

In Search of Union without Unity

The Heart of John Wesley

Philip Clayton

Introduction

Historically, as a denomination becomes more and more deeply divided, the options become fewer and fewer. At some moment there remains only one. The disagreement reaches a tipping point and, as in a divorce, the two sides declare “irreconcilable differences” and go their separate ways.

United Methodism is close to this point. A growing number of voices are calling for UM leaders to throw in the towel, whereas almost no one is proposing that we continue with business as usual. But the denomination is not (yet) to the point where only one option remains. The most innovative and hopeful voices are the ones offering creative proposals for both/and solutions—mediators, in short.

As I expect the chapters in this volume will show, the most intriguing proposals fall into two categories. On the one hand, leaders and scholars are mining the history of the Methodist movement for useable precedents. Historical case studies demonstrate the contemporary relevance of past solutions that would otherwise have been forgotten. On the other hand, authors are defending particular political solutions: changes of structure, polity, and practice that offer potential steps for avoiding the great divorce. These two tracks are complementary, of course, and many authors pursue both. Some proposals represent long shots; others could easily be implemented—if indeed the will to find a solution still remains.

The two tracks represent the most constructive paths available to us; I return to them below. But to make them work, the church will need the two contributions that Wesleyan theologians can make: finding common ground in the thought and action of John Wesley, and formulating the theological principles that constitute our shared heritage. Admittedly, each party in the dispute brings its own interpretations to this discussion. But if we don't at least try to say what connects us as Wesleyans, what good are the political machinations?

The Roots

Where to Start

So could there be something so central to Wesleyan spirituality that it might serve as common ground? Christian spirituality involves the deepest features of one's understanding and experience of God as reflected in the life and teachings of Jesus. Three considerations propel us to look in this direction. First, the split over homosexuality is so great in United Methodism that it will not, in my view, be resolved by arguments—theological, scriptural, or otherwise.

Second, Wesley inherited the traditions of Christian theology and Anglicanism, and he spoke positively about them. In his own writings and practice, however, he was guided—many of us would say that he was more strongly guided—by his experience of the Spirit of God. He

unapologetically used his experiences as a major hermeneutical tool for interpreting and preaching Scripture. Famously, these experiences were among the four sources that, taken together, formed the heart of Wesley's theological method and the source of the series of affirmations that became his theology. Without taking the time to defend it here, I believe that Wesley's theology of the "Great Physician" offers the most compelling starting point for theology.¹ Admittedly, this theological method has often failed to produce consensus, at least after Wesley was no longer present to provide the answers. Experiences differ, as do the contexts in which the church seeks to live out its vision. But then again, the vast majority of theological methods have also failed to guarantee consensus.

There is one final reason to seek to emulate Wesley's method as we come together for these discussions. The usual methods that we have learned as theologians and biblical scholars, which given the standards of academics are not allowed to rely on appeals to experience, tend to become dry, cold, and even hostile when major disputes arise. If we are to fail in our attempt to find common ground and perhaps a solution, let's at least not fail through cerebral distancing. If as Wesleyans we speak from the heart, acknowledging the tragedy of division within the church, we can at least find connection, even if in the end we fail to achieve a political solution. And who knows, perhaps leading with the heart and with personal testimony will succeed at lowering walls that are otherwise impregnable.

Wesleyan Spirituality

Thought is not abstract. None of us thinks, lives, or writes books in a vacuum; all that we do is part of our deeper personal narrative, whether we mention it or not. It's hard for Wesleyan theologians not to affirm this framework. God has a narrative of salvation for each person; it is both a universal story and a highly specific story. The path of sanctification is the same: millions have walked it before us, many far beyond our horizon, and yet each step is unique to each one of us. Grace goes before, but it also draws one forward, step by step.

Although a Christian and a theologian for decades, I am a recent convert to Wesleyan theology, which has reoriented my understanding of the narrative of the Christian life. You might say that I was Wesley's prodigal son, with years spent in the "distant land" of Reformed theology, Lutheran theology, and the Radical Reformation traditions. Yes, my sin knew no bounds.

