

The Moral Pathway: Toward the Stranger in the Life and Thought
of John Wesley

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Last but certainly not least, I owe the greatest thanks to my Master. It was he who enabled John Wesley to see strangers in his midst and also to walk toward them. I, too, turn to the same Master to be and do as Wesley did.

Abstract

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, presents a robust and clearly articulated pathway for those who wish to come alongside neighbours, and others we might consider strangers, in a process that can impact and transform both parties.

Wesley's daily practice was to engage with those who were not within his immediate circle and to make an effort to build relationships with those who might otherwise have been considered outsiders or unwelcome. Through his actions and his wide corpus of diaries, sermons and other writings, he documented his journey and put a framework around his beliefs and practices so that others could also engage with strangers in their midst. Wesley hoped to nurture a people who loved God and loved others.

A close reading of Wesley's corpus gives a method or way to become emboldened and enabled along this 'moral pathway' of connecting with those outside of our comfort zone. Wesley names four enabling dimensions: doctrine, experience, discipline and practice. Doctrine has to do with the story of Christian Scripture and the promises embedded in that story, specifically about human maturation. Experience concerns the heart and its emotions and how these can be so affected by Scripture that a person becomes reoriented toward the stranger. Discipline encapsulates the organisational dimension which directs and sustains human transformation. Finally practice enlightens us to the practical duties involved in loving neighbour and stranger that turn theory into reality.

Wesley's four dimensions form a moral pathway consisting of six 'ortho' strands. Doctrine equates to orthodoxy and experience to orthokardia. Orthopaideia expresses discipline and is further broken down into orthokoinonia and orthonomos. The equivalent of practice is orthopraxy. When all six "orthos" or strands are finely woven together, they form a moral pathway. It was this pathway that compelled Wesley and his Methodists to reach out the hand of fellowship and compassion toward strangers.

Wesley's ideas go beyond contemporary perceptions of a three-stranded cord of orthodoxy, orthokardia and orthopraxy; instead, they suggest a cord of six strands, also including orthopaideia, orthokoinonia and orthonomos. Only this strengthened cord can properly communicate Wesley's intent and method to those who would walk toward strangers in their midst.

Introduction

Wesley the Pedestrian Theologian

In what follows, the reader will be introduced to the central character of this thesis, John Wesley, and to the heuristic methodology that gives shape and substance to this study. A summary of the primary and secondary reference literature is presented along with a preview of the essential arguments.

John Wesley

John Wesley (1703–1791) was an important exponent of the integration of belief, practice, and heart in the eighteenth-century. He was a seminal Christian thinker and activist, an Oxford fellow, and an Anglican minister of religion who established a network of ‘societies’¹ throughout the United Kingdom² to further the spiritual transformation of people so they would have not just a heart for God but also a heart of concern for the marginalised and socially isolated. Wesley himself visited the sick, came alongside prisoners, championed the rights of children in the workforce, relocated to America to serve indigenous Indians, worked among slum dwellers in the United Kingdom, and supported the abolition of slavery and the slave trade.³ Wesley’s ‘heart religion’⁴ was for all and especially those who had been abandoned by society.

John Wesley was an indefatigable worker. He rose at four in the morning and made sure that every hour counted. Invariably, his long days and indeed his long life consisted of

¹ More is said on these in Chapter 6 under orthokoinonia. A society is essentially an association of people around agreed covenants, rules, and objectives.

² The term ‘United Kingdom’ throughout this thesis refers to the Kingdom of Great Britain as constituted in 1707 when the Acts of Union combined England (including Wales) with Scotland. Ireland did not become part of the United Kingdom until 1801 (after Wesley’s death) and in 1927, after the partition of Ireland, the proper title became the ‘United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’.

³ See the next chapter for a detailed description of these activities of Wesley.

⁴ By ‘heart religion’ Wesley was implying several things. First, his religion was one of love. And secondly, an inner transformation of the affections of the heart must occur if there are to be outward loving actions on behalf of others.

two different but not unrelated types of work; his written work and his walking work. In a blur of motion, he moved from pen to pavement, from parchment to people. He was a prolific writer and a passionate visitor of people. What drove him to write and walk as hard as he did was a call to ‘perfection’. By perfection⁵ he meant the remaking of people into lovers of God and each other. He desperately wanted people, including himself, to be marked by an orientation to love. He obsessively wrote about this vision of human-becoming and compulsively took to the dangerous streets of his day. Wesley the scholar, activist, thinker, healer and student endured pain in the study and as a walker of the streets.

What then is an appropriate image or metaphor to describe Wesley that is faithful to his writing and his walking? Those in the field of development studies have used the image of ‘barefoot doctor’⁶ to portray medical practitioners who do not wait for the sick to come to them but walk into impoverished areas to meet the unwell in their healing work. As will be evidenced, Wesley strode into the prisons, fields, and slums as he engaged in his remedial work, in the hope that some would be set free from selfishness and in turn help to free others. Wesley as the remedial⁷ scholar did not confine himself to a classroom or a cathedral, waiting for people to come to him. He left the safety of those places and, on horseback or by foot, made his way toward those who were spiritually sick, taking with him what he believed was the cure they needed. He could therefore be labelled a ‘barefoot theologian’ but I suspect that even Wesley would find this too extreme. Wesley was no radical; he was simply a hard worker. There was something

⁵ By perfection, Wesley was not suggesting that Christians can become omniscient, omnipotent, or infallible. Rather, it was his view that Christians can be set free from the necessity of committing sin, not only outward sinful deeds but also inner evil thoughts and sinful inclinations. Being free from sin enables people to be free to love. More will be said on this term in Chapter 4 of this thesis, pp. 114–18.

⁶ Initially this term was used to describe lay medical practitioners, not necessarily doctors, who would travel to distant villages in rural China and assist in childbirth, first aid, dispensing of drugs and preventative medicine. See, for example, Marvin E. Weisberg and John R. Graham, *Barefoot Doctor's Manual* (Oceanside, NY: Professional Seminar Consultants, 1977). Prepared by the Revolutionary Health Committee and revised by Weisberg.

⁷ Randy Maddox suggests that Wesley’s view of God is that of healer. In other words, God is as much concerned about healing people from the plague of sin as God is concerned about forgiving people of the penalty of sin. See Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 144–5.

very ordinary about him. For this reason, I prefer to see him as a ‘pedestrian theologian.’ This is not to suggest that he was unremarkable, but to note the peripatetic way he did life. Once he got to a place, usually on horseback, he walked the pavements, visited the sick, got alongside prisoners, and embraced strangers. Pedestrianism best sums up his missiological practice.

Wesley’s pedestrianism was driven by a religion of love though faith in God. As a revivalist, his clarion call was “see God and live.”⁸ He counted nothing better than knowing God. This, he believed, was “the fountain of beauty and love, the original source of all excellency and perfection.”⁹ Therefore Wesley could understand why some might ask:

Will it not suffice to worship God, who is a Spirit, with the spirit of our minds, without encumbering ourselves with outward things, or even thinking of them at all? Is it not better, that the whole extent of our thought should be taken up with high and heavenly contemplation; and that instead of busying ourselves at all about externals, we should only commune with God in our hearts?¹⁰

Wesley did not advocate withdrawing “from the world” or ceasing to engage in other important “actions.”¹¹ To become so heavenly minded and of no earthly use was to Wesley nothing but a “pleasing delusion”¹² and a failure to comprehend the true nature of Christianity. Wesley’s religion was one of faith and love, of the vertical and the horizontal, of kneeling in the pews and walking the pavements.

⁸ John Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount IV,” Sermon 24 in *Sermons I: 1–33* (ed. Albert C. Outler; vol. 1 of *The Works of John Wesley*; ed. Frank Baker; Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 531.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1: 531.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1: 532.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1: 532.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1: 533.

Wesley believed that faith in God makes possible a love for others. A favourite text and theme was that of faith working by love.¹³ Wesley was as much concerned about the horizontal axis of love as the vertical one of faith. He urges others to be filled with “faith and love.”¹⁴ What thrilled Wesley was seeing many in his societies not only “alive to God [but also] filled with love.”¹⁵ He describes faith as “seeing God” and love as “feeling God.”¹⁶ He went as far as to say that without love, faith is simply not faith as the Scripture understands it.¹⁷ Between the two, faith is not “an end, but a means only.”¹⁸ Wesley is clear: The “end of the commandment is love – of every command, of the whole Christian dispensation.”¹⁹ Wesley urged his followers to “walk in love.”²⁰ And for Wesley, the love that had to be preserved was specifically the love for a neighbour or stranger. In one of his messages on the Sermon on the Mount, Wesley urges those who have been filled with love not to limit its expression:

(To not) confine the expressions of it to his own family, or friends, or acquaintance, or party, or to those of his own opinions; — no, nor those who are partakers of like precious faith; but steps over all these narrow bounds, that he may do good to every man, that he may, some way or other, manifest his love to neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies. He doth good to them all, as he hath opportunity, that is, on every possible occasion; ‘redeeming the time’ in order thereto; ‘buying up every opportunity, improving every hour, losing no moment wherein he may profit another.’²¹

¹³ John Wesley, *Journal and Diaries* (ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater; 7 vols in *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*; ed. Frank Baker; Nashville: Abingdon, 1988–2003). See (16 June, 1741), *Journal* 19: 201; (26 January, 1742), *Journal* 19: 247; (17 May, 1760), *Journal* 21: 285; and (15 November, 1763), *Journal* 21: 439.

¹⁴ Wesley, (15 November, 1763), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 439.

¹⁵ Wesley, (19 April, 1764), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 453.

¹⁶ John Wesley, “Letter to John Bennet” (1 June, 1744), in *Letters II: 1740–1755* (ed. Frank Baker; vol. 26 of *The Works of John Wesley*; Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 108.

¹⁷ Wesley, “Letter to the Author of the Craftsman” (8 July, 1745), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 149.

¹⁸ Wesley, “Letter to John Smith” (25 June, 1746), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 203.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26: 203.

²⁰ Wesley, (14 October, 1740), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 171.

²¹ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount III,” Sermon 23 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 518.

For Wesley, the character of a Methodist is one whose “heart is full of love to all mankind”²² and especially toward neighbours and strangers. Wesley writes, “That a man is not personally known to him is no bar to his love.”²³ Wesley writes in a letter to John Smith that love is his “favourite tenet” and a theme that he chooses to preach and write on “ten times”²⁴ more than any other.²⁵ Not surprisingly, it is this love formed in the heart that he considers, among other things, to be “the main doctrine of the Methodists.”²⁶ In a letter to the Reverend Richard Baily in 1751, Wesley reiterates his absolute belief in the centrality of love in writing that it is “the sum of our doctrine with regard to inward religion.”²⁷ Without such a love, all that remains, proposes Wesley, is a “poor, lifeless shadow.”²⁸

John Wesley’s religion had to do with the innermost places of the human heart but also with the most extreme outward actions on behalf of others. Both of these dimensions will be dealt with at greater length later in the thesis.²⁹ It was a social and a heart religion. At one level, his religion was extremely private and yet it was also very public. It was filled with heartfelt devotion toward God and self-sacrificial demonstrations of charity. Of the heart he wrote:

This is the religion we long to see established in the world, a religion of love and joy and peace, having its seat in the heart, in the inmost soul, but ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing forth, not only in all innocence ... but

²² John Wesley, “The Character of a Methodist,” in *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design* (ed. Rupert E. Davies; vol. 9 of *The Works of John Wesley*; ed. Frank Baker; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 37.

²³ *Ibid.*, 9: 37–38.

²⁴ Wesley, “Letter to John Smith” (28 September, 1745), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 160.

²⁵ In terms of how Wesley perceived Scripture, refer to Chapter 4 of this thesis, pp. 103–4. In that section there is a brief discussion on Wesley’s use of favorite texts and what function they performed.

²⁶ Wesley, “Letter to John Smith” (30 December, 1745), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 182.

²⁷ Wesley, “Letter to the Rev. Richard Baily” (15 August, 1751), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 475.

²⁸ Wesley, “A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Rutherford” (1768), in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 387.

²⁹ See Chapter 5 on the heart (orthokardia) and Chapter 7 on outward actions (orthopraxy).

likewise in every kind of beneficence, in spreading virtue and happiness all around it.³⁰

In a published sermon on the beatitudes, Wesley also declares that Christianity is “essentially a social religion; and that to turn it into a solitary religion, is indeed to destroy it.”³¹

Wesley’s religion suggests two fundamental truths. Humans can enjoy a new life in God and consequently become like God. As God created space for the Other, in originally creating the first humans, so people restored to the image of God³² can increasingly become like God by walking toward the Other in their midst. In Wesley’s view it is impossible to be a Christian “without living and conversing”³³ with others, and by others he does not mean “those whom we know to be meek and merciful, – holy of heart and holy of life.”³⁴ Rather, Wesley’s God, and therefore his religion, has to do with walking towards and being among the very “opposite character.”³⁵ He talks of stepping over all manner of “narrow bounds”³⁶ that would limit Christians to their own family, friends, church, ilk, and kind or interest group. Rather, Christians are to manifest love to

³⁰ John Wesley, “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,” in *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters* (ed. Gerald. R. Cragg; vol. 11 of *The Works of John Wesley*; ed. Frank Baker; Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 11: 46.

³¹ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount IV,” Sermon 24 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 533.

³² Wesley holds that humans were created by God and in God’s image. See “The General Deliverance,” Sermon 60, in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 437. In this same sermon Wesley details three aspects to this image: the natural, the political, and the moral. The natural has to do with the human ability to think, choose, and feel. The political is the mandate to steward the earth. But for Wesley, the human was made “chiefly in his moral image” and by this he means: “Accordingly, man at his creation was full of love; which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth; so was man as he came from the hands of his Creator.” See “The New Birth,” Sermon 45 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 188.

³³ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount IV,” Sermon 24 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 534.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1: 535.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 535.

³⁶ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount III,” Sermon 23 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 518.

“neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies.”³⁷ Strangers are to be “taken in” and prisoners “visited.”³⁸ Wesley writes that it is God’s hope that Christians be “mingled”³⁹ with such as these.

It was this very sociability of Methodism that made it so appealing. Ernst Troeltsch observes:

To begin with, Methodism gained its victories in the middle and lower classes, among the miners and in the industrial towns. To the middle and lower classes it brought a new sense of the sacredness of personality; it appealed to the popular imagination, and awakened a devotion which found expression in a most self-sacrificing charity ... It had brought the impulse of personality and individuality into the life of the masses, who were being brutalized by the industrial system, and with its charity it helped them in their distress.⁴⁰

Wesley had his critics and enemies but the people of the pavements loved him. Evidence of this, admittedly in the words of Wesley himself, is found in his *Journal* on 18 August 1789, in which, at the age of 86, he wrote:

In the afternoon, as we could not pass by the common road, we procured leave to drive round by some fields and go to Falmouth in good time. The first time I was here above forty years ago, I was taken prisoner by an immense mob, gaping and roaring like lions. But how is the tide turned; high and low now lined the street from one end of town the town to the other out of stark love and kindness, gaping and staring as if the King were going by...⁴¹

Wesley was loved because, as Troeltsch wrote, “he helped [people] in their distress.” He first walked toward them and then awakened their hearts to a love that they in turn expressed in “self-sacrificing charity” towards others. Wesley well knew that many

³⁷ Ibid., 1: 518.

³⁸ Ibid., 1: 519.

³⁹ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount IV,” Sermon 24 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 537.

⁴⁰ Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (trans. Olive Wyon; [S.I.]: Allen & Unwin, 1931), 724.

⁴¹ Wesley, (August 18, 1789), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 24: 151.

would find this kind of social religion burdensome, asking why they should “clog” up their lives with all these “others things” and with “doing and suffering.”⁴² Such “encumbering” of life with “outward actions” on behalf of strangers could only occur if people were willing to embark on a particular type of transformative journey. How Wesley facilitated this human transformative work is at the heart of this thesis and is given particular attention in Chapter 4 on orthodoxy and Chapter 5 on orthokardia.

The Methodology

The primary genre or parent discipline of this thesis is that of Moral Theology, which is defined as “those principles which govern, or should govern, the behaviour of a Christian, and of their application to particular circumstances or classes of cases.”⁴³ Moral Theology links a number of dimensions or sub-disciplines, namely: the social sciences, theology and history. A multi-disciplinarian or integrative approach is employed. This thesis is therefore not just any one of these. It is not a sociological treatise on the stranger, nor a theology on Wesley’s entire belief system, nor a historical work on Wesley and his eighteenth-century Methodists.

This thesis has a bi-focal dimension to it. With one eye looking at the plight of the stranger whilst also observing Wesley and his interaction with strangers, in the hope that such an enquiry will shed light on those principles that Wesley used to govern his Methodists in the particular circumstance of the stranger in their midst.

This study uses, in part, the methodology of heuristic research. The word heuristic can mean, “to discover... to find out things for himself [oneself].”⁴⁴ It carries the idea of problem solving. The term heuristic, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, means, “Any procedure which involves the use of an artificial construct to assist in the

⁴² Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount IV,” Sermon 24 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 532.

⁴³ R.C. Mortimer, “Moral Theology,” in *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (ed. John Macquarrie and James Childress; 2nd impr.; London: SCM, 1990), 398–9.

⁴⁴ J. B. Sykes, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (6th ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 505.

exploration of social phenomena. It usually involves assumptions derived from extant empirical research ... A heuristic device is, then, a form of preliminary analysis.”⁴⁵ When faced therefore with a lot of loose material, a method is employed to try to discover or infer something from that material that will assist in solving a problem. The loose material in terms of this thesis is Wesley’s corpus, made up of journals, published sermons, diaries and the like.

The problem at the heart of this study is inattention toward the stranger. The method to be employed, to ascertain whether or not Wesley can contribute anything to the issue of inattention, is the one that has been developed by Clark Moustakas.⁴⁶ His heuristic research approaches a topic from several angles: the human problem; the illuminated answer; the autobiographical; a literature review; and the overall scope of the project.

The Human Problem

According to Moustakas, the researcher wants to reach “into deeper and deeper regions of a human problem or experience and [come] to know and understand its underlying dynamics and constituents more and more fully.”⁴⁷ The human problem this thesis attempts to understand is that of civil inattention toward the stranger. This is the art of being socially avoidant of strangers. Chapter 2 of this thesis explores this dynamic of avoidance at greater length.

Exploring this human problem and the phenomena around the stranger locates this thesis in the discipline of sociology but as already noted, not completely. Various sociological works are introduced to assist in this phenomenological enquiry, for example: Christine Pohl and her typology of the stranger and Frank Furedi’s work on the culture of fear surrounding the stranger.

⁴⁵ John Scott and Gordon Marshall, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 267.

⁴⁶ Clark Moustakas, *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology and Applications* (London: Sage Publications, 1990).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

The Illuminated Answer

Heuristic inquiry “begins with a question which the researcher seeks to illuminate or answer.”⁴⁸ Heuristic methodology also includes a biographical dimension whereby the researcher seeks illumination on the topic “from direct first-person accounts of individuals who have directly encountered the phenomenon in experience.”⁴⁹ This narrative dimension imports the historical sub-discipline for Moral Theology. For the purposes of this thesis, the key question is whether or not the life and thought of John Wesley can address the contemporary inattention toward the stranger. Wesley has been chosen for several reasons. First, he concerned himself with the strangers of his day. Second, he gives first-hand reports of these encounters in his extensive diaries, journals, letters, and other published works. And finally, Wesley also furnished a way by which others could become attentive toward the stranger. Wesley clearly explores this issue in detail and it is this “invitation to further elucidation” that Moustakas holds central to the heuristic quest, and that will be developed throughout this thesis.⁵⁰

Heuristic methodology is also about story and narrative. Narrative becomes an epistemic device that provides a way to knowing reality. Narrative constructs meaning, and according to Josselson and Lieblich creates a particular type of encounter:

Narrative research refers to any study based on discourse or on a people’s verbal accounts of their experiences. Such a story need not compose a complete autobiography; it may be short descriptive statements or narratives ... The common aspect of all of these narratives is that the material is offered in the natural language of the teller and is created through his or her individual experience and judgment.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 38.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁵¹ R. Josselson and A. Lieblich, “Narrative Research and Humanism,” in *The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology: Leading Edges in Theory, Research, and Practice* (ed. Kirk J. Schneider, James F. T. Bugental and J. Fraser Pierson; London.: Sage Publications, 2001), 275–88.

This thesis will therefore examine the story of Wesley primarily as told by Wesley. James McClendon in his work *Biography as Theology* also picks up on the motif of narrative and suggests “that narrative or story is a means of expression uniquely suited to theology.”⁵² In other words, in examining the life of another, we ourselves can find a way forward. McClendon argues that such figures like Wesley “appear from time to time [as] singular or striking lives, the lives of persons who embody the convictions of the community, but in a new way; who share the vision of the community, but with new scope or power; who exhibit the style of the community, but with significant differences.”⁵³ McClendon goes on to write that these singular and striking lives “disclose and perhaps correct or enlarge the community’s vision.”⁵⁴ That is the goal of this thesis.

A related method to that of biography is that of prosopography. Lawrence Stone defines it as follows:

Prosopography is the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives. The method employed is to establish a universe to be studied, and then to ask a set of uniform questions – about birth and death, marriage and family, social origins and inherited economic position, place of residence, education, amount and source of personal wealth, occupation, religion, experience of office, and so on. The various types of information about the individuals in the universe are then juxtaposed and combined, and are examined for significant variables. They are tested both for internal correlations and for correlations with other forms of behavior or action.⁵⁵

Prosopography concerns itself with a collection of biographies, but of a type where commonalities and connections can be made between the individuals. This thesis will not only probe the story of John Wesley and his interaction with strangers but also the

⁵² James W. McClendon Jr., *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today’s Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 188.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁵ Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 45.

stories of his fellow Methodists.⁵⁶ This study is therefore a “collective biography” used “as a methodological tool for analyzing and interpreting socio-historical phenomena.”⁵⁷

The Autobiographical

It may be asked, ‘Why this topic?’ Moustakas is adamant that in “heuristic research the investigator must have had a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated.”⁵⁸ The topic of the stranger arises out of the researcher’s own quest not to only be there for the stranger but also to mobilise and radicalise others toward the stranger. There is therefore an autobiographical and biographical dimension to this methodology. The autobiographical is of course what the researcher brings to the topic and the biographical is the exploration of John Wesley. In terms of the autobiographical dimension, Moustakas notes that the heuristic journey begins “with something that has called to me from within my life experience ...”⁵⁹ For the author, this experience was leaving the comfortable confines of a typical middle class lifestyle in New Zealand and relocating to the Philippines in 1985, and more specifically, the choice my wife and I made to live in the slums of Manila among the very poor for nearly ten years.⁶⁰ Our pattern was not one of visiting the slums during the day and then departing to a place of retreat in a safer, more comfortable suburb. During these years, we were living in the heart of the slum, occupying a plywood and corrugated iron hovel, and attempting to participate in the culture of poverty. When our poor and vulnerable Filipino neighbours were battered by floods or terrified by fires, so were we. When danger and violence afflicted the streets, we were just as frightened, if not more so. When they came down with sickness, so did we. And when they lost their little children to premature death, we

⁵⁶ Freeborn Garrettson (Chapter 4); Sarah Ryan and Thomas Coke (Chapter 5); Elizabeth Evans, Francis Asbury, and Grace Murray (Chapter 6); John Gardner (Chapter 7).

⁵⁷ Diana K. Jones, “Researching Groups of Lives: A Collective Biographical Perspective on the Protestant Ethic Debate,” *Qualitative Research* 1 (December 2001): 325–46. Online <http://qrj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/1/3/325>.

⁵⁸ Moustakas, *Heuristic Research*, 14.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁰ This story of ours is told in my book *Costly Mission: Following Jesus into Neighbourhoods Facing Poverty* (Rev. ed.; Springvale, Australia: Urban Neighbours of Hope, 2007).

also lost one of our own. When questioned why we did this, our immediate heart-filled response was that we wanted to be among people that no-one else wanted anything to do with. It seemed to us that the Christian faith involved solidarity with socially isolated, forgotten peoples.

Initially, our lives were taken up with daily survival and culture shock but in time we transitioned into language learning. These and subsequent years were engaged in daily walking towards the stranger in our midst. Mostly it was about walking towards people I did not know. In the words of Moustakas, my experience as the researcher was the “actual autobiographical connection” and one that was “vital, intense and full.”⁶¹ It was this experience that birthed not only an interest in stranger-love but also questions about why many in our society, including our churches, are inattentive toward strangers, and what can be done to enable them to transcend such inattention.

To summarize, this thesis has two parts to it: the stranger and John Wesley’s Moral Pathway. The first part is a phenomenological enquiry into a problem around the stranger. This problem is examined throughout the thesis. First, in introducing the kinds of strangers Wesley himself interacted with (chapter 1). Second, in exploring four types of strangers using the typology of Christine Pohl (chapter 2). Her types of strangers surface throughout the thesis especially in chapters 4-7 where at the end of each chapter there are case studies of eighteenth-century Methodists engaging strangers in their midst. A final part to the phenomenological enquiry concerns the problem of inattention toward the stranger.

The second part is a narrative enquiry examining John Wesley to see if he provides an illuminated answer to the problem. This thesis makes clear that he does, and names his answer as the Moral Pathway (chapter 3) which is examined more carefully in chapters four through seven.

⁶¹ Moustakas, *Heuristic Research*, 14.

Wesley's Corpus

To investigate Wesley's contribution, Kenneth Collins suggests the following heuristic framework that embraces three worlds:

1. The text itself, that is, Wesley's own writings in their eighteenth-century context.
2. The traditional and historical sources that fed into Wesley's own theological reflections.
3. The social and historical location of Wesley's theology.⁶²

The above three worlds are not meant to be equal, and the first is by far the greater focus in this present work, given the methodological framework which prioritises the biographical dimension and first-person accounts. The second and third acting as supporting cast members. In terms of Collin's first world, that of the text, we will explore and examine John Wesley's diaries and *Journal*, his letters, published sermons and theological treatises. Wesley's own corpus along with secondary literature will assist in the exploration of the latter two worlds mentioned by Collins.

Diaries and Journals

On Wesley's decision to be ordained in the Anglican Church, he received a letter from his mother⁶³ in which she urged him "to enter upon a serious examination of yourself..."⁶⁴ The method that Wesley chose to facilitate such self-examination he gleaned from Bishop Taylor.⁶⁵ In the preface to one of his journals Wesley wrote:

⁶² Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 17.

⁶³ Susanna Wesley was born in London (20 January 1669) and at age 19 married Samuel Wesley (12 November 1688). She gave birth to John Wesley (17 June 1703). For more on her see Charles Wallace Jr., ed., *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁶⁴ "Letter from Mrs. Susanna Wesley" (23 February 1725) in *Letters* (ed. Baker, 1980), 25: 158.

⁶⁵ John Taylor (1694–1761), a dissenting divine and Hebrew scholar. In matters of theology he tended toward an Arian view of the Person of Christ and to a denial of the fact of original sin. See "John Taylor" in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (ed. Frank L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone; 3rd ed. rev.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1592.

It was in pursuance of an advice given by Bishop Taylor, in his *Rules for Holy Living and Dying*, that about fifteen years ago I began to take a more exact account than I had done before of the manner wherein I spent my time, writing down how I had employed every hour.⁶⁶

On April 5, 1725, he made his first diary entry and for the next 65 years he listed all that he did and thought each day, right down to the very minutiae of life. His intent was self-examination. In other words, Wesley saw himself as a soul-in-the-making. Writing in a diary was a literary device or practice to ensure such soul-making. Vicki Tolar Burton in a rare work on the spiritual literary devices within Methodism comments that “in a large sense, John Wesley's diurnal writing was a daily effort, over a long lifetime, to order his life and shape his soul. Wesley became what Cintron calls a ‘maker,’ one who in making a text is also making himself ...”⁶⁷ As will be shown in subsequent chapters on orthodoxy and orthopraxy, Wesley wanted to not only become a lover of God but also of neighbour and he felt that the former made possible the latter.⁶⁸ His dairy writing was but one means to achieve this end.

While his diaries were strictly private, his *Journal* was for public consumption. In 1740, Wesley published the first volume, covering the years 1735 to 1738. This and subsequent volumes were made up of selective pieces from his private diaries. In the preface to each of the first four volumes, Wesley gave the reasons for their publication. The first, for example, was written to defend himself against any possible misunderstanding relating to the troubles he had in Georgia.⁶⁹ The intent of his *Journal*,

⁶⁶ Wesley, The Preface, *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 121.

⁶⁷ Vicki Tolar Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 68–9.

⁶⁸ See Chapter 4 Orthodoxy (pp. 107–14) and Chapter 5 Orthokardia (pp. 140–5).

⁶⁹ John Wesley ended up in a romantic entanglement with a Sophy Hopkey. He could not quite bring himself to propose to her and so she ended up marrying another. Subsequent to this, John Wesley barred her from taking communion and this action led to a court case against him. See Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (2nd ed. Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1993), 124ff. The second volume of Wesley's *Journal* (1 February, 1738 to 12 August, 1738) sought to explain his Aldersgate experience; the third volume sought to bring to light what Methodists were really about and in the fourth volume, Wesley explained his views on the Moravians. Subsequent volumes chronicled the growth and happenings of the Methodist movement.

in the view of Burton, was that of “an apologia, a genre of rhetoric in which an individual defends himself from an attack.”⁷⁰ But Burton detects another intention, when contrasting Wesley’s *Journal* with those of his eighteenth-century contemporaries:

Two important differences must be noted between John Wesley and his contemporary journal writers, both relating to audience. While Wesley's contemporaries imagined their readers to be more or less like themselves, educated and middle or upper class, Wesley imagined his readers to include the poor and the laboring classes. We know this because he published his journals not only by volume, but sometimes each volume was published in small sections that might be sold for six pence ... This economy made his writings more accessible to the poor. His plain style of writing was also an intentional rhetorical choice to broaden the range of readers ... Furthermore, Wesley wanted his readers to become journal writers themselves, to construct a spiritual self through the written word.⁷¹

This helpful observation suggests that Wesley also had education in mind when publishing the various volumes of his *Journal*. In other words, Wesley was not only intent on ‘making’ himself through his literary work, but wanting these same works to help with the formation of others.

Published Sermons

Wesley indulged in two types of teaching: oral preaching and published sermons. His oral preaching was often quite different from his published sermons. These, as Outler explains, “were written out chiefly for the use of members in the Methodist societies” with the intent of leading “men and women into a clearer understanding of their faith and a more faithful response to the divine imperatives in their Christian existence.”⁷² John Wesley was intent on making people into lovers of God and neighbour. In his preface to *Sermons on Several Occasions*, Wesley explains that he desires “plain truth for plain people” and therefore abstains from “philosophical speculations” and “intricate

⁷⁰ Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley’s Methodism*, 78.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁷² Albert C. Outler, *Evangelism and Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1996), 19.

reasonings.”⁷³ In the same preface, Wesley underlines his real desire in publishing the sermons:

And herein it is more especially my desire, first, to guard those who are just setting their faces toward heaven (and who, having little acquaintance with the things of God, are the more liable to be turned out of the way) from formality, from mere outside religion which has almost driven heart-religion out of the world; and, secondly, to warn those who know the religion of the heart, "the faith which worketh by love" [Gal. 5: 6], lest at any time they make void the law through faith [ct. Rom. 3: 31] and so fall back into the snare of the devil.⁷⁴

His sermons were to be instruments of spiritual growth, the means by which people could be reformed, and specifically made into lovers of God and neighbour. Towards the end of his preface, Wesley daringly declared:

For how far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itself without love? We may die without the knowledge of many truths and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom. But if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels.”⁷⁵

Wesley's sermons were about formation and education and these two themes will surface repeatedly throughout this thesis, especially in Chapter 4 on orthodoxy and Chapter 6 on orthopaideia.

By way of example, in his sermon *On Visiting the Sick*, quoting Matthew 25:34-50, Wesley urged his Methodists to “relieve the stranger.” In explanation, he wrote:

But is there need of visiting them in person? May we not relieve them at a distance? Does it not answer the same purpose if we send them help as if we carry it ourselves? Many are so circumstanced that they cannot attend the sick in person; and where this is the real case it is undoubtedly sufficient for them to send help, being the only expedient they can use. But this is not properly visiting the sick; it is another thing. The word which we render visit, in its literal

⁷³ Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 89.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

acceptation, means to look upon. And this, you well know, cannot be done unless you are present with them. To send them assistance is, therefore, entirely a different thing from visiting them. The former, then, ought to be done, but the latter not left undone.⁷⁶

Wesley pressed the Methodist to walk toward the stranger, sit with them in their space so as to be physically present to them. This underlines yet again Wesley's call for a profoundly personal face-to-face encounter. In his words, the stranger is to be "looked upon." For Wesley, proximity to the stranger is everything. It is not enough to just support an organisation that assists strangers in society but as Wesley counsels "these things [relieving the stranger] you must do in your own person; you see they cannot be done by proxy."⁷⁷ What Wesley wrote in his published sermons he also underlined in his letters.

Letters

Wesley wrote thousands of letters over the course of his life and many from the back of a horse or in a carriage. Burton describes such letters as another of Wesley's "literary acts"⁷⁸ or devices which he employed to further the spiritual formation of people. In his letters he was at times a spiritual director, a pastor, an educator, a friend, truth teller, and mediator. Unlike his *Journal* or published sermons, Wesley's letters express emotion and personal warmth toward people. For example, in a letter to Isaac Lelong he begins, "do not think, my dear brother, that I have forgotten you! I cannot forget you, because I love you..."⁷⁹ And more controversially, in his letters Wesley was able to be a friend and mentor to women. As a high-profile person, he felt he needed to maintain a public distance between him and women so as not to create unnecessary misunderstanding. But

⁷⁶ Wesley, "On Visiting the Sick," Sermon 98 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 387.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 4: 389. Later in the sermon, Wesley gets very practical in suggesting that such visiting of the stranger be done at a certain "fixed hour" each day for to leave it to "anytime is no time."

⁷⁸ Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism*, 76.

⁷⁹ Wesley, "Letter to Isaac Lelong" (22 November 1738) in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 584.

through private letters he was able to come alongside, befriend, and mentor women. His correspondence with Elizabeth Ritchie is a case in point.

Ritchie was 20 years old when she first met Wesley who was then 71. Wesley initiated the correspondence in 1774, and their respective letters were many. Burton calculates that Ritchie wrote to Wesley monthly during that first year and letters have survived dating from 1775 through to 1786.⁸⁰ Of these, Burton writes:

Ritchie's texts indicate that she is looking to Wesley for spiritual direction, support, friendship, and emotional intimacy. Her letters imply that Wesley frequently expresses a need for reassurance that she has not forgotten him or decreased in her love for him. Her responses also indicate that he has taken the role of her spiritual guide by asking questions about the state of her soul in the context of the difficulties of her life. Ritchie is dealing with the illness and impending death of both her parents, for whom she is caring. Ritchie herself is also often ill; in addition, she receives harsh criticism for daring to speak in Methodist meetings at such a young age.⁸¹

The intent of Wesley's letter writing is, yet again, about making relational connection with people, about making friends, about making himself vulnerable and transparent and also about making people into faithful followers of Jesus. For example, in his numerous letters to Miss March, a wealthy Methodist, he instructs her: "Go and see the poor and sick in their own poor little hovels. Take up your cross, woman! Remember the faith! Jesus went before you, and will go with you."⁸² Wesley kept up the pressure, writing months later: "Creep in among these in spite of dirt and an hundred disgusting circumstances, and thus put off the gentlewoman."⁸³ She took his advice and went among the poor, something Wesley was the first to admit was no easy thing to do. "Do not confine your conversation to genteel and elegant people. I should like this as well as you do; but I cannot discover a precedent for it in the life of our Lord or any of his

⁸⁰ Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism*, 188.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁸² John Wesley, "Letter to Miss March" (9 June, 1775), in *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley* (ed. John Telford; London: Epworth Press, 1931), 6: 153.

⁸³ Wesley, "Letter to Miss March" (7 February, 1776) in *Letters* (ed. Telford), 6: 207.

apostles.”⁸⁴ And further, he wrote, “There are a thousand circumstances usually attending it which shock the delicacy of our nature, or rather of our education. But yet the blessing which follows this labor of love will more than balance the cross.”⁸⁵

Tracts

John Wesley’s tracts were also of a practical nature. To assist his Methodists in their work amongst strangers, he wrote *A Word to a Drunkard*, *A Word to a Streetwalker*, *A Word to a Condemned Malefactor*, and *A Word to a Smuggler*. In one such tract to prisoners Wesley wrote:

What a condition you are in! The sentence is passed; you are condemned to die; and this sentence is to be executed shortly! You have no way to escape; these fetters, these walls, these gates and bars, these keepers, cut off all hope. Therefore, die you must. But must you die like a beast, without thinking what it is to die? ... But, O, how will you stand before God; the great, the holy, the just, the terrible God? Is it not his own word, “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord?” ... How then can you escape the damnation of hell-the lake of fire burning with brimstone, “where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched?” You can never redeem your own soul; you cannot atone for the sins that are past ... One thing is needful: “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!” ... Trust him alone; love him alone; fear him alone; and cleave to him alone, till he shall say to you (as to the dying malefactor of old), “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”⁸⁶

Streetwalkers and smugglers were just some of the strangers that Methodists were to approach. Methodists had to walk into disease-infested prisons and ‘creep’ into the hovels of the poor to find these strangers. Wesley was asking something of his Methodists that he had done all his adult life in Oxford, Georgia, London, Bristol, and beyond. But he knew it was not enough to just call people to this work of loving strangers; he needed to also mentor them into it.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 6: 207.

⁸⁵ Wesley, “Letter to Miss March” (26 February, 1776) in *Letters* (ed. Telford), 6: 208–9.

⁸⁶ John Wesley, “A Word to a Condemned Malefactor (1745),” in *The Complete Works of John Wesley: Vol 11 Thoughts, Addresses, Prayers, Letters* (The AGES Digital Library Collections. AGES Software Version 2.0; Albany, OR.: Books for the Ages, 1996), 205-7. Online: http://www.briarchasechurch.org/V6F-Z/WES_WW11.PDF.

Secondary Literature: Wesley and Walking toward the Stranger

The secondary literature on Wesley as a person among strangers is varied. The *Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* for example, variously describes Wesley as revivalist, preacher, biblical interpreter, diarist, publisher, healer, and theologian.⁸⁷ Even though all of these roles invariably took him into the world of the stranger, the literature, by and large, fails to perceive this underlying aspect of his life and work.

In the *Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, one chapter is given to the Wesley brothers but in this, Heitzenrater draws attention to Wesley as founder, revivalist, organiser, preacher, publisher, pastor, and theologian. Again, as with the *Cambridge Companion*, there is no direct referencing of these roles to strangers.⁸⁸ One wonders if Wesleyan scholarship is inclined to recreate Wesley in its own image. Wesley the founder and organiser of a movement or Wesley the scholar and theologian is a ‘Wesley’ that sits more comfortably with those who study him. Wesley the pedestrian theologian who walks towards neighbour and stranger is threatening because he provokes self-analysis, if not critique. Then again, this thesis hardly escapes this criticism of Wesleyan scholarship, for it could be well argued that I too am recasting Wesley in an image that I prefer. This raises an important discussion in historiography, the relation of the subject to the object; or in this case, that of the historian of Wesley (the subject) to that of John Wesley (the object). There is a sense in which no historian comes to their object bias-free. As subjects we come as we are. To deny subjectivity would be to severely compromise communication. It is important to state that an aim of this thesis is to allow the object (John Wesley) to challenge the presuppositions of all those involved in Wesleyan scholarship, including my own. The aim of this thesis is to let Wesley define himself and spare him from being swallowed up by anyone’s ideological agenda. But even Wesley is not to be spared from critical analysis. In other

⁸⁷ Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁸⁸ Richard P. Heitzenrater, “The Founding Brothers,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (ed. William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 30–51.

words, we do not approach him as object in a naïve fashion, accepting everything he writes and says of himself. Rather, there is to be a critical approach to Wesley, the object.

There is, however, an increasing number of works within the Wesleyan academy that see Wesley in all his roles, including that of a person amongst the Other. Mention is now made of these works and how they assist this thesis.

In what is arguably the most definitive biography of Wesley, Rack comments on Wesley's relationships with his Methodist followers but is comparatively silent on his individual one-on-one work with those outside of Methodism.⁸⁹ Earlier biographies however are not as silent. Sherwin's biography is aptly entitled *John Wesley: Friend of the People*.⁹⁰ For example, Sherwin frames Wesley in reference to issues of equality, the evil of poverty, relief of the poor and agitation for reform. Stanley Ayling's biography gives a whole chapter to Wesley's concern for people, their bodies and souls.⁹¹ In Pollock's work on Wesley,⁹² chapters are given to Wesley's field-work, signs and wonders amongst the people, the cry of the poor and slaves, and going into all the world. More recently, William Abraham's *Wesley for Armchair Theologians* has a helpful chapter on Wesley's emphasis on good works, which includes visiting the sick.⁹³ Heitzenrater, in his *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, has Wesley as academic, spiritual pilgrim, apologist, poet, and planner.⁹⁴ Heitzenrater also has Wesley as the colonial missionary, the field and itinerant preacher, the medical practitioner, and the practical theologian.

⁸⁹ Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (2nd ed.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

⁹⁰ Oscar Sherwin, *John Wesley: Friend of the People* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1961).

⁹¹ Stanley Ayling, *John Wesley* (London: Collins, 1979), 164–83.

⁹² John Pollock, *John Wesley: 1703–1791* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1989).

⁹³ William J. Abraham, *Wesley for Armchair Theologians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

⁹⁴ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley* (2nd ed.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003).

This second cluster goes to the heart of Wesley being a person amongst those he does not necessarily know.

In terms of theological works on Wesley, several make helpful contributions as to how Wesley envisaged humans changing to become lovers of neighbours and strangers. The focus is on Wesley's theological orthodoxy and how this promises to shape the human heart and subsequent behaviour.

In part, Albert Outler helped locate Wesley as a theologian of the people or as he framed him, a "folk-theologian."⁹⁵ Outler prefers to see Wesley as a pastor, mentor, and spiritual director of people than as a scholarly systematic theologian. This thesis will support such a reading. Wesley's theology was done *with* people rather than just *for* people. Similarly, Maddox explores developments within Methodism regarding how Wesley has been perceived as a theologian, variously described as a theological saint, hero, and mentor.⁹⁶ Maddox prefers the designation of practical theologian, as he argues that this best conveys Wesley doing his theological work among people and in light of their struggles. Both Outler and Maddox situate Wesley amongst people on the streets and not just in the corridors of the academy. They both argue that Wesley's real genius was his proactive engagement with ordinary people, of the type with whom the middle class educated 'gentlemen' of his day would not normally interact. Wesley was at home with those who did not know him or he them.

Harald Lindstrom's *Wesley and Sanctification* published in 1980 is a helpful reminder that Wesley's overriding concern is not just to get people right with God but also right with other people; with neighbour and stranger.⁹⁷ Lindstrom argues that for Wesley,

⁹⁵ Albert C. Outler, "John Wesley: Folk Theologian," in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage: Essays of Albert C. Outler* (ed. Thomas C. Oden and Leicester R. Longden; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 111–24.

⁹⁶ Randy L. Maddox, "Reclaiming an Inheritance: Wesley as Theologian in the History of Methodist Theology," in *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism* (ed. Randy L. Maddox; Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1998), 213–26.

⁹⁷ Harald Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1980).

faith is a means to love. Trusting God enables one to love. Two years later, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop also wrote of Wesley's theology as *A Theology of Love*.⁹⁸ She describes Wesley as the modern "Apostle of Love."⁹⁹ Essentially, her work is on how Wesley believes human beings can attain a life of love and it is her view that such love can only emerge in the human heart through a metaphysical connection with the Divine. This thesis explores such a connection in the chapters on orthodoxy and orthokardia. Echoing Wynkoop, D. Stephen Long's *John Wesley's Moral Theology* underlines the centrality of a metaphysical participation in the Divine¹⁰⁰ if humans are ever to become God-like in their approach to the Other.¹⁰¹ His book is an excellent text on Wesley's path toward moral goodness. Even though Long explores these concepts without actually referring to most of the orthos named in this thesis, he does at least in a notional sense point in their direction. He also locates Wesley in his own context and has him in conversation with those of his time who were also grappling with what makes humans good.

Kenneth Collins also picks up on the theme of love (more specifically, holy love) in his *The Theology of John Wesley*.¹⁰² This is a love that has its beginnings in God and not in the human heart. Wesley's theology, argues Collins, is one of holy love. God is a God of holy love, humans were originally created to be a people of holy love, Jesus is holy love revealed and the Holy Spirit is the presence of the God of holy love in people. Collins also suggests that for Wesley, the Church is to be one of holy love, and at the end of time there will be a triumph of holy love. Whereas Collin's theological text strongly

⁹⁸ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1972).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁰⁰ To speak of a metaphysical participation in the Divine is to mean that humans can share in the very nature of God. It is to suggest that Christians become who they are by virtue of what they have with God. See David C. Schindler, "What's the Difference? On the Metaphysics of Participation in Plato, Plotinus, and Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* 5 (2007): 583–618.

¹⁰¹ D. Stephen Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2005).

¹⁰² Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007).

favours the God-side of becoming a person who can love, another recent theological work on Wesley captures the human side to becoming a lover of neighbour. Randy Maddox's *Responsible Grace* is helpful in its discussion on human agency.¹⁰³ Maddox is at pains to show that Wesley has a higher view of the human person than may be commonly thought. In other words, to be made in the image of God is, in part, to be a self-determining person. Maddox explores how God enables and empowers humans to be responsive and response-able with God and the Other.

The Scope

This thesis will not be an exploration of Wesley's entire works, nor will it attempt to systematically present the philosophy of Wesley or his entire belief system. Rather, a more inductive approach will be employed that will entail drawing upon relevant sections of his work and from these, working towards his theories surrounding the moral pathway.

Further, this thesis will not be a study of 'virtue ethics'¹⁰⁴ per se but rather an exploration of Wesley's 'theological' ethic¹⁰⁵ of virtue and, in particular, his moral theory around character transformation. Wesley's view was that such an ethic is formed by an object, namely the Christian Gospel, and through several chapters, namely Chapters 4 and 5, this transformation process will be explained.

Finally, in terms of method, this thesis will not be a study of the neighbour or stranger. Important as this topic is, it is not the central focus. The primary interest concerns

¹⁰³ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*.

¹⁰⁴ Virtue ethics have to do with a person's character. In a sense, who a person is and becomes determines what they do and how they choose and behave. Plato speaks of cardinal virtues, Aristotle of passions and states of character and Augustine of rightly ordered hearts. Virtue ethics is concerned with people becoming well adapted human beings, with the appropriate dispositions and character traits that will make for human happiness.

¹⁰⁵ Whereas Plato, for example, writes of the four cardinal virtues of courage, temperance, justice and wisdom, the theological virtues consist of faith, love and hope.

Wesley's moral pathway and, secondarily, how such a pathway can bring about pro-social behaviour such as walking toward the stranger.

The thesis is divided into three parts. Chapters 1 to 3 introduce John Wesley, the concept of the stranger in both the eighteenth-century and in our own, and the moral pathway suggested by Wesley. Part Two, the heart of the thesis, is covered in Chapters 4 to 7, with attempts to define in detail the interaction between the constituent parts of the moral pathway: orthodoxy, orthokardia, orthopaideia with its subset of orthokoinonia and orthonomos, and finally orthopraxy.¹⁰⁶ Part Three, the Conclusion, brings the thesis to a close with a critical analysis of the overall argument.

As previously mentioned, Wesley has been variously described as a supreme organiser, social reformer, theologian, spiritual director, mentor, itinerant preacher and revivalist. In many respects he was all of these. From Chapter 1, Wesley is introduced as a pedestrian theologian, forever walking toward people who were strangers to him. Much of his time was taken up with personal, one-on-one encounters with strangers. His personal work with people was not just in mentoring and pastoring those within his Methodist gatherings but in coming alongside those who were outside Methodist circles. The various chapters of his long life illustrate the intentionality and frequency of his walking toward strangers; whether it was at Oxford in his early years, Georgia or later back in the United Kingdom.

Despite the clear evidence that John Wesley made a conscious and moral effort to engage with and get alongside strangers, some may argue that 'religious' people like him ought not to be used as exemplars of love for the stranger, asserting that a strong religious orientation complicates this engagement, and that Wesley's role as an

¹⁰⁶ Each of these terms is defined in its respective section. Suffice to say here that 'ortho' is of Greek origin, meaning 'straight' or 'correct'. Orthodoxy means right teaching, orthokardia right heart, orthopaideia right education, orthokoinonia right sharing, orthonomos right rules and orthopraxy right practice.

evangelist¹⁰⁷ compromises any encounter; the objection being that Wesley's walk toward the stranger was simply to evangelise and convert them to his Methodism. His concern then was not for the stranger per se but gaining them for his movement. These objections are considered toward the end of Chapter 1, in conversation with the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas.¹⁰⁸

Chapter 2 picks up on the urgency of this thesis. To socially isolate is to damage another human being. A way must be found to embrace and not exclude the Other in our midst. As will be shown in Chapter 3, John Wesley found such a way. But if this thesis is to equip as well as inform the modern reader, it must be asked whether the strangers Wesley encountered on his streets are in any way similar to those in our twenty-first century world. Chapter 2 attempts to draw the lines of continuity between Wesley's eighteenth-century and our own era. Chapter 3 introduces the moral pathway. It will be argued that even though Wesley does not use this term, it does represent his thinking. Fearing the demise of his beloved Methodist movement upon his death, Wesley strongly urged his followers to keep to their doctrine, experience, discipline and practice.¹⁰⁹ This thesis names these as orthodoxy (doctrine), orthokardia (experience); orthopaideia (discipline) and its subset of orthokoinonia (meeting) and orthonomos (rules) and orthopraxy (practice). A cord of four strands constitutes the moral pathway. Only a four-corded strand with its six 'orthos' legitimately represents Wesley's theology and practice. Contemporary Wesleyan scholarship has settled on a cord of three strands (orthodoxy, orthokardia and orthopraxy) and has therefore failed to adequately grasp the

¹⁰⁷ John Dickson notes that the word 'evangelist' comes from the word 'gospel' and literally means 'gospeller' or one who announces the gospel of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. See John Dickson, *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission: Promoting the Gospel with More Than Our Lips* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 143.

¹⁰⁸ Lithuanian-born French Jewish philosopher (1906–1995) whose work concerns the ethics of being responsible for the Other. Some of his published works include: *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo* (trans. Richard A. Cohen; Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985); *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other* (trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav; London: Athlone, 1998); *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence* (trans. Alphonso Lingis; Boston: Kluwer Academic, 1991); *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (trans. Alphonso Lingis; Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (ed. Davies, George, and Rupp), 194.

full significance of Wesley's thinking or adequately articulate the ways in which we may walk towards the stranger in a Wesleyan way. It is the concern of this thesis to correct such misreading and examine ways in which a four-cord strand may serve to correct our inattention toward the stranger.

The second section of the thesis, Chapters 4 to 7, explores in detail each of the four strands. Chapter 4 introduces Wesley's orthodoxy that is firmly rooted in Christian Scripture and its story of a God of love who re-stories people's lives so they are enabled to be people of love, especially toward those who are strangers. One of the ways in which a God of love engenders love is through a transformative work in the emotional field of the human heart. This has to do with what Wesley terms the affections of the heart or what this thesis identifies as orthokardia (see Chapter 5). Yet even a re-orientated, affected heart of love may still end up simply loving those in their own company or circle. This is what Wesley feared would happen among his followers. To ensure they would pursue the ideal, he insisted upon a discipline (orthopaideia) of organised fellowships (orthokoinonia) governed by rules (orthonomos). These three orthos, expanded on in Chapter 6, are followed by orthopraxy in Chapter 7. Even though this ortho suggests action, it is not the view of this thesis that orthopraxy is simply the fruit of the preceding five orthos. Rather, orthopraxy or action is as formative as the other orthos. Right action is not only the consequence of what has gone before but in turn shapes and forms the other orthos and therefore contributes to the overall moral scheme of creating a people that will love their neighbour and walk toward strangers.

Each of the aforementioned chapters on the "orthos" will also chronicle several people who benefited from the moral pathway in Wesley's time and, as a result, embarked on lives that were marked by an overriding concern for others, especially strangers. This is in accord with the methodology previously stated, especially the place of prosopography with its concern for a collection of biographies. Chapter 4 on orthodoxy will conclude with a biographical note on Freeborn Garrettson, a wealthy farmer and slave owner who, upon becoming a Methodist, freed his slaves and embarked on a life of forever walking toward strangers. Chapter 5 on orthokardia will feature Sarah Ryan who, by all accounts,

was a person of the streets but this changed upon her becoming a Methodist. Thomas Coke is another who, as a result of becoming a Methodist, embraced strangers both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Three individuals are highlighted in Chapter 6, each representing the three orthos of orthopaideia, orthokoinonia and orthonomos. For example, orthokoinonia explores the life of Francis Asbury, a poor young metal worker in the United Kingdom who came under the influence of Methodism and in turn migrated to work among eighteenth-century settlers in America, a people and a place he did not know. A chance encounter with a sick beggar is the story of Methodist John Gardner in Chapter 7 on orthopraxy. These stories and those of other Methodist converts are told, including their subsequent pro-social behaviour on behalf of the stranger.

Wesley and his followers were plodders. They stomped all over the place. They were forever walking towards people, visiting the sick and prisoners, speaking to strangers, and as if that were not enough, they also wrote to thousands of them. Ironically, their ingathering of thousands of plain folk both in the United Kingdom and America has been described as a revival, as though some great wave of God's grace swept huge numbers of people into the Church of the day. Theologically, there is much support given to this view and in a subsequent chapter (Four) we will note that God's grace is an axial theme in Wesleyan theology. Ironically this great ingathering has also been attributed to Wesley's or Asbury's or Coke's¹¹⁰ giftedness and great powers. Biblically, there is much credence to this view as the Bible, again noted by Wesley, emphasises the importance of gifting and the power of the Holy Spirit. Historically however, this revival was also as much about one plodder walking towards another, one person at a time. For this reason, many of the descriptions of Wesley and his followers do not quite capture the harsh working realities of what they did. Pedestrianism however, with its connotations of physicality, ordinariness, and the mundane reminds us that revivals are the stuff of people who quite simply and painstakingly walk toward others.

¹¹⁰ Both Asbury and Coke were early leaders of Methodism outside of the United Kingdom. More is said of Asbury in Chapter 6, and Coke in Chapter 5.

John Wesley evidences such a painstaking walk toward others. Be it in crossing a room, the street, or the seas, Wesley was forever approaching strangers. The striking regularity and the incredible diversity of his embrace of others is illustrated and chronicled in the next chapter.

Chapter One

Introducing John Wesley: Walking Toward the Stranger

There are clearly many ways of viewing the stranger – that person or group of people who are unknown, different and often challenging to our way of life, our perceptions and our comfort zone. This thesis takes a moral approach to the challenge of the stranger through the life and philosophy of John Wesley. There are two objectives of this chapter. The first is to provide a biographical sketch of Wesley, illustrating the disciplined, consistent and habitual approach he took through each stage of his long life to interact with strangers. The second is to introduce those who even though they did not say anything about approaching the stranger they nevertheless helped shape the Wesley who did. Not all scholars agree that Wesley should be held up as an exemplar for walking toward strangers; objections, including those raised by twentieth-century philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas, will be considered nearer the end of the chapter.

1703–1720

John Wesley was born on 17 June 1703, most likely the 13th or 14th child¹ of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. Samuel Wesley arrived in Epworth, England in 1697 to become rector of the Anglican parish, a position he retained for 40 years. Epworth was a remote and isolated place, a “straggling market town of no more than 1500 inhabitants, sited on a small hill rising from the fenny Isle of Axholme in north Lincolnshire.”² John Wesley, as one biographer put it, was “raised in an extraordinary household”³ and yet it was a household marked by tragedy, marital discord, insecurity and poverty. Of the 19 children born to Susanna, only 10 reached adulthood. Samuel Wesley had been sent to jail for failure to pay debts when his son John was only two years old and then, three years later, the family home was ravaged by fire and young John was plucked from the

¹ Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, 41.

² Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 45.

³ Pollock, *John Wesley: 1703–1791*, 16.

flames. Biographer Stanley Ayling says “more than once vandals molested his [the father’s] property [and] ill-wishers maimed his cattle.”⁴

John’s mother Susanna ensured he had a strict but loving upbringing. In later life, she enlightened him about the thinking that informed her approach to discipline:

In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will. To inform their understanding is a work of time, and must proceed by slow degrees; but the subjecting the will is a thing which must be done at once – and the sooner the better. For by our neglecting timely correction they contract a stubbornness which is hardly ever to be conquered, and never without using that severity which would be as painful to us as to the children. Therefore I call those cruel parents who pass for kind and indulgent, who permit their children to contract habits which they know must be afterwards broken. I insist upon conquering the wills of children betimes, because this is the only foundation for a religious education. When this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason of its parent, till its own understanding comes to maturity. I cannot yet dismiss this subject. As self-will is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children ensures their after-wretchedness and irreligion; and whatever checks and mortifies it promotes their future happiness and piety.⁵

John had experienced such ‘conquering’ positively and wrote to his mother that she had performed “the noblest offices of love”⁶ for him. What he most appreciated were the quality times they shared every Thursday evening.⁷ The mutual affection between John Wesley and his mother should not be allowed to suggest indifference between him and his father. Henry Abelove perhaps reads too much into some references when he writes that Wesley hardly acknowledged his parents’ marriage, “and all but claimed for himself a virgin birth.”⁸ Abelove offers as proof the assertion that at his mother’s funeral, John

⁴ Ayling, *John Wesley*, 18.

⁵ “Letter from Mrs Susanna Wesley” (24 July, 1732), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 330–31.

⁶ “Letter to Mrs Susanna Wesley” (28 February, 1732), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 330.

⁷ Cf. “Letter to Mrs Susanna Wesley” (28 February, 1732), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 329; Wesley, (1 August, 1742), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 285.

⁸ Henry Abelove, *The Evangelist of Desire: John Wesley and the Methodists* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 57.

Wesley “made no mention of her husband”⁹ and that on her tombstone he described her as “Mrs. Susanna Wesley, the Youngest and Last Surviving Daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley,”¹⁰ omitting any reference to his father. In his *Journal* record of his mother’s passing however, John does describe his father as a “preacher of righteousness” just as both his grandfathers had been, a profession followed by John and two of his brothers.¹¹ While John Wesley and his mother did have a special relationship, this should not imply that he and his father were estranged.

In January 1715 Wesley was sent to Charterhouse School in London where he was educated in the Greek and Latin classics, setting the foundation for his later scholarly career. His home life also prepared him for his future work. His father created a religious society and his mother ran house meetings, both of which were to become features in the Methodist movement he was to found. From his mother he saw the significance of methods and rules. In a letter to John, Susanna reminded him of the “principal rules” that were established in the home and of the fact that “the children were always put into a regular method of living.”¹² His regular Thursday night meetings with his mother formed the model upon which he built his future teaching practice. These nightly meetings were not so much for instruction but private talk between mother and child.

1720–1735

In 1720 John Wesley enrolled at Christ Church in Oxford where, among other subjects, he studied Aristotle and Locke before graduating in 1724. His post-graduation year was defining for Wesley on a number of fronts as he had his heart set on receiving his Masters at Oxford and becoming an ordained priest. In the process he took firm

⁹ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹¹ Wesley, (1 August, 1742), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 284.

¹² Wesley, (1 August, 1742), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 286.

guidance from his parents, particularly his mother, who was in many respects his spiritual mentor:

Dear Jacky, I heartily wish you would now enter upon a serious examination of yourself, that you may know whether you are in a state of faith and repentance or not, which you know are the conditions of the gospel covenant on our part.¹³

This advice coupled with his reading of Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667), who counselled care over the use of time, launched Wesley into what would become a lifetime discipline of recording in a diary how he spent each hour of the day.¹⁴ A third influence upon Wesley as a young Oxford don was his study of Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471) whose opening paragraph in his *Imitation* reflects the course that Wesley would pursue for the rest of his life:¹⁵

“Anyone who follows me shall not walk in darkness,” says the Lord. These are the words of Christ, and by them we are reminded that we must imitate his life and his ways if we are to be truly enlightened and set free from the darkness of our own hearts. Let it be the most important thing we do, then, to reflect on the life of Jesus Christ.¹⁶

Later in 1725, Susanna Wesley outlined what this imitation and reflection of Jesus’ life would look like. In a letter to John she referred to “love to God, and love to our neighbour” as charity, “which ought to be, the principle and rule of all our thoughts, words and actions...”¹⁷ Such charity to one’s neighbour, she urged, “must never conclude any man so bad as ‘tis possible for him to be; nor think because he is guilty of

¹³ “Letter from Mrs Susanna Wesley” (23 February, 1725), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25:160.

¹⁴ Jeremy Taylor was an Anglican bishop and writer of devotional works, especially *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living* (1650) and *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Dying* (1651). More specifically, Taylor urged well-ordered piety governed by temperance and modesty. In the preface to the first volume of his *Journal*, Wesley wrote: “It was in pursuance of an advice given by Bishop Taylor, in his *Rules for Holy Living and Dying*, that about fifteen years ago I began to take a more exact account than I had done before of the manner wherein I spent my time, writing down how I had employed every hour.” Cf. The Preface, in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18:121.

¹⁵ Wesley, “Letter to Mrs Susanna Wesley” (28 May, 1725), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25:162.

¹⁶ Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1989), 30.

¹⁷ “Letter from Susanna Wesley” (10 November, 1725), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25:185.

many sins that therefore he must be guilty of all; nay, we should not judge that the most profligate sinner cannot possibly amend ...”¹⁸ If the advice given to Wesley in early 1725 from both his mother and Jeremy Taylor served to re-order his life, then the counsel later that year from reading Thomas à Kempis further softened his heart toward others.

John Wesley was elected fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, in 1726 and during the following year a “new seriousness and discipline”¹⁹ began to grip him. Despite an inclination to keep to his own company²⁰ his mother continued to reframe life as that which revolves around others.²¹ If his October 1727 sermon is anything to go by, Wesley was indeed heeding his mother’s advice, as he states that a preacher must first be about the concern of others and “our first intention in speaking, is to point him the way to happiness, and to disengage him from the great road that leads to misery.”²² In the course of that year Wesley made yet another life-altering decision: “Leisure and I have now taken leave of one another. I propose to be busy as long as I live, if my health is so long indulged to me.”²³

In 1728 Wesley became an ordained priest in the Anglican communion and “spent long periods at home, helped his father with *Job*,²⁴ and acted as curate at Wroot...”²⁵ The following year he was called back to Oxford to become a tutor at Lincoln, lecturing in

¹⁸ “Letter from Susanna Wesley” (10 November, 1725), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25:185.

¹⁹ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 81.

²⁰ Wesley, “Letter to Mrs Susanna Wesley” (19 March, 1727), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25:213.

²¹ “Letter from Mrs Susanna Wesley” (14 May, 1727), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25:217. In this letter she wrote, for example, that the “true end of preaching” is “to mend men’s lives.”

²² Wesley, “On Corrupting the Word of God,” Sermon 137 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 250.

²³ Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. Samuel Wesley, Jun.” (22 May, 1727), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 223.

²⁴ A commentary on the biblical book of *Job* that his father was writing and would later present for publication.

²⁵ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 77.

classics, logic and divinity. More significantly, he joined a small band of Christian brethren brought together by his brother Charles Wesley, who was studying for his ordination.²⁶ This little group agreed to spend several nights of the week discussing the classics they had been reading in private and then on Sundays “some book in divinity.”²⁷ Their approach to study and discussion became known in wider university circles and soon they were being referred to as the ‘Methodists’,²⁸ a nickname for the group which implied that they lived by a strict code of rules and methods. This small cadre of men not only wanted to be at their cerebral best but also their compassionate best. They proposed various questions:

Whether it does not concern all men of all conditions to imitate him as much as they can who went about doing good?
 Whether all Christians are not concerned in that command, ‘While we have time, let us do good to all men [and women]’?
 Whether we can be happy at all hereafter unless we have, according to our power, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited those that are sick and in prison...?
 Whether we may not lend smaller sums to those that are of any trade, that they may procure themselves tools and materials to work with?²⁹

In answer to these searching questions, they visited the poor, the sick and those in prison. Wesley tells of one of their number, Richard Morgan Jun., who “frequently went into poor peoples’ houses” and went to the jail to “see a man who was condemned for killing his wife.”³⁰ Wesley made it his practice to visit prisoners at least once a month.³¹ By

²⁶ John Wesley’s account of the beginning of this group implies that he himself originated the group with others. Cf. “Letter to Richard Morgan, Sen.” (19 October, 1732), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25:335. But Rack makes mention of a letter that Charles Wesley wrote to a Doctor Chandler in 1785 where Charles states that in 1729, “I went to the weekly sacrament and persuaded two or three young students to accompany me, and to observe the method of study prescribed by the statutes of the university.” Cf. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 85.

²⁷ Wesley, “Letter to Richard Morgan, Sen.” (19 October, 1732), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25:337.

²⁸ Letter from Charles Wesley to Doctor Chandler in 1785. Cf. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 85.

²⁹ Wesley, “Letter to Richard Morgan, Sen.” (19 October, 1732), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 339–40.

