

**“WE ARE THE CHURCH”: THE ROMANIZATION OF  
UNITED METHODISM, 1945–1988**

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
ABSTRACT .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION: "WE ARE THE CHURCH" .....	1
II. AMERICAN METHODIST HISTORY AND WORSHIP TO 1939: "O MIGHT MY LOT BE CAST WITH THEE" .....	18
III. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE TO 1945: "ON THIS STONE NOW LAID WITH PRAYER" .....	36
IV. METHODIST UNION TO 1947: "FORGIVE US, LORD, THE FOLLY THAT QUARRELS WITH THY FRIENDS" .....	52
V. INCREASING FORMALISM, 1945-1965: "THINE IS THE GLORY, RISEN, CONQUERING SON" .....	76
VI. ROBERT E. CUSHMAN, A CASE STUDY IN THE ROMANIZATION OF AMERICAN METHODISM: "HOW BLESSED IS THY CHURCH, O GOD" .....	108
VII. ROMANIZATION, 1968- 1992: "THIS IS A DAY OF NEW BEGINNINGS" .....	145
VIII. CONCLUSION: "ENABLE US TO PENETRATE THE DEPTH OF THE WHOLE TRUTH" .....	172
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	194

## ABSTRACT

In his 1994 Presidential Address to the American Society of Church History, Nathan O. Hatch described the puzzling lack of attention given to American Methodism by religious and general historians. Methodism in early American history has received considerable attention and, more recently, nineteenth-century American Methodism has been drawing more attention. But recent American Methodism is still largely unexplored. Frederick A. Norwood published the last comprehensive survey of American Methodism in 1974, which included the first three-quarters of the twentieth century. Although he included a discussion of the impact of the ecumenical context, Norwood could not have predicted the changes to occur in the practice of Methodist worship.

This dissertation is a study of the changes in Methodist worship in the twentieth century in theological and ecumenical context. While other works have explored the current context of Methodist worship, this work explores the theological and ecumenical factors driving liturgical change. A focus of this study is on the committee processes, the debates in the denomination's quadrennial general conference, and the persons leading the reform efforts. Its thesis is that American Methodism was "Romanized" in the process of liturgical reform, so that Methodist worship in 1988 intentionally looked more like Roman Catholic worship than like nineteenth-century Methodist worship.

Of the persons who epitomize the changes in American Methodism, Robert E. Cushman is a prime focus of this dissertation. Dean of the Divinity School of Duke University through the 1960s, observer at Vatican II, and founding member of the

Wesley Works project, Cushman rejected the liberal evangelical theology of early twentieth-century Methodism and constructed a neo-Wesleyan theology. Cushman emphasized liturgy and sacraments and supported the process of liturgical reform.

This subject of this dissertation begins with Methodist merger in 1939 and ends with the publication of the 1988 *United Methodist Hymnal*. Divided chronology into periods that correspond with the publication of hymnals and worship books, this work looks only at the body of American Methodism that became the United Methodist Church.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>DCA</i>	<i>Daily Christian Advocate</i>
EUB	Evangelical United Brethren Church
MEC	Methodist Episcopal Church
MECS	Methodist Episcopal Church, South
MP	Methodist Protestant Church
<i>NYT</i>	<i>New York Times</i>

## LIST OF TABLES

7.1: Comparison of Prayers of Great Thanksgiving. ....	157
7.2: Comparison of Roman Catholic and United Methodist Services. ....	169

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: “WE ARE THE CHURCH”

In the late twentieth century the Methodist Church in the United States underwent a process of “Romanization,” in which it shifted significantly away from the tradition’s revival and camp-meeting heritage and toward a more Catholic self-understanding. Methodists revised their worship rites throughout the whole of the twentieth century. Revision entailed making choices, at first the choice between the nineteenth-century revivalist pattern and an aesthetically enriched worship, eventually between late-medieval Anglican practices and early Roman services. One writer claimed that the choices facing Methodism at the end of the century were either “Roman Catholic sacramentalism or Baptist evangelicalism.”<sup>1</sup> By 1988, Methodist intellectuals showed a clear preference for the early Roman tradition. Some of the rites in the 1988 *United Methodist Hymnal* showed scant differences from contemporary Roman Catholic services. An emerging ecumenical theology served as the driving force of this shift, replacing the reigning liberal theology when it failed to provide a coherent theology of worship. The ecumenical theology, and its neo-Wesleyan component, emphasized liturgy and sacraments in worship, deliberately bringing the United Methodist Church of 1988 to look more like the Roman Catholic Church than the Methodist Episcopal Church of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup>*United Methodist Reporter*, 16 November 2001, 3; quoting Andy Langford, general editor of the *United Methodist Book of Worship*.

This study begins in 1939, the year in which the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC), the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS), and the Methodist Protestant Church (MPC) reunited, to form the Methodist Church. It chronicles the changes in Methodist worship, given manifestation in successive hymnals and worship books. The study closes in 1988, at the apex of Romanization, when the United Methodist Church approved a new hymnbook that gave visible witness to its liturgical, sacramental, and ecumenical emphases.

The initial question that formed this research came about with the realization that histories of American Methodism are twenty to thirty years old. Furthermore, those histories tended to focus on institutional and bureaucratic changes, growth and decline in membership, with some attention to leading personalities. Some recent monographs have focused mostly on the changing bureaucracy, such as denominational boards, or the changing roles of bishops and conferences.<sup>2</sup> Other studies have considered contemporary questions, such as connectionalism, funding, Methodist universities, missions, or leadership.<sup>3</sup>

In part, historian Nathan Hatch inspired this study by his challenge to look at American Methodism with fresh focus.<sup>4</sup> This is an attempt to see Methodism in a broader, perhaps less triumphalistic, context than older histories provided. A number of

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<sup>2</sup> James E. Kirby, Russell E. Richey, and Kenneth E. Rowe, *The Methodists* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Russell E. Richey, Dennis M. Campbell, and William B. Lawrence, eds., *United Methodism and American Culture*, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997-9).

<sup>4</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, "The Puzzle of American Methodism," *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture*, eds. Nathan O. Hatch and John H. Wigger (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2001).

new studies of eighteenth and nineteenth century Methodism have done that, but the twentieth century still remains mostly unexplored.<sup>5</sup>

Few works have focused specifically on worship. In his doctoral dissertation, “How Contemporary Liturgies Evolve,” Robert Peiffer examined the liturgy of the 1988 *United Methodist Hymnal*. Peiffer focused on the committee process in the national and professional staff of the United Methodist Church and concluded that three denominational staffers established the agenda for the 1988 hymnal. Peiffer failed to see the 1988 hymnal as one of a series of twentieth-century hymnals, and he did not set the work of the hymnal committee in the context of the developing denominational self-identity. Neither did he explore hymnal debates at the level of the general conference, the body that had to give final approval to the book of song and ritual.

Karen Westerfield Tucker has offered the only recent book-form examination of Methodist worship practice.<sup>6</sup> Like the present study, Westerfield Tucker utilized primary sources, including archived committee notes, to describe the changes in Methodist worship. The present study differs significantly from Westerfield Tucker’s analysis by connecting changes in worship practice to changes in theological articulation. Liturgical texts are an important primary source of this study, but so are the debates and the processes by which those texts came to exist. Behind the texts and legislative processes are theologies and theologians that provided the intellectual justification for thinking

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<sup>5</sup> A. Gregory Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home: The Domestication of American Methodism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), and John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodist and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford, 1998), are good examples.

<sup>6</sup> Karen Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

about and organizing a praxis of worship. This study considers the debates about worship practice in the General Conferences—the legislative bodies of Methodism that met quadrennially. Here, Methodist worship is placed in historical context while also seeing liturgical theology within its broader systematic theological context.

This study also offers a unique contribution to the analysis of Methodist worship by way of a case study of one theologian, Robert E. Cushman. In a presentation to the Tenth Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies in 1997, this author gave an outline of Cushman’s thought, with particular reference to his refutation of the Calvinist tradition.<sup>7</sup> The Oxford working group agreed that, as one of the most influential theologians and churchmen of the mid-twentieth century, Cushman demanded more scholarly attention. As the only scholar with access to the Cushman archives at Duke University, this author presents a synopsis of Cushman’s theology, as it relates to the issues of liturgical practice.

Cushman, who taught at Duke University Divinity School, was instrumental in establishing a “Neo-Wesleyan” movement within Methodism, the goal of which was to recover and understand the true tradition of Methodism’s founder, John Wesley. The neo-Wesleyan movement focused on Wesley as a theologian and also sought to recover the tradition that influenced Wesley as well as the texts (liturgical and theological) that Wesley provided for the Americans. Cushman was also one of the first Methodist theologians to teach sacramental theology in a Methodist school and he was an early

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<sup>7</sup> W. Douglas Mills, “Robert E. Cushman, John Calvin, and the Nature of God,” presented to Wesley Studies working group at the Tenth Oxford Institute of Methodist Theology Studies, Oxford England, August, 1997. A shortened version appears as “Robert Earl Cushman: His Critique of John Calvin and Predestination in the Wesleyan Tradition,” *Methodist History*, 38: 1 (October 1999): 3- 13.

consultant to the committee process that created the 1988 *Hymnal* and subsequent *Book of Worship*.

Deans of the seminaries had particular influence<sup>8</sup> and, because the number of deans was small, they often formed close friendships and working partnerships. William R. Cannon, Dean of Candler School of Theology at Emory University from 1953 until 1968, was elected to the episcopacy.<sup>9</sup> Bernard Anderson, best known as an Old Testament scholar, served Drew during the same period.

As much as anyone, Robert Earl Cushman, Dean of the Divinity School of Duke University from 1958 to 1972, set the agenda of Romanization and helped “shape the belief structure of contemporary Methodism in the United States.”<sup>10</sup> As a delegate and sometime consultant to various General Conference committees, Cushman influenced decisions made at the denomination’s quadrennial policy-making meetings. During his tenure as dean, Cushman’s long arm of influence touched all students at the school, as well as the inner structures of the church itself. Cushman, a Protestant observer at

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<sup>8</sup> Methodist seminaries and their deans garnered an increasing share of the *de facto* teaching office. The denomination’s bishops rejected this teaching role. Randy L. Maddox, “‘An Untapped Inheritance’: American Methodism and Wesley’s Practical Theology,” *Doctrines and Discipline*, ed. Dennis M. Campbell (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 40.

<sup>9</sup> Cannon tells of his contributions in his autobiography: William Ragsdale Cannon, *A Magnificent Obsession* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999). Cannon, Outler, and Cushman are sometimes mentioned as the three “big” names in mid-twentieth century Methodism (Rowe, interview by the author, Madison, NJ, 27 September 2001), although Outler was not a dean. He taught at Duke and at Perkins. Outler’s story is told in Bob Parrott, *Albert C. Outler: the Gifted Dilettante* (Anderson, Ind.: Bristol House, 1999). Only Cushman’s story remains untold.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 198.

Vatican II, founded the United Methodist Church's Commission on Ecumenical Affairs and served twice as president of the Association of Methodist Theological Schools. Cushman reorganized the seminary curriculum to include more liturgical theology and training in the leadership of worship, and he oversaw the capital expansion of the school, which included plans for a Divinity School chapel. By 1988, able leadership had transformed Duke Divinity School into one of the three largest and most influential Methodist seminaries, even though a board of visitors had labeled the school inadequate and undistinguished in 1948.<sup>11</sup> A significant number of Methodist ministers trained in Cushman's classes, so his influence on several generations of clergy was considerable. He advocated liturgical worship, taught sacramental theology, promoted ecumenism, and helped shape a United Methodism's ecclesiology in the late twentieth century.

While the hymnals and worship books are prime data for detailing this study, so, too, are the official pronouncements regarding the Methodism's relationship to Roman Catholicism and the joint work that came about as a result of ecumenical, or interdenominational, dialog. In order for Methodism to enter into dialog with Roman Catholicism, it had to undergo a change of attitude. In the early twentieth century, Methodists were, like other American Protestants, anti-Catholic. Pulling no punches, historian A. Gregory Schneider summed up the initial relationship between Methodists and Roman Catholics. "Methodists played their part in the sorry story of Protestant nativism and its fevered imaginings of papist conspiracies, licentious priests, and violated

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<sup>11</sup> Robert F. Durden, *The Launching of Duke University 1924-1949* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 344.

nuns,” he wrote.<sup>12</sup> In the early years of this study, we will find Methodist bishops writing about the Roman Catholic “threat.” Some Methodists advanced Catholic conspiracy theories. Yet, as Jaroslav J. Pelikan pointed out, it is a tribute to the vitality of the Methodist Church, that a denomination that participated in promoting fear and suspicion eventually urged Americans to recognize the fact of religious plurality.<sup>13</sup> In large part, church leadership orchestrated the attitudinal shift. At first, public inflammatory language was toned down; eventually, prominent Roman Catholics were invited to participate in high profile worship services. In an historic event, Roman Catholic Bishop John J. Wright addressed the Methodist General Conference of 1964. Throughout the 1960s, Methodist church leaders took the further step, suggesting the American denomination should develop a deeper appreciation for the Roman church. By 1988, that appreciation developed into mimicry in some respects.

The liturgy—the words and order of worship—found in the 1988 *United Methodist Hymnal* completed the shift toward formal ritual. In its legislation, the 1988 General Conference placed the worship services first in the hymnal, indicating that the liturgy itself, particularly the order for the administration of the sacraments, was preeminent over the hymns. There, in the place of priority, the liturgy serves as the official standard for normative worship. The changes came as a result of “ecumenical peer pressure” and because members of the United Methodist Church bureaucracy had come to think of the institution as a “liturgical church,” and no longer as a revivalistic

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<sup>12</sup> Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home*, 155.

<sup>13</sup> Jaroslav J. Pelikan, “Methodism’s Contribution to America,” in *The History of American Methodism*, ed. Emory Stevens Bucke (Nashville: Abingdon, 1964), 3: 601.

movement. The 1988 *United Methodist Hymnal*, along with the *Book of Discipline*, signaled a denomination that had become sacramental, liturgical, and ecumenical.

Around these themes Methodism learned from Roman Catholic liturgical revisions. Both Catholicism and Protestantism inherited worship practices from the late medieval Church in the West, but each reaped different aspects of that inheritance. Modern Catholic liturgical reform began with Pope Pius X in 1903, intensified in the period after World War II, and resulted in a major transformation of liturgical formation.<sup>14</sup> Dom Cyprian Vagaggini, a prominent Roman Catholic liturgical theologian, explained that the first step of the Second Vatican Council in 1962 had been to expand the idea of liturgy to encompass more than the canon law regarding the church's worship. Vagaggini wrote:

Thus it was found desirable to treat under "liturgy" not only the ceremonies and the rubrics but the liturgical actions or rites themselves, the liturgical formularies, the buildings destined for worship, the altar, the sacred vessels, the liturgical insignia, Gregorian chant, and not only the Mass, the breviary, the sacraments and sacramentals, but also the feasts and the liturgical year—in short, all the elements that have some relation to worship. Moreover, the ideal was to consider all this not only in the Roman liturgy but also in the other liturgies, and to make a comparative study of them.<sup>15</sup>

A similar transformation occurred within Protestantism. Protestants, including Methodists, found appealing so many of the Catholic reforms after Vatican II that they adopted the Catholic agenda and modeled their own reforms on the Catholic normative

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<sup>14</sup> James F. White, *Christian Worship in North America, A Retrospective: 1955-1995* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 10.

<sup>15</sup> Cyprian Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1976), xx. The English version, translated by Leonard J. Doyle and W. A. Jurgens, is from Vagaggini's fourth edition, revised after Vatican II.

patterns. Of Methodist worship, contemporary Methodist scholar James White wrote, “Recent decades have seen more attention to assimilating the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic reforms, especially in the lectionary and a plurality of forms, e.g. twenty-four eucharistic prayers. The *United Methodist Hymnal* (1989) and *United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992) show how far this has gone.”<sup>16</sup>

In this present work, “liturgical renewal” or, simply, “liturgy” encompasses these broader understandings. Methodism, in the process of “Romanization,” reconsidered not only its rubrics and rites, but also the formularies, buildings, priestly vestments, hymns, feasts, and the liturgical year. In short, the two paths, Catholic and Methodist, converged.

Behind these reforms and this convergence stood a vast body of scholarship, some of which will be reviewed here. Non-Roman Catholic scholars such as Anglican scholar Dom Gregory Dix played important roles in shaping revisions by Roman Catholics and Methodists. The third-century work of Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, more than any other document,<sup>17</sup> influenced both Roman Catholic eucharistic rites and Methodist ordination services.<sup>18</sup> Here is where Methodism adopted the Roman Catholic liturgical agenda. The work of Hippolytus, who opposed liturgical change in the third century, formed the basis of the Roman liturgy after Vatican II and, consequently, the base of the Methodists rites by 1992.

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<sup>16</sup> White, *Christian Worship in North America*, 25; first published in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, ed. Peter E. Fink, S.J. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, Edward Yarnold, eds, *The Study of Liturgy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 57-9.

<sup>18</sup> White, *Christian Worship in North America*, 125.

This study of the Romanization of American Methodism should lead to some interesting insights into the dynamics of denominations. It is clear that as Methodism focused on liturgical and sacramental aspects, even as it grew a deeper appreciation for the Roman tradition, it became increasingly bureaucratic and reliant on its professional clergy for leadership. General Conference legislative processes changed. Schools of theology took on new roles and gained increasing influence. The influence of faculty members at those schools increased, too. And, obviously, the patterns, rituals, and expectations of worship changed.

Worship is one indication of the distinctiveness of a denomination. Methodists, Quakers, Baptists all worship differently, according to conventional wisdom. Even an untrained lay person can recognize the differences between denominations, according to sociologist Nancy Ammerman. “The person on the street, like the theologian in the seminary, knows that denominations are supposed to be identifiable by their beliefs and practices. Defining denominations by the ideas and rituals that distinguish them from others is the commonsense thing to do.”<sup>19</sup> Worship is an indication of belief and the history of a denomination is, to some degree, a history of belief.

This study is an attempt to connect intellectual history with the life of an organization. Studies of American Christianity tend to focus on the realm of ideas, in which people and even denominations are often grouped under large, general, labels. An underlying theme of this study is that denominations were changed or evolved in the

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<sup>19</sup> Nancy T. Ammerman, “Denominations: Who and What Are We Studying?,” *Reimagining Denominationalism: Interpretive Essays*, eds. Robert Bruce Mullin and Russell E. Richey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 113.

crucible of ideas, whether those ideas were revivalism, Social Gospel, liberalism, or, in this case, Romanization. In short, this study is an attempt to connect ideas, that is theology, with practice, or with the culture of the denomination itself. When the world of ideas impinged on the life of the denomination, and on the lives of people, change resulted. As a denomination (or, denominations), Methodism in America has changed and what it means to be a Methodist has changed as well. Methodism's understanding of its own doctrine changed, becoming more articulate and more reflective. This study will examine a denomination changing and searching for its essence and uniqueness even as it grew older.

Some historians of the denomination looked for a paradigm to describe the changing face of American Methodism. Frederick Norwood, in particular, described the changes within Methodism as the process of maturation. A new-born in 1784, Methodism grew from a society into a church, and then, from 1860 to 1914, it matured into a settled institution, according to Norwood.<sup>20</sup> Cultural historian A. Gregory Schneider, in his impressive re-evaluation of piety, also used a growth- or life-cycle metaphor to describe American Methodism.<sup>21</sup> Schneider used the word "domesticated," to describe Methodism, in the sense of "settled" or "middle-aged." Norwood, Schneider, and others provide important nineteenth-century background to some of the twentieth-century themes, although the life-cycle metaphor is problematic. If, as Schneider

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<sup>20</sup> Frederick A. Norwood, "The Church Takes Shape," *History of American Methodism*, ed. Emory S. Bucke (Nashville: Abingdon, 1964) I, 419ff, and *The Story of American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), 119ff.

<sup>21</sup> Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home*.

claimed, Methodism was middle-aged in the nineteenth century, and if, as Norwood claimed, it was settled by 1914, then the obvious question is to wonder what word would describe Methodism in 1988. Methodism's emphasis on ecumenicity and ritual orthodoxy do not suggest that the church was "retired" or "near death" by the late twentieth century. A reappraisal, then, of the church's self-understanding in this later period may suggest a new metaphor or, at least, may suggest that the assigned metaphor requires reevaluation.

Russell Richey preferred to understand the changes within a denomination as metamorphosis, or evolution. Methodism, as other denominations, has taken on different forms, renegotiating its boundaries, and redefining its peculiarities.<sup>22</sup> Richey detected five stages or styles of denominational complexion to make his point that denominations change. Denominations vacillated, Richey wrote, between times styles that were introspective, preoccupied with internal order, and phases that were expansive.<sup>23</sup> Note that each change in style involved a debate about the purpose of the church. John Wesley's own revival was born out of his insistence that the Church of England failed in its duty to change hearts and lives and to reach the masses.

Changes in American Methodism, from a small movement to mainstream denomination, gave cause for reflection about the purpose of the church. For a number of generations after Methodism's "triumph" in the nineteenth century, the Methodist Church

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<sup>22</sup> Russell E. Richey, "Denominations and Denominationalism: An American Morphology," *Reimagining Denominationalism: Interpretive Essays*, eds. Robert Bruce Mullin and Russell E. Richey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 75.

<sup>23</sup> Richey, "Denominations and Denominationalism," 91.

was perceived as a sort of national church.<sup>24</sup> It was the largest, most representative, and, presumably, the most influential of denominations. Capitalizing on the influence and ability to affect change, church leadership reduced the purpose of the church to addressing social causes in the antebellum period, then to political activism by late nineteenth century. The church became a highly organized machine, driven by its own inertia, but confused in the twentieth century because it had no dominant theological paradigm to undergird its ecclesiology. The denomination lacked a consensus about the theological purpose of the church and became compulsive in its efforts to be busy in much political activity.<sup>25</sup> Methodism, made famous from the start for its organization, centralized power in its bureaucratic offices in the early twentieth century.

Evaluating the organizational structure of denominations at the beginning of the twentieth century, Nancy Ammerman wrote that it was no surprise that church organization was shaped by “models of centralization and efficiency that seemed to be working so well for business.”<sup>26</sup> The description of Methodism was accurate. Soon after reunion in 1939, the Church began consolidating missions, publishing houses, budgets, pensions, and educational credentials. It standardized record-keeping, organized its documents, and created centralized archives. These are the sources for historians

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<sup>24</sup> Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America*, 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 168.

<sup>25</sup> William H. Willimon and Robert L. Wilson, *Rekindling the Flame* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 27.

<sup>26</sup> Ammerman, “Denominations,” 116.

assessing the changes within the denomination and some of the primary documents for this study.

The call for greater clarity of purpose came to Methodism after the half-century mark. Speaking to the Second Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies in 1962, theology professor Albert Outler explained that “Methodism’s unique ecclesiological pattern was really designed to function best *within* an encompassing environment of *catholicity*.” In its origins, Methodism intended to be a society of reform within the church and, as a result of the accident of becoming a church, it developed a functional doctrine of the church as a matter of necessity. “We need a catholic church within which to function as a proper evangelical order of witness and worship, discipline and nurture,” Outler clarified. Not all of the ecumenical possibilities would serve Methodism equally well. “The way to catholicism—i.e., Christian unity—is *forward*,” Outler urged, “toward the *renewal* of catholicity rather than in *return* to something that has lost its true status as truly catholic. Meanwhile, since we are a church, it is more than a practical convenience that requires of us that we try to act responsibly in the exercise of our churchly character.”<sup>27</sup>

The church’s character, according to Outler, was intended to be liturgical and sacramental.<sup>28</sup> Methodist intellectuals agreed with Outler and understood that a proper ecclesiology included right liturgical practice. Therefore, liturgical renewal became a

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<sup>27</sup> Albert C. Outler, “Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church?,” in *The Doctrine of the Church*, ed. Dow Kirkpatrick (London: The Epworth Press, 1964), 26-7. The emphases are Outler’s.

<sup>28</sup> Outler, “Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church?,” 28.

primary obligation. Liturgical renewal entailed consideration of the rituals and the patterns and styles of worship, certainly, but it also concerned church architecture, Wesley hymnology, its theology of the sacraments, as well as Methodism's relation to and use of the resources of other Christian traditions. In order to fulfill its purpose of being an evangelical order within an environment of catholicity, American Methodism had to draw near to normative Roman worship. In short, Methodism was Romanized.

The present work is generally divided into chapters corresponding to the publication of hymnals and books of worship. In each case, the process is set into the context of social, economic, and institutional factors, apart from which the process of liturgical revision makes little sense. Chapter II gives the historical background of Methodism and also surveys Chapter III details most of the literature related to worship and that affected the shape of Methodist worship in 1939, the year of union between the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church. It is significant that little literature related to Methodist worship existed prior to the twentieth century. Both the pattern of worship that had developed and the lack of institutional maturity of the church explain this absence of literature. No need existed to explore worship *per se* in the nineteenth century because worship was a means to an end (conversion). Thus, the literature, what there was of it, focused on the end product. That the denomination barely recognized itself as a church may also account for some of the lack of literature related to worship.

Chapter IV explores the process by which the first worship book developed from 1939 until the end of the quadrennium of its publication, 1947. This was a period of

charged anti-Catholic rhetoric and a time of great fear brought on by the certainty of U.S. involvement in the European war. As the world changed, so, too, did the church change, including the process by which most clergy persons received their training. The influence of schools of theology increased and conferences established a pattern for worship revision. The process of Romanization was not greatly advanced in this period, but the agenda was identified.

Similarly, Chapter V explores the process by which the second book of worship developed, from 1945 to 1965. Again, social, economic, and institutional factors affected the process of worship revision. The *Book of Worship* of 1965 that was a product of this period was unusual because it looked back only to Cranmer and the Church of England as its ultimate source at a time when other sections of the church were discovering the patristic and Catholic tradition.

Chapter VI departs from the description of revision of worship books and hymnals. Instead, this chapter explores the work of Robert E. Cushman, Vatican II, the World Methodist Council, and the Ecumenical Movement. This discussion provides, then, the context for Chapter VII and the preparation of the last book of worship, in which the agenda of Romanization is clearest. Chapter VIII concludes the matter.

The title of this work and chapter is the title of a hymn that first appeared in official Methodist hymnody in the 1988 hymnal. When, after 1988, United Methodists sang, "I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together," no claim of exclusivity was intended. Rather, Methodism claimed to be a part of the church catholic, not just a reform movement within the church, nor a movement bent solely on the reformation of society. Echoing Albert Outler's words to the 1962 Oxford Institute,

Geoffrey Wainwright spoke to the 1982 Oxford group, again identifying Methodism as an “evangelical order within the church catholic.”<sup>29</sup> Though Wainwright, like Outler, used the word “catholic” in the sense of universal, he meant also that Methodism drew closer to the tradition of which the Roman Catholic Church is a part. Liturgically, sacramentally, ecumenically, the Methodist Church was Romanized.

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<sup>29</sup> The phrase, “evangelical order within the church catholic” is suggested by Geoffrey Wainwright (and others), “Ecclesial Location and Ecumenical Vocation,” in *The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 93-129. Interestingly, Geoffrey Wainwright currently holds the Robert E. Cushman Chair in Systematic Theology at the Divinity School of Duke University.

CHAPTER II  
AMERICAN METHODIST HISTORY AND  
WORSHIP TO 1939: “O MIGHT MY LOT  
BE CAST WITH THEE”<sup>1</sup>

The theological shifts within Methodism, as it evolved from society to denomination, shaped liturgical expression. American Methodism, which began as a society or movement within an existing church, became a church more by accident than intent. Before the American Revolution, Methodist leaders took it for granted that members of the Methodist classes or societies would take part in the existing rituals, particularly those of the Church of England, no matter how infrequent or far away those rituals might be. But the Revolution separated Methodists from the parent church, and the movement, now forced to become a denomination, adjusted by creating its own liturgical expression. Consequently, Methodist liturgical expression shifted from occasions of devotion designed to supplement or enhance existing expressions to its own liturgical ritual, rooted in Anglicanism, on the one hand, but heavily shaped by the dominant religious patterns, on the other.

In 1783, Ezra Stiles, then President of Yale College, predicted that religion in America would become equally divided among Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Hymns for the Use of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1849). #226. This hymnal, measuring only two inches by three inches, does not identify authors or composers.

Presbyterians.<sup>2</sup> Stiles' predicated his forecast on wishful thinking and faulty data, for he did not take into account the already large number of Baptists. Stiles could not have predicted the exponential growth of the Methodists, although there were already signs indicating the potential. In 1773, Methodists in the colonies numbered only 1,160, ballooned to nearly 7,000 in 1776, then jumped from the success of revivals in North Carolina and Virginia to number 8,673 by 1779. Growth came exponentially after that, nearly doubling the membership to 15,000 by 1784.<sup>3</sup>

Evidently, John Wesley also was taken by surprise by the very existence of Methodists in America. He had been unaware of any Methodist activity until he received a letter in 1768 asking for help from some laypeople who had organized Methodist societies in Maryland and New York.<sup>4</sup> Wesley sent two missionaries to the colonies, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore, the first of a series of pairs of preachers. The notable Francis Asbury arrived with Richard Wright in 1771 and additional partners joined the field in 1773 and 1774. Several suffered from poor health, some had greater affinities to Presbyterianism, and some were forced to return to England because of their royalist

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<sup>2</sup> Martin E. Marty, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in American* (New York: Dial Press, 1970), 19; see also Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 4, who noted Stiles' prophesy, including Stiles' remark that American religion would eventually encompass and tolerate all Christian sects.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics are combined from William W. Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (1930, reprinted, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1973), 154 and Paul K. Conkin, *The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 76.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), 65.

convictions. As the Revolution showed signs of success, only Francis Asbury remained in active service.

Methodists in America never intended to be a separate church, thus they had no reason to contemplate ecclesiology or liturgy or many of the doctrines of systematic theology. Early Methodists understood themselves to be among the several religious revival movements in the eighteenth century, organized as a society (or as societies) within the existing establishment. Until 1784 the Methodist movement took place within the Anglican Church and the very presence of the Church made possible the rapid growth of Methodism, especially in Maryland and Virginia.<sup>5</sup> Methodists were “prototypically evangelical,”<sup>6</sup> offering salvation from sin, conceived mainly in moralistic terms, and cultivating Christian living. Doctrine was largely “practical divinity,”<sup>7</sup> to be preached, sung, and lived; it rested on certain pillars, including the reality of sin, the atonement of Christ, the need for repentance, the truth of free will, and the expectation of sanctification, or holy living. Methodists were known for their enthusiasm, their discipline, their preaching, but rarely were Methodists known for their exposition of the full range of Christian doctrine. In these matters, they were largely untutored.

To meet the exigencies of the immediate, Methodists adopted ideas, techniques, even doctrines, from whatever was at hand and worked. John Wesley had set a good

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<sup>5</sup> Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 74-5.

<sup>6</sup> Conkin, *The Uneasy Center*, 67.

<sup>7</sup> Robert E. Cushman, *John Wesley's Experimental Divinity* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1989), 10ff.

example in this regard. Wesley was a complex character of eighteenth-century English society, who was loyal to crown and church and to his own understanding of Christian doctrine. He learned from Anglican theologians, Martin Luther, the American Jonathan Edwards, and even from the Moravians, though he found in them too many unscriptural practices and too much Calvinism. Wesley adhered to high-church Anglicanism even while he joined George Whitfield in “vile” outdoor preaching.<sup>8</sup> In the open-air field at Bristol, Wesley was at first speechless before the crowds of the convicted, who swooned, and convulsed, and cried out in sinful despair, but soon realized that he possessed an ability to move audiences nearly equal to that of Whitfield. Wesley proudly preached Arminianism, although he differed from the Reformed doctrine in several ways. He also preached about human depravity, like the Reformers, complete atonement, like the Mennonites, and salvation as a gift, like the Calvinists.<sup>9</sup> But from the Calvinists Wesley drew his greatest distance, declaring that salvation depended jointly on the decisions of God and humans. This last point troubled Wesley’s critics more than the others; George Whitfield, in particular, called Wesley’s plan a Catholic rather than a Protestant scheme of salvation. But it worked for Wesley, so he adopted it and set a convenient precedent of making use of practical doctrine that would be noticed especially by twentieth-century Methodists who would later adopt other Catholic schemes in the process of Romanizing American Methodism.

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<sup>8</sup> *Letters of John Wesley*, ed. Frank Baker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), I: 588; Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 190.

<sup>9</sup> See Conkin, *The Uneasy Center*, 67.

Methodists also adopted institutions to meet the demands of the times. Historian Paul Conkin noted: “Institutions, even more than doctrines, distinguished the early Methodist movement. In a sense, the Methodist movement grew up within a church and always owed several characteristics to such a unique origin.”<sup>10</sup> Two initial institutions accounted for the rapid growth of Methodism: class meetings, or societies, and lay preaching.<sup>11</sup> As Wesley first formed a society (at Oxford called a “club”) of an informal and voluntary devotional group, so also early American Methodists followed suit. Out of the society, class meetings of about twelve persons organized around a leader.<sup>12</sup> The organization required helpers—mostly lay preachers—who traveled about the societies giving spiritual oversight and leading the members in worship. In time, these leaders became the real ministry of Methodism even though the lay preachers never gained full status under Wesley’s system. At the level of the society, Wesley contributed some of the most distinctive Methodist innovations in worship. Establishing another precedent that would be noticed by future generations, Wesley looked to the patristic church for forms and to his contemporaries, especially to the Moravians, for practices such as the love feast and the watch-night service.

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<sup>10</sup> Conkin, *The Uneasy Center*, 71.

<sup>11</sup> William Warren Sweet, *Methodism in American History* (1933, reprinted, New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 42.

<sup>12</sup> Halford E. Luccock and Paul Hutchinson, *The Story of Methodism* (1926, reprinted, New York: Abingdon Press, 1949), 167-73, describe the development of class meetings and circuits in both England and America.

These institutions created a predicament in American Methodist societies at the end of the Revolutionary War because the non-ordained leadership did not have the privilege of presiding at sacraments. At issue was ecclesiology, or, more specifically, the role of worship and the sacraments in the societies. As the societies in America grew in size and number, the members desired to have the church's sacraments, primarily the Lord's Supper. But this could not be done, in Wesley's opinion, while the preachers and leaders were laypersons. Anglican bishops either would not or did not ordain Methodist preachers and it became clear to Wesley that he would have to act or Methodist leaders would act without his blessing as seemed best to them.<sup>13</sup> Wesley, in agony over his orphaned American children, felt certain that he had to do something, so he turned again to the primitive church and to the Catholic patristic tradition for justification to act. It was not the first time Wesley had looked to the Catholic tradition, nor would it be the last time for American Methodism in the process of Romanization.

Convinced of the scriptural and patristic justification, and acting with the authority as the superintendent of the People Called Methodists, John Wesley ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, and then, in another act of laying on of hands, Wesley "set apart" Coke as general superintendent for the Methodists in America.<sup>14</sup> Coke and his

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<sup>13</sup> Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 506-34, explains in detail the inner turmoil of Wesley. Rack frames the entire question of the ordination of the Methodist preachers in terms of Wesley's desire to retain some measure of authority among the American societies.

