Holiness Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2

Holiness & Reformation

Contents

What have the sermons of John Wesley ever done for us?

Reviews

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

Editorial

Andrew Stobart

I

The terms 'holiness' and 'reformation' are mutually descriptive, and thus essentially related. Reformation in the Church – whether *the* Reformation or any one of the epochal reformations of church practice and proclamation – is always in some way a function of holiness. What this means, first of all, is that reformation is always primarily a work of the Church's holy Lord. As we commemorate the 500th anniversary of one monk's particular stand for holiness in one particular historical moment in one stream of the worldwide Church's life, we must not forget that in all the human grapplings of reformation – and, for that matter, counter-reformation – our holy God was not 'taking sides', but rather at work by his holy Spirit, to make good on the promise of the Apostles' Creed that there will be 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church'. *The* Reformation – *all* our reformations past, present and future – are only stages of the wilderness wanderings of the Church as it detours its way through history towards God's eschatological kingdom. This is in no way to detract from the importance of the Reformation, or reformations in general. God gives them to the Church in order to make her holy. They nudge – or sometimes even throw! – the Church back to her true formation, as the people of God, called to witness by their faith to God's narrative of grace, to the death and resurrection of Jesus as the first fruits of the transformation of all creation.

The Church is reformed for, and by, God's holiness. In turn, holiness is provided with context-appropriate content by reformation, so that the Church's proclamation can be faithful and intelligible. The oft-quoted maxim that the Church is *semper reformanda* (always reforming) would be helpfully expanded:

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 153–159
ISSN 2058-5969

semper sanctorum, semper reformanda. Always holy, always reforming. The one because of the other. The other because of the one. Both reformation and holiness are God's gifts to a Church which must learn, through the vicissitudes of history, to hear God's promises afresh, and so remain faithful to the Church's foundation: she is God's, not ours.

A word of caution, however: while 'holiness' and 'reformation' are mutually descriptive, they are not therefore synonymous. Not all reformation (understood, now, as the human endeavour rather than as a divine gift) is holy; not all holiness (understood as the holy thought and practice of God's people) requires reformation. Discerning and differentiating between wheat and weeds is ever the concern of God's servants.[1] That God refuses to 'sort it out' for us until the end is a matter of both frustration and grace.

II

This issue of *Holiness* gives us an opportunity to reflect on some of the frustrations and gifts of the Reformation that carved up the ecclesial landscape of Europe, and thereafter the world, in the sixteenth century. Eamon Duffy's masterful presentation, 'Reformation and the end of Christendom', seeks to make more complex our understanding of the Reformation and its legacy. Luther's message, for example, was 'entirely positive', but also had 'a very strong negative charge' (p. 165). In the end, Duffy suggests that the Reformation was 'one of the great fractures of history', leading to the sobering prospect that 'the rivers flow in directions which are not likely to flow together at any foreseeable point in the future' (p. 180). Overall, this may well be the case, pending the new heavens and earth, but the second article in this issue does celebrate the way in which Methodist and Roman Catholic rivers have run together in fifty years of dialogue. David Chapman writes from his considerable experience as co-chair of the Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church, and the article helpfully complements the review of the most recent report from that commission, *The Call to Holiness*, which was published in a previous issue of this journal.[2] By speaking of holiness alongside reformation, the sensitive issue of unity – the *one* holy Church – and disunity is unavoidable.

Three articles comprise the next section, which explores holiness and reformation from a theological perspective. From the beginning, the heart-warming conversion of John Wesley – interestingly after hearing a reading from

the Reformer Martin Luther's *Preface to Romans* – set Methodism up for a positive engagement with religious experience. To 'know and feel' one's sins forgiven was undoubtedly one of the hallmarks of authentic Methodist discipleship. However, otherwise known as Pietism within the Christian tradition, the place of religious experience usually sits uneasily with the Reformation stress on justification by faith alone. Our articles, though, reveal a more complex relationship. David Gilland's article, 'What has Basel to do with Epworth?', usefully surveys the thinking of arguably the twentieth century's greatest Reformed theologian, Karl Barth. For Barth, Pietism's problem was that it negated the paradoxical dialectic essential to Luther's theology: God is simultaneously known and hidden, which means there is no straightforward trajectory from divine grace to human experience, prompting Luther's classic description of the Christian as *simul iustus et peccator* (at the same time, justified and a sinner). In later life, Barth did moderate his reaction to Pietism, and this article offers a challenge for Wesleyan scholars to pick up a conversation with Barth on this point, perhaps to the benefit of both. Hiddenness is also highlighted by George Bailey's article, which begins with Wesley's intriguing comment on John 8:59, 'But Jesus concealed himself – probably by becoming invisible.'[3] Bailey interrogates Wesley's Christology through the work of Karl Barth's student John Deschner, leading to some constructive proposals for correcting what Deschner sees as Wesley's christological deficiencies, without losing the experience of Christian perfection – Christ's visibility rather than hiddenness – which Wesley 'fought so hard to protect' (p. 217). Finally, 'Calvin's only prayer' by Nathan Paylor draws our attention to the often overlooked fact that the Reformers were almost always pastors, and not merely scholars, so that the concerns of piety and pastoral care were at least as important for them as theological disputes were.

The Reformers' pastoral practice offers a connection to the new series of articles begun by Alan Palmer, exploring acedia and pastoral resilience. Offering a historical survey of acedia (lack of care), Palmer's article demonstrates the danger of exhaustion and burnout in the pietist endeavour, while highlighting some initial practical habits to confound it.

John Swarbrick's lecture to the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship during this year's Methodist Conference in Birmingham, UK, launches a section considering liturgical aspects of the Reformation. 'Martin Luther: music and mission' is best read alongside the playlist of music that accompanied its delivery, which introduces us to Luther's 'musical Reformation', which has 'become the common property of nearly all Christian traditions today' (p. 254).

Music is just one way to unite the various 'rivers' in this anniversary year; the second article offers a specially commissioned translation of an order of worship used to mark a joint statement on the Reformation by the Council of Christian Churches in Germany. The service, along with the joint statement on which it is based, make for encouraging reading and inspiring worship.

The Reviews section contains a wealth of resources to engage more deeply with the figures and themes of the Reformation. Martin Luther unavoidably features prominently, with a number of biographies and monographs considering his life and thought selected from the wealth of recent publications. Other books reviewed offer perspectives on the Reformation as a movement, or set of movements. That the sixteenth-century Reformation remains such a productive source for authors and publishers is sure testimony to its legacy as both frustration and grace.

Finally, no compilation of articles on the Reformation would be complete without a consideration of the Reformation's most distinctive doctrinal proposal: justification by faith. This issue's contribution to our series on Wesley's sermons explores how 'Justification by Faith', first preached in 1739, can inform our presentation of the good news today. Wesley's careful exposition can provide us with 'a framework within which to reacquaint ourselves with the theological richness of justification by faith' (p. 302). Wesley was convinced that Methodism had a particular clarity on the matter to offer to the wider Church, and as we mark the Reformation's anniversary, with all the frustrations and gifts it gave rise to, perhaps we can also rediscover a role for the Wesleyan voice at the theological table.

III

Reflecting on holiness and reformation is, as we have noted above, a matter of frustration and of grace: frustration, because there is no infallible method for identifying the wheat from the weeds in the smorgasbord of preaching, practice and prayer served up by the reformers and counter-reformers of the past; grace, because what we do find is the gift of another's perspective and passion, from which we ourselves can learn and grow. Confession of 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church' means that, like it or not, we are all rooted together in God's field, experiencing the paradoxical dialectic of faith both secret and embodied, God both present and hidden. The frustration and gift of church history is that, as Rowan Williams points out, 'I do not know,

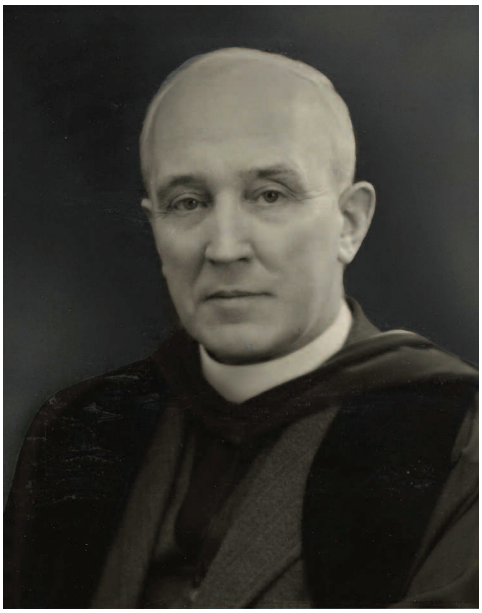
theologically speaking, where my *debts* begin and end.' Christian identity should be thought of 'in terms of a whole immeasurable exchange of gifts, known and unknown, by which particular Christian lives are built up, an exchange no less vital and important for being frequently an exchange between living and dead'.[4]

While this year's Reformation commemoration may draw our attention primarily to the likes of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, we are no less in debt to countless others, often unknown and unnamed, who nonetheless have shaped our ability to have faith by theirs. Reading this journal is an exercise in uncovering our debts, whether old or new, to fellow believers, past or present. One such debt is acknowledged here with gratitude.

Some older alumni of Wesley House, Cambridge will have cause to remember the name of John Newton Davies, having at the end of their first year received a prize in his name for their achievements in Greek in the Preliminary Examination to Part II of the Theological Tripos. Few will have known much about him beyond a large photo of him displayed in the College. To many others his name will be familiar only as one among many in the list of benefactors annually commemorated. However, with the aid of archivists at Drew University and in the central archives of the United Methodist Church in the USA, a rather fuller picture can be drawn.[5]

John Newton Davies was born on 25 February 1881 in Denbigh, North Wales, and graduated with a BA from the University of Wales in 1902. He offered for the Wesleyan ministry, probably in the same year, and was sent to Didsbury College, then in its original location in Manchester. He graduated with a BD in 1905 and served in circuits in Llandrindod Wells, Cardiff, Launceston and Rock Ferry near Birkenhead, all short-term appointments as was the rule at the time. In 1909, after ordination, he married Sarah Ann Parry. She also was Welsh and had trained as a teacher.

In 1919 he was invited to become a Visiting Professor in New Testament Greek Exegesis at Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, New Jersey. What brought this about is not known. Obviously he had talent. Whether he was recommended for the post by his former tutors at Didsbury or felt frustrated by the limitations of his circuit appointments and put in an application, we shall probably never know. He continued at Drew, however, for the rest of his working life. In 1926 he was made a full professor and in the same year Syracuse University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology.



John Newton Davies

Sarah Davies

At first the Wesleyan Conference in Britain listed him as 'permitted to serve', but in 1927 he transferred to what was then the Methodist Episcopal Church in the USA. He retained membership of the New York Annual Conference until his death, although he returned to Britain after retirement in 1949 and lived in Bournemouth, where he died on 31 January 1957.

From the surviving records he was clearly a much loved and respected New Testament teacher. Tributes to him speak warmly of his meticulous scholarship and his ability as an interpreter to make the text come alive. There are tributes too to his preaching and to the hospitality he and Sarah offered in their home. He published little by modern standards. *Rightly Dividing the Word* in 1929 was his only book, although he contributed to the *Abingdon Bible Commentary* and various religious periodicals.

At the end of 1959 Mrs Sarah Davies set up a trust fund of £6,000 in his name for the benefit of Wesley House, to be used at the Trustees' discretion. Originally used for prizes and other awards, it is now, with changing values and needs, to be devoted to the support for one year of the *Holiness* journal. His name will live on in the annual commemoration of the College's benefactors.

This is only one very tangible way in which we, as readers of this journal, are indebted to those who have gone before us in the faith. The anniversary of the Reformation on 31 October is followed the next day by the celebration of All

Saints. Our debts multiply: 'since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.'[6] *Soli Deo gloria*.

Andrew Stobart, Commissioning Editor
October 2017

Notes

1. Matthew 13:24–30.
2. *Holiness* 2(3), Holiness & Contemporary Culture (2016), pp. 438–439.
3. John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, John 8:59.
4. Rowan Williams, *Why Study the Past?* London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2005, p. 27.
5. With thanks to Brian Beck for the following biographical sketch.
6. Hebrews 12:1.

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

Reformation and the end of Christendom: two visions

Eamon Duffy

PROFESSOR EAMON DUFFY FBA is Emeritus Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Cambridge, UK, and Fellow of Magdalene College. A former member of the Pontifical Historical Commission, he sits on numerous editorial boards and advisory panels. His research centres on the history of late medieval and early-modern popular religious belief and practice, and his most recent book is entitled *Reformation Divided*.

ed10000@cam.ac.uk
Cambridge, UK

This article reveals the complex dimensions which make it impossible to speak singularly of 'the Reformation'. Martin Luther's reforming activity gave rise to conflicting visions of the Church, which are impossible now to resolve. The article traces the trajectory of the English Reformation through the figures of Thomas More and William Tyndale. Although both convinced of the need for reform, More was opposed to Tyndale's approach, which he perceived would lead to the breakdown of order into anarchy. The outworking of this signals the end of Christendom, and has led to continuing mutual incompatibility.

REFORMATION • THOMAS MORE • WILLIAM TYNDALE • MARTIN LUTHER • DESIDERIUS ERASMUS • PROTESTANTISM

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 161–180

ISSN 2058-5969

The following journal article is a transcript of a lecture which was given at Wesley Church, Cambridge, UK, on 24 April 2017 to mark the rededication of Wesley House following its major refurbishment and building programme. Professor Duffy's lecture was accompanied by a number of images, some of which have been included here. The text reads largely as presented, in the hope that the texture and tone, and at times humour, of the content might be retained.

Introduction

It is very large minded of you to invite a dyed-in-the-wool Irish Roman Catholic to talk about the Reformation. I have given this talk the title of 'Reformation and the end of Christendom: two visions' because I want to reflect on the tragedy of conflicting visions in the sixteenth century about what Reformation might mean and I am going to home in on the radically opposed understandings of Reformation of two of the greatest figures of the sixteenth century – two great, good men, who it's not too much to say hated each other, Thomas More and William Tyndale. Towards the end of the talk, I also want to reflect on two opposing visions by two contemporary historians who take rather different views of the outcome of the Reformation.

Luther, of course, is the great figure we are commemorating this year, the 500th anniversary of his posting of his Ninety-Five Theses, which were an academic challenge to a rather sordid practice, the sale of the religious benefits known as indulgences to raise the money to build the new St Peter's. Selling indulgences was being farmed out across Europe with people taking cuts along the way. Luther's protest initially took the form of a public challenge to an academic debate on a swathe of arcane theological points. But this was the first age of print, and Luther was a publicist of genius. His list of topics for debate – the Ninety-Five Theses – was printed as a broadsheet, and although the legend that he nailed it to the door of the Castle Church is sadly probably not true, the Theses nevertheless became the world's most improbable bestseller. What might have been a technical academic exercise in the Wittenberg lecture hall rapidly escalated into a fundamental questioning of the whole theological underpinning of Western Christianity. In its wake, Europe divided roughly north and south – beer versus wine – and the peoples of Europe were pitched into a series of murderous ideological wars in which tens, possibly hundreds of thousands died and during which the religious, cultural and political map of Europe, and of the colonies which Europe was just

beginning to acquire, was redrawn. We are still living with the consequences. This religious and cultural earthquake has traditionally been called the Reformation. It is a loaded term, which, as a practising Catholic, you can imagine I'm not altogether comfortable with. To call this religious revolution the Reformation implies that something that was broken got fixed and that a good form of Christianity replaced a bad one.

It is certainly true that Luther introduced aspects of Christianity which all the churches of the West now recognise as central. Luther was, above everything else, of course, a Bible translator. Luther triggered a religious revolution which focused on the Word of God in the vernacular and thereby initiated a transformation of Christian worship. His own reordering of Christian worship was extremely conservative. He reduced the number of sacraments to three and then two: essentially Baptism with Eucharist, and confession/penance as an option. But he didn't, for example, abolish the traditional Mass vestments, he continued to recommend the use of a crucifix in church, and he even used Latin in the Mass.

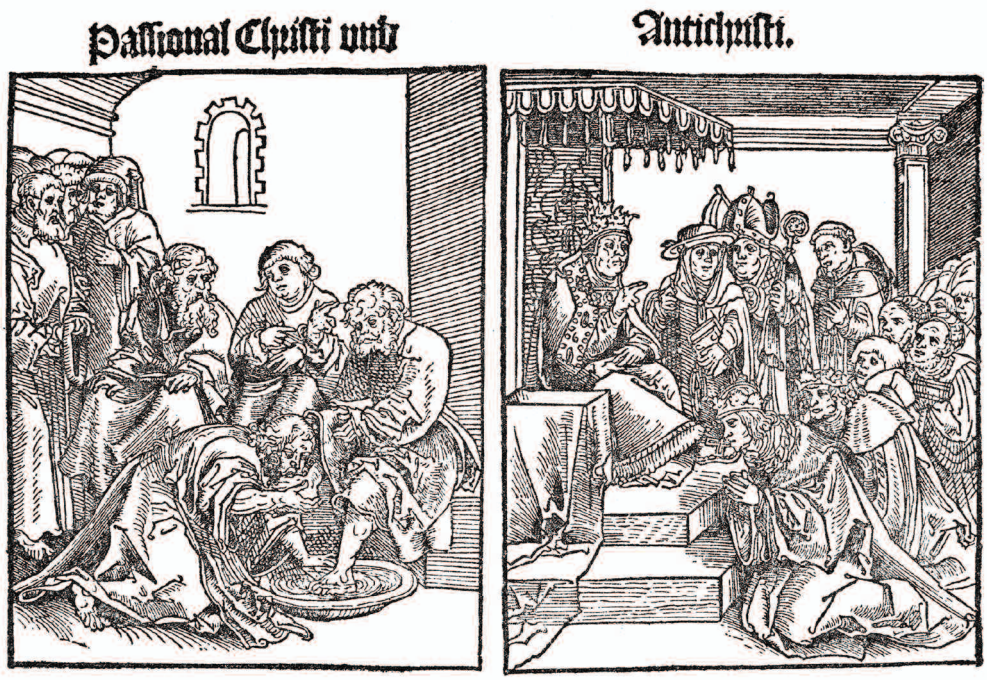
'Martin Luther preaching to the faithful' (1561, Church of Torslunde). Art Collection 2 / Alamy Stock Photo (rights purchased)

However, the centrality of the Bible would inevitably and in a very short amount of time result in rather different kinds of worship. This is a painting of a Calvinist service in France about 15 or 20 years after Luther's death.

Jean Perrissin (1569–70), Le Temple de Paradis. *Paul Fearn / Alamy Stock Photo (rights purchased)*

As you can see, it's a very different kind of imagining of what a church should be: the pulpit central, with men, women and children sitting with their own Bibles following the preacher's words, and on occasion debating it, challenging, extending, making their own comments on it. Luther opened Pandora's box in a way that represents one of the great religious transformations, something that was to have incalculable consequences.

At the heart of Luther's message was the affirmation of God's mercy, freely available to faith. That's an entirely positive message, but his message also had a very strong negative charge. When he encountered opposition from the ecclesiastical authorities, it involved very rapidly a denunciation of the traditional Church as no church at all. From the very early stages of Luther's protest, he harnessed print into this kind of negative comparison between Christ and the official Church. Here we have Christ washing his disciples' feet and the pope having his feet kissed.



Anti-papal woodcut (c.1500). Granger Historical Picture Archive / Alamy Stock Photo (rights purchased)

The idea is that the pope is poles apart from what a Christian should be. That very rapidly turns really septic, with the identification of the papacy with Antichrist, very vividly evoked in these kinds of Reformation cartoons, and with identification of the official Church as anti-Christian. This is one of the illustrations from Luther's Bible, in which you see that the traditional figure of ecclesia becomes the whore of Babylon seated on the seven-headed beast with the kings of the earth worshipping her.

Whore of Babylon *woodcut by Lucas Cranch the Elder (c. 1475–1553). from* Luther's New Testament *(1522). Interfoto / Alamy Stock Photo (rights purchased)*

Another print from the 1540s contrasts the worship of the true Church, rooted on Luther's preaching of Christ's merits, with monastic and papal preaching, coupled with the sale of indulgences and pleading the merits of the saints rather than of Christ. It's a very strong, clear negative message which demonises the Church at large, and centuries of the Church's past. Very quickly, then, Luther's Reformation takes the form of the disowning of huge tracts of the Christian past. It was implicit in Luther's declaration that if the Church found itself unable to accommodate his teaching of justification by faith alone, then that was too bad for the Church. It meant the Church was wrong. So we get this polarising, which is taken up all over the Reformation world. This is a picture which Henry VIII commissioned from an Italian painter Girolamo da Treviso, and it shows the four Evangelists stoning the pope to death.

Girolamo da Treviso (active c. 1497–1544), A Protestant allegory *(c. 1538–44). Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017 (permission given)*

Many religious identities and communities emerged from this conflictual vision of Christendom: Lutheran, of course; and then Calvinist; later on, Anglican; many more radical groupings which are often lumped together under the

name Anabaptist. These, along with the other groups that subsequently emerged – Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Shakers, Quakers, Mennonites, Amish, Pentecostalists and, yes, even Methodists – shared some beliefs and attitudes in common. They all prioritised the written word of God in the Bible over the traditional Church's teaching and discipline. They all vehemently rejected the papacy and the allegedly materialistic religious system which the papacy headed. But they were divided among themselves – often lethally divided – on almost everything else. Within a single generation of Luther's protest, Protestants were excommunicating, fighting and persecuting each other, as well as the common Catholic enemy, and many were calling for a reform of the Reformation. So what characterises the religious transformations of the sixteenth century and their outworkings in the centuries that followed is not a single unifying energy – good or bad, *the* Reformation – but rather variety and multiple incompatibilities.

Marburg Colloquy, October 1529. Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo (rights purchased)

Luther met with Ulrich Zwingli – a sort of minor church council – ending with Luther effectively excommunicating Swiss Protestants. He is said to have taken

a piece of chalk and written on the table cloth *Hoc Est Enim Corpus Meum* (This is my body), saying, 'That is what Jesus meant – it is his body, and if you don't believe it you are not a Christian.' So radical incompatibility is there right at the height of Luther's career, and the Reformation would remain divided on these kinds of issues.

Two visions in the English Reformation

Now I want to go to the source of these Reformation changes in England in the 1520s to consider some of the nature of these conflicts. I want to reflect on the tragic dimension of the original split as it worked out in the lives of two great Tudor figures: Thomas More and William Tyndale.

(left) Sir Thomas More, Hans Holbein (1527). The Artchives / Alamy Stock Photo
(right) Thomas Cromwell, Hans Holbein (1532–33). Ian Dagnall / Alamy Stock Photo (rights purchased)

These are the two famous Holbein portraits from the Frick Collection in New York. They hang on either side of a fireplace in the main exhibition room, glaring at each other. It is really extraordinary to be in that relatively small space with these two amazing mesmerising pictures. They are utterly different personalities.

More's reputation has taken the most tremendous hammering in recent years. More used to be thought of as a man for all seasons as portrayed by Paul Scofield, and that's a view still current among Roman Catholics. In 2012, the English Roman Catholic hierarchy issued a prayer card with a prayer about religious freedom, containing the words, 'Saint Thomas More, patron of religious freedom, pray for us.' On 31 October 2000, Pope John Paul II proclaimed More the patron saint of statesmen and politicians and, as was customary, the Pope preached a homily on that occasion, subsequently issued as an apostolic letter.[1] Some months before the event, a draft of that homily was sent to me via the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster for advice and correction. I was never told who had written the first draft, but the text was riddled with errors. The author was under the impression, for example, that More's favourite child and confidante was his son John, rather than, as was the case, his beloved daughter Margaret. But apart from the factual howlers, the text laid heavy stress on More's belief in the absolute sovereignty of conscience, very much in the manner of Bolt's *Man for All Seasons*. It said not a word about More's activities both as vehement polemicist and as the Crown's chief law officer in practical action against heresy and heretics. I wrote a long, detailed and very urgently phrased commentary on the draft, pointing out the errors and urging the Vatican to include in the text a frank admission of these unpalatable aspects of More's activities as 'hammer of the heretics'. Somewhat to my surprise the comments had some effect. The howlers duly disappeared, the section on conscience wasn't radically remodelled, but at the end of the key paragraph it did include an admittedly diplomatically vague allusion to More's anti-heretical activities. The text now reads:

> it was precisely in defence of the rights of conscience that the example of Thomas More shone brightly. It can be said that he demonstrated in a singular way the value of a moral conscience which is 'the witness of God himself, whose voice and judgment penetrate the depths of man's soul' (Encyclical Letter, *Veritatis Splendor*, 58), even if, in his actions against heretics, he reflected the limits of the culture of his time.[2]

It was something, at any rate, to have gained some concession to reality.

Now, I want to say a little bit about More's activity. I don't have time on this occasion to go into a whole amount of detail. Largely because of the activities of my friend Hilary Mantel in *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*, enormous

fictional force has been given to a historical case that More was a man who betrayed his early beliefs by becoming a bigoted and cruel persecutor of other people. That's basically the figure who was portrayed so marvellously by Anton Lesser in the television series. The material that Hilary Mantel worked on was largely contained in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* and alleged that More had tortured prisoners in his own house in Chelsea, and had condemned and then handed them to death. In fact he never condemned anyone to death and he vehemently and in detail categorically denied ever torturing anyone. But the worst thing you can do when you're accused of some mishap is to deny it because people say, 'Well, he would say that, wouldn't he.' So the canard stuck. But there is no doubt that if More didn't torture heretics – as he would have called them – he did relentlessly pursue people bringing Protestant books into England; he confiscated and saw to the burning of such books; and he particularly targeted his activities against William Tyndale and his followers. More believed that Tyndale was a demonic figure who was ruining souls.

Now, Tyndale, of course, was not a demonic figure. He was the greatest biblical translator who's ever worked in English. Till very recently all English translations of the Bible were indebted to the work he carried out in the 1520s and 30s. He was a translator of transcendent genius. Just think of the phrases that he coined which have gone on ringing through Bible translations ever since: 'the last shall be first and the first shall be last'; 'many are called but few are chosen'; 'under the sun'; 'signs of the times'; 'Let there be light'; 'My Brother's Keeper'; 'lick the dust'; 'fell flat on his face'; 'The Land Of The Living'; 'pour out one's heart'; 'The apple of his eye'; 'Flesh pot'; 'Go the extra mile'; 'The parting of the ways'. He's a great creator of the English language, comparable with Shakespeare. And his little translation of the Bible was innovatory in other ways too; it's not just the genius of the language. Tyndale's New Testament of 1524 was the first New Testament in any European vernacular that you could put in your pocket. It was a little book, easy to smuggle, easy to carry. There is most likely only one complete copy surviving: they were said to have been bought up by the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, Thomas More's friend. Tyndale used the money from the purchases to print a better edition. Tunstall burned them, of course. Tyndale himself ended by being burned – though not alive. He was mercifully strangled on the scaffold before they burned him – that's how they did it on the continent, the English practice was much more savage. He was executed the year after Thomas More was executed.

Why was More so antagonistic to Tyndale? In a way, he shouldn't have been. More was part of a great reforming generation of Catholics. He was the closest

friend of Desiderius Erasmus, formerly a professor in this University of Cambridge. Erasmus, in many ways, initiated the process which Luther took up and which Tyndale dedicated his life to. Erasmus was a great biblical scholar and produced a daring new Latin edition, which established a printed Greek text of the New Testament. This, in many ways, began the theological landslide which turned into the Reformation by challenging traditional terminology, translating, for example, *metanoia* as 'repent' instead of 'do penance'. In all sorts of ways, Erasmus was a very radical figure who in addition to his scholarship used his brilliance as a satirist to ridicule traditional religious practice like pilgrimage. More was an ardent supporter of Erasmus. Some of More's most important writings are in the first half of his career, and are a series of impassioned defences of Erasmus's biblical work and his religious satire, saying that you need Bible translations – and a variety of Bible translations, no less – and if they challenge the original terminology they are to be judged on scholarly terms, and so on. More leapt to Erasmus's defence. He himself, in the same year as the publication of Erasmus's New Testament (1516), had published his famous Treaties, a sort of satirical work of science fiction, a utopia in which he imagined a republic set in the South Atlantic which had never encountered Christianity and where there was a race of rational pagans who tolerated religious dissent. So in all sorts of ways it seems paradoxical that this man, within a matter of years – five or six years – should turn from being a defender of these radical new insights in religion, and particularly in biblical work, into being the hammer of heretics and in particular targeting Tyndale as a biblical translator. Why did he do that? More's change of heart, if that's how one wants to describe it, came from what he saw as the negative charge in the Reformation – this insistence that the Bishop of Rome was Antichrist, and what he perceived to be the consequences of that fundamental move. In one early Lutheran print, the pope is depicted as a wolf devouring a sheep, with attendant monks and friars, and Peter and Paul disowning him. The negative stance that the Reformation adopted towards the traditional faith of Christendom convinced More that here was a force that had to be stopped in its tracks.

Partly, this was to do with More's belief in law and order. He was eventually to become Lord Chancellor of England. He was a great and humane Lord Chancellor and a legal reformer. But he passionately believed in order and discipline. One of the things that alarmed him about the Reformation was its radical political implications. The German Peasants' Revolt in 1525 had traumatised the upper classes – the ruling classes – all over Europe: the prospect of the many-headed multitude in arms attacking their betters. In

common with most educated people in Europe, More believed that the Peasants' Revolt had been triggered by Luther and the libertarian rhetoric of Luther's gospel tracts. For example, in his treatise *On the Liberty of a Christian Man*, Luther had taken the case of a woman who married a man who turned out to be impotent. She wanted children, so Luther says, 'Well, what should she do?' The pope would have her go through an ecclesiastical tribunal to get an annulment, and she would have to discuss intimate details of the bedroom in front of priests, in order to get a piece of paper declaring her free. But, says Luther, she *is* free. So she should go to her husband and say, 'Since you cannot give me children, let me go to your brother or some other man and sleep with him and I will not shame you. I will give the children your name.' But, Luther goes on, no red-blooded German man is going to agree to that. So, what should she do? 'Well,' Luther says, 'she should pack her bags, go somewhere where she is not known, and get married again.'[3] It is that kind of stance that horrified a lawyer like More, and he believed that this urging – to cast law and order to the winds; take things into your own hands; bypass the law, the Church, Christian morality; do your own thing because you are free – had triggered the Peasants' Revolt and brought chaos into Europe.

Luther himself, of course, notoriously felt the Peasants' Revolt was a monstrous aberration, and famously said:

> Therefore let everyone who can, smite; slay, and stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful, or devilish than a rebel. It is just as when one must kill a mad dog; if you do not strike him, he will strike you, and a whole land with you.[4]

And years later, he told his disciples in his *Table Talk*:

> I, Martin Luther, slew all the peasants in the uprising, for I ordered that they be put to death; all their blood is on my neck. But I refer it all to our Lord God, who commanded me to speak as I did.[5]

More felt some of the same vehemence that Luther felt towards the rebels, and towards the new ideology which he felt had caused the rebellion. In the year that More was arrested and taken to the Tower in London, radical Anabaptist Protestant forces had seized the city of Münster and introduced polygamy. John of Leiden, who became the ruler of the city, had 15 wives, one of whom he publicly beheaded himself because she disobeyed him. Lutheran and

Catholic armies joined together to besiege the city and liberate it from this rebellion. The leaders were hanged up in cages, which are still on the tower of Münster Cathedral.

More's horror at the chaos that the Reformation had unleashed is explicable in terms of his own time. More than that, one of the consequences of the Reformation in the early 1520s was a great wave of iconoclasm.

'Destruction of icons in Zurich 1524' (Anon.). ART Collection / Alamy Stock Photo (rights purchased)

This is a portrayal of the cleansing of the churches of images in Zurich in the early 1520s, including the pulling down of wayside crosses and the smashing of images. One must remember that the cult of images was something which was really very strong throughout Catholic Europe at the time, and the impact of these desecrations is hard to overemphasise. Imagine somebody coming into your house and taking your wedding photographs, all the pictures of your dead mother and father, and tearing them up or urinating on them and burning them – it is that kind of horror. The violence involved is psychologically disturbing. If you want to see it for yourself go into the Lady Chapel at Ely – that ruined space where the greatest collection of late Gothic sculpture in Europe was literally pulverised with hammers in the 1540s. Although this was after More's death, he nevertheless knew it was happening all over Europe and often mentions it.

So the point I want to make is that here, on the one hand, is Tyndale, motivated and driven by the desire to liberate God's word, to let the boy at the plough have as much knowledge of the gospel – if not more – than the theologians or the bishops or the pope, and by a sense that the Christian past had been one great conspiracy to lock up the word of God in the hands of experts and priests. It must now be let loose. On the other hand is More, a man equally committed to Christian truth and Christian reform, who believed that the way in which this word had been let loose had actually led to chaos and anarchy and murder. More's polemical writings are full of very powerfully evocations of the ruin which he believed the Reformation had wrought in Germany,

> where their sect hath already foredone the faith, pulled down the churches, polluted the temples, put out and spoiled all good religious folk, joined friars and nuns together in lechery, despited all saints, blasphemed our blessed Lady, cast down Christ's cross, thrown out the Blessed Sacrament, refused all good laws, abhorred all good governance, rebelled against all rulers, fall to fights among themself, and so many thousand slain, that the land lieth in many places in manner desert and desolate.[6]

For More and Erasmus, Luther's teaching on predestination seemed to strike at the heart of all Christian virtue. They had preached a moral reform of Christendom – the cleansing of the Church from corruption and from the sale of things like indulgences, from bad behaviour among the clergy, from Christian laxity – and they urged people to reform their lives by living the gospel. Luther's message was that human beings are *not* free to do this – their wills are not free. Faith is a *gift*. Luther used metaphors, for instance saying that man before justification is like a corpse, and he can do nothing to earn his own justification. The technical debates that lay behind those kinds of vivid phrases would eventually get sorted out. But at the time, to people like More, it sounded as if Luther was preaching a kind of desperation, saying, 'You're not free to be good.' Above all More believed that people like Tyndale were motivated by pride.

Tyndale could see no good in More. More could see no good in Tyndale. And both of them, of course, within a year of each other, fell foul of the respective authorities in the countries in which they were living; both of them died for their understanding of the Christian faith. Of course, those executions in the 1530s would be ramified in the hundred and fifty years which followed.

Execution of Archbishop Cranmer, woodcut from from Foxe's Book of Martyrs. *World History Archive / Alamy Stock Photo (rights purchased)*

Execution of Carthusian monks at Tyburn, 1535. Artist: Nicolas Beatrizet (1904). They resisted the royal supremacy in England under Henry VIII and were brutally hung, drawn and quartered after being starved. Heritage Image Partnership Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo (rights purchased)

One can multiply the atrocities on both sides of the Reformation divide, not just the persecution of individuals, but also the chaos of war. The long legacy of this was the mutual excommunication and mutual hatred of Catholic and Protestant camps in our history in these islands, at times taking the form of the 'No Popery'.[7]

Two visions of the Reformation legacy

I said at the beginning of this talk that I wanted to pick up the 'two visions' theme by referring to the work of two very good contemporary historians: Alex Ryrie – a former Methodist who's now an Anglican – who teaches at Durham; and Brad Gregory, who is the head of Arts and Humanities Research at Notre Dame University. They have both written very good general books on the legacy of the Reformation. Brad Gregory published his enormous book called *The Unintended Reformation* in 2012. He's a particular authority on the Anabaptists and has written the best book on sixteenth-century religious persecution, both Catholic and Protestant. His particular interest is in the Anabaptist movement; that is, the radical wing of the Reformation. Alec Ryrie is a special authority on the early Tudor Reformation and on the Scottish Reformation. He has just published a book which is a very good read indeed, called *Protestants* – plural. Brad Gregory is a Roman Catholic, and Alec Ryrie is an Anglican lay preacher, formerly a Methodist lay preacher.

Brad Gregory is in no doubt that the outcomes of the Reformation were, on the whole, negative. He shares some of the perceptions, if not the vehemence, of Thomas More. According to him, the principle of *sola scriptura* and the rejection of the Church's teaching authority in the end led to what he calls the 'market of values' in which all certainties are dissolved. The abolition of the vowed religious life of monks and nuns removed a powerful institutional witness to Christian ambivalence about material prosperity and opened the door to the acquisitive society. By contrast, the intractability of post-Reformation religious disagreements, among Protestants especially, contributed to the emergence of societies which found their rationale in purely materialistic values, such as the protection of property, or the contractual guarantee of the rights of the individual. In the pioneering early modern secular states, especially the Dutch Republic, he argues that men and women decided to stop killing each other over religion and go shopping instead. In the long run, because there was no universally accepted norm for truth, religion became a private

matter. And this privatisation of religion became one of the building blocks of Enlightenment social theory. So Thomas Jefferson can say, 'It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods or no god: it neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg.'[8] Here, Brad Gregory thinks, is the origin of a rootless modern hyperpluralism in which there is no objective basis for shared value, and in which good and bad become matters of arbitrary personal preference. Or as Gregory, who is an American, puts it, 'Whatever'.

Gregory's study of the Anabaptist movement led him to believe that our perception of the Reformation as having given rise to a different kind of religion is misleading, because mainstream Protestantism is only mainstream from a particular perspective. There were just as many radical fringe groups as there were of so-called mainstream Protestants. These groups would eventually get suppressed by power – by political power – but there is no internal logic in the Reformation which would make one Reformation view normative. People go to the Bible and they find what they find, but they don't all find the same thing.

By and large, Alec Ryrie accepts broadly the same picture of the radical incompatibility of competing Protestant views of the world. So, in his book *Protestants*, he doesn't call it 'Protestantism' because he doesn't think there is such a thing as Protestantism; there are just 'Protestants'. And Protestants, he thinks, are characterised by two things: they are lovers and they are fighters. They are lovers in that they are motivated by a desire to find and love God, and to love the Scriptures. And they are fighters because they don't agree with anybody else who's doing the same thing. So his book is a sort of unfolding of the history of Protestantism over four centuries, arguing that there isn't a common stream, not even, for example, the Bible – because there are now forms of Protestantism in Africa, just as there were in seventeenth-century England, in which the Bible is *not* treated as a sacrosanct book. There is a famous story about George Fox at Swarthmoor Hall coming in on a Puritan Bible study. He sat and listened as people quoted the Scriptures, then stood up and said, 'You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say?'[9] The sense that the heart of the gospel is the Spirit within, and neither a text nor a man in a dog collar telling you what the text means, is a very radically solvent principle. Ryrie cheerfully embraces this and says that Protestantism is constantly changing. It has got a huge vigour which springs from the twin roots of Protestants being lovers and fighters. There will never be a normative form of Protestantism; there will never be Protestant unity; there will never be Protestant–Catholic unity; because the fighting is intrinsic – it is there from the very beginning. It started with Luther burning the pope's

bull of excommunication – defiance is in the genes. But such defiance is also part of its vigour and why it has made the modern world the way it is. The subtitle of Ryrie's book is 'the faith that made the modern world'. Brad Gregory thinks it was indeed the faith that made the modern world – but that, for him, is very bad news. So, two contrasting visions.

Conclusion

One of the reasons More detested Protestantism was that it challenged the traditional faith of the Church. By that he did not mean 'what the pope taught'. More never justifies church teaching by appealing to the pope. He appeals to the common faith of ordinary people: what your father and mother believed, and what their father and mother believed, and what their father and mother believed. He understood the Church as the common corps of Christendom, and he thought that *that* Church is holy. So he was prepared to give folk religion the benefit of the doubt because he thought behind it was a deep instinct of holiness which had to be respected, and before which one must be humble. This is one of the areas in which he disagreed with his friend Erasmus. On the other hand, Luther and Tyndale believed that this so-called common corps of Christendom had been *massa damnata* – it had been a great thousand-year journey into error – and armed with the Bible in your hand you could see through it.