This conversion took place at Claremont School of Theology, that bastion of all things Wesleyan. The details don't need to be recounted here. Suffice it to say that I became convinced that no theological approach to describing the Christian life better reflects the teachings and life of Jesus than the teaching, preaching, and life of John Wesley. Watch out for recent converts, because we preach with unwavering conviction and enthusiasm, still believing that the basic Wesleyan message has a power to reorient lives . . . and institutions.

Is there not at least the chance, then, that reconsidering the heart of Wesleyanism, a heart that reflects the core motivations of Wesley's faith and practice, could supplement the historical arguments and help us sift through the changes to polity that increasingly appear necessary?

The Heart of a Theology

Every profound theology can be read from the inside out. For St. Thomas Aquinas, the center is the principle of order and hierarchy, with all things flowing from God, the source of all things. An amazing amount of his systematic theology grows outward from that one point. For Calvin, it is the justice of God and the power of God that arranges all things for His glory. For Luther, it is

the faith and certainty that salvation from sin possible. In Luther, this experience is not as intimately tied to sanctification as it is for Wesley. As theologians, we can quickly list, and then fight about, countless additional examples.

John Wesley did not write a systematic theology, but there is without doubt a center, a heart of his theology, one that permeates all he says and does. Christians know this heart through ongoing deep, personal experience, which may then lead to a lifetime of study and reflection.

The heart is love. And grace.

First John offers one of the most profound statements about God's love: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8 NRSV). Not surprisingly, this is the text that Wesley preached on more than any other biblical text. If you convinced Wesley that some claim he made about Christianity was inconsistent with this passage from 1 John, he would have retracted it.

Each individual Christian can testify about his or her experiences of grace. Like all doctrines in Wesley's teaching, understanding his writings on grace always involves reflection on *our own*, ongoing experience of grace, without which not a single breath occurs. Before you stand up in a pulpit, grace has permeated the room; before you walk into a room to teach a Bible study or give a lecture, grace has been offered to every person who awaits you. Salvation is unthinkable without grace. Grace and love are the reasons that salvation and sanctification are connected like bone and marrow, like two sides of the same coin. Not only is grace poured out at the moment of conversion; grace also comes before, during, and after every step in the ongoing adventure of sanctification.

These words are easily said, but a lifetime is not enough to understand them. No portrayal of the Christian life so profoundly undercuts the "do it yourself" (DIY) model of the Christian life as does Wesley's. Many of us well remember the struggle, the despair, and the failure of discipleship that we experienced as young Christians as we labored, often futilely, according to the pattern of the DIY model. It's like going to a large hardware store like Lowe's: the nice man or woman explains to you what you must do; you leave the store with a hopeful heart and a heavy cart; you unload the parts in your driveway; and then the darn pieces just won't go together to build the thing in the way that you had been taught.

I remember counseling at Billy Graham Crusades with my DIY Christianity, doing PhD work and writing my first books using the DIY model, and pastoring and teaching in this spirit. It is a cold and discouraging way to live. I'm certainly not the only Christian to feel the burden of Romans 7—especially 7:25, resting like an albatross on one's shoulders—and teaching and preaching Romans 8:1 without really knowing on a personal level the world of grace that lies between the two verses. How often did I teach "faith without works is dead" without realizing that there is not a single moment in the adventure of sanctification that is not buoyed up by grace like a sailboat traversing a storm-tossed sea.

The Limits

"No one is told any story but their own."

Why insist on such well-known themes in the context of a project such as this one? Concretely, how might it help?

Many Christians, and even some Wesleyans, are skeptical of the story I have just told, insisting that it cannot be the whole narrative. As a young evangelical, I was also skeptical. Why

would Paul write and exhort as he does unless the first priority of the Christian life is to “run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Heb. 12:1 NIV). In the end, however, there is no running without grace, not even a step. We are more like disabled persons who are assisted up from our chairs and helped to take our first trembling steps forward. It takes effort on our part to put one foot in front of the other; but not a step forward is possible without the arms that sustain us. As a parent, one is never allowed to make demands on his or her children without letting them know that they are bathed in love before, during, and after—a love that will never let them go.