<sup>14</sup> John J. Tigert, *A Constitutional History of American Episcopal Methodism* (Nashville: Publishing House of the M. E. Church, South, 1913), 161-80, is one of the few American Methodists to attempt to come to terms with Wesley's action of ordaining others.

companions promptly sailed for the new nation, where they took up the duties of their ordination. Upon arrival, Coke preached for several days in New York, then in Philadelphia, next in Delaware. At the quarterly conference at Barratt's Chapel in Kent County, Delaware, Coke presided at the Lord's Supper, administered to several hundred persons. Newly ordained Thomas Whatcoat assisted, much to the surprise of Francis Asbury, who was in attendance but had not yet taken the opportunity to let Coke know it.<sup>15</sup> It was the first authorized administration of a sacrament by a Methodist minister. Wesley's ordination of ministers and his consecration of Coke were but the first surprises for Asbury.

Coke shared Wesley's plan with Asbury and, when they had agreed to a call for a conference of all the preachers, Coke shared the plan with the others, too. Nearly sixty of the eighty-one preachers gathered in conference on Christmas Eve of 1784, where Coke shared with them the materials Wesley had sent.<sup>16</sup> First the preachers heard a general letter from Wesley, describing what he had done by ordaining the leaders, and immediately the conferencing preachers agreed to form themselves into the Methodist Episcopal Church. They reviewed the ordination certificates of those arrived from England and heard Wesley's intention that Asbury should also be a "superintendent."<sup>17</sup> Because Asbury insisted, the preachers confirmed his position by election, and over three

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<sup>15</sup> Sweet, *Methodism in American History*, 108.

<sup>16</sup> Sweet, *Methodism in American History*, 109.

<sup>17</sup> Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 100. Apparently no one was fooled by the term "superintendent," as Methodist historian Frederick Norwood pointed

successive days, Asbury received ordination as a deacon, then as elder, and, finally, consecration as a superintendent.

Coke also shared with the Americans the other documents from Wesley. The conference received Wesley's abridgement of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the English church, from which Wesley eliminated those articles that referred to the king and those that were most clearly Calvinistic. The twenty-five revised articles became one of the doctrinal standards for American Methodism. The conference adopted a *Discipline*, a thirty-five-page book, modeled after the *Large Minutes* of the British Methodist societies, which the Americans already had. This proved the most useful to the American preachers. Based on a kind of catechetical question-and-answer format, the *Discipline* established the structure of church governance. American Methodists continued to update and enact the *Discipline* at General Conferences, which met quadrennially after 1792. As his parting gift, or "last will and testament," Wesley revised the English *Book of Common Prayer* and sent the book of worship directions to the 1784 conference as part of the package.

Wesley's revisions to the prayer book were significant and marked his own theological reflection.<sup>18</sup> He gave to the American Methodists a prayer book tradition and a legacy of liturgical worship. In the twentieth century, Wesley's *Sunday Service*, as it was called, would stimulate a liturgical revival among some Methodists, although it was

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out. In 1787 Asbury reprinted the *General Minutes* of the Christmas Conference and revised his title, using "bishop" for the first time.

<sup>18</sup> William Nash Wade, "A History of Public Worship in the Methodist Episcopal Church and Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from 1784 to 1905," Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1981, provides one of the best analyses and summaries of Wesley's revisions.

largely ignored by American Methodists in the late eighteenth century. Historian William Warren Sweet wrote, “For a time the service was used in the larger churches, and gowns and bands were worn by the superintendents and elders, but a majority of the people disliked such formality, and the Prayer Book was soon laid aside.”<sup>19</sup>

In 1792, the year after John Wesley died, early Methodist preachers gave the first signal of what liturgical scholar Don Saliers called “the surprising history to follow” when they laid aside Wesley’s 314 page *Sunday Service* and placed in the *Discipline*, instead, thirty-seven pages of ritual for baptism, weddings, burials, ordination, and a brief service of the Lord’s Supper.<sup>20</sup> These occasional services retained some of the Wesleyan character and survived the nineteenth century in various modified forms. However, they were set apart in the preachers’ *Discipline* and not in the hymnal or in a people’s prayer book. The pattern for Sunday morning service, stipulated by Wesley, was lost and so, too, was the *Sunday Service* as a book of worship.

According to itinerant preacher Jesse Lee (1758-1816), the fixed liturgy and formal cadences of Wesley’s *Sunday Service* “did not take hold in the hearts, minds, and bodies of the Methodists”<sup>21</sup> of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Early Methodist

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<sup>19</sup> Sweet, *Methodism in American History*, 111.

<sup>20</sup> Don E. Saliers, in “Divine Grace, Diverse Means: Sunday Worship in United Methodist Congregations,” *The Sunday Service of Methodists*, ed. Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1996), 139. The details of the *Discipline* orders are in James F. White, “Methodist Worship,” *Perspectives on American Methodism: Interpretive Essays*, eds. Russell Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1993), 468.

<sup>21</sup> Saliers, “Divine Grace, Diverse Means,” 139. Kenneth B. Bedell, *Worship in the Methodist Tradition* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources- Tidings, 1976), claimed that

preachers preferred greater freedom or spontaneity in the pattern of Sunday worship than Wesley's prayer book allowed. The preachers discovered that "they could pray better, and with more devotion while their eyes were shut, than they could with their eyes open," Lee wrote.<sup>22</sup>

The "apostle of Methodism in New England,"<sup>23</sup> Lee epitomized early Methodism, not only in his rejection of Wesley's liturgy, but also in his style of worship. Lee worked with much success throughout New England, even though the "strict Calvinists of Massachusetts regarded the gospel of Methodists with suspicion."<sup>24</sup> He covered the Eastern states, from Georgia to the northern border of Maine, riding one horse, leading another, and alternating back and forth between them so as not to be slowed by a tired horse.<sup>25</sup> He led emotion-laden revival meetings known to last five or six hours and,

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early Methodist preachers rejected Wesley's services because of a lack of luggage space. "The itinerant Methodist preachers did not have room in their saddlebags for two books, one which ordered their life and activity [the *Book of Discipline*] and another to order their worship" (55). Bedell said nothing of the early preacher's penchant for spontaneous prayer.

<sup>22</sup> Jesse Lee, *A Short History of the Methodists in the United States* (Baltimore: Magill and Clime, 1810), 107

<sup>23</sup> William Warren Sweet, *Methodism in American History* (New York: Abingdon, 1954), 58.

<sup>24</sup> Halford E. Luccock and Paul Hutchinson, *The Story of Methodism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1936), 226.

<sup>25</sup> Luccock and Hutchinson, *Story of Methodism*, 226. Lee, weighing in at 259 pounds, probably tired a horse easily! See Charles W. Ferguson, *Organizing to Beat the Devil, Methodists and the Making of America* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1971), 86, for the weights of some early Methodist preachers.

occasionally, all night.<sup>26</sup> The same kind of enthusiastic worship permeated most of American Methodism in the early nineteenth century, becoming a normal part of religious life.

Methodism capitalized on the spirit of revivalism, rather than on the forms of a prayer book, to win converts. To the surprise of some, including Ezra Stiles, unpredicted growth came through the efforts of traveling evangelists and itinerant ministers. After the Revolution, Methodists pushed into New England, then across the Alleghenies. Societies found home in brush arbors and log cabins and had few permanent structures. Membership mushroomed as a result of the Second Great Awakening, revivals, and circuit riders on the frontier. “It was the Methodists,” wrote historian Samuel Hill, “who deserve most credit for developing the means of spreading the seed of the evangelical message.”<sup>27</sup>

In the course of nineteenth century, American Methodism developed a revivalist style of worship different from what Wesley had prescribed and one from which twentieth-century Methodists would distance themselves in the process of Romanization. The revivalist pattern, developed by Methodism on the frontier, influenced Methodist worship

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<sup>26</sup> John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven By Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford, 1998), 117. Lee served as chaplain to the United States House of Representatives for six years, until his colleagues suggested the work was too secular and entangled Lee in worldly concerns (Sweet, *Methodism in American History*, 176). Lee was unusual in the fact that he lived and served so long; nearly half of the preachers before 1847 died before they were thirty years old (Luccock and Hutchinson, *Story of Methodism*, 229).

<sup>27</sup> Samuel S. Hill, *Southern Churches in Crisis Revisited* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 62.

throughout most of the nineteenth and into the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> The pattern consisted of songs, prayer, and praise, followed by a sermon, then an altar call. The approach was pragmatic and included the “fixed elements” of song leaders, and the “anxious bench.”<sup>29</sup> These elements developed into the normal pattern of Sunday service throughout the nineteenth century, in both urban and rural areas.

Revivalism characterized nineteenth century Methodist worship, whether in the camp meetings or the village church.<sup>30</sup> Methodists appreciated public worship as a means to an end. Drawing on a “wide range of popular religious practices from both Europe and America,”<sup>31</sup> Methodists designed preaching services to produce converts who abandoned immorality and accepted redemption. Because worship was subjective and focused on conversion of the individual,<sup>32</sup> Methodists had little need for reflective dialogue about worship proper, and certainly no need to develop what was later called “liturgical theology.”

Like the nation, American Methodism split over the issues of slavery. However, similar historical interests and developments in worship occurred in both northern and

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<sup>28</sup> James White, *Christian Worship in Transition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976).

<sup>29</sup> L. Edward Phillips, “Creative Worship: Rules, Patterns and Guidelines,” *Quarterly Review* 10 (1990), 13-18.

<sup>30</sup> James F. White, *Christian Worship in Transition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 139-145.

<sup>31</sup> Wigger, *Taking Heaven By Storm*, 110-1. Wigger meant by this that Methodists did not invent the revival form, nor was revivalism unique only in America.

<sup>32</sup> White, “Methodist Worship,” 474.

southern Methodism. In the first years after the politics of the slavery issue divided episcopal Methodism in 1844, congregations and leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS) called for a return to the “primitive” Methodist simplicity. The southern church leaned toward free worship, rejecting “choral and instrumental music and elaborate liturgical forms.”<sup>33</sup> Then, following the American Civil War, some southern Methodist leaders worked to recover Wesley’s commitment to liturgy. Thomas O. Summers, Dean of Vanderbilt Divinity School (1874-1882) and book editor for the MECS, led the denomination in renewed liturgical interest. Summers, who was born in England and immigrated to America in 1830, preferred the style of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. In *The Golden Censer*, his own widely-used book of devotional resources, Summers used prayers exclusively from the Prayer Book.<sup>34</sup> Still, Summers insisted that he could not be an Episcopalian, in part because he believed that the liturgy of the prayer book was too long and its invariable use led to attitudes of ritualism. Summers preferred the prayer book revisions of Wesley and encouraged extemporaneous prayer to counter charges of formalism. Summers had argued that “one great strength of Methodism was that it provided a *via media* between formless worship and ritualism and Summers unabashedly claimed that the Methodist style of worship was the best possible.”<sup>35</sup> The Francis Street Church of Mobile, Alabama, where Summers had served

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<sup>33</sup> Wade, “History of Public Worship,” 376.

<sup>34</sup> L. Edward Phillips, “Thomas O. Summers, “Methodist Liturgist of the Nineteenth Century,” *Methodist History* 27, no. 4 (July 1989): 246.

<sup>35</sup> Phillips, “Thomas O. Summers,” 246, referring to Thomas O. Summers, *Why I am Not An Episcopalian* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1881), 21.

as pastor, petitioned the 1866 General Conference of the MECS for permission to use Wesley's *Sunday Service* in addition to the standard ritual. The conference granted permission and called upon the southern publishing house to reprint the *Sunday Service*. Summers edited the edition, made available in 1867.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, Northern Methodism developed parallel interests in the Wesleyan liturgical expression and in a concern for a more ordered form for public worship. The 1876 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church created a committee to revise the hymn book and gave explicit instructions with regard to the hymns to be included or omitted. The fifteen-person committee worked quickly, gained approval of their work by the Board of Bishops in June of 1877, and sent the new hymnal to press in 1878. In the 1883 printing of the hymn book, the publisher appended the rituals for baptism, reception of new members, and the Lord's Supper, as they were found in the *Discipline*, including paragraph numbering and directions for the presiding clergy.<sup>37</sup> Critics warned of increasing formalism. William McKay, addressing the 1881 Ecumenical Methodist Conference, equated the dangers of formality with those of "worldliness" and "amusements."<sup>38</sup> But supporters, especially in long-established town churches, applauded the ordered forms. In 1896, the MEC took the next step when it placed into the

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<sup>36</sup> Phillips, "Thomas O. Summers," 251.

<sup>37</sup> *Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church: With Tunes* (New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1883), 497-504.

<sup>38</sup> William McKay, "Possible Perils of Methodism from Formality, Worldliness, and Improper Amusements Among Our Own Members," *Handbook and programme of the Oecumenical Methodist Conference held at City Road Chapel, London: September 7th to 20th 1881* (London: Wesley Conference Office, 1881).

*Discipline* a full order for public worship “in order to establish uniformity in public worship among us on the Lord’s Day.”<sup>39</sup> The next printing of the 1878 hymnal included the new order for Sunday services.

Both branches of episcopal Methodism made similar revisions to their forms for funerals, weddings, baptisms, and ordinations. These parallel developments and interests enabled the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South to cooperatively produce a joint hymnal in 1905. In the preface, bishops of both churches declared that the purpose of the book was two-fold: “to provide a worthy manual of song in the public and private worship of Almighty God” and “to declare the essential unity of the two great branches of Episcopal Methodism.” In addition to its stated purpose, the bishops could not help but mention the desire that it also would “supplant those unauthorized publications which often teach what organized Methodism does not hold.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, in the opening decade of the twentieth century, episcopal Methodism united to legislate a common order of worship.

In 1905 the MEC (North) and the MECS, cooperated to produce one common hymnal and included on the front cover before the title page an “Order of Public Worship.” This order formalized the nineteenth century revival pattern. The first part of the service included an instrumental or vocal voluntary, singing from the hymnal, the Apostles’ Creed, prayer, an anthem, lessons, announcements, a collection, more singing, then the sermon and prayer. A footnote indicated that an invitation to come to Christ or

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<sup>39</sup> *Discipline 1896*, para. 56.

<sup>40</sup> *The Methodist Hymnal* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1905), vi, vii.

to unite with the Church should follow the sermon during the singing of another hymn.<sup>41</sup>

This successful form of service became its handicap in later years

The worship service outlined in the 1905 hymnal was simple and built on the pattern of morning prayer with a sermon added. The service allowed a great deal of freedom in that five of its fourteen numbered parts could be omitted at the discretion of the minister. The five optional parts included the instrumental or vocal “voluntary,” the recitation of a creed, and the Gloria Patri. Without the options, the bare service that remained included lessons, a collection, singing, sermon, and invitation—essentially a camp-meeting type service. In the years to follow, this simple worship service would be set aside, as a Romanized Methodism, informed by the ecumenical movement, developed a pattern of worship that revolved about the communion table, rather than the pulpit.

Even this 1905 order of worship, which only formalized the simple revival pattern, faced considerable criticism over the ensuing years but evolved into formality, nevertheless, in slow steps in the process of Romanization. Critics fretted “over the suppression of spontaneity.”<sup>42</sup> At the General Conference of 1928, which established a commission for the revision of the hymnal and psalter, denominational bishops warned delegates to regard the positions of both worshipers who longed for the spontaneous services like the camp meetings and those who wanted formality and ritual. Avoid the two extremes, the bishops declared in the episcopal address: neither “that perversion of liberty

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<sup>41</sup> *The Methodist Hymnal* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1905).

<sup>42</sup> Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), 364.

which makes of God's house a common meeting place," nor "that soulless formality which exalts ritual at the expense of life."<sup>43</sup> But hymnal committees deemed liturgical worship more appropriate for a maturing church institution and general conference members accepted the change. The publication of three hymnals in 1939, 1964, and 1988 and a corresponding number of books of worship in 1945, 1965, and 1992 further signaled the trend away from freestyle services and toward more formal church patterns.

Theological enterprises external to Methodism shaped Methodist practice, including worship, especially in those moments when Methodism had no prevailing systematic theological matrix of its own to provide a certain foundation on which liturgy could rest. Liturgical theologian Karen Westerfield Tucker wrote, "Though not indiscriminate in doing so, the Methodist Episcopal Church was the most willing to adapt its liturgical texts and practices to its new self-understandings, to emerging social and theological issues, and to popular practices from the wider society—all for the sake of constructing meaningful worship."<sup>44</sup> In the nineteenth century, Methodist worship accepted a pragmatic goal (conversion) and forms of worship, and, after 1870, Methodist worship showed the strong impact of Revivalism. Methodists used what worked, but they did not originate the theological enterprise driving the process.

In the first part of the twentieth century, no Methodist theological consensus existed to contribute to the content of liturgy. Methodist rites evolved in the early

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<sup>43</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, 1928* (Methodist Publishing House), 167.

<sup>44</sup> Karen Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 278.

twentieth century into aesthetically pleasing experiences, from austere to rich, where a sense of beauty or good taste served as the only guiding principle. Worship expanded to fill exquisite Gothic structures without reference to any guiding theological formulation.<sup>45</sup>

Not until after the mid-point of the twentieth century did a growing Methodist theological consensus, orbiting about the two poles of John Wesley and ecumenism, become the driving force for the Romanization of worship.

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<sup>45</sup> See James F. White, *Christian Worship in North America, A Retrospective: 1955-1995* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 66-70, for a description of theological factors shaping worship at the end of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth.

CHAPTER III  
BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE TO 1945:  
“ON THIS STONE NOW LAID  
WITH PRAYER”<sup>1</sup>

Instead of the formal liturgies sent by John Wesley, American Methodists adopted a flexible revival style of worship in the nineteenth century. Methodists utilized the informality of field preaching, joyful hymn singing, and extemporaneous prayer. This informal, enthusiastic side of Methodism flourished and only the “occasional services” of the ritual were retained, though set aside in the preachers’ *Discipline*. The revival pattern, without fixed forms, proved more beneficial to Methodists in the early American context. And because of their success, Methodists had no need to reflect on the style or on the purpose of worship, until the revival pattern failed to meet the needs of worshipping Methodists in the early twentieth century.

Church conditions after the Civil War, and especially after the turn of the twentieth century, drove an important group of Methodists to reflect on public worship. Historian John Wigger noted that Methodists “were prominent among the nineteenth century’s emerging middle class” and they “used their newfound wealth to build increasingly

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<sup>1</sup> John Pierpont in *The Methodist Hymnal* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1905), #657. This nineteenth-century hymn appeared in the 1905, 1932, and 1964 Methodist hymnals and was labeled to be sung at the laying of a church foundation.

ostentatious churches.”<sup>2</sup> Along with grander designs in church architecture, American Methodism exhibited more complexity in ecclesiastical polity and developed greater theological sophistication, including erudition of liturgical theology. Sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark noted the increasing “church-like” character of Methodism in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Circuit-riders dismounted and became settled clergy. Bishops exercised greater authority by appointing and removing the pastors. The church shifted the training of pastors from an apprentice program to a “course of study,” eventually to more formal education at established institutions. In the 1880s, rich Methodists enjoyed their wealth, which bought expensive church buildings, pipe organs, and paid choirs. Finke and Stark quoted William Warren Sweet, the dean of Methodist historians, who claimed that by the end of the nineteenth century Methodists had rediscovered their pulpit robes and the prayer books that had been laid aside in the early years of the Methodist movement.<sup>4</sup> This maturing and increasingly settled church drove the need for reflection and a body of literature soon developed. In the first half of the twentieth century, American Methodist scholars began in earnest to reflect on worship and to include the subdivision of liturgical theology within the larger heading of ecclesial theology.

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<sup>2</sup> John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven By Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford, 1998), 175.

<sup>3</sup> Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 150-66.

<sup>4</sup> Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 161.

In the process, Methodist scholars began to reject the revivalist tradition and to search, though with little success, for a more encompassing theology of worship. The initial body of literature, on which twentieth-century reformers would build in the process of Romanization of Methodism, emphasized a recovery of John (and, later, Charles) Wesley, established the justification for a worship- or prayer-book tradition, examined the importance of church architecture, and resolved to move Methodist worship toward a greater social and ecumenical respectability. To achieve the goal of twentieth-century reforms, Methodist intellectuals and church leaders built on this foundational body of literature in which the issues of liturgical reform, sacramental emphases, and even appreciation of the Catholic tradition were presented and debated. Most significantly, American Methodism developed a body of literature where little had existed before because Methodist growth and its worship practices in antebellum America had given little cause for liturgical reflection.

Social and economic conditions, along with political persuasions, also played important roles in shaping these patterns and the ethos of Sunday worship. At the end of the nineteenth century, church architecture reflected newly acquired wealth, civic prominence, and the formal structures that had become intrinsic to Methodism.<sup>5</sup> To provide support for congregations building facilities, the MEC created an office of church architect in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The creation of this denominational

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<sup>5</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, "The Puzzle of American Methodism," in *American Church History: A Reader*, eds. Henry Warner Bowden and P. C. Kemeny (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 284-5.

office signaled a new emphasis on church buildings as the proper location for Methodist worship. Elbert Conover, the first Director of the Bureau of Architecture, noted a palpable change in attitudes, from “the dark ages in American religious architecture” to an “emphatic revival of interest in providing the proper setting for services of worship.” Conover retained little sense of revivalism in his directions for proper church buildings. He preferred stone churches in the Gothic style, with greater window space, pointed arches, reinforced buttresses, and vertical lines. In the properly constructed church building, he wrote, “it is not easy to conduct a service carelessly or flippantly.”<sup>6</sup> New churches were built in Victorian and Gothic styles and the orders of worship adapted to the surroundings. This trend of emphasis on church architecture signaled an awakening interest in the outward expressions of Methodist worship.

A book about the practice of worship appeared for the first time in the curriculum list for the pastors’ Course of Study in 1932.<sup>7</sup> Listed for first-year readers in the ME

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<sup>6</sup> Elbert M. Conover, *Building the House of God* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1928), 65, 100, 111. Conover became director of the Interdenominational Bureau of Architecture, which was formed in 1934 as a cooperative arrangement between twenty-five Protestant denominations. Conover never receded from his insistence on the Gothic style. In his 1948 book, *The Church Builder* (New York: Interdenominational Bureau of Architecture, 1948), he wrote: “For church architecture which seeks to achieve excellence, the *Gothic spirit* expresses lofty idealism and true beauty of form” (36, emphasis his).

<sup>7</sup> *Discipline 1932*, para. 202.2. At the time of union, the primary means of clergy education was the Conference Course of Study program. The 1939 *Discipline* made the Course of Study the normal entrance to conference membership for clergy and it allowed entrance for graduates of theological schools as the exception (para. 216). The norm did not change until legislation in 1956 reversed the order, making seminary graduation normative and the Course of Study the exception. See John O. Gross, “The Field of

Church, J. Hastie Odgers and Edward G. Schutz's, *The Technique of Public Worship*,<sup>8</sup> remained in the curriculum in the 1939 *Discipline*.<sup>9</sup> Odgers and Schutz developed the premise that worship in Methodist congregations vacillated between free and structured elements, and that worship leaders felt little compunction to follow the denominational liturgy. In an unscientific sample of thirty-six church bulletins, mostly from the Chicago Southern District of the Rock River Annual Conference, the authors noted that only three services followed without change the forms prescribed by the *Discipline*. The other thirty-three showed some departure from the disciplinary rites. "In all this experimentation," the writers concluded, "there is much evidence of groping for something satisfactory, as well as of the need of a guiding principle in building an order of worship." The bulk of Odgers and Schutz's work included specific practical advice for conducting services. The authors offered advice on everything from which hymns to use in the different services, to the kind of dress a minister should wear (black suit, white shirt with stiff collars, no cuffs on pants, black tie), to the placement of the baptismal bowl ("a silver vessel of warm water rests upon a convenient stand to the minister's right").<sup>10</sup> *The Technique of Public Worship* stood as one of the first twentieth-century textbooks for Methodist worship and included both theoretical and practical detail.

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Education, 1865-1939," in *The History of American Methodism*, Emory Stevens Bucke, ed. (New York: Abingdon, 1964), 3:243-4.

<sup>8</sup> J. Hastie Odgers and Edward G. Schutz, *The Technique of Public Worship* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1928), 13.

<sup>9</sup> *Discipline 1939*, para. 1711.

<sup>10</sup> Odgers and Schutz, *The Technique of Public Worship*, 13, 168, 204.

For its part, the MECS included in its version of the Course of Study curriculum two books about worship. In 1898, the southern church directed second-year students to read John A. Kern's *Ministry to the Congregation*.<sup>11</sup> Primarily a series of lectures on preaching, Kern's book included a short section on worship. In 1934, the southern church added G. W. Fisk's, *The Recovery of Worship*, the only work in the Course of Study curriculum specifically about worship.<sup>12</sup> Fisk advocated dignified services and indicated that he found the emotional, revival-style services undignified. Robert W. Sledge, whose Master's thesis examined the Course of Study in the MECS, wrote that Fisk's book "reflected also a change in Southern Methodist thinking about spiritual matters, for the old notion of worship as an evangelistic event had been eroding, though not without its conservative defenders, throughout the century."<sup>13</sup>

The 1940 *Discipline* of the reunited church replaced Odgers and Schutz's and Fisk's works with Albert W. Palmer's *The Art of Conducting Public Worship*, to be read in the third year of study.<sup>14</sup> The president of Chicago Theological Seminary, Palmer wrote not for the Episcopalians and Lutherans but for the "so-called free churches,"

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<sup>11</sup> John A. Kern, *Ministry to the Congregation* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1897).

<sup>12</sup> G. W. Fisk, *The Recovery of Worship* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931).

<sup>13</sup> Robert W. Sledge, "The Well-Furnished Minister: The Conference Course of Study in the M. E. Church, South, 1900-1939," in *Rethinking Methodist History: A Bicentennial Historical Consultation*, eds. Russell E. Richey and Kenneth E. Rowe (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1985), 72.

<sup>14</sup> Albert W. Palmer, *The Art of Conducting Public Worship* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1939).

Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Disciples.<sup>15</sup> Palmer produced his book because he felt that too much of worship failed to sufficiently engage the minds of worshipers. Worship, he wrote, did not command the attention of the congregants because it was not impressive and it lacked unity. Palmer offered a solution that included appropriation of resources from both the ancient and the medieval Roman church. “All that was good or beautiful in the medieval church belongs to us just as much as to the modern Roman Catholic; and primitive Christianity is even more peculiarly our own,” Palmer claimed.<sup>16</sup> However, Palmer intended a different kind of appropriation of resources than what other liturgical scholars would consider. Rather than adopting a liturgical philosophy or even style, Palmer recommended snipping “a poem, a prayer, or a prose passage which sound an authentic note of modern need” and placing it in the contemporary form.<sup>17</sup>

Palmer’s work exemplified the lack of coherent theology guiding Methodist liturgical developments in the first half of the century and was evidence of the initial ambivalent attitudes of Methodists toward liturgical renewal. Like others, Palmer utilized the sixth chapter of the biblical book of Isaiah as the quintessential paradigm for modern worship. He developed this paradigm in some depth, though he acknowledged his debt to other writers who had used this paradigm before him. For Palmer, the paradigm

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<sup>15</sup> Palmer, *Art of Conducting Public Worship*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Palmer, *Art of Conducting Public Worship*, 47.

<sup>17</sup> Palmer, *Art of Conducting Public Worship*, 101.

established the pattern for worship: preparation, consideration, resolution, conclusion.<sup>18</sup>

The paradigm proved problematic for successive generations because it lacked a sacramental element and the paradigm would be abandoned in the process of Romanization of Methodist worship. Indeed, Palmer recommended that worship involving the sacraments not be celebrated as part of the ordinary services. He suggested “taking it out of the morning service and making it a separate service at a time set apart for it and for it alone.”<sup>19</sup> Palmer’s book remained on the *Discipline* list through 1956, the last quadrennium the curriculum was printed in the *Discipline*.

Palmer typified evangelical liberalism, the dominant Methodist theology in the period prior to union. Liberalism emphasized personal morality and social responsibility, themes that also dominated any discussion of worship. Relying heavily on the developing German philosophical works of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Albert Ritschl and their interpreters in the United States, evangelical liberalism “stressed the immanence of God, the goodness of man, and man’s freedom of will and inherent capacity for altruism.”<sup>20</sup> According to Palmer, worship was to be beautiful because God was beautiful, harmonious because God was the reality of cosmic harmony, intelligible because Palmer conceived of God as a super-personality of super-rationality. Therefore, Palmer wrote, worship was the

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<sup>18</sup> Palmer, *Art of Conducting Public Worship*, 55-6.

<sup>19</sup> Palmer, *Art of Conducting Public Worship*, 133.

<sup>20</sup> William J. McCutcheon, “American Methodist Thought and Theology, 1919-60,” in *The History of American Methodism*, ed. Emory Stevens Bucke (New York: Abingdon, 1964), 3:264. Also, Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon 1983), 119, 170-184, described the characteristics of evangelical liberalism.

moment of persons turning “to such a God as to a great friend, as to one who is indeed the Father of our spirits, sharing with him all we are and hope to be and waiting in high exultation for the joy and thrill of a divine comradeship!”<sup>21</sup> In the tradition of evangelical liberalism, Palmer defined the primary task of the church to be ethical preaching and moral education.

Liberal evangelicalism influenced Methodist clergy, north and south, in the period before union. In the north, Bishop Francis J. McConnell—a man praised by his teachers and mentors, Reinhold Niebuhr and Borden Parker Bowne—defended Methodism and Christianity from the framework of liberalism. Southern Bishop John M. Moore also voiced his allegiance to liberalism and to Bowne.<sup>22</sup> In the northern seminaries, Olin A. Curtis at Drew; Henry Clay Sheldon, Edgar Sheffield Brightman, and Borden Parker Bowne at Boston; and Harris Franklin Rall at Garrett taught liberalism. Southern theologians Wilbur F. Tillett at Vanderbilt and Gilbert T. Rowe at Duke shared the theological convictions of their northern counterparts.<sup>23</sup> In their teachings, the doctrine of practical holiness replaced the emphasis on radical conversion. These theologians welcomed the spirit of scientific advance, new understandings of human nature, and the development of historical studies. These theologians reflected changing times and

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<sup>21</sup> Palmer, *Art of Conducting Public Worship*, 19.

<sup>22</sup> McCutcheon, “American Methodist Thought and Theology,” 264.

<sup>23</sup> Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 170-93.

signaled the different course upon which Methodist Episcopal theology was set.<sup>24</sup> Their theology displayed a lack of consensus regarding the purpose of the church at worship.

Methodist clergy who did not attend seminary discovered evangelical liberalism through the readings required by the Course of Study and through the major journal of the church, *Religion in Life*. Born in 1932, owned by the Methodist Book Concern, and published by Abingdon Press in New York, the quarterly journal drew from Methodist authors and other scholars and filled a vacuum as the only scholarly journal produced by the Methodist publisher. Reviewing the scope of *Religion in Life* after its first decade, Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr. recognized that the contributors to the journal were, for the most part, representative of liberal Christianity and more than half of them were pastors rather than academicians. “Liberalism both as a theological and social method and as a theological point of view and doctrine provide[d] one of the major premises of *Religion in Life*.”<sup>25</sup> Though the journal listed several British theologians on the editorial board and advisory council, articles by British authors appeared infrequently. Neither did continental European writers find a forum in its pages. *Religion in Life*, in its early stages, focused on American theology and the implications of continental theology in America. Eventually it took up the crises of liberalism and a critical self-examination of liberalism. Professors from the seminaries contributed frequently to *Religion in Life* and because

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<sup>24</sup> Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 194.

<sup>25</sup> Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr., “A Decade’s Trends in ‘Religion in Life,’” *Religion in Life* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1942): 126.

students taking the Course of Study curriculum were directed to read it, the influence of the seminary faculties extended beyond the institutions.

In the first issue of the second volume, *Religion in Life* provided its own suggestions for the well-read pastor. The Odgers and Schutz worship book made the *Religion in Life* list, along with several other books published by Methodist presses. A work by the leading philosopher of the Boston Personalism school of philosophy,<sup>26</sup> Edgar Sheffield Brightman, explored the theory of worship.<sup>27</sup> In the tradition of both Catholic and Protestant theologians, Brightman placed liturgical theory within the larger division of ecclesiology. He discovered that “the religious attitude to God includes and finds its consummation in worship.”<sup>28</sup> Brightman was little interested in the forms and rituals of worship, but rather in the product of it. Drawing on the prophet Isaiah’s temple vision, Brightman deduced that worship begins as reverent contemplation of God, evolved into revelation from God, then communion with God, and finally, as its goal, worship produces fruit. “Not the ecstasy of mystic communion but the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance—is the true goal of worship.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Brightman became the leading interpreter of Borden Parker Bowne. Bowne, in his time, was “the seminal source of the most generally influential school of theology produced by American Methodism.” (Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 175.) Bowne and Brightman and Albert K. Knudson are often included in the group of “evangelical liberals.”

<sup>27</sup> Edgar Sheffield Brightman, *Religious Values* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1925), 173ff.

<sup>28</sup> Brightman, *Religious Values*, 174.

<sup>29</sup> Brightman, *Religious Values*, 183.

For Brightman, then, worship was a mechanism to create or produce certain qualities of life and persons. Worship, explained Brightman, created “perspective, a spiritual ideal, power, and a community of love.”<sup>30</sup>

Other works listed on the *Religion and Life* bibliography contributed to the growing body of literature about worship by calling for liturgical renewal and looking to a larger tradition than just revivalism. G. A. Johnston Ross, in *Christian Worship and Its Future*, focused less on theory and more on practical issues in Christian corporate ceremonies and on the pressing need for liturgical renewal formed by the dominant theological assumptions. Ross also gave direction for liturgical developments. He noted with regret that the Protestant Reformation did not contain within it “all the devotional values which had grown up in the Catholic churches, both Latin and Greek.”<sup>31</sup> Fitzgerald Sale Parker published his 1929 Quillian Lectures to establish the place of Methodist worship within the main-stream of Christian experience. Parker argued that Methodist worship retained many characteristics of the Roman liturgy even while honing it with the reforms of the sixteenth-century Protestants.<sup>32</sup> Because of its sacramental emphasis and also because it was first delivered to ministers-in-training at Emory University, Parker’s work became one of the important Methodist sources on the *Religion in Life* bibliography and was used by his successors who advocated liturgical renewal.

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<sup>30</sup> Brightman, *Religious Values*, 212.

<sup>31</sup> G. A. Johnston Ross, *Christian Worship and Its Future* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1927), 53-4, italics his.

<sup>32</sup> Fitzgerald Sale Parker, *The Practice and Experience of Christian Worship* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1929), 205-6.