³⁰ Wesley, “Letter to Richard Morgan, Sen.” (19 October, 1732), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 124, 127.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 18: 126.

doing so he often put his own life in peril. The prisons of the day were places of death and danger. James Oglethorpe, the English prison reform advocate of the early 18th century, wrote in his report to the House of Commons that prison officials “herded destitute prisoners into overcrowded, disease ridden wards and dungeons.”³² In Marshalsea, a London prison, disobedient prisoners were confined to a yard “containing the corpses of prisoners who had recently starved to death.” In a report on this prison, Oglethorpe wrote that the prison guards “had on several occasions sexually assaulted the wives of incarcerated debtors.”³³ Wesley, the ‘gentleman’ walked into these places and urged his few fellows (incipient Methodists) to walk as he did.

Toward the end of 1730, Wesley began to read William Law’s *Serious Call* which echoed Jeremy Taylor and Thomas à Kempis in stressing discipline, imitation of Christ and visiting others.³⁴ Law writes:

The short of the matter is this; either reason and religion prescribe rules and ends to all the ordinary actions of our life, or they do not: if they do, then it is as necessary to govern all our actions by those rules, as it is necessary to worship God. For if religion teaches us anything concerning eating and drinking, or spending our time and money; if it teaches us how we are to use and condemn the world; if it tells us what tempers we are to have in common life, how we are to be disposed towards all people; how we are to behave towards the sick, the poor, the old, the destitute; if it tells us whom we are to treat with a particular love, whom we are to regard with a particular esteem; if it tells us how we are to treat our enemies, and how we are to mortify and deny ourselves; he must be very weak that can think these parts of religion are not to be observed with as much exactness, as any doctrines that relate to prayers.³⁵

³² Alex Pitofsky, “The Warden’s Court Martial: James Oglethorpe and the Politics of Eighteenth-Century Prison Reform,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 24 (2000): 88–102.

³³ *Ibid.*, 88–102.

³⁴ See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 73. William Law (1686–1761) refused to give his oath of allegiance to George I, and so was released from his fellowship at Cambridge University and labelled a Nonjuror. For the rest of his life he organised schools and almshouses and wrote spiritual books, one of which became a classic: *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. He was a mentor to the younger Wesley (see *Letters* [ed. Baker], 25: 386–8); but in later years their relationship was severely strained over Wesley charging that Law not had taught him about the real nature of faith (see *Letters* [ed. Baker], 25: 540–2, 543–6, 546–8, 548–50).

³⁵ William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (London: Epworth Press, 1961), 6–7.

This combination of serious study, gathering together, and serving the poor earned the group the nickname of ‘The Holy Club’.³⁶ However, walking with the stranger did not come naturally to Wesley. In 1731, he candidly revealed, “the more I observe the dispositions of those poor creatures that make up the bulk of mankind, the more I desire to shelter myself from them...”³⁷ He persisted however, confessing his own fear “of growing old too soon”³⁸ and therefore the danger of having not “started for the goal.”³⁹ The strictness of ‘The Holy Club’ and arguably Wesley’s persistent nature came under scrutiny in 1732 following the death of Richard Morgan Jnr. Morgan’s father alleged the Wesley brothers had in effect killed his son through encouraging him to undergo rigorous fasting.⁴⁰ John Wesley was forced to defend his fledgling movement in extensive correspondence with the grieving father and in his sermons of 1732⁴¹ and 1733.⁴²

The years 1734 to 1735 proved to be a point of departure for John Wesley. His father, Samuel Wesley Sen., asked John to return to Epworth to succeed him as rector of the parish. Much to the displeasure of his father and brother (Samuel Jun.), he initially declined the offer⁴³ and wrote a 26-point letter outlining the reasons he preferred to stay in Oxford. He wrote, “Here are poor families to be relieved; here are children to be educated; here are workhouses wherein both young and old want and gladly receive the word of exhortation; here are prisons to be visited, wherein alone is a complication of all

³⁶ Wesley, The Preface, in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 129.

³⁷ Wesley, “Letter to Mrs Mary Pendarves” (5 April, 1731), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 275.

³⁸ Wesley, “Letter to Ann Granville” (27 September, 1731), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 311.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 25: 311.

⁴⁰ Wesley, “Letter to Richard Morgan, Sen.” (19 October, 1732), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 335.

⁴¹ See Wesley, “On Public Diversions,” Sermon 143 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 319 in which he argues that when calamity strikes, it is done with the permission of God.

⁴² See Wesley, “The Circumcision of the Heart,” Sermon 17 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 401–14 in which he defends walking as Jesus walked and that Christians are to be like “good soldiers of Christ” who “inure him [or herself] to endure hardship.”

⁴³ Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. Samuel Wesley, Sen.” (15 November, 1734), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 395.

human wants...⁴⁴ Wesley believed his work among the poor in Oxford, rather than the congregation at Epworth, would “conduce most to my own improvement...”⁴⁵ It was a view he held throughout his life: That in serving the poor, not only did the poor profit but such work engendered improvement in those who visited them.⁴⁶ However on the death of his father in April 1735, Wesley did return to Epworth, where he assumed pastoral responsibility. This also had the effect of disentangling him from his responsibilities at Oxford.

1735–1738

In October 1735 John Wesley began discussing the possibility of taking up the missionary life in Georgia, America, with Dr John Burton, a family friend of the Wesleys who was seeking to promote mission work amongst the Indians.⁴⁷ Albert Outler writes that Wesley wanted to move ‘The Holy Club’ from Oxford “to a more desolate environment.”⁴⁸ He also desired “to visit” the indigenous Indians of America and impart to them what he had “received.”⁴⁹ However he wrote that his chief motive in going to Georgia was “of saving my own soul.”⁵⁰ By this Wesley meant that by going to

⁴⁴ Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. Samuel Wesley, Sen.” (10 December, 1734), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 404.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 25: 399.

⁴⁶ Visiting the sick and attending to the stranger were for Wesley a “means of grace” by which in the act of visiting, God is not only graciously involved with those that are visited but also in the visitor. See “On Visiting the Sick,” Sermon 98 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 384–399. For clarification of Wesley’s use of the phrase ‘means of grace,’ refer to Chapter 7 of this thesis, pp. 202–6.

⁴⁷ Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. John Burton” (10 October, 1735), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 439. Missionary activity amongst the American Indians had been growing since the mid-17th century and made marked progress after the Great Awakening under the influence of Jonathan Edwards, a resident of Northampton in Massachusetts, and through the visits of George Whitefield from the United Kingdom to America in 1740, 1744, 1754, 1764 and 1770. Kenneth Latourette chronicles some of the major persons and groups involved in mission work amongst the Indians in his *A History of the Expansion of Christianity 3: Three Centuries of Advance, A.D.1500 – A.D.1800* (Paternoster, 1971), 215–25. It is interesting to note that in the year 1700, there were approximately 30 Indian congregations in Southern Massachusetts alone.

⁴⁸ Outler, *John Wesley*, 10.

⁴⁹ Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. John Burton” (10 October, 1735), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 441.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 25: 439.

the Indian people, he would also “learn the true sense of the gospel of Christ.”⁵¹ This is quite consistent with his previous decisions, including his initial choice of Oxford over Epworth. What is signalled here is a procurement ethic; in going to others, Wesley believed, both the recipient of the visit and the visitor benefited.⁵²

If in Oxford he crossed the street and walked into the prisons, now he was prepared to cross the seas and walk towards those about whom he knew nothing. Either way, he remained a man bent on walking toward strangers. The risks of engagement in Georgia must not be underestimated; Wesley’s time there was sandwiched between several violent episodes with the Indian people.⁵³

On 14 October 1735 John Wesley, his brother Charles, along with Benjamin Ingham, a member of the Oxford Holy Club, and Charles Delamotte, an acquaintance of John’s, boarded the *Simmonds* for America. On board, John Wesley continued his practice of walking toward strangers, including “one recovering from a dangerous illness”⁵⁴ and another “that was very ill.”⁵⁵ On 5 February 1736 they dropped anchor on the Savannah River, near Tybee Island. Nine days later, Wesley had his first encounter with Indians when a group came aboard the ship, and another on 19 February when he and Charles took a boat to visit an Indian village. Wesley was however severely restricted in the time he could spend with the local Indians as the pastoral needs of the colonists proved pressing. He lamented that he had so little time to spend with the indigenous people and made mention of this in his journal on 23 November 1736: “I never promised to stay

⁵¹ Ibid., 25: 439. Similarly, Charles Wesley described his going to and being in America as: “It is now that I begin to be a disciple of Christ.” Cf. “Letter from the Revd. Charles Wesley” (27 March, 1736), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 455.

⁵² This notion is further developed in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

⁵³ Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* 3, 219. John Wesley recorded in his Journal his intent to visit the Choctaw Indians on June 27, 1736 but was dissuaded from doing so because of the danger involved. Cf. Wesley, (27 June, 1736), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 163. He tells of another incident in 1736 when a score of French soldiers were taken captive by 200 Chickasaw Indians. Cf. Wesley, (9 July, 1737), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 185.

⁵⁴ Wesley, (21 November, 1735), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 140.

⁵⁵ Wesley, (2 December, 1735), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 140.

here [Savannah] one month. I openly declared both before, at, and ever since my coming hither, that I neither would nor could take charge of the English any longer than till I could go among the Indians.”⁵⁶ Regardless, he still made it his practice to engage with the colonist parishioners as best he could, going “from house to house”⁵⁷ to see to their needs. He continued to use the methods he had established at Oxford, creating a little society for those more serious about spiritual pursuits, who would “meet once or twice a week, in order to reprove, instruct, and exhort one another.”⁵⁸ From this society Wesley selected an even smaller group “for a more intimate union with each other.”⁵⁹

During 1737, Wesley made a habit of visiting the poor in the smaller settlements,⁶⁰ learning Spanish in order to converse with the Jews,⁶¹ getting alongside the French and the Germans⁶² and spending time with the African-American slaves.⁶³ As a result of his encounters with the African-Americans, Wesley proposed an optimistic programme:

And perhaps one of the easiest and shortest ways to instruct the American Negroes in Christianity would be first to inquire after and find out some of the most serious of the planters. Then, having inquired of them which of their slaves were best inclined, and understood English, to go to them from plantation to plantation, staying as long as appeared necessary at each.⁶⁴

⁵⁶ Wesley, (3 November, 1736), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 173.

⁵⁷ Wesley, (10 May, 1736), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 158.

⁵⁸ Wesley, (17 April, 1736), *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 157.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 18: 157.

⁶⁰ Wesley, “Letter to Richard Morgan, Jun.” (16 February, 1737), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 491.

⁶¹ Wesley, (3 April, 1737), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 178.

⁶² Wesley, (15 October, 1737), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 194.

⁶³ Wesley, (27 April, 1737), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 181.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18: 181

As in Oxford and with the Indian people, Wesley did not wait for people to come to him but rather made it his mission “to go to them”.⁶⁵ However a series of misunderstandings put Wesley on the outer with the colonists; a failed love affair and a subsequent court case forced him to flee Georgia.⁶⁶

In the afternoon the magistrates published an order requiring all the officers and sentinels to prevent my going out of the province, and forbidding any person to assist me so to do. Being now only a prisoner at large, in a place where I knew by experience every day would give fresh opportunity to procure evidence of words I never said and actions I never did, I saw clearly the hour was come for leaving this place; and as soon as evening prayers were over, about eight o'clock, the tide then serving, I shook off the dust of my feet and left Georgia, after having preached the gospel (not as I ought, but as I was able) one year and nearly nine months.⁶⁷

On 22 December 1737 John Wesley boarded the *Samuel* bound for England. Despite being “sorrowful and very heavy”⁶⁸ he continued to be there for others. On board, he began instructing a young African-American,⁶⁹ spoke to a poor Frenchman every

⁶⁵ This must not be read as implicit support for slavery. Even though politically conservative, Wesley was anti-slavery and later in life was an ardent supporter of William Wilberforce and the Clapham Group who sought legislative change on the slave trade and slavery.

⁶⁶ Much has been written about John Wesley’s relationships with women. Scholars holding a more negative and critical view on Wesley and women, gender and sexuality include Henry Abelove, *The Evangelist of Desire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleys: Religion in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast* (2nd ed.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993). Scholars of a more sympathetic view include Richard P. Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley* (2nd ed.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003); Vicki Tolar Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley’s Methodism* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008); and Paul W. Chilcote, *She Offered Them Christ* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001). Both Abelove and, to a lesser degree, Kent attempt a psychological explanation for Wesley’s three failed love affairs with Sophy Hopkey, Grace Murray and Mary Vazeille. The more sympathetic views consider each of these cases on their own merits. Such a complex history with women may suggest that Wesley had difficulties with ‘female’ strangers. His life does not bear this out. In fact, over the decades he mentored hundreds of women. His relationships only became complex with those who were no longer strangers but in fact, intimate, and here I make no attempt to exonerate Wesley from his share of the blame for these failed relationships.

⁶⁷ Wesley, (2 December, 1737), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 195.

⁶⁸ Wesley, (1 January, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 207. Somewhat incredibly, John Wesley admitted that he “could give no particular reason” for his heaviness. Cf. (1 January, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 207.

⁶⁹ Wesley, (26 December, 1737), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 207.

morning⁷⁰ and resolved to speak to “every single soul on the ship.”⁷¹ These encounters were undertaken with a heavy heart and during a personal spiritual crisis bought about by his broken relationship, his untimely exit from America and the great sense that he had failed to accomplish that for which he had hoped. On the trip back, he reflected on his unbelief,⁷² his need for conversion,⁷³ his disenchantment with the mystics like à Kempis who had informed a lot of his thinking to this point,⁷⁴ and the feeling of alienation from the life of God.⁷⁵ On his return to England, rather than allowing himself to become self-absorbed by his Georgian failure, Wesley set his heart on doing ‘the works of the Lord.’ As in the past, this was expressed in his determination to continue approaching strangers. Henry Rack notes that he “regularly forced himself to speak about religion to all those he met on his journeys of the next few weeks.”⁷⁶

On 7 February 1738 Wesley met the Moravian Peter Bohler, who tried to convince him that his crisis of faith arose from a lack of an inner assurance of that faith.⁷⁷ Wesley reasoned that, if this were true, he ought to desist from further preaching. Bohler, however, urged him to “preach faith till you have it; and then because you have it you will preach faith.”⁷⁸ Wesley took his advice and, with renewed determination, continued

⁷⁰ Wesley, (7 January, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 208.

⁷¹ Wesley, (13 January, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 210.

⁷² Wesley, (8 January, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 208.

⁷³ Wesley, (24 January, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 211.

⁷⁴ Wesley, (29 January, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 213.

⁷⁵ Wesley, (1 February, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 215.

⁷⁶ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 138. Cf. Wesley, (6 February, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 228.

⁷⁷ The Moravians descended from Czech Christians dating back to the 15th century and, largely through the financial assistance of Count von Zinzendorf, situated themselves in Herrnhut. In the 1720s, some emigrated to America, establishing themselves in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. John Wesley first met them on his trip to Georgia and was impressed by their piety and faith. Whilst in America he continued to acquaint himself with them and their views. Upon his return to England in 1738, he conversed much with the Moravian Peter Bohler who was instrumental in facilitating a shift in John Wesley’s view on faith. Soon after this shift had taken place, John Wesley took a trip to Herrnhut to see the Moravian community for himself.

⁷⁸ Wesley, (4 February, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 228.

to direct his efforts toward strangers, his first effort being “to a condemned criminal under sentence of death.”⁷⁹ A few months later, on 24 May 1738, Wesley experienced his now famous movement from belief to faith:

In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.⁸⁰

Post-Aldersgate, John Wesley visited a Moravian community in Germany for a time, largely because of their significant role in his heartfelt Aldersgate experience. Then he continued as before, as he visited prisoners,⁸¹ and sat with the “raving mad.”⁸² Toward the end of 1738, his sister Emilia wrote reprimanding Wesley for his care and attention toward others while neglecting her poverty-stricken state.⁸³

That year marked what Wesley would later describe as the “third rise of Methodism.”⁸⁴ On 1 May 1738 he and several others began another “little society” that met in Fetter Lane.⁸⁵ Wesley was convinced that it was not enough simply to walk toward strangers, converse with them, and love them. Those who responded to his concern should be encouraged to join small fellowship groups for their ongoing progress. He was

⁷⁹ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 139.

⁸⁰ Wesley, (24 May, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 249–50.

⁸¹ Wesley, (17 September; 3 December, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 12, 22.

⁸² Wesley, (5 November, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 23.

⁸³ “Letter from Mrs Emilia Harper” (24 November, 1738), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 589.

⁸⁴ The first rise was in November 1729 with the formation of The Holy Club in Oxford, and the second rise in Savannah in April 1736 with the establishment of another group.

⁸⁵ Wesley, (1 May, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 236.

determined “not to strike one stroke in any place where I cannot follow the blow.”⁸⁶
This ‘follow-ship’ was practised in small, closely-knit groups.⁸⁷

1739–1743

John Wesley continued his practice of walking toward the afflicted, despite the challenges of severe weather conditions⁸⁸ or being fearful of certain people.⁸⁹ Arguably, it was his visit to the coalminers of Kingswood in Bristol that proved life-changing for both Wesley and the colliers. On 3 March 1739, revivalist preacher George Whitefield (1714–1770)⁹⁰ wrote asking Wesley to come to Bristol and join his mission to the coal workers, specifically the Kingswood Colliers.⁹¹ Wesley was hesitant for a number of reasons: these men had a fearful reputation and he would be placing himself in danger. The colliers kept themselves separate from the rest of society and, if pressed, could easily metamorphise into a criminal mob. Robert Malcolmson wrote that “their independence became more pronounced in the eighteenth century [and] it often proved impossible to enforce the law in Kingswood. The colliers commonly behaved more or less as they pleased, with little fear of punishment.”⁹²

The seventy or so coal mines of Kingswood helped to fuel Bristol. The colliers worked in horrendous conditions underground and were little better than squatters in their slum-

⁸⁶ Wesley, (12 March, 1743), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 318.

⁸⁷ See Chapter 6 on orthokoinonia, pp. 166–83.

⁸⁸ Wesley, (25 October, 1739), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 110.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 18: 110.

⁹⁰ George Whitefield was close to the Wesley brothers in Oxford and Georgia. In 1739, Whitefield returned to England from Georgia to become priested in the Anglican Church and to raise funds for an orphanage in Georgia. It was Whitefield who introduced John Wesley to the practice of preaching outdoors. In 1741, the relationship between Whitefield and the Wesley brothers was strained over theological differences but their friendship continued and on the death of Whitefield, John Wesley was asked to speak at his funeral. Whitefield, like the Wesleys, was a Methodist within Anglicanism, but after 1741 he belonged to a different stream of Methodism to the Wesleys.

⁹¹ “Letter from the Revd. George Whitefield” (3 March, 1739), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 605.

⁹² Robert W. Malcolmson, “‘A Set of Ungovernable People’: The Kingswood Colliers of the Eighteenth Century,” in *An Ungovernable People: The English and their Law in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (ed. John Brewer and John Styles; London: Hutchinson, 1980), 85–127.

like living conditions in and around Kingswood. Their relationship with civil authorities was strained and on several occasions they rebelled when road taxes were imposed on them. They were engaged in violent riots in 1709, 1727, 1749 and 1753.⁹³ Their decades of lawlessness culminated in the 1793 Bristol Bridge riot in which 11 people died and 52 were wounded.⁹⁴ These working class people complained that the authorities of the day had failed to fix the roads with the funds they had contributed. Parliament sent in troops and the activists amongst the colliers were prosecuted without due process. These injustices further eroded any regard for the ruling classes, and their harsh living and working conditions meant they had scant regard for any ‘gentleman’. Malcolmson writes that “the colliers were much feared by the city-dwellers” and that an early 18th-century observation described them as “so barbarous and savage that they were a terror to the City of Bristol, which they several times invaded; it was dangerous to go amongst them, and their dialect was the roughest and rudest in the Nation.”⁹⁵

Wesley, educated at Oxford and decidedly middle class, was of course considered a ‘gentleman’ and understandably hesitant to respond to Whitefield’s request to join him in Bristol. He had little in common with the colliers; they were strangers, and dangerous ones at that. True to form, he took up the challenge, arriving in Bristol on 31 March 1739, and within days had addressed about 1500 people in Kingswood. Wesley wrote in 1768, “No Indians are more savage than were the colliers of Kingswood.” Surprisingly, his success far surpassed anything he had experienced at Oxford or during his limited engagements with the American Indians. Within a short time he was able to write of the miners that, “many...are now a humane, hospitable people full of love to God and man; quiet, diligent in business; in every state content; everyway adorning the Gospel of God their Saviour.”⁹⁶ Malcolmson in his study of the colliers agrees:

⁹³ Mark Harrison, “To Raise and Dare Resentment: The Bristol Bridge Riot of 1793 Re-examined,” *The Historical Journal* 26 (1983): 557–85.

⁹⁴ Philip D. Jones, “The Bristol Bridge Riot and Its Antecedents: Eighteenth-Century Perception of the Crowd,” *The Journal of British Studies* 19 (1980): 74–92.

⁹⁵ Malcolmson, “A Set of Ungovernable People.”

⁹⁶ Wesley, “Letter to Thomas Price” (6 December, 1739), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 702.

Methodism introduced into Kingswood a new form of authority, a set of religious imperatives which attracted at least some of the colliers to a new outlook on life. The early preachers brought to Kingswood, not only a compelling personal dynamism, but also a message of concern and compassion and personal salvation to people who had stood alone – and some of them may have realized that they could not stand alone much longer. Outsiders were inclined to credit Methodism with the improvements that were thought to have occurred in Kingswood.⁹⁷

One of John Wesley's initiatives with the miners in Bristol was to establish a school for the poor. Marquardt notes that "Wesley could not passively accept the imposition of widespread disadvantages, especially in such an important area as education."⁹⁸ Wesley was no absentee founder. He personally got alongside the children, talked with them and, at times, taught them himself.

The years 1739 to 1743 were marked by vibrant debate between John Wesley and the Moravians, a debate in which Wesley knew he had to engage if he was to protect advances being made by his fellow Methodists in walking toward the stranger. It is sufficient to point out that the Moravian call to cease all good works, including visiting the sick and engaging with strangers, in favour of being *still* and nurturing spiritual faith, alarmed Wesley.⁹⁹ He continued to assert that getting alongside the sick and strangers benefited both parties and such good works were a means of grace used by God to strengthen faith. In November 1739, Wesley publicly countered the Moravian view in his published sermon 'The Means of Grace' in which he wrote "that the outward ordinances of God then profit much, when they advance inward holiness."¹⁰⁰ By that he

⁹⁷ Malcolmson, "A Set of Ungovernable People."

⁹⁸ Manfred Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics: Praxis and Principle* (trans. John E. Steely and W. Stephen Gunter (Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 51.

⁹⁹ On this point, history clearly shows that Wesley's fear was unfounded. The Moravians under their founder Count von Zinzendorf proved to be one of the most significant mission movements of church history.

¹⁰⁰ Wesley, "The Means of Grace," Sermon 16 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 379.

meant that doing good works had a positive and spiritual effect on the doer.¹⁰¹ This sharp division split the Fetter Lane Society in London where Wesley had fellowshiped with the Moravians since his return from Georgia. This forced Wesley and his supporters to make a fresh start in the old King's Foundry¹⁰² in London from July 1740.¹⁰³

During this period, Wesley had been devising simple, straightforward rules and codes of conduct for how organised societies, and those who wished to join them, should operate. His book, *The Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies*, was published on 23 February, 1743.¹⁰⁴ Wesley was keen to ensure that those who declared a desire to love God and love their neighbour showed evidence of such a desire in their behaviour. One such rule was the doing of good

... by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible, to all men [women]: to their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick, or in prison ...¹⁰⁵

1744–1755

Richard Heitzenrater refers to the period 1744 to 1755 as being mainly concerned with the “consolidation of the Movement.”¹⁰⁶ For John Wesley, this meant years of travelling from one town to another throughout England, Wales and Ireland where he established new societies and strengthened existing ones. In 1744, he gathered the key leaders in order to establish uniformity on doctrine, discipline and practice. Such ‘Conferences’ soon became an annual affair. Consolidation was also achieved through published works,

¹⁰¹ See Chapter 7 Orthopraxy.

¹⁰² The Foundry in London was formerly used as the royal foundry for cannon.

¹⁰³ Wesley, (23 July, 1740), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 163.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter 6 on orthonomos, pp. 183–95.

¹⁰⁵ Outler, *John Wesley*, 177.

¹⁰⁶ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 147.

especially those that attempted to counter the mounting criticisms of Wesley and the Methodists. For example, in 1745 John Wesley published his *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. In his introduction, he wrote:

In a former treatise I declared, in the plainest manner I could, both my principles and practice, and answered some of the most important as well as the most common objections to each. But I have not delivered my own soul. I believe it is still incumbent upon me to answer other objections, particularly such as have been urged by those who are esteemed religious or reasonable men. These partly relate to the doctrines I teach, partly to my manner of teaching them, and partly to the effects which are supposed to follow from teaching these doctrines in this manner.¹⁰⁷

Despite his frenetic schedule and the need to lead the various groups that had been established, he never lost sight of those who were in need of care, especially individuals who were shunned by society. In his *Journal* of this period,¹⁰⁸ Wesley records numerous such encounters with drunkards,¹⁰⁹ the suicidal,¹¹⁰ the sick,¹¹¹ murderers,¹¹² and strangers who possessed neither food nor lodging.¹¹³ During this period, Wesley also actively engaged in collecting resources from the well-off and redistributing them to the poor, including clothing,¹¹⁴ medicines¹¹⁵ and money.¹¹⁶ In a decisive sermon of 1744,

¹⁰⁷ Wesley, “A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,” in *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters* (ed. Cragg), 11: 105. This work was preceded by his earlier “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,” in *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters* (ed. Cragg), 11: 45–94.

¹⁰⁸ Wesley, *Journal 1743–1754* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 1–495.

¹⁰⁹ Wesley, (11 November, 1744; 8 November, 1745), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20:43, 105. It was during this period that John Wesley also wrote a tract for his fellow Methodists on how to work with and speak to people under the influence of alcohol. The tract was entitled, *A Word to a Drunkard*. See Wesley, (28 November, 1745), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 106.

¹¹⁰ Wesley, (25 August, 1745; 28 September, 1747; 20 October, 1747), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 87, 105, 194–6.

¹¹¹ Wesley, (1 March, 1746; 19 April, 1746), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 115, 121.

¹¹² Wesley, (23 March, 1746), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 118.

¹¹³ Wesley, (24 February, 1747), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 159.

¹¹⁴ Wesley, (27 February, 1744), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 15.

Wesley declared that this action on behalf of the stranger was simply “scriptural Christianity” at work.¹¹⁷ Also noteworthy was his establishment of two institutions: Kingswood School in Bristol for children of the poor; and a poorhouse¹¹⁸ near the Foundry in London for those in need of shelter. He made it a regular practice to sit and eat with those in the poorhouse and to come alongside the children at the school.

John Wesley’s practice of walking toward the stranger greatly influenced other Methodists. During this period, for example, Wesley speaks of Sarah Peters, a fellow Methodist, who made it her practice to visit a select group of condemned prisoners in Newgate Prison.¹¹⁹ She entered their cells knowing that a kind of “pestilential fever” was rampant in the prison, visiting each prisoner until the day of their execution. Several days after the last of her group had been executed, she succumbed to fever and died. John Wesley also suffered through his activities among strangers. While visiting the sick he contracted their illnesses,¹²⁰ was punched in the face¹²¹ and in one encounter was thrown down the steps.¹²²

¹¹⁵ Wesley, (4 December, 1746), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 150.

¹¹⁶ Wesley, (27 February, 1744; 17 July, 1746), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 15, 125. In terms of money, Wesley encouraged people to give all they could to the poor. This act of costly giving was his third rule on money, the first two covering earning and saving all one could. Cf. Wesley, “The Use of Money,” Sermon 50 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 266–280.

¹¹⁷ Wesley, “Scriptural Christianity,” Sermon 4 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 159–180. John Wesley gave this sermon before the University at St. Mary’s, Oxford in 1744 and in it he implied that most people within the University were far from being the kind of Christians that Jesus and the early primitive church called for. Heitzenrater therefore claims that this sermon served to sever his link with the University and thus marked a “new period” in his life. Cf. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, 151.

¹¹⁸ During the 18th century, the terms ‘poorhouse’ and ‘workhouse’ were used interchangeably but the former usually meant shelter and the latter a place where one lived and worked.

¹¹⁹ Wesley, (13 October, 1748), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 252–60.

¹²⁰ Wesley, (23 April, 1748), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 220.

¹²¹ Wesley, (25 August, 1748), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 242.

¹²² Wesley, (28 August, 1748), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 245.

1755–1791

Even in his early fifties, Wesley showed no signs of settling down, and continued to seek out people in need, whether this was a stranger in a kitchen,¹²³ an old man bleeding to death in a nearby room,¹²⁴ or fellow passengers on a boat.¹²⁵ The pattern that was now part of his life saw him walking toward prisoners,¹²⁶ the severely malnourished,¹²⁷ the sick,¹²⁸ and those suffering from domestic violence.¹²⁹ In his teaching at the time, he encouraged his fellow Methodists that it was “better to carry relief to the poor than send it.”¹³⁰ For Wesley, the issue of proximity was crucial. His call was to a one-on-one encounter. Not surprisingly, at this stage of his life he began to see some of the fruits of his own labour as a growing number in his movement followed his example. Arguably, one of the most celebrated was Mary Bosanquet (1739–1815) who in 1763 started an Orphanage in Leytonstone.¹³¹ William New, on becoming a Methodist, spent most of his

¹²³ Wesley, (17 April, 1755), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 4.

¹²⁴ Wesley, (27 April, 1755), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 9.

¹²⁵ Wesley, (29 March, 1758), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 139.

¹²⁶ In Ward and Heitzenrater, see (3 February, 1759) in *Journal* 21: 177; (19 April, 1759) in *Journal* 21:187; (18 April, 1760) in *Journal* 21: 250; and (21 October, 1761) in *Journal* 21:342. In his graphic description of visiting French prisoners, Wesley signalled the perils involved in walking toward the stranger: “Eleven hundred of them, we were informed, were confined in that little place, without anything to lie on but a little dirty straw, or anything to cover them but a few foul thin rags, either by day or night, so that they died like rotten sheep.” Wesley, (1 October, 1759), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 231.

¹²⁷ Wesley, (11 October, 1756), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 79.

¹²⁸ Wesley, (10 November, 1756; 3 August, 1758; 29 April, 1759; 21 April, 1764), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 83, 160, 189, 461.

¹²⁹ Wesley, (28 April, 1757; 21 March, 1764), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 94, 445.

¹³⁰ Wesley, (24 November, 1760), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 290.

¹³¹ Mary Bosanquet was converted at the age of 8 and at 17 sensed a calling to minister to children. Several years later she began to participate in the Methodist world of London. It was only when a property of hers became vacant in Leytonstone in 1763 that she returned to that place to set up the orphanage with her close friend Sarah Ryan. Bosanquet’s actions were, however, not unique for that time. John Fielding, for example, in 1758 founded The Female Orphan Asylum for poor ‘deserving’ girls. See Liza Picard’s *Dr. Johnson’s London: Life in London 1740–1770* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000), 83. See also Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin, eds., *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Culture, Practices* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009), 64–5.

free time “in visiting the sick and the afflicted.”¹³² Wesley also tells of a Mrs Kately of Lambeth who, after many years of doing good among the poor and coming alongside “friendless youth out of prison, took the jail-distemper and died.”¹³³ Worthy of mention by Wesley was a Mr Hopper who, for more than 50 years as a Methodist, gave much of his time to visiting the sick, teaching the uneducated and relieving those in distress.¹³⁴ Another, who according to Wesley had her life cut short because of activism amongst the poor, was Elizabeth Duchesne who quite simply laboured “for the poor beyond her strength.”¹³⁵ His list of notables includes a Mrs Edwards who cared for more than 75 boarders and a Miss Owen who had 20 in her care.¹³⁶ Attention is also drawn to Silas Todd who visited the prisoners of Newgate year after year.¹³⁷

Wesley lamented that there were not more dedicated activists among his ranks. Much of his criticism was directed toward the rich within the Methodist societies. In his *Journal* he writes, “O why do not all the rich that fear God constantly visit the poor! Can they spend part of their spare time better?”¹³⁸ In part, his anguish over the indifference of the wealthy was fuelled by his own intensely personal interaction with the poor. In one of his journal entries, Wesley graphically records, “One poor man was just creeping out of his sick-bed to his ragged wife and three little children – who were more than half naked and the very picture of famine – when on bringing in a loaf of bread, they all ran, seized upon it, and tore it in pieces in an instant.” In reflection on this sorry sight, Wesley wrote, “Who would not rejoice that there is another world?”¹³⁹ His anguish led him to

¹³² Wesley, (25 September, 1767), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 104.

¹³³ Wesley, (30 January, 1770), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 214.

¹³⁴ Wesley, (20 June, 1774), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 416.

¹³⁵ Wesley, (19 December, 1777), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 39.

¹³⁶ Wesley, (7 December, 1778), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 115.

¹³⁷ Wesley, (20 December, 1778), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 115.

¹³⁸ Wesley, (15 January, 1777), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 40. Of course there were exceptions. Wesley makes mention of Lady Maxwell who upon the loss of her husband and son, set up a school for the education of poor children. By the time of her death, she had educated 800 children in the school. See Wesley, (31 May, 1782), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 240.

¹³⁹ Wesley, (15 January, 1777), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 40.

the streets to beg on behalf of the poor, and he did this as an 80-year-old! On one occasion he collected £50¹⁴⁰ and on another £200.¹⁴¹ Even at the age of 83, he took to the streets for four days in a row to beg on behalf of the poor in the hope that he might raise enough money to provide food and clothing for the poor.¹⁴² His continual expectation was that others, even the children in Methodism, would do as he did. Nearing the end of his life, he visited Bolton and estimated that there were approximately 1000 children in the Methodist Sunday schools there. It was the practice of the children to break into groups of 10 or so “to visit the poor that are sick to exhort, comfort, and pray with them.”¹⁴³

Objections Considered

Despite the clear evidence that John Wesley made a conscious and moral effort to engage with and get alongside strangers, arguments may be mounted against Wesley being used as an exemplar of love for the stranger. For example, that strong religious orientation complicates this engagement and that Wesley’s role as an evangelist compromises any encounter with strangers. The philosopher Emmanuel Levinas is helpful in addressing such objections.

Levinas, a Lithuanian who became a naturalised French citizen in 1930, was captured by the German army and imprisoned with fellow Jews (1940 to 1945) after failing to report for military duty. While he and his immediate family survived, many of those in his extended family did not. During his time in the concentration camps, he was often observed jotting down notes on scrap paper. The significance of his observations becomes clear in his post-war writings and in his position as a teacher of philosophy at the University of Paris and at the Sorbonne.

¹⁴⁰ Wesley, (28 September, 1783), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 290.

¹⁴¹ Wesley, (4 January, 1785), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 340.

¹⁴² Wesley, (8 January, 1787), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 24: 2.

¹⁴³ Wesley, (20 April, 1788), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 24: 77.

Levinas rigorously critiques Western philosophy and also underlines the motif of alterity which has to do with the state of being ‘other’ or different. During the war, he had first-hand experience of hostility and inhospitality toward those deemed different. He was dismayed by those who came out in support of Hitler’s regime in the 1930s and of a philosophy that sought only to classify and categorise reality. Levinas, however, claimed that such knowledge served only to control reality. Everything had to fit into boxes and difference was not allowed. No-one, especially strangers, escaped such classificatory control. Those outside the box were reclassified so they did fit in a box and therefore became more or less like the rest of humanity. Levinas’ lament was that, through this approach, Western philosophy created a climate where difference was, for the purposes of this system anyway, essentially rubbed out. This, he said, nurtured a tolerance or complacency toward those who were the same and intolerance toward those deemed different.

Philosophy is produced as a form that manifests the refusal of engagement in the Other, a preference for waiting over action, indifference towards others – the universal allergy of the first childhood of philosophers. Philosophy’s itinerary still follows the path of Ulysses whose adventure in the world was but a return to his native island – complacency in the Same, misunderstanding of the Other.¹⁴⁴

In this process, hospitality toward the stranger is suppressed. The stranger with all their difference or alterity is not allowed to exist as they are. Levinas urged a shift in philosophy from a concern for ontology to ethics and, more specifically, an ethic of responsibility toward the other.

The transcendence of the Other, which is his eminence, his height, his lordship, in its concrete meaning includes his destitution, his exile [*depaysement*], and his rights as a stranger. I can recognize the gaze of the stranger, the widow, and the orphan only in giving or in refusing; I am free to go or to refuse, but my recognition passes necessarily through the interposition of things. Things are not, as in Heidegger, the foundation of the site, the quintessence of all the relations that constitute our presence on the earth (and "under the humans, in company with men, and in the expectation of the gods"). The relationship between the

¹⁴⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, *Humanism of the Other* (trans. Nidra Poller: Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 26.

same and the other, my welcoming of the other, is the ultimate fact, and in it the things figure not as what one builds but as what one gives.¹⁴⁵

Wesley was an evangelist. William Abraham, an expert on Wesley but also a scholar on evangelism, defines evangelism as “that set of intentional activities which is governed by the goal of initiating people into the kingdom of God for the first time.”¹⁴⁶ Wesley’s walking toward strangers, engaging in conversation, field preaching and visiting the sick were driven by his hope that such encounters would result in Christian conversion. The objection is that Wesley’s walk toward the stranger was simply to evangelise and convert them to his Methodism. His concern then was not for the stranger per se but to gain them for his movement.

Objections against Wesley may be construed in the form of questions. Does being strongly religious complicate stranger-love? Does being an evangelist comprise stranger-love? And more to the point: Was not Wesley actually scathing of those who were different from his Methodists and if so, surely this disqualifies him as an exemplar of stranger-love?

The first question implies that Wesley brought too much of his religious agenda to the encounter and that he was not really interested in the stranger but simply their religious or, as the case may be, irreligious status. In other words, he had too much ‘Christian heritage’. Wesley was aware of such dangers. In his sermon on the “Catholic Spirit” he writes of the manner in which we should approach someone who is different:

My belief is no rule for another. I ask not, therefore, of him with whom I would unite in love, Are you of my church? Of my congregation? ... Let all of these things stand by; we will talk of them, if need be, at a more convenient season
 ...¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 76–77.

¹⁴⁶ William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989), 95.

¹⁴⁷ Wesley, “Catholic Spirit,” Sermon 39 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 87.

At one level Wesley was quite prepared to suspend his beliefs during his initial encounter with another. This, however, must not be read as needing to deny his beliefs so as to ensure that the encounter was somehow truly ‘free’. Christina Gschwandtner, in her work on Wesley and Levinas, correctly notes that Wesley insists “that one should be firmly convinced of one’s own traditions, manner of worship, and correct doctrinal belief and yet also proposes that one suspend all such firm convictions in encountering another person in love.”¹⁴⁸ Gschwandtner writes of the same approach to the stranger in Levinas, “Levinas never advocates an abandonment of one’s own tradition in order to fulfil one’s ethical obligation to the other, but rather sees such tradition as founding and spelling out this obligation.”¹⁴⁹

The second objection is that of evangelism. In other words, what if one’s particular religious heritage asks that the stranger be converted? Clearly Wesley actively sought to convert strangers to Christianity. Intentionality of this kind need not imply that Wesley was simply concerned with his own ultimate ends. He sincerely believed that such conversion was for the good of the stranger. In other words, evangelism was for *their* sake. This is in accord with Levinas’ position that having beliefs qualifies rather than disqualifies one for stranger-love. Echoing Levinas, Gschwandtner writes, “thus, encountering another in love need not mean giving up one’s personal convictions or Christian beliefs ...”¹⁵⁰

Wesley never made claims for altruism or disinterested love. To have another’s interests at heart need not imply disinterest in seeing changes occur in that person. As per the definition of evangelism on the previous page, evangelism initiates and invites but never insists. For this reason, Wesley in his various activities of visitation, conversation or field preaching, rarely asked people to respond by accepting Christian conversion then

¹⁴⁸ Christina M. Gschwandtner, “A Wesleyan Model for Reconciliation and Evangelism? Conversation with Hegel and Levinas,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 37 (2002): 70–86.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

and there. Wesley encouraged those wanting to examine Christianity to join one of his classes where they could engage in robust conversation.¹⁵¹

If Wesley walked toward the other and Levinas embraced the other, then both have a common objective. In fact Levinas helps resolve the objections against Wesley as an exemplar of stranger-love. It is Levinas' view that access to God is a two-way affair. Rather than someone like an evangelist taking God to another, he encourages us to see God in the other and in this sense, the other communicates God just as much the evangelist. In his commentary on the Matthean account of Christ's presence in "the least of these", Levinas writes,

When I speak to a Christian, I always quote Matthew 25; the relation to God is presented there as a relation to another person. It is not a metaphor: in the other, there is a real presence of God ... I'm not saying that the other is God, but that in his or her Face I hear the Word of God.¹⁵²

Jonathan Ryan is correct in stating that given Levinas' confessional commitments, unlike Wesley, he "does not embrace the Christological potential of this New Testament passage".¹⁵³ However, Levinas has picked up on a principle that all evangelists amongst strangers would do well to heed and to which Wesley alludes in his assertion that God can be at work in the stranger, regardless of whether they are a Christian believer with radically different beliefs than those of Methodism, or an unbeliever. Wesley mentions Arians, Deists and Turks (Muslims) in his sermon on bigotry and affirms that to suggest God is not at work in their lives is a form of bigotry. He urged Methodists to be willing to recognise the work of God in those theologically distant from Methodism or distinct from Christianity. A Wesleyan approach to evangelism recognises that God can be already present to the stranger and therefore that access to God can come by way of the stranger. However, he quite clearly believed that only Jesus Christ, not the stranger,

¹⁵¹ See Chapter 6 on orthokoinonia.

¹⁵² Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 110.

¹⁵³ Jonathan Ryan, "Like Bread from One's Mouth: Emmanuel Levinas and Reading Scripture with the Other," *Pacifica* 21 (October, 2008): 285–306.

fulfils the role of bringing a definitive revelation of God. Gschwandtner says Wesley urged his Methodists to “an openness to acknowledge the trace of God in the face and voice of the other, regardless of who that other might be.”¹⁵⁴ Wesley’s evangelism, even though intentional and goal-oriented, was nevertheless respectful of the stranger.

A further question mark over Wesley’s candidature as an exemplar of stranger-love comes from his somewhat scathing remarks about strangers in his published sermon ‘The Spread of the Gospel’ where he wrote of “heathens” as “the basest sort, many of them inferior to the beasts of the field.”¹⁵⁵ In context, he was referring to those people who practised cannibalism. Nevertheless, he later described Muslims as “void of mercy as lions and tigers, as much given up to brutal lusts as bulls or goats; so that they are in truth a disgrace to human nature ...”¹⁵⁶ Wesley’s comments are descriptions of the external behavioural patterns of peoples whom he claims are cannibalistic (heathen) and aggressive (Muslims). In balance, however, it must also be noted that Wesley was just as critical and judgmental of his own country and the English. In one example, he writes that the very heathen have every right to judge eighteenth-century England.¹⁵⁷

Levinas holds critical tension between difference and otherness. He allows for difference in the Other, however it is perceived and described, even if it may appear grotesque in the observer’s eyes, and warns against the temptation to reduce the stranger to being the same as ourselves. Wesley was naming difference and simply drawing attention to difference as he saw it. Wesley reminds us that we cannot simply dismiss difference, ignore it or pretend that it does not exist; an encounter with a stranger should not smooth over differences or press for a suffocating sameness. Levinas’ call to get beyond appearances, even external behaviour, must not be read as a denial of appearances. Appearances in face-to-face encounters must not dictate or dominate

¹⁵⁴ Gschwandtner, “A Wesleyan Model for Reconciliation and Evangelism?” 85.

¹⁵⁵ Wesley, “The General Spread of the Gospel,” Sermon 63 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 486.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 486.

¹⁵⁷ Wesley, “Men of Reason and Religion, Part II,” in *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters* (ed. Cragg), 11: 218.

perception. Both Wesley and Levinas urge the observer to see through and beyond appearances. Levinas asks that we see beyond “face.”¹⁵⁸ The manifestation of “the face is the first discourse,”¹⁵⁹ not their clothes, activity or role. The face before me is not “enemy”¹⁶⁰ or my “complement”,¹⁶¹ as though they exist to fill a need in myself. The stranger is first and foremost a human face, a person and yet also more than a person. Jonathan Ryan writes that in contrast to ‘Greek philosophy’, “Levinas posits an unapologetically Hebraic understanding, in which the other reveals a certain transcendence ...”¹⁶² Tragically, the stranger is often not accorded this sacred identity but reduced to certain dehumanising labels and treated accordingly.

Like Levinas, Wesley urges us to look deeper. In the company of a stranger, Wesley saw someone special, stamped with the image of God. He did not see a beggar, slum dweller or prostitute; he primarily saw people made in the image of God whose outward form was that of a beggar or slum dweller. In his published sermon “On Pleasing All Men” he explores this positive attribution:

Shall we endeavour to go a little deeper, to search into the foundation of this matter? What is the source of that desire to please which we term courtesy? Let us look attentively into our heart, and we shall soon find the answer. The same Apostle that teaches us to be courteous, teaches us to honour all men; and his Master teaches me to love all men. Join these together, and what will be the effect? A poor wretch cries to me for an alms: I look and see him covered with dirt and rags. But through these I see one that has an immortal spirit, made to know and love and dwell with God to eternity. I honour him for his Creator's sake. Lo, I see through all these rags that he is purpled over with the blood of Christ. I love him for the sake of his Redeemer. The courtesy, therefore, which I feel and show toward him is a mixture of the honour and love which I bear to the offspring of God; the purchase of his Son's blood, and the candidate for

¹⁵⁸ Levinas, *Humanism of the Other*, 31.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶² Ryan, “Like Bread from One’s Mouth,” 290.

immortality. This courtesy let us feel and show toward all men; and we shall please all men to their edification.¹⁶³

With very little concern for himself Wesley consciously walked toward the other. This sense of abandonment in the face of the stranger is also urged by Levinas:

The knot of subjectivity consists in going to the other without concerning oneself with his movement toward me. Or, more exactly, it consists in approaching in such a way that, over and beyond all the reciprocal relations that do not fail to get set up between me and the neighbor, I have always taken one step more toward him.¹⁶⁴

Taking the extra step toward the stranger was the pattern of Wesley's life in the eighteenth-century. But how does that pattern hold up for life in the twenty-first century? This question and its answer is the sum of the next chapter.

¹⁶³ Wesley, "On Pleasing All Men," Sermon 100 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 425.

¹⁶⁴ Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, 84.

Chapter Two

Introducing the Stranger

Implicit in this thesis is the view that John Wesley outlined a moral pathway of walking toward the stranger, enabling those who followed him in the Methodist movement to imitate him and ultimately providing inspiration for modern Christians to do the same. While a discussion on the differences between the types of strangers encountered by eighteenth-century Methodists and those in the twenty-first century is informative, it raises the question as to whether Wesley's moral pathway remains useful today. This chapter compares and contrasts the strangers of both periods of time, using Christine Pohl's typology of the stranger. Pohl's schema of four different types of strangers is chosen for the way in which she defines the stranger, partly as one who is "unknown" to us, and for her suggestion that there are "different ways of being unknown."¹ Pohl's schema is helpful as it describes and defines what this unknowing looks like. For example, the relative stranger is one we may see often but "barely know."² Unknown strangers, Pohl's second category, are those who are out of sight and not known. Risky strangers are those we may not want to know, whereas desperate strangers we may allow with some limited knowing.

The heart of this thesis is about how people can cross that threshold of unknowing. Wesley and his Methodists made it a practice to be with people they did not know. This thesis is not specifically a call to walk towards the poor or the marginalised but clarifies the notion of the stranger and the potential relationship that may exist, even with the rich and those included and embraced by others who may still be unknown and strange to us.

In much of the literature, the stranger is often reduced to the category of the poor or marginalised. Michael Ignatieff writes of the respectable poor rummaging through bins.³

¹ Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 85.

² *Ibid.*, 89.

³ Michael Ignatieff, *The Needs of Strangers* (New York: Picador, 2001), 9.

Bauman refers to strangers as outcasts and discontents.⁴ Volf talks in terms of those that are different from us.⁵ Augsburg writes of the other as the enemy.⁶ All of these and other renditions of the stranger may in fact be strangers to us but not necessarily so. In other words, we may know or be known by the poor, the enemy or outcast. Pohl's typology is specific as it defines the stranger as one who is unknown.

Having already approached John Wesley biographically, the exercise in this chapter is sociological and historical, introducing the stranger and the dynamics people employ when in the company of strangers. Sadly, people have been indifferent and even dismissive of the stranger. A way out of this indifference is suggested in the next chapter along with an outline of Wesley's thinking, which this thesis names as the moral pathway, which served to keep Methodists focused on the task of walking toward the stranger in their midst.

Strangers: Then and Now

There are points of discontinuity and difference as well as continuity and sameness when comparing the nature of 'the stranger' in the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries. None of the differences, however, diminishes the relevance of Wesley's moral pathway for today. The key difference is not so much in the type of stranger but rather their proximity to us. Rudolf Stichweh writes:

[T]here is a discontinuity in the modern experience of the stranger which has not been reflected sufficiently in the classical sociology of the stranger. Whereas in premodern societies membership criteria are binary codes such as 'kin' vs. 'stranger', 'friend' vs. 'enemy', and elaborate arrangements were then necessary for institutionalizing a third status (e.g. for internal strangers) between the binary alternatives, the modern experience is wholly different. Modern society is no

⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004) and *Postmodernity and its Discontents* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

⁵ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

⁶ David W. Augsburg, *Hate-Work: Working through the Pain and Pleasures of Hate* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).

longer a membership organization. The third status (i.e. being neither 'friend' nor 'stranger') has become constitutive of our everyday experience of other persons. And this everyday experience is that of indifference as our normal attitude towards most persons living in the world. A modern sociology of the stranger has to explore the facets of indifference. Indifference can be described as an interactional achievement in situations of fleeting contact. And it can be examined in its macrostructural consequences in a modern societal order in which motivations for societal engagements and therefore any willingness to care for the other are unavoidably scarce.⁷

In pre-modern times people were delineated as either neighbour or stranger. Neighbours lived in proximity and were known. All others were strangers to be feared and often treated as enemies. In modern times a radical shift has occurred whereby a person can be in close proximity, even a next-door neighbour but also a stranger or alien. In pre-modern times the stranger was invisible, elsewhere; but today the stranger has “become omnipresent.”⁸ Elaborating on this idea of strangers being omnipresent today, Stichweh continues, “It seems to be the case that for persons living in urbanized, functionally differentiated settings, strangers become either invisible or they become omnipresent. In both cases the category of the stranger loses its possible function of indicating a distinct social figure.”⁹

The eighteenth-century world of John Wesley transitions Stichweh’s two worlds, the pre-modern and the modern. Prior to the eighteenth-century, strangers were those who lived outside of one’s immediate parish, neighbourhood or location. Migratory movements of people during the eighteenth-century, however, began to alter the landscape and the location of strangers. Strangers were no longer ‘over there’ in another place or parish, but more frequently occupying space in one’s own parish. This sort of migration from parish to parish became a common feature from the late seventeenth-century and into the eighteenth-century, while “long-distance migration became less

⁷ Rudolf Stichweh, “The Stranger – on the Sociology of Indifference,” *Thesis Eleven* 51 (1997): 1–16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

frequent.”¹⁰ The rural poor in particular went to new locations in search of work. Marquardt notes that the “rural population became dispossessed due to the enclosure of communal lands, the expropriation of fallow land, and the consolidation of farm and fields... [and that] Parliament had provided the legal preconditions for all of the above.”¹¹ This had the effect of accelerating the movement of people from one area to another, not just to the cities but also within the cities. Hindmarsh calculates that “the proportion of Englishmen living in an urban centre approximately doubled over the century. London itself grew from half a million to nearly 900,000 inhabitants.”¹²

In Wesley’s eighteenth-century, strangers became a part of each person’s landscape, occupying the space of ‘others’. Zygmunt Bauman’s depiction of today’s stranger is nonetheless a useful description of all strangers, even of those in Wesley’s time:

They are not visitors, those stains of obscurity on the transparent surface of daily reality, which one can bear with, hoping that they will be washed out tomorrow (though one would still be tempted to do the washing right away). They do not wear swords; nor do they seem to hide daggers in their cloaks (though of that one can never be sure). They are not like the aliens, the outright enemies that prompt one to draw out the sword (or at least this is what they say). However, they are not like the neighbors either. True, one cannot avoid being aware of their presence, seeing, hearing and smelling them, even talking to them or being talked to by them on occasion. But the encounters are far too brief and casual to make a firm classificatory decision, and then there are so many of them coming and going.¹³

Bauman claims that in a brief encounter with a stranger it is impossible to make ‘classificatory decisions’ about them. This is not to suggest however that differentiation cannot be made between those ‘outsiders’ who inhabit our spaces. Christine Pohl’s important book *Making Room* is a call to receive the stranger through the practice of

¹⁰ Tim Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 6.

¹¹ Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 20.

¹² D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 75.

¹³ Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993), 152.

hospitality. As previously mentioned, Pohl furnishes four categories or classifications of stranger. There are, she suggests, relative strangers, unknown strangers, risky strangers and desperate strangers.¹⁴

The next section has two objectives. First, to describe what each of these four categories of stranger looked like in Wesley's time. The relative stranger is therefore likened to neighbour in Wesley's day, the unknown stranger to slum dweller, the risky stranger to beggar, and the desperate stranger to women. Secondly, this section will suggest groups today that correlate with each of these.

Relative Strangers

'Relative' strangers are those with whom we interact regularly but barely know. "While they may be unknown to us," writes Pohl, "they are not without connections or resources."¹⁵ In Wesley's day, these relative strangers were born and raised in a certain parish but located on the edges of that parish and often in poverty. They interacted with the people of the parish on a daily basis, were seen but not necessarily known. After the enactment of the Poor Law Act in 1722 such strangers were assisted by virtue of their birth connection to the parish and so in that sense were not without resources. The Poor Law Act in effect made local authorities responsible for the poor. Fowler writes about this decentralised approach to managing the poor:

Each parish became responsible for looking after those who were too ill, young or old to work, and the costs of so doing had to be paid for by a tax or rate on the property of the wealthier in the parish. Overseers of the poor were elected by the ratepayers each year to administer the system and maintain the accounts.¹⁶

¹⁴ Pohl, *Making Room*, 85–103.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁶ Simon Fowler, *Workhouse: The People, The Places, The Life Behind Doors* (Repr.; Kew: The National Archives, 2009), 15.

Because most of the governing bodies were “ill-equipped”¹⁷ for such a responsibility, Langford writes,

At their worst, these would have put the life of a poor laborer and his family on a par with or perhaps below that of an American slave or a Russian serf. Poor relief might involve the barest minimum of subsistence dependant on ungenerous neighbors, or sojourn in a poor house with consequent exposure to a ruthless master who drew his income from the systematic exploitation of those in his charge.¹⁸

‘Relative strangers’ were often placed in workhouses situated in their region. For example, in Beverley, Yorkshire, “a new workhouse opened in 1727 capable of housing 100 people.”¹⁹ In Gressenhall, Norfolk, a workhouse was established to house “the unemployed from 60 local parishes.”²⁰ In 1777 the county of Middlesex “had 86 workhouses, which housed 15,000 paupers in total.”²¹ By 1750, approximately 600 workhouses had been established. Hitchcock estimates that up to half the inmates were adult women between the ages of 20 and 60 who “also brought their dependant children.”²² Of these women, most ended up in the workhouses through illness or “because they were pregnant, or lunatic, or suffering from venereal disease ...”²³

The living and working conditions in the workhouses were so bad that people preferred their poverty outside to the squalid conditions inside the workhouse. For example, Fowler notes that the workhouse at York “was frequently condemned as insanitary, with one inspection reporting ‘a permanent reservoir of foul air, where idiots mix with

¹⁷ Arthur. Skevington Wood, *The Inextinguishable Blaze: Spiritual Renewal and Advance in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Paternoster, 1960), 11.

¹⁸ Paul Langford, “The Eighteenth Century (1688–1789),” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain* (ed. Kenneth O. Morgan; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 352–418.

¹⁹ Fowler, *Workhouse*, 17.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

²² Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 8.

²³ *Ibid.*, 8.

children and with adults laboring with syphilis and gonorrhoea.”²⁴ Most workhouses were populated by inmates insufficiently clothed, poorly fed and so cruelly treated that poverty far from being a crime was treated like a crime.²⁵ In the Andover Union workhouse, inmates “were forced to eat the marrow from rotting bones to survive and children lived on scraps thrown to the chickens.”²⁶ On admission, families were split up and men, women and children placed in separate wards. In effect, these eighteenth-century workhouses ended up being emergency wards, night shelters, orphanages and geriatric wards; the beginnings of institutional residential care for the vulnerable.²⁷

Today’s equivalent of those with whom we ‘interact regularly but barely know’ are our near neighbours who live in our towns, cities, streets and suburbs or even next door, and have become the relative strangers of the twenty-first century. Albert Hsu in his study of suburbia notes that “one of the biggest critiques of modern suburbia is the problem of suburban isolationism. While we may have a façade of community and neighborhood, we actually have clusters of autonomous individuals and atomized family units with no historic or natural connections to their neighbors.”²⁸ People live in close proximity to one another and most days see each other come and go from their houses. In many cases, they know each other by name and extend greetings when they pass by but ultimately they barely know each other. Hsu explains that such isolationism was originally part of the lure of the suburbs:

The ideal is that every individual family has their own plot of land, yard and picket fence to separate them from their neighbors, defining mine as mine and yours as yours. Inherent to American suburbia is an emphasis on the pursuit of individual homeownership rather than a communal or corporate vision of civic identity.²⁹

²⁴ Fowler, *Workhouse*, 48.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁷ Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 133.

²⁸ Albert Y. Hsu, *The Suburban Christian: Finding Spiritual Vitality in the Land of Plenty* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 117.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

What compounds the situation is the reality of commuting to work from the suburbs then returning home to watch television. Commuting and television keep neighbours as relative strangers to one another. Sociologist Robert Putnam argues that there is a direct correlation between commuting and time spent with neighbours. He estimates that “each additional ten minutes in daily commuting time cuts involvement in community affairs by 10 percent.”³⁰ In terms of television, it is now generally considered that many suburbanites spend up to half their leisure or discretionary time watching television, usually between three and four hours a day.

If and when the relative strangers next door face a crisis, invariably it is the professional helping services that intervene and assist. And if the one facing a crisis is in need of some form of residential and institutional care then, as with the workhouses of Wesley’s day, they are placed inside. While someone may become aware that their next door neighbour has been placed in care, such knowledge will not invariably translate into visiting. Wesley however, demonstrates a pathway toward the relative stranger, the one seen and recognised but not known, whether next door or in residential care.

Unknown Strangers

Christine Pohl’s second category is the ‘unknown’ stranger.³¹ These are outsiders who have no history in the place they now occupy. In the words of Henri Nouwen, these are “estranged from their own past, culture and country, from their neighbors, friends and family, from their deepest self and their God, [who] search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found.”³² In John Wesley’s time, these unknown strangers were often found in the slums, living in back streets and on the periphery of the cities. To put it bluntly, they lived in squalor. In most of these places “ground water from public wells was the only source, and mud filled the

³⁰ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 213. Quoted in Hsu, *The Suburban Christian*, 62.

³¹ Pohl, *Making Room*, 92.

³² Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (London: Fount, 1996), 63.

unimproved roads for much of the year.”³³ The slums were densely populated and, in places, ethnically defined. St. Giles-in-the-Fields, for example, “had over two thousand poor Irish inhabitants, comprising 17 percent of the poor Irish population of London.”³⁴ Their housing consisted of overly populated high tenement apartments. One report described them as follows:

The houses are divided from top to bottom, into many apartments with doors of communication amongst them all, and also with the adjacent houses, some have two, others three, nay four doors opening into different alleys... In many of the rooms, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten men in bed, in one loft into which we were obliged to creep through a trap door, were eight men.³⁵

Another report discovered that in the one room, “men and women often strangers to each other lie promiscuously.”³⁶ Oftentimes these apartments quite literally self-imploded or fell down, crushing those within them. An old lodging house in St. Giles, for example, toppled over, killing seven and severely maiming others. Schama starkly writes of the slums, that “a walk through the seamier areas of London, through the rookeries and alleys, was a walk over bodies. The supply of very potent, very cheap gin had created an entire sub-culture of dependency and violence in the city comparable only to the crack-houses of the 1980s.”³⁷

If Pohl’s first category of ‘relative’ stranger is greeted with indifference and seen as not visible, then ‘unknown’ strangers are simply excluded. Miroslav Volf, in his award winning book *Exclusion and Embrace*, describes what exclusionary practices might look

³³ Tim Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 10.

³⁴ “The Population of the Irish Poor Resident in the Metropolis,” Appendix in *Report from Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis* (1815), 95. Cited in Tim Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth Century London*, 10.

³⁵ *Report from Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis*, 92.

³⁶ Henry Fielding, *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers* (London, 1751). Cited in Picard, *Dr. Johnson’s London*, 42.

³⁷ Simon Schama, *A History of Britain: The British Wars 1603–1776* (New York: Hyperion, 2001), 368.

like.³⁸ First, exclusion “can entail cutting of the bonds that connect, taking oneself out of the pattern of interdependence and placing oneself in a position of sovereign independence.”³⁹ This may mean withdrawing from those places that are populated by strangers. Withdrawal, rather than engagement, becomes one’s praxis. Slums are therefore not visited. Second, exclusion may take the form of abandonment. As Volf writes, “... we make sure that they [the strangers] are at a safe distance and [we] close ourselves off from them.”⁴⁰ Slums are therefore located outside or on the periphery of the city. If they are to be within the city confines, then they are hidden in back streets. Strangers that we do not know are pushed out of ‘our’ place and dumped somewhere else. If they refuse to oblige, we destroy their habitations.

Echoing Volf, Bauman spotlights two often-used strategies in the war against the stranger. He writes,

One was anthropophagic: annihilating the strangers by devouring them and then metabolically transforming into a tissue indistinguishable from one's own. This was the strategy of assimilation: making the different similar; smothering of cultural or linguistic distinctions; forbidding all traditions and loyalties except those meant to feed the conformity to the new and all-embracing order; promoting and enforcing one and only one measure of conformity. The other strategy was anthropoemic: vomiting the strangers, banishing them from the limits of the orderly world and barring them from all communication with those inside. This was the strategy of exclusion — confining the strangers within the visible walls of the ghettos or behind the invisible, yet no less tangible, prohibitions of commensality, connubium and commercium; ‘cleansing’—expelling the strangers beyond the frontiers of the managed and manageable territory; or, when neither of the two measures was feasible — destroying the strangers physically.⁴¹

³⁸ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴¹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, 18. Bauman in his *Postmodern Ethics* also makes mention of two other strategies: phagic and emic. He writes, “The phagic strategy is ‘inclusivist’, the emic strategy is ‘exclusivist’. The first ‘assimilates’ the strangers to the neighbors, the second merges them with the aliens. Together, they polarize the strangers and attempt to clear up the most vexing and disturbing middle-ground between the neighborhood and alienness poles. To the strangers for whom they define the life condition and its choices, they posit a genuine ‘either/or’: conform or be damned,

Mary Douglas in her study of *Purity and Danger* puts it graphically in stating that “what we perceive as uncleanness or dirt” we “busy ourselves scrubbing and wiping out.”⁴² Such filth must not be included if we believe “the pattern is to be maintained.”⁴³ Slum dwellers are reduced to being objects that must be swept away. They are the enemies of order and health. As strangers, slum dwellers are reduced to the status of a ‘thing’ that must be pushed aside or got rid of. Perceiving the slum dweller as enemy starts with the construction of the ‘us’ and ‘them’ divide. We then access stereotypes about ‘them’ so as to reframe them as the aggressor. Fearing ‘them’ we anticipate danger. ‘They’ have now become dangerous and require exclusion if not elimination. Far from falling in love with the stranger, “falling in hate”⁴⁴ becomes the preferred option.

If back street alleys, slums, and forgotten places dotted Wesley’s eighteenth-century London, Bristol and Manchester, they have certainly grown exponentially since then. Charles Dickens chronicles their pervasive existence in the nineteenth-century. In the current century a vast underclass is being warehoused in slums; two billion today, perhaps five to six billion in 50 years.⁴⁵ As noted in the previous chapter, John Wesley urged Miss March, in his correspondence with her, not only to visit the slums but to enter the hovels in order to encounter people one-on-one.⁴⁶ The only real difference between the slum dwellers of Wesley’s day and those of today is the exponential growth in their numbers.

be like us or do not overstay your visit, play the game by our rules or be prepared to be kicked out from the game altogether. Only as such an 'either/ or' do the two strategies offer a serious chance of controlling the social space. They are therefore included in the toolbag of every domination.” (*Postmodern Ethics*, 163).

⁴² Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 53.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁴⁴ This phrase was first coined by Anthony Storr in *Human Destructiveness* (New York: William Morrow, 1972).

⁴⁵ See Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso Publishers, 2007).

⁴⁶ See Chapter 1 of this thesis, p. 47.

