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In 1898 Charles Moldenke, a biblical scholar wedded to the theory that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, acknowledged the existence of Egyptian parallels to the biblical story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, but insisted that they could be accounted for by Moses' having done research at the University of Heliopolis in his youth. He should have reconsidered his assumptions before they put him in such a ridiculous position.

Today, most of us find the Mosaic authorship theory to be not so much incorrect as irrelevant. There may be some residual shock value in the bare facts of the documentary hypothesis (which might explain the surprising success of Richard Friedman's book, *Who Wrote the Bible?*). But on the whole, "authorship" is not a working concept in biblical studies anymore. It has been replaced by more intellectually interesting and historically reasonable theories about oral and written traditions and their basis in local communities. We cannot pretend that modern biblical research has not happened, nor is there reason to do so.

But the church continues to be interested in the authorship of the Bible because for the church, of course, God is the originating source of Scripture. We have evidence of this concern in our very midst. In the 1988 Discipline the revisions of Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task include an emphasis on the normative status of Scripture. It was already there in the 1972 statement, which gave us Outler's synthesis, the Wesleyan quadrilateral. But now the quadrilateral itself has been exegeted, and Scripture has become not only the record of God's dealings with humanity, but the authoritative "source from which we derive our theological affirmations and the
criteria by which we assess the adequacy of our understanding and witness" (Par. 69).

Now that we have committed ourselves to this perspective, the next stage will be to ask once again how we should read the Scripture. We are not exactly on our own here. The statement gives due weight to the need for scholars to deal with the literary and historical intricacies of ancient texts, which often includes Moldenke's Peril, or, what to do with Ancient Near Eastern parallels. But the primary task is ours: we are to look at the Bible as a source of truth in which our lives are mirrored and we find both ultimate comfort and challenge from God. Rahner has quoted Bengel (whom Wesley consulted in the production of his Notes on the New Testament, as David Tripp writes in this issue) on this point: "Apply yourself wholly to the passage, and apply the passage wholly to yourself." Rahner himself said that scripture should be read as if one were gazing into the eyes of one's lover, which makes it something we might actually want to do.

In doctrinal terms, that is what the inspiration of scripture is all about: God's authorship of the Bible has to do with God's loving self-disclosure in the text, rather than the dictation of privileged information to prophetic individuals. The emphasis on the unity of the text means that God has left nothing out that we need to be in right relationship with God. The innerrancy of texts does not mean that there are no incorrect or contradictory statements in the Bible, but that there is nothing in it pertaining to our salvation that is a lie.

It is frightening to think of handling scripture critically but missing the love of God that is revealed there. But it is also frightening to think of doctrinal assumptions allowing Christians to mishandle the evidence, or piety being used as an excuse for ill-formed judgement. The atmosphere of the church or the academy does influence the kinds of questions addressed to the text; but one should not supply answers to the other. The point was driven home to me years ago by a college professor. Religion courses were held in classrooms in the basement of the chapel, and the figurative weight of church authority over us was not lost on him. His constant refrain was, "Let's keep some mental space between the upstairs and the downstairs!"
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The point is this. Two hundred years of biblical research has not corrupted our pristine view of God's word but has taught us how to be more attentive, discerning, and even inspired readers of our sacred texts. Inspiration operates not only in the divine-human mixture called God's Word, but also within readers. In most cases, all we really have to do is overcome our lethargy, sit down, read the Bible, and ask for help when we hit something we don't understand. (Enter biblical scholarship.) Real experience with the text is an antidote to all kinds of theory about the authority of Scripture.

In their way, each article in this issue addresses the question of "norms" and "standards." First, there is a biblical pattern for our worship, the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that is the basis for the Word-and-table service. As L. Edward Phillips writes, true creativity in worship comes from being connected to the sacramentality of the liturgy, and its ability to express the mystery of faith: "Appropriately creative worship reflects this heavenly worship of the saints and angels before the throne of God." With this biblical standard, then, we can evaluate the treasures in our heritage: the revival, the Sunday School, and the Anglican-aesthetic patterns.

The second two articles can be read together in point/counterpoint fashion. A. W. Martin, Jr. contends that Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament* should be claimed by United Methodists, but that Wesley's "doctrinal exposition" of Scripture is hardly the best model for biblical interpretation. In fact, Wesley's writing on the New Testaments is a prime example of what first year seminary students learn not to do. Wesley used a corrupt New Testament text. He used typology as a way to relate the Old Testament to the New Testament, turning the Old Testament into a series of prophecies about Jesus Christ. He harmonized the writings of the New Testament and used it to authorize later church doctrines. And finally, he considered the New Testament to contain predictions about the end of the world. What can we do with the *Notes*? Martin counsels that we listen to biblical scholars who can help us place Wesley's *Notes* in a total interpretive picture.

The British Methodist Church begins with a different position on Wesley's *Notes*: they are standards for faith to which
candidates for ordination must give their assent. Thus there is more pressure to come to terms with the Notes, and David Tripp offers us one way to appreciate what Wesley has given us. James Barr has written that "biblical criticism is a literary mode of operation, which carries with it historical consequences, [rather than] a historical mode of operation, which carries with it literary consequences" (Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism, Westminster, 1983). To look carefully at Wesley's Notes on the New Testament is to see that Wesley was an extremely sensitive reader, alert to imagery and literary nuance. In the matter of historical consequences, Wesley was limited by the thought of his time, which was only beginning to ask the questions that resulted in modern criticism. But Wesley himself possessed the spirit of that modern inquiry when he wrote: "...I trust, wheresoever I have been mistaken, my mind is open to conviction. I sincerely desire to be better informed. I say to God and man, ‘What I know not, teach thou me!’" We might speculate that Wesley would have made a first-rate biblical scholar in the twentieth century.

Charles M. Wood's article, "Theological Education and Education for Church Leadership," builds like a long crescendo. He begins with some basic generalizations: ministry is a word that applies to all Christians, church leadership is a subset of that category. In the local church, we are all in ministry, whatever our function. But we can be trained into church leadership, and that is what seminary is for. Wood has a distinctive, philosophical style, and it makes some demands on readers. But on this solid foundation he can offer the following insight on the spiritual maturity in church leaders:

Pastors and those in similar positions of leadership need to know themselves well....Self-deception, as well as the deception of others, is an easy and attractive feature of religious leadership,...Persons preparing for such work must know their own hearts in this regard; they must be well acquainted with their own strengths and weaknesses when faced by such challenges, and with the opportunities which both the strengths and the weaknesses afford for genuine and effective service.
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The church in Korea has much to teach us about itself, and eventually, about ourselves, if we are non-Asian Christians, as Douglas E. Wingeier discovered in a study trip to Korea two years ago. His essay is an information-packed guide to the Land of Morning Calm that is fascinating on its own but might also serve as background reading to two articles that have appeared in the spring, 1989 issue of Quarterly Review: Jung Young Lee's "Yin-Yang as a Theological Paradigm," and A. Sung Park's "The Theology of Han: The Pain of the Oppressed." Wingeier's article raises the issue of implicit "norms" of leadership: hierarchy and patriarchy. In the Korean Mask Dance he sees the reversal of these patterns, and the chance to look in Korea for the Church's mission to the poor and unimportant people in society.

Sharon J. Hels
What does the word "creative" mean? Usually in our church lingo it means "exciting," "different," "engaging," and such. The opposite of creative would be "boring," "predictable," or "dull"—labels that no one wants! Consequently, creative worship often means new ideas on how to make Sunday mornings more exciting with banners, or music, different approaches to rituals, or new rituals altogether. But before a worship planner rushes headlong into creativity, a more fundamental question should be raised: what sort of norms do we employ when we make a decision to sing a hymn, have a procession, pray a prayer, or display a banner?

United Methodist ministers and worship leaders have so much freedom in ordering their worship services that, at first glance, it may appear that there are no norms. If we were to examine the order of Sunday worship from a dozen different United Methodist churches, we would find that they differ from each other, some in fairly radical ways. Moreover, this variety
occurs not only from church to church, but from pastor to pastor, so that worship varies according to each pastor's taste. Furthermore, the new United Methodist Hymnal contains directions for yet another order of worship, often completely unfamiliar. Because of all of these influences, worship style often changes so abruptly that congregations can suffer from "liturgical whiplash." As one layperson said: "We had just gotten used to the way our previous minister led worship, and now our new minister has changed everything!" Some churches have experienced such a variety of worship styles that they have become totally apathetic about worship: "Just do whatever you want, Pastor. We don't care."

Most of the time, however, the order of worship is a compromise between what the pastor wants and what the congregation expects. Where do these expectations originate? How does a leader decide what is appropriate for worship in a United Methodist congregation? This brings us back to the opening question: What are the operative norms by which we order and evaluate our worship?

This essay is an experiment in devising a method for the evaluation of worship within American Methodism. First, I will test several rules that govern the development of worship patterns in United Methodist congregations. Second, I will describe four basic patterns that are operative in our worship. Last, I will suggest some guidelines for planning and evaluating worship that take into account these rules and patterns.

Rules

In the last few decades, liturgical scholars have discerned several laws that are operative in the evolution of Roman Catholic and Orthodox liturgies. These laws are helpful in tracing the various lines of liturgical development, a method usually referred to as "comparative liturgy." I would like to suggest that the evolution of Protestant worship, even when it is not based on a fixed liturgy, also follows similar rules.

Rule number one: Orders of worship are conservative.
Once a pattern is established, it resists change until someone
or group—or circumstance—changes it. It is much easier to add something to the order of worship than it is to omit something already in place. Thus, while pastors ostensibly have the authority to order worship as they please, rarely do they change everything. Instead, the order of worship is treated like an attic in which everything is stored, old along with new.

One church I attended had an informal greeting among members of the congregation at the beginning of the Sunday service. The church received a new pastor, who wanted to have a greeting of peace after the confession, as it appears in the new United Methodist Hymnal. But, rather than omitting the greeting at the beginning, which seemed to be so popular, she simply added another after the prayer. The service then had two greetings.

Established patterns are conservative because congregations like to know what they may expect in worship. Just try changing the words to the Lord’s Prayer, and see what response you get! Even though there are very good contemporary versions, people like the old standards, either “trespasses” as in the Methodist tradition, or “debts” as many EUB congregations said it. I suspect that one reason for the uproar over changing the words of the old hymns is that these hymns were about all most United Methodists could count on remaining the same, year after year. They constituted a sort of “fixed” liturgy.

Since worship is conservative, we must be careful about introducing change into our worship services because we may be starting a practice which will continue for many years.

Rule number two. The order of worship grows until it becomes unmanageable; some parts are then removed.

This liturgical attic I referred to above can only hold so much. There are limits. Time limits may be the most sacrosanct: “Preacher, just get us out by noon—or else.” When the order takes on more than the congregation can reasonably do within the expected limits, something has to go. For instance, an entertaining children’s sermon is added to worship, so the psalter is dropped, even though the psalter has been a part of Christian liturgy since the earliest times. Or a period of sharing
congregational "joys and concerns" is placed before the pastoral prayer, and the period of silent preparation before prayer is omitted.

These examples illustrate a second feature of this rule. Usually the older parts of the service give way to the newer parts. Few of us really know why we always did the psalter, and children's sermons seem to be so popular. The danger here is that when elements that have been part of Christian worship for centuries are omitted, our liturgy loses historical continuity. It is important to understand the historical significance of our various acts of worship, so that our decision to include or omit them is based on more than our impression of "what works best."

Rule number three: Acts of worship take on secondary meanings when the original meaning is unknown or forgotten.

The reason an act of worship is kept is sometimes different from the reason it was begun. The church I presently serve observes a period of silence at the end of Sunday service, before the postlude. The congregation stands at strict attention for a full fifteen seconds before the organ breaks the silence. I did not begin this custom, but from my first Sunday there I found it to be an especially fitting way to conclude worship. Not long ago I commented to a parishioner how meaningful I found this practice to be. "You know, pastor," he said, "Funny thing about that. We used to have an acolyte come forward during that time to extinguish the candles. The organist always waited until the candles were out, so that we could all watch the children before the mad rush for the door. Well, we haven't had an acolyte extinguish the candles in some years. I guess nobody ever got around to telling our organist to start playing sooner." My interpretation of this period of silence had nothing to do with its origin. I had attached a secondary meaning.

I was once active in a church in which the choir director wore a clerical stole so that he could be "color-coded to the liturgical season, just like the pastor." The historical meaning of vestiture was totally lost, but no one in the congregation minded. They did not know what vestments meant anyway.
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We must be careful about making up explanations for acts of worship we don’t understand. We may be placing a meaning on something that is totally unrelated to its origin. This does not mean that every secondary meaning is invalid. However, it is usually best to establish the original meaning, when that is possible, so that we are not completely altering the meaning, or apologizing for something that has a dubious origin.

Rule number four: The order of worship usually follows some predetermined patterns.

Much of the time these patterns are unconscious. By unconscious I mean that congregations usually accept them without thinking about them, often without even knowing that patterns are being followed. Moreover, churches sometimes follow more than one pattern, or borrow from one pattern to fill in another.

The patterns that United Methodists use are numerous. They come from childhood recollections, memories of college and seminary days, resource books, and other experiences. However, for our purposes the patterns can be grouped into four categories: Revival, Sunday-school, Anglican-aesthetic, and Word-and-table. Each of these types has a basic pattern, and a character, or "ethos."

Patterns

The first type, the Revival, developed out of the revival meetings and camp meetings of the nineteenth century. The person who was most influential in establishing the form of the revival was Charles Finney, probably the most important figure in American Christianity in the nineteenth century. Finney was a lawyer, not a theologian, by training, and he took a decidedly un-theological and a-historical approach to the business of revivals. Conversion, according to Finney, was not a matter of the Holy Spirit; it came as a result of the right technique. If evangelists used the right methods, then they would get results. The order of the day called for "new measures." These new measures included such innovations as the protracted meeting, visiting evangelists, advertising, the "mourners’" or "anxious" bench, altar calls, trained choirs, and
Conversion of the lost, Finney believed, was best achieved through a three-fold pattern of meeting. The first part included the "preliminaries:" hymn singing, special music, introductions, testimonies, prayers, and love offerings—all of which were calculated to set the mood for conversion. Next came the "message." Note, "message" rather than "sermon." The change was significant. The evangelist was trying to communicate a message to the audience, which had as its aim the conversion of the lost. The final part, the "altar call" or "harvest" immediately followed the message. Here people were asked to come forward to give their lives to Jesus. Singing helped to keep the emotional level at an intense high during the altar call.

The revival pattern was very effective in making converts. It remains effective for some churches, although most of us would agree that revivals are not as productive as they once were. Nevertheless, the pattern—preliminaries, message, altar call—became embedded in the Protestant mind as the pattern of the church meeting. The problem is that it became the pattern, not just for revivals, but for Sunday worship. Sunday morning was turned into an evangelistic service.

The line of interaction in a revival is horizontal: from the speaker to the hearer, preacher to the lost. The pattern was not intended to be the worship of the church. Finney did not really care about worship, per se. Even so, the revival became the standard pattern, completely supplanting the corporate action of liturgy in many churches.

The revival may still be the most prevalent basic pattern among United Methodist congregations. One of the churches on the circuit I served fresh out of seminary did not like to have the offering and prayers after the sermon because as one member said, "it might interfere with the invitation to come forward." Not that anyone ever came forward during the Sunday service, but the invitation needed to be there just in case.

The second important pattern is the Sunday school. If the revival was aimed at the gut to get an emotional response, the
Sunday school was aimed at the head to educate: conversion through teaching.

Prior to the nineteenth century, there were few Sunday schools in America. But, by the end of the nineteenth century, virtually every Protestant church had a Sunday school program. For many Methodist congregations, the Sunday school supplanted the class meeting. And, for many rural congregations, the Sunday school assembly was the main weekly event, while worship led by an ordained preacher occurred only every other Sunday, or once a month.

The Sunday school assembly was led by a superintendent, chosen from the laity, rather than by an ordained minister. The emphasis was placed on participation. In many churches assemblies were held before and after classes. The first part would include gathering music and songs with uplifting messages. Often the "theme of the day" was announced. This theme of the day was not based on the liturgical calendar, but on special emphases such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Bible Sunday, or "Women's Day." After the class meeting, the superintendent took the roll and introduced visitors. Collection was taken, and reports were given. Often, one of the class members prepared a devotional—poems or readings with singing and Bible lesson. The assembly always concluded with a hymn and a dismissal prayer.

The Sunday school assembly included elements that the revival would not tolerate—such as "programs" led by children, processions to songs like "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and the recitation of creeds or Bible verses. In the revival, the congregation is basically passive, but in the Sunday school, the congregation is very active.

The didactic character of the Sunday school assembly was continued in the sixties and seventies by so-called "pop" liturgies. In pop liturgies, worship is often a means to raise the consciousness of the congregation regarding themes such as ecology, or sexism, or war and peace. The didactic style can be quite banal: "Good morning." Response, "Good morning." "Why are we here?" "We are here to praise the Lord." (Just once I wish
a congregation would respond, "If you don't know, why are you up there!")

The third pattern I call Anglican-aesthetic. This is the pattern that began to develop in the late nineteenth century and was published in the Methodist Disciplines and hymnals. This pattern introduced elements from the Episcopal Church, many of which had not even been in practice at the time of Wesley. These elements include robed choirs and organs, vestments, altar candles, divided chancels, Gothic architecture, and acolytes.

Anglican-aesthetic liturgy relies on printed orders of worship. The appeal is to "good taste," and "beauty of form." City churches could afford it while many small, rural churches could not. The actual order is basically Anglican morning prayer, followed by an "intermission" that included the announcements and the collection. After this comes the sermon and invitation.

The Anglican-aesthetic pattern developed when Methodism wanted to appear more like a church and less like a movement. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the revival pattern was too strong to be abandoned altogether. Instead, the revival pattern was made to look and sound like a service from the Book of Common Prayer. The Anglican-aesthetic type, then, is important not for its order, but because of its ethos. Worship should be pleasant to listen to, beautiful to behold, and have a pleasing form; therefore, the order was printed in hymnals and, for churches that could afford duplicating machines, in weekly bulletins.

The fourth pattern is Word-and-table. This represents something new for United Methodists. Word-and-table is the form of the alternate rituals series begun in 1972, and is the form that has been included in the new United Methodist Hymnal. It represents an attempt to establish one basic order of worship with two parts: a) a service of the word, and b) a service of Holy Communion (called "Eucharist" in the hymnal). This pattern developed out of the liturgical revolution that took place in sixties and seventies. During this period, almost every denomination revised its liturgical books: Roman Catholics,
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Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, United Church of Christ, as well as United Methodists. The forms for this renewal are based on modern liturgical scholarship and are drawn from scriptural and patristic sources, such as the order of worship given by Justin Martyr around 150 C.E. 12

Word-and-table pays special attention to the theological meaning of order. Of course, every order of worship has theological implications, but in the Word-and-table pattern, the theological meaning of order is clearly acknowledged. 13

The first half, the "word service," begins with the gathering of the congregation, swiftly moves to a greeting and hymn, and then to prayer, usually a collect of the day.

Following this, the scriptures are read. Provision is made for three lessons and a Psalm. The use of the lectionary is thereby encouraged, which ensures a fairly broad selection of texts over the course of three years. The sermon is preached immediately after the reading of lessons. Theologically, this is meant to express the unity of "Word" read and "Word" preached. The sermon, therefore, occurs fairly early in the service.

