ATHENTIC CHRISTIAN WORSHIP:

DISCOVERING WESLEY'S CRITERIA

by

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Wesleyan Theological Conference

March 2009

An Introduction to the Problem

The nineteenth-century American holiness movement was a revival of John Wesley's emphasis on Christian perfection. The denominations identified with this movement, especially those with strong ecclesial ties to their Methodist heritage, have consciously attempted to stick to traditional Wesleyan teachings.

Nevertheless, most have strayed far from Mr. Wesley concerning their understanding and practice of worship. My own denomination, the Church of the Nazarene, like other Wesleyan-holiness churches, has been quick to embrace Wesley's warmhearted faith, but have failed to be as enthusiastic about his liturgical/sacramental inclinations. American Methodism in general had early traded in Wesley's version of *The Book of Common Prayer*, which he titled *The Sunday Service of the Methodist in North America* (*The Sunday Service*), for American frontier revivalism (*John Wesley's Prayer Book*). As camp meetings were adopted by holiness proponents, entire sanctification became the focal point. Immediacy of experience, spontaneity, and feelings played a primary role in this movement.

Concern that people experience the new birth and that believers go on to experience entire sanctification has led the Church of the Nazarene and other Wesleyan-holiness denominations to adopt a revivalistic mode of preaching with corresponding altar calls in order to lead people into these Christian experiences. The prizing of a sense of the Holy Spirit's presence and spontaneity have led to the diminishing importance of sacramental worship, the latter of which is often seen as a part of formal, non-spiritual, or dead religion.

As Brad Estep says, "The holiness movement of the nineteenth century was not a movement of liturgical reform; it was, rather, the revival of a doctrinal emphasis perceived to have been lost" (98). James R. Spruce, after reflecting upon various early accounts of Nazarene worship, concludes by saying, "Thus, Nazarenes worshiped—or even more accurately, celebrated!" (39). He understands his comment to be positive, but I see it as the issue at hand. What those early Nazarenes and other Wesleyans did is more accurately described as celebration, not worship. As Randall E. Davey rightly asserts, "In the early Nazarenes' zeal to promote holiness and minister to the poor, it seems fair to say that they uncritically embraced a worship form framed by pragmatism, rationalism, self-reliance, personal piety and innovations" (3-4). As David Pendleton has said, "The experience tends to be emotionally driven and rather self-focused. In other words, we have gathered to be fed spiritually rather than to offer ourselves in worship to a Holy God" (11-12).

As a denomination, the early Nazarenes did not operate out of a conscious theology of worship. Even today, Nazarenes have no official theology of worship. Each pastor and congregation decide how they will worship God. As culture has changed, many Nazarenes have found that the worship forms of the nineteenth-century camp meetings are no longer viable. They have, therefore, sought guidance from various sources:

> With the 1970's advent of the Church Growth movement, the Kennedy School of Evangelism and the 1980's Willow Creek phenomena, Nazarenes have become increasingly eclectic in worship to the discomfort of some, the displeasure of others and the delight of not a few.
>
> After ninety years of relative silence on the rubrics of worship, Nazarenes are ripe for the "take over." With their pragmatic bent and penchant for innovation, they have pressed the extremes of "spirit" and "structure," driven by an ardent desire to "grow the church." (Davey 12)

Like their early Nazarene heritage, the pursuit for effective worship patterns has often been led by an uncritical pragmatism that has prized an emotionalism tending to be self-focused. One missing source as Nazarenes have sought guidance in the area of worship is the denominations spiritual forefather, John Wesley.

When they look to Wesley for guidance concerning worship, they encounter a stark contrast with the sources above. Wesley was certainly the father of warmhearted religion. He was committed to evangelism. He was concerned about the genuine presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of worshippers, but the pattern found in Wesley is that of "spirit *via* [original emphasis] structure" (Staples 288). This same warmhearted evangelical was also a "High Churchman, the son of a High Churchman" (Wesley, *Journal* 325):

> *Both* [original emphasis] spirit and structure were important, and they were not mutually exclusive. Structure was not opposed to spirit but its very conduit. Forms of worship, ordered services, the *Book of Common Prayer,* hymns that directed the soul to God, ancient creeds, written prayers, and the like were the very channels through which God could send His convicting, regenerating, sanctifying Spirit. They were "means of grace." (Staples 288)

If Nazarenes and other Wesleyan Christians were to look to John Wesley for guidance concerning worship, they would discover a very different kind of criteria than those presently adopted by many Nazarenes.

Biblical/Theological Foundations

The fundamental task of the Church is the worship of God. The first question in the "Westminster Shorter Catechism" seeks to identify the chief aim of humankind. The answer given in the Catechism is exactly right: "to glorify God and enjoy him forever"

(200). The order of the content of that answer is significant. Glorifying God is first.

Examples of Scripture passages that command or call people to worship are numerous. One such passage is 1 Chronicles 16:29: "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come before him. Worship the Lord in holy splendor" (NRSV). Of course, the Scriptures include other commands, and many within the Church would point to the Great Commission. They would argue that the fundamental task of the Church is evangelism. The fact is, both are important, and neither can be left out. Nevertheless, when people look at Matthew 28:17, they discover that the Great Commission is given in the context of worship. Further, Jesus summarizes all of the commandments in the Great Commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). That passage is a worship command.

The first four of the Ten Commandments assume people's role as worshippers:

> I am the LORD your God; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol.… You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God.… You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God.… Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.… But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. (Exod. 20:2-10)

Creation demands that worship be seen as people's fundamental activity. The idea that people were created calls them to stand in awe of their Creator, to adore their Creator, and to worship their Creator.

Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that the Father seeks worshippers who will worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Jesus, during his wilderness temptations, tells the devil that "[i]t is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him'" (Luke 4:8). Jesus is seen as supporting Israel's worship practice in the temple, the

synagogue, and in observing religious feasts.

The New Testament Church emphasized the importance of worship. Throughout the book of Acts and the epistles, readers see the continuing involvement of Christians with the established Jewish patterns of worship. In addition to the services of the Word found in synagogue worship, early Christians gathered in homes to celebrate the Eucharist. Further, Hebrews 10:25 warns Christians not to neglect meeting together, which Wesley understood to mean the meeting together for worship (*Explanatory Notes* 585).