In addition to the works listed on the bibliography, *Religion in Life* included in the early volumes articles that introduced readers to the virtues of Roman Catholic worship or that expounded some themes that would later become goals of liturgical reform. In the first ten volumes of *Religion in Life*, no Methodist pastor wrote specifically about worship in the journal assigned for reading by Methodist pastors. Instead, Warren Wheeler Pickett, the pastor of First Congregational Church in Detroit, advocated the reform of Protestant worship to achieve the beauty of Roman Catholic worship. According to Pickett, the Roman Catholic mass was “a service of tremendous beauty and power, far superior in those respects to the exercises in the ordinary Protestant-meeting house.”<sup>33</sup> Roman worship, Pickett argued, could be modified and made harmonious with Protestant theological trends. In a well-written and humorous article, Howard Chandler Robbins of General Theological Seminary in New York, introduced readers to the ideas of a liturgical calendar and a lectionary.<sup>34</sup> Eventually, these ideas of calendar and lectionary “proved crucial” to the goal of liturgical reform within Methodism.<sup>35</sup> In the spring of 1944, Anglican priest, C. Kilmer Myers, explained liturgical reform and the liturgical movement to readers of *Religion in Life*. Myers explained that the modern liturgical movement within Roman Catholicism compared with the Anglican liturgical renewal led by the

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<sup>33</sup> Warren Wheeler Pickett, “Is Worship an Escape?,” *Religion in Life* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1934): 36.

<sup>34</sup> Howard Chandler Robbins, “Preaching and the Christian Year,” *Religion in Life* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1937): 235.

<sup>35</sup> Hoyt L. Hickman, “Word and Table: The Process of Liturgical Revision in the United Methodist Church, 1964-1992,” in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, ed. Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1996), 129.

Caroline divines, such as Jeremy Taylor, and the nonjuring church leaders, such as William Law. Though the liturgical interests of Taylor and Law did not survive what Myers called the “religiously gloomy days of the eighteenth century,” one Anglican priest, John Wesley, advanced the cause of liturgical renewal, especially by his popularization of Holy Communion.<sup>36</sup> Wesley’s liturgical goals equaled the aims of the Roman liturgical movement, Myers explained, and a recovery of the Wesleyan emphases in twentieth-century Methodism would draw it closer to Rome.

Wesley’s prayer-book preference reflected his own mature ecclesiastical context, and a mature liturgical theology. Neither the context nor the theology existed for early American Methodists. England had parishes and settled vicars, but late eighteenth-century America had very few. While John Wesley may have been accustomed to the Gothic cathedrals such as St. Mary’s at Oxford, there were no Gothic cathedrals in early America and only rarely did one find even a Federal-style meeting house. American church life started anew in some respects. It lacked structure, both political and architectural.

The westward expansion of the nation across the Appalachians produced a dramatically different kind of worship than the form John Wesley bequeathed to his American spiritual children. Preaching style, singing, praying, and the frequency of the sacraments had to adapt to frontier conditions. Even the widespread practice of gathering large numbers of persons together in camp meetings wrought changes in worship styles.

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<sup>36</sup> C. Kilmer Myers, “The Liturgical Movement,” *Religion in Life* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1944): 182-3.

The sedate and fixed forms of a prayer book did not recommend themselves well under these conditions. Enthusiasm, shouting, fervent singing did. Thus, a revivalist tradition, perfected on the frontier, influenced Methodist worship throughout most of the nineteenth and into the beginning of the twentieth century. The 1905 Methodist hymnal formalized this pattern with its emphasis on preaching and altar call and chief aim of conversion.<sup>37</sup> It was a pattern successful for winning converts on the frontier, but it was void of the liturgical theology and the sacramental emphasis that later twentieth-century Methodists required.

Changing social conditions drove the need for a better articulated theology of worship. Methodists on the frontier generally did not face the need for reflection, but as what religious historian Sidney Ahlstrom called the “marks of civilization” began to appear over time, so did theological reflection. Those marks or signs of civilization included the “sedate decorum of established society,” according to Ahlstrom,<sup>38</sup> but also a settled clergy, a complex ecclesiastical polity, and the consequent standards for clergy, including the standard of education.

Very little scholarship about worship occurred in the frontier conditions, but as the church matured, Methodist scholars begin to fill the void in liturgical literature. They began to reconsider the prayer-book tradition, especially of Wesley, and to reconsider Wesley himself. Scholars examined the importance of church architecture for worship. In

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<sup>37</sup> See James White, *Christian Worship in Transition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), for the cultural eras of worship.

<sup>38</sup> Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), 453.

due course, the Methodist leadership determined that some basic knowledge of the principles and theology of worship were requisites, so books about worship were added to the study curriculum for Methodist pastors.

However, while books about worship existed and became required reading, many Methodist pastors found a lack of depth and a certain incoherence in liturgical theory. Evangelical liberalism, the dominant theological system, identified ethical preaching and moral education as the primary task of the church. Evangelical liberalism gave little attention to ecclesiology and even less attention to liturgical theology. Introspective as it was, liberalism created a vacuum where worship was thought irrelevant. Filling the vacuum and connecting theology and liturgy, Methodist intellectuals created the ground upon which the process of Romanization took root.

CHAPTER IV  
METHODIST UNION TO 1947: “FORGIVE US,  
LORD, THE FOLLY THAT QUARRELS  
WITH THY FRIENDS”<sup>1</sup>

An insufficient liturgical theology, especially in the period from union in 1939 through the publication of the church’s first *Book of Worship* in 1944, initiated the conditions by which the Methodist Church was Romanized later in the century. Methodism’s 1944 *Book of Worship*, itself a product of union, drew from a variety of sources with no clear connecting theme or principle other than making a multiplicity of styles available in one publication. In this way, the *Book of Worship* mirrored Methodist culture. Methodism has always been an interesting amalgam of motifs, wrote Methodist historical theologian Albert Outler, in which Methodists borrowed “whatever seemed handy and truly useful and then proceeded to adapt it to their own uses and purposes.” In the process of borrowing, Methodists made choices, sometimes drifting toward congregational autonomy, sometimes toward the vagaries of Baptist-type theologies, sometimes as firmly committed as other Protestants to *sola Scriptura*, sometimes Arminian, but never quite Reformed.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Van Dyke, *The Methodist Hymnal: Official Hymnal of the Methodist Church* (Baltimore: The Methodist Publishing, 1939), no. 421.

<sup>2</sup> Albert C. Outler, “Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church?,” in *The Doctrine of the Church*, ed. Dow Kirkpatrick (London: Epworth Press, 1964), 21.

American Methodism in the early twentieth century suffered from a deficiency in liturgical theology because it lacked a sufficient examination of the systematic category of ecclesiology.<sup>3</sup> The theology of evangelical liberalism emphasized “the centrality of Christian experience, the immanence of God, the true humanity of Jesus, atonement as moral influence, and a positive sense that the kingdom of God is being realized in history.”<sup>4</sup> One thing it did not include: an adequate exploration of ecclesiology. Albert Outler noted that Methodists had never given much attention to the doctrine of the church prior to the twentieth century. “In the beginning the people called Methodist had no distinctive doctrine of the church,” he wrote, “for the simple reason that they did not need one.”<sup>5</sup> Early Methodists, in both England and the United States, were not a church and did not intend to be one. Outler believed that American Methodists, though originally intent on being only a religious order, actually became a church upon separation from John Wesley in 1784. Whether or not American Methodism became a church at that point or an organized and bureaucratic society, to use words from Ernst Troeltsch,<sup>6</sup> is the matter of debate. Still, Outler made his point that American Methodism was low church to begin

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<sup>3</sup> That liturgical theology is drawn from the systematic category of ecclesiology is a principle affirmed by Protestant and Catholic theologians. In his recent books, Gordon W. Lathrap explored this principle in detail: *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 87ff, and *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 1-18.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 193.

<sup>5</sup> Outler, “Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church?,” 12.

<sup>6</sup> Ernst Troeltsch, *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, vol. II, trans. Olive Wyon (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1960), 722.

with and assembled its institutional forms and theological apparatus from many quarters, without a coherency of ecclesiastical theory.

The three bodies of American Methodism that united in 1939—the Methodist Episcopal Church; the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and the Methodist Protestant Church—shared common commitments but lacked an articulate ecclesiology or even a more general theology to establish a context for worship reform. As MEC Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes acknowledged in his address to the 1938 General Conference of the MECS,<sup>7</sup> the three branches shared a history and a polity as well as a character that included common commitments to ecumenism and social issues. Hughes suggested the three Methodist churches shared a theology, too, although many Methodist intellectuals registered disapproval over the lack of theological depth. Edwin Lewis, for example, an English Methodist theologian who migrated to the United States and became a professor of theology at Drew University, disparaged the shallowness of theology in the church in 1933.<sup>8</sup> The churches owned a “Social Creed,” Lewis wrote, but that served as an inadequate substitute for theological understanding.

The union of three branches of episcopal Methodism in 1939 set in motion a major reconsideration of its traditions and theology. The union bequeathed bureaucratic forms

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<sup>7</sup> Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes of the MEC, addressing the 1938 General Conference of the MECS, listed these four items that the three traditions shared: history, polity, character, and theology; *DCA*, 23 April 1938, 75-8. His assertion of a common theology is scrutinized by S. Paul Schilling, *Methodism and Society in Theological Perspective*, vol. 3 of *Methodism and Society* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), 35ff.

<sup>8</sup> Edwin Lewis, “The Fatal Apostasy of the Modern Church,” *Religion in Life*, 2 (1933), 490-1.

of episcopal polity, the scheme of representative conferences, and, as Outler noted, “the patterns of frontier expansion and settlement,”<sup>9</sup> but still union left Methodism with no clear understanding of why and how to worship. More than theological factors, Methodism’s commitment to ecumenism shaped the liturgy in the years after reunion. But ecumenism in the first half of the century was tempered by fears of Catholicism and by a nostalgia for the nineteenth-century style of free worship.

Three separated branches of American Methodism met on April 26, 1939 in the Municipal Auditorium of Kansas City, Missouri, where, committed to ecumenism and efficiency, they merged to create the Methodist Church.<sup>10</sup> Eight million members strong, the Methodist Church brought together the Methodist Protestant Church (MPC), the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church. From 26 April to 10 May, the delegates—half of them clergy and half of them laity—hammered out the details of the plan for union, to which the membership of all three institutions had voted overwhelming consent. On the final evening, twelve thousand persons packed the Municipal Auditorium of Kansas City, Missouri for the service declaring union. “Every delegate and Bishop rose with raised hand as Bishop John Moore of Dallas put the final motion for approval of the plan of union. No one stood on the call for opposition.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Outler, “Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church?,” 20.

<sup>10</sup> *DCA*, 26 April 1939, 1; *New York Times*, 27 April 1939, 19. (hereafter, *NYT*)

<sup>11</sup> *NYT*, 6 May 1939, 15, 11 May 1939, 11.

Bishop Moore read the Declaration of Union seriatim, to which the delegates responded, “We do so declare.”<sup>12</sup>

The union of three branches of American Methodism underscored a commitment to the ecumenical spirit. Bishop Paul N. Garber concluded that the “steps toward organic union of American Methodism coincided with the trend in the twentieth century toward closer relationship among all Protestant denominations.”<sup>13</sup> Though Samuel Kincheloe, in his 1937 study, had indicated that appeals for Christian union lost their fervor during the Depression,<sup>14</sup> from the Methodist perspective the will for union continued unabated. In 1930, the annual conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church and of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in Korea united to form the Korean Methodist Church. Similarly, the Methodist Church of Mexico came into existence the same year, and, in England, the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Primitive Methodist Church, and the United Methodist Church merged in 1932. Before 1930, union occurred in Canada, Japan, Australia, and Ireland. According to the bishops, in their Episcopal Address to the 1939 Uniting Conference, American Methodists heard the cries “for peace and a new Christian and ecclesiastical unity.” Uniting Conference delegates confirmed their commitment to “the world-wide character of Methodism,” and to the wider view of Christian unity.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *DCA*, 10 May 1939, 465-70.

<sup>13</sup> Paul N. Garber, *The Methodists Are One People* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1939), 126.

<sup>14</sup> In Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion*, volume 2, *The Noise of Conflict 1919-1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 254.

<sup>15</sup> *Daily Christian Advocate* (hereafter *DCA*), 9 May 1939, 333.

In his book describing the process of union, James Straughn, president of the former MPC and elected a bishop at the Uniting Conference, recognized that merger would eventually lead to more formal worship and a more thoughtful ecclesiology. Straughn did not anticipate the process of Romanization that would occur, but he correctly recognized changing attitudes. Among other things, Straughn predicted that worship in the new denomination would change and he felt certain that he could already see the signs of it. He noted the inclination away from “free worship,” the sacrifice of camp meetings, altar call, emotionalism, and determined evangelism. “Gone in many places is the prophetic role of the central pulpit and ‘thus saith the Lord,’” he wrote. “Present is the priestly altar, the ritual, liturgy, program.”<sup>16</sup> Straughn noted the conspicuous new trend in church architecture and the beginnings of a fixed form of worship—a liturgy—laid out in the church’s hymnal.

The proposed ritual for the united church bore contributions from each of the partners and proliferated the number of services available to worshipping Methodists.<sup>17</sup> Not one but four orders of Sunday worship appeared in the 1935 hymnal and the ritual of the merged church. The Uniting Conference reissued the 1935 hymnal as the official hymnal for the new church and appended a fixed a complete form for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in addition to a brief order. Like the 1905 hymnal before it, *The*

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<sup>16</sup> *DCA*, 27 April 1939, 31; John M. Moore, *The Long Road to Methodist Union* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943), 223; Garber, *Methodists are One People*, 126; James H. Straughn, *Inside Methodist Union* (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1958), 169-70.

<sup>17</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 19-20.

*Methodist Hymnal* of 1939<sup>18</sup> included on the front flyleaf an outlined order for Sunday worship that did not include the observance of communion. Previous hymnals also had included similar outlines plus, at the end of the book, a brief order of worship for the celebration of communion to be added after the sermon. Both the 1905 and 1935 hymnals implied that the normal order for Sunday worship would be the preaching service—essentially the nineteenth-century revival service with the “extras” of choral singing, responsive readings, and creeds. On those days when a congregation celebrated the sacrament, ministers followed the worship outline through the sermon, then turned to the back of the hymnal and followed the abbreviated service for communion. In contrast to the 1905 song book, the 1939 hymnal included two orders of worship for Sunday morning that had been adopted by each of the union partners separately, along with a common order (still printed on the flyleaf) and a fourth rite “adapted from the Sunday Service of John Wesley.”<sup>19</sup> The new hymnal also included “Aids to Individual and Congregational Devotion,” including calls to worship, calls to prayer, invocations, prayers of confession, words of assurance and pardon, affirmations of faith, offertory sentences, and a number of collects and prayers. Two new rites appeared in the 1939 hymnal: a ritual for the dedication of an organ and one for the dedication of a church, indicating the importance that facilities and organ had taken.

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<sup>18</sup> *The Methodist Hymnal: Official Hymnal of The Methodist Church* (Baltimore: The Methodist Publishing House, 1939) served the denomination until a new hymnal was issued in 1964.

<sup>19</sup> *The Methodist Hymnal*, 506.

A desire for variety rather than for coherent theology bound the services together. The worship and ritual committee attempted to harmonize the services of the three churches, according to the directions given to it, but harmonization proved to be a challenge. Committee members worked with parallel versions of the rituals from the previous denominations, hoping to splice them into one new order. The committee did harmonize portions of the separate rituals; however, committee members also created some new material. Given the trust granted to them, some committee members felt free to fashion new prayers or forms where they thought necessary. One item of novelty the committee added was the opening address in the service of infant baptism, which committee members thought improved the ritual.<sup>20</sup> The address began, “Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are heirs of life eternal,” explicitly advocating a doctrine of the inherent goodness of humanity and a tendency toward universalism.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the committee work introduced an important change to Methodist practice with little discussion on the floor of general conference and without a coherent liturgical theology to justify the change.<sup>22</sup>

Members of the conference gave little or no debate to ritual recommended by the Committee on Rituals and Orders of Worship. Why did the conference delegates give so

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<sup>20</sup> Allan J. Ferguson, “To Revise a Ritual: Baptism and Methodist Union, 1939,” *Doxology* 10 (1993): 42.

<sup>21</sup> Ole E. Borgen, “Baptism, Confirmation, and Church Membership The Methodist Church Before the Union of 1968 (Part II),” *Methodist History* 27, no. 3 (April 1989): 165.

<sup>22</sup> That particular change would be corrected in the 1988 *Book of Worship*.

little discussion to the matters of ritual and worship design? Certainly, the members recognized an authorized amount of license in the use of the ritual. The *Discipline* declared that a certain “liberty is given in the use of these Orders of Worship,” only *urging* (but not requiring) congregations and ministers to make some use of them.<sup>23</sup> Secondly, the timing of the report of the Committee on Rituals and Orders of Worship precluded much serious debate. The committee reported its recommendations in the last days of the conference, after delegates had been warned that the treasury was low and the time for adjournment was at hand.<sup>24</sup> Pressed by time, conference members determined that hymnal and ritual revision would be an ongoing process and postponed discussion. To insure future debate, delegates established a Commission on Orders of Worship, Rituals, and Aids to the Deepening of the Spiritual Life, and directed that the commission report at the second general conference.<sup>25</sup> Thirdly, even united the three bodies lacked the theological sophistication in which to frame the discussion.

Methodism’s historic commitment to abstinence from alcohol produced the context for the only significant floor debate regarding the ritual when the committee presented its prospectus to the members of the Uniting Conference. Again, Methodism lacked a coherent liturgical theology in which to frame this debate. For some members, the church’s position on temperance and its ritual were in conflict. Chester A. Smith moved that the word “wine” used in the proposed Order for the Administration of the

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<sup>23</sup> *Discipline 1939*, para. 1571.

<sup>24</sup> *NYT*, 6 May 1939 (expenses); *DCA*, 9 May 1939, 340ff (committee report).

<sup>25</sup> *DCA*, 8 May 1939, 297; 11 May 1939, 440-1.

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper be changed to the word "cup." Smith reminded the delegates that, in practice, the local churches did not use wine in the service of communion, which was one of the reasons for changing to individual communion cups rather than one common cup. The word "wine" offended many "sensitive-minded people," Smith declared on the conference floor. "I have noticed the leaders of our American youth some time ago called attention to the difficulty the leaders in our youth movement experience in trying to explain certain parts of the New Testament and the advice given to the young people regarding wine in supporting the prohibition cause." To use the word "cup" would make as much sense, Smith argued, and would give a boost to the cause of temperance. But the delegates were not persuaded. Daniel Marsh argued that to use the words "bread and cup" instead of "bread and wine" mixed a metaphor. The delegates agreed and defeated the Smith amendment.<sup>26</sup>

The Smith amendment lost for linguistic and traditional reasons and the conference asserted the priority of Christian experience and behavior with regard to temperance over theological formulation. No member of the conference offered theological justifications either for or against the Smith amendment though, as a whole, the Uniting Conference maintained the long tradition of support for the social issue of temperance by insisting "that intoxicating liquor cannot be legalized without sin." In order to crystallize opposition "to all public violations of the moral law," the conference established a Board of Temperance, headquartered in Washington, D.C. The object of the board was to promote "by an intensive education program, including publication and distribution of

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<sup>26</sup> *DCA*, 9 May 1939, 341-2.

literature, voluntary total abstinence from all intoxicants and narcotics.” The conference gave to the board the responsibility also to “seek the suppression of salacious and corrupting literature and degrading amusements,” including lotteries and gambling. In a section dealing with discipline and trials of church members, the conference continued a provision of both the northern and southern branches that “a member of the church... who persists in using, buying, or selling intoxicating liquors as a beverage,” or who assisted with liquor traffic in even the most indirect way, could be brought to trial and even expelled. Church members could also be tried on charges of “imprudent conduct,” “indulging in sinful tempers,” sowing dissension in the church, or “inveighing against its Doctrines and Discipline.”<sup>27</sup>

As a whole, the 1939 ritual subordinated doctrine to Christian experience or behavior. For example, persons uniting with the church reaffirmed the vows made when they were baptized, specifically confessing Jesus Christ as Savior, pledging allegiance to his kingdom, “receiving the Christian faith as contained in the New Testament,” and affirming their loyalty to the Methodist Church. The ritual included no doctrinal test, no assertion of orthodox theology as a prerequisite for membership. Like other Protestant groups in general, and in accord with evangelical liberalism, Methodists allowed considerable freedom in interpreting few and simple doctrinal affirmations. Correct doctrine finished second to certain Christian commitment.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Discipline 1939*, para. 677.

<sup>28</sup> The ritual from *Discipline 1939*, para. 1584; Schilling, *Methodism and Society in Theological Perspective*, 31.

As a matter of course, members of the Uniting Conference spent more time in debate over matters of social commitment than of theology. The conference directed some of its strongest statements toward the international horizon and the renewed fears of world conflict. Some of the more impassioned debates centered on the issues of war, peace, and conscientious objectors because delegates recognized that an “extremely dangerous state of affairs” existed that year in international relations. In spite of Kansas Governor Alfred Landon’s warning not to meddle “in the delicate foreign relationships of this country” while refusing “to accept the responsibility of our interference,”<sup>29</sup> the church renewed its opposition to the spirit of war that was raging through the world. With regard to conscientious objectors, the conference left the final decision to participate or not in war to the individual who was “to answer the call of his government in an emergency according to the dictates of his Christian conscience.”<sup>30</sup> In the Social Creed the church repeated its support for an army and a navy for police purposes while acknowledging the legitimacy of conscientious objectors. These debates over social issues were often lengthy, emotionally charged, and generally based on practical considerations. Rarely did members of the conference express great theological insights.

Strong anti-Catholic sentiments prevented many Methodists of 1939 from envisioning an ecumenism broader than cooperation among Protestants. Debate at the General Conference of 1940, only one year after union, highlighted the prejudice that would encumber the process of Romanization until changed. Bishop James Cannon, who

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<sup>29</sup> *DCA*, 11 May 1939, 430-2.

<sup>30</sup> *Discipline 1939*, paras. 1697 and 1695.

oversaw southern Methodism's mission work in Mexico, parts of Europe, and the Congo, as well as administering conferences in the United States before union, was one of southern Methodism's leading critics of Roman Catholicism. From Cannon's perspective, the Roman Catholic Church was "aggressive as never before in this country and the rest of the world," and provided one good reason for united Methodist action. Cannon desired that "American Protestantism unite to combat an increasingly rampant, aggressive, politico-religio Romanism." Joining Cannon, Bishops John Moore and Edwin Mouzon, both of Texas, named Catholicism as a menace to American institutions.<sup>31</sup>

While the attitudes of Bishops Cannon and Mouzon reflected the attitudes of many Methodist Church members of 1939, other Methodist leaders offered a qualified challenge to this anti-Catholic sentiment. At the General Conference of 1940, the bishops raised the issue of anti-Catholic sentiment and challenged attitudes of bias in their Episcopal Address. As a result, the bishops set the stage for one of the longest and most heated debates of the session, a debate that sounded the depths of the anti-Catholic prejudices to be overcome. "We are ready and glad to join with the Roman Catholic Church, and with all other religious organizations," the bishops declared, "or with any secular organizations, to promote world-peace... But we deplore, and most firmly resist, any union of Church and State, and are, and will be, unalterably opposed to any establishment of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the United States." Picking up the issue, the Committee on Interdenominational Relations introduced a resolution requesting that

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<sup>31</sup> Robert A. Hohner, *Prohibition and Politics: The Life of Bishop James Cannon, Jr.* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina, 1999), 172.

President Franklin Roosevelt recall Myron C. Taylor, recently appointed as ambassador to the Vatican. Like the bishops, most conference delegates cast the debate in terms of the principle of the separation of church and state. Separation is a principle that goes back historically as far as the Reformation, one delegate declared, though another pointed out that the U.S. had had an ambassador to the Papal States before. Lynn Harold Hough courageously criticized the request to recall Taylor. "The real question at stake, sir, is whether we will go down historically as a Church great in number but parochial and self-conscious in its sympathy, and incapable of taking a large view of great questions," Hough opined, and accused some of fostering an anti-Catholic prejudice. "Do we, sir, want to signalize the union of Methodism by inaugurating a new era of religious hatred?" After much parliamentary wrangling, the conference adopted the report requesting Taylor's recall with only a few dissenting votes.<sup>32</sup>

The accusation of an anti-Catholic spirit notwithstanding, conference delegates affirmed again their belief that world peace and Christian unity went hand-in-hand. Bishops and delegates were aware that the European war threatened to involve the United States and the cause of war, as far as the bishops could see, was "the hold which nationalism has on the minds and hearts and wills of men." Bishop Ralph Ward carried to the conference one message "transcending nationalism," from Chinese Methodist laypersons, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek and Madame Chiang of China. The message spoke of the "crucifixion of China" and the hostilities "which are bringing bloodshed and

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<sup>32</sup> *DCA*, 26 April 1940, 53; 3 May 1940, 301-5; *NYT* 26 April 1940, 10; 30 April 1940, 8; 3 May 1940, 23.

devastation.” “The way of the Cross is the only one that can lead to world fellowship and peace,” wrote the Chiangs. Benjamin Gregory of the British Methodist Church carried fraternal greetings to the Atlantic City assembly and promised that “war is helping the unity of the Churches.” “Some of us today are talking of a Federation of Nations, not interfering with national independence, but breaking down all barriers, economic and social,” Gregory confided. Delegates to the American conference supported the idea and passed a resolution that urged “the United States, in collaboration with other nations, to undertake the building of a federation of nations through which the will to peace may become effective.”<sup>33</sup>

The idea of a Protestant cooperation, to the exclusion of Roman Catholicism, surfaced again at the 1944 General Conference. War and economic pressures forced the conference to shorten its calendar to only ten days, April 26 to May 6; the wartime pressures also brought new calls for unity, though it was what the Federal Council of Churches General Secretary, Samuel McRae Cavert, described as “common Protestantism.” In his address to the General Conference, Cavert reminded Methodists that the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America organized among twenty-four Protestant denominations. “Because there is a common Protestantism,” Cavert explained, “we have common tasks.” Those tasks included providing Protestant (not denominational) chaplains for the military and efforts to bring about a better world order. Cavert cited also common problems, including the seemingly biased Selective Service

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<sup>33</sup> *DCA*, 26 April 1940, 49; 29 April 1940, 117; 1 May 1940, 198; *Discipline, 1940*, para. 1716.

ruling to cancel the deferments of all students for the ministry not enrolled by July first of that year. That decision operated in favor of Roman Catholics, whose ministerial candidates were enrolled in “junior seminaries” rather than in colleges. “Its effect would be to cancel the supply of Protestant students for the ministry entirely, but not to affect at all the supply of candidates for the Roman Catholic priesthood,” Cavert declared.<sup>34</sup>

The anti-Catholic rhetoric died only slowly. In February of 1946, the Council of Bishops appointed one committee to prepare a statement of essential Methodist doctrine and another to study Methodism’s relation to Roman Catholicism, especially Methodism’s opposition to diplomatic representation of the United States at the Vatican. In May of the following year, a *New York Times* headline declared “Methodist Bishops Attack Catholics” when the committee’s report to the Council of Bishops accused the Catholic Church of “political activities in this country and abroad, which the council said amounted to bigotry and denial of religious liberty.” In its report, the study committee specifically noted Argentina, Spain, and Italy, where the Roman Catholic Church enjoyed a great deal of influence with government leaders. Pressured by the Catholic Church, these governments “passed legislation seriously limiting the freedom of other religious bodies.” Accordingly, Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam proclaimed that “it is only a united non-Roman Christianity that can hope to swerve Roman Christianity from its ecclesiastical totalitarianism.” Oxnam, a Methodist leader in ecumenical cooperation and dialog,

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<sup>34</sup> *DCA*, 27 April, 1944, 32-3. Cavert explained that ministerial students were exempt from conscription. Catholic students declared their candidacy for ministry before draft age, whereas Protestant students did not.

predicted a union of Protestant denominations within a decade.<sup>35</sup> He failed to envision Methodist-Catholic collaboration.

In the short session, the 1944 General Conference authorized a worship book for use in the newly united churches that drew on its commitments to a common Protestantism and excluded Roman Catholic influences. The General Conference of 1940 had authorized a Commission on Orders of Worship, Ritual, and Aids for the Deepening of the Spiritual Life and charged it to report to the conference of 1944. The enabling legislation directed the Commission to provide orders of worship and rituals that would “draw upon richer and wider sources than those that have been available up to the present time.”<sup>36</sup> The books of *Discipline* contained the ritual, as they always had, and all three editions, 1939, 1940, and 1944, contained the same ritual with only minor editorial changes. In addition to the service for communion, the hymnal contained orders for baptism, reception of new members, dedications of organs and churches (each designed to be tacked on to the outline of the preaching service), and full orders of matrimony and burial, each taken from the *Discipline*. The ritual in the *Discipline* also contained services of consecration and ordination of deacons, elders, and bishops; a service for the laying of a corner stone; dedications of a church, an organ, a parish house, a hospital, an educational

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<sup>35</sup> *NYT*, 26 February 1946, 46; 1 June 1946, 11; 8 May 1947, 26, where the report of the study committee is quoted; 26 May 1947, 16; Oxnam is treated in Robert Moats Miller, *Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam: Paladin of Liberal Protestantism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990).

<sup>36</sup> *Discipline 1940*, para. 1700.

building, and a home; and additional orders of baptism and reception of members not found in the hymnal. This ritual formed the core of the 1944 proposed *Book of Worship for Church and Home*. Presented to the 1944 General Conference by the Commission, *The Book of Worship* drew from the common richness of the Protestant tradition, and took only little notice of the larger Catholic tradition. Approved by the General Conference, *The Book of Worship for Church and Home* codified into one volume, “not only the historic offices and Ritual of The Methodist Church, but also a wealth of devotional material in the form of prayers, scriptural readings, and orders of worship which may be used as need may require.”<sup>37</sup> The work borrowed heavily from other Protestant traditions, incorporating forms or prayers found in Lutheran, Presbyterian, Church of Scotland, Church of Christ, Episcopalian, and Congregational traditions. Of more than seven hundred prayers and forms, fewer than half a dozen cited Roman Catholic sources.<sup>38</sup>

Anti-Catholic attitudes and the residual desire for free worship, which would hinder the process of Romanization, surfaced in the debate when the committee presented the *Book of Worship*. Some delegates argued that the very notion of a book of worship was Catholic or, at the very least, more liturgical than appropriate for Methodism. The committee chairperson addressed this argument in his presentation to the conference.

“We are not suggesting anything here this morning to make our Methodism ritualistic or

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<sup>37</sup> *The Book of Worship for Church and Home* (n.p.: The Methodist Publishing House, 1944), v; hereafter, *BWCH*.

<sup>38</sup> As indicated in the acknowledgments, *BWCH*, 521-2.

liturgical in the sense some people use the term,” J. N. R. Score declared. The Methodist Church had always had a ritual, he further indicated, and the church’s ritual stood at the heart of the new manual unchanged. Indeed, in the only motion of amendment presented on the floor of the General Conference, North Carolina delegate, Mrs. G. W. L. Pleete, moved to delete the ritual from the manual, arguing that it was redundant to have it in both the *Book of Discipline* and in the *Book of Worship for Church and Home*. The motion failed. Nevertheless, the committee went to great lengths to underscore the paragraph of the report indicating that the use of the manual of worship was entirely optional and not required of any Methodist clergy or layperson.<sup>39</sup> The published version of the work reiterated the point on the title page, though in the preface the committee pointed out that the official ritual, the central portion of the manual, was to be “invariably used.”<sup>40</sup>

There is no doubt that the emphasis on the voluntary nature of the *Book of Worship* created some degree of confusion among Methodist clergy. Successive *Disciplines* directed ministers to use the ritual contained therein. The *Disciplines* of 1939, 1940, and 1944 contained several varieties of orders, even four different orders for Sunday morning. According to the disciplinary statute, ministers and congregation were accorded some “liberty” in the use of these orders, though urged “to make use of some

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<sup>39</sup> Texts of debates found in *DCA*, 3 May 1944, 139-42. The argument that a book of worship is itself “Catholic” would be made positively by 1988.

<sup>40</sup> *DCA*, 3 May 1944, 140; *BWCH*, vii.

one of these Orders.”<sup>41</sup> However, the ritual, which congregations were expected to use, was placed into the *Book of Worship*, designed for “voluntary and optional use.” The Preface to the *Book of Worship* attempted to compensate by explaining that “the Ritual which this book contains is of course official and is to be invariably used.”<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, the new worship book pointed in significant ways away from revivalism and towards Rome. It incorporated several of the recommendations offered in the foundation literature of the Methodist press, including attention to the rituals of other churches, some (limited) recovery of Wesley’s ritual, and a framework built around the church year. The commission noted a growing desire among some Methodists to have access to “the rich inheritance which the Christian Church has preserved in its ancient and moderns treasures of devotion.” At the heart of the new worship book stood the ritual services the commission claimed were preserved from Wesley’s instruction. Beside the ritual stood suggested services and aids to devotional life, which were, for the most part, structured according to the calendar of the Christian year. The book contained an extensive section of complete worship services for the church seasons, including services for Epiphany, Lent, and Holy Week. Two lectionaries, both based on the church-year calendar, provided tables of Scripture lessons to be read. One ordered lessons for the Sundays of the Christian year, while the second gave lessons for Holy Communion. Both listed only two lessons, one from the Old Testament or New Testament epistles; the second always a Gospel lesson. Neither lectionary indicated which took precedence.

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<sup>41</sup> *Discipline 1940*, para. 1571.

<sup>42</sup> *BWCH*, vii.

Presumably, a voluntary observant of the book would follow the lectionary for the Christian year on most Sundays, Advent through Kingdomtide,<sup>43</sup> except on those Sundays that also happened to be communion Sundays, in which case the lectionary for communion would control.

Thus, the merger within American Methodism and its ecumenical spirit committed it to a reappraisal of the theory and form of its worship. Eventually that reappraisal led to the Romanization of American Methodism. Although the 1944 *Book of Worship* was far from a Romanized liturgy, it did provide an initial text for reformers to revise. The composers of the *Book of Worship for Church and Home* claimed that it brought together the best of the two-fold Methodist tradition of liturgical and free worship. In the preface of the manual, the commission explained Methodism “is liturgical in conducting its recurrent stated services with reverence according to officially adopted forms; it is free in its ability to use extemporary prayer, to bend each service to the glorifying of God and to the bringing of his saving grace unto men.”<sup>44</sup> Whether or not a codified liturgical form preserved the element of free worship is debatable. The implication drawn from the *Book of Worship for Church and Home* is that the element of free worship was maintained when worshipers voluntarily chose not to use it, as was allowed by the General Conference legislation. By 1988, this would change. Not only would the forms contained

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<sup>43</sup> For the history of lectionary development and the questions of the number of lessons and the use of Kingdomtide, see W. Douglas Mills, *A Daily Lectionary* (Nashville: Upper Room, 1986).

<sup>44</sup> *BWCH*, vi.

in future books of worship increasingly reflect the Roman Catholic tradition, but also the option to not use the book was omitted.