After the sermon come responses to the Word. This section always includes intercessory prayer (a litany with congregational response is preferable to a pastoral prayer), and it may also include confession, creeds, or some sort of sung response. This is also the place where baptisms or re-affirmations of faith are included.

The transition to the Table service begins with the offertory. The offertory is not just a collection of money, but may include the bread and wine that the congregation is offering to God for the Eucharist.

The eucharistic prayer opens with a responsive dialog between the minister and the people:

The Lord be with you.
R, And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
R, We lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
R, It is right to give our thanks and praise.
Following this, the presider offers the eucharistic prayer. The words of the eucharistic prayer may vary from service to service, but there are elements that are always included: 1) Thanksgiving for creation and for salvation, 2) the "Sanctus" (Holy, holy, holy...), 3) the words of institution, 4) a passage "remembering" (anamnesis) the whole of Christ's work, 5) an invocation (epiclesis) of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine as well as upon the congregation, and 6) a closing trinitarian formula.

After communion, there is a closing prayer of thanksgiving, a hymn, and a blessing and dismissal.

This is the basic order: Word and Table. It does not assume that something is added on communion days. Rather, something is left out on days when communion is not celebrated.

Word-and-table assumes that rote patterns make participation easier—there is little variation in congregational responses. Moreover, responses are simple rather than "flowery" or "wordy," as in the Anglican-aesthetic pattern, or heavily didactic as in pop liturgy.

Word-and-table emphasizes prayer and praise as a corporate action of the people of God. Sunday worship is not an evangelistic service; it is a service for the already-converted, those going on to perfection, to use a Wesleyan term. Moreover, there is little that is arbitrary—unlike the preliminaries of the revival, or the program of the Sunday school.

To summarize, these four patterns, Revival, Sunday-school, Anglican-aesthetic, and Word-and-table, are the most common in United Methodist worship. Each of these patterns has a place in our tradition, and each is suited to particular needs.

However, problems can occur when a particular service includes more than one of the types at the same time, as is often the case. When this happens, the patterns get all distorted and collapsed. Elements from the Word-and-table get twisted into the revival pattern. Or, we have a grand Anglican-aesthetic procession with choir, ministers, and banners, but end it with "—Now let us turn and greet our neighbor with a handshake and a smile" from the Sunday-school pattern.

I attended one church that began the service this way: first
the choir sang a gospel chorus: "Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus;" then we were told to greet our neighbors and fill out attendance forms; next, the acolytes came forward to light the candles, while the organ played; then we had a responsive greeting; this was followed by a hymn. (All of the above was led by a layperson.); following this, the pastor added words of welcome to visitors.

Finally, the pastor prayed an invocation prayer.

I didn't think that service would ever get off the ground! This order of worship illustrates quite clearly the conflation of patterns. It had a beginning from the revival, the Sunday school, the Anglican-aesthetic style, and Word-and-table, all crunched together. No doubt the worship leaders kept adding to the beginning of the service everything that seemed to be an appropriate way to start. My guess is that before long, the congregation will complain and something will be cut.

A lot of the variety in United Methodist worship patterns is a result of conflation of these incongruous patterns. I have visited many churches which have taken the parts of the Word-and-table order, twisted it into the revival pattern, and added various aesthetic flourishes. The problem with this is that all too often the mixing has been done without much understanding of the original patterns. It is not as if United Methodists have no normative patterns; we have too many patterns, and we don’t know it!

Guidelines for Creative Worship

If the rules and patterns given above represent the actual development of United Methodist worship, then any program of liturgical renewal within a congregation might benefit from acknowledging them. To that effect, I would like to offer several guidelines for being creative in worship.

First, be very cautious in implementing any major change in the worship service. The order of worship properly belongs to the congregation, just as the worship belongs to God. Therefore, those who plan the worship should determine what is the basic pattern within the congregation's history and do it as well
as it can be done. Even conflated patterns can have a sort of internal sense for those who follow them Sunday after Sunday. Above all, planners should never arbitrarily change things. Rather, they should work slowly with the congregation, learn its history, and gradually re-work whatever seems inappropriate.

Second, encourage repetition more than innovation. The parts of the service which change each week--hymns, lessons, sermon, prayers--are more effective if the congregation is thoroughly familiar with the overall structure, and can recite the responses from memory: "The Lord be with you." "And also with you." Liturgy is not words on a page. When people can say it by heart, it is theirs. Moreover, repetition makes participation much easier for children, the visually impaired, the mentally handicapped, and those who are illiterate.

Third, respect the structure and ethos of the various patterns. It is possible to borrow from one pattern to another, but planners must be very clear about the overall structure and ethos of the various types, and very aware of incongruities that might develop. If, for example, worship planners are thinking about changing to the Word-and-table pattern of the new hymnal, then they should take much time to introduce it to the congregation, preferably in study groups outside of worship. Fitting the various parts of the Word-and-table order into another, more familiar pattern, such as the revival, will not give the congregation a fair impression of Word-and-table.

Fourth, have a revival meeting or a Sunday school assembly, but hold them at a time other than the main Sunday worship service. Revivals are an important part of United Methodist heritage, and they may have a powerful ritual meaning for many churches. Likewise, the Sunday school assembly may be an important place where catechesis for worship can occur. But evangelism and education and worship are all too important to be crammed together into one hour on Sunday morning. This is not to say that these ministries are unrelated. However, the best evangelism and education within worship are the witness and example of faithful Christians giving worship service to God.
Finally, allow liturgy to express the mystery of God in Jesus Christ. By discerning the rules and patterns that are operative within the order of worship, a worship planner has some tools with which to analyze and evaluate the service, and to interpret norms. I suggest that the Word-and-table pattern is the most appropriate form for worship. Because of the biblical and sacramental character of that pattern, a fundamental norm can be established: worship should express the paschal mystery: the birth, life, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Faithful worship leaders and planners will have a sense of awe and reverence before this fundamental mystery of salvation.

Our hymns declare this awe-full mystery:

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea,
Cherubim and Seraphim falling down before Thee,
Which wert, and art, and evermore shall be.

Appropriately-creative worship reflects this heavenly worship of the saints and angels before the throne of God. Charles Wesley put it this way:

Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

When our worship expresses this, it is creative in the way it ought to be. It is re-creating us into the image of Christ.

Notes

1. This approach is loosely based on the method of Anton Baumstark, Juan
1. I prefer to call them "rules" because they are not absolute laws, like the laws of nature. Nevertheless, I want to argue that, most of the time, they govern the evolution of Protestant worship. The list of rules I give here is not definitive by any means.


7. A very entertaining example is Marion Lawrence, Special Days in the Sunday School (New York: H. Revell Co., 1916).

8. The order for morning worship has always been printed in the Discipline, but until the turn of the century, it was little more than a bare outline. A more complete order was printed in the hymnal of the MEC after 1896, and in the joint hymnal (MEC and MECS) of 1905. See Wm. N. Wade, "A History of Public Worship in the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from 1784-1905." (Unpublished dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1981).

9. See the turn of the century collection of services, psalms, and collects by Charles L. Roberts, Divine Service (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, 1903). A note at the beginning states: "The cry in our Church, in the matter of the form in Public Worship, is, 'Back to Wesley.' This liturgical movement is felt in many Churches, and for several years has been gathering form and force. The thought is not to substitute 'liturgy,' for 'life,' but rather to invest life with a beauty of form." (p. 5).


14. My research in ethnic minority congregations is limited, but I suspect...
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that these four patterns will be present, though undoubtedly in a slightly altered form.
"Then As Now": Wesley's Notes As A Model for United Methodists Today

A. W. Martin, Jr.

Joseph Tarkington, an early nineteenth-century Methodist circuit rider, once described the literary contents of his saddlebag: the Bible, the Discipline, and a hymnbook; either Fletcher's Appeal or John Wesley's Sermons; and some books for sale.1 Unless he had copies of them for sale, Wesley's Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament2 seem to have been absent. A modern expert on Methodism thinks, however, that it was "quite likely" that the Notes were standard saddlebag equipment for most itinerant preachers of the time.3

Whatever the role of the Notes as baggage, it can be shown that during at least part of the nineteenth century Methodist ministers were expected to study them. In fact, they appeared on the required study list for ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, until 1910.

Their status in the twentieth century is another story. Theologian Schubert Ogden's judgment in 1974 on the place of doctrinal standards in the United Methodist Church almost certainly applied to the Notes: "the vast majority of its members, ministerial as well as lay, would still be hard pressed simply to name the standards of doctrine of the United Methodist Church—to say nothing of having any operational under-

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standing of their contents in relation to the church's continuing witness." Discussion leading up to the 1988 General Conference surely increased Methodists' ability to name the standards, but it is too early to say whether more acquaintance with their content has occurred.

It is clear, however, that the General Conference of 1988 took action which seems designed to persuade United Methodists to treat the Notes seriously once again as a doctrinal authority in the church.

But there are some problems with this recommendation of the church's supreme legislative body, especially in the areas of biblical interpretation, ecumenical relations, and social concerns. This paper will deal with the first area only, biblical interpretation. I shall (I) review the conference action, (II) indicate something of the problems, and then (III) make some preliminary observations about dealing with them today.

I. Wesley's Notes at the 1988 General Conference

The first thing the conference did was to reaffirm that the Notes are referred to and protected as a "standard" under the first restrictive rule of the denomination's constitution: "The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion or establish any new standards of doctrine." This position, which was first approved by the General Conference of 1808, had been approved by the 1968 special conference which united the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren. The 1988 conference specifically included the "the Standard Sermons of Wesley" and "the Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament" with the Articles of Religion and the Evangelical United Brethren Confession of Faith as doctrinal norms.

Secondly, in accepting the revised doctrinal statement prepared by its Committee on Our Theological Task, the General Conference approved various references to the Notes. At one point in particular, in the section on "Our Doctrinal Heritage," the Conference apparently went beyond descriptive statements about their historical role in Methodism and made what seems to be a prescriptive recommendation as to use of
the Notes today: "Within the Wesleyan tradition, then as now, the Sermons and Notes furnished models of doctrinal exposition." The phrase "then as now" makes a somewhat awkward sentence, since the verb "furnished" is in the past tense, but this very awkwardness perhaps underlines a claim that the Notes and Sermons are to be used today. Since the Notes are based directly on the New Testament, it appears that the recommendation here is that they are an example to follow in deriving doctrine from Scripture.

A third position taken by the General Conference, though not necessarily related to the Notes directly, has implications for our way of looking at them today. This is the diminishing of an important emphasis in the doctrinal statement that served the church from 1972 to 1988: the view that the present authority of old doctrinal standards is limited because they were historically conditioned by the times in which they were written. The 1988 conference, for example, eliminated the 1972 statement that "the Articles and the Confession are not to be regarded as positive, juridical norms for doctrine, demanding unqualified assent on pain of excommunication." And the following commentary on the Articles and the Confession of Faith in light of this principle from the 1972 Discipline is also gone:

They are and ought to remain as important landmarks in our complex heritage and ought rightly to be retained in the Discipline. The United Methodist Church would be much the poorer if they were simply relegated to the attic of history's discards. But, since they are not accorded any status of finality, either in content or rhetoric, there is no objection in principle to the continued development of still other doctrinal summaries and liturgical creeds that may gain acceptance and use in the church—without displacing those we already have. This principle of the historical interpretation of all doctrinal statements, past and present, is crucial. Such statements never have been and ought not to be legal tests for membership. We should interpret them, appreciatively, in their historic contexts, seeking always to appropriate the contributions of our Christian past even as we also stretch forward toward the Christian
In fairness to the Committee on Our Theological Task and to the General Conference, two other aspects of the 1988 report must be noted. First, it does refer in various places to the need to "reflect critically" on our "biblical and theological inheritance" (1988 Discipline, par. 69). Affirmations along this line can reasonably be understood to imply a recognition of historical and social limitations on the foundational documents themselves. Second, the new section on "Our Doctrinal History" contains a footnote which seems to recognize the possibility of even serious deficiencies in the standards of doctrine. The note states that "the need to interpret the Articles in the light of their historical context and biases is reflected in the Resolution of Intent" approved at the General Conference of 1970. This resolution is from the Theological Study Commission that prepared the 1972 statement and is very much in the spirit of the material, quoted above, which was eliminated in 1988. Regarding anti-Roman Catholic statements in the Articles of Religion, for example, the "whereas" part of this resolution holds that we may now "freely relegate the polemics in these articles (and the anathemas of Trent as well) to our memories..." and the resolution itself declares "our official intent henceforth to interpret all our Articles, Confession, and other 'standards of doctrine' in consonance with our best ecumenical insights and judgment..." If this footnote means that the General Conference of 1988 truly approves the Resolution of Intent of 1970, then the elimination of statements like the ones quoted above may not be too significant. Yet the troublesome question remains why various clear references to the less than permanent nature of our doctrinal authorities have been excluded.

The 1988 General Conference held that United Methodists no longer have the option of saying that maybe the Notes really are not a doctrinal standard in the church. And it stated that the spiritual descendants of John Wesley must also try to decide how to use his Notes today as a "model of doctrinal exposition." This is a formidable task which presents a number of serious difficulties.
II. Problems with the Use of Wesley's Notes

At various points the United Methodist Church today is in disagreement with the Wesley of the Notes, both in the ways he used the New Testament and in the content he found there. Here are some of the problems related to his biblical interpretation.

1. Wesley uses an inadequate Greek New Testament text. Although he probably used the best information available in his time, he was working in the very early days of efforts to establish a critical Greek text. Examples of readings accepted by him which critical editions of the New Testament today would omit without question are the long form of the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11 and the Trinitarian formula in 1 John 5:8. Of the latter Wesley writes, "It must now appear to every reasonable man, how absolutely necessary the eighth verse is." It is necessary, he claims, because St. John "could not think of the testimony of the Spirit, and water, and blood [5:7], . . . without thinking of the testimony of the Son and Holy Ghost, yea, and mentioning it in so solemn an enumeration." Aware of the evidence of the "vast majority of ancient copies and translations," which do not contain the desired words, Wesley still let doctrinal considerations, in this case his belief that the Trinity is frequently and clearly referred to in the New Testament, control textual decisions. One careful student of Wesley the text critic has concluded that on occasion Wesley would make a decision about accepting a reading "because of the possible effect. . . . on the plain, unlettered men to whom his life-work was given." The new doctrinal statement, approved at the 1988 General Conference, specifically affirms the importance of recent textual studies. It is a safe assumption that New Testament Greek courses taught at United Methodist seminaries today would use the latest critical Greek texts. It can also be safely assumed that New Testament professors in United Methodist schools would see one goal of textual criticism as uncovering as early a text as possible, that is, getting as close to what the biblical
writers actually wrote as the manuscript evidence permits. Any consideration of a given reading’s impact on readers, both women and men, would occur at the translation stage, not at the point of establishing the Greek text.13

2. Wesley turns the Old Testament into a Christian book. One way he does this is through his acceptance of typology, a method of relating the Old and New Testaments by finding persons, events, objects, and practices in the former which are seen as directly anticipating persons, events, objects, and practices related to Jesus or the early Church.14 For Wesley, David and Joshua are types of Jesus (John 18:1; Matt. 1:21); Moses’ mixing of blood and water was not only “to prevent its growing too stiff for sprinkling” but perhaps “to typify that blood and water” which came from the crucified Jesus’ side in John 19:34 (Heb. 9:19); the manna received by the Hebrews in their desert wanderings pointed to “Christ and his spiritual benefits” and “the sacred bread which we eat at his table” (1 Cor. 10:3-4); and the ceremonial law was a “prophetic type of Christ” (Gal. 3:19).15

Another way Wesley Christianizes the Hebrew Bible is by finding Jesus and early Church history predicted there. On the birth of Jesus, for example, he states that “Mary seems not to have known that the child must have been born in Bethlehem, agreeably [sic] to the prophecy” (Luke 2:6), and he holds that the wise men who saw the star must have heard Balaam’s prophecy (Matt. 2:1). Discussing Psalm 22 in relation to Jesus’ death, Wesley suggests that the psalm could not refer to any “circumstance of David’s life” and concludes that “the prophet [i.e., the psalmist] seems to have been thrown into a preternatural ecstasy, whereon personating [sic] the Messiah, he spoke barely what the Spirit dictated, without any regard to himself” (John 19:24). The acceptance of Gentiles and rejection of some Jews in the early church was foretold by Isaiah and Hosea (Intro. to Romans; Acts 15:15).

The widespread use of the lectionary in United Methodist churches today may carry at least an implicit endorsement of the idea that the Old Testament should be read in the light of Christ.16 Surely may ministers and lay persons would hold the
belief that the Old Testament predicts events in the life of Jesus. On this point they can appeal to an Anglican Article of Religion, accepted by Wesley for continued use by Methodists in the New World and still one of their normative Articles of Religion today, which affirms the validity of a christological understanding of the Old Testament. It should be noted, however, that the modern Confession of Faith, which came from the Evangelical United Brethren wing of the denomination, has equal standing with the Articles in the United Methodist Church and is silent on this matter. This silence should not be interpreted to mean that the EUB bishops who authorized the Confession would refuse to find Christ in the Old Testament, but it does remind us that much Old Testament study today by Christians is not primarily christological. In our time it is important to know what the writers of the Hebrew Bible wanted to say on their own terms and in their own situations. This view is affirmed in the 1988 doctrinal statement by the words, "As we work with each text, we take into account what we have been able to learn about the original context and intention of that text (1988 Discipline, par. 69)."

Although the statement refers to understanding "individual texts in light of their place in the Bible as a whole," which could open the door to finding Jesus in the Old Testament, these words do not have to mean that. Further, the new doctrinal statement approves historical study of the Bible; it is hard to conceive of historical understanding that does not take seriously the view that biblical texts were addressed to particular people at specific moments in the past rather than to persons in the future. It would probably be safe to say that the historical critical approach still provides the basis for biblical study at United Methodist seminaries, universities, and colleges, and that the first order of the day in the study of Hebrew Bible would be to understand what the ancient writers were saying in their own context. Courses in biblical theology usually deal with themes in one testament or the other, although seminary catalogs reveal an occasional course which attempts to see how the testaments relate to each other. Other methods of study which de-emphasize historical analysis, such as structuralism
and canonical criticism, are gaining strength but it is reasonably safe to affirm that typology and prediction-fulfillment patterns are not favored approaches in United Methodist seminaries today.  


Wesleyan harmonizes both the general viewpoints of the different New Testament writers and specific passages where there is conflict. He states that Peter agrees with Paul; after having read Paul's letters without being "at all disgusted" by what Paul wrote about him (2 Pet. 3:16); Jude in turn confirms Peter (Intro. to Jude), and James does not contradict Paul (James 2:14, 21-22). Wesley can find "justifying faith" implied in Hebrews 11, not too difficult to do since he thinks that Paul wrote Hebrews (Intro. to Heb.; Heb. 11:1). Each gospel writer knew the previous gospel; that is, Mark knew Matthew's gospel, Luke knew the gospels of Mark and Matthew, and John knew the other three (Intro. to gospels; John 1:1). Contradictions or differences among the gospel accounts must be harmonized (Luke 22:58); "the four gospels are...four parts, which, joined together, make one symphony: [s]ometimes one of these only, sometimes two or three, sometimes all sound together" (Luke 23:24). Therefore, Jesus spoke seven words from the cross, even though they are scattered in different gospels (Luke 23:24), two different drinks were given to Jesus at the crucifixion (Matt. 27:34), Jesus carried the cross for a while before Simon of Cyrene took it up (Matt. 27:32), and there were two temple cleansings three years apart (Matt. 21:12). Different accounts of Judas' death are harmonized by saying that apparently the rope broke before he died (Acts 1:15), thus allowing the disciple to die both by hanging and by having his insides burst open. When Mark and Luke refer to one demonia instead of Matthew's two, they are writing about "the fiercer of the two" (Matt. 8:28).

