

ABSTRACT

Preaching Wesley's Ordo Salutis: A Study in Wesleyan Theology Today

by

Edward E. Beedle

In 1786 John Wesley wrote in "Thoughts upon Methodism": "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out" (Wesley *Works* 148). Wesley's fear was that the people called Methodists would lose the passion of their faith, that they would become ineffective in working for the kingdom of God. It appears that in many United Methodist Churches today Wesley's fears are becoming reality, not only United Methodist churches but also churches of all denominations. It appears churches are losing any sense of identity as historical Christian churches. Unless United Methodist churches regain the teaching of the faith there is a bleak future ahead. The Church needs to regain the practice of catechesis, teaching the foundations of the faith. Churches in the Wesleyan tradition need to regain the practice of teaching the distinctive of Wesleyan theology.

This project studies the effects of teaching John Wesley's order of salvation and what makes Wesleyans distinct in their faith. A series of seven sermons on Wesley's ordo salutis was prepared and preached, and a series of six classes was prepared and presented on some of the distinctives of Wesleyan doctrine.

The research type for this project is a mixed method using surveys, focus groups, and participant observations. There is a pre-test survey and post-test survey for both the sermon series and the discussion classes. Following the completion of the sermon series there were two

focus groups and following the discussion classes there was a focus group. Each focus group consisted of three to five people.

Analysis of the data yielded negligible positive change in theological perspective in Wesley's theology of salvation and the Wesleyan distinctives. Possible explanations for these results are discussed.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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CHAPTER 1

NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter will give an overview of the problem investigated and the research methodology used. In this chapter there will be a description of the setting for the research project. The participants in the study will be described as well as the purpose of the project and the research questions to be answered. A brief overview of the literature to be reviewed will be included. Pertinent theological terms will be defined as well as the limitations and generalizability of the research. The methods of analyzing the data will be briefly described in this chapter.

Autobiographical Introduction

St. Andrews United Methodist Church was established as the Methodist Episcopal Church of Syracuse, Indiana in April, 1870 as part of the Milford Circuit. The church became a “station church” in 1918 becoming the Syracuse Methodist Church in 1939. As the town of Syracuse grew so did the Syracuse Methodist Church. In 1961 the church had outgrown their facilities, and a new building was built. When the new building was completed the church was renamed St. Andrews Methodist Church; it become St. Andrews United Methodist Church with the merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren denominations.

I began serving as senior pastor for the St. Andrews United Methodist Church in 2013. Over the past twenty years St. Andrews has experienced a decline. People easily point to a time when the church was bustling with energy and the sanctuary was full every Sunday; when there were children galore, and the youth group was active. However things have slowly begun to become undone. There seems to be an apathy toward things of faith among the people. Sunday

school classes do a good job of informing the attendees, but there seems to be no emphasis in forming disciples.

St. Andrews was established as a Methodist congregation, yet there is little knowledge of Wesleyan doctrine or distinctive. The view of salvation is very much the “say a prayer and you’re good to go” view. There is no evidence of a Wesleyan soteriology or Wesley’s order of salvation. In the fall of 2013 I offered a 6 week Sunday school class on John Wesley using a select group of his sermons. The response was far greater than I had hoped. What I discovered in this class was that the understanding of Wesleyan theology was almost non-existent. Yet there is a hunger to learn and to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ in the Wesleyan way. This is encouraging and has brought me to take on this problem.

At a gathering of clergy colleagues over coffee at annual conference a few years ago the observation was made that even long-time members of United Methodist Churches have little understanding of what it means to be Wesleyan. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the impact of a Wesleyan catechism on the participants’ understanding of Wesleyan theology through a seven sermon series on Wesley’s order of salvation and a seven session class on Wesleyan distinctive of faith at the St. Andrews United Methodist Church.

Statement of the Problem

United Methodist churches all across this country are experiencing declining membership, declining attendance, and declining giving in many of our churches. (Scott & Scott 4) Dean states that many American congregations are “almost Christian” (5) as defined by Wesley’s sermon of that name. This is a situation that is not one of recent origin. This is one that is generations old. It can be traced back to England at the time of the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield. Wesley desired to bring renewal to the Church of England; renewal that was

needed because the Church had grown cold.

The Church today is struggling to impart its faith to the next generation. It is good at maintaining the institution of the church but not so good at imparting the faith to the children and youth (Farr). Farr went so far as to say, “We are giving our children the church but we have failed to give them Christ.” (Farr). This may be the result of the insufficient grasp of the tenets of the faith by the adults. The focus of making disciples has given way to the task of maintaining the institution of the church (Henderson 7). When the task of making disciples is de-emphasized, or worse lost, the church loses its motivation. When the church loses the focus on disciple making it becomes a spiritual wasteland. Churches today have developed a doctrinal amnesia and are spiritually dry (Meadows, 2005). With this doctrinal amnesia a spiritual apathy sets in.

This spiritual apathy has recently been studied in the American youth. Teenagers embody the hopes and the fears of the adult generation, the faith of the generation before them (Smith & Denton 4). When the faith of the adults is weak, the teenager’s faith will be weakened even further. The apathy is contagious. The National Study of Youth and Religion in 2003-2005 looked at the faith of American teens. Out of this study Smith and Denton identified what they called moralistic, therapeutic deism as the view and attitude of teens toward religion (Smith & Denton 162). Dean calls this the “Church of Benign Whatever-ism” and refers to this as Christian-ism (Dean 5).

The research of Smith and Denton found that most American teens are increasingly inarticulate about their faith or religious beliefs. They were unable to give any description of theological understanding. They are unable to state what it is they do believe. This finding indicates a great emptiness in the heart of their understanding of who God is and who they are in relation to God. These same teens are extremely articulate in discussing things such as music,

celebrities, sports, and what it takes to get into college. But they cannot begin to articulate anything about Moses or Jesus (Smith & Denton 134). While this inability to articulate their faith is seen in teenagers, it is not confined to them. The teens interviewed in this study are not rebellious and trying to get away from the family belief system. On the contrary, most of them said they were simply following in the faith beliefs of their family (Smith & Denton 68). Bob Farr referred to the lack of sharing the faith with the next generation when he said we are giving our children the church but not Christ. If something does not reverse this trend, Wesley's fear that the people called Methodist will surely "only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power" (Wesley, *Works*, 148) will become reality.

It appears an answer to our future may be found in our Wesleyan, historic, and scriptural heritage (Scott & Scott 18). The United Methodist Church must regain the Wesleyan foundation upon which she was founded. This would include a renewed emphasis on Wesleyan doctrine and essentials of the Wesleyan faith (Scott & Scott 7).

In the United Methodist Church today there is the emphasis on building vital congregations and faithful disciples (United Methodist Church (US) Council of Bishops 11). One of the recognized parts of a vital congregation is intentional faith development. The Annual Conference, along with the General Church, has brought an emphasis on intentional faith development (Schnase 74). However this emphasis is centered on numbers or how many people are in Sunday school classes and small groups. This emphasis is all quantitative and not qualitative. There is nothing that looks at faith or spiritual formation other than numbers. Looking at the study by Smith and Denton, there needs to be a great emphasis on developing the faith in congregations (Smith & Denton 57-58).

The problem is that the faith of people in congregations is weak and, being weak, lacks

any semblance of passion. When their faith is weak, they have nothing to share with those outside the church or to pass on to those recently coming to faith in Jesus Christ including their children and grandchildren (Meadows, 2005). As Wesley stated he “feared the people called Methodists would become nothing more than a dead sect, having the form of religion but none of the power”(Wesley, Thoughts, 148). Unless the church begins to correct this loss of faith direction, Wesley’s fear will come to be the case (Scott & Scott 21).

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the impact of a Wesleyan “catechism” on the understanding of Wesleyan theology through a seven-sermon series on Wesley’s order of salvation and a six-session class on the Wesleyan distinctive of faith delivered at the St. Andrews United Methodist Church.

Research Questions

Utilizing sermons on Wesley’s order of salvation as a means to teach the Wesleyan theology of salvation. In a class setting to teach the distinctiveness of Wesleyan faith to strengthen the understanding of theology in the Wesleyan tradition.

Research Question 1: How does preaching Wesley’s order of salvation (ordo salutis) affect the listener’s understanding of salvation?

Research Question 2: How does teaching the Wesleyan distinctive of faith in a class setting affect the participants’ understanding of Wesleyan theology?

Rationale for the Project

Matthew 28:19-20 (Holy Bible, New International Version)states, “¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am

with you always, to the very end of the age.” The command is to make disciples, teaching them to obey the commands of Jesus. Teaching the things of the faith. Deuteronomy 11:19 instructs the Hebrews, “¹⁹Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Scriptures directs teaching the ways of the faith as followers of Jesus Christ. In many congregations there is not even knowledge of the basic stories of the Bible, such as the stories of creation, of Noah and the flood, or of Moses and the exodus. There is very little knowledge of the stories of Jesus from the New Testament.

In 1786 John Wesley wrote in “Thoughts upon Methodism”: "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out" (Wesley, *Works*, 148). Wesley’s fear was that the people called Methodists would lose the passion of their faith, that they would become ineffective in working for the kingdom of God. It appears that in many United Methodist Churches today Wesley's fears are becoming reality, not only United Methodist churches but also churches of all denominations. It appears churches are losing any sense of identity as historical Christian churches. Unless United Methodist churches regain the teaching of the faith there is a bleak future ahead. The Church needs to regain the practice of catechesis, teaching the foundations of the faith. Churches in the Wesleyan tradition need to regain the practice of teaching the distinctive of Wesleyan theology.

This project attempts to study the effects of teaching both John Wesley’s order of salvation and what makes Wesleyans distinct in their faith.

Definition of Key Terms

Catechesis: Instruction providing a spiritual grounding in the fundamentals of the Christian faith for new converts. Providing the spiritual food that will produce believers who are passionate for God and strong in their faith

Discipleship: The process for growing vital followers of Jesus Christ. A process that provides the foundation of what the Church believes and how followers of Jesus Christ live.

Prevenient grace: Prevenient grace is the activity of the Holy Spirit working in an individual's life that awakens that individual to their fallen condition. It is this Holy Spirit activity that leads the individual to repentance. Prevenient grace can be likened to a light which illuminates a room. While this light shines in a dark room and illuminates the room, prevenient grace illuminates an individual's spirit to awaken them to the darkened condition of their spirit.

Justifying grace: Justifying grace is the activity of the Holy Spirit bringing remission or forgiveness of sins and results in liberation from the power of the guilt over the sin. Through justifying grace a sinner is in a restored relationship with God.

New birth: Also called regeneration. In the new birth the sinner is not just declared righteous but is actually made righteous. Through regeneration the sinner feels cleansed of the sin and knows the reality of justification. Justification and regeneration are not identical but they occur simultaneously.

Sanctifying grace: Sanctifying grace is the action of the Holy Spirit that saves the regenerated sinner from the power, root, and plague of sin. Sanctification begins at the new birth.

Delimitations

The motivation for this project was a need for a greater understanding of Wesley's soteriology and the factors that make the Wesleyan way of life and faith distinctive. This need was identified by the apparent lack of knowledge of the Wesleyan background of the United

Methodist Church. The need for a greater understanding of the Wesleyan understanding of salvation and faith was expressed by many within the congregation, thus creating an atmosphere of receptivity to the material presented. During the period of time preceding and during the study, congregational morale was high, and a good relationship existed between the congregation and the pastor.

The study was limited to the worship participants of the St. Andrews United Methodist Church, a congregation of 100 members with an average weekly worship attendance of 74 (this number includes adults and children).

The sermon and class discussion were the chosen formats (independent variable) for this particular study. No attempt was made to consider how or if other formats would serve to strengthen the congregation's knowledge of Wesleyan theology. However, since Scripture is the source of the homiletical and didactic content, a favorable response was assumed when biblical passages on salvation and faith are shared in a way that faithfully communicates the meaning of the biblical text in a manner that engages the listeners and invites their response.

Review of Relevant Literature

Literature was surveyed examining John Wesley's order of salvation, specifically prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. Literature surveyed included various theological journals and books concerning Wesley's theology, especially his soteriology. The surveyed literature included sermons by John Wesley dealing with original sin, awakening (prevenient grace), justification, and sanctification. Investigating Wesley's theology logically starts with Wesley's sermons. The sermons were accessed on the internet at "www.umcmembers.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/Title-Index." Major contributors in the area of Wesley's theology are Kenneth Collins with *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of*

Grace along with *The Scriptural Way of Salvation* and *A Hermeneutical Model for the Wesleyan Ordo Salutis*. Allan Coppedge in his book *John Wesley in Theological Debate* proved a valuable resource. Randy Maddox's book, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, provided valuable insight and alongside several journal articles was helpful in examining Wesley's Ordo Salutis. The Thomas Oden series *John Wesley's Teachings* volume one "God and Providence" and volume two "Christ and Salvation" provided helpful references. *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* by Richard Heitzenrater was a source of background information that also proved helpful.

Literature was also surveyed examining catechesis and faith formation, including discipleship. The literature examined looked at catechesis and faith formation in the Bible, the early church, and catechesis practices in the later years. Major resources for catechesis and faith development was J.I. Packer's *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* as well as material by Timothy Tennent, *Ten Words, Two Signs, One Prayer, Thirty Questions*, and *The Call to Holiness*. Tennent's materials provided valuable background material. Packer's *Grounded in the Gospel* provided biblical background for catechesis. Looking at discipleship formation the recent book by Brooks St. Clair, *The Great CoMission: Making Sense of Making Disciples*, provided information on disciple making. Looking at catechesis and disciple making from a Wesleyan viewpoint, Kevin Watson in *The Class Meeting* along with Howard Snyder's *The Radical Wesley: The Patterns and Practices of a Movement Maker* were valuable resources. Andrew Thompson provided a link between catechesis and discipleship with the means of grace in his book, *The Means of Grace*. These resources were the beginnings as many journal references were also investigated.

Research Methodology

A mixed method approach to an intervention design consisting of surveys, focus groups, and participant observer during the discussion classes methods, and interviews was used for this research. .

For the Sermon Series

A researcher-designed survey exploring the congregation's understanding of Wesley's order of salvation both before and after the sermon series on Wesley's order of salvation was used. This survey was given to the entire congregation.

Following the completion of the survey after the sermon series two focus groups of five people each chosen to give a cross section of the congregation was used to probe the impact of the sermon series further. Additionally two persons chosen to represent a cross-section of the congregation, and not part of either focus groups, were interviewed to probe the impact of the sermon series on participant understanding of Wesley's soteriology.

For the Class Sessions

Session one was an introductory class. The researcher-designed survey was given to all participants of the class. This survey covered major themes which would be covered in the remaining six classes. After the third class session a survey was given using only the items pertaining to the material covered in the first three class sessions. At the completion of the class the same survey given prior to the beginning of the classes was given to evaluate the effectiveness of the class material in communicating the distinctiveness of Wesleyan theology.

During the presentations of the class material the researcher acted as participant observer noting particularly the engagement of the participants, the number of questions asked, and responses as the material was presented each session.

At the completion of the class sessions a focus group of five people was chosen to give a cross section of all participants in the classes to probe the impact of the class material.

Additionally two persons not part of the focus group were interviewed to further probe the impact of the material.

Type of Research

Research type for this project is a mixed method using surveys, focus groups, participant observer, and personal interviews. There is a pre-test survey and post-test survey for both the sermon series and the discussion classes. Following the completion of the sermon series there were two focus groups and following the discussion classes there was a focus group. Each focus group consisted of three to five persons.

Participants

The entire congregation of St. Andrews United Methodist Church was invited to participate in this study. There were several announcements in Sunday worship bulletins prior to the beginning of the study inviting members of the congregation to participate in the study. The chairperson of the Administrative Council made several verbal invitations to the congregation to participate in the study

Description of Participants

Participants are members of the congregation of St. Andrews United Methodist Church in Syracuse, Indiana, a small town in north central Indiana. Both males and females are included in the study. Ages of the participants range from late twenties to eighties. There is one person between 20 and 40 years old, two persons between 41 and 60 years old. Those between 61 and 80 number twenty-seven, and there are twenty persons older than 80. Table 1.1 summarizes the age range of the congregation at St. Andrews.

Table 1.1 Ages of Persons at St. Andrews UMC

Years	No Persons
20-40	1
41-60	2
61-80	27
81+	20

Involvement in the life of the congregation varies from only attending weekly worship to full involvement in all areas of congregational life, participating in various committees and Bible studies and in various social events. All participants are Caucasian with one Hispanic male. Most participants are retired. One couple are owner/operators of the local boat sales and service company. There are school teachers and accountants in the congregation as well as a security worker for the local bar and grill. A few of the participants have been Christian for only a few years while others have been Christian for twenty to fifty years. Most of the congregation members have been part of a Methodist or Wesleyan related denomination for the better part of their Christian lives.

Data Collection

Data collection will be collected using pre-test and post-test surveys. Surveys are researcher designed aligning with the topics covered and the research questions under study. The researcher designed a survey for the sermon series on Wesley's order of salvation. The pre- and post-test survey are identical. Following the sermon series there were two focus groups consisting of three to five persons representing a cross-section of those of the congregation. A

researcher-designed survey was used to collect data for the discussion classes with the pre- and post-test surveys being identical. Following the completion of the discussion classes there were focus groups consisting of three to five persons representing a cross-section of those who participated in the discussion classes. All focus groups and interviews were recorded, and the recordings transcribed.

Data Analysis

An identification system that protected the participants' confidentiality on the pre- and post- test surveys was used to enable the pre-test and post-test surveys to be compared for each participant. Results for each survey statement were tabulated on a spreadsheet for easier comparison. Tabulated results of the paired surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. All focus groups and interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were examined for key phrases and examined using the thick description described by Sensing (195). This method looks for deeper meanings behind words and descriptions. The correlations discovered in the survey analysis triangulated with the information from the thick description and gave information on the impact of the sermon series and the discussion class material on increasing the participants understanding of Wesleyan theology.

Generalizability

The researcher can generalize similar outcomes if this study is repeated in other United Methodist congregations of similar size, demographic make-up, and openness toward the proposed research project and preacher-researcher.

Project Overview

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the impact of a Wesleyan "catechism" on the understanding of Wesleyan theology through a seven-sermon series on Wesley's order of

salvation and a six-session class on the Wesleyan distinctive of faith delivered at the St. Andrews United Methodist Church. Chapter two of this work establishes the biblical and theological background for the study. Chapter three presents the research design. Chapter four reports what was discovered in the research, and Chapter five summarizes and interprets the research findings as well as offering suggestions for further development of a Wesleyan catechesis.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ordo salutis

Prevenient grace

Prevenient grace is the first movement of the ordo salutis. Prevenient grace is the activity of the Holy Spirit working in an individual's life that awakens that individual to their fallen condition. This Holy Spirit activity leads the individual to repentance. Prevenient grace can be likened to a light which illuminates a room. Just as a light shines in a dark room and illuminates the room, prevenient grace illuminates an individual's spirit to awaken them to the darkened condition of their spirit. Prevenient grace is the grace that "goes before." It goes before an individual has a consciousness of God and awakens individuals to their alienation from God. Prevenient grace applies to all people and is free for every person. Both Collins and Maddox agree that prevenient grace is an Arminian doctrine of the work of God in fallen humanity before justification (Collins, *Theology of John Wesley*, 255) (Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 84). In order to understand prevenient grace and the place of prevenient grace in Wesley's order of salvation, it becomes necessary to consider the need for grace.