Those two visions end up with different pictures of what the Church is. At its organised Roman Catholic end, it is a great institution, a global Church. The Second Vatican Council, for instance, is a great reforming Council, but it goes about it as a great unitary organisation, hierarchically organised. At the other end, there is an imagining of the Church as made up of small covenanted groups of people inspired by the Spirit, getting their truth neat from the Bible. That legacy has gone on deepening, and has led to radically different forms of Christian expression. They overlap: in the less desirable Roman Catholic churches these days you can sing gospel choruses at Mass, and you can wander into Anglican churches which are indistinguishable from the Vatican except that the Latin is pronounced better.

Of course, many of the great ruptures in theology that started this whole thing off have been healed. Last year, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America declared that on all the major Reformation issues there are now no church-dividing differences between Catholics and Lutherans. But I think, sadly, both

Ryrie and Gregory are right in seeing the ruptures of the Reformation as ineradicable. There may be local unions, and I think one of the most encouraging features of ecumenism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has simply been the laying down of arms and the recognition of Christian truth in each other – what Paul Murray at Durham calls 'receptive ecumenism', attending to what God has given to other churches as well as to other individuals and seeing how those things can be reflected in church relations. But I think the Reformation does represent one of the great fractures in history which cannot be gone behind. The rivers flow in directions which are not likely to flow together at any foreseeable point in the future, which is perhaps a sobering note on which to end.

Notes

1. 'Apostolic Letter issued Motu Proprio Proclaiming Saint Thomas More Patron of Statesmen and Politicians', Pope John Paul II, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_20001031_thomas-more.html (accessed 21 August 2017).
2. 'Apostolic Letter', §4.
3. Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, §6.24 and 25.
4. Martin Luther, *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*.
5. Martin Luther, *Table Talk*.
6. Thomas More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, chapter 14.
7. For instance, in 1988, when the late Lord Paisley heckled Pope John Paul II at the United Nations.
8. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*.
9. Quoted in Quaker *Faith and Practice*, 19.07.

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

Fifty years of Methodist–Roman Catholic dialogue

David M. Chapman

THE REVD DR DAVID M. CHAPMAN is a presbyter of the Methodist Church in Britain currently serving as Chair of the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire District. He is a member of the British Methodist Faith and Order Committee and Co-Chair of the Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church

david.chapman@behdistrict.org.uk
Bishop's Stortford, UK

This article examines the origins and development of bilateral theological dialogue between Methodists and Roman Catholics at a world level since it commenced in 1967 as a result of the Second Vatican Council. In taking stock of the dialogue, consideration is given to what has been achieved in successive phases during the past fifty years. A number of theological issues are identified as requiring further dialogue. The article concludes by outlining the present agenda of the international Methodist–Roman Catholic dialogue commission and briefly considering the future prospects for theological dialogue at a world level in the context of contemporary ecumenism.

THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE • ECUMENISM • METHODISM • ROMAN CATHOLICISM

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 181–189
ISSN 2058-5969

The bitter theological legacy of Reformation controversies ensured that Methodists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries adopted a strongly anti-Roman Catholic stance. Well into the twentieth century, Methodist catechisms and scholarship invariably maintained a polemical stance against Roman Catholic doctrine, actual and supposed. That Methodists and Roman Catholics in fact have much in common in the way they describe holy living in terms of growth in grace towards entire sanctification is therefore a comparatively recent discovery, as a result of mutual engagement and reassessment through theological dialogue.

The immediate origins of formal theological dialogue between Methodists and Roman Catholics lie in the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), which was attended by a number of accredited observers from other world communions, including the World Methodist Council. The principal Methodist observers at the Second Vatican Council, Albert Outler (United States) and Harold Roberts (Great Britain), took advantage of the unprecedented opportunity afforded by their status to engage with the Roman Catholic bishops and theological advisers assembled in Rome for the purpose of bringing up to date the formal teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.[1] Though not permitted to speak during the formal sessions of the Council, the observers had full access to the papers and were invited to participate in seminars convened by the specially constituted Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity so that ecumenical voices could be heard in the process of shaping the final text of the conciliar teaching documents.

Nowadays, it is commonly accepted that the Second Vatican Council signalled the start of a new era in relations between Roman Catholics and other Christians after centuries of mutual condemnation stemming from sixteenth-century Reformation controversies in the West and the Great Schism between East and West in 1054. However, this was far from clear at the time due to the prevailing ecclesiastical climate of mutual suspicion and distrust, reinforced by disquieting memories of the authoritarian and centralising outcome of the First Vatican Council (1869–70). Both beforehand and during the early sessions, there was widespread suspicion in Protestant circles that Pope John XXIII's real intention in summoning a Second Vatican Council was to reassert the exclusive claims of the Roman Catholic Church and its prohibition on all forms of ecumenism other than that which urged the 'separated' Christians to return to the Church of Rome.

Yet, despite attempts by the curia to impose a conservative theological agenda, commentators began to note progressive voices among the bishops and the emergence of a fresh way of describing the Roman Catholic Church in terms that accepted the ecclesial reality of other Christian communities. Correspondingly, conciliar teaching was expressed in more nuanced theological language than had previously appeared to be the case in the polemical exchanges between the Reformers and their opponents. Convinced, therefore, that the teaching of the Second Vatican Council provided a starting point for a fruitful conversation across the Reformation divide, Albert Outler made determined efforts to persuade key figures in the World Methodist Council that the prospect of a formal theological dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church presented a unique ecumenical opportunity to address historic differences between Methodists and Roman Catholics.

The World Methodist Council meeting in London in 1966 duly accepted an invitation from a renamed and enhanced Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity to appoint representatives to a joint international commission for theological dialogue.[2] The joint commission first met in Ariccia, near Rome, in October 1967 and has remained active ever since so that it is among the most enduring and productive of the bilateral theological dialogues at a world level.[3] The commission continues to be sponsored, and its members appointed, by the World Methodist Council and the Holy See's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The fiftieth anniversary of Methodist–Roman Catholic dialogue at a world level happens to coincide with the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses protesting against the sale of indulgences. Whether Luther actually nailed the text to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Saxony, on 31 October 1517 as is popularly supposed, his Ninety-Five Theses set in train a series of events that ignited the fires of Reformation and division in Europe. To mark its own jubilee in October 2017, the joint commission will assemble in Rome for a series of commemorative events, including an audience with Pope Francis, arranged jointly by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Methodist Ecumenical Office, Rome. The recent establishment of a Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome under its director, the Revd Dr Tim Macquiban, was made possible by the deepening relationship between Methodists and Roman Catholics, as a result of the improved ecumenical climate to which bilateral theological dialogue contributed.

Summary of international Methodist–Roman Catholic dialogue

Since 1967, there have been ten successive rounds of conversations, each timed to coincide with the five-yearly cycle of World Methodist Council meetings. At the conclusion of each round, the joint commission issues a substantial report to its sponsors in the form of a convergence statement. In common with the practice in other bilateral dialogues, these reports are not authoritative statements on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church or the World Methodist Council but instead are published by the joint commission for study and reception among Methodists and Roman Catholics. The text is available electronically on the Vatican and World Methodist Council websites; earlier texts can be found in the *Growth in Agreement* series compiled by the World Council of Churches.

The work of the joint commission has been incremental, building painstakingly on the secure theological foundations established in successive rounds of dialogue. The initial phase of the dialogue between 1967 and 1976 produced two reports registering outline agreement on a range of topics: the *Denver Report* (Denver, 1971) and *Growth in Understanding* (Dublin, 1976).

Between 1977 and 2001, a second and more systematic phase of dialogue focused on aspects of core Christian doctrines in order to establish a secure theological framework in which to develop a convergence in historically divisive issues. The title of each report signifies its particular subject: *Towards an Agreed Statement on the Holy Spirit* (Honolulu, 1981); *Towards a Statement on the Church* (Nairobi, 1986); *The Apostolic Tradition* (Singapore, 1991); *The Word of Life: A Statement on Revelation and Faith* (Rio de Janeiro, 1996); and *Speaking the Truth in Love: Teaching Authority among Catholics and Methodists* (Brighton, 2001).

Between 2002 and 2011, a third phase of dialogue produced two substantial reports on ecclesiology. *The Grace Given You in Christ: Catholics and Methodists Reflect Further on the Church* (Seoul, 2006) sets out what Methodists and Roman Catholics are able to recognise in each other as being of the Church and explores a possible 'exchange of gifts'.[4] In response to the need to integrate theological dialogue and church life, the report states a number of guiding principles for Methodist–Roman Catholic relations.

Encountering Christ the Saviour: Church and Sacraments (Durban, 2011) revisits selected topics addressed in the landmark multilateral convergence statement

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (WCC, 1982) in order to extend and deepen existing agreement between Methodists and Roman Catholics. The overarching theological framework is provided by the scriptural theme of the participation of all the baptised in the Paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ. In investigating the Eucharist as the sacramental memorial of Christ's saving death and resurrection, the joint commission drew on the neglected treasury of eucharistic hymns by Charles Wesley as the basis for proposing that 'Catholic language of a eucharistic "offering" of Christ's sacrifice and Methodist language of "pleading" that sacrifice can be reconciled' (Durban, §132).

The treatment of ordained ministry in *Encountering Christ the Saviour* seeks to deepen and extend agreement between Methodists and Roman Catholics. Despite their Wesleyan heritage, Methodists have tended to espouse the indiscriminate Protestant idea of 'the priesthood of all believers' in reaction to Roman Catholic teaching on the ordained ministry as a sacrificing priesthood. The report develops a more nuanced understanding that Christ continues to exercise his priestly ministry in the Church by means of the ministerial priesthood together with the common priesthood of the faithful (Durban, §189).

Since 2012, a new phase of dialogue has begun to focus more closely on the Christian life as experienced in its corporate and personal dimensions. *The Call to Holiness: From Glory to Glory* (Houston, 2016) builds on previous reports to consider 'how Methodists and Roman Catholics understand the nature and effect of divine grace upon the human person and the implications for the Christian life' (§4). The report investigates the grace that enables, the grace that justifies and the grace that sanctifies. The historically divisive issues of 'good works and merit' and 'the assurance of faith and salvation' are set in a new context of a shared understanding of justification. The report explores similarities and differences relating to practices of holy living in the two traditions and adopts a fresh approach to the historically controversial issues of prayer for the departed and the intercession of the saints.

What has Methodist–Roman Catholic dialogue achieved?

On 31 October 1999, after years of theological dialogue and the last-minute addition of a clarifying annex, representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity signed a Joint

Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ), which encompasses 'a consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification and shows that the remaining differences in its explication are no longer the occasion for doctrinal condemnations' (JDDJ, §5).[5] Since 'justification by faith' lay at the heart of the dispute between the Reformers and their opponents, the JDDJ was widely hailed in the secular press as bringing to an end half a millennium of division in the Western Church.

But to what extent is it credible to claim that Reformation controversies have been resolved and are no longer church-dividing? Responding to the JDDJ shortly afterwards, Geoffrey Wainwright posed a question that remains pertinent in this 500th anniversary year of Luther's protest against the sale of indulgences: 'Is the Reformation over?'[6] Noting the very precise language and limited scope of the JDDJ, Wainwright concluded that an unequivocal 'Yes' was impossible, 'while a resounding "No" would also be untrue to the considerable achievements of the ecumenical twentieth century'.[7] In 2006, after an extensive consultation among member churches, officers of the World Methodist Council meeting in Seoul joined Lutherans and Roman Catholics in signing a Methodist Statement of Association with the JDDJ, thereby extending the theological consensus on justification to include Methodism.[8]

If, to a certain extent, unfinished theological business remains from the Reformation, what has been the achievement of ecumenical dialogue with Roman Catholics in the past half-century? In 2009, shortly before his retirement as President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Cardinal Walter Kasper summarised the 'fruits' that can be 'harvested' from the bilateral dialogues between the Roman Catholic Church and the major traditions in the Western Church – Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran and Reformed.[9] The rich harvest identified by Cardinal Kasper included: a shared apostolic faith; a fresh and renewed understanding of the relation between Scripture and tradition; basic agreement on justification; deepened understanding of the nature of the Church; and new approaches to the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. The fruit of Methodist–Roman Catholic dialogue is conveniently summarised in a convergence text published by the joint commission, entitled *Together to Holiness: 40 years of Methodist and Roman Catholic Dialogue* (2011).

Cardinal Kasper also identified a number of areas requiring further dialogue: the need for a common theological language; fundamental hermeneutical problems; a shared theological anthropology; and the sacramental nature of the Church. To these, the present author, writing in a personal capacity, would

add a number of other issues for future dialogue between Methodists and Roman Catholics:

- the participation of the ordinary faithful in authoritative discernment in the life of the Church by virtue of their baptismal vocation to share in the ministry of Christ;
- the ordained ministry in relation to the ministry of the people of God and the service of all the baptised;
- the mutual relationship between the saints below and the saints above within the communion of saints and the way in which the benefits of Christ apply to the faithful departed as members of his body, the Church;
- the role of personal *episkopē* exercised by bishops and others in relation to the corporate *episkopē* exercised by conciliar and synodical structures, including Methodist conferences;
- the structural implications of a shared belief that the Church itself is a means of grace;
- universal primacy and the Petrine ministry of the Bishop of Rome as pope.

Current dialogue between Methodists and Roman Catholics

As things presently stand, the future agenda is sufficient to keep the joint commission in work for at least another half-century: theological dialogue is a long haul. Meanwhile, the commission's next report is scheduled for presentation to the World Methodist Council meeting in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 2021. Continuing to focus on the Christian life in its corporate and personal dimensions, the commission has chosen as its theme for this current round of dialogue the question of how Methodists and Roman Catholics respectively live out their reconciliation 'in Christ' in the Church and how together they can proclaim a gospel of reconciliation to the world involving peace, justice (social and economic) and the integrity of creation. The theological framework in which the joint commission will approach its work is that of the reconciling work of God in Christ (2 Cor 5:18–20).

Addressing the question of reconciliation 'in Christ' will involve giving attention to the nature of Christian community, the bonds of communion and the structures of unity. Thus the topic chosen for the 2021 report is closely related to that of the previous report (Houston, 2016). As the joint commission noted in that report:

> The call to holiness is also a call to unity in the Church, the body of Christ. Jesus prayed for his disciples to be sanctified in the truth that they might all be one (John 17.17, 21). Holiness and Christian unity belong together as twin aspects of the same relationship with the Trinity such that the pursuit of either involves the pursuit of the other. (Houston, §5)

Conclusion

As long ago as 1986, the joint commission proposed that the goal of theological dialogue between Methodists and Roman Catholics should be nothing less than 'full communion in faith, mission and sacramental life' (Nairobi, §20). This goal has been restated subsequently in several reports, most recently in *The Call to Holiness* (Houston, §5) and will be closely investigated in the present round of dialogue.

But what of the long-term prospects for sustaining an international theological dialogue between Methodists and Roman Catholics in the face of competing demands for scarce resources and other priorities such as evangelisation and the urgent need for interreligious dialogue? To advocate continuing theological dialogue between the different Christian traditions in the style of the classical Faith and Order movement is to swim against the tide of so much contemporary ecumenism, which regards shared mission as a sufficient goal. If cooperation in mission is all that matters, theological dialogue becomes redundant. Elsewhere, I have argued that the related concept of 'reconciled diversity' does not adequately express the 'full visible unity' of the Church.[10] In the face of competing agendas in contemporary ecumenism, Methodists are faced with a choice of ecumenical method and horizons in the twenty-first century.[11] Essentially, their eventual choice will reflect where Methodists seek to locate themselves ecclesiologically in relation to the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.[12]

Notes

1. See Albert Outler, *Methodist Observer at Vatican II*, Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1967.
2. National bilateral dialogues between Methodists and Roman Catholics were subsequently established in the United States, Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia (now Uniting Church–Roman Catholic dialogue). These dialogues are beyond the scope of the present article.
3. For a detailed study, see David M. Chapman, *In Search of the Catholic Spirit: Methodists and Roman Catholics in Dialogue*, Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2004.
4. For the exchange of gifts, see David M. Chapman, 'A Methodist Perspective on Catholic Learning', in Paul D. Murray (ed.), *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 134–148.
5. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html (accessed 31 July 2017).
6. Geoffrey Wainwright, *Is the Reformation Over?* Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University, 2000.
7. Wainwright, *Is the Reformation Over?* p. 3.
8. In 2017, the World Communion of Reformed Churches also signed a declaration of association with the JDDJ.
9. Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue*, London: Continuum, 2009.
10. See David M. Chapman, 'Ecumenism and the Visible Unity of the Church: Organic Union or Reconciled Diversity?', *Ecclesiology* 11 (2015), pp. 350–369.
11. For Methodist ecumenical method, see David M. Chapman, 'The Methodist Contribution to Ecumenism', in Paul McPartlan and Geoffrey Wainwright (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Ecumenical Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
12. For Methodist ecclesiological method, see David M. Chapman, 'Methodism and the Church', in Paul Avis (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

What has Basel to do with Epworth? Karl Barth on Pietism and the theology of the Reformation

David Gilland

DR DAVID ANDREW GILLAND is Lecturer in Systematic Theology at the Seminar für Evangelische Theologie und Religionspädagogik at the Technical University of Braunschweig, Germany. He is a John Wesley Fellow and a Fellow of The Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary.

d.gilland@tu-braunschweig.de
Braunschweig, Germany

This article examines Karl Barth's earliest engagements with Pietism, rationalism and liberal Protestantism against the backdrop of the theologies of Albrecht Ritschl and Wilhelm Herrmann. The analysis then follows Barth through his rejection of liberal theology and his development of a dialectical theology over against Wilhelm Herrmann and with particular reference to Martin Luther's theologia crucis. *The article concludes by examining Barth's comments on religious experience to a group of Methodist pastors in Switzerland in 1961.*

KARL BARTH • DIALECTICAL THEOLOGY • PIETISM • RATIONALISM • LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM • METHODISM • ALBRECHT RITSCHL • WILLHELM HERRMANN • RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE • CROSS

ISSN 2058-5969

Introduction

Karl Barth (1886–1968) and Methodism might at first appear to be an unusual topic, evoking clichés along the lines of 'What does Basel have to do with Epworth?' or similar. The reasons for this are legion. First, in what is generally understood to be Barth's sweeping rejection of the liberal theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), Barth is also often understood to have done away altogether with religious experience, one of the central components of Methodist belief and practice. Further, Barth's earlier works, particularly his two famous commentaries on Paul's letter to the Romans, feature an explicit and an occasionally starkly polemical assessment of Pietism,[1] in which the Methodist tradition, at least in part, has its roots. Later, as Barth's works became longer and increasingly doctrinal and he began to rely with increasing insistence on the theology of the Reformation and Post-Reformation Reformed orthodoxy, some of Barth's contemporaries saw him developing precisely the kind of dogmatism inherently problematic for Pietism. As a result, many from Pietist and Methodist circles, though certainly not all, have maintained a healthy skepticism of Barthian theology since its earliest days, if not rejecting it outright.

A closer look at Barth's life and earlier writings, however, betrays a much more complex relationship between Barth, liberal theology and Pietism, and thus with religious experience, than the rather stereotypical examples cited above. In order to move beyond these stereotypes, it will be necessary to resist treating theological liberalism, Pietism and Barth's earlier theology as if they were broad, generally uniform and diametrically opposed ideal categories and rather examine the particular theological statements each makes on the topics relevant to their interrelation and interaction. At the very least this will show us that we are dealing with theological perspectives that not only vary within and among themselves, but also share much in common with the perspectives to which they are reacting critically. Once we have unpacked Barth's complex interactions with Pietism and liberal Protestantism, we will be closer to understanding the tremendous contemporary engagement of scholars representing Methodism and the Holiness traditions with the theology of Karl Barth.

Barth's experience with liberalism and Pietism

At the outset it is worth mentioning that Karl Barth was never a stranger to Pietist belief and practice. Not only were a number of his ancestors in Switzerland involved with Pietist groups, but Barth's father, Fritz, a professor of New Testament and Church History in Bern, was also generally sympathetic to a number of Pietist concerns such as 'a priority of life over doctrine', 'spiritual rebirth', sanctification and 'the coming kingdom of God'.[2] While this did not make Fritz Barth a Pietist himself, his son Karl, who attended his lectures for a time at the beginning of his theological studies, would not have grown up either overly ignorant of or overly hostile to Pietism and its particular theological concerns. Later, as a student, when the young Barth would make his now famous first 'turn' towards the liberal theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) – seemingly in part an act of rebellion towards his more conservative father – he would never adopt a theological agenda that was either wholeheartedly liberal[3] or wholly hostile to Pietism, and was explicitly supportive of its experiential individualism in contrast to Protestant Orthodoxy.[4] When Barth the pastor, now in his late 20s and early 30s, made his even more famous second 'turn' away from liberal theology towards the development of his own theological program, his writings at the time demonstrate a serious and continuous engagement with Pietist scholarship, biographies and other writings.[5] As such, it would be impossible to tell the story of Barth's break with theological liberalism and his turn towards what we can call a 'theology of the Word of God', without also accounting for his engagements with Pietism at the same time.

Barth, however, for a time did become a dedicated follower of Schleiermacher earlier in his studies, and he eagerly went to hear the lectures of the famous liberal theologians of his day, particularly Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930) in Berlin and then Wilhelm Herrmann (1846–1922) in Marburg. Though all differing in their own ways, Harnack and Herrmann had both been variously influenced by Albrecht Ritschl (1822–89).[6] After completing his significant three-volume historical, exegetical and constructive work on the doctrines of justification and reconciliation[7] in the 1870s, Ritschl took this information and now set his sights on continental Pietism. The result was a major three-volume historical and theological deconstruction of Pietism,[8] for which Ritschl also published a separate introduction. Though often overlooked today, Ritschl's *Prolegomena to the History of Pietism*[9] seeks to untangle the historical and theological lines from the Middle Ages through the Reformation and beyond

to determine precisely how Pietism could have arisen in Protestantism. Ritschl argues that seventeenth-century Lutheran and Reformed Pietism was not a fulfillment of the original intention of the Reformers, but rather a remnant of medieval belief and practice ultimately grounded in monasticism.[10] It survived the Reformation in the form of Anabaptism, and then reappeared in the Lutheran and Reformed churches as a 'reforming' tendency against the rationalism of the Protestant Orthodoxy, which for Ritschl was also a departure from the genuine Reformation.[11] The theological crux of Ritschl's argument was that 'the material principle of the Reformation', that is, justification by faith, and its subsequent practical outworking on the Christian life,[12] are not present in their authentic Reformation versions in Lutheran and Reformed Pietism. In sum, Ritschl not only argued that Pietism is at best a compromised form of Protestantism, he also cleared theological ground for his own constructive version of liberal Protestant theology as developed in his earlier work on justification and reconciliation.

Prior to his explicit rejection of liberal theology, Barth would have felt largely at home in this version of intellectual history with its twofold critique, first of rationalism[13] and then of certain elements in Pietism,[14] and its heralding of a third, generally more liberal *and* 'genuinely' Protestant option. But this certainly did not mean that the young Barth was opposed to everything that Pietism also valued. Thus, as a 'liberal' and with the Pietists, the student Barth shared in a critique of orthodoxy and dogmatic theology, especially of rationalism, metaphysics and natural theology, all forms of what is sometimes called 'speculative theology'. Medieval theologians such as Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas, then Protestant Orthodoxy subsequent to the Reformation, as well as many of the Enlightenment era theologies such as that of Christian Wolff (1679–1754), and later Julius August Ludwig Wegscheider (1771–1849) and Christian Ernst Luthardt (1823–1902), to name a few, were all considered guilty in various ways of having subordinated Christian theology to human reason instead of, say, the Bible, revelation or an inner experience of Christ.[15] Whereas considered individually these theologians have dramatically different intellectual programs, a rejection of the 'rationalism' and 'scholasticism' they have in common was understood by liberal theologians and Pietists alike as a genuinely Protestant theological emphasis. Ritschl, for example, understood his critique of rationalism and metaphysics to be a return to the authentic theology of Luther, in particular, a rejection of scholastic and speculative theology for a 'practical theology'.[16] Further, this taming of reason was also compatible, in part, with the philosophical mood of the time, especially the

work of Immanuel Kant, who places limits on speculation and orders legitimate religious knowledge to the realm of practical reason. Thus, the rejection of theological speculation was generally understood at the time as a commonality between the Reformation, Pietism and liberal Protestantism, and many of Barth's earliest writings demonstrate this thinking as well.[17]

Further, with liberalism and along with Pietism, the young Barth maintained a positive stance towards subjectivity and certain forms of individual religious experience. Indeed, liberal theological agendas from Schleiermacher onwards privileged religious experience and subjectivity in various forms. Whereas Schleiermacher had prioritized experience in terms of interiority – an immediate feeling of absolute dependence on God – Barth had fallen under the influence of Wilhelm Herrmann. Here, Christoph Chalamet's work is of particular importance in demonstrating that Herrmann was not your average liberal Protestant theologian, but is better understood as the first 'dialectical theologian' – a school whose most famous, albeit starkly different, representatives would be Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976). In Herrmann's works one finds a variety of expressions which we might anachronistically say sound very much like Barth, such as an emphasis on God's *self-revelation* to the believer and the believer's response in faith as trust.[18] God is also transcendent for Herrmann, meaning God's self-revelation, contra speculation, is neither accessible nor verifiable by reason. Further, faith is self-authenticating and not subject to investigation by science (contra the historicism of Ernst Troeltsch), though Christianity as a religion and the Bible are.[19] God's acts, therefore, are how we know God, and God encounters the believer in the believer's experience of 'the power of Jesus Christ's inner life'.[20] Chalamet puts it in this way: 'Herrmann's theology is an actualist theology: it is concerned with God encountering us in an act (*in actu*) right now, in our present life, and not simply with a past event of history.'[21] As such, for Herrmann there can be no neutral or objective relationship with God in Christ – one, for example, that could be encompassed in a dogmatics – but God always changes those whom God encounters, and to be encountered by God means to be 'born again' and 'converted'.[22] Thus, as a passionate disciple of Herrmann, it is clear that the young Barth shared an interest in individual religious experience with Pietism, though one that was very different from that of Schleiermacher or Albrecht Ritschl.

But, of course, Barth also had his concerns with certain expressions within Pietist thought and practice. Although he did not question the significance of religious experience as such, he did question how certain Pietists had

understood it, along with tendencies towards moralism and an abiding focus on who is Christian and who not.[23] Finally, in sharp distinction from some prominent Pietist theologians and aligned with liberalism, the young Barth would have explicitly rejected biblicism and also embraced higher biblical criticism.

Barth on Pietism and the theology of the Reformation

Whereas Barth always reckoned critically with liberal theology, even in his student days, it essentially fell apart for him as a viable theological option when he saw his beloved teachers give explicit public assent in writing to Germany's war policy in 1914.[24] As a Swiss citizen, Barth experienced this event as an indictment not just of Schleiermacher's theology, but of the entire liberal apparatus, including the theology of his own teachers such as Harnack and Herrmann, and especially the theological foundations for their politics and ethics. Although Barth now came to see his former teachers as opponents, he nevertheless ultimately retained his critical stance towards rationalism and Pietism, though he now also came to subject the liberal theology of his earlier mentors to his newly developing theological critiques. This first came to expression in a number of public lectures[25] and sermons, but especially in Barth's first Romans commentary from 1919, which was then heavily revised and extended for the 1921 second edition. With respect to our present topic, we can say that Barth's initial, polemical move was to equate the subjective elements in both Pietism and rationalism with the subjective element in liberal theology. That is, despite the differences among these three 'isms', Barth came to see all three as taking their starting point in modern anthropology in a way that he saw as being inimical to the theology of the Reformation. That is, Barth came to see modernity and modern thought as the common source of both experiential Pietism and the rationalistic Enlightenment. As he would write later in the 1930s: they are 'two forms which are equally close to the Reformation and equally distant from it'.[26]

As noted above, however, many Pietists understood their movement to be a reaction against rationalism and a restoration of the original intention of the Reformation. By contrast, whereas liberal theologians such as Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf von Harnack generally saw Pietism as a particularly acute misunderstanding of and departure from the Reformation, they typically also rejected rationalism and speculative theology. Chalamet writes the following

in describing Ritschl, though it could apply equally well to Harnack: 'Dialectical or indirect thinking was rejected as something characteristic of "ecclesiastical Orthodoxy", of the Old Testament and of Catholicism.'[27] From this standpoint, much Christian theology and especially scholastic theology, whether medieval or Post-Reformation Protestant Orthodoxy, wrongly attempts to harmonize statements about God that are paradoxical or incompatible, such as God's love and wrath, or God's mercy and justice. Such skepticism also extends to attempts to combine the conception of God in the New Testament with that of God in the Old Testament, which many liberal theologians saw as being strictly incompatible.[28] Ritschl and Harnack saw instances of dialectic and paradox in the writings of Luther – for example in his discussion of law and gospel, or of God hidden and revealed – as remnants of the early Church's compromise with pagan philosophy and its blossoming into medieval scholasticism. As a result, theologians such as Ritschl and Harnack attempted to offer a more purified version of Luther and Protestant theology, a concept of the God of the gospel without any hiddenness and an account of the Christian life without the negative experience of law and *Anfechtung*. Thus, whereas many liberal theologians and Pietists may have generally agreed that Pietism and rationalism were opposites, in particular that Pietism was an anti-modern reaction to modernist rationalism,[29] their assessment of the relationship between Pietism and the Reformation was dramatically different.

From his liberal teachers, Barth would have come to see Pietism as a misunderstanding of the Reformation, at least in part. From Herrmann, however, he would have also come to understand the theological significance of the Reformation in a radically different way from that of Ritschl and Harnack. Herrmann rather saw the dialectical and paradoxical elements of Luther's theology to constitute a significant part not just of an understanding of God, but also of the Christian life.[30] Chalamet writes: 'When Herrmann used the dialectic of God hidden and revealed, he understood it as God's hiddenness in his revelation and not behind it (both possibilities are present in Luther).'[31] Further, Herrmann not only emphasized a positive experience of God's gospel promise, but also a negative, preparatory experience of God's law, including the experience of tribulation or temptation (*Anfechtung*).[32] What God's hiddenness in God's revelation and the believer's experience of *Anfechtung* add up to for Herrmann is the awareness of God's sheer transcendence and the fact that the believer is a sinner whose relationship to God is conditioned by *both* law and gospel. With regard to rationalism, this means that there can be no direct access to God via reason, because God is transcendent and humans are

sinful. With respect to Pietism, this means that any Christian experience of God is utterly dependent on God's self-revelation to the believer in Jesus Christ. Once the believer had encountered Jesus Christ, however, Herrmann could speak intensely about individual Christian experience of Christ and the organic unity of life that resulted.[33]

Though he gained much from Herrmann, Barth's break with liberalism would ultimately bring about a further radicalizing of this dialectical understanding of the relationship of God and humanity, also meaning that his critique of Pietism and religious experience would become more decided and sharp. Herrmann had posited a dialectical relationship of law and gospel between God and humanity, where humans would first be driven to the gospel by the negative experience of the law,[34] but were then ushered into the kingdom of God via their experience of the 'power and life' of Jesus.[35] Once integrated into the kingdom of God, so to speak, the Christian faithful would live out their faith in the world, particularly through marriage, family, culture and the state.[36]

Barth, however, ultimately took this dialectic a step further by denying that God's grace followed on *automatically* from the negative experience of the law.[37] Further, Herrmann had emphasized the organic unity of life with Jesus in the kingdom of God after conversion leading to a positive development of the kingdom of God, a point which Barth also largely maintained throughout his first *Epistle to the Romans*.[38] In the second edition of *Romans*, however, Barth came to reject all such given continuity between God and humanity by means of 'death', a concept which he acquired from the Basel church historian Franz Overbeck.[39] Many have interpreted these passages by Barth as being grotesque, if not altogether unchristian and as implying a denial of any positive Christian experience of God at all. Though Barth's expression here is indeed harsh, his intention was not to deny the possibility of Christian experience as such, but rather to emphasize that Christian experience, not only new birth and conversion, but also the subsequent Christian life, are utterly dependent on Christ's death at every moment: 'Only in the Cross of Christ can we comprehend the truth and meaning of His Resurrection.'[40] Whereas Herrmann had posited organic continuity between God and humanity after new birth and conversion, leading into the kingdom of God with all its political implications, Barth rather came to emphasize radical discontinuity between God and humanity in terms of the Cross of Christ. In this, Barth intentionally meant to unsettle any possible notion that God's relationship to humanity could somehow become a possession of humanity, a possession from which one could derive – undialectically, or in a straightforward manner – a Christian

ethical and political program such as Herrmann's. In essence, Barth saw such a move to be a flat denial of Luther's theology of the Cross (*theologia crucis*) and a return to a pre-Reformation theology of glory (*theologia gloria*).[41]

Though coming after the so-called Romans period, Barth's 1927 lecture 'The Word in Theology from Schleiermacher to Ritschl'[42] first argues for the similarity between the rationalism of a theologian like Julius August Ludwig Wegscheider (1771–1849) and the liberal program of Schleiermacher on the common point that 'man is the measure of all things'.[43] That is, both the liberal Schleiermacher and the rationalist Wegscheider, despite their differences, place humanity at the center of their theology. Barth then goes to examine what he calls 'an apparent – but only apparent – protest'[44] against the liberal theology of Schleiermacher in the form of a number of nineteenth-century reactions to liberalism. Among these groups, Barth includes 'the Awakening theologians', who generally understood themselves to be pushing for a renewal of the theology of the Reformation. Barth's comments on the Pietist theologian Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck (1799–1877) are particularly instructive in this connection:

> What use is all the terrifying talk of sin, at least for theology, if it is still true for Tholuck even in his sermons that all revolves around 'the ability to experience', the human capacity for experiencing; if the miracle and the dialectic of this theology is simply the miracle and the dialectic of the human heart – of the inspired, the enthusiastic, the awakened heart but, for flesh is still flesh, still the human heart? What use is the rediscovery of Anselm's doctrine of the atonement and of Luther's doctrine of justification if the result is advice to concern one's self more than ever with one's self, with man?[45]

As with Herrmann, Barth also finds in Tholuck's work the 'dialectical' qualification on the relationship between God and humanity that sin poses. Nonetheless, Barth still interprets Tholuck as characterizing the believer's relationship to God as one of immanence because this relationship appears to be located exclusively within the human heart. For Barth, Tholuck's emphasis on inwardness obviates his intention to draw support from Anselm on atonement and Luther on justification, both of whose respective doctrines conceive of God as acting on the believer from the outside. As such, Barth questions the legitimacy of Protestant character of the Awakening theology with a general assessment about 'the Semi-Pelagianism which entered

Protestant theology in the eighteenth century by the double open door of Rationalism and Pietism'.[46]

In sum, it is clear that the religious individualism that Barth had previously seen as a positive element of both liberalism and Pietism,[47] he now saw as theologically unsustainable:

> What happened in the distant past has now faded away as such, and is less significant. Extreme Pietists were the first to say it [i.e. the historical event of the Cross] was meaningless as such … The real birth of Christ is in our hearts; his real and saving death is that which we see accomplished in ourselves, that which we have to accomplish ourselves; his real resurrection is his triumph of those who believe in him.[48]

But Barth understood this not only to be theologically problematic, but also politically dangerous in that it seeks to interiorize

> all those elements of Christianity which seem to represent an outwardness, a contrast. The sought-for goal is the appropriation of Christianity, which is regarded as complete when all that is not one's own as such is dissolved and made one's own.[49]

In sum, Barth feared that an exclusive emphasis on individual religious experience led to a dissolution between the real event of justification on the Cross and the reality of the justified Christian life, a dissolution which, especially after his experience in 1914, he believed carried potentially disastrous consequences for Christian ethics and politics.

Conclusion: what has Basel to do with Epworth?

Barth's contact with Methodism throughout his life was sporadic, but seemingly positive on the whole. He not only engaged with Methodists in his various ecumenical activities, but he also took on a number of Methodist students from home and abroad. Barth often used the term 'Methodism' in a pejorative sense in his earlier works, as did other theologians such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who were sympathetic to Barth's theology.[50] In the later volumes of the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth frequently mentions Pietism and Methodism 'in the same breath', so to speak, as a description of a general tendency with

which he was fascinated, but frequently disagreed.[51] As such, whatever one might say on Barth and Methodism will have to be set within the framework of Barth's intricate perspective on Pietism.

Unsurprisingly, Barth did precisely this during a friendly and theologically rich conversation with a number of Methodist preachers held in Switzerland in 1961. As the conversation quickly turns to the topic of religious experience, it is astonishing to see how many of Barth's earlier concerns about Pietism and religious experience reappear explicitly, over forty years after Barth's *Romans* period.

Asked about his personal understanding of the experience of salvation, Barth responds:

> The certainty here concerns something that lies completely and wholly outside of me, not within me. When I consider myself, what I feel, my little or bit theology, my experience – yes I have these, but what I am certain about [is not this experience]. I am not certain about my certainty; I do not believe in my own faith; rather, I believe that which God has done in Christ.[52]

Barth is careful, however, to demonstrate that he is not rejecting the believer's experience of salvation as such, but rather qualifying what he understands to be its proper location: 'With respect to what I can experience psychologically of salvation: naturally salvation is something we can experience.'[53] However, Barth goes on to say that it is necessary to distinguish between human mind, will and conscience with respect to this experience and the source of the actual event of the experience itself: 'What there is on the human side, I will rejoice that I am permitted to have this treasure in a jar of clay. But I do not want to confuse the treasure for the jar.'[54] Barth then continues, commenting wryly, 'I do not know whether what I have said here is "Methodist orthodoxy" or not', concluding his statement by returning to a theme already apparent in his first commentary on Romans, though now in a much more positive tone: 'I do not deny the salvation experience. I wouldn't think of doing that! The salvation experience is that which happened on Golgotha. In contrast, my own experience is only a vessel.'[55] It is significant here that Barth is not pointing towards a particular doctrinal statement about Christ or justification, but rather to the event of the Cross itself. The language is milder than his earlier emphasis on death from the 1920s, but the theological content remains remarkably similar.