After the 1944 General Conference, a number of Methodist leaders claimed the tide had turned and that liturgical worship would become the norm. Albert M. Conover, then director of the Interdenominational Bureau of Architecture, observed in October 1944 that “for more than twenty years now, a movement, significant in volume and effectiveness, has been noticeable in practically all Protestant churches in the United States.” Important to Conover, the movement sought to recover the value of worship and, consequently, of church architecture. This movement met objections, Conover quickly pointed out, notably the criticism that it was a “trend toward Rome.” “These cries have died out,” Conover perceived, though this was mostly a matter of his wishful thinking, “as Protestants realize that rather than being an imitation of Rome, or even of the Episcopal Church, there are values in worship, symbolism and religious arts, regardless of denominational label, and after all The Methodist Church is a *church*, not just a religious society within the church as John Wesley at first intended.”<sup>45</sup>

Conover and pastor Romey P Marshall rejoiced in the pro-Romanization elements signaled by the *Book of Worship*. Marshall, who would play an important role in liturgical revision between 1947 and 1965, began a series of articles about liturgy for the pastors’ monthly magazine, *The Pastor*, which illuminated the shape of things to come. In the first article, Marshall introduced the new *Book of Worship*, which he thought was “designed to

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<sup>45</sup> Elbert M. Conover, “Trends in Church Architecture,” *The Pastor* 8, no. 1 (October 1944): 8.

be used in the same manner as the Prayer Book of the Episcopal Church.” Despite the action of the General Conference that had made the use of the book voluntary, thus creating confusion regarding the use of the ritual, Marshall suggested that pastors would want to make regular use of it. “Too long has Methodism followed the tradition of Dissent,” he wrote, “and neglected the obvious advantages of liturgical worship.” Marshall clearly identified the required next step: “to provide a comprehensive course in liturgy and the ordering of worship in all of our theological schools.”<sup>46</sup> Marshall apparently took it for granted that the theological schools would become important institutions within Methodism.<sup>47</sup> Marshall observed in his article that a recovery of a Methodist liturgical tradition would be a return to the practice and intent of John Wesley himself: “Those who wish to return to the churchmanship of Wesley will be delighted by the new *Book of Worship*.”<sup>48</sup> The obvious first implication to Marshall’s generalization was that Wesley had a “high church” leaning. The second implication, perhaps less obvious, was that succeeding generations of Methodists would want to return to the practices of or recover the intention of John Wesley. The questions of whether or not Wesley was a high church Anglican and whether or not there existed any value in

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<sup>46</sup> Romey P. Marshall, “The New Book of Worship,” *The Pastor* 8, no. 1 (October 1944): 26.

<sup>47</sup> Marshall could not know that the first person in the United States hired to teach liturgy, at either a Protestant or Catholic school, would be a Methodist scholar, James White. White, who earned the doctoral degree from Duke University, began his teaching career in 1961 at Methodist-related Perkins School of Theology; interview with James F. White, 27 September 2001, Madison, NJ.

<sup>48</sup> Marshall, “The New Book of Worship,” 26.

recovering Wesley's intent would be debated within Methodism in the next forty years.

Both questions would be answered in the affirmative.

CHAPTER V  
INCREASING FORMALISM, 1945-1965:  
“THINE IS THE GLORY, RISEN,  
CONQUERING SON”<sup>1</sup>

By a nearly unanimous vote, the 1964 General Conference authorized a second worship book for Methodism twenty years after the first. The vote indicated the popularity of the book. The Preface of the new *Book of Worship*, published in 1965, recognized both the “wide acceptance” won by the 1944 *Book of Worship for Church and Home* and an “awakened and growing need” for worship reform.<sup>2</sup> Hundreds of Methodists, who had grown attached to the idea of a service book, wrote letters to recommend improvements and to request additional aids. Countless congregations evaluated a draft version and reported their conclusions. From many quarters of the Methodist Church, a growing number of members exhibited interest in worship, liturgy, and a book of worship.

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<sup>1</sup> Edmond L. Budry, “Thine Is the Glory,” *The Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1964), #450. American Protestants were introduced to this hymn at the 1948 Amsterdam conference at which the World Council of Churches was established. According to Roger Hazelton (“Ecumenicity in Worship,” *Religion in Life* 19:1 (Winter Number, 1949-50): 48), the hymn represented the best of contemporary expression and was already popular in Europe when it was included in the 1965 Methodist hymnal.

<sup>2</sup> The Methodist Church, *The Book of Worship for Church and Home* (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1965), np.

Like American religion in general, American Methodism underwent a major restructuring in the post-war period.<sup>3</sup> As the population increased and shifted from rural to urban areas, the number of Methodist churches increased rapidly. Trends to raise educational standards for Methodist clergy paralleled the expansion of higher education in American Society. The membership of the Methodist Church one year after union (1940) stood at 8,008,274. Church membership grew and peaked at eleven million in 1965, then gradually declined to fewer than nine million by 1988. Just over eighteen thousand ministers in full connection served 42,262 individual churches in 1940. Many churches were yoked on circuits with one or more churches, though served by only one clergyman. Recruiting did not keep pace with retirements, so that, at the end of World War II, Methodism faced a clergy shortage, having only 15,000 clergy to serve its 40,000 congregations. The number of churches declined steadily, except for the addition of about 2,600 Evangelical United Brethren churches in the merger of 1968. By 1988, the United Methodist Church had lost more than 4,600 congregations. The number of clergy, however, jumped up by 10,000 with the 1968 merger and steadily increased to more than two-and-a-half times the 1940 number.

Attitudes about the education of clergy evolved, too, and the role of seminaries increased in importance. In one of the most important actions of the century, one that would advance the process of Romanization by providing the scholarship and the scholars to promote the theological agenda, the denomination cemented a commitment to

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 5.

theological education. Umphrey Lee, President of Southern Methodist University challenged the 1939 Uniting Conference and the united church to make a change. "It is time that we cease apologizing for our place in education, and that we cease our lugubrious complaints." Following Lee's lead, Lynn Harold Hough, Dean of Drew Theological Seminary, reported that of the institutions, the theological schools stood "in a place of pivotal and overwhelming importance." That pivotal role came to include fostering the agenda of worship reform. Hough pleaded on behalf of the graduate schools of theology: "Every church, every year, should take a collection for which serious preparation is made in order that the work of the theological school may be adequately supported."<sup>4</sup>

Lee and Hough's call to support theological education ran counter to the tradition. Though American Methodists had founded 130 or more colleges, universities, junior colleges, secondary schools, professional schools, academies, and mission schools by 1939, it did not establish seminaries to train clergy until relatively late. Other denominations in the United States, including Congregationalists, Unitarians, Episcopalians, and Baptists, established at least one theological seminary before northern Methodists established their first in 1867.<sup>5</sup> As late as the second half of the nineteenth century, a great majority of the denomination's clergy, especially the denominational

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<sup>4</sup> *DCA*, 11 May 1939, 463-5.

<sup>5</sup> William Warren Sweet, *Methodism in American History* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954 rev.), 225.

leaders, opposed theological education for clergy.<sup>6</sup> Noting that early Methodist preachers had done mighty deeds without the advantage of education, and arguing that practical experience on circuits was the best education for ministers, the MECS rejected proposals for founding theological education for ministers at the General Conferences of 1866 and 1870. Certain conservative elements within Methodism vigorously opposed theological education and worked hard to discourage others from making gifts for educational institutions. MECS Bishop George Pierce remarked in 1866 that had he a million dollars he “would not give one dime for such an object.”<sup>7</sup> At the time, Methodism preferred non-academic training for its clergy, so even in 1939, the year of union, the majority of Methodist ministers received their training on the job and through what was known as the Course of Study.<sup>8</sup> Not until 1956 did the General Conference enact legislation making seminary graduation the normal qualification for clergy to become full members of the annual conferences.

At the time of union, the Methodist Church claimed nine theological schools in the United States. Some of these schools would become instrumental in pressing the agenda of the Romanization of Methodism. In addition to Boston School of Theology and Garrett Biblical Institute, the School of Religion of Duke University, Westminster

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<sup>6</sup> Kenneth Cain Kinghorn, *The Heritage of American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 119; and Sweet, *Methodism in American History*, 227.

<sup>7</sup> John O. Gross, “The Field of Education, 1865-19390,” in *The History of American Methodism*, ed. Emory S. Bucke (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964) 3: 244-5.

<sup>8</sup> Kinghorn, *Heritage*, 112; Gross, “The Field of Education,” 3:243-5. Not until 1956 did General Conference make seminary education the norm for ministerial preparation.

Theological Seminary, Emory University, Gammon Theological Seminary, the School of Theology of Southern Methodist University, Iliff School of Theology, and Drew Theological Seminary reported their histories and missions to the Uniting Conference; from Sweden, the Scandinavian School of Theology also reported.<sup>9</sup> Seminary enrollments consistently increased until 1984.<sup>10</sup> Before 1956, most Methodist clergy gained their training through the Course of Study curriculum; after 1956, a majority of clergy attended seminary. Thus, Methodist seminaries came to play a vital role in the training of clergy and the influence of seminary faculty increased.

The social crises of the post-war years manifested in renewed interest in worship.<sup>11</sup> Unlike the debate about the appropriateness or necessity of the 1944 *Book of Worship for Church and Home*, most of the debate over the 1965 *Book of Worship* focused on content and inclusiveness and the parameters of liturgical reform. A Methodist religious order, organized for the express purpose of advocating liturgical worship, pledged allegiance to the Methodist worship books. Members of the order produced scholarship to support the effort of liturgical revision and some gave leadership on the official committees. Other Methodist leaders, including several key seminary professors, contributed to the growing body of literature about worship and advocated liturgical reform.

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<sup>9</sup> *Daily Christian Advocate*, 1939, 132-3, 196, 134, 135, 164, 165, 166-7, 195, 197, and 260.

<sup>10</sup> *United Methodists Are...* (United Methodist Communications, 1998); Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*, 29; Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed., *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 274.

<sup>11</sup> James Hudnut-Beumler, *Looking for God in the Suburbs* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 29ff.

To address the perceived need and the growing interest in worship, Methodist intellectuals sought historical foundations, primarily within Protestant and Wesleyan liturgical traditions. The foreword of the 1965 *Book of Worship* acknowledged forty-eight different sources and great diversity, including Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. The bulk of the material, however, came from the “free-church” tradition, Lutheran sources, and the Anglican church. Methodists searching for foundations in the middle of the twentieth century looked to Wesley and his Anglican heritage. The most radical proposal in the 1965 *Book of Worship* was a revision of the Wesley’s service of communion to follow more closely the rite from the Anglican 1549 Book of Common Prayer.<sup>12</sup> The leadership responsible for shaping patterns of worship and for developing a coherent liturgical theology within American Methodism, looked back only to the Anglican tradition for direction.

After merger, prominent Methodist theologians, especially Harold DeWolf and Georgia Harkness, continued to promulgate the tenants of evangelical liberalism, the dominant Methodist theology in the first half of the twentieth century, though, by mid-century, other theologians offered persuasive challenges. Although these theologians gave new articulation and development to evangelical liberalism, the system still lacked the theological foundation to provide a coherent liturgical expression for the Methodist Church. A social emphasis continued at the center of liberalism at mid-century. At

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<sup>12</sup> James White, *Christian Worship in North American, A Retrospective: 1955-1995* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 100.

Boston University, L. Harold DeWolf, one of a small number of prominent Methodist theologians,<sup>13</sup> explained the Methodist Christian's interest in the social order:

For the institutions of earth are like the wooden forms within which cement is poured to fashioned dens of vice or cathedrals of worship. The forms are but temporary, yet they shape the structure which endures. In the kingdom it is the person and the community of persons under God which will endure. But this community is affirmed or denied by what we do in politics and commerce.<sup>14</sup>

DeWolf, who made little mention of worship, described the business of the church to cast its influence by altering the social environment in light of the principles of the Gospel and to provide within the Church a miniature of the true community of *koinonia*, or fellowship. To the general topic of worship, DeWolf contributed only two sentences in his book. In the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, DeWolf found mostly symbolism of fellowship and unity.<sup>15</sup>

Georgia Harkness of Garrett Biblical Institute, the first woman in the United States to hold a major chair in theology, at least acknowledged that "the distinctive function of the church is to help people to worship God." However, she placed little value on the sacraments, which she described wholly in subjective terms of community without reference to a sense of the human-divine encounter in the sacramental action. Harkness wrote that the very name of "communion" for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 197. While at Boston, DeWolf was mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr. After 1960, DeWolf moved to Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D. C.

<sup>14</sup> L. Harold DeWolf, *A Theology of the Living Church* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), 317.

<sup>15</sup> DeWolf, *A Theology of the Living Church*, 325, 353.

indicated that fellowship among persons was the primary value. Addressing an age-old theological dispute about the sacrament, Harkness declared that the “real presence” of Christ was found in this fellowship.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, she had no sense of baptism as an action of God or as entry into the worshiping community. In fact, though her work, *Understanding the Christian Faith*, purported to be an explanation of major Christian principles, she found no place to mention baptism at all.<sup>17</sup>

In the post-war years, neo-Reformation theology countered liberal evangelicalism and Edwin Lewis at Drew University attracted new interest. Neo-Reformation theology stressed the total sovereignty of God and God’s judgment of human affairs.<sup>18</sup> It emphasized the unique revelation of God in Jesus Christ and that Jesus Christ alone provided the only means of reconciliation with God. Before World War II, Lewis had undergone personal conversion, rejecting the liberal theology of his early writings and teachings and reasserting more classical themes. According to Lewis, liberalism viewed human nature too optimistically, so he affirmed sin and the objective, sacrificial work of the atonement. Lewis expanded his earlier essay, “The Fatal Apostasy of the Church,” into the book-length *Christian Manifesto*, in which he paid tribute to the influence of Karl

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<sup>16</sup> Georgia Harkness, *Understanding the Christian Faith* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1947), 90-1.

<sup>17</sup> Harkness, *Understanding the Christian Faith*, 151.

<sup>18</sup> See Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 960ff, for “neo-orthodoxy.”

Barth.<sup>19</sup> Lewis emphasized the themes the sovereignty of God and the uniqueness of the Christian revelation. He repudiated liberalism although he did not reject either the goals of the Social Gospel or of biblical criticism.

While neo-Reformation theology challenged evangelical liberalism, it did not embrace a whole and satisfactory liturgical theology. Because neo-Reformation theology emphasized the scriptural revelation, its theology of worship emphasized reading and preaching Scripture to the exclusion of the sacraments. In this sense, neo-Reformation theology offered no more a solid foundation for liturgical theology than evangelical liberalism had. Neo-Reformation worship expressions focused on the Protestant liturgies of the sixteenth century and, for Methodists, on the Wesleyan liturgies.<sup>20</sup> The affirmation of human sinfulness and dependency on God's grace led to a recovery of confession and creed. The heavily penitential language of the Reformation liturgies suited a generation of persons whose faith in the goodness of humanity had been shattered.

Methodists looked to Bard Thompson, a Reformation historian at Methodist related Drew University for worship texts. Thompson focused on the liturgies of the Protestant Reformers with only a mention of the ancient rites of the church and the development of them.<sup>21</sup> The Reformation services that Thompson outlined stressed

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<sup>19</sup> Edwin L. Lewis, *Christian Manifesto* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1934); and "How Barth Has Influenced Me," *Theology Today* (October, 1956): 358.

<sup>20</sup> White, *Christian Worship in North American*, 118.

<sup>21</sup> Bard Thompson's collection, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961) stood as the representative book of the period. He gave some attention to the ancient and medieval Church, but the bulk of the work was given to Reformation liturgies.

preaching and confession, coinciding with the social trends of the times. The same Reformation services supported a memorialist understanding of the Lord's Supper, while discounting an understanding of the "real presence" or of the action of God in the sacrament. These emphases made attendance at the Lord's Supper solemn, penitential, even funereal. The text for the Lord's Supper from the Church of England, which American Methodists adopted at this time, epitomized the style. American Methodists considered these emphases appropriate for a season but hard to take for long.<sup>22</sup> In the process of Romanization, Methodists recovered a sacramental emphasis and the joyful celebration of God's action in the sacraments. But neither evangelical liberalism nor neo-Reformation theology provided that understanding of liturgy.

A number of Methodists committed their very lives to reverence of the sacraments and liturgical worship. On 12 September 1946, four Methodist pastors meeting in New York City formed the Brotherhood of St. Luke in order to promote liturgical revival within the Methodist Church. Two years later, the brotherhood held its first national convocation for its fifty-nine members and those in attendance reorganized the brotherhood into a religious order, the Order of Saint Luke. The order established membership rules that did not dictate communal living, but rather common interests and lifestyle. Members of the order promised to abide by the Seven-fold Rule of Life and Service. The Rule for the Order of Saint Luke prescribed systematic private devotions

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<sup>22</sup> Hoyt L. Hickman, *Worshipping with United Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 45.

and loyalty to the Methodist Church, and promoted clerical garb, including clerical collars outside the church and liturgical vestments during worship.<sup>23</sup> The Rev. Dr. H. C. Sinclair, one of the first directors of the brotherhood and a retired professor, wore his clerical insignia to the order's first convocation and drew praise for his "high-churchmanship." David Taylor, editor of the order's periodical, *The Versicle*, commended the inspirational and pleasant manner of one "who never failed to genuflect and cross himself in Methodist services."<sup>24</sup> The trend in wearing clerical garb caught on. While covering the 1956 meeting of the World Methodist Conference at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, a *New York Times* correspondent surveyed those present and discerned an increase of distinctive clothing.<sup>25</sup>

Initially, the name of the order confused some members about its purpose. One of the order's officers, secretary William Slocum, persistently reminded the membership that the focus should be on "the cure of souls," after Luke the Physician, for whom the order was named. But other officers, including the editor of *The Versicle*, turned the members' attention "upon the liturgical and sacramental in life and worship."<sup>26</sup> The emphasis of the order was more frequent attendance at communion, regular prayer, baptism as the sign of admission into the fellowship of the church and the insistence on confirmation as an

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<sup>23</sup> Vance Martin Reese, "'A Principle Within': Liturgical Renewal in *The United Methodist Hymnal*," Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1997.

<sup>24</sup> David L. Taylor, "The Order of St. Luke and *The Versicle*, A Resume: 1946-1961," *Doxology* 3 (1986): 49.

<sup>25</sup> *NYT*, 11 September 1956, 33:5.

<sup>26</sup> Taylor, "The Order of St. Luke and *The Versicle*," 51.

intrinsic rite to complete baptism, and adherence to the 1945 *Book of Worship*. Members of the Order saw in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper thanksgiving and divine initiative, themes rarely mentioned before mid-century.

Members of the Order of Saint Luke used *The Versicle* and *The Pastor*, a periodical for all Methodist clergy, to introduce Methodists to liturgical scholarship. Romey P. Marshall contributed regular advice columns to *The Pastor*, in which he discussed the proper way to lead worship, the theology of the Lord's Supper, the use of the Methodist ritual, and other matters of liturgical interest. Essays in both periodicals by OSL members sought to familiarize readers with the principles of liturgical worship and with recent liturgical scholarship, including Gregory Dix's *The Shape of the Liturgy*. The second volume of *The Versicle*, published in 1952, featured a comparison of Methodist ritual to the 1549 Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*. Editorials in the volume called for the creation of a permanent Commission on Worship within the Methodist Church. Articles in successive volumes included reviews of books in the field of Christian worship and historical surveys of the liturgical movement. Volume five included an article by the British Methodist John Bishop, titled "Man's Catholic Heart." Bishop, former secretary in the British Methodist Sacramental Fellowship, came to the United States for graduate work, after which he pastored churches in northern New Jersey. Some years later, in a published version of his Master's thesis, Bishop detailed the worship practice in British

Methodism and appealed for a complementary appraisal of both the free church and the Catholic church traditions.<sup>27</sup>

Though the members of the Order of Saint Luke constituted a small minority within the Methodist Church—the society grew to around four hundred members by 1963—they provided valuable service in the process of Romanization. Members of the order advocated liturgical renewal before the development of the 1965 and some eventually took denominational jobs to shepherd the process of revision. Members of the 1956 committee charged with revision of Methodism’s worship examined the scholarship of the order and the calls for normative, unified worship.<sup>28</sup> While the worship revision committee did not accept all of the OSL recommendations before publishing the 1965 *Book of Worship*, members of the order continued to influence the process of liturgical revision until the adoption of the 1988 hymnal.

While many of the members of the Order of Saint Luke were themselves pastors, many were also scholars who contributed to the ongoing discussion of the implications of liturgical renewal. Romey Marshall drafted a new order for communion for the Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and some of the principles were adopted by the committee revising the services for the Methodist Church. Hoyt Hickman, a pastor from Pennsylvania, served a term as president of the order, during which he became a member of the Commission on Worship in 1970. The 1972 General Conference organized a new Division of Evangelism,

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<sup>27</sup> John Bishop, *Methodist Worship in Relation to Free Church Worship* (London: Epworth Press, 1975).

<sup>28</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 134.

Worship, and Stewardship within the General Board of Discipleship and hired Hickman to head the worship area. Thus Hickman became the first professional staff person in the area of worship in the United Methodist Church.<sup>29</sup>

The General Conference of 1948 replaced the Commission on Ritual and Orders of Worship, established in 1940, with the Commission on Worship. More than the name changed. The 1948 Conference gave to the new Commission on Worship a much less focused imperative, authorizing the Commission “to collect information on the use of the ritual, music, and the fine arts; and to report its studies and actions to the General Conference.”<sup>30</sup> The General Conference, meeting in Minneapolis in 1952, continued the Commission, adding to its charge the authorization “to prepare and perfect resources in the field of ritual and orders of worship which may be presented for consideration by the General Conference.”<sup>31</sup> Two matters are noteworthy within these directives. First, general conferences made explicit the understanding that matters of worship and ritual had to be presented to future general conferences because only the general conferences held the prerogative to amend or alter Methodist worship patterns. Secondly, by directing the Commission on Worship to collect information about the use of music, the general conferences conjoined under the purview of one deliberative body both ritual and hymnal

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Peiffer, “How Contemporary Liturgies Evolve: The Revision of the United Methodist Liturgical Texts (1968-1988),” Ph.D. dissertation, Notre Dame, 1992.

<sup>30</sup> *Discipline 1948*, para. 2007.

<sup>31</sup> *Discipline 1952*, para. 2007.

revision. As a consequence, hymnal and ritual revision would be handled by one worship commission, divided into sub-committees, because the hymnal would contain parts of the ritual.<sup>32</sup>

The denomination had used the 1945 worship book for a decade when the General Conference of 1956 received several memorials asking it to initiate the process of ritual revision. The legislative Committee on Ritual and Orders of Worship considered the requests and recommended to the whole conference that the Commission on Worship prepare a revision of the 1945 *Book of Worship for Church and Home* and present it to the 1960 General Conference.<sup>33</sup> Driven by the desire to provide balance, the conference placed one lay person and one clergy person from each jurisdiction on the commission, plus two ministers and one lay person at-large; the book editor; and two bishops, Edwin Voigt and Earl Ledden, who served as chair and vice-chair. The enabling legislation of the commission grew from two itemized responsibilities to twelve and included preparation and revision of forms of worship and supervision of future editions of both *The Book of Worship* and *The Methodist Hymnal*. Lest the members forget, the 1956 General Conference added another paragraph to the commission's charge, quoting Article 22 of the Articles of Religion:

It shall be the purpose of the commission to enrich and not to govern the devotional life of the church, recalling our dual heritage of liturgical and free

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<sup>32</sup> Although the 1945 *Book of Worship for Church and Home* contained all of the ritual, it also contained other, "unofficial," material. Not until 1968 would everything in the worship book be deemed official ritual and, therefore, removed from the *Discipline* and retained only in the 1965 *Book of Worship*.

<sup>33</sup> *DCA* 1956, 1 May 1956, 237; 8 May 1956, 609.

worship, and that “it is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same.”<sup>34</sup>

One paragraph of the commission's charge directed members “to encourage in our schools of theology and pastors' schools the best possible instruction in the meaning and conduct of worship.”<sup>35</sup> Not coincidentally, several of the members of the next quadrennial commission, named in 1960, held teaching posts at schools of theology.

The Commission on Worship began its work on the *Book of Worship* in earnest after the General Conference of 1956. The committee prepared an interim volume, known for its cover as the “Green Book,” or *Proposed Revisions for the Book of Worship for Church and Home: For Trial Use 1960-1964* and presented it to the General Conference of 1960, as directed.<sup>36</sup> The Commission claimed “no desire to superimpose a liturgical burden upon the church.” but did request that the orders contained in it “be given sufficient trial use to catch the spirit and purpose behind them.”<sup>37</sup> The Green Book gave the address for the book editor and invited critiques and suggestions.

Members of the Commission introduced the Green Book to the General Conference and their prefatory speeches indicated the philosophy guiding the committee work. Giving the first introduction, Commission chairman Bishop Voigt explained that

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<sup>34</sup> *Discipline 1956*, para. 1570, quoting para. 82.

<sup>35</sup> *Discipline 1956*, para. 1569.

<sup>36</sup> Board of Publication of The Methodist Church, Inc., *Proposed Revisions for the Book of Worship for Church and Home: For Trial Use 1960-1964* (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1960).

<sup>37</sup> *Proposed Revisions for the Book of Worship*, 5.

the goal of the proposals was to make Methodist worship more meaningful and more “at home in the Church Universal.”<sup>38</sup> Bishop Voight meant the Commission drew from the historic rites of the church and gave special thanks to the seminaries, which had provided the historical data. Pastor Will Hildebrand of Los Angeles explained in greater detail:

While the [proposed] services have a historic background in Methodism, they also have much in common with other communions and much of the material is from the rich resources of every part of Christ's holy church. Similar orders are already in use in our church in many parts of the country and in our Central Conferences overseas.<sup>39</sup>

Dean William Cannon identified specifically the source for the proposed rite of communion. “This service preserves entirely the language and the beauty of the ancient liturgy,” Cannon told the Conference. “It is as much Cranmer at the Sarum Mass as Wesley’s own Prayer Book.” Cannon was as much impressed with the language of Cranmer as Wesley had been, and he did not want to substitute the crude vernacular of the 1960s for the “poetic inspiring language of the Fathers.”<sup>40</sup>

The General Conference of 1960 discussed the *Proposed Revisions* in great detail and finally agreed to try them on an experimental basis. But when presented with the motion to revise the hymnal as well, Conference members were not at all sure that the time

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<sup>38</sup> *DCA* 1960, 5 May, 1960, 352.

<sup>39</sup> *DCA* 1960, 5 May, 1960, 353.

<sup>40</sup> *DCA* 1960, 7 May, 1960, 380. The Sarum Rite, to which Cannon referred, was an elaborate rendition of the Roman rite. The Sarum liturgy was a model for the greater part of England, Scotland, and Ireland. J. D. Crichton, “Liturgies—Medieval and Roman Catholic,” in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. J. G. Davies (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 321, identified Bishop Richard Poore, dean of Salisbury (1217-1228) as the probable compiler of the Sarum Rite.

was right. Hurst Anderson, a layperson from Baltimore, asked this very question when the legislative committee gave its report and moved to revise the hymnal. No compelling need existed, in Anderson's mind, requiring the hymnal to be revised, so he suggested that the money it would cost could be well-spent on "real issues." Similarly, Horace Hauk, a layperson from the Holston Conference, argued that the cost of purchasing new hymnals would be prohibitive to smaller churches. In response, Commission member Will Hildebrand argued that the church had established a pattern of revising its hymnals every thirty to thirty-five years. Hildebrand insisted that the conference must maintain the pattern in order to take the church well into the twenty-first century. Clearly, Hildebrand did not expect another revision of the hymnal a few years after the publication of the proposed one. More importantly, Hildebrand argued that the hymnal and the worship book must be treated together. The Conference had already agreed to experiment with proposed changes to the *Book of Worship*. Any eventual changes, Hildebrand maintained, must be reflected in a new hymnal. In his closing remarks, William R. Cannon of Chandler School of Theology and chair of the legislative committee, repeated Hildebrand's justification. The vote to authorize the Commission on Worship to undertake the task of hymnal revision was close, passing 374 to 343, indicating that many General Conference members did not tie the hymnal and the worship book together.<sup>41</sup>

Upon authorization from the 1960 General Conference, the Commission on Worship met at least twice annually from 1960 to 1964, when it presented its work to the General Conference. In the intervening months between meetings, the body assigned the

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<sup>41</sup> *DCA* 1960, 7 May, 1960, 508; and 9 May 1960, 574-6.

work of writing and revision to individuals or to smaller sub-committees. The commission assigned some of the work to other groups entirely. For example, the National Fellowship of Methodist Musicians largely directed the revisions to the service of marriage. The Council of Bishops naturally informed the revision of the episcopal services, consecration and ordination. The precedent allowed future commissions to be more reliant on liturgical experts.

During the trial period, the commission received, via the book editor, various letters from pastors, church members, choir leaders, and other groups suggesting revisions. Writing in 1961, the editor of the *Christian Advocate*, Ewing T. Wayland, estimated the number of letters in the “hundreds.”<sup>42</sup> Most of the letters addressed the hymnal, especially its contents. Some correspondents requested specific hymns to be included, such as “How Great Thou Art.” Forty-four members of one church, panicked over a false rumor, requested that “some of the best loved hymns such as, ‘What a Friend We Have in Jesus,’ and ‘Blessed Assurance,’” not be dropped from the new hymnal.<sup>43</sup>

Of the letters received, not one letter exists asking the commission to reconsider the worship book idea. That there would be a book of worship for Methodism was a foregone conclusion. The Rev. Alden B. Sears, of Geneva, Nebraska, asked that the

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<sup>42</sup> Wayland, “Probing the Church’s Mind On the Hymnal,” 1.

<sup>43</sup> Glen Jordan and Ellsworth G. Schubert, Jr. to Paul Burt, 24 April 1960, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ. Jordan and Schubert were lay leader and pastor of their local church; forty-two other signatures appear on the letter. Burt, the secretary of the commission, wrote back to assure the members that “the rumor is without foundation,” and that those hymns would be retained, Paul Burt to Ellsworth Schubert, 2 May 1960.

commission include two services, one formal and one informal, but most of the correspondents requested more liturgical direction. Some requests were simple, such as Samuel J. Maconghy's petition that the book include directions on the use of various colors for the altar paraments.<sup>44</sup> Implied in the request were the assumptions that churches have "altars" and that pastors were using hangings, table covers, cloths or other paraments of colors appropriate to the church year. Indeed, in his reply to one pastor, the Book Editor acknowledged a number of similar suggestions regarding the church year, colors, and the desire for a lectionary.<sup>45</sup> Rev. Jack B. Taylor, of Lynchburg, Virginia, asked not only for a lectionary in the new *Book of Worship* but also for more rubrics, including directions for "when to stand at the altar, when to kneel at the *prie dieu* and the like." The pastors need more instruction, Taylor wrote, because "our church is placing more emphasis on worship."<sup>46</sup> Hoyt Hickman, who made significant contributions to the next round of worship revision after 1965, wrote a long letter to the commission, detailing all the advantages of the services in the proposed *Book of Worship*. In his most insistent request, Hickman appealed for commission members to indicate that three Scripture readings should be included in the Sunday service (an Old Testament, an Epistle, and a

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<sup>44</sup> Samuel J. Maconghy to Book Editor, 15 July 1961, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ.

<sup>45</sup> Emory Stevens Bucke, Book Editor, to Rev. Philip G. Palmer, 28 December 1961, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ.

<sup>46</sup> Jack B. Taylor to Book Editor, 21 July 1961, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ.

Gospel reading), because of the “long liturgical tradition behind this practice.”<sup>47</sup> Hickman referred to the liturgical tradition of the early church, the recovery of which practice was important to him and would be important to the process of Romanization after 1965, but was not a tradition greatly valued by this commission. In this round of revision, commission members included directions for only two readings.

Commission members considered carefully other suggestions derived from the trial period. As a result, the church year took a place of prominence in the revised proposal, with calls to worship, invocations, collects, and other prayers arranged to fit the outline of the ecclesiastical calendar. The book included a one-year lectionary, produced by William F. Dunkle, Jr., a clergy member of the 1940-48 General Commission on Rituals and Orders of Worship, and soon to return to the Commission on Worship in 1964. The commission included directions for appropriate colors and an explanation of each of the seasons, Advent through Kingdomtide. Upon the recommendation of many correspondents, commission members chose to use the *Revised Standard Version* of scripture throughout the services, with the exception of the Twenty-third Psalm, which was given in the well-known King James language.

Where the *1944 Book of Worship for Church and Home* offered multiple orders of worship, to take into account the variety of forms from the three partners of the 1939 merger, the 1964 proposal contained only two, a brief form and a complete form. The sequence of services within the proposed book also made a theological statement: the

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<sup>47</sup> Hoyt Hickman to Book Editor, 8 August 1962, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ.

order of worship for Sunday morning without communion came first, next the Order for the Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism, followed by the Order for Confirmation, and, then, the service of Holy Communion. Clearly, the preaching service without communion got priority. Notably, the proposed worship book did not set the authorized ritual apart from the rest, though the ritual remained in the *1965 Book of Discipline*.

The Order for the Administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper went through eight revisions and "absorbed a considerable portion of the time and energy of the commission."<sup>48</sup> Two principles guided the commission, one "to claim the Methodist heritage in worship,"<sup>49</sup> and the other to design services of worship that could be completed in one hour.<sup>50</sup> Commission members gave consideration to one work prepared by Gillett Bechtel of the Order of Saint Luke. Bechtel had prepared "a guide to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist" for Methodist clergy, a revision of the service of communion that aimed to maintain "loyalty to the text and spirit of the Methodist Ritual." Bechtel admitted that he drew from ancient sources along with the Methodist ritual. "This order attempts to follow the ancient Catholic tradition of the Church in England," Bechtel noted, assuring his users that "we need not be too fearful of using the Roman Rite

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<sup>48</sup> Joseph Quillian, Jr., "The Proposed Book of Worship," *Christian Advocate*, 26 March 1964 (rep), 2.

<sup>49</sup> *The Book of Worship for Church and Home* (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1965), np.

<sup>50</sup> Quillian, "Proposed Book of Worship," 2.

as a source as it is an ancient Rite, but we must avoid an uncritical aping of its many liturgical and esthetic errors.”<sup>51</sup>

The Commission also worked with the 1549, 1552, and 1661 versions of the *Book of Common Prayer* in parallel columns while revising the communion service. Bishop Voight, who prepared the study of the three versions, wrote a careful letter detailing the changes from one revision to the next and expressing, at every step, his preference for the 1549 original. Voight liked Archbishop Cranmer’s services. “It just seems to me,” Voight wrote, “that Cranmer’s first service is so beautiful and so basic, and so very natural in its progression that we ought not to pass it by lightly.”<sup>52</sup> Of course, Voight noted that Cranmer’s service was too long, yet he was confident that it could be shortened and refined. The other members considered Voight’s letter and his study and, as a result, produced a reworked Methodist service that was “a brisk revision” of the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, which retained the language and beauty of Cranmer.<sup>53</sup> Throughout its work, the Commission maintained its preference for the Catholic rites mediated through

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<sup>51</sup> Gillett Bechtel, “Preface,” Michaelmas 1951, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ. The title of Bechtel’s work is lost, but the committee circulated the preface and full order of service for study by the members.