In Genesis chapter 1 after each "day" of creation God declares it "good." However, after God created humans, God considered all God had made and declared that is was "very good."

This statement of “very good” would indicate that creation was an expression of the love of God (Harper 21). All creation was created in order to fulfill God’s purpose and reflect God’s glory, and includes humanity. As Wesley observed the world around him, it seemed a stark contrast to the world originally created by a loving God. Humanity did not appear “very good,” and Wesley could only attribute this difference to the fallen state of humanity described in Genesis 3. Wesley believed that humanity was created in the image of God, the image of righteousness, and that due to the fall in the garden that image was effaced. The result was what is described as the “natural state.” Wesley refers to the natural state as the state of humanity in which one is devoid of the grace of God. In this natural state individuals are insensible of God and the things of God. There is no awareness of God. In his sermon “On Working Out Our Own Salvation” Wesley states that there is no such person who is totally devoid of God’s grace. Every person has what is commonly called conscience and Wesley claims this conscience is actually prevenient grace (Wesley Sermon 85 *on Working out Our Own Salvation*). Through prevenient grace the person is awakened to the condition of their soul and a growing desire for God is begun.

According to Collins, Wesley indicates that prevenient grace is the illumination of sinners and the conviction of sin (53). Prevenient grace awakens the sinner to the need for renewal. It is the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of people to open their eyes to their sinful condition. Harper says that prevenient grace is God’s grace active in people’s hearts before they are even conscious of God or realize their need of God (35). One of the results of this awakening is the removal of a spirit of apathy in the life of the sinner. Apathy is a sense of uncaring, a feeling of unconcern. It is neither rejection nor acceptance but disinterest. Through the Holy Spirit acting in prevenient grace this attitude of disinterest is removed as the eyes of the sinner are opened to the reality of the sin in their lives and their need for forgiveness. In Wesley’s sermon, “On Working Out Our

Own Salvation” he discusses the effect of prevenient grace that instills, “the first wish to please God, the dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight, transient conviction of having sinned against him.”(Wesley sermon 85, *On Working out Our Own Salvation*). In *Working Out Our Own Salvation* Wesley taught that humanity is not only sick but “dead in trespasses and in sins,” and that it is not possible for persons to turn from their sins on their own and that the grace of God is necessary for a person to move towards God (Wesley sermon 85 *On Working Out Our Own Salvation*). On the other hand, Rakestraw reports that, for Colin Williams, prevenient grace in Wesley is not sufficient to enable one to turn towards God in faith (197). He is indicating that there needs to be other interventions in the lives of those who are yet to believe. As a result Rakestraw states that, “prevenient grace is most appropriately discussed under the heading of anthropology” (197). Harper argues the opposite in that prevenient grace is the first step in God’s redeeming of humanity. (34). Collins and Maddox both indicate that it is through prevenient grace that a person is awakened to sin and the need to be renewed (Collins “*Scripture Way*” 53; Maddox, “*Responsible Grace*” 159).

Through prevenient grace there is an awakening of the sense of the presence of God, a restoration in the ability to receive from God and respond to God. All of these are absent in the pre-awakened soul. Without these there is no possibility for salvation to continue. Prevenient grace is God’s initiative in salvation; it is God’s initial offering of a renewed relationship with fallen humanity. Through prevenient grace any idea that humanity can come to God on its own merit is removed. Through prevenient grace God takes the first step in redemption. In the pre-awakened state a person is powerless to respond to God’s offer of salvation. The first thing prevenient grace does is to make one aware of the need of God’s forgiveness and God’s healing. Second, prevenient grace restores the liberty to respond to God’s grace. Maddox says that the

only alternative to this restoration of the liberty to respond to God's grace is "unconditional election and irresistible grace" (Maddox *Responsible Grace* 88). Through prevenient grace persons are awakened to their sinful condition, and the liberty to respond to God's grace is restored.

Prevenient grace is the effect of God's move towards restoring His presence in the lives of His creation. With this move a person's faculties are empowered to enable them to recognize their need of a renewed relationship with God and to respond to the offer of that renewed relationship. Because God is perfectly holy, humanity in its fallen state is unable to initiate a relationship with God in God's holiness. Because of the fallen state of humanity, people do not recognize their need of the relationship with God. Prevenient grace awakens people to their need of the relationship and then initiates the possibility of the response. The response to God's grace is not possible on their own initiative, because of their disabilities, but is made possible only by God's grace.

Wesley identifies several benefits conveyed through prevenient grace to humanity. These benefits in some form alleviate the effects of the fall (Collins *Scripture Way* 40). The first of these benefits is a rudimentary knowledge of God. The "natural man" has no knowledge of God. Through prevenient grace humanity is not left in the natural state and has some knowledge of God. Romans 1:20 states, "Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse." This knowledge of God is a consequence of prevenient grace.

A second benefit of prevenient grace is a knowledge of God's moral law. This moral law was imprinted at creation and is an expression of God's image. At the fall knowledge of this moral law was lost. Through prevenient grace the knowledge of God's moral law was replaced.

The moral law is the law of love: love of God and love of others. The moral law is contained in the Ten Commandments and in the Sermon on the Mount.

Third, Wesley states that prevenient grace is responsible for the originating conscience in humanity. Through prevenient grace there is an internal check which causes a sense of uneasiness or discomfort when anyone acts in anyway contrary to the knowledge of the moral law that has been given. The conscience alerts a person when there is a difference between the moral law and an individual's actions or thoughts. While it has been thought that conscience is a result of nature or of society, Wesley believed conscience is a result of God alone through prevenient grace. Wesley believed that conscience was supernatural in origin, a gift of almighty God alone.

The fourth benefit is a restoration of at least a measure of free will. Wesley held that by nature the will of humanity is to evil alone. Prevenient grace enables one to respond to God as well as evil. According to Maddox, Wesley admitted that there were some who showed at least emerging righteous attitudes and actions. These were credited to prevenient grace affecting the person's free will toward virtue as opposed to evil (Maddox, *Responsible Grace* 106).

It is important to note that prevenient grace is not sufficient for salvation. A special note here: Prevenient grace, by Wesley's standard, is the one place where Wesley declared grace to be irresistible. While prevenient grace is irresistible it can be repressed, which would result in a hardening of heart (Maddox, *Responsible Grace* 160). In Exodus, as Moses spoke before Pharaoh calling Pharaoh to release the Hebrews, each time Pharaoh refused. The scripture then says that Pharaoh's heart was hardened. The hardening of his heart was due to suppressing the call of God. Given the doctrine of total depravity, irresistible prevenient grace must follow. It is grace available to all, present to all. The first act of prevenient grace is to awaken and restore

spiritual senses, and this grace cannot be refused or rejected. The renewed senses are available to hear the call of God, and this call of God can be refused and resisted (Collins *Scripture Way*, 44).

Prevenient grace opens the awareness of the state of the relationship with God and opens knowledge of God, but this knowledge cannot provide salvation. Knowledge alone has no power to transform. Through prevenient grace an individual is aware of the sinful condition and aware that there is a flawed image of God. Prevenient grace also shows humanity that there is a remedy for the sinful condition. Prevenient grace is the light that leads a person to the edge of saving grace. In an analogy of a house, prevenient grace opens the door to salvation. The experience of salvation has two dimensions: a divine dimension and a human dimension. The divine dimension is grace. Salvation is by grace alone. Salvation comes only by God's action, and God has acted through Christ. In Christ God has given grace. As the apostle Paul wrote, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). There is also the human dimension. Salvation by grace comes through faith. Faith is the human dimension of salvation. However, even the faith is a gift of God through prevenient grace (Harper 34). Prevenient grace leads to the next experience of salvation by leading to repentance (Cox 145). Through repentance, as an act of faith, is the experience of justifying grace.

Justifying Grace

In Wesley's thought salvation is complete in two actions of God: justification and sanctification. In justification the believer is saved from the guilt and penalty of sin and is restored to a right relationship to God. In sanctification the believer is saved from the power of sin and the image of God, which was corrupted at the fall, is restored. Salvation and restoration is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8).

Through God's prevenient grace sinners are convicted of their sin and are open to the further graces of God (Collins, *Holy Love*, loc 729). This conviction leads to repentance before justification. Wesley stressed throughout his life that justification, i.e. forgiveness of past sins, comes by grace. It is only by grace through faith in Christ that one is justified. In his sermon "Salvation by Faith" Wesley defines what this justifying faith is by stating first what it is not. The faith through which one is justified is not "the faith of a heathen," faith that is merely a belief that God exists (Wesley sermon 1, *Salvation by Faith*). It is also not the faith of a devil, a faith that believes that there is "a wise and powerful God" and that the son of God is Jesus Christ and he is the savior. The faith of a devil also believes that the scriptures are God inspired (Wesley sermon 1, *Salvation by Faith*). This faith of a devil is a faith that is a mental assent to the things of scripture. Wesley then says that the faith that justifies is not the faith of the apostles while they were with Christ. The faith that justifies is a full reliance on the atoning work of Christ, on the full propitiation for sinners made by the blood of Christ. The faith that saves is a reliance on the blood of Christ, trusting in the atoning work of Christ, not just for all humanity but for each individual (Brockwell 22). After his Aldersgate experience Wesley would write that he trusted that Christ loved him, even him.

In the theology of Luther and Calvin, repentance follows justification while for Wesley repentance precedes justification (Brockwell 22). Repentance constitutes a response to the convincing (prevenient) grace of God, but repentance does not justify. However, Wesley does state that "repentance absolutely must go before faith" (Brockwell 22). Repentance is a human response, enabled by God, to prevenient grace. However, justification is solely an act of God. There is no human effort to justification at all.

The act of God in justification is a pardon for past sins (Wesley sermon 5 *Justification by Faith*). Justification is reconciliation with the Father through the sacrificial act of the Son. The reconciliation with the Father comes through the mediation of Jesus Christ. Justification brings a renewed relationship with God. This renewed relationship is one which is mediated through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is through faith in the sacrificial death of Christ that the sinner is declared forgiven and a right relationship with God is restored.

Justification is remission or forgiveness of sins and results in liberation from the power of the guilt over the sin. Through justification a sinner is restored to a right relationship with God. A legal definition of justification is “being made right.” Being made right with God is what justifying grace does for the sinner who repents of sin and turns from sin. Because of sin one is alienated from God, and the relationship is marked by excessive fear. Justification restores the relationship that has been marked by alienation and fear. Through justifying grace the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers in a sense, and the believer is accepted by God because of what Christ accomplished in his selfless sacrifice. This imputation is not a cloak covering the continuing unrighteousness. The imputed righteousness is a testimony to the sheer grace of God in forgiving the sinner. All of this imputation is an action of God alone; there is no human activity aside from accepting the gift. According to Rakestraw the fact that the sinner must reach out in repentance and respond to the offer of forgiveness is an indication that justifying grace is a co-operant grace and not an act of God alone (199). Without the responding and reaching out, there is no receiving of the gift. Some would see this response as conditional salvation. The only condition for justification is acceptance of the gift of God’s grace. There are no actions or works necessary for justification. Wesley does not view the reaching out and receiving the gift of forgiveness to constitute an action or work to receive the righteousness of

Christ. While faith is the condition of justification, it does not deserve a reward. The faith of a believer does not obligate God towards humanity (Brockwell 22).

This initial act of salvation is effected by God's divine grace and humanity's reception. In fact this initial act of salvation, justification and regeneration, cannot occur without the reception by a person and God's granting the grace (Canon 6). Wesley saw justification as a co-operation between a person and a holy God. It is co-operational in that the person must accept the gift of justification. The idea of co-operational justification allows for the person to resist the offer of justification. Thus justifying grace is resistible and can be refused. A person could resist and refuse to accept the gift, and God would not force the gift of forgiveness and new birth. Indeed the faith is as much from the divine side, as the human side for the needed faith is itself a divine gift and is given as a result of God's unconditional love (Canon 6). The individual's part in the gift of salvation is to accept the offered divine gift of grace. And yet, Canon states, the ability to resist the gift is not a person's but the very power of God in the person. The strength to resist however is the person's own strength. God gives the freedom to resist the grace but the strength belongs to the individual. It then follows that a person can deny salvation for themselves in their own power, but the ability to accept or deny the gift comes only as a gift of God's grace (Canon 5). According to Canon, "the decisive factor in personal salvation is the human individual himself" (7). While the ability to resist the gift of justification is given by God, the individual makes the choice to resist or deny the gift. Both Luther and Calvin taught that the act of salvation is all of God and that there is no part for the individual, while Wesley taught that the determining factor in salvation is the individual. God makes the offer of salvation by grace; God presents salvation as an option, but it is the individual who determines whether to accept or resist God's gift.

As a sinner expresses the faith, which would be the essential for salvation, two events take place. These events are not sequential but simultaneous: simultaneous and yet distinct (Brockwell 23). These events are justification and regeneration. Justification is God forgiving the sins that are past. Justification and regeneration are inseparable in time yet they are easily seen as two distinct actions on God's part. Justification does not occur in the absence of regeneration, and regeneration cannot occur separate from justification. Justification implies a relative change while regeneration implies a real change (Brockwell 23). The relative change is a change in the relation to God; people become children rather than enemies. The real change is change of the inmost soul; people become saints rather than sinners (Brockwell 23). In the gracious act of justification God does something for people; he redeems people from the guilt and penalty of sin. In the new birth God does something in people; he changes the status from being a sinner to that of a saint. In justification the guilt for sin and penalty of sin is removed, while in the new birth the power of sin is taken from us. Through justification a sinner is declared righteous before God. In regeneration the sinner is not simply declared righteous but is actually made righteous. Through regeneration the sinner feels cleansed of the sin and knows the reality of justification. Justification and regeneration are not identical, but they occur simultaneously.

Wesley put a great deal of emphasis on the idea that justification and regeneration are instantaneous. Justification and regeneration happen simultaneously and yet are two separate actions (Brockwell 23). While justification is the forgiveness of past sins, what is referred to as conversion is really the new birth. Conversion brings with it a transformation. Justification removes the sin while the new birth brings about the transformation. It is the new birth that Wesley truly sought to see come about in those to whom he preached. The new birth, or regeneration, is a complete transformation of the person's thoughts and behaviors. This

transformation of behavior and thought extends to the sin nature. Wesley taught that once a person was converted, i.e. born anew, God gave the power to no longer sin, either consciously or intentionally. This power is the power over sin and is given at the instant of the new birth. In the transformation brought by the new birth the whole person is changed. As 2 Corinthians 5:17 states, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" The new believer is purified from all unholy desires and behaviors. The bent to sinning is removed, but Wesley also believed, and taught, that there exists the tendency to fall back into the old way of life. There is the possibility of falling back into the habit of sinning (Cannon 7). While the possibility exists, it does not imply in any way that the reborn believer is under the power or control of sin. Sin no longer sits on the throne. This viewpoint seems almost unrealistic. Believers still have faults and exhibit behaviors that are contrary to their status as new creations in Christ. The truth is that believers are not always spiritually healthy (Cannon 7). While believers have been transformed by God through regeneration, they still have free will. They can still choose either the way of sin or the way of righteousness. Believers have the strength of God at their disposal, and God will help resist the sinful temptations if they will avail themselves of that power. The truth is believers can and do willfully violate known laws of God, the law of love. This truth is not to mean that a believer is free to live an immoral life. Wesley taught that a person living an openly sinful life was not saved (Cannon 8). The concept that the righteousness of Christ covers the filth of our sins had no place in Wesley's theology. For Wesley conversion meant total transformation by the Holy Spirit. Regeneration changes our inner nature such that a person would no longer desire to live that old lifestyle.

The new birth that occurs along with justification, like justification, is not incremental but instantaneous. This new birth is a total transformation of the person, not just a change of degree. At the new birth spiritual life begins (Wesley, sermon 45, *The New Birth*). The new birth marks a new beginning. Just as in natural birth new life is instantaneous and leads to the process of maturation so too this new birth is instantaneous and leads to the process of sanctification. The new birth is the entrance into the process of holiness: the initiation of sanctification. The new birth is inward holiness making the heart and all its dispositions sacred and is an activity of God alone through the Holy Spirit. Believers have a role in the process toward holiness and that role is to receive only. There is no active participation by the individual. God has promised that the *imago Dei*, which was distorted as a result of Adam's sin, will be fully restored. The *imago Dei* is restored through sanctifying grace and is done with human cooperation. The cooperation is the receiving of grace by the person.

Sanctifying Grace

Wesley saw salvation a two-pronged action: justification, being saved from the guilt and penalty of sin, and sanctification, being saved from the power, root, and plague of sin (Rakestraw 197). In Wesley's view salvation could be seen as an ellipse with justification and sanctification as the two foci of the ellipse (Dunning 18). This view presents a balanced view of salvation between both justification and sanctification. There are two views from the two foci of the ellipse: the view of salvation from strictly justification, which leads to antinomianism, and the view of salvation from strictly sanctification, which leads to moralism or legalism (Dunning 18). Wesley saw both justification and sanctification in the formula of faith working by love (Dunning *Systematic* 18). Sanctification is the love of God which totally fills the heart with nothing contrary to love within a person. Sanctification is being ruled by pure love of God and

love of others in everything. It is the work of grace that turns a person from love of self to love of God and others (Brendlinger 120). The actions, thoughts, and attitudes of each person are totally ruled by love. Through sanctification the purity of intentions is achieved.

Sanctification is initiated by the new birth, with the new birth being a necessary prerequisite for continuing on the way of salvation. The new birth does not fully transform or fully rejuvenate, but it brings about a new responsiveness to God (Maddox *Responsible Grace* 177). Just as in justification, faith is a necessary condition for sanctification. Wesley saw the new birth only as ones beginning as Christian, the spiritual birth. Sanctification is the transformation into the likeness of God with the cooperation of the individual (Maddox *Responsible Grace* 202). Justification brings about a change in relation with God. There is forgiveness of sins which makes it possible to be in relation with God. Sanctification is real change in which the Holy Spirit brings, through the grace of God, renewal of the fallen nature (Maddox *Responsible Grace* 176). In sanctification the restoring of the image of God does not happen without the cooperation on the part of the individual in responding to God's grace. This sanctifying grace, like justifying grace, is resistible as opposed to prevenient grace, which restores human faculties such as conscience and free will (Collins *Scripture Way* 154). Collins states at the new birth, which begins the process of sanctification, the ability to cooperate with God is restored, as well the obligation to cooperate with God (Collins, 154).

