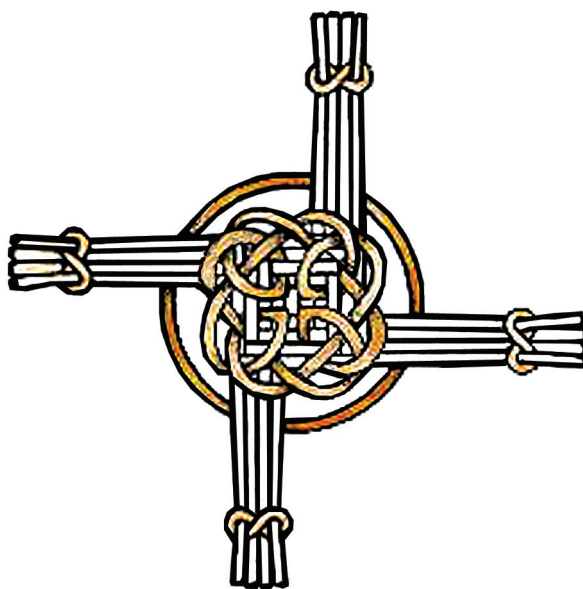


Saint BRÍGÍD of KILDARE

Methodist–Benedictine Consultation



Occasional Papers #2

Resources for Further Inquiry & Conversation

St. Brigid of Kildare
Methodist-Benedictine Consultation

Occasional Papers #2

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Materials for Further Conversations Along the Way: Editor's Introduction

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The texts that have been collected in this second set of "Occasional Papers" of the St. Brigid of Kildare Methodist Benedictine Consultation represent two moments in an emergent ecumenical conversation between United Methodists and Benedictines. The extended conversation that took place in Rome July 4–10, 1994, on the topic of "Sanctification in the Benedictine and Methodist Traditions" was enabled by the kind of scholarly erudition displayed in the text "Ora et Labora: Benedictines and Wesleyans at Prayer and at Work" (included in this set of papers).

When a group of eight persons began meeting in September 2002 at St. Brigid of Kildare Monastery, our conversations were much enriched by the already existing body of articles from that earlier conference in Rome that had been published in the *Asbury Theological Journal* for 1995-96. Participants in the St. Brigid of Kildare Consultation (2002-2004) agreed that any future collection of materials would need to make one or more of these materials available to interested readers. We are grateful to be able to reprint Geoffrey Wainwright's article "Ora et Labora," which was subsequently published in Wainwright's book *Methodists in Dialogue* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books an Imprint of Abingdon Press, 1995, pages 89-106; used by permission of the author and publisher).

At the request of the other seven participants in the St. Brigid Consultation, I prepared an initial bibliography for persons to use to do further exploration. Participants in that series of conversations contributed to this task by identifying the areas where they recognized the value of particular resources for particular kinds of explorations as well as by identifying questions for which there did not seem to be obvious or accessible resources. We are fortunate that the Benedictine orders have worked together to make some resources available via the internet (see for example the Web site administered by St. John's Abbey: <http://www.osb.org/index.html>). Even so, available resources often are not arranged in ways that fit the queries of persons exploring the traditions of spirituality associated with the United Methodist and Benedictine traditions.

Over the past three years, that bibliography has expanded as a result of my conversations with various United Methodists and Benedictines as well as my own reading and research on related topics. I am grateful to Dr. E. Byron Anderson of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and Dr. Mary Ewing Stamps of St. Brigid Methodist-Benedictine Monastery for their comments and suggestions on a previous draft of the three bibliographical reviews included in this volume.

I have chosen to group the resources discussed in this review under three distinct headings, which correspond to the three sets of interests and/or needs that we identified in the St. Brigid of Kildare Consultation. Together, these three "bibliographic reviews" are intended to serve as a guide to sources and resources for persons who may be interested in following up on one or more of the tasks listed in the "Agenda for Further Inquiry and Exploration." The review of "Spiritual Explorations" is intended for those United Methodists and Benedictines whose needs are for resources that will assist them in the context of the rhythms of living according to a rule of life for spiritual formation. By contrast, the review of "Academic Explorations" includes technical studies as well as more synthetic reflections. The third and final bibliographic review is intended to serve the needs of those who may be participating in conversations or who may be planning dialogues in the future.

While this three-fold division serves the purpose of locating resources, as we encountered numerous times in the course of our two years of conversations and dialogue at St. Brigid's Monastery, the same person can sometimes be engaged in all three kinds of exploration. Accordingly, some of the materials that are listed in the second and third sections may also be the subject of spiritual reading and reflection. Just as United Methodist exploration of the Benedictine tradition exists at several levels and takes place with various concerns in view, so also attempts to probe the Wesleyan tradition will have overlapping sets of questions prompted by concerns that range from the personal to the professional.

I. Spiritual Explorations

- A. Spiritual Explorations in American Culture Since 1950
- B. Exploring Benedictine Spiritual Practices
- C. Devotional Resources
 - 1. The Liturgy of the Hours of Prayer or the “Daily Office”
 - 2. Liturgical/Devotional Materials
- D. Monastic Oblation: Resources for Methodist-and-Benedictine Oblates
- E. The Monastic Vocation: Past, Present, and Future Aspects
 - 1. Reflections by Members of Benedictine Women’s Communities
 - 2. Reflections by Members of Benedictine Men’s Communities
 - 3. Articulations of Methodist-Benedictine Identity
- F. Exploring Rules of Life for Spiritual Formation
 - 1. Commentaries on the *Rule of St. Benedict*
 - 2. Protestant Explorations of Rules of Life for Spiritual Formation
 - 3. Rules of Life from Other Christian Orders and Intentional Communities

II. Academic Explorations

- A. Exploring Monastic History and Tradition in Europe and the USA
- B. Sources of the Benedictine Rule of Life: Monastic Traditions and Precedents
- C. Wesleyan-Methodist Resources on Spirituality, Ecclesiology and Vocation
 - 1. Primary Sources & Materials for Wesleyan Spirituality and/or Rule of Life
 - 2. Wesleyan Methodism as an “Evangelical Order in the Church Catholic”
- D. United Methodism and American Culture: Sociological & Historical Perspectives
- E. Studying Patterns of Christian Spirituality in American Culture

III. Conversations & Dialogues

- A. Methodist-Benedictine Sanctification Dialogue (from 1994 Dialogue in Rome)
- B. Official Dialogues: United Methodist Church & Roman Catholic Church
 - 1. Joint Commission: Roman Catholic Church & World Methodist Council.
 - 2. United Methodist Dialogues with United States Catholic Conference
 - 3. Overviews of the State of the Dialogues
- D. Vocation Exploration and Spiritual Formation in Church-Related Higher Education
- E. Bridgefolk: The Emerging Dialogue Between Anabaptists and Catholics
- F. The New Monasticism Movement or Ecclesial Lay Communities

As with the previous collection of occasional papers (May 2004), this set of materials is intended to fund further exploration by those who are interested in the relationship of Methodist spiritual practices to the formative disciplines associated with the Benedictine tradition of Christian spirituality. If this set of materials should—sooner or later—engender *further* “conversations along the way” between Methodists and Benedictines, we will have achieved our limited purpose in publishing these documents.

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Ora et Labora: Benedictines and Wesleyans at Prayer and at Work

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I. Strange Company?

Pray and work: the supposedly ancient Benedictine motto of *ora et labora* has lately been shown to date not from the origins of Benedictinism but rather—with a near miss in the fifteenth-century Augustinian Thomas à Kempis—to be the invention of the Abbot Maur Wolter of Beuron in the late nineteenth century.¹ Nevertheless, the same historical investigation has demonstrated that, even in the absence of the Latin play on words, the nature and purpose of prayer and work, and particularly the relationship between them, have been concerns of monasticism since its earliest days. These are questions, indeed, not simply for those devoted to the religious life in the technical sense of monks and nuns, but for every Christian and for the whole Church. Recent though it may be as a Benedictine motto, *ora et labora* may therefore appropriately be taken as a rubric under which to explore a theme of holiness as it occurs in the Methodist tradition in comparison with its manifestation among Benedictines.

At first blush, it may seem odd to bring Methodism and Benedictinism together in this way. While declaring it necessary for Christians to “retreat” from the evil in the world, nevertheless Charles Wesley (1707-1788), the hymn-writer of Methodism’s two founding brothers, immediately made a polemical point:

Not in the tombs we pine to dwell,
Not in the dark monastic cell,
By vows and grates confined;
Freely to all ourselves we give,
Constrained by Jesu’s love to live
The servants of mankind.²

This corresponded to the statement of his elder brother John Wesley (1703-1791) that “Christianity is essentially a social religion,”³ and that

“there is no holiness but social holiness.”⁴ Given their time and place in eighteenth-century England, the Wesleys would not have known any living examples of monasticism. And Benedictinism is not necessarily, or properly, struck by their strictures. The vocation of a hermit is reckoned to be exceptional, and the regular form of Benedictinism is cenobitic or communitarian, with ample opportunity for the service, in one form or another, of humankind. Benedictinism may therefore be considered, with no obstacle on the Methodist side, as a possible expression of that love of God and love of neighbor in which the Wesleys judged holiness consist.

Let us then cheerfully take *ora et labora* as a binome under which to treat a Methodist understanding and practice of sanctification as well as a Benedictine, comparing and contrasting the two traditions where necessary and useful. The relationship between prayer and work is usually seen as a matter of personal spirituality (the contemplative versus the active, “Mary” versus “Martha”), or of ecclesial ethos (the liturgical versus the diaconal). A first solution to the relationship, whether in the case of the individual or in the case of the community, resides in the alternance or the equilibrium between prayer and work, while a more subtle solution lies in the compenetration between prayer and work. Behind these somewhat stylistic questions of personal spirituality and ecclesial ethos, however, stand deeper theological (soteriological) matters concerning the way in which salvation itself is appropriated and the role of the Church in its mediation; and it will, therefore, also be necessary to face issues concerning the relationship of prayer and works to grace and faith, and the status of the Church as the place and instrument of the gospel. All of this, moreover, occurs within the framework of God’s salutary purpose for humankind and the history of redemption; and with that the present chapter will begin, taking prayer and work, done within the Christian community, as manifestations of our incipient restoration to the image of God in which we were made and as anticipations of our full and final attainment to God’s likeness.

On the Benedictine side, the main resources will be early monasticism, the *Rule for Monks* of St. Benedict,⁵ and (very selectively) the history of Benedictinism.⁶ On the Methodist side, the chief theological texts will be John Wesley's brief portrait of "The Character of a Methodist" (1742)⁷ and his Sermon 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation With Fear And Trembling" (1785),⁸ with supporting material from the hymns of Charles Wesley (so important in the *lex orandi* of classic Methodism) and illustrations from the life and practice of the Wesleys and of other early and later Methodists. Wesleyanism will be used eponymously for Methodism, although Methodism has broadened somewhat from its origins and has been variously faithful to its founders.

II. Renewal in the Image of God

Recognizing the beneficent purpose of the Triune Creator, the fallenness of humankind, and the redemptive work of God in Christ, John Wesley views our salvation—and it is arguably the governing category in Wesley's soteriology—as our renewal in the image of God.⁹ This renewal is appropriately attributed to the Holy Spirit. Among the truths of Revelation, Wesley refers in Sermon 85 to "two grand heads of doctrine": "those which relate to the eternal Son of God, and the Spirit of God—to the Son, giving himself to be 'a propitiation for the sins of the world' [1 John 2:2], and to the Spirit of God, renewing men in that image of God wherein they were created [cf. Col. 3:10]."¹⁰ And, according to "The Character of a Methodist," "the marks of a true Methodist," which "are only the common fundamental principles of Christianity...the plain old Christianity that I teach," include this: "His soul is 'renewed after the image of God' [cf. Col. 3:10], 'in righteousness and in all true holiness' [cf. Eph. 4:24]."¹¹

While his terminology is not always consistent, for Wesley the *imago Dei* has a spiritual, a political, and a moral aspect. In his Sermon 39, "The New Birth," Wesley gives this threefold meaning to God's creation of humankind in the divine image at Gen. 1:27-28:

Not barely in his *natural image*, a picture of his own immortality, a spiritual being, endued with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections; nor merely in his *political image*, the governor of this lower world, having "dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over all the earth"; but chiefly in his *moral image*, which, according to the

Apostle, is "righteousness and true holiness" [Eph. 4:24]. In this image of God was man made. "God is love" [1 John 4:8, 16]: accordingly man at his creation was full of love, which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth: so was man as he came from the hands of his Creator...¹²

This corresponds neatly to the three main strands in the traditional Christian interpretation of the *imago Dei*: the human creature is ontologically capable of communion with God (our spiritual nature); is cosmologically located to "till the ground" (Gen. 2:6) or administer the earth on God's behalf; is constitutionally a society of neighbors with the opportunity for a life of mutual love. Fallen humankind needs redemption and restoration if it is to fulfill its divinely set ends.¹³

Here, then, Wesley is rejoining a common theme of evangelical, catholic, orthodox Christianity. Eastern Orthodox theologians, reaching back at least as far as St. Irenaeus, have viewed humankind as a royal priesthood, called to be the steward of the earthly creation and the voice of its divine praise, offering the eucharistic sacrifice to God; and this human vocation is essentially a corporate one.¹⁴

All this fits nicely with the themes of prayer and work which have characterized the Benedictine tradition. Prayer is our communion with God. Work is our stewardship of the earthly creation on God's behalf. To the motto of *ora et labora*, the later moderns have added a communal dimension. According to Fr. A. Watelet, president of the Congregation of the Annunciation, *ora et labora* truly defines Benedictine life only if one adds *in communione fraterna*. Fr. Frédéric Debuyst entitled his booklet of 1980 "Prie et travaille au milieu de tes frères."¹⁵

III. Alternance or Balance of Prayer and Work

The Benedictine and Wesleyan traditions are here examined in turn.

