

# Towards a critique of Wesleyan reason. From North-Atlantic colonial Wesleyanism to Messianic materialist Wesleyanism

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There are moments to recite  
poetry and there are times to  
box.

Roberto Bolaño

The greatest crimes in the world  
are not committed by people  
breaking the rules. It's people  
who follow orders that drop  
bombs and massacre villages.  
As  
a precaution to ever committing  
major acts of evil it is our  
solemn duty never to do what  
we're told, this is the only way  
we can be sure.

Banksy

## Abstract

In this article, we attempt to carry out two critical readings of Christianity and Wesleyan reason. That is the analytical vision of its conditions of possibility. The first, a historical-critical reading of Christianity and its **turn** to Christendom. The second, a critical reading of his epistemology, as the fundamental basis of his practical and ecclesial, that is, political, procedure. As a method of thinking a critique of Wesleyan reason in terms of theology, ecclesiology, and the practice of Methodism values today. Then we enter a decolonial reading from the theses of Enrique Dussel, Boaventura De Sousa Santos, Franz Hinkelammert, Immanuel Wallerstein, Edgardo Lander, Walter Mignolo among others.

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Also, we rescued the idea of materialistic messianism from the perspective of Walter Benjamin, but from our Latin American reading. As attempt to complete our Wesleyan reason critique. In this way, we delve into what we call the *turn of Christianity* and the eclipse of messianism. From the readings we made. In a second part, we delve into a current practical-political-wesleyan and radical proposal, based on the criticism we undertake.

## 1. The turn of Christianity. An attempt of a historical-critical reading

At this point, we try to develop tightly, the argument that we call the **turn** of Christianity. Although it is known from different angles and authors, we continue in its development for this occasion, the perspective of Latin American thinkers like Franz Hinkelammert<sup>2</sup> (1931), Enrique Dussel<sup>3</sup> (1934), Boaventura de Sousa Santos<sup>4</sup> (1940) and Leonardo Boff.<sup>5</sup> The previous one, which in various works we could summarize, makes the following statement and some variants, which may well indicate the purpose of this point: the center of Jesus' preaching was the Reign of God (βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ) and not the Church. The first, utopia of total revolution and reconciliation of all creation. The second, the institutionalization of the project that brought with it a series of political and social repercussions of considerable importance.<sup>6</sup>

Enrique Dussel directs his attention to colonial epistemology intertwined with the epistemology of Christian theology. The same that led to the original messianism towards the institutionalization of Christianity, betraying in this first moment the message and project of Jesus: the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. Transform it in Church-institution-imperial-Europeanizing. In this way, the colonial notion will present both (messianism and Christianity) in a linear temporal plane. In which the Church-institution is the next natural state of maturity of a project. In this case that of Jesus and his disciples. Eclipsing, invisibilizing and even omitting, the historical-political conditions that have allowed it to consolidate, as central and oppressive Christendom. We now try, then, to reconstruct this argument briefly for this event.

**1.1 First turn. From Christianity to Christendom.** First of all, it should be noted that the community of the primitive Messiah (Χριστός) was itself a Jewish proselytizing sect. That is to say, a group with an opening towards the *góim*<sup>7</sup> and in turn, with a concrete message: βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. History also reminds us that this sect soon gained sympathizers among the poor, the oppressed, the slaves, as well as among other majority groups of the Hellenistic-Roman Empire.<sup>8</sup> The other Jewish sect, one formed around the

<sup>2</sup> Cfr., HINKELAMMERT, F., *Las armas ideológicas de la muerte*, DEI, Costa Rica, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr., DUSSEL, E., *Filosofías del Sur. Descolonización y transmodernidad*, AKAL, México, 2015; Cfr., DUSSEL, E., *Filosofía de la liberación*, FCE, México, 2011; Cfr., DUSSEL, E., *Política de la liberación. Historia mundial y crítica*, Trotta, Madrid, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr., DE SOUSA SANTOS, B., *Refundación del Estado en América Latina: Perspectivas desde una epistemología del Sur*, Editorial Siglo XXI, México, 2015; Cfr., DE SOUSA SANTOS, B. – MENESES, M.P., *Epistemologías del Sur (Perspectivas)*, Akal, España, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> BOFF, L., *Iglesia: carisma y poder. Ensayos de eclesiología militante*, Sal Terrae, Santander, 2001, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> Cfr., BOFF, L., *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> The no jews.

<sup>8</sup> Cfr., THEISSEN, G., - MERZ, A., *El Jesús Histórico*. Ediciones Sígueme, Salamanca, 2012.

Law, the synagogue, from the diaspora and exile in Babylon preserved its customs without incorporating the *goím*.<sup>9</sup> We also know that this messianic sect, later constituted in the (Christian) church, was strongly opposed in its origin to the Hellenistic-Roman Empire. Denying the παντοκράτωρ, the almighty emperor, and son of god, maximum pontiff, the pretense of being a mediation with the divine.<sup>10</sup> And snatching all dignity and power in this way. Thus, the Messianic (Χριστιανοί) secularized the Roman Empire by desacralizing it.<sup>11</sup>

Later men and women under the sign of the Christ were persecuted and accused of being atheists before the Roman gods.<sup>12</sup> They died under the hand of power, with all kinds of torture for some centuries.<sup>13</sup> It was until the IV century Constantino and his work to defeat the Caesars, after the death of Diocletian, who spoke with the messianic to give freedom to their worship. The resolution: from being a sect of persecuted to being a tolerated group and later, becoming a hegemony within the Empire. In this sense, we understand the emergence of Christendom and the suppression of Christianity/messianism. This, briefly, is from our succinct statement what we understand as the first turn of messianism. That goes from the messianic to the triumphant hegemonic Christendom.<sup>14</sup> The current distinction between *Christendom*, *Christlichkeit*, *Chretiené* is not idle. Instead of *Christianity*, *Christendom*, *Christianisme*. The latter, closer to the pretensions of Jesus and his messianic message.

**1.2 The second turn of Christianity.** During the period of s. IV-VII this Christendom is transformed into a new culture. For Clifford Geertz, the culture is a new "*system of conceptions expressed in symbolic forms through which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about attitudes towards life,*"<sup>15</sup> as such a framework of considerable complexity. Moreover, thus generating a Semitic-Christian, Greco-Roman version. The previous one, subsuming the theological, also, cosmological, mythical, symbolic, cult, ritual and philosophical foundations of the Hellenic-Roman world. We find several examples where we can see this impersonation, in the words of Dussel, fetishist. One of them is the fetishist impersonation of the birth of the sun, on December 21st, incorporating the birth of the just sun, Jesus, for example. Among many other cases of this type.<sup>16</sup>

This subsumption, according to our argument is taking shape around the Mediterranean, later ascending the Rhine and the Danube. Taking force among the remote peoples of the Latin Roman Empire. Then with two phenomena, namely: that of the Sacrum

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<sup>9</sup> Cfr., Ibid.; Cfr., MEIER, J., *Un judío marginal: Nueva visión sobre el Jesús histórico*, I-IV Tomos, Verbo divino, Navarra, 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Cfr., PAGOLA, J.A., *Jesús. Aproximación histórica*. Ed. Claretiana, Bs. As., 2009; Cfr., ELLACURÍA, I.-SOBRINO, J., (eds.) *Mysterium Liberationis. Conceptos fundamentales de la teología de la liberación*, Tomo I, UCA, San Salvador, 1990.

