

ANSWERING THE WHY: Reclaiming the Past for the Future ©

by

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The conversation took place on a casual vacation Saturday afternoon in the San Francisco area. As we sat in the backyard with my brother and sister-in-law, my wife and I inquired about what local churches were nearby where we could worship God the next day. Scott and Sharon do not belong to any local church and give no evidence of any deep religious convictions. With charity and without condemnation, they are not Christian. But Jolynn and I thought they knew the area, and so we inquired.

The two of them fumbled around trying to think of the nearest United Methodist Church. After a while, they decided there might be one on a certain street a couple of miles away. They weren't sure. So I checked online, found the worship times. And we invited them to go with us. Scott's answer was an intriguing one. He said, "Why? Why bother?" He said, "If I go they're going to tell me to be a nice person, to help others, and out here they're going to advocate something that sort of looks like the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Well," he continued, "I think I am a nice person. [For the record, I agree. He's a good person and a moral man.] And I've tried being a liberal Democrat. I don't think it works. I've tried," he said, "being a conservative Republican. I don't think that much works either. He paused and reflected something like this: "I

appreciate the invitation, but why would we want to bother going to church? Even more, why would we want to bother being Christian?”

There is more to this personal story, but it is the haunting final question of my brother that grips my mind. I place it now before you. *Why bother being Christian?*

Why bother, indeed? Cannot life be good, full and satisfying without any real connection with God? Still further, is it not possible to be spiritual without being religious? (I have no idea what that means and/or looks like. Still further I would assert that the very concept of SBNRs -- spiritual but not religious -- is philosophical nonsense; literally makes no sense.) The answer is no. You can't be “spiritual” but not religious. Spirituality by definition implies some form of a religion as the philosophical foundation of that spirituality, however inchoate and loosely organized it might be. The more sophisticated question is what or how you are religious -- Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, or your own personal concoction (a religious version of the so called “Singapore Sling” that my college buddies insisted I drink when I turned 21). Still the question attaches itself to us and our time like a piece of Velcro that will not be shaken off. *Why bother being Christian?*

The central thesis of this paper is that the Methodist movement in North America must grapple again with the “why question” in our post-Christian and postmodern world.¹ At the foundational heart of answering the “why question” lie core convictions of belief, value, and commitment. The “why question” is intensely philosophical and theological. Candidates abound for answering this critical question, but few offer satisfactory answers for my brother and his ilk.

The contention of this work is that reclaiming a vibrant and robust core orthodoxy for the United Methodist Church in North America is at the center of our currently theological agenda and any satisfactory answer to the “why question.” My essential claim is that we need to move back to the past in order to reclaim a faithful future as a Methodist movement for the greater Christian movement and the Church Universal. The book of The Acts of the Apostles is more insightful today in our post-Christian culture than it has been since the Battle of Milvian Bridge. The witness of the original Wesleyan movement offers a vibrant guide today in its full orthodox enthusiasm. God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit is calling us to a new future anchored in that past. Reclaiming a vibrant and robust core orthodoxy will entail at least four elements. It must be: 1) Genuinely orthodox; 2) Truly Wesleyan; 3) Unapologetically

¹ I shall focus this work on the North American mission field because this is the field of service in which I find myself and that to which I am best able to speak. Wider application of this paper is appropriate, but the limitation of time and space call for a focusing of effort and application.

evangelistic; 4) Passionately missional. It is to the first of these essential claims that this paper will focus its attention. Additionally, aspects of being “unapologetically evangelistic” shall be addressed at their critical connection points in relationship to orthodox theology and offering an answer to the “why question.”

The Importance of Orthodox Doctrine

Doctrine was central in the life of the earliest Christian movement. After the Holy Spirit descended, Peter preached, and listeners responded with repentance. The life of the newborn church was anchored in its doctrine. “The believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers.”² Other translations render the word “teaching” as “doctrine.” Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary defines the term *doctrine* simply as “a principle or position or the body of principles in a branch of knowledge or system of belief.”³ Jaroslav Pelikan in *Acts: Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible*, references the *textus a patribus receptus* with a stronger translation of action of those earliest Christ followers. “And they were *persisting* in the doctrine of the apostles.”⁴ Thus the critical importance of doctrine (or foundational teaching) emerges as a centerpiece of the life of the earliest Christian church. The importance of doctrine towers over any strategy for growth or program for action. It is a first-order claim on the life of the church.

John Wesley famously wrote: “I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast to both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.”⁵ Wesley both assumed and argued for the essential importance of doctrine. His genius is the way doctrine is combined with spirit and discipline. Such a connection is a reflection of what early Methodists called “primitive Christianity.” They reached back to the first expression of the Christian faith found in the book of The Acts of the Apostles as well as the writings of Paul and the Gospels to grasp again at what was essential and central to the Christian movement. Among a number of distinctive elements the Methodist movement brought back to the fore, was the embodiment of theology in spirit and discipline. Properly understood for Methodists was the notion that theology - core doctrine - was not an idle aside but a central expression of the faith to be lived out or embodied.

All of this seems fairly obvious at first reading; yet, the scene on the North American mission field has largely tried to divorce orthodoxy from orthopraxy; a vital set of core teachings, beliefs, and convictions has been separated from core practices. Wesley’s fear that we

² Acts 2:42 (Common English Bible). All biblical quotations will be in Common English Bible translation unless otherwise noted.

³ www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/doctrine.

⁴ *textus a patribus receptus*, excerpt from Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts: Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), 57; emphasis added.

⁵ John Wesley, “Thoughts Upon Methodism,” 1786.

should exist as a “dead sect, having the form of religion without the power” has now largely become the case in the mission field called North America. We have held fast to neither the doctrine and spirit nor the discipline on which we first set out. Far from a casual academic exercise, answering the “why question” and recovery of a core orthodoxy at the heart of our teaching and preaching is central to any faithful future for the Methodist movement in North America, and in particular in the United Methodist Church. One shudders in recalling the casual comment of a church staff person to her pastor, “We’re Methodists; we can believe whatever we want, can’t we?” No, we can’t. We have to reclaim the past for the future if it is to be faithful and in any sense enduring.

A common answer to the “why question” has taken cultural root in the North American mission field through a heartfelt appeal in moral rectitude. The driving theological conviction is built on the great commandment to love God and love others. From such a strong harbor the Christian faith sets sail in holy crusade to improve human society. For some this Pelagian vision of the Christian faith gains its impetus from attempts to eradicate the blights of war, racism, hunger, and injustice in all their variety and form. The goal and the end of living is the transformation of society with some vague utopian notion of what a just society looks like.

The biblical warrants for such a position are numerous. Amos speaks from the pages of the past:

I hate, I reject your festivals; I don’t enjoy your joyous assemblies. If you bring me your entirely burnt offerings and gifts of food -- I won’t be pleased; I won’t even look at your offerings of well-fed animals. Take away the noise of your songs; I won’t listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.⁶

Christ challenges us in the parable of the Good Samaritan. “ ‘What is written in the Law? How do you interpret it?’ He [the legal expert] responded, ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.’ ”⁷ But the legal expert wanted to prove that he was right, so he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”⁸ wherein Jesus tells the story of two men passing by a man robbed, beaten, and left to die. A third man, a Samaritan, stops and renders aid. The Master closes with the famous

⁶ Amos 5:21-24.

⁷ Luke 10:26-29.

⁸ Luke 10:29.

line: “ ‘What do you think? Which one of these three was a neighbor to the man who encountered thieves?’ Then the legal expert said, ‘The one who demonstrated mercy toward him.’ Jesus told him, ‘Go and do likewise.’ ”⁹

In the parable of the judgment of the nations, the Lord leaves no doubt on the importance of love, justice, and mercy as a cardinal claim on the life of every follower of His and on the life of the church as a whole.

Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who will receive good things from my Father. Inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world began. I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then those who are righteous will reply to him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you, or naked and give you clothes to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ Then the king will reply to them, ‘I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.’¹⁰

Taken as a whole, who could reasonably doubt the importance of such a response of faithfulness? Yet my brother’s question lingers. One answer to the challenge of the transformation of the world in love, justice, and mercy has been the various social programs of liberal democracies and, in particular in the United States, recent stances of the Democratic Party. Yet surprisingly enough, others read the same set of passages and come up with a vastly different social and political moral agenda. They note the claims of love, justice, and mercy as their impact on the most vulnerable, the unborn children, and thus enter a holy crusade against abortion. Or still others perceive a moral collapse in the United States driven by a failure to take seriously the call to personal holiness. In response many advocate a renewed individual spirituality linked to the notion of freedom and liberty.