1. Benedictine

Sometimes monastic writers simply juxtapose prayer and work without explicit reflection on their intrinsic relationship to one another. Each is valued, and they are to be practiced alternately, and a balance struck between them.¹⁶ Thus it is possible, in a first move, to consider prayer and

work separately, as they each figure in monasticism, and more particularly in the Benedictine tradition.

a. Benedictines at Prayer

In the *Rule of St. Benedict*, the communal office (*opus Dei*) figures most prominently (chapters 8-19), though spiritual reading is also enjoined (chapter 48) and private prayer envisaged (chapters 20, 49, and 52). The original simplicity of prayer according to the divine office gave way to greater complexity and elaborateness in the ninth century under the influence of Abbot Benedict of Aniane and the “liturgical enthusiasm of the Carolingian epoch” more generally;¹⁷ and again in the tenth century, the Cluniac model made of the monastic office “only the basis on which were erected another edifice of prayers. Thus votive offices and processions and repeated celebrations of Masses with many *preces* (intercessory prayers) were added. The simplicity of the celebration was abandoned also, and its place taken by rich ceremonial.”¹⁸ In the twelfth century, the Cistercian movement sought a return to older and simpler forms of the choir office and to more intense meditation on the Scriptures, including the *sermo* or conference from the abbot.¹⁹

Skipping over the ups and downs in the intervening centuries of Benedictine history, it may simply be noted that the Liturgical Movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has found radiant centers in the abbeys of Solesmes, Beuron, Maria Laach, and Colleeville; and that the rosters of modern liturgical scholarship are graced by such names as Lambert Beauduin, Fernand Cabrol, Odo Casel, Bernard Botte, L.C. Mohlberg, Burkhard Neunheuser, Ambrosius Verheul, Anscar Chupungco, and the Anglican Benedictine Gregory Dix.

b. Benedictines at Work

Like the desert fathers before him, St. Benedict saw work as having the disciplinary or ascetical role of warding off idleness, or even accidie, the characteristic vice of the monastic profession: “Idleness is the enemy of the soul” (*Rule* 48, 1). More positively, Benedict declared in the same chapter on work that “they will be true monks if they live from the work of their hands, as our Fathers and the Apostles did” (*Rule* 48, 8).²⁰ This points to the recovery of that aspect of the *imago Dei* that consists in the proper use of the material creation or stewardship of the earth. Such work need not be limited to providing for the life of the monastic community. There are indications from the early days of monasticism that the produce of labor may go towards helping the needy neighbor.²¹ A further monastic duty has

consisted in hospitality towards the visitor, the traveler, and the stranger (as in St. Benedict’s *Rule* 53). Such charitable actions extend beyond the bounds of the monastic community the fulfillment of further aspect of the *imago Dei*, namely the constitution of social existence, and indeed a fellowship of love.²²

It appears that manual labor figured prominently in early monasticism and in the early years of Benedictinism. Among Benedictines, however, the monasteries came to employ serfs, renters, and secular servants for agricultural and domestic work,²³ and somewhat later there spread from the abbey of Hirsau in the Black Forest (founded in 1050) the institution of lay bothers, “who made the vow of obedience and stability to the monastery, lived outside the cloister and took part in the divine services of the monks only on Sundays. They took care of the manual work and left the monks free for the contemplative life.”²⁴ Again, the Cistercian reform reintroduced the monks to domestic service and to manual labor in the fields.²⁵

What work had the Benedictines then fallen to? They had devoted themselves above all to intellectual work; and it is probably still to achievements of learning and scholarship—typified by the Congregation of Saint Maur—that the proverbial *travail de bénédictin* most commonly applies. This work naturally led Benedictines into the educational realm, and gave them an important place in the transmission of the higher culture.²⁶ The needs of the Church at large also summoned Benedictines into pastoral and missionary work, as indeed St. Benedict himself had been directed from Subiaco to Cassino in order to convert the pagans.²⁷

2. Wesleyans at Prayer and at Work

One rough equivalent to the monastic pair of prayer and work may be found in a binome contained in John Wesley’s Sermon 85, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation.” There he preaches that our “zeal for good works” [Titus 2:14] must include both “works of piety” and “works of mercy,” thus moving the emphasis in the latter case from labor to charity. At this point, Wesley does not offer any closer specification of the relationship between duty to God and duty to neighbor. In either case, John Wesley was concerned that the time should be “redeemed,” not a moment spent “triflingly”: his own diaries show that he typically accounted for every quarter-hour of the day, whether in prayer (corporate or private), reading (often during travel), preaching, good works, or serious company.²⁸

a. Works of Piety

Here is how Wesley lists the “works of piety” in his Sermon 85, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation”:

Use family prayer, and cry to God in secret. Fast in secret, and “your Father which seeth in secret, he will reward you openly” [cf. Matt. 6:4, 6, 18]. “Search the Scriptures” [John 5:39]; hear them in public, read them in private, and meditate therein. At every opportunity be a partaker of the Lord’s Supper. “Do this in remembrance of him” [cf. Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:26], and he will meet you at his own table. Let your conversation be with the children of God, and see that it “be in grace, seasoned with salt” [cf. Col. 4:6].²⁹

A few comments may elaborate the Wesleyan practice of each of those “means of grace,” as Wesley more usually calls them (thus emphasizing their character as divine gift.)³⁰

Family and private prayer: For personal devotion, John Wesley compiled, with heavy indebtedness to an earlier collection by Nathan Spinkes, *A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day in the Week*. First published in 1733, it went through at least fifteen editions in Wesley’s lifetime. He also provided *A Collection of Prayers for Families* (1744, with at least ten editions) and *Prayers for Children* (1772). It should further be noted that the early Methodists occupied themselves in prayer when they met in the small groups known as “classes” and “bands.”

Fasting: Wesley’s fullest teaching on fasting is contained in Sermon 27, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, VII” (1748).³¹ The early Methodist societies practiced Quarterly Fast Days. John Wesley himself practiced and encouraged a modest individual discipline in regular fasting and abstinence.

The Scriptures: Wesley’s language in the passage quoted from Sermon 85 echoes the collect for the Second Sunday in Advent in the *Book of Common Prayer*: “Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Wesley’s use of the Scriptures will be presented in a little more detail later.

The Lord’s Supper: At a time when the Lord’s Supper was celebrated as rarely as four times a year in the parishes of the Church of England, John Wesley’s diaries shown him to have received communion on an average of once every four or five days.³² He encouraged the Methodist people to request communion more frequently at their parish churches (indeed he spoke more precisely of “constant communion”³³), and he and those of his preachers who were Anglican priests celebrated the sacrament at Methodist gatherings. When, in 1784, he sent ministers and a liturgy for “The Sunday Service” to the Methodist people in the newly independent United States of America, Wesley advise[d] the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord’s Day.³⁴

Conversation: “Conference,” among the preachers in particular, was a vital part of the early Methodist discipline; and the members of the Methodist societies, when they gathered in classes and bands, joined in mutual examination and exhortation.

b. Works of Mercy

Of the “works of mercy,” Wesley says in Sermon 85 simply: “As ye have time, do good unto all men [cf. Gal 6:10], to their souls and to their bodies.”³⁵ This had been further spelled out in “The Character of a Methodist”:

As he has time, he “does good unto all men” [cf. Gal. 6:10]; unto neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies: And that in every possible kind; not only to their bodies, by “feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that are sick or in prison” [cf. Matt. 25:35-36]; but much more does he labour to do good to their souls, as of the ability which God giveth [cf. 1 Pet. 4:11]; to awaken those that sleep in death; to bring those who are awakened to the atoning blood, that, “being justified by faith, they may have peace with God” [cf. Rom. 5:1]; and to provoke those who have peace with God to abound more in love and in good works. And he is willing to “spend and to be spent herein” [cf. 2 Cor. 12:15], even to “be offered upon the sacrifice and service of their faith” [cf. Phil. 2:17], so they may “all come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” [cf. Eph. 4:13].³⁶

Wesley himself visited the imprisoned and worked for prison reform, set up dispensaries for the sick, and established schools for children. Most notably, however, he travelled 250,000 miles on eighteenth-century roads and seaways in the direct pursuit of evangelization to save souls by preaching.

IV. Compenetration of Prayer and Work

Prayer and work (whether, in the latter case, labor or charity) are both necessary to the Christian life. They are, moreover, closely intertwined, and even essentially related. The Benedictine and the Wesleyan understandings and practice of this compenetration will be reviewed in turn and convergences noted.

1. The Monastic Pattern

In the words of St. Isidore of Seville, stimulated by Psalm 28: “To pray without working is to lift up one’s heart without lifting up one’s hands; to work without praying is to lift up one’s hands without lifting up one’s heart; therefore it is necessary both to pray and to work.”³⁷ But how to do both without interruption—for did not the Apostle Paul both give order to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17) and himself claim to “work night and day” (2 Thess. 3:8)?³⁸

Rather simply, Aurelian of Arles, a younger contemporary of St. Benedict, developed a counsel of his predecessor Caesarius: “At vigils, while a lesson is being read, work with you hands by plaiting reeds or twisting hemp or something similar, to avoid falling asleep”;³⁹ and conversely: “While doing manual work all day long, do not cease to recite the sacred text that you know by heart, on account of the Apostle’s instruction, ‘Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God in your hearts’ [Col. 3:16].”⁴⁰

With greater theological depth, St. Basil, whom Benedict called his “holy father,” had already written in the *Great Rule*, which Benedict doubtless knew in the translation by Rufinus: “While our hands are occupied in work, we can praise God with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with the tongue if it is possible, but if not, then in the heart. In this way we thank Him who has given both strength of hand to work and wisdom of brain to know how to work, and also bestowed means by which to work

both in the tools we use and the arts we practice, whatever the work may be. We pray moreover that the works of our hands may be directed towards the mark of pleasing God.”⁴¹

St. Benedict mentions nothing of “mixing” work and prayer. Although he may have known the *Rule* of Caesarius,⁴² he says nothing about his monks doing handwork during the divine office nor about reciting psalms from memory during worktime. At least implicitly, he shares the deeper theological insight of St. Basil concerning the compenetration of prayer and work. Benedict considers the *prayer* of the divine office to be the supreme *work* of God: “Let nothing be preferred to the *Opus Dei*” (*Rule* 43, 3). (The desert fathers had already treated prayer as “hard work,” a *kopos*.⁴³) And all the monk’s life, every activity, including work, is to be accomplished under God’s regard, with attention to God’s will and sensitivity to God’s presence—“in order that God may be glorified in all things (*ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus*).”⁴⁴

2. The Wesleyan Pattern

In describing “The Character of a Methodist,” John Wesley declares that such a one “prays without ceasing.” Wesley affirms both public and private worship and teaches that its spirit should extend to all times and places; echoing the eucharistic preface, he states that the raising of the heart to God is always and everywhere right and fitting (*Sursum corda... Dignum et iustum est, semper et ubique . . .*):

It is given him “always to pray, and not to faint” [Luke 18:1]. Not that he is always in the house of prayer—though he neglects no opportunity of being there. Neither is he always on his knees, although he often is, or on his face, before the Lord his God. Nor yet is he always crying aloud to God, or calling upon him in words: for many times “the Spirit maketh intercession for him with groans that cannot be uttered” [cf. Rom. 8:26]. But at all times the language of his heart is this: “Thou brightness of the eternal glory, unto thee is my heart, though without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee.” And this is true prayer, and this alone. But his heart is ever lifted up to God, at all times and in all places. In this he is never hindered, much less interrupted, by any person or thing. In retirement or

company, in leisure, business, or conversation, his heart is ever with the Lord. Whether he lie down or rise up, “God is in all this thoughts” [cf. Ps. 10:4]; he “walk with God” [cf. Gen. 6:9] continually, having the loving eye of his mind still fixed upon Him, and everywhere “seeing Him that is invisible” [Heb. 11:27].⁴⁵

This love towards God is constantly accompanied by love towards neighbor: “And while he thus always exercises his love to God, by praying without ceasing, rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks, this commandment is written in his heart, that ‘he who loveth God, love his brother also’ [1 John 4:21]. And he accordingly ‘loves his neighbor as himself’ [cf. Mark 12:33]; he loves every man as his own soul. His heart is full of love to all mankind, to every child of ‘the Father of the spirits of all flesh’ [Heb. 12:9].”⁴⁶

Such a person’s “one intention at all times and in all things is, not to please himself, but Him whom his soul loveth”:⁴⁷ “And therefore, loving God with all his heart, he serves him with all his strength. He continually presents his soul and body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.”⁴⁸ Thus all his works are done to God’s glory:

By consequence, whatsoever he doeth, it is all to the glory of God. In all his employments of every kind, he not only aims at this, (which is implied in having a single eye,) but actually attains it. His business and refreshments, as well as his prayers, all serve this great end. Whether he sit in his house or walk by the way, whether he lie down or rise up, he is promoting, in all he speaks or does, the one business of his life; whether he put on his apparel, or labour, or eat and drink, or divert himself from too wasting labour, it all tends to advance the glory of God, by peace and good will among men. His one invariable rule is this, “Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him.”⁴⁹

Hymnically, Charles Wesley expresses the matter thus:

Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go,
My daily labour to pursue,
Thee, only thee, resolved to know
In all I think, or speak, or do.

The task thy wisdom hath assigned
O let me cheerfully fulfil,
In all my works thy presence find,
And prove thy acceptable will.
Thee may I set at my right hand,
Whose eyes my inmost substance see,
And labour on at thy command,
And offer all my works to thee.

Give me to bear thy easy yoke,
And every moment watch and pray,
And still to things eternal look,
And hasten to thy glorious day:

For thee delightfully employ
Whate’er thy bounteous grace hath given,
And run my course with even joy,
And closely walk with thee to heaven.⁵⁰

Thus the Wesleys fuse the eucharistical and the ethical: prayer and work are subsumed in a single doxology.

Two examples may now be briefly offered of convergence between Methodists and Benedictines in the compenetration of prayer and work. First, singing plays an important part in the worship of both traditions. Psalms and hymns figure prominently in the divine office of the Benedictines (Rule, 8-19), while it has been aptly said that “Methodism was born in song.”⁵¹ Singing is a liturgical action in which the body clearly works to raise the spirit towards God.

Second, the interplay between liturgy and ethics is well captured in Wesley’s dictum echoing St. Augustine to the effect that the service of God is “to imitate him you worship” (*imitari quem colis*): “They who resemble [God] in the spirit of their minds are transformed into the same image. They are merciful even as he is merciful...Yea, they are, like him, loving unto every man, and their mercy extends to all his works.”⁵² Benedictines share the Roman rite at the ordination of presbyters, where the priests are charged to “imitate what you handle” (*imitamini quod tractatis*); and, in fact, all who share in the sacramental body and blood of Christ are expected, as several post-communion prayers make clear (especially in the Easter season), to live conformably to his death and resurrection.

V. Grace, Faith, Prayer, and Works

Behind discussion of prayer and work stands the theological question of the respective roles of God and humankind in the attainment of our salvation. This issue is perennially, or at least periodically, controversial. The period of monastic, particularly Benedictine, origins saw the Catholic struggle to exclude pelagianism and semipelagianism yet without endorsing an extreme Augustinianism. Within Protestantism, Lutherans and Calvinists, who themselves lay claim to St. Augustine, have often suspected Methodism of pelagian tendencies, and therefore of falling back into what they think of as “Catholicism.”⁵³ Now, Dom Cipriano Vagaggini has argued that St. Benedict, while aware of the problem, deliberately took no side in what came to be known as the semipelagian controversy: at times Benedict sounds semipelagian, but he can always be read in an orthodox way, and some of his phraseology bears strongly Augustinian marks.⁵⁴ For his part, Wesley clearly teaches in his Sermon 85, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” that even our first movement towards God is a work of divine grace, and yet his exhortations to the hearer imply freedom of the will. It appears, therefore, that Benedictines and Methodists may on this delicate matter come close to convergence at a point in the evangelical, catholic, orthodox faith.