Noticing the generally positive character of Barth's statement about the salvation experience, one of the pastors then followed up by asking: 'There was a time when you were not disposed to speak in this positive way about the experience of salvation. Considered on a purely psychological level, what has changed for you to bring this about?' Barth's response, which is worth quoting at length, rehearses some of the key points in his development as detailed in this paper above:

> I will give you an answer. I come [originally] out of the liberal theology stream, from Wilhelm Herrmann in Marburg and also from Adolf Harnack … I heard no word as often as the word 'experience.' I absorbed all this, and for years I preached to my people in Safenwil about this 'experience.' And then I discovered that behind this theology stood the great Schleiermacher. Then through my reading I also met up with Pietism. I noticed that before Friedrich Schleiermacher there was also a Philip Jakob Spener and an August Hermann Francke (back then I had not concerned myself so much with John Wesley) …
>
> Then in the pulpit I had my breath taken away. I began to read the Bible more and so to look more attentively at what God has done. [And then it dawned on me: the] Bible does not [testify to] 'experience,' rather to the acts of God. And then as it happens in these matters, there has to be a 180-degree turn made, from pious humans to God himself, who has done everything in Christ that was needed to redeem the world. Then I began to write books. I read a great deal [for this task], including many Pietist biographies, and in this activity I said to myself: wait a minute, it does not work *like that*! Pietism and rationalism are brothers: they [both think in] human-centered [ways] … Whenever I heard the word 'Pietism' or just had the inkling it was close by, I believed that I had to engage it strongly. So it happened that with the position I took against the experientiality of salvation, I gave offense to many good, pious people.[56]

As he did frequently in such conversations near the end of his life, Barth goes on to qualify his remarks, both past and present, with, 'Now I have become somewhat older … Now I do not have to turn so fiercely against this expression of faith', though 'I do not have to take back anything. At that time, it was right, and these things had to be said.'[57]

In this it is clear that Barth felt the time was appropriate for a softening of rhetoric, but certainly without a substantive change in theological content from his earliest expressions as a radically dialectical theologian: the event and experience of salvation was the Cross and Resurrection of Christ and this is an event in which a believer can share and experience, but also never make his or her own, because it always implies a particular kind of relationship between God and humanity. As a result, as least as far as Barth is concerned, the answer to the question of what Basel might have to do with Epworth can really only be answered by those willing to say where they themselves stand in relation to the event of the Cross. Whereas the interest among contemporary Holiness and Methodist scholars in Barth's theology may not prove that they find Barth convincing on this point, they have clearly shown that they find it compelling.

Notes

1. A translation of the first edition, Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief: (Erste Fassung) 1919* (ed. Hermann Schmidt; GA 2.16; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1985), has yet to be published. The second edition is widely available in English as Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, Oxford: Oxford University, 1933.
2. Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists: The Young Karl Barth's Critique of Pietism and its Response*, trans. Daniel W. Bloesch, Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004, pp. 11–12.
3. Christophe Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians: Wilhelm Herrmann, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann*, Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2005, pp. 65–81: 'Anyone who believes the young Barth was a purebread liberal theologian, i.e. a critically and historically minded, anthropocentric and immanentist theologian, should carefully (re-)read his early works' (p. 65).
4. Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, pp. 13–17.
5. See, for example, Karl Barth, 'Gespräch mit Methodistenprediger (1961)', in Hinrich Stoevesandt (ed.), *Karl Barth: Gespräche, vol. 1, 1959–1962*, GA 4.1, Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1995, pp. 176–7. Karl Barth, 'Conversation with Methodist Pastors (1961)', trans. John Flett and David MacLachlan, in Karlfried Froehlich and Darrell Guder (eds), *Barth in Conversation, vol. 1, 1959–1962*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, forthcoming 2017. Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, pp. 1–130.
6. Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, pp. 33–59. On the relationship between Ritschl, Herrmann and Harnack, see Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, pp. 45–52.
7. Albrecht Ritschl, *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, 3 vols, Bonn: Marcus, 1870–74. Only the third and most significant volume has been translated into English: *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902.
8. Albrecht Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus*, 3 vols, Bonn: Marcus, 1880–86.

9. Albrecht Ritschl, 'Prolegomena to the History of Pietism (1880)', in *Three Essays*, trans. Philip Hefner, Eugene, OR: Wipf, 1972.
10. Ritschl, 'Prolegomena', pp. 56–105. For Ritschl, the issue is one of the meaning of Christian perfection. See, for example, p. 86: 'Catholic Christianity finds this governing image for its style of life [*Lebensideal*] in monasticism, in the bond created by the obligations of poverty, chastity and obedience (to the superior of the order).' Ritschl accordingly understandings all medieval piety to be an approximation to this idea, even the Franciscans, whose goal was to take the monastic ideal out into the world as opposed to the cloister. In contrast to the Catholic notion, Ritschl summarizes Augsburg Confession articles XVI and XXVII in this way: 'Perfection consists of fear and trust in God through all the conditions of life; this is more fully expressed as fear, trust in God's merciful providence, prayer, and the conscientious carrying out of one's vocation. Such a description is expressly intended as the antithesis to the catholic [*sic*!] view of monasticism.'
11. See Ritschl, 'Prolegomena', pp. 122–139, as well as Albrecht Ritschl, 'Theology and Metaphysics' (1881), in *Three Essays*, pp. 151–217. Ritschl sees Protestant Orthodoxy or Scholasticism to be not only a departure from genuine Protestantism and a return to medieval intellectualism, but also a capitulation to Platonism, with universal formal concepts, to which particular Christian content is then added. In 'Theology and Metaphysics', Ritschl argues that this method explicitly contradicts Luther's doctrine of God (pp. 162, 170, 203–212) and that the Christian's relationship with God is mediated by God's word in the form of either law or gospel, not a mystical union with Christ (*unio mystica*), which for Ritschl is not an authentically Lutheran doctrine, but rather an innovation of the seventeenth century (p. 198).
12. Cf. Ritschl, 'Prolegomena', pp. 84–86.
13. Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, p. 13.
14. Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, pp. 17–25.
15. This assessment is generally disputed today. On Anselm of Canterbury, see, for example, Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quarens Intellectum: Anselm's Proof for the Existence of God in the Context of his Theological System*, Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 1960. On Aquinas, see Gilles Emery, *La théologie trinitaire de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris: Cerf, 2004. On Protestant Orthodoxy, see, for example, Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, vol. 1: Prolegomena to Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987. Wolff and Wegscheider, however, were unquestionably rationalistic in their orientation. With regard to his contemporary Luthardt, in 'Theology and Metaphysics' (1881), in *Three Essays*, pp. 153–154, Ritschl acknowledged he intended to prioritize revelation and faith over reason, but argued that his use of natural theology and dogmatism was simply inconsistent with his statements on the primacy of faith.
16. Ritschl, 'Theology and Metaphysics', pp. 151–217, and Ritschl, 'Prolegomena', pp. 122–139. Cf. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, p. 33.
17. Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, pp. 14–17.
18. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, p. 43.
19. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, p. 38–45.

20. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, p 55. See, for example, the second part of Wilhelm Herrmann's, *Ethik*, in Hartmut Kreß (ed.), *Wilhelm Herrmann: Ethik / Ernst Troeltsch: Grundprobleme der Ethik*, Theologische Studien Texte, vol. 2, Woltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 2002, pp. 72–140, on 'New Birth' and 'Conversion'.
21. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, pp. 55–58 (p. 57).
22. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, p. 44.
23. See Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, pp. 17–25.
24. On this, see especially Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994, pp. 81–83.
25. See, for example, Karl Barth, *The Word of God and Theology*, trans. Amy Marga, London: T & T Clark, 2001.
26. Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002, pp. 70f., cf. p. 97.
27. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, pp. 45–52.
28. Notoriously, in his 1921 book Harnack came to herald the early Christian heretic Marcion as the one figure in the early Church who was able to overcome the inherent contradictions between law and gospel, primarily by rejecting the Old Testament and its God for the 'new God' revealed in the New Testament. Cf. Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott: Eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche*, Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges., 1996.
29. Cf. Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, pp. 22–23.
30. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, pp. 45–52.
31. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, p. 47. The comment in parentheses is also Chalamet's.
32. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, p. 51. For an example of Herrmann's understanding of law and gospel, see Herrmann, *Ethik*, pp. 72, 123.
33. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, pp. 54–58. Cf. Herrmann, *Ethik*, pp. 72–140
34. Herrmann, *Ethik*, pp. 28–37.
35. Herrmann, *Ethik*, pp. 76–77.
36. Herrmann, *Ethik*, pp. 140–87.
37. Cf. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, pp. 130–138.
38. See, for example, Barth, *Der Römerbrief: (Erste Fassung) 1919*, pp. 21, 172 and *passim*. Cf. *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, pp. 53–60.
39. See, for example, Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 162. Cf. Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, pp. 73–78. Cf. Karl Barth, 'Unsettled Questions for Theology Today (1920)', in *Theology and Church: Shorter Writings 1920–1928*, trans. Louise Pettibone Smith, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015, pp. 55–73.
40. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 150.
41. Cf. Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians*, pp. 134–138.
42. Karl Barth, 'The Word in Theology from Schleiermacher to Ritschl', in *Theology and Church*, pp. 200–216.
43. Barth, 'The Word in Theology from Schleiermacher to Ritschl', p. 203.
44. Barth, 'The Word in Theology from Schleiermacher to Ritschl', p. 205.
45. Barth, 'The Word in Theology from Schleiermacher to Ritschl', p. 206.

46. Barth, 'The Word in Theology from Schleiermacher to Ritschl', p. 216.
47. Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists*, pp. 13–17.
48. Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 101. In Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (pp. 119–120), Barth comments that the focus on the Cross of Christ in Pietism actually carried the Reformation notions of vicarious satisfaction and justification 'through pious and rational Pelagianism' of the time.
49. Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 100.
50. Barth, *Der Römerbrief: (Erste Fassung) 1919*, p. 279, This suspicion of 'methodism' was also apparent. For example, in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison: Enlarged Edition*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997, pp. 213, 327, 329, 340, 362, 374.
51. See, for example, Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV, 3.1: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, trans. G. W. Bromiley, London: T & T Clark, 2004, pp. 28, 31, 38, 511, 513.
52. Barth, 'Gespräch mit Methodistenprediger', p. 175. This and the following translations have been taken from the forthcoming translation by John Flett and David MacLachlan, cited in note 5 above.
53. Barth, 'Gespräch mit Methodistenprediger', p. 175.
54. Barth, 'Gespräch mit Methodistenprediger', p. 175.
55. Barth, 'Gespräch mit Methodistenprediger', pp. 175–176.
56. Barth, 'Gespräch mit Methodistenprediger', pp. 176–177.
57. Barth, 'Gespräch mit Methodistenprediger', p. 177.

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

Making the invisible Christ visible: problems and opportunities for Wesleyan Christology

George Bailey

THE REVD DR GEORGE BAILEY is Lecturer in Mission and Wesleyan Studies at Cliff College, Derbyshire, UK, and a Methodist presbyter serving in the Leeds North and East Circuit. He holds degrees in theology from Oxford, Manchester and Cambridge, and currently moderates theologyeverywhere.org, which offers a weekly online theological reflection, sponsored by the Methodist Church in Great Britain.

george.bailey@methodist.org.uk
Leeds, UK

Wesley's Christology has been critiqued as inadequate and potentially unorthodox in a variety of ways, some of them contradictory. The most telling critical analysis has been by John Deschner (1960, 1985, 1988) using Reformed christological categories in his research supervised by Karl Barth. While affirming the Methodist emphases on 'the whole Christ' and 'the present Christ' in soteriological perspective, he also asks pressing questions about how Wesleyan theology can resolve apparent tensions between Christ and the law, and how it can better express the wholeness of Christ, moving beyond individual soteriology towards a more comprehensive vision of ecclesial wholeness and the wholeness of the human community. Wesleyan theologians have in turn responded to these questions in a range of ways, with varying success. What are the parameters and prospects for Wesleyan Christology in the light of this debate, and how does this relate to the contemporary missiological context?

JOHN WESLEY • CHRISTOLOGY • JOHN DESCHNER • KARL BARTH • REFORMED THEOLOGY

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 207–224

ISSN 2058-5969

Introduction

> *But Jesus concealed himself* – Probably by becoming invisible.'
> (John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*: John 8:59)

John Wesley's Christology has been critiqued as inadequate and potentially unorthodox in a variety of ways. The most fully developed critical analysis has been by John Deschner in his book *Wesley's Christology: An Interpretation* (first published in 1960, then reissued with a new introduction in 1985),[1] using Reformed christological categories in his research supervised by Karl Barth. He asks pressing questions about how Wesleyan theology can resolve apparent tensions between Christ and the law, and how it can better express the wholeness of Christ to move beyond individual soteriology towards a more comprehensive vision of ecclesial wholeness and the wholeness of the human community. Despite its age, this remains the fullest and most penetrating discussion of Wesley's Christology, and demands attention from all who approach the topic. Wesleyan theologians have responded to the questions Deschner raises in a range of ways, some of which will be considered below.[2] What are the parameters and prospects for Wesleyan Christology in the light of this debate, and how can constructive theological work proceed? The aim of this essay is to discuss Wesley's Christology primarily by engaging with Deschner's work, and from this discussion to open up new Wesleyan ways of understanding Christology from the particular perspective of the current experience of sanctification. While acknowledging the same problems as identified by Deschner, this is a more optimistic reading of their causes and correspondingly of the way that they represent opportunities for christological developments.

Deschner's book is the result of research carried out under the supervision of Karl Barth (1953–56). One of the significant contributions it made to Wesleyan scholarship and contemporary Wesleyan theology was to frame a systematic discussion of Wesleyan Christology by using categories from what he terms 'Protestant Orthodoxy'.[3] Deschner does not directly engage Barth's own theology, but draws on Heinrich Heppe's 1861 *Reformed Dogmatics* and Heinrich Schmid's 1889 *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. The Barthian influence is in the background, but the explicit dialogue is with Reformed and Lutheran orthodoxy. He follows the schema of the two natures of Christ, human and divine, the two states of Christ, humiliation and exaltation, and, most significantly, the three offices of Christ, prophet, priest and king.

Encouraged by Karl Barth he poses the question of which of these three offices is primary for Wesley, and hence the key to his understanding of the nature and work of Christ. In the absence of any full development of this schema by Wesley, this is an *interpretative* decision. Some reviews of the book saw in this interpretation an imposition on Wesley from a Barthian perspective; hence Franz Hildebrandt's comment that at some points Deschner is 'reading Wesley through Barthian spectacles'.[4] Though mindful of this, it is also apparent that the dialogue between Wesley's texts and a Reformed position is part of the welcome insight that Deschner brings.

On the particular suggestion from Barth to use the threefold office as an analytic tool, Deschner comments:

> Wesley can be read as a legalist or enthusiast if the prophetic or kingly offices are made fundamental to the work of Christ. He can be read in a decidedly more evangelical light if the priestly office becomes the starting point for understanding the others.[5]

This discussion of the relations between the three offices is one which continues in Wesleyan theology and is echoed in contemporary ecumenical discussions. Just one example is the case Geoffrey Wainwright makes in his 1997 work on Christology for the threefold office coming out from its predominantly Reformed roots, and now being used more widely in ecumenical theological explorations.[6] He sees the threefold office as a good vehicle to now press ahead with the 'active appreciation and further transmission of Classic Christianity',[7] and he also acknowledges that Deschner's work marks a significant Wesleyan contribution to this movement.[8]

In brief, Deschner's conclusions from his analysis of the two natures, two states and three offices are that Wesley's Christology overemphasises the divine nature of Christ in opposition to the human nature, is primarily based from the perspective of Christ in exaltation rather than in humiliation, and makes the priestly work of Christ primary, 'and indeed a priestly work which includes the prophetic and kingly work as one'.[9] From an historical perspective, these christological emphases are the result of polemical debates with various theological strands, most importantly eighteenth-century Calvinism. With regards to the primacy of the priestly office, Deschner goes on to conclude, 'Wesley is not Calvin here: Wesley is much more interesting simply as Wesley, even in his doctrine of justification.'[10]

What are the problems with Wesley's Christology?

Before working within these broad characterisations to seek the opportunities they present for Wesleyan Christology, it will be illuminating to explore the major problems which Deschner identifies within Wesley's Christology. Wesley's Christology presents problems in two key ways:

- an under-emphasis on the humanity of Christ;
- a problematic relationship between Christ and the law.

Under-emphasis on the humanity of Christ

This is the clearest symptom of a deeper problem. Especially in his *Notes on the New Testament* Wesley emphasises the divinity of Christ, and on several occasions complements this with a failure to fully describe and develop Christ's human nature. In the most extreme instances Christ's human nature is deliberately limited. One of the strongest critics of Wesley over this point was Albert Outler. His harshest comment is made when Wesley identifies Jesus clearly as God in order to explain the authoritative weight of the Sermon on the Mount. Wesley describes Jesus as

> something more than human; more than can agree to any created being. It speaks the Creator of all – a God, a God appears! Yea, *ὁ ὤν*, the being of beings, Jehovah, the self-existent, the supreme, the God who is over all, blessed for ever![11]

Outler comments that at times he so made 'a direct correlation between the human Jesus and the Second Person of the Trinity' that there is 'no kenosis here, but more than a hint of Wesley's practical monophysitism'.[12] Though Wesley does not ever state any monophysite doctrine – that Christ has just one divine nature – his practical description of the human Jesus can sometimes invite this conclusion. Other critical potential accusations include Nestorianism, the notion that there are two separate hypostases in Christ, and docetism, the notion that Christ ever remains divine and merely appears to be human – Kenneth Collins sees the need to defend Wesley against the charge of Nestorianism,[13] and Deschner defends him against the charge of docetism.[14] However, as Richard Riss wisely points out, these various accusations of heresy are mutually exclusive and they cannot all be correct.[15] The aim here is to seek a more optimistic diagnosis to allow correction, or at least understanding, of

the more problematic comments, while also opening new perspectives on the wider scope of Wesleyan Christology.

There are two key examples in Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* where the deliberate under-emphasis on the humanity of Christ is apparent from the way in which Wesley interprets gospel verses which suggest Jesus experienced human weakness or emotion.

This is a factor throughout Wesley's commentary on the death and rising of Lazarus in John 11. John 11:33 states that Jesus, 'groaned deeply and troubled himself'. However, Wesley comments that 'the affections of Jesus were not properly passions, but voluntary emotions, which were wholly in his own power. And this tender trouble, which he now voluntarily sustained, was full of the highest order and reason.'[16] Then, in verse 35, he does not allow that Jesus wept out of grief and sadness, but only 'out of sympathy with those who were in tears all around Him, as well as from a deep sense of the misery sin had brought upon human nature'.[17] Wesley here denies Jesus ordinary human emotional reactions to bereavement.

Discussing the wilderness temptations of Matthew 4, in a sermon describing the perfected Christian, Wesley also suggests that Jesus is not capable of having any evil thoughts. When invited to fall down and worship the devil, though Jesus may have 'thought of the sin', he was not *capable* of actually having any 'sinful thought', and so it is for 'real Christians'; 'if he was free from evil or sinful thoughts, so are they likewise'.[18] Here Wesley's optimistic view of the prospects for sinlessness is complemented by a Christology which limits the extent to which Christ's human nature is similar to our imperfect human state.

Going beyond this is the associated, and more unusual, claim of Wesley that when Jesus escapes from angry crowds he does so by becoming invisible. John 8:59 describes how Jesus 'concealed himself' to evade the angry crowd in the Temple, and Wesley explains, 'probably by becoming invisible'.[19] Wesley makes a similar comment on Luke 4:30 when Jesus escapes from the crowd at Nazareth. These are striking in that there was no need here for Wesley to defend Christ's divinity, and suggests that there may be more to his particular christological views than just concern for the doctrine of perfection. Wesley is at least wary, but at most disallows, that Jesus has human emotional responses, suffers temptation from evil thoughts, or is limited by usual physical human constraints. Some react to this christological problem by downplaying its significance. Principal among those taking this approach are Randy Maddox and Kenneth Collins. Both argue that these are unusual examples among a

much stronger body of evidence that Wesley's basic Christology of the two natures in one person is simply in line with Chalcedonian orthodoxy and the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. Both give support for this view from Wesley's own stated reserve over describing Christ too casually. In Wesley's sermon 'On Knowing Christ after the Flesh' Wesley argues against 'fondling expression' and 'improper familiarity' with Christ.[20] Incidentally, the introduction to this sermon is another place where Outler raises the concern of monophysitism! Although the reverent reserve of Wesley may explain some of the ways that he refers to Christ, it is a matter of interpretation as to the extent to which this can excuse doctrinal issues. Combined with this is the concern that at least some of the examples of Wesley's are also associated with explicit related doctrinal factors. It is Wesley's soteriology which shapes his Christology, and it has already been noted that one of his limitations on the humanity of Christ was in the sermon on 'Christian Perfection' and pertained to the relationship between the nature of humanity in Christ and the nature of sanctified humanity in Christians.

There are three other examples of Wesley's doctrinal reserve concerning the humanity of Christ in the *Notes Upon the New Testament*,[21] and a further concern is raised by his editing of the Thirty-Nine Articles.[22] However, these various texts present similar christological concerns to the more stark instances already discussed. Rather than discussing the nuances of multiple examples, it will be helpful at this point to turn to Deschner's christological analysis of Wesley's soteriology, for there he locates an even more challenging problem.

Problematic relationship between Christ and the law

A problematic relationship between Christ and the law is apparent when Wesley is giving an account of how the work of Christ relates to the call for those who trust in that work to live a holy life. This account is dependent upon particular decisions which Wesley takes regarding the work of Christ. It is in Wesley's presentation of the priestly work of Christ that Deschner sees the key to understanding the prophetic and kingly work, and the heart of the relationship between his Christology and his soteriology. Deschner connects the over-prominence of the divinity of Jesus with Wesley's view of the atonement and its relation to sanctification. Wesley's view of the atonement turns on the fact that the Son of God has died for us, because of which we are justified, and this opens the way to a distinct regeneration and subsequent sanctification. The emphasis on the divinity of Christ which this atonement requires is accompanied by a focus on the passive righteousness of Christ

rather than on his active righteousness.[23] Drawing this distinction starkly, Wesley bases his understanding of the atonement on the way that Christ passively gives himself over to suffering for our sake, rather than on the way that in Christ's active life and ministry is realised the sinless human life which we are unable to achieve. In this, Wesley treads a very fine line in his polemics with Calvinists, and goes so far in one of his most complete statements on this matter, the sermon on 'The Lord Our Righteousness' published in 1771, as to quote Calvin's *Institutes* extremely carefully on the subject: 'Christ by his obedience procured and merited for us grace and favour with God the Father.'[24] Outler points out that Wesley does not go on to include Calvin's subsequent thought that faith is the formal cause of justification;[25] this is because it would entail predestination of the elect and irresistible grace. It is also clear that although Wesley quotes this line from Calvin appreciatively, he understands the way in which Christ's obedience is imputed to believers, particularly his active obedience, in a quite different way.

For Wesley, what is most significant about the life of Jesus is that in him the divine Son of God in passive obedience allowed himself to be handed over to suffering and death for our sake. This emphasis on the passive righteousness of Christ is complementary with Wesley's polemics against Calvinist accounts of the imputed active righteousness of Christ, which he fears may discourage striving for holiness and encourage antinomianism. Wesley makes a fine, though not always clear, distinction between the way righteousness is merited to us because of Jesus Christ's self-offering, and the righteousness which he actively demonstrates by leading a life without sin. This active righteousness is not imputed to us in the same way as the passive righteousness. Though the active obedience of Christ is inseparable from the passive obedience,[26] and *is imputed* to us in justification, it is not imputed as holiness. In some way, though, it is still connected to the holiness which is expected to be realised in the believer as fruit of sanctification. Deschner argues that it is hard to imagine exactly how – but somehow, 'Wesley's explicit position is that the active obedience which counts for the believer is his own obedience, not Christ's.'[27]

It is precisely by the avoidance of imputed active righteousness that Wesley's sanctification-led soteriology allows for growth in the Christian life. The active righteousness of Christ is not imputed to us but is rather the image of perfect human life towards which we strive. It is only the passive righteousness which establishes a change in our relationship with God through the justifying death of Jesus Christ. This makes space for Wesley's central theological concern for sanctification: the work of Christ is primarily to open the way for the potential

work of the Spirit in the life of believers as they are sanctified towards the holiness of Christ-likeness. Deschner sees here the danger of excessive individualism, which combined with the limited role for the active righteousness of Christ means there is no place in Wesley's Christology for the notion that it is the Incarnation which can sanctify humanity corporately. Wesley's lack of development of the human nature of the incarnate Christ and the complementary under-development of its relation, on the one hand, to the divine nature, and on the other hand, to the general nature of humanity, precludes any such corporate effect of the Incarnation. This then opens the question of what precisely the process of sanctification is progressing individual humans towards. 'Following the example of Jesus' seems insufficient as it fails to denote exactly what in the nature of the incarnate Christ is an aspect of sanctified humanity and what is reserved to the nature of divinity. Wesley must still make this distinction as he does not, for example, expect that all sanctified believers will work nature miracles.

Deschner adds to this critical analysis of Wesley's Christology by noting that, in place of the active righteousness of Christ and the corporate effects of the unity of the dual nature in the Incarnation, Wesley depends on 'the law' to play a significant part. When Wesley describes the law in three sermons published in 1750, the christological language he uses shows that following the law is a necessary aspect of pursuing Christ-likeness, and thus the law has a bearing on the understanding of the identity and nature of Christ. The strength of identification of the law with Christ is well illustrated by these two lines:

> Now this law [the 'moral law'] is an incorruptible picture of the high and holy one that inhabiteth eternity … Yea, in some sense we may apply to this law what the Apostle says of his Son – it is the 'streaming forth' or outbeaming 'of his glory, the express image of his person. [cf Heb. 1:1][28]
>
> The law of God (speaking after the manner of men) is a copy of the eternal mind, a transcript of the divine nature; yea it is the fairest offspring of the everlasting Father, the brightest efflux of his essential wisdom, the visible beauty of the Most High.[29]

The law to which Wesley applies this christological language is the 'moral law', rather than the Mosaic Law, by which he means the discernment of the divine will which is initially available to conscience after the fall, then exemplified by the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount and finally fulfilled in

the life of Christ. The law for Wesley has a continuing vital role after justification in sanctification. The *imago Dei* in Christ, as revealed by his active obedience, is a fulfilment and re-proclamation of the moral law, which it is promised will be written on the hearts of those who trust in the Lord.

He describes sanctification as the realisation of this law within oneself, and the law plays a twin role with Christ in the process of sanctification: 'Indeed each is continually sending me to the other – the law to Christ, and Christ to the law.'[30] Wesley identifies three uses for the law – the first two, wherein the law acts like a 'severe schoolmaster', are to convince the world of sin, and to bring the sinner to Christ. The third use of the law is to 'keep us alive. It is the grand means whereby the blessed Spirit prepares the believer for larger communications of the life of God'.[31] The 'law of Christ', using that as shorthand for the law as fulfilled in Christ, serves the first two uses for a believer. However, for the third use, bearing in mind Wesley's refusal to allow the imputed righteousness of Christ in sanctification, what role exactly does the law play? Is it really a mere example to be followed? It is continuous with the moral law as proclaimed in creation, in the prevenient grace at work in the fallen world, in the re-establishment in Christ, and so also in the future as the standard by which all are to be judged; so, if the law of Christ is an example to be followed, how will this judgement function for the saved who fail to fully follow it?

From this juncture arise the two most cutting of Deschner's criticisms of Wesley's Christology. First, Deschner fears that in this identification of the law with Christ, particularly with the way it encompasses the 'moral law' acknowledged by all through conscience, Wesley has opened the way for other principles, from outside of Christian theology, to become the guiding definition of holiness:

> Does the Wesleyan holiness derive from Christ's revelation of what holiness is, or does it find in Christ a confirmation for an idea of holiness whose content has been learned, possibly only in part, elsewhere?[32]

And further:

> And to this understanding of the content of holiness corresponds the fact that for Wesley sanctification is not primarily a participation in Christ who, as Paul says, is also our sanctification (I Cor. 1:30), but rather such a relation to Christ as allows his Spirit to establish in us

> a 'temper,' a more abstract, stylized kind of holiness … Wesley here makes his most significant departure from his own most characteristic path: from the cross to holiness. It is in this departure that the danger of a periodic identification of Wesleyan holiness with a puritan, socialist, existentialist, or any other stylized morality is greatest.[33]

The second associated key criticism Deschner levels at Wesleyan Christology is whether the justice and mercy of God can be reconciled if the promise of the law is dependent upon the realisation of human holiness rather than solely on the work of Christ. Is God's justice ever really satisfied in Wesley's atonement? Deschner does concede that Wesley makes clear that 'the positive fulfilling of the law's demand takes place not in justification, but in sanctification'.[34] The remaining hope for Deschner of the satisfaction of God's justice in declaring his holy people righteous (or not) can only be met in the final justification. Yet here, too, Wesley follows the particular view of imputed righteousness he already established as operative in first justification. Although the imputed righteousness of Christ continues to merit justification for sins, the actual works of the righteous will also be counted in the judgement, and if they are found lacking it will not be according to justice, but to love alone that they can be declared righteous. Wesley makes this clear in his comment on Matthew 12:37, where Jesus refers to the final judgement:

> Your words as well as actions shall be produced in evidence for or against you, to prove whether you was a true believer or not. And according to that evidence you will either be acquitted or condemned in the great day.[35]

In Wesley's final justification, there is a combined action of the passive righteousness of Christ applying the merit of atonement for sins committed, with faith in the sanctifying work of the Spirit to actually realise the law fulfilled by Christ in the life of those justified. In the late sermon 'On the Wedding Garment', published in 1791 (outside the scope of Deschner's research which was limited to the earlier standard sermons), Wesley argues that it is possible for the grace of God to go further than merely to cover over our corrupt nature, but actually to accomplish 'the renewal of the soul "in the image of God wherein it was created" … the imagination that faith supersedes holiness is the marrow of antinomianism'.[36]

Deschner responds by asking whether the semi-independent moral law is a demand that humanity can ever meet, and so the divine mercy triumphs over and above the law – hence, does God really die for mercy, but without justice? Deschner comments first:

> the divine nature is there [on the Cross] much more to make tolerable a situation where 'justice' is not being done, according to that semi-independent moral law. Could there be a more eloquent testimony that the moral law actually does have penultimate significance, and that Wesley really does mean for the law to lead us to Christ and to keep us there?[37]

And then Deschner laments further: 'It must be said that Wesley's evangelical intention has the final word. And the price of this word is a qualified satisfaction of the positive demand of God's justice.'[38]

Both these most drastic of criticisms from Deschner have a particularly Reformed flavour to them. The easiest remedies which his criticisms invite are essentially a return to what Deschner has characterised as 'Protestant Orthodoxy', with imputed active righteousness of Christ to fulfil divine justice in the final justification, and a sole priority for the Word of God realising holiness in humanity, rather than relying on humanity's own fulfilling of the law of Christ. Either of these remedies would resolve the difficulties of Wesley's Christology, but with the unfortunate complementary effect of negating what he fought so hard to protect: the possibility of the realisation of holiness and fulfilment of the law in the life of believers in *this* day, not only in the great final day of judgement.

Opportunities for Wesleyan Christology

Deschner has helpfully and thoroughly diagnosed the unusual problematic features of Wesleyan Christology, but in so doing also highlights the positive outcomes of these.

To some extent unsurprisingly, this analysis using what is most often a Reformed schema has reproduced some of the doctrinal tensions between Wesleyan theology and the Calvinism of the eighteenth century. With regard to Calvin on justification, Wesley famously claimed only to 'differ from him a hair's breadth'.[39] However, in the letter to John Newton, the famous ex-slaver

and Calvinist, where he argues this, Wesley goes on in the next line to say, 'But the main point between you and me is perfection.' Newton has made the accusation that perfection leads to 'dangerous mistakes', and Deschner's analysis has shown how in fact there may be something in this, at least from Newton's own doctrinal perspective. Wesley compares Newton's opposition to perfection as a 'grave mistake leading to grievous errors' with Wesley's own similar opposition to Calvinist understandings of predestination. Wesley's conception of the relation of the righteousness of Christ to justification does differ from Calvin's and, even if Wesley himself did not see them, there are apparent problems both in the doctrine of the human nature of Christ, and of the reconciliation of God's justice and mercy in salvation. However, Wesley finally defends his doctrine of perfection to Newton, not on doctrinal grounds, but explaining the continuity of his call to holiness from 1725 to the present, and that it is based on the experience of over twenty thousand people (though this seems likely to be hyperbole rather than a precise statistical argument!).

Deschner attributes the tension in Wesley's soteriology and Christology to the fact that he had a moralistic approach to sanctification from an early age, which was interrupted by an evangelical conversion in 1738. This view of Wesley's theological biography, and especially Aldersgate, is overly simplistic, and demonstrates Deschner's bias towards giving too much weight to Wesley's doctrine of justification by faith. Wesley does indeed develop this doctrine in the years immediately following 1738, but equal, or even extra, weight should be given to Wesley's own claim that the pivotal point and 'grand depositum' of his teaching was not justification by faith, but full sanctification.[40]

Assuming that Wesleyan Christology desires to retain this pivotal point of sanctification (or else it ceases to be Wesleyan?), response to Deschner's critique needs to positively defend the focus on sanctification in the life of the Church. It is this that Wesleyan theology prioritises, and which the subsequent difficulties of other aspects of theological thinking must be fitted around or within. Deschner himself does suggest some key areas for christological development which would serve to strengthen the outline of justification and sanctification at the heart of a Wesleyan theology. However, having now established some critique of his particular diagnosis, this essay proposes four corrective strategies which seek to draw together the experience of sanctification with the systematic theology necessary to connect Christology and soteriology in a distinctively Wesleyan way:

1 The development of a strong pneumatology, in close relation to the Christology.

2 A focus on the present experience of sanctification as the primary locus for christological revelation, rather than only in the experience of justification.

3 The priestly work of Christ as intercessor can become the primary way that Christians relate to Christ, accompanied by, but not led by, the priestly work of justification.

4 A discovery, or rediscovery, of how a Wesleyan ecclesiology has christological roots and content.

This essay will end with a brief account of how these four correctives might interact, beginning in dialogue with two Wesleyan theologians who do go some way to explore in these directions how they respond to Deschner.

Henry Knight argues that Deschner has too excessively viewed the work of Christ in Wesley's theology as a past event and that Deschner neglects Wesley's guiding concern to preserve room for the continuing work of Christ in the contemporary life of the believer.[41] Christ's active obedience can be at work as more than a mere exemplar, through the way that human affections are shaped to produce a sanctified life. Wesley uses the affections to re-focus the believer on Christ at work in her own present and future. Knight explains: 'They are truly our affections, but are only Christian affections if they remain continually related to God as their object.'[42] Employing a similar argument against Deschner, Geoffrey Clapper uses the term 'transitive' to describe how for Wesley the affections properly take as their object the active obedience of Christ, which produces love, joy and peace in the believer's heart. Furthermore, he uses the term 'dispositional' to describe how these transformed affections result in altered behaviour. The affections, having been transformed by 'targeting' attention on Christ, become right dispositions towards the world.[43]

However, though both Knight and Clapper concentrate their interpretations on the inward process of sanctification achieved through the affections in a Wesleyan psychological framework, this is somewhat at the expense of adequate recognition for Wesley's insistence upon the direct experience of the Holy Spirit which drives this process. Using Wesley's terminology derived from Romans 8, they focus on the 'witness of our own spirit' without a preceding and primary focus in the 'witness of the Spirit'. The problems with Wesley's

depiction of the Incarnation and his unusual relation between Christ and the law can be seen to be the result of a desire to focus on the experience of Christ in the present life of believers through the work of the Spirit. Christ's active obedience, consisting of love for God and humanity and a right ordering of affections and dispositions towards the neighbour, is neither only past exemplar nor only future criteria of judgement, but also a present reality unfolding through the witness and work of the Spirit made available to humanity now. Though there are clearly deficiencies in Wesley's account of the humanity of Jesus, the present experiential and pneumatological centre of his theology is where these problems can be resolved. The union between the divine and human natures established in the Incarnation is made effective by the witness of the Spirit in the lives of the saints. The relationship of Christians to the Trinity by union with Christ through the Spirit both reveals the incarnate nature of Christ and generates a human participation in the sanctifying effects of the divine nature upon the human nature in Christ. This does not mean that justification is left behind at the beginning of Christian life, but it is made an ever-present reality in the priestly work of Christ as intercessor. In a helpful section identifying the potential, but under-developed, importance of Christ's priestly intercession, Deschner also notes the links between this and the gift of the Holy Spirit, 'who makes intercession for us in our hearts as Christ intercedes in heaven',[44] and also with the 'doctrine of the church as the Body of the interceding Christ'.[45]

Wesley's christological view of the moral law is not necessarily, as Deschner fears, an open door to secular influence on the Christian pursuit of holiness, but instead encourages Christians not to rely solely upon the active righteousness of Christ to describe the detail of moral decisions and habits necessary for Christ-likeness. It is as Christians consider how the law written on their hearts, by the Spirit and through Christ, can be lived with faith and integrity in their own place and day, that this law, and so also Christ, is understood in new ways. Christ-likeness is not received as an historically fixed image, but is discovered afresh as we live the law of Christ in each situation. What Deschner feared to be a back door allowing a way in for non-Christian morality should be seen, from a Wesleyan perspective, as an open front door to the world. With a Wesleyan Christology focused on the Christian community as it is being sanctified, the realities of all life are included as part of the formation of scriptural holiness.

Any theology based on the Wesleyan debates of the eighteenth century ever runs the risk of remaining overly individualistic. However, if faithful to the

insights of a sanctification-led Christology, there is also the potential for a corporate aspect in the present sanctifying work of Christ. A key concept in Wesleyan ecclesiology will be 'social holiness', which defends sanctification against individualism. This demands a renewed Wesleyan ecclesiology and a complementary sacramental and liturgical focus. An adequate Wesleyan Christology can only be worked out by turning to the lives and worship of the present people of God as they are sanctified both as individuals and corporately in relation to the world.

Finally, what might all this mean for the invisible Jesus in the Temple? It has been argued that the problems with Wesley's Christology over the humanity of Christ and the relation between Christ and the law are correctly identified by John Deschner, but that the invitation to adopt Reformed solutions, or even simply to prioritise evangelical justification, is not the way to tackle them. Rather, the identification of the problems should be accompanied by an understanding that they are caused by the shaping of a theology which is led always by the practical desire to facilitate and encourage the experience of sanctification. Hence it is through this lens that any Wesleyan corrective theological work should be carried out on Wesleyan Christology.

The discovery of Christ-like sanctified living in the contemporary Christian Church can only be pursued in dialogue with the scriptural Jesus. Whereas Wesley protected the human nature of Jesus from the physical and harsh realities of human life, including grief, ignorance, sinful thoughts and attack by angry mobs, it has been argued that a sanctification-led Christology demands a Christ-like engagement with these human realities in the world. It is a helpful Wesleyan principle that our understanding of Scripture is in tune with the evidence of the work of the Spirit in the world, and so in the world we might seek the Christ-like model for understanding Christ in the Gospels. Jesus facing the mobs in John 8 and Luke 4 provides just one example of how this theological position might work exegetically. Contemporary Christians do face angry mobs when called to speak prophetically of God's saving justice. They will not be escaping with miracles of invisibility, but they may practise non-violent resistance and work for reconciliation, and these patterns can also be discovered in the human Christ of the Gospels as he walks away from the crowds and lives within the vulnerability of his human nature.

This essay has engaged with John Deschner's seminal work on Wesley's Christology and found there much insight for identifying the shape of the apparent problems. These problems have though been diagnosed differently

as the open edges of a theology which is led more by the present experience of sanctification than by the demand for internal coherence. As such, they have been seen less as problems and rather as opportunities to invite the construction of a Christology which takes on the current experience of Christ in the Church and the world as a conversation partner with the Christ of Scripture. Meeting Christ in the world and in our lives, by the work of the Holy Spirit, can make Wesley's invisible Christ visible again, both in Scripture and in our present reality.