However well intended, the competing options demonstrate the failure of an exclusively moralistic position at the heart of the church. The impetus is good, even holy, yet by themselves the claims reduce the Christian faith to the Pelagian notion of saving yourself through moral

⁹ Luke 10:36-37.

¹⁰ Matthew 25:34-40.

effort. What need of Christ and the church? Perceptively, Phyllis Tickle comments: “if on a Sabbath morning at 11:00 a.m. – and only at 11:00 a.m. – one can either build a habitat for humanity or go to the mass, the Social Justice Christian will say that faith without works is meaningless and go build the house, albeit with some regret.”¹¹ In time, if not nurtured by the deep roots of faith, the moralistic or social justice perspective withers like a tree without water. It is but a short step to drop the label Christian and engage from a singularly social justice perspective. It is worth further noting that study after study of behavior and attitudes among Americans point to little difference between those who profess faith in Christ and those who do not; between those who are church attenders and those who are not.¹²

Our son, now aged 34, has received degrees in both engineering and philosophy. As he has moved about the United States, he has stayed active in local churches, participating in various leadership roles. Through his moves he has had the opportunity to visit quite a number of churches. His insights are anecdotally telling. Nathan commented to me in frustration, “Dad, the typical Methodist sermon consists of three points. One, God loves you. Two, love each other. Three, come on you all, try harder to love each other!” His take on such insipient (and common!) Pelagianism offers scant incentive to those struggling with a “why bother” mentality. The religious “nones” (those belonging to and/or not practicing any formal religion) can get their fill of activities of love, justice, and mercy in a variety of other ways than through the church.

Stirred, not shaken (to borrow from James Bond), such an understanding of Christianity hardly merits getting out of bed on Sunday morning. Yet the deep hunger to somehow be “spiritual” remains. What is lacking is a sense of compelling substance and experience of the divine.

The drive for a moralistic core often has been yoked with a therapeutic milieu. Evidence rises out of the sense of being nice, which permeates the casual cultural understanding of the Christian faith. This is well documented in the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR). Kenda Creasy Dean notes in reflection: “The other 60% -- the majority of American teenagers, who disproportionately call themselves mainline Protestant or Roman Catholic -- harbor an

¹¹ Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 129.

¹² A recent Gallup poll notes that many believe society would be better off if more people were religious, but there is no evidence of concomitant commitment to go with such data. (www.gallup.com/poll/162803/americans-say-religion-losing-influence.aspx). Research by The Barna Group and the Pew Report on Religion in America share similar data.

attitude toward religion that one researcher described as ‘benign positive regard.’¹³ The facile limpness of such a weak assertion points to the lack of theological depth not just in our youth but also in the wider mainline Protestant and Catholic culture. Dean goes on to comment, “While most teenagers agree that religion is good, even important (even if it is not particularly important to them), they cannot explain how or why this is so, and many of them believe religion makes no difference to them personally.”¹⁴

Dean’s second chapter, “The Triumph of the ‘Cult of Nice,” lays out the therapeutic argument in detail. One brief section is worth examination as representative of the therapeutic sense of “niceness” which saturates the current North American religious scene.

American young people are devotees of nonjudgmental openness, self-determination, and the authority of personal experience. Religion stays in the background of their lives, where God watches over them without making demands of them. God, above all else, is “nice.”

‘What do you think God is like?’

‘I would imagine he’s a very nice guy.’ (Evan, seventeen-year-old Mormon)

‘I think he’s nice, but I don’t know because I haven’t actually met him before.’ (Michael, thirteen-year-old Lutheran)

‘[God is] like a really great father who cares about all of us, stuff like that. Like a really nice person.’ (Sam, thirteen-year-old Baptist)

It comes as no surprise, then, that teenagers tend to equate Christian identity with niceness as well.¹⁵

¹³ Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 27-28.

¹⁴ Dean, *Almost Christian*, 28.

¹⁵ Dean, *Almost Christian*, 28.

The youth are reporting an understanding of God and the Christian faith similar to that of my 65-year-old, older brother. Indeed the biggest “bombshell” dropped by the NSYR was the fact that they reflected what they had received from adults. Tellingly, “[Christian] Smith and [Melinda Lundquist] Denton observe: ‘Our religiously conventional adolescents seem to be merely absorbing and reflecting religiously what the adult world is routinely modeling for and inculcating in its youth.’”¹⁶

In addition to this research, reflection on much of what passes for Sunday preaching in America can fall under the headings of either 1) moralistic - try harder to better support justice and love as defined by X political group(s) and advocated by the national denomination – or, 2) therapeutic – God is here to help you be a better person. Such preaching is often reflected in sermons that outline how to live a more healthy and holy life. Joel Osteen is Exhibit A of the therapeutic understanding of the Christian faith as preached from the pulpit.¹⁷

At a recent worship service in a medium-sized church in an Oklahoma town, the focal point of the sermon was to be good (defined as a version of being a nice and helping person) and do good (serve in concrete ways to help those less fortunate). Those are laudable admonitions. Who can be against being a good, nice person? Who can be against being or doing good works? And yet they are a far cry from a full-blown doctrine of sanctification, from holiness of heart and life as John Wesley explicated. They are at best only a baby step in the direction of radically reaching out to the stranger as exhibited in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Others have traced at length our theological drift into the backwaters for Enlightenment deism salted with tradition and peppered with scripture. The theology we have been largely pursuing for the past half century or more is largely bankrupt. A number of examples demonstrate the case. As previously indicated, The National Study of Youth and Religion documented in detail an anemic brand of deism that inculcates much of the religious (and avowedly Christian) culture of North America. The authors trace the roots of such vague deism as nourished in the soil of nice-ness and a “feel-good spirituality that has little to do with the Triune God of Christian tradition and even less to do with loving Jesus Christ enough to follow him into the world.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 262, quoted in Dean, *Almost Christian*, 29-30.

¹⁷ Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics* (New York: Free Press, 2012) documents this therapeutic trend well, linking it to the “prosperity gospel.” See Chapter 6, “Pray and Grow Rich.”

¹⁸ Dean, *Almost Christian*, 4.

Our hyper reaction against evangelical fundamentalism (a mistake of the first order – evangelicalism and fundamentalism are not the same!) and our critical embrace of Enlightenment intellectual biases have led us into our current theological cul-de-sac. The resultant outgrowth is perhaps best labeled “moralistic therapeutic deism,” a term defined by Smith and Denton as an “alternative religious vision of divinely underwritten personal happiness and interpersonal niceness.”¹⁹ Dean, in her follow-on work (*Almost Christian*), which is having a significant impact on the United Methodist Church today, outlines “moralistic therapeutic deism” with the following five points:

1. A god exists who created and orders the world and watches over life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God is not involved in my life except when I need God to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.²⁰

Dean goes on to comment in a manner that serves to highlight the difference between the historic orthodox Christianity of the original Methodist movement and the vague “niceness” seasoned with liberal (or conservative, depending on your point of view) moral and political ascertains.

After two and a half centuries of shacking up with ‘the American dream,’ churches have perfected a dicey codependence between consumer-driven therapeutic individualism and religious pragmatism. These theological proxies gnaw, termite-like, at our identity as the Body of Christ, eroding our ability to recognize that Jesus’ life of self-giving love directly challenges the American gospel of self-fulfillment and self-actualization. Young people in contemporary culture prosper by following the latter. Yet Christian identity, and the ‘crown of rejoicing’ that Wesley believed accompanied consequential faith born out of a desire to love God and neighbor, require the former.²¹

Another contemporary example on the American religious scene is summarized neatly in Ross Douthat’s *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics*. The author painstakingly chronicles the demise of a Christian “center” offered through a coherence of all main branches of the North American Christian community – Catholic, mainline Protestant, and evangelical Protestant. His central thesis is theologically pointed:

¹⁹ Smith and Denton, *Soul-Searching*, 171, quoted in Dean, *Almost Christian*, 14.

²⁰ Dean, *Almost Christian*, 14.

²¹ Dean, *Almost Christian*, 5.