Because worship is the fundamental task of the Church and since the Church's worship is to be directed towards God, then worship demands Christians' utmost consideration. In fact, Wesley understood corporate worship to be so essential to Christianity that in his fourth discourse, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount," he says, "By Christianity I mean that method of worshipping God which is here revealed to man by Jesus Christ" (*Works* Bicentennial 1: 533). Mark Horst is correct in stating that, for the Wesleyan tradition, worship in its broadest sense "encompasses not only public rituals and private devotions, but the Christian life in all its fullness" (297). Nevertheless, essential to that Christian life is corporate worship. Wesley argues that "Christianity is essentially a social religion, and that to turn it into a solitary religion is indeed to destroy it" (*Works* Bicentennial 1: 533).

Wesley, according to James F. White, espoused a vision for the Christian life that built firmly upon the foundation of "the God-given means of grace, particularly sacrament, scripture, and prayer" (Introduction 9). Wesley based his pattern for the Christian life on "a community gathering each Sunday for morning and evening prayer,

and celebrating the Lord's Supper 'on every Lord's day'" (9).

Wesley developed such an understanding of worship within the Christian life from such passages of Scripture as Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers." When commenting on this verse, Wesley says, "So their daily church communion consisted in these four particulars: 1. Hearing the word; 2. Having all things common; 3. Receiving the Lord's Supper; 4. Prayer" (*Explanatory Notes* 281).

In speaking from Colossians 2:20, Wesley insists this passage refers to a freedom from Jewish ordinances. He further insists that Christians are still obligated to observe the ordinances of Christ:

> Consequently this has no reference to the *ordinances of Christ* [original emphasis], such as prayer, communicating, and searching the Scriptures. (3) That Christ himself spake that "Men *ought* [original emphasis] always to pray," and commands "not to forsake the assembling ourselves together," to "search the Scriptures," and to eat bread and drink wine "in remembrance of him." (4) That the *commands* [original emphasis] of Christ *oblige* [original emphasis] all who are called by his name, whether (in strictness) believers or unbelievers, seeing "whosoever breaketh the least of these commandments shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." (*Works* Bicentennial 19: 156)

Thus, Wesley bases his understanding of many of the acts of worship upon the clear commands of Christ. By tying the Lord's words about prayer from Luke 18:1 to the command concerning the assembling together from Hebrews 10:25, Wesley demonstrates his presupposition that the command to pray includes prayer within the context of corporate worship.

Further, Wesley understands such acts of corporate worship to be means of grace. He says, "For God hath in Scripture ordained prayer, reading or hearing, and receiving the Lord's Supper, as the ordinary means of conveying his grace to man" (*Works*

Bicentennial 19: 157). In order to demonstrate prayer as a means of grace, Wesley refers to Matthew 7:7 and Luke 11: 9 where Christ insists that if Christians ask in prayer, they will receive (157). Wesley demonstrates that reading and hearing the Scriptures are means of grace by pointing to Romans 10:17 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. He says that every believer knows by experience that "'all Scripture is profitable,' or a means to this end, 'that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works'" (158).

Wesley insists that in the ancient Church all baptized believers participated in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper every day. This statement is buttressed by referring to Acts 2:46's report that they "all continued daily in the breaking of bread and prayer" (*Works* Bicentennial 19: 158). In his *Explanatory Notes,* Wesley comments upon this passage: "*Continuing daily—breaking the bread—*[original emphasis] in the Lord's supper, as did many churches for some ages" (Acts 2:46). He further insists that "the Lord's Supper was ordained by God to be a *means of conveying* [original emphasis] to men either *preventing* [original emphasis] or *justifying* [original emphasis], or *sanctifying grace* [original emphasis], according to their several necessities" (*Works* Biecentennial 19: 159).

Wesleyan worship, therefore, is more than mere outward forms. Wesleyan worship brings worshippers into the presence of God where they lovingly contemplate God's holiness (Horst 297):

> Whether they appear in the great congregation to "pay him honour due unto his name, and worship him in the beauty of holiness;"… whether they search the oracles of God, or hear the ambassadors of Christ proclaiming glad tidings of salvation; or by eating of the bread and drinking of that cup "show forth his death till he come" in the clouds of heaven. In all these his appointed ways they find such a near approach as cannot be expressed. (*Works* Bicentennial 1: 514)

Wesleyan worship uses outward forms to bring us to God.

As demonstrated above, Wesley understands Scripture to teach that Christian worship involves the unity of "inward power and outward form" (Horst 297). As Horton Davies says, Wesleyan worship blends "the Spirit and the Liturgy" (240). On the one hand, "The nature of religion is so far from consisting in … forms of worship, or rites and ceremonies, that it does not properly consist in any outward actions of what kind so ever" (*Works* Bicentennial 1: 219). On the other hand, if one does not mistake "the means for the end," then Wesley argues that Christians should "use all outward things; but use them with a constant eye to the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness" (545). The outward forms are not *ends* in themselves, but Scripture indicates that they are given by God to be used as *means* of grace. As demonstrated above, Wesley evidenced a biblical theology of worship wherein the Spirit works through the forms of worship.

Scripture demonstrates that worship is the fundamental task of the Church; thus, worship demands Christians' utmost consideration. The biblical theology of worship seen in Wesley was formed around the understanding that God revealed to the Church through Scripture his desire for the Church's worship. In particular, Wesley focused upon God having given to the Church the Word and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, along with prayer, as means of grace. Thus, Christian worship consists of the interplay between the Church and God. As the Church worships according to God's revelation, God's grace is poured out to the Church. Such a revelation from God, as seen in Scripture, demonstrated by the primitive Church, worked out by reason, and confirmed by experience, forms the foundation for Christian worship that may be understood to be authentically Wesleyan.

WESLEY'S CRITERIA

Introduction

In 1784 Wesley sent to the people called Methodist living in North America his revision of the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England. He titled it, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America (The Sunday Service).* In his letter to Coke, Asbury, and the Methodists in North America, Wesley indicates that his revision of the *Book of Common Prayer* was made in response to the advice sought by American Methodists in order that "those poor sheep in the wilderness" might be fed and guided (*John Wesley's Prayer Book* a-ii). In his preface to *The Sunday Service*, Wesley writes, "I believe that there is no liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England" (A1).

This statement indicates that Wesley assessed the value of particular forms of worship based, at least in part, upon two branches of what Albert C. Outler identifies as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral (7-18). The Church's worshipping of God in a way that was "Scriptural and rational" was vitally important for Wesley. In the letter that accompanied *The Sunday Service,* Wesley says that the American Methodists "are now at full liberty, simply to follow the scriptures and the primitive church" (iii). Thus, he added a third leg of the quadrilateral to his basis for evaluating forms of worship. Karen Westerfield Tucker adds the final leg of the quadrilateral by saying that Wesley's theological criteria for his revision of the Anglican prayer book included evangelical experience (*Sunday Service* 19).