The obligation to cooperate with God emphasizes the human responsibility in spiritual growth and development. Believers must seek to respond to the grace of God on a continuing basis. A believer must be continually moving forward and not be satisfied with remaining static. Just as an infant must continue to grow and mature to become a child and then a mature adult, so a believer must continue to grow and mature in their life in Christ. From spiritual birth at

justification and regeneration through to full maturity the believer must move forward in the growth toward holiness.

Sanctification is an essential part of Wesley's soteriology. Sanctification involves three perspectives: a total change of motivation, a renewed image of God, and an ability to love God and neighbor with a holy love (Brendlinger 119). Wesley believed it was the moral image of God that was lost completely at the fall and so would be restored only at full salvation (Brendlinger 119). While Wesley's doctrine of the complete loss of the moral image of God in the fall reflects his low picture of humanity, his doctrine of sanctification is at the complete opposite end of the spectrum and reflects humanity with unlimited potential because the moral image of God is restored through sanctification (Brendlinger 119). With the moral image of God restored, the motivation is completely changed because it relates to the mind of Christ (which is renewed with the image of God), and the ability to love God and neighbor is renewed (Brendlinger 121). The renewed image of God in the life of the believer leads to the concept that sanctification is transformative in the life of the believer.

Through sanctifying grace the Holy Spirit enables a person to "mortify the deeds of the body, our evil nature" (Wesley Sermon 43 *The Scripture Way of Salvation*). One has become more alive to God and dead to sin. As the believer grows in grace there is the growing desire to good works. Good works are not required for sanctification but are the fruit of growing in sanctification. Through sanctifying grace a believer subordinates all thoughts and feelings to that supreme desire, which is the pursuit of God with the ultimate goal of perfect love of God and others (Wesley Sermon 17 *Circumcision of the Heart*).

While justification transforms the relation with God, regeneration and the subsequent process of sanctification transforms the very life of the believer. For Wesley this transformation

is God's love for us. God's love is the basic building foundation for the ability to change and become holy. The believer responds to God's love in loving God. Because God's love reaches into the depth of the believer's heart, the heart is changed at the deepest level (Brendlinger 121).

Wesley defined entire sanctification as Christian perfection. Wesley's intent in his use of Christian perfection is to point to singleness of intention (Harper 84). Harper states perfection is in the will not the action (84). The will of perfection leads to a central purpose and direction in life. The concept of perfection for Wesley is summarized in Matthew 22:37-39, "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Loving God with the whole self (heart, mind, and soul) and loving others is Christian perfection. Christian perfection is the holy love of God and neighbor ruling every aspect of life, thoughts, attitudes, and actions (Maddox *Responsible Grace* 187). For Wesley entire sanctification, or perfection, meant perfect love. It is love that displaces all sin that fills the heart and fills the soul to capacity (Wesley Sermon 43 *The Scripture Way of Salvation*).

The word or concept of Christian perfection throws people off track. When people hear the word "perfection" their first thought is that no one can be perfect; no one can be totally flawless. The definition of perfection in Webster's dictionary, being freedom from fault of defect, is not Wesley's intention. In a pattern that Wesley uses in many of his sermons, he first details what is not meant by perfection in the Christian sense. In the sermon, "Christian Perfection," Wesley states that Christians are not free from ignorance. Wesley states that Christians, "how 'there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and how these three are one'" (Wesley Sermon 40 *Christian Perfection*). Wesley writes that Christians, even those having attained perfection, are liable to make mistakes. Christians are

also not free from infirmities. By Wesley's understanding infirmities are not known sins. Infirmities are those "imperfections which are not of a moral nature" (Wesley Sermon 40 *Christian Perfection*). Christians are also not completely free from temptations. While there may be some who for a time feel no temptation, they are not completely free from temptation (Wesley Sermon 40 *Christian Perfection*). Wesley states what perfection is not, and he writes that Christian perfection is another term for holiness (Wesley Sermon 40 *Christian Perfection*).

For Wesley a definition of Christian perfection is perfect love or "loving God with all our heart, mind soul, and strength" (Rakestraw 200). Perfect love indicates there is nothing other than love remaining in the soul. Christian perfection is nothing less than a life lived in complete love: love for God and love for neighbor. Wesley allowed the possibility of attaining perfect love in this life. It is commanded by God, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37), so Wesley surmised it must be possible to fulfill the command in this life (Rakestraw 201). The state of perfect love is not one which people attains on their own, it is a gift of God. When this gift of perfect love is granted, then the believer is free from the presence of sin in his or her life. When the believer is perfected in love, then sin has no part of the believer's life.

Wesley argues that the believer being perfected in love is made free from all outward sin. This argument of being free from outward sin is based on 1 Peter 4:1-2 "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin),² so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. Wesley argues from this scripture that the believer ceases "from outward sin, any act of outward transgression of the (moral) law" (Wesley Sermon 40 *Christian Perfection*). Wesley argues from 1 John 3:9 as well, "Those who have been born of God do not

sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God." According to Wesley these passages cover all sin, not infirmities, or imperfections or actions of ignorance but they do cover committing any sin (Wesley Sermon 40 *Christian Perfection*). By the perfecting in love the believer is freed from all sin; in the believer, sin ceases to be (Rakestraw 201). At the end of his sermon, The Scripture way of Salvation, Wesley urges his listeners to make all haste to come to God in faith seeking freedom from sin (Wesley Sermon 43 *Scripture Way of Salvation*).

Wesley's theology was truly a theology of grace. Every point of salvation is brought about by God's grace. For Wesley salvation itself is justification followed by sanctification, and justification is truly started with awakening. Wesley's order of salvation begins with the Holy Spirit's awakening through prevenient grace. As sinners are awakened to the true state of their soul the Spirit then convicts them of their sin and brings about reconciliation with God through justifying grace. In justification the person experiences rebirth, which is the beginning of sanctification. The Holy Spirit brings about Christian perfection or holiness in the soul of the believer through sanctifying grace. Perfection is actually a perfecting and participating with God in experiencing new levels of the spiritual life. According to Wesley this perfecting continues even beyond death (Rakestraw 202).

Catechesis/Discipleship

Certain biblical texts are considered the basis for the ministry of the church of initiating new believers, instructing in the things Jesus commanded through preaching and teaching. These include the following verses:

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to

them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:16-20) As well as Mark 16:15, “¹⁵ He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”” to give the church the mission of making disciples. Catechesis has been seen as the initiating rite for believers.

Packer defines catechesis as “a ministry of rigorously grounding and growing believers in the Christian faith. This includes a comprehensive concern for our beliefs about God, our communion with God, and our obedience to God” (loc. 553). Tennent indicates that catechesis is not complete until the believer is formed in what is believed, how one’s life is lived, and the practices of the Christian life are evident (Tennent, *Ten Words*, loc. 46). The difference between the two is that Tennent adds spiritual practices or disciplines to the description of discipleship. Discipleship should include catechesis, a grounding of the believer in the basic beliefs and doctrines; while discipleship takes the student further to include spiritual disciplines. If there is a distinction between the two, there is scriptural background for training in the faith. Catechesis and the following discipleship should ultimately lead to more and more Christlikeness in the life of the believer.

The process of becoming like Jesus Christ actually begins when a person recognizes their need of the grace of God. Even though they may not understand the need, there is a need of grace. This is the Holy Spirit working through prevenient grace, and it is at this point that discipleship actually begins. The process of discipleship has two parts. The first is imparting the foundations of faith such as who God is and the work of God (Samra, 234). Teaching the

foundations of the faith is catechesis. The second part of the process includes being an example to the believers so they may imitate the teacher and, through imitating the teacher, come to imitate Jesus Christ. This is the role of all believers. Samra writes, “All Christians are believers and are called to participate in the discipleship process, both by receiving instruction and in living out their faith for others to see and imitate” (234).

In Deuteronomy chapter six Moses is instructing the people in the commands and ordinances of God, and he tells them, “⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” This is one of the earliest instructions to teach the ways of God to the people of God. It was important to teach the succeeding generations of people what God had done for them. Those who had seen first-hand the deeds of God in setting the people free from slavery in Egypt would need to be reminded of those deeds. However those in succeeding generations had not witnessed for themselves these deeds, and it was imperative that those succeeding generations know not only the actions of God on their behalf but also the commands and ordinances of God. It was important for the generations who had not personally witnessed the saving actions of God to be taught God’s actions and holy commands. If they were to be God’s holy people, they must be instructed in God’s holy laws and commands in order that they might embrace God’s ways of living. The heart of the teaching for the Israelites was Torah. In English translations Torah is translated as “law.” The more accurate understanding of Torah is as a guide or a direction. So, Torah is, for the Israelites, a guide for a way of life with God (Packer, loc. 573).

The Psalms give further evidence for the need to instruct God’s people in the ways of God. Psalm 78 admonishes the people not to forget God’s actions but to pass them on to future

generations. Psalm 78 is an admonishment to the people not to forget God's commands as the people apparently did in the book of Judges. Psalm 119 is a long praise for the commandments of God and how they enrich the psalmist's life. Psalm 119 is a way of calling others to know and follow the ordinances of God. Passages from Deuteronomy and Psalms deal with more than just training in faith. The instructions deal with all dimensions of life and experience (Packer, loc. 623). In the sense of dealing with faith development and life practices, catechesis and discipleship are similar. Catechesis and discipleship in the New Testament deal with the same concerns of faith training and life practices.

The goal of the Christian life is to become like Christ (Samra, 223). Discipleship is the process of growing in this Christlikeness and is built on the foundation of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. The call for all believers is a call to discipleship, and it is a call to an intense process (Samra, 220). Scripture does not recognize the possibility of believers who mentally ascent to the claims of Christianity without that claim being demonstrated in their lives. To be a believer in Scripture is to be a disciple; it is to grow into Christlikeness. The journey of discipleship begins with a focus on entering the process through answering the call of evangelism. This stage is the stage of catechesis, learning the basis of the faith. From the catechesis phase the believer enters the maturing phase which is the discipleship phase. In the gospels believers in this discipleship phase literally followed Jesus around. In Mark 1:17 when Jesus called the fishermen to follow him it was a call to literally follow him (Samra, 221). In the gospels, becoming a disciple involved physically being with Jesus, but after the resurrection and ascension it was not possible to be with Jesus physically.

In Acts and the Epistles the concept of following or physically going with Jesus became more imitating or emulating. Paul urged his readers to follow his example, to pattern their lives

after his (Philippians 3:17, 1 Corinthians 4:4). Paul also urges readers to imitate others who are examples of faithfully following Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 2:14, Hebrews 6:12). Imitation is seen as a means of transferring one's faith and lifestyle to the next generation (Samra, 224).

Imitation became another means of discipleship as more mature believers were modeling Christ's character to less mature believers and helping the less mature believers grow into more Christlikeness (Samra, 224). Discipleship then in the New Testament meant growing into Christlikeness by following Jesus and hearing and watching what he taught and did (Samra, 224). After Jesus was no longer on earth the process of discipleship became one of studying the apostle's teachings and emulating Jesus' example as seen in the lives of more mature believers (Samra, 226). Studying the teachings was often done by means of hearing and repeating back to the teacher what was being taught.

The word used in the New Testament for the process of training in the faith is "katecheo" which literally means "to echo." The term comes to mean teach or impart information (Bauer, 422). Catechesis in the New Testament can be seen as the initial training of new converts, while discipleship is seen as becoming like Christ, the process of becoming a disciple (Samra, 219). Another way of seeing this is that catechesis is the foundation of discipleship. In the account of Apollos in the book of Acts 18:24 says he had been "He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures" using the Greek "katecheo." The very idea of discipleship, beginning with catechesis, is that the student, the disciple, grows to become like Christ. It is without a doubt true that the purpose of the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity was to reconcile the world to God, to redeem humanity from their sins. Alongside this Jesus came to teach people how to live and to teach by example. Jesus came to demonstrate what life as God's

people should look like. Jesus was the ultimate disciple-maker. Discipleship is the process in which a person grows into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Paul admonishes the Colossian church to teach one another the things of Christ (Colossians 3:16). This is the teaching ministry of the church. In Ephesians Paul writes that one of the gifts given the church was that of teaching (Ephesians 4:11). Those who teach do so in order that the church be built up for the work of the church. Teaching the way of faith is seen as a major role of the church. Paul exhorts Timothy to teach the truth of the hope in Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 4:11; 2 Timothy 2:2). This is teaching so believers grow in the faith to become like Jesus Christ. Paul writes to Titus in chapter two that Titus should teach and train older men, older women, younger women, and young men the ways of living that honored God (Titus 2:1-8). The theme of teaching the foundational basics of the faith is seen throughout the New Testament. As the church grew throughout the world, and new believers were further removed in time from the actual people and events of the New Testament, there arose a greater for more formal teaching of the basics of the faith.

As people came to faith in Jesus Christ there arose a greater need for teaching what it meant to follow Jesus Christ. During this time people were being converted many times upon witnessing the lives of believers. These pagans came with a promise to repent and a desire to become part of the church, and they were initially received into the congregation in order that they might hear the preaching of the word of God. However these new converts were not allowed to participate in the Eucharist until they had been fully initiated. The initiation was called the catechuminate or a new Christian class (Arnold, 42). These new believers were not without a basic faith. They were aware of enough of the gospel message to exercise faith and commit to a rigorous time of study preparing them for baptism and being received into the

communion of the church (Arnold, 42). In the period of the apostles it was the practice to baptize converts immediately after the confession of faith (Arnold, 42). There was a move away from this practice to a time of formal preparation for baptism. Due to concern of “the sincerity of the conversion of the candidates” (Arnold, 42) a formal time of instruction in matters of moral living and doctrine began.

The practice of preparing proselytes for baptism in Judaism appears to set a model for initiation into the Christian community in the first century. In the Jewish rite of bringing a Gentile into the People of God there is a period of instruction that prepares the new proselyte to become one of the Jewish faith. This instruction follows a pattern of examining the reasons for changing a person’s religion followed by instruction in the Torah, moral obligations of the Jewish faith, and teaching on the penalties brought about through “transgression of the Torah” (Ford, 177). The final portion of instruction was eschatological, a vision of the world to come. (Ford, 177). In the practice of catechesis in the early church there was a similar pattern of instruction for those preparing for baptism. The candidates for baptism were examined for possible obstacles to baptism, which was followed by instruction in moral living and exploration of eschatological themes. The Didache provides further evidence of the requirement of teaching prior to baptism. According to Ford, the Didache contains proof that there was a process of Christian formation that was used for entry into the Community of Faith (178).

The purpose of catechesis was to foster a solid foundation for spiritual formation and to protect the new believers “against sin, heresy, and apostasy” (Arnold, 44). The content of the catechesis began with an examination of the motives for desiring baptism. The concern was to ensure the candidate was seeking admission into the community of faith based on proper motives. The church condemned seeking entry into the community out of idle curiosity (Ford,

185). The examination of motives was followed with lessons addressing moral concerns with a great emphasis on repentance. Scripture played a vital role, dwelling on God's great restraint and call to righteousness. All was aimed to the end, "Cleanse thy vessel, that thou mayest receive grace more abundantly" (Ford, 185). Matters of orthodox faith were addressed in the teaching of doctrine with teaching on topics such as the Virgin Birth, the cross of Christ, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the final judgement (Ford, 185). With the foundation of scripture and orthodox faith laid, the teaching continued with a rigorous examination of the creed (Ford, 186). Arnold states that the period of instruction for baptism and entry into the community frequently took three years or more (Arnold, 44). The process of catechesis has been compared to erecting a building. Unless the structure is bound and the joints made secure, the building will be weak and full of dry rot and will not stand the force of the elements (Ford, 44).

The early church's practice of catechesis in preparation for baptism and inclusion in the community of faith is understandable because the early church was a missionary community (Ford, 188). As a missionary community the concern was that those coming for baptism were first generation believers. Their parents, grandparents, and others before them were not believers. Because there was no previous history of belief the community of faith took seriously the life and faith of the community and therefore wanted to ensure that those seeking to belong to the community were properly prepared for inclusion. Catechesis in this time was adult formation; infant baptism was definitely not the common practice (Ford, 189). While there were instances of "household baptisms" such as those recorded in Acts 16:15 and 16:33, they were based on the head of the household and were rare if performed at all.

As the church grew there began to be second, and later on third, generation of believers. These were children who had grown up in a Christian home in which there was Christian training

within the home. By the sixth century evidence shows that infant baptisms outnumbered adult baptisms (Ford 190). As children were born into practicing Christian homes the responsibility for training in the faith was transferred to the parents. Baptism was ceasing to be seen as the initiation into the Christian community. The church was no longer viewing itself as a missionary body, and the practice of baptizing infants became the norm (Ford, 192). Baptism was seen less as an initiation into the community of faith and more as a means of “wresting souls from the very gates of hell” (Ford, 191). The church became the dispenser of grace instead of the community of faith and left behind the business of forming people as followers of Jesus Christ. Catechesis fell into disuse as the church ceased being a missionary community.

The middle ages brought a strengthened relationship between the church and the state and gave rise to a “Christian society” (Packer, loc 1081). With this a large portion of the population became a part of the community of faith, and the churches were filled with nominal Christians. The illiteracy of the people was great, and access to the Scriptures was extremely limited even for those who could read. This was a time of neglect for the area of forming authentic disciples of Jesus Christ. The Reformation changed the picture.

The lack of an uneducated church made for fertile soil for poor doctrine, experience, and practice (Packer, loc 1102). The Reformers took up the call to bring back instruction in the scripture. Catechesis saw a rebirth during this time. It was reborn with the belief that Scripture must hold the primary place in matters of faith and practice over the traditions of the church. It was not an effort to replace a church which had died or was dying with a new vibrant and vital church. It was an effort to return the church to the glory of the early years. It was a desire to return to “the simplicity and power of the biblical Gospel” (Packer, loc 1123). The invention of the movable type printing press by Johannes Gutenberg was instrumental in the advancing of

catechesis as it made possible the distribution of large numbers of printed catechisms. These mass produced catechisms along with an increased literacy among the people greatly increased the ministry of Christian formation. In the early church instruction was dependent on the teacher orally transmitting the information to the new believers. The use of printed catechisms expanded the number of people who could be taught. The goal of the Reformers in bringing back catechesis was to enable all who “so that all who wish to be Christian in fact as well as name, both young and old, may be well trained” in the parts of Christendom (Packer, loc 1160).

The content of the training was structured around the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the sacraments, which Calvin referred to as “articles of faith common to all Christians” (Packer, loc 1151). The Reformers believed these areas of instruction contained everything a believer needed to know. Luther believed these elements represented “the content inherited from the ancient church” (Packer, loc 1166). He was not alone in this belief as this was the basic content of catechisms used by the English Puritans in churches in colonial America. The pattern of catechesis from the Reformation on was chosen not because it was traditional but because it was deemed wise and comprehensive (Packer, loc 1194). The overall pattern for catechesis/discipleship in the early church was that a person would experience the proclamation of the gospel and confess their faith. They would become part of a class and submit themselves to accountability to discipline. Through a period of time, usually three years, they would mature in their faith and submit to baptism, generally at the celebration of the resurrection at the Easter vigil. After their baptism they were escorted into the service of the Eucharist for the first time.