<sup>11</sup> Cfr., AGAMBEN, G., *El reino y la gloria. Para una genealogía teológica de la economía y el gobierno*, Pre-Textos, Valencia, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> In this case could read the "*Acta martyria*" en Cfr., QUASTEN, J., *Patrología*. Tomo I, BAC, Madrid, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Cfr., Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Cfr., DUSSEL, E., *Filosofías del sur...*

<sup>15</sup> GEERTZ, C., *La interpretación de las culturas*, Gedisa, Barcelona, 2003, p. 89.

<sup>16</sup> Cfr., DUSSEL, E., *Filosofías del sur...*

Germanic Empire, on the one hand, and with the papal coronation as Emperor of Charlemagne (Frankish King), on the other, the State based on the church of Christendom is sacralized. That is Chrendom (first turn) now established as centrality, imperial (second turn). In this, the patriarch of the church (the Pope) linked to the consecration of the emperors (giving rise to the Popecesarism). We find this way, the total turn. Messianism is subsumed in the principle of a religion justifying the sacralized state. More specifically, the case of the Byzantine Empire. There we find the emperor ruling de facto to the Church. At this stage, there was no lack of criticism of this model, always minorities, persecuted by the State and by the Church, who prophetically criticized these turns, such as the case of John Chrysostom and the desert fathers, among others.<sup>17</sup>

**1.3 Third.** However, this construction of dominant and Eurocentric Christianity is a later recreation. The same one that depends on the myth of German romanticism. Linking this with a Greek-Latin past, culminating in the culture of *Frühromantik*. It will be necessary to note that Christianity from the VII al XV centuries AD., appear on the margins of Islamic civilization. Whose barriers since the VII century are raised, beginning its civilization expansion and leaving it out. As critics of the myth of modernity, excluded from the Asian-Afro-Mediterranean system, point out until the XV century (until 1492). And also, on the other hand, until the fall of the Ottoman Empire and Constantinople, in the same century (1453). In such a way that, before the XV century, Latin Christianity was underdeveloped, as well as insignificant:

"The Islamic world, from Córdoba and Fez (Andalusia and Morocco) to Fatimid Egypt, the Baghdad reference of the ancient system, Afghanistan, the Mughal Empire in India and the kingdoms of Indonesia around Malaka and finally present in Mindanao in the Philippines, crossing the deserts of the Silk Road towards Samarkand, were the connection and the ancient "center of the old world" (old for Adam Smith). The Latin-Germanic Europe was only a peripheral, isolated, feudal world in its "Dark Age" (which contrasted with the "Age of Enlightenment," of the "lights" of the classical Islamic, urban, scientific, Aristotelian, mercantile world)."<sup>18</sup>

According to the reading we are now exposing, Latin-Germanic Christianity, once peripheral and underdeveloped, began a critical expansion. Geographically, surrounded by the Islamic world tried through the crusades a kind of recovery of the Holy Sepulcher. The former, geopolitically indispensable for the trade of the Italian mercantile cities, to rebuild

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<sup>17</sup> Cfr., Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 326: "El mundo islámico, de Córdoba y Fez (Andalucía y Marruecos) hasta el Egipto fatimí, la Bagdad referencia del sistema antiguo, Afganistán, el Imperio mogol en la India y los reinos de Indonesia en torno a Malaka y finalmente presente en Mindanao en Filipinas, cruzando por Samarcanda los desiertos de la Ruta de la Seda hacia China, eran la conexión y el "centro del mundo" antiguo (antiguo para Adam Smith). La europa latino-germánica era sólo un mundo periférico, aislado, feudal en su "Edad oscura" (que contrastaba con la "Edad de la Ilustración", de las "luces" del mundo clásico islámico, urbano, científico, aristotélico, mercantil)"

the economic connection with Asia. For opening a route through the Muslim wall could never be.<sup>19</sup>

Spain wanted then, with the expulsion of the last Muslims of Europe, to try to reach China by the West and from there, the story of Christopher Columbus that we all know. The pretended arrival to the Islands in the Ocean Sea. There, Europe is uncrossed and opened to the world. From the new geopolitical center of navigation and trade: The Tropical Atlantic (controlled by Spain).

In this way, this Latin-Germanic Christendom constructs (or depredates?) the New World: America.<sup>20</sup> Before the emergence of North Europe, Anglo-Saxon and German or Slavic, the seventeenth century. Overlapped to the eastern American colonies. Generating already in this point, a convenient history that begins with the Ancient Greek goes through the birth of Christ, the Fathers of the Church, the Middle Ages and continues in Modernity. The previous idea appeared until the romantic German world of the XVIII century.

**1.4 The conclusion.** This Christendom will become a system of domination, oppressive in the name of the Gospel, from which it will be necessary to sacrifice/crucify indigenous people to the Moloch in order to maintain the systems of domination in force: crucify, in this case indigenous, in the name of the crucified.<sup>21</sup> This is the critical consciousness of being colonial. Moreover, as such, the starting point to think, critically and creatively, the church, theology, the Wesleyan studies, from a specific subjectivity: Latin American in my case. Well, this colonial structure initiated by Portugal and Spain will be followed by England, France, Holland and now, by the United States of America. Becoming then, in Christendom not only European but Anglo, as the prototype of human culture, soothing universal civilization, with the right to dominate cultures and peoples; that helps and makes part of the barbarians, indigenous: immature and poor children with need to be evangelized, educated, before the obscurantism of their culture, the ruin of their rulers and the sin of poverty. That is, the peoples of the south, as children of imperial Christendom, indoctrinated and preminent. The Christians of the south as Christians of the second. The Christians of the South, we, as children of God of a second class.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, we ask at this point: is it possible, analogously, to think of a **turn** of Wesleyanism? Is there a need for a **turn** that tries, at least, to place messianism at the center of Christendom? What are their conditions of possibility, if the previous answer is affirmative?

At least, our response to the first question, unfortunately, is positive. We affirm the need to carry out a critique of the colonial colonialism in force, from the epistemological decolonization of theology and the Wesleyan studies, in order to establish a new Wesleyan, contemporary reason, which thematizes the history of colonial violence and inheritance in the southern regions. However, for this, we will have to gain more relevance on the subject

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<sup>19</sup> Cfr., Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> America as a continent. And not just North America.

<sup>21</sup> Cfr., HINKELAMMERT, F., *Las armas ideológicas de la muerte...*

<sup>22</sup> Cfr., DUSSEL, E., *Filosofías del sur...*

that underlies the praxis of the Wesleyan church, Methodist in our case. As such, the epistemology that lies dormant, under the soil of theology and its praxis.