Wesley was not satisfied with the "worship" of the Methodist societies alone. He considered them, apart from Anglican worship, to be essentially defective. As Lester Ruth indicates, Wesley argued that they lacked the kind of breadth found in the services of worship in the Church of England, and apart from the worship of the established church, Methodist worship was an unbalanced diet (140).

Wesley's vision for the Christian life, as demonstrated within his prayer book revision, according to White, was "firmly built upon the God-given means of grace, particularly sacrament, scripture, and prayer" (Introduction 9). The pattern espoused for the Christian life was "based on a community gathering each Sunday for morning and evening prayer, and celebrating the Lord's Supper 'on every Lord's day'" (9). It took seriously Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers," and it understood "the breaking of the bread" to be the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

I enthusiastically agree with Henry H. Knight, III's argument that "it is the necessity of experiencing the presence and identity of God in a relationship with God that implicitly underlies Wesley's insistence on the patterning of the means of grace" (11). I am contending that that which Tucker identifies as "evangelical experience" (*Sunday Service* 19) ought to be expanded to include this same principle of the necessity of experiencing both the presence and the identity of God. This expansion of the understanding of experience helps to form the criteria whereby worship can be assessed as being authentically Wesleyan.

Scriptural Piety

The first Wesleyan criterion for planning and assessing worship is that of a scriptural piety (cf., Wesley, *John Wesley's Prayer Book* A1). The first question that must be answered is what Wesley means when he uses the term "scriptural." The second question that must be answered is how this term applies to the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England. By answering these two questions, "scriptural piety" will be established as a Wesleyan criterion for assessing worship.

The Meaning of "Scriptural"

As indicated above, Wesley tended to look to four main sources as theological norms, though he certainly did not use such a term as "quadrilateral." Wesley inherited the first three from his own Anglican tradition. To these three he added the norm of experience. The one leg of the quadrilateral that held preeminence above the other three was that of Scripture. As H. Ray Dunning correctly states, "Properly understood, the three auxiliary sources [of theology] directly support the priority of biblical authority" (77).

Wesley refers to himself as *homo unius libri,* a man of one book (*Works* Bicentennial 1: 105). In fact, he claims such a term for all of those in the "holy club":

> From the very beginning, from the time that four young men united together, each of them as *homo unius libri*—a man of one book. God taught them all to make his "Word a lantern unto their feet, and a light in all their paths." They had one, and only one rule of judgment with regard to all their tempers, words, and actions, namely, the oracles of God. They were one and all determined to be *Bible-Christians* [original emphasis]. ...And indeed to this day it is their constant endeavour to think and speak as the oracles of God. (3: 504)

From this statement, and in this sense, Scott J. Jones declares that for Wesley "Scripture alone is the authority for Christian faith and practice. On this point Wesley is definite. It

is the Bible that serves as the final court of appeal" (41). Any student of Wesley will readily agree with Jones that "it is fair to characterize Wesley's writings as embedded with scriptural quotations and allusions" (43). He illustrates this point by referring to one representative sample of Wesley's writings wherein he quotes the Bible 2,181 times. In that same writing, other early Church sources are only referred to fourteen times (43).

With this background in mind, the student of Wesley can easily see that when he referred to something as being "scriptural," he meant that it was either filled with, founded upon, based upon, flowed from, or consistent with the Bible and its teachings. Further, something could be viewed as scriptural if it proclaimed the gospel message of Jesus Christ as found in Scripture. In this sense Tucker can speak of Wesley's belief that no creedal or conciliar decisions of the Church have any authority unless they conform to the witness of Scripture (*Sunday Service* 20). By implication, if those creedal statements did conform to the witness of Scripture, they could be considered as having authority because they were "scriptural" statements.

The Book of Common Prayer as Scriptural

Many would argue that the Scriptures have been worked more thoroughly into Anglican worship than any other branch of Christianity (Tracy and Ingersol 102). Scripture is sprinkled throughout the prayer book (105). Bishop Stephen Neill indicates that the creeds and the liturgy of the prayer book express its strong biblical quality. In fact, he insists that "the Anglican Churches read more of the Bible to [those attending worship] than any other group of Churches" (418). The basis for his statement is not only to the use of the lections but also to the biblical content found throughout the liturgy.

This biblical content illustrates one important way in which the English liturgy

would have been considered by Wesley to be scriptural. The Scripture content of Wesley's *The Sunday Service* is emphasized by White:

> Scripture there was in abundance in Wesley's services: a lesson from the Old Testament was provided for each Sunday both for morning and evening prayer in his table of proper lessons; abundant psalmody was arranged over a thirty-day period; and the liturgical epistles and gospels were retained as provided in the BCP. A note suggests that a gospel chapter be read at morning prayer and an epistle chapter at evening prayer. By far the largest portions of the book are devoted to selections from Scripture. (Introduction 10)

What White says of Wesley's *The Sunday Service* is equally true of the *Book of Common Prayer.* Nearly 95 percent of the prayer book comes straight from the Bible (Hobbs 8):

> The opening sentences are Bible verses; the Lord's prayer is taken from Matthew; the versicles are from the Psalms; the Venite is simply Psalm 95 and 96 arranged into a single Psalm;… the Benedictus is out of Luke 1 (or, if the Puritan substitution of the Jubilate be followed, it is the 100th Psalm); and the final grace is from one of Paul's letters. (9)

Even parts of the prayer book that are not direct quotes from Scripture are often compilations of various biblical passages. The General Confession is an example of such a compilation (8).

In fact, with the exception of the replacement of certain readings from the Apocrypha with those from canonical Scriptures, Wesley ends up with less Scripture than the Church of England's prayer book for two reasons. First, unlike the *Book of Common Prayer,* Wesley did not make morning and evening prayer a *daily* office. Rather, Wesley indicated in the letter that accompanied *The Sunday Service* that the liturgy, including the Lord's Supper, should be used every Lord's day. The litany was to be read on Wednesdays and Fridays, and extemporaneous prayers should be made on all other days (*John Wesley's Prayer Book* ii). Thus, the intended use of the English book provided more Scripture throughout the week than did Wesley's *The Sunday Service.*

The second reason the Church of England's version contained more Scripture was Wesley's pruning of the prayer book. Wesley cuts out thirty-four of the 150 psalms. He removes verses from fifty-eight more psalms, shrinking the prayer book from 2,502 verses to 1,625 verses in *The Sunday Service* (White, Introduction 10). In addition, Wesley shortened the prayer book by deleting such sections as the *Venite* (Psalm 95). The fact that Wesley made so many deletions is not to imply *The Sunday Service* is not scriptural. In fact, some of Wesley's deletions from the English version were made because Wesley judged them to be "scripturally indefensible" (Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* 5). The point is that the English prayer book contained even more Scripture than did Wesley's revision.