The pattern of proclamation leading to conviction, inclusion into a class, accountability to a discipline, and new birth was the pattern which was used by Wesley (Knight, 135). A major

distinctive for Wesley was that in the early church people were being brought into the church while in Wesley's case the people were being initiated into a movement within the church (Knight, 136). One difference between the pattern of the early church and Wesley was that in the early church the catechumens were not baptized until after the period of initiation and did not receive the Eucharist until after baptism, whereas those responding to Wesley's proclamation of the gospel were already baptized as infants in the Church of England. Wesley's catechumens were admitted to the Eucharist as soon as and as often as possible. In the early church, once the catechumens were baptized and admitted to the church, there was no more teaching; for Wesley it was different. Wesley insisted his converts remain in the classes after the new birth (Knight, 136). Staying connected in the classes was a way of maintaining accountability and helped ensure continued growth in salvation. These meetings became the distinctive class meeting for which Wesley is known.

Wesley's heart-warming experience on May 24, 1738 was the beginning of something radically new and different. Not long after that experience on Aldersgate Street, Wesley was called by Rev. George Whitefield to join him in preaching in open-air meetings (Snyder, loc 611). Up to this time Wesley's only preaching had been done in regular church services within the church. Even though Wesley found open-air preaching distasteful he was wise enough to recognize the hand of God in this new thing as a means of reaching the poor and outcast (Snyder, loc 626). As Snyder writes, "The Wesleyan Revival had begun" (Loc 626). As Wesley preached to crowds he came to see many coming under the power of the Holy Spirit. Wesley's concern was that churches were producing too few real Christians (Maddox, "Wesley's Prescription", 15). Wesley's belief was that church members had not attained understanding of vital Christian doctrine, were undisciplined in the Christian faith, and had no evidence of self-denial (Maddox,

“Wesley’s Prescription”, 15). Soon after beginning open-air preaching, Wesley began organizing those who were coming to saving faith through his preaching.

Wesley’s organization revealed his understanding of the church and a sense of the priorities needed. Those converted under his preaching desired to meet regularly with him for further instruction in the faith (Snyder, loc 640). In the early days Wesley did not have a plan as to how to teach these new converts, but he found his involvement in the Moravian meetings led to the development of groups for teaching. He organized these converts who desired further teaching into Societies for the purpose of teaching the basics of the faith (Withrow 6). There was only one requirement to join a Society, and it was the “desire to flee the wrath to come and be saved from their sins” (Snyder, loc 647). A purpose of Wesley’s Societies was to instill a renewed understanding of salvation. Wesley understood that a reason churches were raising up “so few real Christians” was an inadequate theology of salvation (Maddox, *Wesley’s Prescription*, 17). The prevailing concept of salvation at that time was restricted to the forgiveness of sins. The limited view of salvation was a view of discipleship without the concept of the empowering and healing presence of the Holy Spirit (Maddox, ““Wesley’s Prescription””, 18). In his teaching Wesley sought to weave together the themes of God’s salvation with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and the healing presence of the Holy Spirit (Maddox, *“Wesley’s Prescription”*, 18).

The purpose of Wesley’s process of discipleship was that a believer would grow in manifesting Christlikeness in the believer’s life in relation to their surroundings (Withrow, 5). Grace was greatly emphasized in all of Wesley’s teachings. For Wesley discipleship was living life directed by the gospel while at the same time developing an identity as a believer and a vocation responding to the grace of God (Withrow, 6). The societies were seen as an

environment in which believers who had become alienated from the church could respond to the call to discipleship (Withrow, 6). Wesley believed there was more to discipleship than teaching the basics of the faith. Developing an identity in Christ and a vocation as a response to grace was equally important to learning the concepts of grace and salvation that were taught in the societies. The class meetings became a way to further formation in the Christian life.

Class meetings were small groups of twelve people with one being designated as the leader. Initially the class meetings were begun as a means to pay off the debt for a teaching building (Watson, *The Class Meeting*, loc 381). Prior to the class meetings Wesley had written the General Rules for societies. “The General Rules were: do no harm, do good, and attend upon the ordinances of God” (Watson, *The Class Meeting*, loc. 381). During the period of time the class meetings were beginning it was noticed that many of the Methodists were not keeping these General Rules. The class meeting became the place where each member was held accountable for keeping the General Rules (Watson, *The Class Meeting*, loc. 405). The class meeting was not an optional addition to the society. It was the purpose of these class meetings to “watch over one another in love” (Watson, *The Class Meeting*, loc. 405). The class meetings were the place where Methodists were formed in their Christian life. In a typical Sunday school class the emphasis is on the transfer on information. The class meetings were not the place for the members to become informed about their faith but to be formed in their faith. The class meeting was the place where the teachings of the society meetings were tied to behavioral transformation. What had been taught in the society meetings was incorporated in the lives of the members (Henderson, 107). It was in these weekly class meetings that people grew in their relationship with Jesus Christ, and they learned to fully surrender their lives to Christ (Watson, *The Class Meeting*, loc. 429).

The pattern of the class meeting was one that was conducive to spiritual growth. The meeting opened with a prayer and a hymn. The class leaders would then model behavior for those in the class meeting by giving an account of their spiritual progress during the past week (Henderson 99). The class leader would then ask each member in turn how it was with their soul. The leader would respond to each member with encouragement, teaching, or correction, as needed. The meeting would end with a prayer (Withrow 9). As people attended their class meeting they were given a quarterly ticket if they had not missed more than three class meetings in that quarter. Without a ticket a person was not able to attend the society meeting, as it was a closed meeting (Henderson 108). The ticket also ensured that all members were keeping the General Rules. The ticket was another way in which the societies and classes were linked. The class meetings eventually began to serve an evangelistic function. As Wesley and his preachers spread throughout the countryside and encountered persons seeking to begin a faith journey, they were invited to stay and attend the class meeting (Withrow 9). Every other class meeting was open to those inquiring admission to the class. A person could visit a class meeting twice. If they chose not to join, they were prohibited from visiting any longer. By allowing for visitors who would observe the testimonies of the class members, the visitors might experience faith for themselves and hence come to faith in Jesus Christ.

The system of societies and class meetings was the structure of early Methodism which maintained the connection between individuals and the entire movement. The societies and class meetings, but especially the class meetings, ensured that each person was cooperating with God's grace as best they could. The system also made sure no person was left behind or forgotten (Watson, *The Class Meeting*, loc. 445). Wesley was adamant that the class meeting was essential to the growth in Christ and that the class meetings were the key to ensuring the

discipline needed to prevent Methodists from growing cold in their faith and falling back into the old sins from which they had been delivered (Snyder, loc. 674). Wesley noted that those participating in the class meetings regularly were experiencing a level of Christian fellowship which they had not known previously (Snyder, loc. 688). Through these class meetings believers were growing in Christ in ways not before experienced (Snyder, loc. 688).

Through the class meeting system believers found spiritual direction, pastoral care, and accountability for weekly discipleship (Withrow 9). The class meetings brought discipline into the lives of many who had never experienced Christian discipline in the past. It was a discipline similar to that of a monastic order, except it was for the everyday believer living in the world and providing for their families rather than being cloistered away from the world (Knight 136). The desired outcome of Wesley's system was transformed lives. Wesley's goal was believers embracing the journey toward Christ-likeness (Maddox, "Wesley's Prescription", 19).

Wesley's conclusion was that the journey toward full Christ-likeness could not be made through formation in theology alone (Maddox, *Wesley's Prescription*, 19). The journey to holiness, or Christ-likeness, was possible only through God's grace empowering and renewing a believer (Maddox, "Wesley's Prescription", 19). For this reason Wesley emphasized the need for discipline in developing mature believers. The means of grace was essential in the transformation of believers' lives. Wesley considered it foolishness to expect growth toward holiness without regular participation in the means of grace (Maddox, "Wesley's Prescription", 19). Regular practice of the means of grace was the way God had chosen to promote growth in faith and holiness.

Wesley often quoted the Christian proverb, "The soul and the body make a [human]; the Spirit and discipline make a Christian" (Maddox, "Wesley's Prescription", 19). It was the

discipline of the small group class meetings that allowed the Spirit to work and thus to make disciples. One of the functions of the class meetings was to create a place and an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit could transform lives (Withrow 11). The goal of Wesley's system of societies and class meetings was transformed lives leading ultimately to holiness of heart. The aim of the class meetings was to bring a response to God's grace that formed holiness of heart and life (Withrow 12). The class meeting created a community in which growing in holiness as a disciple of Jesus Christ was facilitated. The Holy Spirit was the agent of the growth. The movement started by Wesley had as its purpose ministering among and for the poor of society. The poor were those who the upper classes looked down upon and considered nothing more than instruments for their industries (Snyder, loc. 626). The Church of England catered primarily to the upper class of society while the poor were neglected. The Church of England was in deterioration. Wesley's intention was to bring revitalization to the Church starting with the poor of society, particularly the children (Henderson 20).

In 1786 John Wesley wrote in "Thoughts upon Methodism": "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out" (Wesley, *Works*, 148). Wesley's concern was that future Methodists would lose the understanding of the vital doctrines and disciplines of the Christian faith. Maddox states that in order that not be the case Methodists today need, "to take seriously the task of cultivating in our communities a biblically grounded and theologically balanced sense of what it means to be a Christian, in order that we might be more effective in making real disciples" (Maddox, "Wesley's Prescription", 19). In the 1800's a lay-driven movement brought about the institution

of Sunday school, and as a result the church in the United States abandoned catechesis as a practice of teaching the basics of the faith to the church (Packer, loc. 344). This movement replaced the pastor as catechist with, at best, poorly trained laity. This movement used instruction with familiar Bible stories over any form of the basic beliefs and practices of the faith (Packer, loc. 351). The result today is an entire generation of Christians having only an ambiguous notion as to what Christians historically believe (*Tennent, Thirty Questions*, loc. 78).

In her book, “Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church,” Dean points to the faith of America’s youth as declining (3). Dean points out that teenagers in America are not hostile to religion or things of faith but are instead ambivalent. She states that the state of religious commitment of teenagers is a result of the religious devotion of their parents going back to their congregations (Dean 4). The National Study of Youth and Religion reports that teenagers are open to religion but are generally not committed to any one religion (Dean 4). While this is unsettling it points to the failure of the church in teaching the tenets of the faith. Tennent states that Christian values are not being taught in homes and churches (*Thirty Questions*, loc. 61). The church in the Western world finds itself in a post-Christian age and must be much more deliberate in efforts to pass down the faith. At the same time the church must be teaching the basics of the faith to all those within the congregation as well as those wishing to become part of the church (Tennent, *Thirty Questions*, loc. 69). What the church needs is a renewed effort of catechesis (Tennent, *Thirty Questions*, loc. 69). The church needs to begin looking at the last command Jesus gave his disciples in Matthew 28:19-20, “¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” .

Making disciples is what the church has been about since Jesus gave what is now called “The Great Commission” in Matthew 28:18-20. The mission statement of the United Methodist Church is “Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.” Those who have been looking at the decline in membership in the United Methodist Church have concluded that people were not “experiencing a meaningful, sustainable faith experience through their church involvement” (Withrow, 3). This reflects back to a conclusion of the report of the National Study of Youth and Religion that youth are not engaging in their faith because it is not being passed down; the church is not fulfilling its task of teaching the basics of the faith.

In the church of the first several centuries there was a period of catechesis, of teaching the faith, before a person became a part of the community of faith. With the normalization of infant baptism this period of instruction gradually fell away. As Robert Farr stated at the Indiana United Methodist Annual Conference session in 2014, “We are giving our children the church but we have failed to give them Christ.” The church has become so focused on preserving the institution it has lost sight of the reason for the institution, making disciples. People of all denominations are having difficulty practicing their faith (Watson, *Blueprint for Discipleship* 8). Studies such as the National Study of Youth and Religion show there is a problem (Dean 7) yet stop at identifying a solution to the problem.

Churches today conduct new Christian or new member classes to provide some basic introduction to the Christian faith for new believers or those taking vows of membership (Arnold 39). These classes last anywhere from a few class sessions to possibly eight weeks. Arnold asks the question, “Is a four-week (six-week, or eight-week) new Christian class really enough?” (Arnold 40). Looking back at the practice of the early church of teaching converts the basics of the faith, Arnold’s conclusion is that possibly the time has come to re-examine the ancient

practice of the catechumenate. Ancient church writings indicate that the period of the catechumenate was as long as three years (Arnold 44). Looking at such an extended period it seems that four-, six-, or even eight-week classes are not adequate for what truly should be accomplished (Arnold 45). Considering the findings of Dean (7) it appears classes like these should be offered even to long-time members of a congregation.

The training of new believers in the early church was seen as extremely important (Arnold 45). Offering classes similar to what the early church practiced in the catechumenate should be a priority in churches today (Arnold 45). Arnold proposes that a ministry of teaching the basics of the faith be of such importance, of such priority, that some things need to be eliminated or delegated to others within the congregation in order that leaders might be free to teach these classes (Arnold 46). In the United Methodist Church part of the pastor's key responsibilities are to teach the faith (Book of Discipline, para 340.2c(2)). While the position of teaching the classes is important, of equal importance is the scope of the teaching.

Discipleship, the state of being a disciple, is not an end in itself but a journey. Discipleship is the lifelong journey of a relationship with Jesus. Mark's gospel records Jesus' calling the first disciples. The Revised Standard Version translates the Greek text of Mark 1:17, ¹⁷ "And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.'" Here Jesus is telling those to follow him that this thing called discipleship is not a four-, six-, or eight-week class but that it is a lifelong journey of becoming a disciple (Schwanda, 196). After confessing Jesus as Lord and repenting, catechesis, teaching the basic tenets of the faith, is the first step in the journey of discipleship. Discipleship is the process which brings about changed lives (Shirley, 211). The lifelong process of discipleship is holiness. Catechesis then can be seen as part of the discipleship journey. Catechesis can be seen as the place in which discipleship takes

place. Barna has reported a growing movement within Christianity in which believers are leaving the local church in order to experience spiritual growth outside the institutional church (Barna, 64). Shirley points out that the local church is scripturally the vehicle designed to be the vehicle for discipleship (Shirley, 208). Acts 2:42-47 states,

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

This text provides the model for the process of disciple-making in the local church (Shirley 216). This model outlines the priorities for the local church in making disciples. These priorities are evangelism, teaching, fellowship, worship, and ministry (Shirley, 212). The church is the tool which God has chosen to make disciples (Shirley 212). As the church looks at making disciples the process must begin with the desired end in mind.

The church must have a teaching process for making disciples. Shirley identifies what he believes are the essential characteristics of a disciple: "living in Christ, loving one another, and laboring for the kingdom" (213). Living in Christ is the disciple's relationship with Jesus Christ. It is in this growing relationship that the disciple is formed from the inside out (Shirley, 215). This life nurturing relationship is developed through worship, prayer, and studying and meditating on scripture. The acts of prayer, worship, and scripture are what Wesley referred to as

works of piety (Warner 161). The works of piety are elements of what the ancient church used for catechesis (Shirley 215). Through these particular elements the disciple will be immersed in scripture and will begin growth in a relationship with Jesus Christ. For Wesley the ultimate goal of discipleship was sanctification, growth in holiness (Withrow 6). All the tools of catechesis and subsequent discipleship need to be focused on the goal of sanctification. The activities considered as works of piety are part of what the church calls the means of grace. The means of grace are those actions that open a person to the transforming presence of God's grace. The means of grace are those faith habits which form us into mature disciples (Thompson, loc. 156). Through the works of piety, immersion in scripture, the disciple is able to see the sweep of salvation history (Arnold 47). It is through the immersion in scripture that the relationship with Christ is developed. The second characteristic of discipleship is loving one another.

In John chapter thirteen Jesus tells the disciples, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). Disciples are known by their love for one another. Loving one another as Jesus commanded requires experiencing true community (Shirley 215). The community referred to here is "koinonia". Koinonia is more than spending time with others or sharing a cup of coffee together. Koinonia implies sharing life together, sharing in life's difficulties and life's joys. Koinonia is devotion to one another; it is communal life at its best (Shirley 216). Koinonia, community, is the willingness to surrender one's life for another (John 15:13). Koinonia is described as "a Spirit-created bond within the body" (Shirley 219). Community, also called fellowship, is a way of life within the church (Shirley 219). True community is a relationship with other believers through the relationship shared with Jesus Christ (Shirley 219). A third characteristic of discipleship is shared ministry for the kingdom.

Shirley defines ministry as “a loving response in Jesus’ name to the needs of all persons” (219). Wesley defines this as works of mercy (Warner 161). Wesley saw true discipleship as a balanced life between works of piety and works of mercy. Works of mercy are also included in the means of grace. Ministry as a characteristic of discipleship is a result of living a life in Christ and loving one another as Jesus Christ loved, and it is an expression of love for Jesus Christ (Shirley 219). Ministry is a result of love for Jesus Christ joining with obeying the commands Jesus gave and compassion for people (Shirley, 219). Immersing in the scriptures, loving one another, and working in ministry together are all part of discipleship. There is another aspect of discipleship that must be included; that aspect is teaching the central doctrines of faith.

As part of the discipleship process during the catechesis phase there is the need to understand the major doctrines of the faith. These major doctrines are generally taught in the context of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer. Historically the doctrines of the faith were taught using these documents. The basic doctrines of the faith are contained in the Apostles’ Creed; the Ten Commandments contain the moral or holiness code, and the major spiritual disciplines are summarized in the Lord’s Prayer and the sacraments (Tennent, *Ten Words*, loc. 46). The emphasis in discipleship for the early church, for Wesley, and for the church today is to enable believers to manifest Christlikeness in a way that is relevant to their lives and their surroundings (Withrow 5). The goal of catechesis leading to discipleship in the church today is not that different from Wesley’s goal of Christlikeness or the early church’s goal of growing converts into full believers.

The idea of catechesis leading to discipleship, such as the time a convert would spend as a catechumen before baptism and full inclusion in the community of faith, is not applicable today. Wesley’s practice of requiring regular class meeting attendance in order to be admitted to

the meeting of the associated society would not be suitable for discipleship in the church today. It started in the early church as preparation of new converts to live life in Christ and living life as a witness to the grace of God in Christ. It continued in Wesley with the focus being on the new believer's transformation in holiness of heart and life (Blevins 207). Wesley's model of discipleship was very similar to that of the early church's practice of grounding new believers "in the way of Jesus Christ" (Blevins 207). In the church today it is common for a new members' or new believers' class to be four to possibly eight weeks in length. This is hardly long enough to provide a solid foundation in the faith on which to begin a life-long journey of discipleship. Honeycutt writes, "The number of people who claim to have been Christians for years but who lack spiritual depth and maturity is reason for alarm" (Honeycutt 34). In the church today there is a need for catechesis, teaching the foundations of the faith, as integral to the discipleship process to produce mature Christian disciples (Packer, loc. 74).