Grace may be ubiquitous, but there is one twist. We do not know, and cannot know, exactly how grace is being manifested in the life of another. Are they on track? Are they following the leadings of grace at the fastest pace that they are capable of? Exactly which steps in the journey of sanctification is God directing them to at a particular time? Indeed, what *is* their particular path? When the athlete racing around the track is passed in the last corner, with the finish line in sight, are we really able to judge whether she is running with every last ounce of strength, or whether there is in fact more energy within her that she might have drawn upon to stay in front? When it comes to sanctification, we face a certain sacred unknowing about where the Spirit of Grace is drawing another person as the next step in his or her process.

Think of the well-known passage in *The Horse and His Boy*, one of C.S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia*. When Shasta and Aravis meet Aslan for the first time (or at least for the first time that they recognize him), they ask him why he allowed some of the events to happen as they did. Aslan responds, “No one is told any story but their own.”² It’s not given to the residents of Narnia to know what God is doing in the lives of their friends. Remember also Jesus’ response to Peter’s repeated question about what would happen to John: “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me” (John 21:22 NIV).

The Argument against Context-Free Knowing

Recognizing that grace and a certain sacred unknowing are foundational to the Christian life brings with it a certain humility. One becomes a little more cautious about making claims to know the behavioral requirements for each person, and thus the priorities for an entire denomination or the entire church. Other papers in this volume consider differences across historical periods. To supplement their arguments, I wish to consider differences across cultures. Given the diverging views between, for example, the Central Conferences and the Western Jurisdiction, questions of culture emerge as particularly important.

This semester, I am in the midst of teaching Christian Mission, a United Methodist requirement for seminary students. Over and over again in the history of missions we observe cases of the missionaries instructing new converts what are the exact steps they must take in the journey of sanctification, and in what order. For example, Dana Robert cites a powerful story of converts in Africa. The missionaries insisted that Christian men could have only one wife. Unfortunately, fulfilling this requirement left many of the former wives destitute after their husbands divorced them. In contrast to the missionaries’ priority, the African converts were deeply convinced that it was more urgent for them to use their influence at the king’s court in order to fight corruption, win more rights for the common people, and address the abuses of power that were creating poverty and suffering.³

Lesslie Newbigin makes a similar point in his well-known book, *The Open Secret*, when he is describing mission work in India:

In the “mission station” approach . . . converts are detached from the natural communities to which they belong, attached to the foreign mission and its institutions, and required to conform to ethical and cultural standards that belong to the Christianity of the foreign missionary. The effect of this policy is twofold. On the one hand the convert, having been transplanted into an alien culture, is no longer in a position to influence non-Christian relatives and neighbors; on the other hand the energies of the mission are exhausted in the effort to bring the converts . . . into conformity with the standards supposed by the missionaries to be required by the gospel. Both factors have the effect of stopping the growth of the church.⁴

Newbigin is also famous for his argument that missionaries, after they have planted churches, should step back and allow indigenous leaders to lead in the process of discipling and promoting further church growth. My two African students in the Missions class, knowledgeable about the history of African missions and its leaders in their countries (Congo and Kenya, respectively), have added further painful examples of what has happened when this principle is ignored.

With some embarrassment, I remember a similar example when I was serving with Greater Europe Mission. As a young, German-speaking missionary, I tried to convince an older Catholic woman in a small Austrian town that she did not need to go to the church in order to pray, since God’s Spirit is everywhere. I did not understand the role of sacred spaces, and I thought she was making a theological mistake. Indeed, I was able to bring (what I thought were) impressive arguments drawn from ecclesiology, pneumatology, and the doctrine of divine omnipresence. Fortunately for me, I don’t think the woman was particularly swayed by this fledgling theologian from America.

Numerous other examples could be added, but the point is already clear. We simply are not in the position to know what is the most important next step in the journey of sanctification for a given person or group of people—or, in many cases, even what the steps are. Actions that may count as sin in one cultural context (say, Victorian England) may not count as sin in another. Faced with such sharp differences, we are compelled to affirm a kind of blessed unknowing. Acknowledging what we can and can’t be certain of produces what we might call a blessed humility.

The history of missions helps to explain this outcome: no one is able to advance a particular account of the Christian life without expressing his or her culture at the same time. Culture is the ocean in which we swim. Part of it is the language by which we were formed, since a language inevitably carries with it an entire cultural and social world. I cannot fully understand the other’s cultural world until I have walked a mile in his vocabulary and syntax. Practically speaking, this means a long period of residency in a region, a fluency in the language(s) spoken there, and a finely tuned sensitivity to cultural differences. Many are tone deaf to culture. I fear Americans have one of the worst track records in this regard.