America's problem isn't too much religion, or too little of it. It's *bad religion* [italics in the original]: the slow-motion collapse of traditional Christianity and the rise of a variety of destructive pseudo-Christianities in its place. Since the 1960s, the institutions that sustained orthodox Christian belief – Catholic and Protestant alike – have entered a state of near-terminal decline. The churches with the strongest connection to the Christian past have lost members, money, and authority; the elite that was once at least sympathetic to Christian ideas has become hostile or indifferent and the culture as a whole has turned its back on many of the faith's precepts and demands.²²

Numerous other examples exist which document the institutional decline of Christianity in the United States and the rise of a vague spiritual questing that languidly seeks to accommodate current culture and personal preference with a moral impetus to somehow “do good.” Many in the mainstream of ecclesiastical United Methodism have confused social justice with the fullness of the gospel. We have simultaneously drifted from a spiritual conversation of depth with those who are physically, morally, and spiritually the most hungry. The fullness of a Wesleyan theology (and I would argue a truly Christian theology) involves the deep interaction of social and personal holiness – love, justice, and mercy in their fullest dimensions as both personal and corporate.

A friend of mine refers to his church as a Unitarian United Methodist Church. Another refers to his church as a Bap-a-Meth, meaning a Baptist Methodist Church. With appropriate respect to both Unitarians and Baptists, neither will do. We have some serious theological work to do. A truly cautionary note may be found in a footnote of Alan Hirsch's work, *The Forgotten Ways*.

What is clear is that genuine Christianity, wherever it expresses itself, is always in tension with significant aspects of the surrounding culture, because it always seeks to transform it. Movements are transformative by name, so they do not accept the status quo. On the other hand, theologically liberal Christianity, while sincere, seeks to minimize this tension – that is why liberalism is often called cultural Christianity. And that is why it is just about impossible to find a liberal movement that has made any significant missional impact on the world. Liberalism comes later in the life of a movement and usually is a clear signal of decline.²³

²² Douthat, *Bad Religion*, 3.

²³ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 191.

Such theological confusion exemplified in “moralistic therapeutic deism” is a far cry from the Apostle Paul’s self-introduction to the Romans. “From Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for God’s good news.”²⁴ It is a shocking, even offensive statement, let alone a purported introduction to Christians in the great capital city of the Roman Empire. Rightly we rebuke and despise slavery in every form and yet . . . and yet Paul brags of being a slave. It is worth pausing to more closely examine the biblical claim.

The word slave is sometimes translated as servant, almost in a vain attempt to make it less offensive; but make no mistake, the correct translation means a slave. Slaves are those who have masters. They are owned, controlled, managed by another. Their will and desire no longer matter. Nothing, absolutely nothing, could be more countercultural at a time when the free individual makes his or her own choices based on his or her own whims and desires. The Apostle Paul posts this label on his being as a badge of honor. “From Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus.”²⁵

The glory and honor for Paul come as they must come for us in the pointed last three words of the phrase – “of Christ Jesus.” Christ is the anointed one from God, the divinely sovereign Lord and Master. The label “Christ” is linked, fused, with the personal human name, “Jesus.” In that very first line Paul fuses together an understanding of the Divine Savior who is a human man. What will emerge as orthodox Christology through a series of ecumenical councils culminating at Chalcedon is outlined in the opening line of this great letter. Slaves of the way of salvation are slaves of the one who alone is fully human and fully divine – Christ Jesus.

Paul reaches for the close of this powerful opening verse with a ringing statement of purpose. All of this is about being “set apart for God’s good news.”²⁶ It is about the good news that God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit has visited and redeemed planet Earth. “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won’t perish but will have eternal life. God didn’t send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”²⁷ “Regard Christ as holy in your hearts. Whenever anyone asks you to speak of your hope, be ready to defend it. Yet do this with respectful humility, maintaining a good conscience.”²⁸

Numerous examples leap out of the book of The Acts of the Apostles of disciples’ moving beyond a mere claim of moral behavior to a specific witness to and for Jesus Christ as Lord and

²⁴ Romans 1:1.

²⁵ Romans 1:1.

²⁶ Romans 1:1c.

²⁷ John 3:16-17.

²⁸ I Peter 3:15-16a.

Savior. Peter in his Pentecost sermon dares to boldly assert the sovereignty and rule of Christ over his life in the action of salvation.

Fellow Israelites, listen to these words! Jesus the Nazarene was a man whose credentials God proved to you through miracles, wonders, and signs, which God performed through him among you. You yourselves know this. In accordance with God's established plan and foreknowledge, he was betrayed. You, with the help of wicked men, had Jesus killed by nailing him to a cross. God raised him up! God freed him from death's dreadful grip, since it was impossible for death to hang on to him.... Therefore, let all Israel know beyond question that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.²⁹

Paul standing before King Agrippa once again puts his life on the line with his uncompromising witness. He shares his Damascus road experience and culminates with the witness:

God has helped me up to this very day. Therefore, I stand here and bear witness to the lowly and the great. I'm saying nothing more than what the Prophets and Moses declared would happen: that the Christ would suffer and that, as the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to my people and to the Gentiles.³⁰

When Festus accuses him of being mad, Paul stands his ground. It is worth further note that the deeds of love, justice, and mercy emerge out of the witness to Christ and not the other way around. Thus the response to the Pentecost witness is one of sharing with those in need. Acts 3, the story of the healing of the cripple, comes as a result of the proclamation. "Peter said, 'I don't have any money, but I will give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise up and walk!'"³¹ Similarly the defense of the faith before Agrippa is followed by compassion and reconciliation.

The contrast between being a "slave ... for God's good news" and a chaplain of "moralistic therapeutic deism" couldn't be greater. The book of The Acts of the Apostles chronicles a story of such slavery to the good news and the Lord himself in action. Recovery of this past is central to our embrace of a faithful future.

The Methodist movement in America offers a similar story. One of the early heroes of Methodism is a man named Jesse Lee. Jesse was a lay member of the Methodist movement in 1795 who showed up at a Conference gathering that included Francis Asbury. He had only been a Christian and a Methodist for two years, but at the Conference Asbury visited with him and decided God was calling Jesse to preach.

²⁹ Acts 2:22-24, 36.

³⁰ Acts 26:22-23.

³¹ Acts 3:6.

As they were walking across a courtyard at the end of the Conference session, Bishop Francis Asbury asked Brother Jesse Lee if he would leave the safety of Virginia and go share the gospel in what would become upper New England. Someone from across the courtyard heard the invitation and shouted out, “Ask him what the bounty is!”

Bounty was a term used for salary. In effect, Jesse Lee was being advised by others to ask Bishop Asbury how much he would be paid. Without pausing Asbury replied, “Grace here, and glory hereafter, if the brother is faithful.” Jesse Lee went to New England and poured his life out sharing the gospel. United Methodist Churches all across Maine are still in existence and still sharing the Gospel because of his ministry.³²

There was a time in the life of Methodism when we didn’t worry about the guaranteed appointment or our rights and privileges. There was a time we had people who would go for grace here and glory hereafter. This is the biblical way in which the earliest apostles lived. I believe this day is coming again as we move beyond the bounty. Again, the past reclaims us for a new and different present and future. It was and must be anchored in a recovery of genuine orthodoxy.

The work of Thomas Oden and others who are striving to recover classical orthodoxy ring like a distant trumpet call over the ruins of modernity. Oden writes, “In stark contrast with the impotence of exhausted secularism stands an emerging hope for deep spiritual roots – deep in history. . . . The impotence of modern secularism – its inability to regenerate itself spiritually – contrasts with its own deflated and exaggerated hopes.”³³ In a different vein but with voices in harmony comes the work of Elaine Heath and others who are a part of the so-called “new monastic” movement.³⁴ Hereto is a re-appropriation of insights buried deep in the Christian tradition with practical concrete adaptations for our postmodern society.

If we are to embrace the future, then reclaiming our biblical and Wesleyan theological heritage is a necessary and central action we must take. Lay the witness from the book of The Acts of the Apostles alongside the tepid theological vagueness found in most United Methodist Churches today. The difference is striking. The biblical record demands attention. The modern

³² Bishop Peter Weaver, conversation with author.

³³ Thomas Oden, *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy: Signs of New Life in Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper, 2003), 9.

³⁴ Elaine A. Heath, *The Mystic Way of Evangelism: A Contemplative Vision for Christian Outreach* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008) and Elaine A. Heath and Scott T. Kisker, *Longing for Spring: A New Vision for Wesleyan Community* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010).

chapel begs indifference. Or examine Wesley sometimes on his wintery blast against deism in all its forms. It is telling. Wesley's sermon, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered (1781), cautions against both under and over-valuing reason. He speaks of reason "assisted by the Holy Ghost." His notion of God is not abstract and removed but present and active.