## **2. The eclipse of the messiah. Attempt of an epistemological-theological reading as the core of the praxis of the church**

As we have mentioned, there was a distant, very distant time, in which the Christ and Christianity were understood as the absolute rebellion against the Empire and against the world. A time when messianism, with its apocalyptic message, disdained the world while disdaining the Empire. Showing itself as a clear group of resistance to the divinity and opulence of the *Imperator*. What does it mean on a political level, the figure of a baby wrapped in diapers, born in a caravanserai, as a child of God, before the omnipotent power of the son of God, mediator, the Emperor?

**2.1 Materialistic messianism.** Walter Benjamin<sup>23</sup> was one of the first to grasp, from his reading, that messianism had been relegated, eclipsed, on the margins of Christian theology. Through the *Theses on history*, written between 1939 and 1940, prior to his suicide in Port Bou, the author raises a different logic to the logic of the progressive, Hegelian dialectic. In them, the author proposes a form of dialectic through the revelation of the image of redemption of the past. This logic of messianic arrest is presented as a dialectic in a state of detention (*Dialektik im Stillstand*). At this point, the author argues that this interruption or stoppage of the *continuum* is the logic of messianism. As such it is negativity (in a critical and material sense) as well as rupture. In such a way that this (messianic) event that breaks remains motionless, suspended, without synthesis (to the form of the Hegelian dialectic).<sup>24</sup>

Benjamin's philosophy calls for recovering forgotten stories. As such, a work that tries to reach what was left under, buried or behind. Towards the 1930s he studied Marxism and transformed himself from literary criticism into a Marxist one. Closer to the political texts (*18 Brumaire*, etc.) than to *Capital*, for example. Not abandoning his Jewish background. Later, Walter Benjamin raised the idea of a materialist messianism. What to the ears of Gershom Sholem is a metaphor, insofar as he continued studying or approaching Judaism first hand. Michel Löwy, a Brazilian/French Jewish thinker, specialist in Benjamin has affirmed that the German is a Marxist Jew who reconciles both spaces. Benjamin's intuition was realized in Latin America. Appearing completely through *materialistic messianism* with the Liberation theologies. That from different areas (philosophical, political, cultural) has given unexpected results.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Philosopher and writer. He wrote mainly about art, literature and history, a unique work, which has now had a significant impact. In the current panorama of the 20th century, his unfinished, fragmentary and sometimes hermetic work. He has misunderstood on several occasions.

<sup>24</sup> Cfr., BENJAMIN, W., *Libro de los pasajes*, Akal, Madrid, 2007; Cfr., LÖWY, M., *Walter Benjamin: aviso de incendio. Una lectura de las tesis "Sobre el concepto de historia"*, FCE, México, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Cfr., LÖWY, M., *Walter Benjamin: aviso de incendio...*

What do we understand by *materialism*? Let me to paraphrase a couple of examples from mythical rationality to clarify that we understand by. In the tradition of ancient Egypt, 5000 years ago Osiris in the trial of the spirit of the deceased in front of him asked, in the 125 chapter of the *Book of the dead*: What did in your life to deserve the resurrection (in the fields of Aaru)? The spirit of the deceased answer and then his heart was measured with respect to his life. He said: I fed the hungry, I gave water to the thirsty, gave clothes to the naked and a boat to the pilgrim. That is the answer to the four fundamental needs of the human being, as ethical criteria of the final judgment. A final judgment that is not Arab or Jewish Christian, but Egyptian. Thirty centuries later the Christ uses the same criteria. Moreover, later in the prologue of the *Origin of the family*, Friedrich Engels comments that the four needs of the human being are: eating, heating, dressing and having a house. Instead of the water of the dry Egypt of the first example, a change for the heating in cold Germany. In such a way that this is what we understand by *materialism*: the primary attention of the material criterion of ethics, which is living corporeality. Unlike the decadent Leninist dialectical materialism of the former USSR, understood as a productivist ideology: Everything is matter. Certainly we are far from this statement.<sup>26</sup>

Now, *messianism*. We understand *messianism* in the thought of W. Benjamin, the moment in which redemption enters history and through which we can understand it. As such, it is the messiahs who reconstruct history. Being the Messiah, the being that redeems history in action. However, action in specific. Not any action. Well, you have to interpret history from redemption. So history is understood in the great moments in which continuous time broke. Benjamin has understood this. That history has been conceived in modernity as a *continuum* of time. This vision is one that does not contribute in the sense of rupture, insofar as it allows an anti-revolutionary vision and policies since it is revealed as unbroken continuity.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, Benjamin is nourished by a *messianic* and *materialistic* vision. He criticized Marxism too (because the Marxist adopted the vision of history as a *continuum*). In this sense, for Benjamin, the *dialectic of messianism* is the dialectic of rupture. Well, this shows the internal logic of the messianic. Also, so he says in the notes to the *Theses*:

"For the Messianic detention of the event, one could take advantage of the definition of the "classical" style, according to Focillon: "Brief minute of full possession of the forms, it appears (...) as a fleeting happiness, like the ἀκμῆ of the Greeks: the faithful of the balance does not oscillate but weakly. What I hope is not to see her soon start again, even less the moment of absolute fixation, but, in the miracle of that

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<sup>26</sup> Cfr., DUSSEL, E., *Las metáforas teológicas de Marx*, Siglo XXI Editores, México, 2017. It will be necessary to see that, for example, the plurality of surplus labor, living work creates value from nothing. Use the expression, creation of nothingness: *ex nihilo*. Capital does not pay a salary to create surplus value. So Marx from his vision of the essence of the economy, has a metaphysics of the creation of nothing, which few Christians imagine. We also think about this point, that we will have to read a lot and with enough attention to Marx. In this reading, we affirm, there is no contradiction between the materialism we present with Semitic thought, specifically in the subject of messianism.

<sup>27</sup> Cfr., LÖWY, M., *Walter Benjamin: aviso de incendio. Una lectura de las tesis "Sobre el concepto de historia"*, FCE, México, 2012.

hesitant immobility, of the slight, imperceptible tremor that tells me that she lives"<sup>28</sup>

We look through these views of Benjamin that detention is essentially messianic. Raising the idea that, the way of the structuring of messianism is through this detention. In this sense, we think, beyond the conceptions of temporality as linearity, circularity or repetition that we find in different cultures. It is also important to highlight at this point in the face of an eminently Wesleyan, practical Christian theology, which in Christian as well as Jewish systems, the conception of temporality is presented at the end, advent or arrival of an event or messiah, which carried out this action. In such a way that the arrest is an attribution of the Messiah, from the Benjaminian perspective.<sup>29</sup>

Now, this notion of detention as an inherent part of the messianic presence is revealed as the appearance of an image or scene in which a link or *constellation* is brought up, in Benjamin's terms, as it is clearly stated in the thesis VI. That is, the messianic has already happened at some time, sometimes, with particular detention. Where historical tensions of past redemption, are present as *lightning*, following the reading of Benjamin's texts. Thus, this *lightning* burst and disappears, because it is the image of redemption that comes from the past: revelation, which can be taken by the messianic now.<sup>30</sup> In this way, the irruption in this perspective is referred to an instant, brief, fleeting. A *kairós*, an auspicious time, which happens, leaving behind a spark or wake that allows one to apprehend or make his image patent and knowable.<sup>31</sup>