A first approach may be made by way of Benedict’s and Wesley’s attitudes towards reading, and particularly towards the Scriptures. For to recognize the primacy of the Scriptures is to recognize the priority of divine Revelation and of the history of redemption in any account of the provision of salvation; and to highlight the process of reading is to discern an instance of the “active receptivity” that properly characterizes the human appropriation of salvation.

Reading figures prominently—as part of the divine office (8-18), at meals (38), and as individual responsibility (48)—in the *Rule* of St. Benedict, whose prologue and opening chapters are themselves largely a tissue of scriptural texts. The reading of the Scriptures takes pride of place, followed by the Fathers who help in its interpretation and application (see, typically, 9:8; 73:3-9). As meditation, reading may fall on the side of prayer; as study, it may fall on the side of work; in any case, the compenetration of prayer and work is thereby once more illustrated. The point that presently is of interest finds expression in a tripartite formula from some Carthusian

“Statutes for Novices”: “*Nunc lege, nunc ora, nunc cum fervore labora.*”⁵⁵

In calling my attention to that injunction to “read [the Scriptures and the patristic and spiritual writers],” my old friend Dom Otmar Bauer, of Engelberg and Mont Febè, commented: “*Sans la lectio divina, il n’y a pas l’intégralité du monachisme bénédictin.*”⁵⁶

John Wesley called himself “a man of one Book” (*homo unius libri*). Here is how he valued the Scriptures:

I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air [cf. Wisdom 5:9-13]. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God [cf. Eccles. 12:7]: Just hovering over the great gulf; till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen [cf. Ps 39:13]—I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven—how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way: for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*.⁵⁷

The “one Book” of the Holy Scriptures constituted for Wesley not so much the “boundary of his reading” as “the center of gravity in his thinking.”⁵⁸ On account of their scriptural faithfulness, he assembled from the writings of the early Fathers and the spiritual writers a fifty-volume “Christian Library” for his Methodist people.⁵⁹

To stress the *lectio divina* is, then, to acknowledge the primacy and priority of grace in all soteriology while calling also for the human response. According to St. Benedict, the purpose of the monks’ life is to “magnify the Lord at work in them” (*operantem in se Dominum magnificare*):

Those who fear the Lord do not become proud of their good deeds but, considering that what is good in them cannot come from themselves but from the Lord, they magnify the Lord at work in them, saying with the prophet, “Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name give the glory” [Ps. 115:1], just as the Apostle Paul, too, claimed nothing for his own preaching but said: “By the grace of God I am what I am” [1 Cor. 15:10] and “Whoever glories should glory in the Lord” [2 Cor. 10:17].⁶⁰

“To magnify the Lord at work in you” would in fact have constituted a suitable motto for John Wesley’s Sermon 55, “On Working Out Our Own

Salvation,” which is in fact based in the Pauline text “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13).⁶¹

The Pauline text, says Wesley, “gives God the whole glory of his own work”: “If we are thoroughly sensible that we have nothing which we have not received, how can we glory as if we had not received it [cf. 1 Cor. 4:7]? If we know and feel that the very first motion of God is from above, as well as the power which conducts it to the end—if it is God that not only infuses every good desire, but that accomplishes and follows it, else it vanishes away—then it evidently follows that ‘he who glorieth must glory in the Lord’ [1 Cor. 1:31].”⁶²

Wesley then goes on to trace the several stages in the appropriation of salvation:

Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) “preventing grace”; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight, transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life, some degree of salvation, the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God.⁶³

Salvation is carried on by “convincing grace,” usually in Scripture termed “repentance,” which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone [cf. Ezek. 11:19].

Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation, whereby “through grace” we “are saved by faith” [Eph. 2:8], consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God.⁶⁴

Wesley goes on to show that there is no contradiction in saying “God works; therefore do ye work,” but rather the closest connection: “For, first, God works; therefore you *can* work. Secondly, God works; therefore you *must* work.”⁶⁵

As to the ability to work: Christ truly said, “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5), yet every believer can say “I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).⁶⁶

As to the necessity of working:

You must be “workers together with God” (they are the very words of the Apostle [2 Cor. 6:1]); otherwise he will cease working. The general rule on which his gracious dispensations invariably proceed is this: “Unto him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not,” that does not improve the grace already given, “shall be taken away what he assuredly hath” [Luke 8:18] (so the words ought to be rendered). Even St. Augustine, who is generally supposed to favour the contrary doctrine, makes that just remark, *Qui fecit nos sine nobis, non salvabit nos sine nobis*: “he that made us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves.”⁶⁷ He will not save us unless we “save ourselves from this untoward generation” [cf. Acts 2:40]; unless we ourselves “fight the good fight, and lay hold on eternal life” [1 Tim. 6:12]; unless we “agonize to enter in at the strait gate” [Luke 13:24], “deny ourselves and take up our cross daily” [Luke 9:23], and labour, by every possible means, to “make our own calling and election sure” [cf. 2 Pet. 1:10].⁶⁸

And the peroration of Wesley’s sermon “On Working Out Our Own Salvation” becomes a catena of New Testament texts exhorting believers to work:

“Labour” then, brethren, “not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life.” Say with our blessed Lord, though in a somewhat different sense, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” [John 5:17]. In consideration that he still worketh in you, be never “weary of well-doing” [cf. Gal. 6:9; 2 Thess. 3:13]. Go on, in virtue of the grace of God preventing, accompanying, and following you, in “the work of faith, in the patience of hope, and in the labour of love” [cf. 1 Thess. 1:3]. “Be ye steadfast and immovable; always abounding in the work of the Lord” [cf. 1 Cor. 15:58]. And “the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep”—Jesus—“make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever!” [Heb. 13:20-21]⁶⁹

In a different literary genre, the Methodist sense of these delicate matters of grace, prayer, faith, and work(s) is captured in the tensions between and within the following two hymns by Charles Wesley:

Behold the servant of the Lord!
I wait thy guiding eye to feel,
To hear and keep thy every word,
To prove and do thy perfect will,
Joyful from my own works to cease,

Me, if thy grace vouchsafe to use,
Meanest of all thy creatures, me:
The deed, the time, the manner choose,
Let all my fruit be found of thee;
Let all my works in thee be wrought,
By thee to full perfection brought.

My every weak, though good design,
O'errule, or change, as seems thee meet;
Jesus, let all my work be thine!
Thy work, O Lord, is all complete,
And pleasing in thy Father's sight;
Thou only hast done all things right.

Here then to thee thy own I leave;
Mould as thou wilt thy passive clay;
But let me all thy stamp receive,
But let me all thy words obey,
Serve with a single heart and eye,
And to thy glory live and die.⁷⁰

And then:

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky:

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil:
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care,
As in thy sight to live;
And O thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give!

Help me to watch and pray,
And on thyself rely,
Assured, if I my trust betray,
I shall for ever die.⁷¹

If one were to reflect more fully than John Wesley did on the theological implications for ecclesiology of this view of the appropriation of salvation, it would land Wesley rather on the “Catholic” side in the debates concerning the instrumentality of the Church, in which some contemporary ecumenists have located “the basic difference” between Roman Catholics and Protestants.⁷² In its active reception of the gospel, the Church is by that same motion launched on its task of transmitting it. In practical terms, the early and traditional Methodist institutions of the annual conference and the quarterly meeting illustrate in communal form the concomitance of grace, faith, prayer, and work(s): there the Methodists at appropriate geographical levels gathered in faith to pray, to sing, to partake in the Lord's Supper and the love feast, and to hold “conversation on the work of God,” by which they meant what God was doing among them and through their mission in the world. A nice historical example is found in the conference service of a small Methodist denomination in Britain for the sending of missionaries overseas (with even a quotation, in garbled form, of our “ancient Benedictine motto!”):

There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh in all [cf. 1 Cor. 12:6]. This truth is nowhere shown more clearly than in the field of Foreign Missions. Some are called to be preachers of the Gospel, some to be teachers in schools, some to be translators of the Scriptures, some to the ministry of healing, whilst others are engaged in industrial, or agricultural work. All these forms of service are necessary; all are sacred; work done in the right spirit is a form of worship. It was truly said in old times: “To labour is to pray.”⁷³

That practice of mission to lands overseas—which has been strongly characteristic of historic Methodism—rejoins the evangelizing endeavors of the early medieval Benedictines, whereby Pope Gregory I had sent Augustine to the English, and in turn the insular figures of Willibrord,

Boniface, and Wigbert became apostles to the Netherlands and to central Germany.⁷⁴

VI. Mutual Recognition?

In the foregoing, it has chiefly been a matter of the “ideal,” whether Benedictine or Wesleyan. In ecumenical affairs, it is always important to compare either ideal with ideal, or actual with actual. The greater difficulty, for the ecumenical utility of the present exercise, resides therefore rather in the differences between the kinds of entity under comparison: on the one hand, a religious order within the Roman Catholic Church, wherein (according to its own claim) the sole Church of Christ “subsists” (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 8); and on the other hand, a denominational family of Methodist Churches which claim their own place within the Body of Christ that is held to include others also. Yet a Roman Catholic writer has felt able to compare Methodism’s relationship to Wesley with the way in which “a religious order or spiritual family, within the Roman Catholic Church, owes its spirit to its founder.”⁷⁵ And the late Methodist historian Albert Outler wanted to see Methodism as an “evangelical order of witness and worship, discipline and nurture” that needs “a catholic church” within which to function.⁷⁶ In searching for possible “ways of being one Church,” the Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council has noted an analogy between John Wesley’s Methodist movement and figures such as Benedict of Norcia “whose divine calling was similarly to a spiritual reform,” “which gave rise to religious orders, characterized by special forms of life and prayer, work, evangelization and their own internal organization.”⁷⁷

If contemporary Methodists could find renewal according to the Wesleyan ideal, it is possible that they might encounter supporters among the Benedictines to advocate their recognition within the Church catholic. Certainly there are Methodists who have discovered, as I have done, striking embodiments of the Benedictine ideal within living monastic communities and have thereby been helped in our recognition of the ecclesiality of Roman Catholicism.

Let me leave you with a memory, which may also be an anticipation of the future. From the time of the Methodist celebrations in May 1988 of the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the evangelical conversions of the Wesley brothers, it is the sight of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and former Abbot of Ampleforth, Dom Basil Hume, coming to Wesley’s

Chapel, City Road, London, dressed in the simple habit of a Benedictine monk, and kneeling in silent prayer at the tomb of John Wesley.

Notes

- ¹ See Marie-Benoît Meeus, “*Ora et labora*: devise bénédictine?” in *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 54 (1992):193-219. On this fine article—which is “spirituel” in the two French senses of religious and witty—I have drawn heavily for the literary history of the connection between prayer and work in monasticism, and among the Benedictines in particular. I am deeply grateful to Sister Marie-Benoît, of the Bethany Priory at Loppem (Belgium), for her initiative in sending me a copy of her text.
- ² G. Osborn, ed., *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Conference Office, 1868-1872), 7:43.
- ³ Sermon 24, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, IV” (1748), in *The Works of John Wesley* [Bicentennial Edition], vol. 1, Albert C. Outler, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), pp. 533-534. Wesley goes on: “By Christianity I mean that method of worshipping God which is here revealed to man by Jesus Christ. When I say this is essentially a social religion, I mean not only that it cannot subsist so well, but that it cannot subsist at all without society, without living and conversing with other men.”
- ⁴ From the preface to John and Charles Wesley’s “Hymns and Sacred Poems” of 1739, in *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, Thomas Jackson, ed. (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 14:321. Wesley here appeals to Galatians 5:6, 10 and to 1 John 4:21.
- ⁵ See the mammoth six-volume edition by Adalbert de Vogüé and Jean Neufville, *La Règle de saint Benoît*, Sources chrétiennes 181-186 (Paris: Cerf, 1971-72).
- ⁶ See the concise work of Stephanus Hilpisch, *Benedictinism through Changing Centuries* (Collegeville: St. John’s Abbey Press, 1958).
- ⁷ “The Character of a Methodist,” in *The Works of John Wesley* [Bicentennial Edition], vol. 9, Rupert E. Davies, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), pp. 30-46.

8. Sermon 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," in *Works* [Bicentennial Edition], vol. 3, Albert C. Outler, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), pp. 199-209.
9. See Jürgen Weissbach, *Der neue Mensch im theologischen Denken John Wesleys* (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1970).
10. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:200.
11. Davies, *The Works of John Wesley*, 9:41.
12. Sermon 45, "The New Birth" (1760), in *Works* [Bicentennial Edition], vol. 2, Albert C. Outler, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), p. 188.
13. See Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (London: Epworth, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), in particular pp. 15-44 ("Image of God").
14. See, for example, Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, revised edition, 1974).
15. These last two cases are recounted anecdotally in Meeus, p. 219.
16. Thus in the very first saying of St. Anthony the Great, in *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*, Benedicta Ward, trans. (London: Mowbray, and Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1975), p. 1.
17. Hilpisch, *Benedictinism through Changing Centuries*, p. 37.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 49-50; cf. 79-80.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.
20. Dom Ildephonse Schuster, a former Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, noted the social and cultural novelty of Benedict's attitude: "Whereas the ancient Romans looked upon labor as a punishment for slaves, and the barbarians disdained it as an occupation not suited to warlike peoples, St. Benedict elevated work to the dignity of religion and consecrated the ranks of his disciples to it" (*St. Benedict and His Times* [St. Louis: Herder, 1951], p. 102).
21. So, for example, St. Basil, in *The Great Rule*, 37, with appeal to Acts 20:35, Eph. 4:28, and Matt. 25:34-35; see W.K.L. Clarke, *The Ascetic Works of Saint Basil* (London: SPCK, 1925), pp. 205-206.
22. The works of mercy are listed in Benedict's *Rule*, 4:14-19.
23. Hilpisch, *Benedictinism through Changing Centuries*, p. 37.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20, 24-25, 27-30, 38-40, 68-73.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20, 23-24; Schuster, *St. Benedict and His Times*, p. 170f. (cf. pp. 152f., 164f.).
28. Wesley's (public) Journals and (private) Diaries have appeared, as far as 1786, in *Works* [Bicentennial Edition], vol. 18-23, W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988-1995).
29. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:205-206.
30. See Sermon 16, "The Means of Grace" (1746), in *Works* [Bicentennial Edition], vol. 1, Albert C. Outler, ed., p. 381, where Wesley lists as "the chief": "Prayer, whether in secret or with the great congregation; searching the Scriptures (which implies reading, hearing, and meditating thereon); and receiving the Lord's Supper." In the "Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies" (1743), Wesley names "the ordinances of God" as "the public worship of God; the ministry of the word, either read or expounded; the Supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting, or abstinence" (see *Works* [Bicentennial Edition], vol. 9, Davies, ed., p. 73). To these "instituted" means of grace, Wesley sometimes adds several of a "prudential" kind: such "particular rules in order to grow in grace" or "arts of holy living" are intended to serve "watching [against the world, the devil, and one's besetting sin], denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God"; see the so-called "Large Minutes," in *Works*, Thomas Jackson, ed. (1872), 8:322-24.
31. In *Works* [Bicentennial Edition], vol. 1, Outler, ed., pp. 592-611.
32. See John C. Bowmer, *The Lord's Supper in Early Methodism* (London: Dacre/Black, 1951), pp. 49-61.
33. Sermon 101, "The Duty of Constant Communion" (1787, originally 1732), in Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:427-39.