Wesley's imposing of later orthodox theology on the New
Testament can be seen in the ways he finds references to the Trinity and to Jesus' divinity, often at points where they do not completely fit. He discovers the Trinity in the Lord's Prayer, for example (Matt. 6:13). In Acts 10:48 he finds the Trinity somehow implied in the reference to "baptism in the name of the Lord." At Luke 4:18 he takes Jesus' words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," and comments: "How is the doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity interwoven, even in those scriptures where one would least expect it! How clear a declaration of the great Three-One is there in those very words. ..." An example of uncovering reference to Jesus' divinity appears in Wesley's comment on Jesus' sending out of the twelve apostles; he did so "exercising his supreme authority, as God over all" (Matt. 10:5). Paul's healing of a cripple in Acts 14:11 inspires Wesley to comment, "The Jews would not own Christ’s Godhead, though they saw him work numberless miracles." Looking at Mark 13:32, where Jesus refers to "that day or that hour" which no one knows, Wesley takes the words "neither the Son" and comments about Jesus: "As man he was no more omniscient than omnipotent. But as God he knows all the circumstances of it."

Whereas for Wesley in his Notes there is no place for admitting discrepancies either within the New Testament or between the New Testament and the developed Christian message of the later Church, twentieth-century United Methodists at the 1988 General Conference (see 1988 Discipline, par. 69) accepted that "Scripture witnesses to a variety of diverse traditions, some of which reflect tensions in interpretation within the early Judeo-Christian heritage." The delegates' openness to historical study of the biblical text, mentioned earlier, could certainly be understood to include recognition of how later generations adapted it to new situations. Their support of critical reflection regarding "our biblical and theological inheritance" and of "imaginative and critical thought" in relation to "the Bible and our common Christian history" suggests that judgments continue to be necessary about the validity of later doctrinal expositions of the Bible. At the same time, the 1988 statement emphasizes the principle of
unity within Scripture, although the nature of that unity is never clearly defined: the "diverse traditions" are "woven together in the Bible in a manner that expresses the fundamental unity of God's revelation as received and experienced by people in the diversity of their own lives." The new statement also affirms the importance of a "living core" or "marrow" of Christian truth" to be found in the Bible.

Many Bible courses in United Methodist seminaries focus on the exegesis of individual books or several works by a single author. They include wide use of redaction criticism and the search for the theological viewpoints of different biblical writers. A frequent result of this approach is to emphasize variety within the Bible. Canonical criticism might appear in either exegesis or introductory courses, however, and it would tend to stress biblical unity by studying individual works in their larger context in the canon. In courses on biblical theology the question of unity and variety within the Bible would necessarily arise. One approach to biblical theology would stress the viewpoints of different writers, or strata, within the Bible, and once again variety would be taken seriously. But a course which stress different biblical themes could understand those themes as depicting a "living core" or "fundamental unity."

Wesley's harmonizing approach to the gospel's would almost certainly be rejected in seminary New Testament courses. Form and tradition critics would often assume, when similar but different accounts exist of a teaching of Jesus or an event in his life, that a remembered word or incident has been retold differently over the course of time. Redaction critics would show the freedom of the gospel writers to adjust their material to express their theological views more clearly. Both New Testament scholars and historians of the early Church, if there is any distinction between the two, would be alert, in a way that Wesley was not, to the ways in which the Church went beyond biblical roots to develop more complex doctrinal views or even, on occasion, to find positions in the Bible that were at best only marginally there.
4. Wesley sees the New Testament as written for and about the future. He goes far beyond the making of general claims that the Bible was written for believers of all ages or for the drawing of lessons for his day. He discovers direct biblical reference to church and world history right down to his times and even into the nineteenth century. It is primarily in his notes on the Book of Revelation that this attitude appears.

Wesley introduces his commentary on Revelation by admitting that for a long time only the opening and closing chapters of the book were meaningful to him. Then the works of Bengel, primarily a commentary, gave him the key to understanding the "intermediate parts." He took Bengel's work of about twelve hundred pages, not all of which he would defend, using some of it as Bengel wrote it but abridging "the most necessary of his observations; allowing myself the liberty to alter some of them, and to add a few notes where he is not full." Wesley maintains that the Book of Revelation is "not only the sum, and the key of all the prophecies which preceded, but likewise a supplement to all..." (Rev. 1:3); then he goes on to say,

Our Lord foretold many things before his passion; but not all things; for it was not yet seasonable. Many things likewise his Spirit foretold in the writings of the apostles, so far as the necessities of those times required, now he comprises them all in one short book; therein presupposing all the other prophecies, and at the same time, explaining, continuing, and perfecting them in one thread (Rev. 1:30).

Given these statements and the amount of space Wesley allows for the notes on Revelation, there is no way to ignore what Wesley does with the book when we consider using his Notes as a "model of doctrinal exposition."

In a nutshell Wesley holds that Revelation covers from the "old Jerusalem to the New" (Rev. 1:3). He accepts and explicates in detail an elaborate system whereby a period of 1111 years, known as a chronos, which stretched from Trajan's persecution of the Jews in 96 CE to "the first crusade against the Waldenses" in 1209 CE (Rev. 6:11) is overlapped by a non-chronos which seems to begin in the year 800, (when Charles the Great
instituted in the west a new line of emperors, or of many kings) to end in the year 1836. ... (10.6) Specifically referred to in Revelation are such events as the fall of Rome (8:12) and the "Arian calamity," which was "the inlet to all heresies and calamities, and at length to Mohametanism itself" (8:10). Regarding Revelation 8:13 Wesley states that "to prepare for the third woe, Innocent I and his successors, not only endeavored to enlarge their episcopal jurisdiction beyond all bounds, but also their worldly power, by taking every opportunity of encroaching upon the empire, which as yet stood in the way of their unlimited monarchy." In 9:15 "the number of angels let loose agrees [with] the number of [the] first land most eminent Caliphs" of the Saracens. Wesley sees the woman of chapter 12 as the true church, and her flight to the wilderness refers to her stay in "those countries of Europe which lie on this side [of] the Danube," especially Bohemia, where she "was fed, till God provided for her plentifully at the Reformation." (12:6) The beast of 13:1 refers to the Roman papacy. Regarding his own day, Wesley concludes:

We are now come to a most important time. The non-chronos hastens to an end. We live in the little time wherein Satan hath great wrath: and this little time is now upon the decline. We are in the time, times, and half a time, wherein the woman is fed in the wilderness; yea, the last part of it, the half time, is begun. We are...towards the close of the forty-two months of the beast; and when his number is fulfilled, grievous things will be." (12:12)

One may wonder what the "plain unlettered" people for whom Wesley wrote would have made of comments like these. From the United Methodist standpoint today perhaps Wesley's statement that "some have miserably handled this book" (1:3) should be applied to Wesley himself! As we have seen, the 1988 doctrinal statement gives its approval to the importance of studying biblical passages in the light of their original context. Although Wesley comments on the times when Revelation was written (2:10, 13; 3:10; 6:2), he is primarily concerned with relating it to the future; his approach has little to do with "the
careful historical studies of recent years unless United Methodists are prepared to buy into Adventist interpretations or the Hal Lindsay approach. Studies of the "original context" of the book of Revelation in United Methodist institutions of higher learning today would surely include focus on the historical and political circumstances of the church in Asia Minor near the end of the first century, and there would probably be considerable reference to economic and social dimensions of the church's plight.

III. The Present Situation

In the area of biblical interpretation there is a deep gulf between Wesley's Notes and late twentieth-century United Methodism. Efforts to turn Wesley into a modern biblical critic ahead of his time can have, at best, only limited success.

Furthermore, the four problems we have examined show that there is little future in trying to use the Notes as a "model of doctrinal exposition." If we were simply trying to find succinct summaries of basic Protestant doctrines, like justification by faith, or key Wesleyan emphases, like holiness, the Notes could be mined for still-valuable statements. But any reasonable understanding of the term "model" in relation to the Notes forces us to deal with both the content of Wesley's comments on the Bible, especially the New Testament, and the methods he uses to derive the content. On both counts we cannot get very far using the Notes to bridge the gulf.

At first glance dealing with the problem of Wesley's Greek text seems easy enough. One can argue that since Wesley used the best text and the best textual criticism available in his day his modern disciples can use him as a model by simply going and doing likewise. But the content of Wesley's decisions on textual matters certainly is not always acceptable; as we have seen, he keeps some passages that are almost universally eliminated today. And his methods in making text decisions serve only part of the time. Modern text critics would make every effort to keep personal doctrinal views or considerations about the impact on readers from affecting their choice among possible readings, and Wesley does not. Using him as a model
in the area of text criticism would be a matter, at best, of accepting his attitude of openness to new developments in the field or his purpose of getting the Bible into more understandable English. But since attitude and purpose are also involved in the way he goes about making his text decision (method) and in the decisions themselves (content), we are left in the position of saying that some of Wesley's attitudes and purposes are still acceptable and some are not.

Similar difficulties exist with the other three problems discussed in Part II. One might argue that the content of developed Christian doctrine which Wesley finds in both Testaments may still be valid but the ways in which he finds Christ in the Old Testament and the Trinity in the New are hardly acceptable. But there is a difficulty with the content he finds also. It is one thing to talk about doctrine accepted today from the perspective of later Christian tradition; it is another matter to believe, as Wesley did, that the Christian content itself exists in the Old Testament or that the New Testament presents a unified summary of Christian doctrine. The question of unity in the Bible is still a major concern, and we might argue that in struggling with we are taking Wesley as a model. But how much is there in Wesley that can really be emulated? His ways of finding unity are difficult or impossible to accept, and the content often comes from outside the Bible or the testament under study. Nor are Wesley's attitude and purpose much help; he assumes that unity must be present in the Bible and must be consistent with doctrines which are rooted in tradition as well as in the Bible. The modern student of the Bible, on the other hand, will not ignore the question of unity but will take variety seriously; conclusions about unifying motifs will be made, in so far as possible, on the basis of inductive study of individual authors in the Bible.

In regard to Wesley's view that the New Testament talks about the future, little in either the content of what he says or the way he goes about finding it in the Scripture is usable. One might note that Wesley often shows interest in the historical situation in which a work was written and clearly understands that its author had a message for his own day. From this fact,
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we may argue that we are emulating Wesley when we study the ancient books in relation to their historical settings. But to follow him in his interest about the past, often incidental to his concern for contemporary application, and to ignore the methods he uses to make the old words pertinent to his day can hardly be called using Wesley and his Notes as models. We would simply be copying what we are comfortable with and ignoring what we do not like. Or to start with Wesley's words which may still seem alive for us—in such areas as personal piety, for example—would mean taking the content of some statements as valid but not others. And such an approach might at times imply that their historical or social context was no longer important. Any way we go we are affirming that only parts of what Wesley says and some of his methods are acceptable, so we are hardly using him as a model.

The term "model of doctrinal exposition" appears in the historical section of the new theological statement, and it would seem that this is where it really belongs. For people of Wesley's day, given their knowledge and assumptions, the Notes may have served well. But we gain little or nothing, even if we want to take them seriously once again, by trying to make them, or Wesley's ways of preparing them, or his purposes and attitudes when the wrote them, into models. The word "now" is an intrusion into a historical summary. In regard to content and method, as well as aims and attitudes behind them, the Notes are uncertain guides. As models, they belong to "then" and not to "now."

But if the Notes will hardly serve as a model, how can we use them today? Reaffirming that they are a "standard," under any reasonable definition of the word, does not help because difficulties like those with the "model" understanding are still in play. Implying that they were a standard and then ignoring them seems to have been the order of the day during much of this century. The 1988 General Conference had the opportunity to decide that the Notes were not really a standard, and it turned it down, presumably because of the evidence that historically the Notes have been so considered. But if the Notes will not work as models or normative standards, and if we do
not have the right to have them "relegated to the attic of history's discards" or to include them among the "dated benchmarks in the story of the Church's continuing matura­tion," what is left?

Although insisting that the Notes are a standard, the recent General Conference has left some room for treating them as less than normative. The obligation to "reflect critically on our biblical and theological inheritance" and the permission to use "imaginative and critical thought" in the effort "to understand better the Bible and our common Christian history" surely allow for rejecting some of the positions Wesley took in his exposition of the New Testament and some of the ways he went about biblical interpretation. But what criteria shall be used for determining which positions and which methods to accept and which to reject?

In the area of biblical interpretation, one possible approach to bringing Wesley's Notes across the gulf of more than two centuries is to explore the implications of the primacy of Scrip­ture as an authority in determining faith and practice. Wesley's claim to be a man of one book is well-known and the fact that he found time to prepare not only New Testament but also Old Testament Notes supports the claim. The 1972 doctrinal state­ment took the principle of primacy seriously, and the 1988 affirmation has attempted to give it even more weight. What happens if at some point Wesley's understanding of the Bible does not agree with what the Bible itself, or some portion of the Bible, means? Would we not have to conclude that the Bible overrides Wesley's understanding?

How can we determine whether Wesley has in fact misunderstood the Bible? One way may show up when "we draw upon the careful historical, literary, and textual studies of recent years, which have enriched our understanding of the Bible." We may at times find ourselves looking at what approaches a consensus among biblical scholars which rejects a Wesleyan view. At such points, even though we realize that the "assured results" of investigation in any generation may be challenged in the next, we would be on fairly safe ground if we leave Wesley's position in the attic. Biblical scholars in United
Methodist seminaries already are an ecumenical lot; in addition, they meet often with other scholars from almost every conceivable background. So on various matters of biblical interpretation there is always the possibility that from item to time very broadly based positions will develop. For example, scholars from a tremendous range of denominational loyalties support the importance of understanding biblical writings in the light of their historical and social contexts. They do this in a way that goes far beyond Wesley's use of his knowledge of the ancient world; they would hold that appreciation of an ancient work in its context is far more important than he considered it to be for understanding or applying it in later times. Old Testament investigators who are Christian would agree on many points with Jewish experts on the Hebrew Bible as to the meaning of the Scripture held in common, even though Christian scholars would still disagree as to even the number of books in the Old Testament, to say nothing of the extent to which it can be interpreted through Christian eyes. For the New Testament, scholars would often agree about an author's basic message in its social setting, although they might debate sharply about how to apply the message in situations two millennia later. In so far as scholarly investigations get to the heart of the biblical meanings, therefore, Wesley's views would be subject to correction under the standard of biblical primacy.

For the Book of Revelation, to take an example we saw earlier, United Methodists and other mainline Protestants, Roman Catholics, and conservative or evangelical investigators would all examine in detail what was going on in Asia Minor during the second half of the first century CE. In his basic approach to this work Wesley simply must be left on the far side of the gulf; he belongs to the "then" and not the "now."

It must be admitted, however, that, since some New Testament scholars today are giving more importance to methods that are less concerned about historical matters the day may come when some Wesleyan positions once relegated to the attic will be brought downstairs again—although it is doubtful that Wesley's approach to Revelation can ever be dusted off! Biblical studies in the future will inevitably arrive at new positions,
some approaching consensus and many not. The historical critical approach represents an important way of getting at biblical meaning, and there is no other way that works more carefully. In so far as biblical scholars uncover clearer understanding of the Bible, then under the principle of the primacy of Scripture Wesley's views and methods will be seen from time to time as having more or less contemporary validity.

It is doubtful, however, that most people who treat the Bible as an authoritative source will want to turn over decisions about its meaning completely to the ecumenical community of biblical scholars. Preachers, lay speakers, teachers, and others who search the Scripture for truth that will make their lives more meaningful can hardly wait for the specialists to reach a new consensus or even wide agreement that may be overturned in another generation. Almost every day they look for some word in the Bible that makes immediate sense and can help them find meaning for their lives, and for the lives of others if they preach or teach. Besides consulting the experts, they learn from the experience of others past and present, and many of them determine what the Bible "means" through reading it devotionally and through prayer and meditation. Their views, arrived at day by day in hours of study or reflection, will almost certainly carry priority for them over anything Wesley says, even if his works are still part of their reading. The Notes, if consulted at all, will be only one tool among many to use in the search for meaning in the Bible. In their different ways they will measure Wesley by the standard of the Bible as they understand it.

Conclusion

In his presentation to the 1972 General Conference of the report of the Theological Study Commission which he chaired, Dr. Albert Outler stated, "Nowadays we ask, as if by instinct, about the historical context of any document or pronouncement." He then pointed out how

[the] sense of context and perspective has made modern history possible, and modern Biblical study, too, as one of
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its byproducts. It allows us to appreciate the ancient creeds and confessions afresh and then to repossess their living truth in the light of radically new experience. This holds true for the Apostle’s Creed, the Augsburg Confession, the Westminster Catechism. It holds for Wesley’s Sermons. It holds for the Notes, and especially it holds for the Articles and Confession.

These works must be viewed, he said, "in a new twin perspective of interpretation—of our heritage, on the one hand, and...our contemporary crisis on the other." They were what Outler called "landmark documents," a term the General Conference of 1972 accepted with specific reference to the Articles of Religion, the EUB Confession of Faith, and the Methodist General Rules. In 1980 the General Conference said that these three should be called "foundation documents," and now another Conference has determined that they fit better under the title "Our Doctrinal Standards and General Rules" and that the Sermons and the Notes should be included. We can continue to try different titles every other General Conference if we like, but name changes will not do much to help the denomination take Outler’s "twin perspective" seriously. "Then" and "now," as we have seen, cannot be easily rolled together; the eighteenth-century documents represent "the one hand," and we today are "on the other." The clear and visible inclusion of the Notes, and of course the Sermons, under "doctrinal standards" makes it almost impossible to leave them in the "then," but bringing them into the "now" will be no easy task. Attempting to cross the gulf without sinking or losing the cargo should be a major challenge for United Methodists as we move into the twenty-first century.

Notes


2. Hereafter abbreviated as Notes. They are available in various reprint editions; I have used the third American edition, published in 1812 in New York


5. General Conference of 1988, Daily Christian Advocate (hereafter-DCA), May 2, 1988, p. 233. The section on "Our Doctrinal History," which referred to the 1968 opinion, was approved 916 to 41 by the conference; the official listing of the Sermons and Notes as part of the section on "Our Doctrinal Standards and General Rules" was approved by a vote of 887 to 45 (DCA, May 2, 1988, p. 524). I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. William I. Smith, a member of the Oklahoma Conference delegation to General Conference, for providing a copy of the report of the Committee on Our Theological Task.