The thorough use of Scripture in the prayer book is not the only reason for Wesley's assessment of the English liturgy. As surely as the gospel is proclaimed through the liturgy, it may be assessed as being scriptural. The prayer book announces the commandments, calls people to repentance, assures them of forgiveness, proclaims Christ and the promises of God, and calls people to experience God's grace through the sacrament. Wesley would have seen all of this proclamation of the gospel as being thoroughly scriptural, despite those few "scripturally indefensible" portions. In addition, I would suggest that the observance of the Christian festivals as outlined in the calendar of the prayer book assisted in the proclamation of the gospel story throughout the year.

However, when Wesley declared the prayer book to be scriptural, he did not mean the particular liturgies or structures therein were found explicitly in the Bible. The radical Puritans insisted upon explicit precedents in Scripture for worship practices. Wesley saw no reason to insist that the Scriptures "be the blueprint for Christian worship"; valid

forms could indeed "flow" from Scripture (Tucker, *Sunday Service* 20). Wesley indicates such in "Ought We to Separate from the Church of England?":

> "But is not the Bible the only rule of Christian worship?" Yes, the only *supreme* [original emphasis] rule. But there may be a thousand rules *subordinate* [original emphasis] to this, without any violation of it at all. For instance the supreme rule says, "Let all things be done decently and in order." Not repugnant to, but plainly flowing from this, are the subordinate rules concerning the time and place of divine service. And so are many others observed in Scotland, Geneva, and in all other Protestant churches. (*Works* Bicentennial 9: 570)

Thus, the prayer book conforms to Scripture once again.

As indicated, the use of the prayer book necessarily includes an emphasis upon the sacraments. The high view of the sacraments demonstrated by Wesley's *The Sunday Service* is thoroughly biblical. As J. Kenneth Grider says, "Sacraments are needed … because they were instituted by Christ himself" (492). As one sees from Luke 22:7-20, Jesus clearly instituted the Lord's Supper. Further, the New Testament Church continued the observance of the sacrament (see 1 Cor. 11:26). While biblical scholars must admit that Christ did not *overtly* command converts to be baptized (493), he did give the example by being baptized himself (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). Further, he gave the Great Commission, commanding that Christians baptize (Matt. 28:19). In addition, any survey of Acts and the Pauline epistles will show the importance of baptism. William Greathouse affirms the importance of the sacraments for the New Testament Church:

> In the New Testament church there simply were no unbaptized Christians, and every Lord's Day the early Christians celebrated Christ's atoning sacrifice by eating His body and drinking His blood in the simple faith that He was present with them at the table. (11-12)

Further, Wesley's understanding of the New Testament and early Church was such that he could write that the Lord's Supper was "a constant part of the Lord's day's service.

And for several centuries they received it almost every day. Four times a week always, and every saint's day beside" (*Works* Bicentennial 3: 430).

While Wesley did not see particular structures of worship explicitly demonstrated within the Bible, the general structure of worship found within the prayer book can be seen as consistent with a biblical foundation. Richard C. Leonard infers an outline of Davidic worship from relevant Psalms and historical accounts, such as 1 Chronicles 16. His outline of Davidic worship includes the Pilgrimage, the Call to Worship, the Procession, the Ascent, the Entrance, the Praise of the King, Preparation for the Appearance of the Lord, and Renewal of the Covenant (123-24).

David F. Pendleton sees similarities between Leonard's outline of Davidic worship and Webber's fourfold pattern consisting of Acts of Entrance, Service of the Word, Service of the Table, and Acts of Dismissal. Pendleton understands the first five acts of Davidic worship as Acts of Entrance. He sees the Service of the Word as consisting of the Preparation for the Appearance of the Lord, and he connects the Renewal of the Covenant with the Service of the Table. In the Acts of Dismissal, the people would reaffirm the covenant using the words of Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (27-30).

Webber sees this fourfold pattern as being rooted in Scripture. He points to Acts 2:42, which demonstrates that early Christians gathered in worship around the apostles' teaching and the breaking of bread in the context of prayer and fellowship. In this passage, he finds evidence that from its inception, Christian worship had two primary focuses: Word and Table. To these were added acts of gathering and acts by which worshippers were sent forth (*Planning Blended Worship* 20).

Modern Methodists have seen in the Emmaus Road account (Luke 24) an illustration of the basic fourfold pattern of worship:

> As on the first day of the week the two disciples were joined by the risen Christ, so in the power of the Holy Spirit the risen and ascended Christ joins us when we gather. As the disciples poured out to him their sorrow and in so doing opened their hearts to what Jesus would say to them, so we pour out to him whatever is on our hearts and thereby open ourselves to the Word. As Jesus "opened the Scriptures" to them and caused their hearts to burn, so we hear the Scriptures opened to us and out of the burning of our hearts praise God. As they were faced with a decision and responded by inviting Jesus to stay with them, we can do likewise. As they joined the risen Christ around the table, so can we. As Jesus took, blessed, broke, and gave the bread just as the disciples had seen him do three days previously, so in the name of the risen Christ we do these four actions with the bread and cup. As he was "made known to them in the breaking of the bread," so the risen and ascended Christ can be known to us in Holy Communion. As he disappeared and sent the disciples into the world with faith and joy, so he sends us forth into the world. And as those disciples found Christ when they arrived at Jerusalem later that evening, so we can find Christ with us wherever we go. (*United Methodist Book* 14)

This basic fourfold pattern may be demonstrated in various theological traditions and worship styles. The *Book of Common Prayer* and Wesley's *The Sunday Service* demonstrate one particular way to fulfill the fourfold pattern found in the Emmaus Road story. Therefore, the general structure of prayer book worship may be understood as being consistent with Scripture.

Rational Piety

In Wesley's quote concerning the *Book of Common Prayer,* he referred to it as being scriptural *and* rational (*John Wesley's Prayer Book* A1). For Wesley, reason was so important that he could insist that the one who rejects reason rejects religion (Dunning 83):

> Whenever, therefore, you see an unreasonable man, you see one who perhaps calls himself by the name [i.e., Christian], but is no more a Christian than he is an angel. So far as he departs from true genuine

> reason, so far he departs from Christianity. (Wesley, *Works* Bicentennial 11: 55)

Reason played an essential role in Wesley's understanding of the Christian faith.