34. Letter of 10 September 1784 to “Our Brethren in America,” in Telford, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, 7:238-39.
35. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:206.
36. Davies, *The Works of John Wesley*, 9:41.
37. Isidore of Seville, *Sententiae* III.7.18 (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 83:675-676).
38. St. Basil juxtaposes these two texts in the *Great Rule*, 37; see above (as in note 21), p. 207.
39. Aurelian, *Rule for Monks*, 29:1, in *Règles monastiques d'Occident, IVe-VIe siècle, d'Augustin à Ferréol*, V. Desprez, ed. (Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1980), p. 236; cf. Caesarius, *Rules for Virgins*, 15, *ibid.* p. 175.
40. Aurelian, *Rule for Monks*, §24, p. 235. The same two-directional motion is found in the *Rule of Tarnant* §6, 4-5; §8,7 and 14-15 (in Desprez, *Règles monastiques*, pp. 267-68, 270-71).
41. *Great Rule*, 37; see above (as in note 21), p. 206.
42. The Caesarius served as a model for Benedict was strongly asserted by Ildephonse Schuster in a writing of 1940, translated as *Historical Notes on St. Benedict's "Rule for Monks"* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1962); see in particular pp. 18-31. But even the likelihood of any borrowings from Caesarius is treated rather lightly by A. de Vogüé in his more recent scholarly edition of Benedict's Rule (as in note 5; see in particular volume 1, pp. 148, 170-71). The chief source of Benedict's Rule is now widely recognized to be the so-called *Rule of the Master*, which is in all probability the work of another author, not an earlier work of Benedict himself; see de Vogüé, volume 1, pp. 14-23, 29-44, 135-43, 173-314 (especially pp. 303-12).
43. See, for example, Agathon, 9: “There is no labor greater than that of prayer to God” (*The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, Benedicta Ward, trans., p. 18-19).
44. Cf. Benedict's *Rule*, 57:9.
45. Davies, *The Works of John Wesley*, 9:37.
46. *Ibid.*, 9:37.
47. *Ibid.*, 9:38.
48. *Ibid.*, 9:39.
49. *Ibid.*, 9:39-40.
50. No. 315 in the 1780 Collection (590 in the *British Methodist Hymn Book* of 1933; 381 in the *British Hymns and Psalms* of 1983; and 438 in the *American United Methodist Hymnal* of 1989).
51. Thus the Preface to the 1933 *British Methodist Hymn Book*. The classic text was the 1780 *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (modern scientific edition in *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 7, Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983; reprinted as part of the Bicentennial Edition of *The Works*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1989]). The 1780 Collection was arranged “according to the experience of real Christians.” Methodists have subsequently added other Wesleyan hymns for the church year and for the eucharist (the latter drawn from the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* of 1745). In the twentieth century especially, the sources have been expanded ecumenically.
52. Sermon 29, “Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, IX,” in Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1:635. The closest text in Augustine is *De civitate Dei* VIII.17.2 (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 41:242).
53. For a positive reading of Wesley in the matter by a Roman Catholic writer, whose title (in the original French, though less so as modified for the English translation!) precisely appears to confirm Lutheran and Calvinist fears, see Maximin Piette, *La réaction de John Wesley dans l'évolution du protestantisme* (Brussels: La Lecture au Foyer, and Librairie Albert Dewit, 2nd. ed., 1927; English translation: *John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism* [London: Sheed and Ward, 1937, reprinted 1979]).
54. C. Vagaggini, “La posizione de S. Benedetto nella questione semipelagiana,” in *Studia Benedictina in memoriam gloriosi ante saecula XIV transitus S. P. Benedicti*, *Studia anselmiana philosophica theologica*, 18-19 (Vatican City: Libreria Vaticana, 1947), pp. 17-38. Vagaggini concludes of Benedict: “*Il suo modo di parlare della grazia et del libero arbitrio s'inquadra per lo più facilmente negli schemi semipelagiani, ma può anche spiegarsi in senso ortodosso. La fraseologia stessa con cui tratta di queste questioni si risenta assai della fraseologia semipelagiana, ma vi sono anche forti tracce di fraseologia d'origine agostiniana, senza che si possa sicuramente decidere se il pensiero pendeva*”

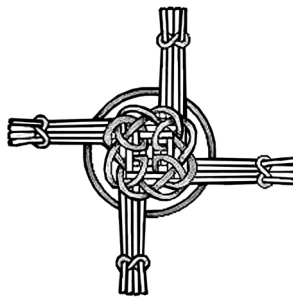
più in un senso che in un altro. Poiché s. Benedetto non ignorava la questione, si deve ammettere che questa sua posizione agnostica non è casuale, ma calcolata” (p. 82). My attention was directed to Vagaggini’s article by my friend Dom Emmanuel Lanne of Chevetogne (letter of 14 June 1994).

55. The text is contained in L. Holstein’s *Codex Regularum monasticarum et canonicarum* (Paris 1663), as expanded by M. Brockie (Ausburg: Veith, 1759; reprinted Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1957), in the second tome, fifteenth addition, p. 335.
56. Letter of 13 May 1994.
57. Preface to “Sermons on Several Occasions” (1746), in Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1:104-105.
58. A dictum of George Croft Cell, quoted by Thomas C. Oden, *Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Asbury, 1988), p. 82.
59. It is reported that Francis Asbury, one of the first two bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, would place children on his knee and teach them the rhyme: *Learn to read, and learn to pray; Learn to work, and learn to obey*. See Henry Boehm, *Reminiscences, Historical and Biographical*, Joseph B. Wakeley, ed. (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1865), p. 447.
60. *Rule*, prologue, 29-32 (my translation from de Vogüé and Neufville, volume 1, pp. 418-21).
61. Of this sermon, the editor of the current scholarly edition of Wesley’s Sermons, Albert C. Outler, writes: “This must be considered as a landmark sermon, for it stands as the late Wesley’s most complete and careful exposition of the mystery of divine-human interaction, his subtlest probing of the paradox of prevenient grace and human agency.... In any dozen of his sermons most crucial for an accurate assay of Wesley’s theology, this one would certainly deserve inclusions.” See Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:199.
62. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:202-203.
63. Later in the sermon, Wesley makes a characteristic attempt to stay away from a Calvinist notion of predestination: “Allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by nature, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man,

unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called ‘natural conscience.’ But this is not natural; it is more properly termed ‘preventing grace.’ Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man. Everyone has sooner or later good desires, although the generality of men stifle them before they can take deep root or produce any considerable fruit. Everyone has some measure of that light, some faint glimmering ray, which sooner or later, more or less, enlightens every man that cometh into the world. And everyone, unless he be one of the small number whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron [1 Tim. 4:2], feels more or less uneasy when he acts contrary to the light of his own conscience. So that no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath” (Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:207). This is the point at which Calvinists may find it difficult to excuse Wesley from semipelagianism; yet in another place, Wesley makes clear that sufficient freedom of will to accept the gospel has been *restored* (admittedly, universally) to human kind (in virtue of Christ’s *redemptive* work for all): “every man has a measure of free will restored to him by grace” (see “Some Remarks on Mr. Hill’s ‘Review of all the Doctrines taught by Mr. John Wesley,’” in *Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, Thomas Jackson, ed. [London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872], 10:392).

64. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:203-204.
65. *Ibid.*, 3:206.
66. Cf. *Ibid.*, 3:206.
67. It is a smart move on Wesley’s part to cite Augustine against the Calvinists, even though he appears to be quoting from memory: “*Qui ergo fecit te sine te, non te justificat sine te*” (Sermon 169, 11(13); Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 38:922-923). Wesley had given the same text, in his own form, in Sermon 63, “The General Spread of the Gospel” (1783), in Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 2:490.
68. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:208-209.
69. *Ibid.*, 3:209.
70. No. 417 in the 1780 Collection (572 in the *British Methodist Hymn Book* of 1933, 788 in *Hymns and Psalms* of 1983).

71. No. 309 in the 1780 Collection (578 in the British *Methodist Hymn Book* of 1933; 785 in *Hymns and Psalms*; and 413 in the American *United Methodist Hymnal* of 1989).
72. See André Birmelé, *Le salut en Jésus-Christ dans les dialogues œcuméniques* (Paris: Cerf, and Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1986); and *Grundkonsens-Grunddifferenz*, A. Birmelé and H. Meyer, eds. (Frankfurt am Main: Otto Lembeck, and Paderborn: Bonifatius Verlag, 1992).
73. From *The Book of Service for the Use of the United Methodist Church* (London: United Methodist Publishing House, 1913), p. 72.
74. Hilpisch, *Benedictinism through Changing Centuries*, pp. 18-20, 23-24.
75. Francis Frost, "Méthodisme," in *Catholicisme, hier, aujourd'hui et demain*, G. Jacquemet and others, ed. (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1948 onwards), 9:48-71.
76. Albert C. Outler, "Do Methodists have a doctrine of the Church?" in *The Doctrine of the Church*, Dow Kirkpatrick, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1964), pp.11-28.
77. See paragraph 24 of the "Nairobi Report," *Towards a Statement on the Church* (1986). Text in the then Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity's *Information Service*, no. 62 (1986/4), pp. 206-16; in the ecumenical periodical published by the Benedictine sisters of Turvey Abbey (England), *One in Christ* 22 (1986): 241-59; and separately as a booklet from the World Methodist Council (Lake Junaluska, N.C.).



Bibliographic Review for Spiritual Explorations

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A. Spiritual Explorations in American Culture Since 1950

Exploration of monastic spirituality is one strand of the wider phenomenon of spiritual seeking that has been going on in American culture for the past half-century. Thomas Merton probably did more during his lifetime to communicate “the mystery of the monastic vocation” to the American public than any other monastic writer in the first half of the 20th century. Merton’s *Seven-Storey Mountain* (1948) was not expected to be a best-seller, but that memoir and its sequel *The Sign of Jonas* (1953) clearly spoke to the longings of Christian pilgrims in the mid-twentieth century. As Paul Elie shows in his book *The Life You Save May Be Your Own: American Pilgrimage* (2001), Thomas Merton was but one example of serious seekers from that era, some of which, like Dorothy Day and Walker Percy, became oblates of St. Benedict finding in the *Rule of St. Benedict* the “trellis” they needed for living as Christians from day to day.

More than five decades after Merton’s book was published, a new generation of American seekers—including more than a few United Methodists—are once again rediscovering monastic spirituality. The means by which this re-discovery of St. Benedict is occurring cannot be located in a single source or movement. Some of these twenty-first century pilgrims have been inspired by the writings of Merton or Henri Nouwen. Others have had their interest awakened through other spiritual writers such as Kathleen Norris or Roberta Bondi. Still others have discovered the mystery of their vocation in the context of prayer and spiritual practices. And some—perhaps many—among all of these groups have found guidance through communities whose lives are ordered around *The Rule of St. Benedict*.

In addition to the popular reflections of such contemporary writers as Kathleen Norris in her books *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography* (1993) and

Cloister Walk (1996), other materials have started to surface in various sectors of American Protestant Christianity that present the model of a serious seeker whose spiritual pilgrimage takes shape within the framework of Benedictine spirituality. Many readers, male and female alike, will resonate with Roberta Bondi’s memoirs in which she recounts her initial encounters with an Anglican Benedictine woman (who embodied the integration of heart and mind that had eluded Bondi until that point in her life). These memoirs are but some of the more notable examples of spiritual memoirs that describe the intersections of “serious seekers” with monastic spirituality. Until recently, we have not been able to discern the patterns within which these kinds of spiritual quests have been taking place.

In his remarkably perceptive study, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s*, Robert Wuthnow describes how a “profound change has . . . taken place” as “a traditional spirituality of inhabiting sacred spaces has given way to a new spirituality of seeking.” (4) In the course of explaining the tensions between these two paradigms of spirituality, Wuthnow refers to the three vows that monks take who adhere to the Rule of St. Benedict. “Stability emphasizes settledness; *conversatio*, change; and obedience suggests a need for commitment to both.” (5) Wuthnow sums up the dialectic this way: “The wisdom of St. Benedict is that dwelling and seeking are both part of what it means to be human.” (6) For this reason and others that he explains in his book, he commends a third pattern of spirituality, that he describes as “practices-oriented spirituality,” (16) which he suggests may provide a way of “retrieving balance in the contemporary debate over the future of American democracy.” (17) He also contends that the scholarly community needs to stop ignoring the significance of spiritual practices for providing orientation and, over time, the formation of a stable sense of identity in a world of change.

Wuthnow's discussion of the paradigm shift in American life from a kind of "dwelling place spirituality" to a "spirituality of seeking" provides a helpful lens for looking at some of the patterns in which we participate. For example, over the past two decades, more than 1,200 Christian pilgrims have found their way to "part-time" monastic experiences like the two-year Academies for Spiritual Formation (Clapper) that have been sponsored by Upper Room Ministries since 1982, and thousands more have participated in the related five-day academies as well as three-year covenant communities and the more recent "companions in ministry" retreats. Inspired by the Benedictine tradition, these latter-days "schools in the Lord's service" have provided the kind of stable environment for spiritual growth and maturity that has made it possible for thousands of Christians, including many United Methodist clergy and laity, to find the depth of spiritual formation that feeds the hunger of serious seekers.

Bondi, Roberta. *Memories of God: Theological Reflections on a Life*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1995.

Elie, Paul. *The Life You Save May Be Your Own: An American Pilgrimage*. New York, NY: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2000.