The mission of the church from the time of Jesus Christ has been to make disciples. This mission is especially important in the twenty-first church. Since the 1960's the mainline Protestant denominations have been experiencing a decline (Warner,168). This decline has been attributed to a pervasive shallow but broad spirituality alongside a growing consumer-driven philosophy (Warner 168). The result of the combination of a broad, shallow spirituality and a consumer mindset is a loss of the identity of what it means to be a Christian. The idea of a disciple as one who has a life-giving relationship runs counter to the popular models of spirituality (Warner 168). One emphasis in the Gospel of Matthew is that of following Jesus Christ in order to make disciples (Warner 169). The Great Commission in Matthew 28 identifies two actions required for making disciples: baptizing and teaching. These actions are the same actions catechesis is responsible for. Matthew's Gospel from the beginning is catechetical

(Warner 169). Wesley understands faithful discipleship as following a cruciform way of life in Jesus Christ. It is a way of life described as dying and rising in the imagery of baptism “and resulting transformation as new creations in Christ” (Blevins 209). Wesley’s practices of society meeting and class meeting have the potential of facilitating grace (Blevins 209). This is catechesis at its fullest understanding both for Wesley and the early church (Blevins 209). The United Methodist Church is slowly fulfilling Wesley’s fear that the people called Methodist would “only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out” (Wesley, *Works*, 148). The churches within Methodism need to once again find the fire that once made them powerful. This can be done if the church brings back a method of catechesis and discipleship which teaches the foundations of the Christian faith alongside those distinctive doctrines of the Wesleyan tribe that set the Wesleyan way apart.

Research Design Literature

The dissertation process for the Doctor of Ministry is a “action-reflection-action” process. In the process the D.Min. student functions as a resident contextual theologian acting to initiate a ministry intervention for the particular context that addresses a discrete problem critically in order that the faith community may continue its journey of becoming like Jesus Christ in the world. The DMin student’s purpose in the process highlights the functioning as a practical theologian in the community practicing: 1) the communal activity of theology relating faith to others, 2) theology as a faith shaping identity – theology as a formative practice, 3) the critical activity of faith seeking understanding in practice, and 4) the public activity of theology as faith expressing itself in the marketplace (Sensing xix). The research done for the DMin process

generates theory from the data collected. The theory generated brings greater possibilities for applications in the field of study and possibly generates new knowledge (Sensing 161).

There are ethical considerations when working with human subjects and these considerations are paramount. Research ethics pertain to the interactions between the researcher and the participants. The research practices are guided by four core principles: 1) non-maleficence, 2) beneficence, 3) self-determination, and 4) justice. The research principles are designed to protect the participants and insure that they are not harmed physically, emotionally, financially, or in any other way. The Institutional Review Board application requires each researcher to complete the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”. Indiana Higher Education Board was consulted to determine if there are any additional requirements regarding research with human participants. In Indiana there are no further requirements. Each participant signed a consent form for each stage of the research project. The consent form followed a set format of: 1) introduction, 2) purpose, 3) procedure, 4) time required, 5) confidentiality/anonymity, and 6) sharing of results (Sensing 34).

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were chosen for this project on Wesley’s order of salvation. The quantitative method in the project consists of questionnaires/surveys. Questionnaires can be effective tools in congregational research but must be carefully focused and interpreted (Thumma, 217). The questionnaire/survey can be a good method to determine various beliefs and attitudes of a congregation (Thumma 217). In using questionnaires/surveys the sample group must represent the congregation as a whole, not a distinct subgroup (Thumma, 219). A distinct advantage of questionnaires/surveys is the ability of hearing from more people

than it would be possible to interview (Thumma 227). One disadvantage of the questionnaire/survey is that the data received is only as good as the questions (Thumma 227).

The qualitative method used in this project is the use of focus groups. The qualitative lens exhibits five characteristics. The researcher used questions in the focus groups which: 1) set the stage, 2) asked for information about the intervention, 3) asked for specific information, and 4) sought the opinions of the participants (Sensing, 88). Focus groups have the advantage of the synergy of the group providing richer data than individual interviews might provide (Sensing, 120). However, the very advantage of group interaction may also be a disadvantage. In some instances the group interaction may hinder individual expressions (Sensing, 120). During the focus groups researchers ask open ended questions to dictate follow-up using the following guidelines: 1) ask questions when do not understand, 2) ask to hear more about the subject, and 3) followed up without interrupting (Seimand).

Literature Review Summary

Wesley's ordo salutis, order of salvation, may be more appropriately called the via salutis, the way of salvation. Wesley's theology of salvation necessarily begins with original sin and a person's awakening to their sinful condition by grace, prevenient grace. There is only one grace, but it is experienced in differing ways at different stages of a person's life. Prevenient grace awakens a person to their need of salvation. Prevenient grace is grace drawing a person into saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Prevenient grace brings a person to repentance.

Upon repenting a person experiences God's grace justifying or forgiving the sin and freeing the person from the penalty of sin. Concurrent with justification is regeneration or new birth. In the new birth the person is born again, and the process or journey of sanctification

begins. As a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) the believer has assurance of their salvation and begins growing in grace as they enter the process toward total sanctification. The means of grace are those practices through which a believer grows in their relationship with Jesus Christ and grows in the grace of God.

Catechesis is the practice of growing a believer in their faith. Catechesis, sometimes called discipleship, begins a life-long process of growing in God's grace. The early church developed catechetical methods to prepare a new believer for baptism and entry into the community of faith. In some faith traditions today a believer is baptized upon their confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, eliminating the period of instruction in the faith. Other faith traditions, such as Methodism, practice infant baptism, and as the child becomes ready they enter a time of catechesis, called confirmation, preparing them to make their own confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and become full members of the faith community.

Many authors see a need for the church to return to a formal catechesis for all who would confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They see the need for new believers to better understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Some authors point to the lack of catechesis as contributing to the weakening of the church's impact on the world today.

The research method for this project is a mixed method employing both quantitative and qualitative methods in a post intervention study. There are advantages and disadvantages to both quantitative and qualitative methods. By utilizing a mixed method of research it is hoped to maximize the advantages and minimize the disadvantages.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter contains a description of the research methodology used in this project. A mixed method approach to an intervention design was used consisting of surveys, focus groups, and participant observation during the discussion class. The researcher wrote and preached a sermon series based on Wesley's order of salvation. A researcher-designed survey exploring the congregation's understanding of Wesley's order of salvation was used both before and after the sermon. The entire congregation was invited to participate in the surveys. Following the completion of the survey after the sermon series two focus groups of five people each were conducted to seek further response on participant understanding of Wesley's soteriology based on the sermon series. Focus group participants were chosen to give a cross section of the congregation.

The researcher also designed a curriculum for a series of discussion classes that covered several of the areas distinctive to the Wesleyan tradition. An introductory class introduced the themes to be covered in the class. The researcher-designed survey was distributed to participants prior to the introductory class. This survey covered major themes to be covered in the remaining six classes. At the completion of the third class session a survey was given using only the items pertaining to the material covered in the first three class sessions. At the completion of the class the same survey given prior to the beginning of the classes was again given in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the class material in communicating the distinctiveness of Wesleyan theology. During the presentations of the class material the researcher acted as participant observer noting particularly the engagement of the participants, the number of questions asked, and responses as the material was presented each session.

At the completion of the class sessions, two focus groups of five people were conducted to probe the impact of the class material. The groups were designed to reflect a cross section of all participants in the classes.

The Problem Restated

In an increasingly secularized society a major challenge for Christians is not only to believe but to understand what they believe and for those beliefs to affect their lives. It is not uncommon when asking people why they are members of a given congregation or denomination to respond they have always been at this congregation and that their families before them have always been part of that congregation. When asked, for example, why they are Wesleyan they might answer because Jesus Christ died on a cross and three days later rose from the dead. These are valid beliefs yet are not distinctive for any faith tradition. While there are doctrines distinctive to those who are Roman Catholic or Baptist or Presbyterian or Anglican there are also doctrines that are distinctive to those called Wesleyan.

The United Methodist Church is committed to the Wesleyan tradition theology. Cooperating with other Christian traditions with a catholic spirit is one of the characteristics of the Wesleyan tradition. The United Methodist Church is fully committed to the idea that Methodism has been raised up by God “to spread scriptural holiness over the land” (Wesley *Works* 8:299). The challenge for those who are United Methodist, among all the various ideologies, theologies, and worldviews, is to remain faithful to the task of scriptural holiness.

There is a need to distinguish United Methodists from generic Protestantism. There is a need to help people in the United Methodist Church stand out from other Protestant denominations. The driving force behind this research project has been to encourage the people of the United Methodist Church in the understanding of the Wesleyan tradition and to enable

them to engage the world with the unique theological worldview and distinctiveness of the Wesleyan tradition.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the impact of a Wesleyan “catechism” on the understanding of Wesleyan theology through a seven-sermon series on Wesley’s order of salvation and a six-session class on the Wesleyan distinctive of faith delivered at the St. Andrews United Methodist Church.

This research consisted of a series of seven sermons outlining Wesley’s order of salvation to help the participants better understand salvation from a Wesleyan tradition. A pre/post survey combined with two focus groups of five persons and participant observer notes provided quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of the sermon series.

A second part of the research was a series of discussion classes on segments of the faith which make the Wesleyan tradition distinctive from other faith traditions. Pre/post surveys along with two focus groups of five persons each and the researcher’s participant observer’s notes provided quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of the discussion classes.

This research is designed to equip participants with a clearer view of Wesleyan theology and tradition and thereby enable them to have a richer world view and to more effectively proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How does preaching Wesley’s order of salvation (*ordo salutis*) affect the listener’s understanding of salvation?

Wesley’s order of salvation dominates Wesleyan doctrine. It is seen as one of the distinctive pieces of the Wesleyan tradition. In order to more fully grasp this distinctive piece of

Wesleyan doctrine there needs to be a grasp of Wesley's order of salvation. In order to help the congregation better understand Wesley's theology of salvation a series of seven sermons was prepared and presented highlighting the major points of Wesley's order of salvation. These sermons addressed topics that are the main points of Wesley's theology of salvation.

The sermons were prepared and preached by the pastor/researcher and were freshly prepared sermons. Researcher/pastor prepared sermons ensured the content was prepared for this particular congregation. Using a pre/post survey and focus groups, data was collected and analyzed to determine the cognitive and affective results on participants.

Research Question 2: How does teaching the Wesleyan distinctive of faith in a discussion class setting affect the participants' understanding of Wesleyan doctrine?

In order to help participants understand the parts of Wesleyan tradition that are distinct to Wesley a series of discussion classes was also taught. The curriculum for this class was written by the researcher/pastor and drawn from material in the United Methodist Book of Discipline section on Our Doctrinal Heritage along with Collins (Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*), Heitzenrater (Heitzenrater *Wesley and The People Called Methodist*), and Harper (Harper, *The Way to Heaven*).

A pre/post survey and focus groups along with the participant observer notes of the researcher/presenter measured the impact of these sermons on the understanding of the distinctives of the Wesleyan tradition. The data from the survey and focus group transcripts and the participant observer notes were analyzed to determine the cognitive effects of the material presented in the discussion classes.

Ministry Context

This study was conducted at the St. Andrews United Methodist Church in Syracuse, Indiana. St. Andrews is a mid-size United Methodist congregation with a membership of approximately one hundred-twenty people and an average Sunday worship attendance of seventy-five persons. The congregation is predominantly an older, retired congregation with the median age in the mid-seventies. The church was established in 1839 and has been at its current location since 1961.

Syracuse, Indiana is a small town in north central Indiana on the shore of both Lake Syracuse and Lake Wawasee. During the summer months Syracuse becomes a resort town with many residents staying for the summer at their lake homes. Aside from the summer residents Syracuse is a typical mid-western small town with a mixture of socio-economic levels represented among the population.

St. Andrews is an upper-middle class Caucasian congregation with several retired school teachers in the congregation. Educationally, 60% of the congregants at St. Andrews have a college education, and several have graduate degrees. The owners of a local boat sales and service company are active members of St. Andrews, and there are several other retired business owners active within the congregation.

St. Andrews is a theologically conservative, evangelical congregation. As an evangelical congregation they believe the conversion or "born again" experience is central to salvation. They believe the scriptures to be God's revelation to humanity and in the importance of sharing the Gospel message. While there is an emphasis on justification there is minimal sense of God's prevenient grace as the means by which God awakens and woos one into a personal relationship. In the St. Andrews congregation there is no difference between justification and the new birth. There is no sense of sanctification or the call to holiness in one's life. For the majority of the congregation there is no sense that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is anything more than symbolic of Jesus

Christ's atoning death on the cross. While St. Andrews shares theological views common with many traditions such as the Baptists, the Presbyterians, the Lutherans, and others, St. Andrews does not appear to be distinctively Wesleyan.

Participants

Criteria for Participation

The entire congregation of St. Andrews United Methodist Church was invited to participate in this study. There were several announcements in Sunday worship bulletins prior to the beginning of the study inviting members of the congregation to participate in the study. The chairperson of the Administrative Council made several verbal invitations to the congregation to participate in the study. In every announcement the congregation was informed of the nature of the project and that the pastor would be preaching the sermons and leading the discussion classes. It was also stressed that participation was entirely voluntary and that they were free to refrain from participating if they chose.

Description of Participants

Participants are members of the congregation of St. Andrews United Methodist Church in Syracuse, Indiana a small town in north central Indiana. Both males and females are included in the study. Ages of the participants range from late twenties to eighties. Involvement in the life of the congregation varies from only attending weekly worship to full involvement in many areas of congregational life including participating in various committees, Bible studies and social events. All participants are Caucasian with one Hispanic male. Most participants are retired. One couple is the owner/operators of the local boat sales and service company. There are school teachers and accountants in the congregation as well as factory workers and a security worker for the local bar

and grill. A few of the participants have been Christian for only a few years while others have been Christian for twenty to fifty years.

Ethical Considerations

This project was undertaken for the purpose of furthering the Kingdom of God and to the glory of God. For this reason an ethical approach was of highest value throughout the entire project. At the beginning of the Preaching Wesley's Ordo Salutis project and after explaining the purpose of the project, it was explained that the pastor as the researcher would be preaching a series of sermons. It was further explained that there would be a pre- and post-sermon series survey to gather feedback on the series of sermons and on their understanding of Wesley's theology of salvation. It was also explained that there would be a discussion class on the distinctives of the Wesleyan tradition led by the pastor as the researcher and that the same type of pre-post-event survey would be used after the six-part discussion class to gather information on their response to the classes on the Wesleyan basis of our faith.

Surveys were coded to ensure confidentiality but also to ensure pre- and post- surveys could be matched to enable evaluating the sermon series and the class being taught. The coding was done using five boxes at the top of each survey. The first box contained the initial of the participants' mother's maiden name with the remaining four boxes containing the last four digits of the participants' social security number. In this way pre- and post-surveys were matched, and the confidentiality of the participants was maintained.

It was explained that there would be focus groups led by the pastor as researcher after the series of sermons and after the discussion class to further gather feedback on the sermons of Wesley's theology of salvation and the Wesleyan basis of our faith. It was explained these focus

groups would be audio recorded and the church secretary would be transcribing the recordings and the secretary would be under a strict covenant of confidentiality.

The participants were informed that the pastor would be the sole interpreter of the data and covenanted with them not to divulge information to any other person, other than what might be necessary for academic oversight by his mentor and others from Asbury Theological Seminary and that no names would be shared in any situation. All research data would be securely stored and password protected at his home. Once the project was completed and the dissertation successfully defended and edited, he would destroy all primary records, including voice recordings, transcriptions of recordings, surveys, and his personal research journal.

The Pilot Test

On March 21, 2016 the researcher administered the surveys for the sermon series and the discussion classes with members of the Administrative Council of the Nappanee United Methodist Church with the consent of the church's senior pastor. Nappanee United Methodist Church is fourteen miles from St. Andrews United Methodist Church. Both congregations are theologically and demographically similar with the exception that Nappanee is a bit larger town than Syracuse, and the Nappanee United Methodist Church is a larger congregation than the Saint Andrews congregation. Ten people of varying ages and incomes filled out the surveys. The surveys were completed by the last person in fifteen minutes. There were no errors detected in the surveys and any revisions were minor and did not require a second pilot test for this project.

Procedure for Data Collection

The congregation in this study is primarily an older population and not as comfortable with on-line surveys. A statement at the top of each survey indicated that by

returning the completed survey the participant indicated their consent to being part of the research project. In order to help ensure confidentiality of participants the pre-test surveys for the sermon were given to the potential participants by the ushers as participants exited at the conclusion of the worship experience two weeks prior to the beginning of the study. Included with the surveys was an addressed, stamped envelope for the participants to return the surveys. Two weeks prior to the beginning of the discussion class the pre-test surveys were given to participants by the leaders of the adult Sunday school classes. Included with the surveys was an addressed, stamped envelope for the participants to return the surveys. At the conclusion of the sermon series the post-test surveys were distributed by the ushers to participants as they exited the worship experience. Again, included with the survey was an addressed, stamped envelope. At the completion of the third class session a post-test survey covering the topics of the first three classes were handed to the participants by a class member. Again, included with the survey was an addressed, stamped envelope. This was repeated after the completion of the sixth class with a post-test survey covering material covered in the last three classes. The participants were provided addressed, stamped envelopes to return the surveys in order to help ensure confidentiality. It has been shown that providing addressed stamped envelopes for returning the surveys increased the participation rates (<http://scantron.com/articles/improve-response-rate>).

Following the completion of the sermon series, two focus groups of five people each, chosen to give a cross section of the congregation, were used to further probe the impact of the sermon series. These focus groups were audio-recorded, and the recordings transcribed. The pastor/researcher recorded participant observer notes during the focus groups, and these were transcribed as well.

Following the completion of the class sessions, a single focus groups of five people, chosen to give a cross section of all participants in the classes, was used to further probe the impact of the class material. These focus group was audio-recorded, and the recordings transcribed. The pastor/researcher recorded participant observer notes during the focus groups, and these were transcribed as well.

Procedure for Analyzing the Data Collected

The process of collecting the data itself was in some measure analyzing the data. All collected data in the categories were analyzed. Sensing states, “Data interpretation begins the first day you begin gathering data” (194). The process of synthesis of outcomes brought about a great deal of reflection and consideration to avoid making premature conclusions. In mixed methods procedures both qualitative and quantitative data collection have several ways of mixing the data. In the connected method there are two distinct phases of data collection in which the data is merged or integrated (Creswell 208). In the method used in the present research the data from the surveys is considered the primary, and the data collected from the focus groups and the participant observer notes is considered to provide supportive information.