Thirdly. Reason, however cultivated and improved, cannot produce the love of God; which is plain from hence: It cannot produce either faith or hope; from which alone this love can flow. It is then only, when we 'behold' by faith 'what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us,' in giving his only Son, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life, that 'the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.' It is only then, when we 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' that 'we love Him because he first loved us.' But what can cold reason do in this matter? It may present us with fair ideas; it can draw a fine picture of love: But this is only a painted fire. And farther than this reason cannot go.³⁵

At the heart of Christianity is a God who is actively moving among us, incarnational to greatest of degrees not just through Christ but through the Holy Spirit active in our world today. We've courted deism as if he (or if you prefer she) is a handsome hunk worth our panting pleasure. It is not so.

The Apostle Paul has it right.

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.³⁶

Our answer to the "why question" involves a reclaiming of theological and biblical fullness and faithfulness. It calls us to embrace the past for the future.

³⁵ John Wesley, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," Sermon #70, Section II Point 8, in *The Works of John Wesley, Sermons II, 34-70, Volume 2*, ed. Albert C. Outler, (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1985).

³⁶ I Corinthians 2:1-4.

In today's religious climate, orthodoxy is seen by some as simply the voting preference of the majority at ecumenical council. The argument runs along the lines of asserting that orthodoxy gained ascendancy through political and autocratically hierarchical impositions of ruling church authorities. Such a false notion crumples under the impact of careful historical study. When Origen offered his writings to the larger church as an initial outline of orthodoxy, the church itself was a small minority sect with no miserable enforcement power or political clout.³⁷ In the Arian controversy, political power in the person of the Emperor supported Arius. "In the end, political influence proved inadequate to sustain a deficient vision of the Christian faith."³⁸ The vision of an overweening papacy viciously suppressing dissent does not stand up to historical examination. Arguably, the See of Rome was fourth in the patriarchal line of power behind Antioch, Constantinople, and Alexandria.³⁹ Far from simply being an opinion that gained more votes than other opinions, orthodoxy slowly emerged through the formation of Christian identity. Orthodox doctrine became (and is still) the way boundary lines of faith and practice are maintained.

By way of image, theologically orthodox doctrine can be understood as the antibodies in the life of the church that fight off infection. In his seminal work on heresy, Alister McGrath writes:

By the fourth century, the term 'heresy' was generally being used regularly to designate a teaching that emerges from within the community of faith on the one hand yet is ultimately destructive of that faith on the other. The central defining paradox of heresy is that it is *not unbelief*; it is rather a vulnerable and fragile form of Christianity that proves incapable of sustaining itself in the long term ... Heresy is thus to be understood to refer to an intellectually defective vision of the Christian faith, having its origins within the church ... The early church regarded heresy as dangerous not so much on account of any challenge it posed to contemporary church authority figures or structures, but on account of its implication for the future of Christianity itself. . . . [Thus] Heresy was a flawed, deficient, anemic, and inauthentic form of Christian faith that was inevitably doomed to extinction in the pluralist and intensely competitive world of late

³⁷ Alister McGrath comments: "The writings of Origen can be considered an attempt to identify 'orthodoxy' as the most consistent rendering of Scripture, ... Yet this process was fundamentally concerned with the crystallization of the perceptions within the church, not the imposition of some predetermined outcome." McGrath, *Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009) 202.

³⁸ McGrath, *Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth*, 205.

³⁹ An engaging discussion of this issue can be found in Chapter 3 of *Jesus Wars* by Phillip Jenkins.

classical antiquity. Orthodoxy had greater survival potential, prompting a ‘search for authenticity’ as a means of safeguarding its future.⁴⁰

Viewed through these lenses, a return to or reclaiming of the past for the future involves a reappropriation of what I call core orthodoxy. It is an invitation back to the firm ground of lived tradition. As such, it by necessity and definition involves a reclaiming and reappropriation of both orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Dr. Dean calls this “embodied theology.”⁴¹ By that I take here to mean beliefs that take on value in action. Put differently, we might simply say practicing what we believe. An embodied orthodox theology is not dry and impractical but one that is lived out in the area of action through concrete faith commitment. Both justification (salvation by faith alone!) and sanctification (the outworking of salvation through holiness of heart and life) will be active components of such an embodied, genuinely orthodox theology.

An embodied orthodox theology involves us in a theological enterprise that is unashamedly Christian at its core and grace-filled in its expression. It will be biblically grounded and faithful to the historic Creeds and Councils. Brian D. McLaren’s phrase, “a generous orthodoxy,” comes to mind.⁴² Such an enterprise is both open and orthodox. It is proactive and not obsessively reactive. Genuinely orthodox means we are unafraid of wrestling with great truths in the modern context. Great churches deal with great issues. This is a launching pad, not a defensive fortification. It is a way of moving forward, not a manner of retrenching; a guide for faithful choices, not a censoring tool for limiting discussion. We are not setting out a rulebook but creating a map.

Yet openness can never be taken as embrace of syncretism nor tolerant gracefulness be allowed to descend into indifference. There is a Christian theological core which, while debated at the edges, retains its center. While it is not within the scope of this work, the doctrine of the Trinity serves as sound example. The center of the center is a doctrine of the Trinity. Put differently this is the center which must hold. To borrow from Justo Gonzalez’s image popularized in the *Disciple Bible Study series*, orthodoxy is a setting of boundaries in a fashion similar to the foul lines in baseball.⁴³ Following this image, there may be substantial debate over

⁴⁰ McGrath, *Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth*, 83-84.

⁴¹ Dean, conversation with author.

⁴² Brian D. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-Yet Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished Christian* (Grand Rapids: Youth Specialties Books, 2004).

⁴³ Justo Gonzalez, speaker, The Disciple Bible Study, Disciple 1 DVD, *Becoming Disciples through Bible Study* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005).

the meaning and full understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity but to move to Unitarianism is to step outside the foul lines of Christian orthodoxy.

Legend has it that John, the Apostle of love, fled a Roman bathhouse when he discovered the heretic Cerinthus sitting across from him. (Some hold that the Johannine epistles “were written in direct response to the teaching of the Gnostic Cerinthus.”⁴⁴)

Why did John flee the bathhouse? He fled because Cerinthus had parted from what, even in John’s day, was already the great received tradition of the gospel. In other words, the gospel is not merely a matter of personal interpretation so that one person’s view is just as valid as the next person’s view. This is why Paul admonishes the Galatian Christians so strongly, saying: “If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed” (Gal 1:10). This is why Paul tells Timothy, “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful ones who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). This is why Jude admonishes us to “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3).⁴⁵

We do not need to flee the bathhouse, but we do need to take seriously the reclaiming of the past for the future, especially with regard to an orthodox theological core. The health of the Christian faith, including the Methodist movement (as one branch of the Church Universal), necessitates a return to a robust, embodied core orthodox theology.

While there is room for great debate about which various theological elements are central, I will focus on four that often appear to be lacking (or severely truncated) in preaching in those parts of the United Methodist Church with which I am most knowledgeable: 1) a doctrine of sin; 2) a doctrine of Christ; 3) a doctrine of salvation; 4) a doctrine of justification; 5) a doctrine of sanctification. I make no claim that such a list is complete in any sense. Rather, I argue that this is the beginning point of reclaiming the past for a faithful and fruitful future.

⁴⁴ Timothy Tennent Blog, “*Why Did St. John Flee the Bath House?*,” April 8, 2013, <http://timothytennent.com>

⁴⁵ Tennent Blog April 8, 2013.

Reclaiming a Doctrine of Sin

Forty years ago Karl Menninger famously asked the question, *Whatever Became of Sin?*⁴⁶ In his work he chronicled the “disappearance of sin” as a general concept and as a part of our cultural language. He noted that the concept of sin had migrated into crime, symptoms of illness or disease, and collective irresponsibility. At the close of his still appropriate book (perhaps even more so than when originally published,) he delivers a plaintive defense of the need to reclaim and reapply an understanding of sin. The closing words of his work linger hauntingly in the air above modern society like smoke after a fire. “Yet, how is it, as Socrates wondered, that ‘men know what is good, but do what is bad’ ”⁴⁷

Culturally we are not far from the Duchess of Buckingham’s famous complaint to the Countess of Huntingdon on Methodist preachers and their understanding of sin.

I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers. Their doctrines are most repulsive and strongly tainted with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavoring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth.⁴⁸

It may be monstrous, but it is also true.