Clapper, Greg. "Spiritual Formation in a Part-time Monastery," in *Christian Century* Vol. 108, No. 12 (April 10, 1991), 388-390.

Foster, Richard. *The Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1988.

Norris, Kathleen. *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*. New York, NY: Tickner & Fields, 1993.

_____. *Cloister Walk*. New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 1996.

Nouwen, Henri. *The Living Reminder: Service and Prayer in Memory of Jesus Christ*. New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1977.

_____. *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1975.

Wuthnow, Robert. *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s*. University of California Press, 1998.

B. Exploring Benedictine Spiritual Practices

Amid the wide variety of books that have been published over the past quarter of a century on Benedictine spirituality, some stand out as being particularly helpful for "serious seekers"—the term that John Wesley used to describe persons who sought to live as "true Christians." Some of these books, such as the resources published in Europe (Africa et al.) are difficult to obtain in the U.S.A., but provide wonderful resources to those fortunate enough to find them. Stewart's book provides one of the most synthetic overviews, but some readers may find books that use particular practices (Casey) as apertures to open up the depths of Benedictine spirituality.

Readers who are ready to focus their attention on the "tools that matter" will want to read one or more of the books by Mary Margaret Funk O.S.B. As the Web site for Humility Matters explains, (<http://www.humilitymatters.com>), Meg Funk has written "a trilogy of books that presents the classic eight obstacles to prayer (thoughts of food, sex, things, anger, depression, acedia (sloth), vainglory and pride.), presents the tools to overcome those afflictions and shows humility as the way to life in Christ Consciousness." Funk explores the thought of the early Christian desert tradition exemplified in the writing of John Cassian (b. 356), especially his major work, "Conferences and Institutes."

Africa, E.-P., A. Borias, M. Casey et al. *Saint Benedict of Nursia: A Way of Wisdom for Today* translated by Sr. Hilda Wood O.S.B. Strasbourg, Austria: Editions due Signe, 1994.

Casey, Michael O.C.S. *A Guide to Living in the Truth: St. Benedict's Teaching on Humility*. Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 2001.

_____. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*. Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1996.

de Waal, Esther. *Living with Contradiction: An Introduction to Benedictine Spirituality*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing Company, 1997.

Funk, Mary Margaret O.S.B. *Humility Matters for the Spiritual Life* with foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Continuum International Publishing Group, 1999.

_____. *Thoughts Matter: The Practice of the Spiritual Life*. Continuum, 2002.

_____. *Tools Matter for Practicing the Spiritual Life*. Continuum, 2004

Homan, Fr. Daniel O.S.B. and Lonni Collins Pratt, *Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2003.

Stewart, Columba. *Prayer and Community: The Benedictine Tradition* (Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series) Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998.

C. Devotional Resources

1. The Liturgy of the Hours of Prayer or the "Daily Office"

Beyond the various handbooks and "companions" that have been published in recent years, various resources about the practice of the "liturgy of the hours" of prayer or the "daily office" are available for different levels of inquiry. Novice practitioners of the daily office will find David Steindl-Rast's reflections on the "music" of silence in the context of the alternation of prayer and work to be inspiring and profound. Those interested in learning about the norms for celebration of monastic liturgy will find Anne Field's collection of materials to be most helpful while those who are interested in learning more about the history and evolution of the liturgy of the hours will find Taft's comprehensive study to be most helpful. In addition, a variety of daily prayer materials can be found at the Order of St. Benedict Web site <http://www.osb.org/index.html>

Benedictine Daily Prayer: A Short Breviary Compiled and edited by Maxwell E. Johnson, Oblate of St. John's Abbey and the Monks of St. John's Abbey. The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 2005.

Steindl-Rast, David and Sharon Lebell. *Music of Silence: A Sacred Journey Through the Hours of the Day*. Berkeley, CA: Seastone Books, 1998, 2002.

Taft, Robert. *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*. Second Revised Edition. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993.

The Monastic Hours: Directory for the Celebration of the Work of God and Directive Norms for the Celebration of the Monastic Liturgy of the Hours. Ed. Anne M. Field 2nd ed. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000.

The People's Companion to the Breviary; The Liturgy of the Hours with Inclusive Language. Revised and Expanded Edition of the New Companion to the Breviary with Seasonal Supplement. Vols. 1-2. Carmelites of Indianapolis, 1997.

Work of God: Benedictine Prayer. Edited by Judith Suter O.S.B. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997.

2. Liturgical/Devotional Materials

While there are lots of resources available for daily prayer, some "Methodist-Benedictines" have found it difficult to locate resources that enable them to integrate the practice of daily prayer with respect to the Wesleyan/Methodist tradition. For example, few United Methodists are aware of the existence of the continuing practice of the "daily office" (Wesley Community) in the context of British Methodism, particularly at Wesley's Chapel on City Road in London.

Stookey, Laurence Hull. *This Day: A Wesleyan Way of Prayer*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004.

The Wesley Community: Daily Offices (April 1982) reprint by Office of Ecumenical & Interfaith Programs at the University of Indianapolis; reproduced with permission of the Trustees of Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London.

Take Our Moments and our Days: An Anabaptist prayer book (four-week cycle of morning and evening prayers for ordinary time) Editors, Arthur Paul Boers, Eleanor Kreider et al. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2005.

The Upper Room Worship Book: Music and Liturgies for Spiritual Formation. Compiled and edited by Elise Eslinger. Nashville, TN: The Upper Room, 1985. Revised and updated edition to be available in August 2006.

The Book of Worship: Daily Prayer. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.

The Book of Common Prayer. Harrisburg, PA: Seabury Press, 1978.

D. Monastic Oblation: Resources for Methodist-and-Benedictine Oblates

Current resources vary from the provisional loose-leaf resources provided by particular monasteries (St. Meinrad) for members of their oblate communities to more polished volumes that reflect more thoroughgoing collaborations between a given monastery and the oblates who share its life (St. John's Short Breviary). There is even an online journal, *The Oblate*, and a forum for ecumenical exchange: <http://www.osb.org/index.html>

To date only a few collections of narratives about the lives of oblates have been produced (Bondi & Kulzer), but those that do exist provide some striking depictions of what it can mean for laypersons and clergy oblates to be "monks in the world." Some have even suggested that oblates may play a significant role in the future of monasticism as the numbers of persons who make full professions as monastic men and women declines and the number of persons who make professions as oblates appears by contrast to be growing. It remains to be seen what the future of "monasticism beyond the walls" might be, but some oblates (Buchanan) are already playing a role in the formation of other oblates in communities such as St. Brigid of Kildare Monastery.

Others have written poignant essays (Jones) about ways that monastic practices can enable "non-monks" to challenge their cultural accommodation while suggesting new ways to bring "balance" to their lives as persons living in the world. In a world marked by mobility, oblates can find stability (Schlabach) in daily life.

The Benedictine Handbook Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003

Saint Meinrad Benedictine Oblate Companion 7th Revised Edition. St. Meinrad, IN: Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 1997.

Bondi, Roberta & Linda Kulzer (eds.) *Benedict in the World: Portraits of Monastic Oblates* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002.

Buchanan, Janet. *Monasticism Beyond Monastery Walls: Benedictine Oblation and the Future of Benedictine Spirituality* D. Min dissertation: Graduate Theological Foundation, 1999. Unpublished document available from the author: Roseburg, Oregon. See also the related audiotape recording of the panel discussion of "Monasticism Without Walls" from the 2000 American Benedictine Academy Meeting with presentations by Janet Buchanan, Nancy Campbell, and Antoinette Purcell O.S.B.

Huston, Paula. "Monastic Practices for Lay Persons" in *Houston Catholic Worker* available online at <http://tcnews2.com/laymonasticism.html>

Jones, W. Paul. "Monastic Practices for the Non-Monk" in *Quarterly Review* 14/3 (Fall 1994): 227-240.

Morris, Dom Augustine (monk of Elmore Abbey). *Oblates: Life with St. Benedict*. Newberry, Berkshire (UK): Elmore Abbey, 1992.

Schlabach, Gerald. "Stability Amid Mobility: The Oblate's Challenge and Witness" in *The American Benedictine Review* 52:1 (March 2001): 3-23. This essay overlaps in certain ways with the third chapter "The Vow of Stability" in Schlabach's forthcoming book on *Unlearning Protestantism/ Unlearning the Protestant Vices/ To be a People: Virtues for Sustaining Christian Community*

Srubas, Rachel M. *Oblation: Meditations on St. Benedict's Rule*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006.

West, Norvene (Oblate O.S.B.) *Preferring Christ: A Devotional Commentary & Workbook on the Rule of Saint Benedict*. Trabuco Canyon, CA: Source Books, 1990.

E. The Monastic Vocation: Past, Present, and Future Aspects

Vocation is one of the topics where Methodists and Benedictines find themselves using overlapping language. In the Benedictine tradition, some books are better suited for helping persons clarify whether they have a monastic vocation (Kelty), while others are more speculative explorations of the monk as "the universal archetype of the human" (Pannikar). Persons who explore these topics, will also want to review historical studies (Malone) of the origins of the monastic profession, and the ways it arose in relation to martyrdom via such images as "spiritual martyrdom," "athlete of Christ," and "soldiers of Christ" as well as the subsequent identification of monastic profession as a "second baptism" in close association to the remission of sins. Dom Jean LeClerc's book *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God* remains unsurpassed as a study of medieval monastic culture, not only because it explains the sources and formation of monasticism, but also because it points to the "fruits" of those communities of men and women who lived out their vocations within the daily rhythms of *ora et labora* (including scholarship) that have partially shaped western culture.

The contributions of Benedictine women to the monastic vocation are beginning to be narrated (Hollerman). Other discerning writers (Francis Kline) have written about the ways in which monasticism can serve the church in the present and future by providing a basis for renewal and creative reform. Nor should we ignore the ways that monastic women and men continue the conversation about how to reform their current practices in ways that are more consonant with the *Rule of St. Benedict* (de Vogüé), which provides the trellis for the monastic soul.

1. Reflections by Members of Benedictine Communities of Women in the USA

Upon This Tradition: Five Statements of the Conference of American Benedictine Prioresses Editor: Ruth Fox, OSB, Sacred Heart Monastery, Richardton, ND. All five sets of documents are available on the OSB Web page: www.mountosb.org/utt/

Upon This Tradition, I: A Statement of Monastic Values in the Lives of American Benedictine Sisters. Norfolk, Nebraska, March 7, 1975

Upon This Tradition, II: Of Time Made Holy—A Statement on the Liturgy of the Hours in the Lives of American Benedictine Sisters. Madison, Wisconsin, March 5, 1978

Upon This Tradition, III: Of All Good Gifts—A Statement on the Nature of Stewardship in the Lives of American Benedictine Sisters. St. Joseph, Minnesota, June 19, 1980

Upon This Tradition, IV: Toward Full Discipleship—An Interim Statement on the Role of Benedictine Women in Church and Society. Ferdinand, Indiana, March 31, 1984

Upon This Tradition, V: With a Listening Heart—A Statement on the Role of Discernment in the Lives of American Benedictine Women. Cullman, Alabama, February 5, 1996

2. Reflections by Representatives of Benedictine Communities of Men in Europe and the USA

Hume, Cardinal Basil, O.S.B. *The Intentional Life: The Making of a Spiritual Vocation* Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2003. “Part One” of a book previously published under the title of *Searching for God*. Hodddard and Staughton Publishers, 1977.

Kelty, Matthew, O.C.S.O. *Aspects of the Monastic Calling.* Our Lady of Gethsemani Abbey, KY, 1975.

Kline, Francis O.S.B. *Lovers of the Place: Monasticism Loose in the Church.* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997.

LeClercq, Jean O.S.B. *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study in Monastic Culture.* Trans. Catharine Misrahi. Mentor Omega, 1961; Reprinted by Fordham University Press, 1982.

Malone, Edward E. *The Monk and the Martyr: The Monk as the Successor of the Martyr.* Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America, 1950. Out of print.

Neumann, Matthias O.S.B., “The Creative Charism of Benedictine Monasticism: A Reply to Francis Mannion,” *American Benedictine Review* Vol. 46, No. 3 (Sept. 1995), 250–274.

Panikkar, Raimundo. *Blessed Simplicity: The Monk as Universal Archetype* New York: Seabury Press, 1982.

de Vogüé, Adalbert O.S.B. *To Love Fasting: The Monastic Experience* trans. Jean Baptist Hasbrouck, O.S.C.O. Petersham, MA: St. Bede’s Publications, 1989.

3. Methodist-Benedictine Identity

Articulations of “Methodist-Benedictine” identity are fairly recent. The earliest documented instances (Parker) occurred in the 1990s. To date, the most focused reflections about what it means to live as a “Methodist-Benedictine” monastic has been offered by Mary Ewing Stamps, the founder of St. Brigid of Kildare Methodist Benedictine Monastery (1999).

Parker, Kenneth L. “The Call to Sanctification: Reflection on the Journey of a Methodist-Benedictine” *The Asbury Theological Journal* Fall 1995, Vol. 50, No. 2; 1996, Vol. 51, No. 1, 71-82.

Molene, John. “Methodist Monastery Established” in *The United Methodist Reporter* Vol. 146, No. 17 (Sept. 10, 1999): 1.

Stamps, Mary Ewing. “Learning to Trust God Along the Way: My Vocation in Community” in *St. Brigid of Kildare Methodist-Benedictine Consultations: Occasional Papers #1*, University of Indianapolis, 2004.

F. Exploring Rules of Life for Spiritual Formation

1. Commentaries on *The Rule of St. Benedict*

The standard reference for English-language readers is *The Rule of St. Benedict in English* edited by Timothy Fry O.S.B. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), which in turn is the translation taken from the unabridged edition of RB 1980: *The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes* ed. Timothy Fry O.S.B. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981). The latter volume is often referred to in the abbreviated format: RB 1980

While there are many commentaries on *The Rule of St. Benedict* available ranging from technical (T. Kardong, etc.) to popular works, with the exception of the preceding article by Mary Ewing Stamps, to date, there have been no attempts to offer a “United Methodist commentary” on *The Rule of St. Benedict* (RB). On the other hand, there are quite a few commentaries by Protestant pilgrims who are oblates of Benedictine communities. Some of these commentaries are wise without being pretentious (Dean). Some invite the reader to engage in *lectio divina*. Esther de Waal, an Episcopal lay woman, provides a good example of the way a Protestant can appreciate Benedict’s text for reasons pertaining to her own tradition, which is known for its “via media” between the poles of Protestant rigor and shapeless indulgence.