6. This comment appears as part of the discussion of 'Doctrinal Standards in American Methodism' (1988 Discipline, Par. 57, p. 64). I am not clear if another statement about the Sermons and Notes, in the section on "the Wesleyan 'Standards' in Great Britain," is meant to be purely descriptive or if it can be understood as prescriptive also: "These writings, then, contained the standard exposition of Methodist teaching. They provide a model and measure for adequate preaching in the Wesleyan tradition" (1988 Discipline, Par. 67, p. 52). Why is 'provide' used instead of 'provided' if the sentence is only descriptive? If it is in some way prescriptive, then does it apply only to British Methodists?

7. This is the former of "two general principles. . .on which there has been broad and basic agreement," according to the 1972 (1984 Discipline, Par. 67, p. 49). The latter principle is repeated with slight modifications in the new document from 1972. "The United Methodist Church stands urgently in need of doctrinal reinvigoration for the sake of authentic renewal, fruitful evangelism, and the effective discharge of our ecumenical commitments" (1984 Discipline, Par. 67, p. 50); in 1988, "The United Methodist Church stands continually in need of doctrinal reinvigoration for the sake of authentic renewal, fruitful evangelism, and ecumenical dialogue" (1988 Discipline, Par. 67, p. 60).

8. Compare the 1984 Discipline, Par. 67, pp. 49-50 with that of 1988, Par. 67, pp. 59-60. Also omitted from the 1972 statement on the Sermons and Notes is the view that their function "was not to impose an inflexible system of doctrine or to inhibit responsible intellectual freedom, but rather to provide a broad and flexible framework of doctrine which would define the outside limits for public teaching in the societies in disputed cases. These standards were more flexible than any of the classical creeds or confessions or articles; they gave the Methodists a measure of protection from doctrinal eccentricity, and they gave Methodist laypersons a new role in the assessment of doctrinal standards. This particular collegial formula for doctrinal guidance was unique in Christendom. It committed the Methodist people to the biblical revelation".
as primary without proposing a literal summary of that revelation in any single propositional form. It anchored Methodist theology to a stable core, but allowed it freedom of movement in the future unfolding of history" (1984 Discipline, Par. 67, pp. 42-43; compare 1988 Discipline, Par. 67, p. 62).

9. 1988 Discipline, Par. 67, p. 60. Dr. Wayne Coffin provided me a copy of the "Resolution of Intent" from the Journal of the 1970 General Conference, pp. 254-55. Referring to a motion to remove "derogatory references" to Roman Catholicism from the Article of Religion, the resolution held that it was better simply to see ten of the thirty-nine Anglican Articles of Religion as coming from a "time of reckless strife." Wesley's keeping of seven of them, as part of a "hasty abridgment," in the Methodist Articles is seen as an act that belongs to our past; "it is...one of the virtues of historical insight that it enables men [sic] in a later age to recognize the circumstances of earlier events and documents without being slavishly bound to their historical evaluation, especially in a subsequent epoch when relationships have been radically altered" (p. 255).


11. See the discussion of these passages in Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), pp. 154-55, 716-18. Another good example is the presence of the name "Jeremiah" in Mt. 27:9. It is considered a "firmly established" reading today (Metzger, p. 56); Wesley saw it as "evidently a mistake."

12. Harrison, p. 113; he refers to Wesley's statement in the preface to the Notes: "I write chiefly for plain unlettered men, who understand only their mother-tongue, and yet reverence and love the word of God, and have a desire to save their souls" (p. iii).

13. A resolution on "Sexist Language and the Scripture," approved at the 1980 General Conference, recommended "that scriptural references used in approved publications of The United Methodist Church be faithful to accepted texts..." (The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church, 1984 [Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1984], p. 242). Although the resolution was removed by the 1988 General Conference as "time-dated" (DCA, Advance Edition, G-12), I doubt that any United Methodist editor would quarrel with this particular statement.


15. There is also a bit of allegorization in the Notes, though it is not nearly so extensive as the typological approach. For example, the phrase "in the evening" in Mt 20:7 refers to "life" or the "world." See also notes on Mt 21:33, Mt 25:13, James 4:4, and Rev. 4:6. For other examples of allegorization see Robin Scruggs, "John Wesley as Biblical Scholar," Journal of Bible and Religion XXVIII (Oct., 1960), p. 418.

17. United Methodist Article VI begins by saying, "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and Man" (1988 Discipline, Par. 68, p. 62). The Anglican article (No. VII) is easily available in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer.

18. It should be noted, however, that an important Old Testament interpreter like Gerhard von Rad, who would certainly still be widely consulted in United Methodist schools, accepts a limited kind of typology. But for him it is clear that "we must accept that meaning of the text which is revealed by using all available exegetical tools and critical criteria." Furthermore, he holds that "we...can no longer say that the David or Joshua of history, or the Tabernacle, or the Passover lamb, are types of Christ" (Old Testament Theology, Vol. II: The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions, trans. D.M.G. Stalker [New York: Harper & Row, 1965], pp. 370 and 371).

19. Other use of the term "Three-One God" can be found in I. Co. 15:28, Heb. 9:25, ad Rev. 4:8. For other references to the Trinity, see Mk 12:28; Eph. 4:4, and Heb. 2:14.

20. Wesley's views on Judaism and other non-Christian religions create enough problems for United Methodists today to merit discussion in a separate paper.

21. See also Mt 28:18, Rom. 1:3; Eph. 1:3. Scroggs holds that: Wesley does not always hold rigorously to the true humanity of Jesus. There are hints that at times Wesley comes close to docetism." He goes on to say that there is "some doubt as to whether the flesh of Jesus is very real to Wesley" (John Wesley as Biblical Scholar," p. 420).


23. Intro. to Revelation; Wesley states that he used Bengel's Gnomon Novi Testamenti, "but far more his Erkarte Offenbarung, which is a full and regular comment on the Revelation."

24. "The time, times, and a half time" run from 1058 CE to 1836 CE; see the chart in Wesley's notes on 12:14.


26. Edward H. Sugden's claim that Wesley "was a critic, both higher and lower, before those much misunderstood terms were invented" has been widely challenged. See Sugden, ed., Wesley's Standard Sermons, Vol. I (Nashville:

27. "British Methodism today, while still affirming the legal position of Wesley's *Sermons and Notes* as standard of doctrine, in fact generally ignores Wesley from the pulpit as though he were an embarrassment to modern theological and ecumenical endeavors" (Richard P. Heitzenrater, "Plain Truth: Sermons as standards of Doctrine" [The Drew Gateway LVII (Fall, 1987)], p. 24). Frank Baker wrote in 1970 about American methodism, "Wesley's *Sermons and Notes* have never been officially superseded, merely forgotten" (John Wesley and the Church of England [Nashville: Abingdon, 1970], p. 251).

28. DCA, April 19, 1972, p. 219
Several years ago now, in 1959, the chaplain of my Cambridge college, an Anglican priest, asked me, a Methodist freshman, whether Methodist biblical scholars of the standing of C. K. Barrett (for example) were obliged to conform their findings to the contents of John Wesley's Notes on the New Testament. This conversation took place against the background of Anglican-Methodist unity negotiations, so the question was an urgent and troublesome one. The only reply I could give at the time, as I remember, was to quote from the British Methodist Church's Deed of Union of 1932:

The Notes on the New Testament and the 44 Sermons are not intended to impose a system of formal or speculative theology on Methodist Preachers, but to set up standards of preaching and belief which should secure loyalty to the fundamental truths of the Gospel of Redemption and ensure the continued witness of the Church to the realities of the Christian experience of salvation.

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Time moved on, and took with it the immediate question of the unity scheme, but the problem (for me, at least) of Wesley’s Notes was an irritant that would not go away. As a British Methodist preacher, I had had to assent to them, as to the 44 Sermons. And I had been honestly able to do so, albeit with some bemusement, both because I had been told that only a general assent was necessary, and also because I could not find anything grossly objectionable in them on a first, hasty, selective reading. Further readings have not revealed anything fundamentally unacceptable, except Wesley’s view of the Roman Catholic Church; but that is not enough.

Why does the British Methodist Church perpetuate the normative status of Wesley’s Notes, and why were they ever accorded such a status at all? Since more than half the Methodist world have never regarded the Notes (or the 44 sermons, but they are another topic) as a doctrinal standard, what might they mean for the world relationships of Methodism? Are they symptomatic of something distinctive in the Wesleyan tradition that we ought to notice and evaluate?

The Canadian Nathanael Burwash, in the general introduction to his book Wesley’s Doctrinal Standards (1881), asked a similar question, and gave this answer:

To interpret these standards or apply them after the manner of Articles of Religion, or Creeds, or Confessions of Faith, which categorically define the doctrines to be professed or believed, would be contrary to their very nature. It is to the spirit and type of this preaching that our obligations bind us. There may be in the Notes and Sermons many things, accidental and personal, to which no Methodist minister would feel bound to profess assent. But Methodism demands that in all our pulpits we should preach this gospel, and expound the Word of God according to this analogy of faith.

Seventy-five years later, Franz Hillebrand (who had been a Lutheran and was later to join the Church of Scotland) wrote in Christianity according to the Wesleys (1956) that the Wesleyan standards pointed to an open Bible:

Methodism, unique among the major denomination in Christendom, expresses her doctrine officially in the form
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of expository documents: the Notes on the New Testament and the Standard Sermons. Where others have Confessions or Articles of Faith, we (notwithstanding the 25 Articles) point directly to the Bible as annotated by Wesley, listening to his expert guidance, but bound only to the Word of God.

Other commentators on the Notes—and they are few—have little to add. One great problem facing any such commentator is that a definitive account would presuppose an overwhelming task of source-criticism. In his preface, (par. 7,8) Wesley gratefully lists his chief sources: the Gnomon Novi Testamenti of "that great light of the Christian world (lately gone to his reward,) Bengelius," Dr. Hoyalyn's "Theological Lectures," Dr. Guyse, and the "Family Expositor" of Dr. Doddridge, adding (in the introduction to the Revelation) Bengel's Erklärte Offenbarung. These are Wesley's chief sources, and others, patristic and contemporary, are also mentioned; yet further sources are certainly to be traced, and until that is done, and each note examined in the light of its certain or probable sources, we shall not be able to appreciate the choices that Wesley faced at each point in his text and the decisions that he made.

But apart from views he credited to others, Wesley characteristically referred to the stylistic beauty of the New Testament books, and the technical skill of their authors. This might appear unusual, eccentric, or even self-indulgent in a biblical commentator, even if it might be a natural preoccupation in an educated, privileged gentleman of Augustan England whose contemporaries included men such as Capability Brown, Samuel Johnson, and Joshua Reynolds. But Wesley's fascination (it would be too much to call it an obsession) with the elegance of his text is too consistent and too prominent to be dismissed as a foible. I contend that this feature of his Notes indirectly dominates the purpose of this whole book and of the entire corpus of his writings, and even of the whole movement within which he came to be a determinative figure and an eponymous hero.

At this point we should note that Wesley's preface to the Notes contains a statement of their purpose and the role Wesley assigned them:
a) to mediate the fruits of the best available scholarship, and of the best spiritual theology, to "plain, unlettered men, who understand only their mother-tongue, and yet reverence the word of God, and have a desire to save their souls" (par. 3);

b) to correct the dominant translation (the King James Bible, of course), according to the best available text, but as gently as possible, for "is it not an excusable infirmity, to be unwilling to part with what we have been long accustomed to, and to love the very words by which God has often conveyed strength or comfort to our souls?" (par. 4,5);

c) to avoid abstruse difficulties, "lest I should leave the ordinary reader behind me" (par. 6);

d) to divide the text into paragraphs, "making a larger or smaller pause, just as the sense requires," following Bengel, because (and this comment on a stylistic point is of major importance): "even this much is such an help, in many places, as one who has not tried it can scarcely believe" (par. 7; par. 11 contains negative comments on conventional chapter-divisions);

e) to avoid all partisan interpretation ("God forbid that I should make the words of the most gentle and benevolent Jesus, a vehicle to convey such poison" par. 9), and by implication, to unite Christians by drawing on the learning of diverse traditions: Bengel, the Lutheran; Heylyn, Wesley's fellow Anglican; Guyse and Doddridge, Calvinist Congregationalists;

f) to help all to "agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear his Word, to imbibe his Spirit, and to transcribe his life into our own!" (par. 9).

The Notes were composed in 1754/5, while Wesley was in ill health. In 1784 he specified them, together with the first four volumes of his sermons, as a standard of the doctrine to be maintained in the Methodists' preaching-houses. This "independent standard of doctrine" has been the target of hostile
criticism from non-Methodists, to which no serious answer has yet been given.\textsuperscript{11} The "Large Minutes" (the prototypes of the Methodist Discipline) urges preachers to use them directly: "Frequently read and enlarge upon a portion of the Notes" (Minutes of Several Conversations, Q. 97, A. 12; Works, 1872 edition, VIII. 317).

The preachers were to use them, not only for sermon preparation, but also, even primarily, in their prayers. Wesley and his Assistants felt obliged to ask the Helpers (preachers) at short intervals, "Do you use all the means of grace yourself, and enforce the use of them on all other persons?...\textsuperscript{2} (2.) Searching the Scriptures by, (i.) Reading: Constantly, some part of every day; regularly, all the Bible in order; carefully, with the Notes; seriously, with prayer before and after; fruitfully, immediately practising what you learn there?" (Minutes, Q. 48, A; Works, etc. tom. cit. 323).

An earlier rule in the Large Minutes (Q.29 and A., tom. cit. 314) gives the Notes an even more central role:

What general method of employing our time would you advise us to? A. We advise you, (1.) As often as possible to rise at four. (2.) From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read, partly the Scripture with the Notes, partly the closely practical parts of what we have published. (3.) From six in the morning till twelve, (allowing an hour for breakfast,) to read in order with much prayer, first, "The Christian Library," and the other books which we have published in prose and verse, and then those which we recommended in our Rules of Kingswood School.

It has not been pointed out that Question 29 sets up the Methodist equivalent of the Daily Office.\textsuperscript{12} Although there is no reference to psalmody, the emphasis on reading and meditation matches the sense of priorities that Wesley learned from the Book of Common Prayer:

The first original and ground of the Divine Service...was not ordained but of a good purpose, and for a great advancement of godliness. For they so ordered the matter, that all the whole Bible (or the greatest part thereof) should be read over once every year; intending thereby, that the Cler-
gy, and especially such as were Ministers in the congrega-
tion, should (by often reading, and meditation in God's
word) be stirred up to godliness themselves, and be more
able to exhort others by wholesome doctrine, and to con-
trive them that were adversaries to the truth; and further,
that the people (by daily hearing of holy Scripture read in
the Church) might continually profit more and more in
the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the
love of his true Religion. (Book of Common Prayer,
1661/2: "Concerning the Service of the Church")

Closely associated with this pastoral-liturgical role for the
Notes is their relationship with Wesley's chosen stance on
spiritual reading and meditation. This is perhaps best seen in
the directions introducing Wesley's edition of Thomas à
Kempis' The Imitation of Christ, more formally in the 1735
edition, but more succinctly in the shorter version issued from
1741 onwards, throughout Wesley's lifetime and later: 13

Prepare yourself for reading by purity of intention,
whereby you singly aim at your soul's benefit; and then, in
a short ejaculation, beg God's grace to enlighten your un-
derstanding, and dispose your heart for receiving what you
read; and that you may both know what he requires of
you, and seriously resolve to execute his will when known.

3. Be sure to read not curiously and hastily, but leisurely,
and with great attention; with proper intervals and pauses,
that you may allow time for the enlightenings of divine
grace. Stop every now and then, to recollect what you have
read, and consider how to reduce it to practice. Further,
let your reading be continued and regular, not rambling
and desultory. It shows a vitiated palate, to taste of many
dishes without fixing upon, or being satisfied with any; not
but what it will be of great service to read over and over
those passages, which more nearly concern yourself, and
more closely affect your own passions and inclinations;
especially if you add a particular examination upon each.

4. Labour for a temper correspondent to what you read:
otherwise it will prove and unprofitable, while it only en-
lightens your understanding, without influencing your
will, or inflaming your affections. Therefore intersperse
here and there, pious aspirations to God, and petitions for
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his grace. Select also any remarkable sayings or advices, treasuring them up in your memory to ruminate and consider on....

5. Conclude all with a short ejaculation to God; that he would preserve and prosper his good seed sown in your heart, that it may bring forth its fruit in due season...

(1816 edition, pp. iii-v, pars. 2-5, emphasis added)

These counsels should be rated with the classic methods of spiritual meditation; if they follow the text meditated on more closely than, say, the *Golden Book* of Peter of Alcantara, that is only to be expected in a tradition with a Reformation view of the Bible, and in a spiritual guide who knows himself to be *homo unius libri*, a man of one book. They also serve to explain important features of the Notes. In his method of spiritual reading, we see Wesley making use of the aesthetic sense of the reader (note par. 3), and the reader’s sense of identification with the text, to lead into a “temper” that matches the text. Thus the reader’s own spiritual development (with all its implications for action and relationships) matches that of the writers as they wrote and that of the participants in the events recorded, both as they took place and as their meaning became clearer in time. With this in mind, we may return to Wesley’s preface to his Notes:

An exact knowledge of the truth was accompanied, in the inspired writers, with an exactly regular series of arguments, a precise expression of their meaning, and a genuine vigour of suitable affections.... In the language of the sacred writings we may observe the utmost depth, together with the utmost ease. All the elegancies of human composition sink into nothing before it: God speaks not as man, but as God. His thoughts are very deep; and thence his words are of inexhaustible virtue. And the language of his messengers, also, is exact in the highest degree: for the words which were given them accurately answered the impression made upon their minds.... To understand this thoroughly, we should observe the emphasis which lies on every word; the holy affections expressed thereby, and the tempers shown by every writer. (Notes, preface, par. 11-12; emphases added)
Wesley believed that the authors' personality development is at least as significant as the ideas expressed in the text. The literary qualities of the texts (regularity, precision, vigor, depth, ease, emphasis) signal the affections, or the new disposition of the biblical writer that has been caused by the event of revelation.

Essential to the reader's entering into this process is the time-factor in the reading, the observances of "proper intervals and pauses" (Imitation preface, par. 5). We must learn the author's speed and subordinate our reading-speed to that, learning to allow time between words, between phrases, between sentences, between paragraphs, for the text to work in us what it worked in the writer. So important was this for Wesley that, for readers who could not cope with the whole of the Notes, he issued his revised translation, "properly distributed into paragraphs," and with the short analyses of each book, separately.13

How do the Notes set out to fulfill the purposes of their author?

There can be no complete survey offered here of their method; but some general observations are possible. The Notes set out to make explicit what is implicit in the text, but may be missed in a hasty reading of the English. Concise allusions are unpacked, and hidden metaphors are brought to light. Consider Phil. 4:7:

*And the peace of God—That calm, heavenly repose, that tranquility of spirit, which only God can give. Which surpasseth all understanding—Which none can comprehend, save he that receiveth it. Shall keep—shall guard, as a garrison does a city. Your hearts—your affections.*

In this example we see not only the method but also the consistent bias of the Notes—to stress the action of God upon human experience. As an inspection of the Imitation preface would lead us to expect, there are frequent interjections of an edifying kind, whether moral (such as at Luke 10:42: "Mary hath chosen the good part—To save her soul. Reader, hast thou?") or spiritual (as at 1 Cor. 15:9: "True believers are humbled all their lives, even for the sins they committed before..."
they believed). Some notes defend the reader against stumbling-blocks in unclear or morally questionable passages, or against what Wesley had to reject as heterodoxy: double predestination, works-righteousness, antinomianism, formality, Arianism, quietism, mariolatry, irresistibility of grace. Other notes point to the heights of mysticism: "True meditation is no other than faith, hope, joy, melted down by the fire of God’s Holy Spirit, and offered up to God in secret" (on 1 Tim. 4:16).