Since the time of Wesley, the world has become increasingly urbanised. Ashley Barker, in his doctoral research on the growth of slums, notes that only 3 per cent of humans lived in urban areas in 1800, only 14 percent by 1900 and 30 percent by 1950.⁴⁷ In 2010, it was estimated that those living in urban areas (3.42 billion) surpassed those living in rural areas (3.41 billion).⁴⁸ It is further estimated that by the year 2050 the urban centers of the world will gain another 2.9 billion people. Such growth will result in more and more people living in slum-like conditions. Barker references one report that warns slum residents could well reach 3 billion people by 2050.⁴⁹ Of this, Barker writes, “The fact that over a billion people live in urban slums today and that some in the UN estimate that nearly half the world could live in urban slums by 2050, however, should get the world’s best attention, not least Christianity’s attention.”⁵⁰ Wesley urged his followers to at least walk into the slums of his day and visit the poor; Barker’s hope is that more and more from within the Church will actually relocate into the slums and make them their place of living. Either way, the stranger in the slums is no longer out of sight.

Risky Strangers

The third classification is the ‘risky’ stranger.⁵¹ These strangers are as prevalent today as they were in Wesley’s time; they endanger our safety or compromise what we are trying to protect, whether it is people close to us or items we own. An obvious example of an eighteenth-century ‘risky’ stranger is the beggar, a common sight on the streets of London. Macquiban records that by the mid-eighteenth century “at least one tenth of the

⁴⁷ Ashley James Barker, “Enfleshing Hope: Toward a Christian Response to the Rise of Urban Slum and Squatter Neighborhoods” (Ph.D. thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2011). Barker gleaned these figures from: Population Reference Bureau, “Human Population: Urbanization,” [cited 2 February, 2010]. Online: <http://www.prb.org/Educators/TeachersGuides/HumanPopulation/Urbanization.aspx>.

⁴⁸ United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision* (New York: United Nations, 2010), 2.

⁴⁹ UN Habitat, “The Challenge,” [cited 11 August, 2010 by Barker]. Online: www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=10&cid=928.

⁵⁰ Barker, “Enfleshing Hope,” 21.

⁵¹ Pohl, *Making Room*, 93.

population was reduced to beggary.”⁵² Stichweh suggests there are three ways to deal with strangers: “one can privilege him, one can tolerate him or one can disprivilege him.”⁵³ If the strategy for dealing with the ‘unknown’ stranger was that of disprivileging, then tolerance was the approach adopted with the beggars. Stichweh writes that “tolerating the stranger seems to be an invention of the voluntarist eighteenth-century. To reformulate it in a slightly provocative way, tolerance means that the stranger is still disturbing but one feels obligated to suffer this.”⁵⁴

Hitchcock supports this view, adding “that eighteenth century London was more welcoming and more charitable, more orderly and more forgiving, than historians have allowed.”⁵⁵ In part, this was driven by the fact that both rich and poor had no choice. Such was their “visceral proximity”⁵⁶ to each other that they had to find ways of co-inhabiting the same streets and spaces. Heitzenrater suggests Wesley “did not have to search out the poor; they sat right there in front of him on the benches of his preaching houses.”⁵⁷ Proximity demanded toleration. This toleration was also driven by a backstreet, informal economy. Hitchcock writes:

The beggarly professions of eighteenth century London provided economic opportunities, however meager the rewards, for the most insecure and marginal of individuals. At the same time, they also provided the services and products needed for by the middling sort and elite. They were a fundamental part of the economy of London.⁵⁸

⁵² Tim Macquiban, “Friends of All? The Wesleyan Response to Urban Poverty in Britain and Ireland, 1785–1840,” in *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (ed. Richard P. Heitzenrater; Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2002), 131–60.

⁵³ Stichweh, “The Stranger – on the Sociology of Indifference,” 4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁵ Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, xvi.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁷ Richard P. Heitzenrater, “The Poor and the People Called Methodists,” in *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (ed. Heitzenrater), 15–38.

⁵⁸ Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 74.

Such toleration, however, did not necessarily render the beggar safe. There was still risk involved in interacting with these strangers. Hitchcock reports an incident when a certain Carl Moritz was walking towards Windsor in 1782 and was approached by a beggar asking for money in a threatening manner:

The beggar asked for a halfpenny to buy, as he said, some bread, as he had eat nothing that day. I felt in my pocket and found that I had no halfpence; no nor even a sixpence in short nothing but shillings. I told him the circumstance which I hoped would excuse me: on which he said with an air and manner the drift of which I could not understand, ‘God bless my soul?’ This drew my attention still closer to the huge brawny fist, which grasped his stick; and that closer attention determined me immediately to put my hand in my pocket and give him a shilling.⁵⁹

Hitchcock’s work on beggary in London in the eighteenth-century is replete with reported incidents of threat and violence. If risky beggars posed a direct threat, then visiting strangers in prison was just as risky, but indirectly so. We have already noted that Wesley made it his practice to visit prisoners at least once a month,⁶⁰ and that by doing so he often put his own life in peril. As described in Chapter 1, the prisons of the day were places of death and danger. A report on prisons in 1776 further underlines the dangers of visiting such places:

Vagrants and disorderly women of the very lowest and most wretched class of human beings, almost naked, with only a few filthy rags almost alive and in motion with vermin, their bodies rotting with the bad distemper, and covered with itch, scorbutic and venereal ulcers ... are drove in shoals to gaols, particularly to the two Clerkenwells and Tothill Fields; there thirty and sometimes near forty of these unhappy wretches are crowded or crammed together in one ward where, in the dark, they bruise and beat each other in a most shocking fashion.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Charles P. Moritz, “Travels, Chiefly on Foot, Through Several Parts of England in 1782. Described in Letters to a Friend (1795),” 141-142. Cited in Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London*, 76-7.

⁶⁰ Wesley, “Letter to Richard Morgan, Sen.” (19 October, 1732), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 126.

⁶¹ William Smith, *State of the Gaols in London, Westminster and Borough of Southwark* (London, 1776), 9-10. Cited in Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London*, 163.

Stranger-danger was as much an issue in Wesley's world as it is today. Not surprisingly, Pohl counsels courage. Walking toward the stranger will, she writes, require "the kind of courage that lives close to our limits ..."⁶² A modern-day equivalent of the 'risky stranger' could be the younger person. Many people are increasingly wary of approaching youth – those aged 12 to 20 as they are perceived as being different, distanced and belonging to another generation with their own 'tribes'. They might also be seen as dangerous, due to the prevalence of youth crime.

Desperate Strangers

The fourth and final classification that Pohl furnishes is the 'desperate' stranger'. These are the destitute, the most vulnerable, and the ones at the very bottom of the pile. In the eighteenth-century it was often women across the socio-economic divide: beggars, lowly paid servants or the highly educated. Late into the eighteenth-century, Matthew Martin did a sociological survey of the beggars in London whom he invited to his office. Of the two thousand that took up the offer, 1808 were women and, of these, 127 were single, 1100 married and 581 widowed.⁶³

Women at the very bottom of the socio-economic pile often suffered and died alone. In 1763, for example, a prospective buyer looking over a house discovered to his horror "the emaciated bodies of three almost naked women on the ground floor, while in the garret he found two women and a girl, alive, but on the verge of starvation."⁶⁴ Many of the women forced to beg were "assumed to be sexually available."⁶⁵ Female domestic servants were also at risk of being assaulted. Even women who managed to get an education and a job faced a life of misery. Porter writes that "the great majority of

⁶² Pohl, *Making Room*, 131.

⁶³ Matthew Martin, "An Appeal to Public Benevolence for the Relief of Beggars: With a View to a Plan for the Suppression of Beggary" (England, 1812). Cited in Tim Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London*, 3.

⁶⁴ Hitchcock, *Down and Out*, 30.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

women who obediently and honorably did what they were told were condemned to a second-class life hedged with briars.”⁶⁶ By way of example, Porter continues:

The autobiography of Elizabeth Ham is a rare record of such a bleak existence. Born in 1783 of a Dorset yeoman family which gave her cold baths but denied her affection, Elizabeth was brought up by a cousin, offered a cheap, broken schooling in petty accomplishments, and driven by parental hardships into a spinster existence as a governess. Trapped between the servants and family, her work was humiliating, empty, and bitterly lonely. Religion alone gave her solace
 ...⁶⁷

It was against this backdrop that Wesley directed a lot of his attention toward women, both in person and also in letter writing. Burton describes such letters as another of Wesley’s “literary acts”⁶⁸ or devices which he employed to come alongside, befriend and mentor women. His correspondence with Elizabeth Ritchie is a case in point. Ritchie was 20 years old when she first met Wesley who was 71 at the time. Wesley initiated the correspondence in 1774 and their respective letters to each other were many. Burton calculates that Ritchie wrote to Wesley every month during 1774 and there are letters that have survived from 1775 through to 1786.⁶⁹ Of these Burton writes:

Ritchie's texts indicate that she is looking to Wesley for spiritual direction, support, friendship, and emotional intimacy. Her letters imply that Wesley frequently expresses a need for reassurance that she has not forgotten him or decreased in her love for him. Her responses also indicate that he has taken the role of her spiritual guide by asking questions about the state of her soul in the context of the difficulties of her life. Ritchie is dealing with the illness and impending death of both her parents, for whom she is caring. Ritchie herself is also often ill; in addition, she receives harsh criticism for daring to speak in Methodist meetings at such a young age.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), 47–8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 47–8.

⁶⁸ Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism*, 68–9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 188.

Wesley's Methodism, far from suppressing women, became a place where women could flourish. Hempton writes that "almost all membership surveys of Methodist classes show a preponderance of women on a ratio of almost three to two."⁷¹ Based on the statistics he found, Hempton concludes that Methodism was "predominantly a women's movement."⁷² Wesley actively promoted women into roles that were generally considered to be the domain of men. In this respect, on the issue of gender, he was a progressive in his time. For example, while he was editor of the *Arminian* magazine, he ensured that "... 40 per cent of the biographical and autobiographical material published ... related to women."⁷³ Hempton rightly corrects any modern impression of Wesley's Methodism in regard to women and feminist issues when he writes:

Some Marxist and some feminist historians find no difficulty interpreting Methodism as a form of social or gender control, but the evidence is never unambiguously supportive of such an interpretation. No doubt Methodism could operate as a form of social control, and no doubt it was appropriated by many as a way of absorbing the shock of social change, but there is compelling evidence also to suggest that women ... chose to be Methodists because it offered them tangible benefits of various kinds.⁷⁴

Sociologically many women were desperate strangers but theologically, Wesley and Methodism found a way to include and empower them.⁷⁵

⁷¹ David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 78.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷³ Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, 235.

⁷⁴ Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, 9.

⁷⁵ Today, women continue to be stigmatised and marginalised around the world. The statistics speak for themselves. It is estimated that approximately 100 million women are missing through the practice of gendercide – the killing of female babies and the abortion of female fetuses because of a cultural preference for boys. In terms of poverty, women are more likely to be malnourished than boys. Large numbers of women in most countries experience physical violence at least once in their lifetime. Eighty percent of all people trafficked across borders are women and girls and most end up in prostitution. Increasingly the statistics suggest that for many women, not much has changed since Wesley's century. Women continue to be found at the bottom of the human pile and in need of a rescuing and empowering movement like Methodism proved to be.

The mentally ill who walk the streets and inhabit our neighbourhoods today may be considered a contemporary equivalent of Pohl's fourth category of stranger — the desperate ones, at the bottom of the pile and in great need. Since the mid-1960s many Western countries have embarked on a process of decarceration which has seen large numbers of mentally ill people released into the wider community. The sociologist Anthony Giddens writes that a consequence of this has been that “many mental patients in fact seem worse off than they were before”⁷⁶ when institutionalised. This is not to suggest that Giddens is advocating a return to locking people away, simply that an unintended consequence of decarceration is that large numbers of the mentally ill have drifted into “inner-city areas” and often “live in poverty and isolation, as trapped in their lodging rooms or dosshouses as they ever were in the asylum, but without security.”⁷⁷

Despite their proximity to the mainstream of society, Woodward writes, “there is evidence that the general population still have a distorted perception of people who are psychiatrically disabled.”⁷⁸ He suggests that one such misperception is that “psychiatric disorder is inextricably linked with violence.”⁷⁹ But even in safer contexts, like that of a university setting, the mentally ill still face stigmatisation and therefore social isolation. Yasmin Anwar tells of an incident concerning a psychology student at the University of California. The student made it known to the class that she suffered from bipolar disorder. A fellow student observed that “other students, who had previously been engaged and excited to learn about mental illness in the abstract, became extremely uncomfortable, refused to make eye contact with her, and were quiet and withdrawn.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Anthony Giddens, *Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 152.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁷⁸ Pauline Woodward, “Mental Health and Social Work,” in *New Zealand Social Work: Contexts and Practice* (ed. Marie Connolly; Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001), 168–80.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁸⁰ Yasmin Anwar, “Stigma of Mental Illness Explored,” *UCBerkeleyNews* (16 January, 2007). Online: http://berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2007/01/16_stigma.shtml.

Other than an irrational fear of violence, a more prevalent reason for wanting to keep distance with the mentally ill may be the quite understandable view, mistaken or otherwise, that to get to know and be known by a mentally ill person is tantamount to taking on a ‘bottomless pit.’ In other words, there will be no end to what you will have to do for them. In Wesley’s day the most desperate were considered women and children; today, women, and especially older women, feature among the mentally ill. Sociologist Malcolm Waters notes that “the probability of being defined as mentally ill increases with age ... [and] the probability of being defined as mentally ill is greater for women than for men in all adult age groups ... In general, mental illness is associated with age, femininity, and lower socio-economic status.”⁸¹

Pohl’s four types of strangers span the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries. Zygmunt Bauman writes that “all societies produce strangers”⁸² and often they remain the same across centuries. Strangers walk among us, observed from a distance, off to one side, known or unknown, unacknowledged, often neglected, ill-fitting, isolated or banished, with us and yet not one of us.

Strangers and Contemporary Saints

Having described Pohl’s four categories of stranger and suggested contemporary equivalents to these, there remains one final point made by Pohl: Since the time of Wesley, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been difficult in terms of Christians attending to the stranger.⁸³ What follows is a summary outline of the factors beginning from the time of Wesley to our present twenty-first century. No particular tool is used in the selection of these other than simply trying to trace and sequence some of the key historical and sociological factors behind an inability to walk toward strangers.

⁸¹ Malcolm Waters, *Sociology One: Principles of Sociological Analysis for Australians* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1989), 128–9.

⁸² Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, 17.

⁸³ Pohl, *Making Room*, 56.

Ironically, one of the factors stems from Wesley and his Methodists, and their care for the stranger. Pohl says the “early Methodists created many small-scale institutions to help care for the needs of strangers, poor people, children and others.”⁸⁴ In other words, institutionalism and the professionalising of care that eventually resulted, have arguably done more to inhibit individual attention toward the stranger than anything else. Parker Palmer picks up this point by stating that the scarcity of care in our society results from “the fact that there are some human problems which the public does not wish to face or even acknowledge [and] by institutionalizing these problems we meet our need to have them kept out of sight, out of mind.”⁸⁵ For Palmer, caring institutions such as prisons, mental hospitals, homes for the aged, and wards for the dying serve “to remove problem people from public view [and] our squeamishness conspires with professional self-interest to keep these human needs hidden.”⁸⁶ Strangers and strange people who are out of sight in a refugee centre or homeless shelter are difficult to approach. And they are surrounded by professionals, at least in the modern era, which suggests that the ordinary person is inadequate. People therefore “withdraw from those places where [they] might learn to care, thus further weakening [their] sense of relatedness.”⁸⁷

The second sociological reason emerges from the first. In the absence of regular contact with the stranger, people begin to imagine all sorts of things about them. Technically, this has to do with the process of ‘catastrophising’. This occurs when people make a negative over-generalisation about ‘the other’, where they assume too much. The stranger becomes something far more than what they actually are in reality. To catastrophise is to give a negative spin on a person. The stranger becomes truly strange and there is all the more reason to stay away from them.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 55.

⁸⁵ Parker J. Palmer, *The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of America’s Public Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 97.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 97.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 98.

What is reinforced in this distancing and catastrophising is a culture of fear. This third reason has been developed by the sociologist, Frank Furedi, who believes that such a culture “estranges people from one another.”⁸⁸ A culture like this is marked by an “atmosphere of suspicion that distracts people from facing up to the challenges of society”,⁸⁹ one of which is the need to come alongside the stranger. People are advised to adopt the “precautionary principle”⁹⁰ toward those they do not know. In other words, it is better to play it safe with people; to avoid any unnecessary risks with someone you don’t know, ‘best be safe rather than sorry’. Such a culture nurtures a “social phobia” or what can be termed a “disabling disorder.”⁹¹ People lose their nerve and thus they are quite unable to walk toward the stranger. Phobias have a tendency to cluster and so along with social phobia another fear, *proteophobia*,⁹² can also be found. This is where a person avoids any encounter in which they know they will simply not know what to do. Where there is a “lack of clarity about the rules of engagement”⁹³ or where one “stands in relation to the other”⁹⁴ or when one feels “lost, confused and disempowered”,⁹⁵ then it is better to avoid the strange situation around the stranger and play it safe.

Scott Bader-Saye also talks in terms of a culture of fear around the stranger. He warns that this fear can be taught to children and caught by them. Children are taught to be suspicious of strangers as a potential threat. Such suspicion has become “a virtue in the culture of fear.”⁹⁶ The biblical virtue of hospitality toward the stranger has now been

⁸⁸ Frank Furedi, *Culture of Fear: Risk-taking and the Morality of Low Expectation* (Rev. ed.; London: Continuum, 2005), xvi.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, xvi.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁹² Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, 164.

⁹³ Furedi, *Culture of Fear*, 109.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁹⁵ Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, 164.

⁹⁶ Scott Bader-Saye, *Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear* (Grand Rapids; Brazos Press, 2007),

replaced by what Bader-Saye calls the “‘shadow’ virtue of suspicion.”⁹⁷ To be suspicious of strangers is to be a mature adult showing common sense. To risk hospitality is tantamount to being irresponsible. Bader-Saye writes, “There is a tension in the biblical story between God’s calling to welcome the stranger, the outsider, even the enemy, and the countertendency to exclude and destroy whose difference or diffidence is perceived as a threat. Suspicion can look very much like a virtue when people are afraid.”⁹⁸

A compounding factor in this mix and the fourth reason is the tyranny of time. Life is lived at such a hectic pace that the stranger is not seen or there is no time for them. Princeton University psychologists, John Darley and Daniel Batson, conducted an experiment around the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 15:11-32) to try to ascertain why some, unlike the Samaritan, fail to walk toward the stranger. They met with some seminarians and asked them to prepare a message on the Good Samaritan. While the students were at work, the psychologists retreated to another part of the campus, more specifically a narrow corridor where they planted a colleague of theirs in filthy clothes soaked with alcohol. The seminarians were then informed they were to give the presentation in another building of the campus but to get there they had to pass through the narrow corridor where inevitably they stumbled on the ‘derelict’ man. The question was: Who would stop and help? They knew the parable of the Good Samaritan and had a talk to give on the subject but who would be a Good Samaritan and walk toward the man in need?

As the seminarians made their way to the building, some were told to hurry up while others were instructed to take their time. The researchers had several hypotheses in mind: First, people thinking religious, ‘helping’ thoughts would still be no more likely than others to offer assistance. Second, people in a hurry would be less likely to offer

⁹⁷ Ibid., 31. When talking to children about strangers, which is needful, Bader-Saye urges that this be done in a way that doesn’t identify the stranger with danger.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 33.

help than others.⁹⁹ The results were convincing and they concluded that “while the hurry variable was significantly ($F = 3.56$, $df = 2/34$, $p < .05$) related to helping behavior, the message variable was not. Subjects in a hurry were likely to offer less help than were subjects not in a hurry.”¹⁰⁰

The percentages of subjects who offered aid by situational variable were, for low hurry, 63% offered help, intermediate hurry 45%, and high hurry 10% ...¹⁰¹

By way of commentary the researchers concluded that: “It is difficult not to conclude from this that the frequently cited explanation that ethics becomes a luxury as the speed of our daily lives increases is at least an accurate description.”¹⁰²

Another reason for inattention toward the stranger revolves around the issue of shyness. Put simply, “large numbers of people find talking to a stranger terrifying.”¹⁰³ While shyness was once considered normal – something to be expected and managed – introversion and reserve have been pathologised since the early 1970s. Shyness is now considered a condition, a pathology needing treatment. In the 1970s, leading psychiatrists expanded the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM for short) and Christopher Lane in his critical analysis of this group argues that they discovered 112 new disorders and diseases, one being social phobia or avoidant personality disorder.¹⁰⁴ Inventories to help in the diagnosing of such an illness have included: ‘being criticized scares me a lot’; ‘I avoid going to parties’; ‘talking to

⁹⁹ John Darley and Daniel Batson, “From Jerusalem to Jericho: A Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27 (1973): 100–8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁰³ Christopher Lane, *Shyness: How Normal Behavior Became a Sickness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 2.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 5, 42.

strangers scares me’; ‘trembling or shaking in front of others is distressing to me’.¹⁰⁵ These markers were once considered normal behaviours of normal people or, at most, a minor condition but not a major illness. But since the 1970s shyness has become the third most common physiological disorder.¹⁰⁶ A net result of this pathologising has legitimised withdrawing from strangers. People now believe they have an ‘illness’ or condition and feel justified in not facing their fears and encountering the stranger in their midst. Until their illness is cured the stranger in their midst will remain unattended.

A final reason for inattention toward the stranger centres on ‘the ideology of intimacy.’ Richard Sennett writes,

The reigning belief today is that closeness between persons is a moral good. The reigning aspiration today is to develop individual personality through experiences of closeness and warmth with others. The reigning myth today is that the evils of society can all be understood as the evils of impersonality, alienation, and coldness. The sum of these three is an ideology of intimacy: social relationships of all kinds are real, believable, and authentic the closer they approach the inner psychological concerns of each person. This ideology transmutes political categories into psychological categories. This ideology of intimacy defines the humanitarian spirit of a society without gods; warmth is our god.¹⁰⁷

Because intimacy has been privileged, people are reluctant to embark on those encounters or relationships that do not promise this. Encounters with strangers, that are inevitably marked as brief, casual, distant, cold, fleeting and difficult are therefore avoided. Picking up on Sennett’s concern, Parker Palmer notes:

The problem arises when closeness and warmth become the criteria of all meaningful relations, when we reject and even fear relationships which do not

¹⁰⁵ K. M. Connor et al., “Psychometric Properties of the Social Phobia Inventory,” *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 176 (2000): 379–86. Online: <http://www.psychtoolkit.com/social-phobia-inventory-spin.html>.

¹⁰⁶ David C. Rettew, “Avoidant Personality Disorder, Generalized Social Phobia, and Shyness: Putting the Personality Back into Personality Disorders,” *Harvard Review of Psychiatry* 8 (2000): 283–297.

¹⁰⁷ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 259.

yield to these standards. The problem arises when we impose the norm of intimacy (which applies primarily to private life) upon the public sphere. For within the public realm, where most relations are necessarily distant and impersonal, the demand for closeness and warmth distorts and eventually destroys the potential of public experience.¹⁰⁸

In light of these inhibiting factors, the issue has become how to live in the company of strangers without engaging them. How do we live with those from whom we are socially distant and yet physically close? How do we occupy the same social space? As noted, these were also the questions of the eighteenth-century, but for Wesley and company they were a new and emerging set of questions. What is disturbing is that they are still with us and yet to be sufficiently resolved.

The Net Effect

So why is it that people generally have a reluctance to walk toward strangers? And how do they react when in proximity to a stranger? Zygmunt Bauman notes that one modern approach is an aesthetic one, where the observer is amused or entertained by the stranger as an object of interest and curiosity. Strangers are to be gazed at but kept at safe distance. “Offering amusement,” writes Bauman, “is their only right to exist – and a right which they must continually confirm, with each successive ‘switching.’”¹⁰⁹ But it is the distant observer who controls the switch, something Bauman calls an ‘aesthetic control’ moment. Such a moment may look like the following:

I see that man there meeting that woman. They stop, they talk. I do not know wherefrom they came. I do not know what they are talking about. I do not know where they will go when they finish talking. Because I do not know all that and much more, I may make them into whatever I wish, all the more so that whatever I make them into will have no effect on what they are or will become. I am in charge; I invest their encounter with meaning. I may make him into a philanderer, her into a wife seeking escape from the grinding monotony of marriage. I may send them to bed right from where they stand at the moment, or to their respective rooms, where they will sulk the missed chance. The power of my fantasy is the only limit the reality I imagine has, and the only one it needs.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Palmer, *The Company of Strangers*, 49.

¹⁰⁹ Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, 178.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 169.

Those not wanting to be amused by strangers, employ what Erving Goffman calls the technique of civil inattention.¹¹¹ Bauman and May unpack what Goffman had in mind:

Characterized by elaborate modes of pretending that we do not look and do not listen, or assuming a posture that suggests that we do not see and do not hear, or even care, what the others around us are doing, civil inattention is routinized. It is manifested in the avoidance of eye-contact which, culturally speaking, can serve as an invitation to open up a conversation between strangers. Anonymity is thereby assumed to be given up in the most mundane of gestures. Yet total avoidance is not possible, for a simple passage in crowded areas requires a degree of monitoring in order to avoid collision with others. Therefore, we must be attentive, while also pretending that we are not looking or being seen.¹¹²

Even though the stranger might be close in a physical sense, we pretend that they are not. Civil inattention enables ‘us’ to see ‘them’, the strangers in our midst, as invisible. We can be aware of one another without being overly friendly, or occupy the same space, street or suburb but choose not to engage. Bauman calls this the “arcane art of mismeeting.”¹¹³ He writes:

By the technique of mismeeting, the stranger is allocated to the sphere of disattention, the sphere within which all conscious contact; and above all a conduct which may be recognized by him as a conscious contact, is studiously avoided. This is the realm of nonengagement, of emotional void, inhospitable to either sympathy or hostility; an uncharted territory, stripped of signposts; a wild reserve inside the life-world. For this reason it must be ignored. Above all, it must be shown to be ignored, and to be wished to be ignored, in a way allowing no mistake ... The point is to see while pretending that one is not looking. To look ‘inoffensively’, provoking no response, neither inviting nor justifying reciprocation; to attend, while demonstrating disattention. What is required is scrutiny disguised as indifference. A reassuring gaze, informing that nothing will follow the perfunctory glance and no mutual rights or duties are presumed.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Erving Goffman, *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings* (New York: Free Press, 1966), 84.

¹¹² Zygmunt Bauman and Tim May, *Thinking Sociologically* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 40.

¹¹³ Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, 153.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 154.

Civil inattention is the art of being socially avoidant or de-socialising an encounter. The stranger in our midst is not physically evicted from our space but is sociologically evicted. Strangers are made to “hover in the background.”¹¹⁵ At best, this is a coping mechanism enabling us to live in the constant company of strangers. However this enablement is not devoid of anxiety. It can engender the fear previously mentioned that Bauman labels *proteophobia*¹¹⁶ in which a person does not know how to proceed. Instead of making this discomfort our issue, we can blame the stranger and subsequently turn on them in anger. At worst then, civil inattention can become detrimental when it is but a “short step away from the more serious notion of moral indifference.”¹¹⁷ The risk is that we socially construct two groups, turning strangers into ‘them’ because they are not of ‘us’. At best the stranger becomes someone of whom to be wary and suspicious, and at worst, less morally valuable than the non-stranger. Therefore moral responsibility toward the stranger is diminished and we engage in “moral indifference, heartlessness and disregard for the needs [of the stranger].”¹¹⁸

Roger Yates argues that whenever strangers are denied the right to our moral responsibility, they are treated as ‘lesser humans’, as a ‘flawed human’, ‘not fully human’, or downright ‘nonhuman.’ He writes:

If simply being ‘less-than-human’ can be a serious threat to one’s moral standing, the apparently thoroughly unforgiving status of nonhuman puts one far away from the likelihood of being treated as morally valuable. Thus, historically, some early human communities deliberately described themselves with names that literally meant ‘human’, thus automatically casting all ‘outsiders’ and ‘others’ into nonhuman categories and therefore beyond the boundary of ethical concern.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 155.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 164. See p. 73 of this thesis for earlier use of this term.

¹¹⁷ Roger Yates, “Insiders and Outsiders,” on *On Human-Nonhuman Relations: A Sociological Exploration of Speciesism* (posted 23 April, 2007). Online: http://human-nonhuman.blogspot.co.nz/2007_04_01_archive.html

¹¹⁸ Bauman and May, *Thinking Sociologically*, 42.

¹¹⁹ Yates, “Insiders and Outsiders,” 4.

A Christian Response

A Christian response to the stranger in these social spaces should be radically different. The Christian is to create new “free and friendly space(s).”¹²⁰ For Henri Nouwen, as but one example, this means recapturing the motif of hospitality in which we enter the space of another and/or welcome them into our space. Nouwen avers:

Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines. It is not to lead our neighbor into a corner where there are no alternatives left, but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment ... The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations. Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the life style of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own.¹²¹

Nouwen is the first to admit that this is no easy task, likening it to the “task of a patrolman trying to create some space in the middle of a mob of panic-driven people for an ambulance to reach the centre of the accident.”¹²² Such hospitality is made even more problematic by Nouwen’s insistence that when we invite strangers into new spaces they must be allowed to come on their own terms and not ours. Strangers are to be reframed as guests and not potential enemies. As such, they come with their beliefs and behaviours intact. The Christian therefore gives up on their right to order the social space as they see fit. Space that was once uncontested is now challenged. For this reason Bauman admits that living with strangers “is at all times a precarious, unnerving and testing life.”¹²³

Miroslav Volf also picks up on the theme of making space for others by appealing to the cross of Christ. “At the heart of the cross,” he writes, “is Christ’s stance of not letting

¹²⁰ Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 68.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 69.

¹²³ Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, 161.

the other remain an enemy and of creating space in himself for the offender to come in.”¹²⁴ In light of this cross and having been embraced by God, Volf urges that the Christian “must make space for others in ourselves and invite them in”¹²⁵ and having done so, Volf asks that we leave “the door open.”¹²⁶ He describes this as the drama of embrace. Such a drama has four acts, the first of which is opening the arms:

Open arms are a gesture of the body reaching for the other. They are a sign of discontent with my own self-enclosed identity, a code of desire for the other ... Open arms are a sign that I have created space in myself for the other to come in and that I have made a movement out of myself so as to enter the space created by the other.¹²⁷

Once the arms are open, the second act, which is one of waiting, commences. Open arms are but an invitation, not a command. There is to be no control or coercion of the stranger. The stranger must have the space or room to move as they will. If they reciprocate with a desire to move closer then act three is invoked, marked by the closing of the arms. This is where “each enters the space of the other.”¹²⁸ The fourth and final act is opening the arms again. Each must let the other go so that both retain their true identity. Unlike the previously mentioned strategies of assimilation, abandonment or exclusion, the Christian makes space for the ‘strangeness’ of the stranger. Their difference is welcomed and given ground to flourish.

Many Christians would concur with the concerns and exhortations of Pohl, Nouwen and Volf yet still feel unable to walk toward the stranger; they therefore practise indifference. In this they are no different from most other people in society. It was Wesley’s contention that Christians could and indeed should be different. How they might express the dignity of that difference, with all its love for those whom the rest of society prefers

¹²⁴ Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 126.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 143.

to marginalise, is described in this thesis as the moral pathway. With John Wesley as an exemplar of love toward the stranger, and having now introduced the stranger, the next challenge is to explore the moral pathway as envisaged by Wesley.

Chapter Three

Introducing the Moral Pathway

We have introduced Wesley and his practice of walking toward the stranger, and explored the world of the stranger both in the eighteenth-century and the twenty-first. Now we begin to look at the concept of the moral pathway and how it fits within the context of recent Wesleyan scholarship.

In Chapter 1 I describe Wesley as a pedestrian-theologian. As a pedestrian, he made it his almost daily duty to walk toward strangers. He was not content with merely being an exemplar of love toward neighbours and strangers; he set about to reform the Church of his day in the hope that it would embrace rather than exclude the stranger. In order for such an inclusive revolution to happen, Wesley outlined a cord of six strands, which this thesis describes in terms of orthodoxy, orthokardia, orthopaideia, orthokoinonia, orthonomos and orthopraxy. These six strands constitute what I propose to be Wesley's 'moral pathway'.

In his *Thoughts Upon Methodism* Wesley writes:

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 both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.¹

On another occasion John Wesley was also reported to have said:

The Methodists must take heed to their doctrine, their experience, their practice, and their discipline. If they attend to the doctrines only, they will make the people antinomians [lawless]; if to the experimental part of religion only, they will make them enthusiasts [pious fanatics]; if to the practical part only, they will make them Pharisees [legalists]; and if they do not attend to their discipline, they

¹ John Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism," in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 527.

will be like persons who bestow much pains in cultivating their garden, and put no fence around it, to save it from the wild boar of the forest.²

Another list occurs in the Minutes where doctrine, discipline and practice are clearly named and differentiated.³ A final cluster occurs in Wesley's sermon "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity" where he mentions spirit, discipline and doctrine in the first part of the sermon; and then, doctrine, discipline and practice toward the end of the sermon.⁴ All four (doctrine, spirit, discipline and practice) are important items to Wesley.

What Wesley wanted to keep alive was not the sect of Methodism but rather a movement intent on spreading "scriptural holiness over the land."⁵ In her comprehensive study of Wesley's use of holiness and love, Wynkoop concludes, "Wesley did, indeed, not merely relate these two words (and the concepts they represent) but equated them."⁶ By scriptural holiness, then, Wesley meant love; and for Wesley, the love that had to be preserved was not just love for God but also love for neighbour and stranger. In one of his messages on the Sermon on the Mount, Wesley urges those who have been filled with love not to limit its expression:

(To not) confine the expressions of it to his own family, or friends, or acquaintance, or party, or to those of his own opinions; — no, nor those who are partakers of like precious faith; but steps over all these narrow bounds, that he may do good to every man, that he may, some way or other, manifest his love to neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. He doth good to them all, as he hath opportunity, that is, on every possible occasion; 'redeeming the time' in

² Quoted in Rupert E. Davies, Raymond George and Gordon Rupp, eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (vol. 3; London: Epworth Press, 1983), 194.

³ "The Large Minutes," in *The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference* (ed. Henry D. Rack; vol. 10 of *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Frank Baker; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 120-122.

⁴ Wesley, "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity," Sermon 122 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 86-96.

⁵ "The Large Minutes," in *The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference* (ed. Henry D. Rack; vol. 10 of *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Frank Baker; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 845.

⁶ Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love*, 22.

order thereto; ‘buying up every opportunity, improving every hour, losing no moment wherein he may profit another.’⁷

Wesley predicted that a revolution of such love could only survive his death if the community of Methodists stuck to doctrine, experience, practice and discipline. These form the components of a Wesleyan ‘Moral Pathway’.

The Moral Pathway

The pathway is first and foremost concerned with Christian morality. A key concern of Wesley is to make clear what a ‘real Christian’ looks like. In other words, Wesley’s focus is not just ethics per se and what people ought to do. Rather, he addresses the Christian faith and how this impacts human behaviour such that an overtly Christian ethic is explored. Robin Lovin helps to differentiate the Christian faith from ethics in general by suggesting that ethics and Christian ethics ask quite different questions about life. “Christian ethics would be thinking about how to live life in Christian terms, and ethics would be about how to make choices about life without considering a relationship to God or the teachings of a particular religious tradition.”⁸ Moral theology may be defined as “the discussion of the principles which govern, or should govern, the behaviour of a Christian, and of their application to particular circumstances or classes of cases.”⁹ In other words, the subjective morality of the agent is important. The internal principles, dispositions of the heart, motives and intentions of the person are at the foreground of human agency and dispose people to do the right thing. By contrast, an ethicist is more interested (but not exclusively), in the acts of the human. What matters is not so much the rightness of dispositions but the rightness of acts. Here, there is an orientation toward the objectivity of the act, irrespective of how the subjective person is

⁷ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount III,” Sermon 23 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 518.

⁸ Robin W. Lovin, *Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 18. Robin Lovin warns that it is easy to overstate the difference between ethics and morals. He writes, “The difference between the English words *ethics* and *morals* derives from their origin in Greek (*ethos*) and Latin (*mores*), respectively. In the original languages both words mean the same thing – that is, the shared beliefs and practices of a people.” Lovin, *Christian Ethics*, 17.

⁹ R.C. Mortimer, “Moral Theology,” in *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (ed. John Macquarrie and James Childress; 2nd impr.; London: SCM, 1990), 398–9.

feeling. Once the right act has been calculated, the person wills to do it. Duty or obligation is what counts rather than transformed hearts. Historically, moral theology falls within the provenance of virtue ethics while duty and obligation are located under deontological ethics. Frederick Carney summarises the two approaches:

- (1) Obligation Theory answers the question, what ought to be done? What actions are appropriate?
 - Decisions are framed within the options of right or wrong actions, norms, or policies.
 - This approach uses principles, rules, commands, and standards to guide the decisions.
 - Failure, in this mode, is seen in terms of the guilt of violation, transgression, or omission.
 - Such failure can be overcome by accepting forgiveness for wrong actions.

- (2) Virtue Theory answers the question, what kind of person should I be? What sort of character is most appropriate?
 - Decisions are framed in terms of good or bad qualities, dispositions, motives, and actions.
 - This approach uses models, portrayals of the ideal, of what is just or good.
 - Failure, in this mode, is seen in terms of shame of weakness.
 - Such failure can be overcome by the experience of transformation (rebirth or new life).¹⁰

Stephen Long affirms that:

... moral theology is characterized by virtues, holy tempers, and the centrality of desire. It subordinates the place of law, duty, and obligation to these ends ... Ethics is primarily constituted by duty, obligation, disinterestedness, and nonpreferential loves ... it focuses on methods and procedures for insuring equal access that take us away from desires for the local and particular in favor of an abstract universal.¹¹

¹⁰ This material is gleaned from a summarised version of Carney's unpublished paper entitled "John Wesley's Theological Ethic" and used by Richard P. Heitzenrater in his "The *Imitatio Christi* and the Great Commandment: Virtue and Obligation in Wesley's Ministry with the Poor," in *The Portion of the Poor: Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition* (ed. M. Douglas Meeks; Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995), 54–5.

¹¹ Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology*, 33–4.

The language of John Wesley is definitely but not exclusively that of the moral theologian. Wesley is at the human agency end of the spectrum while the ethicist is more concerned with what occurs at the act end of such a spectrum. Richard Heitzenrater writes, “For Wesley, then, the Christian life is not defined primarily by doing certain activities but by being a certain kind of person. In terms of ethical theory, virtue ethics, for Wesley, is more basic than obligation ethics, though they necessarily interrelate and correlate. Virtue takes precedence over obedience; ‘being’ has priority over ‘doing’.”¹²

Heitzenrater, however, does not rule out the role of duty and obligation (deontology)¹³ in Wesley’s framework. As will be evidenced in later sections on orthonomos and orthopraxy, Wesley pressed for human participation in moral transformation. It is not all up to God; people have to play their part as well. Choice, duty, obligation and responding to God’s command were as much a part of Wesley’s language as virtue, desire, and character. Wesley held virtue ethics (being/character) and a deontological call to duty (laws/doing) in critical tension. While Heitzenrater places Wesley toward the virtue end of the spectrum, Marquardt and Jennings locate Wesley closer to the obligation end. “Alongside deriving love of neighbor from the doctrines of God, creation, and redemption,” writes Marquardt, “still another argument occasionally plays a role in the love of neighbor commanded by God.” Here Marquardt is highlighting duty. He declares, “thus to the inner necessity arising from the love of God communicated in faith, Wesley added the outward necessity of the divine commandment, fulfilled by Jesus and the first Christians in exemplary fashion.”¹⁴ Theodore Jennings also brackets the two when claiming that “Wesley will have nothing to do with the sort of grace that

¹² Heitzenrater, “The *Imitatio Christi* and the Great Commandment: Virtue and Obligation in Wesley’s Ministry with the Poor,” 54.

¹³ Of this term, Lovin writes: “The term is derived from a Greek root, *deon*, which concerns that which is necessary or required. Deontological ethics makes doing one’s duty, doing what is required, the key determinant of whether one is a good person. Deontological ethics evaluates actions by asking whether this action was the right thing to do according to a rule, not by assessing what happens as the result of the action. See Lovin, *Christian Ethics*, 42.

¹⁴ Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 33.

saves us without changing us”¹⁵ but also writes, “This carrying of good news to the poor was not, for Wesley, something that just happened. It was the result of a conscious and deliberate choice . . .”¹⁶

Wesley is very much a conjunctivist thinker in that he attempts to hold in critical tension seemingly opposite positions. This is evidenced in his postulating four dimensions (doctrine, experience, discipline, practice) if Methodism was to survive. As noted, this thesis equates these four dimensions to six orthos or strands and it is these that provide a pathway that can make for a Christian morality marked by love of stranger. The pathway proposed by this thesis is as follows:

1. What God does for people and what God subsequently does in people. This is the language of moral theology or orthodoxy.
2. More specifically, what God does in people is to change the disposition of their hearts. This is the language of moral psychology or orthokardia.
3. Such transformation is not for its own sake but so that people might attain to an ideal where the interests of God and others are at heart. This is the language of moral perfection or orthopaideia.
4. Such idealism is made possible through a socially transformative process. This is the language of moral community or orthokoinonia.
5. Dispositions and social communities both need to be directed and held accountable to certain ends. This is the language of moral law or orthonomos.

¹⁵ Theodore W. Jennings, “Wesley and the Poor: An Agenda for Wesleyans,” in *The Portion of the Poor: Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition* (ed. Meeks), 19–37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 20. Interestingly, this notion of deliberate choice was developed by another 18th century thinker, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) but we have no record of whether Wesley and Kant actually read each other. Kant proposed a system or science of duty to free people from the very things that Wesley was advocating. For Kant “subjective beliefs, wants and desires” had little place in deciding and doing the right thing by others. Kant held that people must perform their duty irrespective of motivation or consequences. Once the right thing to do had been calculated, Kant believed that the doing of it was a matter of the will and simply choosing to do it.

6. In the doing and practising of what God asks, people continue to change and acquire further love. This is the language of moral practice or orthopraxy.

It is these six strands that encapsulate Wesley's four dimensions and together they form the constituent parts of the moral pathway, expressed thus:

Table 1. A Cord of Six Strands

Wesley's terms	Doctrine	Spirit	Discipline	Practice
Ortho	Orthodoxy	Orthokardia	Orthopaideia: - orthokoinonia - orthonomos	Orthopraxy
Themes	Narrative Promise Human maturation Ordo salutis	Affection- centered view	Classes, bands and communal gathering Rules and practices	Outward religion Good works Sacrificial self- denial Love

The six orthos are not Wesley's but they express constitutive features of his theology. I examine Wesley's four terms using the six orthos in detail later in this thesis (Chapters 4 to 7) although a brief definition of the orthos is provided here. Wesley only mentioned the first term, orthodoxy. Orthopraxy and orthokardia surfaced as theological terms in the twentieth-century; orthopaideia, orthokoinonia and orthonomos are contributed by this thesis and are new to the secondary literature on Wesley.

Orthodoxy literally means 'right opinion'.¹⁷ The term "expresses the idea that certain statements accurately embody the revealed truth content of Christianity and are

¹⁷ Orthodoxy is used differently in biblical and secular Greek. Secular Greek renders orthodoxy as right opinion whereas biblical Greek uses the term to mean right praise, glory or repute. See Verlyn D. Verbrugge, ed., *The NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan,

therefore in their own nature normative for the universal church.”¹⁸ Wesley measured the rightness of his opinions and their normative value against Scripture and what Campbell terms “the apostolicity of ancient Christian teachings.”¹⁹ Wesley’s primary source of right opinion was the Bible. A further test was to subordinate his teachings to those of the Ante-Nicene Fathers.²⁰ In a letter to Joseph Benson, Wesley writes, “I regard no authority but those of the Ante-Nicene Fathers; nor any of them in opposition to Scripture.”²¹ Again, in his *Farther Appeal* he states that he proves “the doctrines we preach by Scripture and reason; and, if need be, by antiquity.”²² By antiquity, Wesley is referring to the early Christian fathers, essentially those of the first three centuries.²³ Wesley’s orthodoxy is formed therefore by the language and thought of the three creeds: Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian. A final test as to the orthodoxy of any teaching was, in his words, “the doctrine of the Church of England, as contained in her Articles and Homilies.”²⁴

2000), 346; Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 1; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), 340–8. These two meanings can combine to mean ‘forming a right valuation, worth or praise of another’.

¹⁸ James. I. Packer, “Orthodoxy,” *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Walter A. Elwell; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1984), 802.

¹⁹ Ted A. Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 74.

²⁰ Early Christian writings by Church leaders or fathers prior to A.D. 325, including Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Tertullian – to name a few.

²¹ Wesley, “Letter to Joseph Benson” (22 February, 1782), in *Letters* (ed. Telford), 7: 105.

²² Wesley, “A Farther Appeal to Men of reason and Religion, Part III,” in *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters* (ed. Cragg), 2: 310.

²³ For an extensive survey of Wesley’s reading of the early Christian fathers, see Campbell’s *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*.

²⁴ Wesley, “On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel,” Sermon 112 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 582. In 1543, a collection of homilies or sermons was produced to assist Anglican priests in their role as teachers, and especially to enable them to better teach in the vernacular. In 1563 a second book of homilies was issued under Elizabeth I. See Frank L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of The Christian Church* (3rd ed.), 790.

Orthokardia, or right affection, is a recent term in Wesleyan scholarly literature (see p. 90) and has to do with the category of the heart.²⁵ What is stressed is the place of affections or dispositions in the heart and the determinative role they have in human behaviour. Chapter 5 explores this affection-centered view that Wesley had of the human condition. For him, it was not just what one thinks but what one loves that determines human conduct.

Orthopaideia denotes right training, instruction or discipline.²⁶ What is in view here is not the content of instruction but how a person is trained such that they attain to the ideal. This thesis will show that Wesley employed two further orthos as the means by which Methodists were trained: orthokoinonia and orthonomos. These two orthos constituted the discipline of Methodism. Orthokoinonia connotes right association, fellowship and participation.²⁷ The central idea is that of forming bonds with others so as to develop a “sense of brotherhood.”²⁸ Orthonomos is defined as right norms, rules and order.²⁹ These enable people to dwell “together in a community.”³⁰ In other words, social bonds (orthokoinonia) governed by rules (orthonomos) make for a process (orthopaideia) that can assist all in their attainment of an ideal.

Orthopraxy, the final ortho in the moral pathway, bespeaks activity, action and deed.³¹ What is in view here is the external conduct or practice of a person or people; their outward actions, deeds and duties. As will become clear in Chapter 7, practice as

²⁵ In classical Greek *kardia* is used in a literal sense to denote the heart as a bodily organ, but it is also used in a figurative sense whereby it is regarded as the seat of the emotions and passions, and therefore has a role in determining human behaviour. See Verbrugge, *The NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 647.

²⁶ Verbrugge, *The NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 947.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 696.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 696.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 867.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 867.

³¹ Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 3; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans), 145.

understood by Wesley and its ortho equivalent of orthopraxy must not be confused with a more contemporary use of orthopraxy that has emerged out of Latin America and its liberation theology.

These six orthos constitute the moral pathway. We now proceed to an analysis of the secondary literature on these orthos.

Ortho Developments

The translating of Wesley's material into ortho equivalents is a recent development in Wesleyan scholarship and one that essentially picks up on three specific orthos: orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthopathy (or orthokardia). As a review of the literature will now show, the trajectory of the development has followed that order; namely, orthodoxy, then orthopraxy, followed by orthokardia.

Prior to the 1960s, much of the literature on Wesley could best be described as the 'one central truth' project. Wesleyan scholarship wanted to get to the very core of Wesley, and for most, this meant mining his orthodox position. George Croft Cell's *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*³² focused on the theological motifs of justification and sanctification. In the same year, R. Newton Flew³³ explored Wesley's preoccupation with perfection. A decade later, W.E. Sangster also wrote on this theme under the title *The Path to Perfection*.³⁴ In 1946, Harald Lindstrom dealt with the theological theme of sanctification in his *Wesley and Sanctification*.³⁵ Franz Hildebrandt, the colleague of

³² George C. Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983).

³³ Robert N. Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology: An Historical Study of the Christian Ideal for the Present Life* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

³⁴ William E. Sangster, *The Path to Perfection: An Examination and Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection* (London: Epworth Press, 1943).

³⁵ Harald Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1980).

Bonhoeffer, in his book *From Luther to Wesley*,³⁶ focused on the influence of Luther in Wesley's theology. It is clear that Wesley's orthodoxy was at the forefront of scholarship in the early part of the twentieth-century.

From the 1960s, however, a slight shift occurred with the publication of Colin Williams's book *John Wesley's Theology Today*.³⁷ The focus was still largely on orthodoxy but there was a growing concern to make this relevant to contemporary twentieth-century issues. The 'one central truth' project developed into the 'making Wesley relevant' project. Williams sought to make connections between Wesley's orthodoxy and ecumenism. Also at the dawn of the sixties, A. Skevington Wood,³⁸ in two works, explored how Wesley's orthodoxy can contribute to evangelism. Arguably one of the most significant contributions to come out of this decade was Albert Outler's article, "Towards a Re-appraisal of John Wesley as a Theologian."³⁹ Again, the focus was on Wesley and his theology or orthodoxy.

From the 1970s until 2010, three significant movements occurred in Wesleyan scholarship. In the first, orthopraxy was coupled with orthodoxy. This was largely due to the influence of liberation theology emerging from Catholic Latin American contexts.⁴⁰ Gustavo Gutierrez wrote of theology being a second act, the first being praxis.⁴¹ In like

³⁶ Franz Hildebrandt, *From Luther to Wesley* (London: Lutterworth, 1951).

³⁷ Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960).

³⁸ See Arthur Skevington Wood, *The Inextinguishable Blaze: Spiritual Renewal and Advance in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Paternoster, 1960); *The Burning Heart: John Wesley: Evangelist* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1967).

³⁹ Albert C. Outler, "Towards a Re-appraisal of John Wesley as a Theologian," in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (ed. Oden and Longden), 39–54.

⁴⁰ Liberation theology can be understood in two ways: theology that has as its core a concern for the marginalised and the poor; and the liberation of theology from the classroom (academy). Liberation theology came into prominence in the second Conference of Latin American bishops held at Medellin in Columbia in 1968. Its initial impulse was a rejection of western solutions to problems faced in the two-thirds world. Theologically this meant the poor forming their own theology from their praxis. See Cross and Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 983–4.

⁴¹ See Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973); *The Power of the Poor in History* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983); *We Drink From Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984).

mind, Casalis comments, “Praxis is the primary and categorical prerequisite for a popular theology.”⁴² Following this introduction of liberation theology into the hallways of Western theological academia, Wesleyan scholars began re-reading Wesley in light of liberation concerns for praxis, practice, action, the poor, and inductive theology. This reworking of Wesley in light of liberation theology was another attempt to make him relevant. Also building on that premise was Bernard Semmel’s *The Methodist Revolution*,⁴³ followed by *Sanctification and Liberation*,⁴⁴ edited by Theodore Runyon. More recent contributions on the juxtaposition of orthodoxy and orthopraxy include *John Wesley’s Social Ethics: Praxis and Principle*⁴⁵ by Manfred Marquardt; *The Portion of the Poor: Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition*,⁴⁶ edited by M. Douglas Meeks; and *The Poor and the People Called Methodists*,⁴⁷ edited by Richard P. Heitzenrater.

Since the 1970s, a second movement has put much effort into coupling orthokardia with orthodoxy. Don Saliers in 1980 published *The Soul in Paraphrase*,⁴⁸ focusing on the religious affections. Gregory Clapper’s *John Wesley on Religious Affection*⁴⁹ was also a significant contribution. In the same year, Theodore Runyon began to use the term

⁴² George Casalis, *Correct Ideas Don’t Fall from the Skies: Elements for an Inductive Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984), 25–6.

⁴³ Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution* (London: Heinemann, 1974).

⁴⁴ Theodore Runyon, ed., *Sanctification and Liberation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981).

⁴⁵ Manfred Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics: Praxis and Principle* (trans. John E. Steely and W. Stephen Gunter; Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2000).

⁴⁶ M. Douglas Meeks, ed., *The Portion of the Poor: Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995).

⁴⁷ Richard P. Heitzenrater, ed., *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2002).

⁴⁸ Don E. Saliers, *The Soul in Paraphrase: Prayer and the Religious Affections* (New ed. Akron: OSL Publications, 2002).

⁴⁹ Gregory S. Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections: His views on experience and emotion and their role in the Christian life and theology* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1989).

‘orthopathy’ to highlight the place of the heart.⁵⁰ Richard Steele’s work⁵¹ in 1994 analysed the centrality of the heart in the religious revivals of the eighteenth-century and mention must also be made of Randy Maddox,⁵² who has arguably done more than any other Wesleyan theologian in recent years to advance the conversation on moral psychology and the role of the heart in human transformation.

The third movement has, not unsurprisingly, sought to combine orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthokardia to make a cord of three strands. Gregory Clapper compares and contrasts orthodoxy and orthokardia (or orthopathy) with what he believes to be the contribution of Catholic liberation theology – orthopraxy.⁵³ Theodore Runyon⁵⁴ rightly makes the claim that orthodoxy and orthopraxy have often been coupled, and wants to add orthopathy. Henry H. Knight describes orthodoxy, orthopraxis and orthopathy as being in a “mutually interdependent” relationship where “orthodoxy and orthopraxis serve both a means of expression and as contexts of growth for orthopathy.”⁵⁵ Richard Steele describes a “cordiality of spirit” between orthodoxy, orthopraxis and orthopathos (or orthokardia), stating that one without the other “is barren.”⁵⁶ Using different language but still seeking to integrate the three strands, Thomas Albin introduces the concepts of “noetic focus” and “affective focus” along with the “praxeological context.”⁵⁷ A different terminology is employed by Sondra Higgins Matthaiei to achieve

⁵⁰ Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 146–9.

⁵¹ Richard B. Steele, “*Gracious Affection*” and “*True Virtue*” According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1994).

⁵² Apart from his *Responsible Grace* (1994), see “A Change of Affections: The Development, Dynamics, and Dethronement of John Wesley’s ‘Heart Religion’,” in “*Heart Religion*” in the *Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard Steele; Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2001), 3–11.

⁵³ Clapper, *John Wesley on the Religious Affections*, 171–3.

⁵⁴ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 146–9.

⁵⁵ Henry H. Knight III, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1992), 195.

⁵⁶ Richard B. Steele, “*Gracious Affection*” and “*True Virtue*” According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, 212.

basically the same end. She discusses “a Wesleyan ecology of faith formation” that integrates “relationships, structures, and practices to nurture faith for churches in the Wesleyan tradition.”⁵⁸

The transition of Wesleyan scholarship from orthodoxy to orthopraxy and finally to orthokardia was arguably in response to what was occurring in other circles. For example, when Catholic liberation theologians in the 1970s began to talk in terms of praxis, practice and the poor, Wesleyan scholars added the second ‘ortho’ (orthopraxy) to orthodoxy. William Abraham also notes the reworking of Wesleyan theology in light of liberation theology but nuances it more specifically. Abraham posits that several scholars within the Wesleyan house have reinterpreted Wesley’s motif of sanctification to mean liberation. Abraham avers:

The most serious rival interpretation of entire sanctification has surfaced in the efforts to infuse the insights of liberation theology into Methodism. Liberation theology took hold in Methodist circles in the 1970s when it became the default, go-to position at the Oxford Institute for Methodist Studies, the quadrennial global forum for Methodist theology. The connection with sanctification was a natural one in that sanctification can easily become a synonym for the more generic appeal of liberation (Runyon, 1981). Given that shift from personal transformation to social transformation had already been forged in the late nineteenth century, the move to liberation theology was standing waiting to be exploited.⁵⁹

Then orthokardia was joined to the coupling of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Since the 1960s, emotion has been attracting substantial and increasing interest as an independent philosophical field of study.⁶⁰ Important observations were made by Dylan Evans, a

⁵⁷ Thomas R. Albin, “Inwardly Persuaded: Religion of the Heart in Early British Methodism,” in *Heart Religion in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard B. Steele), 33–67.

⁵⁸ Sondra Higgins Matthaei, *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 31.

⁵⁹ William J. Abraham, “Christian Perfection,” in *The Oxford handbook of Methodist Studies* (ed. Abraham and Kirby), 595–6.

⁶⁰ Cheshire Calhoun and Robert C. Solomon, eds., *What is an Emotion? Classic Readings in Philosophical Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). Calhoun and Solomon note that this renewed interest “may mirror the general introversion (some would say ‘narcissism’) of recent years,

former Research Fellow in the Department of Philosophy at King's College London, who directed a research project into the evolution of the emotions. He writes:

Scientific interest in the emotions underwent something of a renaissance in the 1990s. For much of the twentieth century, research in the emotions was confined to a few psychologists and even fewer anthropologists. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, however, things are rather different. Emotion is now a hot topic. Anthropologists have begun to question their previous views on the cultural relativity of emotional experience. Cognitive psychologists have abandoned their exclusive focus on reasoning, perception, and memory, and are rediscovering the importance of affective processes. Neuroscientists and researchers in artificial intelligence have also joined the debate, contributing further pieces to the jigsaw.⁶¹

The third 'ortho' (orthokardia), not surprisingly then, was added soon after movements in the study of emotion had begun elsewhere. It could be argued, therefore, that Wesleyan scholarship has from the 1960s been at pains to make Wesley relevant to and compatible with new developments in other places.

A weakness in this approach is that it runs the risk of reducing Wesley to current debates. It is this reductionism that has arguably made for a cord of only three strands. The work of locating Wesley in current debate and thereby attempting to make him relevant is a worthy one but this project needs to be held in tension with the earlier literary project which sought to get to the core of Wesley. It is clear that Wesley's main ideas go beyond contemporary perceptions of a three-strand cord of orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthokardia; instead they suggest a cord of six strands, including orthopaideia, orthokoinonia and orthonomos. This is not to suggest that the secondary literature has been remiss in its scholarship on these three strands. To the contrary, ink has been spilt on all three.

which has been most apparent at the popular level. But it also shows that there is a need for a comprehensive account of emotion to replace the piecemeal accounts that have inevitably resulted from emotion's being a backseat to other philosophical and psychological issues." (pp. 5–6).

⁶¹ Dylan Evans, *Emotion: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

The secondary literature on orthopaideia is sparse to say the least. Paul Chilcote is one of the few Wesleyan scholars to draw a link between Wesley’s emphasis on discipline and paideia.⁶² Furthermore, Chilcote places paideia in a schema that comes close to resembling the six-stranded cord suggested by this thesis:

Table 2. Chilcote and the Six-Stranded Cord

Source	Strands				
Chilcote	Bible	Spirituality and formative worship	Discipleship in groups	Accountable discipleship	Missional vocation
Thesis	Orthodoxy	Orthokardia	Orthopaideia Orthokoinonia	Orthopaideia Orthonomos	Orthopraxy
Wesley	Doctrine	Spirit	Discipline	Discipline	Practice

Chilcote weaves his movements into one paradigm in this way:

This dynamic model of renewal in the life of the church – combining the rediscovery of the Word and faith with an holistic spirituality orientated around accountable discipleship and lived out in a balance of doxology and mission – has much to offer the church today.⁶³

Other than Chilcote, several other scholars have picked up on the role of discipline but, unlike Chilcote and this thesis, have not equated it to an ortho or paideia. Thomas Frank argues that discipline has to do with the “order and governance”⁶⁴ of the fellowships. Ted Campbell nuances discipline as accountability and believes this to be the distinct

⁶² Paul Wesley Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesleys’ Vision: An Introduction to the Faith of John and Charles Wesley* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 67–79.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶⁴ Thomas Edward Frank, “Discipline,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (ed. Abraham and Kirby), 245–61.

element of the fellowships.⁶⁵ Campbell writes that in early Methodist circles, “discipline was especially associated with class meetings and their leaders ...”⁶⁶ Clark likens discipline to regulation,⁶⁷ as does Wigger.⁶⁸ Hempton mentions ecclesiastical discipline⁶⁹ and how such a discipline “supplied the necessary foundations for Methodism to emerge ...”⁷⁰ Knight connects discipline to structures within the Methodist movement.⁷¹ Notwithstanding the many references to discipline in recent publications, Frank laments “the dearth of scholarship addressing discipline per se in the Methodist traditions.”⁷² Frank further notes that “books that explore Methodist discipline as a whole, seeking to name its constitutive elements and core practices and the way those elements and practices combine to generate Methodism’s unique character as a movement, have numbered three or less in most every generation – at least of American Methodism.”⁷³ Such an omission is striking and puzzling, given that Wesley named discipline alongside doctrine, experience and practice.

There is a growing body of literature that embraces orthokoinonia and orthonomos, giving a broader view of Wesley’s approach and practice. Arguably, the leading Wesleyan scholar and contributor in the area of orthokoinonia is David Lowes Watson. In his main work *The Early Methodist Class Meeting*,⁷⁴ Watson explores the

⁶⁵ Ted A. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 65.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁶⁷ Jonathan C. D. Clark, “The Eighteenth Century Context,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (ed. Abraham and Kirby), 3–29.

⁶⁸ John H. Wigger, “Francis Asbury and American Methodism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (ed. Abraham and Kirby), 51–66.

⁶⁹ David N. Hempton, “Wesley in Context,” in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (ed. Maddox and Vickers), 60–77.

⁷⁰ David N. Hempton, “Wesley in Context,” 65.

⁷¹ Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life*, 2.

⁷² Frank, “Discipline,” 245.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁷⁴ David Lowes Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origins and Significance* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock, 2002).

relationship between Wesley's Methodist movement and group dynamics, showing that Wesley clearly believed an increase in the virtue of love occurred in the context of social accountability. Watson provides an extensive historical review of the type of groups Wesley fostered, the context in which they operated, and how they were empowered to make and sustain commitments. Other works related to orthokoinonia, at least in a notional sense, include Richard Heitzenrater's *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*⁷⁵ and Thomas Albin's paper "Inwardly Persuaded: Religion of the Heart in Early British Methodism."⁷⁶ Also of note is Sondra Higgins Matthaei's work *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition*,⁷⁷ which makes a strong case for the role of fellowship in formation. A recent addition to the discussion on Wesley's communities, and especially the class meeting, is Andrew Goodhead's *A Crown and a Cross*.⁷⁸ The literature around Wesley's emphasis on command, rules and law is less extensive and most Wesleyan scholars rarely develop it in such a way that it is shown to be integral to Wesley's overall schema of spreading love across the nation. A notable and welcome exception to this is D. Stephen Long's contribution in his *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness*.⁷⁹ Other contributors in and around the strand of orthonomos are William Abrahams,⁸⁰ Henry Knight⁸¹ and David Lowes Watson.⁸²

⁷⁵ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).

⁷⁶ Thomas Albin, "Inwardly Persuaded: Religion of the Heart in Early British Methodism," in *Heart Religion in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard B. Steele), 33–67.

⁷⁷ Sondra Higgins Matthaei, *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000).

⁷⁸ Andrew Goodhead, *A Crown and A Cross: The Rise, Development, and Decline of the Methodist Class Meeting in Eighteenth-Century England* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010).

⁷⁹ D. Stephen Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2005).

⁸⁰ William J. Abraham, *Wesley for Armchair Theologians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

⁸¹ Henry H. Knight III, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1992).

⁸² David Lowes Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origins and Significance* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002).

Several studies are worth reading in terms of understanding the orthos mentioned in this thesis. Richard Steele's *"Heart Religion" in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements*⁸³ and Theodore Runyon's *The New Creation*⁸⁴ give pride of place to three of the orthos: orthodoxy, orthopathy (what I am calling orthokardia) and orthopraxy. Notwithstanding their usage of orthopraxy and neglect of the other orthos (orthopaideia, orthokoinonia, and orthonomos), their respective works are a valuable introduction into the conversation. Joerg Rieger's paper "Between God and the Poor"⁸⁵ is likewise beneficial in seeing how Wesley weaves together a number of orthos. Rieger explicitly talks about the Other and urges that, instead of seeing orthodoxy and orthopraxis as two opposing camps within Christendom, we see them as Wesley did, enmeshed in God's praxis. Two additional books are worth mentioning. David Watson's *The Early Methodist Class Meeting*⁸⁶ is a thorough treatment on one of the orthos – orthokoinonia – even though he himself does not use the term. And Gregory Clapper's *John Wesley on Religious Affections*⁸⁷ is also very helpful on another ortho – orthopathy, or what he prefers to term orthokardia. Randy Maddox's paper on "Psychology and Wesleyan Theology"⁸⁸ plots Wesley's transition from believing that reason dictates human behaviour to seeing that the heart and its affections are more determinative of human action, especially toward our neighbour. Even though Maddox does not use the term orthokardia, his discussion on the heart and its affections is very much the focus of orthokardia. Two further academic papers of note in reference to orthopraxy are

⁸³ Richard B. Steele, ed., *"Heart Religion" in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2001).

⁸⁴ Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

⁸⁵ Joerg Rieger, "Between God and the Poor: Rethinking the Means of Grace in the Wesleyan Tradition," in *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (ed. Heitzenrater), 83–99.

⁸⁶ David Lowes Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origins and Significance* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1985).

⁸⁷ Gregory S. Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections: his views on experience and emotion and their role in the Christian life and theology* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1989).

⁸⁸ Randy L. Maddox, "Psychology and Wesleyan Theology: Precedents and Prospects for a Renewed Engagement," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 23 (2004): 101–9.

Kenneth Collin's *The Soteriological Orientation of John Wesley's Ministry to the Poor*⁸⁹ and Maddox's "*Visit the Poor*": *John Wesley, the Poor, and the Sanctification of Believers*.⁹⁰ Both of these papers, even though not using the term orthopraxy, nevertheless address the kinds of actions and duties that Wesley had in mind for Methodists.