Commentaries written by male and female monastics are also very accessible. Some are arranged to accommodate the monastic practice of reading and reflecting on the entirety of RB three times per year (Chittister). Persons from United Methodist tradition may find those commentaries that discuss the role of the Bible (Dumm), or humility (Casey) to be helpful ways to engage the tradition of reflecting on Benedict’s rule of life.

Thanks to the work of the Ecumenical and Cultural Institute at Collegeville, Minnesota, the commentary tradition has now been extended to include the reflections of Buddhist monks (Henry) and practitioners. It is unclear what the future of interfaith commentaries may be, but it is one of the fruits of the Monastic Interreligious Dialogues that began in 1968 with Thomas Merton and continues with Sr. Mary Margaret Funk O.S.B., David Steindl-Rast O.S.B., et al.

Barry, Patrick, Richard Yeo, Kathleen Norris et al. *Wisdom from the Monastery: The Rule of St. Benedict for Everyday Life*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2005.

Benedict’s Dharma: Buddhists Reflect on the Rule of St. Benedict (includes a complete translation of Saint Benedict’s Rule) edited by Patrick Henry with an afterword by David Steindl-Rast, O.S.B.

Chittister, Joan. *The Rule of Benedict: Insights for the Ages*. (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

_____. *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1991.

de Waal, Esther. *A Life-Giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995.

Dean, Eric. *Saint Benedict for the Laity*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1989.

Dumm, Demetrius O.S.B. *Cherish Christ Above All: The Bible in the Rule of St. Benedict*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1996.

Kardong, Terrence G. *Day By Day With St. Benedict*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2005.

McQuiston, John II. *Always We Begin Again*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing Company, 1996.

Stamps, Mary Ewing. “Lives of Living Prayer: Christomorphism and the Priority of Prayer in the *Rule of St. Benedict*” *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch Before God* edited by E. Byron Anderson and Bruce Morrill, 139-151.

2. Protestant Explorations of the Notion of a Rule of Life for Spiritual Formation

For readers who are unfamiliar with the concept of a rule of life for spiritual formation, Thompson’s *Soul Feast* is particularly winsome. More advanced readers will appreciate the depth of more recent volumes on the topic (Guenther). While it is understandable that someone might want to claim that “there is nothing in the Methodist tradition that is comparable to the Rule of St. Benedict” (Lyons, 1994), that does not mean that the notion of a rule of life for spiritual formation is foreign to the United Methodist tradition. Cartwright has argued that that properly understood,

the “General Rules of the United Societies” are to be understood in the context of spiritual formation as well as moral formation. Showing why the “General Rules” should be regarded as a “Wesleyan rule of life for spiritual formation”—in the context of Christian practices as means of grace—has been the focus of recent essays by Cartwright and others.

The topic of a rule of life for spiritual formation is becoming part of the curriculum of theological education (Anderson and Yust), and it is also an increasingly common topic in theological exploration of vocation programs offered in church-related colleges and universities around the USA.

Persons interested in the cultivation of vocation exploration in colleges and universities will be interested in the explorations of students who are living according to a rule of life (Holderly) either as individuals or as groups (see “Allelon House Rule of Life”)

Cartwright, Michael G. “The General Rules Revisited” in *Catalyst: Contemporary Evangelical Resources for United Methodist Seminarians* Vol. 24, No. 4 (April 1998): 1-2.

_____. “Watching Over One Another in Love: A Commentary on the ‘General Rules of the United Societies’ as a Rule of Life for Spiritual Formation.” Unpublished work-in-progress, available upon request from the author (e-mail: mcartwright@uindy.edu)

Guenther, Margaret. *At Home in the World: A Rule of Life for the Rest of Us*. New York: Seabury Books, 2006.

Holderly, Shalimar. “A Trellis for Shaping the Soul: Discerning an Ethic of Christian Discipleship for Christian Living.” Honors Thesis, written under the supervision of faculty in the Department of Philosophy & Religion at the University of Indianapolis (Feb. 2001).

Lyons, Patrick. “Conversion in the Benedictine and Wesleyan Traditions” *The Asbury Theological Journal* Fall 1995, Vol. 50, No. 2; 1996, Vol. 51, No. 1, 83-94.

Thompson, Marjorie. *Soul Feast: Introduction to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995.

Tomaine, Jane. *St. Benedict’s Toolbox: The Nuts And Bolts of Everyday Benedictine Living*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing Co., 2005.

Yust, Karen-Marie and E. Byron Anderson, *Taught By God: Teaching and Spiritual Formation*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2006. In particular, see chapter seven, “The Rule as Teacher” for discussion of the Rule of St. Benedict, the Rule of the Society of St. John the Evangelist and the General Rules of the United Societies.

3. Rules of Life from Other Christian Orders and Intentional Communities

Delfieux, Pierre-Marie. *The Jerusalem Community Rule of Life*. A translation of *Jerusalem: Livre de Vie* by Sr. Kathleen England with Foreword by Carlo Carletto. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985; previously published in Great Britain under the title of *A City Not Forsaken* London, England: Dartman Longman and Todd, 1985.

Incarnation Abbey (Berkeley, CA). “St. Romauld’s Brief Order for Camadolese Monks” available at <http://www.contemplation.com/Heritage/community.html>

North American Congregation of the Society of St. John the Evangelist. *The Rule of the Society of St. John the Evangelist*. Boston, MA: Cowley Press, 1997.

“The Allelon House Rule of Life.” <http://vocations.uindy.edu/> available from the Lantz Center for Christian Vocations and Formation at the University of Indianapolis.

The Rule of St. Francis. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/stfran-rule.html> and <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06208a.htm>

The Rule of St. Augustine (ca. 400 C. E.) <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/1534/ruleaug.html>

Please note: Members of the Dominican Order (a.k.a “Order of Preachers” or O.P.) follow a modified version of the Rule of St. Augustine.

Bibliographical Review for Academic Explorations

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A. Exploring Monastic History and Tradition in Europe and the USA

Explorations of monastic history are more accessible than ever before thanks in part to the efforts of monastic leaders who have taken the time and trouble to narrate the stories of particular “houses” (Barry, Chittister) and federations of Benedictine communities of men and women. Telling the story of an individual monastic community can be difficult, but the task of narrating monasticism across the span of more than 1500 years is arduous indeed. Some monastic historians even include chapters on Protestant Monastic communities, and a few (King) actually attempt to narrate the rise of monastic communities in Europe as well as the emergence of “monastic longings” in England that cropped up from time to time following the closure of the monasteries in 1539 before the first English expatriate monastic communities returned to England in 1792.

Focused studies of particular “disciples” of Benedict (Farmer) in men’s and women’s community have been published by monasteries in the United Kingdom, and thanks to the Cistercian Studies series, we now have materials about various chapters in the history of Cistercian women’s communities (Kervingant). Narratives about the founders of early Benedictine communities in the American context (Rippinger) are striking for the parallels to the determined character of Protestant missionaries on the frontier. Other commentators have pointed to the variety of ways in which Benedictine communities have enacted the vows. Some of these suggest that the relationship of the contemplative and apostolic dimensions of monasticism has been overgeneralized in ways that have obscured the “charism of creativity” that has marked Benedictine involvement in missionary foundations as well as other apostolic endeavors.

Barry, Colman O.S.B. *Worship and Work: St. John’s Abbey and University 1856-1992*. American Benedictine Academy Historical Studies Number 11. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993.

Chittister, Joan. O.S.B. *The Way We Were: A Story of Conversion and Renewal* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005.

Farmer, David Hugh. (Editor). *Benedict’s Disciples*. Eastbourne, England: Gracewing Publications, 2000.

Hollerman, Ephraim. *The Reshaping of a Tradition: American Benedictine Women. 1852-1981*. St. Joseph, MN: Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict, 1994.

Kervingant, Maria de la Trinite. *A Monastic Odyssey*. Cistercian Studies No. 171. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1999.

King, Peter. *Western Monasticism: A History of the Monastic Movement in the Latin Church*. Spencer, MA: Cistercian Publications, 1999.

Neumann, Matthias O.S.B., “The Creative Charism of Benedictine Monasticism: A Reply to Francis Mannion,” *American Benedictine Review* Vol. 46, No. 3 (Sept. 1995), 250–274.

Rippinger, Joel O.S.B. *The Benedictine Order in the United States: An Interpretive History* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990.

Sutera, Judith. *True Daughters: Monastic Identity and American Benedictine Women’s History*. Privately produced by Mt. St. Scholastica Monastery, 1987.

B. Sources of Benedict's Rule: Monastic Traditions and Precedents

Those interested in pursuing scholarly projects about *The Rule of St. Benedict* may be interested in learning more about the text (Kardong) of the Rule or the history of its application in the context of the “customaries” of particular communities. Others may be interested in the efforts that Benedictine historians (de Vogüé, Gribomont, Holmes) have made to reconstruct the monastic “rules of life” that informed Benedict’s text. Benedictines disagree about whether the primary tributary of influence lies with Cassian and the Egyptian monastics (Adalbert de Vogüé’s position) or with the Cappadocian father, St. Basil (the position of Jean Gribomont). Over the past half-century, however, there can be no question that the conversation has been more attentive to the influences of predecessor rules on the Rule of Benedict of Nursia, rather than reading the text as having been largely original. See the introduction to Holmes’s study of the rules of St. Basil for a helpful overview of this particular controversy in—what some writers have described as—“Benedictine hermeneutics” in the commentary traditions associated with RB.

The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes ed. Timothy Fry, O.S.B. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981. Abbreviated as “RB 1980”.

The Conferences of John Cassian, Translation and Notes by Edgar C. S. Gibson. A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Vol. 11; New York, 1894; www.osb.org/lectio/cassian/conf/index.html

Chitty, Derwas J. *The Desert: A City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism Under the Christian Empire*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1966.

de Vogüé, Adalbert. *Community And Abbot In The Rule of St. Benedict: Volume One*.

Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1979. Volume Two, 1988.

_____. *The Rule Of Saint Benedict: A Doctrinal and Spiritual Commentary*. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1983.

_____. “Twenty-five years of Benedictine Hermeneutics—An Examination of Conscience” *American Benedictine Review* 36:4 (1985) 402-452.

Dumm, Demetrius O.S.B. *Cherish Christ Above All: The Bible in the Rule of St. Benedict*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1996.

Gribomont, Jean O.S.B. “The Commentaries of Adalbert de Vogüé and the Great Monastic Tradition” in *American Benedictine Review* 36.3 (1985): 229-62.

Holmes, Augustine O.S.B. *A Life Pleasing to God: The Spirituality of the Rules of St. Basil* Cistercian Studies 189. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2000.

Stewart, Columba. *Cassian the Monk*. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998

The Rule of the Master. Edited by Adalbert de Vogüé. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications: 1977.

C. Wesleyan-Methodist Resources on Spirituality, Ecclesiology, and Vocation

1. Sources and Materials for Wesleyan Spirituality and/or a Wesleyan Rule of Life

While it is difficult to find a single volume that includes all of the relevant materials from the writings of John and Charles Wesley, there are a few collections that come close (Whaling) United Methodist and Benedictine readers may be curious about what John Wesley wrote on various topics. The “Bicentennial Edition” of *The Works of John Wesley* is an excellent source for reading annotated versions of the series of Sermons on “Scriptural Christianity, (I-4), “The first Fruits of the Spirit” (I-8), “The Witness of the Spirit I & II (I-11-12), “On the Means of Grace” (I-16), “The Sermon on the Mount” (21-33), “The Catholic Spirit” (II-39), “Christian Perfection” (II-40), “The Scripture Way of Salvation” (II-43), “The Good Steward” (II-51), “Of the Church” (III-74), “On Perfection” (III-76), “On Zeal” (III-92), “The Duty of Constant Communion” (III-101), “On Attending Church Services” (III-104), “On the Discoveries of Faith” (IV-117), “On a Single Eye” (IV-125), “The Danger of Increasing Riches” (IV-131), We are very fortunate to have the collection of hymns with annotations (VII).

At present, the best single introduction to the spirituality of John and Charles Wesley is by Paul Chilcote, but such books need to be read with attention to the social history of early Methodism (Heitzenrater). A few theologians (Snyder) have attempted to chart the connections between Methodism and monasticism, or have attempted to show how the Wesleyan practices of covenant accountability (class meetings, etc.) fit with the practices of spiritual direction of the wider Christian tradition (Jones).

The recovery of the traditions associated with the early Methodist “class meeting” (Watson) is an effort that is now extending to a second generation of resources (Manskar, Beasley-Topliffe). In addition, thanks to the efforts of Paul Chilcote (oblate SB), there is a collation of generous quotations from the writings of John Wesley grouped under the headings of “*What to Teach? How to Teach? What to Do?*”—the questions that were the focus of the earliest gatherings of the Methodist Conference in England and America. Lester Ruth has put together a wonderful collection of documents that shed light on the character of early Methodist spiritual practices. Those persons who are interested in exploring the texture of spiritual practice in the lives of early Methodists will find Paul Chilcote’s collection of autobiographical writings of early Methodist women to be invaluable.

Whatever else it may mean for some United Methodists in the first decade of the 21st century to think of themselves as in some sense “Methodist-and-Benedictine,” it means that they must understand their vocational existence in the context of the mystery of God’s providence. To take a leaf from Merton, it may very well be that they find themselves “rediscovering” what it means for them to be “Methodists” in the context of engaging in practices that in contemporary American culture are principally associated with Benedictine communities, and still not be able to fathom the deepest meanings of their calling. It may also be the case, however, that in the context of their conversations, they discover aspects of United Methodist identity that have eluded understanding in the past precisely because of the ways in which American Methodism came into being in circumstances marked by the absence of the monastic vocation, and over the past three centuries has evolved in various precincts, some of which have provided abundant opportunities to re-engage monasticism, and others of which have been deprived of such opportunities.

Abraham, William J. *Wesley for Armchair Theologians* (with illustrations by Ron Hill). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

Beasley-Topliffe, Keith. *Surrendering to God: Living the Covenant Prayer*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2001.

Carter, Kenneth. *A Way of Life in the World: Spiritual Practices for United Methodists*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004.

Chilcote, Paul Wesley. *Her Own Story: Autobiographical Portraits of Early Methodist Women*. Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, an imprint of Abingdon Press, 2001.

_____. *Recapturing the Wesleys’ Vision: An Introduction to the Faith of John and Charles Wesley*. Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

_____. *Wesley Speaks on Christian Vocation*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1986. Although currently out of print, copies of this resource can be obtained from the Cokesbury bookstore at Methodist Theological School, Delaware, Ohio.

Early Methodist Life and Spirituality: A Reader. Edited by Lester Ruth. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press/Kingswood Books, 2005.

Harper, Steve. *Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1981.

Heitzenrater, Richard. *John Wesley and the People Called Methodists*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995.