<sup>52</sup> Edwin E. Voight to Dean William Cannon, Dr. Emory Bucke, Dr. Paul Burt, and Dean Joe Quillian, 16 June 1961, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with James F. White, 27 September 2001. Prof. White referred also to his *Christian Worship in North America, A Retrospective*, 100, in which he used the “brisk version” phrase.

and revised by Cranmer. This, Commission members believed, was the Methodist heritage passed on through Wesley.

Commission members elected not to modify the language of the prayer book, “since it is clear and readily understandable, [and] it would be an act of barbarism to try to modernize it, for it is poetic prose, and the music of its sentences reign in the human heart.” Importantly, according to the committee, Wesley used the service of Cranmer.<sup>54</sup> However, the commission felt justified to reorder parts of the service, especially of the communion canon, in which they reversed what became known as the Prayer of Humble Access and the Prayer of Consecration. Because of members' desires to provide one single and complete order of service, they had altered Cranmer's sequence. The commission acknowledged that the arrangement of Cranmer followed the ancient church, where the unbaptized left the service after the offering and only the initiated remained for the prayers and sacrament.<sup>55</sup> In the view of commission members, the ancient sequence provided two distinct, almost complete services. By re-sequencing the service, the members sought to emphasize that the whole order was a unity, or one whole service of communion. But it was not the familiar Methodist pattern. The brief service more closely followed the traditional Methodist pattern, but worshipers who turned to it would discover that it completely omitted important parts of the canon, including the *Sursum*

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<sup>54</sup> “Introduction to the Order for the Administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion,” a working paper prepared for the use of the Commission on Worship, 4, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ.

<sup>55</sup> “Introduction to the Order,” 3.

*Corda* (“Lift up your hearts....”), the preface, and the *Sanctus* (“Holy, holy, holy Lord....”).

While one part of the Commission on Worship focused on the ritual, the sub-committee to revise the hymnal established the processes for its work. The hymnal sub-committee first heard from Lovick Pierce, of the Methodist Publishing House. Pierce informed the committee of the potential market for a new hymnal. In a denomination that had grown to just under ten million members by 1960, the most recent hymnal, the 1935 edition, sold five and a half million copies. Pierce estimated that only half of those were in use, however, and that no more than fifty percent of Methodist churches actually used the hymnal. In order to verify Pierce’s estimates, commission members authorized a survey to ascertain the use of the hymnal in the churches.<sup>56</sup> On behalf of the commission, the Publishing House devised a survey which was mailed to all pastors and district superintendents. Over 11,000 replied, about half the number mailed, including fifty-five percent of the pastors serving a single (station) church and forty-three percent of the pastors serving more than one church on a circuit. Through the questionnaire, commission members learned that fifty-eight percent of the churches in a circuit and a staggering ninety-two percent of the station churches used the *Methodist Hymnal*.

The survey also highlighted the ambiguities of the situation. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents reported being satisfied with the current hymnal, which must have

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<sup>56</sup> Minutes, Commission on Worship, 12-14 September 1960, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ.

caused commission members to wonder why they were revising it! And yet, when asked specifically for suggestions, half of the respondents wanted new hymn texts and new hymn tunes. Large majorities of respondents asked for more Wesleyan hymns, more Gospel songs, more hymns for young people, more hymns for children, and more spirituals, but in a hymnal with about the same number of hymns as the current edition. Only a third of the responding pastors asked for fewer of the “ancient hymns and canticles.”<sup>57</sup>

Armed with this information, the sub-committee for hymnal revision agreed on a methodology. It began with the 1935 hymnal and considered whether to retain or delete each of the hymns. Then it considered the hymnals of other church denominations, including the new hymnal of the Evangelical United Brethren. Members also considered any other hymns suggested to it, either by committee members themselves or by correspondence. In every case, the committee, as a whole, considered each hymn individually, deleting by majority vote, rather than voting to accept or reject the recommendations of sub-committees.<sup>58</sup> By October of 1962, the committee had approved five hundred hymns and agreed to prepare a completed version to report to the General Conference of 1964.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Statistics from Ewing T. Wayland, “Probing the Church’s Mind On the Hymnal,” *Christian Advocate* (7 December 1961 rep.), 2-3.

<sup>58</sup> Minutes, Commission on Worship, Hymnal Revision Committee, 20-22 February 1961, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ.

<sup>59</sup> Minutes, Commission on Worship, Hymnal Committee, 1-3 October 1962; Minutes, Commission on Worship, 22-24 October 1962, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ. The 1935 *Hymnal* contained 564 hymns.

As its first major piece of legislation, the 1964 General Conference heard the report and motion from the Commission on Worship to adopt the proposed hymnal. Bishop Edwin Voight, chair of the Commission, explained the procedure to the conference members. In preparing previous hymnals for the use of the church, general conferences had determined the need, then appointed a committee and entrusted it with the authority to publish an acceptable hymnal. Contrary to that precedent, the General Conferences of 1956 and 1960 had retained the prerogative to approve or reject a proposal made by the worship commission. In essence, Bishop Voight explained, the 900 members of the 1964 General Conference sat as a committee of the whole, with the liberty to edit the proposed hymnal. After Bishop Voight explained the procedure, the hymnal editor, Carleton R. Young, presented the proposed hymnal in general terms, and church musician and committee member, Austin Lovelace, led the conference members in singing a few of the hymns.<sup>60</sup>

When the commission had finished its presentation, the presiding officer opened the floor for debate and amendment. Seven conference members rose to give enthusiastic support to the hymnal as presented, including Hurst Anderson, who had claimed in 1956 that there was no pressing need for a new hymnal. Only one delegate offered an amendment: Robert Moon of Fresno, California moved to delete the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” from the songs on the grounds that it was a “war cry sung and used by one

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<sup>60</sup> *DCA*, 30 April 1964, 103-105.

side of this nation against the other.”<sup>61</sup> The motion failed for lack of second. After a few more laudatory speeches—some occurring even after the members voted to end debate—the conference approved the proposed 539-song hymnal.

The proposed *Book of Worship* came to the agenda a week later. As had been done with the hymnal, members of the commission presented in detail sections of the proposed *Book of Worship*. When finished, the legislative committee to which the proposal had been assigned, requested five changes, one of them a correction, three slight amendments to wording, and the fifth a wording change that significantly altered the understanding of baptism. In the service of baptism for children, the Commission included words spoken by the pastor after the baptism which declared the child was “received into the family of God.” The legislative committee moved to amend the wording to declare that the baptized child was “recognized as a member of the family of God.” Dean William R. Cannon of Chandler School of Theology, speaking on behalf of the commission acknowledged his reluctance to accept the amendment, arguing that “when one is baptized, he is received into the family of God.” Likewise, Dean Robert E. Cushman of the Divinity School at Duke University also rose to argue against the unorthodox theology that underlay the amendment. Albert Outler, too, a well-known professor from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, addressed the matter in his typical pontifical style. All three seminary professors suggested that this matter should be properly left to the theological experts and not amended on the floor of the conference,

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<sup>61</sup> *DCA*, 30 April 1964, 107-8. Moon was chairman of the Fellowship for Reconciliation, which was founded in World War I for pacifist witness.

but their arguments failed to persuade. Grudgingly, Dean Cannon confessed, he accepted the change from “received” to “recognize” because his colleagues on the commission “preferred to do that to getting into heated parliamentary debate” on the floor of the Conference.<sup>62</sup> Thus, the commission accepted the amendment without debate or vote; once again, the General Conference refused to partake in serious theological dialog. Clearly, the seminary professors, Cannon, Outler, and Cushman, felt they had no platform from which to teach.

As he had done in five previous general conferences, Chester Smith of New York, moved to amend the ritual by substituting the word "cup" in the service of communion in place of the word "wine." Aged and hard of hearing, Smith admitted that he did not expect to be able to ever make the motion again and it would have been, as he said, "the crowning event" of his life if the members of the conference would make the change. Smith left disappointed, however, when the members rejected his motion.<sup>63</sup> Conference members accepted the commission's amended proposal, including three services from John Wesley at the end of the book.

According to the Latin formula, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, there is an intimate connection between belief and worship.<sup>64</sup> Either what is prayed indicates what must be

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<sup>62</sup> *DCA*, 8 May 1964, 584-7.

<sup>63</sup> *DCA*, 8 May 1964, 585-6.

<sup>64</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi,” *Journal of Religious Thought* 18, no. 2 (1961-2): 113-119.

believed, or, what must be believed determines what is prayed. Methodist theologian Geoffrey Wainwright addressed the connection in some detail. He wrote, “The linguistic ambiguity of the Latin tag corresponds to a material interplay which in fact takes place between worship and doctrine in Christian practice: worship influences doctrine, and doctrine worship.”<sup>65</sup> In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the latter was especially true for American Methodists. Theology shaped worship practice. Methodist theology of the nineteenth century, focused on personal conversion, developed the camp-meeting style worship, which it formalized in the 1905 hymnal. In the early twentieth century, desires to “enrich worship” and make it more aesthetically pleasing, corresponded to a theology that attempted to do the same for all of society.<sup>66</sup> In the middle part of the twentieth century, as Methodist theologians sought historical foundations for doctrine, so worship sought foundations. Methodist liturgists looked to the liturgy that John Wesley used for foundation, believing that it represented the Western and Catholic tradition. The 1965 *Book of Worship* relied extensively on the English *Book of Common Prayer*.

Approved by General Conference of 1964 and published in 1965, the *Book of Worship* cemented the twentieth-century prayer book tradition in the Methodist Church. It addressed many of the issues raised within the literature of the period by providing services that orbited about church year, emphasized Scripture and scriptural preaching,

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<sup>65</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Oxford, 1980), 218.

<sup>66</sup> For an interesting essay about the introduction of the sign of the cross on church buildings in order to enrich devotion in the late nineteenth-century, see Ryan K. Smith, “The Cross, Church Symbol and Contest in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Church History* 70, no. 4 (December 2001): 705- 734.

and elevated the role of the sacraments. More Methodists discovered the liturgical tradition and began to call for more formalization in worship. By 1960, when the denominational Commission on Worship was deep into the process of worship revision, hundreds of worshipping Methodists wrote letters to the commission, requesting changes, directions, and, as Rev. Charles T. Rinkel, Jr. phrased it, “*one sound pattern of worship for all our people so they can truly worship wherever they go. This is probably the strong point in the Roman Mass.*”<sup>67</sup>

Some members of the 1964 General Conference suggested that the timing of both the *Book of Worship* and of the *Methodist Hymnal* was inauspicious because of the anticipated merger with the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB). When he introduced the proposed hymnal to the whole conference, commission chairman Edwin Voight attempted to defuse that criticism. During the years of committee work, he had communicated with officials of the EUB Church to inquire if hymnal revision should be postponed. The reply had been, “We do not want to hold up any work in our church which we think is important to the life of the church, and we do not expect you to hold up any opportunity or enterprises that you think are worthy of action in the church.”<sup>68</sup> Members of the conference neither delayed the work, nor did they mount much of a challenge to the underlying assumptions.

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<sup>67</sup> Rev. Charles T. Rinkel, Jr. to the Book Editor, 28 November 1962, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Church Archives, Madison, NJ; emphasis is his.

<sup>68</sup> *DCA*, 30 April 1964, 103.

Some critics of the Methodist services came from outside of Methodism.

Episcopal scholar Massey Shepherd complained that the revisions to Methodist worship had been “made too narrowly within the compass of the Prayer Book tradition” and they failed to take into account ecumenical discussions and scholarship then current.<sup>69</sup> While Commission on Worship members looked to recover Wesley through Cranmer and the English tradition, other parts of the universal church, notably Gregory Dix and the Catholic theologians then assembled at Vatican II, sought to recover the tradition of the early church.<sup>70</sup> James White noted the irony that the reports to General Conference of the Commission on Worship “must have gone to the printer at just about the same time the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* was promulgated in December 1963.”<sup>71</sup>

Within a few years of production of a second *Book of Worship* in 1965, liturgical Methodists had become convinced that what had been accomplished was not enough. Established liturgical scholars would approach the Commission on Worship and argue that it was already time to start the process of liturgical revision again. And the commission would rely on those experts to lead the church through the next round of revision, a round that brought Methodism and Rome very close together. Liturgical revision, specifically the 1965 *Book of Worship*, served as a half-way house on the road to the Romanization of Methodism.

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<sup>69</sup> Tucker, *American Methodist Worship*, 137, quoting Episcopal liturgist Massey Shepherd to Lawrence Snow, 15 March 1964, Order of St. Luke Collection, Drew University Library, Madison, NJ.

<sup>70</sup> Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Westminster, 1945).

<sup>71</sup> White, *Christian Worship*, 100.

## CHAPTER VI

### ROBERT E. CUSHMAN, A CASE STUDY IN THE ROMANIZATION OF AMERICAN METHODISM: “HOW BLESSED IS THY CHURCH, O GOD”<sup>1</sup>

Robert Earl Cushman, pastor, scholar, teacher, bridged the generations from liberal evangelicalism to a Romanized Methodism. The son of a Methodist bishop whose spirituality was as deep as his son's intellect, his devotion to a maturing Methodism never wavered. Schooled in liberal evangelicalism, Cushman was transformed by his contact with Roman Catholicism, and, as a result, became an agent of transformation within American Methodism. Cushman guided American Methodist theologians to rediscover the depth of John Wesley's thought and to form an ecumenical identity. In the classroom, Cushman taught that in baptism and communion Methodists professed a primary theology and, therefore, stood in a “doctrinally ordered continuity with the apostolic catholicity of Christian worship, life, and confession of faith.”<sup>2</sup> Both professionally and theologically, Cushman drew Methodism closer to Romanization.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “How Blessed Is Thy Church, O God,” a hymn Cushman wrote with his wife Barbara for the sesquicentennial celebration of Trinity United Methodist Church, Durham, NC, 25 April 1982, and found pasted inside the front cover of each hymnal in Trinity church.

<sup>2</sup> The words belong to Don E. Saliers, “‘Taste and See:’ Sacramental Renewal Among United Methodists,” *Quarterly Review* 22:3 (Fall 2002): 231, but are the apt description of Cushman's agenda.

Cushman's theological agenda began with his first personal contacts with Roman Catholic worship. In the spring of 1936, Robert E. Cushman was appointed pastor of the South Meriden Methodist Church, Connecticut, some distance from New Haven, where he was pursuing a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School.<sup>3</sup> Artisans primarily of European descent, many of them Roman Catholic, populated the silver manufacturing center of Meriden. The Catholic liturgical tastes overflowed among the members of the Methodist church, nurturing within them and their pastor a liturgical and sacramental devotion. In what was his typical way of understatement by use of the negative, Cushman noted of his Methodist congregation that "the sacraments were not a matter of indifference, and Holy Communion was a requisite with some frequency."<sup>4</sup> Here Cushman's appropriation of the Catholic tradition began and it matured to fruition in his theological departure from evangelical liberalism and his consequent studies of John Wesley.

Cushman received his theological degree in 1940 and his Ph.D. from Yale University in 1942 under the direction of Douglas Clyde Macintosh. From Macintosh Cushman took his understanding of philosophical theology as well as the difficult syntax of his own compositions. Yet Cushman found the weaknesses in Macintosh's methodology

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<sup>3</sup> Ninetieth Anniversary Bulletin 1851-1941, South Meriden Methodist Church, Cushman collection, Duke University Archives, Durham, NC.

<sup>4</sup> Robert E. Cushman, "Theological Reflections on Occasion of the Forthcoming Retirement of a Master Theologian and Teacher—Professor David C. Shipley," 11 May 1971, Cushman collection, Duke University Archives, Durham, NC. The Cushman collection is unprocessed and, therefore, in unnumbered boxes. The material is to remain sealed to most parties until 2018.

and in criticizing not just Macintosh but all of liberal theology, Cushman developed his own ecumenical thinking. Cushman rejected evangelical liberalism and began to build a new theological structure, one, as it turned out, that would be more suitable to an ecumenical and Romanized Methodism.

While Macintosh sought a theory for the verification of religious knowledge, Cushman sought the sources of Macintosh's argument and, consequently, the historical sweep of Christian thought. In Cushman's own copies of Macintosh's books, he wrote many marginal notes, reminding himself to consider Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Spinoza and, especially, Karl Barth and Friedrich Schleiermacher. Macintosh aimed at conversation with the scientific world-view of the early twentieth century and Cushman aimed to become conversant with Christian knowledge in history and, thus, the ecumenical implications of twentieth-century theology. In consequence, Cushman detailed the shortcomings of Macintosh's position. Macintosh could not validate certain fundamental concerns by way of his method, Cushman noted. Macintosh's empirical theology contributed nothing to the doctrine of a unique revelation in Jesus Christ, nothing to the doctrines of the divinity and the work of Christ, or to the doctrines of sin, resurrection, and the church. His departure from Macintosh's schema made Cushman one of the first in a new era of Methodist theologians.

Cushman early proved his mastery of the material when, in September of 1942, he took over for a year the Yale classes of his mentor after Macintosh suffered a stroke. Cushman established as his immediate task an explication of the position and method of the senior professor. In his first classroom lectures, Cushman explained at great length

that Macintosh conjoined the scientific dogmatics and the anthropological optimism of nineteenth-century German Protestant theologians, Frederick Schleiermacher and Albrecht Ritschl. “Macintosh produced the most radical Christian theology anywhere to be found,” according to Cushman. Macintosh was radical in the sense that he departed from traditional orthodoxy in favor of a theological method that sought to distinguish in an experimental fashion between certainty and uncertainty. He summed up his method in the phrase “right religious adjustment,” by which Macintosh indicated concentration of attention and absolute self-surrender to the “Divinely Functioning Reality.”<sup>5</sup>

Macintosh’s prime concern was the philosophy of religion, specifically religious knowledge. Macintosh concluded that “there are absolute values, universally and eternally valid for persons,” and that “there are real persons, a real world of things, and an existent reality so divine in quality and function as to be a worthy object of religious trust and worship.”<sup>6</sup> Macintosh sought to verify the object of religious knowledge; Cushman, unconvinced, sought to insure that the object of religious knowledge was, in fact, divine reality and not imposed human values.<sup>7</sup> According to Cushman, Macintosh erred when he accepted too quickly a Kantian premise of epistemology. “I am inclined, therefore,” Cushman lectured his adopted students, “to the view that Professor Macintosh fails in his

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<sup>5</sup> Robert E. Cushman, unpublished lectures, 1942, in Cushman collection, Duke University Archives, Durham, NC.

<sup>6</sup> Douglas Clyde Macintosh, *The Problem of Religious Knowledge* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940), vii.

<sup>7</sup> This was H. Richard Niebuhr’s critique (*The Meaning of Revelation*, New York: Macmillan, 1941), as Cushman pointed out in his second-semester lecture, 1943, in Cushman collection, Duke University Archives, Durham, NC.

undertaking precisely because of the *one* point he concedes to Kant's theory of knowledge, namely, that all knowledge is through *experience*, that is all theoretical or certain knowledge." The certainty of divine activity could not be gained through experience, according to Cushman, but only by "intellectual intuition."<sup>8</sup>

To counter liberalism's optimistic view of human nature, and to begin to add his own unique interpretation to the doctrine of fallen human condition, Cushman drew from his own dissertation study of Platonic philosophy. According to Plato, the state of the human condition is an inverted existence of bondage that compels persons "to honor virtue with their lips while they serve their own desires with might and main."<sup>9</sup> This fundamental principle was preserved in authentic Platonic instruction whose diagnosis of life was an upside-down condition in which humans misidentify true reality with experience and opinion. Ethics must begin with this description of the human condition, but more importantly for Cushman, this description was the principle starting point for epistemology. Plato's epistemology depended on the Socratic conviction that the mind is already cognate with a divinely imparted datum of reality. Though the rational and irrational components of the soul battle for control, with the appetite mainly winning, there is, still, a system of knowledge inherent to the soul. It is by the possession of this knowledge that all receive the dignity of being human and all are in the likeness of God. "Within *nous* [cognitive faculty], there are vestigial patterns, *paradeigmata*, after-images

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<sup>8</sup> Robert E. Cushman, unpublished lectures, 1943, in Cushman collection, Duke University Archives, Durham, NC.

<sup>9</sup> Robert E. Cushman, *Therapeia: Plato's Conception of Philosophy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), xviii.

of the soul's primordial communion with divine realities. As surviving patterns adumbrating reality, they are *a priori* or antecedent to sensible experience and are, indeed, its 'formal' presuppositions."<sup>10</sup>

Cushman turned to Augustine of Hippo and the larger Christian tradition to bring together the study of Plato and the doctrine of original sin. Cushman found in Augustine confirmation of the divine visitation into the mind, that is, the *a priori* knowledge. The affection of the soul, that is, the inclination of persons to love either the world of shadows or the things of God, was Plato's major concern, according to Cushman. Thus, Augustine correctly interpreted Plato's point of view, confirming that "right knowledge is dependent upon right love rather than love dependent upon right knowledge." Augustine's assumptions were clear: it was not human reason alone that is suspect, but the will that is corrupt. On this principle of the primacy of the will, Augustinian theology began and Christian theology, Catholic and Protestant, was to build its foundation. The pride of the sinful will was to be brought into submission by the re-inversion of its affection. "What is known cannot be divorced from what is loved," Cushman wrote. "At the very minimum, all cognition is directly dependent on interest, and nothing is fully known to which the consent of the will has not been given."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cushman, *Therapeia*, 43.

<sup>11</sup> Cushman rephrased Plato's diagnosis of the human condition: "the native and essential orientation of the soul toward that with which it is 'akin' [the divine] is diverted to alien concerns, properly subordinate and of secondary value." (Cushman, *Therapeia*, 43.) Robert E. Cushman, "Faith and Reason," in *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*, ed. Roy W. Battenhouse (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 299, 289.

According to Cushman, Augustine thought knowledge as well as belief dependent on a movement of the will. That means that awareness of God depends on the desire of the will, but reason is incompetent if the will is self-directed. The solution to the problem was “the divine Visitant,” the Incarnation, which “so moves the will that man is enabled to love the good of which he has been aware without acknowledgement, without *caritas*. As mover of the will, Christ becomes ‘the *Principium* by whose Incarnation we are purified.’”<sup>12</sup> Thus, Cushman wrote: “The problem of Christian apologetic is not that of vindicating the truth of theism or the reality of God, but that of discovering man’s condition to himself, that is, his condition as he is approached by God. This was the method of Socrates, of the Prophets, of Augustine, of Pascal, of Luther, of Wesley, and many more.”<sup>13</sup>

Cushman utilized the popular Isaiah vision to further illustrate the human condition. Where teachers of worship had used the text as the primary paradigm for worship, Cushman took it as a biblical exposition of the human condition. The record of Isaiah’s vision in the Temple, widely used to establish the pattern for right worship, became for Cushman the chief paradigm of human existence. In the sixth chapter of the Book of Isaiah, the prophet reported a vision of the divine glory. Once Isaiah recognized the seraphim and cherubim, the sign of God’s presence, he recognized, too, his moral unworthiness. The solution to the existential crises was a gift of grace from God,

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<sup>12</sup> Cushman, “Faith and Reason,” 306; quoting Augustine. The italics are Cushman’s.

<sup>13</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “The Shape of the Christian Faith—A Platform,” *The Iliff Review* (March, 1956): 34.

symbolized by a burning coal placed on Isaiah's lips. Then, renewed, Isaiah asked to be sent out in God's service. This related experience of the prophet was in concert with Cushman's philosophical understanding of the human condition. Existence in the presence of God entailed crises and called for true acknowledgement and honest recognition of human alienation from God. Cushman called this the paradox of human existence and described it this way:

human beings, created to be conformed to the image of God, decline to espouse their given and exalted calling. Their dignity consists, however in their call-declined which, at the same time, is their sinful disobedience. In a word, man is paradoxical in that he can be a sinner because he is called to be a son, that is, a "saint."<sup>14</sup>

In this philosophical theology, Cushman reshaped several themes that had been central to liberalism and he aligned himself with what he described as the Catholic understanding, in contrast to the Protestant one. He did not give prime importance to the scientific or empirical methodology, contra Macintosh; neither did he establish philosophy as the metaphysical foundation. The experience of God, Cushman claimed, resulted primarily and exclusively from God's initiative. Therefore, knowledge of God came by revelation and by grace. "Human ignorance is, in part, the product, not of the inaccessibility of true Being, but of a misdirection of the cognitive power," Cushman wrote.<sup>15</sup> In Cushman's opinion, the Reformers, John Calvin among them, failed to understand this principle of Plato, to which Augustine assented and which formed the

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<sup>14</sup> Robert E. Cushman, "The Shape of the Christian Faith—A Platform," in Thomas A. Langford, *Wesleyan Theology: A Sourcebook* (1956, rep. with new material, Labyrinth Press: Durham, NC, 1984), 258.

<sup>15</sup> Cushman, *Therapeia*, 62.

basis of the doctrine of fallen human nature. “We are privileged to believe that the greatness of the Augustinian solution in no small part depends on the fact that it did not repudiate reason, philosophy, nature, or the universal while, nevertheless, it preserved to faith, history, grace, and the particular a certain primacy.”<sup>16</sup> The Reformers renounced the role of reason, Cushman taught, misunderstanding Augustine in the process.

Cushman disputed the position of Calvin on three grounds, and thereby drew closer to Roman Catholic theology. From his studies of Plato and of methodology, Cushman assailed Calvin’s philosophical position that emphasized God’s sovereignty at the expense of human will.<sup>17</sup> From his own heritage, Cushman reiterated John Wesley’s attacks on Calvinism. And from his position as an ecumenical theologian, Cushman challenged the orthodoxy of Calvin’s thought, primarily Calvin’s position on eternal covenants. In this regard, Cushman surveyed an expansive range of Christian literature, from Caesarius of Arles and the sixth century Council of Orange, through Medieval thought concluding with John Calvin’s doctrine of predestination and John Wesley’s critique of Calvin. Cushman chiefly complained that Calvin, in his zeal to attenuate the mediatorial role of the church and the sacraments, subordinated sacramental grace to the primacy of the preached Word of God as the primary instrument of the regenerative or converting process. Thus, Calvin provided the context for a renaissance of predestinarian

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<sup>16</sup> Cushman, “Faith and Reason,” 289.

<sup>17</sup> W Douglas Mills, “Robert Earl Cushman and a Study of Predestination in the Wesleyan Tradition,” *Methodist History* 38, no. 1 (October 1999): 3-13.

teaching, a teaching, Cushman argued, found initially, perhaps, in Augustine, but not accepted as the rule of faith.

On the initiative of Caesarius of Arles and by the favorable disposition of Pope Felix IV, the Council of Orange in 529 A.D. declared for the *vitium naturae*, the vitiation of man's original integrity, through the erosion of our nature in Adam's sin and, therewith, the indispensability of God's grace--an *infusio et operatio* of God's Spirit--for restoration of a wholesome will in believers capable of the Gospel virtues. This "infusion" of grace is sacramentally assured in baptism of "regeneration" and is nurtured in the eucharist. And this view became normative as the "rule of Catholic faith." It is affirmed by Peter Lombard and Hugo of St. Victor in the 12th century, and with reference to the grace of confirmation also. Hence it remained fundamental for sacramental theology of the high Middle Ages.<sup>18</sup>

According to Cushman, the Council of Orange declared that the doctrine of "grace alone" to be the rule of faith. Thus, "the irresistible grace of predestination was driven from the field by the sacramental grace of baptism."<sup>19</sup> Cushman wrote:

With this outcome of the Council of Orange we may, perhaps, perceive in the triumph of *infusio gratiae*, infusion of grace at baptism--a conception already accepted by Augustine--the decisive establishment of the sacramentarian principle in Latin Catholicism. It was to have definitive formulation by the Council of Florence in 1439 as enriched and further advanced by the theology of the 13th century, including that of Hugo of St. Victor, Aquinas, and Bonaventure. Already with Orange, however, was ample basis provided for the "containment" or, perhaps, absorption, of the Pelagian controversy over antecedent grace. It was by way of a sacramental theology which secured the means of grace in the keeping of Holy Church upon which Christ had conferred the powers of "binding and loosing." St. Thomas concurred with the view of Hugo that the sacrament, as a sign, or symbol,

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<sup>18</sup> Robert E. Cushman, unpublished study, in Cushman collection, Duke University Archives, Durham, NC; that study, which exists only in notes and rough-draft form, was one of several projects with which this author was assisting Dr. Cushman prior to his untimely death on June 9, 1993. That project, and several others, will most likely remain unpublished, though parts of it were intended to serve as the introduction to volume 12 of the Wesley's Works project.

<sup>19</sup> R. Seeberg, *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952), I: 382.

contains the grace, and while God remains its originative (*principal*) cause, the sacrament is the instrumental cause whereby infusion occurs as a direct creative act of God in the soul. According to Seeberg, "This view, through its advocacy by Duns Scotus, became the dominant one of the later Middle Ages."<sup>20</sup>

Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), in his *Declaration of Sentiments* (1608), considered the rigorous articulation of the doctrine of double predestination by the Geneva reformer to be innovative by the standard of orthodoxy. It possessed the warrant of no council of the Church in the first six hundred years of its life and no "doctors" or "divines" of established orthodoxy subscribed to it. Arminius allowed that it was first approved by Luther and Melancton, but then abandoned. John Wesley and subsequent interpreters of Methodist theology found some appeal to the position of Arminius. The degree to which Wesley actually incorporated Arminian thought is a matter of debate, though certainly Wesley, in concert with Arminius, asserted that persons are free to accept or reject God's grace. Wesley may have intended to represent the Reformers' position of *sola gratia*, Cushman noted, but he also represented the Catholic understanding that humans were created by God for responsibility.<sup>21</sup>

For Cushman, predestinarianism of whatever variety destroyed the foundation of the Christian religion by impugning both God's justice (moral nature) and God's grace, either in creation or redemption. This nullified the Gospel of salvation, Cushman insisted. For if salvation was exclusively by eternal decree of the divine will—whether prior

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<sup>20</sup> Robert E. Cushman, unpublished study, in Cushman collection, Duke University Archives, Durham, NC; quoting Seeberg, *Text-Book*, II: 126-7.

<sup>21</sup> A very contemporary discussion of this point is found in Walter Klaiber and Manfred Marquardt, *Living Grace: An Outline of United Methodist Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 227.

(supralapsarian) or posterior to the fall of humankind in the sin of Adam (sublapsarian)—then the eternal decree not only deprived human existence of moral seriousness, but rendered the history of salvation, as completed in Christ, superfluous. In Cushman’s view, this was a mockery. Accordingly, predestination seemed to Cushman to posit a moral contradiction at the heart of God, and he found no grounds for it in philosophy nor, especially, in the Catholic tradition.

Historically related to the Methodist church, the Divinity School at Duke University, where Cushman eventually settled, also struggled through the changes in Methodist theology. William Preston Few, the founding president who collaborated with James B. Duke to transform Trinity College into Duke University, envisioned a school unlike others. Few hoped to build “the first voluntarily supported research university in the South,” and a school that would not undervalue the religious dimension of life. Few believed that other institutions had failed in this regard and “had so distanced themselves from the church-related beginnings that few vestiges of the original ties and common purposed survived.” Few recognized that religious attitudes in the South had developed a powerful fundamentalist wing. He determined that the School of Religion, as the Divinity School was originally called, should play a mediating role between the religious conservatism of the region and the great intellectual ferment of the burgeoning scientific age. Above all else, Few intended the school to “maintain its friendly but not constricting relationship with the Methodist church,” a relationship symbolized by the great Gothic

chapel that James Duke wanted built in the center of the new campus.<sup>22</sup> Contemporaries hailed the school's leadership for its ecumenical spirit and labors at interdenominational cooperation, including work to form the North Carolina Council of Churches.<sup>23</sup>

Two issues with regard to the School of Religion initially challenged President Few: the selection of a dean and the relationship between the professional school and undergraduate education. After receiving much advice, Few convinced Edward D. Soper, professor of the history of religion at Northwestern University and a northern Methodist, to take command of the School of Religion. Although Soper and Few agreed that the program must be a strictly graduate one, admitting only students with college degrees, that decision flew against the trend of the time. A survey of the MECS revealed that in 1926 only four percent of clergy were graduates of both college and a theological school. More than half had only a high school education or less. Few and Soper intended to overturn the nineteenth century tradition of an uneducated clergy.<sup>24</sup> The decision to admit only college graduates determined that the first classes of students would be small and that the School of Religion would be organizationally separate from the undergraduate program, though the two would have a close relationship and share some faculty in certain cases. The school opened in 1926 with seven full-time faculty and eighteen students.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Robert F. Durden, *The Launching of Duke University, 1924-1949* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), x, 303, xi, 305.

<sup>23</sup> J. H. Marion, Jr., "Duke: Symbol of a Coming South," *Christian Century* (April 26, 1939): 538-40.

<sup>24</sup> Durden, *The Launching of Duke University*, 309-10.

<sup>25</sup> Durden, *The Launching of Duke University*, 316.

From its start, Duke attracted strong and promising scholars and, in theology, was dominated by liberal evangelicalism. Gilbert T. Rowe, called the individual who best “exemplifies the School of Religion faculty of this era,”<sup>26</sup> became professor of Christian doctrine in 1928. Rowe came to Duke after serving a long tenure as general book editor for the southern church’s publishing interests and as editor of *The Methodist Quarterly Review*. Like Cushman who succeeded him, Rowe also learned from D. C. Macintosh and, like Macintosh, Rowe relied on the theological positions of Schleiermacher and Ritschl and was open to the influence of reason and the currents of philosophy. In their acceptance of Macintosh and John Wesley’s teachings, Rowe and Cushman were polar opposites. The strength of Methodism, according to Rowe, lay in its “creedless condition,”<sup>27</sup> its lack of distinctive doctrine. He favored less doctrine rather than more and certainly fewer dogmatic formulations. Indeed, Rowe claimed, John Wesley himself had ceded to the Methodists great freedom of thought and an attitude of liberality.<sup>28</sup>

Robert Cushman succeeded Rowe as theologian in 1946; Cushman held a theological position in a sharp contrast to Rowe’s and he represented the changes through which the Methodist Church was then passing. In his scholarship, Cushman declared that

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<sup>26</sup> Bradley J. Longfield, “‘Eruditio Et Religio’: Religion at Duke Between the World Wars,” *Methodist History* 35, no. 1 (October 1996): 48.

<sup>27</sup> William J. McCutcheon, “American Methodist Thought and Theology, 1919-1960,” in *The History of American Methodism*, 3 vols., ed. Emory Stevens Bucke (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), III: 263, 288.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 191.