In order to establish rational piety as a Wesleyan criterion for planning and assessing worship, the first question that must be answered is what Wesley meant when he used the term "rational" or "reason." The second question that must be answered is how this term applied to the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England.

The Meaning of "Rational"

In "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," Wesley begins by setting out to define reason. The first definition he gives the word is that of *argument.* He refers to the use of the word in a sentence such as, "He has good *reasons* [original emphasis] for what he does," and Wesley comments that, in that context, it seems to mean "he has sufficient *motives* [original emphasis], such as ought to influence a wise man" (*Works* Bicentennial 2: 589). Wesley used reason in this sense throughout his writings, but this sense was not Wesley's technical philosophical use (Miles 84-85).

Wesley rejected reason as an independent source of knowledge. He did not subscribe to the Platonic school of thought (Miles 85). Instead, Wesley embraced an empirical understanding of reason as a tool or capacity for understanding. Reason processed information or data that was derived from other sources (86). Thus, Grider says that it is "mainly a vehicle for taking revealed data and sorting out what it means. It is a vehicle that we humans can use to sort out what is meant by the Word of God lived out in Christ and written out in Scripture" (109). In fact, it is a necessary tool. As John Miley says, "A divine revelation is, in the nature of it, a divine communication of truth, and especially of moral and religious truth. There can be no communication of such truth

where there is no capacity for its apprehension and reception" (41).

Wesley illustrates Miley's point:

> It means a faculty of the human soul; that faculty which exerts itself in three ways: by simple apprehension, by judgment, and by discourse. *Simple apprehension* [original emphasis] is barely conceiving a thing in the mind, the first and most simple act of understanding. *Judgment* [original emphasis] is the determining that the things before conceived either agree with or differ from each other. *Discourse* [original emphasis] (strictly speaking) is the motion of progress of the mind from one judgment to another. The faculty of the soul which includes these three operations I here mean by the term *reason* [original emphasis]. (*Works* Bicentennial 2: 590)

Unlike the empiricist of his day, however, Wesley believed that human beings had "spiritual senses." With these spiritual senses in mind Tucker says, "Not simply the exercising of the God-given gift of the human intellect, reason more importantly was the perceiving of divine revelation through the agency of the Holy Spirit" (*Sunday Service* 22). Reason was understood by Wesley to be the means whereby Christians are enabled by the Holy Spirit to understand God's communication with them.

Finally, in addition to the concept of reason as a tool, Wesley sometimes used reason as a synonym for "common sense." In this sense, reason was seen as "a pragmatic, common sense wisdom" that most people would accept (Miles 93). Instead of understanding reason as a tool or processor, it was understood as a set of conclusions derived from the process that any reasonable person would accept (93). An example of this use is seen in Wesley's letter to Robert Carr Brackenburry on 9 March 1782:

> It is exceeding clear to me, first, that a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to you; and, secondly, that you are peculiarly called to publish it in connexion with us. It has pleased God to give so many and so strong evidences of this, that I see not how any reasonable person can doubt it. (*Works* 3rd ed. 13: 3)

Wesley's comments to Brackenburry are derived from a clear process he is sure any

reasonable person would accept.

Wesley understood reason as being a great help in the areas of art, science, grammar, rhetoric, logic, natural and moral philosophy, mathematics, algebra, and metaphysics. In fact, reason was seen as being of considerable service in all things relating to the present world, but Wesley also believed that reason could "do exceeding much," both with regard to the foundation and the superstructure of religion (*Works* Bicentennial 2: 591). "Reason (assisted by the Holy Ghost) … enables us to understand what the Holy Scriptures declare concerning the being and attributes of God" (592). In this same way Christians can come to understand the essential truths in the Scriptures, as have been summarized in the Apostles' Creed (592).

On the one hand, Wesley "recognized the judicious use of reason coupled with Scripture when he admitted the possibility of various styles of worship, as long as the basic faith was maintained" (Tucker, *Sunday Service* 23). "Rational human beings had a God-given right to worship as they were persuaded" (23). Wesley expresses this same opinion:

> I do not mean, "Embrace my modes of worship," or, "I will embrace yours." This also is a thing which does not depend either on your choice or mine. We must both act as each is fully persuaded in his own mind. Hold you fast that which you believe is most acceptable to God, and I will do the same. (*Works* Bicentennial 2: 89-90)

Christians should be free to worship in a manner considered by them to be most reasonable.

On the other hand, Wesley does insist that Christians should be reasonably persuaded as how best to worship:

> But the man of a truly catholic spirit, having weighed all things in the balance of the sanctuary, has no doubt, no scruple at all concerning that

> particular mode of worship wherein he joins. He is clearly convinced that *this* [original emphasis] manner of worshipping God is both scriptural and rational. He knows none in the world which is more scriptural, none which is more rational. Therefore without rambling hither and thither he cleaves close thereto, and praises God for the opportunity of so doing. (*Works* Bicentennial 2: 93)

Wesley's statement in the preface to *The Sunday Service* makes quite clear that he was convinced that the manner of worshipping God as prescribed by the *Book of Common Prayer* was both scriptural and rational. He knew of none in the world that was more scriptural or more rational (*John Wesley's Prayer Book* A1).

The Book of Common Prayer as Rational

I have already established that for Wesley rules for Christian worship were subordinate to the supreme rule of the Bible and that these subordinate rules did not violate the supreme rule but flowed from it (*Works* Bicentennial 9: 570). These subordinate rules flow from the Bible in accordance with reason. Reason, used as a tool, helps to formulate the structure and the content of the liturgy.

Edward C. Hobbs says that the rationality of the prayer book tradition "is one which conforms to the rationale of the Christian faith—i.e., it systematically exhibits the Christian's relation to God, in accordance with the Christian understanding of that relationship" (9). He sees this structure centering on a basic threefold arrangement of the service (9).

Hobbs identifies the "versicles," or exchanges of dialogue between the minister and the people, as the transition points between each of the three sections of the service:

> The first exchange begins, "O Lord, open thou our lips; And our mouth shall show forth thy praise." The signal is clear—we are about to enter a service of praise. The other is the common, "The Lord be with you; And with thy spirit; Let us pray." The signal is just as clear—prayer is to follow. (9)

Following these clues the researcher sees that the three portions of the service include one of penitence and confession; one of praise, thanksgiving, and God's Word; and, one of the worshipers offering themselves and all to God. Hobbs calls these sections "the Service of confession, the Service of the Word;… and the Service of offering" (9).