Notes

1. John Deschner, *Wesley's Christology: An Interpretation*, Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1960, 2nd edn, 1985.
2. The whole range of available analyses of Wesley's Christology is summarised and surveyed, Richard M. Riss, 'John Wesley's Christology in Recent Literature', *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 45(1) (Spring 2010), pp. 108–129.
3. In this he was following nineteenth-century Wesleyan systematics, for example William Burt Pope's *Compendium of Christian Theology* (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1880), and more recent German work on John Wesley's theology by David Lerch: *Heil und Heiligung bei John Wesley* (Zurich: Chrsitliche Veriensbuchhandlung, 1941).
4. Franz Hildebrandt, 'Wesley's Christology', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 33(6) (June 1962), pp. 122–124. See also the review by Geoffrey Wainwright which attributes all the criticisms he makes to Barth's influence: Geoffrey Wainwright, *Perkins Journal* 39(2) (April 1986), pp. 55–56.
5. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology,* p. 82, n. 10.
6. Geoffrey Wainwright, *For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ*, London: SPCK, 1997.
7. Wainwright, *For Our Salvation*, p. 119.
8. Wainwright, *For Our Salvation*, p. 107.
9. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, p. 186.
10. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, p. 186.
11. References to Wesley's sermons are to the text as published in A. C. Outler (ed.), *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*, vols 1–4, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987; abbreviation: *Works*. Sermon 21, 'Sermon on the Mount I' (1748), §9, *Works*, vol. 1, p. 474.
12. Sermon 21, 'Sermon on the Mount I' (1748) §2, note f, *Works* vol. 1, p. 470.
13. Riss, 'John Wesley's Christology', p. 115; citing Kenneth J. Collins, *A Faithful Witness: John Wesley's Homiletical Theology*, Wilmore, KY: Wesley Heritage Press, 1993, pp. 35–43.
14. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, p. 28.
15. Riss, 'John Wesley's Christology', p. 128.
16. John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (1755), London: Epworth Press, reprint edn 1976; abbreviation: *NT Notes*, John 11:33.

17. *NT Notes,* John 11:35.
18. Sermon 40, 'Christian Perfection' (1741), §II.21, *Works*, vol. 2, p. 117.
19. *NT Notes*, John 8:59.
20. Sermon 123, 'On Knowing Christ After the Flesh', §§8–9, *Works*, vol. 4, pp. 101–102; Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994, p. 116; Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace,* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007, pp. 94–95.
21. Mark 6:6, Mark 13:32, Luke 2:52; in each of these, Wesley makes a distinction between the limited knowledge of the human nature of Christ and the all-knowing divine nature. See Deschner, *Wesley's Christology,* p. 31; see also Matthew Hambrick and Michael Lodahl, 'Responsible Grace in Christology? John Wesley's Rendering of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews', *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 43 (Spring 2008), pp. 91–92.
22. Randy Maddox (in *Responsible Grace*, p. 116) points out that in Wesley's *Twenty Five Articles*, his edited version of the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles, from the Article II statement that Jesus 'took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin', he omits the next clause that Jesus was 'of her substance' (*John Wesley's Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America: With an Introduction by James F. White*, Nashville, TN: United Methodist Publishing House, 1984, p. 306). A similar doctrinal reserve in Wesley's *Christian Library* was also noted by Ted Campbell in his analysis of Wesley's excerpted edition of the *Ignatian Epistles* from which are omitted any passages describing Jesus as born 'of the race of David according to the flesh' (*John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991, pp. 80–81).
23. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, pp.152ff.
24. Sermon 20, 'The Lord our Righteousness', §II.9, *Works*, vol. 1, p. 457; citing Calvin, *Institutes* III.xiv.17, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, ET Ford Lewis Battles, Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960, vol. 1, p. 784. Wesley has extracted this passage from John Goodwin's *Imputatio Fidei* (1642). See *Works*, vol. 1, p. 457, note c.
25. Sermon 20, 'The Lord our Righteousness', §II.9, note 44.
26. Sermon 20, 'The Lord our Righteousness', §I.4, *Works*, vol. 1, p. 453.
27. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology,* p. 164.
28. Sermon 34, 'Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law', §II.3, *Works*, vol. 2, p. 9.
29. Sermon 34, 'Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law', §II.6, p. 10
30. Sermon 34, 'Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law', §IV.7, p. 18.
31. Sermon 34, 'Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law', §IV.1–3, pp. 15–16.
32. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, p. 103.
33. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, pp. 105–106.
34. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, p. 174.
35. *NT Notes*, Mt 12:37.
36. Sermon 127, 'On the Wedding Garment' (1791), §§17–18, *Works*, vol. 4, p. 148. Outler attributes the impulse for Wesley to publish this sermon to the persistent

accusations from Calvinists that he espoused works-righteousness – as Outler describes it, Wesley responds with a summary of 'his distinctive emphasis on the unity of faith *and* love in true holiness, as a sort of "last word"'. *Works,* vol. 4, p. 140.

37. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology,* p. 168.
38. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, p. 179.
39. Journal, 14 May 1765, *Works*, vol. 21, p. 509.
40. 'This doctrine [full sanctification] is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up.' *Letters*, vol. 8, p. 238.
41. Henry H. Knight III, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life*, Meutchen, NJ, and London: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1992.
42. Knight III, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life*, p. 59.
43. Geoffrey S. Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, London: The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p. 79.
44. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, p. 170.
45. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, p. 172.

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

Calvin's only prayer: piety and pastoral care in early Reformed thought and practice

Nathan Paylor

DR NATHAN PAYLOR studied theology at Durham and Chester, completing his PhD in 2014 on the definition of the Reformed theological tradition. He lives in Chester, where he runs an inter-denominational theology course for laity.

nathanpaylor@hotmail.com
Chester, UK

Many of the sixteenth-century Reformers were pastors before being anything else. Despite this, it can be easy for us to miss the extent to which practices of piety dominated their personal and theological lives. In this article we will briefly detail the emphasis early Reformed authors placed on piety and pastoral care. We will identify this trait in the works of Ursinus and Bullinger, after which we will focus specifically on Calvin's treatise On the Christian Life.

REFORMERED TRADITION • JOHN CALVIN • HEINRICH BULLINGER • ZACHARIAS URSINUS • PIETY • PASTORAL CARE • CHRISTIAN LIVING

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 225–234

ISSN 2058-5969

Introduction

Throughout the sixteenth century, Switzerland endured several outbreaks of plague. It had already taken its toll on the Swiss Reformers: both Zwingli and Oecolampadius lost children to the sickness. Calvin spoke of how he 'was so affected both in mind and spirit, that I could do naught but lament and bewail'.[1] When the plague reached Geneva in October 1542, Calvin wrote the following to his friend Pierre Viret:

> The pestilence [rages] here with greater violence, and few who are at all affected by it escape its ravages. One of our colleagues was set to be apart for attendance upon the sick … If anything happens to him I fear I must take the risk upon myself, for, as you observe, because we are debtors to one another, we must not be wanting to those who, more than any others, stand in need of our ministry … [So] long as we are in the ministry, I do not see that any pretext will avail us, if, through fear of infection, we are found wanting in the discharge of our duty when there is most need of our assistance.[2]

According to contemporary reports, the civil authorities of Geneva had to compel Calvin *not* to minister to the sick and dying.[3] One is reminded of a comment made many centuries later by J. D. Benoit, regarding Calvin's *Institutes*: '[It] is not only the book of a theologian; it is the book of a man who even before he became a pastor was haunted by a concern for souls.'[4]

Anecdotes such as the one narrated above are remarkably common. It is reported, for example, that Zwingli perished at the Battle of Kappel (1531), not as a result of engaging the enemy in combat (for he did not carry a weapon) but because he was struck by a projectile while ministering to a fallen soldier.[5] The point here is not to prop up a naive Protestant hagiography. Rather, it is to underline the beating, pastoral heart of many sixteenth-century Reformers and the extent to which practices of piety dominated their personal and theological lives. Yet for a variety of reasons this 'beating heart' can easily be drowned out by other concerns. It might be assumed that the scholasticism of later centuries was also typical of sixteenth-century Protestantism, or that the stereotype of Calvinism as dour and heartlessly puritanical holds true for Calvin and his contemporaries. It would be a tragedy if we lost sight of the fact that the Reformers were almost always pastors before anything else, such that the fruit of their scholarly labours was often flavoured by that same concern for piety.[6]

The Reformed prioritising of piety and pastoral care

Over the last few decades a great number of texts have been published concerning the place of piety and pastoral care in early Reformed thought. For Calvin alone we could mention Manetsch's *Calvin's Company of Pastors* (2013), McKee's arrangement of Calvin's *Writings on Pastoral Piety* (2001), Battles' *The Piety of John Calvin* (1978) and Richard's *The Spirituality of John Calvin* (1974). For our purposes it must suffice to perform a general sketch of how many Reformed authors privileged these themes. To do so we will very briefly examine how Bullinger, Ursinus and Calvin perceived the theological task.

Consider Heinrich Bullinger (1504–75), minister of the Church of Zurich and successor to Zwingli. Although an exact model of his theological method is difficult to establish (he was not overly concerned with prolegomena), at one point in his *Third Decade* Bullinger discusses the role of doctrine:

> The greatest offence is that which doth arise of wicked doctrine, directly contrary to the true doctrine of the holy gospel. The next to this is that offence which doth arise of foolish and unseasonable doctrine; which, though it be derived out of the word of God, is notwithstanding either unaptly uttered, or unwisely applied. For the preacher may sin either by too much suffering or lenity; or else by too much sharpness and overthwart waywardness, so that the hearers being offended do wholly draw back from all hearing of the gospel.[7]

Bullinger constructs a distinction between 'wicked doctrine' (that which is contrary to creedal orthodoxy) and 'foolish doctrine'. Bullinger would regard the former as unbiblical, whereas the latter need not be. Doctrine can be foolish *and* be scriptural. Its folly derives from it being 'unseasonable'; disconnected from the ordinary congregation. It fails to assist God's people in their living out of the Christian faith. This is offensive, says Bullinger, because the spiritual life of the ordinary Christian is neglected, ignored or abused. If it is *bad* doctrine that leads a congregation wayward in their *religiosity*, then it is *good* doctrine that leads them forward in their *piety*.[8]

Also consider Zacharias Ursinus (1534–83), the co-author of the Heidelberg Catechism and a student of Melanchthon. Ursinus begins his commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism by outlining the definitional features of a true and living Church.[9] In the commentary's opening sections he states that there are

'three marks by which the church is known: purity of doctrine – the proper use of the sacraments, and obedience to God in all parts of this doctrine, whether of faith or practice'.[10] This for Ursinus is the defining characteristic of church life: sound doctrine must be soundly practised. Orthodoxy must be combined with orthopraxy. Ursinus even describes formal theological training as pastorally directed, with at least two distinct applications. First, the systematic student of doctrine is herself blessed by a 'full and easy understanding of 'the whole system of theology'.[11] According to Ursinus, it is not only intellectually advantageous to pursue theological instruction – it is personally and spiritually beneficial when rightly pursued. Ursinus also assumes that theological students will be able to apply what they have learned *when* they become servants of God's people.[12] The emphasis is deliberate: Ursinus presents pastoral ministry as the rightful conclusion to a person's theological education. The latter is inextricable from the former.

We have already seen how Calvin, too, was concerned for pastoral realities. The *Institutes* contains no detailed methodological preface or introduction. What we find instead is more akin to the sage advice of a pastor-theologian. Here are Calvin's words to the reader, written 1 August 1559:

> I shall think my work has appeared at an opportune time as soon as I perceive that it has borne some richer fruit for the church of God than heretofore. *This is my only prayer* … [It] has been my purpose in this labour to prepare and instruct candidates in sacred theology for the reading of the divine Word, in order that they may be able both to have easy access to it and to advance in it without stumbling.[13]

In the wider Reformation tradition, *pietas* came to be generally associated with the cultivation of godly knowledge and practice,[14] but it was a category of special concern for Calvin. By his own admission, Calvin's 'only hope' was that his work would cultivate the piety of God's people. Indeed, his theology in the *Institutes* is self-defined as the pursuit of 'God knowledge', which in itself is gained through pious devotion.[15] In his words to the reader, Calvin even asks for the reader's prayers,[16] and in his *apologia* to King Francis I he writes that his only 'purpose was solely to transmit certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal for religion might be shaped to true Godliness'.[17]

Calvin on the principles of piety and pastoral care

Commenting on the text of 1 Timothy 4:7–8,[18] Calvin wrote:

> Godliness is the beginning, middle and end of Christian living. Where it is complete, there is nothing lacking … Thus the conclusion is that we should concentrate exclusively on godliness, for when once we have attained to it, God requires no more of us.[19]

We have already sketched how Bullinger, Ursinus and Calvin prioritised piety and pastoral care in their conceiving of the theological task. Now we will consider how Calvin handled this specifically. To wit: how should the believer 'concentrate exclusively' on godliness? We will consider Calvin's short treatise *On the Christian Life*. 'I am not unaware', Calvin writes, 'that in undertaking to describe the life of the Christian, I am entering on a large and extensive subject, one which … is sufficient to fill a large volume.'[20] He continues:

> Doctrine is not an affair of the tongue, but of the life; is not apprehended by the intellect and memory merely, like other branches of learning; but is received only when it possesses the whole soul, and finds its seat and habitation in the inmost recesses of the heart … To doctrine in which our religion is contained we have given the first place, since by it our salvation commences; but it must be transfused into the breast, and pass into the conduct, and so transform us into itself, as not to prove unfruitful.[21]

Calvin's concern in this treatise is to describe how doctrine might be 'transfused into the breast'. To do so he characterises Christian spirituality in four distinct ways. First, he describes the believer's life as a life lived in union with Christ; second, as a life of self-denial; and third, as a life lived in answer to the vocational call of God.

In the *Institutes*, Calvin writes that if we remain separate from Christ, then 'nothing which he suffered and did for the salvation of the human race is of the least benefit to us' – therefore, in order 'to communicate to us the blessings which he received from the Father, he must become ours and dwell in us'.[22] The doctrine of the believer's union with Christ is a staple of Reformed teaching on Christian spirituality. The Heidelberg Catechism (XXX), for example, describes the believer as a 'partaker' of Jesus' anointing,[23] and the Westminster Confession

of Faith (1647) extols the believer's participation in Christ such that the saints have fellowship with Christ in his 'grace, sufferings, death, resurrection and glory'.[24] This spiritual union of the believer with Christ is reliant upon the Reformed understanding of Word and Spirit,[25] and is reflected even in Calvin's eucharistic theology.[26] In his treatise *On the Christian Life*, however, the doctrine of *Unio cum Christo* serves a distinct purpose:

> When mention is made of our union with God, let us remember that holiness must be the bond; not by the merit of holiness we come into communion with him (we ought rather first to cleave to him, in order that, pervaded with his holiness, we may follow whither he calls) but because it greatly concerns his glory not to have any fellowship with wickedness and impurity.[27]

The logic here is reminiscent of that of Paul in his letter to the Corinthians.[28] Calvin is content not simply to describe the believer's union with Christ but to observe its consequences. The Christian lives her life in holy obedience to the One with whom she has been united. Nevertheless, Calvin is keen to maintain a careful tension between perfectionism (on the one hand) and a kind of antinomianism (on the other). 'I insist not so strictly', he writes, 'on evangelical perfection', even if such an aspiration is worth pursuing.[29] If an impeccable record of obedience is required then 'all would be excluded from the Church'. Rather, Calvin is keen for the believer simply to fix their eyes on Christ and be 'sincerely devoted to God in the cultivation of holiness'.[30] Christian piety is found in that tension between an earnest desire for holiness and an acceptance of being created in futility (*simil iustus et peccator*), flowing from a spiritual union with Christ.

Calvin next presents Christian spirituality as consisting in self-denial. This is not at all exclusive to Calvin's thought or to Reformed theology in general. Luther's seventh mark of the Church, for example, is the cross of temptation and persecution.[31] Nevertheless, Calvin's presentation is threefold. First, Christian piety consists of self-denial in so far as it is also robustly theocentric: '[We] are not to seek our own, but the Lord's will, and act with a view to promote his glory … [To] be so trained and disposed as to consider that his whole life has to do with God.'[32] Warfield once quipped that Reformed thought is 'born of the sense of God' – that God fills the whole horizon of the Reformed theologian's thinking.[33] All Christian traditions are theocentric, of course, but Warfield meant to suggest that theocentricism is a particular emphasis of the Reformed

tradition. The first question of the Westminster Larger Catechism illustrates this well: 'Q: What is the chief end of man?' 'A: To glorify God and to enjoy him forever.'[34] Here in his treatise on the Christian life, Calvin is keen to apply this same point to the believer. To deny oneself means (at least in part) to observe the Lord's will with a view to promote his glory. Second, Calvin suggests that a believer's self-denial not only involves the glorification of God but love for neighbour: 'self-denial has respect partly to men and partly (more especially) to God … [for] Scripture enjoins us, in regard to our fellow men, to prefer them in honour to ourselves'.[35] Finally, the believer's life of self-denial consists in suffering for the gospel. This is said to function forensically, testing God's people and 'putting them to the proof'; it is said to improve our fellowship with Christ, and it also serves to provide an 'ocular demonstration of our weakness'.[36]

While discussing the Christian life of self-denial, Calvin writes the following:

> [In] seeking the convenience or tranquillity of the present life, Scripture calls us to resign ourselves, and all we have, to the disposal of the Lord, to give him up the affections of the heart, that he may tame and subdue them … [If] we believe that all prosperous and desirable success depends entirely on the blessing of God, and that when it is wanting all kinds of misery and calamity await us, it follows that we should not eagerly contend for riches and honours … [We] should always have respect to the Lord, that under his auspices we may be conducted to whatever lot he has provided for us.[37]

Here we are confronted by a central aspect of Calvin's account of Christian piety – namely, the significance of divine vocation. In the *Institutes* he writes how each individual 'has his own kind of living assigned to him by the Lord as a sort of sentry post', and that from this we can be encouraged, for 'no task will be sordid and base, provided you obey your calling in it'.[38] This component proved critical for early Reformed spiritual direction. Instead of encouraging a kind of passive fatalism, this charged the Reformed account of Christian piety with a profound sense of agency. In the words of Michael Walzer, the Calvinists came to see themselves 'as divine instruments and theirs was the politics of wreckers, architects and builders – hard at work upon the political world'.[39] As Hambrick-Stowe has observed, while Luther might have laid great emphasis on the doctrine of justification, the Reformed tradition has typically emphasised the experience of sanctification (hence Calvin's emphasis on the *tertium usis legis*).[40]

Calvin's description of one's divine calling tallies with this exact emphasis. Christian piety (according to Calvin) is not just a matter of prayer nor is it restricted to the cloister. The believer experiences the grace of God in real, tangible terms: the farmer at his plough and the scholar with her pen are interacting with the gracious call of God upon their lives. Their daily occupations are not *distractions* from God's work of grace; they *are* God's work of grace, to be handled with diligence and joy.

Conclusion

In the years after the Reformation, the Reformed vision of Christian piety continued to make an impact within the Reformed tradition. The following century saw Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* (1613), Hooker's *Brief Exposition of The Lord's Prayer* (1645), and Baxter's *The Reformed Pastor* (1656). We might also include Mason's *Spiritual Treasury* (1803) and Pink's treatise on sanctification. Even Schleiermacher (who in many respects diverged considerably from the Reformed consensus) established 'Piety' as a major theological category in *The Christian Faith* (1830). This impact is in no small part attributable to the clarity with which early Reformed thinkers articulated the importance of Christian piety. As stated above, practices of piety dominated their personal and theological lives. In the words of Calvin, 'doctrine is not an affair of the tongue, but of the life'.

Notes

1. John Calvin, *Letters of John Calvin – Compiled by the Original Manuscripts and Edited with Historical Notes by Dr. Jules Bonnet – Vol. 1*, ed. J. Bonnet, trans. D. Constable, Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Co. [1528–45] 1855, p. 286.
2. *Letters of John Calvin*, p. 334.
3. *Letters of John Calvin*, p. 334.
4. J. D. Benoit, as quoted in I. J. Hesselink, 'Calvin's Theology', in D. K. McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 77.
5. Raget Christoffel, *Zwingli; Or, The Rise of the Reformation in Switzerland – A Life of the Reformer, With Some Notices of his Time and Contemporaries*, trans. J. Cochran, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1858, pp. 454–455.
6. Cf. Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994, p. 104 – 'I find Calvin's "burning interest" to be precisely "Christian experience". Almost immediately in Book I of the *Institutes*, Calvin makes it clear that he wants nothing to do with

any purely intellectual knowledge of God; that, indeed, the promotion of piety is what concerns him most deeply' (emphasis original).

7. Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades of Henry Bullinger: Minister of the Church of Zurich – Third Decade*, ed. T. Harding, trans. H. I. Harding, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [*c.* 1550] 1850), p. 316.
8. This brings Richard Muller to the conclusion that in this and elsewhere, Bullinger 'demonstrates an ability to draw on scholastic definition while maintaining the mood of an instruction in piety'. Cf. Richard Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2008, pp. 42–43.
9. A habit shared by his reformatory colleagues. Calvin, for example, listed reverent preaching, the hearing of the gospel and the obedience to the two sacraments as the marks of a true Church (*Institutes* IV.I.11), whereas Luther listed the presence of the word, the sacraments, church discipline, the presence of biblical ministers and church offices, prayer, public worship and the 'cross' of temptation and persecution. Cf. Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 146.
10. Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Willard, Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1985, p. 2.
11. Ursinus, *The Commentary*, pp. 9–10.
12. Ursinus, *The Commentary*, p. 10.
13. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion – Volume One*, ed. J. T. McNeill, trans. F. L. Battles, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press [1559], 2006, p. 4.
14. Charles Hambrick-Stowe, 'Piety', in D. K. McKim (ed.), *The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology – The Westminster Handbook to Reformed Theology*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, pp. 170–171.
15. Cf. John McNeill, 'Introduction', in J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion – Volume One*, ed. J. T. McNeill, trans. F. L. Battles, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press [1559], 2006, pp. li–lii: '[Calvin] was not, we may say, a theologian by profession, but a deeply religious man who possessed a genius for orderly thinking and obeyed the impulse to write out the implications of his faith. He calls his book not a *summa theologiae* but a *summa pietatis*. The secret of his mental energy lies in his piety; its product is his theology, which is his piety described at length.'
16. Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 5: 'Farewell, kindly reader, and if you benefit at all from my labours, help me with your prayers before God our Father.'
17. Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 9.
18. 'Have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives' tales. Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come' (1 Tim 4:7–8, NRSV).
19. J. Calvin as quoted in J. R. Beeke and S. B. Ferguson (eds), *Reformed Confessions Harmonized – With an Annotated Bibliography of Reformed Doctrinal Works*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999, p. 126.

20. John Calvin, *On the Christian Life*, trans. H. Beveridge, Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library [*c*. 1540] 1845), p. 5.
21. Calvin, *On the Christian Life*, p. 7.
22. Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 537.
23. Heidelberg Catechism, Q 32.
24. Westminster Confession of Faith, Q 26:1–3.
25. Cf. J. T. Billings, 'United to God through Christ: Assessing Calvin on the Question of Deification', *Harvard Theological Review* 98(3) (2005), and Tamburello, *Union with Christ*.
26. Cf. John Calvin, 'Short Treatise on the Holy Supper of our Lord and Only Saviour Jesus Christ', in J. K. S. Reid (ed.), *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, [1541] 2006.
27. Calvin, *On the Christian Life*, p. 6.
28. 'Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!' (1 Cor. 6:15, NRSV).
29. Calvin, *On the Christian Life*, p. 7.
30. Calvin, *On the Christian Life*, p. 7.
31. Cameron, *The European Reformation*, p. 146.
32. Calvin, *On the Christian Life*, p. 10.
33. Benjamin Warfield, *Calvin as a Theologian and Calvinism Today*, London: Sovereign Grace Union, 1951, p. 17.
34. Westminster Confession of Faith, Q 1.
35. Calvin, *On the Christian Life*, p. 11. The Reformer, however, issues the following caveat: 'Those duties, however, are not fulfilled by the mere discharge of them, though none be omitted, unless it is done from a pure feeling of love. For it may happen that one may perform every one of these offices, in so far as the external act is concerned, and be far from performing them aright. For you see some who would be thought very liberal, and yet accompany everything they give with insult … [From] Christians something more is required than to carry cheerfulness in their looks' (p. 13).
36. Calvin, *On the Christian Life*, p. 17.
37. Calvin, *On the Christian Life*, p. 14.
38. Calvin, *Institutes*, pp. 724–725.
39. Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 3.
40. Hambrick-Stowe, *Piety*, p. 171.

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

Martin Luther: music and mission

John Swarbrick

THE REVD JOHN SWARBRICK is a Vice-President and Director of Music of the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship, and a Methodist Presbyter in the Harrow and Hillingdon Circuit.

mjswarbrick@btinternet.com
Harrow, UK

This article seeks to demonstrate Martin Luther's often-overlooked credentials as a musician. Luther was convinced that music was the viva voce evangelii *(living voice of the gospel), and unlike other more radical Reformation movements, he encouraged the use of choral and congregational singing in worship. Some of his familiar hymns* – Nun freut euch, Ein' feste Burg and Aus tiefer Not – *offer insights into his ambitions to embed congregational singing into his vision of reformed worship, which went hand in hand with liturgical reform. Luther's* Formula Missae *and the vernacular* Deutsche Messe *lay the groundwork for Lutheran worship, which restructured the service around the centrality of the gospel proclamation. Luther's musical tradition reached its zenith in the work of J. S. Bach, which continues to echo in the Western musical canon, leaving Luther with a lasting musical legacy.*

MARTIN LUTHER • MUSIC • REFORMATION • J. S. BACH • ORGAN MUSIC • LITURGY

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 235–256
ISSN 2058-5969

This lecture was delivered at the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship Meeting during the Methodist Conference of 2017 in Birmingham, UK, and is published here with the kind permission of the MSF editors, the Revds Norman and Margaret Wallwork. Hard copies are available at £3.50 (including postage) from 6 Exmoor Close, Tiverton EX16 6UR, and details of the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship and its other publications can be found at www.sacramental.org.uk. This lecture is best read alongside the playlist of recorded music, which can be found in the Appendix.

Recorded music: Mendelssohn, Symphony no. 5 in D, op. 107, fourth movement

The fourth movement of Mendelssohn's Fifth Symphony is not a conventional symphonic finale, more a fantasia on Luther's hymn *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* (A mighty fortress is our God). The German poet Heinrich Heine called *Ein' feste Burg* the 'Marseillaise of the Reformation'.[1] 'Marseillaise' is a word that puts us in mind of revolution, though it would be fair to say that Luther prosecuted revolution by stealth. This year's Proms marked the quincentenary of the beginning of the Reformation in 1517 with a performance of Mendelssohn's Fifth Symphony as part of a season in which the Reformation's musical legacy featured prominently. This included three concerts on Sunday 20 August, marketed as 'Reformation Day', and ended with a performance of J. S. Bach's St John Passion; and, a week later, with a concert devoted to music inspired by the fifteenth-century Bohemian Reformation led by Jan Hus (*c.* 1372–1415). Fittingly, it began with the Hussite chorale 'You who are warriors of God' (*Ktož jsú Boži bojovníci*).

Well, revolutionary defiance expressed in music comes in many forms: this year's Proms season also marked the centenary of that other October revolution – the one that erupted in St Petersburg in 1917. Shostakovich's Twelfth Symphony, subtitled 'The Year 1917', is one of several Soviet-era works featured in this well-planned season.

But for present purposes, back to Mendelssohn's Fifth. It's a good place to start, in more ways than one. Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47) came from a famous mercantile Jewish family that had converted to Lutheran Christianity, though that didn't save his music from proscription under the Nazis. His fifth and final symphony was composed in 1829 and was intended for a celebration planned in Germany for the following year to mark the tercentenary of the Augsburg Confession, the primary doctrinal statement of the Lutheran faith agreed at the Diet of Augsburg in June 1530. In the event, the anniversary celebration

never took place, and Mendelssohn finally released the symphony for public performance in 1832. It was published only after his death – and, to add to the confusion, it was chronologically his fourth symphony! Now why start here? Because Mendelssohn's homage to Luther demonstrates the reach of hymnody in German culture, its contribution to a sense of national identity long before there was a single German state, and the Lutheran Reformation's long-term influence on the development of German music – classical, pop and rock.

Martin Luther: Augustinian friar, theologian, preacher, anti-Semite,[2] pugnacious controversialist, uxorious family man, master of the new media of print and pamphlets – but few would add 'musician' to this list. Regrettably, that includes the contributors to *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*,[3] which contains no study of his liturgical reforms, his hymns or his understanding of music. But I suspect that this may be par for the course for church historians and systematic theologians for whom music is merely a side dish to accompany the main course. And as for the popular image, I hate to disappoint you, but Luther probably did not wake up one morning and decide to hammer his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg on 31 October 1517. What he actually did was to publish and circulate the *Theses* as a pamphlet, in Latin, intended not for a readership of local laypeople, but as a starting point for a debate with his clerical colleagues about the abuses of the system of indulgences. 'Wrong but wromantic', to adapt Sellar and Yeatman in *1066 and All That*.[4] It is closer to the truth to say that with the *Theses* Luther nailed his colours to the mast rather than to the church door.

The controversy over indulgences, Luther's excommunication by Pope Leo X, his subsequent summons before the Diet of Worms in 1521 and refusal to recant – 'Here I stand; I can do no other' (a good soundbite, but again apocryphal) – all marked a turbulent sequence of events for a turbulent priest, though there was a happy issue out of all these afflictions when Frederick III ('Frederick the Wise'), the sympathetic Elector of Saxony, spirited Luther away to safety in the Wartburg castle at Eisenach. It was a brief, voluntary incarceration, but it released a torrent of creativity over the next few years, including: the translation of the New Testament from the Greek, not the Vulgate, into German in 1522; the *Formula Missae* (a first draft for liturgical reform) in 1523; the *Achtliederbuch* (the first German hymn book) in 1524; and the *Deutsche Messe* (the reformed German-language Mass) in conjunction with the composer Johann Walter in 1525–26. The Old Testament and Apocrypha were more a team effort, but were completed in 1534. It is not an exaggeration to say that Luther's translation of the Bible has the equivalent cultural status in

Germany to that of the King James Version in anglophone countries – and it remains even today the standard version for German Protestants.

That's a brief and necessarily selective introduction. Let's turn to the Reformer and music. For Luther *Musica praedicavit evangelium* – 'Music preaches the gospel'.[5] It is this proclamation that distinguishes Luther's Reformation from the more radical reformations that were evolving in cities like Geneva, Zurich, Basel and Strasbourg. On the basis of *sola scriptura* the Reformed churches in Switzerland, France and southern Germany restricted congregational music to the singing of the psalms. Instruments were forbidden. The most radical suppression was in Huldrych Zwingli's Zürich where there was musical silence in church from the 1520s until the 1590s.

Luther the young Augustinian friar had absorbed the best of his own tradition well. Augustine of Hippo regarded music as a preparation for the gospel – in the sense that it was a part of God's providential care in drawing humankind towards the divine vision (*visio Dei*) – though it has to be said that he, like other patristic authors, had an ambivalent attitude towards the use of music in worship, observing that:

> when I recall the tears which I shed at the song of the Church in the first days of my recovered faith, and even now as I am moved not by the song but by the things which are sung when sung by fluent voice and music that is most appropriate, I acknowledge again the great benefit of the practice. Thus I vacillate between the peril of pleasure and the value of the experience, and I am led more – while advocating no irrevocable position – to endorse the custom of singing in church so that by the pleasure of hearing the weaker soul might be elevated to an attitude of devotion. Yet when it happens to me that the song moves me more than the thing which is sung, I confess that I have sinned blamefully and then prefer not to hear the singer.[6]

John Calvin shared the same hesitations. Luther, however, did not: he took Augustine's insight a stage further, claiming that the gospel itself is effectively heard and known in music and is also a means of its proclamation.

Music was part of Luther's life from his early days. He absorbed an initial love of it from his parents. At around the age of seven he entered the Latin school at Mansfeld. Even for such young children, it was a rigorous educational regime,

initiating them into the three core subjects of the medieval *trivium*: grammar, logic and rhetoric. But the study of Latin was allied with the study of music. An emphasis on practical aspects of music like notation and sight-singing, with a smattering of instruction in music theory and the rudiments of Gregorian chant, gave Luther the ability to sing the liturgical texts that he and his school friends would have sung in St George's Church Sunday by Sunday.

In 1497, Luther was sent to the Latin cathedral school at Magdeburg and lived with the Brethren of the Common Life, a quasi-monastic community that promoted a simple, practical spirituality; here his studies continued in a similar vein – more Latin grammar, some logic and rhetoric, as well as music that would enable him to sing the services in the cathedral. But after only a year at Magdeburg, he was sent to a similar school at Eisenach where this pattern of education was continued. These years were formative, as he became more familiar with the cycle of music sung throughout the liturgical year, and it took deep root in him.

He matriculated at Erfurt University when he was 18 and embarked not only on the *trivium* but also on the *quadrivium*. In other words, to grammar, logic and rhetoric were added arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. At Erfurt he was part of what we would now call a cohort of musically talented undergraduates, some of whom became firm friends and subsequent associates in the Reformation movement. Here he extended his knowledge of popular folksong (*Volkslieder*), studied simple counterpoint and composition, and became a proficient lutenist. But a potential career in the law that his father intended for him was abandoned in response to a call to the monastic life; and in 1505 Luther was professed as a monk, entering the monastery of the Augustinian Hermits at Erfurt. Here he was immersed in the music of the daily offices, was ordained priest, and gave his spiritual adviser Johann von Staupitz a torrid time in the confessional with his exacting and over-scrupulous conscience.

Staupitz hit on a brilliant way to channel Luther's *Anfechtungen* in a more creative direction: he suggested that Luther should go off and teach theology at the recently founded University of Wittenberg. In 1508 he was appointed professor of moral philosophy and later, on completion of his doctorate, professor of biblical exegesis – a post he held until his death in 1546. Academic life was complemented by the university's rich musical life. The university's founder, the Elector Frederick the Wise, had a keen interest in music and lavished resources on the court chapel, which also doubled up as the university

church. In 1508, the year Luther arrived at Wittenberg, 31 clergy and musicians were responsible for the music; by 1520 the numbers had doubled. New sets of partbooks were produced for the singers, including music by such prominent early sixteenth-century Flemish composers as Josquin, Jacob Obrecht and Heinrich Isaac. The other significant point was that the study of music at Wittenberg was shifting from *musica theoretica* to *musica practica* – in other words, less philosophical speculation on the music of the spheres and more emphasis on music as a practical skill and art.

In this résumé of his education and scholarly achievements lies the key to what Luther later hoped to achieve in the Reformed ecclesiology to which history has appended his name. His love of music was for itself, but it also had a catechetical, liturgical and missionary purpose. But how about some of his own words on this subject rather than mine? I jump ahead a bit here to this extract from a letter he wrote to the Swiss composer Ludwig Senfl in October 1530, during his second period of voluntary detention for his own safety in Coburg Castle. The context is the Diet of Augsburg of that year when the confessional standards of the Lutheran Church in their studious moderation were codified and agreed. Luther writes:

> Although my name is so hated that I must fear, my dear Ludwig, that this letter will not be safely received and read by you, yet my love of music has overcome my fear, and in musical talent, I see that God has richly endowed you … We know that music is hateful and intolerable to devils. I really believe, nor am I ashamed to assert, that next to theology there is no art equal to music, for it is the only one, except theology, which can give a quiet and happy mind, a manifest proof that the devil, the author of racking care and perturbation, flees from the sound of music as he does from the exhortation of religion. This is the reason why the prophets practised no other art, neither geometry nor arithmetic nor astronomy, as if they believed music and divinity nearly allied; as indeed they declare in their psalms and canticles. Praising music is like trying to paint a great subject on a small canvas, which turns out merely a daub. But my love for it abounds; it has often refreshed me and freed me from great troubles.[7]

This friendship survived despite the confessional differences that remained between them. Senfl continued writing music for the adornment of the

Catholic liturgy, but two of the pieces he composed at this time show in the first case diplomatic tact and in the second a deft personal tribute. The first was a setting of Psalm 133, *Ecce quam bonum*, to be sung at the opening of the Diet ('Behold how good and pleasant it is to dwell together in unity'); and the second was a motet on verse 17 from Luther's favourite psalm, Psalm 118: *Non moriar, sed vivum et narrabo opera Domini* (I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord) – a text that meant so much to Luther that it became in effect his motto.

Recorded music: Ludwig Senfl, Motet Non moriar, sed vivum et narrabo opera Domini

Interestingly, Luther wrote his own more modest setting of this same text in a motet published at Wittenberg in 1545, the year before his death. His letter to Senfl was not the only example of his claim that 'next to theology there is no art equal to music'; he repeated it on a number of occasions and in different contexts. However, the portion of the letter we heard rehearses a number of themes which he was later to develop in a proposed treatise on music, of which he wrote only a draft outline.

Let us take a step back to some of the practical outworkings of Luther's understanding of the role of music in worship and Christian formation. Senfl's cool, elegant polyphony was fine for trained choirs, but it was never going to be the stuff of popular congregational participation. Congregational participation was certainly a primary goal for Luther's reformation of worship, but he envisaged it as one element alongside choral and instrumental, especially organ, music. What we now typically think of as a Lutheran chorale (*choral* in German) was, in those early years, something closer to a unison chant rather than to a harmonised melody. The word 'chorale' itself evolved from the common term for Gregorian chant and could be sung in unaccompanied unison (*choraliter*) or in polyphonic settings (*figuraliter*) by a choir. Many chorale melodies were developed from specific Gregorian chants; for others new tunes were written – some adapted from secular folksong (*Volkslied*), but certainly by no means all. Other chorales were new versions in German of Latin office hymns, for example the Advent hymn *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* from *Veni, redemptor gentium*. Metrical versions of the psalms and canticles were also added to the repertory. Like all liturgical innovations, it took some time for Lutheran congregational singing to become custom and practice. The early hymn books were written with choirs rather than congregations in mind.

In 1524, the first collection of chorales was published, a slim volume of eight hymns entitled the *Achtliederbuch*, including four by Luther himself, one of which is *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gemein* or 'Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice, with exultation springing'. In the *Achtliederbuch* it is headed 'A Fine Spiritual Song, How a Sinner Comes to Grace'. This ten-verse hymn in the translation by Richard Massie (1800–87) appears in the 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*.[8]

Hymn: 'Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice', to the tune 'Nun freut euch'

1 Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice,
With exultation springing,
And, with united heart and voice
And holy rapture singing
Proclaim the wonders God has done,
How his right arm the victory won,
What price our ransom cost him!

2 Fast bound in Satan's chains I lay,
Death brooded darkly o'er me,
Sin was my torment night and day;
In sin my mother bore me.
But daily deeper still I fell;
My life became a living hell,
So firmly sin possessed me.

3 My own good works all came to naught,
No grace or merit gaining;
Free will against God's judgement fought,
Dead to all good remaining,
My fears increased till sheer despair
Left only death to be my share;
The pangs of hell I suffered.

4 But God had seen my wretched state
Before the world's foundation
And, mindful of his mercies great,
He planned for my salvation.

He turned to me a father's heart;
He did not choose the easy part,
But gave his dearest treasure.

5 God said to his belovèd Son:
''Tis time to have compassion.
Then go, bright jewel of my crown,
And bring to all salvation;
From sin and sorrow set them free;
Slay bitter death for them that they
May live with you forever.'

6 The Son obeyed his Father's will,
Was born of virgin mother;
And, God's good pleasure to fulfil,
He came to be my brother.
His royal pow'r disguised he bore,
A servant's form, like mine, he wore,
To lead the devil captive.

7 To me he said: 'Stay close to me,
I am your rock and castle.
Your ransom I myself will be;
For you I strive and wrestle;
For I am yours, and you are mine,
And where I am you may remain;
The foe shall not divide us.

8 'Though he will shed my precious blood,
Of life me thus bereaving,
All this I suffer for your good;
Be steadfast and believing.
Life will from death the vict'ry win;
My innocence shall bear your sin;
And you are blest forever.