Wesley and, by extension, American Methodism held definite doctrines and standards.<sup>29</sup> Cushman identified a “constellation of doctrinal affirmations,” including the Twenty-Five Articles of Religion and the church constitution, but also Wesley’s sermons and even the 1780 *Minutes of Several Conversations*. Cushman also found doctrinal commitments in Wesley’s articulated theology. Furthermore, Wesley’s *Sunday Service* and even his collection of hymns served as doctrinal standards.<sup>30</sup> These last two particularly enabled the process of Romanization and certainly provided the basis from which Cushman could advocate a liturgical and prayer-book tradition, a sacramental emphasis, and an appreciation of Catholic teaching.<sup>31</sup>

Cushman began his tenure at Duke by critiquing liberalism. He turned first to a critical assessment of Immanuel Kant and the notion of autonomous freedom.<sup>32</sup> In contrast to his predecessors, Cushman placed greater emphasis on the doctrine of human sinfulness, arguing that human goodness is established by God, not by the exercise of independent freedom. Shaken by world war and by the discovery of nuclear power,

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<sup>29</sup> He codified this argument late in his career; cf. Robert E. Cushman, *John Wesley’s Experimental Divinity: Studies in Methodist Doctrinal Standards* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1989), and Robert E. Cushman, “Church Doctrinal Standards Today,” in *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church*, ed. Thomas A. Langford (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991).

<sup>30</sup> Cushman, *John Wesley’s Experimental Divinity*, 180.

<sup>31</sup> According to Methodist liturgist and professor of worship James White, Cushman was the first to teach sacramental theology in a Methodist seminary. Interview with the author, 27 September 2001, Madison, NJ.

<sup>32</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “A Study of Freedom and Grace,” *The Journal of Religion* 25, no. 3 (July, 1945): 197-212.

Cushman reasserted the idea of sin. The world of atomic power and Nazi politics revealed both the fallacy of Kantian ethics and that humanity had “long since exchanged the vision of God for the vision of nature.” Any hope for the future, wrote Cushman, depended upon a renewal of the vision of God.<sup>33</sup>

Cushman critiqued more than Kant; indeed, in many ways, he defined his neo-Wesleyan theology by a path of the *via negativa*. Cushman rejected the historical skepticism of Rudolf Bultman and John Knox, who allowed the dissolution of the “historical Jesus.”<sup>34</sup> He criticized Bonhoeffer’s conception of church as mission and the phenomenological existentialism of Paul Tillich that could not “deal significantly either with the *scandalon* of particularity (the Incarnation) or the redemption of the creation.”<sup>35</sup> Cushman felt most comfortable when lecturing and writing about theological method and from that arena he critiqued much of liberal Protestant theology. Though he recognized the strand of Reformed theology that infused Methodism, still Cushman spent much of his career chiding the Calvinistic understanding of the sovereignty of God and of human

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<sup>33</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “Verum aut Bonum,” *The Journal of Religion* 26, no. 1 (Winter, 1946-7): 25-33.

<sup>34</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “The Incarnation—A Symbol of What? An Inquiry into the Christology of Rudolf Bultman,” *Theology Today* XV, no. 2 (July 1958); “Christology or Ecclesiology? A Critical Examination of the Christology of John Knox,” *Religion and Life* 27, no. 4 (Autumn 1958).

<sup>35</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “Ecumenism and Some Currents of Theology Today,” *The Duke Divinity School Review* 41, no. 3 (Fall 1976); “Consideration Basic to Revised Theological Method in Protestant Theology,” in *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1981), 247, (hereafter *FSU*); originally presented to the Duodecimo Theological Group, Union Theological Seminary, New York, October 1968.

responsibility. For Cushman, the alternative to Calvinistic theology required a recovery of the “Catholic” side of John Wesley.

Cushman relied most heavily on the Catholic tradition in his understanding of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. He again turned to John Wesley and noted in Wesley’s preaching, but especially in the hymns of John and Charles, “a stress upon the sacrifice of Christ, represented in the sacrament of the altar.” Wesley grounded his understanding of the Lord’s Supper in the corresponding section of the *Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (1571). Wesley reasserted the emphases of the sacrament as a vehicle of grace and of the “real presence” of Christ in it. “There is also not to be missed a certain stress upon the *prevenience of grace in the sacrament* that, in comparison with the reformed tradition of the Continent, moves in the direction of restoring the priority of the divine initiative as in *ex opera operato* of the Catholic tradition.” Cushman sought to avoid a “memorialist” view of the sacrament held by many Protestants, but also the Catholic concept of “transubstantiation.” The latter, Cushman considered an unfortunate misunderstanding of the Catholic tradition. The way to avoid both, Cushman wrote, was “found within both the Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions and need not be newly fabricated.” The sacrament is a “sign” and a “seal of the covenant,” but also a “converting ordinance” and “a vehicle and medium of grace.” To receive the sacrament is to participate personally in the sacrifice of Christ and to make Christ’s saving work present therein. According to Cushman, Methodists in the line of John Wesley could affirm the Catholic understanding of the real presence of Christ in the reception of the elements. In

his articulation of a sacramental theology, Cushman let Wesley serve as the path to Romanization.

Along with Yale classmate William R. Cannon, and following the lead of their senior classmate, Albert Outler, Cushman also focused particular attention on John Wesley. Together the three concurred that Wesley deserved a hearing among Protestants as a heavyweight theologian in his own right.<sup>36</sup> Cannon made his first contribution with a study of John Wesley's theology, focusing on Wesley's development of the doctrine of justification by faith.<sup>37</sup> In 1964, Outler published an anthology of John Wesley's writings for the Library of Protestant Thought.<sup>38</sup> Influenced, in part, by these, Cushman determined that the conventional understandings of John Wesley, and therefore of Methodism more generally, lacked proper breadth and depth. Wesley, Cushman concluded, had been obscured by his biographers and interpreters.

Nineteenth-century biographers had painted Wesley as a pious evangelist though a rather unsystematic thinker. As a result, Methodist intellectuals in the first third of the twentieth century showed only passing interest in him.<sup>39</sup> When some few scholars of the middle part of the century turned their attention to Wesley, a conflicting and complex

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<sup>36</sup> Kenneth Rowe, interview by the author, Madison, NJ, 27 September 2001.

<sup>37</sup> William R. Cannon, *Theology of John Wesley* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1946).

<sup>38</sup> Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

<sup>39</sup> Randy L. Maddox, *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1998), 213-4.

picture emerged. George Craft Cell, of Boston University, published *The Rediscovery of John Wesley* in 1935 after twenty-five years of research. Cell attempted to remove the anti-Calvinistic interpretation of Wesley and to picture Wesley as “the third member of the Reformation trinity, whose message was justification by faith alone, a saving faith which transcends free will, and the operation of the continuing grace of God in and through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>40</sup> Belgian Franciscan scholar Maximim Piette finished his study of Wesley in 1925 and had it translated into English in 1937.<sup>41</sup> Piette’s subtitle in French—*sa reaction dans l’evolution du protestantisme*—revealed his thesis, namely that John Wesley “marked a reaction’ within the evolution of Protestantism, and this ‘reaction’ brought Wesley in some ways closer to Catholicism” than Wesley’s Anglican contemporaries.<sup>42</sup> More studies followed, including Methodist Bishop Francis J. McConnell’s popular biography of Wesley in 1939 and William Cannon’s theological study in 1946.

What emerged was a multi-faceted portrait of Wesley, yet one necessarily limited by the lack of a definitive text of Wesley’s writings and sermons. The most complete collection of Wesley’s works appeared in thirty-two volumes between 1771 and 1774. The material, edited and published by Wesley himself, was incomplete, since Wesley did not die until 1791. It also contained a significant amount of material from other persons

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<sup>40</sup> McCutcheon, “American Methodist Thought and Theology,” 291; with reference to George Craft Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley* (New York: Henry Holt, 1935).

<sup>41</sup> Maximim Piette, *John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism*, J. B. Howard, trans. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937).

<sup>42</sup> See Geoffrey Wainwright, *The Ecumenical Moment: Crises and Opportunity for the Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), 169.

that Wesley abridged. Joseph Benson reprinted the collected works from 1809 to 1813 and called it the second edition. Thomas Jackson produced a third edition in 1829-31, known by his name, which was, as Cushman wrote, “a very decided improvement over the two earlier editions, both in completeness and accuracy. However, it also proved to be the last edition of collected works up until now.”<sup>43</sup>

Other quarters of the church universal devalued John Wesley as a theologian and, consequently, marginalized the Methodist movement.<sup>44</sup> Methodist scholars themselves had largely contributed to the confusing and obscure picture. Nineteenth-century biographers of Wesley intended to disassociate the man from his Anglican ties. According to historical theologian Randy Maddox, nineteenth-century biographers sought to de-Anglicanize Wesley and in the process had to read Wesley’s well-known “heart-warming experience” at Aldersgate Church as his “‘conversion’ *from* high-church bigotry and intolerance *to* the true (i.e., low-church) faith.” Maddox underscored the most blatant example, explaining that Thomas Jackson, in his edition of Wesley’s works, completely omitted Wesley’s extracts of the *Homilies* of the Church of England. For Maddox, the conclusion was obvious: “What the exclusions demonstrates is that while Wesley

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<sup>43</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “The Wesley Works Project,” 1-2, in the Cushman Collection, Duke University archives, Durham, NC.

<sup>44</sup> See Randy Maddox, *Rethinking Wesley’s Theology for Contemporary Methodism* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1998), 216-20, who described the marginalization of Wesley particularly among Anglican divines. Even some early twentieth-century Methodists rejected the idea of looking to Wesley for theological guidance. Maddox lifts Harold Bosley of Garrett Evangelical to exemplify Methodists who rejected the authority of Wesley, page 213. Maddox also wrote a substantial article detailing the various biases that guided most studies of Wesley, in “Reading Wesley as Theologian,” *Wesley Theological Journal* 30, no. 1 (1995): 7-54.

considered the *Homilies* authoritative, Jackson (and most other nineteenth-century Methodists) did not.”<sup>45</sup> The Jackson edition of Wesley’s works influenced many a Methodist pastor and scholar because it served for a century as the only collection readily accessible.

Every biographer of John Wesley wrote with certain convictions and identifiable prejudices. That historians have bias is not news. What is startling was the twentieth-century reversal of the nineteenth-century agenda, a reversal engineered in large part by Albert Outler<sup>46</sup> and substantially promoted by Robert Cushman. Twentieth-century historians, Cushman among them, also had their own biases, no doubt, but it was a collective reversal—some would say correction—of former trends. Kenneth Rowe, preeminent Methodist bibliographer, remarked that Methodists “became low church survivalists early on and lived with that so long we thought that was genuine Methodism. But as others re-discovered the Catholic side of Wesley, Methodism was embarrassed.”<sup>47</sup>

Eventually, a significant number of twentieth-century Methodist intellectuals sang a consistent song, the refrain of which called for a recovery of the person and theology of John Wesley. Especially among liturgical scholars who joined in the request, a critical edition of Wesley’s writings was prerequisite. All assumed, and probably rightly so, that John Wesley had been misunderstood, especially within the American Methodist tradition,

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<sup>45</sup> Maddox, *Rethinking Wesley’s Theology*, 215.

<sup>46</sup> Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 208.

<sup>47</sup> Kenneth Rowe, interview by the author, Madison, NJ, 27 September 2001.

and that a recovery of Wesley would undergird a comprehensive ecclesiology for the denomination(s), at the very least, and possibly a competent liturgical theology as well.

Presented with the problem and the desire for a definitive text, Cushman agreed that the works of Wesley must be made available to the academic community and to the “ecumenical community” alike, “whole, entire and from scratch.”<sup>48</sup> Bernard Anderson, dean of the Theological School at Drew University, and Merrimon Cuninggim, dean of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, first floated the idea of producing a definitive collection of Wesley’s works in 1959. Encouraged by Albert Outler to pursue it, they asked Cushman to convene a group of scholars for exploratory conversations, which he did in March of 1960.<sup>49</sup> Easily persuaded to support the project, those in attendance returned home and sought the financial support of their respective institutions for the project. Five Methodist-related schools—Duke, Southern Methodist, Drew, Emory, and Boston (which soon withdrew)—undertook academic and financial sponsorship of the project. “As a university project,” Cushman wrote, “its primary aim is to present Wesley to the modern world in proper academic dress—although it is obvious that a well-edited edition of his writings would find a very much wider audience than the scholarly community.”<sup>50</sup> Though he was asked to take on general editorial duties,

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<sup>48</sup> Cushman, “The Wesley Works Project,” 2.

<sup>49</sup> Robert E. Cushman to President Hollis Edens, Duke University, 1 April 1960, in Cushman collection, Duke University archives, Durham, NC.

<sup>50</sup> Cushman, “The Wesley Works Project,” 3.

Cushman declined, but agreed to serve as general leader. Thus he became the first chairman of the Board of Directors for the Wesley Works Editorial Project, Inc.<sup>51</sup>

Among those who served on the board of directors, the need for a definitive text of Wesley's works could not have been more plain. "John Wesley must be adjudged one of the shaping forces in 18th century British life and a major figure in the evolution of Protestantism," Cushman wrote in the prospectus of the Wesley's Works project.<sup>52</sup> The then current state of scholarship confused or obscured "Wesley's historical stature and current significance," in large part because no adequate text existed to which the interested student might turn. Thus, the prospectus read, "it goes all too well with the misleading stereotype of Wesley as sectarian-evangelist that he has never had a complete and critical edition of his writings."<sup>53</sup>

The board projected a thirty-four volume collection (of which fifteen have been completed) to include all of Wesley's original prose works along with his journals and diaries, a volume of hymns, and a volume devoted to extracts of the writings of others that Wesley edited. The preamble of each explained, "A fully critical presentation of [Wesley's] writings has long been a desideratum in order to furnish documentary sources

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<sup>51</sup> "By-laws of The Wesley Works Editorial Project," in Cushman collection, Duke University archives, Durham, NC.

<sup>52</sup> Robert E. Cushman, "The Wesley Works Project," unpublished materials in the Cushman Collection, box 1, Duke University Archives, Durham, NC. The material in the Cushman Collection is unprocessed and sealed to all except the current author.

<sup>53</sup> Cushman, "The Wesley Works Project."

illustrating his contributions to both catholic and evangelical Christianity.”<sup>54</sup> For Cushman, this project was of tremendous significance. It set Wesley in his context, provided the sources for scholarship as well as devotion, and it established the foundation from which Methodists could interpret the Wesleyan tradition in ecumenical dialog. Looking back on the project at the end of his career, Cushman attributed the motivation for the Wesley’s Works project to the ecumenical movement. “One would miss the point, however, unless he sees that the ecumenical movement not only fostered unprecedented international theological exchange across the long and rather firmly closed denominational frontiers but also nurtured exploration and recovery of the entire range of the Christian tradition in depth.”<sup>55</sup>

Few events and directions influenced Cushman and the process of Romanization as much as his participation in the ecumenical movement. According to conventional descriptions, the ecumenical movement began with a world missionary conference at Edinburgh in 1910, evolved into the work of the World Council of Churches in 1961, manifested in several church mergers, and continued in the form of bilateral (two partners) and multilateral (several partners) dialogs through the twentieth century.<sup>56</sup> “This

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<sup>54</sup> Frank Baker, “The Oxford Edition of Wesley’s Works and Its Text,” *The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition*, ed. Kenneth E. Rowe (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1976), 117-8; quoting the preamble of each volume.

<sup>55</sup> Cushman, “A Case-Study in Ecumenism: Fifty Years of Theology at Duke,” *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 337.

<sup>56</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, *The Ecumenical Moment: Crises and Opportunity for the Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 2.

movement, along with its accompanying theological renaissance, undoubtedly provided the living *milieu* for theological endeavor and doctrinal reformulation at Duke as elsewhere,” Cushman wrote.<sup>57</sup> In the context of the ecumenical movement, Cushman articulated the core of Methodist identity as well as to recover “the tradition catholic as contrasted with the traditions, plural.”<sup>58</sup> Cushman advanced recurrent themes: theological revision, liturgical renewal with a recovery of Catholic emphases, common worship, and sacramental priority. As a consequence of his ecumenical involvement, Cushman’s personal friendships with Roman Catholics grew more intimate and his theology reflected an increasing appropriation of the fruits of conversation. Cushman considered Methodism’s relationship with the Roman Church a necessity. What was true of Methodism in general was also true of Cushman in particular: “Methodists and others [came] to see that their own churchly character cannot be complete without some kind of relation with the Roman Church.”<sup>59</sup>

For American Methodism, the path to official relations with Rome came through ecumenical involvement, especially with the work of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. Faith and Order provided theological study of the issues affecting unity and was “the principle instrument for implementing the constitutional aim of the World Council: to help the Churches advance to ‘visible unity in one faith and in

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<sup>57</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “Fifty Years of Theology at Duke,” *FSU*, 336.

<sup>58</sup> Cushman, “Fifty Years of Theology,” 337.

<sup>59</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, “Looking Back, Looking Forward,” *Divinity News & Notes*, 17, no. 1 (Fall 2001): 26.

one eucharistic fellowship.”<sup>60</sup> In August of 1952, Cushman traveled to Lund, Sweden, commissioned as a Methodist representative to the Third World Conference on Faith and Order because of his theological expertise. The ecumenical movement had reached a point of crisis, as Cushman observed, and no longer found fruitful the previously utilized method of comparative ecclesiology.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, the conference assented to proceed by the method of constructive theology and organized into five sections. Three sections dealt with the nature of the Church, one considered the ways of worship, and the last, in which Cushman participated, treated intercommunion. Part III of the report on intercommunion would prove of “permanent significance,” according to Cushman:

Certain positive positions are taken which are correctives to narrow ecclesiology wherever found. (1) In the first place, it is declared on principle that the Table is the Lord’s. It is not in the keeping of any particular church. Christ is sovereign over his Table. It is not at the disposal of men. (2) Second, it is asserted that “responsibility for the due ordering of the Table in the name of Christ has been committed to the Church.” This is a solemn trust, not to be slightly discharged. (3) Third, there is the following important pronouncement: “We are agreed in recognizing the administration of the Lord’s Supper in the divided churches, when controlled by the words of institution, as real means of Grace through which Christ gives Himself to those who in faith receive the appointed elements of bread and wine.”<sup>62</sup>

Even within this report Cushman identified certain themes that would become components of his own teaching and that would influence Methodist liturgical renewal. In accordance with John Wesley, as well as the participants of the Lund conference,

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<sup>60</sup> Wainwright, *Ecumenical Moment*, 2.

<sup>61</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “Impressions of the Lund Conference,” *Religion in Life* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1953): 232.

<sup>62</sup> Cushman, “Impressions of the Lund Conference,” 240-1; quoting from documents provided to the delegates, rather than from final and published reports.

Cushman reiterated the efficacy of grace in the sacrament and he insisted that the rite must have established “controls”—in this case, the words of institution. Following Cushman, Methodist theologians who subscribed to the need for liturgical renewal also insisted that the ritual must invariably include certain components, not the least of which were the words of institution (the command of Jesus to repeat the act) in the communion prayer of Great Thanksgiving.

Two years after the Lund Conference, the Methodist Church hosted the second assembly of the World Council in Evanston, Illinois.<sup>63</sup> J. Robert Nelson, who had been elected executive secretary for Faith and Order, wrote: “When the closing service in First Methodist Church [Evanston], with Bishop Berggrav of Norway as preacher, brought the assembly to its end on August 31, it was evident that something of tremendous importance had happened in American church life.”<sup>64</sup> Hundreds of journalists had covered the event and thousands of Christians had witnessed the assembly. The gathering brought the Ecumenical Movement home for American Methodists and gave cause for laypersons and church leaders alike to consider the issues of ecumenical relations.

In preparation for the North American section of Faith and Order meeting at Oberlin College in 1957, Cushman addressed the Methodist Council of Bishops on the considerations of church unity.<sup>65</sup> In his lecture, “The Methodist Church and the World

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<sup>63</sup> *The Evanston Report* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955).

<sup>64</sup> Nelson, “Methodism and the Ecumenical Movement,” 573.

<sup>65</sup> Roy H. Short, *History of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church: 1939- 1979* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 111; Short incorrectly identifies Robert E. Cushman’s middle initial.

Council of Churches: The Implications of Our Membership,” Cushman developed a theological rationale for the World Council and for the attendant Methodist participation:

It is that the existence of the World Council is an expression of the realization on the part of the member churches that (1) the Body of Christ is presently fragmented; (2) that there is a proper unity of the Church in Christ; and (3) that the realization of this unity, however partially and gradually, in visible form, ought to be the daily prayer and continual aspiration of the member churches.<sup>66</sup>

This theological rationale, as Cushman understood it, contained certain implications for Methodism. Cushman expected that Methodism should place considerable effort and emphasis upon both biblical and historical study. Cushman challenged the bishops to careful biblical and theological scholarship that they might be confident of the scriptural warrant for unity of the churches. Simultaneously, the bishops should demand careful historical scholarship to sharpen Methodist understanding of its own heritage. That self-study should include a study of why Methodism came into existence as a separate church, its distinctive doctrinal emphasis, and an examination of ecclesiology, ministry, and sacramental understanding. Thus Cushman contributed his own scholarship to further the cause of unity by centering his own studies on ecclesiology, his classroom lectures on sacramental theology, and his final life project on the distinctive elements of Wesleyan and Methodist theology.

In addition to laying the groundwork for future scholarship, Cushman planted with the bishops the idea of a commission of ecumenical affairs within the Methodist Church. Cushman called for the establishment of an official agency within the church to direct

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<sup>66</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “The Methodist Church and the World Council of Churches: The Implications of Our Membership,” 4, in Cushman collection, Duke University archives, Durham, NC.

scholarship, stay abreast of developments, and provide the official denominational response to the ecumenical discussion. As example Cushman pointed out that no official response had been made to the Lund Conference of five years previous, raising for Cushman the question of “why we send our delegates to these convocations if we make no effort to assess the finding and ascertain our attitude toward them.”<sup>67</sup>

At the next meeting of the Council of Bishops, Bishop Gerald Ensley sponsored a motion to create a church commission and the bishops acted quickly on the proposal.<sup>68</sup> The Council established a Commission on Ecumenical Consultation, responsible to the bishops. Bishop Ensley, serving as chairman, scheduled a meeting for September, 1958, and asked Cushman, one of the designated members, to address the first meeting “on how this Commission might operate most effectively.”<sup>69</sup> Cushman identified a number of important questions, the answers to which would determine the purpose of the commission. In each, Cushman suggested that the role of Methodism in ecumenical affairs

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<sup>67</sup> Cushman, “The Methodist Church and the World Council of Churches,” 15.

<sup>68</sup> Bishop Short seemed to give equal credit for the idea to Bishop Ensley (Short, *History of the Council of Bishop*, 111) and Robert Nelson seemed unaware of the origins of the idea (Nelson, “Methodism and the Ecumenical Movement,” 574). The correspondence between Cushman and Ensley indicates that the idea was first presented by Cushman. At the organizational meeting of the group, 26 September 1958, Cushman gave the first address and began with the words: “In the original proposal which I made....” Robert E. Cushman, “Statements to the First Meeting of the Commission on Ecumenical Consultation,” 1, in Cushman collection, Duke University archives, Durham, NC. The minutes of the meeting clarify the chronology: “Minutes of the First Meeting of the Commission on Ecumenical Consultation,” 26 September 1958, in Cushman collection, Duke University archives, Durham, NC.

<sup>69</sup> F Gerald Ensley to R. E. Cushman, 25 August 1958, in Cushman collection, Duke University archives, Durham, NC.

was more than a sign of the desire for fellowship. Instead, Methodism was motivated by the strong theological desire to affect unity among the divided churches. To that end, then, the consultation “might be understood as that of a theological forum or parliament within the Methodist Church to serve as a kind of reagent for the crystallization of Methodist theological understanding, especially as this is related to the development of ecumenical life within the world church, and to report to The Methodist Church from time to time.”<sup>70</sup>

As he had to the bishops, Cushman suggested that the commission should direct scholarship and prepare reports and publications, especially in response to official papers of interchurch dialogue.

The General Conference of 1960 ratified the creation of the commission,<sup>71</sup> retaining, also, the rather odd configuration of accountability. The commission was accountable to the Council of Bishops, which directed the commission in its work. Included among the responsibilities, General Conference dictated that the commission, working with the Council of Bishops, should “receive and respond to communications received from the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, and duly appointed agencies of these bodies.”<sup>72</sup> The awkwardness of the relationships resulted from the fact that only a General Conference, not a commission and not even the Council of Bishops, held the authority to make official response to communications of other

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<sup>70</sup> Cushman, “Statements to the First Meeting of the Commission on Ecumenical Consultation,” 2.

<sup>71</sup> *Discipline 1960*, para. 1597.

<sup>72</sup> *Discipline 1960*, para. 1597.2.a.

ecumenical partners. Though this situation of polity had to be corrected by the General Conference of 1964,<sup>73</sup> Cushman formally brought the denomination into the ecumenical movement.

At the end of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 1959, Pope John XXIII revealed his intention to gather a general council to consider, in part, the question of the unity of the church. Pope John established the office of the *Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity* in 1960, naming the Jesuit Augustin Bea its president and John Willebrands of the International Catholic Conference on Ecumenical Affairs its secretary. In one of the more momentous decisions, Bea and Willebrands invited non-Catholic theologians and pastors, including Cushman, as observers at the four official sessions of the Second Vatican Council.

Observers took an active role by speaking to smaller groups or interacting with individual members of the council. The seven-member Methodist party joined between thirty and fifty other authorized observers, who consulted with the approximately 2,400 cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, superior generals, and abbots of Vatican II.<sup>74</sup> Sometimes they critiqued the first drafts of documents or they were invited to speak to the bishops. The observers contributed to the understanding and discussion of the main

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<sup>73</sup> *Discipline 1964*, para. 1575.

<sup>74</sup> From Robert E. Cushman's notes, "Vatican Council—Remarks to Kiwanis Club," Durham, NC, in Cushman collection, Duke University archives, Durham, NC.

questions and they were treated by the Secretariat as real brothers. Friendships grew<sup>75</sup> and theological understanding developed. Cushman called the council and its accomplishments in the arena of ecumenical thought and action “among the epoch-making events of modern church history.”<sup>76</sup> After the close of the council, Cushman corroborated “the Pope’s impression that relations between us, the council fathers, and the theological consultants became, especially in the third session, matters of mutual acceptance, one might say almost of expectant normality.”<sup>77</sup>

The relationship between observers and Council was a reciprocal one, Cushman reported, and he gained as much from the conversation as the council fathers gained from him. “The fact is that ‘dialogue’ became the fashionable word at the third session of the council,” Cushman said in his Gray Lectures before the Divinity School community.

“Moreover it was recognized that, by its nature, dialogue presupposed a certain mutuality of respect between partners of dialogue, a spirit of openness and inquiry with the prospect of enlarging mutual understanding.”<sup>78</sup> That Methodism found it imperative to dialog with Catholicism came as no surprise to Cushman, who had insisted that Catholic and

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<sup>75</sup> As example, the *Raleigh Times*, 23 May 1964, carried a picture—one of many—of Robert Cushman and his wife, Barbara, seated in their residence and surrounded by Catholic bishops Lambert Hock of Sioux Falls, SD and Lew Dworschak of Fargo, ND; Fr. Vincent A. Yzermans and Colman Barry of St. Johns Abbey College, MN; and Fr. Max Jordan of Rome.

<sup>76</sup> “Robert Cushman: Dean, Delegate to Vatican II,” *Divinity News & Notes*, 17, no. 1 (Fall 2001): 26.

<sup>77</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “Prospects of Ecumenism,” *The Duke Divinity School Review* 30, no. 1 (Winter 1965): 61; given as the Gray Lectures, 1964.

<sup>78</sup> Cushman, “Prospects of Ecumenism,” 61.

Reformed strands of Christianity had fused in Methodist “liturgy, polity, and in the classical substance of its theology.” That is, in order to know what Methodism is Cushman believed it necessary to understand its mixture of “Catholicism and anti-Catholicism.”<sup>79</sup>

While at Vatican II, Cushman sent home to his colleagues and students many letters and notes, and when he returned to his duties between sessions, he gave many reports and updates. In all of these, Cushman clearly made his point that a new era had arrived as a result of the Second Vatican Council. Sooner or later, he wrote, even the American South, the “citadel of Protestantism,” would have to acknowledge that it had been addressed by the Council and that “a new situation in World Christianity requires responsible answers.”<sup>80</sup>

It is now time for non-Catholic Christianity to awake to the challenge which will issue from the Second Vatican Council. It is not a challenge that can be ignored. It will require searching and thoughtful response. The Catholic principles of ecumenism will have to be faced, not alone by the World Council of Churches, but by the member bodies. The Catholic Church is now surely on the ecumenical offensive, and in defining how it stands with reference to us, it will force us to define with greater precision than has been our wont how we stand with reference to it.<sup>81</sup>

Even before the end of the Vatican Council, Cushman began to wonder about the role of the World Council of Churches in the continuing ecumenical discussion. Cushman noted that the member churches kept the World Council “waiting in the wings for all but

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<sup>79</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “The Ecumenical Challenge to Methodism,” *Drew Gateway* 35, no. 3 (1965): 141.

<sup>80</sup> Cushman, “Prospects of Ecumenism,” 74.

<sup>81</sup> Cushman, “Prospects of Ecumenism,” 73.

an infinitesimal portion of their program.”<sup>82</sup> The World Council lost some of its original focus, especially after 1968.<sup>83</sup> Methodism, Cushman thought, needed other avenues to pursue ecumenicity. To Cushman’s delight, the World Methodist Council took on the task of sponsoring bilateral dialogs among some of the larger confessional bodies on behalf of more than four score Wesleyan-related denominations around the world. The World Methodist Council gave approval to dialogs with the Roman Catholic Church in 1966 and has pursued them uninterrupted since. American Methodists played a considerable role in the work of the World Methodist Council and, specifically, in the reports of the Roman Catholic-Methodist dialogs.<sup>84</sup>

In May of 1971, when Dean Robert Earl Cushman resigned his top administrative post at the Divinity School, Duke University Provost Dr. John C. Blackburn commended Cushman's years of service, declaring that Cushman had “rendered invaluable service to the church, the university, and the Divinity School and he will be greatly missed.” Dr. Olin T. Binkley, then president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at Wake Forest, said, “Dean Cushman is one of the most productive scholars and most distinguished teachers in theological education in the U. S. His resourceful leadership in

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<sup>82</sup> Cushman, “The Ecumenical Challenge to Methodism,” 136.

<sup>83</sup> Wainwright, “Looking Back, Looking Forward,” 26.

<sup>84</sup> See Geoffrey Wainwright, *Methodists in Dialog* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995), 37-56, for the substance of the reports. The whole history of the World Methodist Council, its impact, and significance, has not been written, though small pieces of the story exist in various places.

the theological enterprise has been fruitful not only in the state and the South, but across the nation.”<sup>85</sup> During his twelve years as dean, Cushman oversaw the capital expansion of the Divinity School, reorganized the seminary curriculum, gave leadership to efforts to desegregate the university, sat as a Protestant observer at Vatican II, founded the United Methodist Church's Commission on Ecumenical Affairs, and served twice as president of the Association of Methodist Theological Schools.<sup>86</sup>

In spite of the praise he received then, Cushman has been largely overlooked as an ecumenical theologian and a strong rudder steering the course of the Methodist tradition. He was a scholar, who excelled at teaching and who found great satisfaction in publishing. Cushman was detailed, in some ways meticulous, a man who wrote out in long-hand every lecture he gave. But Cushman’s scholarly work was overshadowed by his administrative gifts, by which he “provided national and international leadership to theological education.”<sup>87</sup> In addition to his service to graduate theological education, Cushman oversaw the Wesley’s Works projects through its formative years and during some of the most difficult moments of research and selecting editors. The first volume of the Works appeared in 1975 and, to date, fifteen volumes have been completed.

Cushman framed his theological position in response to what he frequently cited as “the ecumenical challenge.” The Second Vatican Council posed the challenge and the

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<sup>85</sup> Don Seaver, “Dr. Cushman Resigns Deanship of the Duke Divinity School,” news release, no date, 1, from materials in the Duke University Archives.

<sup>86</sup> *Divinity News & Notes* 9, no. 1 (Fall 1993), 6.

<sup>87</sup> “Robert Earl Cushman: Dean and Theologian,” *Divinity News and Notes* 19, no. 1 (Fall 1993): 7.

consequences of it were great, not only for Roman Catholicism, but for Protestantism as well. Vatican II symbolized and prophesied “a new day in world Christianity,” Cushman wrote. “It signific[ed], at least in its beginnings, the passing away of the post-Reformation and counter-Reformation eras.”<sup>88</sup> Cushman concluded, certainly, that Vatican II signaled a considerable revolution for Roman Catholicism as it became open to dialog with other Christians and even with non-Christian religions. But the effect on Protestantism, and Methodism, was also great. Methodism would have to determine where it stood in relation to Vatican II and Roman Catholicism. If, as one author noted, the only choice is between “Roman Catholic sacramentalism or Baptist evangelicalism,”<sup>89</sup> Cushman clearly aligned himself on the side of Romanization. Robert Cushman’s son, Tom, explained that his father was “sacramentally aware and liturgically aware.” Simply, Robert Cushman “was very Catholic,” his son concluded,<sup>90</sup> and his influence as churchman and intellectual rippled throughout Methodism.

Cushman joined the faculty at Duke at an important time, for both the institution and American Methodist theology. With his first-rate education, Cushman provided an intellectual bridge from liberal evangelicalism to neo-Wesleyan Methodism. Cushman respected the Protestant tradition, but he never rejected the Catholic tradition as other Protestants (including some Methodists) did. Cushman provided a solid theological

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<sup>88</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “Catholic Renewal and Vatican Council II,” *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 308.

<sup>89</sup> Quoting Andy Langford, *United Methodist Reporter*, 16 November 2001.

<sup>90</sup> Tom Cushman, telephone interview with the author, 27 May 2000, Portales, NM.

articulation that included also a liturgical theory—what Methodism had been missing. He stressed the revelation of God in scripture and in Jesus Christ and underscored, too, the grace of God in the sacraments. A teacher of sacramental theology, Cushman approved of the Word and Table pattern of worship and advanced the Romanization of Methodism.

CHAPTER VII  
ROMANIZATION, 1968-1992: “THIS IS  
A DAY OF NEW BEGINNINGS”<sup>1</sup>

By 1968, only three years after the publication of the last worship book and hymnal, a number of liturgically influential Methodists expressed dissatisfaction with the official liturgies.<sup>2</sup> Some Methodists were aware of the deep cultural changes that had affected worship patterns and called for an end to ethnic and gender discrimination in worship language. Some Methodists were aware of the significant ecumenical changes, including the call within Roman Catholicism for a reform of the liturgy. All were aware of the changes within the Methodist Church itself, including the union of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB). The EUB Church was itself a merger of the United Brethren and the Evangelical Church in 1946. Both of the former denominations originated among German-speaking Americans and, merged, the EUB Church possessed orders of ministry and confessions of faith similar to the Methodist Church. Formal conversations between the EUB Church and the Methodist Church began in 1956. The expectation of successful negotiations made many Methodist leaders point out that the 1964-5 worship book and hymnal were premature.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Wren in *The United Methodist Hymnal: Book of United Methodist Worship* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), #383; the music was written specifically for this text by Carlton Young, the editor of the hymnal.