What stands in marked contrast is that many Methodists (and Methodist preachers) are inclined to at least subconsciously agree with the Duchess of Buckingham. Sin as a topic preached or taught is seldom lifted up in our pulpits. When the term is applied, it tends to be accepted in ways that relate to egregious personal moral failure (usually related to sexual, political, or economic activity) on the conservative side or corporate injustice on the progressive or liberal side. While exceptions abound, a weak doctrine of sin is the general rule. We don’t

⁴⁶ Karl Menninger, *Whatever Became of Sin?* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973).

⁴⁷ Menninger, *Whatever Became of Sin?*, 230.

⁴⁸ Letter from the Duchess of Buckingham to the Countess of Huntingdon (early days of Wesley’s ministry).

teach or preach on sin to any significant degree. Thus there is no real need to be saved from anything. We need merely to improve. “ ‘Gospels of Sin Management’ presume a Christ with no serious work other than redeeming humankind ... [and] they foster ‘vampire Christians,’ who only want a little blood for their sins but nothing more to do with Jesus until heaven.”⁴⁹ (But I am ahead of myself).

We have limited the label “sin” to something others do ... those who aren’t good. We have applied it to a certain class of actions (usually involving errant sexuality) or relegated the concept to our enemies. Yet everywhere we live with the consequences of sin, our own and others. Consider this list which Professor Scot McKnight has put together.

- Individualism – the story that “I” am the center of the universe
- Consumerism – the story that I am what I own
- Nationalism – the story that my nation is God’s nation
- Moral relativism – the story that we can’t know what is universally good
- Scientific naturalism – the story that all that matters is matter
- New Age – the story that we are gods
- Postmodern tribalism – the story that all that matters is what my small group thinks
- Salvation by therapy – the story that I can come to my full human potential through inner exploration⁵⁰

Officially a doctrine of sin (and original sin at that) is part of the lexicon of United Methodism. Article VII of the Doctrinal Standards and General Rules of the Methodist Church states:

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby every man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 76.

⁵⁰ Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited*, 157.

⁵¹ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2012* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House), Paragraph 103, Section 3, p. 65.

Similarly Article VII of the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church states:

We believe man is fallen from righteousness and, apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is destitute of holiness and inclined to evil. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. . . .⁵²

(It is important to note that both General Rules are currently operative and protected by the Restrictive Rule 2, Paragraph 18 of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2012*.) On paper we hold to a doctrine of sin as central to understanding and diagnosing the human condition. Its evidence is all around and within us in a bewildering variety of personal and corporate ways. And yet, our easy acceptance of the cult of the nice precludes real analysis.

Similarly the book of The Acts of the Apostles is peppered with specific references to sin. None perhaps is more pointed than the conclusion of Peter's great Pentecost sermon.

Peter replied, 'Change your hearts and lives. Each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you, your children, and for all who are far away -- as many as the Lord our God invites.' With many other words he testified to them and encouraged them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.'⁵³

We must repent of sin and be saved by the Lord our God in the fullness of the Trinity – baptized in Jesus Christ, received the gift of the Spirit, at the invitation of the Lord God. It is all there in the original doctrinal claim of United Methodism, and yet much of it is lacking in our preaching and teaching today.

⁵² *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2012*, Paragraph 103, Section 3, p. 72.

⁵³ Acts 2:38-40.

The original Methodist movement also reclaimed a strong doctrine of sin. The aforementioned letter of the Duchess of Buckingham offers dramatic evidence of this conviction and practice. Wesley's sermon on original sin leaves no room for doubt.

This, therefore, is the first, grand, distinguishing point between heathenism and Christianity. The one acknowledges that many men are infected with many vices, and even born with a proneness to them; but supposes withal that in some the natural good much overbalances the evil. The other declares that all men are 'conceived in sin,' and 'shapen in wickedness;'; that hence there is in every man a 'carnal mind which is enmity against God, which is not, cannot be, subject to his law, and which so infects the whole soul that 'there dwelleth in him, in his flesh, in his natural state, 'no good thing;,' but 'all the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil', 'only evil', and 'continually.'⁵⁴

The modern mind chokes at the strong words and harsh language of Wesley's sermon. Yet there is a truth here which we have forgotten and largely ignored even though it lies still embedded in our core doctrines. We have succumbed to the foundational idolatry of self-salvation. In moralistic therapeutic deism, Pelagius stands triumphant. Almost forty years ago Albert Cook Outler offered the theological challenge we face in comfortable middle class Methodism. "How many of you would take seriously the notion of a human flaw that is radical, inescapable, universal – a human malaise that cannot be cured or overcome by any of our self-help efforts or ethical virtues, however 'moral' or aspiring – which is not, at the same time, of the actual essence of God's original design for the *humanum* (what he intended human existence to be)?"⁵⁵

The great American theologian of the twentieth century, Reinhold Niebuhr, defines sin as rebellion from God ultimately rooted in pride. We are not the center of the universe. It is not about us. Our personal pleasure, regardless of whether it is golf, gold, or grumbling is not the purpose for which we are created. Outler, the great Methodist theologian, labeled sin "a radical universal human flaw ... a malignant disease."⁵⁶ A simple, basic way to think about this issue is to ask yourself who is in charge of your life. Who is your ruler; your ultimate boss; the commander of your existence, resources, actions, and reactions? C. S. Lewis put it this way: "A world of nice people, content in their own niceness, looking no further, turned away from God,

⁵⁴ John Wesley, "Original Sin," Sermon #44, in *The Works of John Wesley, Sermons II, 34-70, Volume 2*, ed. Outler, 183.

⁵⁵ Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Tidings, 1975), 24.

⁵⁶ Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 32, 34.

would be just as desperately in need of salvation as a miserable world and might even be more difficult to save.”⁵⁷ H. Richard Niebuhr summarizes this watered-down, blanched out understanding of sin in his famous statement: “A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.”⁵⁸

And yet, at any age, we are called to greatness through life in Christ under power of the Holy Spirit. The way of salvation begins with a Holy Spirit-inspired recognition of our sin, of the fact that we are not the center of the universe. This is what Wesley called the first dawning of grace. Prevenient grace is that grace of God that goes before. It leads us to an awareness of our sin and our need for a Savior. Such grace is the first step in the “order of salvation.”

The critical element of reclaiming a doctrine of sin lies in its connection to the doctrine of salvation. Indeed any concept of salvation (Christian or otherwise) reflects to the need to be saved from something. In the Christian case, that something is sin – our persistent separation from God and determination to have ourselves as our own gods. If the failure of the human condition and the sad state of human affairs is endemic and systematic, then surely we need rescuing. If it is merely a matter of being “nicer,” then why bother? We merely need to work a little harder at being nice people. We need to be more arduous at improving our moral behavior. And yet, at the center of the Christian claim is the notion of sin that is a radical human flaw that cannot be adequately dealt with by any self-help solution or governmental intervention. St. Augustine’s words whisper from the past, guiding us to reclaim the present and the future: “But my sin was this, that I looked for pleasure, beauty, and truth not in him but in myself and his other creatures, and the search led me instead to pain, confusion, and error.”⁵⁹ It is the centrality of this conviction of sin that delivers us to a doctrine of salvation and the concomitant need for the reclamation of a vibrant doctrine of the Trinity.

Rebuilding a Christological Foundation

Before examination of a doctrine of salvation, it is important to pause and note the needed work in reclaiming the doctrine of the Trinity. The emphasis on the first person of the Trinity has led to a de-emphasis on the Christology and pneumatology. In part, this is driven by a natural (and even laudatory) attempt to be sensitive to other religions (especially the other great monotheistic faiths). The outcome has been a steady slide away from a distinctively Christian theology. A critical element of reclaiming the past for the future is to reassert an orthodox

⁵⁷ C.S. Lewis, quoted in Dean, *Almost Christian*, 25.

⁵⁸ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1937), 193.

⁵⁹ Augustine of Hippo, translated by R.S. Pine-Coffin, *Confessions, Book I, 20* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), 40-41.

Trinitarian theological foundation. As indicated above, I will focus in this work on rebuilding the slight, missing, or even rejected elements of a Christology.⁶⁰

New Testament scholar Willi Marxsen noted long ago that the earliest Christian creed was the simple three word phrase, “Jesus is Lord.”⁶¹ It is not a mistake that the great early Ecumenical Councils of the Church dealt first with the person of Jesus Christ. A doctrine of salvation hinges on a doctrine of Christology, which in turn hinges on an understanding of the Trinity. The whole issue of soteriology hangs on these core doctrines.