Conclusion

None of this literature, however, uses the terms 'orthopaideia', 'orthokoinonia' and 'orthonomos', nor do they correlate these with Wesley's fourth dimension of discipline. Furthermore, no-one so far has pressed for their inclusion in the cord. Despite the challenges, Wesleyan scholarship remains settled on the cord of three strands. Wesley intended more than three strands and in fact proposes a six-stranded cord; any other reading of his work is radically deficient.

A lead proponent of this three-ortho frame or cord, as he prefers to name it, is Richard Steele. Gleaning from Wesley's *Thoughts Upon Methodism*, Steele makes mention of Wesley's three dimensions: doctrine, spirit and discipline.⁹¹ From these three, Steele argues that what Wesley had in mind was right belief (doctrine), right conduct (discipline) and right passion (spirit).⁹² In a somewhat lengthy but necessary introductory and descriptive passage, he writes:

To begin, we must underscore the fact that an authentically Wesleyan theology does not reduce Christian faith to religious emotion. On the contrary, it regards faith as "cord of three-strands," a dynamic complex of three distinct but

⁸⁹ This essay was originally presented at the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, Somerville College, Oxford, in August 1997. It appeared in a slightly different form as "The Soteriological Orientation of John Wesley's Ministry to the Poor," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 36 (2001): 7–36.

⁹⁰ Randy L. Maddox, "Visit the Poor: John Wesley, the Poor, and the Sanctification of Believers," in *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (ed. Heitzenrater), 59–83.

⁹¹ Richard B. Steele, introduction to "*Heart Religion*" in *the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard B. Steele), xix.

⁹² *Ibid.*, xxii.

inseparable and equally necessary ways by which a Christian stands related to the living God. These we shall call "right belief," "right conduct," and "right passion." ... (1) By "right belief" we shall refer to the "doctrinal" or noetic dimension of faith. Wesley expected his followers to cordially affirm what God has revealed about God's nature and activity in the history of the people of Israel, in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, and in the history of the Christian church. They were to regard the Christian Scripture as the preeminent source of God's self-revelation, and to accept the doctrines of orthodox Christianity, as summarized in the ecumenical creeds, as the hermeneutical norms for rightly understanding and applying the biblical message ... (2) By "right conduct" we shall refer to the "disciplinary" or praxeological dimension of faith. Early Methodists had to pledge themselves to be earnest disciples of Jesus, to follow the moral guidelines established by Scripture and acknowledged by the mainstream of the Christian tradition, and to participate eagerly in the spiritual exercises, devotional habits and liturgical practices of their local society and/or parish church ... (3) By "right passion" we shall refer to the "spiritual" or experiential dimension of faith. Wesley's followers were to display firm trust in and zealous love for the God revealed in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. This aspect of their faith is composed of a wide variety of distinct religious emotions appropriate to the diverse circumstances of life (e.g., love for neighbor, joy for forgiveness, gratitude for blessings, sorrow for sin) ... These three dimensions of Christian faith must not be played off against each other, and none of them must be privileged too much or too long over either or both of the other two. Each affects and is affected by the others, and one's spiritual health depends on attending more or less equitably to all three.⁹³

These three orthos as suggested by Steele provide a helpful way of rewording what Wesley had in mind and, according to recent scholars, frame a cord of three strands. To paraphrase Wesley then, if Methodists hold onto this cord of three strands as Steele terms them – belief, conduct and passion – then Methodism would thrive. Steele equates these three to three orthos: orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxy.⁹⁴ In other words, Steele's trajectory is as follows:

⁹³ Ibid., xxvi–xxiii.

⁹⁴ Ibid., xxx–xxxv.

Table 3. Steele's Cord of Three Strands

Wesley	doctrine	spirit	discipline
Steele	right belief	right passion	right conduct
Ortho equivalent	orthodoxy	orthopathy	orthopraxy

From a Wesleyan perspective, Steele is right to equate praxeology with participation in certain practices and to emphasise that orthopraxy also has to do with external conduct.⁹⁵ This praxeological dimension, he states, is about doing one's "bounden duty."⁹⁶ Steele uses the term orthopraxy to mean living the Christian life "in a morally rigorous and spiritually disciplined way."⁹⁷ Under this definition, participating in the practices of moral guidelines (orthonomos) and church exercises (orthokoinonia) could be subsumed under orthopraxy, which allows Steele to end up with a three-stranded cord.

This thesis prefers to name discipline 'orthopaideia' and not 'orthopraxy' as Steele does. Orthopaideia, with its core meaning of process and education, is a better equivalent to what Wesley had in mind when using the word 'discipline' than the notion of orthopraxy. Wesley also delineates discipline (orthopaideia) into the two separate categories of orthokoinonia and orthonomos. In a letter to George Whitefield, he names the two constituent elements of discipline when he writes of Whitefield's speaking lightly "of the discipline received among us, of societies, classes, bands, of our rules in general, of some in particular."⁹⁸ This one sentence imports the three orthos of orthopaideia (discipline), orthokoinonia (societies, classes and bands) and orthonomos (rules) that need to be added to the oft-mentioned three of orthodoxy, orthokardia and orthopraxy propounded by contemporary Wesleyan scholarship.

⁹⁵ Ibid., xxx.

⁹⁶ Ibid., xxvi.

⁹⁷ Ibid., xxxiii.

⁹⁸ Wesley, "Letter to the Revd. George Whitefield" (28 May, 1753), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 508.

In equating discipline with orthopaideia, orthopraxy can then be equated with Wesley's other dimension of practice. As Chapter 7 on orthopraxy is careful to show, this is not to suggest that what Wesley meant by practice was practices. Rather, practice has to do with outward actions and duties, like that of visiting the sick and feeding the hungry. These actions fit well with the ortho of orthopraxy.

In respect to orthonomos, it may be argued that any Wesleyan emphasis on law is better subsumed under orthodoxy than orthonomos. On this I concur. In his criticism of the Moravians, Wesley included their position on the law under his section on doctrine.⁹⁹ This placing of the law under doctrine (orthodoxy) is further supported in his *Journal* in which he published a letter he wrote in 1738 to the Moravians, "First, with regard to your doctrine, that ye purge out from among you the leaven of antinomianism, wherewith you are so deeply infected, and no longer 'make void the law through faith.'"¹⁰⁰ Issues around the laws of God are best kept within the confines of orthodoxy. But in his letter to Whitefield, as quoted above¹⁰¹ Wesley is referring to *Methodist* rules, general and particular, not to the laws of Scripture. The rules of Methodism are a different category from the laws of Scripture. This thesis respects that differentiation and urges with Wesley that any discussion on the place of law in discipleship is best kept to doctrine (orthodoxy). When considering a movement's rules, a separate category is needed and therefore he uses discipline, of which rules or orthonomos are a part – as has already been shown.

Alongside doctrine (orthodoxy), experience (orthokardia), and practice (orthopraxy) there is also discipline. As noted in Wesley's letter to Whitefield, discipline has to do with the principle of gathering (orthokoinonia) and the keeping of rules (orthonomos). A cord of six strands, not three, is what Wesley had in mind. Wesley recognised that orthodoxy, orthokardia or orthopraxy on their own could not alter behaviour toward the

⁹⁹ Wesley, "Letter to the Revd. George Stonehouse (27 November, 1750), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 443.

¹⁰⁰ Wesley, (3 September, 1741), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 224.

¹⁰¹ See Page 7.

neighbour and stranger. Discipline was also needed, marked by a social discipleship (orthokoinonia) and an accountable discipleship (orthonomos). Understanding and trusting in God's love (orthodoxy) and therefore being predisposed to love (orthokardia) were not enough to get people actually loving the neighbour and stranger (orthopraxy). People may, for example, simply end up loving only their fellow Methodists or loving only when they felt like it. David Lowes Watson highlights the latter:

The inherent blind spot of the Protestant Reformation, as the Puritan casuists were quick to discern, was that refined theological concepts do not readily translate into tenets for practical Christian living. Faith will work by love — on a good day, maybe. For the other days, there must be habits, rules, and methods by which to live out what we know in our hearts is the way of Christ, but which we cannot expect to be accomplished for us by spiritual waves of grace, on the crests of which we ride with an effortless participation that is very close indeed to a new quietism.¹⁰²

This thesis affirms that a cord of six strands can be deduced from Wesley's prediction and indeed his corpus and that it is only such a strengthened cord that can properly communicate his intent and method to those who would walk toward strangers in their midst. The three extra strands that arise from Wesley's focus are discipline (orthopaideia), fellowship (orthokoinonia) and rules (orthonomos). When one puts it all together, a cord with six strands emerges whereby people progress toward an ideal (orthopaideia) in the context of a defined community (orthokoinonia), governed by rules (orthonomos) to direct the dispositions of the heart (orthokardia), that have been formed by a comprehension of God's love (orthodoxy), toward new practices (orthopraxy), on behalf of the neighbour and stranger. When Wesley's dimension of discipline (orthopaideia), with its contingent strands of structured fellowship (orthokoinonia) and obedience to rules (orthonomos), is added to the other dimensions of doctrine (orthodoxy), heart (orthokardia), and practice (orthopraxy), the cord is more complete. More importantly, love of neighbour and stranger is now not only possible but necessary. Albert Outler, in his discussion on Wesleyan discipline, writes that "its discipline is the

¹⁰² David Lowes Watson, "Aldersgate and the General Rules," in *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (ed. Randy L. Maddox; Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1990), 33–47.

effort to apply the gospel in practice with utter seriousness.”¹⁰³ In this brief definition of discipline, the six strands are at work. Discipline (orthopaideia, orthokoinonia and orthonomos) is the effort to apply the gospel (orthodoxy) in practice (orthopraxy) with utter seriousness (orthokardia). Discipline has an applicatory affect.

Having defined and outlined the moral pathway with its six orthos, this thesis now turns to a more comprehensive study of each. Part One introduced Wesley, the stranger and the moral pathway. Part Two, which follows, commences with the first of the six orthos – orthodoxy.

¹⁰³ Outler, “Towards a Re-Appraisal of John Wesley as a Theologian,” 39–54.

Chapter Four

Orthodoxy

The bi-focal approach employed in this thesis as explained in the methodology has one eye on the human problem, that of the stranger; and the other on the illuminated answer, that of John Wesley's moral theology. As also noted in the methodology, moral theology has to do with those sets of principles that govern the behaviour of a Christian and their application to particular circumstances. In what follows, chapters 4 through 7, six principles are illuminated, represented as six orthos. Wesley sought to apply these to his Methodists in the hope that their application would propel his followers to love of neighbour of which walking toward the stranger in their midst was a part.

The moral pathway as discussed in this thesis is essentially a cord of six strands prefixed by the word *ortho* which in Greek means straight or correct. Although orthodoxy, orthokardia, orthopaideia (orthokoinonia and orthonomos) and orthopraxy are not terms used by John Wesley, I propose that these concepts embrace his theology and are critical in understanding how he sought to mobilise Methodists towards a concern for the stranger. Each of these terms will be examined separately in subsequent chapters; this chapter is primarily concerned with orthodoxy.

This chapter will proceed along the following lines: To better appreciate the contribution orthodoxy plays in the commitment to walk toward the stranger, we need to explore the role of philosophical psychology, which opens up the place of narrative in influencing human behaviour. Wesley's narrative was shaped by the Bible and the promises embedded in its pages, particularly those relating to human maturity, which are at the core of his orthodoxy. Wesley, ever the practitioner, was concerned with how to actualise those promises and believed that people invariably had to pass through phases or stages for such transformation to occur. Wesley referred to this process as the way of salvation (*via salutis*) or order of salvation (*ordo salutis*).¹ This suggests a Wesleyan,

¹ For further discussion of these terms and their appropriateness see pp 110–11 and 123–4 of this chapter.

developmental structuralist approach and therefore exposes his position to a post-structuralist critique. This critique and other objections to Wesley's position are considered at the conclusion of this chapter.

Acts and Narratives

Walking toward the stranger is an act performed by a person, which raises the question of whether there is a connection between the act and the person who performs the act? The answer lies in the field of philosophical psychology and I am indebted to Gregory Jones for alerting me to its significance:

One of the central issues in an account of the moral life is how to understand the relationship between actions and the persons who perform those actions. One way to deal with such a question is to deny that there is a relevant relationship. On such a view, it is assumed that the proper domain of moral thought is the making of moral judgments about specific actions and practices independently of the persons involved in the actions and practices. There is no essential relationship between acts and agents, for acts can be characterized and evaluated without reference to the character of the agents. The agent's perspective may be important in what is actually done, but that is a matter left to psychologists and sociologists. It is not involved in the making of moral judgments.²

Put simply, there is a view that suggests actions like walking toward the stranger have little to do with the person performing the act. Gregory Jones describes this as the “non-agential view of the self and human action.”³ In this view the anthropology of the person or their subjective qualities is not relevant to the task of being attentive to the stranger. It is not about changing people so they act in a particular way, and virtue is not required. Rather, it is about a rule being followed and a role played out. By contrast, “an agential understanding of human action”⁴ considers both the intentions and purposes of the person in determining whether or not the act is performed. Without purpose, the action of walking toward the stranger will not be performed.

² L. Gregory Jones, *Transformed Judgment: Toward a Trinitarian Account of the Moral Life* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 20.

³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

Gleaning from the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, Jones takes the position that life is not simply made up of a series of “discrete, unrelated actions.” Rather, life “has a unity.”⁵ Walking toward a stranger on a Monday for example and then doing so again on a Thursday suggests a larger story, or what MacIntyre refers to as ‘narrative’.

[In] successfully identifying and understanding what someone else is doing we always move towards placing a particular episode in the context of a set of narrative histories, histories both of the individuals concerned and of the settings in which they act and suffer. It is now becoming clear that we render the actions of others intelligible in this way because action itself has a basically historical character.⁶

In other words, I do what I do because I am “bound up with the narratives of other people.”⁷ My story has its genesis in the story of another. MacIntyre therefore asserts, “I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’”⁸ What we do with the stranger in our midst will be strongly influenced or shaped by the story of which we are a part. As stated previously, the stranger, like never before, is in close proximity to us, inhabiting our space. To manage this, Erving Goffman posits that many employ the art of mis-meeting, or seeing the stranger as invisible, something he labels as ‘civil inattention’. Those subscribing to the agential view will ask why it is that this person chooses to be so inattentive. For MacIntyre, the answer lies in the wider narrative backdrop of the inattentive person, or the story out of which they came.⁹ Conversely, those like Wesley,

⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (3rd ed. repr.; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 211–12.

⁷ Jones, *Transformed Judgment*, 37.

⁸ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216.

⁹ Tom Wright suggests that the particular narrative backdrop of many in the 21st century is the emotivist movement. By this he means that moral discourse is reduced to the likes or dislikes of people. Preferences rather than principles dictate behaviour, even the act of walking toward the stranger. If a person prefers not to do this, then they should not. The exhortation to the emotivist is: “Be yourself; don’t let anyone else dictate your style; be honest about what you’re really feeling and desiring. Get in touch with the bits of yourself you’ve been screening out; make friends with them and be true to them. Anything else will result in a diminishing of your true, unique, wonderful self.” N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 51. Wright further posits that the

who choose to be attentive to the stranger, do so because of a particular narrative that informs and forms their movements.

Wesley's Narrative Backdrop

Before examining the Bible that John Wesley read, and how he read it, a brief introduction into the nature of biblical studies in the eighteenth-century should provide helpful context. Donald Thorsen is right in stating that “Wesley lived before the day of historical-critical questions about Scripture.”¹⁰ Historical criticism as an academic discipline had not yet surfaced in England, as it had in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. From the seventeenth-century, a number of scholars in Europe had begun to apply a critical spirit to the handling of historical texts, including the Bible. Benedict de Spinoza (1632–1677) was a pioneer in this field. Richard Simon (1638–1712) denied that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch and Herman Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768) rejected the notion of miracles as recorded in the Bible. Herbert Marsh (1757–1839) was the first in the English speaking world to apply the critical-historical method to Scripture. Even though Stephen Neill and Tom Wright state that “more than an echo”¹¹ of this critical spirit “had reached England by the end of the eighteenth century” it was too late for Wesley to engage with.

The questions that Wesley inherited from his era relate to what Scripture is saying and how one comes to comprehend this. Largely because of the religious conflicts that had raged through the seventeenth-century, many of which were over differing opinions of what was meant, Wesley sought to furnish a clear and correct understanding of Scripture

emotivist movement of the twenty-first century emerged from the romantic movement of the nineteenth-century and the existentialist movement of the twentieth-century. The romantic movement, he suggests, stressed inner feelings and that actions should flow from them; the existentialist movement underlined authenticity – to be true to one’s inner self. These two movements combined to form the emotivist movement of the twenty-first century and this, Wright suggests, is the narrative backdrop of moral discourse today.

¹⁰ Donald A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: A Model of Evangelical Theology* (Lexington: Emeth Press, 2005), 81.

¹¹ Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament: 1861–1986* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 4.

from his point of view. Unlike the proponents of historical criticism, he was not concerned with questions of human authorship and production of the biblical texts but with God's inspired authorship and message in the Bible. Wesley also sought to counter the overly cerebral approach to the understanding of Scripture. David McEwan notes that "many people in the eighteenth century viewed Christianity as an intellectual system, and belief was an intellectual quality involving the comprehension and application of propositional truth."¹² Wesley therefore speaks of the Scriptures as being a gift of God and the ability to understand what Scripture is saying as another divine gift rather than human deduction and reasoning.¹³ The influences of Martin Luther, John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards on Wesley are evident here.

It is not surprising that John Wesley, who was born into a strong Christian home, was not only exposed to the narrative of Scripture but schooled in its original languages. At school, Charterhouse (1714–1720), he read the Christian Scriptures daily, but possibly in a perfunctory manner.¹⁴ However, this changed at Oxford University in 1725. Having dedicated himself to God, within four years he "began not only to read but to study the Bible."¹⁵ It became Wesley's habit to immerse himself in the scriptural story for at least a couple of hours a day. For example, on his way by ship to Georgia in 1735, he made it his daily practice to read the Bible with others from five to seven in the morning.¹⁶ The young Wesley believed the Bible was "the only standard of truth, and the only model of pure religion."¹⁷ Consulting the Bible became his habit.¹⁸ He wanted his Methodists to

¹² David B. McEwan, "The Living and Written Voice of God: John Wesley's Reading, Understanding, and Application of Scripture," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 46 (2011): 106–19.

¹³ See John Wesley's "Letter to John Smith" (10 July, 1747), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 249–50.

¹⁴ Wesley, (24 May, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 243.

¹⁵ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2007), 6.

¹⁶ Wesley, (21 October, 1735), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 138.

¹⁷ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 6.

¹⁸ For example, when experiencing his own personal faith crisis in 1738, he still made the Bible his primary point of reference. See Wesley, (12 May, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 248.

be “scriptural Christians”¹⁹ and attributed the rise of Methodism to the fact that the Methodists consulted Scripture²⁰ because they were “downright Bible Christians.”²¹ Wesley and his Methodists read, studied and indeed desired the Bible and made it the rule²² of their lives. Wesley wanted to be a man of this one book,²³ because he believed that immersion in the Bible encouraged love for all, including the stranger. In one of his sermons he writes,

Methodism, so called, is the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the primitive Church, the religion of the Church of England. This old religion, (as I observed in the "Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,") is "no other than love, the love of God and of all mankind ... This love is the great medicine of life; the neverfailing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world; for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand ... This religion of love, and joy, and peace, has its seat in the inmost soul; but is ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing up, not only in all innocence, (for love worketh no ill to his neighbour,) but, likewise, in every kind of beneficence, spreading virtue and happiness all around it."²⁴

¹⁹ John Wesley, “Principles Further Explained,” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 225.

²⁰ John Wesley, “A Plain Account of the Methodists,” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 254.

²¹ John Wesley, “A Short History of Methodism,” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 368.

²² *Ibid.*, 9: 368.

²³ This is not to suggest that Wesley read only the Bible. He gleaned his material from numerous scholarly sources and recorded most of what he read after 1725. According to Outler, “this record runs to more than fourteen hundred different authors”. From Wesley’s sermons alone, Outler tabulates:

... twenty-seven quotations from Horace ... Virgil follows with nineteen, Ovid with ten, Cicero with nine, and Juvenal seven ... Wesley’s other “classical” sources range from Plato to Aristotle to Plotinus to Augustine to Thomas à Kempis. He knows the medieval mystics and the Renaissance secularists (e.g., Rabelais). He quotes freely from Shakespeare ... and from Milton even more freely – but also from Abraham Cowley, George Herbert, Thomas Parnell, and Matthew Prior. He had read widely in patristic theology, was well-grounded in the Reformation classics but was even more intimately acquainted with English “divinity,” from Hooker to Baxter to Tillotson and Doddridge.” (Outler, *Evangelism and Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 78–9.)

²⁴ Wesley, “On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel, Near the City-Road, London,” Sermon 112 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 585–6.

In other words, Wesley's orthodoxy was taken up with the big story of the Bible which was the narrative backdrop that inspired him to become an attentive person to those around him. This story is about a God who creates the first humans who are different from their Creator and prove to be difficult. God never gives up on the human project but, time and again, looks to reconcile them to himself. The narrative of Scripture with all its "many different subplots and digressions"²⁵ is about God walking toward humanity in order that they may meet. In this story inattention, sidestepping, walking around and mis-meetings are discouraged and indeed, lamented. This is the "narrative paradigm"²⁶ within which Wesley located himself.

The biblical narrative is for Wesley also one of promise. On Sunday, June 4 he writes,

For from the time of my rising till past one in the afternoon I was praying, reading the Scriptures, singing praise, or calling sinners to repentance. All these days I scarce remember to have opened the Testament but upon some great and precious promise. And I saw more than ever that the gospel is in truth but one great promise, from the beginning of it to the end.²⁷

On the morning of May in his daily Bible reading he chanced upon the motif of promise in 2 Peter 1:4 – "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature." In the evening of the same day the now famous event took place of which he wrote:

In the evening I went unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in

²⁵ Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983; 3rd pr. 1986), 25.

²⁶ Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims On the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 15. See also Horton's *Covenant and Eschatology: the Divine Drama* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 9–12.

²⁷ Wesley, (4 June, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 254.

Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.²⁸

Whether or not his Aldersgate heart warming experience constituted a conversion,²⁹ and notwithstanding the significance of the experiential knowledge or personal assurance that Wesley now enjoyed, at another level he saw that the narrative of Scripture spoke of a God of promises who can be trusted. A month after his experience, Wesley declared the Bible is “one great promise.” Elsewhere, he notes “that every command in Holy Writ is only a covered promise.”³⁰ In commentary on what Wesley meant, William J. Abraham writes, “When God tells us to do something, the command is an implicit promise that God’s agency will make possible the outcome of the command.”³¹ The framing of Scripture as promise is again evidenced in one of Wesley’s letters, “What the Scripture promises, I enjoy. Come and see what Christianity has done here; and acknowledge it is of God.”³²

By implication therefore, Wesley did not perceive the Bible as some sort of yardstick by which to judge the opinions of people. In his journal, Wesley wrote, “O that all men

²⁸ Wesley, (24 May, 1738), *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 250.

²⁹ In a helpful article by Randy Maddox, “Aldersgate – Signs of a Paradigm Shift?” in *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (ed. Maddox), 11–19, Maddox outlines three current positions. First, the standard interpretation of Aldersgate that assumes that Aldersgate was Wesley’s conversion experience. The second view critiques this ‘conversionist’ reading and instead locates the crucial turning in Wesley’s life in 1725, not 1738. The third view, or what has become known as the alternative paradigm is, in the words of Maddox, the view that Aldersgate “should not be viewed as the decisive experience that marked the beginning of Wesley’s authentic Christian life. Rather, it was an important further step in his spiritual development when his intellectual convictions about God’s gracious acceptance were appropriated more deeply at an affectional level” (p. 18). See also: Kenneth J. Collin’s “Assurance” in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (ed. Abraham and Kirby), 602–17; Richard P. Heitzenrater’s “Great Expectations: Aldersgate and the Evidences of Genuine Christianity,” in *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (ed. Maddox), 49–91.

³⁰ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount V,” Sermon 25 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1:554–5.

³¹ William J. Abraham, *Aldersgate and Athens: John Wesley and the Foundations of Christian Belief* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 17.

³² Wesley, “A Letter to the Reverend Doctor Conyers Middleton,” in *The Works of John Wesley* (ed. Thomas Jackson; 14 vols.; 3rd ed.; London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872; repr.; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 10: 79.

would sit as loose to opinions as I do! That they would think and let think!”³³ In Albert C. Outler’s opinion, Wesley was not the type who had some sort “of inherited template of truth to be pressed down on the hearer’s mind, regardless of his own perceptions.”³⁴ Rather, says Outler, Wesley was essentially about “affirming pluralism without drifting into indifferentism”³⁵ with the result that “every Methodist man and woman [was to be] their own theologian.”³⁶ Wesley claimed that Methodism was about a “broad foundation” requiring of its members “no conformity either in opinions or modes of worship.”³⁷ “The distinguishing marks of a Methodist,” he wrote, “are not his opinions of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions ... are all wide of the point.”³⁸ Wesley warned against elevating opinions on non-essentials into “an orthodoxy required of others.”³⁹ The telling of God’s story was the heart of Wesley’s orthodoxy, not a list of correct opinions. It is more about promise than just mere prohibition. Wesley did have core or primary convictions and doctrines against which he assessed others’ ideas. He was a seeker after truth. On indifferent matters or secondary issues, he allowed for debate and difference.

Wesley was concerned with correct doctrine or right teaching⁴⁰ but his intent was not to create an orthodoxy that could be used to distinguish between those who were right while sidelining others as heretics. Neither was it his aim to craft a theological system

³³ Wesley, (3 December, 1777), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 38.

³⁴ Outler, *Evangelism and Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 63.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁶ Albert C. Outler, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral—in John Wesley,” in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (ed. Oden and Longden), 21–37.

³⁷ Wesley, (26 August, 1789), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 24: 152.

³⁸ John Wesley, “The Character of a Methodist,” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9:33.

³⁹ John B. Cobb, Jr., *Grace and Responsibility: A Wesleyan Theology for Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 137.

⁴⁰ Horton notes that doctrine simply means teaching. In other words, out of the narrative backdrop of Scripture, certain teachings can be discerned. Such teachings help to make sense of the events in the narrative. See Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 20.

out of Scripture.⁴¹ Donald Thorsen rightly notes, “Critics often forget that Wesley never intended to write a systematic theology and wrongly caricature him by evaluating him with inappropriate criteria. Interpreters must evaluate Wesley's theology by criteria in line with the intent or spirit of his writings.”⁴² Thorsen is not disputing that Wesley did theological work of merit. He writes:

Wesley did not dismiss all analytical and critical thinking. On the contrary, he continued to employ careful logic throughout his pastoral and theological writings. Wesley may not have been a systematic theologian, but he did approach his writing methodically and thus considered his work substantially consistent throughout his life and ministry. He sought to unite sound learning with the existential force of Christian experience, which he generally understood as a soteriological category.⁴³

Of his own theological contribution, Wesley wrote:

I write as I generally speak, ad populum — to the bulk of mankind — to those who neither relish nor understand the art of speaking ... I design plain words for plain people; therefore, of set purpose, I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations, from perplexed and intricate reasonings; and, as far as possible,

⁴¹ Outler admits that “it would be far beyond the mark to claim that Wesley ever was a theologian’s theologian or that he deserves a ranking with the major figures in the history of Christian thought.” See Outler, “John Wesley’s Interests in the Early Fathers of the Church,” in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (ed. Oden and Longden), 97–110. Thorsen echoes this in conceding that Wesley did not produce a “completed, rationalistic system” of all that he held to be true. See Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 19. Abraham describes Wesley as a “small fry” when comparing him to the likes of Luther and Calvin. See Abraham, *Wesley for Armchair Theologians*, 25. And others, most notably the biographer Abelow, have dismissed Wesley’s theological contribution altogether:

Wesley taught the Methodists no particular theology, no particular inflection of the Christian tradition. Instead he provided them with an internally contradictory mix of virtually everything Christian, new and old, Protestant and Catholic, Dissenting and Anglican, heretical and orthodox. The points he emphasised in his teaching at any given moment depended principally on what he was then opposing. For he was always concerned to distinguish his position from something or other else, to keep the attention of his flock fixed firmly on himself. (Abelow, *The Evangelist of Desire*, 74.)

Notwithstanding these observations, Outler posits that Wesley “is the major Anglican theologian in the entire eighteenth century and also one of our major resources for twentieth-century theology.” See Albert C. Outler, “John Wesley as Theologian – Then and Now,” in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (ed. Oden and Longden), 55–74.

⁴² Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 34.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 34.

from even the show of learning ... My design is, in some sense, to forget all that ever I have read ... In the following sermons ... I have endeavoured to describe the true, the scriptural, experimental religion, so as to omit nothing which is a real part thereof and to add nothing thereto which is not.⁴⁴

As already noted, Wesley immersed himself in the Scriptures and encouraged his fellow Methodists to read the Bible for up to two hours a day. This constant reading of Scripture was not just an act of devotion to the Bible. Wesley's overriding concern was not that people would love the Bible but rather, love what the Bible loves; namely, the promise of human transformation such that renewed people would in turn love both God and neighbour.

Randy Maddox says there is nothing particularly unique about how Wesley saw the Bible; "similar points could be made for many of his fellow Anglicans."⁴⁵ Wesley's distinctive feature, he suggests, is in his particular *discrimen*, a term developed by David Kelsey,⁴⁶ meaning the interpretive lens⁴⁷ that he brought to reading Scripture. Maddox further defines *discrimen* "as a perceptive insight into the deepest themes of Scripture."⁴⁸ Kelsey elaborates by suggesting that an interpreter of Scripture has a "working canon," or a group of texts to which they often appeal.⁴⁹ Wesley admitted to this approach in two of his published sermons:

Every truth which is revealed in the oracles of God is undoubtedly of great importance. Yet it may be allowed that some of those which are revealed therein are of greater importance than others, as being more immediately conducive to the grand end of all, the eternal salvation of men. And we may judge of their

⁴⁴ Wesley, "The Preface," in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 103–4.

⁴⁵ Randy L. Maddox, "The Rule of Christian Faith, Practice, and Hope: John Wesley on the Bible," in the *Methodist Review* 3 (2011): 1–35.

⁴⁶ David H. Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine: The Uses of Scripture in Modern Theology* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press, 1999), 163–7, 193–6.

⁴⁷ Maddox, "The Rule of Christian Faith, Practice, and Hope," 26.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁹ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 103–4 and commented on in Maddox, "The Rule of Christian Faith," 26.

importance even from this circumstance, — that they are not mentioned once only in the sacred writings, but are repeated over and over.⁵⁰

We know, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and is therefore true and right concerning all things. But we know, likewise, that there are some Scriptures which more immediately commend themselves to every man's conscience.⁵¹

Wesley identifies the first Epistle of John as “the deepest part of the Holy Scripture”⁵² and as the “compendium of all the Holy Scriptures,”⁵³ and, further, as a “compendium of genuine Christianity.”⁵⁴ An example of how Wesley saturated some of his material with the thoughts of John 1 is evidenced in his sermon “The Witness of the Spirit”:

Agreeable to this are all those plain declarations of St. John, in his First Epistle: "Hereby we know that we do know him, if we keep his commandments." (1 John 2:3) "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; Hereby know we that we are in him"; that we are indeed the children of God. (1 John 2:5) "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him." (1 John 2:29) "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (1 John 3:14) "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him"; namely, because we "love one another not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his 'loving' Spirit." (1 John 4:13) And, "hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the 'obedient' spirit which he hath given us." (1 John 3:24)⁵⁵

Toward the closing years of his life, Wesley declared “I love St. John’s style and matter.”⁵⁶ Robert Wall suggests that it is this Epistle that was for Wesley his “canon

⁵⁰ Wesley, “Of Hell,” Sermon 73 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 31.

⁵¹ Wesley, “On Charity,” Sermon 91 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 292.

⁵² Wesley, (17 July, 1765), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 13.

⁵³ Wesley, (9 November, 1772), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 352.

⁵⁴ Wesley, (30 August, 1763), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 427.

⁵⁵ Wesley, “The Witness of the Spirit I” in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 272.

⁵⁶ Wesley, (5 January, 1787), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 24: 2.

within the canon.”⁵⁷ According to Walls, the Epistle provided a “roadmap.” for Wesley.⁵⁸ It captures a cluster of important themes for him, namely: narrative, progress and perfection,⁵⁹ which are at the very core of his orthodoxy. Wall continues:

Wesley’s theo-logic is unimpeachable: if God is love, then love is a “natural” disposition for those born of God. Moreover, those who are birthed by God to love do so because God who is love is the first to love, thereby establishing the model, providing the motive, and awakening the very possibility of human love.⁶⁰

The Promise of Human Maturation

For Wesley, the transformation of the individual through the promises of pardon and sanctification is at the centre of the biblical narrative. Pardon is God’s forgiveness or what God does for us, while sanctification is the promise of radical change and is what God does in the individual. These two promises became the axial themes or central concerns of Wesley’s movement. He describes them as the “true foundation,”⁶¹ the “basis of Methodism,”⁶² the “essentials,”⁶³ the “heads,”⁶⁴ and “main doctrines.”⁶⁵ Wesley’s concerns were therefore for human maturation. His ambition was to reform, rebuild and remake people. Wesley was therefore asking a different set of questions than reformist Martin Luther, as Randy Maddox explains:

⁵⁷ Robert W. Wall, “Wesley as Biblical Interpreter,” in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (ed. Maddox and Vickers), 113–28.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁵⁹ The story of Jesus coming to earth (1 John 1:1-6), Jesus as atonement (1 John 2:1-2), progress and perfection (1 John 3:5, 9), God as love and love coming from God (1 John 4:7, 8, 16, 19).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁶¹ Wesley, “Preface”, in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 117.

⁶² Wesley, “A Letter to the Editor of Lloyd’s Evening Post” (17 November, 1760), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 286.

⁶³ Wesley, “A Letter to Clergymen” (19 April, 1764), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 456.

⁶⁴ John Wesley, “The Principles of a Methodist,” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9:50.

⁶⁵ John Wesley, “The Principles of a Methodist Further Explained,” *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 227.

The emphasis on free grace in Martin Luther's theology is often explained by saying that the guiding question of his life was "How can I, a sinner, stand in confidence before the holy God?" The characteristic differences between Luther's theology and that of John Wesley can be understood in large degree by recognizing that a different question guided Wesley's spiritual journey: "How can I be the kind of person that God created me to be, and that I long to be, a person holy in heart and life?" To know that God graciously accepts me when I fall short of this goal is good news; but the news that Wesley longed to hear was that God offered more than just such acceptance, that God offered a gracious means to becoming truly holy in heart and life.⁶⁶

Rack comments that for Wesley "it was the reality, the results of what the doctrine stated that really mattered – a life of 'faith working by love'."⁶⁷ It was a life of love that mattered, fuelled by faith in God. While, arguably, Luther rightly recaptured the motif of faith, Wesley argued that while faith was a means, love was the end. In his sermon "The Law Established Through Faith – Part 2", Wesley warned: "Let those who magnify faith beyond all proportion, so as to swallow up all things else, and who so totally misapprehend the nature of it as to imagine it stands in the place of love, consider farther, that as love will exist after faith, so it did exist long before it."⁶⁸ Wesley gave pre-eminence of place not to faith but to love:

... faith itself, even Christian faith, the faith of God's elect, the faith of the operation of God, still is only the handmaid of love. As glorious and honourable as it is, it is not the end of the commandment. God hath given this honour to love alone: Love is the end of all the commandments of God. Love is the end, the sole end, of every dispensation of God, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things.⁶⁹

In Wesley's thinking, love of God, neighbour and stranger is not inherent in humans. Rather, it is a quality that must be fused into the heart; something that can only occur

⁶⁶ Maddox, "Psychology and Wesleyan Theology," 101.

⁶⁷ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 155.

⁶⁸ Wesley, "The Law Established Through Faith – Part 2," Sermon 36 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 39.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:38.

through divine assistance. It was Wesley's view that humans go through various levels or stages to actualise the promise of transformation. Successful passage through this anatomy of transition increases the capacity of individuals to not only love God but also love neighbour.

Wesley submits there is a sequence to realise maturity in the human condition. Wesley identifies three phases of human maturation beginning with the 'natural person,' developing into the 'legal person' and ultimately the 'evangelical person.' Wesley describes the natural person as being in a state of sleep,⁷⁰ blind to their real condition. If, for example, the natural person exhibits indifference toward others, they may be unaware of such behaviour. Conversely, others may be cognisant of their indifference, "at peace"⁷¹ and "secure"⁷² in who they are, even though their actual behaviour is antisocial. The natural person is "not troubled"⁷³ by his or her actions and may in fact "congratulate"⁷⁴ themselves on such indifference. The second stage is that of the legal person, who may experience an awakening in the form of tragedy, suffering or loss; through discovery of new knowledge, or a new person or group in their lives. Wesley believed that through such means, God acts to awaken people to their real condition. They have become aware of themselves as somehow fundamentally flawed but unable to do anything about it. Wesley writes of these states:

Here ends his pleasing dream, his delusive rest, his false peace, his vain security. His joy now vanishes as a cloud; pleasures, once loved, delight no more. They pall upon the taste: He loathes the nauseous sweet; he is weary to bear them. The shadows of happiness flee away, and sink into oblivion: So that he is stripped of all, and wanders to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Wesley, "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption," Sermon 9 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 251.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1: 251.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1: 252.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1: 254.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1: 253.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 257.

If the natural person has a false peace about who they are and the legal person no peace at all, then, observes Wesley, the evangelical person comes into true peace which is premised on the peace and love of God filling their hearts.⁷⁶ Consequently, the evangelical person is liberated from narcissistic behavioural patterns and matures into the kind of person “doing no evil to any child of humanity, and being zealous of all good works.”⁷⁷ In a helpful table, Thomas Oden, gleaning from Wesley, compares and contrasts the three stages:

Table 4. Grace Works Through Three Stages

Natural The Spirit of Bondage	Legal The Spirit of Bondage unto Fear	Evangelical The Spirit of Adoption
Aesthetic What I want to do	Ethical What I ought to do	Religious What God does for me
Unaware of moral danger Sleeping	Aware of bondage as if facing an abyss Awakening	Aware of bondage being transcended Reposing
Attempted avoidance of suffering Lacking faith Autonomy Blameless lack of dread Easy self-ignorance	Tragic moral choices deepen suffering Faith of the servant Heteronomy Dreadful blame Odious self-knowledge	Joy amid suffering Faith of the son or daughter Theonomy Overcoming of dread by faith Gracious freedom
False peace of the naturalized self Fantasized liberty Wrestling in utter darkness Neither conquers nor fights Sins willingly	Internal war within the moral self Bondage Seeing the painful light of hell Fights but does not conquer Sins unwillingly	True peace of the reconciled self True liberty Beholding the joyous light of heaven Fights and conquers Does not sin willingly
Prevenient grace Neither loves nor fears God Naiveté Supposed freedom	Convicting grace Only fears God Death of naiveté Slavery to sin	Justifying grace Loves as God loves New birth Children of a new inheritance

⁷⁶ Ibid., 1: 261.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 1: 263.

Source: Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 278.

To describe and outline how the transition from “what I want to do” to that of loving “as God loves”, Wesley employs another trajectory known as the *ordo salutis*,⁷⁸ or the order of salvation. Even though Wesley never actually uses the term, his corpus resonates with its meaning. The *New Dictionary of Theology* defines *ordo salutis* as “the systematic ordering of the various elements in personal salvation.”⁷⁹ Tom Wright takes the phrase *ordo salutis* to mean, “the lining up in chronological sequence of the events which occur from the time when a human being is outside the community of God’s people, stuck in idolatry and consequent sin, through to the time when this same erstwhile sinner is fully and finally saved.”⁸⁰ Muller defines the term as the “temporal order of causes and effects through which the salvation of the sinner is accomplished.”⁸¹ In justifying its usage, Myk Habets writes:

Scripture reveals that God applies Christ’s objective work on the cross progressively by his Holy Spirit through a series of movements. This has led to the theological method of developing an *ordo salutis*, a justifiable order of salvation that God has purposefully established. The various formulations of the *ordo* seek to express the way by which God through Christ imparts salvation to sinners from inception to consummation or from eternity past to eternity future. These schemes can be chronological, logical, or both.⁸²

⁷⁸ Arguably brought into theological usage in 1737 by Jakob Karpov, a Lutheran. See G. N. M. Collins, “Order of Salvation,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Elwell), 802. Muller applies the term to the “temporal order of causes and effects through which the salvation of the sinner is accomplished ...” See, Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 215.

⁷⁹ See, Sinclair B. Ferguson, “Ordo Salutis,” in *New Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson et al; Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 480–1.

⁸⁰ N.T. Wright, “New Perspectives on Paul,” in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* (ed. Bruce L. McCormack; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 243–64. It is possibly more accurate to say that the order is logical rather than chronological as Wright puts it, given that a number of the elements in the *ordo* occur simultaneously, but some have logical priority.

⁸¹ Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 215.

⁸² Myk Habets, “An Evangelical Ordo Salutis,” unpublished paper, Carey Baptist College, Auckland, 2006.

To break it down even further, an *ordo salutis* outlines how the biblical themes of regeneration, faith, repentance, justification, new birth and sanctification, for instance, relate to each other and how the combined effect of these constituent parts transform a person from one state to another. Even though there is no fixed order in Wesley's corpus, he does delineate a general order. The following two examples from separate sermons illustrate the point:

Table 5. Ordo Salutis: A General Order

Sermon 43 The Scripture Way of Salvation	Sermon 58 On Predestination
The operation of prevenient grace	God's foreknowledge of the believers
Repentance previous to justification	Predestination
Justification or forgiveness	Justification
The new birth	Sanctification
Repentance after justification and the gradually proceeding work of sanctification	Glorification
Entire sanctification	

Source: Adapted from Harald Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 113.

In terms of secondary literature, it suffices to compare and contrast Lindstrom,⁸³ Maddox⁸⁴ and Collins,⁸⁵ whose presentation of Wesley's *ordo* can be compared as follows:

⁸³ Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 113–120.

⁸⁴ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 157–91.

⁸⁵ Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 73–82, 122–3, 165–9, 169–72, 195–208, 293–303, 313–24.

Table 6. Lindstrom, Maddox, and Collins: A Scholarly Contrast

Lindstrom	Maddox	Collins
Prevenient grace	Prevenient grace	Prevenient grace
Convincing grace or conviction of sin	Awakening	Convincing grace
Saving faith	Repentance	Justifying faith
Justification	Justification	Justification
New birth	Regeneration	Regenerating grace
Gradual sanctification	Sanctification	
Complete sanctification or Christian perfection	Christian perfection	Entire sanctification
		Glorification

The key points of focus in Wesley's *ordo salutis* are justification, the new birth, and sanctification. Extensive scholarly work has already been done on these themes so an introduction is all that is required for the purposes of this study.⁸⁶ In Wesley's terms justification is "another word for pardon"⁸⁷ and those who are in need of this are those who know they are sick. "These who are sick, the burden of whose sins is intolerable, are they that need a Physician; these who are guilty, who groan under the wrath of God, are they that need a pardon."⁸⁸ Justification then is an "objective work" in that "it arises

⁸⁶ Some of the main contributions being: William Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley, with Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946); Colin Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960); Harald Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1980); Timothy L. Smith, *Whitefield & Wesley on the New Birth* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1986); Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of his Teaching on Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994); Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998); Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007).

⁸⁷ Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," Sermon 43 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:157. See also Sermon 5 where he writes that "the plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins". "Justification by Faith," Sermon 5 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1:189.

⁸⁸ Wesley, "Justification by Faith," Sermon 5 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 192.

not from a change in us but from a word of God to us”⁸⁹ therefore Wesley argued it is something that God does “for us.”⁹⁰

While God’s work for a person is an objective work, what begins to happen in the new birth or regeneration, is subjective, although Wesley understand that these occur concurrently. For the purposes of clarity however, he separates them:

In order of time, neither of these is before the other: in the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also ‘born of the Spirit’; but in order of thinking, as it is termed, justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive his wrath to be turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts.⁹¹

There is however an even more significant reason for this separation. Wesley believed that justification and the new birth accomplished different things. If justification by faith was what God did *for* the fallen person in extending pardon then new birth is what God begins to do *in* the now accepted person. Wesley makes it clearer:

If any doctrines within the whole compass of Christianity may be properly termed fundamental, they are doubtless these two, — the doctrine of justification,

⁸⁹ Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today*, 171.

⁹⁰ Wesley, “The New Birth,” Sermon 45 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:187. Contrasting Wesley with Calvin and Luther on justification, Williams notes:

Wesley gives a narrower definition to justification than do Luther and Calvin. The latter include two movements in justifying faith: (1) repentance (2) trust in Christ. Wesley limits it to the latter moment of conscious acceptance of Christ, accompanied by a sense of forgiveness. In the terms of the earlier Reformers, then, repentance works are not works done before faith but works of faith ... Justification has two movements: (1) Preliminary faith, which includes the free response to God's prevenient grace and a desire to please him but is still only the "faith of a servant." (2) Justifying faith proper, which is a sure trust and confidence in Christ bringing a conviction of forgiveness, this being "the faith of a son." (Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today*, 64–5).

Maddox provides a useful discussion as to whether Wesley is to be located in a monergistic framework or a synergistic one. If by monergism God irresistibly performs our human acts of faith and virtue then this is not Wesley’s position. Wesley however does suggest that humans are totally dependent upon God for the ability to believe and grow in grace. Wesley also posits that it is God who takes the initiative but this initiative must not be read as irresistible. See Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 91.

⁹¹ Wesley, “The New Birth,” Sermon 45 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:187.

and that of the new birth: The former relating to that great work which God does for us, in forgiving our sins; the latter, to the great work which God does in us, in renewing our fallen nature.⁹²

He teases out this difference in another of his sermons “The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God”:

Justification implies only a relative, the new birth a real, change. God in justifying us does something for us; in begetting us again, he does the work in us. The former changes our outward relation to God, so that of enemies we become children; by the latter our inmost souls are changed, so that of sinners we become saints. The one restores us to the favour, the other to the image, of God.⁹³

The work that God begins to do in a person is, for Wesley, a “vast inward change” whereby a person begins to live “in quite another manner”⁹⁴ than they did before. In his sermon on “The Marks of the New Birth” Wesley echoes his own Aldersgate experience in declaring that at the new birth the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts.⁹⁵ This new experience of love in the heart can, argues Wesley, increase a person’s capacity to walk toward neighbours. He writes: “The necessary fruit of this love of God is the love of our neighbour; of every soul which God hath made; not excepting our enemies; not excepting those who are now ‘despitefully using and persecuting us’; — a love whereby we love every man as ourselves; as we love our own souls.”⁹⁶ However, even though there is an instantaneous change in the person at the new birth, such a change is not completed at that birth. Wesley was quick to remind his hearers that this is just the beginning of change. He described the new birth reality as a “gate”⁹⁷ or an entrance point. What comes after the new birth is the realisation of actual behavioural change

⁹² Ibid., 2:187.

⁹³ Wesley, “The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God,” Sermon 19 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1:431–2.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 1:432.

⁹⁵ Wesley, “The Marks of the New Birth,” Sermon 18 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1:425.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 1:426.

⁹⁷ Wesley, “The New Birth,” Sermon 45 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:198.

which Wesley called sanctification. Collins also draws the same link between new birth and sanctification:

In this context, then, the totality of the change of the new birth refers not to the entirety of the process of sanctification (as in other usages of Wesley), but to the integrity, the thoroughness, of its beginning. Speaking in a natural way, just as when a child is born, the completeness of this work is not mistaken for subsequent growth and maturity, so, too, spiritually speaking, the new birth is a complete work, in the sense of its nature and integrity, a work that nevertheless admits of further growth in grace.⁹⁸

Wesley did not subscribe to the view that to become a Christian was simply to be forgiven (justification). In his 1745 “Farther Appeal” he writes:

By salvation I mean, not barely (according to the vulgar notion) deliverance from hell, or going to heaven, but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity; a recovery of the divine nature; the renewal of our souls after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth. This implies all holy and heavenly tempers, and by consequence all holiness of conversation.⁹⁹

By conversation, Wesley means behaviour. His concern was for a present day “ethical regeneration”¹⁰⁰ of people. The mark of a genuine Methodist society and its members was that “they long and expect to be perfected ...”¹⁰¹ At this juncture it is important to differentiate Wesley’s idea of sanctification from his notion of perfection. Sanctification is the term he uses for the gradual change or progressive work in people after their new-birth experience. Sanctification is about “being made”¹⁰² into the kind of person that can increasingly “love all”¹⁰³ humankind, which by definition, includes the stranger.

⁹⁸ Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 207.

⁹⁹ John Wesley, “A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part 1 (1745),” in *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters* (ed. Cragg), 11: 106.

¹⁰⁰ Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 92.

¹⁰¹ Wesley, (3 May, 1784), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 306.

¹⁰² Wesley, “Justification By Faith,” Sermon 5 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 187.

¹⁰³ Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” Sermon 43 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 158.

Sanctification is therefore a “progressive work, carried on in the soul by slow degrees.”¹⁰⁴ It is a “gradual work.”¹⁰⁵

For Wesley, the ultimate goal is entire sanctification, or perfection, which is of a different order. Perfection is a completed state, whereby people come into a condition of perfected holiness and love. People are to wait for that time when God “shall sanctify them wholly.”¹⁰⁶ Sanctification and perfection are therefore not two different things, but, rather, degrees of the same thing. Wesley furnishes two definitions of this ultimate perfection. Firstly, it has to do with holiness, and secondly, with love.¹⁰⁷ “Perfection is another name for universal holiness – inward and outward righteousness – holiness of life arising from holiness of heart.”¹⁰⁸ On perfection as love, he writes:

This is the sum of Christian perfection: It is all comprised in that one word, Love. The first branch of it is the love of God: And as he that loves God loves his brother also, it is inseparably connected with the second: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself": Thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets": These contain the whole of Christian perfection.¹⁰⁹

There is both a negative and positive aspect to his position on perfection. The negative entails a freedom from sin which then, positively, frees the person to love. Colon-

¹⁰⁴ Wesley, “The New Birth,” Sermon 45 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 198.

¹⁰⁵ Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” Sermon 43 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 160.

¹⁰⁶ Wesley, “The First Fruits of the Spirit,” Sermon 8 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 247.

¹⁰⁷ Abraham takes issue with some recent Wesleyan scholarship that seems to reduce the notion of perfection to love. See Abraham, “Christian Perfection,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (ed. Abraham and Kirby), 595. Outler, for example, conflates holiness and love, and writes, “Inward holiness is, predominantly, our love of God, the love of God above all else and all else in God. Outward holiness is our consequent love of neighbour ... with a love that springs from our love of God and that seeks the neighbor’s well-being as the precondition of our own proper self-love.” Outler, *Evangelism and Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 128. Arguably, Collins has done the most work on trying to keep holiness and love together as separate but equal definitions of perfection. Collins’ writes: “Entire sanctification, then, is love replacing sin, holy love conquering every vile passion and temper.” Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 302.

¹⁰⁸ Wesley, “On Perfection,” Sermon 76 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 75.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 3: 74.

Emeric considers the negative aspect of Wesley's doctrine of perfection to the "sickness of sin" for which the positive aspect of the doctrine "perfect love" is the remedy.¹¹⁰ Wynkoop, in her commentary on Wesley's doctrine of perfection, likewise locates the negative aspect as pertaining to the "body of sin" but the positive as "outgoing love."¹¹¹ In a letter to Thomas Maxfield, Wesley wrote, "I like your doctrine of perfection, or pure love – love excluding sin."¹¹² Elsewhere he defines perfection as the heart being filled with "humble love."¹¹³ The phrase he often used to sum up perfection was "walking as Christ walked."¹¹⁴ In his "Circumcision of the Heart" sermon he talks of "the most essential duties of Christianity"¹¹⁵ as "being perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect",¹¹⁶ and that what we learn of Christ is to "follow his example and tread in his steps."¹¹⁷ Later in the sermon, in what has become classical Wesleyan terminology, he adds, "If thou wilt be perfect, add to all these, charity; add love, and thou hast the circumcision of the heart." He adds: "Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment."¹¹⁸ To be perfect is to love but to love not only God but "that we love our brother also."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁰ Edgardo A. Colon-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection: An Ecumenical Dialogue* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 25.

¹¹¹ Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love*, 275.

¹¹² Wesley, (29 October, 1762), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 394.

¹¹³ Wesley, (6 March, 1760), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 244.

¹¹⁴ For example, see (25 August, 1768) in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 155 and Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 6. Heitzenrater notes this phrase was the most common way Wesley expressed the nature of Christian perfection and it is also the most repeated phrase (more than 50 references) in his published sermons. See Heitzenrater, "The *Imitatio Christi* and the Great Commandment: Virtue and Obligation in Wesley's Ministry with the Poor," 58. Hence my title "Walking Toward the Stranger".

¹¹⁵ Wesley, "The Circumcision of the Heart," Sermon 17 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 401.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 403.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 404.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 407.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1: 408.

It was Wesley's conviction that this particular doctrine of perfection was the one "peculiarly entrusted to the Methodist."¹²⁰ Perfection, he argues, is not only something to be aimed for but actually attained.¹²¹ Wesley was quick to evidence such perfection by way of other people's testimonies. On 2 December 1744 he claimed he was with two people who "believe they are saved from all sin."¹²² Elsewhere in his journal, he notes others who are considered perfect.¹²³ What is clear is that Wesley did not claim perfection for himself or the majority of his Methodists. And nor is Wesley referring to sinless perfection. In his sermon "On Sin in Believers" he makes it absolutely clear that whereas one can be delivered from the guilt and power of sin, no-one is spared from the being of sin. Wesley writes, "The guilt is one thing, the power another, and the being yet another. That believers are delivered from the guilt and power of sin we allow; that they are delivered from the being of it we deny."¹²⁴ Wesley did not hold to sinless perfection¹²⁵ or "entire deliverance"¹²⁶ but instead argued that Methodists were still inwardly corrupt¹²⁷ and liable to mistakes.¹²⁸ Four of his published sermons make it abundantly clear that being perfect did not imply doing no wrong.¹²⁹

The new perfect activity that Wesley had in mind was love toward God as well as neighbour. This was the positive side of his perfection and he reiterated it time and again

¹²⁰ Wesley, (2 May, 1789), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 24: 121.

¹²¹ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 14.

¹²² Wesley, (2 December, 1744), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 44.

¹²³ See Wesley, *Journal* (ed. Ward and Keitzenrater), 21: 242f., 331, 398, 449, 461; 22: 20, 93; and 24: 133.

¹²⁴ Wesley, "On Sin in Believers," Sermon 13 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 328.

¹²⁵ John Wesley, "The Principles of a Methodist," in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 53.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 9: 53.

¹²⁷ Wesley, (2 May, 1741), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 192.

¹²⁸ Wesley, (24 July, 1761), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 337.

¹²⁹ In *Sermons* (ed. Outler), "On Sin in Believers," Sermon 13 (1:314–34); "The Repentance of Believers," Sermon 14 (1:335–52); "The Circumcision of the Heart," Sermon 17 (1:401–16); and "Christian Perfection," Sermon 40 (2:99–124).

to his critics. Combining the negative and positive aspects, it would appear that Wesley's doctrine of perfection has to do with being perfect in love but not perfectionism. This doctrine also is very much one of promise and a great one at that. In this present world, humans can experience a profound transformation such that they are no longer bent in on themselves but predisposed to love of God and neighbour. In commentary on Wesley's doctrine of perfection Abraham opines that "Christian believers do not have to live morally defeated lives" and that beyond their conversion a "radical spiritual reorientation"¹³⁰ can occur and that therefore the call to perfection "is not an idle ideal" but "very much an attainable goal."¹³¹

As our present study concerns the majority of people and their walking toward the stranger, sanctification is of greater relevance than perfection. Sanctification is about the repair and gradual remaking of the human person. Abraham, in reference to Wesley, talks in terms of "cognitive dysfunction through sin" and "cognitive repair through the work of the Holy Spirit."¹³² Being on a trajectory of repair does not necessarily suggest that reaching a desired destination is inevitable and it to this aspect that we now turn.

Abandoned Hope

A distinctive feature of Wesley's schema is its insistence on the resistibility of grace. God comes to all and seeks to awaken all, but grace can be stifled and a person may choose not to respond to it. In this sense, God's grace is more influence than coercion. Far from wanting to overpower a person, God endeavours to empower them. Wesley develops these thoughts in his sermon "On Working out Our Own Salvation" which he gave in 1785, late in his life. In this sermon he draws attention to what God does for each person but also to what that person must do in response to God's grace. In other words, grace requires a response. "God works; therefore you can work" and indeed

¹³⁰ Abraham, "Christian Perfection," 588.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 598.

¹³² Abraham, *Aldersgate and Athens*, 31.

“must work”, writes Wesley.¹³³ In the face of God’s grace, there is what Maddox refers to as a “response-ability.”¹³⁴ God, in other words, “has chosen a place for [human] participation.”¹³⁵ For Wesley it is only God who can quicken or awaken a person but that person can definitely “stifle” what God has done and as a result no “deep root” or “considerable fruit” results.¹³⁶ When God works with a person, Wesley says they must take up the challenge and be “workers together with him.”¹³⁷ Such cooperation results in further grace and enlightenment. “The general rule,” writes Wesley, “on which his gracious dispensations invariably proceed is this: ‘Unto him that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not’ — that does not improve the grace already given — ‘shall be taken away what he assuredly hath’.”¹³⁸ In commentary on this Wesleyan position, Williams writes, “that a response to the grace within us brings a further gift of grace.”¹³⁹ In other words, there is a role for a divinely empowered human response but this is not to be read as a human work that is meritorious in itself.

In other words, it is possible to get stuck at a certain place on the trajectory. Arrested development occurs. Some may transition from being the natural person to the legal person but progress no further, thereby inhibiting the capacity to love both God and neighbour. Wesley, for example, talks in terms of an ‘almost’ Christian.¹⁴⁰ This is the person who has come some distance along a trajectory but not completed the journey into the new birth. To help us understand this dynamic better, he contrasts the ‘almost’

¹³³ Wesley, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” Sermon 85 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3:206.

¹³⁴ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 55.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹³⁶ Wesley, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” Sermon 85 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3:207.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3:208.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3:208.

¹³⁹ Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today*, 43. Williams also quotes Wesley: “stir up the spark of grace which is now in you, and he will give you more grace.”

¹⁴⁰ Wesley, “The Almost Christian,” Sermon 2 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1:131–41.

Christian with the ‘altogether’¹⁴¹ Christian. This discussion helps to explain why many in the churches may be religious in orientation and yet not among those whose practise it, so as to walk toward the neighbour and stranger in their midst. Wesley describes the ‘almost’ Christian as one who has a “form of godliness” and “avoids” all manner of evil, “constantly frequents” church and is prepared to give of their excess to the poor and needy be it “spare” food, or “superfluous” clothing. Their behaviour toward the stranger is one of pity, not wanting to harm them, and doing what they can in their spare time. The ‘almost’ Christian would be unlikely to heed Wesley’s advice to Miss March, spoken of in Chapter 1, to “spend time in their poor little hovels.”¹⁴² The ‘almost’ Christian, while not excluding the stranger, may not embrace them or invite them into their home or space. The ‘almost’ Christian sees the stranger as visible but most likely keeps their distance. However, they may send gifts to the poor or do good by proxy. In Wesley’s schema, the ‘almost’ Christian has transitioned from the natural to the legal condition but has yet to enter into the evangelical experience of the new birth.

The ‘altogether’ Christian is evangelical (Wesley’s term as used on p. 110 of this chapter) and experiences “a real, inward principle of religion.” Their love of God and neighbour “engrosses the whole heart.”¹⁴³ Furthermore, the ‘altogether’ Christian devotes not just their *spare* time and excess resources to neighbour and stranger but at a more fundamental level their *every* hour and resource. In the words of Wesley the ‘altogether’ Christian “devotes ... all ... words and works ... business ... studies and diversions ...”¹⁴⁴ to the love of God and neighbour. The ‘altogether’ Christians are willing “to spend and be spent”, as Wesley would have it, for all people.

But even the ‘altogether’ Christian can stall. It was Wesley’s view that the evangelical or ‘altogether’ Christian could resist further growth in grace and therefore not continue

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 1: 137. Later in life Wesley allowed for a looser application of these categories as evidenced in his sermon, “The More Excellent Way.”

¹⁴² See Chapter 1 of this thesis, p. 47.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 1: 137.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 1:137–41.

as a lover of God and neighbour. In his scheme, there is no determinism attached to human transformation. On becoming a believer in Christ the person is still in need of what Maddox refers to as response-ability. Lindstrom clarifies:

Thus a gradual development, a progression in sanctification, is envisaged after the instantaneous supervention of justification and the New Birth. This development is regarded as analogous to that before justification and new birth. Just as repentance and faith were necessary to instil the Christian life, so another repentance and another faith are necessary to its retention and growth. Repentance before justification is thus supplemented by repentance after justification ... No man may voluntarily neglect good works. If he does, he cannot expect ever to be fully sanctified. He cannot grow in grace, he cannot even retain the grace already accorded to him. Thus obedience is necessary to the development of the Christian life. If the new life is to persist and grow, activity on God's part must always be accompanied by activity on man's part.¹⁴⁵

It was Wesley's view that continued change does not come naturally (unaided by grace) or automatically (by coercive or irresistible grace). Nor did he believe that such a profound change was 'all up to God.' For human transformation to occur, God and the human must work together. In his later years, the more mature Wesley in his sermon "On Working Out Our Own Salvation" says "you yourselves must do this, or it will be left undone forever."¹⁴⁶ He also speaks of steps "to take,"¹⁴⁷ "that [they] can ... and must work" and we must be "workers together with him [God]".¹⁴⁸ To further underline his point, Wesley quotes Augustine toward the end of his sermon: "He that made us without ourselves will not save us without ourselves."¹⁴⁹ Humans, in other words, are not simply passive objects in God's drama; they are actors writing the script and with a part to play in what unfolds. In sympathy with this view, Gustafson writes, "Persons are not merely passive chips floating on rivers of events and circumstances and carried by

¹⁴⁵ Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 116–17. See Wesley's sermon "The Repentance of Believers," Sermon 14 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 335–52.

¹⁴⁶ Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," Sermon 85 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 203.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3: 205.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 3: 208.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 3: 208.

whatever currents flow. Rather they are agents, or actors ... As agents, they have capacities to determine themselves to some extent ...”¹⁵⁰

While supportive of Wesley’s view, Maddox is quick to add a qualifier: “... it is important to recall that the reason for our requisite – but uncoerced – participation in the process of salvation is not a deficiency in God’s grace (needing the supplement of our efforts), but a quality in God’s character: the God we know in Christ is a God of love who respects our integrity and will not force salvation upon us.”¹⁵¹ Kenneth Collins describes this synergistic¹⁵² paradigm as a dance “which contains both divine and human acting.”¹⁵³ Maddox concludes that for Wesley “God will not effect holiness apart from our responsive participation.”¹⁵⁴

Such an emphasis on human agency is in no way meant to undermine God’s grace in a person’s life. Rather, there is a need to underline that which may have been lost in the understandable enthusiasm over grace. Stassen and Gushee warn there is necessary tension between human action and grace:

Some have erroneously taken grace to imply passivity, disempowerment of those who receive God’s grace: if God is giving grace, it means that we are doing nothing. And if we are doing something, if we are acting in conformity with God’s will, it must not be grace. This sets God’s grace and our discipleship in opposition, as rivals ... When [however] God acts to deliver us, we are thereby empowered, not disempowered. When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, we are thereby empowered, not rendered powerless.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ James M. Gustafson, *Can Ethics Be Christian* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 12.

¹⁵¹ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 148.

¹⁵² For definition, see p.113, n. 73.

¹⁵³ Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 12.

¹⁵⁴ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 148.

¹⁵⁵ Glen Stassen and David Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 46.

Grace enables a person to become fully human, assisting them to become all that they were created to be: thinkers, deciders, actors. Far from grace making us less human and more divine, divine grace makes us more human. Chilton and McDonald, in their discussion on the parables of Jesus and, more specifically, the parable of the seed growing secretly in Mark 4:26–9 also hold in critical tension God’s performance and human performance:

At one end is the divine performance of the kingdom, an inceptive reality which attracts hope. At the other end is human performance, an enacted response which itself elicits action. Hopeful action and enacted hope characterize the parable as a whole, at each point in what is depicted ... The parable never concerns merely promise alone or action alone. Indeed, the creative interface between the two is of the essence of the Kingdom which is presented ... To read the parables is itself an acknowledgement that human action might be implicated in God’s Kingdom; to believe them is actually to undertake appropriate action, the parabolic action of the Kingdom, in the present.¹⁵⁶

This recognition of what a person can contribute to their own transformation should not to be misinterpreted as an overly optimistic view of human nature; otherwise, we end up with a “semi-Pelagian synergism.”¹⁵⁷ David Hempton is right to remind the reader of Wesley that it would be a mistake to conclude from his emphasis on human responsibility “that Wesley had a weak theology of grace or that he was a closet Pelagian.”¹⁵⁸ Wesley’s stress on grace belies this. Rather, and as Hempton discerns, Wesley is simply positing that human beings have some control over their “spiritual

¹⁵⁶ Bruce Chilton and James I. H. McDonald, *Jesus and the Ethics of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988), 24, 31.

¹⁵⁷ Richard B. Steele, “Gracious Affection” and “True Virtue” According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, 11.