This structure follows the pattern of the Christian's relationship with God. The structure does so as "a reminder and an interpretation of that life" before God (Hobbs 10). In other words, if the Church's worship of God is to be "rational," then Christians cannot simply worship according to their own whims. Instead, Christians must worship in the same way "in which we always meet and acknowledge God when we meet the God who confronts us in Christ" (10). Hobbs summarizes the service:

> The fearful Word is the first thing we hear–"Thou art the man!"–when we enter.… And the minister of God's church then explains to us that the Scriptures move us to confess ourselves to God as precisely that which the Scripture says we are–sinners. Hence we fall to our knees and confess together. And then–thanks be to God!–the word of pardon comes, through the words of the minister, freeing us to pray in the words of Jesus. The versicles remind us that we may now praise him, since he has opened our lips. So we rise joyfully to our feet, and join in singing his praises, in giving him thanks, in hearing his Word. When we have summarized this faith in our creed, we are called on to present our concerns to him, in the Collects. And as we go forth, grace, love, and fellowship go with us. (11)

Hobbs says that "all the great services of Christian worship, from beginning till now, follow this fundamental scheme; the Communion is simply an elaboration of it, chiefly in the third portion" (12). This structure of worship proves to be thoroughly rational.

From a different perspective, as illustrated in the previous section on scriptural piety and the following section on the primitive church, the structure of prayer book worship may be seen as one of a number of ways to demonstrate the fourfold pattern wherein "(1) We enter into God's presence; (2) We hear God speak; (3) We celebrate at

God's Table; and (4) We are dismissed" (Webber, *Signs* 37). Webber comments on the rationality of this pattern:

> The fourfold pattern of worship is characterized by a narrative quality because it is taking us someplace (the throne room of God's kingdom) where a rehearsal of our relationship to God is expressed through the word and the response of thanksgiving. Having been touched [by] God, we are sent forth into the world to love and serve the Lord. This fourfold pattern is the biblical and historical structure of worship that most effectively communicates the content of worship. (*Planning Blended Worship* 21)

Webber understands the "content of worship" to be the gospel (21). The structure of prayer book worship, therefore, follows a reasonable procedure. Thus, any reasonable person would agree that the structure of the liturgy makes sense.

Further, worship based upon the services of the prayer book can be seen to be rational in that they provide a "balanced worship" on a weekly basis. The design of Sunday worship according to the prayer book tradition provides spiritual breadth for worshippers, "including the acts of repentance, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving," as well as the Lord's Supper (Ruth 140-41). These are elements of worship the Methodist societies often lacked apart from the English liturgy. The *Book of Common Prayer* provided a solid means of spiritual formation because it included a systematic reading of Scripture, preaching, and the sacrament.

Continuity with the Primitive Church

In his letter accompanying *The Sunday Service,* Wesley says the American Methodists "are now at full liberty, simply to follow the scriptures and the primitive church" (*John Wesley's Prayer Book* iii). Thus, the third criterion whereby worship can be assessed as being authentically Wesleyan is that of continuity with the primitive Church. In order to establish this third element as a criterion, I will identify what Wesley

was referring to when he spoke of "the primitive church." I will then identify how continuity with the primitive Church may be seen in worship.

Identity of the Primitive Church

In one sermon, Wesley sets out to answer the question, "What is Methodism?" (*Works* Bicentennial 3: 585). He identifies Methodism as "the old religion, the religion of the Bible, *the religion of the primitive church* [emphasis mine], the religion of the Church of England" (585). Wesley goes on to speak of the religion of the primitive church as that of "the whole church in the purest age" (586):

> It is clearly expressed even in the small remains of Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp. It is seen more at large in the writings of Tertullian, Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Cyprian. And even in the fourth century it was found in the works of Chrysostom, Basil, Ephrem Syrus, and Macarius. (586)

Wesley intends Methodism to mirror the religion of these early Christians.

Beyond the biblical time period, Ted A. Campbell identifies the ante-Nicene period as being Wesley's primary meaning when referring to the primitive Church (5). Campbell goes on to indicate that early Anglican leaders agreed the time of the primitive Church may have extended into the fourth or fifth centuries (13). Wesley makes reference to the fourth century (*Works* Bicentennial 3: 586). Nevertheless, when he speaks of the primitive Church, Wesley primarily refers to the Church in the first three Christian centuries, to which the fourth and fifth centuries may be added. Thus, Wesley says, "And *even* [emphasis mine] in the fourth century" (586). Such a view is consistent with that of Wesley's father, Samuel. The latter showed more regard for the first three centuries but did give his approval to fourth and fifth century works, especially the Nicene formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity (Campbell 25).

Wesley sees a shift in the history of Christianity beginning with the reign of Constantine in the early fourth century. He sees much greater unity and demonstration of purity prior to Constantine (Campbell 47). He frequently recommends "the Ante-Nicene Fathers" or "the writings of the first three centuries" (47):

> The esteeming the writings of the first three centuries, not equally with, but next to, the Scriptures, never carried any man yet into dangerous errors, nor probably ever will. But it has brought many out of dangerous errors, and particularly out of the errors of Popery. (Wesley, *Works* 3rd ed. 10: 14)

Wesley elsewhere says, "How much more shall I suffer in my usefulness, if I have wasted the opportunities I once had of acquainting myself with the great lights of antiquity, the Ante-Nicene Fathers" (10: 493). Thus, Wesley indicates that the ante-Nicene period is his primary reference when speaking of the primitive Church.

Continuity in Worship

Wesley understands the Anglican liturgy to be one of the areas in which the Church of England showed great continuity with the apostolic and primitive Church (Campbell 97). Concerning the sacraments, Wesley understands the practice of infant, as well as adult, baptism to be consistent with the practices of the early Church (95). The Eucharist was celebrated daily in the earliest times, and in later times it was celebrated every Sunday (96). Such a view was consistent with Wesley's insistence upon "The Duty of Constant Communion" (*Works* Bicentennial 3: 427-39). Wesley, like the Church of the East, also understands the primitive Church communed baptized infants (Campbell 96).

Wesley is aware of the yearly feasts observed by the ancient Christians as they celebrated Easter, Pentecost, and Epiphany (Campbell 99). Further, he is quick to adopt certain ancient practices for these celebrations. Wesley records, "During the twelve

festival days we had the Lord's Supper daily; a little emblem of the Primitive Church. May we be followers of them in all things, as they were of Christ" (*Works* Bicentennial 22: 441). Again, he records, "Sun. 30.—Easter Day was a solemn and comfortable day, wherein God was remarkably present with His people. During the Octave I administered the Lord's Supper every morning, after the example of the Primitive Church" (23: 45-46). Thus, Wesley demonstrates his desire to remain in continuity with the worship practices of the primitive Church.