Where does "observe the gradation" fit into this?

Of Wesley’s aesthetic comments, a significant number point out "gradations," climaxes or anticlimaxes, compelling transitions from one level of meaning to another. All his stylistic observations warn the reader to be especially attentive and ready to pause and wonder. When he comments on "gradation" specifically, he gives notice of a moment in the text where it will be time to make a major move in awareness and decision, if we are to match what is happening in the narrative or the narrator, and at this juncture aptly to "transcribe" Christ’s "life into our own."

Examples of "gradation," as being also examples of Wesley’s general method of employing aesthetic criteria, may be classified under three headings.

First, to deepen the sense of the need for salvation and of the ease of falling away from God:

On Matt. 4:16: "Here is a beautiful gradation: first they 'walked,' then they 'sat in darkness,' and lastly, 'in the region of the shadow of death.' (And the note on v. 17 goes on to explain that the summons to repentance, with Jesus as with John, is the necessary preparation to the inward kingdom). On Luke 1:19: "There seems to be a remarkable gradation in the words, enhancing the guilt of Zacharias’s unbelief."

On Ephes. 4:31: "Here is a beautiful retrogradation" (sc., from bitterness to evil speaking), "beginning with the highest, and descending to the lowest, degree of the want of love."

On 1 Tim. 6:9: "Fall—plunge—a sad gradation! Into temptation—Miserable food for the soul! And a snare."
In these passages it is as if, at a sudden turn in the way, we are shown a precipice before our feet.

Secondly, to open a vista of what grace can and will and seeks to do for us:

On Luke 11:13: "How much more shall your heavenly Father — How beautiful is the gradation, — a friend, a father, God! Give the Holy Spirit — The best of gifts, and that which includes every good gift."

On Ephes. 3:20 (and compare the note on 4:31): "Now to him — this doxology is admirably adapted to strengthen our faith, that we may not stagger at the great things the apostle has been praying for, as if they were too much for God to give, or for us to expect from him. That is able — Here is a most beautiful gradation. When he has given us exceeding, yea, abundant blessings, still we may ask for more. And he is able to do it. But we may think of more than we have asked. He is able to do this also. Yes, and above all, Above all we ask — Above all we can think. Nay, exceedingly, abundantly above all that we can ask or think."

On Hebrews 12:23-24: "It is observable" (i.e., calling for comment) "that in this beautiful gradation, these first-born are placed nearer to God than the angels... This blood of sprinkling was the foundation of our Lord's mediatorial office. Here the gradation is at its highest point."

In these examples, we are invited to venture forward with God towards the fullness of love, and even given a glimpse of eternity; of Hebrews 12 Wesley says also: "St. Paul here shows an excellent knowledge of the heavenly economy, worthy of him who had been caught up into the third heaven" (on 12.22).

Thirdly, to mark the association between the doctrine of the Trinity with faith in divine love and mercy in a specially vivid way:

On Luke 4:18: "How is the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity interwoven even in those scriptures where one would least expect it! How clear a declaration of the great Three-One is there in those very words, "The Spirit of the
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Lord is upon me! To proclaim deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised—Here is a beautiful gradation, in comparing the spiritual state of men to the miserable state of those captives who were not only cast into prison, but, like Zedekiah, had their eyes put out, and were laden and bruised with chains of iron.

On Matt. 18:14: "So it is not the will of your Father—Neither doth my Father despise the least of them. Observe the gradation,—the angels, the Son, the Father!" (The sentence commented on concludes, of course: "That one of these little ones should perish").

At these points, Wesley reveals the foundations of his exegetical method: he sets the New Testament totally in the context of a trinitarian faith, according to which the union-in-love of the divine being entails a universe created and recreated in love and for love. Wesley follows (as we cannot) Bengel in retaining 1 John 5:8, adding: "The testimony of the Spirit, the water, and the blood, is by an eminent gradation corroborated by three, who give a still greater testimony...Nothing can separate the Spirit from the Father and the Son...this position of the seventh and eight verses...affords a gradation admirably suited to the subject." The Wesleyan insistence on the Trinity reveals a sense that the Bible does not simply speak for itself, or stand alone: it grew within a tradition, and must be read in the light of that tradition. Wesley’s letter to Richard Tompson of June 28, 1755 (Works, XII, 466-7) exemplifies both Wesley’s sincere resolve to learn from any candid critic, and also his assumption of an a priori principle of interpretation: “your favour of the 22d [sic] instant...came exceedingly favourably; for I was just revising my Notes on the fifth chapter to Romans. One of which I found, upon a closer inspection, seemed to assert such an imputation of Adam’s sin to his posterity, as might make way for the ‘horrible decree’. I therefore struck it out immediately; as I would willingly do whatsoever should appear to be anyway inconsistent with that grand principle, “The Lord is loving to every man; and his mercy is over all his works.” The noting of “gradation” or other stylistic intensity of transition, in
association with the Trinity shows that for Wesley the Trinity is not a concept of static transcendence but a glimpse of union in loving encounter, a divine union into which the creature can be brought as participant-by-grace.

What are we to make of this piece of Wesleyan heritage? At the very least it deserves to be unearthed and examined, since it typifies an aspect of Wesley's thought-process that has influenced the whole of the Methodist tradition in its various forms, even where the Notes are not a formally canonised standard. Wesley's method of meditation has profoundly influenced the Wesley hymns: this has been documented in an initial way for the British Methodist tradition, but not yet, so far as I know, for the American line. Since the Christmas Conference made the 1784 Collection of Psalms and Hymns for the Lord's Day, and not the 1780 Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists, the normative hymnal, the effects of this difference may be far-reaching. The significance of the Notes for other aspects of Methodist worship tradition has yet to be researched. Its importance for the general character of exegesis and systematic theology in the context of Wesley-originated communities also awaits thorough investigation.

But even before historical exposition goes any further, we cannot avoid asking critical questions that are existentially urgent for Methodists, and for all who feel that they owe much to the Methodist tradition. Can we still make the assumptions about the Bible that Wesley made? First it should be clarified that Wesley was not opposed to a critical reading of the text, according to the thought of his time. Wesley felt no need to be what we would call an "inerrantist." I draw attention to the note on Matt. 1:1, where Wesley observes that the evangelists did not need to correct the errors in their sources: divine wisdom would use the errors as well as the accurate data. This approach seems to open the way to a positive use even for the critical questioning that may arise in a spiritual reading of the biblical text. It would be unfair, however, to insist that Wesley should have anticipated modern views of the history of the composition of the text, the role of the early Church in that process, and other things that we must consider.
In light of the current discussion of literary critical methods among biblical scholars, some of whom advocate more theological reflection in exegesis, it is important to remark that the Notes ask us to engage courageously with the text as it stands. This is a position taken in American biblical studies by Brevard Childs and others ("canonical criticism").

We may have to say that Wesley's notion of inspiration, that is, a moving at God's prompting (whether to write or to read the text) may sometimes be too mechanical. In principle, however, for Wesley inspiration is always a forward movement with God. Where it is still too inflexible (where, for instance, Wesley and his heirs are uncharacteristically anxious about "mere opinions," or disputed points of orthodoxy), we need to consider the extent to which Wesley's undeveloped Christology has influenced his reading of the New Testament. Wesley's Christology in the Notes inclines toward a kind of naïve Nestorianism that tends to infect British theological expression: Jesus, a man inhabited by God, is passible (i.e., having human emotions and subject to external forces) but omniscient. A more vigorous Christology, with deity self-identifying unreservedly with fallible and fallen humanity, would among other things imply a bolder doctrine of inspiration: God reveals Godself by entering into our fallible human conversation.

The Notes, whatever their other vices or virtues, certainly typify the Methodist ecumenical stance, perhaps best expressed, (and most riskily) in the preface to the (44) Sermons on Several Occasions:

...I trust, whereonsoever I have mistaken, my mind is open to conviction. I sincerely desire to be better informed. I say to God and man, 'What I know not, teach thou me!' Are you persuaded you see more clearly than me? It is not unlikely that you may. Then treat me as you would desire to be treated yourself upon a change of circumstances. Point me out a better way than I have yet known. Show me it is so, by plain proof of Scripture. And if I linger in the path I have been accustomed to tread, and am therefore unwilling to leave it, labour with me a little; take me by the hand, and lead me as I am able to bear...
A church which, even if in only one of its two main branches, has written into its confessional documents such an invitation to other Christians to correct it, and an acknowledgment (as in the Notes) of direct indebtedness to other churches, has no choice but to be ecumenically open.

In an age of fear and flight, when people lust to define themselves by their hatreds, this openness will cost Methodism much popularity. But that is a cost that fidelity requires.

Notes


2. The Notes were never a doctrinal standard in USA Methodism and cognate churches, nor in the non-Wesleyan traditions in Britain, except the Primitive Methodist Church, until the 1932 union. In the British-related Wesleyan churches the Notes held their position until unions with other traditions took place, or, in some cases, until independence. For example, in the Statuts relatifs à la pratique et discipline constitutionelles de l'Église Protestantte Méthodiste de Côte d'Ivoire (1984), the Ivory Coast Methodists confess their faith in words derived from the World Council of Churches constitution, the historic creeds, the Protestant Reformation and the doctrinal clauses of the British Deed of Union without reference to Wesley or his writings. They state their church "est prête à se corriger et à se reformer conformément à l'Enseignement des Ecritures et la révélation que continue à en donner le Saint Esprit." Submission to the continuing interpretation of the Scriptures by the Spirit is very much in line with the thought of this paper.


4. Franz Hildebrandt, Christianity according to the Wesleys, (London: Epworth Press, 1966) 16

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6. D. Joh(annis) Albcrti Bengel, Gnomen Novi Testamenti in quo ex nativo verborum vi simplicitas, profunditas, consinitia, salubritas sentniam eclees-tium indicatur (1752): I have used the 1864 reprint (Stuttgart, J. F. Weinkopf) of the 3rd (1773) edition; John Heylyn, Theological Lectures at Westminster Abbey, With an Interpretation of the Four Gospels. To which are added, Some Select DISCOURSES upon the principal Points of REVEAL'D RELIGION (London: J. and R. Tenson and S. Draper, 1749); John Guyse, An Exposition of the New Testament in the Form of a Paraphrase (1739-1752, 3 vols); Philip Doddridge, The Family Expositor (1739-1756, 6 vols); J. A. Bengel, Die erklarte Offenbarung, 1954. I have examined Wesley's use of the first two works in some detail; two or three years' full-time research would be needed for a thorough investigation of the whole source-critical issue.

7. Generally known until recently (from the lie printed on the title page) as "The Authorised Version"; Heylyn's preferred sobriquet, "the public translation," is apt.

8. In this rare allusion to the Middle Ages (which he calls, in the Enlightenment style, "the dark ages"), Wesley refers of course to Cardinal Hugo (1238).

9. The Notes were begun on 4 January 1754 (Journal, ed. Curnock IV 91), finished 23 September 1755 (IV 137). As to the process, we glimpse the Wesley brothers working together in February/March 1754 (IV 92) reading Heylyn and Doddridge and comparing the translation of the Gospels with the original. December 12 1759 (IV 361) finds the brothers, this time with "other" brothers, again at work: "enlarging and correcting the Notes." Five editions appeared in the author's lifetime; I have used the undated "stereotype" edition (c.1880), from the Wesleyan-Methodist Book-Room, London.

10. On the process, see E. Benson Perkins, Methodist Preaching Houses and the Law. The Story of the Model Deed, (Wesley Historical Society Lecture No. 18), (London: Epworth Press, 1952). The Model Deed itself is in Works (1872 edition) VIII. 330-1. The Biristall (Yorkshire) Deed of 1782 (Works VI. 445) specified only "Mr Wesley's Notes upon the Old and New Testaments." The omission in 1784 of the (1765-7) Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament must be deliberate, as "the experience of Jews is not the standard of Christian experience," (Letters, ed. Telford, IV. 11, cited and discussed by M. Schmidt, John Wesley, A Theological Biography (2/two, ET by Denis Inman, London: Epworth Press, 1973) 250). This shows both that Wesley's idea of canonical inspiration was not mechanical and also that his notion of distinctively Christian experience was perhaps too removed from the usual run of human awareness; this in turn raises questions about his Christology (cf. note 19 below).

11. As from W. J. Sparrow Simpson, John Wesley and the Church of England (London: SPCK, 1984) 68: "An independent Standard of Doctrine is lero set up. But that is an attitude which no member of the English Church, least of all one of its clergy, can consistently adopt."

12. I hinted in this direction in "The Office in the Lutheran, Reformed, and
The citation is from *The Christian's Pattern; or, a Treatise of the Imitation of Christ: written in Latin by Thomas à Kempis. Abridged, and Published in English*, by John Wesley, A.M., London, T. Blanshard, 1816. The preface is also in *Works VIII* (199-210); the editor helpfully identifies the origin of the passage that survived into the later and shorter version as being from the 1682 Cologne edition of the Imitation.

14. The *New Testament, with an Analysis of the Several Books and Chapters by the Rev. John Wesley, 1790; A New Translation...of the New Testament, in which the subjects are properly distributed into paragraphs*, by...John Wesley...1816; *John Wesley's New Testament*, 1938, 1953. (These are the holdings of the British Library, London.)


16. See David Jasper, "Criticism and the New Testament", *P.N. Review* (London) 15/2 (1988): 37-41; a secular literary scholar rebuking theologians for their detachment from their texts, and quoting John Donne: "read the Scriptures" as thou wouldst search a Wardrobe, not to make an inventory of it, but to find in it something for thy wearing."

17. Cf. note on 2 Tim 3:16. A vital point is the admission (on Rom 8:3), "human words cannot fully describe the motion of souls that are full of God": here too mystery, as with the Trinity, is approached and engaged, rather than comprehended, in an ascent of love. But this is not to say that inspiration is devoid of objective content: the Trinity is, however little we may understand, and however little right we may have to insist on others sharing our descriptions of the Trinity.

18. Cf. Y. Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival* (New York, 1952). A more vigorous Christology would also imply a bolder doctrine of ecclesial comprehension: we are called, not only to "tolerate" other views and ways as our own in the sense of grudging non-prohibition, but actively to carry the errors and sins of others as our own. See also John Deschoer, *Wesley's Christology: An Interpretation* (Dallas, Southern Methodist University Press, 1960, 1985).

19. See Edward H. Sugden, ed., *Wesley's Standard Sermons* (London: Epworth Press, 1921) I. 33. As the editor notes, there is an element of irony, but that does not deprive the words of their force.
Theological Education
and Education
for Church Leadership

Charles M. Wood

The conviction motivating this essay is that a source of chronic difficulty in the current wide-ranging discussion of the organization and aims of theological study (especially when the discussion touches on the subject of practical theology) is a failure adequately to discriminate among several of the elements involved. When two or more things are not properly distinguished, they cannot be properly related. What usually happens instead is that one somehow absorbs the others, so that their own reality can only emerge from time to time as an anomaly or a disruption. This pattern of absorption and disruption has been played out repeatedly both in theoretical proposals for the reform of theological study and in curricular practice.

My aim here is not to justify this underlying conviction through a critical review of the literature, but rather to undertake a more constructive exploration of some key distinctions which, it seems to me, are essential both to coherent discussion of the issues and to a coherent vision of the structures and aims of theological study. To make these distinctions I have had to

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sketch out at the relevant points a few elements of a theological, or at least quasi-theological, account of ministry. I hope that these points are phrased with enough generality as to be accessible and useful to people whose full theology of ministry might be quite different from my own.

Writing of the late medieval philosophers with their concern for careful conceptual distinctions and their patience for detail, David Burrell has remarked: "The quest for coherence led to discrimination." Although what is offered here is not exactly an exercise in "philosophical grammar" on the medieval model, it does have the same objective: to help us avoid false generalizations, and to see and make appropriate connections.

I.

Let us begin with the distinction between ministry and church leadership—a distinction commonly affirmed in principle and ignored in practice—and, as a sort of corollary, the distinction between education for ministry and education for church leadership.

Church leadership is one sort of ministry, but it is not the whole; education for church leadership is one sort of education for ministry, but it is not the whole. Ministry (that is, service) is the gift and responsibility of all Christians. Indeed, it is the gift and responsibility of all human beings to render service to one another, to other creatures, and thus to God. A properly theological account of ministry would, I think, begin with the ministry of God—that is, with the service God renders—and would place the ministry of creatures (including, but not limited to, that of human beings and of Christians) into that context, as a participation in God's ministry. For the present purpose, we must defer the development of this fuller account, and concentrate on a few points regarding the ministry of Christians.

Christians are, without exception, human beings. As such, they are to participate in the service which human creatures are called and enabled to render to fellow-creatures (human and otherwise) and to God. We might call this their human vocation. Christians normally testify that their capacity to
understand and fulfill this service has been decisively affected by their own encounter with the Christian tradition, and with God through that tradition (whether primarily by the preached word, the sacraments, the caring of a community, or some other particular means). In one way or another, they have been led to grasp for themselves the story of the universal loss or corruption of the human vocation, of its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, and of the promise of its restoration in themselves and in others—a promise whose realization they may experience, however partially or fitfully, in their own present existence, and for whose completion they hope. Through their participation in Christianity, they are being restored to the human vocation of ministry. Christians need not deny (though some do) that non-Christians may also be given the grace to recover the human vocation, in order to affirm that it is through the Christian faith that they themselves have been given it, and to wish to share that possibility with others.

This brings us to the distinctive aspect of the ministry of Christians, namely, their ministry as Christians: the service they are called and enabled to render, not simply as human beings, but in their capacity as Christians. We might call this the Christian vocation, to distinguish it from the larger human vocation which Christians share with all others. This distinctively Christian ministry is essentially a ministry of witness or testimony (marturia). It is the ministry of enabling others to receive, understand, and appropriate the Christian tradition as a means of grace for their own lives, and to join in turn in its witnessing work. Like ministry in general, this is always to be understood as a participation in the ministry of God. The human enabling of others is itself enabled by God.

This Christian ministry has many parts. It is in some ways corporate, and in some ways individual; it is at times "official," that is, explicitly commissioned and sanctioned by the community, and at times unofficial. There are special ministries undertaken by some on behalf of all, and there is the general ministry in which all share simply by participating in the common life of the Christian community. Christian ministry is both explicit and implicit, direct and indirect. For most Christians, it is a ministry carried on along with—and, to a great
extent, through—the other activities which occupy us most of
the time (making a living, caring for a family, friendships,
political action, and so forth), which are at the same time the
vehicles through which we exercise our human vocation more
or less effectively. For some, the Christian vocation is more
nearly and directly a full-time occupation, whether church-
commissioned and church-supported or otherwise.