¹⁵⁸ Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, 58. Pelagius (d.c. 419), a British monk, held that human beings have complete free will. Unlike Augustine of Hippo (354–450), who argued that the free will of humans has been compromised by sin, Pelagius did not hold to such a doctrine of original sin. Given this, all commands of God, even the call to walk toward the stranger, can be obeyed by people without divine assistance and without first having to go through character transformation. Interestingly, Wesley positions himself closer to Augustine but not completely at a distance from Pelagius. With Augustine, he holds to original sin and therefore there being no libertarian free will. However, Wesley does teach that God’s grace assists people to express themselves as free will decision-makers and in this sense, they come to enjoy a divinely assisted free will.

destinies.”¹⁵⁹ People can therefore arrest the developmental work that God is attempting in their lives by settling at a certain place rather than continuing along the trajectory. Churches, therefore, can be populated by sojourners who have for whatever reason abandoned the call to further progress.

Such spiritual abandonment, argues Wesley, affects not only the sociological makeup of churches but also the orientation of believers. At a sociological level, churches can consist of ‘almost’ Christians and stalled ‘altogether’ Christians. Both display a reluctance or inability to sacrificially love their neighbour. This arrested spirituality affects the sociology of the church, which in turn determines social behaviour. Half a century ago, E. Stanley Jones claimed that up to two-thirds of the church “knew little or nothing about conversion as a personal, experimental fact.”¹⁶⁰ In the mid-1980s George Gallup, Jr. said of the American Church:

We boast Christianity as our faith, but many of us have not bothered to learn the basic biblical facts of this religion. Many of us dutifully attend church, but this act appears to have made us no less likely than our unchurched brethren to engage in unethical behavior. We say we are Christians, but sometimes we do not show much love toward those who do not share our particular religious perspective. We say we rejoice in the good news that Jesus brought, but we are often strangely reluctant to share the gospel with others. In a typical day the average person stays in front of the TV set nearly 25 times longer than in prayer.¹⁶¹

Ron Sider, writing of the American Church five years ago is even more damning:

Scandalous behavior is rapidly destroying American Christianity. By their daily activity, most "Christians" regularly commit treason. With their mouths they claim that Jesus is Lord, but with their actions they demonstrate allegiance to

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 58.

¹⁶⁰ E. Stanley Jones, *Conversion* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1959), 26.

¹⁶¹ George Gallup, Jr., and George O’Connell, *Who Do Americans Say That I Am?* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 88–9.

money, sex, and self-fulfilment ... White evangelicals are the most likely people to object to neighbors of another race.¹⁶²

Similarly, William Abraham states:

One of the truly astonishing features of modern church life is the fact that so many church members need to be evangelized. This judgment is not offered in anger or frustration; it is a fact we record with regret. Renewal can come not by starting from scratch but by clearly understanding that Christian initiation has been partial and incomplete. Perhaps we might say that people in modern Western Christianity have been half-evangelized.¹⁶³

To be half-evangelised, as Abraham puts it, is to have stopped at certain points along Wesley's trajectory. The promise of the vast inner change or reorientation that Wesley talks about which culminate in a perfection marked by love is for those who continue along the salvific path. To summarise, Wesley's orthodoxy is founded on a biblical narrative that promises human transformation. He claims that this narrative furnishes a trajectory and an order of salvation that can actualise human maturation, so that people who become lovers of God become lovers of others, including the stranger.

Criticisms Considered

Wesley's claims receive a varied response within Wesleyan theological scholarship and indirect opposition from certain philosophical circles. Within the Wesleyan academy, there is debate around the term *ordo salutis*, and criticism that Wesley's model of human maturation has done more harm than good. Philosophical criticism centres on the concerns of post-structuralism. Both criticisms will be considered here.

The debate within Wesleyan scholarship over the appropriateness of the term *ordo salutis* to describe Wesley's orthodox pathway to human transformation is illustrated in

¹⁶² Ronald J. Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 12–13.

¹⁶³ Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism*, 113.

the conflicting views of Maddox and Collins.¹⁶⁴ Both agree that Wesley's concerns are for human transformation although Maddox contends that Wesley had in mind a *via salutis*¹⁶⁵ and Collins presses for the retention of an *ordo salutis*. *Via salutis* – the way of salvation – argues Maddox, is in keeping with Wesley's sermon titles: 'The *Way* of the Kingdom' (Sermon 7, emphasis mine) and "The Scripture *Way* of Salvation" (Sermon 43, emphasis mine). Maddox is clear that Wesley's language is more descriptive than prescriptive. Wesley is describing what occurs in the process of human maturation. Maddox reads Wesley as saying there is a "developing response" to God, a "continuing journey" wherein a number of dimensions "intertwine" culminating in a person discovering "increasing depths" with God and therefore enjoying a "gradual recovery."¹⁶⁶ This is how he sees the transformation that occurs when a person encounters the God of the Bible. Collins, who of his own admission¹⁶⁷ had previously employed the term *via salutis* of Wesley, now advocates *ordo salutis*. The term *via salutis* is for Collins too "open-ended"¹⁶⁸ and suggests too much of a "gradualism"¹⁶⁹ in Wesley. Far from Wesley believing that human transformation somehow unfolds, Collins reads Wesley as delineating a clear path where certain realities must be actualised in sequence, some experienced instantaneously and others gradually. As noted in a previous discussion on Wesley's *ordo*,¹⁷⁰ the sequence is more logical than chronological. Arguably, both are right, depending upon from whose perspective one views the change. When taken from the vantage point of the person being changed, it appears to be gradual and unfolding. But from the lens of the observer, there is a pattern and a sequence with instances of sudden change followed by gradual change. In fact

¹⁶⁴ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 157–8; and Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 336, n. 9.

¹⁶⁵ *Via* suggests the way of something whereas *ordo* as it sounds, is the order of a particular thing.

¹⁶⁶ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 158.

¹⁶⁷ Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 336, n. 9.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 336, n. 9.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 336, n. 9.

¹⁷⁰ See pp. 110–11 of this chapter.

Maddox appears not to be overly precious about which term is used, *via* or *ordo*, when he writes,

Actually, Wesley would have probably have seen little difference between “way” and “order.” He could as easily talk of the “order” in which we might encounter God’s work in our life (e.g., Sermon 16, “The Means of Grace,” V.1-2, *Works*, 1: 393-4 [but note V.3, p. 395!]) and the “golden chain” of pardon, holiness, and heaven (Sermon 42, “Satan’s Devices,” II.4, *Works*, 2: 149-50).¹⁷¹

A second objection is more theological in nature and not just confined to Wesleyan scholarship. It may be argued that Wesley’s heavy reliance upon an *ordo salutis* defeats the very thing that he hopes will be achieved by it. In other words, Wesley uses the *ordo salutis* to assist people in their quest for salvation, so that those ‘saved’ emerge as lovers of God and therefore lovers of neighbours. Tom Wright posits that the *ordo salutis* approach is in danger of producing self-absorbed Christians, and not other-centered people. In other words, in following Wesley, we run the risk of suggesting that God’s entire enterprise revolves around us and is about us and our salvation. This can result in a private spirituality and not the hoped-for social concern. From outside the Wesleyan academy, Tom Wright warns:

The theological equivalent of supposing that the earth goes round the sun is the belief that the whole of Christian truth is all about me and my salvation. I have read dozens of books and articles ... on the topic of justification. Again and again the writers, from a variety of backgrounds, have assumed, taken it for granted, that the central question of all is, 'What must I do to be saved?' or

¹⁷¹ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 330–31, n.3. The note V.3 on p. 395 of Wesley’s that Maddox alerts us to is:

Yet, as we find no command in holy writ for any particular order to be observed herein, so neither do the providence and the Spirit of God adhere to any without variation; but the means into which different men are led, and in which they find the blessing of God, are varied, transposed, and combined together, a thousand different ways. Yet still our wisdom is to follow the leadings of his providence and his Spirit; to be guided herein (more especially as to the means wherein we ourselves seek the grace of God), partly by his outward providence, giving us the opportunity of using sometimes one means, sometimes another, partly by our experience, which it is whereby his free Spirit is pleased most to work in our heart. And in the mean time, the sure and general rule for all who groan for the salvation of God is this, — whenever opportunity serves, use all the means which God has ordained; for who knows in which God will meet thee with the grace that bringeth salvation? See Wesley, “Means of Grace,” Sermon 16 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 395.

(Luther's way of putting it), 'How can I find a gracious God?' or, 'How can I enter a right relationship with God?' ... But we are not the centre of the universe. God is not circling around us. We are circling around him. It may look, from our point of view, as though 'me and my salvation' are the be-all and end-all of Christianity ... God made humans for a purpose: not simply for themselves, not simply so that they could be in relationship with him, but so that through them, as his image-bearers, he could bring his wise, glad, fruitful order to the world.¹⁷²

Abraham, who writes from within Wesleyan scholarship, sees Wesley inadvertently contributing to a kind of spirituality that is all about the person but not the world in which they live. He sees in Wesley “a shift away from a focus on the reality of the Kingdom as it comes in Christ and in the operations of the Holy Spirit to a focus on the religious affections and on personal religious experience.”¹⁷³ This “anthropocentric emphasis”¹⁷⁴ as Abraham terms it, results in “a fierce concentration on the response of the individual”¹⁷⁵ but not necessarily their response to others. As has already been illustrated however, Wesley in his life and thought believed that the end purpose or telos of human maturation was love of ‘the other’ – both God and neighbour. Therefore, and as Clapper correctly notes, Wesley “escapes the critique of ‘religion as inwardness,’”¹⁷⁶ stating that if “Wesley’s vision of true ‘heart religion’ were taken seriously today it would lead to anything but self-centered navel-gazing.”¹⁷⁷

A final critical consideration emerges from philosophy; more specifically, post-structuralism from within that discipline. To recap Wesley’s position, we see a stage-by-stage, layer-upon-layer approach to human development that reads like a hierarchical

¹⁷² Tom Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (London: SPCK, 2009), 7.

¹⁷³ Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism*, 58.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 59. See also William J. Abraham’s “A Theology of Evangelism: The Heart of the Matter,” in *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church* (ed. Paul W. Chilcote and Lacey C. Warner; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 18–32. Philip Meadows takes issue with what he terms Abraham’s “missiological paradigm” and insists that a Wesleyan paradigm consists of both an inward focus and an outward one. See, Philip R. Meadows, “The Journey of Evangelism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (ed. Abraham and Kirby), 413–30.

¹⁷⁵ Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism*, 59.

¹⁷⁶ Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, 167.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 173.

integrative trajectory where what goes before overlaps with what follows, ultimately culminating in some sort of perfection. As a person transitions from one stage to another, so renewal and transformation begin and, hopefully, continue. Those that stay the course emerge at the other end as new creatures, capable of love of neighbour and stranger. What is apparent in Wesley's approach is "the differentiation of salvation into the separate stages of a process."¹⁷⁸ Progress is made by passing through stages in accordance to a fixed sequence or pattern. In this respect, Wesley's orthodoxy resembles a religious structuralist developmentalist approach. A developmentalist perspective holds that "developmental change is systematic in that it is coherent and organized."¹⁷⁹ It is structured around stages, sequences, differentiations and "descriptions, explanations and predictions."¹⁸⁰

It is this very structured approach that opens Wesley up to various criticisms from within philosophy. Post-structuralists¹⁸¹ may ask of Wesley the following set of questions: Is it fair to reduce people to being natural, legal or evangelical? Do such fixed categorisations do justice to human diversity? Can Wesley claim such absolute truth about people? Is it right that he is so clear and categorical about people and where they are on a spectrum in terms of their human journey? What about the role of the person themselves to self-define who and where they are?

¹⁷⁸ Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 85.

¹⁷⁹ Diane E. Papalia, Sally Wendkos Olds, and Ruth Duskin Feldman, *Human Development* (7th ed.; Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 18.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁸¹ Post-structuralism emerged in the 1970s in reaction to structuralism that had shaped research from the 1950s through to the 1970s. Structuralism prefers scientific models, systems, constituent elements and rules, and detailed elaboration. Post-structuralism seeks to liberate the subject of enquiry from such systems, rules and so on. The subject is not to be governed or labelled by powerful discourses or institutional knowledge. Such sources, claims the post-structuralist, are culturally constructed for the sake of power. See Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 708; Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 882–3.

Wesley, far from being a categorical thinker who reduces people to boxes or either/or binary opposites, thinks in terms of spectrums or continuums.¹⁸² For him, people can experience the same thing to different degrees. Lindstrom makes the point that in Wesley “there is nothing that cannot be expressed in terms of degrees and measures.”¹⁸³ For example, in terms of human sincerity, he does not divide people up into opposites; those who are sincere and those who are not. Rather, he proposes degrees of sincerity.¹⁸⁴ Likewise with love, Wesley suggests this “may admit of a thousand degrees.”¹⁸⁵ This allows Wesley to be inclusive of all people and respectful of diversity and heterogeneity – thus addressing the concerns of post-structuralism.

At first reading Wesley’s layered, systematic approach may also seem overly formulaic and hegemonic. Implicit is the idea that everyone *must* pattern their journey of faith logically and chronologically and that the individual person has no room to move in terms of self-definition. This is another concern of post-structuralism. The text, be it the Bible or Wesley’s corpus, seems overly to define and control the path people should take. However, we must not confuse Wesley’s style with his intent. His style is that of an eighteenth-century theologically-trained logician. His intent however, is to empower the reader to decide for themselves. Clapper rightly makes the point that “it was Wesley’s desire not to come between the Scriptures and the reader, but to put the reader in more intimate connection with scriptural truth.”¹⁸⁶ Wesley provides evidence of this in the preface to his *Notes* on the Old and New Testaments. He chose not to write full commentaries on the books of the Bible but rather brief notes, believing that commentaries can easily disempower the reader, whereas notes allow his readers to think more freely for themselves. Wesley explains in his preface to *Notes* on the New Testament: “I have endeavoured to make the notes as short as possible, that the

¹⁸² See Wesley’s Sermon (89) “The More Excellent Way.”

¹⁸³ Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 120. For example, degrees of self-denial, peace, joy, faith, and contemplation of God, among other qualities.

¹⁸⁴ Wesley, “On Obedience to Pastors,” Sermon 97 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 381.

¹⁸⁵ Wesley, “On Family Religion,” Sermon 94 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 336.

¹⁸⁶ Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, 24.

comment may not obscure or swallow up the text; and as plain as possible, in pursuance of my main design, to assist the unlearned reader.”¹⁸⁷ And in the preface to his *Notes on the Old Testament* he writes similarly, “It is no part of my design, to save either learned or unlearned men from the trouble of thinking ... On the contrary, my intention is to make them think, and assist them in thinking.”¹⁸⁸ Clearly then, rather than imposing a text on others, Wesley sought to empower his readers to think for themselves.

Without needing to privilege the concerns of post-structuralism, this chapter on Wesley’s orthodoxy does address them in some measure. Wesley’s orthodoxy is not one of dogma. Rather, it is centred in events that he believed took place in space-time history. The backdrop to his orthodoxy is therefore one of events rather than propositional statements. These events, he argues, were subsequently reflected upon by a heterogeneous community and their interpretations form what is currently termed the Bible. Wesley believes these interpretations to be divinely inspired by the One who was involved in the actual events. The Bible is, in his understanding, story and narrative. Wesley reads this narrative not so much for information but formation. He reads, not so much to master the text, but to allow the text to shape his life, thought and walk. In this respect, Wesley does not treat the biblical text as an object but treats himself as the object of the text. He therefore reads more receptively than analytically. But in this act of reading, he remains the subject that can choose to respond; free to agree or disagree.

Wesley’s orthodoxy is one of participation in God’s love as expressed in the event of Christ and spoken of in Scripture. This participation makes for transformation, evidenced by a love of God and in turn of neighbor and stranger. In the introductory chapter, it was noted that this thesis would take on a prosopographical methodology, consisting of a collection of biographies to illustrate the way in which individuals were profoundly influenced by the various strands in the moral pathway. This chapter

¹⁸⁷ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (London: William Bowyer, 1755) Reprinted (London: Epworth Press, 1976), 7.

¹⁸⁸ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament* (Bristol: William Pine, 1765) Reprinted (Salem, Ohio: Schmul, 1975), viii, ix.

concludes therefore with the story of Freeborn Garrettson. Garrettson located himself in the story of Scripture (orthodoxy) and subsequently experienced his heart being affected (orthokardia). His story is therefore an ideal bridge between this chapter and the next on orthokardia.

An Exemplar of Orthodoxy

Freeborn Garrettson (1752–1827)

One-time wealthy farmer and slave owner Freeborn Garrettson took an interest in religion late in life. Then a personal revelation resulted in a changed heart and a passion to become a travelling advocate for slaves, black people and the poor.

Garrettson was born at Bush River Neck, Maryland in 1752. His grandfather, an immigrant from Great Britain, was among the first settlers in Maryland. Robert Drew Simpson, in his biographical essay on Garrettson, notes that his family “enjoyed above average economic circumstances” in that “they owned considerable land, a farm, a store, a smithy, and a number of slaves.”¹⁸⁹ At age 10, Freeborn became deeply depressed after losing his mother and several years later, his sister. He turned to religion but found little solace. After leaving school, he managed a neighbour’s farm.

At the age of 19, Freeborn heard of “a people called Methodists”¹⁹⁰ who were creating a stir in the county of Baltimore. The following year he was involved in a horse-riding accident and, while waiting for assistance, determined to become a seeker after God.

[B]efore I moved from the place, I promised to serve him all the days of my life. But before I arose from my knees, all my pain of body was removed, and I felt nearly as well as ever I did in my life. I also felt the drawings of God’s Spirit, and in a measure saw a beauty in Jesus: but I did not know that my sins were

¹⁸⁹ Robert Drew Simpson, “Introductory Biographical Essay and Notes,” in *American Methodist Pioneer: The Life and Journals of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson 1752–1827* (ed. Robert Drew Simpson; Rutland, Academy Books, 1984), 1–33.

¹⁹⁰ Simpson, *American Methodist Pioneer: The Life and Journals of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson 1752–1827*, 39.

forgiven; neither was the plan of salvation clearly open to me; but I went on my way determined, by grace, to be a follower of Christ.¹⁹¹

This turn of events troubled his father, especially when Freeborn began to show interest in the Methodists, whom he considered too serious. At age 21, after his father died, he immersed himself in Methodist literature for the next two years and became familiar with their orthodoxy. Finally, in June 1775, he was assured in his heart that what he had previously known in his head was true. Of this experience (orthokardia), he writes: “I saw a beauty in the perfections of the Deity and felt that power of faith and love that I had ever been a stranger to before”.¹⁹² This affectional change in his heart continued throughout his life. A few years after this his initial heart change, he observed that “his desires” were being “wonderfully enlarged.”¹⁹³

In one of his first actions following his Christian conversion, Freeborn set all his slaves free.

As I stood with a book in my hand, in the act of giving out a hymn, this thought powerfully struck my mind. “It is not right for you to keep your fellow creatures in bondage; you must let the oppressed go free.” I knew it to be that same blessed voice which had spoken to me before – till then I had never suspected that the practice of slave-keeping was wrong; I had not read a book on the subject, nor been told so by any – I paused a minute and then replied, “Lord, the oppressed shall go free.” And I was as clear of them in my mind, as if I had never owned one. I told them they did not belong to me, and that I did not desire their services without making them a compensation; and I was now at liberty to proceed in worship.¹⁹⁴

On making this radical change he also declared that it was his aim to go “to the ends of the earth”¹⁹⁵ on behalf of others. From that time onward, he never tired in his advocacy

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 40.

¹⁹² Ibid., 45.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 58.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 48.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 48.

on behalf of American slaves. In his preaching he spoke to “both white and black.”¹⁹⁶ He wrote of the “hard usage of the poor afflicted negroes” and in observing their plight “many times did my heart ache on their account, and many tears run down my cheeks.”¹⁹⁷

In 1775, Freeborn committed to the Methodists, exclaiming “these are the people”¹⁹⁸ and began attending a class-meeting (orthokoinonia). Not unlike Wesley, he gave the rest of his life to being in groups and creating groups. Freeborn came to see that this structured way of social discipleship was all part of Methodist “discipline”¹⁹⁹ or as this thesis terms it, orthopaideia.

In 1776, his emerging praxis became one of travelling to meet new people in new places, a practice that did not come easily to him. That year, he set out on a particular trip but, having arrived at his destination, wanted to turn back. He felt like hiding, and excused himself by claiming he was sick.²⁰⁰ However, he increasingly came under the combined empowering and enabling effect of the orthos, and gave himself to an “innate restlessness” which saw his disposition change to a strong desire to “be in the field.”²⁰¹ Ezra Tipple, in his biography of Freeborn Garrettson, likens him to Francis Asbury²⁰² whose life was marked by “I went ... I rode ... I came.”²⁰³

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 63.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 65.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 49.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 57.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 57.

²⁰¹ Simpson, “Introductory Biographical Essay and Notes,” 26.

²⁰² Francis Asbury (1745–1816) converted to Methodism as a young teenage boy in the United Kingdom, and at age 26 departed for America to further the cause of Methodism. In terms of this thesis, Asbury is more comprehensively cited under the ortho of orthokoinonia.

²⁰³ Ezra Squier Tipple, *Freeborn Garrettson* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1910), 40.

Nathan Bangs, a contemporary of Garrettson, wrote that what distinguished him was his “gospel simplicity”²⁰⁴ (orthodoxy), “habits”²⁰⁵ (orthonomos), “divine love in the heart”²⁰⁶ (orthokardia), “an embrace”²⁰⁷ of his brethren (orthokoinonia), and the doing of “good”²⁰⁸ (orthopraxy). In other words, Freeborn was a person who walked the moral pathway and not surprisingly, walked toward neighbour and stranger in the process. Arguably, it was his early exploration of the Christian story and the Methodist interpretation of that story that ushered him into the incredible life lived for others which fulfilled the promises of orthodoxy. The following chapter will show that when a person’s story meshes and merges with the story of Scripture, the heart of a person is altered and new desires, urges and yearnings are birthed – including a desire for the Other, the stranger in one’s midst.

²⁰⁴ Nathan Bangs, *The Life of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson: Compiled from His Printed and Manuscript Journals and other Authentic Documents* (2nd ed., rev. and cor.; New York: J. Emory and R. Waugh, 1830), 323.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 323.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 323.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 324.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 324.

Chapter Five

Orthokardia

History, Head and Heart

In the preceding chapter, we conceded that walking toward a stranger is an act of will; that intent and purpose have a bearing on whether or not the decision will be made to step forward and commit to action. If that action is played out on one day of the week, and again when the opportunity presents, that person is then part of a larger story. In other words, a narrative backdrop becomes apparent that informs the intentions and purposes of the person who is acting; that story is now shaping their actions. John Wesley, as we have observed, made a conscious effort to walk toward all types of stranger on a regular basis. The story which became compelling for him arose from the Christian narrative. Wesley believed that the Christian narrative based in Scripture held the promise of bringing people to maturity. People can change to become, not only intentional lovers of God, but also purposeful lovers of people.

Wesley does not suggest that it is the biblical text itself that changes people, as though simply reading the biblical narrative will somehow make people mature. It is what the text speaks of or points towards that Wesley believes can truly change people. Scripture announces that God in Christ procured the possibility of changing human life through the events of Jesus' life, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension in Jerusalem. It is this story in space-time history as told in Scripture that promises life-change. Wesley's *ordo salutis* with its constituent parts – God working for people in pardoning and God working in people through regeneration – that promises what Wesley terms “a vast inward change” which in turn redirects the person outward toward neighbour. This is the point we reached in the previous chapter on orthodoxy. The nature of that inward change is the concern of this chapter and it has to do with our second ortho – orthokardia. In classical Greek *kardia* has both a literal and figurative meaning. Literally, it means the bodily organ of the heart but figuratively it denotes the seat of the emotions

and passions.¹ Before we explore this in its relation to Wesley, it is important to situate the question of what exactly changes inwardly in the context of Wesley's time and life. First, a brief paragraph on seventeenth-century moral psychology, and then a much longer section on how this psychology worked out in Wesley's life.

Moral Psychology and Wesley's Quest

During the seventeenth-century, faculty psychology was on the rise. Behaviour was explained in terms of the constituent parts of human faculties. For the intellectualists, the faculty of the mind was determinative of behaviour; for the voluntarists, the will was paramount; but for the sentimentalists, the genesis of human action lay in the heart. Richard Steele suggests that up until the early part of the eighteenth-century, these three were "competing moral psychologies."² Steele defines the first two as follows:

"Intellectualism" will refer to the theory that a person always chooses what she understands to be best ... on this view, the will is a "rational appetite" ... "Voluntarism," in contrast, gives much greater weight to the nonrational factors in human motivation than intellectualism, and construes moral goodness (or evil) as obedience to (or rebellion against) divine command ...³

Steele describes sentimentalism as being supported by those who emphasise the mystical, the emotional and the affections of the heart.⁴ There are therefore three competing psychologies: the mind, the will and the heart, and to a large extent these psychologies frame Wesley's life. Prior to his famous 1738 Aldersgate experience when he felt his heart strangely warmed, he believed that his mind and his will would determine his behaviour. In about 1738, Wesley became persuaded that the category of the heart is also very much determinative of human behaviour. In many respects, his journey to this new position resembles a quest and it is to this that we now turn.

¹ See p. 84, n. 14 of this thesis.

² Richard B. Steele, "*Gracious Affection*" and "*True Virtue*" According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, 35.

³ *Ibid.*, 35–6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12, 16.

Prior to 1738, John Wesley's love for the neighbour was mostly a matter of thinking, choosing and resolving. He was determined to love the stranger and (in the broadest sense) his neighbour because it was the right action to take. This cerebral/rational approach was instilled by the platonic philosophic climate of the day that privileged the human faculties of the mind and the will.

Wesley was raised to believe that the mind and reason could determine much. While at home, Wesley learned from his mother the Greek philosophical notion that the head and not the heart was more determinative of human behaviour. Susanna Wesley was a reader of Plato⁵ and, as Burton notes, in her reading of the Greek philosophers she usually disagreed with Aristotle but to Plato "gives more credit."⁶ Plato clearly privileges reason over the emotions as Susanna did in her discourses with her son. For example, in his *Republic*, Plato tells the following story:

It's about Leontion, son of Aglaion, who was in his way up from the Peiraeus, under the outer side of the north wall, when he noticed some corpses lying on the ground with the executioner standing by them. He wanted to go and look at them, and yet at the same time held himself back in disgust. For a time he struggled with himself and covered his eyes, but at last his desire got the better of him and he ran up to the corpses, opening his eyes wide and saying to them, "There you are, curse you – a lovely sight! Have a real good look!"⁷

One of the points Plato makes here is that desire forces people to do what reason disapproves. In other words, desires may get in the way of people doing the good and right thing, like walking toward the stranger. Plato likens desire and reason to political factions fighting within a person. He writes that once "reason has decided against resistance",⁸ then desire is free to rule. Conversely, if reason rules, then desire is held in

⁵ For example, in a letter to another son, Samuel Wesley Jr., she not only draws upon Platonic ideas but also mentions Plato by name. See "Letter to Wesley Jr." (11 March, 1704) in *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* (ed. Wallace), 43.

⁶ Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism*, 38.

⁷ Plato, *The Republic* (trans. Desmond Lee; 2nd ed. rev.; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), 216 (439e).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 216 (440b).

check. Such privileging of reason is underlined again in Plato's *Allegory of the Chariot* and in his dialogues on love and the place of rhetoric in *Phaedrus* (circa 370 BC):

Of the nature of the soul, though her true form be ever a theme of large and more than mortal discourse, let me speak briefly, and in a figure. And let the figure be composite – a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. Now the winged horses and the charioteers of the gods are all of them noble and of noble descent, but those of other races are mixed; the human charioteer drives his in a pair; and one of them is noble and of noble breed, and the other is ignoble and of ignoble breed; and the driving of them of necessity gives a great deal of trouble to him. (*Phaedrus* 246a-b).

In commentary on this, David Melling notes:

The charioteer and the two horses represent the three parts or elements of the human soul. Later passages in the *Phaedrus* and passages of direct psychological exposition in the *Republic* make clear the identity of the three elements in the image. The charioteer represents reason; the noble horse is thymos, the spirited, energetic, aspiring element in the soul; the horse of degenerate stock is appetite.”⁹

Implicit is the idea that reason can steer the emotions. The emotions have their place, for it is their raw power that draws the chariot along. In this respect, the emotions generate action. But for the chariot to head toward the stranger, for example, reason is needed.

Against this Platonic backdrop, it is not surprising that Susanna Wesley, in a personal letter to her son, writes that “the true happiness of man, under this consideration, consists in a due subordination of the inferior to the superior powers, of the animal to the rational nature ...”¹⁰ Later in the same letter she warns that “the inversion of this order is the true source of human misery.”¹¹ For Susanna, the root problem of human misery and unhappiness are unruly passions and a stubborn will. The cure is in doing what is right and the means is instruction. Therefore, “only when reason is in charge are

⁹ David J. Melling, *Understanding Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 73–4.

¹⁰ Susanna Wesley, “Letter to John” (8 June, 1725), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25:164–5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 25:165.

actions good.”¹² Even though she admits this in theory, she laments in her journal that often it is the emotions that rule despite the role of reason:

How is it that convictions have so little effect? Whence proceeds this constant perverseness in the affections that they do not immediately follow the dictates of the understanding and judgment? In the order of nature the understanding should direct the judgment, that the will, and that should excite the affections, and in indifferent things it usually is so; but in things of a moral nature `tis often quite otherwise, and by a stronger corrupt reverse of the actions of the soul the order of nature is inverted and the passions gain the ascendant over the superior powers ...”¹³

Randy Maddox labels this overly intellectualist approach to moral psychology,¹⁴ the “habituated rational control” model.¹⁵ Under this model the “will” is viewed as an “autonomous ability” that can “assert rational control over our motivating dynamics, thereby freeing ourselves to make moral choices.”¹⁶ In other words, all that is needed to walk toward the stranger is a decision to do so, based on the “rational recognition that it is our duty.”¹⁷ To put it bluntly, we are to love because we know it is the right and reasonable thing to do, or as Colon-Emeric puts it, “Only when reason is in charge are actions good.”¹⁸

For John Wesley, this “habituated rational control” model seemed to work, at least in terms of walking toward the stranger. As explained in Chapter 1, Wesley was walking toward all manner of strangers at Oxford and in Georgia and seeking to rationally order

¹² Colon-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection*, 36.

¹³ Wallace Jr., *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, 244.

¹⁴ Randy Maddox defines ‘moral psychology’ as: “the dynamics involved in moral choice and action.” At issue here, according to Maddox, are a number of important questions: Are our options really open at the juncture of moral choices or acts? If the option is open in some meaningful sense, what most hinders us from choosing as we ought? And, what would most effectively “free” us to choose differently? See Maddox, “A Change of Affections,” 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁶ Maddox, “Psychology and Wesleyan Theology,” 104.

¹⁷ Maddox, “A Change of Affections,” 10.

¹⁸ Colon-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection*, 36.

his life while under the influence of his mother. However, if we examine his letters in 1738, it is clear something is gnawing at him. In correspondence with Lady Cox,¹⁹ he laments that on his return to Oxford after his Georgia campaign, only a few Methodists were continuing along the path he had prescribed. While many had scattered throughout England and almost “to the ends of the earth,” he is disappointed to find “only three gentlemen who trod in their steps, building up one another in the faith.”²⁰ Wesley, forever the astute observer, may have wondered about his “habituated rational control” model and its long-term sustainability, not only for others but for himself. Echoes of this are found in his letter of criticism to William Law:²¹

For two years (more especially) [I] have been preaching after the model of your two practical treatises. And all that heard have allowed that this law is great, wonderful, and holy. But no sooner did they attempt to follow it than they found it was too high for man ... both they and I were only more convinced that this was a law whereby a man could not live ...²²

Wesley studied Law’s books and would have noted his high view of Plato and other Greek philosophers. Like Plato, Law talks of the “dignity of reason”²³ and of the need to educate people “to think, and judge, and act, and live ...” Law further privileges the role of reason when he states “the short of the matter is this; either reason and religion prescribe rules and ends to all the ordinary actions of our life, or they do not ...”²⁴ In his reflection on Law’s published works, Harald Lindstrom observes that, for Law, “religion is associated with reason” and that “the holy life was the reasonable life, in harmony with an objective rational order ...”²⁵ After two tumultuous and tiring experiments in

¹⁹ Lady Cox, was the widow of Sir Richard Cox, second Baronet of Dumbleton, Gloucestershire. She was one of George Whitefield’s earliest converts.

²⁰ Wesley, “Letter to Lady Cox” (7 March, 1737/8), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 533.

²¹ Refer to p. 35, n. 35 of this thesis for background material on Law.

²² Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. William Law” (14 May, 1738), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 540–41.

²³ Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, 169.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁵ Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 168.

Oxford and Georgia, Wesley sought a better and possibly easier way to love God and neighbour. What Maddox calls the “habituated rational model” may have worked for Wesley but he did not believe it was the most sustainable way to love neighbours.

Wesley had come to the view that reason and the mind, on their own, were not sufficient. In early 1738 he wrote in a memorandum, “... I fluctuated between obedience and disobedience: I had no heart, no vigour, no zeal in obeying ...”²⁶ It was not enough to just know and believe the right thing; Wesley knew his heart had to be in it as well.²⁷ No longer enamoured of William Law, Wesley’s quest for a more sustainable way of loving God and neighbour led him to the Moravian, Peter Bohler, whom he met on 7 February, 1738. Bohler urged Wesley to purge himself of his philosophic ways²⁸ and instead think of “an instantaneous work of God”²⁹ in his own heart and life. What Bohler had in mind was an infusion of God into Wesley’s life.³⁰ Wesley was well familiar with this Augustinian approach.³¹ As Maddox notes, the English Moravians were steeped in the “Augustinian stream of Christian spirituality.”³²

Augustine took issue with Plato, whom he thought underestimated the power of the passions and overestimated the power of the mind to control them. It was Augustine’s

²⁶ Wesley, (28 January, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 213.

²⁷ Prior to Aldersgate, Wesley was clearly faithful in his practice of walking toward the stranger and yet his heart was not in it. There was constancy but, in the words of Amy Plantinga Pauw, not “fidelity.” She explains: “When my practices exemplify fidelity, my whole self, including my beliefs, is present in them; there is a vital connection between my deepest sense of the world and how I conduct myself in it. When I am merely constant, my practices exhibit a bare conformity to my beliefs, but I am not ‘present’ in them in the same way.” See Amy Plantinga Pauw, “Attending to the Gaps between Beliefs and Practices,” in *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 44.

²⁸ Wesley, (18 February, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 226.

²⁹ Wesley, (22 April, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 234.

³⁰ Wesley, (10 May, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 239.

³¹ That Wesley was familiar with Augustine is demonstrated, for example, in several of his published sermons. In *Sermons* (ed. Outler), see Sermon 3 (1: 148); Sermon 51 (2: 285); Sermon 67 (2: 548); and Sermon 103 (3: 459).

³² Maddox, “A Change of Affections,” 11.

view that far from the mind subjugating the passions, the mind was in fact a slave to the passions. Augustine, like Plato, still advocated a view that the mind needed to control the passions, but he believed only a God-aided mind could effectively achieve this. The need to subjugate the emotions should not be viewed as Augustine wanting to obliterate desire or encourage impassivity. Augustine avers:

Then if *apatheia* describes a condition in which there is no fear to terrify, no pain to torment, then it is a condition to be shunned in this life, if we wish to lead the right kind of life, the life that is, according to God's will ... Some of those people may display an empty complacency, the more monstrous for being so rare, which makes them so charmed with this achievement in themselves that they are not stirred or excited by any emotions at all, not swayed or influenced by any feelings. If so, they rather lose every shred of humanity than achieve a true tranquility.³³

To help us appreciate the role of emotions, Augustine differentiated between passions and the affections. The former were troublesome but the latter praiseworthy.

If these emotions and feelings, that spring from love of the good and from holy charity, are to be called faults, then let us allow that real faults should be called virtues. But since these feelings are the consequence of right reason when they are exhibited in the proper situation, who will then venture to call them morbid or disordered passions?³⁴

For Augustine, emotions are not wrong or evil; they only become so when directed wrongly by the will. Conversely, when the will was directed by a God-aided mind, the emotions become assets. "The important factor in those emotions is the character of a man's will. If the will is wrongly directed, the emotions will be wrong; if the will is right, the emotions will be not only blameless, but praiseworthy. The will is engaged in all of them; in fact they are all essentially acts of the will."³⁵

³³ Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans* (trans. Henry Bettenson; London: Penguin Books, 1984), XIV: 9, 565–6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, XIV:9, 563.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, XIV:6, 555.

Augustine believed that if the troublesome passions were to be subverted, then this would require an ‘infusion’ of God’s affections into the human soul. In this sense, Augustine promoted supernatural intervention as a way, not only to sideline all harmful passions but also to foster new and beneficial affections. In Maddox’s view, however, such infusions compromise or reduce Augustine’s view to “deterministic voluntarism”³⁶ where God not only decides the good but also causes humans to do that good. The good, under this scheme, is the necessary and inevitable fruit of prior causes. Infused affections *of necessity* change human conduct. Maddox rightly argues that Wesley, with his clear notion of human response-ability, found this aspect of Augustine’s affectional view problematic.

Wesley’s quest for an appropriate affectional view took him next to Aldersgate and an examination of his own heart. In the context of a small group and while listening to a reading from Luther’s preface to Romans, Wesley felt his heart ‘warmed’. He writes:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.³⁷

Wesley framed this experience in terms of feelings. He felt his heart strangely warmed and added, “I felt I did trust in Christ ...”³⁸ Such feelings had been absent prior to Aldersgate: “... I well saw no one could (in the nature of things) have such a sense of forgiveness and not feel it. But I felt it not.”³⁹ Just before to his Aldersgate experience, he wrote to William Law confessing that he had a “speculative, notional, airy” faith which lived in his head but “not the heart.”⁴⁰ To put it crudely – at Aldersgate his heart caught up with his head. From this point onwards, as noted in the earlier sections in this

³⁶ Maddox, “A Change of Affections,” 10.

³⁷ Wesley, (24 May, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 249–50.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 18: 250.

³⁹ Wesley, (24 May, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 248.

⁴⁰ Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. William Law” (14 May, 1738), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 541.

chapter, Wesley underlined the vital and vibrant role that the heart and its emotions have in determining behaviour, including pro-social behaviour on behalf of others.

In his journal, sermons and letters, Wesley mentioned the importance of feelings and the things of the heart. In October 1738, he wrote that people can inwardly change such that their “desires are new” and indeed all their “passions and inclinations.”⁴¹ The following year in a letter to Henry Stebbing, he wrote of a “thorough change of heart, an inward renewal,”⁴² and in the same letter went on to say that inward realities “must be felt.”⁴³ For example, it is not enough just to know the belief of justification, it must also be felt.⁴⁴ And to his anonymous critic John Smith, Wesley argued that a person “must feel in themselves the testimony of God’s Spirit that he is a child of God.”⁴⁵

By feelings, Wesley meant an inner awareness of things. In his sermon “The New Birth” he talked of being “inwardly sensible of” and “conscious of” the love of God.⁴⁶ In a letter to Dr. Rutherford who pressed Wesley to define what he meant by feelings, he replied, “By ‘feeling’ I mean being inwardly conscious of.”⁴⁷ Wesley is not referring to fleeting ephemeral emotional states; the ‘feelings’ consciously imply a cognitive dimension. The object of which he is conscious is God’s narrative, his story concerning Christ. When linking Wesley’s narrative and his affectional view, we need to understand that, in his anthropology, the emotional center of the human being is responsive. As Maddox writes, “the affections are not self-generating springs of motive power, they incite us to action only when they are affected.”⁴⁸ As such, the religious affection of

⁴¹ Wesley, (14 October, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 18.

⁴² Wesley, (31 July, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 84.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 19: 85.

⁴⁴ Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. Charles Wesley” (28 June, 1738), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 554.

⁴⁵ Wesley, “Letter to John Smith” (25 March, 1747), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 230.

⁴⁶ Wesley, “The New Birth,” Sermon 45 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 193.

⁴⁷ Wesley, “A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Rutherford” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 383.

⁴⁸ Maddox, “A Change of Affections,” 13.

love for the stranger is contingent upon a reality external to itself, namely God's love in Christ in space-time history. Clapper rightly notes that in Wesley's scheme, the "religious affections, then, are not totally self-contained 'inner realities' in that they require an object. Their generation is a result of the soul turning to God. If God is not the object, they are not Christian affections."⁴⁹

In talking about the affections, Wesley does not simply mean irrational, innate feelings. Rather, his religious affections have their genesis in what he believes God accomplished in Christ in a particular place called Jerusalem. This external act, once revealed by God and received by the individual, results in a transformation of the emotional realm. The trajectory therefore is: God's actions in history, knowledge of this, meditation on that knowledge, gaining a revelation, and then receiving and experiencing God's love. This, in turn, produces new desires, culminating in outward behaviour which for our purposes includes walking toward the neighbour or stranger. The course therefore is not through some "mystagogic or ecstatic"⁵⁰ intervention, but one that engages history, head and heart.

Wesley does not speak of inherent, self-generated, emotional upheavals or moving, feeling states. Rather, he is trying to describe the content-filled communicative action of 'another' in the innermost core of one's being which can engender inner feelings and affectionate responses. The content-filled communicative action of 'another' is the Spirit of God witnessing to a person's spirit that they are loved by God. In his sermon "The Witness of the Spirit", Wesley writes:

The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, 78.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵¹ Wesley, "The Witness of the Spirit I," Sermon 10 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 274.

Wesley struggles to comprehend how this communicative action by the Spirit actually transpires. “It is hard to find words in the language of men,” he writes, “to explain ‘the deep things of God.’”⁵² Elsewhere he uses language like “an inward impression”⁵³ and that of an “immediate influence, and by a strong, though inexplicable operation”⁵⁴ to describe the Spirit’s work in the heart of the person. However it occurs, “the language of the heart”⁵⁵ changes and what is inwardly felt is that the person must now “tread in his steps.”⁵⁶ In other words, as Jesus walked, so the individual now wants to walk in his steps; which includes walking toward the “stranger.”⁵⁷ The Spirit enables people to be walkers, but such enabling is not just an infusing of energy or enthusiasm. Rather, the Spirit enables a person to become inwardly conscious of their being, truly loved by a pardoning and affectionate God; and this inner awareness affects the heart so that it is now “disposed toward”⁵⁸ love. As Collins puts it, the Spirit engenders a “dispositional transformation.”⁵⁹ Or as Maddox observes, “the Spirit’s goal is to bring even greater freedom by transforming our tempers, so that our deepest inclinations are to acts of love for God and neighbor.”⁶⁰ Or, for Wesley, the new inward feelings are the “mighty workings of the Spirit of Christ” that can kindle love.⁶¹

Wesley talks not just of affections but also of dispositions and tempers of the heart. His sermon “On a Single Eye” lists “passions, affections and tempers.”⁶² By way of

⁵² Ibid., 1: 274.

⁵³ Wesley, “The Witness of the Spirit II,” Sermon 11 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 287.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1: 287.

⁵⁵ Wesley, “scriptural Christianity,” Sermon 4 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 164.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1: 164.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1: 164.

⁵⁸ Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 127.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 127.

⁶⁰ Maddox, “A Change of Affections,” 18.

⁶¹ Wesley, “Letter to Dr. Henry Stebbing” (25 July, 1739), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 672.

⁶² Wesley, “On a Single Eye,” Sermon 125 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 126.

differentiating these, Knight suggests, “Affections denote those inclinations evoked in the heart ... When affections take root in the heart to the point of abiding dispositions they become “tempers.”⁶³ These affections, dispositions and tempers have been variously described in secondary literature as the “new principle in the agent,”⁶⁴ “master passions which shape all behaviour,”⁶⁵ “the fixed posture of the soul,”⁶⁶ “the deep attitude of the heart,”⁶⁷ “general orientation,”⁶⁸ “inward perfection,”⁶⁹ “and motivating inclinations,”⁷⁰ or the “inner orientation.”⁷¹ The marker then of a mature person is that of abiding dispositions becoming life-long tempers.

Moral Psychology and Wesley’s Anthropology

Wesley uses a plethora of biblical passages to support his view that the heart and its desires are foundational to what it means to be both human and, more importantly, Christian.⁷² Wesley makes direct reference to the emotions of the heart through referencing a key passage in Deuteronomy 5:

Hast thou worshipped God in spirit and in truth. Hast thou proposed to thyself no end besides him. Hath he been the end of all thy actions. Hast thou sought for

⁶³ Henry H. Knight III, “The Role of Faith and the Means of Grace in the Heart Religion of John Wesley,” in *Heart Religion in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard B. Steele), 273–90.

⁶⁴ James M. Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective* (vol. 1: Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), 226.

⁶⁵ Gregory S. Clapper, “Shaping Heart Through Preaching and Pastoral Care,” in *Heart Religion in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard B. Steele), 209–24.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁶⁸ Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, 57.

⁶⁹ Heitzenrater, “The *Imitatio Christi* and the Great Commandment: Virtue and Obligation in Wesley’s Ministry with the Poor,” 60.

⁷⁰ Maddox, “A Change of Affections,” 14.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷² Exodus 4:21f.; Deuteronomy 2:30; 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 105:25; Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10; 20:12; Ezekiel 36:26; Mark 12:33; Luke 10:27; John 9:38; Acts 2:46; 15:9; 22:3; Romans 8:27; Galatians 6:8; 2:20; 5:25; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:2-3; 1 John 3:19.

any other happiness, than the knowledge and love of God. Dost thou experimentally know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent Dost thou love God. Dost thou love him with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; so as to love nothing else but in that manner and degree which tends to increase thy love of him. Hast thou found happiness in God. Is he the desire of thine eyes, the joy of thy heart? If not, thou hast other gods before him.⁷³

Wesley's use of *experimentally* in these notes picks up on the second of his four dimensions (experience) and he elaborates by writing of *love, heart, desire* and *joy*. In commentary on the Deuteronomic call to love God and neighbour (Deuteronomy 30:6), Wesley references Luke 10:27:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God – That is, thou shalt unite all the faculties of thy soul to render him the most intelligent and sincere, the most affectionate and resolute service. We may safely rest in this general sense of these important words, if we are not able to fix the particular meaning of every single word. If we desire to do this, perhaps the heart, which is a general expression, may be explained by the three following, With all thy soul, with the warmest affection, with all thy strength, the most vigorous efforts of thy will, and with all thy mind or understanding, in the most wise and reasonable manner thou canst; thy understanding guiding thy will and affections. Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18.⁷⁴

In noting the heart and its affections, Wesley is yet again speaking the language of orthokardia.

Wesley's anthropology of the human was firmly rooted in his belief in the Genesis story of creation. He held that humans were created by God and in God's image.⁷⁵ In his sermon "The General Deliverance", Wesley details three aspects to this image: the natural, the political and the moral. In terms of the natural, humans are "endued with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections."⁷⁶ These are the immaterial or

⁷³ John Wesley, "Notes on the Fifth Book of Moses Called Deuteronomy," n.p. [accessed 28 July, 2012]. Wesley Center Online. Online: <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesleys-notes-on-the-bible/notes-on-the-fifth-book-of-moses-called-deuteronomy/#Chapter%2BV>.

⁷⁴ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (London: William Bowyer, 1755) Reprinted (Oxford: Benediction Classics 2010), 116.

⁷⁵ Wesley, "The General Deliverance," Sermon 60 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:437ff.

⁷⁶ Wesley, "The New Birth," Sermon 45 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:188.

spiritual aspects of the image. Being in God's political image has to do with governance and leadership. Humans are to be "governors of this lower world" in light of the Genesis call for Adam and Eve to exercise dominion over the created order. Humanity was made "chiefly in his moral image" and by this he means: God is love.

Accordingly, man at his creation was full of love; which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth; so was man as he came from the hands of his Creator. God is spotless purity; and so man was in the beginning pure from every sinful blot; otherwise God could not have pronounced him, as well as all the other work of his hands, "very good" (Gen. 1:31.). This he could not have been, had he not been pure from sin, and filled with righteousness and true holiness.⁷⁷

It was this moral image that Wesley believed ultimately set humans apart from other created beings. And so of Adam and Eve, the original humans, he writes: "Man is capable of God; the inferior creatures are not. We have no ground to believe that they are, in any degree, capable of knowing, loving, or obeying God."⁷⁸ From his understanding of the creation account, Wesley introduces the three constituent parts of his human anthropology: understanding, the will and liberty. His definition sheds light on the role he believes the heart has to play in human behaviour.

Understanding ensures humans have the "power of distinguishing"⁷⁹ one thing from another so they are "capable of apprehending all things clearly."⁸⁰ Such understanding enables humans to think, judge, reason and reflect.⁸¹ Liberty, on the other hand, is "a power of choosing what was good, and refusing what was not."⁸² This is the arena of "choice."⁸³ Wesley warns that this liberty must not be "confounded with the will" as it is

⁷⁷ Ibid., 2:188.

⁷⁸ Wesley, "The General Deliverance," Sermon 60 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:441.

⁷⁹ Wesley, "The Image of God," Sermon 141 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 293.

⁸⁰ Wesley, "The General Deliverance," Sermon 60 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:439.

⁸¹ Wesley, "What is Man?" Sermon 116 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 21.

⁸² Wesley, "The End of Christ's Coming," Sermon 62 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:475.

⁸³ Wesley, "The Image of God," Sermon 141 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 295.

of a “very different nature.”⁸⁴ It is the place of “self-determination.”⁸⁵ This brings us to the third dimension of the will, which enables humans to “love, desire, and delight in that which is good.”⁸⁶ Wesley writes that the will is the home of “inward emotions which are commonly called ‘passions’ or ‘affections.’”⁸⁷ The will, therefore, is not the rational choosing mechanism but a “constellation of affections, passions, and tempers ...”⁸⁸ In other words, it is more an emotional centre than a purely rational one.

The way in which these three parts work together is now explored. As the understanding comprehends God’s actions in space-time history, so the heart can be affected to act in a certain way, for example love of others. Seeing love enables love. Experiencing love engenders affections of love for others. Receiving God’s life and therefore God’s love, generates a new desire to love. Wesley writes: “The necessary fruit of this love of God is the love of our neighbor; of every soul which God hath made; not excepting our enemies; not excepting those who are now ‘despitefully using and persecuting us’; — a love whereby we love every man as ourselves; as we love our own souls.”⁸⁹ The person therefore loves the other, not simply out of gratitude for the love that they have received but because it is now in their nature to love. God’s love has infused an affectional response to love. The will has been altered.

Wesley was not conclusively stating that a change in desire will *necessarily* bring about love of the stranger. Wesley’s affections are not irresistible forces that undermine human freedom. As Maddox notes, the category of liberty, that choosing part in Wesley’s anthropology, enhances “our capacity to enact (or refuse to enact) our desires

⁸⁴ Wesley, “What is Man?” Sermon 116 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 23–4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 4: 24.

⁸⁶ Wesley, “The End of Christ’s Coming,” Sermon 62 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:474.

⁸⁷ Wesley, “What is Man?” Sermon 116 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 22.

⁸⁸ Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 53.

⁸⁹ Wesley, “The Marks of the New Birth,” Sermon 18 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1:426.

and inclinations.”⁹⁰ Elsewhere, Maddox writes that “Wesley could not accept Augustine’s deterministic moral psychology (where God infuses irresistible dispositions).”⁹¹ Returning to Wesley’s anthropology, he equates the will with the affections, and talks of ‘liberty’ as the part that chooses to act on the inclinations of the affections. In a rather lengthy but helpful passage, Maddox writes:

These affections are not simply feelings; they are the indispensable motivating inclinations behind human action. In ideal expression they integrate the rational and emotional dimensions of human life into holistic inclinations toward action. While provocative of action, the affections have a crucial receptive dimension as well. They are not self-causative, but are awakened and thrive in response to experience of external reality. In what Wesley held as the crucial instance, it is only in response to our experience of God’s gracious love for us, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that our affection of love for God and others is awakened and grows ... While the will (i.e., the affections) responsively provides our actual inclinations to action, liberty is our limited capacity to refuse to enact any particular inclination. Though we cannot self-generate love, we do have the liberty to stifle responsive loving! This insistence distanced Wesley’s mature moral psychology from both philosophical and theological forms of strong determinism.⁹²

The religious affections and desires may not determine action, but for Wesley, they prime the person for action, especially that of love toward neighbour/stranger. In Wesley’s scheme, the affections can be inclinations to love but not predispositions in a determinative sense. The will can be moved to love but liberty or choice can derail any such move. Wesley’s place for liberty, and Maddox’s reference to it, distances them from the views of James K. A. Smith, who likens new God-given desires to a second nature that predisposes a person to act in a certain way. Smith writes:

These habits constitute a kind of "second nature": while they are learned (and thus not simply biological instincts), they can become so intricately woven into the fiber of our being that they function as if they were natural or biological. They represent our default tendencies and our quasi-automatic dispositions to act

⁹⁰ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 69.

⁹¹ Maddox, “Psychology and Wesleyan Theology,” 102.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 103.

in certain ways, to pursue certain goods, to value certain things, to cherish certain relationships, and so forth. So the virtuous person is someone who has an almost automatic disposition to do the right thing "without thinking about it." Our habits incline us to act in certain ways without having to kick into a mode of reflection; for the most part we are driven by an engine that purrs under the hood with little attention from us. This precognitive engine is the product of long development and formation – it's *made*, not some kind of "hard wiring" – but it functions in a way that doesn't require our reflection or cognition.⁹³

Wesley would shy away from language such as “quasi-automatic dispositions”, acting “without thinking about it”, and “being driven” to act. His anthropology keeps a place alive for reflection (understanding), inclination (affections) and choice (will).

Moral Psychology and Wesley’s Conversation Partners

This chapter began with a brief introduction to the three competing psychologies of the seventeenth-century, represented by the intellectualists (mind and understanding), the voluntarists (the will) and the sentimentalists (the heart). Wesley was conversant with these competing psychologies through his reading of notable theorists, including John Locke (1632–1704), Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715), Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), and Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758). Comparing and contrasting Wesley with these thinkers helps make his particular brand of theological anthropology much clearer.

What Wesley drew from Locke⁹⁴ was his separation of the will from the faculty of liberty. Both will and liberty were antecedent to action. The will, in terms of our study, comprised the desire to walk toward the stranger but without necessarily making it

⁹³ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 56.

⁹⁴ Even though Wesley aligned himself with Locke on some fronts, this is not to suggest that Wesley was an ‘Enlightenment’ figure. For Wesley, morality, virtue, and knowing and doing good are all contingent upon participation in God, and such participation is Christological. In other words, even though Wesley was with Locke in rejecting the notion of innate ideas, this must not be read as a Wesleyan embrace of Locke’s empiricism. Human sensation, intuition, observation and reflection, even though they are helpful, cannot in and of themselves produce knowledge of God, love of God and virtuous behaviour for neighbour and stranger. In terms of contemporary debate as to the extent to which Wesley can be mediated through Locke, see Richard B. Brantley, *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1984) and D. Stephen Long, *John Wesley’s Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2005).

happen. The human agent has liberty to choose to act or not. In other words, the faculty of liberty ensures we have “the power to begin or end actions.”⁹⁵ Locke stressed “the possibility of conflict between desires and volitions”⁹⁶ and Wesley concurred:

I am conscious to myself of one more property, commonly called liberty. This is very frequently confounded with the will; but is of a very different nature. Neither is it a property of the will, but a distinct property of the soul; capable of being exerted with regard to all the faculties of the soul, as well as all the motions of the body. It is a power of self-determination; which, although it does not extend to all our thoughts and imaginations, yet extends to our words and actions in general, and not with many exceptions. I am full as certain of this, that I am free, with respect to these, to speak or not to speak, to act or not to act, to do this or the contrary, as I am of my own existence. I have not only what is termed, a "liberty of contradiction" – power to do or not to do; but what is termed, a "liberty of contrariety" – a power to act one way, or the contrary. To deny this would be to deny the constant experience of all human kind. Every one feels that he has an inherent power to move this or that part of his body, to move it or not, and to move this way or the contrary, just as he pleases. I can, as I choose, (and so can every one that is born of a woman) open or shut my eyes; speak, or be silent; rise or sit down; stretch out my hand, or draw it in; and use any of my limbs according to my pleasure, as well as my whole body. And although I have not an absolute power over my own mind, because of the corruption of my own nature; yet, through the grace of God assisting me, I have a power to choose and do good, as well as evil. I am free to choose whom I will serve; and if I choose the better part, to continue therein even unto death.⁹⁷

With Locke, Wesley wants to keep a place for the desires but, unlike the sentimentalists, he does not reduce human behaviour to the realm of the emotions. His emphasis on choosing has Wesley in sympathy with the voluntarist position and arguably at variance with our next prominent theorist, Malebranche. Wesley was an avid reader of Malebranche and urged his fellow clergy to read his works, arguing that by doing so they would profit much.⁹⁸ Where Wesley and Malebranche differ is over the latter's

⁹⁵ Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 285.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁹⁷ Wesley, “What is Man?” Sermon 116 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 23–4.

⁹⁸ See Wesley's *An Address to the Clergy*. Stephen Long suggests that most of Wesley's key themes are all present in Malebranche, namely: “preventing grace, divine illumination, spiritual reaction, the end of the Christian life as happiness and holiness, salvation as the renewal of the defaced image of

occasionalism,⁹⁹ the view that there are no efficient causes other than God. Stephen Long defines Malebranche's occasionalism as that "which assumes that no secondary causality truly operates but everything is a direct cause of God's will."¹⁰⁰ In other words, the real and ultimate cause of all good resides in God. If and when humans come alongside the neighbour or stranger, this is occasioned by God's divine activity. Events are caused only by God, not by other events. With Malebranche, Wesley strongly holds to an interventionist God who comes to the aid of humans to enable them to do good, but Malebranche grants some causality as well, in the sense that without human desire to act and comply, the good is not done.

If Malebranche erred on giving God, and only God, the credit for the good done by people, then Wesley's next prominent conversational partner, Frances Hutcheson, does the opposite by limiting God's part and extolling human action. Wesley rigorously critiqued Hutcheson and in his *Journal* wrote: "In my way to Luton, I read Mr. Hutcheson's *Essays on the Passions*. He is a beautiful writer, but his scheme cannot stand unless the Bible falls."¹⁰¹ Hutcheson proposed a God who sets things in play but then departs. Humanity steps forward and in God's absence or distance, and with no thought of God, innately and inherently chooses the good. In other words, humanity does not need a God in order to know and do the good. For Hutcheson, the doing of good to please God and be rewarded by him only serves to compromise actions. He preferred a disinterested benevolence. Wesley, however, argued that the Bible does "not

God, the significance and listing of God's perfections, a spiritual sensorium, the rejection of innate ideas in favor of a metaphysics of participation, the importance of sanctification beginning with the 'circumcision of the heart,' opposition to nominalism, an emphasis on perfection, a privileging of Christian antiquity, and the Thomistic doctrine that grace perfects but does not contradict nature ..." Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology*, 108–9.

⁹⁹ *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* defines occasionalism as: "The philosophical theory of the relation of mind to matter which denies that finite things have efficient causality and postulates that God always intervenes to bring about a change in matter when a change occurs in the mind, and vice versa". See Cross and Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 418.

¹⁰⁰ Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology*, 111.

¹⁰¹ Wesley, (17 December, 1772), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 356.

allow that any action is good which is done without any design to please God.”¹⁰² It was Wesley’s view that an action done to please God did not compromise that action by making it a selfish one, for pleasing God is virtuous. With Locke, Wesley opposed the view that humans innately know the good and with Malebranche, stressed God’s role in aiding humanity to know and do the good. According to Steele, Wesley’s major criticism of Hutcheson’s notion of moral sense was its “immanentism, that is, its ascription of moral perception to a purely natural sense rather than to divine inspiration.”¹⁰³

In terms of the affections, it is the fourth theorist, Edwards,¹⁰⁴ who advanced Wesley’s thinking on the matter. On his way to Oxford in October 1738, Wesley – after reading Edwards¹⁰⁵ – wrote: “In walking I read the truly surprising narrative of the conversions lately wrought in and about the town of Northampton in New England. Surely ‘this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.’”¹⁰⁶ Edwards sought to demonstrate that “reasonable Christianity can also be deeply emotional.”¹⁰⁷ If other thinkers helped Wesley to hold desires and choice in critical tension, Edwards coupled reason and the affections. Edwards believed there needed to be an affective component if people were to change their behaviour and argued that such affections are activated by prior understanding. In his *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* Edwards wrote:

¹⁰² Ibid., 22: 357.

¹⁰³ Richard B. Steele, “Gracious Affection” and “True Virtue” According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, 335.

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Edwards (1703-58), American preacher and theologian. Ordained to the ministry of the Congregational church at Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1727. During the Great Awakening of the 1740s he preached the necessity of a ‘new birth’ and dependence upon the Holy Spirit for ongoing renewal.

¹⁰⁵ Wesley was reading Jonathan Edward, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God, in the Conversion of many hundred Souls in Northampton ...* (ed. Isaac Watts and John Guyse; 2nd ed.; London, 1738).

¹⁰⁶ Wesley, (9 October, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 16.

¹⁰⁷ Richard B. Steele, “Gracious Affection” and “True Virtue” According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, 209.

Gracious affections do arise from the mind's being enlightened, rightly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine things. Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge. The child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine things than he did before ...¹⁰⁸

For Edwards, affections require an object and are not “simply internal feeling states.”¹⁰⁹ That object is God and the narrative of Scripture. He writes that affections “that are truly spiritual and gracious, do arise from those influences and operations of the heart, which are *spiritual, supernatural and divine*.”¹¹⁰ In this respect, Edward's theory of affections, according to Dixon, is “full-bloodedly theological”¹¹¹ and so has a rational dimension.

Edwards does not suggest that a rational understanding of the biblical narrative will in itself bring about the needed pro-social shift in people. Of the reading of Scripture he writes:

There are multitudes that often hear the Word of God, and therein hear of those things that are infinitely great and important, and that most nearly concern them, and all that is heard seems to be wholly ineffectual upon them, and to make no alteration in their disposition or behavior.¹¹²

The frequent reading of Scripture by itself does not change behavior. Edwards is clear; even an understanding of the whole sweep of the biblical narrative will not usher in the needed change. Reading and hearing about the nature of God, the love of Christ, the Gospel and the promises of God will not of themselves change anything. Edwards declares, “I say, they often hear these things, and yet remain as they were before, with

¹⁰⁸ Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections* (ed. John E. Smith; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 266.

¹⁰⁹ Richard B. Steele, “Gracious Affection” and “True Virtue” According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, 133.

¹¹⁰ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 197.

¹¹¹ Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 80.

¹¹² Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 102.

no sensible alteration on them, either in heart or practice.”¹¹³ The reason being, posits Edwards, that in their reading and hearing the Gospel narrative, they are “not affected with what they hear.” With supernatural help through the influence of the Spirit, Edwards believed that the hearts of people could be “deeply affected”¹¹⁴ by those things heard and read. This affectional change re-orders the heart, so that new inclinations, as Edwards terms them,¹¹⁵ are birthed in the heart. These inclinations or affections serve, determine and govern actions;¹¹⁶ they are “the spring of action.”¹¹⁷ Edwards’ trajectory parallels that of Wesley: narrative, rightly understood via the assistance of the Spirit of God, so affects the heart that new affections are embedded and these in turn can usher in a profound change in behaviour.¹¹⁸

Wesley was profoundly moved by the life story of one of Edwards’ young assistants, David Brainerd (1718–1747). The historian Hempton notes that Wesley asked his Methodists “to emulate David Brainerd’s heroic evangelism.”¹¹⁹ Brainerd’s autobiography was one of “the four main spiritual autobiographies recommended by Wesley written by non-Methodists.”¹²⁰ Brainerd’s life illustrated for Wesley how a changed heart could in fact be the spring of action, especially on behalf of strangers. Brainerd walked among some of the most dangerous strangers of his time: the American

¹¹³ Ibid., 102.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 102.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 96.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 96.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 100.

¹¹⁸ For a comprehensive study comparing and contrasting Wesley with Edwards see Richard B. Steele, *“Gracious Affection” and “True Virtue” According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1994).

¹¹⁹ Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, 59.

¹²⁰ Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley’s Methodism*, 200. The other three books were about David Haliburton, a Scottish Presbyterian; the Marquis de Renty, a French nobleman; and Gregory Lopez, a Catholic hermit.

Indians¹²¹ and the frontier folk of his period. He did this at great cost to himself. His journey began some years earlier when, like Wesley, he experienced God's love in his heart:

... as I was walking in a dark thick grove, unspeakable glory seemed to open to the view and apprehension of my soul ... it was a new inward apprehension or view that I had of God, such as I never had before ... thus God, I trust, brought me to a hearty disposition to exalt him ... I continued in this state of inward joy, peace, and astonishment, till near dark ... I felt myself in a new world ... the sweet relish of what I then felt, continued with me for several days ...¹²²

Soon after his heart conversion, Brainerd's affections began to be directed toward others. In his diary he wrote of wrestling "for absent friends, for the ingathering of souls, for multitudes of poor souls, and for many that I thought were the children of God, personally, in many distant places ... I longed for more compassion towards them."¹²³ After a brief stint at Yale College, he dedicated the rest of his life to strangers, specifically the American Indian. It is clear from his writing that this was no easy step:

I live in the most lonesome wilderness; have but one single person to converse with that can speak English ... I live poorly with regard to the comforts of life: most of my diet consists of boiled corn ... I lodge on a bundle of straw, my labor is extremely difficult ... and the Dutch people hate me because I come to preach to them [the Indian] ...¹²⁴

Brainerd was often sick and the force of such suffering is captured in his words: "... towards night [I] was taken with a hard pain in my teeth, and shivering cold ... I continued very full of pain all night; and in the morning had a very hard fever, and pains almost over my whole body ..."¹²⁵ Brainerd gave his life to the Indian people. At his

¹²¹ For example, the Mohican of New York state and then the Lenape (Delaware Indians) in New Jersey.