Qualitative Data

In the present study the qualitative data is being embedded within the quantitative data. In this way the focus group data provides a supporting role in the project. In the present study the quantitative data was weighted more heavily than the qualitative data as the project is designed to look for the changes in attitudes and knowledge, which is determined by the surveys (Creswell 206). The data from the participant observer notes and the focus groups was helpful as it provided data that would clarify the data from the surveys. Questions used to open the focus groups were open-ended questions to draw the participants into further discussion of the material

of the sermons or classes. Audio recordings from the focus groups were transcribed, and the first step in analysis was to obtain a general sense of the information (Creswell 185). Analysis of the transcripts, the recordings of the focus groups for both the sermon series and the discussion classes, and the participant observer notes looked at potential themes and patterns in participants' responses to the sermons and the discussion classes (Sensing 198). The data was further analyzed using the themes to provide information to embed with the survey data. Participant observer notes from the focus groups were transcribed to provide yet another set of qualitative data for analysis.

The participant observer notes recorded the descriptive notes of the participants' reactions to questions, their demeanor during the group, and their interactions with the other group members. The descriptive notes also recorded the actual answers to the questions. The participant observer notes also recorded the researcher's notes that reflected on the group's participation in the event. Triangulating data from the surveys along with data from focus groups and observer notes helped determine the impact of the sermon series and the discussion classes in affecting the lives of the participants.

Quantitative Data

Results from the pre-sermon series surveys was compared with the results from the post-sermon series surveys to determine how the sermons brought change in understanding the points of Wesley's order of salvation and how the sermons impacted the spiritual life for each participant. The data was analyzed looking at the percentage change for participants in the given areas of the order of salvation: awakening, repentance, justification, new birth, assurance, growing in grace, and sanctification. The data was analyzed for the mean change in each of the areas as well (Brink, 467).

Likewise, results from individual pre-class surveys were compared with the post-class surveys for the discussion classes to determine how the classes changed individual's understanding of the distinctives of Wesleyan theology. The data was analyzed to determine the percentage change for participants in the given areas of the distinctive areas of Wesley's theology: original sin, Wesley's distinctive theology of grace, Wesley's discipleship, the means of grace, social holiness, and perfection. The data was analyzed for the mean change in each of the areas as well (Brink, 467).

Reliability of Project Design

The surveys were screened by Rev. David Schramm, retired United Methodist pastor and District Superintendent; Rev. Jim Davidson, active United Methodist pastor; Dr. Stacy Minger, professor of preaching at Asbury Theological Seminary; Dr. Milton Lowe, Director of Networks for the Beeson Center of Asbury Theological Seminary, and Dr. Ellen Marmon, Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Asbury Theological Seminary. Each indicated that the surveys aligned with the research questions. Additionally a person with no background in Wesley studies or theology screened the surveys along with the research questions and observed the surveys aligned with the research questions to a person from the outside.

The researcher evaluated the survey statements against relevant literature and found them to be valid representations of the corresponding material. Surveys were distributed prior to the sermon series and prior to the discussion classes to obtain baseline data for comparison.

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data obtained from pre- and post-test surveys and focus groups for a series of sermons and classes for the study. The purpose of the research was to evaluate the impact of a Wesleyan “catechism” on the understanding of Wesleyan theology through a seven-sermon series on Wesley’s order of salvation and a six-session class on the Wesleyan distinctive of faith delivered at the St. Andrews United Methodist Church.

To answer Research Question 1: “How does preaching a series of sermons on Wesley’s order of salvation, *ordo salutis*, affect the participants understanding of the Wesleyan view of salvation?” a series of 7 sermons on John Wesley’s order of salvation was presented to the congregation of St. Andrews United Methodist Church. The sermons topics were: awakening, repentance, justification, new birth, assurance, growth in holiness, and sanctification. Outlines of the sermons are included in the appendices. A survey was given to all participants the week prior to the beginning of the sermon series. Following the conclusion of the sermon series an identical survey was given to participants to investigate to what extent the sermon series had deepened the participants understanding of Wesley’s order of salvation. Two focus groups were conducted to gain further information on the effectiveness of the sermon series.

To answer Research Question 2: “How does teaching the Wesleyan distinctive of faith in a class setting affect the participants’ understanding of Wesleyan theology?” a series of 6 classes was presented at St. Andrews United Methodist Church. The class topics were: original sin, grace, means of grace, Wesley’s discipleship method, social holiness, and perfection. Outlines for each of the classes is included in appendix. Surveys were given to participants before and following the classes to investigate to what extent the discussion classes improved participant’s understanding of key Wesleyan doctrines. A focus group of five persons was held to further investigate the extent to which the classes impacted the participant’s understanding of key

Wesleyan doctrines. Data collected from the surveys and from the focus groups were analyzed in order to answer the research questions.

Participants

Research Question 1 Participants

The congregation at St. Andrews United Methodist Church in Syracuse, Indiana was the population group for Research Question 1. The congregation is comprised of Caucasian men and women with educational levels varying from high school graduates to graduate degrees. The congregation consists of approximately fifty adult men and women ranging in age from early twenties to early nineties. There were thirty members of the congregation who returned both pre-test and post-test surveys for the quantitative portion of Research Question 1. Given the size of the population and in order to ensure the confidentiality of those who participated in the study, there was no question on the survey asking the participants' ages.

Sermon series participants were asked how long they had been part of a Methodist/United Methodist congregation. Of the thirty surveys returned, twenty-one people specified a length of time in a Methodist/United Methodist congregation; the remaining nine either did not answer or simply answered "all my life" or "since I was a child." Of the persons answering the question three had been part of a Methodist/United Methodist congregation from 3-20 years, six persons from 21-40 years, four persons from 41-60 years, seven persons from 62-80 years, and one person who had been part of a Methodist congregation for over 80 years. The average length of time survey participants have been associated with a Methodist/United Methodist congregation is 42.8 years. Participants in the focus groups were those who had heard all seven of the sermons and had indicated they had returned both pre- and post-sermon surveys. The focus group

participants were men and women ranging in age from late-60's to early 80's. Table 4.2 shows the years participants at St. Andrews UMC have been part of a Methodist congregation.

Table 4.1: Number of Years in Methodist Congregation

Years	#
3-20	3
21-40	6
41-60	4
61-80	7
81+	1

Participants were asked to indicate how many of the sermons they had heard. Seven respondents heard six of the seven sermons while six participants heard all seven sermons. Five participants heard five of the seven sermons. The remaining 40% of the participants (12 out of 30) heard four or fewer of the seven sermons. Table 4.3 shows the number of sermons heard by those who returned surveys.

Table 4.2: Number of Sermons Heard

# Sermons	# Persons
2	3
3	4
4	5
5	5
6	7
7	6

Research Question 2 Participants

The members of the adult Sunday school class at St. Andrews United Methodist Church in Syracuse, Indiana was the participant group for answering Research Question 2. The class is comprised of Caucasian men and women with educational levels varying from high school graduates to graduate degrees. The focus group was five persons from the class who indicated they had returned both pre- and post-class surveys. Ages of those in the focus group were those

in the 71-80 age range. The class consists of 16 adult men and women; of these, two persons were in the 61-70 age range; seven were in the 71-80 age range, and seven were older than 80 years old. Table 4.4 indicates the age range of participants in the class.

Figure 4.3: Age of Participants in Class

Age	Number
61-70	2
71-80	7
81+	7

Four participants (25%) attended all six class sessions; two persons attended five of the class sessions; four persons attended four of the class sessions; three persons attended three of the class sessions, and three persons attended two of the class sessions. Six of the sixteen participants (37.5%) attended three or fewer classes. Table 4.5 shows the class attendance of participants.

Table 4.4: Class Attendance

# Classes	# People
2	3
3	3
4	4
5	2
6	4

Research Question 1: Description of Evidence

Research Question 1: How does preaching a series of sermons on Wesley’s order of salvation, *ordo salutis*, affect the participants’ understanding of the Wesleyan view of salvation?

Quantitative Analysis

The pre/post sermon survey included fifty-six scaled statements ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The items on the survey were divided into the following topics:

awakening, repentance, justification, new birth, assurance, growing in holiness, and sanctification. These seven topics correspond with each of the seven sermons. The mean score for each statement on both the pre-sermon survey and the post-sermon survey was calculated and the difference for each statement was determined.

The awakening sermon presented the topics of original sin, prevenient grace, and the resistible nature of grace. In this portion of the survey items numbered 1-3 and 5-6 showed a negligible increase, items 7-8 showed a negligible decrease, and item 4 showed no change. Table 4.5 shows the results of the survey for the sermon on awakening.

Table 4.5: Survey Results for the Sermon on Awakening

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
1	Original sin is a condition we are born with	3.0	3.2	+0.2
2	I have the faith of a servant	3.2	3.4	+0.2
3	Prevenient grace awakens us to our condition before God	3.2	3.3	+0.1
4	My heart has been warmed by God's grace	3.5	3.5	NC
5	The Holy Spirit makes us aware that we are alienated from God	2.9	3.2	+0.3
6	There is no one completely devoid of God's grace*	2.9	3.1	+0.2
7	Grace is irresistible*	2.2	2.1	-0.1
8	I have the faith of a child of God	2.2	2.1	-0.1

*item reversed scored

For the sermon on repentance item numbers 11, 13, and 14 register negligible increase. Items 10, 15, and 16 register negligible decrease. Items 9 and 12 show no change. Table 4.6 shows the survey results for the sermon on repentance.

Table 4.6: Survey Results for the Sermon on Repentance

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
9	Repenting means being sorry for our sins*	2.1	2.1	NC
10	Confession is the same as repentance	3.1	3.0	-0.1
11	Repentance has brought me freedom	2.9	3.2	+0.3

12	Repenting is a one-time event*	3.2	3.2	NC
13	Repenting means turning to a new way of living	3.2	3.5	+0.3
14	I know my need of repentance	3.3	3.4	+0.1
15	Repentance makes me holy*	2.7	2.5	-0.2
16	True repentance brings new life	1.7	1.6	-0.1

*item reverse scored

For the sermon on justification item numbers 17, 18, and 20 register a negligible increase.

Items 19, 23, and 24 register a negligible decrease. Items 21 and 22 register no change. Table 4.7 shows the survey results for the sermon on justification.

Table 4.7: Survey Results for the Sermon on Justification

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
17	Justification restores us to God's favor	3.0	3.2	+0.2
18	Being "saved" ends with having our sins forgiven*	1.7	2.6	+0.9
19	I am right with God because I love God*	2.9	2.5	-0.4
20	Not everyone can be saved*	3.0	3.2	+0.2
21	We work to gain salvation*	2.8	2.8	NC
22	My heart is right with God	3.2	3.2	NC
23	God saves us totally apart from anything we might do*	2.7	2.4	-0.3
24	I am acceptable to God just as I am*	2.3	2.0	-0.2

*item reverse scored

For the sermon on the new birth item numbers 28 and 30 register a negligible increase.

Items 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, and 32 register a negligible decrease. Table 4.8 shows the survey results for the sermon on the new birth.

Table 4.8: Survey Results for the Sermon on the New Birth

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
25	Being "born again" is just a figure of speech*	3.2	3.1	-0.1
26	We are unable to cooperate with God in our salvation*	3.2	3.0	-0.2
27	Conversion is another term for new birth	2.9	2.8	-0.1
28	I am a new creation	2.8	3.0	+0.2
29	Justification is the same as the new birth*	2.5	2.3	-0.2

30	I am no longer under the control of sin	2.4	2.5	+0.1
31	Faith is simply believing in Jesus*	2.9	2.6	-0.3
32	Born again is a meaningless term- *item reverse scored	3.3	3.2	-0.1

For the sermon on assurance item 36 showed a negligible increase. Items 33, 35, 37, and 38 registered a negligible decrease. Items 34, 39, and 40 registered no change. Table 4.9 shows the survey results for the sermon on assurance.

Table 4.9: Survey Results for the Sermon on Assurance

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
33	I can know I am saved	3.3	3.2	-0.1
34	We can have peace of mind about our relationship with Jesus Christ	3.3	3.3	NC
35	Assurance of salvation is a gift from God	3.4	3.2	-0.2
36	My sins are forgiven	3.2	3.4	+0.2
37	God's grace only forgives our sin*	2.5	2.2	-0.3
38	I know Jesus loves me	3.6	3.5	-0.1
39	We cannot know with certainty if our sins are forgiven*	3.3	3.3	NC
40	I hope but I am not certain I will go to heaven* *item reverse scored	3.0	3.0	NC

For the sermon on growing in holiness items 41, 44, and 46 register a negligible increase. Item 43 registers a negligible decrease. Items 42, 45, 47, and 48 register no change. Table 4.10 shows the survey results for the sermon on growing in holiness.

Table 4.10: Survey Results for the Sermon on Growing in Holiness

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
41	Holiness is keeping a set of strict rules for what believers do and don't do*	2.9	3.0	+0.1
42	I can grow in holiness on my own*	3.1	3.1	NC
43	Salvation is agreeing with God's truths	3.1	3.0	-0.1
44	I am moving toward perfection	2.6	2.8	+0.2
45	Working out your own salvation means doing good things to earn salvation*	3.2	3.2	NC
46	I am striving for holiness	2.9	3.1	+0.2
47	It is possible for a believer to be free from sin	2.1	2.1	NC

48	in their life I must cooperate with God in my salvation *item reverse scored	3.0	3.0	NC
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For the sermon on sanctification items 49, 50, 55, and 56 register negligible increase.

Items 52, 53, and 54 register negligible decrease. Item 51 registers no change. Table 4.11 shows the survey results for the sermon on sanctification.

Table 4.11: Survey Results for the Sermon on Sanctification

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
49	Sanctification is being ruled by the pure love of God	3.0	3.1	+0.1
50	I have power over sin	2.5	2.6	+0.1
51	It is possible to live without committing willful sin	2.6	2.6	NC
52	Perfection means we make no mistakes*	3.0	2.9	-0.1
53	I still face temptations	3.2	3.1	-0.1
54	Perfection means we are free from inward and outward sin	2.4	2.2	-0.2
55	I desire perfection	3.0	3.2	+0.2
56	I am free from sin *item reverse scored	2.0	2.1	+0.1

Qualitative Analysis

At the completion of the sermon series on Wesley's order of salvation ten persons who indicated they had returned both a pre- and post-sermon survey were asked to participate in two focus groups of five persons each. The following questions were prepared for the focus groups:

- 1) What reflections or insights have you had since this series of sermons?
 - 2) What specific parts of this series of sermons helped you better understand Wesley's theology of salvation?
 - 3) Was there anything in this series of sermons which helped you grow in your faith?
 - 4) What did you hear in the sermons that was new to you or that you had forgotten?
 - 5) What do you think "work out your own salvation" means?
 - 6) What do you think being "saved" means?
- As participants

began answering the questions their answers led to exploring further what they experienced as they listened to the sermons.

It was difficult keeping the focus groups on task with the questions presented as they tended to wander from the questions. In response to question one there were comments such as “I haven’t heard much about Wesley’s way of salvation before.” Another participant commented that they thought salvation was simply praying a prayer for forgiveness. There was some discussion concerning original sin and one remarked that they remembered it came from Adam and Eve. Prevenient grace was a term which was new to the participants of the focus groups. Participants were not able to identify any specific parts which opened Wesley’s theology of salvation to them in discussion of question 2. Question 3 brought no answers. As question 4 was asked there was light laughter and several quiet comments such as, “Almost all of it was new.” With question 5 participants agreed they had heard and/or read that scripture but were not certain what it meant other than working toward their salvation. Question 6 brought discussion concerning whether there was a point they had been saved or whether they “grew into it.”

Research Question 2 Description of Evidence

Research Question 2: How does teaching the Wesleyan distinctive of faith in a class setting affect the participants’ understanding of Wesleyan theology?

In order to answer Research Question 2 a series of six classes was presented covering some of the distinctives of Wesleyan theology. The class topics were: 1) original sin, 2) Wesleyan distinctiveness of grace, 3) the means of grace helps us as believers, 4) the Wesleyan way of discipleship, 5) the Wesleyan understanding of holiness, and 6) perfection. At an introductory class for the series participants were given a survey to test their understanding of Wesleyan doctrine. Immediately following the last class session participants were given an

identical survey to determine the impact of the series of classes. A focus group of five persons who had participated in at least four of the classes was chosen at the completion of the classes.

Quantitative Analysis

There were 16 participants for the quantitative portion of Research Question 2. The mean score for each statement on both the pre-test surveys and the post-test surveys was calculated and the difference for each statement was determined.

For the class on original sin items numbered 3 and 5 register negligible increase. Items 1, 2, and 6 register negligible decrease. Item 4 registers no change. Table 4.12 shows the survey data for the class on original sin.

Table 4.12: Survey Results for the Class on Original Sin

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-Test Average	Difference
1	We inherit original sin from our parents	2.6	2.5	-0.1
2	There is no cure for original sin*	3.3	3.1	-0.2
3	Original sin is a genetic trait*	2.9	3.0	+0.1
4	Original sin is our tendency to be rebellious	3.0	3.0	NC
5	Original sin causes me to think differently	2.8	3.0	+0.2
6	Original sin relieves me of responsibility for my lifestyle*	3.8	3.5	-0.3

*item reverse scored

For the class on Wesleyan distinctives of grace items 9, 11, and 12 register negligible increase. Items 8 and 10 register negligible decrease. Item 7 registers no change. Table 4.13 shows the survey data for the class on Wesleyan distinctives of grace.

Table 4.13: Survey Results for the Class on Wesleyan Distinctives of Grace

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-Test Average	Difference
7	Grace is a gift from God	3.7	3.7	NC
8	We cannot resist God's grace*	3.0	2.7	-0.3
9	There are several kinds of grace	2.6	2.7	+0.1
10	Not every person receives grace	2.7	2.6	-0.1
11	I need to work with God in my salvation	2.9	3.3	+0.4

12	God's grace doesn't affect my lifestyle*	3.2	3.3	+0.1
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*item reverse scored

For the class on the means of grace items 13, 14, and 17 register negligible increase. Item 18 registers negligible decrease. Items 15 and 16 register no change. Table 4.14 shows the survey data for the class on the means of grace.

Table 4.14: Survey Data for the Class on the Means of Grace

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
13	The means of grace are those actions which make us more aware of God's presence	2.9	3.0	+0.1
14	The means of grace make me more acceptable to God*	2.5	2.6	+0.1
15	Some of the means of grace are called sacraments	2.8	2.8	NC
16	The means of grace help us develop holy habits	3.0	3.0	NC
17	The means of grace help me grow as a disciple	2.8	3.1	+0.3
18	The means of grace can be divided into three categories: instituted, prudential, and general	3.6	2.7	-0.9

*item reverse scored

For the class on the Wesley's discipleship methods items 22, 23, and 24 register negligible increase. Items 19, 20, and 21 register negligible decrease. Table 4.15 shows the survey data for the class on the means of grace.

Table 4.15: Survey Results for the Class on Discipleship

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
19	John Wesley was not overly concerned with people growing in their faith*	3.6	3.3	-0.3
20	John Wesley's method of organizing believers in their discipleship was not very organized*	3.6	3.2	-0.4
21	I can grow as a disciple on my own*	3.4	3.2	-0.2
22	I need discipline to be a disciple	3.0	3.2	+0.2
23	Transformation is part of discipleship	3.0	3.1	+0.1
24	To grow as a disciple there needs to be accountability	3.0	3.2	+0.2

*item reversed scored

For the class on the means of grace items 26, 28, and 29 register negligible increase. Item 30 registers negligible decrease. Items 25 and 27 register no change. Table 4.16 shows the survey data for the class on growing in holiness.