9 'Now to my Father I depart,
From earth to heav'n ascending,
And, heav'nly wisdom to impart,

The Holy Spirit sending;
In trouble he will comfort you
And teach you always to be true
And into truth shall guide you.

10 'What I on earth have done and taught
Guide all your life and teaching;
So shall the kingdom's work be wrought
And honoured in your preaching.
But watch lest foes with base alloy
The heav'nly treasure should destroy;
This final word I leave you.'

Martin Luther
trans. Richard Massie (1800–87)[9]

Textually, we have a hymn written in the first person, suggesting that here Luther may be in autobiographical mode. In the *Lutheran Book of Worship* it is placed in the section on 'Justification', offering a commentary in verse on the doctrine of justification that had been Luther's great theological breakthrough in the years before the indulgences controversy of 1517; in addition, it is also a skilful commentary on Romans 1 – 8; and, finally, it is strongly Trinitarian in character. Musically, we have a tune composed by the author of the words, though not in its rhythmically freer, original version. This should not surprise us, as Lutheran congregations did what all congregations do when faced with singing complex rhythms and syncopations: they tend to make them rhythmically more regular, predictable and four-square. The other significant change in performance practice was to transfer the tune in chorales from the tenor of monastic plainsong to the soprano line for a congregation of women, men and children.

In the interests of authentic/period performance practice we can sing *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* in something closer to its original form – something with the melodic fluidity of Gregorian chant. First, a little background to Luther's great Reformation battle cry. We can't be certain exactly when Luther wrote it – probably at some point between 1527 and 1529 – or for what occasion, though the most probable answer was for the 1529 Diet of Speyer when the Lutheran-sympathising free cities and princes of the Holy Roman Empire lodged their formal 'protest' against the Catholic majority. This wasn't just a political

manoeuvre, but reflected the genuine growth in adherence to Luther's reform movement. However, Heinrich Heine's description of it as the 'Marseillaise of the Reformation', sung as Luther and his friends entered Worms in 1521, is just a little too good to be true, though its themes of defiance of authority, contempt for 'the devil and all his works', awareness of one's own weakness, and an absolute and joyous trust in God is spot on. The text is based, loosely, on Psalm 46, with a couple of sideways glances at 1 Peter 5:8, a translation not as familiar as the one by Thomas Carlyle, but the one used in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* of 1978.[10]

Hymn: 'A mighty fortress is our God', to the tune 'Ein' feste burg ist unser Gott'

1 A mighty fortress is our God,
a sword and shield victorious;
he breaks the cruel oppressor's rod
and wins salvation glorious.
The old satanic foe,
has sworn to work us woe!
With craft and dreadful might
he arms himself to fight.
On earth he has no equal.

2 No strength of ours can match his might!
We would be lost, rejected.
But now a champion comes to fight,
whom God himself elected.
You ask who this may be?
The Lord of hosts is he!
Christ Jesus, mighty Lord,
God's only Son, adored.
He holds the field victorious.

3 Though hordes of devils fill the land
all threat'ning to devour us,
we tremble not, unmoved we stand;
they cannot overpow'r us.
Let this world's tyrant rage;
in battle we'll engage!

His might is doomed to fail;
God's judgement must prevail!
One little word subdues him.

4 God's word forever shall abide,
no thanks to foes, who fear it;
for God himself fights by our side
with weapons of the Spirit.
Were they to take our house,
goods, honour, child, or spouse,
though life be wrenched away,
they cannot win the day.
The kingdom's ours forever.[11]

By way of relaxation, we have what J. S. Bach (1685–1750) makes of the sentiment and the chorale melody from his church cantata *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80. It's an early work from his time as court composer at Weimar when a version of it was sung during the church service for the Third Sunday in Lent; he later revised and expanded it when he was at Leipzig; and we know that it was sung on at least two occasions for the feast of the Reformation in 1723 and in 1735. Here is the fifth movement, a vigorous choral piece that sets the words of verse three of the chorale – with bubbling strings and festive trumpets to accompany the triumphalist text:

And were this world all devils o'er,
and watching to devour us,
we lay it not to heart so sore;
nor they can overpower us.
And let the prince of ill
look grim as e'er he will,
he harms us not a whit;
for why? His doom is writ;
a word shall quickly slay him.

Recorded music: Johann Sebastian Bach, Cantata BWV 80, fifth movement

If *Ein' feste Burg* is Luther's most famous hymn, it is closely followed by his paraphrase of Psalm 130, *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir* (Out of the depths I cry to thee). Written in 1523, it was one of his first hymns. A four-stanza version was included in the *Achtliederbuch* of 1524 and a five-stanza version was published in a hymn book by his friend and collaborator, the composer Johann Walter, in the same year. The shorter version remains closer to the text of the psalm; the longer version explores more fully the theme of grace rather than works. Because Psalm 130 was one of the appointed psalms in the traditional funeral service, it is perhaps no surprise to learn that in Luther's paraphrase it was sung at the funeral of the Elector Frederick the Wise in 1525, and 21 years later, in 1546, at Luther's own funeral. As early as 1537 it had found its place in the lectionary in the town church at Naumberg as the gradual hymn (between the Epistle and the Gospel) for the Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity.

We know it best in the translation by Catherine Winkworth (1827–78), a skilled nineteenth-century translator of German hymns. Like Luther, she also produced two versions of the hymn: the earlier one, originally published in a collection entitled *Lyra Germanica* (1855), has appeared in Methodist hymn books since 1877; the second kept to the metre of Luther's original text and the chorale melody that goes with it, and was published in her *Chorale Book for England* (1863). A new tune, 'St Martin', composed by James Sheppard (1835–79), was composed for the version with which we are now familiar.

This superb hymn is more than a metrical version of Psalm 130: it alludes to a wide range of Old and New Testament texts as well, and comes across as a profound and personal expression of Luther's own understanding of the doctrine of justification. But it had another function beyond its use in funeral services: it was sung as a catechism hymn because of the way in which it expounds the doctrine of justification; and this exposition found an echo in Luther's Shorter Catechism. In a popular catechetical guide published in 1581, a later Lutheran writer noted:

> This fifth main part of the holy catechism with its questions and answers the children at home can rehearse and practise after breakfast and after the *Gratias* has been said. Following the evening meal, and after the *Gratias* has been said, the children at the table can pray out of 'David's Catechism' Psalm 51 … and thereafter sing … from Luther's hymnbook, *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir.*[12]

I'm not sure such an approach would go down well with Young Church today, but we at least can have a little more insight into how Luther believed that one of the best ways to learn the faith was to sing it.

Hymn: 'Out of the depths I cry to thee'[13]

1 Out of the depths I cry to thee,
Lord God! O hear my prayer!
Incline a gracious ear to me,
And bid me not despair:
If thou rememberest each misdeed,
If each should have its rightful meed,
Lord, who shall stand before thee?

2 'Tis through thy love alone we gain
The pardon of our sin;
The strictest life is but in vain,
Our works can nothing win;
That none should boast himself of aught,
But own in fear thy grace hath wrought
What in him seemeth righteous.

3 Wherefore my hope is in the Lord,
My works I count but dust;
I build not there, but on his word,
And in his goodness trust.
Up to his care myself I yield,
He is my tower, my rock, my shield,
And for his help I tarry.

4 And though it linger till the night,
And round again till morn,
My heart shall ne'er mistrust thy might,
Nor count itself forlorn.
Do thus, O ye of Israel's seed,
Ye of the Spirit born indeed,
Wait for your God's appearing.

5 Though great our sins and sore our wounds,
And deep and dark our fall,
His helping mercy hath no bounds,
His love surpasseth all:
Our trusty loving Shepherd, he
Who shall at last set Israel free
From all their sin and sorrow.

Martin Luther (1483–1546)
trans. Catherine Winkworth (1827–78)
based on Psalm 130

Examples such as *Nun freut euch, Ein' feste Burg* and *Aus tiefer Not* offer us insights into Luther's ambitions to embed congregational singing into his vision of Reformed worship. But hymns were only part of a wider strategy for this reform; they went hand in hand with liturgical reform. There is a sense in which everything he did was a response to his understanding of justification by faith alone: this lies, I think, at the heart of every theological question and every practical expression. He was at one and the same time a conservative and a radical liturgical reformer. We see this in his first attempt to reform the liturgy, the *Formula Missae* of 1523. Don't force through too much change too quickly. Keep the Latin, the candles, the incense and the vestments – the familiar liturgical landmarks; but read the Scriptures in German, preach in German, sing hymns in German, and strip the canon (the Eucharistic Prayer) of anything that smacks of the language of eucharistic sacrifice – or in Luther's words that 'great abomination and blasphemy that papistic idol … namely, the Mass and the other abuses of the sacrament'.[14] Against that background, the preaching and teaching of justification will touch more receptive rather than antagonised ears.

It meant the drastic pruning of the canon of the Roman Mass – in other words the Eucharistic Prayer – to the Preface, which included the Words of Institution, the singing of the Sanctus, the Benedictus, during which the elevation took place, followed by the giving of the bread and the wine, during which the Agnus Dei was sung. Luther's aim was to replace the traditional understanding of the celebrant making an offering to God with a diametrically opposite dynamic: it is all about God's gift to us. In his 'Admonition Concerning the Sacrament' (1530), he wrote:

> Doing this is set forth briefly and surely in these words: 'Do this in remembrance of me'. Learn to remember him … in preaching, praising, honouring, listening, and giving thanks for grace revealed in Christ. If you do that … you have given nothing to God, nor are you able to, but you have and receive each and every thing from him, particularly eternal life and [the] infinite righteousness of Christ … For this is the true God who gives and does not receive, who helps and does not let himself be helped … in short, he does and gives everything, and he has the need of no one; he does all things freely out of pure grace without merit, for the unworthy and undeserving, yes, for the damned and the lost. This kind of remembrance, confession and glory he desires to have.[15]

The *Formula Missae* was not, however, the law of the Medes and the Persians; it was prepared for the pastor of the church at Zwickau, and intended as general guidance for him and other celebrants who were free to modify it *ad libitum*. It laid the foundations for the vernacular *Deutsche Messe* of 1526. This was more prescriptive, but prescriptive in a particular direction: 27 of its 49 pages are filled with musical notation; the remaining 22 pages include frequent reference to the musical aspects of the liturgy. Luther adopts the same approach to the canon, but it is the careful and consistent use of music which is astonishing: he uses plainchant in different modes (those medieval precursors of the major and minor scales with which we are more familiar) for different elements in the liturgy. There is an elegant, I would say almost organic, symmetry about this. In the earliest 1526 version, he takes modes 1 (Dorian), 5 (Lydian) and 6 (Hypolydian) and deploys them in this way:

Kyrie	Mode 1
Gospel	Modes 5/6
Credo: *Wir Glauben all an einen Gott*	Mode 1
Words of Institution	Modes 5/6
Agnus Dei: *Christe, du Lamm Gottes*	Mode 1

Figure 1

The central aim is to give the same significance to the proclamation of the gospel as to the Words of Institution in the same Mode 5/6 either side of the

confession of faith in the Creed in Mode 1. A few points to note: (1) there is no Gloria, because this original version was first trialled during Advent 1525; (2) we are starting to see German metrical versions of the standard liturgical texts in the Creed and the Agnus Dei; and (3) Luther was consulting musical colleagues.

By 1537, to take just one example, the *Deutsche Messe* as celebrated in Naumberg has been expanded, and now includes the use of another mode, Mode 4 (Hypophrygian), but the underlying symmetry remains.

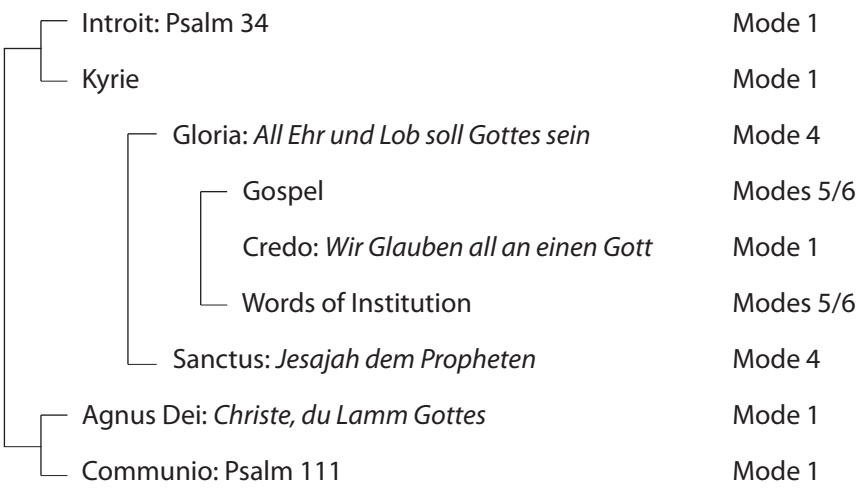


Figure 2[16]

Using Psalm 34 as an introit had familiar eucharistic associations, especially in verse 8: 'O taste and see that the Lord is good.' Singing Psalm 111 during the administration of the elements referred back to the Words of Institution, especially in verse 4: 'He has instituted a memorial of his wonders.' Luther's own metrical versions of the Gloria and the Sanctus were sung alongside congregational chorales. Some of these metrical versions of liturgical texts are still included in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. There are 12 verses of *Wir Glauben all an einen Gott*, Luther's metrical version of the Nicene Creed. We can listen to the congregation of Roskilde Lutheran Cathedral in Denmark singing part of it in a recording that reconstructs what a Lutheran Mass for the Feast of the Epiphany might have sounded like under J. S. Bach's direction at St Thomas's Church, Leipzig in 1740.

Recorded music: Wir Glauben all an einen Gott from J. S. Bach, Epiphany Mass

The *Deutsche Messe* provided a template for the development of Lutheran church music in the years that followed. We know from the liturgies devised by Luther's Wittenberg colleagues, as well as from the correspondence with one of his key lieutenants, Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), that the *Deutsche Messe* was more of a guide than a chain. In villages, it was used in its simplest form, and sung mainly in German. In larger towns and cities, especially where there was a Latin school, the liturgy was a mixture of Latin and German, with more German in what we would call Ordinary Time and more Latin on high days and holidays. Successive editions of hymn books extended the repertory of chorales for congregations; vernacular chant was sung not only by the pastors, but by the people as well; and a rich tradition of polyphonic choral music was retained. Gradually, the role of the congregation was transformed from one of passive listening to active participation. That active participation required instrumental accompaniment: it came principally in the form of the organ – one of the most complicated machines of the early sixteenth century – and organ playing and the composition of music for the organ flourished.

Do not underestimate this. In 1705, the young J. S. Bach, then aged 20, *walked* the 400 kilometres from Arnstadt in Saxony, where he had been appointed organist at the Neukirche, to the Hanseatic port of Lübeck to hear the famous Dieterich Buxtehude (1637–1707) play the splendid three-manual organ with its 54 stops.[17] What is sometimes called the North German organ tradition was still flourishing well into the nineteenth century, with the music of Mendelssohn, Max Reger (1873–1916) and Josef Rheinberger (1839–1901), and into the twentieth century with Paul Hindemith (1899–1963), though in the last century it is French composers who have dominated the organ repertory.

All these developments contributed to Luther's understanding of music as *viva voce evangelii* – the living voice of the gospel – using music as the medium to connect the preaching and teaching ministry of the Church. There were two related aspects to this process. First, to encourage the practice of singing for congregations and choirs, music became an integral part of children's education: as early as 1528, Philip Melanchthon drew up regulations for schools in Saxony, so that the curriculum included four hours of music teaching a week. Choir schools attached to churches flourished. Second, in a tradition that persisted over the next two centuries, it became customary for pastors and teachers to study music as well as theology, and for church musicians to study

theology as well as music. If music was now to preach the gospel, then Luther's conviction inspired composers such as Michael Praetorius (1571–1621), Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672), Buxtehude and several generations of the Bach family, culminating in the work of Johann Sebastian, to write music for the Lutheran Church *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* – to the greater glory of God.

J. S. Bach's music for the Lutheran Church represents the zenith of this tradition. An orthodox Lutheran, but one drawn to Pietism – as all those arias in the cantatas and the St John and St Matthew Passions illustrate. And arguably, he was the supreme composer of the Christian Cross. I don't say that simply because the larger part of his output was composed explicitly for the Church; this is something that runs through his instrumental and secular vocal music as well. It has something to do with that perfect integration of the vertical and horizontal aspects of composition, themselves a metaphor of the Cross. By vertical, I mean the harmony – the chords, if you like. By horizontal, I mean counterpoint – the fluid independence of the lines, or 'voices' as music theorists call them, though those 'voices' can be human or instrumental. And there is an integration here: harmony cannot exist independently of counterpoint; and counterpoint cannot exist independently of harmony. Bach's music fuses harmonic logic, linear ecstasy and rhythmic energy, and exhibits a level of technical and expressive perfection which has influenced composers ever since – and a wider musical public since 1829, when Mendelssohn revived a version of the St Matthew Passion for public performance for the first time since the 1740s. For Bach all music, sacred or secular, was 'a harmonious euphony for the glory of God and the instruction of my neighbour'.[18]

The Mass in B Minor was not and could not have been performed liturgically. Indeed, it is difficult to find evidence that it ever was performed in Bach's lifetime. I suspect he wrote it for God and for himself. But his four settings of the Lutheran Mass – Kyrie and Gloria only – certainly were; and when added to the extraordinary cycle of cantatas he composed for every Sunday in the liturgical year, they represent a towering achievement in the canon of Western music, and the culmination of Luther's conviction that music proclaims the gospel. In the formative years of his reform movement, they released ordinary people to sing a new world into being. His legacy has become the common currency of most Christian traditions where, at their best, hymns enable congregations to connect head, heart and voice, and sing the faith 'lustily and with good courage'. But it's not just about the Church: singing 'Abide with me' at a cup final as well as, shall we say, more demotic football chants, and political protest songs all draw on this same source, however unconsciously.

All that said, if Bach's music *does* represent the zenith of this tradition in Germany, Scandinavia and further afield where Lutheranism took root, echoes of it continue to resonate down the centuries in the Western musical canon, though sometimes in unexpected contexts. A few weeks ago, I went to hear Leif Ove Andsnes and Marc-André Hamelin, two pianists at the top of their game, give a recital of music for two pianos at Wigmore Hall. The inestimable benefit of being a presbyter stationed in the Harrow and Hillingdon Circuit is the speed with which the Metropolitan Line conveys me to and from this home from home. One of the pieces they played was Debussy's *En blanc et noir* – a suite of three pieces composed in 1916 and inspired, according to the composer, by 'the greys of Velázquez' – a study in musical *grisaille*, if you like. Debussy was already ill with the cancer that would claim his life two years later in 1918 and, in his response to the Great War, was self-consciously styling himself *Claude Debussy – musicien français*.

The second movement of *En blanc et noir* is marked *Lent, sombre*. It is a threnody dedicated to a cousin of his publisher, Jacques Durand. Before his call-up, Lieutenant Jacques Charlot had worked for the family firm, the most distinguished of French music publishers, and had been killed in action in March 1915. It's a long time since I had heard this piece, and I confess I had forgotten how Debussy had expressed his anger and sadness at Charlot's death; but as we listen to it now, we shall hear the ghostly echoes of a familiar hymn tune. For Debussy it represented his fear that the war to end all wars would lead not only to the destruction of France and Germany, but also of their art and culture.

Recorded music: Claude Debussy, En blanc et noir, *second movement*

Luther would have been amazed not simply by the soundscape of early twentieth-century French music, but more significantly at the reach of his musical Reformation. That Reformation has extended well beyond the spiritual, pastoral and catechetical needs of a sixteenth-century religious revolution to become the common property of nearly all Christian traditions today; it has also flowed into the bloodstream of Western classical music and influenced the torch songs and anthems of popular music, too. Music, religious as well as non-religious, may, in W. H. Auden's words, be the 'brandy of the damned', but is much more often to be experienced in the 'sudden mansion of any joy'[19] – and for that latter insight we owe Luther a great debt.

Appendix

The following recordings were used during the course of this lecture:

Mendelssohn, Symphony no. 5 in D, Op. 107, fourth movement
Warner Classics 0190295909109, CD 2, track 6

Ludwig Senfl, *Motet Non moriar, sed vivum et narrabo opera Domini*
CHE 0147–2, track 9

Johann Sebastian Bach, Cantata BWV 80, fifth movement
HMC 901326, track 17

Wir Glauben all an einen Gott from J. S. Bach, Epiphany Mass
Archiv 457 631–2, disc 1, track 24

Claude Debussy, *En blanc et noir*, second movement
CDH 55014, track 2

The hymns from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* can be listened to at
www.lutheran-hymnal.com/lbw/lbw_online.html

Notes

1. Quoted in Richard Watson and Kenneth Trickett (eds), *Companion to Hymns and Psalms*, Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1988, p. 376.
2. Thomas Kaufmann, *Luther's Jews: A Journey into Anti-Semitism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
3. Donald K. McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
4. W. C. Sellar and R. J. Yeatman, *1066 and All That: A Memorable History of England*, London: Methuen & Co., 1930.
5. Ivor H. Jones, *Music: A Joy for Ever*, London: Epworth Press, 1989, p. 71.
6. From Augustine, *Confessions,* quoted in James McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 155.
7. From a letter to Ludwig Senfl, 4 October 1530, quoted in E. G. Rupp and Benjamin Drewery, *Martin Luther*, London: Edward Arnold, 1970, p. 143.
8. No. 299 in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, and Philadelphia, PA: Lutheran Church in America, 1978.
9. *Lutheran Book of Worship*, no. 299.
10. *Lutheran Book of Worship,* no. 228.
11. *Lutheran Book of Worship*, no. 299.
12. Bartholomäus Rosinus, *Kurtze Fragen und Antwort über die Sechs Häupstücke deß heiligen Catechismi D. Martini Lutheri* (1581), quoted in Robin A. Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications*, Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007, p. 151.

13. *Hymns and Psalms*, London: Methodist Publishing House, 1983.
14. Letter to the pastors at Lübeck in 1530, quoted in Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, p. 175.
15. Quoted in Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, p. 176.
16. See Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, pp. 168–168.
17. Malcolm Boyd, *Bach,* 2nd edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 22.
18. Quoted in Wilfrid Mellers, *Bach and the Dance of God*, London: Faber and Faber, 1980, p. 9.
19. W. H. Auden, 'Music is International', *Collected Poems*, London: Faber and Faber, 1976, pp. 340–341.

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

Reconciled with one another: commemorating the Reformation ecumenically in Germany

Ulrike Schuler

PROFESSOR DR ULRIKE SCHULER is Professor of Church History, Methodist and Ecumenical Studies at Reutlingen School of Theology. From 2011 to 2016 she was President of the World Methodist Historical Society and has been a delegate for the United Methodist Church in the bilateral dialogue with the Moravians in the USA. She is currently the World Methodist Council's delegate in the bilateral dialogue with the Baptist World Alliance.

ulrike.schuler@th-reutlingen.de
Reutlingen, Germany

Statement and liturgy translated by Gillian Houghton

THE REVD GILLIAN HOUGHTON is a Methodist minister with an interest in art as an expression of faith and spirituality, and a former professional patent translator. Her ministry is divided between conventional circuit work and her artistic endeavours.

revgillian@btinternet.com
Harrogate, UK

This article includes a specially commissioned translation of 'Reconciled with One Another', an ecumenical statement from the Council of Christian Churches in Germany for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Introduced by a member of the working party that composed it, the statement is followed by a liturgical order which picks up the text of the statement. The liturgy is offered here as a valuable resource for English-speaking churches in this commemorative year.

GERMAN REFORMATION • ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS • LITURGY • ECUMENICAL STATEMENT

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 257–270

ISSN 2058-5969

Introduction
by Prof Dr Ulrike Schuler

I am the delegate from the United Methodist Church to the German Ecumenical Theological Study Committee (Deutscher Ökumenischer Studien Ausschuss). All delegates are theologians from different confessional faculties in Germany. The DÖSTA is associated to the Council of Christian Churches in Germany (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen). The ACK wanted an ecumenical statement to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, and we composed this statement, 'Reconciled with One Another', which the ACK finally approved.

It was a really effective process to write this statement and discuss the paragraphs in the context of ecumenical richness. All delegates always learn a lot by doing these kinds of studies. I think the statement is really significant. It has been written by theologians from the Roman Catholic Church, the different Orthodox Churches, Lutherans, Reformed and Free Churches (including Baptists and, of course, Methodists). The original German text can be found on the website of the ACK: www.oekumene-ack.de.

The ACK celebrated a service to mark the statement's adoption, with representatives of each of the churches reading out parts of the statement. When I organised a study day at our Reutlingen School of Theology (the Methodist Seminary for the German-speaking area – Germany, Switzerland, Austria) in June, we celebrated this service at the end of the study day. The study day was entitled Freiheit und Verantwortung: Zur Bedeutung der Reformation Heute (Liberty and responsibility: the significance of the Reformation today).

Celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation together is a clear sign of the extremely positive experience of the Second Vatican Council. It is significant that the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church have been holding a dialogue at world level since 1967 – that is, in this year of the Reformation 500th anniversary, now continuous for 50 years.

An ecumenical statement from the Council of Christian Churches in Germany on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation

Within the Christian community, 2017 is a special year. The Council of Christian Churches in Germany, within which for seven decades people of different denominations have encountered one another in spiritual solidarity within the one Christian faith and together shaped church and social life, has taken the opportunity of the anniversary year 2017 to provide for all Christians in Germany a considered statement of common witness and of commitment to 'oikonomia'.

1 Considering the year 2017 ecumenically

The anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 is the first year in which it is possible to consider across the entire ecumenical community of all Christian denominations the process of the Reformation, its effects on Christianity, and also the barriers and dangers which have arisen in the Western Church as a result of the Reformation.

Previous anniversaries have been characterised by denominational self-assertion. Thus the early commemoration of Luther in the sixteenth century already reflected historical and theological interpretations: Martin Luther was proclaimed prophet, teacher and hero. Even later commemorations of the Reformation served primarily to strengthen political, denominational or national convictions.

Today we recognise in 'oikonomia' that the Reformation was and remains not just a significant event in the history of Protestant churches and in German and European history, but also a salient event in Christianity which is of significance in world history. Nevertheless, the different positions of the Christian churches result in different views on the reasons for, course of and consequences of the Reformation. The impact of the events of the Reformation has been felt differently within the denominations.

In the sixteenth century, claims to truth that were asserted against other claims to truth did at times lead to considerations of possible tolerance, but above all led to mutual condemnation. The efforts to enforce such truth claims politically

frequently resulted in the persecution of religious minorities and in repeated military disputes. The consequences of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation in connection with the exclusion of religious minorities are a common legacy for Christianity which continues to burden us. For the churches in the ecumenical age, questions arise about how to deal with the competing claims to truth which are made in the name of Jesus Christ. The Reformation's message about the freedom of every single Christian, which reveals itself in service to neighbour, is today a common ecumenical conviction. The entirely personal conviction of faith in the gospel of every baptised individual is a key consideration. Freedom of conscience in religious judgement is an undisputed basis for conversations about faith. In numerous conversations between the churches important commonalities in teaching and life can be recognised.

As a sign of this ecumenical solidarity and understanding, the Christian churches look together with gratitude in this year 2017 at the core concerns of the Reformation and want to make them fruitful for their present-day co-existence. These include:

1 reference to Holy Scripture in every situation in life and in every formation of theological judgement. Together we confess that the Bible must be considered the source and norm for ecclesial and personal life.

2 orientation towards the grace of God with respect to eternal salvation and the Christian life. Together we confess that for our redemption we are utterly reliant on the mercy of the Triune God and that we remain dependent on the support of God in the Holy Spirit for the success of our Christian actions. Together we confess Jesus Christ as the only true foundation of our Easter hope.

3 the conviction of the priesthood of all Christians, grounded in faith and baptism. Together we confess that the whole people of God has the responsibility of making known and living out the Easter hope and the limitless mercy of God in the world.

2 Taking up the impulses of the Reformation

From the perspective of the Reformed traditions, the central theme of the sixteenth century was the question of certainty in trusting faith. Were sinners able to trust in God? As long as doubt and uncertainty with regard to individual

worthiness for redemption dominates, the centrality of faith remains unrecognised. Many Reformers, such as Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, Huldrych Zwingli, Martin Bucer, John Calvin, Menno Simons, Balthasar Hubmaier, Thomas Cranmer and John Knox, pushed the gospel to the centre of faith as the message of the free grace of God, that is, the underserved turning of God to people hopelessly entangled in their sins. In the sixteenth century many women stood alongside the men in social, charitable, political and theological engagement. All Reformers spoke decisively against any attempt to obtain the grace of God through special efforts of piety. In contrast they offered the insight that only faith in the unconditional intervention of God for humankind in Jesus Christ offered certainty of salvation. The grace of God cannot be linked to any human endeavour, but rather it flows ahead of human endeavour and only then opens up the horizon for their fulfilment. The reformational criticism of the Church of the time was directed above all against practices (indulgences and money for Masses) which gave the impression that the means of grace of God could be administered by church officials for a corresponding financial consideration.

It was the newly rediscovered gospel message of justification which the Reformers pointedly pushed into the centre of the life of the Church. At the same time, the specific form of Christian freedom was given prominence in a special way: the freedom of each Christian is based on God's promise of mercy.

The Reformers attached special importance to two further matters, connected to the foundational call of justification purely by faith. The first is the instructional power of the biblical witness which is foundational for every church teaching. The biblical witness has alway to be heard anew, for it is connected with the promise of the self-revelation of God through the life of his Spirit. Even if, now as before, there are different perspectives in the different denominations in dealing with the Bible, today the Bible is generally recognised as the highest norm for the teaching of the Church. Given this agreement, the ecclesial tradition has the task of preserving the one gospel through the ages. The second clear shift resulting from the Reformation is the prominence given to the priesthood of all the baptised in the life of the Church. On this point, too, many churches have taken up the impulse of the Reformation and have rediscovered the fundamental significance of the common worth of all believers and their joint responsibility for the life of the Church.

Above all, it is these biblical insights, pushed to the centre of the Christian life of faith by the Reformation, which we can celebrate ecumenically today.

3 Jointly considering the division of the Church and its painful consequences

As a result of the Reformation, which was originally theologically motivated and later had a marked effect on all areas of the social and cultural life of the early modern age, denominational and cultural differentiation and pluralisation became an enduring hallmark of Europe. In a long process, a plurality of independent denominations arose which were distinct from one another. This development was accompanied by polemical disputes, mutual exclusions and persecutions which ultimately led to confrontation between states of different confessions and to religious wars lasting decades.

The Reformation and the associated disputes had, like all great ground-breaking movements, both perpetrators and victims. Fringe Protestant movements, above all the Anabaptist communities, were discriminated against and persecuted both by Roman Catholic as well as Lutheran and Reformed authorities for many centuries, starting in the sixteenth century. On every side, political power was misused and people suffered when under the dominance of another denomination. The commemoration of 500 years of the Reformation must therefore inevitably also include remembrance of the numerous victims of religiously motivated violence: wars, deportations and executions were justified in the name of God. Social unrest was brought to a bloody end. Today the churches jointly deplore that both before and after the sixteenth century their anti-Semitism repeatedly had such devastating consequences.

One of the consequences of the Reformation was an increasing alienation of Christians from one another in the individual denominations, which not only brought about a different understanding of faith and life but also gave rise to many prejudices and assumptions. The claim to be the sole possessor of the truth was directed against members of other denominations, and also against members of other faiths. Up to and into the twentieth century, Christians lived in denominational cultures largely cut off from one another, in which differences were clearly marked, extending beyond exclusionary rites into issues of daily life (for example, marriage and divorce, choice of names, burial procedures, and education), leading to manifold hurts.

We must confess that as Christians we are mutually at fault. Together we are striving towards the healing of painful memories. We honour the many witnesses to the faith and the martyrs from the time of the Reformation and

the wars of religion as well as all Christians still suffering religiously motivated persecutions, and we jointly commemorate their courageous faith and their loyalty to the gospel. We also honour those who in earlier times stood up for religious peace and for the end to the use of any violence.

4 Learning from one another

Looking back over the past 500 years, the churches have not only reason to confess fault, but also occasion to give thanks. Much learning has been shared, especially in the last 50 years. Together we live in the knowledge that the gifts of God's Spirit, which have been preserved and are experienced currently in one Christian denomination, can also enrich other churches. Thus, today it is undeniable that important issues addressed at the Second Vatican Council were also concerns of the Reformation: respect for Scripture for the spiritual life and for theological teaching; the sacramental ties of baptism connecting all Christian believers; the common priesthood of all the baptised; the necessity of all churches to return to the one gospel; spiritual 'oikonomia'; the common diaconal and missionary service to all humanity; freedom of religion. On the side of the Reformation, there is recognition that the Orthodox tradition has retained the legacy of the liturgy in great richness and that the Roman Catholic tradition has kept the memory of the universality of the Christian Church beyond ethnic or state boundaries. The Baptist and Methodist traditions enrich the whole Christian community of faith by their emphasis on a personal profession of faith. Many denominations place particular emphasis on working towards peace in the world or on serving society. As a result of different historical, regional and personal conditions, individual churches have developed different responses to the challenges of the places where they live. The multiplicity of these denominational characteristics is a richness. Within the ecumenical movement we have been able to develop a culture of valuing all God's good gifts.

All churches are jointly asked to pray for unity and to seek a form of unity which serves the credibility of the gospel. Together we confess the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. We need one other in order to fill this declaration with life.

5 Shaping the ecumenical future

Today we are jointly called to review our fidelity to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to shape our ecclesial life according to the gospel. This requirement, which has been repeatedly pushed to the centre of ecclesiastical reform movements, is expressed above all through the high standing the Holy Scriptures enjoy in the preaching, liturgy, service and mission of our churches. As Christians we are encouraged readily and constantly to rediscover the renewing power of the gospel of Christ, to call it to mind and to allow ourselves to be inspired by it in our daily church life, in order to draw from it the necessary guidance for an ecclesial practice in society which is true to the gospel. To this extent, talk of the *ecclesia semper reformanda* – of the Church always in need of renewal – speaks a truth which all churches can accept.

In 2001 the churches in Europe together signed the Charta Oecumenica, in which it said:

> We commit ourselves
>
> - to follow the apostolic exhortation of the Letter to the Ephesians (Eph 4:3–6) and persevere in seeking a common understanding of Christ's message of salvation in the gospel;
>
> - in the power of the Holy Spirit, to work towards the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ in the one faith, expressed in the mutual recognition of baptism and in eucharistic fellowship, as well as in common witness and service. (ChOe I.1).

Together, as the Council of Christian Churches in Germany, and in the face of the commemoration of the Reformation in 2017, we renew this commitment. We continue on the ecumenical path – with gratitude for mutual trust achieved, with energy in the face of the demands of society, and with confidence in the presence of God's Spirit in all the good that happens. We are certain: reconciled with one another, we are credible witnesses to Jesus Christ.

An ecumenical act of worship on the occasion of the publication of a statement by the Council of Christian Churches in Germany to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation

Hymn: Praise to the Lord, the almighty, the king of creation (*Singing the Faith*, 88).

Welcome

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The grace and peace of God who has reconciled us to himself through Christ be with you all (2 Cor 5:18).

And with your spirit.

Introductory words

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

This year many churches and Christians are commemorating the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. The member churches of the Council of Christian Churches in Germany have adopted a statement on this matter, 'Reconciled with One Another'. We are celebrating this act of worship on the occasion of this joint statement on the Reformation. We celebrate it by using words from this joint statement as prayers. We give thanks for what we have learned together from the Reformation. We lament and seek forgiveness where we have been at fault towards one another and in witness to the gospel. St Paul reminds us that God has reconciled us to himself through Christ. With the words 'reconciled with one another' we ask to be servants of reconciliation. In the unity of the Holy Spirit, let us praise God together and celebrate this act of worship.

Psalm: Psalm 36:5–10

I CONSIDERING THE YEAR 2017 ECUMENICALLY

Reading: Galatians 3:26–29, 'You are all one in Jesus Christ'

Litany of thanks (in the style of Psalm 136)

L: Using words from 'Reconciled with One Another' we give thanks for what has grown between us since the Reformation.

L: Good God, you have made yourself known to us and taught us the Way of Life. We thank you for the Holy Scriptures. They have become for all of us the source and norm for our church and personal life.

A: **Give thanks to the Lord, for his goodness endures for ever.**

L: Merciful God, you humbled yourself and became human. We thank you for Jesus Christ, our Lord. In him you show us your mercy and offer us salvation. He is the only true foundation for our Easter hope.

A: **Give thanks to the Lord, for his goodness endures for ever.**

L: Merciful God, in faith and baptism you make all Christians to be your kings, priests and prophets. We give you thanks that you allow us to be participants in your love for the world. You send us, your people, into the world so that we can make known the Easter hope and can hand on your limitless mercy in word and deed.

A: **Give thanks to the Lord, for his goodness endures for ever.**

L: Good God, we thank you for the seven decades in which the Council of Christian Churches in Germany has met. Trust has grown and we have learned that we are bound to one another through faith in you. We thank you that in Germany our spiritual bond has become so close that we shape our church and social life together.

A: **Give thanks to the Lord, for his goodness endures for ever.**

L: Threefold, One God, we give you thanks that after 500 years we can celebrate in ecumenical community the anniversary of the Reformation as a Christian festival.

A: **Give thanks to the Lord, for his goodness endures for ever.**

Song: Lord, your goodness extends to the heavens (Ps 36). (Alternative song from *Singing the Faith*, 77, Give thanks to the Lord)

II taking up the impulses of the reformation

Reading: Romans 3:21–31, 'Justification through faith'

L: Faithful God, you turn again and again to your people. You have renewed your Church through humankind and in and through her have offered life. We thank you for all who have dared new ventures in your Church. Throughout the centuries your Spirit has moved people to rekindle the fire of faith, to push the gospel back to the centre and to call for a fresh start.

A: **Yes I will sing, I will sing of the mercy of the Lord.** (Ps 89:1)

L: The message of your free mercy returned to the centre of faith. Through your unmerited gift, the sinful may hope and receive salvation in you. You give faith and certainty that in Jesus Christ you have unconditionally stepped in for us. In your great mercy you consider us. You justify us sinners and absolve us in Christ.

A: **Yes I will sing, I will sing of the mercy of the Lord.**

L: Good God, the source of life, you give us your good Spirit. You lead us in all truth and enliven your word within us. You make us kings, priests and prophets and show each of us where we can serve you and your community.

A: **Yes I will sing, I will sing of the mercy of the Lord.**

SILENCE

III lamenting the division of the church

Reading: Mark 10:35–45, 'Masters and servants'

Lament

L: Our God and Father in heaven, in Jesus Christ you forgive us our sins. In your word, you promise, 'If we confess our sins, you are faithful and just so that you forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' (cf 1 Jn 1:9)

L: We lament the absoluteness of the claims to truth which our respective churches have proclaimed and which in the course of time have led to irreconcilable differences.

A: **O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, come and listen to me.**

L: We lament the mutual condemnations, the persecution of religious minorities and the constantly recurring warlike quarrels. The exclusion of religious minorities burdens us even today.

A: **O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, come and listen to me.**

L: We lament that our denominations have over a long time disassociated themselves from one another. The polemical disputes, mutual exclusion, persecution and decades-long wars of religion of the past weigh down our co-existence even today.

A: **O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, come and listen to me.**

L: We lament discrimination and persecution, above all of the Anabaptist communities by Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed authorities. Political power was misused on all sides. Denominational dominance has caused pain.