The ministry of church leadership has a similar variety to it.
It can be part- or full-time, official or unofficial, "lay" or "profes­
sional," individual or corporate. (Actually, each of these distinc­
tions is problematic, particularly when interpreted as a
disjunction. They must be handled with care.) Its common task
in all its forms is "to equip the saints for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ" (Ephes. 4:12); to enable the
church to be the church, to guide Christians, individually and
corporately, in the exercise of their vocation. At its most basic
and comprehensive, this leadership is shared by every Chris­
tian in the service one renders to another, grounded in the
grace which is given to each "according to the measure of
Christ's gift" (Ephes. 4:7). In a more particular and limited
sense, church leadership is entrusted (in principle, at least) to
those whose gifts and opportunities are most appropriate for
the specific tasks involved: teaching, nurture, administration,
community-building, judgment, guidance, and so forth. While
recognizing the common "leadership of all believers" and the
great variety of more particular forms of leadership, I will
concentrate from this point onward on those kinds of leader­
ship which are ecclesially-commissioned, typically full-time,
and normally exercised in relation to a congregation or local
Christian community.

Education for such leadership is a form of education for
ministry, and is best understood within that context even
though it has some distinctive features. Education for ministry,
in turn, is one aspect of the broader enterprise of Christian
education, understood as that whole complex of educational
activities by means of which persons are received into the
Christian community and are prepared—not just initially, but
continually—for responsible participation in that community.
Not only the more focused and deliberate occasions of teaching and learning in the church—church-school classes, study groups, etc.—but also the educational aspect of the community's ritual and sacramental life, of its care for its members in crises, and of all of its other activities, belongs to Christian education thus comprehensively understood.

Within that enterprise, three distinct (though certainly closely related) components may be identified. There is, first, that educational activity through which we attain our knowledge of the Christian tradition and of our own particular ecclesial tradition the doctrines, events, institutions, persons, and so forth which make the tradition what it is. From this we gather our own sense of what the Christian faith is all about. We could call this "education in Christian faith." Second, there is what might be called "education in Christian life." This is the lifelong process of coming to understand ourselves and our world in ways appropriate to the Christian message, with its key life-shaping concepts; of learning to trust in God and to be loyal to God, to acquire the attitudes, dispositions, perceptions, and so forth which are appropriate to such trust and loyalty, and thus to take on a certain kind of human and Christian identity. The third component we can designate "education for ministry," so long as we recognize that each of the other two is in its own way also education for ministry. The specific contribution of this third aspect is to equip us with the particular competencies we need in order to play our part in the Christian community's ongoing life of witness and service.

These three components are closely interdependent, and the order in which they have just been mentioned should not be taken to imply some inherent logical or pedagogical ordering of them: Understanding the Christian faith requires training in Christian life, and vice versa; and neither is possible apart from some initiation into the practice of Christian witness, both corporate and individual. Nor is the third a possibility without the other two. Receiving the Christian witness and being formed by it; understanding that witness and one's own place in it, so as to affirm it for oneself; and coming to bear witness, to share the community's distinctive ministry, are all three ongoing, interwoven elements of Christian existence.
Although the three are inseparable, it is within the third, education for ministry, that we may more specifically locate education for church leadership. As we shall see, education for church leadership requires a particular intensification of all three aspects of Christian education. This is because church leadership itself demands certain sorts of spiritual maturity and certain ways of understanding the Christian faith, as well as certain capacities for the exercise of leadership, which are not required of all Christians. But since all of these special requirements are ordered to preparation for the ministry of leadership, it is in relation to that aim that they are best understood.

Of course, church leadership is one of many sorts of ministry for which some particular educational preparation is required. Acknowledging that ministry and church leadership are not synonymous terms, and then referring exclusively to education for church leadership as education for ministry or ministerial education, is one way of negating in practice what one affirms in principle. Anyone who undertakes a course of study so as to be better equipped to serve God and fellow-creature is engaged in education for ministry—and a relatively small proportion of that education goes on in schools of theology.

II.

Education for church leadership is frequently referred to as "theological education"—an equation which carries dangers as well as values. While the two enterprises are associated, they should not be merely equated. The distinction and relation between theological education and education for church leadership deserves some careful exploration.

Theological education, in the most strict and proper sense, is the process through which persons acquire an aptitude for theology. An aptitude for Christian theology is a capacity and disposition to engage in critical reflection upon the Christian witness (which means, upon what is conveyed by everything that Christians are, say, and do as Christians, singly and together), aimed at testing the adequacy of that witness in terms of its own claims to validity. The three ingredients of
the claim to validity which any act of Christian witness at least implicitly makes, as I understand it, are 1) the claim to be authentically Christian, i.e., to represent faithfully the gospel of Jesus Christ; 2) the claim to be meaningful and true; and 3) the claim to be fitting, or appropriate to the context. Theological reflection can take the form of a critical examination of some actual sample of Christian witness something said or done by Christians in their capacity as Christians to see to what extent this act of witness lives up to its own intentions to be authentic, true, and fitting to the situation. Or it can take the more constructive (though no less critical) form of asking what valid witness would amount to under a given set of circumstances.

Some aptitude for Christian theology is requisite to Christian life itself. This does not mean that every Christian must be a theological scholar, nor even that she or he must be cognizant of what theological scholars are up to. It only means that every Christian, under normal circumstances, inevitably is called to make judgments as to what constitutes valid Christian witness, accepting or rejecting certain alternatives. Such judgments are involved from fairly early on in each person’s Christian existence. It is for this reason that one element of Christian education, touching on all three principal components of that enterprise, is theological education. In the course of making those judgments as to the nature of Christian faith, life, and practice which are involved in coming to be a Christian, people learn, from those who teach them in these matters, how to make judgments. Depending on how they are taught, they learn to judge well or poorly, reluctantly or willingly, haphazardly or with deliberation. They acquire some sort of theological aptitude, which plays an important role in determining the sort of Christian identity they take on, the way they understand the faith, and the quality of the witness they bear. A Christian community has no choice as to whether theological education, for all its members, will be an element of its educational work; it only has a choice as to the kind of theological education it will be.

The role of theological education in education for church leadership is especially crucial, since it has a large part in
determining the quality of judgment of those responsible for
the nurture and guidance of the rest of the community. The
greater the scope of leadership, the more serious this becomes.
It is altogether appropriate, then, that those institutions
responsible for the most rigorous and intensive preparation of
church leaders be known as theological schools. It is far more
important, however, that these institutions actually be
theological schools, and that the education they provide aspir­
ing church leaders be, from start to finish, genuine theological
education.

III.

The theological education of church leaders, like that of
other Christians, must give attention to all three of those
components of Christian education which were outlined ear­
erlier: education in Christian faith, education in Christian life,
and education for Christian ministry.

I said earlier that education for church leadership requires
a particular intensification and development of these three
components. The way in which this is so must not be
misunderstood. So far as education in Christian life is con­
cerned, we should not think that church leadership demands a
higher Christian proficiency than other forms of ministry. It is
a mistake to assume that anyone who shows signs of serious­
ness and promise in the Christian life should automatically be
steered toward preparation for church leadership, for there are
other kinds of ministry at least as demanding of spiritual
maturity and all that it involves. There are, however, certain
aspects of spiritual maturity, certain dispositions and traits of
character, which are particularly (though not exclusively) per­
tinent to certain forms of church leadership.

For example, pastors and those in similar positions of leader­
ship need to know themselves well. Leadership in general is full
of temptations. Further, the professional roles occupied by
such church leaders in our society give ample opportunity for
various kinds of abuse. Self-deception, as well as the deception
of others, is an easy and attractive feature of religious leader­
ship. Misuse of time and resources, manipulation of others by
means of one's professional knowledge and power, and other forms of malfeasance are not only possible, but are often subtly encouraged by the social arrangements in which church leaders find themselves and the psychological dynamics of the situation. Persons preparing for such work must know their own hearts in this regard; they must be well acquainted with their own strengths and weaknesses when faced by such challenges, and with the opportunities which both the strengths and the weaknesses afford for genuine and effective service.

Church leaders are also typically called upon to know the hearts of others. If they are to provide leadership to congregations and individuals under all sorts of conditions, they must understand human behavior in health and adversity. This requires some degree of psychological, anthropological, and sociological understanding, as well as a theological grasp of the human condition before God. It also requires insight and penetration, receptivity and generosity, and a multitude of other personal qualities which rest finally upon one's self-knowledge and on the character of one's spiritual life. In these and other ways, the responsibilities of church leadership call for some special attention to the quality of the Christian existence of those being prepared for it.

Similar points can be made concerning the particular needs of church leaders in the other two component areas of Christian education. So far as their education in the Christian faith is concerned, to the extent that church leaders are responsible for guiding the church in its preservation and extension of the Christian tradition, their education must involve their acquiring not only a more extensive factual knowledge of that tradition than that ordinarily expected of other Christians, but also an understanding of how the tradition works, and a sure ability to distinguish authentic tradition—that which mediates the genuine gospel—from its counterfeits. It is not necessary that they have the erudition of professional historians of Christianity, but it is necessary that they have an ability to work with the tradition as it bears upon their responsibilities of leadership (for example, teaching the faith to others, answering questions about what Christian belief involves, sharing in the task of formulating and explicating the community's doctrines, or
equipping people to discern what is going on when they are confronted with competing claims about the faith).

With regard to education in the task of leadership, it is clear that pastoral leadership (for example) requires a number of identifiable abilities in such areas as administration, counseling, preaching, group leadership, and teaching. Basic competence in the functions pertaining to one's own role and its expectations is essential: one must know how to conduct a meeting, deliver a sermon, plan a service of worship, and so forth, and part of one's education for leadership is acquiring and continuing to strengthen those specific capabilities. But there is an aspect of the competence of leadership whose presence or absence in a person, though not so visible as the quality of her or his skill in a particular area of functioning, is ultimately far more important. This is the capacity for critical reflection on what one is doing as a leader, through each and all of the activities and roles that one's leadership involves: the capacity to transcend the obvious demands and expectations of one's office, and to think about the direction and effect of what one is doing in relation to the mission of the church in the situation. An aptitude for that sort of reflection will not compensate for the lack of basic skills in the practice of one's ministry. It is not, by itself, sufficient qualification for church leadership. But no amount of technical virtuosity as preacher, counselor, etc., will make up for the absence or immaturity of that judgment on which genuine leadership, as distinguished from the competent fulfillment of certain role expectations, depends.

This brief account of the ways in which education for church leadership must address each of the three component areas of Christian education may begin to make clearer why it must involve theological education at every point. Essentially, what this account indicates is that church leadership requires a well-developed aptitude for theological self-criticism; for theological understanding of the Christian faith; and for theological criticism of one's performance in leadership. The theological education of church leaders, then, must address all three of these. It can only do so adequately if all three are explicitly brought under scrutiny in some way in the course of
one's theological study.

It must be kept in mind that the aim of theological education as such is not to form Christians, but to form the habit of critical reflection on one's formation. It is not to mediate the content of the Christian tradition, but to equip one for theological reflection on the Christian tradition. It is not to train in leadership skills, but to cultivate an aptitude for reflection on the quality of one's own and others' leadership as an instrument of the church's witness. The service of theology to witness, and hence of theological education to Christian education, is best conceived as an indirect one: it is the service performed by reflection upon a practice, rather than by the practice itself. This is a genuine and even an indispensable service. But whenever the distinction between theology and witness or between theological education and Christian education is forgotten or denied—as it frequently seems to be—that unique service is lost. 6

Distinct as these educational processes are, in the education of church leaders they cannot be separated. Learning to reflect theologically on one's formation not only presupposes that formation is going on, but is a part of one's formation. Learning to reflect theologically on leadership must be ingredient in the process of acquiring the specific abilities for leadership, or it is not likely to become second nature to the leader, as it should. And the process of understanding and appropriating the Christian tradition already involves the making of theological judgments, and the gaining of some sort of competence in that enterprise. Theological education of the sort that theological schools conduct is not a separate stage of education to be entered upon only after one has already acquired the other requisites for church leadership. One might think of the theological school as the medium or the context within which one's development in these three areas is given some important nourishment and brought to a new level of maturity precisely through theological study. Certainly, one's Christian education (including one's education for ministry) normally begins long before one enters a school of theology, and continues long after one leaves. The distinctive contribution of the school of theology to education for church leadership is to strengthen the
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theological aspect of that education, across its entire range.

IV.

In carrying out their responsibility for the theological education of church leaders, theological schools differ considerably among themselves with regard both to their explicit intentions and to their actual accomplishments. Some of the differences are matters of principle: for instance, commitment to a particular ecclesiology or a particular understanding of ministry will lead a school to a certain set of objectives and decisions which will set it apart from schools grasped by different commitments. Other differences are the results of historical or social factors. A school will do well to reflect from time to time upon both its explicit aims and those other factors in its situation which are shaping its work.

As a stimulus to such reflection, let me risk some impressionistic generalizations about one group of schools which, despite various differences of academic and ecclesiastical affiliation, share a common legacy: those institutions founded and largely maintained by what until recently we have called the main-line Protestant denominations in the United States. These schools generally seem to do a better job of teaching students to reflect on the Christian tradition than of teaching them to reflect on their own Christian existence or to reflect on the quality of their leadership. This is not to say that the schools spend more time on education in Christian faith than they do on education in Christian life or on education for ministry; the proportion of time given to each varies a great deal from place to place or tradition to tradition. It is rather to say that the schools are better at teaching students to deal theologically with the content of the tradition than with either their own lives or their vocation as church leaders. Such education as goes on in these latter two areas is relatively less theological in character, as a rule. With regard to Christian spirituality or formation, it is more likely to consist in a straightforward extension of basic Christian education (often of a remedial sort); and in the area of education for ministry, it is more likely to concentrate on conveying a basic functional
competence in the role. My impression is that the calls which such schools frequently hear that they should give more attention to spiritual formation or to the cultivation of students' professional competence for ministry are rarely cries for more theological attention to these areas, but rather for more basic "first-order" education in Christian life and in meeting the needs of congregations.

At the same time, in the area in which these schools do relatively well at theological (as distinguished from Christian) education, they generally do a better job at teaching students to pursue the questions of the authenticity and of the meaningfulness and truth of Christian witness than to pursue the question of its fittingness to its context. Courses in Bible and history may encourage students to think about the origins and transmission of the Christian tradition, its continuity and its transformation through time, and raise (at least implicitly) the theological question of the authenticity of contemporary witness. Courses in systematic theology tend to pursue this question, sometimes in conjunction with the more philosophically-oriented question of meaning and truth. Indeed, the task of systematic theology is often formulated as that of mediating the demands of authenticity or faithfulness to what has been received, and of meaningfulness or credibility in the contemporary world. Courses in what is sometimes called "practical theology" (the fourth division of the conventional fourfold curriculum, in addition to biblical, historical, and systematic studies) are for the most part courses aimed at teaching the various more or less discrete competences required of pastors and other church leaders, and their teachers tend to identify themselves with the specific disciplines concerned (homiletics, pastoral care, education, etc.) rather than with practical theology as such.

Accounting for the emergence and maintenance of such a state of affairs in modern theological education is a task for social historians. Rather than attempt any such interpretation, I want to concentrate on a conceptual problem which, while it is not solely responsible for the tendencies just identified, seems to me to have done a great deal to encourage them. The problem has to do with the use of the term "practical theology"
to designate two distinct sorts of inquiry and instruction, each
legitimate and necessary in its own right. The failure to dis­
guish properly between them has sometimes led to a sort of
competition between them for the title, which has not served
the real interests of either. I would not want to claim that the
multitude of uses of the term "practical theology" can finally be
reduced to these two. My claim is rather than if these two were
appropriately distinguished and recognized as legitimate and
complementary enterprises rather than as rival understand­
ings of one task, it would do something to reduce the
current confusion which tends to weaken both.

One contender is that dimension of theological study whose
particular responsibility is to pursue the question as to the
fittingness of Christian witness to its context. The other con­
tender is that sort of theological study whose subject-matter is
church leadership—typically, pastoral leadership. The first is
distinguished by the particular aspect of the validity-question
which it pursues; the second, by the particular subject-matter
it investigates.

One reason it has proven difficult to keep these two distinct
is that each of them involves the other. Theological reflection
on the fittingness of Christian witness to its context includes
(but is not limited to) reflection on the role of church leader­
ship—of the institutions, activities, etc., through which leader­
ship is exercised—in enabling (or preventing) that witness to
be fitting to its context. Theological reflection on church
leadership—that is, on the ways in which the structures, ac­

tivities, etc., of leadership work to further or hinder valid
Christian witness—includes (but is not limited to) reflection on
the fittingness of that leadership to its context. If, as sometimes
happens, the church is identified with its leadership, and Chris­
tian witness reduced to the activity of church leaders, the
distinction between these two intersecting inquiries becomes
that much more difficult to see.

In my own constructive account of the organization of
theological study, I have reserved the name of practical theol­
ogy for the first of these contending enterprises. It is one of
the three primary theological disciplines, each of which cor-
responds to one of the three constitutive dimensions of Christian theology. (In this account, the question of the Christian authenticity of the witness belongs to historical theology, and the question of its meaningfulness and truth to philosophical theology.)

When it has not been called practical theology, a name which has sometimes been assigned to the second of these enterprises is pastoral theology. Pastoral theology has often been conceived and taught in such a way as to combine theological reflection on church leadership (specifically, on the office and duties of the pastor) with theological reflection on the personhood of the leader (that is, on the pastor's own life and Christian self-understanding, particularly in relation to the responsibilities of leadership). Thus, it deals (from a theological standpoint) with both the "education in Christian life" and the "education for ministry" of the candidate for church leadership, and has gone some way toward addressing the lack of attention to these two areas in the typical theological curriculum. There is much to be said for this approach, so long as it is not seen as an alternative to practical theology (as I have used the term above), but rather as a sort of concentration of theological attention upon the theme of church leadership and upon the education of the leader. Both practical theology and pastoral theology (if we are to use these names for them) have a place in education for church leadership: the former as a necessary component of theological education as such, and the latter as a means of acquiring the aptitude for theological self-examination which is necessary to genuine leadership.

There are some difficulties, however, with the name of "pastoral theology" for the second of these pursuits. In conventional Protestant usage, pastoral theology is concerned with "the pastoral office and its function"—that is, with the role and activity of the pastor in the congregation. Unless all church leadership is somehow to be assimilated to the pastoral office, the term has some obvious limitations as a designation for the theological examination of church leadership. Its use may also give some privileged weight to the concept or image of "shepherd" as a key to the understanding of church leadership—a privilege which may or may not be theologically war-
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ranted. At the same time, in Roman Catholic usage—and increasingly in Protestant usage as well "pastoral theology" has come to refer not to that discipline which deals with the office and function of the pastor, but rather to that which deals with the pastoral activity of the church as a whole, as well as with the pastoral activity of its leaders. It concerns itself with the care which the church provides to people, and its scope may be considerably broader than was previously thought: extending to the church's care for non-members as well as members, and to a care which is exercised through social and political action as well as on the individual level.

It is not clear, then, that "pastoral theology" is the best term to use for the theological examination of church leadership. Perhaps a better term, enabling a better grasp of what this study involves, will emerge. What is crucial, in my judgment, is that the two inquiries I have here described be clearly distinguished, and that both of them be affirmed as properly belonging to theological education for church leadership.

Notes


2. I do not mean to imply that only Christians can understand the Christian faith. However, an understanding of the Christian faith or of any other religious tradition does seem to require a kind of conceptual equipment which is normally achieved through personal participation in it. The task confronting the person who wishes to understand a faith other than her own is to "entertain" that faith sufficiently to acquire the relevant concepts, through whatever sort of involvement is both necessary and appropriate. This is less difficult in some cases than in others, for a variety of reasons, but it is probably never easy.