¹²² James M. Sherwood, ed., *Memoirs of Rev. David Brainerd: Missionary to the Indians of North America* (London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), 11–12.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 30–31.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 62–3.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

funeral on 12 October, 1747, Jonathan Edwards said of him that “the change, which he looked upon as his conversion, was not only a great change of the present views, affections, and frame of his mind, but was evidently the beginning of that work of God in his heart, which God carried on, in a wonderful manner, from that time to his dying heart.”¹²⁶ In the same eulogy, Edwards talked of Brainerd’s desires as being great.¹²⁷

Moral Psychology and Wesley’s Legacy

Wesley’s anthropology, then, swims alongside the intellectualist, voluntarist and sentimentalist positions although he never quite jumps into any one of them. He holds the place of the mind, the will, and the affections in critical tension. Each has to flow with the other if human behaviour is to step toward the stranger.

This interpenetrative union of mind, will, and affections placed Wesley at variance with two further thinkers, this time from outside of the theological academy: David Hume (1711–1776) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). Hume grappled with human agency and contended that moral sentiments or feelings of approval and disapproval are more determinative than the dictates of the mind. This places Hume in the sentimentalist camp; feelings, for him, provide the necessary motivation for action. Hume’s anthropology privileges the emotions. Without them, action would not occur. In his *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume boldly declared that “a passion is an original existence, or, if you will, modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or modification.”¹²⁸ Passions, therefore, are not chosen, directed or informed by the agent or the will or the mind of the agent, but simply are. They originate in themselves.

We have no record as to whether Wesley and Immanuel Kant actually read each other but for Kant, subjective beliefs, wants and desires have little place in deciding and doing

¹²⁶ Ibid., 346–7.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 349.

¹²⁸ David Hume, “A Treatise of Human Nature,” in *What is an Emotion?* (ed. Calhoun and Solomon), 93–111.

the right thing by others. In fact, the emotions are not to be trusted and as such are to be subjugated by reason. Kant urged that the one seeking to do good:

[S]hould bring all his capacities and inclinations under his authority (that of reason). And this is a positive precept of control over himself; it is additional to the prohibition that man should not let himself be governed by his feelings and inclinations (the duty of apathy). For unless reason takes the reins of government in its own hands, feelings and inclinations play the master over man.¹²⁹

As Lowry aptly puts it, even though Wesley had “rationalistic tendencies”, these paled in comparison “to the rationalism of Kant.”¹³⁰ Wesley allowed a role for the affections and feelings but Kant disallowed them as he did a role for God.

In theological morality the concept of God must determine our duties. But this is just the opposite of morality. For men picture all sorts of terrible and frightening attributes as part of their concept of God. Now of course such pictures can beget fear in us and move us to follow moral laws from compulsion or through fear of punishment. But they do not make the object interesting. For we no longer see how abominable our actions are; we abstain from them only from fear of punishment. Natural morality must be so constituted that it can be thought independently of any concept of God, and elicit our most zealous devotion solely on account of its own inner worth and excellence.¹³¹

Kant states that people must perform their duty irrespective of motivation, consequences or religion. Once the right thing has been calculated, Kant believes, the doing of it is a matter of choice and will.

The good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes or because of its adequacy to achieve some proposed end; it is good only because of its willing, i.e., it is good of itself ... Even if it should happen that, by a particularly unfortunate fate or by the niggardly provision of a stepmotherly nature, this will

¹²⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Ethical Philosophy: The Complete Texts of “Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals” and “Metaphysical Principles of Virtue”* (trans. James Ellington; Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), 67–8.

¹³⁰ Kevin Twain Lowery, *Salvaging Wesley’s Agenda: A New Paradigm for Wesleyan Virtue Ethics* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2008), 239.

¹³¹ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Philosophical Theology* (trans. Allen W. Wood and Gertrude M. Clark; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 31.

should be wholly lacking in power to accomplish its purpose, and if even the greatest effort should not avail it to achieve anything of its end, and if there remained only the good will ... it would sparkle like a jewel in its own right, as something that had its full worth in itself.¹³²

By contrast, Wesley is adamant that knowledge of God and gratitude for his benevolence to all humanity predisposes us to love our neighbour:

It is in consequence of our knowing God loves us, that we love him, and love our neighbour as ourselves. Gratitude towards our Creator cannot but produce benevolence to our fellow creatures. The love of Christ constrains us, not only to be harmless, to do no ill to our neighbour, but to be useful, to be "zealous of good works"; "as we have time, to do good unto all men"; and to be patterns to all of true, genuine morality; of justice, mercy, and truth ... This begins when we begin to know God, by the teaching of his own Spirit. As soon as the Father of spirits reveals his Son in our hearts, and the Son reveals his Father, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts ...¹³³

As people are enabled by God to comprehend the narrative of Scripture, this incites an affectional response in the will that inclines the believer to act on behalf of others. The mind's capacity to know and receive teaching is therefore part of the process. Wesley underlines the role of reason in comprehending things. He talks of the "absurdity of undervaluing reason"¹³⁴ and argues that such a tool enables people to apprehend, judge and discourse.¹³⁵ But the mind's ability to reason cannot of itself engender action. Wesley is adamant that reason alone cannot produce love and as such "neither can it produce virtue."¹³⁶ What reason cannot do alone, it can do with the heart, as both are affected by God's agency. What results is not just God working through human agency, or inherent righteousness but the nature of the person being so changed that they now

¹³² Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, (trans. Lewis White Beck; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), 10.

¹³³ Wesley, "The Unity of the Divine Being," Sermon 120 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 67.

¹³⁴ Wesley, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," Sermon 70 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 588.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2: 590.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2: 598.

want to walk toward the neighbour and stranger. In this scenario, affectional development is part and parcel of human maturation.

Wesley's eighteenth-century affection-centered view came under attack from several nineteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers. In his magisterial work on the emotions, Thomas Dixon¹³⁷ describes what was essentially a "terminological revolution"¹³⁸ whereby the more "differentiated typologies (which included appetites, passions, affections and sentiments)" of the eighteenth-century were displaced "by a single overarching category of emotions during the nineteenth century."¹³⁹

It is an immensely striking fact of the history of English-language psychological thought that during the period between c.1800 and c. 1850 a wholesale change in established vocabulary occurred such that those engaged in theoretical discussions about phenomena including hope, fear, love, hate, joy, sorrow, anger and the like no longer primarily discussed the passions or affections of the soul, nor the sentiments, but almost invariably referred to 'the emotions.'¹⁴⁰

Dixon lists David Hume, Thomas Brown, Alexander Bain, Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin as the protagonists in this story. It was they who subsumed all feeling states under the umbrella term 'emotion' and reduced such emotions to mere physiological and neurological impulses. Affectional inclinations for action were replaced or reduced to nervous physiological changes, activity and disturbances, not unlike those of animals. Human agency was therefore denied to the will and the affections.

Maddox suggests that it was Freud's work on the human subconscious in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that "marked a re-entry into modern psychology of emphasis on the passional element of human willing."¹⁴¹ By the mid-1970s, Robert C.

¹³⁷ Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴¹ Maddox, "Psychology and Wesleyan Theology," 106–7.

Solomon was calling for a rethink on emotions. It was his view that for too long, philosophers and theologians alike had framed emotions negatively. Solomon lamented that the emotions were typically considered as “occurrences that happen to (or ‘in’) us” and were typically “irrational and disruptive.”¹⁴² He was also concerned by the view of those who regarded emotions as things to be controlled “like the caging and taming of a wild beast, the suppression and sublimation of a Freudian ‘it.’”¹⁴³ Solomon advocated for emotions to be seen as “rational and purposive”,¹⁴⁴ rather than irrational and disruptive. In philosophical circles, Calhoun and Solomon¹⁴⁵ note that, since the 1960s, emotion as an independent field of study has attracted substantial and increasing philosophical interest.¹⁴⁶ Thomas Dixon writes of recent history that “the last three decades have witnessed an explosion in emotion studies, in the fields of cognitive psychology, anthropology and literary history.”¹⁴⁷

The language of affectivity, which is the language of Wesley, is returning. Solomon’s call is to see emotions as rational and purposive, and Evans reports that cognitive psychologists are recapturing the significance of affective processes. Dixon expresses hope that “even if the old-fashioned terminology of passions and affections does not find favor in future psychological theories, the old habit of distinguishing between affective states in some similar way may yet be revived.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Robert C. Solomon, “Emotions and Choice,” in *What is an Emotion?* (ed. Calhoun and Solomon), 305–26.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 305.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 306.

¹⁴⁵ Cheshire Calhoun and Robert C. Solomon, eds., *What is an Emotion? Classic Readings in Philosophical Psychology* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1984).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 5. Calhoun and Solomon note that this renewed interest “may mirror the general introversion (some would say “narcissism”) of recent years, which has been most apparent at the popular level. But it also shows that there is a need for a comprehensive account of emotion to replace the piecemeal accounts that have inevitably resulted from emotion’s being a backseat to other philosophical and psychological issues.” See Calhoun and Solomon, *What is an Emotion?*, 5–6.

¹⁴⁷ Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, 1.

¹⁴⁸ Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, 245.

From the 1980s, a growing number of Wesleyan theologians have also turned their attention to the affections of the heart. In 1981, Don Saliers published *The Soul in Paraphrase*, focusing on the religious affections.¹⁴⁹ Clapper in his own work in 1989 claims that the emotions “are a crucial part of human existence; some would even say they are the defining aspect of a human life.”¹⁵⁰ In the same year, Theodore Runyon began to use the term orthopathy to highlight the place of the heart.¹⁵¹ Richard Steele’s work in 1994 analysed the centrality of the heart in the religious revivals of the eighteenth-century and Randy Maddox, has arguably done more than any other Wesleyan theologian to advance the conversation on moral psychology and the role of the heart in human transformation.¹⁵² Clapper claims that this recent research follows a time when “many thinkers in the Western tradition have ignored the broad questions that emotion raises for theology.”¹⁵³ In a 2009 work on the heart and its pivotal role in ushering in behavioural change, Christian educationalist and philosopher, James K. A. Smith¹⁵⁴ posits that our identities are not fundamentally shaped by what we know (orthodoxy) but more by what we love (orthokardia).

¹⁴⁹ Don E. Saliers, *The Soul in Paraphrase: Prayer and the Religious Affections* (New ed; Akron: OSL Publications, 2002).

¹⁵⁰ Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, 1.

¹⁵¹ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 147–9.

¹⁵² Apart from his *Responsible Grace* (1994), see “A Change of Affections: The Development, Dynamics, and Dethronement of John Wesley’s Heart Religion,” in “*Heart Religion*” in *The Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard B. Steele), 3–11.

¹⁵³ Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, 1. In terms of how to explain such ignorance, it would appear that there is confusion as to where the study of emotions truly belongs. Some have perceived emotions as merely secondary qualities and therefore not deserving of serious reflection in the theological academy. Even when serious thinkers like Kierkegaard or Wesley have examined the emotions, such work has been transferred to the realm of ‘spirituality’. Presently, discussions on the affections of the heart have been placed within the disciplines of pastoral care and on the practical or applied side of theology. Fear also seems to be a factor behind any reluctance to give the emotions their due. Will such research result, for example, in irrationality (fideism), self-deception (fanaticism), or spiritual narcissism (quietism)?

¹⁵⁴ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).

Exemplars of Orthokardia

Interestingly, most of the aforementioned theological scholars use John Wesley as their mentor when conducting research into the heart. Wesley is a mentor not only because of what he wrote but also through the influence he had on others in his own century. His moral pathway, with its emphasis on emotion and the affections of the heart, propelled others in his day to walk toward neighbour and stranger. This is evidenced in the lives of Sarah Ryan and Thomas Coke.

Sarah Ryan (1724–1768)

Sarah Ryan was a woman of poor means and low virtue whose life was transformed by her commitment to Methodism. Despite being inadvertently blamed for the demise of John Wesley's marriage, she became a leading light in the movement through her firm commitment to walk alongside strangers,

Born on 20 October, 1724, Sarah was raised by “morally good parents [who] brought up their children according to the best light they had in all the outward duties of religion ...”¹⁵⁵ However, it was a poor family at the best of times and in her early teens when her father's circumstances worsened, Sarah was forced to “go out into all the world”.¹⁵⁶ This may suggest living on the streets where, in her own words, she increased “in vice.”¹⁵⁷ At the age of 17 she was greatly affected by the preaching of George Whitefield and joined one of Wesley's societies, although this did not last long as she was drawn back to the streets.

Sarah married a seaman when she was 20 but he promptly returned to sea, leaving her to a life of destitution. By chance, she struck up a conversation with the wife of a sea captain who was a member of Wesley's Foundery Society. Sarah was invited to attend

¹⁵⁵ “An Account of Mrs. Sarah Ryan,” in *Arminian Magazine: Consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption 2* (1779): 296–302, 304–6, 309–10. Quoted in *Early Methodist Spirituality: Selected Women's Writings* (ed. Paul Wesley Chilcote; Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2007), 75. From this point onward any quoting of Ryan will be referenced to Chilcote's work.

¹⁵⁶ Chilcote, *Early Methodist Spirituality*, 76.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

their next meeting and declared her interest in exploring what it meant to become a Christian. She applied to join one of the Methodist groups and was accepted. A year later, while she was in the process of becoming a believer, her husband returned and pressured her to go back to her previous ways. In 1754 at Spitalfields Church she heard Wesley preach and was affected as before; again, she attended a class meeting. Eventually she owned the fact that she was now a Christian and a Methodist. A few years after her Spitalfields encounter, she became an intimate friend of Wesley who took her on as his housekeeper in Bristol in 1757.

Much of the literature concerning Sarah Ryan has to do with how her friendship with Wesley strained his marriage. John Wesley had married the widow Mary Vazielle (1710–1781) on either 18 or 19 February, 1751. Uncertainty over the date is partly due to Wesley’s own ambivalence toward the marriage. In his *Journal* he simply writes, “I now as fully believed that in my present circumstances I might be more useful in a married state, into which, upon this clear conviction and by the advice of my friends, I entered a few days after.”¹⁵⁸ Nothing more was said on the matter. The marriage did not survive, partly due to its dubious beginnings¹⁵⁹ but also because of Wesley’s rigorous itinerancy. Another contributing factor was his friendship with Sarah Ryan. One of the ways in which Wesley mentored women was through letter writing and at the outset of his marriage, he gave his wife permission to open any correspondence delivered to their residence.¹⁶⁰ On one occasion it became apparent to Mrs Wesley that her husband was on intimate letter writing terms with Sarah Ryan and she insisted he desist from writing to her. Wesley wrote later that his wife’s jealousy of Ryan spoiled the marriage.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Wesley, (2 February, 1751), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 378.

¹⁵⁹ John Wesley was still aggrieved over the failed affair with Grace Murray. Arguably, this union with Vazielle was a ‘rebound’ of sorts.

¹⁶⁰ In a letter to her, Wesley writes, “If any letter comes to you, directed to the Revd. Mr. John Wesley, open it – it is for yourself.” Wesley, “Letter to Mrs. Mary Wesley” (11 March, 1751), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 454.

¹⁶¹ Wesley, “Letter to Mrs. Wesley, (15 July, 1774), quoted in Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, 181–185.

What is noteworthy about Ryan is that she eventually became one of the leading women in the Methodist movement, not because of her close friendship with Wesley but through her resolve to love neighbour and stranger. Wesley mandated that all within Methodism, including women, adhere to the “General Rules” which entailed doing good to all. Chilcote, in his work on the women in early Methodism, notes that in their effort to adhere to this instruction, Methodist women like Sarah Ryan, “sought out people in need – the poor, the hungry, the destitute, and the neglected. They visited the prisons, established orphanages and schools, and practiced their servant-oriented faith in their own particular contexts ...”¹⁶² Ryan was one of the first women within Methodism to pioneer social service ministries. In 1763, for example, Ryan and others developed the Leytonstone orphanage. Chilcote notes that Ryan and the other women involved in this venture “decided to take in none but the most destitute and hopeless”,¹⁶³ including many “friendless of the London streets.”¹⁶⁴ Five years later in 1768, it was decided to relocate the orphanage to Yorkshire but Sarah Ryan died that year, aged 43.

Ryan knew from painful personal experience what it was like to be poor, thrown out on the streets and destitute. Arguably, she had empathy for the street children of London. While those who have escaped from the streets do not necessarily want to return, Ryan’s way back to the strangers on the streets of London came through her choice of Wesley’s moral pathway. Through the combined teaching of Whitefield and Wesley she came to hear the Christian narrative (orthodoxy) which in time deeply affected (orthokardia) her own heart. Arguably, of all the orthos, it was orthokardia that reoriented her life. She writes of being “filled with light and joy and love,”¹⁶⁵ of being “greatly affected”¹⁶⁶ and of things said to her in her “heart.”¹⁶⁷ In many respects, she was transformed from the

¹⁶² Chilcote, *Early Methodist Spirituality*, 32.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶⁴ Chilcote, *She Offered Them Christ*, 68.

¹⁶⁵ Chilcote, *Early Methodist Spirituality*, 35.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 77.

inside out. A change of heart led to a change of direction, orientation, and ultimately of address. She lived with the destitute.

Thomas Coke (1747– 1814)

Thomas Coke, the first Methodist Bishop, remembered as ‘the Father of Methodist missionaries’, was initially dismissed as an Anglican minister for his ‘Methodist leanings’ which inspired him to seek the salvation and welfare of strangers, often in their own homes.

Coke was born in Brecon, Wales, on 28 September, 1747 to Bartholomew and Anne Coke and, according to the writer John Vickers, it was likely his father had heard Charles Wesley preaching during his visit to Brecon in 1753.¹⁶⁸ Thomas Coke junior entered Jesus College, Oxford University, aged 17 and was ordained as a deacon by the Bishop of Oxford six years later. He began serving as a vicar in South Petherton, Somerset, where the Rev. James Brown introduced him to the writings of Wesley. Subsequently he had a “heart warming” experience similar to that of Wesley. Samuel Drew describes the event:

One evening as he walked into the country, to preach to his little flock, his heart was in a peculiar manner lifted up to God in prayer, for that blessing which he had sought so earnestly, and so long. He did not then receive any immediate answer to his petition. But while he engaged in his public duty, and was unfolding the greatness of redeeming love, it pleased God to speak to his soul, to dispel all his fears, and to fill his heart with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.¹⁶⁹

Soon after this heartfelt experience (orthokardia) of God’s love (orthodoxy), Coke met John Wesley for the first time. Wesley writes of this in his *Journal*:

I preached at Taunton and afterwards went with Mr. Brown to Kingston. The large old parsonage-house is pleasantly situated, close to the churchyard, just fit

¹⁶⁸ John Vickers, *Thomas Coke: Apostle of Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), 8.

¹⁶⁹ Samuel Drew, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Coke* (repr.; Memphis: General Books, 2010), 17.

for a contemplative man. Here I found a clergyman, Dr. Coke, late Gentleman Commoner of Jesus College in Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose. I had much conversation with him, and an union then began which I trust shall never end.¹⁷⁰

Henry Moore, an early Methodist co-worker and biographer of Wesley, claims he was given an account of that conversation by Thomas Coke himself.

In the morning, Mr. Wesley having walked into the garden, he joined him there, and made known his situation and enlarged desires. Mr. Wesley, with marked sobriety, gave him an account of the way in which he and his brother proceeded at Oxford, and advised the Doctor to go on in the same path, doing all the good he could, visiting from house to house, omitting no part of his clerical duty; and counseled him to avoid every reasonable ground of offence. The Doctor was exceedingly surprised, and, indeed, mortified. “I thought”, said he when he related the account to me, “he would have said, *Come with me, and I will give you employment according to all that is in your heart.*”¹⁷¹

From the outset, Coke heard the heartbeat of Wesley’s Methodism, “doing all the good he could” and “visiting from house to house”. Wesley told Coke to walk towards neighbours and strangers. Soon after this conversation Coke was dismissed from his curacy largely because of his Methodist leanings. He was, however, welcomed into Methodism. Wesley makes a record of this: “I went forward to Taunton with Dr. Coke, who, being dismissed from his curacy, has bid adieu to his honorable name and determined to cast in his lot with us.”¹⁷²

Drew notes that Coke “made himself fully acquainted with the doctrines, discipline, and rules of the Methodists”¹⁷³ which, for the purposes of this study, entails orthodoxy, orthopaideia and orthonomos. In 1780, Coke became the superintendent of the London circuit, which would have required him to belong to various groups within the Methodist structure. In this he expresses orthokoinonia. Further evidence of this embrace of the

¹⁷⁰ Wesley, (13 August, 1776), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 27.

¹⁷¹ Henry Moore, *The Life of John Wesley* (vol. 2; London, 1824), 3–9.

¹⁷² Wesley, (19 August, 1777), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 66.

¹⁷³ Drew, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Coke*, 23.

orthos is documented by Vickers and Drew. For example, on Coke's arrival in America in 1784, he and Francis Asbury set about publishing a combined work on the doctrine and discipline (orthopaideia) of Methodism.¹⁷⁴ While in America, Coke also expressed dismay at those Methodists who were in "opposition to our Rules" (orthonomos).¹⁷⁵ His life followed the moral pathway.

Coke was "never at a loss in conversation with strangers."¹⁷⁶ This was evidenced in his talking to crew and passengers on his way to America, and his interaction with the American settlers on arrival. More than anything, it was his travels to other countries that marked Coke as a person for others. He also went to the Channel Islands, the West Indies, the Virgin Island, Jamaica and Grenada, Gibraltar, and Ceylon. All of these trips were undertaken as his way of being a "real lover of mankind."¹⁷⁷ This love was not just expressed to the masses, but also to particular individuals and groups. He had a particular concern for the slave population of the Caribbean and often visited them. In the early nineteenth-century, and toward the end of his life, Coke started a work among French prisoners of war in England. He died while engaged in his ongoing service to humanity during yet another trip to India.¹⁷⁸ Because his heart was strangely moved, Coke's life became one of continually moving from one person and place to another.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 68.

¹⁷⁵ Vickers, *Thomas Coke: Apostle of Methodism*, 97.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 41.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 133.

¹⁷⁸ Rack sums up Coke as a man who was simply intent on acquiring missions as Britain had her colonies. Rack also claims that Coke's overriding concern was not compassion or justice for people, but rather their religious salvation. See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 477–8. This may be evidenced in his work amongst slaves. In 1785, Coke was strident in his opposition to slave owners in the American South but, eight years later, he was commending plantation owners for their humane treatment of slaves. Vickers makes the claim that for Coke "in the last resort the eternal salvation of the slaves mattered to him more than their temporal emancipation." See Vickers, *Thomas Coke: Apostle of Methodism*, 170. This claim by Vickers has some credence for in 1792 it was charged that Coke had actually bought slaves and he admitted this but by 1807 he had returned to his earlier forthright opposition. Coke, nevertheless, walked toward an incredible array of strangers to impart to them what he considered to be of inestimable worth.

The orthokardic effect created new habits of the heart, outworked through his travel on behalf of others.

Ryan and Coke reached a level of maturity that many today would consider unreachable. Their lives were marked by progress. This striving for perfection was quite intentional on their part. In fact, it was expected by John Wesley and promoted in Wesleyan circles. And it is this expectation of becoming someone new that forms the next ortho – orthopaideia – which is the subject of the next chapter. As will be noted, this particular ortho has two wings attached to it: orthonomos and orthokoinonia. Orthopaideia carries the idea of right process and the process itself involves rules (orthonomos) and community (orthokoinonia). These three orthos channel the affections (orthokardia) that have been stirred by the story of Scripture (orthodoxy).

Chapter Six

Orthopaideia: Orthokoinonia and Orthonomos

Introduction

When John Wesley was asked to explain what would ensure the longevity of Methodism, he underlined doctrine, experience, discipline and practice. In table form the strands of Wesley’s cord and how this thesis translates them follows:

Table 7. A Cord of Six Strands

Wesley’s terms	Doctrine	Experience	Discipline	Practice
Ortho	Orthodoxy	Orthokardia	Orthopaideia: -orthokoinonia -orthonomos	Orthopraxy
Themes	Narrative Promise Human maturation Ordo salutis	Affection- centered view	Classes, bands & communal gathering Rules & practices	Outward religion Good works Sacrificial self- denial love

This chapter will establish the link between orthopaideia and discipline, then delineate two related areas: orthokoinonia as community and orthonomos as rules. It will be demonstrated that Wesley had both of these strands in mind when using the term ‘discipline.’ There is in fact a strong case for a cord of *six* strands rather than the three for which recent Wesleyan scholarship has settled. Current scholarship does not embrace or even make mention of orthopaideia, orthokoinonia and orthonomos, as already argued.¹

¹ A notable exception is Paul Chilcote who in his *Recapturing the Wesleys’ Vision: An Introduction to the Faith of John and Charles Wesley* (Downers Grove; IVP, 2004) does mention koinonia (p. 43) and paideia (p. 67) but not as orthos or in reference to the cord of three strands adopted by Steele et al. Rack cites Gordon Rupp using the term koinonia in reference to fellowship and signalling this as a feature of English Methodism. See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 168.

Discipline as Orthopaideia

In biblical Greek the word discipline is rendered ‘orthopaideia’.² It carries the idea of instruction and correction through action, not simply words. Education occurs by participation and activity. The *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* renders paideia as a “training process”,³ and the *NIV Dictionary of New Testament Words*, similarly implies that paideia is “the process of education.”⁴ What we view here is the scaffolding of discipline, which is itself a structured process, and the way or order of instruction and education. Chilcote notes that paideia can be translated as “instruction,” “nurture,” “education,” “training,” “guidance,” even “chastisement,” but its primary meaning is “discipline.”⁵ Chilcote adds that paideia is “the use of action”⁶ directed toward “character formation.”⁷ Similarly, Clara Park in her review on Werner Jaeger’s work on paideia describes it as a “dynamic ... here-and-now process” concerned with “the forming of human beings.”⁸ Discipline therefore involves those activities, structures and processes that contribute to human maturation – something that was of vital concern to Wesley.

² DISCIPLINE = NT:3809 – paideia, paideía; gen. paideías, fem. noun from paideúō (3811), to instruct. Originally instruction of children. It evolved to mean chastening because all effectual instruction for the sinful children of men includes and implies chastening, correction. Paideía occurs with epanóρθōsis (1882), rectification, in 2 Tim 3:16. In paideía there is discipline. In Eph 6:4, en paideía . . . kuriou (en [1722], in; kuriou, the gen. of kúrios [2962], Lord) means such training as the Lord approves. By synecdoche, taking a part for the whole, it means correction, chastisement (Heb 12:5, 7, 8, 11; Sept.: Prov 3:11; 22:15). See nouthesía (3559), which means instruction mainly by word, while paideía is by deed. To be distinguished from kólasis (2851), penal infliction, punishment and timōria (5098), penalty, punishment which denote penal retribution while paideía speaks of correction, educative discipline. (From *The Complete Word Study Bible* and *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* Copyright © 1991, 1992, 1994, 2002 AMG International, Inc.). From Craig Bluemel, “Defining the Meaning of Discipline in the Original Languages of Greek and Hebrew,” (South Colby, WA: The Bible Answer Stand Ministry, 2007). Online <http://www.bibleanswerstand.org/discipline.htm>. [Last modified 4 July, 2007].

³ Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 3), 3.

⁴ Verbrugge, *The NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 947.

⁵ Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesleys’ Vision*, 67.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁸ Clara Claiborne Park, “A Reconsideration: Werner Jaeger’s Paideia,” in *Modern Age* 28 (1984): 152–5.

Arguably, the definitive work on paideia is from Jaeger, who in his three-volume opus explores how the ancient Greeks educated and shaped human character to attain an ideal. Jaeger uses paideia to describe “education,”⁹ “child rearing,”¹⁰ “training,”¹¹ “a process of ... discipline,”¹² “a system of education,”¹³ and an “an educational activity.”¹⁴ In other words, paideia is not just concerned with the content of education but also “the process of education.”¹⁵ In Jaeger’s view, the Greek approach to training, instruction, and education was to ensure each individual could “attain”¹⁶ a “consciously pursued ideal.”¹⁷ Entering into this educative and life-changing discipline was like embarking on a “hazardous journey”¹⁸ with the hope that such a journey would “make him a man at last.”¹⁹ This maturing of the human person concerned both outer conduct and “inner nature.”²⁰ Paideia is therefore “a process by which the life of each citizen should be shaped to conform with some absolute norm ...”²¹ The process or system that achieves the shaping can also, as Chilcote notes, be rendered as the discipline.

Wesley often uses the word discipline but there is no record of his explicitly equating it to paideia. That is not to suggest he was unaware of the term. He was an avid reader of

⁹ Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture: Volume 1 Archaic Greece, The Mind of Athens* (trans. Gilbert Highet; Oxford: B. Blackwell; 1965), xxiv, 3, 303.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 287.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 303.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 303.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, xxiv.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, xvii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

the Bible and he preferred to read it in Greek. In his reading of the Septuagint, Wesley would have noted the use of *paideia*²² and also in his reading of the New Testament.²³ In fact the functional meanings he attaches to ‘discipline’ sit well with *paideia*. While the term *orthopaideia* is not Wesley’s, the concept it represents is. The particular biblical text informing Wesley’s process of discipline or *paideia* is Philippians 2:12, which speaks of continuing “to work out your salvation with fear and trembling ...” Salvation is the ideal and ‘working out’ is the process. Wesley believed there were two parts to this process: small classes (*orthokoinonia*) and certain rules (*orthonomos*).²⁴ His rules of doing no harm, doing good and attending upon all the ordinances of God were part of a mechanism for testing people’s hearts. If they were truly intent on reaching the ideal, then their behaviour would demonstrate this through obedience to certain rules. Matthew 3:7-8 was Wesley’s key supporting text for such a notion.²⁵

Wesley spoke of and wrote about discipline and was careful to differentiate it from doctrine (orthodoxy) and practice (orthopraxy). In his criticisms of the Moravians, for example, he differentiated their practice from their discipline.²⁶ Likewise, in a letter to his brother Charles, he separated faith, practice and discipline.²⁷ The fact that such separations were disputed by those close to him demonstrates that they were important distinctions for Wesley. Samuel Wesley questioned his brother over the distinction he made between “the discipline and doctrine of the church.”²⁸ However, John makes it

²² Deuteronomy 11:2; Ezra 7:26; Job 20:3; 37:13; Psalms 2:12; 18:35; 50:17; 119:66; Proverbs 1:2, 7f.; 3:11; 4:1; 5:12; 6:23; 8:10; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18; 15:5; 16:17; 17:18; 19:20; 22:15; 23:12; 24:32; 25:1; Isaiah 26:16; 50:4f.; 53:5; Jeremiah 2:30; 5:3; 7:27; 17:23; 30:14; 32:33; 35:13; Ezekiel 13:9; Daniel 1:20; Amos 3:7; Habakkuk 1:12; Zephaniah 3:2, 7.

²³ Ephesians 6:4; Hebrews 12:4-11; 2 Timothy 3:16.

²⁴ Wesley combines Philippians 2:12 with the need for fellowship and rules in “The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies,” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 69–73.

²⁵ Wesley, “The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies,” 9: 70.

²⁶ Wesley, (3 September, 1741), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 224.

²⁷ Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. Charles Wesley” (4 August, 1738), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 560.

²⁸ Wesley, “Letter from the Revd. Samuel Wesley, Jun.” (3 September, 1739), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 681.

clear what he means by discipline. In various places, he mentions discipline in reference to structured groups and how these groups ought to be organised. For example, on his return to Oxford he conversed with others about the “proper method to preserve discipline and good government.”²⁹ And in a letter to James Hutton in 1738, he contended that the original apostles of Christ handed on to the primitive church a disciplined way of gathering.³⁰ Soon after his 1738 Aldersgate experience, John Wesley visited the Moravians in Herrnhut and engaged many of them in earnest conversation, including Christian David who stressed to him the importance of discipline.³¹ By this, he was referring to the way the Moravians ordered and governed their gatherings.³² In 1744, Wesley wrote of the Moravians’ “excellent discipline” and noted again their shape and structure.³³ They were marked by due subordination; they knew and kept their rank, with an exact division into groups; frequently conferred with one another; and had an ordered approach to assisting those in need. In other words, Wesleyan discipline has to do with how people gather in groups. Discipline is an issue of group process that can best enable and facilitate the kind of education that brings people to maturity.

In ‘Principles Further Explained’ Wesley addresses the issue of discipline in his correspondence with a Rev. Mr. Church. Church raises questions about congregations of faithful people, and Wesley responds by saying these issues “turn on discipline.”³⁴ Again, Wesley equates discipline with group activity. In his General Rules and *Journal*, Wesley attempts to explain what he means by discipline by way of analogy:

²⁹ Wesley, “Letter from Dr. John Morley” (21 October, 1729), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 240.

³⁰ Wesley, “Letter to James Hutton” (27 November, 1738), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 593.

³¹ Wesley, (12 August, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 276.

³² In commenting about their discipline, Wesley wrote of their officers, the division of people, the government of children and the order of services. See Wesley, (11 to 14 August, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 291.

³³ Wesley, “Preface 1739–1741,” in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 118.

³⁴ Wesley, “The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained (1746),” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 186.

If one wheel in a machine gets out of its place, what disorder must ensue! In the Methodist discipline, the wheels regularly stand thus: The Assistant, the preachers, the stewards, the leaders, the people.³⁵

In other words, discipline had to do with the constituent parts of group processes and group dynamics when the Methodists gathered. Group structure, order and cohesiveness were at the core of discipline. However, group roles, cooperation and the bases of social power only represent some of the constituent parts of discipline. Continuing with his machine-and-wheel analogy, Wesley stresses that “each wheel keep its own place” and “let none encroach upon another.” In other words, discipline has to do with “all [moving] together in harmony and love.” In the absence of this discipline or collective organisational behaviour, Wesley warns that there would be a “gradual decay in the work” and that “the wheels [would be] hindered in their motion.”³⁶ Discipline has to do with group goals, membership, leadership and group performance, bases of social power, the structural properties of groups, the operation of group standards and group cohesiveness.³⁷ Discipline is, therefore, how groups gather and order their way of operating.

In correspondence with fellow revivalist George Whitefield, Wesley adds further light on discipline:

They were likewise concerned at your sometimes speaking lightly of the discipline received among us, of societies, classes, bands, of our rules in general, of some in particular ...³⁸

This one sentence imparts the two functions essential to discipline: Methodists being gathered, but also governed. The “societies, classes and bands” constituted the gathered social units of Wesleyan Methodism and the rules governed the groups and their

³⁵ Wesley, (31 March, 1771), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 268.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 22: 269.

³⁷ Some of these headings are taken from Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zandler, eds., *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory* (2nd ed.; Elmsford, NY: Row, Peterson & Co, 1960), v–vii.

³⁸ Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. George Whitefield” (28 May, 1753), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 508.

members. Discipline, in other words, relates to the overall shape of the gatherings and their regulation.³⁹ In his work on discipline in Wesleyanism, Thomas Frank defines it as “common rule of life.”⁴⁰ On the one hand, there is commonality which implies communality and brings us to our fourth ortho – orthokoinonia; on the other is the rule of life or orthonomos which is the fifth. Both of these orthos are subsumed under discipline or orthopaideia. It was Wesley’s hope that by placing people in group activity (orthokoinonia) and directing their lives in those groups through rules (orthonomos), they would make progress toward the biblical ideal. This is the process of orthopaideia.

Orthokoinonia

As previously noted, orthokoinonia is a constituent part of orthopaideia. In its more religious sense, Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider contend that *koinonia* represents those “persons who stand in a relationship of community because they have a common share in something.”⁴¹ Koinonia therefore is not something in and of itself; it does not exist because people exist collectively; it is not simply a group. Muller, in reflecting on its religious sense, writes that koinonia is never simply, “societas, society in general.”⁴² Rather, it refers to the “communion of believers.”⁴³ It is a communion made possible through being “in Christ through the gospel and by the Spirit.”⁴⁴ For koinonia to exist in its religious sense there needs be, in the words of Verbrugge, “a mutual recognition of being in Christ.”⁴⁵ In this respect, koinonia, even though it includes a local fellowship in Christ, is not limited to local expression – it includes all Christians in all places in all times. Various translations have rendered koinonia as fellowship, participation,

³⁹ Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. Charles Wesley” (24 July, 1751), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 472.

⁴⁰ Frank, “Discipline,” 246.

⁴¹ Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 2; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 304.

⁴² Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 169.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 169. biblical texts in support of this: 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Philippians 1:5.

⁴⁵ Verbrugge, *The NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 698.

partnership and communion. A sharper rendition is offered by Balz and Schneider in their claim that koinonia carries with it the idea of “relationships of obligation.”⁴⁶

As noted, the first dimension of Wesleyan discipline is that of being gathered and participating in a group; this comes close to the neutral rendering of koinonia. The religious sense is more pertinent to Wesley. What is at issue here is not just the reality of gathering but how the Methodists gathered. They got together because of a shared consciousness of, and participation in, Christ. The focus goes beyond the shape, form, order, regularity and governance of their gatherings to the belief that God called such a group to exist. In this sense, koinonia does capture the Wesleyan approach to groups. To understand the absolute significance of groups and how they met in the Wesleyan scheme of things we need to look at John Wesley’s personal journey with groups, the significance of groups in Methodism and their type, growth and decline.

Wesley gave his life to groups. Ted Campbell states that “there were only a few points in his (Wesley’s) life beyond Epworth when he did not live in some kind of community.”⁴⁷ Wesley also “spent the majority of his life organising and leading religious societies ...”⁴⁸ Even before he left his home in Epworth, Wesley had tasted and seen the benefits of small groups. At the age of nine he observed his mother Susanna form and conduct such a group within their home. It got to a point where nearly 200 were attending.⁴⁹ In explaining how these groups came about, Susanna Wesley explained that it was simply “other people coming in and joining with us.”⁵⁰ She called

⁴⁶ Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 2), 304.

⁴⁷ Ted A. Campbell, “The Image of Christ in the Poor: On the Medieval Roots of the Wesleys’ Ministry with the Poor,” in *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (ed. Heitzenrater), 39–57.

⁴⁸ Jason E. Vickers, *Wesley: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 11.

⁴⁹ Susanna Wesley, “Letter from Susanna Wesley to Samuel Wesley Sr.” (6 February, 1711/12), in *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* (ed. Wallace), 80.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

the gathering a society.⁵¹ Her husband Samuel was also involved in a structured group or society in Epworth from about 1701.

Much later in life (1781), Wesley explained the rise of Methodism in terms of the groups that he and other Methodists had started:

But it may be observed, the first rise of Methodism (so called) was in November 1729, when four of us met together at Oxford; the second was at Savannah, in April 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house; the last was at London, on this day, when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday evening, in order to a free conversation ...⁵²

The first gathering occurred in 1729, the year John Wesley came to reside at Oxford. He joined a small group which had been started by his brother Charles, and included Richard Morgan and Robert Kirkham.⁵³ They spent as much time together as they could in all manner of practices and activities.⁵⁴ Over time, their number increased and included a Mr Clayton and “several of his pupils”⁵⁵ as well as pupils of John Wesley. To this were added “Mr. Broughton, Ingham, Whitefield, [and] Hervey.”⁵⁶ The second group was begun in Savannah, where Wesley had gone to be a missionary to the Indians but spent most of his time ministering to a local congregation. He discerned the more serious of their number and recommended they “form themselves into a sort of little

⁵¹ Ibid., 81. Of course, not in a neutral sense but a decidedly religious sense.

⁵² Wesley, “A Short History of The People Called Methodists (1781),” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 430.

⁵³ Wesley, “Preface,” in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 124.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 18: 127. Some of their practices and activities included spending up to four evenings a week together in reading and at least once a week visiting the local prison. See Wesley, “Letter to Richard Morgan, Sen.” (19 October, 1732), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 336–7. They also decided to spend several hours a week visiting the poor in town who were sick. See Wesley, “A Short History of the People Called Methodists (1781),” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 427.

⁵⁵ Wesley, “Letter to Lady Cox” (7 March, 1737/8), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 533.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 25: 533.

society, and to meet once or twice a week ...”⁵⁷ The third gathering that can be seen as giving rise to Methodism was in London in 1738, soon after Wesley’s return from America, when he began attending the Church of England Society meetings at John Hutton’s place.⁵⁸ Out of this a new society was formed in Fetter Lane which experienced steady growth: “Fourteen were added since our return, so that we have now eight bands of men, consisting of fifty-six persons ... [but] only two small bands of women.”⁵⁹ Within a year, Wesley was in doctrinal strife with the Moravian leaders of the Fetter Lane Society, which resulted in him and others departing to form a Society at the Foundery in London.

Rack is right to note, that in terms of an “independent organization which grew into his [Wesley’s] ‘connexion’,”⁶⁰ it was the Foundery that launched Wesleyan Methodism. Wesley says as much in his ‘General Rules of the United Societies’ where he writes:

In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London ... that I would spend some time with them ... I appointed a day when they might all come together, which from henceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening ... this was the rise of the United Society, first at London, and then in other places.⁶¹

Wesley’s structured group approach evolved over time to become a collective society embracing a network of smaller bands, often operating within the same city. These small bands were homogenous in terms of gender, age and marital status. In London (1738) Wesley reports 56 men divided into eight bands and two further female bands, one of

⁵⁷ Wesley, “A Short History of the People Called Methodists (1781),” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 429. Rack notes that, unlike the Oxford groups which were centred in study and charity, the Savannah group was more focused on devotion. See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 120.

⁵⁸ Wesley, (1 May, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 235.

⁵⁹ Wesley, “Letter to the Church at Herrnhut” (14 to 20 October, 1738), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 572.

⁶⁰ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 204. Elsewhere, Rack disputes the notion that the Oxford group was a picture “of a single, tightly knit club led by Wesley under fixed rules and meeting in one place.” See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 87.

⁶¹ Wesley, “The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies (1743),” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 69.

three and the other five.⁶² Other bands of differing make-up were added. Those considered too “slack”⁶³ in their keeping of the band rules were encouraged to belong to “distinct bands,”⁶⁴ and those who flagrantly rebelled against such strictures but, on reflection, wanted readmission to Methodist circles, found a place in penitent bands. Band meetings could be held on Monday evening and the United Society meeting on Wednesday night.

Methodists were also expected to attend their local church – invariably Anglican – on Sunday morning. It is important to note that Wesley’s small group movement, at least in his lifetime, stayed within the Church of England. Collins rightly asserts that “Methodism quickly became an evangelical order within the Church of England,”⁶⁵ a view that is also supported by Abraham.⁶⁶ Baker writes that Wesley “did not attempt to formulate a new doctrine of the church,”⁶⁷ and Colon-Emeric is insistent that Wesley’s ambition “was not to create a separate church”⁶⁸ and neither, according to Knight, did Wesley want to “replace the church.”⁶⁹ Rather, as Ted Campbell suggests, “Wesley fits in the genus of distinctively Christian renewal movements.”⁷⁰ Methodists then, were not “a distinct party”⁷¹ but rather an attempt at “renewing the Church of England from within.”⁷² John Kent disputes the reformist urge within Wesleyanism and instead argues,

⁶² Wesley, “A Letter to the Church at Herrnhut” (14 to 20 October, 1738), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 572.

⁶³ Wesley, (17 March, 1741), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 187.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 19: 187.

⁶⁵ Kenneth J. Collins, “Wesley’s Life and Ministry,” in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (ed. Maddox and Vickers), 43–59.

⁶⁶ Abraham, *Wesley for Armchair Theologians*, 15.

⁶⁷ Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London: Epworth Press, 1970), 2.

⁶⁸ Colon-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas and Christian Perfection*, 57.

⁶⁹ Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life*, 35.

⁷⁰ Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, 116.

⁷¹ Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, “Wesley’s Emphases on Worship and the Means of Grace,” in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (ed. Maddox and Vickers), 225–41.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 226.

somewhat cynically and without support, that Wesleyanism could be construed as an attempt “to restore Anglican clerical claims to authority over the laity.”⁷³ Wesley created groups that he could only attend once a year which meant he was very reliant on and supportive of a laity-led movement. Kent also argues that, by and large, the Anglican Church of Wesley’s day was in fact not in need of reform. “Official Anglicanism was never as spiritually dead as the Wesleys said it was, or as the Catholic historians have assumed it must have been, not being Catholic. There were whole aspects of Hanoverian Anglicanism which the Wesleys never fully understood.”⁷⁴

Wesley in fact saw some merit in staying within Anglicanism. It was Wesley’s view that there existed an almost symbiotic relationship between the Church of England – in which he was a minister – and the Methodist movement. In 1766 he wrote in his *Journal*, “I see clearer and clearer, none will keep to us unless they keep to the Church. Whoever separate from the Church will separate from the Methodists.”⁷⁵ Almost a decade later, this view was underlined when at a preachers’ conference it was decided to stay within the Church of England. Of this decision he wrote, “after a full discussion of the point, we all remained firm in our judgment that it is our duty not to leave the Church, wherein God has blessed us ...”⁷⁶ Toward the end of his life when the momentum was to break away from the Church of England, Wesley was yet again adamant that this must not happen, declaring that those who did would see his face “no more.”⁷⁷ Rack questions Wesley’s overly optimistic view of his role and that of the Methodist Societies within Anglicanism by noting:

His [Wesley’s] picture of Methodism as a mere auxiliary to the Church of England was unconvincing when he allowed men of all sects and none to join his societies. His challenge in legal as well as practical terms to the Anglican parish

⁷³ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleys*, 47.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁷⁵ Wesley, (4 August, 1766), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 55.

⁷⁶ Wesley, (7 July, 1778), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 98.

⁷⁷ Wesley, (1 January, 1790), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 24: 2.

system and Anglican clericalism and prayer-book religion was much more fundamental than he acknowledged. Methodism was in fact a disruptive force in parish life, and peculiarly offensive and difficult to deal with ...⁷⁸

Attendance at the local Anglican Church on Sunday mornings was encouraged, be it under strained circumstances, although Sunday nights for the Methodists consisted of a love-feast.⁷⁹ The first love-feast was in 1739 where approximately 70 people gathered for several hours. Wesley's purpose or design for the love-feast was to provide a space "in which every man, yea, and woman, has liberty to speak whatever ..."⁸⁰ In a culture and society that privileged some and demeaned others, these love-feasts empowered all. Wesley was especially concerned to see "plain people" speak "without reserve."⁸¹

The number of people joining the Methodist movement was so great that as early as 1742, Wesley voiced frustration that newcomers were "continually scattering hither and thither."⁸² The bands were not geographically based and so new members were quite literally traversing all over the place to get to one. An unexpected solution was found when Wesley and other leaders in Bristol were addressing an unrelated financial issue and it was decided to create neighbourhood-based classes of about a dozen or so people. It was Wesley's design to divide each Society "into smaller companies, called Classes, according to their respective places of abode."⁸³ Each had a leader and his or her responsibilities included visiting each person once a week to inquire how they were faring and if they needed support and direction.⁸⁴ The Bristol initiative was soon followed in London. Wesley writes that "there could be no better way to come to a sure,

⁷⁸ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 279.

⁷⁹ A love-feast was a large-group gathering in which people came together to share a very modest meal and testimonies of how God had been at work in their lives.

⁸⁰ Wesley, (19 July, 1761), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 336.

⁸¹ Wesley, (27 March, 1785), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 347.

⁸² Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism (1786)," in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 528.

⁸³ Wesley, "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies in London, Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle upon Tyne (1743)," in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 69–70.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 9: 70.

thorough knowledge of each person, than to divide them into classes like those at Bristol ...”⁸⁵ Wesley’s language is not to imply an intrusive and controlling leadership. Rather, in a letter to the Sheffield Society, Wesley writes, “Let the leaders be as parents to all in their classes, watching over them in love, bearing their infirmities, praying with them and for them, ready to do and suffer in all things for their sakes.”⁸⁶

A year after forming the classes, Wesley introduced the notion of the United Society which was simply a union of societies. Several years on, he created the “select society”⁸⁷ for those more advanced in Methodism – a place where he could “unbosom [himself] on all occasions, without reserve ...”⁸⁸ To gain admission into these select gatherings one had to be sponsored or recommended by an existing member.

In the following years the number and variety of groups continued to expand. The first watch-night in London, April 1742, saw Methodists gathered primarily to sing together.⁸⁹ In 1747, Wesley held one of his earliest conferences for Methodist preachers. In 1751 another was held over three days when mostly doctrinal issues were discussed. In the same year in another city about 30 preachers gathered. It was hoped leaders could “speak their minds”⁹⁰ at these conferences, be self-critical of the movement⁹¹ and come to agreement on important issues.⁹² In 1780 it was decided that these conferences should run for at least nine to ten days.

⁸⁵ Wesley, (25 March, 1742), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 258.

⁸⁶ Wesley, “Letter to the Sheffield Society” (23 February, 1750), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 411–12.

⁸⁷ Wesley, (13 October, 1749), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 307.

⁸⁸ Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People called Methodists: In a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham in Kent,” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 270.

⁸⁹ Wesley, (9 April, 1742), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 258–9.

⁹⁰ Wesley, (6 May, 1755), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 10.

⁹¹ Wesley, (5 August, 1777), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 64.

⁹² Wesley, (9 July, 1780), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 181.

Wesley's concern was to provide a social unit for people at each stage of their faith development.⁹³ He defined distinct groups for those still unenlightened to spiritual truth, using public services, often held outdoors, as the setting. Those who were open to exploring Christianity further were invited to join classes. If, after significant time in these trial classes, some found themselves convinced by Christianity, they were encouraged to join a band. If band members emerged as devoted practitioners of what they believed then they transitioned from the band to a select society. Rack notes that "the class meeting persisted as the core of the Methodist system, but the more select groups were always more difficult to maintain and appear to have faded away during the early nineteenth century."⁹⁴

In a helpful breakdown of each of these group structures: Thomas Albin⁹⁵ outlines the flow from one to the other as overleaf:

⁹³ In this respect, he was 'client-centred' in his approach (to use modern social work phraseology). People's respective starting points, needs and strengths determined which type of group they belonged to. It was not enough simply to have people in groups but more importantly to place them in the right groups. Membership in these different groups was determined by stages, ages, gender, and geography.

⁹⁴ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 239.

⁹⁵ Albin, "Inwardly Persuaded," 46. Of his 13 characteristics, only 6 appear in this thesis due to their direct relevance. Albin's other characteristics include: music, prayer, meeting place, gender and marital status, number of members, leadership and community.

Table 8. Early Methodist Small-Group Structures and Settings for Spiritual Formation

Characteristics	Class meeting	Band meeting	Select Society
Essential experience [and theology]	Desire for God [Convincing grace]	New birth [Justifying grace]	Love of God [Sanctifying grace]
Formational focus	Mind	Will	Heart or affection
Noetic focus	Finding the way	Overcoming sin	Love of Christ
Praxeological context	Outwardly obey the three rules	Inwardly practise the means of grace	Live in love and obedience
Affective focus	Desire for God	Repentance and forgiveness	Love of God and neighbour
Expected response	Outward obedience	Growth in Christian discipleship	Love, service, spiritual leadership.

Source: Thomas Albin, “Inwardly Persuaded,” in *“Heart Religion” in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard B. Steele; Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2001), 46.

Wesley created a social pathway for people to progress from one setting to another. Essentially movement along the pathway was from class meeting, to bands and then on to a select society. This movement equates to several of the orthos:

Table 9. Small-Group Structures and their Ortho Equivalents.

Characteristics	Class meeting	Band meeting	Select society
	Orthodoxy Orthopaideia	Orthokardia Orthopaideia	Orthokoinonia Orthopaideia Orthopraxy

At their core, all Wesley’s groups had the hope that individuals would progressively change to become lovers of God and neighbour. Albin rightly identifies love of neighbour and service as desired outcomes, among other qualities, for those travelling along the Methodist social pathway.

It was Wesley's view that group activity could generate works of love. Not surprisingly, he encouraged all to consider life alongside others. For Wesley, intentional relationships were a crucial first step in human maturity. For example, in a letter to a much younger man, Wesley advised, "... and do not take one step ... without first consulting your best friends."⁹⁶ It was Wesley's view that with a select group of friends it was possible to "unbosom oneself without reserve."⁹⁷ He believed one of the benefits of a small group of friends was that they could "constantly" watch over each other and, if need be, administer "reproof or advice."⁹⁸ In a letter to John Burton, Wesley writes that his own friends had "lifted up my hands that hung down, and strengthened my feeble knees."⁹⁹ Such collegiality was for friendship and in order that each might grow in love.

Wesley argued that such "joining together"¹⁰⁰ was a means of achieving the end of "renewing each soul in love."¹⁰¹ He admitted that many were "the advantages which have ever since flowed from this closer union of the believers with each other".¹⁰² Confession of faults, for example, led to healing and personal transformation so people were then "strengthened in love" and therefore enabled "to abound in every good work."¹⁰³ Quite simply, they came together "to provoke each other to love and to good works."¹⁰⁴ A society was, for Wesley, "a company" united in common purpose to "watch over one another in love" so that "they may help each to work out their

⁹⁶ Wesley, "Letter to Christopher Hopper" (8 October, 1755), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 601.

⁹⁷ Wesley, "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists (1749)," in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 270.

⁹⁸ Wesley, "Letter to the Revd. Samuel Wesley, Sen." (10 December, 1734), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 399.

⁹⁹ Wesley, "Letter to the Revd. John Burton" (10 October, 1735), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 25: 442.

¹⁰⁰ Wesley, "Letter to the Revd. Gilbert Boyce" (1 May, 1750), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 419.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 26: 419.

¹⁰² Wesley, "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists," in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 268.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 9: 268.

¹⁰⁴ Wesley, (30 January, 1745), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 51.

salvation.”¹⁰⁵ In his published sermon “On Working Out Our Own Salvation”, Wesley made clear this meant “learning to do well”, “being zealous of good works”, especially “works of mercy.”¹⁰⁶ Being with others contributed to human maturing, resulting in human doing. Orthokoinonia made orthopaideia possible.

Wesley’s societies were nothing new. Structured groups or societies had made their appearance well before Wesley’s were born. Outler, for example, dates their appearance to the Stuart downfall¹⁰⁷ and Ted Campbell notes that they were definitely on the rise in the late seventeenth-century.¹⁰⁸ Five years before the birth of Wesley, there were an estimated 32 societies in London alone.¹⁰⁹ There were the “Societies for the Reformation of Manners (flourishing from the 1690s), the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1698, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) in 1701.”¹¹⁰ Marquardt notes that these societies were “concerned with personal conversations in small circles and lives lived in accordance with strict rules ... and that undertook social tasks.”¹¹¹ John Wesley was born into the “age of associations.”¹¹² Not surprisingly, he joined in and took advantage of this development.¹¹³

¹⁰⁵ Wesley, “The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies (1743),” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 69.

¹⁰⁶ Wesley, “On Working out Our Own Salvation,” Sermon 98 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 205.

¹⁰⁷ Albert C. Outler, “Pastoral Care in the Wesleyan Spirit,” in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (ed. Oden and Longden), 175–88.

¹⁰⁸ Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, 20.

¹⁰⁹ Wood, *The Inextinguishable Blaze*, 32.

¹¹⁰ Jeremy Gregory, “The Long Eighteenth Century,” in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (ed. Maddox and Vickers), 13–39.

¹¹¹ Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics*, 22.

¹¹² Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, 78.

¹¹³ David Watson traces Wesley’s indebtedness to other traditions in his forming of Methodism. First and foremost, he was indebted to his own beloved Church of England. For example, the respective societies for the reformation of manners, propagation of knowledge and of the Gospel in foreign parts were all sponsored by the Church of England. In other words, societies were a mainstream activity prior to the evangelical revival. Watson also discerns the influence of the Puritans on Wesley’s model in “their concept of the church as small communities of believers, living together in the covenant of grace.”

Wesley's societies were marked by significant initial growth. In 1738, for example, the Fetter Lane London Society had 32 attendees¹¹⁴ but five years later his Foundry Society in London had 2,200.¹¹⁵ By the 1760s the Methodists were getting reasonable numbers to their societies in other cities, for example, in Connaught (200), Ulster (250), Leinster (1,000),¹¹⁶ Lewisham (2,375)¹¹⁷ and Tunbridge (2,700).¹¹⁸ Those who joined were often from the lower socio-economic classes. In 1742 Wesley described the members in Newcastle as people:

... without power (for you are a low, insignificant people), without riches (for you are poor, almost to a man, having no more than the plain necessities of life), and without either any extraordinary gifts of nature or the advantages of education ...¹¹⁹

Wesley depicted the teachers of this society as being “quite unlearned and (in other things) ignorant men.”¹²⁰ He said of the society in Nottingham that most were “of the lower class, chiefly employed in the stocking-manufacture.”¹²¹ These descriptions were

(Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting*, 26). The notion of covenant was later used by Wesley as a way of renewing people's allegiance to one another and therefore to Methodism. The Presbyterianism of the mid-17th century also informed Wesley especially in regard to its practice of small bands of leaders meeting in homes. Wesley likewise learned the place of meeting in the home from Congregationalism, especially during times of hardship and persecution. The Moravians demonstrated to Wesley the potential of placing people into small fellowship bands. Ted Campbell discerns much earlier influences on Wesley's commitment to a social Christianity. Campbell locates these influences in Christian antiquity and the early primitive church. He writes of Wesley's Christianity that it was a “vision of Christianity in the ante-Nicene period ... a vision of a Christian community holding its possessions in common, exercising a strict discipline over its catechumens, worshipping together daily ... an orderly communion ... suffering under persecutions, providing for the needs of its own constituents, first, then for the rest of humankind so far as it is able.” See Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, 36.

¹¹⁴ Wesley, (17 September, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 12.

¹¹⁵ Wesley, (1 December, 1743), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 6.

¹¹⁶ Wesley, (2 July, 1760), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 267.

¹¹⁷ Wesley, (24 February, 1761), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 308.

¹¹⁸ Wesley, (14 January, 1762), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 351.

¹¹⁹ Wesley, “Advice to the People Called Methodists (1745),” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 126.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 9: 126.

¹²¹ Wesley, (18 June, 1777), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 56.

not said unkindly but simply as a matter of sociological fact. Whereas the members of Newcastle may, in Wesley's eyes, have been of the lower class, Rack suggests that it was "the broad spectrum of the 'middling sort of people' down to the craftsmen" that were "the real target of Methodism."¹²² Rack's view is, however, at variance with a letter dated 23 May, 1747 in which non-Methodists make the observation:

A set of people who stile (sic) themselves Methodists have infus'd their enthusiastick (sic) notions to the minds of vast numbers of the meaner sort of people in the western part of this County, they are very strenuously endeavoring to propagate them all over it: several have assembled frequently ... the preacher they are so very fond of, is no better than a mean illiterate Tinner, and what is more surprising, but a boy of nineteen years old.¹²³

With stark transparency, Wesley recounts the decline and deterioration of many of his societies from the 1750s onward. In late 1750, he visited Brentford and "gathered up the poor remains of the shattered society."¹²⁴ A few years later, he visited the society in Allendale and found it "shattered in pieces."¹²⁵ In 1761, the society at Evesham had "sunk into nothing."¹²⁶ By 1762 the Newtown society had been "reduced from fifty to eighteen members"¹²⁷ and he simply described the society in Cardiff in 1763 as being "in a ruinous a condition as the castle."¹²⁸ A lot of the decline occurred between 1765 and 1775. His *Journal* seems replete with one failure of a society after another. In Waterford for example he "found a small, poor, dead society,"¹²⁹ at Yarmouth "confusion"¹³⁰ and at Edinburgh the numbers had been reduced by two-thirds.¹³¹ At St.

¹²² Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 9.

¹²³ Thomas Secker, "Letter from J. Birkenhead and J. Tremayne to the Bishop of Exeter" (23 May, 1747). Cited in Goodhead, *A Crown and a Cross*, 268.

¹²⁴ Wesley, (30 November, 1750), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 372.

¹²⁵ Wesley, (26 May, 1752), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 425.

¹²⁶ Wesley, (10 March, 1761), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 309.

¹²⁷ Wesley, (21 April, 1762), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 361.

¹²⁸ Wesley, (28 August, 1763), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 426.

¹²⁹ Wesley, (10 June, 1767), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 84.

¹³⁰ Wesley, (7 December, 1767), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 115.

Ives only a few remained¹³² and at Hertford the society was simply “no more”.¹³³ At Leytonstone the society had dwindled to several and Wesley feared that it too would “shrink into nothing”.¹³⁴ By 1782 his beloved society at Kingswood was also “continually decreasing”.¹³⁵

Wesley, on witnessing the decline, became even more strident in his insistence that people continue in their group. A year before he died, he wrote to Ann Bolton:

From the time you omitted meeting your class or band you grieved the Holy Spirit of God, and He gave a commission to Satan to buffet you: nor will that commission ever be revoked till you begin to meet again ... I exhort you for my sake (who tenderly love you), for God’s sake, for the sake of your own soul, begin again without delay. The day after you receive this go and meet a class or a band. Sick or well, go! If you cannot speak a word, go; and God will go with you. You sink under the sin of omission! My friend, my sister, go! Go, whether you can or not.¹³⁶

A family of factors, at least from Wesley’s perspective, explains the demise and decline of his small group structure. In the aforementioned instance with Ann Bolton, Wesley uses the category of sin to explain lack of attendance. In other cases it was his exclusionary tactics. Initially and inevitably the young movement attracted all sorts of people, including those who distracted and even derailed existing members. Wesley therefore felt constrained to disqualify these disruptive or ‘disorderly’ elements. For example, in Bristol in 1741, Wesley felt “obliged to exclude”¹³⁷ more than 30 from the society. In Boroughbridge, 50 were excluded,¹³⁸ and at Kingswood in his March 1743

¹³¹ Wesley, (9 May, 1770), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 229.

¹³² Wesley, (27 August, 1770), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 244.

¹³³ Wesley, (18 December, 1773), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 357.

¹³⁴ Wesley, (3 March, 1774), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 399.

¹³⁵ Wesley, (22 September, 1782), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 255.

¹³⁶ Wesley, “Letter to Ann Bolton” (4 November, 1790), in *Letters* (ed. Telford), 8: 246.

¹³⁷ Wesley, (9 December, 1741), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 240.

¹³⁸ Wesley, (20 February, 1743), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 315.

visit, all manner were excluded for various reasons: 2 for swearing, 17 for drunkenness, 3 for quarrelling, 1 for beating his wife, 3 for lying, 1 for laziness and 29 for carelessness.¹³⁹ Elsewhere, the reasons for decline were harmful doctrine,¹⁴⁰ staffing issues¹⁴¹ or the wider sociological issue of factories closing down cause populations to move.¹⁴² Another reason for their decline was the inevitable tensions and misunderstandings involved in belonging to such small groups. In his biography, John Valton, for example, relates his initial meetings in a small group:

The other evening I was exceedingly tried by one in our Class, who I feared had not a spirit of love. I recommended him to God. After Class the devil roar'd furoisly at our Leader's house. Our meeting was forbade, at least our Class Leader my soul's friend was denied the meeting us. I was accused of receiving Stolen Goods and called many bad names.¹⁴³

Indeed our Class seems to lose both the power and form. Our Class Leader mostly ill, another an elderly person, a Pharisee unwilling to let go her Rage. Another quite lifeless, fell away from what he had received under a dissenting Minister, and another whose pious impressions, like Jonah's Gourd are soon destroyed by levity of spirit and carelessness, and last of all, the unworthiest of all, myself.¹⁴⁴

In Scotland the decline is partly explained by a cultural bias. Margaret Batty reports that there were "735 Scots members in 1774, but by 1779 the number had fallen to 632."¹⁴⁵ A key reason for this decline had to do with the Wesleyan insistence on class meetings. Batty explains: "The Scott's dislike of telling one another their inmost thoughts would

¹³⁹ Wesley, (12 March, 1743), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 318.

¹⁴⁰ Wesley, (3 April, 1751), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 382.

¹⁴¹ Wesley, (5 June, 1772), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 337.

¹⁴² Wesley, (28 June, 1784), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 319.

¹⁴³ John Valton, *The Christian Experience of the Late Rev. John Valton: A Clerk in the Ordinance Office; Afterwards a Most Zealous Minister in the Late Mr Wesley's Connection Vol. 1* (1764; Early Methodist Diaries Collection: MA 1977/293, John Rylands University Library, Methodist Archives), 130. Quoted in Goodhead, *A Crown and a Cross*, 256.

¹⁴⁴ Valton, *The Christian Experience of the Late Rev. John Valton: Volume II*, 67. Quoted in Goodhead, *A Crown and a Cross*, 256.

¹⁴⁵ Margaret Batty, *Scotland's Methodists: 1750–2000* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 29.

prove to be a reason for the poor success of class meetings.”¹⁴⁶ Thomas Erskine (1788–1870), a leading Church of Scotland thinker of the time, wrote of the Methodists: “They form bands or classes where measures are followed offensive to many judicious Christians. Could they not be witnesses to Christianity without that inquiry into one another’s religious experiences, which Christ has nowhere enjoined either as a moral duty or a mean of grace?”¹⁴⁷

Regardless of Wesley’s own explanations, and those given by others at the time for the decline of his groups, Andrew Goodhead proposes other more sociologically nuanced reasons in a recent work.¹⁴⁸ Goodhead uses three sociological frameworks to explain the demise: totemism developed by Emile Durkheim, Max Weber’s routinisation and Ernst Troeltsch’s typology of church and sect. Goodhead is right to suggest that totemism, routinisation and institutionalism, can explain why some groups eventually stop growing and even decline. But he is wrong to use these as an explanatory framework for the demise of Wesley’s small groups.