Table 4.16: Survey Results for the Class on Growing in Holiness

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
25	Social holiness is how we interact with the world	3.0	3.0	NC
26	Social holiness is seek justice for oppressed people*	2.0	2.1	+0.1
27	Holiness is something we must work on in community	3.1	3.1	NC
28	Holiness is God's business alone, we can't do anything to move toward holiness*	3.2	3.3	+0.1
29	Holiness is instantaneous*	3.0	3.2	+0.2
30	Holiness means having no bad habits*	2.9	2.8	0.1

*item reverse scored

For the class on perfection items 32, 33, 34, and 36 register negligible increase. Items 31 and 35 register no change. Table 4.17 shows the survey data for the class on perfection.

Table 4.17: Survey Results for the Class on Perfection

Item No	Survey Statement	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Difference
31	Perfection means completion	2.6	2.6	NC
32	Perfection is all about love	2.3	2.7	+0.4
33	A life perfected is fully loving God and loving others	2.8	3.2	+0.4
34	I can be perfect in this life	2.0	2.3	+0.3
35	I need not strive for perfection*	3.2	3.2	NC
36	To be perfect is to have no faults*	2.6	2.8	+0.2

*item reversed scored

Qualitative Analysis

Five participants in the classes on distinctives of Wesleyan were asked to participate in a focus group. The participants asked to participate in the focus group attended at least four of the classes. At the completion of the series of classes on some of the distinctives of Wesleyan the

following questions were prepared for the focus groups: 1) When you were invited to participate in this six part class what did you think it would be about? 2) From your participation in this six part class how do you understand original sin? 3) After participating in this six part class how do you understand Wesley's distinctive of grace? 4) What part(s) of this six part class helped you understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? 5) How do you understand the means of grace after participating in this six part class? 6) From your participation in this six part class how do you understand Wesley's concept of holiness? 7) How did this six part class help you better understand Wesley's concept of Christian perfection? As participants began answering the questions their answers led to exploring further what they experienced as they participated in the classes.

When question one was asked, one participant stated he thought the class would be about the historical aspects of John Wesley. Others indicated they did not have an idea of the topic of the classes.

Question two on original sin produced conversations concerning the sin of Adam and Eve but no discussion as to what that sin means for people today.

Question three elicited discussion of grace and statements like, "You mean I really can resist God's grace? But who would want to." Prevenient grace was part of the discussion of grace in the group. "I not sure I understand this prevenient grace thing." And, "How does this prevenient grace thing work again?" A few participants thought grace was only functioning to forgive or justify us. The idea of grace wooing us into a relationship had been something they had never heard of. One remark was, "I see now that without God's grace drawing me to himself I most likely would never have come to saving faith. And now I understand it." The concept of prevenient grace was a concept with which the participants had not had much exposure to.

Comments such as, “Why haven’t we heard about this before?” were voiced by several participants.

As the focus group continued on question three on grace, one participant noted while they had heard sermons on Ephesians 2:8 about being saved by grace they more or less assumed the reality of God’s grace. One participant remarked that he believed grace was there for him because he was in church. Another participant remarked, “Even people like the terrorists have grace available to them?”

In discussing question four on what it means to be a disciple there was discussion on Wesley’s methods of growing disciples. Participants agreed that Wesley’s methodology for growing people in their faith was different; that Wesley seemed very authoritarian. Yet several stated the methods worked, “We should adapt those ideas and use them today.” One problem participants could see is that people are so busy that getting them to commit the time to class meetings and such would be very difficult. One misconception participants had was the idea these class meetings were for Bible study, which is only a part of the method. One comment was, “I’m not sure I want to share that deep intimate stuff with other people in the congregation.” All agreed small accountability groups with the sort of sharing as Wesley reports would require a level of trust far deeper than currently exists. That comment brought the comment, “Maybe part of the problem in congregations today is that people don’t really trust each other.”

In the focus group question five, the means of grace, was a conversation topic. There was discussion concerning the means of grace as a means of discipleship. One participant remarked that, “I never saw some of these things (means of grace) as forming me as a disciple before. I always thought that what formed me as a disciple was Bible study alone.” There was general discussion about how the means of grace were transformational. The idea of communion or

fasting being transforming the participant was eye-opening. “I always thought we did those things as a memorial of Jesus.” There were statements about some of the means of grace as sacraments. “I thought only high steeple churches did the sacraments.” Fasting was one of the means of grace which seemed to be somewhat resisted. “I thought fasting is something Roman Catholics did during Lent.”

Participants remarked that discovering works of mercy as means of grace was eye-opening for them. One commented, “I used to think we did things like caring for the poor was just our duty or responsibility as Christians. I never thought about them molding me as a disciple.” The participants reported they now saw the connection between the works of mercy as means of grace and applying scripture to their lives, “I understand the passage about the sheep and goats in Matthew 25 is about my growing in grace as well as caring for others.” Another participant remarked that the means of grace, works of piety as well as works of mercy, show him how to follow Jesus. Another participant remarked, “I never understood how as a disciple I should follow Jesus. Now I understand; it is through not only prayer and reading the scripture but also in the acts of mercy.”

Discussion of question 6 on holiness brought remarks that holiness was seen as a mark of spiritual maturation and not for the ordinary believer. One remark was, “Holiness is truly a goal toward which I am striving now.” Another remark was, “How can I, a sinner, be holy?” One participant equated being holy as, “being separated from who I was,” as an indication of the absolute newness of rebirth and sanctification. One comment was that original sin separated us from God and holiness erased that separation. The discussion of holiness in the focus group brought up the idea of social holiness. “This is what Wesley meant by social holiness, growing in holiness with each other in community.” Another commented, “Now I understand why I need to

be with others as we seek perfection together. We can't do it on our own!" And all agreed that to grow in holiness together required open sharing and above all trust.

Question 7 brought the discussion to Christian perfection. This was one of the topics that overlapped with a sermon in the sermon series. One comment made in the focus group, "I always thought Christian perfection was a goal we struggled toward but was impossible to attain." A participant noted that she had struggled for years with the scripture in Matthew that said, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." She said she never felt she could be like God. One person in the class remarked to me later that the question in the ordination vows about expecting to be perfected in this life always puzzled him until the class which covered being perfected in love. I told him he is probably among good company.

Summary of Major Findings

The results of this study can be summarized in three major findings:

Major Findings:

- 1) As a result of the sermon series on Wesley's ordo salutis there is negligible positive change in theological perspective.
- 2) As a result of the classes on Wesleyan distinctives there is negligible positive change in theological perspective.
- 3) In the focus groups there was an expressed desire for further teaching on Wesleyan theology.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter addresses the major findings of the study and their implications for ministry. The problem addressed in this study is the lack of a vibrant understanding of the Wesleyan

doctrinal heritage. A lack of a vibrant Wesleyan theological formation has eroded the identity of those in the Wesleyan heritage. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of a series of sermons on Wesley's order of salvation and classes on the distinctives of Wesleyan doctrine in a United Methodist congregation.

Major Findings

First Finding

The sermon series on Wesley's *ordo salutis* shows negligible positive change in theological perspective. Analysis of the data from the surveys and focus groups for the sermon series indicates that there has been a negligible increase in the respondents' understanding of Wesley's *ordo salutis*. When the pre-test surveys were analyzed it showed how little the participants understood the historic Wesleyan doctrine of salvation. It was surprising, given the length of time the participants have been part of a Methodist faith community, that the understanding of Wesley's theology of salvation was no deeper than understanding that salvation is by grace through faith. It was disappointing to realize that long time Methodists did not have a stronger understanding of Wesley's doctrine of salvation.

Even though the responses to the surveys did not indicate significant insight regarding Wesleyan theology, there are patterns that provide some understanding to the minimal change created by the sermon series. There are some members of the study population who have been associated with a Methodist congregation their entire adult life, and some even as children. Lifelong membership does not ensure being deeply formed with a Wesleyan theology. If the congregation in the past has not been exposed to Wesleyan doctrine in sermons or in class, there will be minimal formation in Wesleyan theology. There are others who have been part of the St Andrews congregation many years but come from other denominational backgrounds, such as

reformed, Roman Catholic, and Anabaptist, and bring other doctrinal backgrounds with them. Coming from another denominational backgrounds they may have held to their former traditions and may not have adopted a Wesleyan theology for their lives and practice of the Christian faith. Some come from church traditions that have no doctrinal history or tradition. There is a history in the Northern Indiana area of nondenominational or independent churches, and many of these do not have the doctrinal traditions that the Wesleyan movement has. There is also a large Anabaptist influence in the area. This comingling of doctrinal traditions results in a diminished foundation of Wesleyan theology. The congregation has not rejected or moved away from historic Wesleyan theology but an appreciable foundation of Wesleyan theology has not been laid.

The curious mixture of doctrinal backgrounds at St Andrews, and in other United Methodist Churches where the researcher has served, results in a non-descript theology that is a mixture of reformed, Anabaptist, and Roman Catholic theologies. The resulting mixture of theologies could explain why at the beginning of the study most respondents experienced difficulty articulating a beginning level of Wesleyan theology. Attempting to build a deeper Wesleyan understanding of salvation in seven sermons is not very successful.

After the sermon series one person told me, “We need to hear this in many different ways over a long period of time.” Without an appreciable foundation of Wesleyan theology, a seven sermon series on Wesley’s order of salvation will be unlikely to produce a measurable positive change in theological perspective. Looking at the subject matter of Wesley’s sermons it can be seen that Wesley addressed his order of salvation in many of his sermons rather than just a few. For example, in the volume of Wesley’s sermons edited by Collins and Vickers, it is recorded that Wesley preached on repentance six times (Collins & Vickers, v). Other portions of the order

of salvation are preached many times as well. In order to bring about a measurable positive change in theological perspective, the order of salvation needs to be preached more than a single time, and each stage of the order needs to be preached multiple times.

Wesley did not preach the order of salvation as it stands now. Wesley preached the gospel from the scriptures. Wesley's preaching was undergirded by his theology. As Wesley preached the gospel he constantly emphasized grace: prevenient grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace. In Wesley's preaching he was striving to show the full breadth of God's grace from the sinner's initial awakening to entire sanctification of the believer. Wesley scholars later identified from Wesley's sermons what they labeled the *ordo salutis*, or order of salvation, that exists today. Wesley provided his local preachers volumes of his sermons for the people they tended (Vickers, *Wesley* 21). These sermons were to guide his itinerant preachers in their preaching as they traveled from one place to another. The goal was that those who heard the sermons would hear the Gospel from Scripture. Wesley's foundation was his theological framework, and he preached his foundation from various passages of Scripture. Wesley preached the Gospel from the Scripture and emphasized God's rich grace available from awakening to complete sanctification. Preaching the Gospel from Scripture will incorporate the *ordo salutis* and provide the congregation a solid foundation in Wesleyan theology. If Wesley's method were followed, one would see a measurable increase in the congregation's understanding of Wesley's *ordo salutis*. The desired result of a congregation's growth in understanding Wesley's theology can be realized over a period of time in multiple sermons which incorporate the elements of the order of salvation. Wesley's sermons were instrumental in forming a theological foundation to help the people in their spiritual and theological formation (Collins &

Vickers, xi). Wesley desired that the people called Methodist might not only come to saving knowledge of Christ but also grow in their faith beyond the basic teachings.

In the book of Hebrews the author admonishes the believers to leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity (Hebrews 6:1). The preceding verses admonish that the believers should be teachers of the faith. In United Methodist churches those who have advanced beyond the basic understanding of salvation must be available to instruct newer believers. With time and effort congregations like St. Andrews can build on a solid foundation, grow ever deeper in their understanding of Wesleyan heritage, and thus grow deeper in their faith and practice of the Wesleyan faith and tradition. Preaching Wesley's order of salvation and teaching some of the basics of historic Wesleyan doctrine can over time result in an increased understanding of the theological heritage from Wesley.

Second Finding

The classes on Wesleyan distinctives yield negligible positive change in theological perspective.

Analysis of the data from the surveys and focus groups for the class series indicates that there has been a negligible positive change in the respondents' understanding of Wesley's doctrinal distinctives. When the pre-test surveys were analyzed it showed how little the participants understood of historic Wesleyan doctrine. It was surprising given the length of time the participants have been part of a Methodist faith community that the understanding of Wesley's doctrinal distinctives was no deeper than understanding of grace as God's unmerited favor. It was disappointing to realize that long time Methodists did not have a stronger understanding of Wesley's doctrine of salvation.

Even though the responses to the surveys did not indicate significant insight regarding Wesleyan theology, there are patterns that provide some understanding of such minimal change from the class series. Within the St. Andrews congregation there is a great diversity of theological backgrounds. There are some who have been members of St. Andrews from childhood, and there are some who have been a part of St. Andrews for a considerable part of their lives but come from other denominational backgrounds. Long-term membership does not ensure being deeply formed with a Wesleyan theology. Those coming from another denominational background may have held to their former traditions and may not have adopted a Wesleyan theology for their lives and practice of the Christian faith. Some come from church traditions that have no doctrinal history or tradition. Northern Indiana is an area of nondenominational or independent churches and many of these do not have the doctrinal traditions that the Wesleyan movement has. There is also a large Anabaptist influence in the area. All of this results in the observation of a diminished foundation of Wesleyan theology. The St. Andrews congregation has not rejected or moved away from historic Wesleyan theology but an appreciable foundation of Wesleyan theology has not been laid. The lack of an appreciable foundation of Wesleyan theology results in a faith that is very wide yet very shallow.

At St. Andrews there is a group that meets weekly for Bible study, and the group members are faithful to meet together when they are in town. Their studies are on a general knowledge level and do not have a Wesleyan perspective. There are others who attend other churches in the area for Bible studies, especially Beth Moore studies. The Beth Moore studies, while good, are generally taught from a reformed perspective. In the past there have been no study groups at St. Andrews that use materials with a distinctly Wesleyan perspective. There is a basic grounding in the Christian faith at St. Andrews, and the people understand the basics of the

faith. However there is no evidence of consistent catechesis to encourage growth in the faith and the understanding of those elements of the Christian faith distinctive to Wesley.

The new member classes that were held prior to the arrival of the researcher/pastor almost four years ago consisted of an introduction to the structure and polity of the United Methodist Church, the current Annual Conference, and the organizational structure of St. Andrews. There have been no youth for confirmation class since before my arrival. In questioning some of the leadership I discerned no attempt at any Wesleyan catechesis of new members, transfer members, or youth.

Within Methodism today the use of Wesley's methods of classes can provide a means of catechesis for congregations. Wesley utilized the class meetings to catechize those who had come under conviction of their sin by his preaching (Watson, *Class Meeting*, loc. 369). Those who initially joined the classes and bands did not have a strong foundation in the faith. Most, if not all, were just coming to faith in Christ. The members of the classes were taught the distinctives of Wesley's doctrine over many months and even years. The foundation of faith was laid in the meetings of the classes. Members grew in their faith as a result of the catechesis taking place in the class meetings. At St. Andrews there is some foundation in the faith to begin building on. The use of Watson's adaptation of Wesley's classes (Watson, *Class Meeting*, loc. 1599) and bands (Watson, *Pursuing Social Holiness* 185) would provide a means of catechesis to bring about an increased understanding of Wesleyan doctrines. The method of classes and bands can teach the elements of the doctrines of original sin, grace, holiness, sanctification, and others and build on the foundation that is present.

A primary ministry of the church is growing persons as disciples of Jesus Christ. Packer defines catechesis as the grounding and growing of believers in their faith (loc. 553). Through a

process of catechesis in Wesleyan theology the Methodist church can plant seeds of faith and nurture people as they grow in their faith to produce fruit in their lives. Within the United Methodist Church this growing and nurturing necessarily involves teaching the Wesleyan roots and basis of faith as Wesleyans.

Catechesis is more than intellectual growth. Wesley's class meetings were meant to help believers grow in their spiritual lives. Tennant includes not only head knowledge, but also heart knowledge in the form of spiritual disciplines (*Ten Words*, loc. 46). Preaching and teaching work together to bring the believer information and also help the believer explore the spiritual disciplines as ways for growing deeper in their discipleship. By using the sermon and the class teaching the strengths of both are combined, and the result is stronger than the sum of the two. The overall goal of catechesis is to strengthen the congregation in their faith, specifically in the Wesleyan tradition of the Christian faith.

Paul writes in Ephesians chapter four concerning the building up of the body of Christ that there may be unity within the Church (Ephesians 4:12-14). The desire is that by being built up in the knowledge of Jesus Christ believers would not be swayed by every possible doctrine. Paul also tells Timothy there would come a time when people will flock to teachings that make them feel good (2 Timothy 4:3-4). There is a great deal of what Paul describes as the cunning and craftiness of men in deceitful scheming in the world today. In order to strengthen the Church it is necessary there be strong theological foundations. Teaching the historic Wesleyan doctrines in the Methodist family of churches will strengthen the people called Methodist against these false doctrines. It is necessary that those in Methodist congregations be grounded in strong theological foundations and that they grow deep in their faith through faithful doctrine. Through

faithful catechesis in the Wesleyan doctrine, the people called Methodist can be strengthened in order to stand firm in their faith in times of doctrinal turbulence.

Third Finding

There was an expressed desire for further teaching on Wesleyan theology. During the class sessions and the focus groups for both the classes and the sermons there was observed an intense interest among the participants in the material presented. In some of the participants it was though a light bulb suddenly came on. The expressions on participants' faces during the discussions showed that they were thoughtfully engaged in the topics being discussed. As participants began answering the focus group questions their answers led to exploring, beyond the focus groups, what they experienced as they participated in the classes. Some of this exploration is an ongoing process. Their answers to the focus group questions led to deeper discussions of Wesleyan theology than what the focus group questions covered. The focus group questions prompted respondents to explore at greater depth grace and original sin, justification and the new birth as well as the areas of sanctification, perfection, and holiness.

Wesley created the classes and bands to help those people who had been awakened to grow in their faith. His desire was to help those who desired "to flee the wrath to come" to grow in their faith (Watson, *Class Meeting*, loc.535). Through the teaching and mutual accountability they found in the classes and bands they did grow in their faith. The class meeting method is credited with the growth of the Methodist movement in England and later in the land called America (Watson, *Class Meeting*, loc. 369). As people in the congregations today come to saving faith in Jesus Christ there need to be ways to help them grow in their faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ. A major finding of this study is that people want to grow not only in head knowledge but in their relationship with God. Wesley's classes and bands are good ways to help

people grow in their understanding of the Wesleyan doctrine as well as grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. The use of Wesley's class and band meetings today is growing as a means of catechesis and helping people to grow (Watson, *Class Meeting*, loc. 369).