3. There are other forms of theology and of theological education than Christian. To what extent, if at all, what I say about the Christian versions would be true of other traditions (e.g., Jewish theology and theological education) is best left to members of those other traditions to judge. For more on the general understanding of Christian theology and theological education represented here, see Charles M. Wood, Vision and Discernment: An Orientation in Theological Study (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).

4. Regarding the moral aspect of Christian witness (its injunctions, recommendations, etc. concerning human conduct), one might substitute "right" for "true" in the second category—depending on how one construes the logic of moral claims. There is a highly illuminating treatment of the possible relations between claims to authenticity and truth or rightness in religious traditions in

5. I am indebted to my colleague Prof. Joseph L. Allen for his reflections on this theme in a recent convocation address at Perkins School of Theology.


7. See Vision and Discernment, pp. 46-49, 95.

8. Thomas C. Oden's *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), exemplifies both of these problematic features. Pastoral theology is concerned with "the systematic definition of the pastoral office and its function" (p. x), and "shepherding" is the "pivot analogy" (pp. 49-63). Since these are matters of deliberate decision for Oden, his book provides a good contemporary indication of what is gained and lost thereby.
New Leadership Patterns in Korea

Douglas E. Wingeier

During the Silla Dynasty, a nobleman called Sunjong-gong sat to eat lunch with his beautiful wife, Suor Puin ("Lady of the Water") on their way to Kangnung, where he would take up his official post as county magistrate. Behind them, along the beach stood a rocky crest whose peak was covered with blossoms.

Suor-Puin exclaimed, "Oh, how lovely. Who will pluck those azaleas and bring them to me?" Her servant replied, "Madam, the mountain crest rises on a hanging rock, untrodden and untouched by human creatures. The azaleas are there to be gazed at, and not plucked." Just then, an old peasant who was leading a cow along the seashore heard her words. He dropped the cow rope, quickly climbed up, picked some of the azaleas, clambered down and offered them to her with a song.

On the following day, when Suor-Puin was eating lunch with her husband in a sea-viewing pavilion, a sea dragon appeared and snatched her off to his watery palace. The amazed husband stamped his feet and shrieked at the top of his voice, but to no avail. Another old peasant who was on the scene told the unhappy husband, "There is an old saying, 'many mouths can

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melt even hard iron. How much more will the sea-creatures be afraid of myriad voices? If you gather all the fisher people from the coastal villages, and get them to sing and strike the sea-rocks, you will find your lost wife." So Sunjong-gong did what he was told, the villagers gathered and sang. And sure enough, the dragon emerged from the sea with Suor-Puin in his arms, returning her to her husband, who cried for joy.

In this Korean legend from the Three Kingdoms period (57 B.C.-668 A.D.), the political, societal context is that of kingdom, with nobility, class system and vertical distribution of status and power. But the message of the story is of the resourcefulness, power, and solidarity of the common people, peasants and fishermen. What the nobleman's servant could not do, the humble herdsman accomplished with ease. What the nobleman himself was powerless to accomplish, the seashore villagers were able to achieve by putting their efforts and voices together.

This story epitomizes my observations about leadership patterns in Korean church and society, past and present. These reflections are based on a four-month sabbatical sojourn in the Land of the Morning Calm in the fall of 1988, during which I attended classes on Korean history, culture, society, and religions at Yonsei and Ewha Universities, visited churches, a Buddhist monastery, and religious ceremonies, made an effort to learn the Korean language, and interviewed leaders in all walks of life.

The predominant norms for the practice of leadership in Korea stem from the kingdom tradition: authoritarian, hierarchical, patriarchal, stratified. But in the midst of this prevailing pattern, there are emerging signs of an alternative consciousness.

My desire to learn about Korean leadership patterns originated in a growing awareness of the dilemmas faced by the Korean-American church and its leaders, and by persons who wish to be partners with them in ministry in this country. Coming from a long tradition of directive, assertive, controlling leadership, their natural inclination is to continue this pattern in their new setting. But their co-workers in the Caucasian
church, and their children and young people raised and educated in a society where the norms are more egalitarian and cooperative, expect more opportunity for mutuality, ownership, and participation in decision making, and more shared leadership and responsibility in carrying out the ministry of the church.

Conflict and misunderstanding arise out of these crossed expectations, and negotiation, compromise, and new patterns of structure and leadership must be developed. The first step in working through these dilemmas, at least for me, was to try to understand the background and context of leadership out of which Korean-American Christians come, in order to be able to more wisely and effectively participate in the training of leaders for their churches.

The Prevailing Pattern

We look first at the historic prevailing pattern—hierarchical, authoritarian, patriarchal, and stratified.

Centuries of Monarchy

After an early history of clan communities, city states, and state federations, three monarchies emerged in the North (Koguryo), Southeast (Silla), and Southwest (Paekche), beginning in 57 B.C. Unified in 668 A.D., the monarchical form of government continued under three dynasties—Silla (668-918), Koryo (918-1392), and Yi or Chosun (1392-1910)—until the Japanese occupation. The Korean monarchy was basically aristocratic, characterized by a bureaucracy entered by the nobility through competitive civil service exams.

These yangban (aristocrats) had a virtual monopoly on leadership positions because the freeborn men (there was no opportunity at all for women) lacked the time and money to undertake the years of study and preparation required.

There were four classes in traditional Korea: the yangban or aristocratic class, the chungin or middle class, the commoners (farmers and merchants), and the low-born (slaves, artisans, shamans, butchers, tanners, hunters, sailors, peddlers, and...
entertainers). Class and profession were hereditary and there were many class conflicts.

One observer has described the politics of traditional Korea as "the politics of vortex," in which power was at the center, drawing persons into the hub in Seoul, creating pressure for upward mobility, competition between factions, conflict without negotiation, atomization of group solidarity, and persons on a pendulum swinging toward the center to grasp the power and then out again when falling into disfavor, to be banished to the provinces.

The monarchical society, then, was characterized by centralization, factionalism, a class system, competition for power, and hierarchical control from the top.

Decades of Military Government

When the Chosun dynasty fell to the Japanese in 1910, a period of nearly eight decades of military rule was inaugurated. The Japanese colonized the Korean people, forcing assimilation into the Japanese culture through imposing the Japanese educational system and requiring Koreans to take Japanese names and learn the Japanese language. They burned Korean history books, and distorted Korean history in school textbooks to make Japanese history appear older and Japanese culture superior to that of Korea. Police oppression and economic exploitation of Korean labor and raw materials kept the people in subjugation.

This domination engendered a nationalistic response, expressed in the Independence Movement, which culminated in an uprising on March 1, 1919. This attempted overthrow of the Japanese was unsuccessful, however. The Japanese occupation thus did not end until the Second World War, when the U.S. military took control for three years, retaining the Japanese governmental structures. The Americans did not allow the Koreans' own provisional government-in-exile headed by Kim Gu, later assassinated, to return home as a group and set up their own government (leading some Koreans today to say, "We lost our real leaders," but instead lent their support to the dictatorial Syngman Rhee, simply because he was anti-com-
The Korean War between the two halves of a country divided by the superpowers without consultation with the Korean people, intervened in that period with a great deal of turmoil, suffering, destruction, and loss of life.

Then, when Rhee was overthrown by student uprisings in 1960, after a brief period of democracy which was aborted prematurely by a military takeover, two brutal military dictatorships followed—those led by Park Chung-Hee (1961-79) and Chun Doo-Hwan (1980-87). During this period of military rule, the Korean people experienced seventy-seven years of domination, with some attempts at uprising and rebellion, but primarily characterized by control and oppression imposed from the top. As Koreans readily admit, this gave them little or no experience with democracy.

Confucian Ethics

The autocratic pattern of both the monarchical and the military eras was undergirded by the Confucian value system, which had been acquired from the Chinese. In the Confucian system, the five cardinal relationships are ruler to subject, father to son, husband to wife, older brother to younger brother, and friend to friend—all but the latter of which are hierarchical in nature. In Confucianism, the heavenly way, or truth, is to be respected and followed; heaven and moral law are to be known, loved, and obeyed; faith, destiny, or the will of heaven is inevitable; and the sage ruler is to follow the mandate of heaven, the divine mission.

Filial piety is owed to parents and ancestors in gratitude for being brought into the world and raised in it. Propriety is to be expressed in terms of strict distinctions of social rank. Loyalty and harmony within the collective society foster intolerance, conformity, dogmatism, composure, and self-control, while discouraging creative self-expression, individual thinking, and initiative.

Traditional Family Patterns
This Confucian ethic undergirds age-old forms of family life, in which kinship ties and dependencies are close, and harmony and loyalty are strong. The family is run as a benevolent monarchy, with the eldest male as household head and proper patriarchal regulation of women and children observed. Traditionally, filial duty and respect are enjoined, marriages are arranged, and wives must serve and please their husbands and especially their mothers-in-law. There are clearly defined male and female roles, both outside and inside the home, and the eldest sons inherit the wealth, family leadership, and responsibility for caring for their parents.

**Buddhist Organization and Training**

This authoritarian, hierarchical pattern is also expressed in both Buddhist and Christian religious organizations.

The Chogye order of Buddhist monks, for example, is organized hierarchically. At the top is the head of the order in the headquarters in Seoul. Below him at the next level are the abbots of the four main monasteries. Under them are the heads of departments at each monastery and the heads of the branch temples associated with the main monasteries. Then come the ordinary monks, then the novices, and, finally the postulants, those seeking ordination.

The training of a Buddhist monk also reflects an authoritarian pattern. The process begins with an initiation ceremony in which the postulant’s head is shaved and he is given the clothing of a monk. Then he enters a period of discipline, hardship, and rigorous training, during which he is basically a servant to the other monks in the monastery, serving in the kitchen, doing clean-up, and participating regularly in the services of chanting and prayers. One of the disciplines that entering monks have to perform is to do ten thousand vigorous bows within a three-day period.

After going through this disciplinary period, the postulant is ordained a Sumi (novice), and enters into a four-year study of the sutras. After this he will be ordained as a Biukku, when he takes the Bodhisattva vows and begins his quest for Nirvana. Then he goes to a Zen master and to the meditation room eight
hours a day, plus three hours of Tai Chi. The quiet, secluded, highly structured monastery environment is very conducive to this kind of disciplined practice, centering of one's spirit, and conformity to behavioral standards, that equip monks for their ministry.

After completing their training, Buddhist priests serve two major roles as spiritual leaders in Korean society. The first of these is prayer. The laity cannot pray for themselves because only the priest can fully enter into Nirvana; so the priest must pray for the laity. The second priestly function is that of the sermon, exhorting the laity to observe the Buddhist lay disciplines.

Thus, the correlation between the authoritarian, hierarchical patterns of traditional Korean society and the structure of the Buddhist order and the monks' leadership roles is apparent.

Structure and Leadership of the Christian Church

A similar authoritarian, hierarchical pattern prevails within the Christian church. The locus of power in the Korean church is at the local level, and the pastor is the key figure. "The pastor is king" is an oft-repeated phrase, which reflects the reality that he (there are few women pastors) guides, directs, and rules nearly all aspects of congregational life. Pastors tend to have a long tenure in a congregation, and build up a following based on deep love, strong loyalty, and genuine respect for the spiritual leader. Older pastors become mentor and sponsor for young seminary graduates seeking to find a place in the system.

The concentration of power in the local church and pastor leads to a corresponding weakening of program, leadership, and control at the judicatory level. Boards, agencies, and supervisory personnel have limited power and resources; bishops and superintendents serve only two-year, non-repeatable terms, and continue pastoring their congregations while functioning in those capacities. The large size of some congregations (the largest Methodist church has over 35,000 members; the largest Presbyterian church over 50,000), and the high level of giving (the tithe is a minimum expectation for church membership)
provide the local church with the resources and leadership to operate more or less independently. Local congregations often carry out denominational functions such as producing educational materials and sending their own missionaries.

Some churches do not ordain women at all, and those that do tend to assign them either to small struggling churches, or employ them as assistant pastors/educational workers who also take on secretarial and hostess duties for their senior pastors. (For example, I was once received at the door of a church by a female assistant pastor who took me into the pastor's office and served me tea while I was waiting to talk with the senior pastor.) In the Methodist system, women who graduate from seminary can be ordained, but once they are married they can no longer pastor churches, but must serve in other areas of church work. If their small churches begin to grow, clergy women are likely to be replaced by a man.

The organization of Korean churches is hierarchical and extremely efficient. Every member of a Korean church belongs to a neighborhood class meeting led by a lay class leader. In the larger churches, these leaders are accountable to the Bible women, or women evangelists, who in turn answer to the male associate pastors, who in turn are responsible to the senior pastor. An hour after the last Sunday morning service, the senior pastor is likely to have on his desk a list of everyone who was absent that day. The next day the class leaders visit these absentees to find what is going on and provide pastoral care as needed. The class meeting structure also provides an effective vehicle for evangelism, as the members of these neighborhood groups reach out and draw other people in. Mission is also carried out by these class groups, and other mission societies in the congregation, which engage in outreach and service in the community and beyond in the world.

This hierarchical system is clearly very efficient, but it also generates rivalry, competition, and factionalism at both the general and local levels. At the national level, pastors vie with one another for coveted judicatory or institutional positions, and factions representing differing political or theological views compete for ascendancy. In the local church, a struggle for
control of policies and funds is often waged between the pastor and one or more of the lay elders, who are elected and ordained for life.

All this can help us understand the phenomenal growth of the Korean church in recent years. There are several reasons for this rapid growth. One is the recent history of social conflict and dislocation, beginning with the Japanese occupation and continuing through the Korean war. Industrialization has only heightened these conditions: people are leaving their ancestral homes in the countryside and coming to the city to seek employment, where they turn to the churches for acceptance, security, and social services. Some also see Christianity as a "modern religion" which can provide material blessing and prosperity in return for faithful giving and participation.

A second reason frequently given is the hard work of the pastors. One pastor told me he worked 20 hours a day, and gave as evidence his daily schedule from 5:00 a.m. until 1:00 the next morning. In the view of Korean Christians, this devotion to the work of the church is a sign of the pastors' dedication to Christ, which evokes from them a loyal response of generous giving and regular participation. A third reason for the growth of the church is the dedicated service of the small group leaders, who through the weekly class meetings provide the evangelistic outreach and pastoral care that maintain the church's links of communication and accountability.

Glimpses of an Alternative Consciousness

While the authoritarian, hierarchical pattern of leadership has predominated in Korea from time immemorial, there have been, and continue to be, indications of an alternative approach. These appear in cultural and religious forms and movements, social and political trends, and theological and ecclesiological expressions—both old and new.

Glimpses in Culture and Religion

The cultural and religious expressions of an alternative form of leadership to which I was exposed include Shamanism,
1. Shamanism. The leaders in Korea's most ancient religion are approximately seventy-five percent women. Called mudangs, they were highly regarded in early times. But for centuries now it has been a low-status occupation (although many wealthy and educated people continue to use their services). Many parents therefore discourage their daughters from becoming shamans. Their role is to appease and drive away the spirits and free the haunted minjung (common people) from fear and misfortune, bringing them back to a harmonious life. Some women become shamans by inheriting the role from mothers or mothers-in-law. But most have call experiences in which, through illness or disturbance, they undergo a kind of death and resurrection. They die to the old, then rise to a new call, a new way of life.

This experience of dying and rising is then repeated in the kut, a rite of exorcism and seance that takes place when a petitioner comes with a request. In the ceremony which follows, the bitter han, the suffering and resentment of the people, is dissolved through the power of empathy of the mudang and her ritual act of dying, entering the spirit world on their behalf, and then returning with a promise of blessing. This creates a community of trust. I experienced this in the all-day kut I attended, as the relationship deepened and a bonding took place. This happens particularly among women, since most mudangs and petitioners are women.

Leadership in this setting is based on spirit power. It is relational, informal, human, service-oriented, humble. There is no hierarchical relationship. During a kut, a daughter-in-law may strike a father-in-law, even though ordinarily there are strict boundaries between them. Ordinary people and shamans both have a divine quality; they enter into the holy together. The god of Shamanism is not omnipotent; power is shared among the gods and spirits, both male and female. And spirituality is a harmony between this world and the spirit
PATTERNS IN KOREA

world, where spirits are concerned with people's mundane needs, and mutuality and harmony are promoted.

2. Hanism. Shamanism is incorporated into Hanism, a modern word describing traditional Korean thought. The word han here is a different Korean word, which has a total of twenty-two different meanings, including but not limited to the "bitter resentment" mentioned earlier. Most of these meanings relate to a paradoxical combination of wholeness and individuality, God and the world, leader and followers, absolute and relative, transcendent and immanent, the one in the many and the many in the one. The word "aboutness" is used to refer to the relativity of time, incompleteness, and lack of exactness, clarity, and sharp distinctions in life. This "aboutness" is illustrated in Koreans' traditional non-punctuality, in the Korean theatre where there is no strict division between the stage and the audience, and in the kut, as I experienced it, where there was no separation between the shamans, the petitioner, and the audience. At one point, I was invited to get up, put on the dress (Both men and women shamans wear the same feminine robes) of the shaman, and dance along with her as part of the ceremony. So I was part of the act, so to speak; there was no separation.

This "aboutness" or relativity suggests a leadership in which there is no clear division between leader and followers. It is symbolized by the yin-yang, which originated in China but is a widely recognized Asian symbol for the harmony and blending of opposites like night and day, earth and sky, dark and light, female and male, open and closed, moon and sun. (Significantly, Koreans list these pairs with the female-related element first, as here, the reverse of the Chinese order.) The yin-yang of Hanism highlights the unity, equality, relationship, rhythm, and creativity of process.

3. Tonghak and Chundokyo. Another manifestation of this egalitarian approach occurred in the Tonghak Movement and Rebellion in the late 19th century and in its contemporary, much-weakened remnant successor religion, Chundokyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way). The Tonghak Movement was a peasant rebellion which nearly succeeded in overthrowing the
ruling Chosun Dynasty, until it was put down with the aid of Chinese troops. Its underlying philosophy was based on the concepts of innanechun—people are heaven, or people are God, or the people’s mind is God’s mind—and sainnaechun—treat/serve people like heaven, or like God. In this movement and religion, members are encouraged to respect and help others. They should not discriminate against others on the basis of sex, occupation, or race, nor show partiality between the powerful and the weak, rich and poor, or government officers and common people.

Tonghak was a people’s religion and a non-aristocratic political movement, characterized by an egalitarian, bottom-up, structure of religious leadership. Slave register documents were destroyed, a classless society was the goal, and the people-wisdom of the oppressed was the main motive power behind the formation of non-military local governments for social transformation. Even when the religious congregations and leaders were turned into military units in the Tonghak revolutionary army in a last-ditch effort to throw off the oppressors, their chief leader, Bong-joon Chun, was quoted as saying, “The people asked me to lead the rebellion and I followed the people’s word.” Tonghak and Chundokyo represent the effort of suffering, oppressed people to bring about a reign of heaven on earth, in which equality, mutual respect, and just treatment are present for all.