Goodhead uses Durkheim’s categories of the sacred and the profane to understand the demise of the classes. He argues that Wesley and his followers elevated the classes into a sacred object which became a totem, or something that could not be dismantled. Goodhead writes,

... the class meeting was a totem, because Wesley’s own ‘warmed heart’ experience was in a small group, and when the opportunity came along for a group meeting that was pastoral and educational as well as a catalyst to conversion and sanctification, it was hard for Wesley to admit the class meeting could outlive its usefulness, and might need to be replaced or supplemented by other organizations.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴⁷ John Erskine, “Preface” in James Hervey, *Aspasio Vindicated and the Scripture Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness Defended ... in Eleven Letters* (Edinburgh, 1765). Quoted in Batty, *Scotland’s Methodists*, 16.

¹⁴⁸ Andrew Goodhead, *A Crown and a Cross: The Rise, Development, and Decline of the Methodist Class Meeting in Eighteenth-Century England* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 234.

In other words, the classes became sacred, immutable, unchanging; not to be meddled with or touched. As such, argues Goodhead, they soon became mundane and archaic and not surprisingly, people voted with their feet. The sociologist Anthony Giddens suggests that Durkheim uses the word ‘totem’ to describe those sacred objects that are “‘apart from the routine aspects of existence – the realm of the profane’”.¹⁵⁰ In other words, the totem or sacred object “‘is believed to have divine properties’”.¹⁵¹ This definition renders Goodhead’s usage of Durkheim’s totemism problematic as far as Wesleyan Methodism is concerned. It is one thing to say that Wesley highly valued and was extremely dependant upon the classes, bands and societies and indeed tirelessly committed to them; but that is some distance from suggesting the Methodists of his day believed their group structure was inherently supernatural.

Goodhead also uses Max Weber’s theory of routinisation and the loss of charisma to explain the decline and demise of the small groups. Wesley began, so the argument goes, as a typical charismatic pioneer of a movement and, while everything revolved around his supernatural gifts, Methodism grew. When, in the words of Goodhead, growth demanded that Methodism rely upon “‘tried and trusted models of work’”¹⁵² instead of Wesley’s charisma, routinisation crept in, excitement ebbed and the movement was compromised. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, when Max Weber uses the category of the charismatic leader, he is referring to a leader who “‘disrupts tradition’”¹⁵³ and who others treat “‘as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.’”¹⁵⁴ It is one thing to describe Wesley as an extremely gifted and courageous pioneer of a new movement, which he was, but he was also very conservative. The last thing he wanted to do was disrupt traditions; proof of this was his adamant refusal to leave the Church of England. On this point,

¹⁵⁰ Giddens, *Sociology*, 459.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 459.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 202.

¹⁵³ Scott and Marshall, *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, 64.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

Kent is right to describe Wesley's true conservative colours when he writes about Wesley's "... ostentatious loyalty to the Hanoverian dynasty in 1745, his aggressive support for English rule in Ireland, and his eagerness to back the Crown against the American colonists."¹⁵⁵

The only hint of radicalism in Wesley is the societies themselves. Many broke up the traditional order of things at a time when any form of dissent or non-conformity was unwelcome. As Kent rightly states, there were some within the moderate wing of the Anglican Church who felt that the social consequences of a Wesleyan societal reform movement at the parish level would be unbearable and that tolerance was needed, not revival.¹⁵⁶ But this kind of in-house religious radicalism hardly equates to the kind of radicalism that Weber had in mind.

Goodhead also relies upon Ernst Troeltsch and his analysis of mystical group, sect and church to explain the one-generational decline of the classes. He stresses that at the very outset, the Methodists "fitted the description of mysticism."¹⁵⁷ Experiencing the world of big ideas propelled them onwards. Sooner than expected however, "a desire for acceptance and respectability"¹⁵⁸ as well as "organisation"¹⁵⁹ changed Methodism into a sect and with it the beginnings of institutionalism and therefore the seeds of decline. In terms of Troeltsch's comparison of church and sect, the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* defines a sect as a small group "which adopts a radical stance towards the state and society."¹⁶⁰ Throughout his long life, however, Wesley was at pains to demonstrate that his Methodism was law-abiding and supportive of the state, thereby disqualifying it

¹⁵⁵ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, 79.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 246.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 246.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 247.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 587.

from Troeltsch's analogy. Not surprisingly, Rack writes that "Methodism has never fitted easily into the 'church or sect' analysis."¹⁶¹

As far as Wesley was concerned, the success or otherwise of his small group structure was not to be measured in numbers, as Goodhead seems to imply, but rather in human transformation, resulting in love of God and neighbour. This goes to the heart of orthopaideia. Growing groups was not Wesley's concern; rather, the groups were a means of growing people. Rack rightly observes that "Wesley in fact often purged the societies ruthlessly on his visits – he preferred a smaller group of the committed to a large group of the lukewarm."¹⁶²

Secondary Wesleyan literature supports the view that, in community, people are likely to change. As Les Steele writes, the class meetings of Wesley "were not designed to meet 'felt needs' but to form the heart in Christian love."¹⁶³ Clapper insists that affectional development (orthokardia) "requires a society, a community, for both their formation and their expression."¹⁶⁴ Richard Steele, in a lengthy passage, captures the importance of groups to human transformation:

This transformation, however, must not be understood naturalistically, like the stages of ordinary human maturation. Rather, it can only take place when the person is a faithful member of the Christian community, allowing her thoughts to be regulated by the church's doctrinal convictions, her conduct to be governed by its norms, and her experience of God and of everything else in light of God to be shaped by the collective wisdom embedded in its spiritual disciplines and liturgical practices. The Methodist doctrine of Christian perfection implies neither Pelagian moralism nor religious individualism. Rather, it attests to the

¹⁶¹ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 249.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 241.

¹⁶³ Les L. Steele, "Educating the Heart," in *"Heart Religion" in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard B. Steele), 225–44.

¹⁶⁴ Gregory S. Clapper, *The Renewal of the Heart is the Mission of the Church: Wesley's Heart Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010), 88.

transforming power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who, together, constitute the Body of Christ.¹⁶⁵

L. Gregory Jones admits that any such transformative work is difficult at the best of times and therefore “requires an ongoing deconstruction and reconstruction of one’s life in and through the community of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁶⁶ Les Steele locates human transformation in places of “Christian community”, “collective wisdom” and the “Body of Christ.”¹⁶⁷ In community, states Outler, people acquire “habits of acting”¹⁶⁸ and are “inducted into the shared practices of Christian life.”¹⁶⁹ The habit and practice of walking toward the stranger is no easy thing, but as Abraham enjoins, “the higher the initial demands, the greater the need for communal support.”¹⁷⁰

Outside of the Wesleyan academy, there is also support for the way in which a small group can contribute to advances in pro-social behaviour among its members. Sociologist Robert Wuthnow, in his research of contemporary small groups, tested whether “small groups focus so much attention on the emotional needs of their members that they could not possibly encourage broader interests.”¹⁷¹ His concern was to establish whether or not groups in the modern era are predominantly ingrown or outgoing? In his three-year survey of members of groups, he asked “as a result of being in this group, have you done any of the following”¹⁷² Wuthnow listed ten activities,

¹⁶⁵ Richard B. Steele, “*Heart Religion*” in *the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements*, xxviii.

¹⁶⁶ Jones, *Transformed Judgment*, 140.

¹⁶⁷ Richard B. Steele, “*Heart Religion*” in *the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements*, xxviii.

¹⁶⁸ Jones, *Transformed Judgment*, 76.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁷⁰ Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism*, 129.

¹⁷¹ Robert Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America’s New Quest for Community* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 319.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 319.

“eight of which dealt with various kinds of helping activities ...”¹⁷³ The results indicated that a significant majority of the small-group members had “worked with the group to help someone inside of the group who was in need.”¹⁷⁴ This suggests ingrown-ness, but Wuthnow also discovered that two out of three group members had also “worked with the group to help other people in need outside of the group”,¹⁷⁵ which indicates an outgoing orientation.

According to Wuthnow, there is something about groups that encourages “a charitable lifestyle.”¹⁷⁶ He gives several reasons for this. First, “small groups have an enormous advantage in being able to help other people because members can divide up the work.”¹⁷⁷ Each person ends up with a manageable load. Secondly, and possibly more importantly, small groups free up individuals “from their own insecurities so that they can reach out more charitably toward other people.”¹⁷⁸ Another reason given by Wuthnow is that small groups “prompt people to quit thinking and start acting.”¹⁷⁹ What he means by this is that in a small group, people are reminded they do not have to become perfect in motive before they act, but can step out irrespective of intention. In other words, small groups press “people for a decision.”¹⁸⁰ Modern research clearly demonstrates the power of groups to evoke choices for change in individuals. Festinger, Schachter and Back write:

There is no question any longer that individuals and groups do exert influences on others which can and do result in uniform opinions and behaviour patterns ... It has also been shown, by a series of independent studies, that people’s

¹⁷³ Ibid., 319.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 319–20.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 320.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 323.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 323.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 323.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 324.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 324.

aspirations and goal-setting behaviour are strongly influenced by information they possess about how others behave and their relationship to these others. All of these influences produce changes in the individual's behaviour which result in his being more similar to other members of the group to which he feels he belongs.¹⁸¹

However, for groups to have a transformative effect, Wesley adds rules as a further dimension. Each group he created was literally saturated in rules, and it is this rule-based approach that furnishes another ortho – orthonomos.

Orthonomos

While Wuthnow suggests groups can stir people to action, this is not to infer they will necessarily focus on those outside of the group. Kurt Back, in his history of encounter groups in contemporary America, concludes that they are “nothing more than the American middle class at play.”¹⁸² Groups can turn inward, existing for themselves, rather than taking to heart the interests of outsiders. For groups to possess an outward pro-social focus, directives, precepts and rules are required. To use sociologist Peter Berger's phrase, groups will need ‘nomization’. Berger uses the term nomos (‘law’), to mean a set of principles that can create order and so keep at bay its opposite, anomy or chaos. He posits that one of the most important functions of any collective is nomization,¹⁸³ which has to do with stating clearly what something is and what it is not. In this sense, a meaningful order is created that can help people navigate human experience. In part, rules order collectives and direct the process of human maturing.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Leon Festinger, Stanley Schachter and Kurt Back, “The Operation of Group Standards,” in *Group Dynamics* (ed. Cartwright and Zander), 241–59.

¹⁸² Kurt W. Back, *Beyond Words: The Story of Sensitivity Training and the Encounter Movement* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), xxi.

¹⁸³ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 22.

¹⁸⁴ It is also Berger's view that such laws or principles are formed out of a narrative backdrop. Wesley was of the same opinion, allowing his rules, precepts, conventions and principles to surface from the biblical narrative. The day-to-day rules of a group therefore serve not only to guide their behaviour but also as a window into what they actually hold to be true. Implicit in rules are certain beliefs. In this sense, orthodoxy shapes orthonomos which in turn directs the behaviour of those in the groups, especially in a pro-social love of neighbour direction.

Rules introduce orthonomos into Wesley’s moral pathway. ‘Nomos’ is often thought of as that which has to do with law but Balz and Schneider contest the view of Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya when he writes, “nomos does not signify ‘Law’ in the legal and juridical sense of classical Greek ...”¹⁸⁵ Nomos, at least in Greek mythology, is the spirit, god, or deity of laws, statutes and ordinances. In more general usage, it has come to include rules, precepts, injunctions, and principles.¹⁸⁶ It can also mean customs, or those influences that impel action.¹⁸⁷ Nomos therefore has a prescriptive dimension that acts as a force to direct and compel certain types of action. Balz and Schneider endorse this wider view of nomos in stating that etymologically, nomos derives from nemo or assign. Nomos was therefore originally that which has been “assigned.”¹⁸⁸ In other words, customs, mores, conventions, principles and instructions are assigned to a particular collective so as to make for “order.”¹⁸⁹ Verbrugge uses nomos to mean those rules which are “laid down or ordered”¹⁹⁰ so as to create “processes essential for humans to live together in community.”¹⁹¹

In Wesley’s letter to Whitefield, he underlines two necessary dimensions to discipline, or the process of human maturing. Societies, classes and bands, which this work labels as orthokoinonia, are the first. Rules, the second dimension, described as orthonomos, are also placed under discipline whether they are “rules in general” or “in particular.”¹⁹² Orthopaideia, or discipline, has to do with gathering people into groups but groups that are marked not just by fellowship but also accountability around rules. A rule-based

¹⁸⁵ Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 2), 473.

¹⁸⁶ BibleStudyTools, “Nomos,” 2012. Online: <http://www.searchgodsword.org/lex/grk/view.cgi?number=3551>

¹⁸⁷ Biblos, “Nomos,” 2004–2011. Online: <http://strongnumbers.com/greek/3551.htm>

¹⁸⁸ Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 2), 473.

¹⁸⁹ Verbrugge, *The NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 867.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 868.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 867.

¹⁹² Wesley, “Letter to the Revd. George Whitefield” (28 May, 1753), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 508.

approach permeated Wesley's groups. The goal of orthopaideia is to see people become mature, and it was Wesley's view that human maturation could be facilitated through groups that held their members accountable.

Wesley's groups, classes, bands or societies, were all marked by rules, precepts, customs and ordinances. Returning to Thomas Albin's¹⁹³ typography of Wesley's groups, it becomes clear they all have rules in common (see overleaf):

Table 10. Early Methodist Small-Group Structures and Settings for Spiritual Formation

Characteristics	Class meeting	Band meeting	Select Society
Community defined	Rules	Rules	Rules
Essential experience [and theology]	Desire for God [Convincing grace]	New birth [Justifying grace]	Love of God [Sanctifying grace]
Formational focus	Mind	Will	Heart or affection
Noetic focus	Finding the way	Overcoming sin	Love of Christ
Praxeological context	Outwardly obey the three rules	Inwardly practice the means of grace	Live in love and obedience
Affective focus	Desire for God	Repentance and forgiveness	Love of God and neighbour
Expected response	Outward obedience	Growth in Christian discipleship	Love, service, spiritual leadership.

Source: Thomas Albin, "Inwardly Persuaded: Religion of the Heart in Early British Methodism," in *Heart Religion in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard B. Steele; Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2001), 46.

Outler notes that Wesley "turned out 'rules' by the dozen ..."¹⁹⁴ In no way must these comments of Outler be read as negative. He is simply stating the case that Wesley was a producer of numerous rules, both for himself and his Methodists. For example, in May

¹⁹³ Only 6 of his 13 characteristics appear in this thesis.

¹⁹⁴ Albert C. Outler, "The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition," in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (ed. Oden and Longden), 75–95.

of 1738, Wesley with Peter Bohler, wrote up the “fundamental rules”¹⁹⁵ of the Fetter Lane Society. Some of the rules were as follows:

1. That we will meet together once a week to ‘confess our faults one to another, and pray for one another that we may be healed’.
2. That the persons so meeting be divided into several ‘bands’, or little companies, none of them consisting of fewer than five or more than ten persons.
3. That everyone in order speak as freely, plainly, and concisely as he can, the real state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances, since the last time of meeting.
4. That all the bands have a conference at eight every Wednesday evening, begun and ended with singing and prayer.¹⁹⁶

Seven more rules followed these four. Mention is made of ‘bands’ in rule two (above) and these smaller groups also had their particular rules, some of which were:

1. To meet once a week, at the least.
2. To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest in order as many and as searching questions as may be concerning their state, sins, and temptations.¹⁹⁷

Before people could join such a band they had to answer in the affirmative a number of questions, including:

1. Do you desire that every one of us should tell you from time to time whatsoever is in his heart concerning you?
2. Is it your desire and design to be on this and all other occasions entirely open, so as to speak everything that is in your heart, without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Wesley, (1 May, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 236.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 18: 236.

¹⁹⁷ “Rules of the Band Societies,” Drawn up 25 December, 1738, in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 77–8.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9: 78.

The rules not only covered how they met as groups but also how they conducted themselves outside of the groups in normal daily business and life. For example:

1. Not to mention the fault of any behind his back, and to stop those short that do.
2. To use no needless self-indulgence ...
3. To give alms of such things as you possess, and that to the uttermost of your power.¹⁹⁹

It was Wesley's hope that in all societies all the rules would be adhered to, "great and small."²⁰⁰ He expressed this hope in his 82nd year! In other words, Wesley, who started out with an almost obsessive-compulsive strictness around rules, never compromised or drifted in his more mature years. His lists for these "great and small" rules were numerous. In 1735 he believed that denying himself "even in the smallest instances"²⁰¹ might be helpful, and so he ruled that he would abstain from meat and wine for a season. Although Wesley was careful not to insist other Methodists necessarily adopt his own personal rules, he did as Rack notes, ask that members adopt his practice "of making sets of 'General Rules' to guide their lives."²⁰² For example, Wesley counselled that Methodists be similarly directed by what can only be described as small rules: abstaining from "fashionable diversions, from reading plays, romances, or books of humour, from singing innocent songs, or talking in a merry, gay, diverting manner ..."²⁰³ Such rules went as far as details about furniture and fashion: "Do you still follow the same rule both in furniture and apparel, trampling all finer, all superfluity, every thing useless, every thing merely ornamental, however fashionable, underfoot?"²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 9: 79.

²⁰⁰ Wesley, (28 May, 1785), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 23: 362.

²⁰¹ Wesley, (20 October, 1735), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 137.

²⁰² Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 91.

²⁰³ Wesley, "Advice to the People Called Methodists," in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9:126.

²⁰⁴ Wesley, "The Law Established Through Faith, I," in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:30.

Wesley was careful to differentiate between general rules for all Christians, and particular ones just for Methodists. The many particular rules (for Methodists) were simply directives on how to obey the general rules (for all Christians). In his “Plain Account of the Methodists” he differentiates between these types of rules:

... that the Scripture, in most points, gives only general rules, and leaves the *particular* circumstances to be adjusted by the common sense of mankind. The Scripture (for instance) gives that *general* rule, ‘Let all things be done decently and in order.’ But common sense is to determine, on *particular* occasions, what order and decency require. So, in another instance, the Scripture lays it down as a *general* standing direction, ‘Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ But it is common prudence which is to make the application of this, in a thousand *particular* cases.²⁰⁵

Wesley was not asking all Christians to do what the Methodists were attempting. In the actual formation of the rules, Wesley was open to the insights of others. The prudential rules came under constant scrutiny at the Methodist conferences. At one such gathering in 1756, Wesley noted:

Thursday 26th, about fifty of the preachers being met at Bristol, the Rules of the Society were read over, and carefully considered one by one. But we did not find any that could be spared. So we agreed to retain and enforce them all. The next day the Rules of the Bands were read over, and considered one by one, which after some verbal alterations we all agreed to observe and enforce. On Saturday the Rules of Kingswood School were read over, and considered one by one. And we were fully satisfied that they were all agreeable both to Scripture and reason.²⁰⁶

What is significant in this note is that the rules were not set in stone but constantly under review and collectively reviewed. The implication is that Wesley did not act as the sole rule maker. This is evidenced in a letter in 1752 in which he reiterates what *thirteen Methodists* had mutually decided upon as to how preachers in their movement should

²⁰⁵ Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People called Methodists,” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 263.

²⁰⁶ Wesley, “A Short History of the People Called Methodists (1781).” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 465.

conduct themselves.²⁰⁷ Nor was Wesley asking for a blind obedience. People were only asked to conform to the rules²⁰⁸ after having them explained and being given “the reasons of them.”²⁰⁹

This rule-based approach was not new or unique to Wesleyan Methodism. It was very much part of the climate of the time. For example, in 1678 Anthony Horneck established the Savoy Society, partly for the relief of the poor. Some of their rules were:

1. All that enter into such a Society shall resolve upon a holy and serious life.
2. To love one another.
3. To pray, if possible, seven times a day.
4. To examine themselves every night.²¹⁰

Josiah Woodward, another example of the time, was involved in a religious society in Poplar, and their rules were more comprehensive than the Savoy Society. They had 15 rules but under rule 10, there were 20 sub-rules. The Epworth Society of which Wesley’s father Samuel was a member, had 14 rules. John’s mother Susanna, employed a rule-based approach in the home. For example, a child would not be beaten “if it made open confession.”²¹¹ Numerous other rules were drawn up, not to control the child but to form character. In the context of the time, such rules were not essentially about duty or living by an imposed obligation. Rather, the rule-based approach of Wesley’s time and of his own movement, pointed to larger purposes.

²⁰⁷ Wesley, “Letter to the Methodist Preachers (29 January, 1751),” in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 490.

²⁰⁸ Wesley, (6 February, 1743), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 316.

²⁰⁹ Wesley, (12 August, 1747), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 20: 189.

²¹⁰ From F. W. B. Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies 1520–1799* (St. Leonards on Sea: Budd & Gillatt, 1963). See “Appendix 1” in Goodhead, *A Crown and a Cross*, 289–90.

²¹¹ Martin Schmidt, *John Wesley: A Theological Biography* (vol. 1; New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 61.

The rules served to sharpen the identity of Methodism. They created a *particular* and “visible people.”²¹² They also helped stabilise the Methodist groups,²¹³ especially in their early years of insecurity, rejection and persecution. They also formed and shaped individual members within Methodism. Wesley ruled that the groups be marked by a high degree of transparency, the questioning of one another and confession of faults. In such a collective environment, with all its customs and conventions, people could learn from one another and be held accountable. As Goodhead notes, such rules and their consequences, took people “deeper in the quest for perfection”²¹⁴ and in this respect had, in the words of Conklin-Miller, “formative importance”²¹⁵ encouraging the formation “of holiness.”²¹⁶ The rules were intended to help people achieve sanctification, which in part, meant love of neighbour. In a rhetorical attack on the typical Anglican church of his day, Wesley highlighted what his rule-based groups were achieving:

Who watched over them in love? Who marked their growth in grace? Who advised and exhorted them from time to time? Who prayed with them and for them as they had need? This, and this alone is Christian fellowship. But alas! Where is it to be found? Look east or west, north or south; name what parish you please. Is this Christian fellowship there? Rather, are not the bulk of the parishioners a mere rope of sand? What Christian connexion is there between them? What intercourse in spiritual things? What watching over each others’ souls? What bearing of one another’s burdens? ... we introduce Christian fellowship ... and the fruits of it have been peace, joy, love, and zeal for every good word and work.²¹⁷

Rule-based fellowships marked by watching over one another and accountability produce a particular kind of person – one who is zealous for “for every good word and

²¹² Jeffrey A. Conklin-Miller, “Peoplehood and the Methodist Revival,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 46 (2011): 163–82.

²¹³ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 92.

²¹⁴ Goodhead, *A Crown and a Cross*, 156.

²¹⁵ Conklin-Miller, “Peoplehood and the Methodist Revival,” 181.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 175.

²¹⁷ Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists,” in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 259.

work.” John Kent, in his treatment of the Wesleys, seems to miss this and other reasons for the rules, simply categorising John and Charles as “constant reprovers of other people’s conduct.”²¹⁸ Kent’s cynical view is that the Wesleys employed the rule-based approach to make it possible for them to more effectively police their followers. However, something far more nuanced was taking place.

The rules functioned to spell out “every good word and work,” enabling the Methodists to see in concrete terms what love, doing good and not doing harm looked like in real situations. Wesley believed that for a “general rule” like doing good to be understood and applied, it needed to be broken down into “a thousand particular cases.”²¹⁹ The rules, as Goodhead points out, were intended to “guide”²²⁰ people in all of life’s activities. Wesley was not content in just urging a motive of love for neighbour but wanted to make clear what that love looked like in a particular situation.²²¹ In this sense, the rules, as Conklin-Miller puts it, fulfilled a catechetical function, “introducing the ways of discipleship, the specific patterns of the way of a Christian in the world.”²²² Rules communicated what practical Christianity looked like.

Christopher Momany also suggests that Wesley’s three principles – doing no harm, doing good and attending upon the ordinances of God – all needed specific injunctions if they were to be effectively implemented by Methodists. For this reason, Wesley listed

²¹⁸ Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, 84.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9: 263.

²²⁰ Goodhead, *A Crown and a Cross*, 167.

²²¹ Kevin Lowery argues that Wesley did not give “significant attention to the systematic evaluation of the practical effects of actions” in his corpus. In other words, he concentrated on motive rather than the appropriate actions that result from such motives. See Kevin Twain Lowery, “Empiricism and Wesleyan Ethics,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 46 (2011): 150–62. My study posits that the very rules of Wesley give shape to actions needed. In other words, virtuous people will act virtuously.

²²² Conklin-Miller, “Peoplehood and the Methodist Revival,” 176.

“very specific injunctions within each category.”²²³ In a somewhat lengthy quote, Momany helps us capture this dynamic:

“Doing no harm” emphasized the refraining from evil and directed Methodist Christians away from such destructive behaviours as profanity, drunkenness, fighting, buying or selling uncustomed goods, self-indulgence, and laying up treasure upon earth. While his concrete directions may at first appear entirely precritical and quaint, Wesley’s emphasis upon this first principle had broader implications. He firmly grounded this passion for doing no harm in the Golden Rule and desired to keep his followers from “Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.” The negative formulation of this biblical admonition anticipates Kant’s categorical imperative by forty years. Moreover, the 1789 American edition of the “General Rules” placed an unqualified prohibition of slavery squarely within this section devoted to the doing of no harm. Opposing and eliminating evil practices had decidedly far-reaching impact ... Wesley grounded his direction to do good upon Galatians 6:10 and emphasized two basic types of benevolence. First, he instructed his followers to do bodily good to other people “by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick, or in prison.” This might be construed as a clear reference to Matthew 25:35-39. Second, Wesley urged adherents to work benevolence among the souls of others. Thus, even the positive command to do good offered an integration of body and soul, physical feeding and spiritual feeding.²²⁴

In other words, Wesley was not using rules to establish a legalistic ethic where obedience to a objective moral code ensured acceptance with God. He employed a rule-based approach to secure clarity of direction and behavioural change in line with the character or virtues commensurate with a genuine Christian experience.

Where then does Wesley belong as far as ethical theory is concerned? We have already shown in Chapters 4 and 5, that human maturation and becoming are at the heart of his ethical schema. Virtue ethics seems to be most fitting but this is not to rule out other ethical positions. For the sake of argument the virtue end of the spectrum and not deontological or Kantian ethics is where Wesley essentially belongs in respect to ethical

²²³ Christopher P. Momany, “Wesley’s General Rules: Paradigm for Postmodern Ethics,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 28 (1993): 7–22. Online: http://wesley.nnu.edu/fileadmin/imported_site/wesleyjournal/1993-wtj-28.pdf

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11–12.

theory.²²⁵ It is therefore misleading for Outler to suggest that Wesley has a “rule-ethic”²²⁶ and that Wesley “must have been a deontologist in ethics – forever asking about the *ought* in moral issues, about one’s duty or about the rules for authentic Christian living.”²²⁷ Along with Outler, Jennings and Marquardt also frame Wesley as a deontologist.²²⁸ Deontological ethics asserts that the rightness and wrongness of moral behaviour is intrinsic to an act, and is not determined, for example, by heart motive or intention. More specifically, rule-deontology suggests that moral behaviour should be governed by one or more rules, irrespective of person or situation. But as has already been shown, Wesley was vitally concerned with the role of a person’s heart (orthokardia) and stressed that Methodism’s particular rules applied to Methodists and their situation, not to everyone. Wesley’s rules were person-dependant, heart-dependant and group-dependant. This is not the position of a deontologist.

For Wesley, the many rules were a means to an end: they assisted in the process of human maturation. They were tools to help shape human character. Stassen and Gushee provide a helpful way of combining rules and character, such that rules (deontology) serve an end (teleological):

We believe a Jesus-centered ethic takes divine commands seriously and is indeed vigorously deontological. But it understands the mandates and teachings of Jesus to be gracious and authoritative instruction concerning *how to do the will of God (deontological) and how to participate in the coming of the kingdom of God (teleological)*. [italics: theirs].²²⁹

²²⁵ Lowery warns that the term “Wesleyan ethics” is somewhat nebulous for several reasons, one of which is that Wesley never systematised his own views on ethics. See Lowery, “Empiricism and Wesleyan Ethics,” 150.

²²⁶ Outler, “Pastoral Care in the Wesleyan Spirit,” 183.

²²⁷ Outler, *Evangelism and Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 127.

²²⁸ See Jennings, *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley’s Evangelical Economics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 141–53; and Marquardt, *John Wesley’s Social Ethics: Praxis and Principle*, 110–113.

²²⁹ Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 121.

Virtue ethics and not legalism or deontology is ultimately where Wesley belongs. Heitzenrater is helpful in arguing that there is interrelation and correlation in Wesley's ethical theory where one strand is woven with another, for example, character and obligation to rules – virtue ethics and deontology. Heitzenrater is clear, Wesley has “virtue taking precedence ...”²³⁰ via the following route:

- That a virtue ethic was central to his [Wesley's] understanding of the nature of the Christian and the shape of the Christian life;
- That a virtue ethic was quite consistently central to his thinking throughout his life;
- That an obligation ethic was important as a means of fleshing out and measuring the manifestations of virtue in particular areas of behaviour;
- That this significant but subsidiary role of the obligation ethic (seen in rules and works) was misunderstood by Calvinist and Moravian detractors as works-righteousness;
- That the centrality of virtue theory in Wesley's thinking is closely related to his doctrine of sanctification (renewal, becoming holy); and
- That the relationship between virtue theory and obligation theory is important to a fuller understanding of how Wesley's emphasis “on having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked” correlates with the great commandment, “to love God and to love neighbor.”²³¹

Clearly, Wesley did not play off virtue against rules. Both are important. And Heitzenrater is right to posit that in Wesley one (character) is determinative of what one does (rules). Virtue precedes rule-keeping.

Wesley also employed rules to reveal the heart, not just direct the heart. Heitzenrater is right to suggest that for Wesley the rules helped “to examine one's actions as a measure of the development of virtue and thus to gauge the inclination of one's heart and affections ...”²³² In other words, the rules acted like a mirror, showing up and helping to expose what was really in the heart of the person. This insight from Heitzenrater explains why Wesley asked seekers to abide by the rules of the societies even though, by

²³⁰ Heitzenrater, “The *Imitatio Christi* and the Great Commandment: Virtue and Obligation in Wesley's Ministry with the Poor,” 63–4. The bullet points are as Heitzenrater has them in his text.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 62–3.

²³² *Ibid.*, 57.

his own definition, seekers were not yet born of God and could not keep the rules. Woods poses the question slightly differently:

There is a subtlety about the Rules which some have mistaken for inconsistency. Is not this a counsel of perfection and therefore of despair? How can the man who merely desires to be saved but has not yet actually entered into the experience of salvation, ever hope to fulfil these conditions, however simple they may appear to be? Is it possible to display this form without the power?²³³

To help appreciate why Wesley's seekers – those who were not yet Christian – were to keep rules, we need to return to his *ordo salutis* and his category of prevenient grace. As noted in Chapter 4, Wesley's *ordo salutis* is a continuum with a number of markers along the way. One thing precedes another. There is a sequence. The continuum plots the constituent parts of what it is to become a different type of person, namely a Christian. It was Wesley's view that both God and the person are actively involved all along the continuum. God and the individual are at work prior to the person actually becoming a Christian. Wesley called this activity, especially from God's side, prevenient grace. God is with, and acting for, the individual ahead of their conversion. If and when they become a Christian, this is again accomplished but this time through God's convincing grace. Wesley puts it this way:

Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) preventing grace; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life; some degree of salvation; the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God. Salvation is carried on by convincing grace, usually in Scripture termed repentance; which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone.²³⁴

God comes to a person and attempts to awaken in them realities about themselves, God and the world they live in. On such an awakening, argues Wesley, the person

²³³ Wood, *The Inextinguishable Blaze*, 169.

²³⁴ Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," Sermon 85 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 203–4.

experiences “the first wish to please God.” As this experience is a purely subjective and deeply personal one, Wesley wanted to find a way of objectively and collectively ascertaining or verifying it. To assist in this, he established rules, even for the seeker. The desire and effort to keep the rules signalled that a person had undergone a prior awakening. Again we have the rules acting as a mirror, this time for those not yet Christian. The wish to please God through the keeping of specific rules demonstrated for Wesley that prior divine activity had occurred.

Rules therefore had a purpose before and after Christian conversion: beforehand they expose the heart of the seeker; afterward they direct the heart of the Christian. Wesley includes groups and rules under discipline. As noted, discipline or orthopaideia, is about the process of human becoming. Wesley’s goal was to see ideal Christians emerge, marked by love of God and neighbour. He employed a collective and rule-orientated process to achieve his goal. The two strands of community (orthokoinonia) and rules (orthonomos) do not act separately but rather contribute to and are finely woven with each other. The communities are rule directed; rules keep people in community. Communities in turn empower people to keep the rules. A community, writes Lovin, also helps “us to understand what obedience to the rules requires.”²³⁵ Communities can perform this function because they consist of people who can become “our teachers and coaches in ethics.”²³⁶ Lovin states that it is through such life-teachers that “we learn how to apply moral rules.”²³⁷ To phrase this differently, Jones proposes that “intimate friendships extend and redefine the boundaries of particular conceptions of how we ought to live.”²³⁸ In such communities people can “puzzle with others,”²³⁹ and think “in

²³⁵ Lovin, *Christian Ethics*, 42.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 81.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

²³⁸ Jones, *Transformed Judgment*, 85.

²³⁹ Jones, *Transformed Judgment*, 4.

common”²⁴⁰ about “how to relate the biblical texts to the particular material realities, cultural conditions, and concrete situations in which people find themselves.”²⁴¹

Methodist bands, classes and societies (orthokoinonia), and rules (orthonomos) mentored people in the art of making life work. Jones and Cartwright see these two strands working within Wesleyan Methodism when they write that “one of the primary factors enabling the ‘people *called* Methodist’ to become the ‘*people called* Methodist’ in early Methodism was the practice of the General Rules through the class meetings and gatherings of the societies.”²⁴² It is for this reason that the Wesleyan scholar David Watson urges a return to the way in which Wesley formed groups without necessarily copying his model. Wesley’s groups were shaped around enforced mutual accountability, the hope being that such rule-based accountability would make for behavioural redirection, especially toward our neighbours. Change in an individual is more likely to occur when that individual faces their decisions with others who are facing the same decisions. Furthermore, there is a greater likelihood for change when individual members of the group provoke each other, and if needed, press one another for reasons why change is not occurring. To ensure that ‘provoking’ and ‘pressing’ occur, rules make space for this in the life of the group. ‘Provoking’ and ‘pressing’ become customs or accepted conventions of the group. The establishing of rules, customs and conventions is nomos at work.

We have now explored three of the four orthos (orthodoxy, orthokardia, orthopaideia), with orthopaideia having a subset of two additional orthos (orthokoinonia and orthonomos), and Wesley’s moral pathway is beginning to take shape. God’s activity in creation and Christ (orthodoxy), apprehended through God’s grace in the heart of people (orthokardia), creates communities of faith (orthokoinonia) and disciplined direction

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 154.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 154.

²⁴² L. Gregory Jones and Michael G. Cartwright, “Vital Congregations: Toward a Wesleyan Vision for the United Methodist Church’s Identity and Mission,” in *The Mission of the Church in Methodist Perspective: The World is my Parish* (ed. Alan G. Padgett; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 96, n. 22.

(orthonomos) so that people mature (orthopaideia). But mature into what? As noted in Chapter 4, Wesley did not give pre-eminence to faith development but to the fruiting of love:

... faith itself, even Christian faith, the faith of God's elect, the faith of the operation of God, still is only the handmaid of love. As glorious and honourable as it is, it is not the end of the commandment. God hath given this honour to love alone: Love is the end of all the commandments of God. Love is the end, the sole end, of every dispensation of God, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things.²⁴³

Love of God and of neighbour was the desired outcome of human maturation for Wesley. The maturation process (orthopaideia) required community as well as rules.

Exemplars of Orthopaideia

Early examples of orthopaideia and its subset of orthokoinonia and orthonomos are Elizabeth Evans, Francis Asbury and Grace Murray.

Elizabeth Evans (1776–1849)

The similarities between the Methodist lay preacher Dinah Morris in George Elliot's 1859 novel *Adam Bede* and the author's aunt, Elizabeth Evans, have led to widespread speculation that Evans was indeed the model for the much-loved fictional heroine.

There is much to support this conjecture. Firstly, George Elliot is a pseudonym for Mary Ann Evans (1819–1880), the niece of Elizabeth Evans, suggesting Mary Ann was well familiar with the life-story of her aunt. Dinah Morris, the heroine in Elliot's novel, is a Methodist who has a heartbeat for the marginalised and for strangers. This is especially captured in the description of Dinah Morris visiting a condemned woman in prison, an account that closely parallels Elizabeth Evan's real-life visit to Mary Voce who was imprisoned and condemned to be executed for poisoning her own child. Before we get to the narrative of Elliot's character and the actual details of Evans' relationship with

²⁴³ Wesley, "The Law Established Through Faith, 11," Sermon 36 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2:38.

Voce, we need to clarify that Evans' journey was rooted in her decision to walk the Wesleyan 'moral pathway'.

Elizabeth Evans was born to Methodist parents Tomlinson and Newbold Evans in Leicestershire in 1776. At the age of 21 she embraced the Christian narrative (orthodoxy) for herself (orthokardia). At this point, the Christian faith was no longer just inherited but owned as a heart relationship. In her own words, soon after this conversion, she became convinced "of the necessity of being sanctified."²⁴⁴ For Elizabeth this urge to progress (orthopaideia) is captured by her desire to be "enabled to grow in the Grace", "to feel nothing contrary to love" and to be "filled with the fruits of righteousness."²⁴⁵ She claims to have attained a measure of these. Parallel to this maturation, she attended and supervised classes and engaged in the social discipleship of Wesleyan Methodism (orthokardia and orthonomos). For example, she was asked by a certain Mrs Dobinson to lead her class in Derby. In time, she came to a conviction that it was her duty (orthopraxy) to share what she had discovered with strangers. A defining moment was her encounter with Mary Voce who was confined in the town goal of Nottingham and condemned to death for the poisoning of her child. Elizabeth writes:

A Miss Richards (now in heaven), who was eminently pious and useful, was granted the favor of being with her night and day until the morning of her execution. I longed to be with her also, and how my heart rejoiced when I heard Miss Richards say, Betsey, go with me to the gaol directly. Accordingly I went ... Miss Richards and I attended her to the place of execution. Our feelings on this occasion were very acute. We rode with her in the cart to the awful place. Our people sang with her all the way, which I think was a mile and a half.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Taken from Zechariah Taft's transcript of Elizabeth's journal in *Biographical Sketches of the Lives and Public Ministry of Various Holy Women ...* (1:145–58) and quoted in Paul Wesley Chilcote's *Her Own Story: Autobiographical Portraits of Early Methodist Women* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2001), 174.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 175.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 176.

As a result of this awful but profoundly moving experience, Elizabeth lost her fear of people and felt that she could be sent “to the uttermost parts of the earth.”²⁴⁷ What this meant for her using up her discretionary non-work time in walking (literally) to villages and neighbourhoods in Derby and surrounding areas. By this time she was married to Samuel Evans and worked at a lace factory. The desire to become more than who she was, to progress and attain to an ideal (*orthopaideia*) launched Elizabeth on the path that ultimately led to her encountering Mary Voce in prison. In her own autobiographical writing, she sheds little detail but in her niece’s fictional account we are given a sense of the pathos and drama.

In George Elliot’s novel, Dinah Morris asks a magistrate if she can get into the Stoniton jail to see the condemned criminal Hetty Sorel. The magistrate remembers having heard Dinah speak on the village green at Hayslope in her role as a Methodist preacher.²⁴⁸ Elliot captures the meeting of Dinah and Hetty in jail. This fictional narrative is significant as it arguably captures the dramatic details of the encounter between Evans and Voce:

A jet of light from his [the jailer’s] lantern fell on the opposite corner of the cell, where Hetty was sitting on her straw pallet with her face buried in her knees. It seemed as if she were asleep, and yet the grating of the lock would have been likely to awaken her.

The door closed again, and the only light in the cell was that of the evening sky, through the small high grating – enough to discern human faces by. Dinah stood still for a minute, hesitating to speak, because Hetty might be asleep; and looking at the motionless heap with a yearning heart. The she said, softly –
“Hetty!”

There was a slight movement perceptible in Hetty’s frame – a start such as might have been produced by a feeble electric shock; but she did not look up. Dinah spoke again, in a tone made stronger by irrepressible emotion –
“Hetty ... it’s Dinah.”

Again there was a slight, startled movement through Hetty’s frame, and without uncovering her face, she raised her head a little, as if listening.
“Hetty ... Dinah is come to you.”

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

²⁴⁸ George Elliot, *Adam Bede* (repr.; London: Dent, 1964), 427.

After a moment's pause, Hetty lifted her head slowly and timidly from her knees, and raised her eyes. The two pale faces were looking at each other: one with a wild hard despair in it, the other full of sad, yearning love. Dinah unconsciously opened her arms and stretched them out ...

Hetty kept her eyes fixed on Dinah's face, – at first like an animal that gazes, and gazes, and keeps aloof.

“I'm come to be with you, Hetty – not to leave you – to stay with you – to be your sister to the last.”

Slowly, while Dinah was speaking, Hetty rose, took a step forward, and was clasped in Dinah's arms.²⁴⁹

Of the final journey to the place of execution, Elliot writes:

She [Hetty] was clinging close to Dinah; her cheek was against Dinah's. It seemed as if her last faint strength and hope lay in that contact; and the pitying love that shone out from Dinah's face looked like a visible pledge of the Invisible Mercy.²⁵⁰

What Elizabeth Evans did in real life, represented by Dinah in fiction, was an external act of kindness to a prisoner.

Francis Asbury (1745–1816)

As a teenage convert to Methodism, Francis Asbury developed a hunger to share the gospel and engage strangers in the rural villages of England and in America where he became an influential religious leader highly regarded for his compassion.

Francis was born in August 1745, the son of Joseph Asbury, a gardener, and his wife Elizabeth. He was raised in a small rural village in the parish of Handsworth, outside Birmingham, England. His parents were poor and not particularly religious. The young family moved to the hamlet of Newton, near Wednesbury where Joseph was employed at a local brewery. Francis left school aged 13, largely due to bullying by one of the teachers, and became apprenticed to a local metalworker.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 429–30.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 441–2.

His mother Elizabeth's hunger for spiritual truth was largely driven by the loss of a daughter and the near loss of Francis. Her spiritual awakening came when John and Charles Wesley came to preach at Wednesbury, less than three miles from the Asbury family cottage. John Wesley writes of this in his *Journal*:

About four in the afternoon I came to Wednesbury. At seven I preached in the Town Hall. It was filled from end to end; and all appeared to be deeply attentive while I explained, 'This is the covenant I will make after those days, saith the Lord ...'²⁵¹

John Wesley was to make many more trips to Wednesbury and it was there that he faced some of the most violent opposition to Methodism. He was physically assaulted and many Methodist homes were ransacked.²⁵² Despite this, Elizabeth Asbury's desire to grow in the evangelical faith saw her invite Methodists to her home. From the age of 12, Francis had begun to seek out religious truth and was encouraged by his mother to attend a Methodist meeting at Wednesbury. During this period, he read the Scriptures and anything religious he could get his hands on, including the letters of George Whitefield. In terms of the moral pathway, this initial reading was the beginning of orthodoxy for the young Asbury. Reading the promises of Scripture birthed within him a desire for conversion and a heartfelt assurance of being saved (*orthokardia*) which he received at age 16. Soon after, he joined "a class meeting and a band ..."²⁵³

The next nine years of Ashbury's life were taken up with travel to new villages and towns – Colchester, Bedfordshire, Wiltshire and onward – where he met countless strangers and shared his faith. Then, like Wesley who went to Georgia, Asbury volunteered at age 26 to go to America, where he stayed until his death in 1816. During this time, he travelled at least 130,000 miles and in the words of his biographer John

²⁵¹ Wesley, (5 June, 1743), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 310.

²⁵² Wesley, (20 October, 1743), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 343–9.

²⁵³ John H. Wigger, "Francis Asbury and American Methodism," 53.

Wigger, “conversed with ordinary people ... building relationships face to face.”²⁵⁴ Wigger notes that during his service in America, Asbury was known for “special compassion for others, especially the downtrodden”²⁵⁵ and that “he often gave money to strangers.”²⁵⁶

Once, in Ohio, Asbury and Boehm came across a widow whose only cow was about to be sold for debt. Determining that ‘it must not be’, Asbury gave what he had and solicited enough from bystanders to pay the woman’s bills.²⁵⁷

History remembers Asbury as arguably one of the three or four most important religious leaders in American history.²⁵⁸ From his beginnings as a poor, uneducated metal worker, he became a follower of Wesley, influenced by Methodist doctrine (orthodoxy), experience (orthokardia), discipline (orthopaideia, orthokoinonia and orthonomos), and practice (orthopraxy). This moral pathway had the effect of transforming Asbury into one who was willing to walk toward whomever, regardless of the circumstances, to do whatever was needed to show compassion and practical love.

Arguably, the ortho that most profoundly affected Asbury was orthokoinonia. This is evidenced in his absolute insistence that for a Methodist to be a real Methodist they had to be regular participants in the group structure of Methodism. Asbury noted on his arrival in Virginia in 1775 that the local Methodists had drifted away from the Wesleyan structure of class meetings and so he set about insisting they organise themselves into classes, fearing that “without discipline we should soon be as a rope of sand.”²⁵⁹ He was

²⁵⁴ John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and The Methodists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁵⁷ Wigger, “Francis Asbury and American Methodism,” 59.

²⁵⁸ See Mark A. Noll’s commendation of Wigger’s biography, back cover.

²⁵⁹ Quoted in Wigger, *American Saint*, 79.

just as strident in relation to observing rules within the groups, insisting they must be “attended to”.²⁶⁰ This brings us to the final ortho in this chapter – orthonomos.

Grace Murray (c.1715–1803)

Although Grace Murray may be better known as John Wesley’s romantic interest, the impact of her later life brings much needed perspective to her role as a Wesleyan leader who helped run orphanages and visited the sick and needy.

She was born Grace Norman at Newcastle upon Tyne around 1715, and after marrying a seafarer at the age of 20, lost one of her children and became increasingly depressed. “After the child was interred I was brought into such lowness of spirits that I could rest in no place. I lost my relish for all worldly pleasures, and, though I was taken from place to place to divert me, it was to no purpose. I wanted – but I knew not what.”²⁶¹

While staying with her sister in London, she went to hear George Whitefield speak at Blackheath and soon afterwards heard John Wesley at Moorfield and subsequently became a Methodist. This change in her life occurred while her husband was overseas and caused him great anger on his return from sea. At his death, however, Grace Murray joined the Methodists.

Regrettably, her life has become more known for her failed love affair with John Wesley than her faithful walk as a Methodist. In August 1748, Wesley became sick and in need of constant care. Grace, his housekeeper, nursed him back to health. Eventually he realised she was not only a helper but a companion, friend and co-labourer in God’s work. He could think of none better to marry. In a letter to his brother Charles, and in somewhat effusive language, he writes:

Now, show me the woman in England, Wales, or Ireland, who has already done so much good as Grace Murray. I will say more. Show me one in all the English

²⁶⁰ Quoted in Wigger, *American Saint*, 53.

²⁶¹ Quoted in Chilcote, *Early Methodist Spirituality*, 72.

annals whom God has employed in so high a degree! I might say, in all the history of the Church, from the death of our Lord to this day. This is no hyperbole, but plain, demonstrable fact. And if it be so, who is so proper to be my wife?²⁶²

Wesley and Murray entered into an understanding that suggested an agreement to marry. This was however complicated by another suitor, John Bennett, a fellow Methodist. When Charles found out about his brother's intention to marry Grace Murray, he intervened, putting a stop to the relationship, which in effect resulted in Grace choosing Bennett. She married Bennett in 1749 and they had five sons. Wesley was deeply hurt by this loss and angered at Charles' interference. Grace and John Bennett left the Methodists but on the death of the latter in 1759, Grace returned to the fold. One of the main reasons why Charles was so against his brother marrying Grace was her socio-economic status as "low born", her parents being "poor, labouring people" and therefore not a match for his brother, the middle class gentleman John Wesley. Charles feared that such a match would prove scandalous and "break up"²⁶³ the Methodist societies.

The life of Grace Murray was about so much more than her romantic connections with Wesley. From her conversion after hearing Whitefield and Wesley, she wanted to "lay at the feet of Jesus"²⁶⁴ but did not know how. Undaunted, she began to attend all manner of Methodist gatherings and "got acquainted also with many of the people".²⁶⁵ She also immersed herself in the Christian story. Both orthokoinonia and orthodoxy are at work here. Eventually, and again in her own words, she felt she was filled with "light and love".²⁶⁶ This suggests orthokardia. Of her own conversion she writes:

²⁶² Wesley, "Letter to the Revd. Charles Wesley" (25 September, 1749), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 384.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 26: 385.

²⁶⁴ Chilcote, *Early Methodist Spirituality*, 73.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 73.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

I would have no encomiums passed on me: I AM A SINNER, SAVED FREELY BY GRACE: Grace, divine grace, is worthy to have all the glory. Some people I have heard speak much of our being faithful to the grace of God; as if they rested much on their own faithfulness: I never could bear this; it is GOD'S FAITHFULNESS to his own word of promise that is my only security for salvation.²⁶⁷

In the context of community (orthokoinonia), she came to hear of the Christian story (orthodoxy) which burst in upon her heart (orthokardia). She was asked by Charles Wesley to write of her experience and upon being examined by Charles, was admitted into a Methodist society (orthokoinonia). She soon became a leader of various groups within Methodism and eventually an orphanage housekeeper. Of all the orthos, it is arguable that orthonomos, or the keeping of rules, best framed Grace's life. Evidence of this is gleaned from Wesley and also from the fact that she was a visitor of strangers.

It was in this role that John Wesley saw first-hand her capacity to keep the rules.²⁶⁸ He explains the role:

It is the business of a Visitor of the sick: to see every sick person within his district thrice a week; to inquire into the state of their souls, and advise them, as occasion may require; to inquire into their disorders, and procure advice for them; to relieve them, if they are in want; to do anything for them which he (or she) can do; to bring in his accounts weekly to the Stewards.²⁶⁹

Attached to the role were a number of rules:

(1) Be plain and open in dealing with souls. (2) Be mild, tender, patient. (3) Be cleanly in all you do for the sick. (4) Be not nice.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Quoted by Yeo Khiok-khng, "Salvation by Grace Through Faith: A Reassessment and its Implications," in *Wesleyan Tradition: A Paradigm for Renewal* (ed. Paul W. Chilcote; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 66–77.

²⁶⁸ Wesley, "Letter to the Revd. Charles Wesley" (25 September, 1749) in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 383.

²⁶⁹ Wesley, "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists: In a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham in Kent," in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 274.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 9: 275.

By the latter, Wesley meant not being overly sensitive. It was this way of visiting that Grace Murray embraced. And as already been noted in Wesley's sermon "On Visiting the Sick", the visitor is asked to go to the place of the afflicted and place themselves in proximity so as to "look upon"²⁷¹ them. The visitor is to be "present with them."²⁷² Subsequent to the visit, the visitor may also need to "beg for"²⁷³ the one visited. In other words, the visitor goes to the place of strangers (the afflicted) and then from there approaches other strangers to assist those just visited. More than likely, Grace Murray would have known Wesley's final word on the matter; not only are the visited benefited but to the visitor there is also "a present reward for all their labour."²⁷⁴ Orthopraxy is therefore at work.

Grace's life was shaped around rules within Wesley's house and rules of conduct in the hovels of strangers. Such rules kept her life on a certain trajectory that had the life of others at its core. This orthopaideic dynamic of process, groups and rules ushers in the final ortho within the moral pathway – orthopraxy.

²⁷¹ Wesley, "On Visiting the Sick," Sermon 98 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 387.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 3: 387.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3: 390.

²⁷⁴ Wesley, "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists," in *The Methodist Societies* (ed. Davies), 9: 275.

Chapter Seven

Orthopraxy

This chapter commences with a broad definition of the word praxis and proceeds to give a more nuanced meaning to the word through Wesley's use of the means of grace. This move necessitates contrasting a Wesleyan use of praxis with how the same is rendered within Liberation Theology and more contemporary discussions around practice. Wesley's emphasis on practice lays him open to charges of salvation by works and ethical formalism which, as will be shown, are without foundation. The chapter concludes with a discussion on how practice fits into the moral theory and finishes with a demonstration of its utility in the life of John Gardner.

The final ortho in Wesley's moral pathway is orthopraxy – intentional action or right conduct. At its core, orthopraxy carries the notion of “a practical discipline.”¹ Essentially praxis implies “activity, action, deed.”² Wesley would have been familiar with this Greek term. At Oxford University he taught students using Gerard Langbaine's *Philosophiae Moralis Compendium: Juventutis Academicae Studiis*, a brief commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* which employs the language of “action”³ or *praxis*.

As already noted, when asked what would ensure the longevity of Methodism, Wesley mentioned doctrine, experience, discipline and practice. Unlike Steele, he differentiated discipline from practice.⁴ Wesley used the word practice to mean outward religion. In a 1745 letter to John Smith he wrote:

¹ Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 244.

² Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 3), 145.

³ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. J. A. K. Thomson; rev. ed.; London: Penguin Books, 2004), 146.

⁴ For previous discussions on this relationship between discipline and practice and the contribution of Steele to this, see pp. 84, 97–9 and 164–6 of this thesis.

I would rather say faith is ‘productive of all Christian holiness’ than ‘of all Christian practice’; because men are so exceeding apt to rest in ‘practice’, so called, I mean in outside religion; whereas true religion is eminently seated in the heart, renewed in the image of him that created us.⁵

By practice, Wesley meant outward religion and this he equated with “outward action,”⁶ “outward works,”⁷ “visiting the sick and prisoners,”⁸ “feeding the hungry or clothing the naked,”⁹ “outward holiness,”¹⁰ “a round of outward duties,”¹¹ “outward service,”¹² “outward righteousness,”¹³ and “outward behaviour.”¹⁴ All of these descriptors of outward religion speak of external deeds. Wesley extolled such a religion. He talked of outward religion “profit[ing] much”¹⁵ and that outward actions are “sensible things.”¹⁶ Outward works were for Wesley “of great price”¹⁷ and necessary:

Should it be said, "Why, what signifies the form of godliness?" we readily answer, Nothing, if it be alone. But the absence of the form signifies much. It infallibly proves the absence of the power. For though the form may be without

⁵ Wesley, “Letter to John Smith” (30 December, 1745), in *Letters* (ed. Baker), 26: 179.

⁶ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, IV,” Sermon 24 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 532.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 543.

⁸ Wesley, “On the Death of George Whitefield,” Sermon 53 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 331.

⁹ Wesley, “The Way to the Kingdom,” Sermon 7 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 219.

¹⁰ Wesley, “On Working Out Your Own Salvation,” Sermon 85 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 202.

¹¹ Wesley, “The Nature of Enthusiasm,” Sermon 37 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 46.

¹² Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, IX,” Sermon 29 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 633.

¹³ Wesley, “The Lord Our Righteousness,” Sermon 20 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 453.

¹⁴ Wesley, “On Dissipation,” Sermon 79 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 117.

¹⁵ Wesley, “The Means of Grace,” Sermon 16 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 379.

¹⁶ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, IV,” Sermon 24 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 532.

¹⁷ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, VI,” Sermon 26 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 573.

the power, yet the power cannot be without the form. Outward religion may be where inward is not; but if there is none without, there can be none within.¹⁸

At first, Wesley reminded his readers that such valued externals are nevertheless not what religion is essentially about. Externals may give the appearance of religion but without inward religion, they are simply that. Conversely, Wesley stressed that the absence of external deeds signals inner bankruptcy. Stephen Long, in his work on Wesley's moral theology, puts it this way: "The external presupposes the internal, but the internal cannot be had without the external."¹⁹ For Wesley, outward religion with all of its external deeds, actions, works, services, behaviour and forms was to be prized. In other words, "Christians are supposed to do"²⁰ and not just be. External behaviour is as needed as internal purity. It is this outward religion with all of its externalities that best sums up what Wesley meant by practice. Practice is external outward religion at work. It has to do with duties, services, works, and actions.

Wesley declared that love is of greater importance than any other topic and, not surprisingly, highly ranked 1 Corinthians 13, the famous love chapter in Paul's corpus.²¹ For Wesley, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount²² was "the noblest compendium of religion which is to be found even in the oracles of God."²³ In many respects, the Sermon on the Mount was a picture of what love looks like in real-life situations. Among his published sermons, he submitted 13 on the Sermon on the Mount, more than any other on any given biblical text. The first four sermons feature the Beatitudes and it is his third

¹⁸ Wesley, "True Christianity Defended," Sermon 134 in *The Works of John Wesley* (ed. Thomas Jackson; London, 1872; ed George Lyons for the Wesley Center for Applied Theology at Northwest Nazarene College, Nampa, ID). Online: <http://www.umcmission.org/Find-Resources/Global-Worship-and-Spiritual-Growth/John-Wesley-Sermons/Sermon-134-True-Christianity-Defended>

¹⁹ Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology*, 154. Long rightly makes the observation that students of Wesley can be tempted to contrast his "religion of the heart" to all externalities). For Long, such a temptation "would be to mistake Wesley's moral theology for Kant's dispositional ethics, where the only good thing is finally a good will." (p. 89)

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

²¹ Wesley, "On Charity," Sermon 91 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 292–307.

²² Matthew 5 to 7.

²³ Wesley, (17 October, 1771), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 293.

sermon on the Beatitudes, ‘Sermon on the Mount, III’, that is pertinent to our discussion on practice. Wesley posits that the first six Beatitudes have to do with “inward holiness” or the “religion of the heart.”²⁴ A shift occurs in the seventh Beatitude, from the inward to the “outward conversation.”²⁵ Wesley describes the shift as “what Christians are to be” to “what they are to do.”²⁶ Doing therefore proceeds from being. The doing Wesley has in mind is good deeds, whether providing bread for the hungry or meeting the needs of strangers.²⁷

Such an outward religion with all its duties was Wesley’s practice. He was a man of action, a practitioner of external deeds. His *Journal* is essentially an account of what he did. Of Wesley’s daily writings, Hindmarsh notes, “In this sense the Journal consistently bears witness to Wesley’s ethos as the main actor in the story, even while it does not provide a strong overarching mythos for his life. There is more action than syntax.”²⁸ From the beginning, Wesley was an ardent practitioner of good works. Of his early years in Oxford, he wrote, “I omitted no occasion of doing good.”²⁹ Baker rightly observes that it is “small wonder that to young Jacky Wesley religion meant doing what God told you.”³⁰ Good works were the rhythm of his life.

Wesley’s time in Georgia was an extension of this pattern. In a memorandum of January 1738 he wrote:

²⁴ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, III,” Sermon 23 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 517.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 517.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 517.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 519.

²⁸ Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, 123. Hindmarsh observes that Wesley spent little time, compared to Augustine, in pondering what his life meant.

²⁹ Wesley, (24 May, 1738) in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 245.

³⁰ Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, 8.

I was early warned against laying, as the Papists do, too much stress either on outward works or on a faith without works, which, as it does not include, so it will never lead to, true hope or charity. Nor am I sensible that to this hour I have laid too much stress on either, having from the very beginning valued both faith, the means of grace, and good works, not on their own account, but as believing God, who had appointed them, would by them bring me in due time to the mind that was in Christ.³¹

Wesley deemed that going to Georgia was a work that he hoped would produce goodness in him. In Chapter 1 of this thesis there is an extensive record of the dutiful Wesley doing all manner of good deeds on behalf of the marginalised, the poor, the lonely and the lost. Not surprisingly, he asked fellow Methodists to embrace the practice of doing external deeds. The works and duties that Wesley had in mind are as follows:

In an exterior circle are all the works of mercy, whether to the souls or bodies of men. By these we exercise all holy tempers – by these we continually improve them, so that all these are real means of grace, although this is not commonly adverted to. Next to these are those that are usually termed works of piety – reading and hearing the word, public, family, private prayer, receiving the Lord's supper, fasting or abstinence. Lastly, that his followers may the more effectually provoke one another to love, holy tempers, and good works, our blessed Lord has united them together in one body, the church, dispersed all over the earth – a little emblem of which, of the church universal, we have in every particular Christian congregation.³²

The defining trajectory so far is one of practice or outward religion, which consists of actions, services, and works. Wesley draws our attention to two categories of works or practice in particular that are to be the mark of gathered communities (orthokoinonia); works of mercy and works of piety, which he views as means of grace, a term that now needs explanation.

Means of Grace

Wesley uses the term ‘means of grace’ because as he says, “I know none better; and because it has been generally used in the Christian church for many ages; – in particular

³¹ Wesley, (28 January, 1738), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 212.

³² Wesley, “On Zeal,” Sermon 92 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 313.

by our own Church, which directs us to bless God both for the means of grace, and hope of glory ...”³³ Notwithstanding this, Wesley knew only too well that since the time of Luther and the Reformation various Christian traditions have differed over the exact nature of these means of grace. In many respects the focal point of the debate centered on the sacraments but as Maddox makes abundantly clear, it could be “any area where human performances are related to God’s gracious works.”³⁴ In terms of the sacraments, Luther located the benefits of Christ (grace) within the actual elements. Zwingli strongly disagreed, arguing that God’s grace is conveyed not through elements or practices but by faith in God and God’s promises. Calvin struck an alternative position, positing that there was profit in the practice of taking the sacraments but, rather than the elements themselves conveying grace to the recipient, it was the Spirit of God that did this as the person took the sacraments. Wesley aligned himself more with Calvin in writing that even though Christ is the “only meritorious cause”³⁵ of grace, it is the Spirit of God that effectively conveys that grace³⁶ through the taking of the sacraments or participating in any of the means of grace.

Wesley framed the means of grace into two distinct categories:

It is generally supposed, that the means of grace and the ordinances of God are equivalent terms. We commonly mean by that expression, those that are usually termed, works of piety; viz., hearing and reading the Scripture, receiving the Lord's Supper, public and private prayer, and fasting. And it is certain these are the ordinary channels which convey the grace of God to the souls of men. But are they the only means of grace? Are there no other means than these, whereby God is pleased, frequently, yea, ordinarily, to convey his grace to them that either love or fear him? Surely there are works of mercy, as well as works of piety, which are real means of grace.³⁷

³³ Wesley, “The Means of Grace,” Sermon 16 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 381.

³⁴ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 192.

³⁵ Wesley, “The Means of Grace,” Sermon 16 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 383.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 382.

³⁷ Wesley, “On Visiting the Sick,” Sermon 98 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 385.

By works of mercy, Wesley meant actions including visiting the sick and those in prison, feeding the hungry and relief for the stranger. The means of grace therefore have a vertical dimension (piety) and a horizontal one (mercy). Outward religion, and therefore practice, has to do with prayer and people, the sacraments and public service, fasting and loving your neighbour. Wesley suggested that in doing these works, God's grace is "conveyed"³⁸ to the one acting, contributing to "spiritual growth and maturity."³⁹ In his sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation" Wesley proposed that in the doing of good works the doer is made holy:

It is incumbent on all that are justified to be zealous of good works. And there are so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them, he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified; he cannot grow in grace, in the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus; nay, he cannot retain the grace he has received; he cannot continue in faith, or in the favour of God. What is the inference we must draw herefrom? Why, that both repentance, rightly understood, and the practice of all good works, – works of piety, as well as works of mercy (now properly so called, since they spring from faith), are, in some sense, necessary to sanctification.⁴⁰

Collins is quick to state that Wesley is not suggesting that the doing of good works amounts to "an increase in holiness"⁴¹ thereby implying salvation can be earned. Rather, as Long puts it, there is a retroactive dynamic at play in that works "make our intentions holy."⁴² Through action there is a reaction, the act rebounds and affects the doer. Wesley was at pains to illustrate this on a number of fronts. His relocation to Georgia was so that he would be saved;⁴³ his participating in the Eucharist enabled an "uncommon

³⁸ Wesley, (7 November, 1739), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 121.

³⁹ Collins, "The Soteriological Orientation of John Wesley's Ministry to the Poor," 30.

⁴⁰ Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," Sermon 43 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 164.

⁴¹ Collins, "The Soteriological Orientation," 30, n. 80.

⁴² Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology*, 158.

⁴³ Wesley, (14 October, 1735), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 18: 137.

blessing” to be felt.⁴⁴ Praying strengthens those praying⁴⁵ and in visiting the sick the visitor is “greatly refreshed.”⁴⁶

I visited as many as I could of the sick. How much better is it, when it can be done, to carry relief to the poor than to send it! And that both for our own sake and theirs. For theirs, as it is so much more comfortable to them, and as we may then assist them in spirituals as well as temporals. And for our own, as it is far more apt to soften our heart and to make us naturally care for each other.⁴⁷

Maddox writes that it was Wesley’s conviction “that engaging in works of mercy has an empowering and formative impact on those offering help, beyond whatever positive impact there is upon the recipients of the works.”⁴⁸ Conversely, neglecting the practices had the effect of causing stagnation and eventual demise. In commentary on a certain Ephraim Bedder, Wesley exclaimed that he was “once a pattern” for all. But through leaving off “fasting and universal self-denial, in which none was more exemplary for some years, he sunk lower and lower, till he had neither the power nor the form of religion left.”⁴⁹ In this sense, Wesley’s concept of practice or orthopraxy is expansive. It is not merely an external work done, but one in which the divine is involved. Joerg Rieger, captures this:

In the new model, works of mercy are more than just correct actions, or orthopraxis. As the means of grace, they are channels that convey God’s grace to the one who acts mercifully. A work of mercy is, therefore, no longer a one-way street leading from the well-meaning Christian to the other in need. Something comes back in return, which transforms the doer of mercy as well.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Wesley, (18 May, 1755), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 11.