A: **O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, come and listen to me.**

L: We lament the estrangement of Christians from one another. Prejudices are still perceptible today. Often differences between us are clearly highlighted. This causes pain.

A: **O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, come and listen to me.**

Confession of sins

L: Merciful God and Father in heaven, we look on the history of our churches today and recognise that we are mutually at fault. We confess this sin to you: all religiously motivated violence and the wars of religion, deportations and executions in your name, social unrest which was ended by bloodshed. We confess also our anti-Semitism and the dreadful consequences of it which are still unfolding today.

A: **Kyrie eleison.**

L: Forgive us our sin and heal all painful memories. Help us to honour the many witnesses to the faith. Let us honour together especially the Christians who suffered as martyrs under religious persecution.

A: **Christe eleison.**

L: Remind us of those who already in earlier times stood up for religious peace and an end to the use of any force. Help us to honour them and to align ourselves to their witness.

A: **Kyrie eleison.**

L: May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to eternal life.

A: **Amen.**

Hymn: Praise the Lord for all his mercy. (Alternative hymn from *Singing the Faith*, 681, Community of Christ)

IV LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

Reading: Galations 6:1–10, 'Doing good to all'

Short sermon/homily

Instrumental music

Prayer for unity (from the Fifth World Congress on Faith and Order in Santiago de Compostela, 1993)

L: We pray for the unity of the church.

A: **O God, holy and eternal Trinity, we pray for your Church throughout the world; heal her life, renew her worship, strengthen her witness, heal her divisions, let her unity become visible. Lead us with all our sisters and brothers to community in faith, life and witness so that we, united in the one body, through the one Spirit, may together witness to the complete unity of your love.**

L: All that has moved us we bring together in the prayer which Jesus taught us:

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: Come Lord, bless us. (Alternative hymn from *Singing the Faith*, 689, Summoned by the God who made us)

V SHAPING THE ECUMENICAL FUTURE TOGETHER

Reading: John 17:18–23, 'Jesus' high priestly prayer'

Personal commitment

L: On the first ecumenical church day in 2003, the member churches of the Council of Christian Churches in Germany signed the *Charta Oecumenica*. The present document, 'Reconciled to One Another', reminds them of this commitment and encourages everyone, each in their own churches, and with God's help, to satisfy those obligations which were entered into at the signing. We say together the foundational obligation of the *Charta Oecumenica* which relates to the unity of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Charta Oecumenica

A: **We commit ourselves:**

to follow the apostolic exhortation of the letter to the Ephesians and to work steadfastly towards a common understanding of the message of salvation of Christ in the gospel;

in the power of the Holy Spirit to work towards the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ in the one faith, which finds expression in the mutual recognition of baptism and eucharistic communion, and also in common witness and service.

Sending and blessing

L: We cry to you, merciful God, let all who seek reconciliation experience your help so that they can make known the great deeds of your love. This we pray through Christ our Lord.

A: **Amen.**

L: The blessing of almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always.

A: **Amen.**

L: Go in the peace of God

A: **Thanks be to God, the Lord.**

Hymn: Now sing praise, all Christians. (Alternative hymn from *Singing the Faith*, 684, Here on the threshold of a new beginning)

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

Acedia, depletion and pastoral resilience: series introduction

Alan Palmer

THE REVD DR ALAN PALMER is Deputy Lead Chaplain for the Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust. He was previously Head of Religious Studies at Culford School, is the author of a commentary on the Psalms and has church leadership experience in both England and Canada.

Alan.Palmer@ipswichhospital.nhs.uk
Ipswich, UK

Acknowledgement is given to the Susanna Wesley Foundation, based at the University of Roehampton, which initially funded this research.

In January 2017 Martin Seeley, Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, commented on local radio that in terms of contemporary parish ministry the Church was 'asking the clergy to do an impossible task' (BBC Radio Suffolk). Bishop Martin's comments served only to increase my commitment to investigate further the issues relating to 'burnout', 'compassion fatigue' and 'personal and pastoral resilience' among clergy.

This line of thought dovetailed neatly into what I had been reading and thinking about over the previous years. I had experienced 'burnout' while being the senior minister of a large multi-staff church in Canada. I had experienced what I have called elsewhere, 'ministerial meltdown'. Then during my reading of works by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, I came across a malady that monks experienced and that the Desert Fathers and Mothers analysed in great deal, namely *acedia*. Although written about as early as the fourth century, acedia is still present in various forms, as we shall see in this series of articles.

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 271–280
ISSN 2058-5969

One aspect of acedia was that the monk wished to abandon his cell, the place where he was stationed, and move somewhere else – perhaps to deal with a mounting sense of exhaustion, compassion fatigue, loss of joy, purpose and fulfilment in his desert location and spiritual vocation. What I discovered was that the perception of what defines acedia has 'morphed' through the centuries, from a sin to a medical condition. The name and the classification of acedia may have changed, but at the base of this 'affliction' lay the causes of a depletion of pastoral resilience.

This desire by ancient monastics to 'escape' their cell is very prescient. Today the Church worldwide is haemorrhaging clergy in worrying numbers. Runcorn notes this in his *Fear and Trust: God-Centred Leadership*. He writes:

> Research a few years ago revealed that three out of ten ministers have felt, for a prolonged period, like leaving the ministry. Seven out of ten feel consistently overly burdened by the task. An estimated 200 ministers a week in the UK miss Sunday activities through stress-related issues.[1]

I think we can safely say that this situation has not improved, with the clergy taking on more multi-church responsibilities. In terms of the Methodist context, Haley and Francis undertook a piece of empirical research using data from 1,339 Methodist clergy. Haley and Francis note in their Preface:

> The publication of research in 2006 is timely. Currently the Methodist Church has decided that stress in ministry is a matter that needs further consideration. Our research data confirm that view and underscore the urgency with which the matter needs to be addressed.

They continue:

> According to our data 45% of circuit ministers claim to be exhausted by their work. The news is not all bad, because so many ministers are able to offset their exhaustion by the sheer joy they have in doing their work. Ministry is a special vocation, with rich rewards and tremendous personal costs. Yet clearly *for some the personal costs become too great, leading to professional burnout, high levels of stress and poor health. For the Church, not to take that warning*

> *seriously shows negligence towards the ministers and irresponsibility towards the ministers' families. It is also damaging to the mission and the pastoral care of circuits.*[2]

I recognise that the Methodist Church has taken some proactive measures to address this issue; however, there is much more that can be done. We will explore some of these options in later articles.

One thing to note from the beginning is that whatever coping strategies we propose, these will not alleviate the 'pain that accompanies pastoral ministry'. We serve a 'crucified God'[3] and a 'Christ who shed tears' (John 11:35).[4] Any pastoral resilience that we experience will come via growth, and growing is often painful, it tempers and tests us to make us stronger. We become resilient through following our crucified Lord, as presbyters we are called to share in his suffering. Resilience is never attained via a hedonistic path but via the pathway of vulnerability and laying down our lives, being open to learning through painful experiences and episodes. Writing in the context of vulnerability and church leadership, Herrick and Mann put this well:

> The word Jesus uses to appoint his disciples is the same word, τίθημι that he uses to speak of laying down his own life. It is a word which implies laying down horizontally, surrendering oneself. Jesus lays down his life for his friends. He expects his friends to lay down their lives for each other and for God. This is the nature of leadership, a leadership one accepts because of a sense of trust and confidence in God. It is an acceptance of the power of God.[5]

It is worth noting in this context the words of Anthony Bloom:

> Surrender means such an act of trust and confidence that you can put yourself unreservedly, joyfully, by an act of freedom, into the hand of God, whatever, because you are sure of Him, more than you are sure of anything else … these are the words of Jesus, 'No one is taking my life from me, I give it freely.' This is surrender.[6]

The essence of Bloom's words is echoed in the Covenant Prayer of the Methodist Church, which will be looked at in more detail later.

M. Craig Barnes' words in *The Pastor as a Minor Poet* resonate with this concept of clergy as 'pain-bearers' who grow resilient through adversity. Clergy can

empathise with those who suffer because they have 'seen' suffering up close in their own lives. Barnes believes that pastors as poets 'see the despair and heartache as well as the beauty and miracle that lie beneath the thin veneer of the ordinary, and they describe this in ways that are recognised not only in the mind, but more profoundly in the soul'.[7] It seems, then, that pastors who act as poets 'feel' as well as 'think' their way through life and ministry.

Methodology

I have deliberately made these studies multidisciplinary in nature. Wesley Carr concurs with this approach when he states that 'The amalgam of life, belief and pastoral practice requires interdisciplinary effort on the part of any writers.'[8] This means that I have looked at a variety of academic sources to inform my thinking and writing. These sources include church history, linguistics (Greek, Latin and Hebrew), theology, philosophy, sociology and psychology, among others.

From the start, we need to recognise difficulties in writing theology because of its multidisciplinary nature; 'it is like trying to paint a bird mid-flight', says Karl Barth. Moreover, writing practical theology also brings with it several interesting challenges. Esther Acolatse of Duke University Divinity School explores the multi-textured nature of practical theology in her article, 'What is Theological about Practical Theology? Toward a Pastoral Hermeneutic of Primal Speech', where she quotes John Swinton and Harriet Mowat:

> It is hermeneutical because it recognises the centrality of interpretation in the way that human beings encounter the world and try to 'read' the texts of that encounter. It is correlational because it necessarily tries to hold together and correlate at least three different perspectives – the situation, the Christian tradition and another source of knowledge that is intended to enable deeper insight and understanding. It is a critical discipline because it approaches both the world and our interpretations of Christian tradition with a hermeneutic of suspicion, always aware of the reality of human fallenness and the complexity of forces which shape and structure our encounters with the world.[9]

Whatever complexities we face in exploring the realms of practical theology it is not a journey we can or should try to avoid. Ballard and Pritchard support this determination to engage theology with praxis:

> Christian theology has never been simply a speculative enquiry but a practical one. Theology is 'faith seeking understanding'. It arises from the experience of the life of discipleship and seeks to reflect on and serve the faith commitment. The root of all theology is the witness of the Christian community in worship, proclamation, service, and daily living.[10]

There are other related challenge issues in attempting writing this type of practical theology, objectivity and bias in the study of history being a prime example. Voltaire says that 'history is a pack of tricks we play upon the dead'. So, one must tread carefully here. The 'present' can and does influence our knowledge of the past – 'an element of subjectivity enters at every step in the process of investigation', there is no such thing as 'value-free historical investigation'.[11]

The literary critic and author Susan Sontag helpfully cites Nietzsche's comment in the context of 'interpretation'. She notes Nietzsche's words, 'There are no facts, only interpretations.'[12]

The specific problem is that we are not only dealing with the problems of 'factual objectivity' in doing historical research, we are also dealing with issues relating to objectivity in psychological research. Acedia, after all, is primarily a psychological affliction. The danger here would be to read modern understandings of mental health back into the fourth-century setting. The crucial point is the danger of what we might call 'psychological eisegesis' – reading into a primitive psychological and behaviour pattern our own thoughts and understanding of what is being presented.

Finally, there is the problem of objectivity in the way we use language to describe metaphysical issues. If we are not careful, we will get caught 'under the net' of language – 'the web of words that divides us from the unutterable particularity of the world and the immediacy of our experience'.[13] This 'net' was what certain early twentieth-century philosophers attempted to break free of. The so-called 'logical positivists', among whose number was the British philosopher A. J. Ayer (a member of the Vienna Circle), believed that unless something could be verified empirically, it was in philosophical and scientific

terms 'non-sense'. Religious language and ethical statements fell into this category of being non-verifiable.[14] The major problem for Ayer and those who called themselves logical positivists was that the very statement upon which their approach was built was not itself verifiable. Later, Ayer had to come up with a softer or weaker version of the verification argument; having said that, there are still several difficulties when it comes to using language about God, the soul and, indeed, human emotions.

Rowan Williams, in his excellent book *The Edge of Words*, attempts to tackle the limitations of language in his usual academic yet accessible style. We realise that whether we are talking about God, the soul or even the psychological impact of acedia, we are restricted to the realm of metaphor. On metaphor, Williams, reflecting on the work of Cornelius Ernst, writes:

> This may entail looking very critically at the usual way in which we distinguish 'literal' and 'metaphorical' language: to think of language about God (or other metaphysical issues) as 'metaphorical' is not to abandon truth claims nor to suggest that such language is the cosmic elaboration of a simpler and more 'secular' literal truth. It is more like putting the question, 'What sort of truth can be told only by abandoning most of the norms of routine description?[15]

The British essayist and novelist George Orwell, in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, states that 'words are such feeble things'.[16] While recognising the fragility of language, we are not in a position here to expound upon the strengths or shortcomings of language itself. We will just note that when it comes to metaphysical statements in their various forms, an apophatic (*via negativa*) approach, not saying anything in case we are in error, is not one open to us. We must say something kataphatic (*via positiva*), however tentative we are about the language used to describe the psyche and the impact acedia makes upon it.

Style

In terms of style, I have tried to make this research as accessible as possible. I have also used extensive quotations. These extended quotations are to encourage further reflection and maybe to prompt an interest in wider reading on the topic referred to.

Painful process

Finally, in terms of writing these articles let me briefly reflect on the process. Bernard Crick's words are helpful here: 'Like Aristotle's good rhetorician, the essayist must know not just the subject and have something to say about it, but must know an audience and how to reach it.'[17] I believe I know my audience, having been a minister for nearly 25 years, and therefore can speak helpfully in this context. The ability to do so, however, has not been painless. The American author Annie Dillard describes the activity of writing in this way: 'The line of words is a fibre optic, flexible as wire; it illuminates the path just before its fragile tip.'[18] I have found this writing process to be like crawling along inside a dark tunnel with only the aid of a flickering candle to light my way. I have felt that any moment the light might dim even further or be extinguished altogether. The result would be that I might be plunged back into the darkness of acedia or its related maladies myself.

Personally, the topics dealt with here, such as burnout and depression, are still raw in my memory. In Dillard's work *Holy the Firm*, she talks about one of her writing projects in these quite startling terms: 'Nothing is going to happen in this book. There is only a little violence here and there in the language, at the corner where eternity clips time.'[19] Again, the words I have written are much more than academic; they are in places frightening because they deal with 'eternity clipping' my own soul and mind. Some parts are just too impactful on my psyche, yet they are important and need to be addressed for the sake of others who share my vocation.

Dillard quips in her brilliant work *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, 'We are here on the planet only once, and might as well get a feel for the place.'[20] Dillard's words may well be true, but for many clergy the 'feel of the place' when it comes to pastoral ministry can be an extremely painful experience. In the article by Richard J. Foster published in 2016, 'Embracing Suffering', the author cites the words of C. S. Lewis which are apposite in this context: 'God's work in our lives can be painful, but his ultimate goal is to transform us into something better.'[21] This sentiment of Lewis's was personalised by Henri Nouwen, who experienced the 'dark side' of both life and ministry. His biographer Michael Ford writes of a comparison of the lives and struggles of Nouwen and his fellow Dutchman Vincent van Gough:

> The writings of Henri J. Nouwen, like the paintings of fellow Dutchman Vincent van Gough, emerged from an intense vision

> which captured the imagination of people the world over. Much of his genius was shaped by loneliness and anguish which also afflicted van Gough whose art Nouwen greatly admired. Constantly fearing solitude and rejection, especially by those they loved, both men sank at times into deep depression yet, at their lowest ebb, managed to create some of their most inspiring and memorable work.[22]

The ancient 'demon' of acedia can be countered, through resilience; that is, through a process of often painful growth. Perhaps true ministry is always the result of unavoidable personal suffering on the part of the clergy. Justin Lewis-Anthony asks a pertinent and probing question in this context:

> Can we be strong in Christ's weakness? Can we remember that Christian vocation in the words of Rowan Williams is to live out the weakness of Christ in our material lives so that the power which depends on nothing but its own glorious integrity can appear?[23]

In our weakness, we learn to lean hard on our sense of calling and our faith in God. Paul's words echo the need for both resilience and dependence:

> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Rom 5:4)

> But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Cor 12:9)

Mark Craig Barnes is surely correct when he writes, 'But when we are on a journey through a hard place with God, there are no short cuts.'[24]

In the following articles we will look at the history and development of the concept of acedia and then consider what I have called the 'echoes of acedia' in the life and ministry of twentieth-century clergy. Over all, I have tried to analyse the main causes of 'pastoral depletion' (ie, draining the 'reservoir of resilience') and recommend a variety of ways to 'replenish' stocks of resilience.

I will reflect upon the following, which will be published in this and subsequent issues of *Holiness*:

- Acedia, its history and development
- Echoes of acedia: introverts in the Church
- Echoes of acedia: perfectionists in the Church
- Echoes of acedia: depression in the Church
- Echoes of acedia: compassion fatigue in the Church
- Echoes of acedia: 'burnout' in the Church
- A new paradigm: healthy Church
- Dealing with the echoes of acedia: pastoral resilience.

Notes

1. D. Runcorn, *Fear and Trust*, London: SPCK, 2011, p. 49.
2. J. M. Haley and L. J. Francis, *British Methodism: What Circuit Ministers Really Think*, Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2006, p. vii.
3. J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, London: SCM Press, 2001.
4. V. Herrick and I. Mann, *Jesus Wept: Reflections on Vulnerability in Leadership*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1998.
5. Herrick and Mann, *Jesus Wept*, p. 58.
6. A. Bloom, in N. Auton (ed.), *From Fear to Faith: Suffering and Wholeness*, London: SPCK, 1976, p. 26.
7. M. Craig Barnes, *The Pastor as Minor Poet: Texts and Subtexts in the Ministerial Life*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009, p. 17.
8. W. Carr, *The Pastor as Theologian*, London: SPCK, 1989, p. 7.
9. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn, London: SCM Press, 2016, p. 73, cited in E. Acolatse, 'What is Theological about Practical Theology? Toward a Pastoral Hermeneutic of Primal Speech', *Practical Theology* 7(3) (2014), p. 208.
10. P. Ballard and J. Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action*, 2nd edn, London: SPCK, 1996, p. 1.
11. http://www.historydiscussion.net/history/objectivity-and-bias-in-the-study-of-history/632 (accessed 2 February 2017).
12. S. Sontag, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, London: Penguin, 2009, p. 5.
13. I. Murdoch, *Under the Net*, London: Vintage, 2002, p. xi.
14. A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, New York: Dover Publications, 2001.
15. R. Williams, *The Edge of Words*, London: Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 5–6.

16. G. Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, London: Penguin, 2001.
17. G. Orwell, *Essays*, London: Penguin, 2000, p. xxii.
18. A. Dillard, *The Writing Life*, New York: HarperCollins, 1989, p. 7.
19. A. Dillard, *Holy the Firm*, New York: HarperCollins, 1977, p. 24.
20. A. Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, New York: HarperCollins,1982, p. 74.
21. R. J. Foster, 'Embracing Suffering', www.renovare.org/articles/embracing-suffering (accessed 6 July 2015); originally published in *Perspective*, February 2006.
22. M. A. Ford, *A Portrait of Henri J. M. Nouwen*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999, p. 1.
23. J. Lewis-Anthony, *Circles of Thorns: Hieronymus Bosch and Being Human*, London: Continuum, 2001, p. 13.
24. M. Craig Barnes, *Sacred Thirst: Meeting God in the Desert of our Longings*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001, p. 13.

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

Acedia: its history and development

Alan Palmer

THE REVD DR ALAN PALMER is Deputy Lead Chaplain for the Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust. He was previously Head of Religious Studies at Culford School, is the author of a commentary on the Psalms and has church leadership experience in both England and Canada.

Alan.Palmer@ipswichhospital.nhs.uk
Ipswich, UK

The first in a series of articles on acedia, this article focuses on the history and development of the ancient anchorite malady of acedia, the 'noonday demon' as it was sometimes called. Akēdia, *in Greek, originally suggested 'a lack of care'. Its symptoms were many, including lethargy, boredom, an 'unwillingness' to stay in one place. Over time acedia's meaning changed from 'lack of care' to 'sloth', one of the 'seven deadly sins', to a 'lack of love for God and the things of God', to melancholia, depression and existential boredom and ennui. This survey of acedia forms the basis of forthcoming articles, in which acedia is used as a paradigm for modern pastoral 'dis-ease'.*

ACEDIA • LETHARGY • BOREDOM • DEPRESSION • DEPLETION • PASTORAL RESILIENCE

ISSN 2058-5969

Introduction

In the fourth century, a movement began among Christians, a move away from urbanisation to a life spent in the desert. These were known as anchorites. There is some debate among scholars of this period as to why these godly persons withdrew from society to seek a greater focus on their spirituality in desert places. Some scholars believe that the movement was sparked by the conversion of the Emperor Constantine and the resultant elevation of Christianity from an outlawed religion to the official state religion. Because of its official imperial status and backing, Christianity and its leadership were considered, by some devout believers, to have become less radical, more 'worldly' and in danger of compromising the gospel. In the light of this the so-called anchorites moved out into the desert to practise a 'deeper' spirituality.

Other scholars, such as the Oxford church historian Diarmaid MacCulloch, have other views. In his book, *Silence: A Christian History*, MacCulloch posits that the reason for some anchorites moving to the Egyptian deserts was to avoid trenchant imperial taxation![1] Other writers, including Richard Harries, believe that the reason for the anchorite exodus was not to escape conformity and spiritual compromise but to engage in spiritual warfare in the desert places. Harries writes:

> When in the fourth century a number of Christians left the newly Christianized Roman Empire to go into the deserts of Egypt, they did not do so primarily to flee the compromises of a newly fashionable Christianity or to get way from the world. It was because the desert was the front line in the struggle against evil. There, faced with nothing but the desert and the inner life, they discovered that the ordeal was indeed fiery.[2]

Rowan Williams, in his book *A Silent Action*, comments further on this 'demonic engagement in the desert':

> The Church has failed to recognize the devils in the city, and so the monk seeks them out in the desert; the only real reason for the flight to the desert is the impulse to confront the diabolical, the infernal, which threatens all men, be they ever so oblivious of it.[3]

In the desert the Israelites found a place of testing, temptation and challenge. It is well known that the symbolic significance in Hebrew culture of 'forty years'

in the wilderness is that 'forty' is the number that signifies a period of 'testing'. We can see this concept again expressed in terms of Jesus spending 'forty days' in the wilderness. The desert was where Jesus encountered the devil and faced temptation to divert from his God-given identity and purpose (Mt 4:1–11).

The Solace of Fierce Landscapes

Before leaving this discussion of why the anchorites headed for the desert places, we need to add one more line of thought. Belden Lane, in *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes*, has very pertinent ideas about the 'metaphor' of the desert landscape. Lane sees the desert, in one sense, as a metaphorical place of disorientation, a place of fear and emptiness: 'Emptiness offers answers of its own. Deep speaks to deep.'[4] Also, this sense of the desert being 'the abode' of djinns and spirits makes it an uncanny and supernaturally unsettling, unnerving place. This sense of 'the uncanny' is a theme that is picked up by Heidegger in his concept of 'uncanniness' (*Unheimlichkeit*). He saw in the uncanny moments in life moments when things suddenly seem strange – objects in the world lose their meaning, 'we feel like strangers to ourselves', or human existence itself strikes us as bizarre and unintelligible.[5] So the desert is an unsettling place, a place of extremity. As William James describes, 'extremity' is the necessary, even normative starting point for understanding the strenuous character of the spiritual life.

In his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1997), T. E. Lawrence ('Lawrence of Arabia') wrote of his years in the Hejaz along the Red Sea (Hebrew: *Yam Suph*). In the naked desert night, he said, 'we were stained by dew, and shamed into pettiness by the innumerable silences of the stars'.[6] Belden Lane says of Lawrence, 'He found in the desert something that cut to the bone, reducing his soul to a thinness he would spend the rest of his life trying to recover.'[7] This place of silence also stands as another metaphor that would undergird the apophatic tradition in the Eastern Church.

Lane believes that twenty-first-century Christians still need 'a desert place'. He writes:

> My fear is that much of what we call 'spirituality' today is overly sanitized and sterile, far removed from the anguish and pain, the anchoredness of place. Without the toughminded discipline of the desert-mountain experience, spirituality loses its bite, its capacity

> to speak prophetically to its culture, its demand for justice. Avoiding pain and confrontation, it makes no demands, assumes no risks.[8]

Mark Craig Barnes makes a parallel point in terms of when our prayer life 'dries up'. Barnes states that the desert is where we should go and remain:

> There simply is no alternative but to remain in the desert places when we are led there, including waiting out the long spells when we are doing nothing but wandering around in the wilderness of our own prayers. There is no easy way out. It always feels as though we are wasting time in the wilderness, that we are heading nowhere and will never be able to leave *but it is there we must stay*.[9]

Spiritual deserts

Brian Kolodiejchuck, in his book about Mother Teresa of Calcutta, speaks about Mother Teresa's *desert period*, which lasted for at least two decades. Mother Teresa experienced 'the absence of God' or the 'hiddenness of God' (*Deus absconditus*) – her prayers seem to go unheard and her pilgrimage became a barren place. Teresa spoke of it as her 'deep loneliness' and 'interior darkness'. However, she was faithful to remaining in 'her wilderness' and saw it as a place of learning through suffering.[10]

Perhaps modern 'spiritual urbanites' have lost the challenging sacred symbolism that desert landscapes can bring. We miss both their 'uncanniness' and their ability to put things back into perspective. In his book *Celtic Sacred Landscapes*, Nigel Pennick writes helpfully on this point: 'As human beings, we are rooted in the earth, but modern civilization obscures the fact to the point where many people appear unaware of it. Much current human behaviour results from the denial of this reality.'[11]

It was in this 'uncanny place' of the fourth-century deserts that the anchorites faced temptation and direct attack by 'the noonday demon', the malign influence which became known as acedia.

Acedia and its linguistic development

We should note from the start that *akēdia* is a word unmistakably Greek in form and always a linguistic foreigner in Latin. As we will see, the transition from Greek to Latin in terms of acedia caused in some cases a radical redefinition of the word.[12]

Marc Cardinal Ouellet writes of the burgeoning early interest in acedia:

> Very early on, the monastic tradition became interested in a strange and complex phenomenon: acedia. Spiritual sloth, sadness, and a *disgust with the things of God, a loss of the meaning of life, despair of attaining salvation: acedia drives the monk to leave his cell and to flee intimacy with God, so as to seek here and there some compensation for the austere way of life to which he felt called by God*.[13] (italics mine)

In the context of a monk wanting to leave his cell, Thomas Merton cites Abbot Antony's advice:

> Just as fish die if they remain on dry land so monks, remaining away from their cells, or dwelling with men of the world, lose their determination to persevere in solitary prayer. Therefore, just as the fish should go back to the sea so we must return to our cells, lest remaining outside we forget to watch ourselves intently.[14]

We first come across the 'noonday demon' in Psalm 91:6 (Hebrew numbering; Psalm 90:6, as it is numbered in the Vulgate of St Jerome). The Hebrew text reads, *mi-ketev yashud tsohorayim*, 'from destruction that despoils at midday'. The Septuagint (LXX) version reads: ἀπὸ πράγματος διαπορευομένου ἐν σκότει ἀπὸ συμπτώματος καὶ δαιμονίου μεσημβρινοῦ, '[you need not fear] the pestilence that walks in the darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday'.

The Vulgate reference to the noonday demon (*daemonium meridianum*) comes from Jerome's translation of the Septuagint into Latin. It is important as we move forward to understand that here Jerome has personified the word *daimonion*. There we find the words: *Non timebis … ab incurs et daimonio meridano*, 'You will not fear … because of the assault ('invasion' and 'incursion') and the noonday demon'.[15]

The Canadian scholar Donald Grayston continues by noting that this element of personification holds true in the Douay translation of 1609, where the Latin translation is literally 'the noonday devil'. On the other hand, the King James Version of 1611 follows the Hebrew text, rendering the verse, 'and the destruction that wasteth at noonday'. This is echoed in the most commonly used contemporary translations, for example the NRSV has 'the destruction that wastes at noonday'. However, particularly through the influence of the Vulgate, 'the noonday demon' has come down to us in personalised form through the Desert Fathers and Mothers, the Christian hermits of Egypt, Syria and Palestine. The fourth-century Christians found that this personalised form of the noonday demon resonated with their ascetical experience.[16]

Acedia and monotonous toil

The anchorites lived a strict spiritual and work regime, coping with the extremes of desert life. Their routine of prayer and work sometimes led to weariness of body, mind and soul. In the *Institutes* by John Cassian (*c*. 360–435), a monk and theologian, we find Cassian speaking about Abba Paul, who like many desert monks wove baskets as he prayed and subsisted on food from his garden and ate a few date palms.[17] Unlike monks who lived closer to cities and could sell their products there, Abba Paul

> could not do any other work to support himself because his dwelling was separated from towns and from habitable land by seven days' journey through the desert … and transportation cost more than he could get from the work he did. He used to collect palm fronds and always exact a day's labour from himself just as if this were his means of support. And when his cave was filled with a whole year's work, he would burn up what he had so carefully toiled over each year.[18]

This monotonous toil must have been mind-numbingly boring at times. As Norris mentions above, the palm-leaf baskets made by monks were collected and burned at the end of the year, and the whole process apparently was repeated ad infinitum. If this was the case, then the anchorite's boredom must have been tinged by the absurd.

This sense of existential boredom and absurdity are major themes of Camus' *La Peste* (The Plague).[19] The novel features a man passing the time counting peas, though he seems to have found some (ironic or perhaps insane) pleasure in it: 'When Rieux entered the room, the old man was sitting up in bed, at his usual occupation, counting out dried peas from one pan to another. On seeing his visitor, he looked up, beaming with delight.' (We might also mention that the apparent meaninglessness of life and mundane activities is expertly explored in Ecclesiastes.)

Rowan Williams, in *Silence and Honey Cakes*, adds to our understanding of acedia when he writes: 'acedia has to do with frustration, helplessness, lack of motivation, the displacement of stresses and difficulties from the inner world to the outer world'.[20] Tomlin, in *The Seven Deadly Sins*, writes: 'sloth (acedia) is essentially a giving up on life, and it leads us to finding no pleasure in life, only dull, steady torpor that expects nothing new, nothing exciting, nothing worth getting out of bed for'. Tomlin goes on to quote Dorothy L. Sayers' words when she writes of sloth (acedia):

> It is not merely idleness of mind and laziness of body: it is that whole poisoning of the will which, beginning with indifference and an attitude of 'I couldn't care less', extends to the deliberate refusal of joy and culminates in morbid introspection and despair.[21]

In his Foreword to a symposium on the seven deadly sins, Ian Fleming writes that acedia is 'a form of spiritual suicide and refusal of joy'. In the same volume, Evelyn Waugh writes, 'besides acedia there is *pigritia*, "plain slackness", which is a deflection from, if not an outrage against, the divine order'. Waugh informs us that as a writer he sometimes experienced what the ancient monks did in terms of how laborious and irksome life and labour can be. Waugh writes that the actual process of writing is laborious and irksome: 'We sit at our desks for, say, two hours and emerge with a thousand deathless words.' Waugh continues with these insights into acedia and the ageing process:

> Medical science has oppressed us with a new huge burden of longevity. It is in that last undesired decade, when passion is cold, appetites feeble, curiosity dulled, and experience has begotten cynicism, that acedia lies in wait as the final temptation to destruction. The last deadly assault of the devil.[22]

It was particularly in the middle of the day (noon) that some monks began literally 'to wilt'. It was in this atmosphere that the noonday demon of acedia was said to operate. In *The Praktikos* by Evagrius Pontus (fourth century) we find an exposition of the dangers associated with the noonday demon of acedia. Evagrius speaks of the devastation caused by this demonic attack:

> [The demon of acedia] made it seem that the sun barely moves, if at all, and that the day is fifty hours long. Boredom tempts the monk to look constantly out of the windows, to walk outside the cell, to gaze carefully at the sun to determine the lunch hour.

Evagrius soon discovered that this apparently innocuous activity has an alarming effect, 'for having stirred up a restlessness that he is unable to shake, the demon taunts him with the thoughts that his efforts at prayer and contemplation are futile. Life then looms like a prison sentence, day after day of nothingness.'[23] This is prescient of what modern-day pastoral ministry has become for some clergy. Acedia, the noonday demon, seems also to embody fatigue, listlessness and what is later referred to as the deadly sin of 'sloth'. In *The Praktikos*, Evagrius describes the listless monk in terms that might fit some modern clergy in their studies:

> When he reads … [he] yawns plenty and easily falls asleep. He rubs his eyes and stretches his arms. His eyes wander from the book. He stares at the wall and then goes back to his reading for a little. He then wastes his time hanging on the end of words, counts the pages, ascertains how the book is made, finds fault with the writing and the design. Finally, he just shuts it and uses it as a pillow. Then he falls asleep not too deep, because hunger wakes his soul and he begins to concern himself with that.

Acedia as a malevolent force

Looking at the etymology of acedia is helpful at this point. It will help to explain some of the reasoning behind acedia being seen as a malevolent spiritual force. The Greek root of acedia – *a+kēdos* – means 'without care' or 'absence of care'. However, it has proved difficult to find a dynamic equivalent in English. As well as the later Latin form – *acedia* – modern writers tend to leave the term untranslated, or employ the Middle English (via Old French) term *accidie*.

Acedia, then, is about 'lacking care', 'lacking passion' and 'lacking attentiveness'. However, what makes acedia not just a psychological issue but also a metaphysical one is its focus. What made this so much more shocking for Evagrius and others was that this sloth, this weariness, this listless apathy, was being expressed by Christian monks concerning their relationship with God and things of God. Surely to be bored with God and God's work must be demonic in origin. At this stage in history, there was religious, philosophical and theological commitment to belief in the demonic.

Grayston writes of this belief in demons:

> A belief in demons, differently understood at different times, had been part of Greek culture since Plato. Their existence was an accepted aspect of human experience, and was confirmed for the monks by their presence in the ministry of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. Once in the desert, the monks found that as external distractions diminished, interior distractions, the work of the demons, increased, 'and they began to study their thoughts as they arose, noting which were life-giving and which destructive' – that is, which ones come from the demons (the passionate thoughts, the logismoi) and which ones from God.[24]

All *logismoi*, according to Evagrius, have essentially a twofold origin which corresponds to the twofold nature of a human being, corporeal and spiritual. They come from two impassioned faculties of the soul – first, the *concupiscible* (the appetite by which we sense attraction to what appears to be a good – even if it is not); second, the *irascible*, 'aversion to evil, even if it is not evil'. Again, Nault states that the concupiscible and the irascible elements of human nature arise and darken the third faculty, the intellect, the principal function of which is to know God. But acedia holds a very special place among these psychical elements, because it arises from all the faculties at once and hence its terrible character. It is found at the intersection of two series of vices: one that comes from below (corporeal passions) and the other from above (spiritual passions). Acedia affects the body and soul simultaneously. It takes advantage of the body and so affects the soul. Gabriel Bunge, in his book *Despondency: The Spiritual Teaching of Evagrius Ponticus on Acedia*, writes:

> In the life of the soul, acedia thus represents a type of dead end. A distaste for all that is available combined with a diffuse longing for

> what is not available paralyses the natural functions of the soul to a degree that no single one of any other of the (positive) thoughts can gain the upper hand.[25]

One can see here echoes of what today we may well call 'depression', where ruminating on dark thoughts can lead to mental illness. Nault notes that acedia, 'like an obscure malady, plunges the heart of the person that if afflicts into the gray fog of weariness and the night of despair'.[26] Evagrius' advice to those experiencing such an attack was to 'stay in one's cell' (ie, the monk's room), that is, to 'stand firm' (see Eph 6:11) and to meditate, particularly on Scripture. The Psalms, anything from the Gospels, and the very name of Jesus, formed the staples of the monastic armoury.

Acedia and sloth

Moving from Evagrius to John Cassian, we see a shift in the perception of acedia. It appears to move from being an attack made by demons to a specific sin committed by the individual and that tinged with laziness, hence his designation of a*cedia* as 'sloth'. In Book 10 of the *Institutes*, Cassian notes that acedia is chief among the capital vices. He describes acedia in terms of 'weariness of heart', 'anxiety', akin to sadness. The sin of acedia is in 'ingratitude' about one's position and location. Acedia, according to Cassian, 'makes a person horrified at where he is, disgusted with his cell (room) … disdainful of his brothers who live with him … being careless and unspiritual'. The monk experiencing acedia is bored, listless, lacking in love for God and humanity. Cassian's interpretation of acedia can be viewed as developmental change in the understanding of the term. While Evagrius spoke of eight *logismoi*, John Cassian speaks of eight daughters of acedia or sloth. As noted earlier, Cassian is at the origins of the transformation of acedia into sloth. This view greatly influenced the thinking and writing of St Benedict. The 'eight daughters of acedia/sloth' (Cassian's eight principal vices, or *vitia principala*) are: laziness, sleeplessness, peevishness, restlessness, vagrancy, instability of mind, garrulousness and curiosity .

The next stage of the transformation of the term can be seen in the work of Gregory the Great (540–604). We owe Gregory for the revised list of deadly sins, reducing the list from eight to seven by folding 'sadness' into acedia. Aquinas (1225–74) aligns himself with the Gregorian tradition by considering acedia to be a form of sadness, but a specific sadness about God. Aquinas, we should

note, translates acedia, some say unhelpfully, also as sloth. (NB: It is likely that Aquinas was not strong linguistically in terms of reading the Greek of Evagrius.) However, his views were massively influential even into our own time – not least through his taxonomy of the seven deadly sins. What is more important here for our argument is that Aquinas saw the sin of sloth as 'sadness, a lack of love for God and for the things of God'. Aquinas analyses acedia/sloth under two headings: 'Sadness about spiritual good (*tristia de bono divino*)' and 'Disgust with activity (*tedium operandi*)'.

Sadness about spiritual good

For Aquinas, acedia seems to reverse our spiritual and perhaps our intellectual polarity. When we are in the grip of this malady, we experience a kind of sadness when faced with spiritual good. The spiritual good seems to us to be evil. This results in a severe depletion of joy. It is a sin against the *gaudium de caritate* – at core it is the sadness of having to give something up for God (see the response to giving up his wealth by the rich young man in Mark 10:17–27). Aquinas seems to consider that 'acedia causes sadness, a negative reaction to what ought to be our greatest happiness, participation in the life of God'.[27]

Disgust with activity

According to Aquinas, acedia causes spiritual paralysis, stopping us from being fully participative in the divine life. This, for Aquinas, is not now simple sadness, but a kind of sluggishness, a reticence that prevents action. Acedia, then, is a sin against charity and charitable action. Aquinas also names joy as the first three effects (or 'fruits') of charity. Acedia, as 'a kind (species) of sorrow' is a vice opposing this joy (in activity). Rather than being lifted up by joy at its union with God, the person afflicted with acedia is oppressed or weighed down; as one's own, the divine good (and good actions) is seen, rather, as an unwelcome burden. For Aquinas, acedia can cut a person off from God as the very heart of his or her activity. Dave MacQuarrie, in his book *The Darkness Within*, picks up this theme of acedia militating against activity. He writes: 'I propose that the behavioral outcomes of acedia lead to a loss of community, an intolerance of diversity, an avoidance of authentic exploration of inner experience, and an *unwillingness to do the work necessary for effective change*.'[28]

Aquinas views acedia as 'a kind of spiritual torpor accompanied or even causing physical weariness'. It seems that those who spend much time handling sacred things can become detached and blasé about things of God. This can amount to a 'trivialization of God'.[29]

We can also see Aquinas' influence in Dante Alighieri's (1265–1321) *Divine Comedy*. In the central volume, *Purgatory*, Dante reflects on acedia on three occasions. Dante sees acedia as indolence. He writes: 'Here the slackened oar is pulled with greater force' (XVII:82–87). Like Aquinas, Dante considers that acedia results from insufficient or improper desire to attain the good.[30]

The theme of acedia is picked up in the work of Geoffrey Chaucer (1343–1400). In *The Canterbury Tales*, the Parson's Tale features a discussion of acedia, or *accidie*. 'Accidie', says the Parson, will make us 'sad, anxious and angry'. The cure for *accidie* is *fortitudo* (fortitude) – the cardinal virtue of strength, magnanimity and courage. With *fortitudo* must be joined the theological virtues of faith, love and hope; and with their exercise will sinners find acedia departing from them.[31]

Acedia and melancholia

In later centuries acedia morphs again, this time from metaphysics and sin to a medical condition. Acedia now becomes melancholia. Melancholia traces back to Greek *melan* ('black', 'dark') and *cholē* ('bile'). Medical practitioners once adhered to the system of humours, bodily fluids that included black bile, yellow bile, blood and phlegm. An imbalance of these humours was thought to lead to disorders of the mind and body. One suffering from an excess of black bile (believed to be secreted by the kidneys or spleen) could become sullen and unsociable, liable to anger, irritability, brooding and depression.[32]

Robert Burton, who himself was a depressive, wrote a seventeenth-century epic tome, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, on this disorder.[33] It was Burton's life work and is still consulted today. The modern writer Andrew Solomon, who also experienced a debilitating episode of depression, points out that in later centuries, notably in the Renaissance, the term melancholia was used to refer to what we now call depression.[34] Also, that it was given an Augustinian interpretation, meaning that, 'the melancholiac's despair suggested that he was not suffused with joy and the certain knowledge of God's divine love and mercy'. By the time of the Inquisition, which began with the Dominicans in the thirteenth century, some depressives could even be fined or imprisoned for their malady. This may well have been the case; however, we should not lose sight of the steady separation of acedia from a metaphysical state to a medicalised malady.