It should also be noted that this irruption happens as a specific temporality. On one hand, look to the past and recover the lost stages of history. The stories denied. The stories eclipsed by the oppressive power. Moreover, on the other hand, it should be noted that in Benjamin, the *jetztzeit*, the idea of *time now*, the rupture time, according to Agamben, comes from a reading of Paul of Tarsus. In specific from the Letter to the Romans, under the Greek expression *kairós*. Time is now the break with continuous time and is the time of danger, as stated in thesis VI: "*Historically articulate the past does not mean knowing" as it was in particular "*, but rather take possession of memory similar to that shines in an instant of danger."<sup>32</sup> This in particular, would be the case of the political militant, in whose search for change is present political action, rebellious and as such, the presence of danger. We dare here, to say analogously, it is also the case of a particular Christians within the Church. And Wesleyans within Wesleyan churches and practices. When the power institution is criticized and it hangs in a thread. Or rather, it is at the bottom of the abyss. It is the time of danger, then, where each day appears like an eternity. The *kairós* then is the

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<sup>28</sup> BENJAMIN, W., *Tesis sobre la historia*, Ítaca, México, 2008, p. 63. "Para la detención mesiánica del acontecer se podría aprovechar la definición del estilo "clásico", según Focillon: "Breve minuto de plena posesión de las formas, se presenta (...) como una felicidad fugaz, como el ἀκμή de los griegos: el fiel de la balanza no oscila sino débilmente. Lo que espero no es verla pronto iniciarse nuevamente, menos aún el momento de la fijación absoluta, sino, en el milagro de esa inmovilidad dubitativa, del temblor ligero, imperceptible, que me indica que vive"

<sup>29</sup> Cfr., LÖWY, M., *Walter Benjamin: aviso de incendio. Una lectura de las tesis...*

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 70-73.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 73-74.

<sup>32</sup> BENJAMIN, W., *Tesis sobre la historia...*, p. 40.



moment in which this messianic apparition faces against the institutionalized powers, in our case, against the church-institution. Messianism from the perspective of Benjamin is the revolution. It's time break. We could ask ourselves at this point already: Who could redeem today, as messianic figures, the fetishized church that we have to witness today?

Finally, and tightly we think that this materialist messianism of which Christendom requires to subvert its history, putting of head. Alternatively, instead, eclipsed by another figure that prevents the arrival of the final, apocalyptic time, through the *lightning* of messianic rebellion.<sup>33</sup>

**2.2 The eclipse of the Messiah.** Continuing with the argument that we have raised in the first point, from an attempt of a historical-critical reading, we want to try now to delve into a subtle level, but no less compelling. In this case, we try briefly, the critical reading of the epistemological of the theology of Christianity, which at its base finds the *eclipse of messianism*. That is the break of it, as well as its denial to the interior of the practice of Christendom. Alternatively, instead, the seclusion of messianism (in the sense of its political commitment and the rebelliousness it promotes) at the core of the Christendom-institution.

The argument we take up is relevant in the sense of current political theology, where the debate between Carl Schmitt (1888-1895) and Erik Peterson (1890-1960) elicited some ideas. Moreover, which currently the figure of Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) appears as a relevant alternative. Similarly, the notions of philosophers such as Jacob Taubes (1923-1987), Giorgio Agamben (1942), Slavoj Žižek (1949), who see in the theology of Paul of Tarsus a political position to rescue, appear in the debate today. Alain Badiou (1937) also enters into it himself. However, this contemporary debate finds its basis in the theme of the messianic, theological-political, the apocalyptic and the prophetic, as well as the ultimate relation it holds with Christianity. Also, its practical-material impact in the world. In this case, we try to trace the notion of messianism, in such a way that we can glimpse the ecclesiological implications, as well as the religious and political practices that come from it.<sup>34</sup>

In this way we propose the attempt of an epistemological-theological reading of inverted/turned Christianity, previously exemplified (and from our postcolonial historical reading, following the argument of Dussel) as the core of ecclesiology, theology and even a side of Wesleyan praxis, that we will explain later.

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<sup>33</sup> Gramsci points out that when leadership loses consensus, it becomes the dominant power. Moreover, the excluded become constituents of a new system. To paraphrase St. Paul: the law is not the criterion of the right or just act, because the law kills. If there is no faith, this faith, a critical consensus of the oppressed, is the new criterion of justification. For Walter Benjamin, the victims are the criterion for the interpretation of history.

<sup>34</sup> For an approach to the debate of political theology in current perspective, the primary bibliography I suggest is the following: AGAMBEN, G., *El tiempo que resta. Comentario a la Carta a los Romanos*, Trotta, Madrid, 2006; BADIOU, A., *Saint Paul. La fondation de l'universalisme*, PUF, Paris, 1997; TAUBES, J., *La teología política de Pablo*, Trotta, Madrid, 2007; SCHMITT, C., *Teología política*, Trotta, Madrid, 2009; PETERSON, E., *Tratados políticos*, Cristiandad, Madrid, 1966; BENJAMIN, W., *Tesis sobre la historia...*

Now, with the *eclipse of the messiah* we understand the following: the movement in which the messianic impulse is hidden by the figure of the *katéchón*. In this sense we understand that, the movement of the Christ and of primitive Christianity, was constituted as we have said in an absolute rebellion against the Empire. Later, when it expanded, it took some political forms of the world to other levels. In this case, incorruptible, distant, far away, because they were in the world or the realm of the celestial. That is, the Messiah who broke into the world and died for it, was ascended, rising to the heavens. Relegated from the power systems to that space, untouchable. At this moment the step is taken to a new turn or kidnapping. Taking the policy, as well as the rebellion and the apocalyptic end that brought the Messiah, to a world that we cannot fully access. Erik Peterson in his proposal left the theology of politics and rebellion free, rather, adjusting them under the figure of a legitimate celestial power. Subdued to the eschatological kingdom. In this way, messianism was eclipsed and captured (or ripped up, died and buried?) To stabilize and merge with the world, through the form of a sovereign with power without equal. The other, constituting him as a king but now in the heavens. Thus, and under the figure of the *katéchòn* a revolutionary ending is stopped, conserving the Law and the State. In our particular case we ask: The structure of the Methodist, now pyramidal/episcopal and institutionalized Church, the weight of the Discipline, as well as the bureaucratic mechanisms (almost-stalinized), its courts, commissions proclaim a similar form of exclusion or burial of messianism, as we have explained?