4. Taoism. Another facet of this alternative consciousness is Taoism, which, while originating in China, has been influential in Korea and throughout East Asia. Lao Tzu, in the Tao Te Ching, offers injunctions like these: conduct yourself in accordance with the laws of nature; be humble, meek, and easily content; live simply and do not desire acquisition; govern the world through “non-action”; and do nothing and let the people do what they can do for themselves. Speaking directly of leadership, Lao Tzu said, “of a great leader it will be said, we did this ourselves.”

5. Won Buddhism. In contemporary Korea, Won (Circle) Buddhism is gaining increasing popularity, particularly among the educated, affluent middle class. It teaches that II Won (one
circle) is the origin of all beings in the universe. All are one and equal. "All are incarnations of truth-Buddha. Do each thing as an offering of worship to the Buddha. Practice meditation continually, everywhere. Moving and being quiet are of one suchness. Keep the spirit and the body fully integrated. Buddhist truth is found in life; life is Buddhist truth itself." Observe unity, harmony and respect for all.

In this modern, rapidly growing form of Buddhism, the leadership of laity and of women in its worship, organization, and education and service programs, is very prominent. Rooted in a deep awareness of the unity, harmony, and worth of all creation, Won Buddhist priests and laity share equally and respectfully in the leadership of their movement.

6. Maitreya or Minjung Buddhism is another expression of the alternative consciousness. Maitreya is the name of the Buddha who is yet to come to establish paradise on earth. This is an eschatological form of Buddhism, in which a realm free from suffering is to be established, with the caste system eliminated, women and men equal, and the hope of the oppressed realized. The descending Maitreya of this form of Buddhism stands in opposition to the more widely accepted Amitabha Buddhism of King Asoka of ancient India, who invoked the power of the Buddha to preserve the status quo of the then-current monarchical and autocratic social order. In Maitreya Buddhism, the power of the state is based on a contractual relationship between the king and the people, which requires the king to earn his position by his executive skill and moral example. The king is accountable to the people.

Minjung (people's) Buddhism hears in the voice of the people the demands of history and tries to respond faithfully. It is egalitarian and revolutionary in nature. The masses of people are the subjects of history, the protagonists of destiny; from them revolutionary energy keeps bursting up; from them the Maitreya will come to transform the political and social structures and establish a new world, the Buddha Land. The common people, not the ruling classes, will provide the messianic leadership for the new age.
Glimpses in Society

Turning now to society, we see other glimpses of an alternative approach to leadership in some of the customs and trends both past and present.

1. Village egalitarianism. Vincent Brandt, a Harvard anthropologist, did a study of a rural Korean village to which he gave the fictitious name, Sokpo, where he found abundant evidence of long-standing practices of mutual aid, cooperation, hospitality, generosity, tolerance, and social bonding—all of this across class lines. These customs fostered an egalitarian ethos and collective leadership from various classes, in a variety of village activities such as fishing, harvesting, and house-building. This cooperative village system is based on the traditional concept of Doo-Mae ("community"), which has been all but lost in the modern urbanized, industrialized Korean society.

2. Social mobility. In the 19th century, the breakdown of feudal society and the class system fostered greater social equality, due in part to the invasion of colonial economic forces. But there were other contributing factors: the purchase of nobility status by people in the lower classes, forgery of stratification documents through bribery, the discrediting of Confucian political and social control, and the growing antagonism against the ruling class exploitation of commoners.

In the 20th century, the move toward social equality has been hastened by the dislocation of population caused by the Japanese occupation, World War II, the Korean War, the flow of refugees from North to South, industrialization, the move from farm to city, and growing prosperity. These factors have led increasingly to the collapse of the class system and the acceptance of leadership based on ability rather than hereditary status.

3. Democratization. Very recently, since the fall of the Chun Doo-Whan military dictatorship and the popular election of president and national assembly, Korean society is moving toward greater democratization in many areas of life. Televised legislative hearings have exposed the corruption and brutality
of the military regime, prompting calls for reforms. Public student and worker demonstrations have agitated for the implementation of democratic measures in factories, educational institutions, and the political process.

In some universities, student-faculty councils have been instituted to share decision making with administrators, and presidents have been elected rather than appointed by the government. Radical student groups utilize an "up-and-down" process of decision making in place of traditional authoritarian approaches. Foreign-trained teachers are introducing participatory methods and ideas into the classroom. And in business and industry, through American and Japanese joint ventures, managers are gaining increasing experience with the delegation of responsibility, decisions in executive council rather than by one boss, and trusting the competence, training, and ideas of employees at lower levels.

Theology and Church Life

1. Minjung theology. The best-known form of indigenous Korean theology is Minjung, or people's theology, in which oppressed people, the minjung, with a long history of struggle, are seen as a source of eschatological hope. The minjung are defined as those who are politically oppressed, economically exploited, sociologically alienated, and culturally and educationally deprived. They are seen as subjects of history, holding power for social and historical transformation. They are weighed down by han, an accumulated feeling of unresolved resentment against unjustifiable suffering and oppression. And they rid themselves of han by the practice of dan, or the cutting off or release of both the feeling of resentment and the temptation to retaliate against the oppressor.

The minjung are identified with the Hebrew slaves in Egypt and the ochlos (poor) of first century Galilee. Jesus is seen as the mudang come from the bottom, proclaiming that the poor will inherit the earth. Jesus was the Messiah of the masses, offering hope to the han-ridden minjung who are themselves destined now to be the new Messiah, liberating people from oppression. God has revealed and makes truth known through
the struggle of the minjung for liberation. God chooses the minjung to perform their Messianic role. Koinonia, which is defined not as fellowship but as solidarity, is the joyous community where love and justice abound as the minjung at the bottom struggle to give themselves out of hope, to die and be resurrected to new life, as they bring about liberation for all. 14

2. Feminist theology and women’s issues. Progressive feminist theologians are today emphasizing women’s images of God as caring and nurturing, with obvious implications for leadership style. They are also beginning to see the Shamanist mudangs as sisters and spiritual leaders, in contrast to the prevailing view of Shamanism among the vast majority of Christians as pagan superstition. They are exploring the sources of the mudang’s power in traditional Korean society, and looking for parallels between their approach to religious leadership and that which might be adopted by women pastors. They are reasserting the legitimate role of women as religious leaders and a style of leadership which hears, empathizes with and liberates the minjung.

One example of this form of leadership is Rev. Cho Wha-Soon, a Methodist woman pastor who shared the struggle and suffering of the women textile workers in Inchon. Another is Dr. Lee Tai-Young, who provides counseling for women and family problems and leadership for women’s rights in Korean society. A third woman leader is Mrs. Ahn Sang-Nim, who when I first met her was General Secretary of the Korean Association of Women Theologians. Her agenda was four-fold: to develop and spread Korean feminist theology, to participate in action for social change to enable the liberation of all human beings and the world of nature, to bring about acceptance of women’s ordination and equal rights for women throughout church and society, and to oppose specific abuses such as prostitution and sex tourism.

A current study of the leadership patterns among Korean religious women, both Shamanist and Christian, defines power as “the ability to help people” rather than the more widely accepted “ability to accomplish goals.” It identifies the following as the qualities of good women leaders: a comfortable, confi-
dent, relaxed presence; sensitivity and awareness of people; not
dominant or showy but humble and somewhat deprived-look­
ing; energetic in religious activities and dedicated to work;
nurturing and caring in human relationships; wise, knowledge­
able, and insightful about life, people, themselves, and fate; and
expressing a theology of glory and empowerment by God in
contrast to a theology of the cross, submission, and confession
of sin and guilt. 15

3. Minjung churches. A growing movement in the Korean
church is the emergence of the so-called minjung or people’s
churches. These are small, and for the most part made up of
workers and the urban poor. The one I visited, the Methodist
Membership Church in Seoul, worships Korean-style, sitting
on the floor, in a house that also serves as a hostel for child
laborers—young girls who come in from the country to work
long hours in textile factories in the garment district nearby.

Another is Inhang Methodist Church near Inchon, where
classes are offered for workers on labor laws, organization
strategies, and traditional musical instruments. Workers them­
selves lead Bible study, relating scriptural themes to their
struggle in the factories for industrial justice. And in a com­
munion service I attended, members came forward in pairs and
served each other the elements face-to-face, in a touching,
intimate expression of koinonia.

In the Sandol (Living Stone) Church, a Presbyterian con­
gregation, where the pastor is Dr. Kim Yong-Bok, a leading
minjung theologian, the laity provide leadership for service and
educational programs for the workers and the urban poor. In
the life of the congregation, leadership responsibilities are
shared, decisions are made in full congregational meetings, and
the laity conduct worship, preach, and teach. This congregation
has developed a written covenant, recited monthly in their
communion services, which affirms their commitment to
shared, servant ministry. This covenant states, in part

We, as the Sandol community of faith, resolve before God
and our people to share the gospel with the poor, to prac-
Justice and love of God, and to realize reconciliation and peace, as follows:

1. We renew our life through vigorous spiritual discipline. By deepening our spiritual life, we will lay the foundation for church renewal in the Korean church.

2. We enrich our life of faith through deepened koinonia as the faithful people.

3. We share suffering and hope with the poor, participate with them in the local mission by proclaiming the Good News of God's Kingdom, revitalize our life together, and share our joys with them.

4. We create a new style of life as a covenant community, in the political, economic and cultural arenas, and dedicate ourselves to social transformation.

5. We offer ourselves as sacrifices to justice, freedom and re-unification, which are the aspirations of our people; we resolve to be living sacrifices for reconciliation and peace among our people.  

Minjung theology and the minjung churches give expression to the power and vitality of the common people in Korea, providing creative leadership in developing fresh, egalitarian forms of Christian thought and church life and ministry.

Conclusion

The Korean mask dance has its roots in an old village festival in which people carried out religious ceremonies to request the blessing of the gods on their crops. It was accompanied by entertainment, including satirical portrayals of aristocrats, rhythmic music, songs, humorous dialogue, vulgar expressions, and bold, dynamic dance movements. People from the audience joined in, and the masks helped them slip into the world of dream, fantasy, and vision.

In one scene from the Korean mask dance, Maltugi, the servant of three aristocrat brothers, ridicules and deceives them, degrades the word yangban with derogatory puns, and
defeats them in a poetry contest. As the ruling elite, the yangban class is supposed to be scholarly, respectable and above the mundane world of ordinary folks. In this scene they are too caught up in their own world to hear what Maltugi is really saying. They are so preoccupied with the existing system in which they hold a prestigious position that they become blind to the reality of the world around them.

The audience, however, sees everything, and laughs at them. Maltugi, knowing the reality, dramatizes the situation and caricatures the aristocrats, thus exposing the incongruities in the system.

Would it be too presumptuous to say that the yangbans in the mask dance represent the traditional patriarchal, hierarchical, autocratic leadership system of ancient and present-day Korea? And that Maltugi symbolizes the minjung—the shamans, women, students, workers, and villagers—challenging the aristocrats and exposing the incongruities in the system? And that we, the audience, can see it all, recognizing the reality, and rejoicing with Maltugi in seeing the signs of a new age emerging in the Land of the Morning Calm?

The challenge and opportunity which all this presents to the Korean American immigrant church, and to those who share their sense of mission, is: Can the polarization between hierarchy and factionalism and protest and resistance be transformed? Can the strength of positive, vigorous, assertive pastoral leadership be combined with the cooperative solidarity and empowerment of the minjung? Such a combination could well forge a creative new synthesis that would offer fresh models of leadership to challenge and inform both the predominant authoritarian mentality of the Korean church and the more permissive, often lethargic and laissez-faire patterns of some American churches.

Notes


5. Ibid., p. 68.

6. Ibid., p. 145.

7. Ibid., p. 148.

8. Ibid., p. 83.

9. Paraphrased from the *Tao Te Ching*, which also includes the following statements about wise male leadership: "The sage places himself in the background, but finds himself in the foreground" (Chapter 7). "To lead them, but not to master them this is called profound and secret virtue" (Chapter 10). "The best (rulers) are those whose existence is (merely) known by the people...It is only when one does not have enough faith in others that others will have no faith in him" (Chapter 17). "For a victory, let us observe the occasion with funeral ceremonies" (Chapter 31). "I take no action and the people themselves are transformed. I love tranquility and the people of themselves become correct. I engage in no activity and the people of themselves become prosperous. I have no desires and the people of themselves become simple" (Chapter 57). The great rivers and seas are kings of all mountain streams because they skillfully stay below them. That is why they can be their kings. Therefore, in order to be the superior of the people, one must...place himself below them" (Chapter 66). "A skillful conqueror does not compete with people. One who is skillful in using men puts himself below them" (Chapter 68). "To know that you do not know is the best. To pretend to know when you do not know is a disease" (Chapter 71). "The Way of Heaven is to benefit others and not to injure. The Way of the sage is to act but not to compete" (Chapter 81). See also John Heider, *The Tao of Leadership* (New York: Bantam Books, 1986) for paraphrases of other Taoist teachings on leadership.


14. For fuller treatments of *Minjung* Theology, see Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, ed., *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981); and Changwon John Suh, "A Formulation of Minjung Theology: Toward a Socio-Historical Theology of Asia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary,
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16. From the "Declaration of Faith for Covenant Community," Sandol Church, Presbyterian Church of Korea, established 1984.


*Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible,* introduces to experienced and new preachers alike a set of approaches to biblical interpretation capable of strongly influencing the preaching of the church. Clearly and simply, with many helpful illustrations, the book introduces literary and rhetorical approaches to biblical interpretations. But Long's central purpose is not to introduce a new type of biblical interpretation; it is to help preachers see how their preaching may be strengthened and enriched by attending to the literary forms of the Bible.

As Long characterizes it, literary and rhetorical styles of biblical interpretation are to be understood in contrast to historical/critical styles. Historical critical interpretation is interested primarily in investigating what lies behind a text. That is, historical critical approaches want to know who wrote a particular text, why they wrote it, what was going on at the time of the writing. By contrast, literary rhetorical approaches to biblical interpretation are primarily interested in literary features in the texts and rhetorical dynamics which are likely to take place in front of the texts, that is between the texts and the readers" (p. 24). Interpretation from a literary rhetorical perspective begins with the assumption that texts have readers and that what a text means is not solely a function of what an author said, but is also closely related to how a reader reads the text. To say this type of interpretation is concerned with what "takes place in front of the texts" is to insist that texts don't have meaning, but participate in a process of making meaning.

In the early portion of the book, Long outlines and explains five questions that will help the preacher focus on the literary and rhetorical aspects of texts. The questions are: What is the genre of the text? What is the rhetorical function of this genre? What literary devices does this genre employ to achieve its rhetorical effect? How in particular does the text under consideration, in its own literary setting, embody all of these
characteristics and dynamics? And how may the sermon, in a
new setting, say and do what the texts says and does in its
setting?

The remainder of the book uses these questions to explore
how one might preach different literary forms found in the
Bible: the psalms, proverbs, narratives, parables, and epistles.
Throughout, his argument is that the "preacher's task is not to
replicate the biblical text but to regenerate the impact of some
portion of that text."

This is a very helpful book. It enters into the complex and
confusing debates of biblical scholarship and emerges with a
clear and coherent statement that is understandable for the
non-specialist and usable for the preacher. That is a remarkable
accomplishment.

I have two criticism of the book. First, the chapters which
treat the various literary forms are too brief to be able to give
anything but the simplest taste of how to preach these forms.
They whet the appetite of the reader, but leave one wanting
much more. Although the footnotes give some indication as to
where one might find out more, these sections would have been
strengthened had they included a list for further reading.

My second criticism is a little more subtle. A central argu­
ment of the book is that biblical preaching does not just seek
to say what the Bible says, but it also seeks to do what the Bible
does. I have no objection to Professor Long's claim that how
something is said is inseparably related to what it says. My
concern is with the unquestioned assumption that what the
Bible says and does is worth saying and doing. Undoubtedly at
very many points what the Bible says and does is worth saying
and doing, but this is not an assumption one should make
uncritically. When Long says that preaching is to regenerate
the impact of some portion of the text, has he lost sight of the
larger demand that Christian preaching is to proclaim the
gospel of Jesus Christ? If regenerating the impact of the same
portion of the text meets this demand, then by all means do it.
But is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the same thing as the Bible?
Is preaching that is faithful to the biblical text always faithful
to Jesus Christ? These are questions raised by what Long has
to say in this book, but not directly addressed. We can only hope
that they are issues he will soon take up.

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Frederick E. Maser. *The Story of John Wesley's Sisters: Seven
Sisters in Search of Love*. Rutland, Vermont: Academy Books,

Maser has provided Wesley buffs with a look inside the
Wesley household that the general reader will find amazing, if
not shocking. Two hundred years of Methodist hagiography has
made certain that only the cleanest of the laundry was placed
in the public eye. It is to Maser's credit, a Methodist who
contributed articles to the *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*
and who served on the editorial board of the three volume
*History of American Methodism*, that he has been willing to go
to the painstaking and perhaps even a bit risky task of assimilat­
ing this provocative material into a small book (118 pages
including indices).

The sources from which the biographical sketches of the
Wesley sisters was gleaned is not conducive to facilitating a
quick and easy research process. In addition to the various
editions of the letters and journals of John and Charles Wesley,
Maser has made extensive use of the two volumes of memoirs
of the Wesley family by Adam Clarke and George Stevenson.
The small size of Maser's treatment of the Wesley's sisters is
more an indication of the scanty amount of material that has
survived than it is of the amount of primary source material
that one has to read in order to out line the sister's lives.

The chapter titles are provocative enough to inspire a
television mini-series: "Heartbreak and Healing" [Emilia Wes­
ley Harper]; "A Case of Wife Abuse" [Susanna Wesley Ellison];
"Joy and Tragedy" [Mary Wesley Whitelamb]; "Passion and
Punishment" [Mehetabel Wesley Wright]; "As a Quiet Stream" [Anne Wesley Lambert]; "Living and Forgiving" [Martha Wesley Hall]; "Quiet Desperation" [Kezia Wesley].

The strength of this collection of stories is the bringing together of the scattered biographical information, but this is at the same time the occasion for its weakness. The information about the seven sisters is so diverse, and the factual information reported in the letters and journals is so often not placed in context, that Moser's essays often lack a smooth flow. At times the reader feels that information was placed in the chapter because it is an interesting "tidbit" rather than because it contributes in a special way to the story. This flaw is, in the reviewer's opinion, probably unavoidable to a certain extent.

Perhaps the only way to overcome the lack of flow in the story would have been to write a completely different type of book, an historical novel utilizing the factual information. There are, as a matter of fact, times in each chapter in which Moser has added his own conjectures and expanded on the historical data in order to complete the picture. There are also several instances in which the author seemed to be citing specific information but failed to give the references. For the student who wishes to retrace the research, this will prove most disconcerting.

The strength of this book is its research of the primary sources on a topic that is new, except in scattered periodicals. In this area of researching the primary sources, Moser would have been well served by spending a few delightful days in the Methodist Archives at the Deansgate branch of the Manchester University Library, England. There are several manuscript letters related to the Wesley sisters that would have helped provide more continuity to his biographical sketches. I have referred to some of these in the manuscripts section of the bibliography in my The Limits of Love Divine (Abingdon, 1989), and I have also provided some more details about the love life of Martha Wesley in the chapter, "The Wayward Preachers," (pp. 186 ff).

These comments on weakness should not be allowed to detract the general reader who wants to know more about the
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Wesleys or the student who is interested in 18th century history, from examining this well-produced book on seven sisters who searched in vain for romantic love.

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