The Apostle Paul’s great assertion of I Corinthians 15 arrests our attention. “I passed on to you as most important what I also received: Christ died for our sins in line with the scriptures, he was buried, and he rose on the third day in line with the scriptures.”⁶² Paul is not offering a minor aside in asserting the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a claim to who Christ is. He is the risen triumphant Lord and Savior, fully divine and fully human. The credal affirmation rightly reaches to this essence.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven,

⁶⁰ The same rebuilding needs to be done on a doctrine of the Trinity as a whole and more specifically on a doctrine of the Holy Spirit. As important as such a task is, it must wait for a later work on pneumatology.

⁶¹ Willi Marxsen, *Christology in the New Testament*, Supplementary Volume, *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 146-156.

⁶² I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
And became truly human.⁶³

Such creedal claims are a reflection of the early Christian church. By way of example, at Pentecost Peter lays out the core Christological claim in the closing line of his sermon. “Let all Israel know beyond question that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”⁶⁴ When the Apostle Paul offers his witness at Mars Hill, the speech is going well until he insists on the resurrection of Jesus in verse 31. “When they heard about the resurrection from the dead, some began to ridicule Paul. However, others said, ‘We’ll hear from you about this again.’”⁶⁵ This biblical foundation is even more explicit in the Gospel of John.⁶⁶

A similar reflection of what we might loosely call a “high” Christology is found in the works of Wesley and the original Methodist movement. Again by way of example, Wesley’s sermon on “Salvation by Faith” rests on the firm foundation of a high Christology.

What faith is it then through which we are saved? It may be answered: first, in general, it is a faith in Christ – Christ, and God through Christ, are the proper object of it. Herein therefore it is sufficiently, absolutely, distinguished from the faith either of ancient or modern heathens. And from the faith of a devil it is fully distinguished by this – it is not barely a speculative, rational thing, a cold, lifeless assent, a train of ideas in the head; but also a disposition of the heart. For thus saith the Scripture, ‘With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.’ And, ‘If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.’⁶⁷

By contrast much of our preaching and teaching veers away from holding the great mystery of Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, in tension. The “moralistic” emphasis tends to lift high the ethical actions of Jesus but subtly de-emphasizes the claim of Savior. A part of this may

⁶³ The Nicene Creed (No. 880), *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989).

⁶⁴ Acts 2:36.

⁶⁵ Acts 17:32.

⁶⁶ Raymond Brown writes: “With justice Johannine Christology can be called the highest in the NT.” *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1979), 45.

⁶⁷ John Wesley, “Salvation by Faith,” Sermon #1, in *The Works of John Wesley, Sermons I*, Volume 1, ed. Outler, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 120.

well be a reaction to fundamentalism. The excessively high Christology in some aspects of the more conservative side of the Christian movement in America threatens to overwhelm the human aspects of Jesus. While such an emphasis is understandable, it is still dangerous. If Jesus is simply a great man, a supreme example, then the equation of salvation falls. A merely human Jesus may well help us manage our sin or lessen sin's damage, but he can hardly deliver us from sin and death.

The subtle shift from an orthodox view of Christianity to a vague deism with Jesus as a great moral example and teacher has been buttressed by the syncretic tendency of much mainline preaching and teaching. Seeking to steer clear of the sin of religious bigotry and intolerance, enhanced by the search of the historical Jesus, we slowly succumb to a watered down Christology lacking any real strength. Ross Douthat perceptively contrasts Paul's great assertion in I Corinthians 15 with the pallid picture of Christ offered to so many mainline North American Christians.

For Paul, Christian faith means worshipping Jesus Christ rather than just emulating him. It means regarding the crucifixion as an atonement for human sins. It means believing in a physical resurrection rather than some sort of "spiritual" or psychological event. It means seeing Jesus' life and death as the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy as well as a witness to the Gentiles. It means celebrating the Eucharist as a memorial of Christ's passion....In Corinthians and Romans and Galatians, we have direct evidence of what it meant to be a follower of Jesus just a few years after his crucifixion. And what it meant, at least to Paul and his communities, looks more like the Christianity of the Nicene Creed than does any heretical alternative.

In other words, the popular revisionist conceit that the early Christians initially meditated on Jesus' sayings and only gradually mythologized their way toward the idea of his divinity finds no support whatsoever in the oldest surviving stratum of Christian writing. As Adam Gopnik, no believer himself, put it in a *New Yorker* essay: 'If one thing seems clear from all the scholarship ... it's that Paul's divine Christ came first, and Jesus the wise rabbi came later. This fixed, steady twoness at the heart of the Christian story can't be wished away by liberal hope Its intractability is part of the intoxication of belief.'⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion* (New York: Five Press, 2012), 164-165, including text by Adam Gopnik, "What Did Jesus Do?" *The New Yorker*, May 24, 2010, 165.

Anecdotal stories of the decline of our United Methodist Christology abound. A young friend went to visit a Unitarian church. When I asked her about it, she commented, “I missed Jesus.” Another young friend somewhat heatedly asked me, “What is it with you preachers? Do you forget about Christ when you learn the secret handshake from the bishop at your ordination?”⁶⁹ Furthermore, our Christology is often poorly thought through and poorly articulated. A pastor in the Central Texas Conference reported to me a recent experience interviewing for a possible staff addition in education and/or youth ministry. “I asked each of them the following question to get a sense of their Christology,” the pastor said. “If a youth came to you and said, ‘I believe in God, but who is this Jesus Christ and why is he so important?,’ what would be your response?”

“The newly commissioned United Methodist seminary graduate gave a very nebulous response that emphasized something about ‘community.’ A Lutheran lay person’s response was equally weak and basically went in circles. The applicant we ended up hiring,” said the pastor, “was a UM lay person [who] gave the best response, but still needs coaching in how to be simple and clear.”

Scot McKnight is telling when he comments,

The messianic, lordly, and kingly confession of Jesus is not incidental to the Bible. It is the point of the Bible, and the gospel is the good news that Jesus is that Messiah, that Lord, and that King. We are his subjects. The question over and over in the Bible is: ‘Who is the rightful Lord of this cosmic temple?’ The answer shifts in the pages of Israel’s Story until it comes to Jesus, and we get not a full stop but an exclamation point: Jesus is the Messiah and Lord!⁷⁰

In *The Message* Eugene Petersen’s paraphrase of II Corinthians 5:14-15 captures the dramatic Christological claim before us in our time. “Our firm decision is to work from this focused center: One man died for everyone. That puts everyone in the same boat. He included everyone in his death so that everyone could also be included in his life, a resurrection life, a far better life than people ever lived on their own.”⁷¹ This sense of a focused center based on Christ is critical to the future of the Christian movement as we seek the way forward.

⁶⁹ For the record, I replied that a) I didn’t know any secret handshake, and that b) I certainly hope not.

⁷⁰ McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited*, 141.

⁷¹ II Corinthians 5:14-15; Eugene Petersen, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Navpress Publishing Group, 2002, 2101).

The Way of Salvation

The way of salvation shines forth in divine revelation, a divine calling that comes in a fully divine and fully human person – Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. The story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19 might well serve as both a metaphor and illustration of salvation. “When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up and said, ‘Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay in your home today.’ So Zacchaeus came down at once, happy to welcome Jesus.”⁷²

Here then is the essence of the good news, the gospel. We are met at the foot of the tree, at the place of our lostness, our separation from God as our fundamental sin, by Jesus Christ. In the person of Jesus the Lord God, the Holy Three in One intercepts us. It is this good news of which the Apostle Paul will call himself a servant.⁷³

Karl Barth equates the very concept of gospel or good news with salvation.

The gospel is constituted by the mighty acts of God in history for the liberation of the cosmos. It is not a set of rickety arguments about the divine order; it is not the expression of some sublime religious experience brought mysteriously to verbal form; it is not a romantic report about awareness of God in nature; it is not a speculative, philosophical theory about the nature of ultimate reality; it is not a set of pious or moral maxims designed to straighten out the world; it is not a legalistic lament about the meanness of human nature; it is not a sentimental journey down memory lane into ancient history. It is the unique narrative of what God has done to inaugurate [God’s] kingdom in Jesus of Nazareth, crucified outside Jerusalem, risen from the dead, seated at the right hand of God, and now reigning eternally with the Father, through the activity of the Holy Spirit, in the church and in the world. Where this is not announced, it will not be known.⁷⁴

We have corrupted our understanding of salvation when we make it merely about who gets into heaven. We have also corrupted our understanding of salvation when we divorce it from heaven. Salvation is a both/and. It is about life here and now and life forever. It is about the conquering of sin and death. It is about climbing down out of our personal and corporate trees. A sign of our theological poverty in the United Methodist Church is how few sermons speak about salvation.