Nevertheless, contemporary liturgical scholarship reveals that some of Wesley's notions of early Christianity were less than correct. As an example, Campbell cites Wesley's belief that the "Spiritual Homilies" were actually the work of the fourth-century Egyptian monk Macarius (4). Within his lifetime Wesley's beliefs about ordination and episcopacy changed as he gained clearer insights into the practices of the ancient Church:

> Mon. 20. I set out for Bristol. On the road I read over Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church. In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught. But if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order. (*Works*, Bicentennial 20: 112)

As a result of such a change in his understanding of the ancient Church, Wesley eventually exercised his presbyterial authority to ordain other presbyters.

Such examples of Wesley changing his position on issues when gaining a more correct understanding of the primitive Church sets a precedent for contemporary liturgists as they view the primitive Church through the eyes of more recent scholarship. This precedent implies that where contemporary scholarship reveals aspects of ancient worship practices to which Wesley did not have access, Wesleyan liturgists need not follow Wesley verbatim in the development of liturgical texts in order for their texts to be

considered authentically Wesleyan.

I am suggesting that one important way contemporary Wesleyans might adhere to their spiritual forefather's admonition to follow the worship pattern of the primitive Church (*John Wesley's Prayer Book* iii) is to adopt the basic, historical fourfold pattern of worship. This pattern understands Christian worship to center around "Word and Table" (Webber, *Signs* 34). To those two basic acts of worship, the early Christians added the development of acts of entrance and acts of dismissal (37-41). This pattern of gathering for worship around the Word and the table is seen clearly in the second century in Justin the Martyr's *The First Apology* (chaps. 61-67). This pattern has been popularized in recent years by Webber:

> The four basic acts of Sunday worship include assembling the people, Scripture readings and preaching, breaking bread and pouring wine along with prayers of thanksgiving, and sending the people forth. These four acts are accomplished through a sequence of songs, Scriptures, and prayers that proclaim, enact, and celebrate the Gospel, and a sequence of congregational responses that help them experience the Gospel. One can study the history of worship from the early church to the present and discover, without exception, that Sunday worship has always been characterized by these four acts. (*Worship* 150)

The implementation of this pattern is one way for contemporary Wesleyans to follow the worship pattern of the primitive Church.

Among contemporary Wesleyans, this general pattern has been adopted by the United Methodist Church in the *United Methodist Book of Worship* as an attempt to reclaim their biblical and historical heritage (13-15). The fourfold pattern has also gained some attention within the Church of the Nazarene, most notably in Pendelton's doctoral dissertation. Pendelton's dissertation focused upon "the historical four-fold pattern of worship as a common ground for Christ-centered worship in the Church of the Nazarene"

(6). I am suggesting that the fourfold pattern of worship is one important expression of being consistent with the primitive Church's worship practices, and, thus, one important step in being guided by the criteria for authentic Wesleyan worship. My position broadens the possibilities of authentic Wesleyan worship well beyond the exclusive use of the *Book of Common Prayer* or *The Sunday Service*, although the use of those resources would be one possibility for fulfilling the fourfold pattern.

This fourfold pattern naturally leads to the consideration of Wesley's concept of "The Duty of Constant Communion" (*Works* Bicentennial 3: 427-39). While, perhaps, few Nazarene congregations are likely to implement the practice in the near future, nevertheless, the celebration of the Eucharist on a weekly basis should be viewed as the norm. As Nazarene general superintendent Greathouse affirms, "Every Lord's Day the early Christians celebrated Christ's atoning sacrifice by eating His body and drinking His blood in the simple faith that He was present with them at the table" (11-12).

Another practice of the early Church of the Nazarene that should be reasserted, over against the strong influence of baptistic baptismal practices, is the practice of infant baptism. The practice of infant baptism is highly consistent with the Wesleyan heritage and with the practice of the early Church. Such a position does not speak to the norm of adult baptism for sacramental theology but to the accepted practice of the early Church as well as those within the Wesleyan tradition.

Finally, worship leaders should seek to recover the great festivals of the Church, thereby helping the Church to order its life according to the Christian year. Although Wesley omitted most of the "holy-days (so called) … as at present answering no valuable end" (*John Wesley's Prayer Book* A1) when he revised the prayer book for "those poor

sheep in the wilderness" (ii), he did retain references to Advent, Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday (Pentecost), Trinity Sunday, Good Friday, and Ascension Day. I suggest that the observance of these days is scriptural in the sense that they help to proclaim the gospel. Such observances also connect worshippers to the primitive Church.

The observance of Easter, Pentecost, and Epiphany developed within the first three centuries of Christianity, the former two having been inherited and adapted from Judaism (White, *Brief History* 62). Ever since the fourth century, Christians have observed Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Day as the sacred triduum (63). By 336, reference is made to the celebration of what is now called Christmas (64). Thus, ever since the fourth century, Christians have had "a year of two cycles, nativity and paschal, consisting of four seasons: Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter plus the intervals in between" (65). While not all of these observances fit within the first three Christian centuries, they do fit within Wesley's *extended* understanding of the primitive Church. Thus, the observance of these feasts/fasts provides one means of fulfilling this criteria of authentic Wesleyan worship.

Experience of the Presence and Identity of God

The fourth criterion whereby worship can be assessed as being authentically Wesleyan is that of experience. My contention is that, just as Knight identifies the necessity of experiencing the presence and the identity of God through Wesley's patterning of the means of grace (11), so, too, both elements are vital for authentically Wesleyan worship. Although this criterion is not explicit in the letter accompanying *The Sunday Service,* it is a synthesis of Wesley's statements in a variety of places and should be presumed as the backdrop for Wesley's letter. In order to establish the experience of

the presence and the identity of God as a criterion for authentic Wesleyan worship, I review Knight's exploration of the presence and the identity of God in the means of grace. I then apply my findings to the area of Wesleyan worship.

The Presence of God

Knight identifies certain of Wesley's means of grace that encourage openness to the presence of God. They include Christian community, works of mercy, extemporaneous prayer, fasting, and the general means of grace (13). The latter include universal obedience, keeping all the commandments, watching, denying oneself, taking up the cross daily, and exercise of the presence of God (5).

The worship of Methodist societies leaned heavily in this direction, as has typical, historical Nazarene worship. The danger in leaning too far in this direction without the balance provided by the identity of God is that worshippers will fall into the trap of emotionalism. Worshippers easily become subjective.