<sup>2</sup> Hoyt L. Hickman, “Word and Table: The Process of Liturgical Revision in the United Methodist Church, 1964-1992,” in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists: Twentieth-Century Worship in Worldwide Methodism, Studies in Honor of James F. White*, ed. Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995), 121.

Dissatisfied with the revised Anglican services of the 1964 *Book of Worship*, Methodist scholars published books and articles as well as official worship resources recommending change. In addition, Methodist scholars drew from the liturgical scholarship of other traditions, especially the work of Roman Catholic scholars after Vatican II. The literature included the renewal efforts of other denominations and the fruit of ecumenical dialogs.<sup>3</sup> Individually, Methodist theologians began to write and teach along similar lines, calling for a renewed study of John Wesley, patristic principles of worship, sacramental and liturgical theology, and an emphasis on church seasons and the lectionary.

The common threads of scholarship and teaching coalesced into what became known as the “Word and Table” pattern of worship. The Word and Table pattern was shaped by ecumenical scholarship and based largely on the Roman Catholic recovery of the patristic *Apostolic Traditions* of Hippolytus. A presbyter of Rome in the third century, Hippolytus resisted the liturgical innovations of his day. Sometime around 217, he wrote the *Apostolic Traditions*, a detailed description of worship in Rome. The *Apostolic Traditions* included the earliest surviving texts for several types of worship and, therefore, became the source of many liturgical reforms.<sup>4</sup> The Word and Table pattern, grounded in the current scholarship and the *Apostolic Traditions*, abandoned earlier attempts at ordering Methodist worship, including the 1964 revision of

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<sup>3</sup> Examples include the Faith and Order Task Force’s, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper no. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982) and the Roman Catholic-Methodist statement, “The Eucharist and the Churches,” *Origins* 2 (25 March 1982): 651-9.

<sup>4</sup> James White, *Introduction to Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 115.

seventeenth-century Anglicanism and nineteenth century revivalism. It changed the nature of United Methodist liturgical theology.

Adding to the growing denominational bureaucracy, The United Methodist Church<sup>5</sup> (as it became after the 1968 merger) established a denominational office, the Section on Worship, to shepherd liturgical revision and to produce new worship resources. Denominational staff from a newly created Section on Worship worked closely with legislative and standing committees of the General Conferences but, in most cases relied on liturgical experts, who were consultants or committee members. While some in the group complained about theology that was done by non-theologians, and liturgy by non-liturgists,<sup>6</sup> still the work of the experts prevailed. After more than two decades of committee meetings, staff work, and general conferences, the church issued the 1988 *United Methodist Hymnal*, which contained the full liturgy for Sunday worship in the front and services for marriages, funerals, and daily prayer at the back. The placement of the ritual for Sunday worship at the front of the book indicated its normative position. The service followed the Roman pattern and, in particular, the communion prayer was based on the best of Catholic scholarship. The 1988 hymnal completed the journey from revivalism of the nineteenth century to Romanization of the twentieth.

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<sup>5</sup> By order of General Conference action, the word “The” is capitalized in the title of the church.

<sup>6</sup> James F. White, *Christian Worship in North America, A Retrospective: 1955-1995* (Collegetown, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 146.

Literature laying the groundwork for a new liturgical theology began to appear at the same time as the new hymnal and worship book. H. Grady Hardin, senior professor of worship at Perkins School of Theology, James F. White, assistant professor of worship, and Joseph D. Quillian, Jr., dean of the school, collaborated to write a study in Christian worship. Claiming that there was then more interest in worship than at any other time in the century, the three authors reviewed the history of worship design, including the history of Methodist rituals and the initial scholarship of the modern liturgical movement. Hardin, Quillian, and White considered the shape of Methodist weddings and funerals as well as that of Sunday worship and the sacraments. Importantly, the authors took issue with the use of Isaiah 6 as the primary paradigm of modern worship. While acknowledging the central place the Isaiah motif had held and the work of other scholars who utilized it, Hardin, Quillian, and White described a re-conceptualization of worship around New Testament themes. Their new model of worship preserved the elements of confession, affirmation, and dedication found in the paradigm of the sixth chapter of the Book of Isaiah, but reoriented the model to claim a sacramental element to the action of God.<sup>7</sup>

Even Bishop Lance Webb, who had chaired the committee that produced the 1964 *Book of Worship*, contributed to the ever-growing body of literature by writing that renewal within the local church and within the denomination could begin with renewal of

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<sup>7</sup> H. Grady Hardin, Joseph D. Quillian, Jr., and James F. White, *The Celebration of the Gospel: A Study in Christian Worship* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 26-30. White and Hardin both earned degrees from Duke Divinity School while Robert Cushman was there. Their work came out too late to affect discussions prior to the 1964 worship book.

worship. Webb, who was much less interested in the formality and liturgical correctness of worship than others,<sup>8</sup> recognized that two of the keys to church renewal were emphases on Scripture in worship and the sacrament of communion.<sup>9</sup> While Webb left it uncertain how willing he was to abandon the 1964 order and concept of worship, he did acknowledge that the scholarship of Vatican II along with the work of Methodist theologians could contribute to a new liturgical theology.

One of the most prolific authors of the era, James F. White, foreshadowed what would become his major themes of liturgical renewal in the published revision of his Duke University dissertation, *The Cambridge Movement* (1962). White explored the influence of architecture on worship and theology. In another work, *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture* (1964), White argued that knowledge of liturgical history was prerequisite for liturgical revision. A historian by training, White grounded all of his scholarly work in an historical context. In his 1971 work, *New Forms of Worship*, White described the imperative for change in worship patterns. He traced the historical sweep of worship rites and liturgical scholarship, explored the impact of changing technologies—from the printing press to the television, and analyzed the psychological perceptions of reality. White collected years of classroom lectures and molded an introduction to Christian worship. From the late 1960s through the late 1980s, White contributed many articles to the more popular, less scholarly Methodist periodicals. In those articles, White repeated many of his themes, including the necessity of historical

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<sup>8</sup> James F. White, interview with the author, 27 September 2001, Madison, NJ.

<sup>9</sup> Lance Webb, *When God Comes Alive Through the Spirit-Renewed Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 37-46.

understanding for the process of worship revision. In the 1980s, during the height of his work with the worship revision committees, White articulated the developing principles of liturgical theology and worship reform.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps the best known Methodist theologian of the late-twentieth century, Geoffrey Wainwright contributed perhaps the most to the scholarship of the budding Methodist liturgical theology. A British Methodist, Wainwright taught at Union Theological Seminary in New York, then at Duke University Divinity School, where he immersed himself in American Methodism. In 1971, Wainwright published *Eucharist and Eschatology*, a study of the meaning of the Lord's Supper in the categories of biblical eschatology. He collaborated with Cheslyn Jones and Edward Yarnold to edit a collection of historical essays about worship in various Christian traditions, including Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant. *The Study of Liturgy* considered many of the Christian rites, including baptism, Lord's Supper, and ordination, and gave special attention to the development of the various rites in the patristic period. In 1980, Wainwright authored *Doxology*, reversing traditional categories by making systematic theology an operation of liturgical theology. Wainwright's vision of faith was "firmly

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<sup>10</sup> James F. White, *The Cambridge Movement: The Ecclesiologists and the Gothic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962); *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture: Theological and Historical Considerations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); *New Forms of Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971); *Introduction to Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980); "Our Apostasy in Worship," *Christian Century* 94 (28 September 1977): 842-5; "Where the Reformation Was Wrong on Worship," *Christian Century* 99 (27 October 1982): 1074-7. Grant S. Sperry-White prepared a complete bibliography and short biography in "James F. White: Historian, Liturgist, and Teacher," in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, 333-53.

shaped and strongly coloured by the Christian liturgy.” Thus, he conceived of worship as the both the beginning point and the final confirmation of the Christian witness.<sup>11</sup>

Other authors helped to carry the message of liturgical renewal to the general Methodist public. Hoyt Hickman offered to pastors and worship committees a study of the major categories of Sunday worship in 1984, the same year that new Methodist services were added to the Ritual.<sup>12</sup> William Willimon, one of the more popular Methodist authors in the last two decades of the twentieth century, preceded Hickman with his interpretation of worship history. Willimon underscored the growing consensus about worship structure and liturgical theology:

The recovery of patristic worship material from the first centuries of the church has had an immense influence upon worship reform. In chapter 3 [of his book], when the Apostolic Tradition was discussed, we noted Hippolytus’s influence upon all liturgical revisions since the 1930s. The simplicity, conciseness, and clearly discernible patterns of patristic worship were most appealing when these early practices were compared with some of our later and more disordered rites. We learned again that Christian worship is not so much a set of words and fixed written texts but, rather, a pattern of basic actions which allow for possible variations in the words.

Willimon added his support for worship reform, the Word and Table pattern, and a firm foundation of liturgical theology.

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<sup>11</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (London: Epworth Press, 1971; Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold, eds., *The Study of Liturgy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Hoyt Hickman, *A Primer for Church Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984).

By 1970, proponents of a new liturgical theology took their case to Methodist leaders, warning that “a revolution in worship practice was taking place.”<sup>13</sup> The Commission on Worship, appointed by the 1968 General Conference,<sup>14</sup> asked David Randolph of the denominational Board of Evangelism to collect and edit contemporary and experimental forms of worship. A special Committee on Alternate Rituals directed the work. Randolph collected orders of worship, audio tapes, photographic slides, and any other items he could find with the hope that the distribution of an edited collection would stimulate the liturgical creativity of pastors and congregations. Hundreds of congregations took interest in the project and experimented with innovative forms of worship.<sup>15</sup> Randolph edited five separate resources as part of the project.<sup>16</sup> The fruit of the revolution in worship, along with the input from hundreds of persons and congregations, may have indicated that the Commission on Worship encouraged innovation and creativity, and it may have been a sign of the need for alternative services.<sup>17</sup> But the fruit also indicated that a large segment of worshipping Methodists,

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<sup>13</sup> Robert B. Peiffer, “How Contemporary Liturgies Evolve: The Revision of United Methodist Liturgical Texts (1968-1988), Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1992, 5-7 Peiffer, citing Hoyt Hickman, described a meeting with the Commission on Worship in 1967 and another in 1968. James White recalled only the one in 1970. James F. White, interview with the author, 27 September 2001, Madison, NJ. Throughout his dissertation, Peiffer seems to downplay the role of James White, the director of his dissertation!

<sup>14</sup> 1968 Discipline, paras. 1385.2 and 4.

<sup>15</sup> Hoyt L. Hickman, *Companion to the Book of Services: Introduction, Commentary, and Instructions for Using the New United Methodist Services* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988) 9-11.

<sup>16</sup> *Ventures in Worship* are listed in *Companion to the Book of Services*, 10.

especially pastors, were dissatisfied with the 1964 *Book of Worship* and felt free to vary or deviate from its use.

Some liturgical theologians took on the challenge of redirecting the desire for creative and contemporary services into the call to revise the denomination's authorized services. In the spring of 1970, the Executive Committee of the Commission on Worship, heard the request of several liturgical experts to start again the process of revising the church's ritual.<sup>18</sup> Hoyt Hickman, president of the Order of Saint Luke, reported that "a large and growing number of Methodists" asked not only for a new ritual but also asked to be part of the evaluation process.<sup>19</sup> James White, one of those making the request, reflected that members of the commission "had gloom all over their faces because it was not what they wanted."<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, commission members agreed to proceed with the recommendations.

From 1970 to 1972, the commission continued to direct the work of the special committee. The commission authorized the Committee on Alternate Rituals to produce three revised rituals, one each for baptism, confirmation, and communion.<sup>21</sup> H. Grady

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<sup>17</sup> This is the argument of Peiffer, "How Contemporary Liturgies Evolve," 8.

<sup>18</sup> White, *Christian Worship in North America*, 145.

<sup>19</sup> Hickman, *Companion to the Book of Services*, 9-11

<sup>20</sup> James F. White, interview with the author, 27 September 2001, Madison, NJ. White described this in less detail (than in the interview) in his chapter in *Christian Worship in North America*, 145ff.

<sup>21</sup> Minutes, Executive Committee, 4 September 1970, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Archives, Madison, NJ. Also in Peiffer, "How Contemporary Liturgies Evolve," 13.

Hardin chaired the committee, which served as an editorial committee with the prerogative to recruit clergy and laity, seminary faculties, and denominational staff to prepare the texts. Although the assignment was fairly broad, the committee focused primarily on an alternate text for the Lord's Supper.

Contrary to the charge, the committee formed no sub-committee to prepare the text for the Lord's Supper. Instead, Hardin recruited James White to write the text for the alternate communion service and enlisted Presbyterian David G. Buttrick, Duke Divinity School dean Robert E. Cushman, Nebraska pastor Benjamin Garrison, Perkins School of Theology professor Fred. D. Gealy, and Wesley Theological Seminary professor Laurence Hall Stookey as consultants.<sup>22</sup> White had previously prepared an order for the Lord's Supper, which David Randolph had included in the *Ventures in Worship* series.<sup>23</sup> White revised his original text and sent it to the consultants for comments and to committee members for review before their meeting in spring of 1971.

White prepared for the work of liturgical writing while on sabbatical in Rome, 1967-8, observing the work of the Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, itself a product of Vatican Council II. White confessed to reading not only the newsletters and journals of Roman Catholic liturgical reform, but also of consulting publications of the Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Disciple of Christ churches. In his readings, he became convinced of the theological deficiencies of the

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<sup>22</sup> Minutes, Committee on Alternate Rituals, 4 November 1970, Commission on Worship collection, United Methodist Archives, Madison, NJ.

<sup>23</sup> David J. Randolph, ed. *Ventures in Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), 82-5.

1964 Methodist service and the need to recover the ancient structure of the fourth century. For content, White turned to Hippolytus and the *Apostolic Tradition* and to the Wesleyan eucharistic hymns for theology.<sup>24</sup> White gave to his text “a basic ecumenical shape,” informed by his reading of Gregory Dix’s, *The Shape of the Liturgy*.<sup>25</sup>

Initially, the committee did not receive White’s proposal well. Years later, White reminisced:

I well remember how despondent the committee was when it saw the text, partly because some of them had never encountered the Eucharist in contemporary English. They missed the Cranmerian cadences if not the vocabulary. I had to leave before the meeting was over and I understand there was much handwringing about the flatness and unpoetic nature of my prose. Indeed, Albert Outler later told me that in writing it I had loved the Lord Jesus but not the English language.<sup>26</sup>

Cushman, one of the consultants, had remarked only that White’s text was very “culinary.”<sup>27</sup> Through eighteen months and many hurt feelings among committee members, the committee produced eight draft versions, most of them written by White. Finally, the committee released the alternate service, entitled *The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper: An Alternate Text*, 1972, in time for use at the 1972 General Conference in Atlanta.

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<sup>24</sup> More detail is in White, *Christian Worship in North America*, 150-1.

<sup>25</sup> Peiffer, “How Contemporary Liturgies Evolve,” 18.

<sup>26</sup> White, *Christian Worship in North America*, 146. This article in White’s collection of essays was, originally, White’s speech when he accepted the 1983 Berekah Award at the North American Academy of Liturgy.

<sup>27</sup> Robert E. Cushman, Cushman collection, Duke University Archives, Durham, NC. Peiffer thought the remark an insult to White (“How Contemporary Liturgies Evolve,” 26), but this author is certain that Cushman intended it as a compliment of White’s use of thanksgiving to God for food.

Selling more than two million copies before it was revised in 1980, the 1972 alternate text for the Lord's Supper introduced Methodists to a new order of worship and the basis of a new liturgical theology.<sup>28</sup> The thanksgiving prayer over the bread and cup, known to Methodists in 1980 as the Prayer of Great Thanksgiving, expressed the theology of the service.<sup>29</sup> The three-part prayer followed the ancient pattern, adopted principally because of its strong trinitarian doctrine and also for its ecumenical appeal. The prayer explicitly held to a strong doctrine of the presence of Christ in the supper, which consultant Laurence Stookey claimed to be Wesleyan.<sup>30</sup> It was set within the Word and Table pattern and followed the Roman format for eucharist (Table 7.1).

The similarities between the Methodist and the Roman rites may best be seen in a side-by-side comparison of only the prayers of Great Thanksgiving.<sup>31</sup> Although the 1970 Roman Rite IV prayer is much longer, the basic order and common source is evident.

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<sup>28</sup> The United Methodist Church, *The Book of Services* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1985), 5.

<sup>29</sup> Hoyt L. Hickman, "Word and Table: The Process of Liturgical Revision in the United Methodist Church, 1964-1992," in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, 124.

<sup>30</sup> See Hickman, "Word and Table," 125, for a discussion of the presence of Christ, and Peiffer, "How Contemporary Liturgies Evolve," 23 for Stookey's comments. Hickman pointed out that the language of "presence" was made stronger in the 1984 revision in which the Holy Spirit is invoked to make these gifts of bread and wine "be for us the body and blood of Christ." See W. Douglas Mills, "The Words at the Invocation," *Worship Works* 4:4 (November 1991): 22, for a critique of the 1984 language.

<sup>31</sup> Prayers are taken from Max Thurian and Geoffrey Wainwright, eds., *Baptism and Eucharist: Ecumenical Convergence in Celebration* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1983), 119- 21, 171- 2; and *Today's Missal* 69: 5 ( May 26- November 30, 2002):104- 113.

Table 7.1: Comparison of Prayers of Great Thanksgiving.

<b>Roman Missal (1970) Eucharistic Prayer IV</b>	<b>The “Alternate Rite” (1980) The United Methodist Church</b>
<p>The Lord be with you. <i>And also with you.</i> Lift up your hearts: <i>We lift them up to the Lord.</i> Let us give thanks to the Lord our God: <i>It is right to give him thanks and praise.</i> Father in heaven, it is right that we should give you thanks and glory:</p>	<p>The Lord be with you. <i>And also with you.</i> Lift up your hearts. <i>We lift them to the Lord.</i> Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. <i>It is right to give him thanks and praise.</i> Father, it is right that we should always and everywhere give you thanks and praise. Only you are God.</p>
<p>You are the one God, living and true. Through all eternity you live in unapproachable light. Source of live and goodness, you have created all things, to fill your creatures with every blessing and lead them to the joyful vision of your light.</p>	<p>You created all things and called them good. You made us in your own image. Even though we rebelled against your love you did not desert us. You delivered us from captivity, Made covenant to be our Sovereign God, And spoke to us through your prophets.</p>
<p>Countless hosts of angels stand before you to do your will; they look upon your splendor and praise you, night and day. United with them, and in the name of every creature under heaven, we too praise your glory as we say:</p>	<p>Therefore, we join the entire company of heaven and all your people now on earth in worshiping you and glorifying you:</p>
<p><i>Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.</i> <i>Hosanna in the highest.</i> <i>Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.</i> <i>Hosanna in the highest.</i></p>	<p><i>Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.</i> <i>Hosanna in the highest.</i> <i>Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.</i> <i>Hosanna in the highest.</i></p>
<p>Father, we acknowledge your greatness: all your actions show your wisdom and love. You formed man in your own likeness and set him over the whole world to serve you, his creator, and to rule over all creatures. Even when he disobeyed you and lost your</p>	<p>We thank you, holy Lord God, that you loved the world so much you sent your only Son to be our Savior.</p>

Table 7.1 cont.

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**Roman Missal (1970)  
Eucharistic Prayer IV**

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**The “Alternate Rite” (1980)  
The United Methodist Church**

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friendship you did not abandon him to the power of death, but helped all men to seek and find you. Again and again you offered a covenant to man and through the prophets taught him to hope for salvation.

Father, you so loved the world that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior.

He was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, a man like us in all things but sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation, to prisoners, freedom, and to those in sorrow, joy. In fulfillment of your will he gave himself up to death; but by rising from the dead, he destroyed death and restored life. And that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him, he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Fathers, as his first gift to those who believe, to complete his work on earth and bring us the fullness of grace.

Father, may this Holy Spirit sanctify these offerings. Let them become the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord as we celebrate the great mystery which he left us as an everlasting covenant.

He always loved those who were his own in the world.

When the time came for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, he showed the depth of his love.

While they were at supper, he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples saying: Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body which will be given up for you.

The Lord of all life came to live among us.

He healed and taught, ate with sinners, and won for you a new people by water and the Spirit.

We saw his glory.

Yet he humbled himself in obedience to your will, freely accepting death on a cross. By dying, he freed us from unending death; by rising from the dead, he gave us everlasting life.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, the Lord Jesus took bread.

After giving you thanks, he broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.

Table 7.1 cont.

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**Roman Missal (1970)  
Eucharistic Prayer IV**

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In the same way, he took the cup, filled with wine. He gave you thanks, and giving the cup to his disciples, said: Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.*

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. We recall Christ's death, his descent among the dead, his resurrection, and his ascension to your right hand; and, looking forward to his coming in glory, we offer you his body and blood, the acceptable sacrifice which brings salvation to the whole world.

Lord, look upon this sacrifice which you have given to your Church; and by your Holy Spirit, gather all who share this one bread and one cup into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.

Lord, remember those for whom we offer this sacrifice, especially N. our Pope, N. our bishop, and bishops and clergy everywhere. Remember those who take part in this offering, those here present and all your people, and all who seek you with

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**The "Alternate Rite" (1980)  
The United Methodist Church**

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When the supper was over, he took the cup. Again, he returned thanks to you, gave the cup to his disciples, and said: Drink from this, all of you, this is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, poured out for you and many, for the forgiveness of sins. When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we experience anew the presence of the

Lord Jesus Christ and look forward to his coming in final victory.

*Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.*

We experience anew, most merciful God, the suffering and death, the resurrection and the ascension of your Son, asking you to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, as a living and holy surrender of ourselves.

Send the power of your Holy Spirit on us, gathered here out of love for you, and on these gifts.

May the Spirit help us know in the breaking of this bread and the drinking of this wine the presence of Christ who gave his body and blood for all.

And may the Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in service to all the world.

Table 7.1 cont.

<b>Roman Missal (1970) Eucharistic Prayer IV</b>	<b>The “Alternate Rite” (1980) The United Methodist Church</b>
<p>a sincere heart. Remember those who have died in the peace of Christ and all the dead whose faith is known to you alone. Father, in your mercy grant also to us, your children, to enter into our heavenly inheritance in the company of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, and your apostles and saints. Then, in your kingdom, freed from the corruption of sin and death, we shall sing your glory with every creature through Christ our Lord, through whom you give us everything that is good.</p> <p>Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. Amen.</p>	<p>Through your Son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.</p>

Eucharistic Prayer IV of the Roman Missal also became the source document for “A Common Eucharistic Prayer,” published in 1975 by an unofficial ecumenical committee in the United States and included in United Methodist resources. The Consultation on Church Union used the common prayer in its material and the Episcopal Church adopted it in its 1979 revised Book of Common Prayer as Prayer D in Rite II.<sup>32</sup>

Ritual and hymnal revision followed a different course than had been taken in the previous perturbations because of the use of liturgical experts and, after 1972, the reliance on church bureaucracy to direct the work. The *Discipline* gave general

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<sup>32</sup> Thurian, *Baptism and Eucharist*, 121.

directions for ritual revision, charging the Commission on Worship “to prepare forms of worship and to revise existing orders of worship for recommendation to the General Conference;” and “to supervise future editions of *The Book of Worship for Church and Home*.” General Conference of 1972 retained these same directives, added the direction “to prepare new and alternate rituals and orders of worship,” but assigned all of the work to the staff members in the office of Division of Evangelism, Worship, and Stewardship of the denomination’s newly constituted general Board of Discipleship.<sup>33</sup> The staff, who would rely on consultants, prepared much of the succeeding work.

General Conference also provided for a full-time staff person in the area of worship. Hoyt Hickman, who had served as president of the Order of Saint Luke and as a volunteer committee member with the Commission on Worship, accepted the job offer. As the next step following the production of 1972 alternate text for the Lord’s Supper, Hickman focused some of his attention on proposing a new structure for Sunday worship following the principles of the Lord’s Supper alternate service. The committee process Hickman used produced *Word and Table* in 1976, outlining a basic order for worship for use on every Sunday whether there was communion or not.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Discipline 1972*, paras. 1019 and 1023.

<sup>34</sup> *Word and Table*, Supplemental Worship Resources 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, rev. 1980).

Following White's precedent, Hickman and committee based the *Word and Table* pattern on "some of the earliest Christian traditions, recovered as part of the ecumenical process of liturgical scholarship."<sup>35</sup> Pastor-scholar William Willimon praised the work:

I doubt that it would be an overstatement for me to claim that *Word and Table* is the most significant liturgical event in the Methodist tradition since Wesley's *Sunday Service for Methodists in North America* in 1784. With the publication of this commentary on Sunday worship, United Methodist congregations have an opportunity to return to our rich heritage in worship, a heritage that is both Catholic and Evangelical.<sup>36</sup>

*Word and Table* also detailed the new ecumenical calendar and introduced the common lectionary. The Roman Catholic Church first proposed and published an ecumenical lectionary in 1970, which the Episcopal Church began testing the same year before adopting a revised version in 1979. The Commission on Worship of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) began work on a lectionary in 1972 as a means of promoting church unity. The commission engaged James White and Hoyt Hickman to draft a common lectionary closely following the Catholic lectionary, which was perfected and published in 1974.<sup>37</sup> The Section on Worship (formerly the Worship Area) reviewed the common calendar and lectionary and recommended its trial use to United Methodist congregations. Several thousand United Methodists received copies of the lectionary,

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<sup>35</sup> Don E. Saliers, "Divine Grace, Diverse Means: Sunday Worship in United Methodist Congregations," in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, 145.

<sup>36</sup> William H. Willimon, book review in *Duke Divinity School Review* 42:3 (Fall 1977): 55.

<sup>37</sup> *Common Lectionary* (New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1983).

studied it and responded favorably to it. Thus, the Section on Worship adopted it for use in 1975.<sup>38</sup>

The adoption of the ecumenical consensus lectionary signaled another change in the process of liturgical reform: the testing of services and forms in congregations and receiving feedback. United Methodists tested and commented on the new lectionary. The alternate services were published with the invitation for those who used them to evaluate and give their suggestions. In the process of constructing the 1972 alternate text for communion, consultants and committee members tested the service in a variety of congregations and presented the text for evaluation to the First World Methodist Consultation on Worship in Denver in 1971. The large numbers of Methodist worshipers who evaluated the services, forms, and lectionaries contributed many helpful criticisms and suggestions but made no significant theological challenges to the underlying principles.<sup>39</sup> However, the wide appeal of the services can probably be explained, in part, by the sense of broad participation in the revision process.<sup>40</sup>

Not just the service for the Lord's Supper and the basic pattern of Sunday worship received treatment in the revision process, the Section on Worship produced other alternative services for evaluation, too. More than a dozen volumes comprised the Supplemental Worship Resources collection, including a book of services for the

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<sup>38</sup> Details of the process are in *Word and Table*, 44-54.

<sup>39</sup> See White, *Christian Worship in North America*, 148, and Peiffer, "How Contemporary Liturgies Evolve," 34-46, for a discussion of variant liturgical theologies introduced by members of the committee, separate from the broader evaluation process.

<sup>40</sup> By the time the services were adapted by the 1988 General Conference, more than 20,000 letters had been received by the committees; *DCA*, 4 May 1988, 385.

Sundays of Lent through Pentecost and Don Salier's volume of services for the Sundays of Advent through Epiphany.<sup>41</sup> Other services included the 1976 *Service of Baptism, Confirmation and Renewal*, the 1979 services of *Christian Marriage* and *Death and Resurrection*.<sup>42</sup> Hoyt Hickman provided multiple communion prayers, designated for season, holiday, or general use, in another volume; the collection of Great Thanksgiving prayers was modified and reissued in 1987.<sup>43</sup> All of these services and rites followed the same established pattern and articulated the same liturgical theology.

The various alternative services displaced the official 1964 ritual through the legislative processes of the 1984 and 1988 general conferences. The Section on Worship codified the services into one booklet, *We Gather Together*, which was commended by the 1980 General Conference to local churches for trial use. The Section on Worship gave special care to test the suitability of the alternate ritual in ethnic minority churches and it received more constructive criticism from individuals and congregations, mostly about wording, format, and rubrics. The Section also appointed a select group of expert

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<sup>41</sup> *From Ashes to Fire*, Supplemental Worship Resources 8 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979); Don E. Saliers, *From Hope to Joy*, Supplemental Worship Resources 15 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984).

<sup>42</sup> *A Service of Baptism, Confirmation, and Renewal, with Introduction, Text, Commentary, and Instructions*, Supplemental Worship Resource 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976); *A Service of Christian Marriage, with Introduction, Commentary, and Additional Resources*, Supplemental Worship Resource 5 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979); *A Service of Death and Resurrection: The Ministry of the Church at Death*, Supplemental Worship Resource 7 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979).

<sup>43</sup> *At the Lord's Table*, Supplemental Worship Resource 9 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981) and *Holy Communion*, Supplemental Worship Resource 16 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987).

consultants, who worked with staff to perfect the proposal. The General Board of Discipleship revised the alternative and still unofficial ritual and presented it to the 1984 General Conference as “The General Services of the Church, 1984.” Members of the 1984 General Conference adopted the report of the Board of Discipleship and included the General Services in the Ritual of the church.<sup>44</sup>

At the same time the General Conference increased the number and variety of services in the ritual (by placing the new General Services alongside the existing Ritual of Methodist and EUB services), it also established a Hymnal Revision Committee to prepare and submit in 1988 a “single volume hymn and worship book for congregational use.”<sup>45</sup> The task to produce one volume of hymns and worship services to replace the existing two volumes was ambitious and would require that hard decisions be made regarding the ritual. Furthermore, in an effort to hold down costs, the General Conference cut in half the proposed number of persons to serve on the hymnal committee, designating a group of twenty-five. The membership included bishops, laypersons, and clergy, selected for geographic and ethnic inclusivity, five members of the Board of Discipleship (two of whom were staff members), and a member of the Fellowship of United Methodists in Worship, Music, and Other Arts. The committee clearly lacked persons chosen for expertise, but the legislation authorized the committee to establish subcommittees and to retain consultants.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *The Book of Services*, 6-7.

<sup>45</sup> *DCA*, 9 May 1984, 568; 1984 *Discipline*, para.1214.3.

<sup>46</sup> See Peiffer, “How Contemporary Liturgies Evolve,” 208, for James White’s criticism regarding the lack of liturgical scholars. The committee did enlist the help of

The Hymnal Revision Committee worked quickly to prepare a report in only four years and the first task was to decide how much of the ritual to include in the hymnal. The committee determined to include only services needed by the whole congregation.<sup>47</sup> Based on the results from a denomination-wide survey, the committee decided to include the 1984 General Services (Word and Table, communion, baptism, marriage, and death) because they required “extensive congregational participation,” and to combine the communion service from the former Methodist Church with that of the EUB Church into a Rite IV. The EUB and Methodist rites of baptism, confirmation, and reception of members were also combined.<sup>48</sup> To the contents, the committee added services of daily prayer. By this process, the Hymnal Revision Committee made what was once unofficial alternative rites the only services included in the report.

The Hymnal Revision Committee mailed its final proposal to members of the 1988 General Conference before the meeting in order to give ample time for review, comment, and amendment. At conference, the legislative committee voted only twenty-three amendments to the proposal of more than 1,200 pages. Most of the amendments corrected misspellings and punctuation, although members debated at length the use of inclusive language and the translation of the Psalms. The most significant amendment

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100 volunteer consultants, presumably chosen for their knowledge or expertise in liturgy or hymnody, of which the present author was one.

<sup>47</sup> Hoyt L. Hickman, ed., *Worship Resources of The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 13.

<sup>48</sup> Hickman, *Worship Resources*, 13. “The Methodist and EUB services for the baptism of children could not be readily combined, and so the part of each service spoken by the people is included in the new hymnal.”

changed the service of baptism by substituting new language drawn from the language of the former EUB and Methodist services. Even this amendment did not change the overall structure of the service, the liturgical principles guiding the service, or the fundamental theology of the service. Instead, the amendment substituted the language of well-known prayers for the proposed contemporary language. The substituted service became Rite III in the new hymnal and the service originally developed as an alternative rite claimed the number one position.<sup>49</sup>

All of the services of the 1988 *United Methodist Hymnal: Book of United Methodist Worship* possessed a common set of worship assumptions. The first assumption claimed that worship patterns should be based on ancient configurations developed during the patristic period of church history. Decades of Roman Catholic scholarship focused on the third-century services of Hippolytus and Protestant liturgical scholarship followed the same course. In the Roman Catholic Church, liturgical renewal culminated in the reforms of Vatican Council II and Protestant movements of worship renewal since the middle of the century have insisted that worship services be based on the same principles. Consequently, these same ancient services and the same scholarship provided the foundation of the United Methodist services. In particular, the United Methodist services for the Lord's Day and the rite for Holy Communion depended on this assumption, paralleling, then, Roman Catholic services.

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<sup>49</sup> The committee presentation and debate is found in *DCA*, 5 May 1988, 509-18.

Complete formularies for the eucharistic prayer in the Roman Catholic tradition appeared in the late sixth century, although there is certain evidence that a number of the component parts go back to the fourth century description of Hippolytus.<sup>50</sup> The United Methodist eucharistic prayer followed nearly the same outline (Figure 7.1) as that which evolved in the Roman church and which became normative for Roman Catholic liturgical scholars after Vatican II.<sup>51</sup>

Introductory dialog (“Lift up your hearts....”)
Preface or Thanksgiving
Sanctus (“Holy, holy, holy Lord....”)
The Account of the Institution
The Anamnesis (“... do this in memory of me.”)
The Offering (“... accept this our sacrifice of praise ....”)
Invocation upon elements and communicants (send the Holy Spirit)
Epiclesis (to know the presence of Christ)
Intercessory prayers
Final doxology
Amen
Lord’s Prayer
Breaking of the Bread
Kiss of Peace
Communion
Song
Prayer
Dismissal blessing

Figure 7.1: Outline Order of the Prayer of Great Thanksgiving.

The United Methodist service differed from this order only by placing the Kiss of Peace after the offering and by reversing the final song and prayer.

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<sup>50</sup> Robert Cabie, *The Eucharist*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell, volume II of *The Church at Prayer*, ed. A. G. Martimort (Collegeville, Minn.. The Liturgical Press, 1986), 89.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Cabie, *The Eucharist*, 89- 113.

A comparison of the whole outline of Roman Catholic and United Methodist rites for Sunday morning service reveals the similarities (Table 7.2). United Methodist worship followed the ancient pattern as it had evolved after Vatican II.

Table 7.2: Comparison of Roman Catholic and United Methodist Services.

<b>The Order of Mass of Paul VI<sup>52</sup></b>	<b>The United Methodist Word and Table: Service I<sup>53</sup></b>
<b>Introductory Rites</b>	<b>Entrance</b>
Entrance Song	Greeting
Greeting	Hymn
Confession	
Gloria	
Collect or Opening Prayer	Opening prayer
<b>Liturgy of the Word</b>	<b>Proclamation and Response</b>
Scripture Lesson	Prayer for Illumination
Psalm	Scripture Lesson
Alleluia	[Psalm]
Gospel Lesson	hymn
Homily	Gospel lesson
Profession of Faith	Sermon
General Intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful	Creed
	Concerns and Prayers
	Invitation
	Confession
	Peace
	Offering

<sup>52</sup> Outline taken from Robert Cabie, *The Eucharist*, 189- 220.