Thus, the capture of the Messiah or what we have called the *eclipse of the Messiah* serves as the postponement of the end that the world will not know. In this case, the fact is not minor, since the announced apocalyptic ending is delayed. He does so, according to Benjamin's thesis supplanted this moment until the advent of the Kingdom of God. Towards the one that the history is directed of progressive form, and in whose future the end of the messianic time has been postponed, based on a biblical reading of the incognito or mystery, *ad hoc* with the most conservative and reactionary part of the church, not willing to a flash of *lightning*, because: "*neither the angels themselves know the day and the hour*".<sup>35</sup>

We affirm then, together with other scholars, that Christianity begins its decadence at the moment in which Christianity legitimizes the Roman empire with Constantine. This is: when the Roman emperor and the form of the universal political empire, are no longer contrary to Christianity and its messianic, rebellious message. Stop being an anti-Christian power.<sup>36</sup>

In this way, the turn of Christianity and its messianic message results in the neutralization of it. Well, the general current understands Christianity in absolutely historical terms. In the sense of continuum, that is, of historical continuity, where the divine revelation is shown through a son of Israel, through a message (*euangelion*) of universal redemption. Its subsequent propagation conquered the Empire, to legitimize it later. Generating a new historical function of Power, where the Empire subsumed Christianity becoming a mechanism more than a specific oppressive political theology. Jacob Taubes

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<sup>35</sup> Cfr., Mc 13, 32; Mt 24, 36.

<sup>36</sup> Cfr., BADIOU, A., *Saint Paul. La fondation de l'universalisme*, PUF, Paris, 1997.

already pointed out in a phrase that exemplifies what we have tried to argue: "*It is prayed for the preservation of the State, because, God forbid, if it does not remain, it breaks the chaos, or, even worse, the kingdom of God!*"<sup>37</sup>

In this way, the *logic-of-power-that-stops*, part of Christianity but goes against its own messianic nature and message. The logic of the church-institution is a detention operation against Messianic. That comes from the dormant and domesticated apocalyptic force. Thus stopping the revolution, the Messiah of institutionality, from our reading, is inserted in the continuity of time becoming the power that slows down. In this way, it has to agree with the world and its powers in order to conserve itself. Being a new theological piece of political legitimization and the *katéchôn*, the figure that hides and at the same time that replaces the figure of the messianic redeemer. In such a way that we have in the Church-institution detention, conservation, instead of irruption and rebellion. The conclusion that follows is as follows: Messianism is trapped in a conservative form, the *Empire form*, located in historical continuity and without the fulfillment of its apocalyptic work. If the reader has already understood, the overshadowed messiah is the stoppage of the final time, which does not reach. For this eclipse of the messiah postpones the *continuum* of time, and by delaying it, by distancing it, the messianic impulse and its apocalyptic task diminish. Moving away from the conflict, stopping the end, saving Christianity from it. Saving the Church-institution thereof granting an extension to order all things Sunday through Sunday. In a simulation of change but at the end, everything remains the same.

From our perspective, the question is not whether the current conjuncture of the Methodist Church worldwide allows for a possibility of some ideological adherence. For this argument is found in the same way in the circularity of the Institution. However, what is under discussion is the possibility of bringing messianism back to the Church. A re-evangelization of it. An approach to messianism from which he started and which has

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<sup>37</sup> TAUBES, J., *La teología política...* p. 169.

eclipsed, postponed, forgotten.<sup>38</sup> At this point: What could we say about ecclesiology, missions, agencies and their bets, as well as the praxis of faith of world Methodism?<sup>39</sup>

### **3. Nord Atlantic colonial Wesleyanism: another turn of Christianity and a brake on messianism?**

With the appearance of the works *The wretched of the earth*<sup>40</sup> (1963) and *Black skin white masks* (1952) by Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), we witnessed the criticism of colonial, ethnocentric, Europeanizing or North-Atlantic legacies in southern territories. The psychiatrist and writer from Martinica pointed out the psychopathology caused by the colonial occupation. In which torturers and tortured intervened. Specifically, Fanon's study attempted to answer the question: why do blacks adopt the values of white subjugators? As well as trying to delve into the results that this phenomenon produces, especially among the oppressed. In his words: "*We are trying to understand why the black of the Antilles likes to speak French so much.*"<sup>41</sup>

Later, with the appearance of the work *Culture and imperialism* (1993) by the philosopher Edward Said<sup>42</sup> (1935-2003), we witnessed the critical analysis of the cooperation and collaboration that exists between culture and politics. Nothing casual or innocent relationship. For it produced a system of domination extended in forms and images, finally compromising, penetrating and subjugating the imaginary of the dominated.

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<sup>38</sup> It is worrisome to read texts of some "reputed" Wesleyan theologians, who shamefully lend themselves to legitimizing exclusion (in the case of rights for LGBTQ within the UMC, for example) from a reactionary version of Methodism in the UMC, which present as "orthodox, biblical and doctrinal." They are in a far away rationality, of what we try to explain here in deep epistemological-critical terms. They did not understand that the debate at this level is not related to the assumption of a specific theological current (orthodox to progressive and its intermediates). Based on a certain reading history of the same church, rooted in specific localities of the United States, or that even the deepest debate is not about choosing among a series of plans to solve a problem. It is, then, the last level, to rethink/ return/make present the messianism of the Methodist church. This, we think, is beyond a tantrum of global schism (recalling the phrase Fresh Hope for an Orthodox Version of the United Methodism) that has its roots in that old interpretation, interspersed with poor biblical readings and an inability to dialogue with current perspectives beyond an unhealthy reading of Wesleyanism. To be honest, this is one of the most important tragedies of the Wesleyan world and its intellectual breakdown: the rise of "theological figures" in academic positions of power, with the inability to generate a theology consistent with the time signs, of some actors of the North-Atlantic academic circle today. As well as understanding it is possible that theology has left the classrooms, churches and ecclesial spaces, to present now in the form of symbolic-cultural referents, in the streets. For what is needed epistemological tools beyond theology to face such a situation.

<sup>39</sup> From our reading, we do not doubt that there are earnest and honest attempts of the faithful, laity and pastors, who try every day and night to resolve conflicts or get involved reliably in giving help to the needy. To help in situations of oppression. Not obstinately, from the exercise that we undertake in this article, it seems to us that any form of *detention or messianic eclipse* that does not finally touch the possibility of rupture of the *continuum* appears finally as purely palliative care. The question is: how do we recognize these dispossessed sectors as collective messiahs? Is the Church ready for it? We can see, clearly, with some specific cases that in general, it is not like that.

<sup>40</sup> Accompanied by the excellent preface of the French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980).

<sup>41</sup> FANON, F., *Los condenados de la tierra*, FCE, México, 2010, p. 27.

<sup>42</sup> Considerado como el fundador de la teoría poscolonial.

Said then highlights the thesis on *Orientalism and Occidentalism* through those that made the construction of the *Eastern* like the *other*. Making clear in his vision, *a system of total oppression, which goes beyond weapons*. A genuinely integral system, where the dominated in turn reproduces this colonial heritage in itself, in its relationships and so on. Reviving Fanon's position. Nor can we forget the valuable ideas of Aimeé Césaire against colonialism.<sup>43</sup>

Later, the theories of subalternity with an influence of the indicated authors made manifest the framework of a system of global domination. Moreover, so, in the face of decolonial and postcolonial criticism, we find the need to rethink the link between knowledge and power. In this way, Latin American postcolonial studies suggest four spheres of coloniality: the coloniality of power, the coloniality of knowledge, the coloniality of being and the coloniality of nature. Let us now enter into the second of these typifications, to reflect on specific practical theology, the Wesleyan studies, and a certain ecclesiology.