Nevertheless, this aspect of worship is essential for safeguarding against dead ritualism. It keeps worshippers from having the form of godliness without the power. The means of grace that might be found within corporate worship would include Christian community, extemporaneous prayer, watching, and exercise of the presence of God. Much of the music used in worship would tend to function in this same way.

Wesley does not discourage that which fosters the presence of God. Indeed it is essential for the Christian life. What he is concerned about is that while the Methodist societies fostered the presence of God, they lacked the balance of the identity of God that the worship of the Church of England provided.

The Identity of God

The Wesleyan means of grace identified as promoting the identity of God include Scripture, preaching, the Eucharist, and the prayers of the tradition. All of these items describe the character and activity of God. They add content to the experience of the presence of God (Knight 13).

All of these means of grace are important parts of Christian worship. While the free-churches may not spend as much time using the prayers of the tradition, these prayers are listed here because they function to identify God. Therefore, even if free-church worship does not use these specific prayers, worship leaders can learn from them ways to allow their extemporaneous prayers to promote the identity of God.

The free-church worship tradition as seen in revivalistic camp meetings clearly promotes the identity of God far less than it does the presence of God. Free-church worship does focus upon preaching, and preaching will most often include at least a brief Scripture text. Nevertheless, when compared to the scope of Scripture used in the prayer book tradition, free-church worship is shown to be quite lacking.

Current Worship Trends

The various elements of Wesley's approach to worship provide insights into the possible tensions and conflicts found in the current approaches to worship by contemporary Wesleyan Christians. Wesley, himself, encountered tensions regarding worship when he was confronted by some from the Methodist societies who insisted that the society meetings provided sufficient worship for the Methodist people. For those who are currently faced with what is often referred to as the "worship wars," Wesley's response may prove helpful:

> But some say, "Our own service is public worship." Yes; but not such as supersedes the Church Service; it presupposes public prayer, like the sermons at the University. If it were designed to be instead of the Church Service, it would be essentially defective; for it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer, deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. (*Works* 3rd ed. 8: 321-22)

The claim of those in the Methodist societies and Wesley's response to them demonstrate varying perspectives about sufficient worship practices.

Current-day Wesleyans also face tensions and varying opinions concerning worship. A major point of contention for contemporary Wesleyans concerns worship styles. Many Christians now identify themselves in terms of styles of worship rather than in terms of denomination or faith tradition. They participate in "contemporary worship," "traditional worship," or "blended worship" (Plantinga 2-3). Those who advocate each of these and other various styles of worship make up the various camps within what has been called the "worship wars."

Dramatic changes have taken place in the worship practices of protestant churches over the last few decades. These changes have served to intensify the debate over worship styles, which has tended to focus on music. Many of these changes within protestant Christianity have come as an outgrowth of Roman Catholicism's Vatican II (Plantiga 24-26). The variety of practices have come from four major forces that have been identified as contributing to these changes. They are "the worldwide ecumenical liturgical movement, the charismatic movement, 'front door evangelism,' and cultural diversity" (*Authentic* 14). Each of these forces can have a different impact on the worship practices and perspectives of various congregations. Such impacts may be complementary, but they may just as likely be oppositional. Of these four forces, only the ecumenical liturgical movement is likely to share an internal logic similar to Wesley's

approach to worship.

The ecumenical liturgical movement sought to promote worship patterns derived from examples in the church of the second, third, and fourth centuries. This movement has been influential in recovering the pattern of Word and Table as the norm for Christian corporate worship. In addition, it has influenced the recovery of the Christian year, the development and use of a lectionary, the recovery of the prayer of thanksgiving during the Eucharistic celebration, and an emphasis on the participation of the congregation (*Authentic* 15-16). The ecumenical liturgical movement has had great influence within mainline denominations but minimal influence within Church of the Nazarene, particularly local Nazarene congregations.

The charismatic movement, which has emphasized the lively participation of the people, times of small group prayer, and services of healing, has also been instrumental in bringing about the praise and worship movement. This latter movement has focused on enthusiastic music, particularly the use of praise choruses and the use of a praise team and/or band (*Authentic* 16-17).

The charismatic emphasis upon spiritual gifts, especially tongues, has been judged as suspicious by most Nazarenes. As a denomination born out of the nineteenth century holiness movement, the history of the relationship between Nazarenes and Pentecostals has been difficult. The charismatic movement has been understood by Nazarenes to be an outgrowth of Pentecostalism. Nevertheless, the enthusiastic participation and praise and worship music has been readily adopted by a number of Nazarene congregations. Enthusiasm was a hallmark of the camp meeting tradition, and praise and worship music is seen by some as a means of recapturing that enthusiasm for a new century.

"Front Door Evangelism" has seen the worship service as a means of reaching the unchurched (*Authentic* 17). While this concept may be new to some denominations, it is not new to Nazarenes. What is new is the use of sociological marketing techniques for reaching the unchurched. The use of marketing techniques is very much a part of American consumer culture. The danger for the Church in using such techniques is that it will allow the desires and preferences of the consumer to distort the gospel message. In such cases worship is no longer about *worshipping* God; rather, the focus of worship has shifted from God to "the lost." Spurred on by the church growth movement, the "Front Door Evangelism" movement has been readily and often uncritically embraced by many Nazarenes.

Cultural diversity has also influenced current worship practices. Just as society has become more culturally diverse, many denominations have also become culturally diverse. Language, music, and cultural traditions have all played a role in enriching the worship of Christians (*Authentic* 18). In addition, society has become less literate and more entertainment driven. People focus more upon feeling and less upon truth. These cultural characteristics have all played a role in influencing current worship trends.

Worship practices have been enriched greatly by certain worship trends within the present-day Church. On the other hand, other trends have produced services of worship that are open to the same kinds of criticisms that Wesley expressed at the beginning of this section. Within this context of the various worship trends and the current "worship wars" the Wesleyan criteria is offered as a means of traversing the various movements and filtering the various practices in such a way as to provide authentic Christian worship.

Conclusion

As pastors and congregations in the Church of the Nazarene and other Wesleyan/Methodist churches continue to struggle with change in the area of worship, having adequate criteria for planning and assessing the worship of God is vital. The Wesleyan criteria developed and promoted in this paper can thoroughly fill the gap. As demonstrated in this study, the Wesleyan criteria transcend various styles of worship while promoting Christian worship that is scriptural, rational, in continuity with the Primitive Church, and that fosters the experience of the presence and the identity of God.

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