<sup>53</sup> “A Service of Word and Table I,” *The United Methodist Hymnal: Book of United Methodist Worship* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1988), 6-11.

Table 7.2 cont.

<b>The Order of the Mass of Paul VI</b>	<b>The United Methodist Word and Table: Service I</b>
<b>The Eucharistic Liturgy</b> Preparation of the elements Great Thanksgiving Lord's Prayer The Peace The Fraction Communion Hymn Prayer after communion Dismissal	<b>Thanksgiving and Communion</b> Great Thanksgiving Lord's Prayer Breaking the Bread Communion Prayer After communion Hymn Dismissal

A second assumption placed greater importance on the sacrament, especially the Lord's Supper, lifting it to the same level of that of preaching. A Sunday service in which communion is not offered comprised only half of the pattern; a preaching service with communion completed the whole Word and Table sequence. Some contemporary liturgists considered this assumption to be more faithful to Wesley's intention in the Sunday Services, more faithful to the Reformation claim of the importance of the proclaimed word, and more faithful to the Catholic sacramental emphasis.<sup>54</sup> David N. Power, a contemporary Roman Catholic commentator, noticed how closely the services mirror the ancient and Roman patterns.

Though there are some problems that remain with how the nature of the eucharist is expressed, or with the format of service followed and prayers proclaimed, by and large one might say that there is enough accord on these matters to allow for recognition of Methodist worship on the Roman Catholic side, not only of

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<sup>54</sup> Hoyt Hickman, "Word and Table," 131.

“eucharistic realities” but of the eucharistic sacrament given to the Church by Christ.<sup>55</sup>

A third assumption recognized that a unified liturgical theology formed the foundation of worship. Methodist scholars and teachers united to express “a fuller and more balanced Trinitarian theology, celebrating not only redemption but also creation, sanctification, and eschatology.”<sup>56</sup> The Word and Table pattern avoided the weakness of other patterns: the individualism of the revival pattern, the secular morality of liberal evangelicalism, the class bias of aesthetic worship.

In its 1988 hymnal, the United Methodist Church adopted services of worship that reflected the dominant theological position of the denomination’s experts. A coherent theology and a resultant sacramental and Catholic liturgical theology shaped Methodism’s worship. The pattern of the adopted services followed the third-century and Roman standards of Hippolytus. Methodism’s liturgical theology in the late twentieth century had been influenced by ecumenical relations and scholarship and refined in its own seminaries. Methodists made a choice and, in doing so drew close to Rome. Instead of the sixteenth-century services of the Protestant Reformers, or the seventeenth-century services of the Anglicans, Methodists chose the Catholic services handed down through the ages.

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<sup>55</sup> David N. Power, “Κοινωνία, Οίκουμένη, and Eucharist in Ecumenical Conversations,” in *Ecumenical Theology in Worship, Doctrine, and Life*, eds. David S. Cunningham, Ralph Del Colle, Lucas Lamadrid (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 117.

<sup>56</sup> Hickman, “Word and Table,” 132.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION: “ENABLE US TO PENETRATE THE DEPTH OF THE WHOLE TRUTH”<sup>1</sup>

Sunday worship in Methodism changed more in fifteen years at the end of the twentieth century than it did in the hundred years of the nineteenth. Many sources and a host of complex factors drove the changes in which the United Methodist Church evolved from camp meeting and revival style services to the Romanized worship declared normative by the 1988 General Conference. The revival-style worship fit a reform movement, a sect, within the Christian tradition, but Romanized worship signaled a fully developed church, but perhaps one seeking an identity. Though John Wesley had no intention of founding a church, in 1988, Wesley’s United Methodist spiritual children sang “we are the church.”

Westward expansion and the phenomenal growth of Methodism in the post-Revolutionary period produced patterns of worship dramatically different than “old world” forms and certainly different than the prayer-book form John Wesley sent to the new-born America. Methodist preachers employed whatever worked to win new converts for the kingdom, borrowing techniques from Congregationalists, learning from the experiences of Yale College, and following the methods of New Divinity men. There were differences in manifestations of style, of course, both geographical and

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<sup>1</sup> Pope John Paul II, “Litany for Christian Unity,” in *The United Methodist Hymnal: Book of United Methodist Worship* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), #556. This prayer, written by Pope John Paul, is included in the hymnal for congregational use.

chronological. Calm and “respectful silence” characterized the New England revivals, while greater emotionalism, even hysteria, differentiated the western revivals of a few years later.<sup>2</sup> Western revivals appealed more to a migrating population and they operated in areas where further opportunities for Christian nurture were few. Nevertheless, preachers everywhere sought to provoke revival by reading scripture and preaching or teaching the Word, which was itself to be experienced and personally affirmed. “Thus the revival became a technique—a technique that had been taking shape earlier, but never had it been quite so instrumental in character,” wrote religious historian Winthrop Hudson.<sup>3</sup> Revivalism elevated the individual’s religious experience over corporate acts of worship, or sacramental means of grace, or the value of the institutional church.

Though the revivals of early nineteenth-century America were largely Presbyterian in origin, Methodists and Baptists reaped the greatest rewards in terms of growth. In a two year period at the height of revival, the Western Conference of Methodism added more than 6,000 members.<sup>4</sup> According to Hudson, “the decades immediately preceding the Civil War witnessed the triumph of the distinctive emphases of Methodism in practically all denominations.” Principally, the regnant Calvinism of other denominations became diluted as Methodists emphasized human moral responsibility. Secondly, the Methodist triumph revealed little theological

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<sup>2</sup> Detailed in Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 417.

<sup>3</sup> Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 131.

<sup>4</sup> William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1930, rep. 1975), 231.

sophistication.<sup>5</sup> The shortcomings of a simplistic and inarticulate theology resulted in an unsatisfactory liturgical depth.

Methodists institutionalized the early nineteenth-century revival style as the basic pattern for Sunday worship. The legacy of the three-part worship service—songs, message, and invitation—became the custom throughout most of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth in both rural and urban churches. When formalized in the 1905 *Methodist Hymnal*, it contained an opening musical voluntary, a creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and a choral anthem all as part of the “preliminaries” before the sermon.<sup>6</sup> The design of the pattern attempted to satisfy both those who longed for “free worship” and those who yearned after fixed forms. Although the full ritual for worship—forms for baptisms, Lord’s Supper, ordination, weddings, funerals, etc.—existed only in the church’s book of polity, the *Book of Discipline*, the hymnal outlined a basic pattern of worship.

For nearly a century episcopal Methodism divided over issues of politics and slavery, of which sixty-five of those years were spent contemplating reunion.<sup>7</sup> Before northern and southern branches of episcopal Methodism reunited in 1939 (drawing the Methodist Protestant Church in, too), ample time provided opportunity to work together on a consensus pattern of worship. Both churches had followed similar lines of

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<sup>5</sup> Hudson, *Religion in America*, 168-9.

<sup>6</sup> Don E. Saliers, “Divine Grace, Diverse Means: Sunday Worship in United Methodist Congregations,” in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists: Twentieth-Century Worship in Worldwide Methodism: Studies in Honor of James F. White*, ed. Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1996), 141-2.

<sup>7</sup> Many of the details of planning and merger are in Frederick E. Maser, “The Story of Unification, 1874-1939,” in *The History of American Methodism*, ed. Emory Stevens Bucke (New York: Abingdon, 1964), 3: 407- 78.

scholarship, renewal, and interest in worship. Northern and southern Methodist intellectuals had taken another look at John Wesley and his liturgical expression. Enough commonality existed in musical tastes that northern and southern churches cooperatively produced a joint hymnal of 1905 as a statement of the unity of the two branches. When the two cooperated again on another hymnal in 1935, both bodies agreed to maintain an emphasis on the evangelistic quality of worship.<sup>8</sup> Rubrics in the rituals of both churches required that an invitation should be given when the final hymn was announced.

Immediately after reunion, the 1940 General Conference created a Committee on Rituals and Orders of Worship and the committee members soon agreed to publish a book of worship. That the church would even consider a formal worship book when its predecessor leadership had rejected the prayer book offered by John Wesley came as a surprise to some. Critics of the book feared suppression of the “free worship” tradition and of evangelical fervor. Some critics also charged the denomination of formalism by appearing too Catholic! In response to the criticisms, the committee appended to the title page of the 1944 *Book of Worship for Church and Home* a subtitle, declaring that its usage was voluntary. Nevertheless, American Methodism received its first twentieth-century prayer book, its first after laying aside John Wesley’s *Sunday Service*.

Variety served as the organizing principle of the *Book of Worship for Church and Home*. The 1905 hymnal included one order of worship and the 1939 one detailed four. The 1944 prayer book gave an amazing eleven different options for Sunday morning congregational services and additional aids for individuals and families. It also included

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<sup>8</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15.

festivals for the Christian year and a large number of occasional offices used less frequently by congregations. Variety also meant that the book incorporated many of the proposals raised in the literature by those who advocated worship reform. The prayer book utilized the Christian year and a lectionary, captured prayers and prose from both Protestant and Catholic traditions, and recommended services of worship in which congregants were participants and not just targets.

While the variety of the *Book of Worship for Church and Home* served many different kinds of persons and congregations, it also betrayed a lack of liturgical reasoning. Methodism's ecclesiastical theology did not stipulate a coinciding liturgical theology. Some years later, Reinhold Niebuhr looked back and noted that American Methodism had no theology, "only dissipated evangelical fervor." Like other Protestant denominations, Methodism had lost the discipline of corporate worship. When the frontier spontaneity was gone, he wrote, "a church without adequate conduits of traditional liturgy and theological learning and tradition is without the waters of life."<sup>9</sup> Methodism sailed on without a theology to support its liturgical expression.

In the years up to the publication of the 1944 *Book of Worship for Church and Home*, Methodist theology emphasized social reform. Historical theologians would come to call the period the years of "rampant liberalism," in which Methodism drifted away from its earlier accent on personal conversion to a direction of social activism.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Essays in Applied Christianity*, ed. D. B. Robertson (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 62.

<sup>10</sup> William J. McCutcheon, "American Methodist Thought and Theology, 1919-1960," in *The History of American Methodism*, ed. Emory Stevens Bucke (New York: Abingdon, 1964), 3: 263.

Evangelical liberals preached about the inherent goodness of humans and the personal ability to advance a moral social world. They taught the social character of salvation, “involving persons in their wholeness, inter-related with other persons in manifold ways.”<sup>11</sup> They promoted the transformation of life, corporate and institutional, through the agency of the church working at the ministry of reconciliation. However, liberal evangelicals rarely conceived of the local church as a community at worship or a congregation giving praise to God through its worship. Liberal theology reduced worship to a rally for Christian social action. Theology and worship suffered this disconnection, made manifest in the *Book of Worship for Church and Home*.

Some proponents of liberal theology advocated worship reform in order to create patterns that more suitably expressed their fundamental beliefs. Frank Mason North influenced Methodism with his hymns of the Social Gospel and of societal redemption.<sup>12</sup> North’s hymns turned Methodists and other Protestants away from the subjective individualism of the revival-style worship and to a more corporate, worldly action. Liberals continued to want to encourage persons to do something, but what they wanted was for persons to do something for others. So, the Federal Council of Churches established a new season of the church year, called “Kingdomtide,” in which the themes

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<sup>11</sup> S. Paul Schilling, *Methodism and Society in Theological Perspective*, vol. 3 of *Methodism and Society* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), 208.

<sup>12</sup> William H. Willimon, *Word, Water, Wine, and Bread: How Worship Has Changed Over the Years* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Judson Press, 1980), 114.

of social action and service to humanity dominated. Only the Methodists incorporated the new season.<sup>13</sup>

The long decade of the 1950s, from 1945 to 1965, proved pivotal for American Protestants at large and American Methodists in particular. Mainline denominations came to a “crossroads,” to borrow a phrase from religion professor Robert Ellwood. It was a decade of golden years, when religious bodies grew at a rate of three percent, though the population increased at a rate of only one-and-a-half percent.<sup>14</sup> Methodism grew and changed, too. In the end, it was no longer the social activist church, nor was it the wartime church.<sup>15</sup> Methodism entered a season of conservatism, anticommunism, and an historical search for foundations. Worship began to stress individual and corporate confession and the use of historic creeds. Methodists rediscovered John Wesley and the Anglican liturgy of Wesley. The resultant 1965 Methodist *Book of Worship* provided a contemporary revision of the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England. At this point, the Methodist Church adopted an Anglican form and not a Romanized book of worship.

In parts of Methodism, signs of the influence of a liturgical movement began to appear. Some Methodist preachers discovered preaching robes, while others put on more

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<sup>13</sup> Willimon, *Word, Water, Wine, and Bread*, 114.

<sup>14</sup> Robert S. Ellwood, *1950: Crossroads of American Religious Life* (Louisville, Ken.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 99.

<sup>15</sup> See my article, W. Douglas Mills, “The Response of the United Methodist Church to War and Nuclear Weapons, 1940-1990,” *Quarterly Review* 17, no 3 (Fall, 1997): 257- 74, for a description of the affects of war on the social principles of the church.

formal cassocks, surplice, and stoles. Choirs also donned vestments, all color-coordinated with the liturgical year. The Order of Saint Luke, a religious society devoted to liturgical worship, formed in 1946. Members of the Order advocated liturgical renewal throughout the 1950s and even into the 1980s, and some of the members became influential denominational staff members or members of hymnal and ritual committees. Quality music programs and “beautiful” worship services, full of ritual and liturgy, raised the reputation of many churches. In this way, Methodism inherited a modified, high-church Anglicanism more characteristic of the nineteenth-century Oxford movement than of the eighteenth-century legacy of John Wesley.<sup>16</sup> Methodists had not developed, as Roman Catholics had, a sufficient theological basis for liturgical reforms. Innovations were largely borrowed, with some attention to the Anglicanism of John Wesley.

Renewal and theological consensus centered on a group of Methodist intellectuals who abandoned liberal evangelicalism and found home in the ecumenical movement, a new reading of John Wesley, and a deepened sacramental theology. Robert E. Cushman, dean and professor theology at Duke University Divinity School, exemplified this growing accord. Trained in philosophy and liberalism, Cushman challenged the prevailing optimism about human nature and the subjective character of the moral atonement model. His appreciation for the Roman Catholic tradition began with personal friendships and matured when he sat as a theological observer at Vatican II. As the dean of Methodism’s third largest seminary, he held considerable influence and his reports regarding the Vatican council were highly regarded. Cushman initiated the proposal to

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<sup>16</sup> Don E. Saliers, “Divine Grace, Diverse Means,” 144.

create within United Methodism a general office of ecumenical affairs. He took charge of the Wesley's Works project to produce a fair reading of Methodism's founder. And while all of these were significant achievements, Cushman's greatest influence may well have been with the countless hundreds of ministerial students in his classes who learned sacramental theology, affection for things liturgical, and the value of the Roman Catholic tradition for Protestantism.

Following Cushman, and others, Methodists became dissatisfied with the church's ritual and with the 1965 *Book of Worship*. Within only a few years after its release, liturgical specialists—a new breed of Methodists—began to ask for revision. In 1969, the denomination's Commission on Worship held a national convocation on worship in Saint Louis. Almost two thousand persons attended and provided input to the commission. Among other things it heard, the commission learned that “a large and growing group of United Methodists was asking for a carefully developed new ritual and orders of worship that they could have a part in testing.”<sup>17</sup>

The Commission on Worship turned to liturgical experts to develop alternate rites for use and testing within Methodism. In 1972, after several revisions, the commission released *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: An Alternate Text* in time for use at General Conference. That General Conference also merged several committees, including the Commission on Worship, to form a General Board of Discipleship, which assigned further projects of liturgical renewal to a Section on Worship. Responsible for more worship resources, the Section on Worship relied on the expertise of liturgical

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<sup>17</sup> *Companion to the Book of Services: Introduction, Commentary, and Instructions for Using the New United Methodist Services*, Supplemental Worship Resources 17 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985, rep. 1988), 10.

scholars to complete the work on several other worship rites, including *A Service of Baptism, Confirmation, and Renewal*, *A Service of Christian Marriage*, and *A Service of Death and Resurrection*.

The work on these services followed a different kind of process than had been followed earlier in the century. Not only did consultants and experts direct or write many of the texts, but also the services were tested and evaluated in local churches and with special interest groups. Finally, the Board of Discipleship commended all of these alternate texts to the General Conference of 1980, which accepted them and asked local congregations to evaluate them more thoroughly. Once again, experts, including liturgical scholars from other denominations, reviewed the evaluations and proposed changes.<sup>18</sup> After all the testing, evaluation, and revision, the 1984 General Conference adopted the alternate services as authorized ritual.

All of the services had a common understanding of worship and all followed a consistent pattern. The services elevated the role of the sacraments to the same level as the role of preaching. Even traditionally non-sacramental services such as the rite of ordination, followed the same pattern and assumptions, giving to it a “sacramental-like” quality. All of the services—wedding and funeral included—explicitly revolved about the dual foci of preaching the word and celebrating the Lord’s Supper. Each followed “the ancient four-action shape of the liturgy delineated by Dom Gregory Dix (offertory,

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<sup>18</sup> *Companion to the Book of Services*, 16.

thanksgiving, breaking of the bread, distribution).”<sup>19</sup> Here was the product of the theological consensus developed in Methodism after Vatican II.

Normative Methodist worship, after 1984, followed what has been called the Word and Table pattern. Rooted in scripture as well as Jewish and early Christian practice and fixed by the guidelines of Hippolytus, the services followed liturgical principles established in Rome. This Roman pattern bridged several centuries, having been established in the third century and refined by the twentieth-century Roman liturgical movement and the worship reforms of Vatican II. By placing the congregational services based on this pattern in the front of the 1988 *United Methodist Hymnal*, General Conference signaled Methodists that the Word and Table pattern was the standard form and that congregations should not deviate from the pattern without good cause.<sup>20</sup>

The process of Romanization serves to highlight the recurrent Methodist tension between denominationalism and ecumenicity. Though he was often encouraged by others to make a break with the Church of England, John Wesley strongly resisted the moves of some of his preachers to separate the societies from the church.<sup>21</sup> For Wesley,

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<sup>19</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 139. The reference is to Anglican liturgical theologian Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre, 1945).

<sup>20</sup> Hoyt L. Hickman, ed., *The Worship Resources of The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 15.

<sup>21</sup> Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 489-534, treated this in detail.

the ecclesiological reality was the established church, from which he personally never withdrew. Methodist historians point out that war with England and John Wesley's Tory prejudices virtually forced the American Methodist societies to separate.<sup>22</sup> Wesley's ordination of Whatcoat and Vasey to celebrate the sacraments for the Americans, and his appointment of Coke and Asbury as General Superintendents, provided the mechanism for the inevitable. Once they were separated from the established church, the "purposive missionary association" of Methodist societies essentially stumbled upon the idea of church denomination.<sup>23</sup>

Methodist societies formed new denominations not only in America and, eventually, in England, but also around the world. By the year 2002, seventy-seven separate denominations belonged to the World Methodist Council, the communion of Wesley-related churches.<sup>24</sup> The membership includes most of the Wesleyan-related denominations in America, including the Church of the Nazarene. While the history of United Methodism indicates a willingness to form mergers and unions as an expression

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<sup>22</sup> Frederick A Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 82- 93, offered a balanced view.

<sup>23</sup> Frederick Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 101- 2, following Sidney Mead, used the "stumbling" term to describe the way American Methodists became church. Russell E. Richey, "Denominations and Denominationalism: An American Morphology," in *Reimagining Denominationalism: Interpretive Essays*, eds. Robert Bruce Mullin and Russell E. Richey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 75- 98, described the second phase of denominational evolution as "purposive missionary association." Richey noted that the concept of denominationalism predated the reality.

<sup>24</sup> *World Methodist Council: Handbook of Information, 2002-2006* (Lake Junaluska, N.C.: The World Methodist Council, 2002), 8, 17-19.

of ecumenism, it also reveals some of the dynamics of denominationalism. In spite of the title of its largest body, Methodism is not so united.

The possibility of other denominational unions still exists for United Methodism because of its ecumenical character. Intra-family conversations are only one type of ecumenical venture. Methodists gave leadership to the formation of the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches of Christ, engaged in the work of the YMCA and YWCA, and actively supported a number of student organizations, both national and international.<sup>25</sup> Robert Cushman and others served as delegates to Faith and Order Conferences and World Conference of Churches assemblies. Methodism has had a significant impact on the world ecumenical movement.

The relationship is dynamic: the ecumenical movement affected significant change within American Methodism, too. Called “warm-hearted” but “light-headed,” early twentieth-century Methodism did not have sufficient theological depth among its promoters to greatly influence the thought of the ecumenical movement. Dean William Cannon noted that Methodism’s early role in ecumenical affairs was “more supportive than contributive,” until the introduction of new factors, namely the participation of the Roman Catholic Church and of neo-Reformation theologians from Lutheran and Calvinist traditions.<sup>26</sup> Neo-reformation theologians continued to accentuate differences with Rome, even while Rome actively promoted Christian unity. In the struggle,

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<sup>25</sup> J. Robert Nelson, “Methodism and the Ecumenical Movement,” in *The History of American Methodism*, 3: 577.

<sup>26</sup> William R. Cannon, “The Theological Stance of Methodism in the Ecumenical Movement,” *Methodist History* 6, no. 1 (October 1967): 5.

Methodism had to re-discover its own theological heritage in John Wesley and, particularly, in its Catholic affinities. Indeed, Wesley served as the channel between the Catholic tradition and Methodism's efforts in the ecumenical dialogs. Methodist theologian Norman Young, a member of the Catholic-Methodist dialogs, reported to a 1983 consultation on Wesleyan theology:

The more I have become involved in bilateral and multilateral conversations with other churches the more I have become convinced that when Wesley's theology is taken seriously it does more than give Methodists a common accent in which to carry on dialogue with others. It can, to use the metaphor of the consultation program, help to build bridges over ecclesiological chasms that are far older and deeper than those resulting from Methodism's shift from movement to church.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, Wesley emerged as the path that led Methodists to greater contributions to the ecumenical movement and, also, to closer relations with the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>28</sup>

In the search for its theological heritage, or for foundations, liberal evangelicalism in Methodism declined, to be replaced by a neo-Wesleyan theology. Cultural historian Richard Wightman Fox noted that little effort has been made to explain the decline of liberal Protestantism and that is certainly true of liberalism within Methodism. Fox claimed that liberalism declined because liberals themselves either became wholly secular or they were drawn away when they began to miss the "aura of the transcendent and the miraculous, and the accompanying forms of piety" that "more traditional" forms

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<sup>27</sup> Norman Young, "Wesley's Theology and the Future of the Church," in *Wesleyan Theology Today: A Bicentennial Theological Consultation*, ed. Theodore Runyon (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1985), 309.

<sup>28</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, *Methodists in Dialog* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995), 37. Wainwright, a member of the Methodist-Catholic dialogs since 1983 and chair since 1986, found it tempting to date the real start of Catholic-Methodist conversations to John Wesley's "Letter to a Roman Catholic," 18 July 1749.

of theology stressed. Of particular interest to the history of Methodism and the process of Romanization is Fox's assertion that "we need to know more about conversions from liberalism to traditionalism within Protestantism, although there may have been more of them from liberalism to Catholicism."<sup>29</sup> This is largely unexplored within Methodist intellectual history.

Methodism lost more than liberal evangelicalism in the process of Romanization. It also lost a significant number of members, declining from 10.7 million members in 1970 to less than 9.1 million in 1987 although the number of ministers increased by almost five thousand in the same period. The loss of membership in United Methodism parallels similar losses in America's mainline churches, especially the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church, both of which went through similar processes of Romanization. Changing theology, worship renewal, and the growing ecumenical consensus about liturgical theology affected other denominations at the same time American Methodism was affected. Therefore, Romanization coincided with a period of membership decline, and some certainly will argue a cause-and-effect relationship. One factor, such as Romanization, alone cannot account for the complex characteristics of membership decline. Low-quality preaching, inadequate church programming, and incoherent theology seem as likely to affect membership decline as other factors, but little study of membership decline and the factors causing it has been done in American Methodism. This area also needs study.

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Wightman Fox, "Experience and Explanation in Twentieth-Century American Religious History," in *New Directions in American Religious History*, eds. Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 400, 407.

Some of the proof of a Romanized Methodism comes in anecdotal form.

According to Arturo L. Razon Jr., a church member from the Philippines, persons of other denominations sometimes say the United Methodist Church in his country is “just a little Catholic church.”<sup>30</sup> Most United Methodist ministers can tell of church members who are former Roman Catholics but who joined the United Methodist Church after divorcing or moving. The United Methodist Church felt most familiar to those alienated from Catholicism. Clergy participate in lectionary study groups that include Methodist and Catholic, since both preach from the same scriptural texts. Worshipers at Duke University Chapel can describe robed choirs and clergy, processions including acolytes and crucifers, and people genuflecting in the aisles. Late-twentieth century students from Duke University Divinity School relate learning how to use rosaries and to say the “Hail Mary.” Congregants at the small United Methodist Church in Hermleigh, Texas, expect their pastor to wear an alb, chasuble, and stole, to process with crucifer and incensor, and to follow, without deviation, Rite I of *The United Methodist Hymnal*. The abbot of the Order of Saint Luke recently consecrated a new chapel near the Hermleigh church.<sup>31</sup> Retired from teaching at Notre Dame University, James White described the United Methodist Church he attended in South Bend. Every Sunday morning his church celebrated the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper and the only difference between their service of worship according to the official United Methodist “Service of Word and

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<sup>30</sup> Tom McAnally, “New committee digs into Holy Communion study,” *United Methodist News Service*, 7 September 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Billy Haynes, OSL, interview with the author, 18 October 2002, Abilene, Texas. Hermleigh is a small, agricultural town in northwest Texas, halfway between Snyder and Sweetwater.

Table” and the Roman Catholic Mass was that the Catholics “use real wine and we use real bread. So similar have the revised rites become in recent decades that an analysis of the texts would not yield any really significant theological differences and not many in structure.”<sup>32</sup> Both rites, Methodist and Catholic, borrowed from the *Apostolic Tradition* and Eastern Orthodox churches; both were informed by contemporary liturgical scholarship.

If Methodism has been Romanized, then so, too, Catholicism has become more “Protestantized.” The Roman Mass is almost universally observed in the vernacular language. The Bible and preaching play a more prominent role in worship and congregational singing gives the laity an important sense of participation. Catholics and some Protestants, certainly Catholics and Methodists, have adopted much of the same agenda for liturgical reform.

Obviously, attitudes have changed. For five centuries, the worst insult a Protestant heard was the accusation of “popery” or of being too Catholic. Likewise, to call something Protestant made it unthinkable for Catholics. Methodists of all sorts, bishops, clergy, and laypersons, participated in an anti-Catholic bias at some point in Methodist history. However, a major transformation occurred at the beginning of the Cold War era. For some, the fear of Roman Catholicism miraculously vanished in the McCarthy days and was replaced with a new sense of camaraderie in opposition to

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<sup>32</sup> James F. White, *Christian Worship in North America: A Retrospective: 1955-1995* (Collegetown, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 3.

Communism.<sup>33</sup> A number of Protestant chaplains who returned home after World War II continued to wear clerical garb in their stateside churches. Other signals indicated that anti-Catholic attitudes were changing within Methodism specifically. In 1954, forty seminary students from Methodist-related Drew University visited Roman Catholic schools, missions, and press in order to deepen their understanding of the Catholic Church and its enterprises.<sup>34</sup> Given the opportunity in May of 1960 to go on record as being “uneasy” over the possibility of a Roman Catholic president of the United States, delegates to the Methodist General Conference refused even to allow the motion to be brought to the floor.<sup>35</sup> Then, for the first time in history, the General Conference of 1964 welcomed a Roman Catholic prelate, the Most Rev. John J. Wright, who brought greetings from the Roman See and from the Second Vatican Council.<sup>36</sup> Of course, the signals were ambiguous. Even while accepting the candidacy of Catholic John F. Kennedy, the General Conference reiterated the historic position in favor of separation of church and state. Specifically, this meant the Conference opposed the use of tax money to support parochial education.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, attitudes changed in an astoundingly short time.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Robert S. Ellwood, *1950, Crossroads of American Religious Life* (Louisville, Ken.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 91. Ellwood quoted Warren Vinz, *Pulpit Politics* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1997), 116.

<sup>34</sup> *NYT*, 20 March 1954, 16:5.

<sup>35</sup> *NYT*, 1 May 1960, 57:1.

<sup>36</sup> *NYT*, 7 May 1964, 33:6.

<sup>37</sup> *NYT*, 5 May 1960, 31:3.

<sup>38</sup> White, *Christian Worship in North America*, 10.

At the end of the twentieth century, the line between Methodists and Catholics was not as definite as it was even in the middle of the century. In 1952, Mount Holyoke College Professor J. Paul Williams published a book to describe the differences in religious belief and worship.<sup>39</sup> Williams included Catholic and Protestant Christians in his survey, as well as Jews, Mormons, Christian Scientists, Unity believers, and some “nonecclesiastical spiritual movements” to make the point that what persons believe determines the ways they worship. According to sociologists, conventional wisdom still declares that the various Christian denominations are identifiable by distinctive beliefs and practices of worship.<sup>40</sup> But official church doctrine makes the presumption less certain. In 2001, the Methodist-Roman Catholic dialog team published their latest findings and listed areas of consensus and commonality.<sup>41</sup> On fundamental doctrine, the two churches agree, including the elements of ecclesiology: the church as communion, the primacy of the word, the role of tradition, and the (sacramental) means of grace. Differences focused mostly on the authority of bishops and of the bishop of Rome, though no differences in worship were itemized. There is considerable agreement, Catholic and Methodist theologians have noted, on matters of doctrine, the nature of the

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<sup>39</sup> J. Paul Williams, *What Americans Believe and How They Worship* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1952).

<sup>40</sup> Nancy T. Ammerman, “Denominations: Who and What Are We Studying?,” *Reimagining Denominationalism: Interpretive Essays*, eds. Robert Bruce Mullin and Russell E. Richey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 111-33.

<sup>41</sup> *Speaking the Truth in Love: Teaching Authority Among Catholics and Methodists* (Lake Junaluska, North Carolina: 2001), is the report of the Joint Commission for Dialogue Between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council, 1997-2001, seventh series.

church, and the components of worship.<sup>42</sup> The nature of the ordained ministry and of apostolic succession in the episcopacy mark the differences and, therefore, the impediments to union.

In spite of the agreement and commonality, Methodist ecumenists consider merger in the near future to be unlikely.<sup>43</sup> Rather, the principles of liturgical worship which Methodism has in common with Roman Catholicism have become Methodism's new expression of what it means to be "an evangelical order within the church catholic." This commonality has become the expression of Methodism's ecumenical commitment. Methodist theologians fondly quote John Wesley's Letter to a Roman Catholic in order to underscore the points that Methodism will no longer harbor an anti-Catholic bias and that Methodism offers a certain liturgical unity as its expression of ecumenical responsibility. John Wesley wrote:

Then if we cannot as yet think alike in all things, at least we may love alike.... Let us resolve, first, not to hurt one another; to do nothing unkind or unfriendly to each another.... Secondly, God being our helper, to speak nothing harsh or unkind of each other.... Thirdly, resolve to harbour no unkind thought, no unfriendly temper, towards each other.... Fourthly, endeavour to help each other on in whatever we are agreed leads to the kingdom. So far as we can, let us always rejoice to strengthen each other's hands in God.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> David N. Power, "Κοινωνία, Οίκουμένη, and Eucharist in Ecumenical Conversations," in *Ecumenical Theology in Worship, Doctrine, and Life*, eds. David S. Cunningham, Ralph Del Colle, Lucas Lamadrid (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 117.

<sup>43</sup> John Deschner, "United Methodism's Basic Ecumenical Policy," in *Perspectives on American Methodism: Interpretive Essays*, eds. Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1993), 448-59.

<sup>44</sup> John Wesley's, "Letter to a Roman Catholic" (18 July 1749) is found in Richard P. Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley: John Wesley His Own Biographer* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), I: 202- 8. An example of the use of this passage is Brian Beck,

To Wesley's list, contemporary Methodist theologians add that Catholic and Methodists should continue to hold in common the right and proper forms of worship, particularly around the Lord's table.<sup>45</sup>

By placing such a heavy emphasis on the patterns of worship, Methodists have elevated the ritual, as it is found in the 1988 hymnal, to the status of "doctrinal standard." The constitution of the United Methodist Church maintains several restrictive rules related to doctrine. The first, and most often quoted, declares that "General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine." The other restrictive rules prevent changes to the Confession of Faith and the form of church government.<sup>46</sup> Robert Cushman argued that the restrictive rules establish doctrinal standards to guide Methodist theological thought. Those things that cannot be changed, the distinctive Methodist doctrines, include the Articles of Religion, the confession of faith, and the standard expressions of doctrine. Thus, Methodism constitutionally retained the first four volumes of Wesley's Sermons, his *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, and the Twenty-Five Articles of Religion as doctrinal

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"Connexion and Koinonia: Wesley's Legacy and the Ecumenical Ideal," in *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism*, ed., Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1998), 140-1.

<sup>45</sup> See *Methodist-Catholic Dialogues: Thirty Years of Mission and Witness* (New York: United States Catholic Conference, Inc., Washington, D.C. and General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns of The United Methodist Church, 2001)

<sup>46</sup> *Discipline, 1988*, paras. 16-20.

standards.<sup>47</sup> At the 1968 union of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren, General Conference judged the EUB Confession of Faith to be congruent with the historical expressions of doctrine. In the placement and use of the ritual in the hymnal, the “*ordo salutis*” has become a doctrinal standard for United Methodism.

The ritual of the 1988 hymnal has become a doctrinal standard because of its adoption and by its placement. The 1968 General Conference had removed the ritual from the *Book of Discipline*, where it had been since the first American conferences. The Conference deemed that the official ritual was that contained in the 1965 *Book of Worship for Church and Home* along with the ritual of the EUB Church. General Conference had already removed from the *Book of Worship* the subtitle indicating that it was for “voluntary use.” The General Conference of 1992 declared that the ritual was that contained in the 1989 hymnal, the *United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992), and in the Spanish language translations.<sup>48</sup> That ritual, Romanized in the twentieth-century process of liturgical revision, stands as a vital expression of Methodism’s identity and ecumenical theology. In short, the weight of tradition, rather than the force of law, cause it to be one of Methodism’s doctrinal standards.

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<sup>47</sup> Robert E. Cushman, “Church Doctrinal Standards Today,” in *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church*, ed. Thomas A. Langford (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 64- 74.

<sup>48</sup> *Discipline 1968*, para. 1388; *Discipline*, 1992, para. 1213.3.

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