**3.1 Coloniality and colonialism.** We point out from here that what we understand as coloniality does not mean the same as colonialism. Well, when we talk about coloniality, we refer in a first approximation, to the concept developed by the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (1930-2018), the Argentine thinker Walter Mignolo (1941) and the Argentinean-Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussel mainly. Moreover, whose influence is on the American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1930) from his concept *World System*.<sup>44</sup> Thus, colonialism (unlike coloniality) for Aníbal Quijano is:

"(...) one of the constitutive and specific elements of the world pattern of capitalist power, based on the imposition of a racial / ethnic classification of the population of the world as the cornerstone of said power pattern and *operates in each of the planes, areas and dimensions, material and subjective, of the daily social existence and societal scale*".<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, we can specify the following: *Coloniality* is presented as a model, total, determined, permanent power, daily and present in the most different dynamics of today's society. It comes, of course, from the historical experience of *colonialism*, but it no longer needs it to survive. For *coloniality* has remained somewhat entrenched: it has metastasized into the societal patterns of the modern world. In such a way that *coloniality* is the direct

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<sup>43</sup> Cfr., CÉSAIRE, A., *Discurso sobre el colonialismo*, Akal, Madrid, 2006.

<sup>44</sup> Through this, Wallerstein wanted to understand the dynamics that allowed the economic and power asymmetry that exists between the North and the South of the world. That is an epistemic-critical reading, which attempted to thematize the long history of colonial inheritances and subjugations in the region, which ended in the violence of various types. It had the objective of thinking that the countries of Latin America were located unequally in a particular global system, with oppressive, dominant features that condemned those to economic violence, primarily, by making them dependent countries. Of certain centralities of power. In the same way, the dialogue that started this position in a certain way brought to the table debate about the Latin American philosophies, their methods, and dynamics. The underlining is ours.

<sup>45</sup> QUIJANO, A., "Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social", en *Journal of World-Systems Research*, VI, 2, Summer/Fall 2000, 342-386. Special Issue: Festschrift for Immanuel Wallerstein. Part I, p. 345.

consequence of centuries of *colonialism*. Also, it is the creation, presence, and permanence of a habit in the world system.

**3.2 Coloniality of knowledge.** It has become clear that in our exposition, colonialism, and coloniality are not the same. Now, we must say that the coloniality of knowledge is only one of the levels that help us to understand the mechanics of coloniality, as the constitutive foundation of social relations, which have allowed the West to dominate over the rest of the world. This level on which we pay attention, and we point out could be understood as the implantation of the Eurocentric / Anglocentric order, as the most precise, unique, validated and therefore a superior way of knowing the world. This is, following Walsh, certain coloniality that implies the negation of the intellectual, epistemological production of alterities (Latin, indigenous, afro, Chicana, feminist and others) as knowledge.<sup>46</sup>

In this way, the coloniality of knowledge is then an instance of the control, a device (institutional at times) that following Edgardo Lander was, is and will be generated by the coloniality of power to sustain the control and legitimacy of knowledge. Where the Eurocentric and North-Atlantic positions (educational institutions, for example) presented as universal and where their academics, voices, become the legitimate and sanctioned messengers to disseminate the "European" and "Anglo-Saxon." In the same way, the purpose of this intelligent and ingenious device has been and is, that local, ancestral, oriental and native peoples know their knowledge, cultures, knowledge, traditions. The previous ones that constitute part of their being. It is sought as such, these colonized sectors are illustrious and embrace the teachings that would make women and men modern, educated, educated, clean, new, under the European or Anglo-Saxon perspective. Thus, the rejection of the multitude of knowledge of subaltern knowledge is no longer rejected by the premise of race, colonial. However, they are rejected under the premise of knowledge, legitimized, sanctioned, scientific: coloniality of knowledge.

We ask ourselves at this point and after presenting the arguments we believe necessary, if similarly, specific Wesleyan ecclesiology, the Wesleyan studies, and a specific Methodist practical theology: Were, are and will be control devices, which share elements of this coloniality of knowledge, reproducing models in Latin American, Asian, African sectors of Wesleyan style?

**3.3 Methodist churches and the coloniality of knowledge.** We answer the question posed above: Yes. The first church organizations in Latin America were ecclesial and economic reproductions of the American matrices from which they came. His goal was to support his missionaries, on one side and the other, the evangelization that brought converts to the new faith. Later came the lifting of buildings, churches, as signs of the new Methodist creed.

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<sup>46</sup> Cfr., WALSH, C., "Interculturalidad y colonialidad del poder: Un pensamiento y posicionamiento otro desde la diferencia colonial", en *El giro decolonial. Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica en el capitalismo global*, CASTRO GÓMEZ, S., - GROSFOGUEL, R., (eds.), Editorial Siglo del Hombre, 2007.

In local churches, the model to follow was similar. Appealing to the matrices from elements such as Sunday worship and participation of the converts in it; translation and production of songs and hymns; the use of the Bible and its reading; Sunday schools for children, youth meetings, men's and women's meetings. In this sense, the groups dedicated to each age, sex, around the religious activity were privileged. The same that at least in large part of Latin America remains that way today.

History tells us that later, schools were erected next to the temples. Practice proper to Methodism and the Presbyterian Church. A first educational boom covered elementary schools. Subsequently secondary. The characteristic was that of being bilingual (Spanish / English). Then came the raising of schools for young ladies, then for deaconesses. Finally came the schools, from elementary and today universities in some cases. Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico were benefited by this configuration, at first.

The first teachers of the elementary schools were missionary pastors. Moreover, so, fundamentally modern, liberal values linked to the preaching of the gospel were spread. The sport played a significant role. Also reading circles and cultural activities.<sup>47</sup> That is a critique of the barbarism and backwardness of the Latin American Catholic sector from which, to date, the Protestant and Methodist prevent him from recognizing those as his brothers or equals. At present, the debate on ecumenism in the region is a clear example of this.

The printing press appeared, which strengthened the literature of the evangelical groups with their publications. The hospitals and the clinic had a reduced diffusion in this period, which later would be consolidated.

Also, the diffusion of the evangelical churches at the beginning of the s. XX depended economically on North American capital.

The formation of new groups and religious spaces following as seminars.<sup>48</sup> The standard reading: the enlightenment of Latin American societies by the North Atlantic Methodist world, to get out of their arrears? It is probable, however, that all intended "*development*" has an obverse. In the case we study, the obverse of *power*.

Thus, and from our vision, schools, primary, secondary, universities, agencies, foundations, were and are part of these power/knowledge devices. In a certain way, depositaries of knowledge and specific worldviews (*Weltanschauung*), in this Eurocentric and Anglo-Saxon case of supposed superiority. They were and still are judges who validate, qualify or deny, which is beyond their perspectives and practices, as something that needs

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<sup>47</sup> The cross of Malta, distinctive young Methodist (youth groups) indicate four areas of a development that they call integral: social, cultural, biblical and sports.