John and Charles Wesley: Selected Writings and Hymns. Edited with an introduction by Frank Whaling. Preface by Albert C. Outler. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1981.

John Wesley’s Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America with an Introduction by James F. White. Methodist Bicentennial Commemorative Reprint. United Methodist Publishing House and the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, 1984.

Jones, W. Paul. “Communal Spiritual Direction: The Wesleyan Model—A Guide,” chapter 3 in *The Art of Spiritual Direction*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2002, 65-96.

Law, William. *A Serious Call to the Devout and Holy Life*. Western Classics of Spirituality Series. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980.

Maddox, Randy. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology*. Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, An Imprint of Abingdon Press, 1994.

Ruth, Lester. *A Little Heaven Below: Worship at Early Methodist Quarterly Meetings*. Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, an Imprint of Abingdon Press, 2000.

The Works of John Wesley. Vols. 1-4 *Sermons* [No. 1 thru No. 151] Edited by Albert C. Outler. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1980.

_____. Vol. 7. *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*.

_____. Vol. 9. *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*. Edited by Rupert E. Davies. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989.

_____. Vol. 11. *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters*. Edited by Gerald R. Cragg. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989.

2. Wesleyan Methodism as an “Evangelical Order in the Church Catholic”

If Albert Outler’s description of early Methodism as an “evangelical order in the church catholic” is accurate, then the ecclesial “vocation” of Methodism must be placed in the context of the ecumenical movement. A veteran of ecumenical dialogue, Geoffrey Wainwright has offered what some would call a “British Methodist” perspective on Methodist identity within the oikoumene that converges with Outler’s assessment.

John Wesley wrote extensively in an effort to clarify what “Methodism” was and was not intended to be about. See “The Character of the Methodist” (IX-1), the Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies” (IX-3), “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists” (IX-9). According to Albert Outler, Wesley’s “most mature ecclesiological reflections” are found in his sermon “On the Church” (II-74) and its sequel “On Schism” (II-75), both of which were published late in Wesley’s life. In all these cases, Wesley argued forcefully for Methodism as an evangelical movement whose mission was for the whole church, a position of “catholicity” that led to sharp tensions with the Church of England while others described Methodism in various ways vis-à-vis the Roman Catholic Church.

On Wesley’s views about the relation of Methodist piety to that of Catholicism, see the series of three “Open Letters” to Dr. George Lavington, Bishop of Exeter (XI) where Wesley defends Methodism against the charges of those who regard it as an “enthusiastic” movement

like Moravianism in some respects and like Catholicism in other respects. Wesley’s critique of “religious houses” can be found in Sermon 104 “On Not Leaving This World” and his related criticism of hermits and monks can be found in Sermon 81 “In What Sense We Are to Leave the World.”

To date, there is no significant debate about the tributaries of influence that informed the development of the General Rules of the United Societies—at least not a debate that is comparable to the debate between historians of monasticism about the roots of the Rule of St. Benedict (see above). With several recent studies (Long, Cartwright), there are initial signs that this situation may be changing.

Campbell, Ted. *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change* Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books/Abingdon Press, 1991.

Carder, Kenneth L. *Living Our Beliefs: The United Methodist Way*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1996.

John Wesley. Edited by Albert C. Outler in A Library of Protestant Thought. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Knight, Henry III. *The Presence of God: John Wesley and the Means of Grace*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1992.

Long, Steve. *John Wesley’s Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness* Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 2005.

Manskar, Steven W. *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God’s Household*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2000.

Outler, Albert. “Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church” in *The Doctrine of the Church* Ed. Dow Kirkpatrick. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1964, 11-28. See also the reprinted version of this article published in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage: Essays of Albert C. Outler*, edited by Thomas C. Oden and Leicester Longden Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 211-226.

Robbins, Bruce W. “Connection and Koinonia: Wesleyan and Ecumenical Perspectives on the Church” in *United Methodism and American Culture: Vol. 3, Doctrines and Discipline*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 199-212.

Snyder, Howard A. *The Radical Wesley & Patterns for Church Renewal*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980.

Wainwright, Geoffrey. “Ecclesial Location and Ecumenical Vocation” in *The Ecumenical Moment*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987.

Watson, David Lowes. *Covenant Discipleship: Christian Formation Through Mutual Accountability*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1991, 1998.

_____. *The Early Methodist Class Meeting*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1984.

D. United Methodism and American Culture

Although the number of studies of the relationship of United Methodism and American Culture has grown dramatically in recent years (Campbell, Richey et al.), there remains a strong tendency for United Methodists to think as if their cultural experience of Christianity as normative. In some cases, such as populist writings of “Evangelical Methodists” (Case), that tendency has led to an almost total occlusion of the Anglican and Catholic sources tributaries of influence. In other cases, such as the publications of the Order of St. Luke, one finds a very strong emphasis on liturgy, and a high appreciation for the sacraments. Apart from this kind of split between “sacramental” and “evangelical” sensibilities in contemporary United Methodism, it is now possible to find reassessments of theological influences that shaped John Wesley’s moral and spiritual theology (Long), including the origins of United Methodist spiritual practices such as the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer (Beasley-Topliffe).

Vital Congregations—Faithful Disciples: Vision for the Church, a pastoral letter from the United Methodist Council of Bishops issues in 1990 stresses continuity with early Methodism’s emphasis on “holiness of heart and life,” but did not engage the discontinuities of congregational life that have occurred over the past two centuries. Others have offered a constructive critique of the United Methodist Bishops’ pastoral letter. For example, Michael Cartwright has argued that the Council of Bishops’ pastoral letter “reflects but does not resolve the ongoing ecclesiological problem” of American Methodism. While sharing with Outler, Wainwright, et al. the view that the “provisional ecclesiology” of early Methodism still has something to contribute to a “reconstructed” Methodist understanding of its ecclesial vocation in the present, Cartwright raises critical questions about contemporary United Methodist ecclesiology.

One of the issues that until recently has been largely ignored in thinking about the relationship of the United Methodist church and American culture is the question of how the social transformation of Methodism -- in terms of social class -- has altered the church’s self understanding. Wesley’s

preachments about the dangers of riches notwithstanding, American Methodists ultimately did become the great middle class church (Corn), often without knowing how to account for this other than to ally their denominational saga with the narrative of the United States of America.

Meanwhile, in the first decade of the 21st century contemporary theological educators and church leaders in the United Methodist Church continue to hold up the denomination’s origins as “a renewal movement with the church [catholic]” at the same time that they openly acknowledge the “ecclesiological ambivalence about the relationship of ordination to the teaching ministry of the church” in that denomination (see “A Wesleyan Vision for Theological Education” below).

A Wesleyan Vision for Theological Education and Leadership Formation for the 21st Century Foundation Document. Nashville, TN: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church, 2003. <http://www.gbhem.org/asp/resourceLibrary/WesVision/pdf>

Beasley-Topliffe, Keith. *Surrendering to God: Living the Covenant Prayer*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2001.

Campbell, Richey and Lawrence. *United Methodism in American Culture*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Vol. I. *Connectionalism: Ecclesiology, Mission, and Identity*. 1997.

Vol. II. *The People(s) Called Methodist: Forms and Reforms of Their Life*. 1998.

Vol. III. *Doctrines and Discipline*. 1999. See Cartwright’s essay on “The Discipline in Black and White” (99-127) for an analysis of evolution of the practices of Book of Doctrines and Discipline from 1798 to 1908 in Euro-American Methodism and African-American Methodism.

Questions for the Twenty-first Century Church. 1999.

Cartwright, Michael G. “The Pathos and Promise of American Methodist Ecclesiology” in *Asbury Theological Journal* 47/1 (April 1992): 5-25.

Case, Riley. *Evangelical & Methodist: A Popular History*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004.

Corn, Kevin. “*Forward Be Our Watchword*”: *Indiana Methodism and the Modern Middle Class: 1880 to 1930*. Indianapolis, IN: University of Indianapolis Press, to be published in 2007.

Long, Steve. *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness*. Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 2005.

Rattenbury, J. Ernest. *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley*. Cambridge, England: Epworth Press, 1948; American edition edited by Timothy J. Crouch, O.S.L. Cleveland, OH: OSL Publications, 1990.

United Methodist Council of Bishops. *Vital Congregations—Faithful Disciples: Vision for the Church*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1990.

E. Studying Patterns of Christian Spirituality in American Culture

“There is no holiness but social holiness” is one of the sayings of John Wesley that was well-known in the 18th century. Patterns of spirituality in American culture have often displayed yearnings for community, but American “seekers” have also displayed preference for individualistic forms of piety in vivid ways. Some have even argued that this is the most notable feature of American spirituality. For example, Leigh Schmidt contends: “The very development of ‘spirituality’ of American culture was inextricably tied to the rise and flourishing of liberal progressivism and the religious left.”

Often, but not always, such explorations have taken shape within what sociologists have called “experiential expressivist” categories (Bellah et al.) that take the individual as the sole or primary authority within which spiritual exploration takes place. At the same time, perceptive studies of patterns of spiritual pilgrimages are beginning to be published that suggest a very different pattern can also be discerned. As “serious seekers” engage the traditions of Christian spirituality with more attention to the grammar of religious experience and more intentionality about maintaining the integrity of spiritual practices, new alignments are emerging that elude definition according to the older grids of “Protestant” vs. “Catholic,” “liberal” vs. “conservative,” etc.

Midway through the first decade of the 21st century it is not uncommon to find resources (Holt) that attempt to interpret the traditions of Christian spirituality to Christian pilgrims whose “thirst for God” is not being quenched by the manifestations of popular spirituality. Wuthnow and other sociologists of religion have explained the shift from a spirituality of “dwelling” to the “seekers” pattern and the resultant way in

which spiritual practices have gained renewed significance as a formative source of stability in the lives of individuals as well as for congregations, denominations, and other groups.

Bellah, Robert et al. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985.

Bass, Diana Butler. *The Practicing Congregation: Imagining a New Old Church*. Washington, D. C.: The Alban Institute, 2004

Holt, Bradley P. *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005.

Schmidt, Leigh. *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco Publishers, 2005.

Wuthnow, Robert. *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998.

Bibliographic Review: Dialogues and Conversations

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Conversations do not occur in a vacuum. The fact that United Methodists and Benedictines in various precincts have found themselves in conversation about spiritual matters owes much to the kind of scholarly explorations narrated above in Part III. Such conversation has also been funded by scholarly exchanges like the 1994 Dialogue in Rome. Just as persons who might want to convene a group of United Methodists and Benedictines in the future would want to review the records of the conversations of the group that met at St. Brigid of Kildare Monastery on four occasions between September 2002 and March 2004 as well as the records of the Monastic Design Team that met a decade before (see *Occasional Papers #1 from the St. Brigid of Kildare Methodist-Benedictine Consultation*), so also future conversations and dialogues should be aware of some of the adjacent dialogues that have taken place over the past few decades.

Of course, United Methodists are not the only group of Protestants who are interested in Benedictine spirituality. Persons who are interested in pursuing future conversations should be aware of at least three other sets of conversations, some of which have convergent concerns, others of which have proceeded in ways that have sometimes paralleled the “Methodist-Benedictine” conversations and explorations. One of the features common to all of these conversations is the way they deploy the World Wide Web as a tool for networking small communities that would otherwise exist in isolation from one another.

A. Methodist-Benedictine Sanctification Dialogue (from 1994 Dialogue in Rome)

Although archival materials are available (see library at the Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY), the best source for accessing this particular conversation is the special edition of *The Asbury Theological Journal* Fall 1995, Vol. 50, No. 2; 1996, Vol. 51, No. 1. This volume contains the published versions of papers that were originally presented at the World Ecumenical Conference on “Sanctification in the Benedictine and Methodist Traditions” held July 4-10, 1994, in Rome, Italy. Although Wainwright does not attempt to compare these two traditions at the level of their respective “rules for life,” he does provide very useful perspectives about how the two streams of Christian discipleship understand the relationship between the practice of prayer in the context of daily work. Lyons’s article is conspicuous for noting that there is nothing in the Methodist tradition that serves the role played by the Rule of St. Benedict. Should the “General Rules of the United Societies” be dismissed so quickly? Are there not significant senses in which this document served as something like a “rule of life” for early Methodists?

Bondi, Roberta. “Sanctification in the Tradition of the Desert Fathers: A Methodist Perspective” (27-34).

Kardong, Terrence G. “Benedict’s Puzzling Theme of Perfection” (35-44).

Lyons, Patrick. “Conversion in the Benedictine and Wesleyan Traditions” (83-94).

Maddox, Randy L. “Holiness of Heart and Life: Lessons from North American Methodism” (151-172). Some of Maddox’s insights converge with arguments of Cartwright, Outler, and Wainwright noted above.

Parker, Kenneth L. "The Call to Sanctification: Reflection on the Journey of a Methodist-Benedictine" (71-82).

Westerfield Tucker, Karen B. "Benedictines and Methodists in Liturgical Renewal: Currents and Cross-Currents" (211-222).

Wainwright, Geoffrey. "Ora et Labora: Benedictines and Wesleyans at Prayer and at Work" 95-114). See pages 9-22 above.

B. Official Dialogues: The United Methodist Church & the Roman Catholic Church

Thanks to the efforts of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns the official dialogues between Catholics and United Methodists are well documented and readily available in book and web-based forms. Some of the more recent issues also provide a glossary of terms. These resources are designed for those United Methodist and Catholic congregations that are just beginning to have conversations. Depending on the focus and depth of exploration, these documents are not necessarily particularly valuable for the purposes of the Methodist-Benedictine conversation. Although most of these documents do not "map" precisely with the Methodist-Benedictine dialogue that we are re-initiating in the St. Brigid Consultations, they do highlight the fact that even where the topic would lend itself to conversation about the Benedictine way, as in the case of the Holy Living—Holy Dying resource, there is no reference to such concepts as the monastic imperative to "keep death daily before your eyes."

1) Joint Commission for Dialogue Between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council.

_____. *The Denver Report* of the Joint Commission: First Series (1968-1971)

_____. *The Dublin Report* of the Joint Commission: Second Series (1973-1976)

_____. *The Honolulu Report*—Toward an Agreed Statement on the Holy Spirit (1977-1981) Third Series

_____. *Towards a Statement on the Church* (1982-1986) Fourth Series

_____. *The Apostolic Tradition* (1986-1991) Fifth Series

_____. *The Word of Life: A Statement on Revelation and Faith* (1991-1996) Sixth Series

_____. *Speaking the Truth in Love: Teaching Authority Among Catholics and Methodists* (1997-2001) Seventh Series

2) United Methodist Dialogues with United States Catholic Conference

The United Methodist-National Conference of Catholic Bishops Dialogue, *Shared Convictions About Education* (1970).