⁷² Luke 19:5-6.

⁷³ Colossians 1:23.

⁷⁴ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), quoted in William H. Willimon, *Who Will Be Saved?* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 9.

Out of an attempt at “niceness” we almost flippantly have adopted a notion that everyone is saved, therefore it doesn’t matter what you believe or who you follow. The truth is the opposite. If we are “being saved” (as Acts 2:47 puts it), then it makes all the difference in the world who is our Lord – our ruler and leader. It makes all the difference in the world and beyond in whom we put our ultimate trust. Salvation thus properly, biblically conceived is about a lot more than just who gets into heaven. It is about the essence of life here and hereafter. Reclaiming the past for a faithful future necessitates embracing the gospel truth that the fullness of life - salvation at its essence - comes in and through Christ by the Holy Spirit. “Salvation can be found in no one else. Throughout the whole world, no other name has been given among humans through which we must be saved.”⁷⁵ (In accepting this truth we must not succumb to the evil and corrupt notion that we can judge who gets into heaven. God alone does that!)

A return to Luke 19 is instructive. Jesus says to Zacchaeus, “I must stay in your home today.”⁷⁶ The Savior of the universe is talking about taking up residence where he lives. Gaze at the grand overture of the opening of the Gospel of John. “The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.”⁷⁷ Both passages share the insistence of the Lord taking up residence in our lives. Note, the Lord does not just take up residence in our hearts and minds but in our actions as well. Zacchaeus rose from the encounter with Jesus a new person. Such is the dynamic of genuine conversion welded with salvation in its fullest sense of justification and sanctification.

“Salvation thus conceived is not simply that which believers receive when they die and go to heaven but rather that present dynamic in which we pass from death to life here and now (1 John 3:14).”⁷⁸ It is the dynamic wherein the control of our life is given over to God in Christ. The risen Lord rules and reigns. Sin is still a presence but it no longer has the power to control us. Willimon adds, “Salvation is thus a given, decided, present reality, not a yet-to-be-accomplished work of God. ‘We are not left alone in this frightful world. Into this alien land God has come to us,’ says Barth. ‘To discover who sits on the throne is yet another way of saying that God is salvation.’”⁷⁹

To walk in the way of salvation is to live in the fullness of both justification and sanctification as elements in the order of salvation. Wesley is instructive in his famous sermon,

⁷⁵ Acts 4:12.

⁷⁶ Luke 19:5.

⁷⁷ John 1:14.

⁷⁸ Willimon, *Who Will Be Saved?*, 8.

⁷⁹ Willimon, *Who Will Be Saved?*, 8, including quote from Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*.

“The Scriptural Way of Salvation.” He holds to an understanding of the order of salvation by which he means preventing, justifying, accompanying, and sanctifying grace.⁸⁰ Basing the sermon on Ephesians 2:8, Wesley anchors the text, “ye have been saved,”⁸¹ with the comment: “So that salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till its consummation in glory.”⁸² Wesley then directs the focus to justification and sanctification.

“Justification,” writes Wesley, “is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins, and (what is necessarily implied therein) our acceptance with God.”⁸³ In his equally famous sermon, “Justification by Faith,” Wesley builds his case on Romans 4:5, “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness.”⁸⁴ He points back to the general ground or need of justification as built on sin and points forward to the work of Christ alone. The thrust of his argument is unequivocal. “The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father, whereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he showeth forth his righteousness (or mercy) by the remission of the sins that are past.”⁸⁵

Such language both from the early church and from John Wesley is a far cry from the moral imperatives of moralistic therapeutic deism. The answer to the why builds on a doctrine of sin and it bursts forth in the glory of a classical understanding of justification. Writes Outler, “it is a fact – it is the *central* fact in the Wesleyan Revival – that from 1738 onwards, Wesley taught the *sola fide* as the first and last article by which the church (and with it the gospel) stands or falls.”⁸⁶

What makes the early Christian movement and Wesley himself stand out from the classical summary is the way sanctification is welded inseparably to justification. This might

⁸⁰ *An Introductory Comment* on John Wesley Sermon #43, “The Scriptural Way of Salvation,” *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 2, Sermons II, 34-70*, ed. Outler, 154.

⁸¹ Ephesians 2:8.

⁸² John Wesley, “The Scriptural Way of Salvation.” ed. Outler, 156.

⁸³ John Wesley, “The Scriptural Way of Salvation,” ed. Outler, 157.

⁸⁴ Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 54.

⁸⁵ Romans 4:5 (King James Version).

⁸⁶ John Wesley, Sermon #5, “Justification by Faith,” *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 21, Sermons I, 1-33*, ed. Outler, 189.

well and properly be called the fullness of salvation. It is at its heart deeply consistent with the notion of an embodied theology. Let us turn again to the Zacchaeus narrative.

In Luke 19 we continue to see both the present and future context. We continue to see this responding theme of giving the rule of your life to Christ and living henceforth in a new way. Look at the change that takes place in Zacchaeus. There is no cheap grace here. Both Zacchaeus and Jesus reject cheap grace, forgiveness without an attempt at restitution. There is no simple “now that you’ve apologized, we can go on.” Nor is there a refusal to forgive. That is what the grumblers of verse 7 wanted. The way of salvation involves a change of heart and life (repentance). It doesn’t happen with a snap of the fingers.

The way of salvation is brought to fullness in verses 8 through 10. “Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I repay them four times as much.’”⁸⁷ He took concrete, specific action to amend his wrongs. Zacchaeus put his life radically in the hands of the Savior in trusting obedience. This is holiness of heart and life. This is sanctifying grace in action. The theology of salvation is embodied in sanctification.

Jesus said to him, “Today, salvation has come to this household because he too is a son of Abraham. The Human One came to seek and save the lost.”⁸⁸ What we call justifying grace and sanctifying grace (Wesley’s great “order of salvation”) are linked together in this gospel passage. This is radically different ground on which to stand than either cheap grace or moralistic therapeutic deism. It is significant that at the close of Pentecost we have a linking of the deeds of love, justice, and mercy with salvation. The apostles shared with all who were in need. “They praised God and demonstrated God’s goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved.”⁸⁹

It is this linking that is verbally acknowledged yet rarely enacted in the United Methodist Church today. In far too many churches, the gospel is not good news but just a plaintive plea to try harder because God loves you and you ought to love others - and oh yeah, this way Jesus shows us God’s love. The truncated gospel of try harder and be nice is a thin branch that breaks easily under the weight of our tree-climbing girth. It snaps in the explosions of modern living.

87 Luke 19:8-9.

88 Luke 19:10.

89 Acts 2:47.

90 Luke 19:10.

“The Human One came to seek and save the lost.”⁹⁰ We are the lost, every single one of us. We are the ones He seeks, every single one of us.

The way of salvation comes through radical trust and deep obedience to Christ (justifying and sanctifying). Easter both establishes and demonstrates the Lordship of Jesus as the Christ; that is, the risen and conquering Lord. Salvation comes in the conquering – namely the defeat of both death and sin. They (sin and death) may be, indeed are!, still present, but their reign or rule over human life is over.

The way of salvation “is not primarily the formation of beliefs about Jesus,” writes Dr. Dean, “but the cultivation of trust in him.” She continues,

It is an important distinction. When famed French tightrope walker Charles Blondin crossed Niagara Falls on a high-wire in 1860, carrying his trembling manager Harry Colcord on his back, the 19-year-old Prince of Wales, Edward Albert, was there to watch. Before the stunt, Blondin asked the prince, “Do you believe that I can carry a man across the Falls on a tightrope?” Edward replied that he did. So Blondin asked: “Will you be that man?” (The prince declined.)

Incredibly, Blondin died in his bed in 1897 at the age of seventy-five after an accident-free high-wire career. The facts of his feats had been widely reported. But to participate in Blondin’s high-wire act required trust, not belief – a quality found almost exclusively among those close to him, which is why Blondin’s stunts involved his manager (and his five-year-old daughter, until the French government prohibited it, citing “child endangerment”) instead of strangers. Belief may enable us to approach Christ as a curious bystander, but our investment is abstract. Trust opens us to God relationally as we submit ourselves to divine love, which awakens our desire to know Christ better for ourselves.⁹¹

Do you remember that old hymn, “Trust and Obey?” The refrain tells the tale of the way of Salvation. “Trust and obey, trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.”⁹² This is the way of salvation.