⁴⁵ Wesley, (20 August, 1755), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 24.

⁴⁶ Wesley, (14/15 January, 1742), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 246.

⁴⁷ Wesley, (24 November, 1760), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 290.

⁴⁸ Maddox, “Visit the Poor,” 73.

⁴⁹ Wesley, (27 June, 1755), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 21: 21.

⁵⁰ Rieger, “Between God and the Poor,” 87.

This infusion of grace must not be read as practice makes perfect. To conflate these two is to mix categories. Wesley allowed for both but did not call one the other. For example, Wesley argued that the practice of prayer, which he considers a work of piety, can be perfected over time through constant practice. One example is found in his observation of his leaders in their practice of prayer. “It was observable, too, that their leaders ... [had] an uncommon gift in prayer. This was increased by their continual exercise of it.”⁵¹ As Colon-Emeric writes, “repeated acts of virtue strengthen the associated habit.”⁵² Prayer often practised is perfected. But a perfected or strengthened practice is different from participating in a practice in order to be perfected. Wesley made this point with respect to visiting the poor, arguing that what is changed is not just the practice of visiting but aspects of the visitor.

And while you minister to others, how many blessings may redound into your own bosom! Hereby your natural levity may be destroyed; your fondness for trifles cured; your wrong tempers corrected; your evil habits weakened, until they are rooted out; and you will be prepared to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in every future scene of life.⁵³

Henry Knight writes that the Christian learns what it means to love one’s neighbour by practising love. “Works of mercy are means of grace through which the active expression of love in the world both increases sensitivity to human need and deepens the capacity to love.”⁵⁴ For Wesley, it is not just *being* a lover of neighbour but the *doing* of love that strengthens love. Knight underlines this when he notes that “through their experience of practicing love, Christians deepened their knowledge of what God’s love

⁵¹ Wesley, (4 June, 1772), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 22: 330.

⁵² Colon-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection*, 17.

⁵³ Wesley, “On Visiting the Sick,” Sermon 98 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 397.

⁵⁴ Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life*, 111–12.

for a fallen creation entails.”⁵⁵ In this sense, there is a “recreative relationship”⁵⁶ with neighbour and stranger — through loving, one becomes even more loving.⁵⁷

Wesley was not asking people to trust in the means, as all trust is to be reserved for Christ; rather, the means provide a way of trusting in Christ. In other words the means is a “channel through which the grace of God is conveyed.”⁵⁸ Colin Williams avers, “Christ is the only source of grace, but he has appointed meeting places where we may receive his grace.”⁵⁹ As noted in the introduction to this section on the means of grace, Wesley insisted that Christ and only Christ is the meritorious cause of grace, not the human activity of participating in the sacraments or prayer. But the way in which this gift of grace is effectively conveyed to a person can be through the means of prayer, reading Scripture and taking the sacraments. If ever the means becomes an end, then, as Knight suggests, this “effectively blocks Christian growth rather than facilitating it.”⁶⁰ The means should not suggest a works-based righteousness, as though praying or reading the scriptures or visiting the sick wins acceptance with God. It is only through Christ’s work that such acceptance is attained.

Wesley insisted that the practices be subservient “to the end of religion.”⁶¹ By that he means that the end goal is the love of God and the practice of these actions is done in dependence on the Spirit.⁶² Wesley is clear that there is no “intrinsic power”⁶³ or

⁵⁵ Ibid., 113.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁷ Gustafson suggests that “as a person acts in certain ways over a period of time, a certain quality is formed in his ‘powers’ which disposes him to act on subsequent occasions in a similar way, or in such a way that the quality which has formed is expressed in those actions.” See James M. Gustafson, *Can Ethics Be Christian?* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 41.

⁵⁸ Wesley, “The Means of Grace,” Sermon 16 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 378.

⁵⁹ Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today*, 132.

⁶⁰ Knight, “The Role of Faith and the Means of Grace in the Heart Religion of John Wesley,” 278.

⁶¹ Wesley, “The Means of Grace,” Sermon 16 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 381.

⁶² Ibid., 1: 382.

“inherent power”⁶⁴ in the means. As one looks to God and depends on God’s Spirit, so grace is conveyed. Wesley urges that the means be performed “with a single eye.”⁶⁵ To ignore God in the practice of the means is to miss out on the benefits. According to Knight, “we cannot forget God and receive grace ...”⁶⁶ Runyon also opines: “As for orthopraxy, it can do good works, but if those works lack the partnership with the divine Spirit in their creation, they are simply our own subjective product and are in that sense not genuinely ‘good,’ i.e., the product of synergism.”⁶⁷ This more expansive version of orthopraxy locates Wesley in quite a different place to the theologians of liberation and how they have come to use orthopraxy, a topic to which we now turn.

Liberation Theology

This section suggests that a first reading of Wesley with his pro-poor bias and his willingness to critically reflect on action arguably has him in sympathy with Liberation Theology. However, as is made clear, Wesley’s starting point is not his own action but the actions recorded in the biblical text.

Orthopraxy is a term that came into prominence, at least in theological circles, in the mid-twentieth century through the influence of predominantly Catholic priests working among the poor in Latin America and later by Protestants also working for the liberation of marginalised groups.⁶⁸ Partly as a reaction to what they held to be an overemphasis

⁶³ Ibid., 1: 382.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1: 382.

⁶⁵ Wesley, “On Visiting the Sick,” Sermon 98 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 385.

⁶⁶ Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life*, 32.

⁶⁷ Theodore Runyon, “Orthopathy: Wesleyan Criteria for Religious Experience,” in *Heart Religion in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (ed. Richard B. Steele), 291–305. In terms of Runyon’s usage of the term synergism, refer to footnotes 73 and 143 in the Orthodoxy chapter for further clarification.

⁶⁸ See for example: Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973), George Casalis, *Correct Ideas Don’t Fall from the Skies: Elements for an Inductive Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984), Robert McAfee Brown, *Theology In A New Key: Responding to Liberation Themes* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978). See also pp. 89–90 of this thesis for further reflections on how liberation theology has impacted Wesleyan scholarship.

on orthodoxy and cognition, they stressed “the historical level of praxis and obedience.”⁶⁹ As Robert McAfee Brown writes, the starting point for a liberation theologian is not so much what one thinks but rather one’s context and one’s company.

Where do we begin our theological inquiry? Christian history offers many answers to this question. A favorite one starts with nature and concludes from an examination of order or beauty or causality that there must be a God. Another starts with the givenness of a set of claims made by an infallible book or an infallible church and works from that self-authenticating revelation to a world on which the revelation sheds light. A third starts with the inherently rational nature of the human mind and concludes that a universe out of which such rationality could evolve must itself be the creation of a Supreme Mind ... Liberation theology has a different starting point. Its starting point is the poor, the “marginalized,” those about whom the rest of society could not care less ... It is with them that theology must start; not with theories, not with views from above, but with “the view from below.”⁷⁰

Another liberationist writes, “where do correct ideas come from? ... the skies? No ... they come from social practice.”⁷¹ Right practice forms right opinions. Under this arrangement, and as Bonino states, for liberation theology, “Orthopraxis, rather than orthodoxy, becomes the criterion for theology.”⁷² Steele, while not necessarily agreeing with this position, believes it represents the view of many within liberation theology:

Hence, Liberation theologians challenged the longstanding assumption that the first and most important step in theology is to get the dogmatic formulas worked out, after which one may turn to the business of living and action in the world. They insisted instead that “theory” and “praxis” are polar coordinates in a dynamic process, with each influencing the other and neither having prominence.⁷³

⁶⁹ Jose Miguez Bonino, *Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age* (London: SPCK, 1975), 87.

⁷⁰ Brown, *Theology In A New Key*, 60–1.

⁷¹ Casalis, *Correct Ideas Don’t Fall from the Skies*, 25.

⁷² Jose Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 21.

⁷³ Richard B. Steele, “Heart Religion” in *the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements*, xxxii.

By way of definition, Brown is careful to note that praxis “means something different from the familiar-sounding ‘practice.’ Praxis describes the two-way traffic, or better stated the circular traffic that is always going on between action and theory.”⁷⁴ Such circularity, as Brown describes it, is played out so “action forces me to look at theory again ... and theory forces me to look at action again.”⁷⁵ Liberation theology therefore insists that the “Christian task is not ‘ortho-doxy’ e.g., right thinking, but ‘ortho-praxis,’ e.g., the right combination of thinking and doing.”⁷⁶

It is not too difficult to see why some within the Wesleyan academy are tempted to locate Wesley alongside liberation theology. Wesley was pro-works and, as already shown, pro-poor. This, however, must not be read as Wesley advocating a bias toward the poor.⁷⁷ Rather, he had a heightened sense of responsibility toward them, due in part to their vulnerability. It can also be admitted of Wesley that he allowed his practice to shape his ideas. Of Wesley, Baker notes that “his practices modified his theology, and his changed theology led him into new practices.”⁷⁸ This circularity of action and reflection arguably renders Wesley a practical theologian. James Fowler explains the term:

Practical theology aims at a kind of knowing that guides *being* and *doing*. While concerned with theory, it is not *theoria*; while concerned with techniques, it is not *poiesis*. Its knowledge is a *practical knowing* – a knowing in which skill and understanding cooperate; a knowing in which experience and critical reflection work in concert; a knowing in which disciplined improvisation, against a backdrop of reflective wisdom, marks the virtuosity of the competent practitioner ... practical theology investigates Scripture and tradition, on the one

⁷⁴ Brown, *Theology In A New Key*, 71.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁷⁷ Collins notes that “the value-laden language of ‘preferential options’ and the like, which have become a part of the rhetoric of liberation today, reveal the proper inclusions as well as exclusions – although in a way perhaps foreign to Wesley’s own ethic.” See Collins, “The Soteriological Orientation,” 8.

⁷⁸ Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, 137.

hand, and the shape of the present situation of ecclesial ministry, on the other, for the sake of constructive and critical guidance of the church's praxis.⁷⁹

Wesley's way of doing theology was very much concerned with theory and practice. Although he was intent on practising his theory, the practical theologian was not simply about the business of 'applied theology' whereby theologies worked out elsewhere are applied to certain contexts. Instead, a conversation is allowed to occur between theology and the particularities of a practice in a historical context. Such a conversation then informs and shapes both theology and further practice. Arguably, Albert Outler has done more than any other Wesleyan scholar to frame Wesley as a practical theologian, or as Outler prefers to see Wesley, a folk-theologian.⁸⁰ Outler makes this move for two reasons. First, he hopes to correct those who dismiss Wesley as a theologian, including the biographer Ablove:

Wesley taught the Methodists no particular theology, no particular inflection of the Christian tradition. Instead he provided them with an internally contradictory mix of virtually everything Christian, new and old, Protestant and Catholic, Dissenting and Anglican, heretical and orthodox. The points he emphasized in his teaching at any given moment depended principally on what he was then opposing. For he was always concerned to distinguish his position from something or other else, to keep the attention of his flock fixed firmly on himself.⁸¹

⁷⁹ James Fowler, "Practical Theology and the Shaping of Christian Lives," in *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World* (ed. Don S. Browning; Philadelphia: Harper & Row, 1983), 148–66.

⁸⁰ Outler's working definition of a folk-theologian is as follows: "By 'folk-theologian,' I mean one whose special gifts are in the communication of the gospel with literally marvelous powers (i.e., powers not easily explained) of outreach and ingathering, of upbuilding and nurturing, of the folk (viz., the unlearned masses, the humble and poor, nominal Christians who are candidates for conversion to 'heart-religion') and for lives transformed by grace to Christian service ... The measure of folk-theologians is threefold: 1) their grasp of the gospel itself (the *fides historica*) in its fullness and integrity; 2) their competence as theologians, viz., in their understanding of how perplexed and intricate the reasonings really are that lie back of all apparently 'plain truths'; and 3) their determination to make their message their medium – rather than counting so heavily on the media." See Outler, "John Wesley's Interests in the Early Fathers of the Church," in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (ed. Oden and Longden), 99.

⁸¹ Ablove, *The Evangelist of Desire*, 74.

Not surprisingly, observes Outler, it is “Wesley the organizer and Wesley the social reformer” who is remembered, “but hardly Wesley the theologian.”⁸² Notwithstanding these observations, Outler posits that Wesley “is the major Anglican theologian in the entire eighteenth century and also one of our major resources for twentieth-century theology.”⁸³ Outler makes this move by casting Wesley, as a “folk-theologian”, someone who has mass appeal. This kind of theologian is found not so much in the classroom but on the streets with ordinary people, the masses. This sits well with the liberationist theme which relates to where the individual is located and who they are with. Secondly, the term folk-theologian, suggests pragmatism. Having been with the people, the folk-theologian rethinks and recasts theology. For the liberationist, pragmatism is preferred to dogmatism.

Theodore Runyon takes Wesley closer to the camp of the liberation theologians in adamantly declaring that Wesley “insisted on the priority of orthopraxy.”⁸⁴ Runyon quotes from Wesley’s sermon “On Living Without God” to establish this:

I believe the merciful God regards the lives and tempers of men more than their ideas. I believe he respects the goodness of the heart rather than the clearness of the head; and that if the heart of a man be filled (by the grace of God, and the power of his Spirit) with the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man, God will not cast him into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels because his ideas are not clear, or because his conceptions are confused. Without holiness, I own, "no man shall see the Lord;" but I dare not add, "or clear ideas."⁸⁵

From this Runyon argues that Wesley questioned “the orthodoxy of ideas as a final criterion”⁸⁶ and instead insisted upon the priority of orthopraxy. In other words, divine

⁸² Outler, *Evangelism and Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 76.

⁸³ Outler, “John Wesley as Theologian – Then and Now,” in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (ed. Oden and Longden), 58.

⁸⁴ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 148.

⁸⁵ Wesley, “On Living Without God,” Sermon 130 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 175.

⁸⁶ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 148. Gregory Clapper also opines that followers of Wesley will be sympathetic to Liberation Theology’s rejection of the “sufficiency of either abstract doctrine or mystical

judgment of people will, in the final analysis, be based upon what they have done rather than what they have thought.

Describing Wesley as a practical theologian is not the same as labelling him a liberation theologian. Wesley could admit to ideas, new thoughts and opinions emerging from practice but it is important to note that he started with theological truths, not practice, as already highlighted in this study.⁸⁷ He allowed practice to inform his theology; he was a reflective practitioner, which is a distance from some within liberation theology who imply that praxis is the first act in knowing God and revelation. Stephen Long is adamant Wesley's starting point was that of "metaphysical principles of truth and creedal Christianity."⁸⁸ Long is even reluctant to render Wesley a practical or pragmatic theologian even where his theology responds to "needs"⁸⁹ and "concrete situations"⁹⁰ and "adjusts theology accordingly."⁹¹ Long insists that Wesley is first and foremost a "Christian dogmatist."⁹²

Because Wesley was dismissive of opinions, Runyon seems to conclude that he also sidelined orthodoxy. In fact Wesley's orthodoxy was a dogmatic one, centring on the being of God, participating in God and the promise of human maturation resulting in love of neighbour. In other words, love of neighbour is impossible without the love of God. Toward the end of his life he wrote:

experiences for defining the true nature of Christianity." See Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, 173.

⁸⁷ This is in reference to the Chapter on Orthodoxy which sets out the biblical narrative behind Wesley's actions.

⁸⁸ Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology*, 5.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 5.

Let all therefore that desire to please God condescend to be taught of God, and take care to walk in that path which God himself hath appointed. Beware of taking half of this religion for the whole; but take both parts of it together. And see that you begin where God himself begins: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Is not this the first, our Lord himself being the Judge, as well as the great, commandment? First, therefore, see that ye love God; next, your neighbour, – every child of man. From this fountain let every temper, every affection, every passion flow. So shall that "mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Let all your thoughts, words, and actions spring from this! So shall you "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."⁹³

In the same sermon, Wesley laments, "Men hereby willfully and designedly put asunder what God has joined, – the duties of the first and the second table. It is separating the love of our neighbour from the love of God."⁹⁴ Wesley is absolutely clear and even dogmatic: The starting place toward love of neighbour is God.

Both by Scripture and by experience we know that an unholy, and therefore an unhappy, man, seeking rest, but finding none, is sooner or later convinced that sin is the ground of his misery; and cries out of the deep to Him that is able to save, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" It is not long before he finds "redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins." Then "the Father reveals his Son" in his heart; and he "calls Jesus, Lord, by the Holy Ghost." And then the love of God is "shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit which is given unto him." From this principle springs real, disinterested benevolence to all mankind; making him humble, meek, gentle to all men, easy to be entreated, – to be convinced of what is right, and persuaded to what is good; inviolably patient, with a thankful acquiescence in every step of his adorable providence.⁹⁵

Long understandably concludes that "love of God and love of neighbor, are wedded together in Wesley, and divorce is impossible."⁹⁶ Not only are these wedded together but they are also sequenced. Wesley was at pains to show that for love of neighbor to occur a prior love must be seen, received and reciprocated. Love of God enables love of neighbor. It is this sequence that sets Wesley apart from the liberation theologians. His

⁹³ Wesley, "The Unity of the Divine Being," Sermon 120 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 4: 71.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4: 69.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4: 70.

⁹⁶ Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology*, 51.

starting point is not the poor but God, not the context of poverty but the text of Christian narrative.

It is this divine aspect to Wesley's notion of practice or outward religion that also keeps him at some distance from the contemporary discussion around practices, as the next section demonstrates.

Practice and Practices

To help nuance Wesley's concept of practice even more, comparisons and contrasts can be made with a current conversation on practices. Wesley's point of contrast gives rise to another conversation which has already been visited in this thesis – how practice not only assists the receiver of action but also matures the actor.

Alasdair MacIntyre, an early contributor to the conversation on practices, defines practice as follows:

By a 'practice' I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.⁹⁷

Admittedly MacIntyre's definition is dense but certain principles emerge. First, practice is "socially established." It is something that people can understand, participate in and recognise "across time and place."⁹⁸ And as Owens notes in commentary on MacIntyre, it is "something people do together."⁹⁹ Second, a practice is a "human activity." Dykstra

⁹⁷ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187.

⁹⁸ Craig Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass, "A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices" in *Practicing Theology* (ed. Volf and Bass), 28.

⁹⁹ Roger L. Owens, *The Shape of Participation: A Theology of Church Practices* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010), 48.

is right to remind us that practices are what we ‘do’ and not just think about.¹⁰⁰ Third, the MacIntyre definition informs us that a practice has “goods internal to that form of activity.” By that, MacIntyre means practices are not to be done so as to achieve unrelated external benefits. For example, some may walk toward the stranger to acquire “prestige and status”¹⁰¹ but these ‘goods’ are not inherent in walking toward the stranger. A fourth dimension to a practice is that it has “standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity.” In other words, entering into a practice involves being subject to what the task demands rather than personal preferences. There are standards and rules, protocols and principles. And finally, a practice is something that can be “systematically extended.” This has to do with structurally embedding the practice so that it is carried through into successive generations albeit at the risk of the practice being corrupted by the institution that does the embedding.

There is much in this definition that aptly describes the practices of human activity. Such activities are created and understood by people, and if done in groups, can be embedded in culture so people in another time and place can also participate in them. According to his definition, MacIntyre includes the game of football as a practice but not “throwing a football”; architecture but not bricklaying, farming but not planting turnips.¹⁰² Wesley’s notion of practice, while not specifically mentioning vocations like architecture or farming, does include “the common business of our employments” or what he terms “common life.”¹⁰³

Still echoing MacIntyre, Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass, nuance four principles intrinsic to Christian practices. Practices “address fundamental human needs and

¹⁰⁰ Craig Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 69

¹⁰¹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 188.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁰³ Wesley, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, VIII,” Sermon 28 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 612.

conditions through concrete human acts,”¹⁰⁴ they are done “together and over time,”¹⁰⁵ and “possess standards of excellence.”¹⁰⁶ It is not just a matter of faithfully embodying a practice but being effective and so finally, through all these practices, Christians come to see that their “daily lives are all tangled up with the things God is doing in the world.”¹⁰⁷ Dykstra and Bass therefore define Christian practices as the “things that Christian people do together over time in response to and in the light of God’s active presence for the life of the world.”¹⁰⁸ To ascertain what they mean, Dykstra and Bass encourage the reader to note the type of practices mentioned in their table of contents, where we find: Honoring the Body, Hospitality, Household Economics, Saying Yes and Saying No, Keeping Sabbath, Testimony, Discernment, Shaping Communities, Forgiveness, Healing, Dying Well, Singing Our Lives.¹⁰⁹

Elsewhere Dykstra proffers his own definition:

In sum, then, practices are those cooperative human activities through which we, as individuals and as communities, grow and develop in moral character and substance. They have built up over time and, through experience and testing, have developed patterns of reciprocal expectations among participants. They are ways of doing things together in which and through which human life is given direction, meaning, and significance, and through which our very capacities to do good things well are increased. And because they are shared, patterned, and ongoing, they can be taught. We can teach one another how to participate in them. We can pass them on from one generation to the next.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Craig Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass, “Times of Yearning, Practices of Faith,” in *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People* (ed. Dorothy C. Bass et al; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 6.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁰ Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 69–70.

Normatively and theologically understood, in the definition of Dykstra and Bass, Christian practices are the human activities in and through which people cooperate with God in addressing the needs of one another and creation.¹¹¹ There is much in what Dykstra and Bass write that coheres with Wesley. There are elements of piety and mercy. God initiates and enables. The practices are group-based and can be translated over time. Where Wesley struck a discordant note is in his insistence that the means of grace are to be applied to those not yet Christian, as much as to those who consider themselves Christians. What is staggering here is Wesley's view that the religious works of piety and mercy ought to be practised prior to a person becoming a Christian. This opens Wesley up to the charge of a works-righteousness, whereby people gain acceptance with God from doing good works.

The Charge of Good Works

In a letter to Molther, the Moravian, in 1739 Wesley wrote:

Therefore I believe it right for him who knows he has no faith (i.e., that conquering faith),
 To go to Church;
 To communicate;
 To fast;
 To use as much private prayer as he can, and
 To read the Scripture;
 (Because I believe these are 'means of grace', i.e., do ordinarily convey God's grace to unbelievers; and that it is possible for a man to use them, without trusting in them);
 To do all the temporal good he can ...¹¹²

Wesley encouraged those seeking salvation to join his classes and to practise the practices in those classes. He asked this of seekers because it was his view that such efforts have an "empowering and formative impact."¹¹³ Take for example the sacrament,

¹¹¹ Craig Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass, "A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices," in *Practicing Theology* (ed. Volf and Bass), 13–32.

¹¹² Wesley, (31 December, 1739), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 133.

¹¹³ Maddox, "Visit the Poor," 73.

or as Wesley terms it, the Lord's Supper. For Wesley, this work of piety was not just a confirming practice but a converting one. It was not just an act of remembrance but also a practice which made renewal possible. Wesley therefore invited all to the communion table, believer and undecided. Similarly, Wesley invited the undecided to attend church, hear sermons, pray and do acts of kindness for neighbour and stranger. Wesley perceived such acts as "means towards one's own conversion."¹¹⁴ Such a position lays Wesley open to various criticisms, the first being legalistic nominalism, which Mark Olsen defines as "salvation by works of the law."¹¹⁵

The dispute over the Fetter Lane Society was more concerned with Christians of low faith rather than unbelievers, but even so, it helps to distance Wesley from accusations that he subscribed to any hint of salvation by works. The Fetter Lane Society was formed by Peter Bohler the Moravian, James Hutton, and the Wesley brothers during the spring of 1738. Soon after the departure of Bohler, John Wesley became a key leader. In October 1739, another Moravian, Philip Molther arrived to assume a leadership role, especially in light of Wesley's long absences due to his itinerant work. The Moravian influence had continued prior to Molther's arrival and by June 1739, it was becoming clear that major doctrinal problems were emerging. At one point, Wesley had to return quickly to the Society¹¹⁶ whereupon it is noted there were serious "divisions."¹¹⁷ By September of 1739 Wesley was appealing for love,¹¹⁸ and a few months later the so-called 'stillness' debate threatened to divide the Fetter Lane Society. In his *Journal*, Wesley wrote:

I left Bristol, and on Saturday came to London. The first person I met with there was one whom I had left strong in faith and zealous of good works. But she now

¹¹⁴ Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, 168.

¹¹⁵ Mark K. Olsen, "The Stillness Controversy of 1740: Tradition Shaping Scripture Reading," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 46 (2011): 120–33.

¹¹⁶ Wesley, (11 June, 1739), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 65.

¹¹⁷ Wesley, (15 June, 1739), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 70.

¹¹⁸ Wesley, (9 September, 1739), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 95.

told me Mr. Molther had fully convinced her she '*never had any faith at all*', and had advised her, till she received faith, 'to be *still*, ceasing from outward works', which she had accordingly done ...¹¹⁹

The presenting issue was one of outward works. But at a deeper level, there was a key difference of opinion. Wesley quite clearly saw the woman as already a Christian but Molther suggested otherwise. In the words of Mark Olsen, Wesley saw her as post-new birth and Molther as pre-new birth.¹²⁰ This is important as her status determined the role of the outward works. If she was indeed post-new birth as Wesley posited, then her good works were the fruit of her faith. If, however, she was pre-new birth and Wesley was insisting she perform good works, then in the eyes of Molther this was nothing short of salvation by works of the law. Not surprisingly, Molther commended that she desist from all good works and be 'still' until the gift of faith was granted her by God. Wesley saw the matter in quite a different light as Olsen makes clear:

Contrary to Molther [the leading Moravian in the Fetter Lane Society], he [Wesley] believed these converts were already justified and born again. Consequently, they already had the gift of faith, but in a *low degree*. Their remaining doubts concerned their sanctification, not their justification ... Wesley, therefore, had counseled these converts to diligently *practice* the means of grace to perfect their faith.¹²¹

Wesley was at pains throughout his life to demonstrate his evangelical credentials in stressing that there is no salvation by works of the law. For example, in his published sermon "The Lord our Righteousness", he wrote:

We must be cut off from dependence upon ourselves, before we can truly depend upon Christ. We must cast away all confidence in our own righteousness, or we cannot have a true confidence in his. Till we are delivered from trusting in anything that we do, we cannot thoroughly trust in what he has done and

¹¹⁹ Wesley, (1 November, 1739), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 119.

¹²⁰ Olsen, "The Stillness Controversy of 1740," 121.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 121–2. [Italics: Olsen].

suffered. First, we receive the sentence of death in ourselves: Then, we trust in Him that lived and died for us.¹²²

It was Wesley's fear that the Moravian position on 'stillness' could result in antinomianism, or a complete disregard for outward moral behaviour and duty post-new birth. He feared Society members would take the view that even after new birth, there would be "only one duty, that of believing."¹²³ In other words, far from doing outward works they would perceive themselves as outwardly free to do whatever they liked. Wesley deemed such ethical passivity irreconcilable with the biblical themes of justification by faith and sanctification. It was Wesley's view that imputed righteousness through justification by faith makes possible inherent righteousness or sanctification. He wrote, "Cry aloud, (is there not a cause?) that for this very end the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, that 'the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us;' and that we may 'live soberly, religiously, and godly, in this present world.'"¹²⁴ In rhetorical dialogue with the Moravians, Wesley wrote:

But do not you believe inherent righteousness? Yes, in its proper place; not as the ground of our acceptance with God, but as the fruit of it; not in the place of imputed righteousness, but as consequent upon it. That is, I believe God implants righteousness in every one to whom he has imputed it. I believe "Jesus Christ is made of God unto us sanctification," as well as "righteousness"; or, that God sanctifies, as well as justifies, all them that believe in him. They to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed, are made righteous by the spirit of Christ, are renewed in the image of God, "after the likeness wherein they were created, in righteousness and true holiness."¹²⁵

The righteousness that is imputed is the human or external righteousness of Christ. It is the righteousness of how he lived in love for God and neighbour. Long reads Wesley as meaning that what is imputed to us and then becomes actualised in us, is Christ's "active

¹²² Wesley, "The Lord Our Righteousness," Sermon 20 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 458–9.

¹²³ Wesley, (3 September, 1741), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 19: 223.

¹²⁴ Wesley, "The Lord Our Righteousness," Sermon 20 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 463.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 458–9.

righteousness” or “his positive actions in the world.”¹²⁶ As Christ was able to do good works, so by participating in this aspect of his righteousness, people can also do good as Christ did. But it is not as though the human person is a mere channel or conduit. The point Wesley seems to be making is that through an infusion of Christ’s active righteousness, we, the human agents, can do good works. In Wesley’s scheme, human agency is important. Inherently, it is still the human person doing the good even though the original impulse for such good, and the ongoing enablement of it, is through an infusion of God’s grace.¹²⁷

One of the reasons why Wesley insisted on inherent righteousness rather than simply imputed righteousness was his fear that the latter alone would induce antinomianism, or a disregard for moral behaviour toward our neighbour.

In the meantime what we are afraid of is this: – lest any should use the phrase, "The righteousness of Christ," or, "The righteousness of Christ is imputed to me," as a cover for his unrighteousness. We have known this done a thousand times. A man has been reprov'd, suppose for drunkenness: "O", said he, "I pretend to no righteousness of my own; Christ is my righteousness." Another has been told, that "the extortioner, the unjust, shall not inherit the kingdom of God": He replies, with all assurance, "I am unjust in myself, but I have a spotless righteousness in Christ." And thus, though a man be as far from the practice as from the tempers of a Christian; though he neither has the mind which was in Christ, nor in any respect walks as he walked; yet he has armour of proof against all conviction, in what he calls the "righteousness of Christ."¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology*, 139.

¹²⁷ In his sermon “The Lord our Righteousness” Wesley differentiates between Christ’s divine and human righteousness. The former has to do with Christ’s eternal equality with the Father. Wesley is insistent that it is not this righteousness that is imputed to us. Rather, it is Christ’s human righteousness. According to Wesley, this has two parts to it: Christ’s active and passive obedience. The former has to do with what Christ did by others and the latter what was done to him by others, by which Wesley was referring to his suffering on the Cross. Wesley argues that these two parts are inseparable in Christ. But the overall tenet of the sermon is that it is Christ’s human and active righteousness that is imputed to and implanted in people. See Wesley, “The Lord our Righteousness,” Sermon 20 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 449–65.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 462.

Wesley's view on good works carved out a third, new position on the issue of good works and, as such, is at some distance from the extreme views of cheap grace, as Bonhoeffer put it,¹²⁹ and antinomianism, as Randy Maddox outlines:

At one end of the spectrum in this debate are those who view (or are accused of viewing) good works as duties that we must fulfill to qualify for Christian status or to maintain pure Christian character. At the other end of the spectrum are those who decry such apparent “works-righteousness” and argue that good works are simply the expression of the faith or holy dispositions that are graciously infused in Christians by the Spirit at their conversion. For this group, good works are impossible prior to attaining Christian status and character but become natural (at the most extreme, inevitable) after regeneration.¹³⁰

For Wesley, therefore, works were not a matter of merit-making (the first view) but making room for God to work. Neither, in his scheme, were works a necessary consequence of conversion (the second view). Wesley did not subscribe to such a deterministic view. Rather, good works were duties or practices that human agents did and, in the doing, they experienced infusion. He considered such works as needful, both prior to and after Christian conversion.

The Charge of Ethical Formalism

It is because Wesley integrates the inner dimension of the heart with the outer dimension of works that he cannot be charged with an ethic of formalism. Ethical formalism, at least in a religious context, has to do with an “undue insistence on the outward observances of religion or the prescriptions of a moral code, with a corresponding neglect of the inner spirit ...”¹³¹ As has already been shown in Chapter 5 on orthokardia, Wesley was very much concerned with the inner dispositions of the heart and how these can compel action. Wesley was forever connecting the inner world of the heart with the outer world of behaviour.

¹²⁹ See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (trans. R. H. Fuller, with some rev. by Irmgard Booth; London: SCM Press, 1959; 10th impr. 1978).

¹³⁰ Maddox, “Visit the Poor,” 70.

¹³¹ Cross and Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 627.

I answer, It is most true that the root of religion lies in the heart, in the inmost soul; that this is the union of the soul with God, the life of God in the soul of man. But if this root be really in the heart, it cannot but put forth branches. And these are the several instances of outward obedience, which partake of the same nature with the root; and consequently, are not only marks or signs, but substantial parts of religion ... It is also true, that bare outside religion, which has no root in the heart, is nothing worth; that God delighteth not in such outward services, no more than in Jewish burnt-offerings; and that a pure and holy heart is a sacrifice with which he is always well pleased. But he is also well pleased with all that outward service which arises from the heart ...¹³²

In Wesley's scheme, the heart (orthokardia) and practice (orthopraxy) are finely woven. Practice is deeds done in response to experiencing God's love in the heart. Wesley writes that "outward religion is nothing worth, without the religion of the heart ..." ¹³³ Unless a person experiences the inner reality of being born of God, Wesley argues, "outward religion will profit us nothing ..." ¹³⁴ This position is advanced when he compares deeds done by the irreligious with those of the religious:

Yea, two persons may do the same outward work; suppose, feeding the hungry, or clothing the naked; and, in the meantime, one of these may be truly religious, and the other have no religion at all: For the one may act from the love of God, and the other from the love of praise. So manifest it is, that although true religion naturally leads to every good word and work, yet the real nature thereof lies deeper still, even in "the hidden man" of the heart.¹³⁵

Arguably, Wesley was overly cynical of good deeds done by irreligious people, averring that these were done for the praise of others. However, his point is to suggest that external acts are not to be divorced from the person acting. In other words, acts and the attitude in which they are done are both important. As a moral theologian, (see Chapter 3, pp. 85–8) Wesley argues that the subjective state of the agent must be taken into

¹³² Wesley, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, IV," Sermon 24 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 544.

¹³³ Wesley, "The Means of Grace," Sermon 16 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 379.

¹³⁴ Wesley, "On the Death of George Whitefield," Sermon 53 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 2: 331.

¹³⁵ Wesley, "The Way to the Kingdom," Sermon 7 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 219–20.

account when evaluating external acts or deeds. Internal dispositions and the category of the heart are critical when calculating the merit of what is done. Wesley therefore does not separate the internal from the external. Acts done with good and godly motives are preferred to those done as a matter of course or personal choice. Clapper continues that “we need to see that for Wesley the Christian life is not simply a collection of proper deeds to do, but also as entailing a distinctive manner of doing them. This means that being a Christian is not just a question of knowing what to do and then doing it, but it is also a question of how these deeds are done.”¹³⁶ Wesley encourages orthopraxy by way of orthodoxy. There should be something “truly religious”¹³⁷ about how engaging in every good work and practice. Clapper warns against “seeing Christianity as primarily something that one does, and ignoring the subjective experience of being a Christian.”¹³⁸

Orthopraxy and the Moral Pathway

Making the connections between orthopraxy and the other orthos requires us now to revisit previous conversations on how practices affect beliefs and human maturation. Orthopraxy has an almost symbiotic connection with our other orthos. Two of the orthos – orthodoxy and orthokardia – make clear this two-way relationship with orthopraxy. Orthodoxy is the genesis of good works. God’s story informs our story. God’s good works make possible our good works. John Cobb notes that today many speak of orthopraxis instead of orthodoxy. In reflection he notes: “This is not enough for Wesley. Orthopraxis might mean works that could occur apart from repentance and faith. For Wesley these are not Christian. Wesley wanted the fruits of the Spirit, not outwardly good actions that are motivated by something other than love. Hence faith was essential for him.”¹³⁹ Cobb renders a Wesleyan view of orthopraxy as “the fruits of the Spirit.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Clapper, “Shaping Heart Religion through Preaching and Pastoral Care,” 212.

¹³⁷ Wesley, “The Way to the Kingdom,” Sermon 7 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 1: 218–32.

¹³⁸ Clapper, “Shaping Heart Religion through Preaching and Pastoral Care,” 210. Clapper continues, “Overemphasizing practices can lead to an overemphasis on the will-power virtues to the exclusion of those of the heart. This can lead to what has often happened in those traditions that emphasize holiness – a deadening moralism where Christianity is entirely defined by the observable practices in which one does or does not engage.” (p. 212)

¹³⁹ Cobb, *Grace and Responsibility*, 142.

In other words, the fruiting of outward works is made possible through faith in God's promises, especially the promise of an inner work being brought about by a Divine Spirit. Orthodoxy is the soil of orthopraxy.

It has often been understood that the relationship between belief (orthodoxy) and practice (orthopraxy) is a chronological one – belief informs practice. There is a truth to this but the relationship between them must not be reduced to one of cause and effect, as though belief always informs practice. Miroslav Volf rightly asks, “but do practices contribute anything to beliefs?”¹⁴¹ Rieger prefers to see belief and practice in terms of a “two-way”¹⁴² relationship. Just as theology shapes practice, so praxis can both precede and inform theology. In fact, where one stops and the other starts is difficult to discern at times. Dorothy Bass sees these two dimensions as very much travelling “hand in hand.”¹⁴³ She talks in terms of a practice being “a cluster of ideas.”¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Amy Plantinga Pauw posits that beliefs are “present in them [practices].”¹⁴⁵ Seen in this light, practices are “carriers of beliefs.”¹⁴⁶ Volf opines that there is a movement from practices to beliefs in that practices introduce beliefs.¹⁴⁷ For example, in the practice (orthopraxy) of gathering (orthokoinonia), people are introduced to certain beliefs (orthodoxy). Practices can also provide a corrective to belief.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 142.

¹⁴¹ Miroslav Volf, “Theology for a Way of Life,” in *Practicing Theology* (ed. Volf and Bass), 245–63.

¹⁴² Rieger, “Between God and the Poor,” 190.

¹⁴³ Dorothy Bass, introduction to *Practicing Theology* (ed. Volf and Bass), 1–9.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴⁵ Pauw, “Attending to the Gaps between Beliefs and Practices,” 44.

¹⁴⁶ L. Gregory Jones, “Beliefs, Desires, Practices, and the Ends of Theological Education,” in *Practicing Theology* (ed. Volf and Bass), 194.

¹⁴⁷ Volf, “Theology for a Way of Life,” in *Practicing Theology* (ed. Volf and Bass), 255–58.

The relationship between orthopraxy and orthokardia is likewise two-way. Clapper notes that “right actions flow out of the Christian affections of the renewed heart.”¹⁴⁸ Clapper echoes Wesley in stressing that action is compelled by the affections of the heart. In this respect, orthopraxy is dependent upon orthokardia. But Wesley also admits to the transformative value of action. In other words, in the doing of something on behalf of another, the giver also receives. In one of his published sermons, Wesley wrote, “In an exterior circle are all the works of mercy, whether to the souls or bodies of men. By these we exercise all holy tempers – by these we continually improve them, so that all these are real means of grace, although this is not commonly adverted to.”¹⁴⁹ In other words, works of mercy both “exercise” and “improve” the emotions of the heart. This movement from praxis to the affections is no more evident in Wesley’s thinking than in his sermon “On Visiting the Sick.” In the practice of visiting those in need, Wesley suggests that transformation occurs in the visitor. The visitor’s capacity for sympathy is increased and their “social affections”¹⁵⁰ are strengthened. It is often thought that those with sympathy visit but Wesley reverses this order when he writes, “One great reason why the rich, in general, have so little sympathy for the poor, is, because they so seldom visit them.”¹⁵¹ It is visiting that makes for heartfelt sympathy. Maddox teases this out further by noting that we do not engage in this act of mercy because “we feel like it or only when we feel like it”¹⁵² but rather it is in the doing of it that the feelings are aroused. Gregory Jones writes “that our desires are always already being educated and formed in one way or another through ... our activities.”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ Gregory S. Clapper, *As If the Heart Mattered: A Wesleyan Spirituality* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1997), 111. Elsewhere, Clapper comments, and rightly so, that orthodoxy and orthopraxis do not “exhaustively describe what was essential to his [Wesley’s] vision of Christianity. What is missing is what I term the orthokardia – the right heart.” See Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, 154.

¹⁴⁹ Wesley, “On Zeal,” Sermon 92 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 313.

¹⁵⁰ Wesley, “On Visiting the Sick,” Sermon 98 in *Sermons* (ed. Outler), 3: 387.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3: 387.

¹⁵² Maddox, “Visit the Poor,” 75.

¹⁵³ Jones, *Transformed Judgment*, 194.

In other words, there is a two-way transformative process between orthokardia and orthopraxy. Being loved (orthokardia) can make for love of others (orthopraxy) but loving your neighbour can strengthen love. Gustafson sheds further light on this dynamic:

But surely the growth of a “loving disposition” is not only the result of momentary responses to being loved. It is the result of living out the reality of love, determining with one’s capacities to do “habitually” what is loving. As many authors have pointed out, most recently Victor Furnish, in both the ancient Torah and in the teachings of Jesus love is commanded, hard as that is for us to grasp in an age attuned to the conventional wisdom of certain psychologies and styles of life. To be in the process of becoming a loving person is not simply a matter of the spontaneity of loving emotions but a determination of the intellect and of the attitude of the will.¹⁵⁴

If we are to love our neighbour, then, as Gustafson notes, human choice and determination are needed. Wesley supports this but only in the sense that God animates and then enables determination. Stephen Long sees this symmetry as one of action and reaction. He writes that “God infuses life into the soul, and the person then cooperates by returning that life to God through specific acts.”¹⁵⁵ Cunningham talks in terms of a “dual-causal understanding”¹⁵⁶ where both God and the person cooperate to ensure that external acts are done. Such acts include love of neighbour which, in turn, breaks down into a thousand smaller acts including walking toward the stranger in our midst. As to the actual embodiment of this praxis, we now turn to the life-story of a former soldier who was transformed in an act of charity.

¹⁵⁴ Gustafson, *Can Ethics Be Christian?* 70.

¹⁵⁵ Long, *John Wesley’s Moral Theology*, 131.

¹⁵⁶ Joseph William Cunningham, “John Wesley’s Moral Pneumatology: The Fruits of the Spirit as Theological Virtues,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 24 (2011): 275–93.

An Exemplar of Orthopraxy

John Gardner

John Gardner, a former soldier, was so profoundly impacted by an encounter with a dying beggar in 1785 that he challenged his Methodist brothers to visit and minister to those in the poorest parts of town. As a result of this encounter, he founded the Strangers' Friend Society.

The dying man, covered only in rags, exclaimed to Gardner, "I must die without hope." In reflection, Gardner said, "it was to little purpose to offer comfort to the soul when the body was the subject of gnawing hunger."¹⁵⁷ Rev. Luke Tyerman, in his 1871 biography of Wesley, examines that life-changing encounter:

John Gardner; a retired soldier, in his London visits, met a man in a miserable garret, dying of fistula. He lay on the floor, covered only with a sack, without shirt, cap, or sheet. The old soldier felt, as every one must feel, that to visit such cases without relieving them, was not worthy of a Christian ...¹⁵⁸

After his awkward revelation, Gardner returned to his Methodist class, unburdened himself, and explored with the class what could be done for strangers on the streets of London. Subsequently, he and 15 other Methodists pledged "to join in a penny a week subscription"¹⁵⁹ for the purpose of relieving such physical plight. However, not all the class accepted this initiative; in fact some opposed it, resulting in Gardner writing directly to John Wesley for his guidance.

Reverend and Dear Sir, – a few of us are subscribing a penny a week each, which is to be carried on the Sabbath by one of ourselves, who read and pray with the afflicted, who, according to the rules enclosed, must be poor strangers,

¹⁵⁷ John Gardner, *The Grain of Mustard Seed: or, An Account of the Rise, Progress and Extensive Usefulness of the Benevolent or Strangers' Friend Society, founded 1785* (London: Christie, 1829). Cited in Tim Macquiban, "Friends of All?" 137.

¹⁵⁸ Rev. Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley* (vol. 3; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1871), 253. Electronic version available at Google Books.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 253.

having no parish, or friend at hand to help them. Our benevolent plan is opposed by my class leader; therefore, we are constrained to seek your approbation before we proceed. We are very poor, and our whole stick is not yet twenty shillings: will thank you, therefore, for any assistance you may please to afford your very humble servant.¹⁶⁰

Wesley's response was one of immediate support, promising a guinea straight away and three pence a week thereafter. Emboldened, Gardner used his initiative to create the Strangers' Friend Society. In his *Journal*, Wesley makes mention of this development:

Sunday 14 was a comfortable day. In the morning, I met the Strangers Society, instituted wholly for the relief, not of our society, but for poor, sick, friendless strangers. I do not know that I ever heard or read of such an institution till within a few years ago. So this also is one of the fruits of Methodism.¹⁶¹

Initially, Strangers' Friend Societies (SFS) were opened in Bristol, London, Manchester and Hull. The primary purpose was to raise up a company of visitors who would actually walk toward sick and dying strangers and personally administer whatever assistance was needed. They employed a very hands-on approach, insisting their members visit the slums, enter the shacks and come alongside those in direst need. In his research into the Manchester SFS, Gordon Hindle draws attention to the primary role of a visitor, "to daily seek out objects of real woe and to visit their miserable retreats."¹⁶²

Hindle's research uncovers some of the people and places to which the visitors went:

John Pritchard: Stone mason, lame many weeks, his wife miscarried, had no food, three children. Jane Hallsworth: Spring Alley, sick and distressed, 94 years of age, and without fire and food. Bridget Meggitt: Long Millgate, sick and

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 253.

¹⁶¹ Wesley, (14 Sunday, 1790), in *Journal* (ed. Ward and Heitzenrater), 24: 169. Rack questions the extent to which the SFS can be attributable to Methodism. He opines, "It is not in fact clear that they were all originally founded by Methodists, and they in some cases have been taken over by them." Rack also points out that their efforts centered on "raising funds for the relief of non-Methodists." See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 448. Wesley suggests that the SFS is a fruit of Methodism and Rack disputes this; the truth may be found in both. The general consensus is that Gardner helped start the original SFS but this is not to suggest the other Strangers' Friend Societies were not founded by others.

¹⁶² Gordon Bradley Hindle, *Provision for the Relief of the Poor in Manchester, 1754–1826* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975), 82.

distressed, had not tasted meat for two or three days, and her children quite wasted before her.¹⁶³

The *Leeds Intelligencer* wrote about the work of the Strangers' Friend Society in Manchester, noting that it had:

Undertaken the arduous task of visiting in person the place where the poorest and most wretched outcasts of this community are to be found. Those who have no claim to relief from any parish are continuously experiencing the complicated miseries incident to the most forlorn state to which human nature can be reduced, that of living amongst opulence and comfort, the victims of disease, nakedness, and want.¹⁶⁴

Stephanie Kennedy, in her Masters' research on the evolution of professional helping, notes that one of Gardner's key insights in London, was in carving "the city into districts, assigning a visiting lady to each region."¹⁶⁵ Of Gardner and his fellow Methodists, Kennedy also writes, "Methodist churches of the era discharged visitors straight from the pews into the homes of the poor."¹⁶⁶

Christine Pohl makes a helpful observation in suggesting that Wesley reoriented Matthew 25, a biblical passage he often used regarding the stranger. Matthew 25 talks of 'inviting in' the stranger in the sense of hosting a stranger. The reorientation that Pohl refers to is one of location. Instead of inviting the stranger into one's own abode, Pohl writes that Wesley's emphasis "was almost entirely on visiting rather than hosting people."¹⁶⁷ This is not to suggest that Wesley ruled that his followers like Gardner were

¹⁶³ Ibid., 82.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in Robert F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Epworth Press, 1945), 212–13 and also quoted in Christine D. Pohl "Practicing Hospitality in the Face of 'Complicated Wickedness' (Keynote Address)," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 42 (2007): 28.

¹⁶⁵ Stephanie C. Kennedy, "From Sin to Synapse: The Development and Evolution of Professional Helping." (Master of Social Work thesis, Florida State University, College of Social Work, 2011), 14.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 14.

¹⁶⁷ Pohl, "Practicing Hospitality," 22.

not to take people into their homes, but that his emphasis was on going to the stranger rather than just waiting for the stranger to come to them.

John Gardner's life was changed forever through an encounter with poverty. As he sought to assist the hungry man on the streets of London, so his own life was assisted. Despite its ineffectiveness (what did he actually do?), this one act of neighbourly duty ultimately resulted in Gardner creating a movement of societies dedicated to strangers. This is orthopraxy at work.

Orthopraxy does not stand alone. Embedded in a practice is a belief (orthodoxy). Practice also proceeds from being (orthokardia) but needs community (orthokoinonia) to sustain it and rules (orthonomos) to guide it. In fact, none of the orthos is independent of the others. The moral pathway's efficacy is in all six orthos travelling together. The six are to be so finely woven that they form the one cord. It is this cord – what this thesis terms the moral pathway – that pulls people toward the stranger in their midst. The interdependency or interconnectedness of these six orthos is described in the conclusion, to which we now turn.

Conclusion

The primary concern of this thesis has been John Wesley, his moral pathway and how following that pathway can bring about pro-social behaviour such as walking toward the stranger. A stranger is a person who is unknown; they do not know us and we do not know them. They may live next door, on the other side of town or across the ocean; they may be rich or poor, isolated or socially connected or even a member of our extended or direct family who is shunned or shamed.

One contemporary strategy for dealing with strangers, as discussed in Chapter 2, is that of inattention or dismissal, thereby rendering the stranger invisible. The stranger can be treated as second best, excluded, pushed to the margins or exterminated from our consciousness. This prevalent attitude is often evidence of a disinclination or inability to walk toward the stranger. An aspirational objective of this thesis is to find and articulate a way that makes it easier for people to not only occupy the same space as a stranger but become more pro-social and take up the challenge of walking toward those who are unknown. The direct objective is to illustrate this way within Wesley's corpus.

The central argument of this thesis is that John Wesley found a way to be fully present to strangers and that he also formulated a way for his followers to be attentive to strangers in their midst. The thesis refers to John Wesley as a pedestrian theologian, which is not intended to demean the man but describe his missional practice. As evidenced in the Introduction and in Chapter 1, Wesley quite simply made it his daily habit to walk toward strangers; and the frequency, intensity and scope of this practice is striking. Although scholarly secondary literature rightly calls attention to Wesley's general heartfelt concern for the lost and the poor of his day, this thesis complements that literature by focusing on the practice and process that made this possible. This is evidenced in the chapter dealing with his adult life, from 1720 to 1791. During the eighteenth-century Wesley walked toward and among prisoners, the condemned, the sick and dying, American Indians and settlers in foreign lands, ship hands and passengers, miners, slum dwellers, middle class women and street beggars. A key

finding of this thesis is that Wesley spent much of his life with strangers and found a way to do this over a very long time – 50 years!

This thesis asserts that Wesley formulated an approach to nurturing others into the practice of being attentive to the stranger, described here as the moral pathway. While Wesley did not use the term, I contend that, in a notional sense, this is what he proposed. Wesley argued that four things were needed for Methodists to remain faithful to the mandate of love toward God, neighbour and stranger: doctrine, experience, discipline and practice. A key finding of this thesis is that these four dimensions can be translated into six ortho strands: doctrine as orthodoxy; experience as orthokardia; discipline as orthopaideia, made up of orthokoinonia and orthonomos; and finally, practice as orthopraxy. It is these six orthos that form the moral pathway.

Wesley's four dimensions of doctrine, experience, discipline and practice were not new in his day and there was nothing unique in his emphasis on the Bible (doctrine), the heart (experience), groups (discipline) and external deeds (practice). All of these dimensions were being championed, debated and commented on during his lifetime. A closer reading, however, makes it clear Wesley had a distinctive approach to each. It is this distinctiveness that forms and fills the moral pathway; any who travel that path will find it easier to stay the course, and live lives of attentiveness toward strangers.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the distinctive feature of Wesley's orthodoxy is his assertion of perfection. Wesley did not admit sinless perfection but proposed that humans can experience radical life changes that result in real progress toward that goal. Wesley wrote liberally on how a person can be accepted by God but he wrote even more on right living. For Wesley, human dysfunction was never the final word. Beyond dysfunction is the promise of maturation. People can be placed on a trajectory that awakens their lives to love. This reorientation occurs as people first encounter God's love in Christ. Seeing and experiencing this divine love enables love.

More specifically, and as noted in Chapter 5, love is enabled through an affectional change in the heart. Wesley's theological anthropology underlines the centrality of the human heart and its desires. Wesley came to see that the desires of the heart are as determinative of human behaviour as what a person thinks or wills to happen. In Wesley's scheme, disordered desires can be reoriented and new desires generated through an infusion of God's grace. For Wesley, the call is not simply to imitate how Jesus lived his life. It goes deeper to where heart participation in God's love enables and empowers this imitation of Christ's love. Experiencing this vast inner change is what this thesis describes as *orthokardia* which, in a notional sense, is equivalent to Wesley's second dimension of experience.

Wesley stressed that God's enabling grace comes to a person through various means. It does not simply drop from the heavens. This enabling and empowering grace is mediated through various means including prayer, reading of Scripture, participating in communion and being transparent with others in small groups. These means are not inherently good but provide spaces in which God can come to a person and renew them afresh. In Wesley's movement, these spaces are invariably collective, done with other people. In other words, human maturation does not occur in a vacuum and nor is it simply an individualistic event; there is a process that involves others. This action-filled collective process is what Wesley meant by discipline and what this thesis refers to as *orthopaideia*, as outlined in Chapter 6.

The two constituent parts of *orthopaideia* are social discipleship (*orthokoinonia*) and a discipleship marked by rule-based accountability (*orthonomos*). In a sense, these represented the discipline in Wesley's movement. While he formed a range of groups, taking care to ensure there was a group to fit each person's needs, the means of grace were practised in each. It was Wesley's view that the road to maturity and growth in love had to be a guided one. Rules served to expose hearts and thereby mark off the genuine from the inauthentic. At a more profound level, the rules also directed reoriented hearts. Those experiencing love and enabled to love can too easily settle for love of the familiar and like-minded, or those from one's own social group. The rules

channel love, and signpost where love is most needed. Far from a strict legalism that bound people to certain behaviours, Wesley's rules were intended to mark out what love looks like in specific situations. These rules served a pedagogic or socialising and educational purpose.

The sixth and final ortho in the moral pathway is orthopraxy (see Chapter 7), which covers Wesley's fourth dimension of practice and has to do with external duties and good works. The distinctive feature of Wesley's approach to good works is that they not only benefit the recipient of the good work but also the doer of the act. In this sense, good deeds are another means of grace. Orthopraxy must not be read as the final outworking of the previous five orthos and is not just the applied side of the other orthos. Orthopraxy is as transformative as the others. The inner self is influenced by outward action. In Wesley's schema, it is not just the change of heart that alters behavior but learned behaviour that affects the heart; doing therefore affects being.

Wesley does not suggest a strict chronological sequence in these dimensions. It is not as though one starts with orthodoxy and is then fed through the middle orthos to emerge at the end with a vibrant orthopraxy. In Wesley, day, those wanting to explore Methodism were encouraged to do good works (orthopraxy) even if they had not yet settled on the story of Christ and the promises of God (orthodoxy). Similarly, participation in a group and adherence to rules could occur prior to a heart change (orthokardia). For others, the sequence could be different. Wesley was simply positing that his four dimensions of doctrine (orthodoxy), experience (orthokardia), discipline (orthopaideia: orthokoinonia and orthonomos), and practice (orthopraxy) were all required, but occurred differently among those called Methodists as they continued their journey to become lovers of God, of neighbour and of stranger.

Wesley's extensive personal corpus, especially his *Journal*, describes in detail his own attempts at walking toward the stranger. His published sermons point to the constituent parts of a way to mature people so that the fruit of such maturity is love of neighbour and stranger. His letters name a pathway, at least in a notional sense, that keeps people

walking towards strangers. This thesis documents, especially through the biographies of those who followed him, that Wesley did in fact accomplish this objective. An example of this is the life of Freeborn Garrettson (Chapter 4), a wealthy farmer who, on becoming a Wesleyan Methodist, set his slaves free and gave the rest of his life to those he did not know. Chapter 5 features Sarah Ryan, a ‘woman of the streets’ who came into the Wesleyan fold, then returned to the streets as a servant of children in need. The lives of others noted in this thesis – Thomas Coke, Elizabeth Evans, Francis Asbury, Grace Murray and John Gardiner – all provide evidence of the impact and effect of Wesley’s approach.

I have adopted the heuristic methodological approach of exhaustive research, as outlined by Clark Moustakas. As noted in the Introduction, Moustakas’s heuristic enquiry calls for direct first-person accounts of those who have encountered the phenomenon under scrutiny. I was able to examine first-person accounts by reading Wesley’s extensive corpus and specifically his *Journals*. As this thesis demonstrates, I discovered that Wesley elucidates a clear way forward.

Even though Wesleyan secondary literature does not refer to the moral pathway as such, a growing number of recent thinkers are alluding to it. This is especially so in recent discussions around the various orthos that represent Wesley’s work. Most of the attention centres on three of the six orthos proposed in this thesis: orthodoxy, orthopathy (orthokardia) and orthopraxy. While the secondary literature conflates discipline and practice and subsumes both under orthopraxy, this thesis differentiates them, as did Wesley. Wesley quite clearly named four distinct dimensions or categories: doctrine, spirit, discipline and practice. The one is not the other. Discipline has to do with how Wesley’s Methodists gathered and what governed their groups. The internal infrastructure of the Methodist movement – its social scaffolding – is the concern of discipline. By contrast, practice has to do with the external behaviour, practices and duties expected of each and every Methodist. This move to differentiate discipline from practice is a contribution to Wesleyan scholarship.

A second contribution to Wesleyan scholarship equates Wesley's term 'discipline' with a new ortho – orthopaideia – which carries the idea of formation by process. For a person to attain an ideal, it is not enough simply to educate, as though transformation can be attained through knowledge. Significantly, it is how one is educated that makes the difference. Wesley's structured group methodology became the process by which people could change and attain the ideal. Two further orthos, subsumed under orthopaideia, are added: orthokoinonia, which addresses the social structuring of Wesley's movement; and orthonomos, which points to the social accountability of those within the groups. This triad of orthos is also new to Wesleyan scholarship, which in its conversation on respective orthos has thus far only settled on a cord of three strands: orthodoxy, orthokardia and orthopraxy. This thesis claims that such a cord does not do justice to Wesley's corpus; and nor can the three orthos on their own alter behaviour toward neighbour and stranger. Discipline (orthopaideia) is also needed, marked by a social discipleship (orthokoinonia) and a discipleship of accountability (orthonomos). Only this strengthened cord can properly communicate Wesley's intent and method.

It has been shown that these four dimensions and their six orthos are clearly interdependent. The secondary literature, if only in its discussion on the first three orthos nevertheless has them integrated (page 103). On several occasions this thesis has them interconnected (pages 237, 276-7, & 283). Notwithstanding this obvious interdependency, Wesley in his communication of the four dimensions differentiates them and more than that, gives each their own particular emphasis.

A closer reading of Wesley's material does expose various weaknesses. For example, did his approach (or what this thesis names as his moral pathway) actually work? Did it create a people bent on walking toward strangers in their midst? At one level, Wesley believed it did and as proof, furnished countless stories of people who, upon becoming Methodists, evidenced life-change. Some of these stories have been retold in this thesis in Chapters 4 through 7. However, such anecdotal support, while it is encouraging and inspirational, does not prove a theory. In most movements, there will always be 10 to 20 percent of people who bridge the rhetoric and reality gap and attempt that which is

advocated. These are the cream of the movement and many of Wesley's stories are suggestive of this top layer. The real test of a theory is the degree to which it affects the 80 percent, the rank and file. Wesley supplies little evidence on this front. It must be stressed that when it suited Wesley, he was very much a numbers man. He incessantly collected and collated data on numbers of attendants and monies given. In other words, he measured his inputs but not his outputs. Inputs have to do with a movement's giving, attendance and spending; Wesley's journals are replete with these. But measurements on his movement's activity and productivity are almost non-existent. This is regrettable, especially given that it was within his capacity to measure such activities.

A second weakness of Wesley's work is that of unintended consequence. There are a number of features to his work that have resulted, ironically, in Methodists withdrawing from neighbour and stranger. For example, his orthodoxy was very much taken up with his *ordo salutis* or, as some view it, his *via salutis*. The criticism is that a preoccupation with one's own salvation path can make for narcissism and not the other-centered life. Self and its salvation, and not the plight of the stranger, are foregrounded. A fixation on one's own spiritual journey can make for self-obsession, a distracting scrupulosity and spiritual pride. Another unfortunate unintended consequence of his work revolves around Wesley's establishment of residential care facilities for the poor and needy. Given the extent of poverty at the time, it is understandable that such buildings were erected. Regardless of the good done in such places, a net effect was to place an even greater distance between residents and those wanting to help. To all intents and purposes, these early residential care facilities contributed to the 'out of sight, out of mind' mentality. When intuitionism separates the so-called client from others, an 'us and them' sociological divide is erected.

What Wesley does present is a full-orbed pathway that remains, in many ways, translatable today. On a number of fronts, his orthodoxy connects with contemporary concerns. For example, the role of narrative and how one story (God's) can intersect with our own stories, resulting in a new story being written. The promise of human maturation and character change is another current issue. Wesley's orthokardic strand

connects with contemporary conversation on the emotions and the extent to which they are more determinative of human behaviour than what we might think or choose. The transformative potential of groups (orthopaideia) is not without contemporary support; even Wesley's emphasis on rules prefigures rehabilitative healing communities today. The outward-inward direction of orthopraxy, whereby action shapes what we become, is a topic gaining attention through praxis-based liberation movements.

Even though making Wesley relevant to today's Christian activism is not the task of moral theology, we are well-placed to ask whether any particular one of the six strands is most absent in today's context or likely to be the hardest to recover. As noted in the methodology, exemplars like Wesley can "perhaps correct or enlarge [a] community's vision" (page 11). Wesley, and what this thesis refers to as the Moral Pathway, can be instructive for ministry and mission today in several ways.

Wesley adopted an holistic approach to character transformation. It was marked by a "both/and" approach. To doctrine was added spirit and to these were added discipline and practice. Wesley attempted all four simultaneously within the one movement. Right from the outset all four were underlined and developed. They were not introduced sequentially or progressively over an extended period of time. This reinforces their inter-dependence. Quite simply, they need each other. Each is effective as it travels with the others. The contribution of each is enhanced in a combined package. This counters a silo-approach, where the one is either pursued at the expense of the others; or each is developed but independent of the others. Wesley's conjunctivist-approach is possibly a corrective to a prevailing silo-approach in which some movements are known for their doctrine, others for their experience or spirit, and others for either their group methodology or praxis.

As already established, this thesis gleans from Wesley's four dimensions six ortho-equivalents and each is instructive in its own way. Orthodoxy (doctrine) counsels that it is not enough simply to imitate Christ, one has to also participate in Christ so as to imitate him. Participation fuels imitation and makes it possible. An imitation ethic even

though laudable may not ensure sustainability. Wesley's metaphysical participation in the divine provides the wherewithal for a regular costly walk toward the stranger. Orthokardia (spirit) is a reminder that what we love is at times more determinative of human behaviour than what we think. An affected heart and new governing predispositions promise activity alongside the stranger. A sociological understanding of the plight of the stranger and a resolve to do something about it is not enough to ensure engagement. Transformation and not just education is needed for a new generation of walkers to emerge.

Orthopaideia (discipline) with its subset of orthokoinonia (social discipleship) and orthonomos (accountable discipleship) is arguably the missing ortho today. It is, counter-cultural. Perfection as an ideal is not easily accepted. And allowing others to spur one onto such an ideal is not easily embraced. These emphases rub against the moral relativism and excessive individualism of our times. Wesley's God invites people as they are but in no way accepts people as they are. Rather, Wesley speaks of being radically changed, of becoming someone altogether quite different. Actualizing this ideal has a vertical God-ward dimension to it and yet is also dependent upon a group methodology marked by accountability. It is this in-your-face intrusive and almost aggressive call and challenge that is so confronting and uncomfortable.

Orthopraxy (practice) is for Wesley more of an incentive than an instruction. This positive bent is appealing. As already noted, in visiting the sick two are benefited, the sick and the visitor. Likewise in walking toward the stranger, both stranger and walker are helped. The call to action (praxis) is not simply one of self-denial but also of self-benefit. The challenge is not simply one of come and die for others but come and truly live. This reframing of the call to action is worthy of attention.

What is unanswered and beyond the scope of this thesis is whether or not the suggested moral pathway can affect a group today to the degree that their love of neighbour and strangers demonstrably broadens and deepens. What is not in question is Wesley's

commitment to the moral pathway. Its applicability and indeed its efficacy today is still an open question.

This then is Wesley's pathway, and as noted, it is a theologically moral one. Wesley's concern for neighbour is not simply an ethic of obligation or an act of the will. Rather, it is about becoming an altogether different type of person. This becoming or maturing is God-enabled from beginning to end. Walking toward strangers is made possible because God stepped closer to humankind in the person of Jesus. The whole act of coming alongside the stranger in our midst emerges from a prior act of God coming alongside us. Wesley could not separate God from goodness; love of God from love of neighbour; the doer of the good from acts of goodness. Actions of charity are right insofar as they are pushed by God-given motives and pulled toward God-ward ends. In other words, actions done on behalf of neighbour and stranger, no matter how good they may appear to be, are for Wesley not right actions unless they are done with godly motive, means and purpose. It is a *moral* pathway for this reason.

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