_____. *Holiness and Spirituality of the Ordained Ministry*. United States Catholic Conference, 1976.

_____. *Eucharistic Celebration: Converging Theology—Divergent Practice* (December 1981).

_____. *Holy Living and Holy Dying: A United Methodist/Roman Catholic Common Statement*. General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, 1981.

_____. *Yearning to Be One: Spiritual Dialogue Between Catholics and United Methodists*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources co-published with United States Catholic Conference, 2000. See also the Web site for the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns <http://www.gcuic-umc.org/web/home.htm>

C. Overviews of the State of the Official Dialogues

Veteran ecumenists from Catholic (Gros) and Methodist (Wainwright) have provided perceptive review of the first two decades of dialogue between these two Christian traditions with a view toward the prospects for future conversations. Perhaps the most telling observation is Gros' comment: "It is not clear where Catholic and Methodist relations will develop in the future." Perhaps this comment could be read by Methodist-Benedictines as an indicator that the life we are living can also be in service to the church. This booklet published by the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious concerns, provides a very helpful overview of "world-level dialogues" and "United States Dialogues" that have taken place over the past four decades. As that resource makes clear, "the most developed network of Methodist-Catholic relationships seems

to be in the United States. While U. S. dialogue has not been as extensive as the global conversation, it has touched upon important ethical and relational issues.” (13)

Gros, Jeffrey. “Toward Full Communion: Roman Catholics and Methodists in Dialogue” in *Quarterly Review* 14/3 (Fall 1994): 241-262.

Wainwright, Geoffrey. *Methodists in Dialogue*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995.

Methodist-Catholic Dialogues: Thirty Years of Mission and Witness. The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns of The United Methodist Church: New York. United States Catholic Conference: New York, 2001. This document is available at the following Web site: www.usccb.org/seia/methcath.shtml

D. Vocation and Spiritual Formation in Church Related Higher Education

Another adjacent conversation that is emerging comes into focus through the conversation about the mission and identity of Catholic colleges and universities that have been founded by Benedictine communities. In some cases, these resources have proven to be useful not only for Catholic educators but for Protestant church-related institutions and educators as well.

The authors challenge contemporary educators to take the measure of Benedictine wisdom about how to foster community as they frame their agenda for building campus community.

Benedictine-related institutions of higher education have also been responsible for producing winsome resources that serve a very practical function of enabling non-Benedictine, non-Catholic, and/or non-Christian members of universities founded by Benedictine communities to understand the terminology specific to that academic community where monastics can be encountered in the classroom as well as in the abbey. In particular, the vocation projects at St. John’s University and St. Benedict’s College have also produced booklets with first-person accounts of the lives and vocations of monastics from men’s communities and women’s communities.

Meanwhile there are also United Methodist-related institutions like the University of Indianapolis that have created Christian vocation programs (Cartwright) that incorporate features of monastic spirituality alongside

Wesleyan emphases. The University of Indianapolis also is the location of “The Allelon House,” an intentional Christian community that was formed in 2004, under the direction of Micah Weedman, and continues to live according to a rule of life for spiritual formation under the direction of Sr. Jennifer Horner O.S.B.

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Cartwright, Michael G. “Hospitality as a Mark of Excellence” President’s Convocation September 7, 2002. A privately printed booklet available from the Office of Ecumenical & Interfaith Programs at the University of Indianapolis.

Klassen, John O.S.B., Emmanuel Renner O.S.B., and Mary Reuter O.S.B. “Catholic, Benedictine Values in an Educational Environment” available from Saint John’s University Vocation Project Office as a reprint of article originally published in *American Benedictine Review* 53, No. 2 (June 2002), 147-74.

Hagan, Harry O.S.B. and Carney Strange. “Benedictine Values and Building Campus Community” in *The Cresset: A Review of Literature, Arts and Public Affairs* Vol LXI, No. 6 (Trinity 1998): 5-13. See also “The Rule of St. Benedict and Student Life Programs” audio recording of session at which Hagan and Strange spoke during the 2000 American Benedictine Academy Meeting.

Placher, William. (Editor) *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*. Eerdmans, 2005.

Schwehn, Mark and Dorothy Bass. editors *Leading Lives That Matter: What We Should Do and Who We Should Be*. Eerdmans, 2006

“Table Talk: A Key to Benedictine Conversation.” Collegeville, MN: St. John’s University, 2002. This resource is available through the Vocation Project Office, Luke Hall 209, Collegeville, MN 56321.

A Way of Life, A Way of Faith: Benedictines in Central Minnesota (Collegeville, MN: St. John's University, 2002). This resource is available through the Vocation Project Office, Luke Hall 209, Collegeville, MN 56321.

E. Bridgefolk: The Emerging Dialogue between Anabaptists and Catholics in North America

To a significant extent, the conversation that has emerged between North American Mennonites and Roman Catholics has been made possible by the hospitality of monastic communities such as St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. As the following statement explains,

"Bridgefolk is a movement of sacramentally-minded Mennonites and peace-minded Roman Catholics who come together to celebrate each other's traditions, explore each other's practices, and honor each other's contribution to the mission of Christ's Church. Together we seek better ways to embody a commitment to both traditions. We seek to make Anabaptist-Mennonite practices of discipleship, peaceableness, and lay participation more accessible to Roman Catholics, and to bring the spiritual, liturgical, and sacramental practices of the Catholic tradition to Anabaptists." Bridgefolk has an archive of materials on their website: <http://www.bridgefolk.net/resources/>

Gerald Schlabach, Associate Professor of Theology at St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota is one of the leaders of this group. Interested readers can find a variety of resources and personal statements like "The Vow of Stability: A Premodern Way through a Hypermodern World" on Schlabach's Web site—<http://personal.stthomas.edu/gwschlabach/docs>

Gerald Schlabach's articles are instructive in a variety of ways, not least of which is the definition he provides for the terms "Catholic Mennonites" or "Mennonite Catholics":

"We are Christians who seek to be nurtured by the fullest possible communion of Christian communities through the centuries and across the globe, even as we seek to follow Jesus Christ in life without deferring to his teachings or betraying the nonviolent wisdom of his cross. We can do neither of these except in the eschatological hope that believes that the peaceable Kingdom he proclaimed is a present reality, and that the Church

for whose unity he prayed (that it might witness to that Kingdom) is also a present reality. Nonetheless, for both Christian unity and God's peaceable Kingdom, we painfully await the gift of their fullness. We are caught then between the 'already' of hope that calls us to live now according to both of these realities, and the 'not yet' histories that require honesty concerning the failures of our traditions to do so. Thus, no ecclesial structure feels altogether like home – and any way home is one we can only 'see through a glass darkly.'"

While Schlabach's statement might or might not provide a basis for stating analogous definitions of "Methodist-Benedictine" identity, it is worth pondering nonetheless.

F. The New Monasticism Movement or Ecclesial Lay Monastic Communities of the 21st Century

This movement coalesced in a conference held in Durham, North Carolina, in June 2004 that was hosted by The Rutba House, a Christian community of hospitality, peacemaking and discipleship in the Walltown neighborhood of Durham, NC. Although diverse in background, this network is remarkable for the number of "twenty-something" men and women who are forming intentional Christian communities in the first decade of the 21st century. Taking their cue from the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre in his book *After Virtue* (1982)—as re-articulated by the Canadian Anabaptist theologian Jonathan Wilson—the New Monastics are founding new forms of sociality in the dark world in which we await a new and very different St. Benedict. These Christian radicals are embracing the challenges of neighborhood blight, unreconciled communities, and class-based ignorance while embracing the promise of embodying the Christian gospel in intentional Christian communities.

With a few exceptions, to date the conversations of the "New Monasticism" network have not been with communities in the Benedictine tradition, but more with the heirs of the Anabaptists, particularly intentional communities founded in the mid-to-late 20th century (Reba Place Fellowship, The Church of the Servant King) and mendicant traditions of spirituality associated with St. Francis of Assisi. In that respect, it seems to have something in common with "the radical Wesley" (see book by that title by Howard Snyder). A Web site for the network

is also administered by the members of the Rutba House Community:
<http://www.newmonasticism.org/>

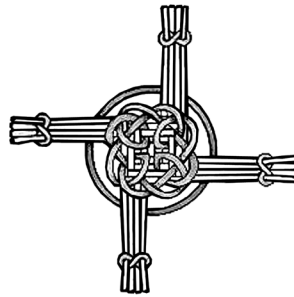
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Afterword: Agenda for Further Inquiry and Exploration

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The materials collected in this second booklet of “Occasional Essays” are intended to serve the needs of United Methodists who are oblates and friends of monastic communities. Some of these oblates and friends are scholars. Some are not. Regardless, I would like to think that there are multiple levels of inquiry that can be undertaken. Some inquiries will be personal and/or devotional, some for particular “houses” or intentional Christian communities, and some for the wider scholarly communities, etc. Here I identify *seven* trajectories that I think are worth pursuing. I have a personal interest in several of these tasks, and I know others in the United Methodist Church who already have launched inquiries in the other trajectories listed below.

1. Recovery of the Sources of the Wesleyan Rule of Life:

My forthcoming essay “What Do Benedict of Nursia and William Law Have to Do with John Wesley?” constitutes my own attempt at narrating the connections that exist between the Wesleyan Rule of Life and the tradition of monasticism. I would be the first to admit that the subjects of comparison that I used in that essay are two of the most obvious candidates for assessment, once one decides to take seriously the prospect that John Wesley may have owed more to sources ancient and contemporary than most Methodists have recognized and/or acknowledged. As I indicated in the conclusion of that paper, there are other kinds of connections that could be drawn. It could be very illuminating for persons to do focused studies that compare the practice of the rules of Dominic and Francis (in particular communities) with the ways the “General Rules” has been practiced (in particular Methodist “societies”) over time.

2. Comparison of the Texts of the *Rule of Benedict* with the

“General Rules”: Although there are no published examples—as far as I know—of such comparisons, those who are interested might begin by compare segments of the prologue of the Rule of St. Benedict with the General Rules to see how such an inquiry might proceed. While various

kinds of scholars will bring particular sets of tools (literary, linguistic, social, historical) to bear on this kind of exercise, this kind of comparative reading need not be left to the scholars. Lay and clergy alike will benefit from reading the Rule of St. Benedict and reflecting on how wisdom associated with the latter may inform our appropriation of the “General Rules of the United Societies” as the documentary expression of a Wesleyan Rule of Life.

3. Commentaries on the General Rules as a Rule of Life for

Spiritual Formation: For many years I have been advocating the importance of reviving the commentary tradition that was lost in American Methodism about the same time that the status of “probationary membership” of the laity was lost. More recently, I have dared to take the step of trying to write such a commentary,¹ and while I am hardly satisfied with the initial results, I am more than ever convinced that this task is worth doing, particularly if those of us who are in a position to produced such commentaries are careful to do so with other key texts such as the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer and the hymns of Charles Wesley in view.

4. Review and Assessment of Previous Commentaries on the

General Rules: Although it is true that much of the American commentary tradition on the “General Rules of the United Societies” was moralistic, that does not mean that there are not nuggets to be reclaimed by the heirs of John and Charles Wesley from those items located in the “treasure chest” of the Wesleyan tradition. I believe that there is much to be learned as we gather wisdom and insight from those who practiced “Watching Over One Another in Love” in previous centuries. The names of Nathaniel Bangs, Moses Henkle, and Hilary Hudson are three of the most noteworthy American Methodist commentators on the General Rules that should be consulted. I am also eager to identify commentators (published and unpublished) from other wings of the Wesleyan family from which wisdom can be gleaned.

5. Recovery of Practices of Discipleship that funded the Wesleyan Rule of Life. The practice of “giving and receiving counsel” is being recovered in our time. Searching the Scriptures is another practice that we are beginning to recover as United Methodists and others recover the practice of *lectio divina* as a spiritual practice. The re-emergence of a “hermeneutic of trust”² in biblical scholarship may also be a harbinger of renewed prospects for searching the scriptures in ways that are not anti-intellectualist on the one hand and not captive to sterile forms of academic analysis on the other.

6. Prospect of Developing Methodist-Benedictine Daily Prayer

Resources: Dr. Ron Anderson and Dr. Mary Ewing Stamps continue to discuss the prospect of gathering resources that can be used by United Methodists who are engaged in the practice of morning and evening prayer. From Anderson’s vantage point, one step forward is to assemble a “core bibliography” of Wesley materials that can serve as a kind of “companion” to the *Daily Prayer Book*. These would included but not be limited to Wesley’s Sermons on the Sermon on the Mount, Sermon on the Means of Grace, Sermons on the Beatitudes, as well as selected hymns of Charles Wesley, etc.

7. Ongoing question of how to narrate Methodist Benedictine journeys in relation to the various “odysseys” of Benedictines across time and around the world:

Here there are two kinds of stories to be told. On the one hand, we need to gather the stories of the lives lived of individuals who are living according to the Rule of St. Benedict. The collection of “oblate stories” in *Benedictines in the World* may serve as a suggestive guide for such explorations. And while it would be anachronistic as well as misleading (to ourselves and others) to pretend that eighteenth century British Methodists like Mary Bosanquet Fletcher and Sarah Crosby were “Methodist-Benedictines,” it nevertheless might be illuminating to narrate their respective “monastic longings” in relation to Benedictines in England before and after the eras in which they lived.

At the same time, we need to pay attention to the stories of communities that have been founded in the past and/or that are in the process of being founded Here narratives like the one by Mary Ewing Stamps (see Occasional Papers #1) will be very helpful for future exploration. Finally, we need to learn more about the wider set of Benedictine communities so that we can learn in what ways our story fits within the complex 1500 plus years of history of living according to the rule. I suspect that it will take some time before we start to learn which analogies are most apt, and which are misleading.³ With that counsel of humility in view, what we cannot afford to do as “stewards” (Matthew 13:52) of all that we have been given is to make the mistake—as individual pilgrims, as scholars, and “Methodist-Benedictine” leaders—of not broaching such inquiries at a time when there is such great spiritual hunger.

Notes

- ¹ Although I am not ready to seek publication of the material that I have written about the General Rules as a Rule of Life for Spiritual Formation, I will be happy to make copies of “Watching Over One Another in Love” available to interested readers provided that they agree to give me feedback that I can use in revision of this material.
- ² See Richard Hays, *Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005).
- ³ For example, the more that I have learned about the ways that apostolic and contemplative aspects of Benedictine life have been understood and practiced in English Benedictine communities, the more I am inclined to believe that the story of the “monastic longings” of early Methodism does in fact belong to that wider story of what God is doing among the disciples of St. Benedict.