<sup>48</sup> Cfr., RUÍZ GUERRA, R., *Hombres nuevos. Metodismo y modernización en México (1873-1930)*, CUPSA, México, 1992.

support raised to the first level, because it has, although it is not stated, something of a barbarian or provincialism.<sup>49</sup>

From the postcolonial literature that we are now trying, we can point out that the coloniality of knowledge can be understood from various complementary ways, active in consciousness and in material practices, a complex framework, a device of power that passes through different spaces of social life.

For all the above, we affirm that if the current knowledge, Europeanizing / Anglo-Saxon colonial is not questioned and are assumed as superior/universal, generate knowledge of domination. As well as relations of Eurocentrism or Anglocentrism. In such a way that we fall into the impossibility of rethinking the world, in this case, the church, Wesleyan church, from the experiences of the peoples of the South. In this way, epistemological debates are political debates of the first order. Inside the church and outside of it.

4. Now, the field of research within the Wesleyan tradition, Methodist, currently dedicated to the study of its doctrinal corpus and its history is called Wesleyan Studies, as well as the theology inspired by John Wesley and the Methodist movement. We ask here: Is it possible that this Wesleyan theology / Wesleyan studies / Wesleyan church practice / Practical theology, present analogous characteristics with systems of colonial domination, replicating this phenomenon in Latin America or Africa, for example? Is it possible that these devices can be considered as part of the coloniality of knowledge, disseminating religious and theological systems that worked and function as veils of a sociocultural, political and economic cover-up? Is it possible that the Wesleyan theological thought of Europeans and North Americans as an expression of civilization, modernity, and progress has turned the peoples of the south, as José Martí says, into "*a mask with English breeches, the Parisian vest, the North American coat? Moreover, the Montera of Spain*", far from its present problems and realities?

We think so, in the way of a critique of Wesleyan reason, from the recent decolonial and postcolonial positions, which provide essential elements for a task so necessary today.

The previous ones generally carried out with greater diffusion and tenacity from academic institutions, in the centrality of the United States of North America and to a certain extent in the United Kingdom. The same people who have played (and play) a fundamental role in education, or let's say teaching, in the Latin American region and throughout the Wesleyan globality. Its propagation force is linked to great thinkers, a rich tradition around the investigation of historical matters, primarily. Due to the possession of documents of historical value for the tradition, the idiomatic closeness, and history that links to both mentioned regions. Moreover, later to his missionary establishments, up to the present training of pastoral agents in different regions. With greater strength during the first third of the 20th century.

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<sup>49</sup> Although at present, immersion trips are part of the academic training for American students, we think that on several occasions these operate more like specific academic tourism. As such, an ideological screen regarding Paul Ricoeur.



However, we think that the uncritical reproduction and transfer of the contents of the Wesleyan tradition to the Latin American territory have been carried out and is carried out in most of the occasions, from parameters and conjunctural paradigms typical of the Anglo-Saxon culture. That is, the assumption of problems of this tradition (Wesleyan) in more than one of the Latin American countries, was based on American parameters, and from a univocal doctrinal reading. In such a way that juxtaposes the debates around the doctrinal purity; the historical appearance of periodic cuts of such tradition, interpretations of the Wesleyan texts, located in the figure of its founder and its historical context.<sup>50</sup> In Mexican Methodist Church even in 2018, for example, the correct ways of understanding the theological framework continue to be discussed year after year in the *Doctrinal Congresses* (yes, Doctrinal!). Discussions in historical terms, minimally dedicated to the current reality of the country, where the purity of the doctrine and what distinguishes these groups from Catholics or Pentecostals, is the main reason for discussion. That is, thematic around a correct interpretation of the Wesleyan narrative. Alternatively, of biblical purity or even of erudition in some biblical-theological areas. All these finally re-produce Anglo-Saxon or Eurocentric approaches as if they were typical of the Latin American, from a slightly twisted hermeneutics, in most cases.<sup>51</sup> Elements that make us think about the possession of the reserved rights, on the part of the academic or hierarchical North American groups, that sometimes disseminate them without thinking about the consequences.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Except for some cases like Maddox: *Rethinking Wesley's theology for contemporary Methodism*, Kingswood Books, Nashville, 1998, where Methodism is thought from other latitudes. For example, some inclusions of Míguez Bonino in the centralized North American discussion. However, the decolonial part still does not appear in these spaces. We must also take care of cases such as that of Colón-Emeric, which undertakes a comparative study between Wesleyan thought and the approaches of the first theologians in Latin America, in the s. XVI. We think that this is very valuable because it encourages the dialogue of the tradition, but: Why should we always resort to the Anglo-academic reading of Mr. Wesley to obtain approval of our Latin American, Indian, and fundamental knowledge or theologies? Is this a kind of argument *ad verecundiam* beneath and undercover? Finally, we think that in the current production of Wesleyan studies, the discussions revolve around the recognition of elements of the work and person of Wesley, his contemporaries and scholarly notes to Wesleyan thought and time, as well as the legacy of the first Methodist settlements. Generating in this way the privatization of Methodism, restricted to academic legitimacy and its production. The problem becomes viral when such centralized-privatizing visions are exported and are assumed by the settlements of this confession in the Latin American region for example, without the use of essential hermeneutical tools. Producing reflections located in the middle of extreme poverty, murders, disappearances, death, gender violence, marginalization, unemployment, excessive violence, extreme pollution, corruption, drug trafficking, murders, environmental crises, migratory crises, racism, gender inequality, etc., which run around a monolithic doctrine and identity, thus generating true opioid and ideological phenomena.

<sup>51</sup> Es importante destacar que incluso en la actualidad existen intentos de reflexión de esta tradición de fe, a partir de *Congresos de doctrina metodista*. No han reparado aún, en la reproducción acrítica de esta *pantalla-ideológica* en términos de Paul Ricoeur.

<sup>52</sup> The saddest and shameful case I think is the Wesleyan theologians who in his essay (?) like: *The birth pangs of United Methodism as unique, global and orthodox denomination*, around LGBTQ groups presents as a solution to such a problem: they line up or they leave. ABRAHAM, W., *The birth pangs of United Methodism as unique, global and orthodox denomination view in:* <https://peopleneedjesus.net/2016/08/25/the-birth-pangs-of-united-methodism-as-a-unique-global-orthodox-denomination/>

In this sense we think, specific generalized Wesleyan studies and specific North American Wesleyan theology realizes as an ideology while religion is presented as a cultural cover-up, taking up the Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea. Thus, it is presented under the coverings of culture, of European and North American peoples as an expression of civilization, modernity, and progress. Converting, as Martí says, into: "*a mask with shorts from England, the Parisian vest, the North American coat and the cap of Spain*"<sup>53</sup> or also: "*We were epaulets and togas in countries that came to the world with espadrilles on their feet and the headband.*"<sup>54</sup>

We point out, then, the alienating and oppressive function that the transfer of a certain Wesleyan orthodoxy, or a specific Wesleyan colonial North-Atlantic vision in the present, what causes in the Latin American regional interpretations of this tradition of faith some quite baroque phenomena. By assuming as their own the postulates around the doctrinal purity and correct interpretation of the same current. Thus, the uncritical assumption of this branch in Latin America is presented as an ideologizing whenever they obscure the problems inherent in the historical, local conjunctures, in which Latin Americans are linked to this religious tradition. It is not possible to discuss the doctrine and the Wesleyan history, as a priority, when we live in the era of greater disappearances and murders in the war against drug trafficking, for example. In this sense, I wonder about the drug that planted in Mexico, of which, mostly, it is for North American consumption. How does the UMC work on the issue of legalization/non-legalization of drugs, for example?