Acedia and depression

Solomon notes that '*acedia* seems to have been almost as widely used as depression is today … sharing as it does many of the same symptoms'. Though, we should note here that there was always the 'shadow of sin' hanging over this condition. People felt, and were often made to feel, guilty about their melancholy. In some ways, it was an illness with 'guilt' attached. Solomon is insightful when he writes that it is from these primitive understandings of acedia, and to some extent melancholy, that 'the stigma still attached to depression today has grown'.[35]

In the early part of the nineteenth century we saw the birth of a discipline known as psychoanalysis. Acedia again had its shadowy presence in this embryonic approach to understanding the human psyche. The process of the secularisation of our understanding of the psyche, particularly through the work of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), Solomon asserts, moved society away from dependence on religious categories regarding depression, but without shedding the stigma of imperfection (if not sinfulness) and shame that was the legacy of the medieval Church.

Acedia has moved, then, from being a demonic attack in the fourth century to being a secular psychological condition in the twentieth century. Moreover, with the work of Samuel Beckett, Sartre, Camus and Heidegger, in the twentieth century, acedia now appears as ennui, nausea, nihilism and existential boredom. Samuel Beckett, in a conversation with Harold Pinter, expresses the essence of acedia and twentieth-century 'formlessness' and nihilism in this way:

> If you must insist on finding form, I'll describe it for you. I was in hospital once. There was a man in another ward dying of throat cancer. In the silence, I could hear his screams continually. That's the only kind of form my work has.[36]

One suspects that the fear of this nameless horror, this impotence in the face of 'the nothingness of life', is expressed in the last words of Kurtz in Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*: 'The horror! The Horror!'[37] Harries, in his book *The Beauty and the Horror*, suggests that it is not surprising that Konrad's words were referred to by T. S. Eliot in the epigraph to his poem 'The Hollow Men', a poem written at a time when his personal life was bleak but that also reflected the breakdown of spirit and the sense of *total meaninglessness* felt in the aftermath of the First World War.[38]

In terms of another genre of art, this nameless horror, meaninglessness, nihilism and existential boredom is powerfully depicted in Edvard Munch's painting *The Scream*. Again, Harries comments that this 'became one of the iconic images of the twentieth century, with its portrayal of a person on a bridge whose scream seems to fill the whole universe'. The psychologist Eric Fromm also notes that part of our difficulty is our 'self-awareness', leading to a sense of isolation in the cosmos. He writes: 'Human self-awareness has made man a stranger in the world, separate lonely and frightened.'[39] Elsewhere Fromm speaks of what he calls, 'moral aloneness'.[40]

Acedia and boredom

In his novel *Identity*, Milan Kundera has the main character Jean-Marc rehearsing his 'old theory'. According to him, there are three types of boredom: passive boredom – the girl dancing and yawning; active boredom – kite-lovers; and rebellious boredom – young people burning cars and smashing windows.[41] Here Kundera is seeking to summarise modern views. However, boredom is more sophisticated and textured than Kundera states. Peter Toohey, in *Boredom: A Lively History*, argues that boredom is a complex 'grab bag' term covering emotions such as frustration, surfeit, depression, disgust, indifference, apathy and that feeling of being trapped or confined.[42]

There are two types of boredom. The first results from predictable circumstances that are very hard to escape – so-called *reactive boredom*. As Reposa notes, 'for the bored person, time seems to stand still'.[43] On the other hand, time almost ceases when, as Mihaly Csikszentmihaly writes, 'you're in the flow'. Toohey also notes that one of the reasons we moderns love extreme sports is our natural aversion to boredom. This presents both a positive and negative reflection on how some deal with boredom. While adrenalin-enriched activities can help some deal with 'the blahs', others turn to drugs, alcohol and sexual dalliances. We will look at the link between acedia and sexual misconduct among clergy later.

The second type of boredom is what Toohey calls '*complex boredom or super boredom*'. This is more akin to elements of acedia and links into Sartre's concepts of ennui in his work *Nausea*.[44] R. J. Snell sees acedia in modern garb as an insatiable desire to be free. He suggests that, for modern people, 'freedom has become an idol'.[45] Snell writes that 'freedom' has become flattened and unhooked from reality. 'Our lives', he notes, 'are arbitrary and insignificant.' There

is about our modern society 'an instance bearing no weight'. (See in this regard Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.[46]) Snell continues: 'This weightlessness, this unbearable lightness of being, results in the torpor of meaninglessness, the spiritually enervating results of a life not worth living.'[47] For Snell, acedia seems to capture with aptness the spiritual conditions of our own age. Acedia has become a cultural reality, nestled deep in the roots of our ways of acting and living; sloth (acedia) seeps into our loves and lives in virtually every domain, before finally transforming itself into boredom and nihilism.[48] Acedia, in its modern manifestation, seems to result in a 'disgust at being'.

Charles Taylor, in his book *A Secular Age*, describes this '*acedia* infected modern' world well as 'a terrible flatness in everyday life, the utter flatness, emptiness of the ordinary'.[49] Taylor writes in *The Ethics of Authenticity*: 'There is a sense that our freedom came at a cost, namely the loss of a higher purpose, of anything worth living for, and so the only remainder is a "centering self".' He continues: 'And since the world is devoid of "thick meaning", the world itself loses depth, sinking to the level of mere resource for our use and abuse in pursuit of our own, rather shallow comfort.'[50]

In his remarkable book *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Kundera's character Tomas wants to be light and free as he hunts for some difference to distract him from the boredom of it all. Tomas represents the modern sufferer from acedia – unsure whether to choose weight or lightness.

Remedies for acedia

Nault gives five traditional remedies for acedia:

1 *Tears*. These are an external manifestation of the need for salvation. Water will melt the stony heart. 'Tears will make a notch so that mercy might pour in the gap.' Evagrius states that 'Sadness is burdensome and acedia is irresistible, but tears shed before God are stronger than both.'[51]

2 *Prayer and work*. Work with your hands (exercise) will overcome the demon of acedia. It helps to deal with sloth (laziness) and listlessness. Evagrius in his eight thoughts said perseverance (resilience) is the cure for acedia.

3 *The antirrhetic method or contradiction*. Jesus used this approach in the desert to counteract the attacks of Satan. It is about 'talking back' – replying to the temptation with a verse of Scripture. Benedict later

adopted this approach in his Rule: 'when evil thoughts come into one's heart, [we are to] dash them against Christ immediately'. John Cassian also developed this principle in his tenth *Conference.* Linked into this use of Scripture to repel the demon of acedia, the Desert Fathers, particularly in the Eastern tradition, developed the so-called 'Jesus Prayer': 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me the sinner.'

4 *Meditation on death*. In his Rule, Benedict recommends as one of the instruments of good works 'to keep death daily before one's eyes'. There is nothing morbid about this – it reminds us of our finitude. It stands to reason as a simple element of vigilance.[52] For Benedict, the first degree of humility is to live in the presence of God. Recognising finitude helps us not to fight to hold on to ourselves (the sin of *philautia*, self-love). Evagrius regards 'self-love' as the root of all sins.

5 *Perseverance (resilience)*. The essential remedy for acedia is ὑπομονή (*hypomene*) perseverance. This is a very active thing that increases faith. Benedict said, 'The handrail is fidelity to one's everyday routine – the fidelity to rule one's life.'

All five remedies are bound together with prayer. This is not Stoicism per se, but rather 'long patience in God's sight' (echoes of Nietzsche's 'a long obedience in the same direction').

Snell suggests other ways to deal with the malignity of acedia, some of which we will revisit later. He suggests that those suffering with acedia might:

- *start seeing boredom as a heresy*. Despite Nietzsche stating that 'Against boredom even the gods struggle in vain', Snell sees boredom as heresy, because it declares that God was wrong when he saw goodness in the world. God 'looks the world into loveliness' and the bored think God's vision is impaired. G. K. Chesterton says that to be 'a Christian means a person who believes that deity or sanctity has attached to matter or entered the world of senses'.

- *start loving the world passionately*. Instead of despising the world, we are to love it passionately – amateurishly – into grace. For like Chesterton says of Aquinas, it was 'that positive position of our minds, which are filled and soaked as with sunshine, the warmth and wonder of created things'. It is as Gerard Manley Hopkins says in 'As kingfishers catch fire', the sheer 'thingness of things'.

- *start engaging with glory*. The Hebrew for glory, *kabod*, also carries with it the sense of 'weight' or 'heaviness'. God's glory and the glory of creation imply a weight immanently present at the core of things. This is reminiscent of Hopkins' poem, 'God's grandeur': 'The world is charged with the grandeur of God.' We humans can share in this 'weightiness', this glorious 'heaviness' of meaning too. Ruth Burrows argues, 'God is not glorified by half-persons.'[53] Simply by living 'whole-lives', 'full lives' can we bring glory to God. The second-century theologian St Irenaeus put it well: *Gloria Dei vivens homo* – 'The glory of God is the person fully alive.'

- *start approaching the world with wonder*. Because of the exponential rise in technology,[54] the society we live in has tended to some extent to become 'dis-enchanted'. As T. S. Eliot stated, 'the nymphs are departed'. Snell helpfully writes, 'the glory and weight (*Kabod*) of the disenchanted world is hard to see given "the gradual bleaching out" of the sense that things possess integrity and … have been "loved into being"'.[55] We perhaps lack the antennae to pick up the intrinsic signals of the wonder of 'being'. Gerard Hughes, in *Cry of Wonder*, writes that technology, while bringing so many advantages to us humans, does have a dark side. These wonderful gifts of technology 'can blind our long-distance vision; we become so overloaded with information, so preoccupied with the complex details of life, that we no longer have the energy, or the inclination, to consider wider questions about the meaning and the wonder of it all'.[56]

The magnetic qualities of wonder can help draw us away from acedia. Snell notes that we tend to become fixated with 'objects'. 'Moderns', he writes, are those 'who reduce things to mere objects with extension. Flattening and thinning things to matter in space, objects … stripped of their glory.' Snell continues this idea that modern humans are missing wonder by 'objectifying' life, by commodification – making life a thing, a resource. He states that 'objects please us according to our objective taste – the world has become a mere resource, what Heidegger called "standing-reserve"'. Life's interiority is denied, its splendid formula dimmed and there is no *Kabod* or 'freshness deep down' – nature is 'mute'.[57]

For society, for Christians and for clergy, 'wonder' can act as an effective antidote to acedia. Sometimes this wonder can be seen in the ordinary things of life. The Oxford academic and novelist Iris Murdoch found that on one occasion when she was distracted and anxious, simply looking at a bird in her

garden brought about the peace she longed for.[58] Wonder, apparently, can be found in the quotidian. In the following articles in this series, we move forward using acedia as a paradigm for everything that is likely to deplete clergy resilience.

Notes

1. D. MacCulloch, *Silence: A Christian History*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 38.
2. R. Harries, *The Beauty and the Horror*, London: SPCK, 2016, p. 126.
3. R. Williams, *A Silent Action: Engagements with Thomas Merton*, London: SPCK, 2011, pp. 25–26.
4. Belden Lane, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 19.
5. See K. Withy, *Heidegger on Being Uncanny*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015; S. Bakewell, *At the Existentialist Café*, London: Chatto and Windus, 2016; I. McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary*, New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 2009.
6. T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, New York: Doubleday, 1997.
7. Lane, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes*, p. 20.
8. Lane, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes*, p. 20.
9. M. Craig Barnes, *Sacred Thirst*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001, p. 55.
10. B. Kolodiejchuck, *Mother Teresa: Come be My Light*, London: Rider, 2007, pp. 156–157
11. N. Pennick, *Celtic Sacred Landscapes*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2000, p. 7.
12. S. Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1967, p. 7.
13. Marc Cardinal Ouellet in his Foreword to J.-C. Nault, *The Noonday Devil: Acedia. The Unnamed Evil of our Times*, San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2015, p. 11.
14. T. Merton, *Wisdom of the Desert*, Tunbridge Wells: Burns and Oates, 2002, p. 32.
15. D. Grayston, *The Camoldi Correspondence: Thomas Merton and the Noonday Demon*, Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015, p. 12.
16. Grayston, *The Camoldi Correspondence*, pp. 12–15.
17. K. Norris, *Acedia and Me*, New York: Riverhead Books, 2008, p. 1.
18. Norris, *Acedia and Me*, p. 1.
19. A. Camus, *The Plague*, London: Penguin, 2002.
20. R. Williams, *Silence and Honey Cakes: The Wisdom of the Desert*, Oxford: Lion, 2003, p. 83.
21. Dorothy L. Sayers, *The 'Comedy' of Dante Alighieri the Florentine. Cantica II: Purgatory*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955, p. 209, quoted in G. Tomlin, *The Seven Deadly Sins* (Lion Books, 2014), p. 172.
22. E. Waugh, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, New York: Akadine Press, 2002, p. 64.
23. Norris, *Acedia and Me*, p. 4.
24. Grayston, *The Camoldi Correspondence*, p. 14.

25. G. Bunge, *Despondency: The Spiritual Teaching of Evagrius Ponticus on Acedia*, Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2012, p. 58.
26. Nault, *The Noonday Devil*, p. 72.
27. R. K. DeYoung, '*Acedia*'s Resistance to the Demands of Love: Aquinas on the Vice of Sloth', p. 9. Available at www.calvin.edu/academic/philosophy/virtual_library/articles/deyoung_rebecca_k/acedia.pdf (accessed 8 September 2016).
28. D. MacQuarrie, *Acedia: The Darkness Within*, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2012, p. 36 (italics added).
29. See D. W. McCullough, *Trivialisation of God*, Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1995.
30. Grayston, *The Camoldi Correspondence*, p. 21.
31. Grayston, *The Camoldi Correspondence*, p. 22.
32. Webster Online Dictionary, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/melancholia (accessed 12 January 2017).
33. R. Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, New York: Clarendon Press, 1989.
34. A. Solomon, *The Noonday Demon: An Anatomy of Depression*, London: Vintage, 2014, p. 292.
35. Solomon, *The Noonday Demon*, p. 294.
36. D. Blair, *Samuel Beckett*, London: Jonathan Cope, 1978, p. 528. See also A. Cronin, *Samuel Beckett – The Last Modernist*, Boston, MA: Da Capo Press, 1999.
37. J. Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, London: Collins, 1973, p. 100. See also Francis Ford Coppola's retelling of *Heart of Darkness* in his film *Apocalypse Now* (1979).
38. R. Harries, *The Beauty and the Horror*, London: SPCK, 2016, p. 6 (italics added).
39. E. Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, New York and London: Harper & Rowe, 1964, p. 113.
40. E. Fromm, *Fear of Freedom*, Abingdon: Routledge, 1980, p. 15.
41. M. Kundera, *Identity*, London: Faber and Faber, 1998, p. 15.
42. P. Toohey, *Boredom: A Lively History*, New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 2011, p. 4.
43. See also P. M. Spacks, *Boredom: The Literary History of a State of Mind*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
44. J.-P. Sartre, *Nausea*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000.
45. R. J. Snell, *Acedia and its Discontents: Metaphysical Boredom in an Empire of Desire*, Kettering, OH: Angelico Press, 2015.
46. M. Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, London: Faber and Faber, 2002.
47. Snell, *Acedia and its Discontents*, p. 61.
48. Snell, *Acedia and its Discontents*.
49. C. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
50. C. Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
51. Nault, *The Noonday Devil*, pp. 38–39.
52. *The Rule of Benedict*, ed. Caroline White, London: Penguin, 2008. See also Earnest Becker, *The Denial of Death*, London: Souvenir Press, 2011.
53. Ruth Burrows, *Before the Living God*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1975, p. 118, cited in W. Au and N. Cannon, *The Urgings of the Heart*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995, p. 1.

54. J. Ellul, *The Technological Society*, New York: Random House, 1973.
55. Snell, *Acedia and its Discontents*, pp. 90–91.
56. G. W. Hughes, *Cry of Wonder*, London: Bloomsbury, 2014, p. ix.
57. Snell, *Acedia and its Discontent*, p. 82.
58. I. Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, London: Routledge, 2001.

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

What have the sermons of John Wesley ever done for us?

'Justification by Faith'

Andrew Stobart

THE REVD DR ANDREW STOBART is Commissioning Editor of *Holiness* and Superintendent Presbyter in the Darlington Methodist Circuit, UK.

andrew.stobart@methodist.org.uk
Darlington, UK

John Wesley's sermon 'Justification by Faith' provides a helpful set of headings to prompt our exploration of this foundational Reformation proposition. Reflecting on recent theological scholarship (including Bonhoeffer, Pannenberg and Jenson), this article follows Wesley's argument from the ground of justification, through the definition of justification, the identification of those who are justified, to the condition of justification, which is faith. Wesley's sermon remains an important resource for a Wesleyan understanding of justification and its role in the Church's proclamation today.

JUSTIFICATION • JOHN WESLEY • REFORMATION • FAITH

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 301–316

ISSN 2058-5969

> But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.[1]

Preaching 270 years closer to the Reformation than we do, John Wesley boldly declared both the significance and the slipperiness of the Reformation's renowned doctrinal proposal – justification by faith alone – as matters of 'no common importance' to his hearers.[2] While today we may reserve the exposition of justification for appropriately studious contexts, Wesley had no qualms about preaching 'the nature, the cause, and the condition or instrument of justification' to about a thousand people in Gloucester, or from his father's tombstone at Epworth.[3] His sermon 'Justification by Faith' sets out his thinking in strikingly honest complexity: while justification 'contains the foundation of all our hope', Wesley acknowledges the 'confused', 'utterly false' notions, at times 'absolutely inconsistent with the oracles of God,' that plague its exposition.[4] Wesley's sermon seeks to provide 'true and just conceptions of this great mystery of godliness'.[5]

In particular, Wesley observed that justification by faith was too often confused with that other great act of God within the Christian's life, sanctification. Given his overriding concern for holiness, it is telling that Wesley wished to distinguish so neatly between the two. Indeed, such was Wesley's conviction of the clarity of his own teaching on justification and sanctification that 40 years later he could compare the Methodist movement with both Protestant and Catholic branches of the Church, and say 'it has pleased God to give the Methodists a full and clear knowledge of each [justification and sanctification], and the wide difference between them'.[6] Giving justification its proper doctrinal location and proportion seemed, to Wesley, to be one of his movement's most distinctive theological characteristics.

So what has Wesley's sermon 'Justification by Faith' ever done for us? Not much yet, perhaps. But, if we let it, it can provide a framework within which to reacquaint ourselves with the theological richness of justification by faith. Despite another 270 years of preaching and teaching, it is not clear that we are any further from 'vain jangling and strife of words' than Wesley's hearers were.[7] As the late American Lutheran theologian Robert Jenson put it at the turn of the twenty-first century, 'doctrine about "justification," although pivotal for the life of the Western church, ecumenically and in other ways, is badly in need of conceptual sorting out, as it offers a prize example of the confusion of understanding by linguistic illusion'.[8]

Wesley's sermon offers a helpful schema for 'sorting out' this 'prize example' of doctrinal confusion. He examines justification under four headings:

1 What is the general ground of this whole doctrine of justification

2 What justification is

3 Who they are that are justified

4 On what terms they are justified.

The ground of justification

Wesley begins by offering a dense précis of the entire sweep of salvation history: humans were created in God's image; the law of God's love was written on the human heart; disobedience led to condemnation, judgement and death; Jesus appeared as 'a second general Parent and Representative of the whole human race'; his sacrifice brought the remission of sins, the reinstatement of God's favour, and the restoration of our dead souls to spiritual and eternal life.[9] This, he says, 'is the general ground of the whole doctrine of justification', and against this fulsome backdrop justification is brought into sharper focus:

> so, by the sacrifice for sin made by the second Adam, as the representative of us all, God is so far reconciled to all the world, that He hath given them a new covenant; the plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, 'there is no more condemnation' for us, but 'we are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ'.[10]

The recitation of salvation history at the outset of Wesley's exposition of justification is instructive. Far too often, Jenson's caricature of the post-Reformation Church is embarrassingly accurate:

> Most of Protestantism worries about the matter [why justification is the doctrine by which the Church stands or falls] not at all, having long since returned to various – bowdlerised – versions of medieval religion, supposing these to be the latest thing … where there are reminiscences of the Reformation, a usual concept is that the church

> has a list of discrete opinion-items to be accepted, that 'justification by faith' is one such item, and that Protestantism has for some reason decreed it the most important.[11]

In consequence, Protestant churches can come dangerously close to making it a statement of faith that one is justified by believing that one is justified by believing that one is justified … and so on, ad infinitum. Such linguistic nonsense and conceptual circularity is only possible when the doctrine of justification by faith is peeled away from its biblical and liturgical background. Justification cannot be understood in a vacuum; it is grounded in a rich narrative landscape that provides a secure anchorage for its otherwise abstract definition. Similarly, although language of justification alludes to a judicial context, any exposition of justification that merely conjures up a courtroom drama – with the guilty human in the dock, God on the bench, and Jesus at the bar – is entirely inadequate, at least from a Wesleyan perspective. The legal fiction in which God 'confounds' the guilty sinner with Jesus, and so supposes that the guilty is in fact innocent, is, according to Wesley, 'neither reconcilable to reason nor Scripture'.[12] As Joel Green puts it, commenting on Wesley's sermon, 'the general outline of Wesley's view of justification needs to be read within the grand mural of God's covenant faithfulness, rather than in terms borrowed from English (or American) courts of law'.[13]

Such a 'grand mural' could indeed have been provided by the biblical passage from which Wesley launches his sermon: the early chapters of the letter to the Romans. That Wesley does not explicitly develop this immediate biblical context in his sermon is disappointing, though hardly surprising, given his characteristic homiletic concern with being an evangelist rather than an exegete, and his tendency to interpret passages theologically rather than exegetically.[14] Here, instead of exploring Paul's ressourcement of Abraham's story, he reaches for second Adam terminology, which was a recurrent feature in the Wesley brothers' early expositions of their heart-warming experiences. For instance, Charles' hymn for Christmas Day, published the same year as John's sermon, included the now-forgotten verse:

> Adam's likeness, Lord, efface,
> Stamp thy image in its place,
> Second Adam from above,
> Reinstate us in thy love.[15]

Adam language enabled the Wesley brothers to develop their conviction about the universality of the need and offer of salvation more easily than they supposed Abrahamic language could have done. In John Wesley's 1754 treatise on original sin – quite surprisingly, given its topic, the longest sustained argument he wrote – he defended the federalism often associated with Reformed theology. Adam, as a 'figure' of Christ, was to be understood as a 'representative' or 'federal head', just as Christ is. With Adam, humanity sinned and fell; with Christ, humanity is restored:

> The State of all Mankind did so far depend on Adam, that by his Fall they all fell into Sorrow and Pain and Death, Spiritual and Temporal. And all this is no Ways inconsistent, with either the Justice or Goodness of God, provided all may recover through the Second Adam whatever they lost through the First.[16]

Indeed, Wesley goes on, not only does humanity recover what was lost, but 'recover it with unspeakable Gain', since every temptation felt due to the corruption of human nature will 'if conquer'd by Grace' become an additional contribution to the promised 'exceeding and eternal weight of glory'. Wesley's confidence in universal salvation – 'not one Child of Man finally loses thereby'[17] – is, of course, at theological odds with other parts of the Reformed tradition,[18] but Wesley's position depends upon the same federalism that undergirds the doctrine of original sin. Eighteen years earlier, in his 'Justification by Faith' sermon, Wesley prefigured the complexity of his later argument: by the sin of the first Adam all are condemned, 'even so', says Wesley, by the sacrifice of the second, all the world is reconciled to God.[19] Using Adam, rather than Abraham, language allowed Wesley to tell a universal tale, grounding justification in the redemptive narrative that arches from creation to new creation.

The omission of a developed exegesis of the Abraham material in Romans 4 shows Wesley to be a man of his time. Wesley admitted that he was not a 'hair's breadth' away from Calvin on the matter of justification,[20] and, like the Reformers, Wesley approached the biblical text with the overriding concern of 'how to be justified',[21] which inhibited him from following Paul's actual argument. The New Perspective on Paul questions the hermeneutical propriety of the Reformation's concern with the mechanics of justification (whose righteousness is to be imputed to the believer?). In what Tom Wright calls 'the tragedy of much Reformation reading of Paul', Abraham's story – indeed, the

entire Jewish story – is 'lost from view'.[22] Quite apart from the abiding problems this created for Christianity's relationship with Judaism, an indispensable piece of theological jigsaw was mislaid. As Wright notes, Paul's appeal to Abraham is not a simple case study of the more general point; rather, God's promises to Abraham and consequent faithfulness to those promises provide the key to unlocking the entire language of righteousness and thus justification.

It is important, then, that we reinsert the narrative of Abraham into Wesley's telling of the grounds of justification. Abraham and his descendants are neither a cul-de-sac nor a detour in the sweep of salvation history from creation to new creation; rather, the first and second Adams are related *through Abraham*. The particularity of Abraham does not deny the universality of the salvation that comes from Abraham's descendant. Indeed, the universal scope of Abraham's particular call is a vital link in Paul's argument in Romans 4. God's call to Abraham, recounted in Genesis 12, is 'perhaps the most remarkable of all the instances of divinely chosen singularity in the Bible'.[23] And yet, despite this singularity, Abraham was chosen 'precisely so that blessing may come to all the nations'.[24] God's promise to Abraham to bless the families of the earth 'in you' required Abraham to contemplate a seemingly impossible future, in which, in his old age, he and Sarah would embrace a sign of divine gift and human flourishing: a son. Reaffirming this promise in Genesis 15, God pointed out the numberless stars in the sky, declaring, 'So shall your descendants be.'[25] It is this – this utterly unimaginable fulfilment of God's promise – that prompted Abraham's celebrated faith: 'And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness.'[26]

The story of Abraham, even more so than of Adam, exposes the promise-oriented character of human dealings with God. As Brueggemann puts it, 'As the two parts of an hourglass are joined by a slender neck, the role of this one man connects the universal setting of [Genesis] chaps. 1–11 and the worldwide vista of the promissory call.'[27] 'Adam's helpless race'[28] becomes 'God's chosen people'[29] as the divine promise of blessing to and in Abraham becomes humanity's enacted history. The ground of justification, in other words, is not merely, as Wesley has it, the *story* of the universal sweep from creation to new creation, not least because that trajectory is still ongoing. It is, more specifically, the *promise* of that universal sweep, contained in God's particular dealings with Abraham and his descendants that grounds Paul's understanding of justification by faith.

Pannenberg offers the necessary logic for this proposition:

> In German the word 'Heil' carries the sense of the wholeness or integrity of life, even in the sense of achieving wholeness in the course of our history … The wholeness of life that a word like 'Heil' denotes cannot be achieved, however, in the process of time. It may even be felt to be absent, or at least to be threatened, in the march of history, with no final security. Hence the salvation of human life depends on the future.[30]

The ground of justification is God's promised future. Philip Melanchthon, in his *Apology* of the classic statement of Reformation thought in the Augsburg Confession, recognises that the redemption of human life proposed by the gospel of Jesus is only justifiable as *res promissa*, the 'stuff of promise'.[31] The sweep of salvation from creation to new creation is possible only in prospect, which is another way to say that the whole panoply of blessings which Wesley enumerates – remission of sins, reinstatement of favour and restoration of life – is possible only because of a *promise*, or better, *a God who promises.*

Paul's appeal to Abraham in Romans thus becomes intelligible as more than simply an exemplar of faith; Abraham's story reveals the priority of a divinely promised future, within which faith, justification and all the other facets of the gospel's embodiment in history are to be comprehended. As Jenson describes it, 'Genesis's story of Abraham is the story of a man living by promises.'[32] We too, if we are to be in any way related to Abraham by faith, must also understand that life is truly lived (rather than simply endured) by promises. Such promises are the availability of the future within the story while it is still in progress.[33]

Whereas Wesley recounts the ground of justification as if it were fully contained with the historical narrative of Jesus' death and resurrection, we must extend that narrative into the future – God's promised new heaven and earth, the healing of the nations, the wiping away of tears, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. The ground of the doctrine of justification is provided by the Church's ability to speak boldly about a future yet to be realised, an ability which itself is grounded in the specific character of God as a God who promises. What is the ground of justification? It is that God has promised that all families of the earth will be blessed;[34] the curse of first Adam will be overtaken by the blessing of second Adam;[35] creation which currently groans for God's coming will find eschatological fulfilment;[36] heaven will marry earth;[37] and righteousness and peace will kiss.[38]

What justification is

Having prepared the ground, Wesley now turns to his second heading, 'What justification is'. A significant initial observation is that Wesley spends as much time describing what justification *isn't* than what it *is*, giving credence to his later comments that most of his contemporaries lacked sufficient clarity on the nature of justification.[39] First, justification is not to be confused with sanctification; it is 'not the being made actually just and righteous' which is a 'distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature'. In Wesley's useful shorthand, justification is 'what God does for us through His Son', whereas sanctification is 'what He works in us by His Spirit'.[40]

Next, Wesley identifies three judicial scenarios often ascribed to justification, which, he says, are unprovable from Scripture. The first is that justification clears the Christian from Satan's accusation; the second that justification clears the Christian from the law's accusation; the third that justification is a legal fiction in which God pulls the wool over his own eyes in order to declare the Christian just. While Wesley recognises some merit in at least the first two of these scenarios, he is clearly altogether uncomfortable with expounding justification in such a forensic way. Instead, Wesley locates justification within a more relational context: 'The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins.' Further:

> To him that is justified or forgiven, God 'will not impute sin' to his condemnation. He will not condemn him on that account, either in this world or in that which is to come. His sins, all his past sins, in thought, word and deed, are covered, are blotted out, shall not be remembered or mentioned against him, any more than if they had not been … And from the time we are 'accepted through the Beloved,' 'reconciled to God through His blood,' He loves, and blesses, and watches over us for good, even as if we had never sinned.[41]

The term 'justification' is thus not reserved for a legal transaction within a divine law court; instead, it refers to the more fulsome notion of freedom from past sin in order to enjoy future relationship, which does not explicitly deny the former forensic sense but certainly transcends it.[42] Wesley's position is more in tune with that of the Reformer Martin Luther than we might think; and Luther, in turn, is less in tune with his followers than might be supposed. As Graham Tomlin notes, 'an exclusively forensic understanding of justification is a position

much more clearly found in Melanchthon and later Lutheranism than in Luther himself.'[43] Luther's view, according to Tomlin, is 'clearly … eschatological',[44] and while not wanting to mount a defence or otherwise of this claim here, it is possible to use that term 'eschatological justification' to exegete Wesley's understanding. Justification declares in the present the otherwise unachievable future that God has promised. Like Luther, Wesley's view of justification is principally christological as well as eschatological: we have certainty of being accepted by God '*through the Beloved*' – or, to use the Apostle Paul's participative terminology, '*in Christ*'. Justification, then, is God's gracious declaration that, in company with his Son, his people will inherit the fulfilment of all his promises.

Even more basically, justification is the answer given to the question of our existence. 'In Reformation language, Am I justified? acquired the sense: Have I any justification for existence? What is my excuse for taking up space and time?'[45] Given the sweep of God's story from creation to promised new creation – including the interruption of this trajectory by sin and its deadly effects – the notion of justification presupposes an intensely existential set of questions: why am I here? Why is there a 'me' who has sustained existence from this moment to the next? Why have I not simply been swept away by sin and its consequences?

What is justification? Whereas Wesley adheres closely to Reformation language to give an answer, we must allow our answer to be flavoured by the terms of the existential threat felt by the contemporary world, in which nihilism – whereby the world loses its ability to hear any promise whatsoever about its future – is an ever-present possibility.[46] Nihilism, though, brings us back to the despair felt by all God's people prior to God's intervening activity. Whether for childless Sarah and Abraham, the children of Israel existing as futureless slaves in Egypt, a conscience-stricken medieval lawyer-turned-monk, or a methodical Anglican priest seeking to know and feel his sins forgiven, justification establishes a hope and a future.[47] Justification is God's declaration, contrary to all expectations, that there is a future for humanity-with-God, which can be known and embraced in the present.

Who they are that are justified

Wesley answers this question by turning back to Paul's text: those who are justified are 'the ungodly'[48] – 'the ungodly of every kind and degree; and none but the ungodly'.[49] The biblical evidence for this answer is compelling. Jesus,

as the good shepherd, declared he had come to seek and save the *lost*, and as the physician, that he was needed by the *sick* and not the healthy.[50] The 'ungodly', moreover, are 'without works'. This is not to say, of course, that humans accomplish nothing at all before their justifying encounter with God; however, even the best 'good works' done prior to justification are not, 'strictly speaking, good in themselves, or good in the sight of God'.[51]

Some observations are necessary. First, while the term 'ungodly' is typically understood as a comparative term – 'ungodly as opposed to godly' – this does not thereby mean that humanity can be divided into two equally populated groups. When Paul and Wesley say that it is the ungodly who are justified, they do not mean that there are some who are 'godly' who have no need of justification. In his sermon 'Original Sin', Wesley makes it clear that all humanity is considered ungodly: enmity against God 'infects the whole soul'[52] so that 'By nature ye are wholly corrupted.'[53] As Paul quotes earlier in Romans, 'None is righteous; no, not one.'[54]

The universal ungodliness of humanity is not, though, for Wesley, a cause for pessimism. While some traditions may wallow in the peril of ungodliness, Wesley simply states it as the pre-existing condition of those who are justified. Ungodliness is that which God justifies; and therein is a message of hope.

The logic of this is clear: it is only from the perspective of justification that ungodliness can truly be named as such. 'Sin' and 'ungodliness' are not straightforwardly *descriptive* terms in Wesley's mind, but rather *theological* terms, which arise only as a consequence of the history of salvation as it is made known to humanity:

> God hath willed and commanded, that *all our works* should *be done in charity*, in love, in that one to God which produces one to all mankind. But none of our works can be done in this love, while the love of the Father (of God as our Father) is not in us; and this love cannot be in us till we receive the 'Spirit of adoption, crying in our hearts, Abba, Father.'[55]

As Jenson so eloquently puts it, 'history's entire tedious smorgasbord of sins presents only various ways of *not* being one thing, righteous.' So:

> Our large and small moral disasters ought indeed to appear as sin to any who notice them, but this is because we ought all to be

> conducting our lives toward humanity's only actual goal in God and experiencing our lives and those of others within that narrative … Thus if we do not reckon with God, we will not be able to handle the concept.[56]

Justification, then, is not a matter of morality, but of righteousness – which are not the same. 'Ungodly' here, as 'sinner' in the Gospels, refers not to the quality of a person's moral fibre, but to their status in relation to future inclusion in God's eschatological kingdom.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's exposition of justification in terms of ultimate and penultimate things sheds helpful light on this. Bonhoeffer describes justification as the word of God bursting in to the closed tomb of human existence: 'heaven is torn open above us humans, and the joyful message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ rings out from heaven to earth as a cry of joy.' Then, the telling sentence, 'He never knew before what life is.'[57] Justification is God's ultimate word, which is therefore 'at the same time the judgment on the penultimate ways and things'.[58] Penultimate things take many forms, some which may aspire to be good works and others which may not; however, all are revealed to be penultimate – and therefore ungodly – by encounter with God's ultimate word.[59]

While Bonhoeffer's language takes us some way from Paul's terminology in Romans, it does enable us to focus on the eschatological nature of justification. If justification is a declaration of what is ultimate – 'that God, in love and omnipotence, makes an end of death and calls a new creation into life'[60] – then all other self-declarations, including the good works by which we attempt to establish ourselves, are necessarily penultimate. Nothing that humans do can achieve God's eschatological intentions; and so, from that perspective, all that does not spring from that future is 'ungodly'.

Herein is hope: without works (all the penultimate intentions and actions of human life), God justifies the ungodly.

On what terms they are justified

At last, Wesley arrives at *faith*, as the only necessary condition of justification. He labours the point: without faith it is impossible to be justified, and faith is all that is necessary, without addition or supplement.[61] The condition 'by faith' –

for Wesley, for Paul, for Luther – is a crucial polemic that locates justification solely within divine grace.

Paul's immediate argument in Romans was that Abraham was justified by faith before the covenant of circumcision was enacted; hence boasting on Abraham's part was utterly excluded. That theme is reiterated throughout the sweep of biblical history, not least when Moses reminded the Israelites why they have been rescued from slavery: 'It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the LORD set his heart on you and chose you … It was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors.'[62] On God's part, his justification for saving anyone to inherit his promised future blessing is purely by grace alone, the gift of his choice and pardon. On our part, justification is thus by faith alone, trusting that God indeed justifies the 'ungodly', and no one else.

There is a significant transition in this final section of Wesley's sermon. So far, Wesley has argued carefully and progressively through his outline: what the ground of justification is; what justification itself is; who the justified are. But now, having established the principle of faith alone, Wesley moves into exhortation:

> Thou ungodly one, who hearest or readest these words! thou vile, helpless, miserable sinner! I charge thee before God, the Judge of all, go straight unto him, with all thy ungodliness. Take heed thou destroy not thy own soul by pleading thy righteousness, more or less. Go as altogether ungodly, guilty, lost, destroyed, deserving and dropping into hell; and thou shalt then find favour in his sight, and know that he justifieth the ungodly.[63]

On one hand, we would expect nothing less of Wesley the evangelist. However, it is an important final point to note that the shift from exposition to exhortation is no mere rhetorical device. In other words, preaching is the appropriate *mode* of communication within which grace and faith are given and received. 'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'[64] Apologetic and systematic logic may get so far, but when it comes to the reorientation of life towards God's eschatological future, achieved only by Christ and in Christ, we must, as Jenson says, 'shift categories … and begin to preach.'[65] Faith is precisely not an intellectual or moral achievement – such so-called faith is the 'work' without which the ungodly *are* justified. In short, faith is what happens when 'the gospel is rightly spoken to or enacted for me', which

'places me where I can finally say only "I believe, help my unbelief" or "Depart from me."'[66]

Wesley's sermon thus teaches us a crucial lesson about justification by faith, which we would do well to remember as we commemorate the Reformation's foundational insistence on it. The gospel by which we are saved is not 'justification by faith' but 'Christ' – more specifically, 'Jesus is risen … and is ahead of you.'[67] At most, justification by faith is a grammatical rule for preaching that gospel faithfully. The ungodly – quite astonishingly and offensively – are justified without any condition over which they have any control. Faith simply – or should that be, profoundly? – hears the unconditional promise about inclusion in God's future and responds, 'I believe, help my unbelief.' In some contexts today, then, as Jenson drastically puts it, it may in fact be more appropriate to speak about 'justification by unbelief', if 'faith' has become entangled with so much theological freight as to render it a 'work'.[68] While that itself would be fraught with difficulty and misunderstanding, it focuses our attention on the pressing matter: how to tell the good news as God's *unconditional* promise of justification without works, by faith.