The term “blessed humility” fits because in a foreign culture one remains a life-long learner. Even as a fluent German speaker and author, it’s still clear that I am an immigrant; even today I continue to pick up cultural and linguistic nuances that I had missed before. I now understand my German-speaking Catholic brothers and sisters more fully than I did as a young evangelist. As a result, I’ve learned to respect their practices more fully. And yet, even with extensive experience, we are still unable to fully separate what is a product of our mother culture from what are the highest priorities in the journey of sanctification for members of other cultures.

The Implications

Regarding the Homosexuality Question Itself

It's not only Bolivia, Bangladesh, and Botswana that are culturally distant from us; we encounter this distance even without crossing an ocean. Differences of race and ethnicity bring differences in culture. The lives of the poor, the middle class, and the very rich evidence sharp cultural contrasts.⁵ A high-school Latina girl in East Los Angeles, deeply bonded with her Anglo friends during the day, may translate for her grandmother in the afternoon, and prepare for her *Quinceañera* in the evening. She lives thirty miles from my school, and yet there are complexities to her culturally hybrid life that I will never understand.

Age differences also produce cultural misunderstandings. Brian McLaren and I were once leading a large "Big Tent Christianity" event in Phoenix⁶ where the audience was evenly split between Millennials and white-haired churchgoers. I'll never forget what happened when an older woman stood up, described how her granddaughter was active on Facebook, and told the audience, "But there's no such thing as a real friendship online." A hundred Millennials jumped to their feet at the same time, begging to disagree.

Blessed Unknowing and Blessed Humility are needed across a far larger variety of encounters than one might think. I feel this requirement with particular strength in my relationship to homosexual Christians. As a young person, I wanted to think that sexual orientation was freely chosen sometime during or after adolescence, so that their "wrong" orientation could be understood as a sin. But it turns out matters are much more complicated. Genetic differences over the history of biological evolution have produced in nature virtually every combination of homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, and asexual behavior that one can imagine.⁷ At least in some cases, boys and girls are aware of their sexual orientation in middle childhood.⁸ I remember when a nine-year-old friend told me at a Christian camp that he was "different," that his attraction was to boys rather than girls. As a fourth grader, I found this hard to understand; today I have a slightly better understanding of what this meant. Over the years, many of us have had discussions with people who described how they knew their sexual identity even as children.

Their experience is way outside what I know, as is the experience of growing up in a Kenyan village. I recognize that I do not really understand what it is like to discover that one's affections are drawn to people of the same sex. After thirty years of studying science and writing on science-religion relationships, I do know something of the complexity of causal influences on sexual orientation. But knowing the theory is not the same as knowing the experience. Confronted by difference, one has no choice but to be a learner.

Regarding Priorities

Many would like to skip this learning step, judging the action by itself without needing to understand the person. Here Wesley's doctrine of grace again comes to the fore. *Grace* is frequently defined as "unmerited favor." The divine knowledge of a person's merit encompasses who she is at every moment, intentions as well as actions, and includes all influences that have played a role in who she has become. None of us can match that level of knowledge; but we *are* obligated to get as close to it as we can. Love requires the fullest possible knowledge of the other person and how she experiences the world; grace—from us, as also from God—requires bestowing love even beyond what the individual actually deserves. These are high standards. One's primary task is not to judge but to exercise love and grace to the highest degree that one is capable of. Otherwise, we are likely to fall into stereotypes, caricatures, and misunderstandings.

In fact, achieving such a depth of love and grace does tend to move one beyond judgment. “Do not judge, or you too will be judged” (Matt. 7:1 NIV). One thinks of the woman caught in adultery. “Go now and sin no more” is clearly part of Jesus’ message. But the phrase that remains the most transformative comes before it: “Then neither do I condemn you” (John 8:11 NIV). Condemnation, that is, judgments about the sins of others, is easy; I can see the specks in their eyes from one hundred yards. The path toward Christian perfection does not lie in this direction, but in the demands of an ever-expanding love.

