perfection. Whatever, if anything of substance is implied, the sequence in Jeremiah's Order of Salvation is obscure.

Jeremiah's "Order of Salvation" comes after his abbreviated version of the History of Salvation. Exodus (Jer 31:31-32) comes before the covenant (31:33-34), that is, theologically, Redemption before Reconciliation. Again, the covenant, including forgiveness, sanctification, and perfection, is set off from the exodus, or liberation. As such, one could say sanctification is subsumed under or at least subsequent to, exodus or liberation, and not equated with it as was assumed in much of the proceedings under the 1977 Oxford Institute theme, "Liberation and Sanctification."

26.

We can only note at this point that the stories of salvation need an even broader sweep in the mission of the triune God as Creator, the Christ, and the Consummator, the Source, Savior, and Sanctifier. If we took more seriously the Creator, for example, we could work on constructive effort in globalization rather than only decrying the evils

of globalization. God “has created and is creating,” as we have learned to affirm from “A Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada.”

The point came home to me in reading *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (NY: Penguin, 2005), by Jeffrey Sachs. He recognizes the tragic problems which globalization brings, but Sachs has established a record of micro and macro-economic development in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Fortunately he heads up the UN Millennium Development Goals to end poverty for one-sixth of humanity by 2015, and end extreme poverty for all of humanity by 2025. His proposals are more akin to joining the work of the Creator, rather than an exclusive preoccupation with naming the evils, and how we can correct them through the work of the Christ and the Consummator.

27. Quoted by Runyon, in *Sanctification and Liberation*, p 42, from Thomas Jackson’s edition of Wesley’s *Works*, 5, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979 reprint of the edition published in London, England, Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, 1829), p. 296. Runyon has conveniently gathered other relevant lines on pp. 35, 41-43, from *Works* 5, pp. 302, 305-306, and the less accessible, but important quote in *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (London: Wesleyan Methodist Conference Office, 1868), edited by George Osborn, Vol 1, pp. xxii. Runyon, pp. 35, 42.

28. The divided flames in the logo of The United Methodist Church reverses the direction. The two flames depict two denominations becoming one, not fluency in one language becoming an ability to speak in a second language at Pentecost.

29. Quoted in Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 86.

30. The ability to describe what is happening and bear witness to who God is and what God does in situations, was captured in the dictum attributed to Karl Barth that we carry a news paper in one hand and the Bible in the other.

31. These three points develop the two questions H. Richard Niebuhr observed at critical junctures in the history of Israel and the early Christian community. They asked: “What is happening?” and then “What is the fitting response to what is happening.” See, H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self* (NY: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 67. My three points interjects a question between these two questions with: “Who is God and what is God saying and doing in what is happening?,” as a clue to “What is

appropriate, or how can we join God in what is already underway?"

32. John Wesley, "Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions" (pp. 53-59) and "Thoughts upon Slavery" (pp. 59-79) in *Works*, edited by Jackson.

33. Apostolicity of US Methodism is described by Dee E. Andrews in variations on two key words, "movement" and "missionary." Typically, Andrews writes, "The **missionizing drive of the movement** continued to be one of the most original and dynamic feature." Andrews, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2000), p. 238 (Emphasis added). "In 1850, David Campbell, . . . would describe Methodism as 'completely a missionary system' designed 'to carry the Gospel to the very fire sides of the most ignorant and benighted of our countrymen.'" Andrews, 243.

Speaking broadly, Nathan O. Hatch says in 1820 US Methodism had a quarter of a million, by 1830 it was twice that number. *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale, 1989), p. 3. In a more detailed chart, David Hempton notes the growth from 57,858 in 1790 to nearly tenfold, 501,298, in 1830, and more than doubled that by 1850 to 1,247,077, in his *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven: Yale, 2005.), p. 212. According to Mark A. Noll says, in *A History of Christianity in The United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), that in 1776, Methodists ranked fifth in the percentage of the population, with 2.5%; by 1850, it ranked on top, with 34% of the population. (p. 153)

34. The mission of Methodism in the US, was to "reform the continent, and spread scriptural holiness." As noted earlier holiness here did not refer to sanctity of the divine name, Yahweh or Lord, but the humanized understanding of holiness. They saw themselves spreading this holiness by leading people through the Order of Salvation. Concerning the doctrinal coverage of Methodist conversions, Andrews says it included "original sin, redemption through Christ's sacrifice and resurrection, free will, and final judgment as well as the perfectionist emphasis on the Holy Spirit's transformation of the emancipated heart." Andrews, p. 78.

35. David Hempton called the spread of Methodism an "Empire of the Spirit." As evidence he says, "By the 1880s, only a hundred and fifty years after Wesley's heartwarming experience in London, Methodism, either of the English or the American variety, had established a foothold in most countries of the world," *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, (New Haven: Yale, 2005), p.151.

Catholicity in this paper does not only mean geographic coverage, but more importantly the variety of people in that wide area and in the church as a whole. Hence catholicity means inclusion of a diversity of people with distinctive expressions of the faith. As Andrews noted, "Methodism [in the US] was, . . . an extraordinarily inclusive movement." Andrews, 242. She has separate chapters on inclusion of women (pp 99-122) and African Americans. (pp. 123-154) Andrews also describes Methodism reaching not only the poor, but also middling people and the upper classes in such centers as Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia. (Pp 155-183) See too, her Appendix A, Tables 1-14, pp. 248-256, for a careful breakdown of the various diversities.

36. Andrews reproduced a dramatic picture of Methodist "connectionalism" in 1818, where the church is catholic yet one. The picture has six concentric circles, hence one form of diversity. The six circles represent ever expanding connections moving successively from the Bands, to Classes, Circuits, Districts, Annual Conference, and the General Conference. Lines go from the smaller circles into the larger circle, and vice versa, hence the inclusive connections. Andrews, 208.

What we have in the picture is a diversity which is tied together into a whole, and thus united, or one. To cast the oneness in these terms averts the constant temptation to reduce one to being same or uniform.

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