But to deal with that matter, we would need, as with Jenson and Wesley himself, to turn to preaching, in which the word of God's forgiving and justifying grace in the crucified and risen Jesus may be truly heard as the unconditional promise it is.

Notes

1. Romans 4:5. Bible quotations are from the NRSV.
2. Wesley 1739, ¶1.
3. According to his *Journal*, Wesley used Romans 4:5 as his text first at Gloucester on 6 October 1739, and then on subsequent occasions, including at Epworth on 8 June 1742.
4. Wesley 1739, ¶1, ¶2.
5. Wesley 1739, ¶3.
6. Wesley 1779, ¶I.5.
7. Wesley 1739, ¶3.
8. Jenson 1999, p. 290.
9. Wesley 1739, ¶I.1–8.
10. Wesley 1739, ¶I.9.
11. Gritsch and Jenson 1976, p. 36.
12. Wesley 1739, ¶II.4.
13. Green 2010, p. 89.
14. Weeter 2007, pp. 200, 232.

15. From Charles Wesley's hymn, 'Hark how all the Welkin rings', in Wesley and Wesley 1739, p. 208.
16. Wesley 1757, p. 267.
17. Wesley, 1757, p. 268.
18. On this, see McCall 2014, p. 148.
19. Wesley 1739, ¶I.9.
20. In a letter to John Newton, 14 May 1765.
21. Wesley's sermon begins, 'How a sinner may be justified before God, the Lord and Judge of all, is a question of no common importance to every child of man.' Wesley 1739, ¶1.
22. Wright 2009, pp. 190–191.
23. Bauckham 2003, p. 28.
24. Bauckham 2003, p. 28. See Genesis 12:2–3.
25. Genesis 15:5.
26. Genesis 15:6.
27. Brueggemann 1982, p. 105.
28. As Charles Wesley puts it in 'And Can It Be'.
29. 1 Peter 2:9.
30. Pannenberg 1994, p. 399.
31. Often translated 'nature of promise', *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, 4.84, quoted in Jenson 1997, p. 14.
32. Jenson 1997, p. 68.
33. Jenson 1997, pp. 67–68.
34. Genesis 12:3.
35. 1 Corinthians 15:22.
36. Romans 8:18–22.
37. Revelation 21:2.
38. Psalm 85:10.
39. Wesley 1779, ¶I.5.
40. Wesley 1739, ¶II.1.
41. Wesley 1739, ¶II.5.
42. Colin Gunton's explanation of the use of justification language is instructive: 'The heart of the matter is the use of the metaphor: that a concept whose apparently primary meaning is to be found in matters of legality is now used chiefly to explicate relationships between persons and in particular the all determining relationship between the creator and his erring but never abandoned children.' Gunton 1988, p. 113.
43. Tomlin 2017, p. 45.
44. Tomlin 2017, p. 46.
45. Gritsch and Jenson 1976, p. 40.
46. For Jenson's appraisal of nihilism as the context for hearing the gospel today, see Jenson 1997, p. ix.
47. See, further, Romans 5:1–5.
48. Romans 4:5.

49. Wesley 1739, ¶III.1.
50. Wesley 1739, ¶III.4.
51. Wesley 1739, ¶III.5.
52. Wesley 1754, ¶III.1.
53. Wesley 1754, ¶III.5.
54. Romans 3:10.
55. Wesley 1739, ¶III.6.
56. Jenson 1999, p. 133.
57. Bonhoeffer 2005, p. 146.
58. Bonhoeffer 2005, p. 150.
59. 'What is this penultimate? It is all that precedes the ultimate – the justification of the sinner by grace alone – and that is addressed as penultimate after finding the ultimate. At the same time it is everything that follows the ultimate, in order again to precede it. There is no penultimate as such, as if something or other could justify itself as being in itself penultimate; but the penultimate becomes what it is only through the ultimate, that is, in the moment when it has already lost its own self-sufficiency.' Bonhoeffer 2005, p. 159.
60. Bonhoeffer 2005, p. 158.
61. Wesley 1739, ¶IV.4–6.
62. Deuteronomy 7:7–8.
63. Wesley 1739, ¶IV.9.
64. Romans 10:17.
65. Jenson 1969, p. 22.
66. Jenson 1999, p. 292.
67. Matthew 28:7. See Jenson 1999, p. 293.
68. Gritsch and Jenson 1976, p. 37.

Bibliography

Bauckham, Richard. 2003. *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. Carlisle: Paternoster Press.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. 2005. 'Ultimate and Penultimate Things' in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 6: Ethics*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press. pp. 146–170.

Brueggemann, Walter. 1982. *Genesis*. Louiseville, KY: John Knox Press.

Green, Joel. 2010. *Reading Scripture as Wesleyans.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Gritsch, Eric and Jenson, Robert. 1976. *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press.

Gunton, Colin. 1988. *The Actuality of Atonement*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

Jenson, Robert. 1969. *The Knowledge of Things Hoped For.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Jenson, Robert. 1997. *Systematic Theology: Volume 1, The Triune God*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jenson, Robert. 1999. *Systematic Theology: Volume 2, The Works of God*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McCall, Thomas, '"But a Heathen Still": The Doctrine of Original Sin in Wesleyan Theology' in Madueme, Hans and Reeves, Michael (eds). 2014. *Adam, The Fall, and Original Sin*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. pp. 147–166.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart. 1994. *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

Tomlin, Graham. 2017. *Luther's Gospel: Reimagining the World*. London: Bloomsbury.

Weeter, Mark. 2007. *John Wesley's Use and View of Scripture*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.

Wesley, John. 1739. 'Justification by Faith.' Available at: http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-5-justification-by-faith/ (accessed 9 October 2017).

Wesley, John and Wesley, Charles. 1739. *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. London. Available at: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ecco/004800840.0001.000/ (accessed 9 October, 2017).

Wesley, John. 1754. 'Original Sin.' Available at: http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-44-original-sin/ (accessed 9 October 2017).

Wesley, John. 1757. *The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience*. Bristol: F. Farley. Available at: https://archive.org/details/doctrineoforigin00wesl (accessed 9 October 2017).

Wesley, John. 1765. 'A Letter to John Newton'. Available at: http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-letters-of-john-wesley/wesleys-letters-1765/ (accessed 9 October 2017).

Wesley, John. 1779. 'On God's Vineyard.' Available at: http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-107-on-gods-vineyard/ (accessed 9 October 2017).

Wright, Tom. 2009. *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision*. London: SPCK.

HOLINESS
THE JOURNAL OF WESLEY HOUSE CAMBRIDGE

Reviews

***Martin Luther**: Renegade and Prophet*, Lyndal Roper (London: Vintage, 2017), 592 pp, £14.99 pbk

This is the kind of book that probably only about a few dozen people in the world can properly assess. With its 110 pages of tightly printed footnotes, meticulously substantiating the version of Luther's life presented here, there will not be many who have the knowledge and authority to offer a counter-claim such as 'no, you're wrong there: Luther didn't do that'. And I am certainly not one of those few dozen! I have, though, wrestled with Luther's thought and its impact in different ways for nearly four decades and so felt it was high time, in this 500th anniversary year of the 'Wittenberg Door' event, that I engaged seriously with his life in its entirety. In this way, perhaps, I would make better sense of what I did know about Luther's thought and belief, and how they emerged from, were shaped by and in turn shaped his own experiences and actions, and the lives of many others both contemporary to him and in the centuries to follow.

Reading this magnificent book was an ideal way to do that. Appearing as it does at a time when, predictably, a flurry of biographies have appeared – including Scott H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer* (Yale University Press, 2016), Heinz Schilling, *Martin Luther: Rebel in an Age of Upheaval* (Oxford University Press, 2017; a translation of the 2012 German original) and Peter Stanford, *Martin Luther: Catholic Dissident* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2017) – it is inevitably not going to be possible to adjudge definitively that this or any other text 'really has' captured the essence of Luther. And this is no comparative review anyway. What critical engagement with this text does provide, though, is an opportunity to take note of what its author, Lyndal Roper, Regius Professor of History at the University of Oxford, suggests were key emphases in Luther's

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 317–321
ISSN 2058-5969

life and thought and, for the purposes of this journal, to reflect on how those emphases have or have not been helpful for or influential upon Methodist and Wesleyan recipients of and respondents to Luther and the Lutheran tradition.

What, though, to begin with, of the book itself? It has 19 main chapters, filling, after a 16-page introduction, a little over 400 densely packed pages. There are also 75 black and white illustrations and a dozen colour plates which are not simply there for light relief or window-dressing. Discussion of these is interwoven with the text in an informative way. Together, words and images bring Luther and the German Reformation to life within the context of the multiple Reformation movements which blossomed in the first half of the sixteenth century.

The Luther that emerges is indeed a radical, though with plenty of inconsistencies in thought and practice thrown in. He was not straightforwardly from peasant or working-class stock, despite his claims (pp. 17–19), though his father's employment in the mining industry connected Luther from his early life with the challenges and fluctuations of commercial life. It, and his later monastic experience, also made him aware of the importance of good management (p. 62). The educational influence of his mother's family was important and perhaps opened Luther up to think more widely about possible avenues to follow than the legal career which his father hoped for him (pp. 38–41). Becoming a monk was an obvious act of rebellion against his father, though was not a life that he particularly enjoyed. It did, however, enable him to construct the platform, through study and spiritual discipline, upon which he was later able to build, and through which he was able to process the many, rapid-moving developments which the Reformation movements would press upon him.

The passage of time from Luther's arrival to be a resident (as opposed to a student) in Wittenberg, in 1511 (when 'the town was a building site', p. 77), through to when he began his travels to defend himself in public across the German-speaking world is handled in Chapter 4. Luther's sheer industry, intellectual creativity and existential courage is reflected here, and includes the famous 95 theses. Roper highlights just why the theses were so shocking (p. 99).

The intense years (1519–30) from the Leipzig debate, through the three crucial 1520 texts and the Diet of Worms to the Diet of Augsburg, at which Luther could not even appear, occupy 11 chapters and inevitably form the heart of the book. It is in many ways invidious, and somewhat arbitrary, for a reviewer

to attempt to distil particularly striking insights, but there are conclusions and observations made by the author which do stand out. The driving force of Luther's anger, as a creative impetus to the development of his thought, is noted at many points. If it turned into irascibility and sheer venomous cantankerousness, especially in his later life, it also fired him up and led him to new discoveries at key points. Luther's physicality – his earthiness, his robust, positive approach to sexuality, his love of food and drink, his attentiveness to bodily functions – features throughout. Its theological importance not only in informing his embodied theology, but also as it related, perhaps surprisingly, to his high view of Communion, is accentuated. For all their significance, the philosophical debates about the elements at the Mass were not all that were influencing the decisive and sometimes violent disagreements about 'Communion in both kinds'. The physical energy and stamina needed for lengthy journeys should also not go unnoticed. In days of air and rail travel to 48-hour conferences it is sobering to be reminded of the many risky journeys of many hundreds of miles – on foot, or by cart – to protracted disputations and debates that Luther had to make, necessitated to save his own skin, as well as to plead the cause and defend what he deemed to be a divinely inspired position. With hindsight it is easy to see that these disputations *were* the party political conferences and the international summits of their day, and what is telling now is the relative absence (and at what cost) of theological and philosophical elements in current similar events.

In the midst of the author's enquiry into all of this there are sharp observations made about the emerging emphases of Luther's theology: a 'bleak' concept of salvation (p. 118), which would eventually mingle both gloominess and liberation (pp. 167–168); the crucial importance of fatherhood as a theological category, though of God's distance rather than closeness (p. 206); the acute psychological insight brought by his opposition to free will, despite its unmodern origin and nature (pp. 288–289). Such wrestling occurred as he worked with friends and allies to further the cause of the Reformation, yet as he also fell out (an understatement!) with many who had been allies. In many ways this theme becomes a central thread of the final four chapters of the book, one of the chapters (17) being entitled 'Friends and Enemies'. At many points Roper observes that Luther, in becoming more parochial and entrenched as time went on, did not enable the more conciliatory approach which may have led to greater evangelical/Protestant unity to hold sway. Despite his fluctuations through time, there were certain key convictions on which he would not shift, and he needed, to the end, to be 'right' on so many counts.

There was not much 'give' in his approach. Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of the author's interpretation of Luther is her reminder that his 'relationship with God was not that of a believer cheerfully confident of having been "saved"' (p. 421).

Roper's book is, then, an appreciative, appropriately contextualised account of Luther's life, which does justice to his drive, energy and lasting impact on European thought and political life without glossing over not just the personality flaws but also the deeply damaging aspects of his views (his anti-Semitism, for example). The account also displays an informed interest in Luther's psychology without being reductionistic.

What, though, is to be made of such a reading of Luther among Methodists? At a recent church meeting in the UK at which a talk had been given on the (largely positive) significance of Luther for Christianity in the West a helpfully dissenting voice raised a query as to whether we should, as Methodists, be straightforwardly affirming of Luther's influence. Luther had after all, said the respondent, sided with the princes over the peasants. His decision and his political commitments had cost many lives. It was a helpful corrective. While similar criticisms of John Wesley's political conservatism can also be made, there is no direct equivalent to Luther's role in the peasant wars. It has to be accepted that others among Luther's contemporaries (Andreas Karlstadt in particular) were more sympathetic to the peasants' cause than Luther, an insight which highlights the lingering ambiguity about whether 'the Reformation' can unequivocally be regarded as a people's movement.

The question as to the way in which Methodism can be deemed a Reformation movement remains live. As a branch of Protestantism emerging from the Church of England, sparked off, in part, by Wesley's heart-warming reading, in 1738, of Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans the answer may seem self-evident. But emerging from a Church which claims both Catholic and Reformed roots and, as Methodist–Roman Catholic conversations have long shown, given that there are creative points of contact between Methodism and Roman Catholicism which belie easy assumptions about the route from the Reformers to Methodism, there is much more to be said.

There are, though, also tough things which Luther and Lutherans need to say to Methodists. In the same way that Luther's 'earthiness' challenged those in his own day who, in his view, overemphasised the spiritual at cost to the material, the challenge is sometimes still needed now. It is always easier for the materially comfortable to emphasise the spiritual, after all. The sheer

radicalness of Luther's insistence on the futility and unworthiness of human activity (as having anything at all to do with the receipt of God's grace) may have been apparent to, and understood by, the Wesleys. And it did not, of course, mean that 'good works' had no value; you simply had to be aware of the basis on which they were being done. But not all who have inherited and made use of Luther's emphasis here – Methodists included – have been able to distinguish human worth (utterly dependent on God, but still real) from seeking, and trying to earn, that worth. Low self-regard and manic activity can be easy partners, whatever is being said on Sundays, or whatever it is thought is being believed. Roper's book offers a timely reminder that Luther was thinking, believing and writing prior to the emergence of modern understandings of 'the self' and conscience.

Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet is, then, a hugely stimulating read. Whether or not it proves provocative among Luther specialists (I cannot judge where its particular 'take' on Luther may be controversial), as an account of his life and thought it sounds totally plausible. It is extremely well written. Without signalling to the reader elements which resonate with today – which would have compromised the style and approach of its scholarship – it presents plenty of material which invites contemporary reflection. Theologians may wish for more digressions, and nuanced engagement, about Luther's writings. But in a book of this kind, Roper has got it about right: enough discussion to make clear what was at stake, and clear location of a text's importance in Luther's life, and the context of his times. It is to be hoped that Methodists, and many others, will read the work. Luther was not a comfortable figure, but he was profoundly influential, and justifiably so. Reading this book explains why and would give all readers influenced by Western European culture insight into what we should be inspired by, and wary of, as we continue to be influenced by Luther.

Professor Clive Marsh is Head of the Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Leicester.

cm286@leicester.ac.uk
Leicester, UK

***Reformation Divided:** Catholics, Protestants and the Conversion of England*, Eamon Duffy (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 441 pp, £30.00 hbk

Towards the conclusion of his biography of Sir Thomas More in 1557 – one of the first biographies ever written in the English language – Archdeacon Nicholas Harpsfield made a remarkable, even for some a faintly ludicrous, claim about his subject: 'he was the first of any whatsoever layman in England that died a martyr for the defence and preservation of the unity of the Catholic Church. And that is his special peerless prerogative.[1]

Writing as part of the official campaign under Queen Mary Tudor to reintroduce and re-instil Catholicism into the public worship and private devotion of the English people, Harpsfield placed More at the very heart of his appeal, and in that reflected one of the key strategies of the regime. For Harpsfield, as for his boss, Cardinal Reginald Pole, it was critical that the nation was asked to reconsider its recent past, and thus to understand afresh, both the reasons for the upheaval and turbulence of the preceding few years and that the solution to the country's woes was the very policy of reconciliation with Rome which the Queen had pursued. Absolutely central and critical to this right reading of recent history in their minds was the right reading of Sir Thomas More and his stand against King Henry's 'Great Matter': his divorce from Queen Katherine of Aragon.

It's perhaps time again for our reading of Sir Thomas More to be re-examined and recalibrated. Hilary Mantel's very particular interpretation, in *Wolf Hall*, is still fresh in our minds, and has more recently been brought vividly to life by Anton Lesser on our television screens. Her More is the fanatical heresy-hunter, dour, zealously intent, ferociously purposeful in his unbending quest to stamp out error. The contrast with Robert Bolt's *Man for All Seasons*, the phlegmatic champion of individual liberty of conscience, equally memorably played by Paul Scofield, could not be more pronounced. But both evocations are woefully inadequate and profoundly misinformed. The Thomas More who became idolised, by Nicholas Harpsfield and by the generations of English Catholics who read his works and claimed his theological and ecclesiological inheritance, was neither of these things. Nor did his singular importance rest, for them, on his piety, or his pursuit of heresy, or his bravery, important (if often

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 322–325
ISSN 2058-5969

misunderstood) though those things were. Rather, the qualities that made him a statesman also made him a saint: wisdom and foresight. More, unique among his contemporaries (apart from Bishop Fisher), and although not a renowned supporter of papal supremacy, foresaw what others could not: that Henry VIII's royal supremacy in church matters, whatever promises or assurances were given, could have no other outcome than a descent into division, disavowal of the common Christianity of the known world, and a constant process of rebellion and revolt among the English people. By 1557, no one could claim that he had been wrong, whatever their religious convictions.

This absorbing, entertaining, constantly enlightening and thoroughly readable collection of articles by Professor Eamon Duffy reflects his main scholarly concerns across several decades. If his seminal work in *The Stripping of the Altars* (London: Yale University Press, 1992), which offered a compelling and challenging evocation of the real power of medieval Catholic piety and devotion over English hearts and minds on the eve of Reformation, is the work by which he is best known, this collection reminds its readers of other areas in which he has offered a careful and convincing corrective to prevailing historical opinion. Chief among them is the Marian reintroduction of Catholicism in England from 1553 until the Queen's death in 1558, an effort until recent years usually felt to have been moribund and ineffective, and thus to have failed, partly through its reliance on a discredited figure such as Thomas More. Duffy has no truck with either proposition.

In Part One, Duffy draws together and revises three earlier pieces on More: a more general reappraisal of the man and his contribution, together with considerations of two of his most important, and commonly criticised, works: the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* and the *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*. Seeking to extricate More from the anachronism of many recent attempts to understand him, Duffy carefully sets the man and even his most polemical writing against the backdrop of his age and the common outlook of his times. Far from the rabid fundamentalist of Mantel's novels, still less the ranting hysteric others have claimed to see here, More emerges rather as the kind of rigorous humanist whose approach to the great causes of his life in fact feels rather reminiscent of that of Luther or Tyndale himself, and all of a piece with the Catholic world he inhabited and defended and whose collapse he feared would bring anarchy in its wake.

Thus, Part Two of the collection follows on from this rehabilitation of More to focus on the English Counter-Reformation. It begins with the generation of

Nicholas Harpsfield, seeking to present More to the English as the icon and emblem of what had befallen them, and of the unity with all humanity now being restored under the influence and guidance of Queen Mary, the child of King Henry's one healthy, happy marriage. There are helpful reminders here of the ways in which Duffy has sought to reappraise the efficacy of Marian religious policy, most fully in his book *Fires of Faith* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009). Beginning with his study of the place of preaching under Reginald Pole's policy and in the Archbishop's own practice, the collection charts the contours of Duffy's impressive contribution to scholarship on English Catholic identity.

In this regard, pen portraits of two of the English Counter-Reformation's most influential and controversial leaders, William, Cardinal Allen and Gregory Martin, are included, and both articles seek, like earlier pieces, to set these men more carefully against the canvass of their own time in order the better to appreciate their unique approach and creative contribution. Following on from this, Duffy explores the difficulties and divisions within the English Catholic community, especially after the papal excommunication of Queen Elizabeth in 1570 invited her Catholic subjects to overthrow her. Duffy's meticulous historical research, combined with his engaging prose, make a winning combination here, revealing the true nature of these intra-religious disputes, and offering a striking description of the impossibly difficult position in which the Pope left his English followers and of the conundrums to which it led.

Much of this section of the book, it should be noted, is very directly aimed at the collection's dedicatee, the late Professor John Bossy, whose propositions about the shifting character of English Catholicism during and after the Reformation Duffy acknowledges as having been highly influential, even as his own research seemed to undermine their credibility. It is nevertheless a very touching tribute, from one enormously generous scholar to another, and Duffy frequently cites his indebtedness to Bossy, even when disputing his theses and ideas. This section of the book in particular, although constructed out of several discrete articles, holds together remarkably coherently as a whole, and constitutes a helpful gathering together of some of Duffy's most pertinent writing in an area still demanding further investigation and assessment.

The book ends with some mostly older pieces, culled from a variety of sources, including the *Epworth Review* (Vol. 12, 1985), and refreshed for republication. Here, Duffy returns to scholarly concerns from earlier in his career, including the character of the Puritan movement and its influence on the English Church,

and the divergence of theological approaches taken by Puritan ministers in the care and formation of their flock. Pleasingly prominent here is the figure of Richard Baxter, a West Midlands Presbyterian for whom Duffy, an Irish Catholic who spent some formative years in Birmingham, obviously holds a great regard and depth of appreciation. Baxter's moderation, pastoral wisdom and thoughtful preaching were for a time the cause of considerable renewal among the Christian people of Kidderminster. A pair of articles in this collection commemorate his career, but more particularly locate him carefully against the varied contentions and often heated division of his contemporaries.

This well-crafted and thoughtfully constructed cornucopia of scholarly insight ends on a rather touching ecumenical note, with Duffy's short account of the life and influence of George Fox, the founder of the Quakers. Here again, he does much both to dispel common misapprehensions and to offer a portrait at once more honest and yet for all that more compelling. Supervised as a doctoral student by Professor Gordon Rupp, the Principal of Wesley House, Cambridge, Eamon Duffy's influences and interests have always been broad and generous. To end on a personal note: when he began supervising my own doctoral work, on Nicholas Harpsfield, there were those who asked me why I would, as a Methodist myself, research Catholicism. The question for me was always answered by the kind of ecumenical richness and benefit which a collection like this brings and makes plain. In this 500th anniversary year of the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation, this wide-ranging and always fascinating collection by one of the Reformation's finest historians demonstrates how pivotal, critical and formative this crisis in European Christianity was and still is. More than that, it reminds us also of how grateful Protestants and Catholics ought to be that, in our time, we are now able to be enriched in our appreciation of our own tradition by the observations and insights of those we once considered the religious 'other'.

Jonathan Dean is Director of the Centre for Continuing Ministerial Development at the Queen's Foundation.

deanj@queens.ac.uk
Birmingham, UK

Note

1. E. E. Reynolds (ed.), *Lives of Saint Thomas More* (London: J. M. Dent, 1963), p. 170.

***Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God**: The Wittenberg School and its Scripture-Centered Proclamation*, Robert Kolb (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 517 pp, £29.99 hbk

It's hard to know which book on Luther to trust these days – particularly this year, of all years! Luther's celebrity, eccentricity and exceptional influence (both religiously and culturally) make him ripe for skewed interpretations of his priorities. Kolb's study may appear to offer yet another voice in the crowd; yet it stands apart for its rigour and its faithfulness to Luther's overall tenor, showing – in immense detail – the richness of Luther's fundamental priority and commitment to the Word of God.

This book offers an expertly detailed grasp of Luther in his Wittenberg context, showing the background and key tenets behind the exegetical revolution which catalysed the Reformation. Although the political and sociological factors surrounding 1517 and beyond must never be dismissed, Kolb reminds us that this Scripture-centredness was paramount to the Wittenberg project, which was so influential on subsequent reform movements. We see particular insight into Luther's theology of the Word, which is quite possibly the highest imaginable. For Luther, the Word (in Scripture, preaching and sacrament) is the creative and reparative source of all life, and the prism throughout which all else is interpreted.

Luther, of course, did not develop his understanding of the Word in a vacuum, nor via a revelatory bolt of lightning! We see a healthily nuanced awareness of Luther's relationship to medieval theology – by which he was neither unaffected nor determinatively influenced. This blend of historical and theological analysis is incisive, and situates the book amid the likes of Ocker's *Biblical Poetics before Humanism and Reformation* (2008) and Oberman's *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* (1963), with which Kolb regularly interacts. Indeed, Kolb shows critical awareness of those who would misunderstand Luther's relationship to his context, resisting the temptation to fall into anachronistic readings.

As expected, Kolb gives a thorough account of Luther's exegetical world, including his use of (and departure from) medieval allegorical exegesis, his Christocentric reading of the Old Testament, his law–gospel hermeneutic, his

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 326–328
ISSN 2058-5969

awareness of canonical and historical-critical issues, and his approach to biblical diversity. Here we are able to observe Luther's exegesis *in action* in various ways throughout his enormous output as a preacher, a pastor, a commentator, a translator and a professor. We see his narratival and imaginative lecturing style, bringing the Word to life for both hearer and reader, and providing a tangible sense of what it meant for Luther to recover the 'privilege' of the accessibility of God's Word in his context.

Kolb also goes in-depth with Luther's theology, addressing many of the relevant and controversial theological themes, such as justification, nominalism, divine hiddenness, and the enigmatic relationship between Scripture and tradition. We see how, for Luther, all tradition (including Lutheran tradition!) remains subject to the judgement of Scripture in every age and context. Kolb's account delves deep into close readings of the primary sources (often including his own translations) of a whole variety of sixteenth-century texts, ranging through sermons, treatises, pamphlets, lectures, commentaries, letters and edited student notes. This includes not only Luther's own material (of which there is a great deal) but also others around the Wittenberg context and beyond who were influenced by the movement as a whole, as Luther's students and colleagues continued 'the Wittenberg message' in inventive ways in the next generation.

Indeed, one of the strengths of the book is in drawing attention to the 'teamwork' ethos at Wittenberg. On the contentious issue of the various 'edited' versions of Luther's writings, Kolb notes insightfully: 'The Wittenberg project was not about Luther; it was intended to convey God's Word to a larger readership' (p. 170), also adding that in virtually all cases what was published in Luther's name – however tweaked – accurately reflected what he wanted to convey publically (p. 171). We also see the different sermonic forms and preaching styles in the Wittenberg circle, the distinction of the sermon as a unique genre, and the different ways preaching was received and understood as a media event, including its uniquely political dimensions.

Although this book is exceptionally detailed in its analysis of key texts, it does risk becoming a little bogged down in such details at the expense of a coherent overall narrative. Indeed, at times the chapters could almost be read as separate essays, and it is no coincidence that a good deal of these chapters were previously published as articles. The Wittenberg connection and the overall theme of 'the enduring Word of God' (connoting the famous maxim which appeared on the title page of Luther's 1534 translation of the Bible) helps hold

the individual studies together in a general sense, though certainly more could have been done to show their connection. Overall, however, the book succeeds marvellously in its close attention to Luther's exegetical and homiletical context and the cross-fertilisation of the Wittenberg circle. It will itself undoubtedly endure as a landmark study for many years to come.

Dr Aaron Edwards is Lecturer in Theology, Preaching and Mission at Cliff College, Derbyshire.

a.edwards@cliffcollege.ac.uk
Calver, UK

***The Whole Church Sings**: Congregational Singing in Luther's Wittenberg*, Robin A. Leaver (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 206 pp, £17.99, pbk

Robin Leaver draws on a range of perspectives in this insightful examination of congregational hymnody in Luther's Wittenberg. Drawing on the breadth of his scholarly expertise in church history, Lutheran theology and musicology, and combining attention to fine details with lucid and economical prose, he argues for a re-evaluation of the generally accepted view that congregational singing was slower to take hold in Wittenberg than elsewhere. The historical significance attached to Luther's contribution to the repertoire and practice of congregational hymnody makes this an important book for anyone interested in the history of liturgical music, most obviously, though not exclusively, in relation to any of the church traditions that trace their heritage back to Luther. A general level of familiarity with the historical context of the Reformation is necessary, and a basic level of musical literacy would be useful, although not essential. The book is accessibly written, but also demonstrates considerable academic rigour; readers with a deeper scholarly interest in the topic will find much important information in the extensive footnotes and appendices, particularly concerning aspects of publication history.

The book is an argument-driven examination of the evidence of liturgical publications mostly from the 1520s, and Leaver is forthright in his intention, 'It challenges some of the conclusions that have been drawn from the available evidence and attempts to provide new perspectives on the old treasure of the earliest Wittenberg hymnals' (p. vii). He begins by setting out the various ways in which vernacular song would have permeated everyday life in Wittenberg, as elsewhere, in the early sixteenth century, paying particular attention to the influence of *Leisen*, religious folk songs often sung at major festivals. Permeating the many references to musical practice that Leaver describes is a clear understanding that words and music, separately and in combination, were important influences in shaping religious beliefs and attitudes. Furthermore, the use of congregational music in religious practice drew on existing materials and customs, but reshaped them for a new context: 'not the wholesale replacement of the old by the new but rather the re-formation of what was old and good' (p. 80).

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 329–330
ISSN 2058-5969

The central focus of the book is a small hymnal rediscovered in 1894, the *Enchyridion*, published in Wittenberg in 1526. Leaver argues that this volume has not received the attention it deserves, as it has not been considered as a primary source. By examining its contents in fine detail and comparing it with other known sources, he posits that it is in fact a third edition, following on from two earlier versions, now lost, printed in Wittenberg in 1524–25. Though conjectural, the argument is persuasive thanks to Leaver's careful attention to detail, and it presents a fundamental challenge to the received view that congregational singing did not flourish in Wittenberg until at least 1529. In turn, this calls for a new understanding of the emphasis Luther and his colleagues placed on congregational participation, from the very beginning of their work.

This is an important book for anyone with an interest in the history of congregational song and the role of music in the Reformation. It is also a significant affirmation and example of the benefits of considering congregational song in a holistic way: as words and music, written, compiled and practised in specific contexts.

Dr Martin V. Clarke is Lecturer in Music at the Open University.

m.v.clarke@open.ac.uk
Durham, UK

All Things Made New: Writings on the Reformation, Diarmaid MacCulloch (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 464 pp, £25.00 hbk

Diarmaid MacCulloch's latest book is a highly enjoyable, eclectic series of essays, the nature of which is best summed up by it's subtitle, 'Writings on the Reformation'. The range of the essays presented is vast, from attitudes to angels and the Virgin Mary in the Reformation to the story of the seventeenth-century forger Robert Ware, and the fact that they represent MacCulloch's reflections on the last 25 years of Reformation scholarship. Every essay included has appeared in print before and several were originally book reviews.

If the range of the subjects covered is great, then equally the joy of reading many of the essays lies in the vast range of knowledge which the author demonstrates. The article on Robert Ware, for example, carefully places him in his own historic context, as well as exploring how the forgeries continued to shape Reformation scholarship until relatively recently. The essays on the early English Reformation brought to life just how complicated and broad the Reformation would have seemed at the time.

Readers may find that this vast range is both the strength and the weakness of the book. It is beautifully written and often witty and there is a great deal here to interest someone who has some background in Reformation history but who is not necessarily a specialist. At the same time, terms are not always explained and at times lesser-known individuals are referenced in a way which assumes a fair amount of knowledge from the reader. It is also worth noting that in places the focus of attention is on how the Reformation is and has been studied, rather than the events themselves; I suspect that the eclectic nature of the essays may prove less than attractive for some.

MacCulloch writes as an Anglican, but most definitely not only for Anglicans. Those who have read some of his other work will not be surprised at the strong emphasis, underlined again in the final essay, that Anglicanism is a product of the Reformation, albeit a unique one; an argument I can only support. Methodists and others may well appreciate his acknowledgement on the final page that Anglicanism, which he describes engagingly as a 'trial and error' form of Christianity, has made mistakes and that losing the Dissenters and the Methodists, and of course killing Roman Catholics, are some of the worst.

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 331–332
ISSN 2058-5969

The book came out in 2016; writing this review less than a week after the horrific events in Charlottesville gave particular resonance to the argument made in the Foreword that history has a moral purpose in preventing societies and institutions telling themselves badly skewed stories about the past and thereby 'collectively going insane' (p. xiv). If, as he acknowledges, Professor MacCulloch has concentrated his efforts on Anglicanism, he has nevertheless served a much broader audience.

The Revd Dr Judith Rossall is Tutor in Church History at the Queen's Foundation.

rossallj@queens.ac.uk
Birmingham, UK

Brand Luther, Andrew Pettegree (New York: Penguin, 2016), 383 pp, US$18.00 pbk

On 31 October this year the world will celebrate the moment 500 years ago when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, a small town in Saxony, south of Berlin, thus signalling the beginning of the Reformation. This new book by the historian Professor Andrew Pettegree is an entirely fresh look at the origins and growth of the movement until into the early seventeenth century.

Pettegree, an expert in the history of printing, presents Luther as the one who more than anyone else exploits the enormous advantages of the printing press 70 years after its invention by Gutenberg in Mainz. He presents Luther as the world's first master of mass communication as well as a revolutionary theologian and biblical teacher. He demonstrates very skilfully the many advantages that Luther exploited – the devotion and loyalty of the Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, who, though himself a Catholic, resisted all attempts to unseat Luther, the presence in Wittenberg of the artist and entrepreneur Lucas Cranach, whose friendship, help and illustrative work in the form of woodcuts proved invaluable, the dislike of the local populace for the constant demands for money made on them by the Roman Catholic Church in their sale of indulgences, even before Tetzel's notorious activities, and the natural advantage of Germany's possessing the most advanced metalwork industries in Europe favouring the production of printing type. This latter point is one of many most interesting, possibly lesser-known snippets of information in this most informative book.

In addition to exploiting these advantages, Luther wrote so powerfully, succinctly and directly, producing an infinite number of pamphlets, thus making things easier for the printing process, whereas many longer, detailed works would have been too costly and slow in production. He also wrote in German from the start, quickly producing the first German Bible, reaching the immediate public, while ensuring that enough works were published in Latin to reach the wider scholarly public.

Pettegree's book is extremely well illustrated, with over 50, largely half-page, black and white illustrations, maps and photographs, detailed notes, clear

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 333–334
ISSN 2058-5969

indexing, as well as chapters divided into manageable sections for the busy reader to encompass efficiently. While Luther's theology and doctrinal differences with Rome are only covered generally, the author describes the political disputes and confrontations very thoroughly, revealing the combative, uncompromising and very practical Luther who had to confront troubles such as the Peasants' War, persecution and excommunication. He also covers Luther's married life and his unsavoury views of Jews, giving a very full picture of the man and the 'brand', his exploitation of the printing technology and the resources in manpower to hand.

The book, though general in its coverage of Luther's theology, presents an original and fascinating picture of an entrepreneurial Luther, without our requiring detailed technical knowledge. The historical detail of Luther's times is sufficient to ensure our interest and understanding. Highly recommended.

Dr Gordon Leah publishes on matters of Christian belief reflected in literature. He is a retired languages teacher and Methodist local preacher.

docleah@talktalk.net
Worcester, UK

***Protestants:** The Radicals who Made the Modern World*, Alec Ryrie (London: William Collins, 2017), 495 pp, £25.00 hbk

Perhaps the warmest compliment I can offer Alec Ryrie on his truly outstanding tome is that it gave me a nightmare. This is without question a brilliant work – so forcibly impressive, indeed, that I found myself regularly haunted by nuggets of information laced with rare detail bringing to life the story of Protestants and their torturous expedition of faith; an astonishing statement from North Korea, for example (the cause of my nightmare):

> They [believers working for North Korea's internal security services] said that it was a heartbreaking job to catch Christians while they, too, were Christians, but that they had to stay in their positions because the situation could turn even worse if an evil-minded person was in that position to ferret out believers.

With an eye for forensic analysis that wouldn't look out of place in any Colin Dexter novel, and could easily hold its own in a court of law, Ryrie succeeds in turning what could, disastrously, have become an historical document as dry as Luther's bones into an immensely readable, compelling masterpiece.

Allied to what is, patently, a spectacular ability to excavate remarkably deeply in his painstaking research, repeatedly and generously laying out gems of stunning evidence in substantiation of his proposal that Protestantism is a 'cult' that 'became one of the most creative and disruptive movements in human history' ('Still the German Christians tried, vainly, to demonstrate the compatibility of their beliefs with Nazism … One German Christian publication even looked forward to a postwar world "completely purged of Judaism"'), Alec Ryrie demonstrates, with chronological clarity and consistent fairness, his skills as an historian and storyteller par excellance.

So detailed are Ryrie's tales, and sometimes so eye-popping in their substance, that one is forced to remind oneself over and again that *Protestants* really is a record of actual, factual events that shaped individual and national destinies and enormous swathes of Christendom. Likewise, so widespread and comprehensive is the content, moving with an ease that is only really appreciated in

www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness
HOLINESS The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge
Volume 3 (2017) Issue 2 (Holiness & Reformation): pp. 335–336
ISSN 2058-5969

hindsight from Luther to Bunyan to Billy Graham to modern-day jihad, that one is sometimes left reeling by the sheer magnitude of the Protestant impact; 'reformation' becomes far too diluted and inadequate a word to ever again satisfactorily employ.

Arguably, the beauty of *Protestants* is that it would rest well on the loaded bookshelves of a professor, yet also on the less-cluttered bedside table of someone not particularly interest in reading towards a formal qualification. That is to say, this towering study would enhance academic circles while also serving as enjoyable and enriching bedtime reading for the Protestant keen to analyse and better understand the roots of their persuasion.

If it is the job of the comedian to 'leave 'em laughing', then it is the responsibility of the historian to join the dots between history that is documented and history that is still to happen. Ryrie succeeds in this too, leaving the now well-informed reader wondering just exactly where Protestantism might go next.

Stephen Poxon is a member of The Salvation Army and a freelance writer.

sjp65@outlook.com
St Albans, UK