It’s natural to try and resolve disputes by moving up to higher levels of abstraction, by appealing to generalized theological affirmations. At this level, it is said, judgments are more compelling. For example, concerning the homosexuality question it is argued:

- Experience is ambiguous and unreliable
- This is a debate about doctrine, not Wesleyan spirituality
- Scripture is unambiguous
- Homosexuality is always and everywhere wrong

But as a recent convert to the Wesleyan understanding of grace, returning from the distant land where acts, not grace, provide the entrance ticket, I’m more cautious about abstractions like these. We cannot separate judgments and exhortations from love. There is no part of the Christian life that is not grounded in grace or love. Where there is a conflict between doctrinal requirements and grace and love, grace and love triumph.

Regarding Labels and Differences That Won’t Go Away

The authors in this book cover a vast variety of positions and arguments. In most cases, one can quickly tell which position the author represents. The reader’s temptation is to dismiss the authors with whom one disagrees and give credence to claims made by one’s allies. This tendency deepens the divisions.

So do the labels. Labels sharpen the differences between people. Labels are largely responsible for the fact that (it seems) only two positions on the homosexuality debate remain in The United Methodist Church today: pro or con. Labels sharpen the divisions between the opposing camps. These sharper oppositions then structure the ensuing debate. Those on the one side are labeled traditionalists or conservatives or advocates of holiness; those on the other, progressives or revisionists or liberationists—and those are only the nicer labels.

Consider the incompatibilities presupposed by the last label in each of these two groups of words. For the one side, homosexual relationships and homosexual clergy represent a departure from the quest for holiness, and hence, are incompatible with the Methodist movement. For the other side, holiness does not exclude these relationships and clergy. Loving, committed relationships are at the heart of the Christian life, and it’s unjust to stigmatize all homosexual relationships for those whose only other options is celibacy.

Homosexual practice either does or does not clash with Jesus’ life and teaching. If it does, it has to go; if it does not, The United Methodist Church should not forbid it. One wishes that a careful exegesis of Wesley’s writings, sermons, and practices would decide this question. Unfortunately (as in other cases in Methodist history) it doesn’t. Those on the other side of the issue are as certain of their reading of Wesley as we are of ours. The dispute is as clear as it is unresolvable.

Living with Theological Differences

I have argued that the central themes of Wesleyan spirituality can help us to live with theological disagreements. This conviviality, this living together, does not work when the various parties lead with the battle of doctrine against doctrine, proof text against proof text. It *can* work when we agree to stay focused on the life of love and grace. The key is to acknowledge the priority of these two modes of being in the world, located in the deepest strata and experience of the Christian life, as well as their centrality in Wesley's understanding of the Christian life. We never get to say, "I believe in love, but . . ."

I stress this approach because it is at least possible that it will allow for life together when doctrinal disputes don't. There's another reason: if we do not mutually affirm some central agreements about the heart of the Christian life, there will not be enough common ground for conviviality, for life together. In that case, divorce is the only remaining option. But when one finds agreement on at least the most fundamental level, it becomes possible to arrange sufficient space for the other disagreements—even for disagreements that are viewed by one or the other as fourth or third or even second most important of all.

The Polity Question and What History Teaches Us

The polity question is then: *how much* room do we need to make between churches and annual conferences and judicial structures and normative documents, so that there is space for the disagreements to remain without destroying us?

Here the historical arguments are particularly interesting and, I think, fruitful. Other authors in this book have offered and analyzed compelling examples, which fall into four main categories. Historically, there are (1) cases of not needing to do anything, that is, cases where folks recognized differences but still got along just fine. (2) There are cases of disagreement that threatened unity but did not actually result in schism. (3) Other disagreements, in retrospect perhaps not as irreconcilable as folks thought back then, produced schism and separation. Finally, (4) there are cases where a Solomonic decision, along with the good will of the participants or the political forces of the time, deconstructed the battle lines, allowing the church to survive intact even when differences remained.