**5. With Wesley and beyond Wesley? Perspectives.** Finally, the presence of the discursive theological narrative of the evangelical, Methodist sector has been present throughout the processes of social transformation and development of various countries in the region. The liberating presence of its praxis does not emerge from a doctrinal-identitarian position. Although, in the beginning, it was necessary to define religious identities towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the evolution of the history of such groups allows understanding them based on their contextual situation in each of the places in which he has participated. In this way, the resolution of such efforts can be understood from the consolidation of the status quo, on the one hand. On the other hand, participation in liberation projects based on historical praxis based on religious faith and orthopraxis. No more orthodoxy, Therefore, it is necessary to define the social and political world of the places in which the discursive narrative is belonging to Methodism implanted. The previous implies the use of a de-ideologizing instrument. Therefore, the relevance and support of the History of ideas in Latin America, as well as the critical sociology of knowledge, which potentiate such an approach by exerting a modification in the epistemology of Wesleyan studies, beyond the Anglo-Saxon understanding of them.

By this, we mean that not because we are Wesleyans or Methodists, we should return to the past and the ideas of the founders unless it is to face fundamentalists who have not read a single line of Wesley. Alternatively, to dialogue with conservatives from the point of view they claim to know. Always remember the laws of logic: even Wesley as an argument *ad verecundiam* is a hoax. *The magister Dixit* is presented in different variants

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<sup>53</sup> MARTÍ, J., en ZEA, L., *América latina en sus ideas*, Siglo XXI, México, 1986, p. 17.

<sup>54</sup> Cfr., ZEA, L., Op. Cit., p. 18.

today, within the Wesleyan studies and in the praxis of the Methodist Church. Have not enough years passed to understand Wesley in the sense of a combative and rebellious spirit? Have not enough years passed to say, with Wesley, but beyond him?

We think then that the fetishization of Wesleyan theology and studies, in general, has resulted in the fetishization of structures (ecclesiology and ecclesiastical praxis) founded on this principle contrary to Christianity (messianic). Moreover, debited from the (epistemological) level that we have tried to unravel. Thus, we can affirm that a debate on the foundation of the theological knowledge of Wesleyanism is first and foremost a debate on the practical theology of it and it is also a political debate within the colonial structures of knowledge, within the Wesleyanism.

**5.1 Messianism in Wesleyanism: Wesleyan studies, ecclesiology, and practical theology.** When we speak of Wesleyan theology and its active correlate, the following is evident: social action as part of the theological and ecclesial framework of the Methodist world. However, according to everything we have said: is it possible to talk about social action in the world today? There will be those who answer yes starting from the classical reading of Wesleyanism. From our perspective, as indicated, this category is no more than a vague memory or a limitation of the theology and practice we need today. In the case we present, with the previously argued from the thesis of Benjamin and the decoloniality of theology, we need today a theology in tune with those approaches. As such, we think, a theology of transgression where the messianic figures appear in such a way, like a lightning bolt using Benjamin's phrase. Who would be the collective messiah today inside the church-institution? Where should have to start this reflection on the practice of theology? Since returning to Wesleyan notions of the eighteenth century, we try to transpose them to our experiences of today. In this case: one of the first political battles *intra eclessia*, would be the struggle to dialogue from epistemology, as the preeminent source or basis of a Wesleyan practical theology? How is history read in Wesleyan terms today? How do Latin American, African, Asian spaces appear in the eyes of the UMC world?

**6. The new Wesleyan theology.** From social action to transgression. For the previous, we think that the figure of the Messiah and its occurrence under the logic of the Dialectic of detention. That is, the messianic irruption (different from the modern vision, Hegelian in its case where the synthesis and progressive progress is presented, *Aufhebung*) is presented as a possibility of present reading, of the Methodist reality in the whole world, we think that the ways and spaces to talk about the path towards a practical Wesleyan theology practice, the ecclesiology and Wesleyan studies, from a materialist messianic point of view. Which we have explained previously.

However, it will be necessary to clarify and to say already, that this new bet moving in a slope, messianic, could seem to be carried out in a double movement (*intra* and *extra eclessia*). However, to think about separating our work or company would be again, in the dualist thought that includes the world as something external or separated from the ecclesial work. Also, on the other hand, to the task of the theologian relegated to the interior of the doors of the church or the house, paraphrasing the theologian J. Baptist Metz. Which stated: "*His cross (of theology) is not in the privatissimum of the personal-individual sphere, not even in the sanctissimum of the purely religious sphere, but beyond the reserved private*

*sphere or the protected purely religious sphere.*" In this sense, we think, the mobilization of the critical power of messianism, which is at the center of the Christian tradition.

The messianic interruption is like that, the moment of danger. Where the story suddenly beats with a much intensity, which as we said, any day is an eternity that hangs. Creative moments of history that allow generating readings beyond the institutionality that must be broken. The road to transformation in our case, towards a Wesleyanism whose historical reading attempts to decentralize, to understand what we have said above: that this modern history is complemented by the paradigm of capitalism, of Christianity. Moreover, as such, it is a late and later construction, generated in German romanticism. This is, on the one hand, that the reserved rights of Wesleyanism are not characteristic of European or North-Atlantic theologies. At the same time, the stories of the oppressed, vanquished and exiles are essential to generate today ecclesial practices that go beyond benefactor support to poor sectors of Latin America or the world. Urgent works that reveal the emergence of these messiahs, the ones who have been violated in the world today.

Call this way, the rebellion of theologians aware of the need for the interruption, the need for a flash of lightning that momentarily crosses the church sky and the practice of Methodist theology. Walking beyond the institution, indeed. With a foot in it, if it is still possible, but also, with a foot in the current political causes that urgent need to present from the perspective of the excluded, narratives and forgotten stories. The visions of the world lost and buried.

Finally, for an interpretation of a new Wesleyan theology, the following should be said: the Chilean poet Nicanor Parra spoke in his life about the figure of the antipoet. This antipoet is an ordinary individual who communicates in the language of every day. This antipoet, before the order of the established, the status quo, the solemnity, the reverence, answers with irreverence and humor, through antipoetry. At this point, we think that similarly, we should get closer to the figure of the anti-theologian (or are you afraid of losing your tenure?). This would be an ordinary individual, who speaks of God in the language of every day. Especially, in the world of poverty, inequality, and death in which millions of Latin Americans live. Go down from the Olympus of the academy, approaching the people, whether it is Christian or not, it has ceased to matter, being honest and honest with the God of transgression and the rebellion of the Messiah, who comes like lightning.

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