Unapologetically Evangelistic

⁹¹ Dean, *Almost Christian*, 118-119.

⁹² Chorus, “Trust and Obey,” (No. 467), *The United Methodist Hymnal*.

It is common to find deep engagement in so called mission activities – food pantries, backpack ministries, mission trips, mentoring, Imagine No Malaria, and the like. It is less common but still present to find engagement in justice ministries. In the Fort Worth Episcopal Area one such activity is JFON (Justice for Our Neighbors), a justice ministry working with immigrants and for the reform of immigration in the United States. What is (with rare exception) lacking is any connection of these “sanctifying” activities with a vibrant doctrine of justification through offering Christ. Our theological bankruptcy has led to a spiritual starvation as we attempt to go it our own way. In truth, as both the earliest disciples in the book of Acts and the original Methodists understood, evangelism is the offering of Christ.

It is important to understand at the outset that we cannot define the term evangelism out of existence. It quite literally means tactics for sharing the good news. Evangelism is thus yoked to a doctrine of salvation. The theological link runs from a doctrine of sin through a robust Christology to an understanding of the order of salvation in its constituent part to an unapologetically evangelistic outreach in and through the life of the community of faith. Albert Outler notes that in the early Methodist movement Wesley’s favorite text was I Corinthians 1:30.⁹³ “It is because of God that you are in Christ Jesus. He became wisdom from God for us. This means that he made us righteous and holy, and he delivered us.”⁹⁴

The burden of his evangelical message was always the same; the references are almost monotonous. He [Wesley] speaks of ‘preaching Christ,’ of ‘offering Christ,’ ‘proclaiming Christ,’ ‘declaring Christ,’ and so forth. As always it was the gospel of salvation by grace through faith, justification and deliverance through God’s grace in Christ.⁹⁵

In returning again to Acts, it is hard to overstate the evangelistic emphasis. From Pentecost onward the invitation is to put your whole trust in Christ, receive his grace and move forward in newness of life under his Lordship. As such it is always far more than merely a verbal or intellectual assertion. The intent of evangelism is an embodied of commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ over one’s life. It is still difficult to surpass the 1919 Anglican Archbishop definition. “To evangelize is to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men [people] shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their Savior, and serve him as their king in the fellowship of his Church.”⁹⁶ Another readily popular (and accurate definition) comes from the insightful pen of D. T. Niles.

⁹³ See Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 45.

⁹⁴ I Corinthians 1:30.

⁹⁵ Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 46.

⁹⁶ The Anglican Archbishops Committee of Enquiry into the Evangelistic Work of the Church, 1919.

EVANGELISM is witness. It is one beggar telling another beggar where to get food. The Christian does not offer out of his bounty. He has no bounty. He is simply guest at his Master's table and, as evangelist, he calls others too. The evangelistic relation is to be 'alongside of' not 'over-against.' The Christian stands alongside the non-Christian and points to the Gospel, the holy action of God. It is not his knowledge of God that he shares, it is to God Himself that he points.⁹⁷

The rubbed raw wound of much of North American mainline Christianity is that, while we assert to a vague value of evangelism, both theology and practice betray our lack of both belief in and practice of evangelism. One particular story from Martha Grace Reese captures the close connection between answering the why and embracing evangelism. She writes:

The idea for the Mainline Evangelism Project can probably be dated to one conversation I had with some of my favorite people. I was leading a retreat for eight smart, loving pastors of growing mainline churches. Off the cuff, I asked, 'Hey, what difference does it make in your own life that you are a Christian?'

Silence. *Loud* silence stretched on. And on. I stared around the circle in disbelief. Finally one volunteered hesitantly, 'Because it makes me a better person???' That question hadn't been intended as a pop final. I was not raised in the church, so I have a very clear sense of having made a choice to become a Christian that went against the culture in which I had always lived. I have a good sense of what it is like to be Christian and what it is like *not* to be Christian. Most Christians and most pastors grew up in the church. They did not change cultures to get there.⁹⁸

The story is telling on a variety of levels. First, there is no sense of a theological rationale behind the invitation to be a Christian and a member of the body of Christ, the church. Second, there is little sense of how one might go about evangelizing others. Dormant, but I submit potently present, is the deep conviction that mainliners do not wish to sound or act like fundamentalists or even those moderately evangelical. As one person put to me, "I left the Baptist Church to get away from this."

Once again at stake for the Methodist movement is reclaiming the past for the future. Less remembered than his clarion definition of "one beggar telling another beggar where to find

⁹⁷ Daniel Thomas Niles, *That They May Have Life*, 96.

⁹⁸ Martha Grace Reese, *Unbinding the Gospel* (Atlanta: Chalice Press, 2006), 14; emphasis in the original

food” is D. T. Niles’ insistence on unapologetically engaging in the work of evangelism. “Evangelism is the call of the hour, as it has been the call of every hour when Jesus has been taken seriously. Sometimes world events spell out that call, while at other times the call comes through some person who has been in communion with his God. But at all times, when the call does come, it comes as a challenge and a compulsion.”⁹⁹ At its most basic this involves our being consciously aware of the dictum of I Peter 3:15-16. “Instead, regard Christ as holy in your hearts. Whenever anyone asks you to speak of your hope, be ready to defend it. Yet do this with respectful humility, maintaining a good conscience.”¹⁰⁰

We must be unapologetically evangelistic not for the sake of institutional maintenance but for the purpose of Christ. The Great Commission is still in force. “Jesus came near and spoke to them, ‘I’ve received all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I’ve commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age.’”¹⁰¹ Unapologetically evangelistic means we will engage in making disciples in answer to the great commission without apology or pause. Bob Dylan’s old album, *Slow Train Coming* (in his Christian phase), has a classic line in the song “Gotta Serve Somebody:” “Everybody’s got to serve somebody.”¹⁰² So it is, and we lift up Christ and Him crucified and risen, the Lord and Savior of all humankind, who alone is worthy of highest allegiance and greatest commitment.

One element of this linkage must be the vital reconnection of witness in the deeds of love, justice, and mercy, and verbal witness with a concomitant call to commitment to Christ as Lord. Lesslie Newbigin’s famous dictum, “Words without deeds are empty, but deeds without words are dumb,” applies at the deepest level of the church’s life and witness.¹⁰³

Currently the church is blocked in its evangelism effort not by technique but rather by the deeper theological crisis exhibited by a vapid deism that renders any potent answer to the “why question” raised by my brother and the legions of those who pursue gods of their own making. “The desperate, prayer-soaked human clinging to Jesus, the reliance on his Spirit, and the distillation of the gospel message into the simple, uncluttered message of Jesus as Lord and

⁹⁹ Niles, *That They May Have Life*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ I Peter 3:15-16.

¹⁰¹ Matthew 28:18-20.

¹⁰² Bob Dylan, *Gotta Serve Somebody*, Album: *Slow Train A Coming* (Columbia, 1979).

¹⁰³ Lesslie Newbigin, *Signs Amid the Rubble: The Purpose of God in Human History* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003).

Savior is what catalyzed the missional potencies inherent in the people of God.”¹⁰⁴ Such an unapologetically evangelistic engagement will empower the church today for tomorrow. It is no more nor less than the recovery of the original impetus for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. It is no more nor less than the original explosion of the Methodist movement.

We need to think and pray our way beyond where we are now back to a theology that is genuinely orthodox and healthily open. Such a theology will lead to an engagement that is unapologetically evangelistic. Doing so will involve a recovery of the primacy of Christ. It will engage the heart of spiritual formation, prayer, and growth sprung from the soil of a rich past for a healthy present and a vibrant future. It will necessitate a full reclaiming of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and a rejection of vague deism. The early Christian movement not only resisted but also emphatically rejected any temptation to syncretism, the false and corrupt notion that all religions are essentially the same. We must confess that we have flirted with the heresy of syncretism in ways that are unhealthy and embrace the fullness of our confession that Jesus is Lord. Only in such a protracted and faithful venture can we embrace the new future, which even now the Lord as Father, Son and Holy Spirit has in store for us. It happened in Wesley’s days, and it can happen again. Our “why” is Christ. Our bounty is grace here, and glory hereafter, if we are faithful.

¹⁰⁴ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 86.