It's particularly important to consider the most effective methods that the Methodist movement has found in order to achieve this last result. One sees among the examples a common approach: the decision to allow divergent practices at different levels of organization. In early American history, class meetings were the foundational level. "To be a Methodist meant to be a member of a class," so that "these small groups, a signature of Wesleyanism, quite literally constituted the people called Methodist."⁹ Quarterly meetings took place for those in a particular geographic area, and annual conferences for traveling preachers.¹⁰

For Wesley, accountability happened here. Belonging to a band of only four people, you would know exactly when to encourage and when to condemn a fellow member. The same was almost as true for a class of twelve people, and rather less true for a society, and much less for the broader groupings. In the early Methodist Movement, then, accountability started at the bottom. The further away from the bottom one moves, the less possible it is to know. "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over" (Matt. 18:15 NIV). If you do this in love, and with your eyes on grace, the conversation will have the most effect. And sometimes it will be you who walks away with new understanding.

We now recognize that shared understanding at the local level was the key to the success of the Methodist movement. The slowness of communication helped too. If all the Methodists

under the care of a single circuit rider could have heard on their radio how the preachers in neighboring circuits preached, or who they were appointing to lead their classes and societies, their dissatisfaction with their own preacher might well have increased. If the decisions of annual conferences were immediately available via color TV to every parishioner in that conference, it would highlight differences within the conference and sharpen divisions. If the requirements laid down by one annual conference were binding for others, dissent would have broken out immediately. (The conspiracy theories that prosper on social media would not have helped either.) Regional discrepancies, differences of race and ethnicity, theological differences, even differences of style would have become the source of schisms. Indeed, through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, it was precisely the growing centralization that gave rise to the well-known disputes and divisions.

In the beginning, however, temporal and spatial distance prevented these things from happening. Then came technology. Today, one can travel easily to annual and general conferences, and the debates and decisions are conveyed back to individual congregations almost instantaneously. At one point, the distance of space and time allowed healthy differences to coexist. Now the disappearance of distance threatens to crush difference.

Where Next?

Methodist history, I've argued, shows how the imposition of a single framework can threaten to dissolve the complementarities. In early American Methodism, geographical distance and the slowness of communication allowed classes and societies and quarterly meetings to diverge in healthy ways while still remaining Methodist. Today, lightning-fast communication and a rapidly shrinking world have erased that distance to almost nothing. Perhaps by increasing the autonomy of annual conferences, we could again find the balance that once made possible the rapid growth of the Methodist movement.

That's a historical argument. Theologians, by contrast, are trained to pursue discussions of doctrine and the interpretation of Scripture. Yet these discussions today only seem to sharpen our disagreements, causing us only to make the battle lines more rigid. That's sad, actually. Given the *Realpolitik* of The UMC situation today, it's clear that the historians and polity experts have more to offer than we theologians.

If allowed to speak the language of polity experts, I will advocate for *union without unity*. The models for this solution may be drawn from the pre-conciliar church, or the Methodist World Federation, or the open table that United Methodists celebrate with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. I think these models hold great promise; indeed, I think they offer us the only chance that we have right now. If there is no longer any will to pursue *union without unity* in some form, however, then the divorce must be consummated. It's too late for a theologian to sway us.

One thing could save us, though. It's a matter of the heart first, not the mind. The heart of the gospel is love. And grace. Something that God did before we could do anything. No theologian saw and spoke this truth more strongly than John Wesley.

That's the reason I have explored these two central experiences of the Christian life in these brief pages. If any common commitment could provide common ground for all Wesleyans, it's the love and grace taught and lived by a man named Jesus.

Centering on love and grace allows us to pull back from the sense of absolute certainty, and hence, universal normativity that separates the disputing parties. If the shared experience of

grace forms the bird's body, then the right and left wings can again work together, symmetrically, to propel the bird forward. Personal piety and social holiness again become complementary parts of sanctification, for both individuals and groups.

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¹ Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), e.g. ch. 6.

² C. S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 202.

³ Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995), 122.

⁵ See the classic presentation of the differences in Paul Fussell, *Class* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984).

⁶ See the report on the Phoenix meeting at <https://progressivechristianity.org/resources/big-tent-christianity-progressives-emergents-find-common-ground-at-national-event/>.

⁷ Bruce Bagemihl, *Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity* (Stonewall Inn Editions, 2000); Joan Roughgarden, *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

⁸ See the brochure from the American Psychological Association at <http://www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/orientation.pdf>.

⁹ Russell Richey et al., *American Methodism: A Compact History* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2010), 14.

¹⁰ Ibid.