In light of the present circumstances in the United Methodist Church concerning the debates on sexuality, marriage, ordination, and especially the authority of scripture the people at St. Andrews want to know and understand what United Methodists as Wesleyans believe and why they believe it. As a result of the current study some of the people at St. Andrews United Methodist Church have expressed a hunger to understand Wesley's theology and practices. During the class sessions, after a time of teaching, open and honest discussion was quite normal. People truly wanted to understand historically what it means to be Wesleyan and what it means to live their Wesleyan beliefs in today's world.

During the focus groups there was discussion on the impact Wesley's theology and practices had on eighteenth century Great Britain. There was discussion on Wesley's impact on care of the poor, education, and the prisons, to name a few. People in the focus group wanted to better understand Wesleyan theology and talked about how a return to the roots in Wesleyan theology might enable them to impact the culture around them in the town of Syracuse, Indiana. They were excited about how a better understanding of the theological roots might bring transformation to the Church they love. In the class session on Wesley's method of discipleship there was a great amount of interest and discussion on how Wesley's use of small groups helped people actually impact the society and how a better understanding of Wesleyan theology could bring about the making of new disciples. There was interest in how the class meetings helped people grow in their faith beyond just listening to a sermon, and how the idea of the class

meeting in making and growing disciples might be appropriated in today's culture. The idea of mutual accountability to help one grow in their faith was captivating to people.

Outside the formal class settings and focus groups this researcher/pastor has been approached several times about more classes on Wesley's theology by people who have been part of the congregation for many years. Statements have been made such as, "We want to know more of what Wesley taught. Please teach us." There has been an expressed interest in a study group meeting to discuss Wesley's sermons on a weekly basis in order to better know what Wesley taught and how it speaks to people today.

Ultimately the life of faith is about a relationship with Jesus Christ. For those who are Wesleyan the relationship with Jesus is enhanced and informed by an understanding of Wesleyan theology. "Wesley was convinced that a relationship with Jesus was best experienced and most likely to grow within the context of community, a 'heavenly family'" (Watson, *Class Meeting*, loc. 1599). At the end of Matthew's gospel Jesus gives the great commission instructing us to "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20) This is a call for the church to make disciples. Making disciples is about people's relationship with Jesus and growing in the relationship. The Wesleyan classes and bands are a way to accomplish the goal of making disciples as people grow not only in their understanding of Wesleyan theology but also in their relationship with Christ.

Ministry Implications of the Findings

One finding of this study is that people in the pews want to know what they, as Methodists, are supposed to believe. They are hungry to learn their Wesleyan theological

heritage. In this study people were excited to learn what Wesley taught and how to apply it to the church today. There is a desire to reconnect to the church's heritage. As they study Wesleyan theology and practices they find they are studying scripture as well.

Preaching Wesley's theology of salvation and teaching Wesleyan doctrine can bring a better understanding of the Wesleyan doctrinal heritage. Understanding Wesleyan theology helps a congregation better understand who they are as people of the Methodist movement. As congregations in the Wesleyan family today better understand their doctrinal heritage, they are better prepared to share the message of God's love in Jesus Christ as Wesleyan people

Teaching historic Wesleyan theology in the United Methodist Church, allow members of the congregation to recover a sense of their identity as Methodists. Along with a renewed sense of who they are will come a renewed sense of their purpose and mission. Throughout this study the participants have shown a renewed sense of identity as Wesleyans as they have come to better understand Wesleyan theology.

Limitations of the Study

The small number of participants in this study limited the amount of data collected from which observations could be drawn as they related to the responses to the sermon series and the small group study. Prior to the beginning of this study several key people left the congregation of St. Andrews, which decreased the population available to participate in the study. These additional persons would have increased the participant numbers and added to the data.

Some of the survey questions were cognitive; some were about personal faith; some were corporately worded, and some were addressed to individual experience. Different ways of asking questions may have contributed to the negligible positive change in the data. It would depend on how each person heard the sermon or class. It is likely that there was not a tight match between

what was being conveyed in the sermons and the way the questions were asked. It is possible that if the questions had been worded to better reflect what the sermons had intended to convey there might have been a greater indication of increase in the participants' understanding. Possibly if there had been a tighter match between what was being conveyed in the questions and the sermons, there would have been a better representation of the participants' understanding. There is the possibility the participants have a better understanding of the theology than is shown in the data but the mismatch between questions and sermons has prevented it from being demonstrated.

The focus group for the discussion classes was limited to one group due to the unavailability of several participants. The age of several participants caused them to exclude themselves due to memory difficulties. If there had been a greater number of participants in the class discussions more data would have been available.

Unexpected Observations

It has come as a surprise that laity from St. Andrews along with a neighboring United Methodist congregation have expressed a renewed interest in undertaking a study of Wesleyan doctrine and practice. Hearing comments at the completion of the study about the level of enjoyment by the participants was unexpected. Several participants commented they would like to learn more and gain a deeper understanding of Wesley's theology. Several participants asked for recommendations for further reading. One participant has begun reading Wesley's journals. They indicate that they find Wesley fascinating and relevant to the current theological situation in the United Methodist Church.

The low level of exposure to Wesleyan doctrine in the St. Andrews congregation was unexpected. Given the length of time people at St. Andrews had been part of a Methodist/United Methodist congregation the lack of exposure to Wesleyan doctrine and practice was astounding.

Given that the average number of years in a Wesleyan family congregation was 42.8, a stronger foundation in Wesley's doctrine was expected. If the results of this study can be generalized to other United Methodist congregations' grasp of Wesleyan doctrine, the lack of foundation in Wesleyan theology could be a contributor to the decline of the United Methodist Church. The lack of foundation is evidence of Wesley's concern, "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out" (Wesley *Works*, 148).

Recommendations

Congregations throughout the Wesleyan denominations, i.e. Wesleyan Church, Free Methodist Church, African Methodist Episcopal Church, and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, should be taught Wesley's *ordo salutis* and Wesleyan distinctives through preaching and study groups in order to strengthen the Wesleyan foundation in the Wesleyan denominations

Those who pastor in the United Methodist Church, either ordained or local pastors, should develop a strong foundation in Wesley's theology. The responsibility for the depth of a congregation's foundation in Wesleyan theology falls to the pastor. Only a pastor who is solidly grounded in Wesleyan theology can ground a congregations to regain in Wesleyan theology. If the United Methodist Church is to once again be a Kingdom movement the congregations must have a solid foundation in Wesleyan theology.

As a result of this study it is recommended that a congregation spend a year studying the sermons of John Wesley. One approach would be to study a particular sermon each week along with the scriptures in the sermon. Leading such a study would require a pastor to first develop a

Wesleyan theology foundation. One excellent resource for this is Collins and Vickers edition of Wesley's sermons, *The Sermons of John Wesley: A Collection for the Christian Journey*. This would provide a solid foundation in Wesleyan theology along with the scriptures of these sermons.

In the past Cokesbury has put together some very well done materials such as *Disciple Bible Study*, *Christian Believer*, and *Jesus in the Gospels*. These materials are based on Wesleyan theology but do not deal explicitly with Wesley's theology. As a result of this research, a study should be developed that explicitly teaches Wesleyan theology. An excellent resource for the church would be a study similar to *Disciple* or *Christian Believer* but with an explicitly Wesleyan theology curriculum. Utilizing a weekly study of a particular Wesleyan doctrine and/or sermon and pairing it with a video segment done by a well-known Wesley scholar could produce a resource for study. A Wesleyan based catechetical curriculum would be helpful to a local congregation desiring to rediscover their Wesleyan DNA. The *Alpha Course* is another good model for catechesis. An Alpha styled material employing Wesleyan theology could be developed to help people in the Wesleyan tradition rediscover their Wesleyan roots and DNA.

There is a need for a resource for ongoing discipleship. A material for small group accountability that will help participants continue in their growth toward holiness as disciples and help them move on to perfection is essential.

Postscript

John Wesley has been a larger-than-life-figure in my spiritual life. To have the opportunity to study his theology through his sermons and to evaluate how preaching his *ordo salutis* helped a congregation better understand salvation through a Wesleyan lens has been a joy

for me. Working through Wesley's theology has been no easy task to undertake, yet, even in the difficult parts and the head-scratching, it has been a joy.

I have, in the course of this ministry transformation project, found myself transformed. As I have written sermons to help parishioners better understand salvation from a Wesleyan perspective I have found myself better understanding Wesley's theology. As I better understand Wesley's theology my preaching has a better foundation in Wesleyan theology, and I lead from a stronger theological position. At times when I would ask myself why I was doing this I would go back and re-read what Wesley wrote in 1758, "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out" (Wesley, *Works*, 148). My desire is to form a congregation who has the power of religion as well as the form. My goal is to form a congregation that can bring transformation in the community around them way the early Methodist movement transformed its world.

I have experienced the decline of the Methodist Church and struggled to find a way to revitalize what was once a powerful agent of God for the transforming and building of a nation. From the first time I began reading Wesley I believed that a return to Wesley's theology in our churches and his practices of growing disciples was the way God wanted to revive this church. Over the last half century or more we have seen Wesley's fear for the people called Methodist come true. If we could hear Wesley speak to us today, I believe he would tell us to get back to our roots.

In this project I have attempted to show a way back to our roots. As I prepared the sermons for the series on Wesley's *ordo salutis* I began to see a way back to our roots. As I

preached that series to the congregation and explored their responses, I saw their understanding of salvation grow. As I prepared the classes surveying some of the Wesleyan doctrines and then taught the material, I observed the people's understanding of John Wesley grow. As I listened to people tell me, "We need to study this more!" I found myself studying Wesley even more myself. I believe rediscovering our Wesleyan DNA and using Wesley's methods for making disciples is the way to revitalize the people called Methodist.

APPENDICES

A. Survey questions

B. Focus Group Questions

C. Sermon Outlines

D. Class Outlines

E. Ethical Issues

Consent Forms Template

Confidentiality Agreement Template

APPENDIX A

Sermon Survey

As member of the St. Andrews congregation you are invited to participate in this project on the topic of Wesleyan distinctives at St. Andrews United Methodist Church. By filling out this survey you are granting your consent to be part of the project. Your participation in this project is voluntary and you are free to not answer questions or stop participating in the study at any time you wish. No one but myself will see these surveys and your identification code will not be used in the reporting of the data.

Identification Code: ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

Survey after sermon series on Wesley's order of salvation.

1. Original sin is a "condition" we are born with.

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------
2. I have the faith of a servant of God

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------
3. Prevenient grace awakens us to our condition before God

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------
4. My heart has been warmed by God's grace

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------
5. The Holy Spirit makes us aware that we are alienated from God

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------
6. There is no one completely devoid of God's grace

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------
7. Grace is irresistible

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------
8. I have the faith of a child of God

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|----------|-------|----------------|
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 9. | Repenting means being sorry for our sins | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 10. | Confession is the same as repentance | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 11. | Repentance has brought me freedom | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 12. | Repenting is a one-time event | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 13. | Repenting means turning to a new way of living | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 14. | I know my need of repentance | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 15. | Repentance makes me holy | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 16. | True repentance brings a new life | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 17. | Justification restores us to God's favor | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 18. | Being "saved" ends with having our sins forgiven | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 19. | I am right with God because I love God | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |

20. Not everyone can be saved

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

21. We work to gain salvation

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

22. My heart is right with God

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

23. God saves us totally apart from anything we might do

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

24. I am acceptable to God just as I am

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

25. Being “born again” is just a figure of speech

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

26. We are unable to cooperate with God in our salvation

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

27. Conversion is another term for new birth

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

28. I am a new creation

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

29. Justification is the same as the new birth

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

30. I am no longer under the control of sin

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

31. Faith is simply believing in Jesus

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

32. Born again is a meaningless term

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

33. I can know I am saved

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

34. We can have peace of mind about our relationship with Jesus Christ

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

35. Assurance of our salvation is a gift from God

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

36. My sins are forgiven

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

37. God's grace only forgives our sin

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

38. I know Jesus loves me

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

39. We cannot know with certainty if our sins are forgiven

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

40. I hope but I am not certain I will go to heaven

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

41. Holiness is keeping a set of strict guidelines for what believers do and don't do

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

42. I can grow in holiness on my own

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

43. Salvation is just agreeing with God's truths

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

44. I am moving toward perfection

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

45. Working out your salvation means doing good things to earn salvation

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

46. I am striving for holiness

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

47. It is possible for a believer to be free from sin in their life

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

48. I must cooperate with God in my salvation

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

49. Sanctification is being ruled by the pure love of God

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

50. I have power over sin

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

51. It is possible to live without committing willful sin

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

52. Perfection means we make no mistakes

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

53. I still face temptations

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

54. Perfection means we are free from inward and outward sin

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

55. I desire perfection

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

56. I am free from sin

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

57. How long have you been part of a United Methodist congregation? _____

58. How many of the sermons on Wesley's order of salvation did you hear? _____

How many did you hear live (not from a recording)? _____

Class Survey

As member of the St. Andrews congregation you are invited to participate in this project on the topic of Wesleyan distinctives at St. Andrews United Methodist Church. By filling out this survey you are granting your consent to be part of the project. Your participation in this project is voluntary and you are free to not answer questions or stop participating in the study at any time you wish. No one but myself will see these surveys and your identification code will not be used in the reporting of the data.

Identification Code: ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

Survey for the class on Wesleyan distinctives.

1) We inherit original sin from our parents.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

2) There is no cure for original sin.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

3) Original sin is a genetic trait.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

4) Original sin is our tendency to be rebellious.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

5) Original sin causes me to think differently.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

6) Original sin relieves me of responsibility for my lifestyle.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

7) Grace is a gift from God.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

8) We cannot resist God's grace.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

9) There are several kinds of grace.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

10) Not every person receives grace.

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|----------|-------|----------------|
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 11) | I need to work with God in my salvation. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 12) | God's grace doesn't affect my lifestyle. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 13) | The means of grace are those actions which make us more aware of God's presence. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 14) | The means of grace make us more acceptable to God. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 15) | Some of the means of grace are called sacraments. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 16) | The means of grace help us develop holy habits. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 17) | The means of grace help me grow as a disciple. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 18) | The means of grace can be divided into three categories: | | | |
| | instituted means of grace | | | |
| | prudential means of grace | | | |
| | general means of grace | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 19) | John Wesley was not overly concerned with people growing in their faith. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 20) | John Wesley's method of organizing believers in their discipleship was very unorganized. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 21) | I can grow as a disciple on my own without any help. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 22) | I need discipline to be a disciple. | | | |
| | strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 23) | Transformation is part of discipleship. | | | |

- | | | | |
|--|----------|-------|----------------|
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 24) To grow as a disciple there needs to be accountability. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 25) Social holiness is how we interact with the world. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 26) Social holiness is seeking justice for oppressed people. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 27) Holiness is something we must work toward in community. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 28) Holiness is God's business alone, we can do nothing to move toward holiness. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 29) Holiness is instantaneous. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 30) Holiness means having no bad habits. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 31) Perfection means completion. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 32) Perfection is all about love. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 33) A life perfected is fully loving God and loving others. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 34) I can be be perfect in this life. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 35) I need not strive for perfection. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 36) To be perfect is to have no faults. | | | |
| strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree |

APPENDIX B

Focus Group Questions

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR SERMON SERIES

- 1) What reflections or insights have you had since this series of sermons?
- 2) What specific parts of this series of sermons helped you better understand Wesley's theology of salvation?
- 3) Was there anything in this series of sermons which helped you grow in your faith?
- 4) What did you hear in the sermons that was new to you or that you had forgotten?
- 5) What do you think "work out your own salvation" means?
- 6) What do you think being "saved" means?

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR STUDY GROUP

- 1) When you were invited to participate in this six-part class what did you think it would be about?
- 2) From your participation in this six-part class how do you understand original sin?
- 3) After participating in this six-part class how do you understand Wesley's distinctive of grace?
- 4) What part(s) of this six-part class best helped you understand what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- 5) How do you understand the means of grace after participating in this six-part class?
- 6) From your participation in this six-part class how do you understand Wesley's concept of holiness?
- 7) How did this six-part class help you better understand Wesley's concept of Christian perfection?

APPENDIX C

Sermon Outlines

Sermon Outline - Awakening

It Is Time

Romans 13:11-14

Lead in – awakening from physical sleep

Alarm clocks

Reville in boot camp

Spiritual sleep

Romans 13:11

Unaware of our spiritual state

Unaware of our condition before God

I'm not as bad as ...

Believe in perfect spiritual health

Comparing selves to others

Wrong standard

Jesus is proper standard

Need to see ourselves for who we are – sinners

John 3:19-20

Original sin

Tendency to disobedience

Illustration – little girl in church – sitting down outside, standing

inside

Prevenient grace

Holy Spirit makes us aware of our state

God's alarm clock for our sin

Available to all

Irresistible

Become fearful

Measure of faith

Faith of a servant

So what?

Time to become aware of who we are

Paul writing to believers

Salvation more than initial forgiveness of sins

Receive fullness of God's salvation

Isaiah 49:8

Genesis 1:27

Image of God distorted

Prevenient grace beginning to repair image

Revelation 3:2

It is time to wake up from sleep and see what wonders God has for us

Sermon Outline - Repentance

Recognize Who You Are

Mark 1:14-15

Lead in

What was ultimate message Jesus proclaimed

Teaching

Healing

Miracles

What was Jesus all about

Way of salvation?

Yes but is that full message?

Message – The Kingdom of God is at hand

Kingdom of God

In Jesus Kingdom of God is dawning

Reign of God

God's sovereignty

God's rule

Kingdom of God

Hungry & thirsty satisfied

Blind will see

Dead will live

Those far from God come near

To be part requires something

Repent

Repent and believe in the good news

Often misunderstood

Saying sorry, tears, etc

Asking forgiveness

Sorry for sin

Full idea

John 8:2-11

“Go now and leave your life of sin”

Walk away from sin lifestyle – walk toward God

Recognize who you are and turn from that

Not repentance

God desires

Ezekiel 18:32

Repent and live

Sin

Transgressions against holy God

Shaming God

Cause pain

Sorry

For sin or getting caught

Illustration – Johnny in cookie jar

Repentance brings life

Luke 13:3

Without repentance will perish

Necessary for salvation

Once awakened need repent

Believe

Have faith in

Trust in

Chair experiences

Have faith in the Good News

Luke 2:10-11

Jesus was good news at his birth

Good News

2 Corinthians 5:19

In Jesus God reconciling world to himself

Made peace

Restored relationship

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

When repent can trust/have faith in Good News

End

God's Kingdom has dawned here – now

Wake up – awakened by Holy Spirit

Turn from sin

Trust are reconciled

Sermon Outline - Justification

The Great Gift

Romans 3:21-26

Lead in

Unbelievable gifts

Wesley's way of salvation

Awakening to condition as sinner

Repentance

Repentance leads to eternal life

Made right with God

Justified

Made right with God

Brought into alignment with holy God

We are a sorry lot

Ecclesiastes 7:20

Romans 3:23

All fall short

God's standard

Jesus

None measure up

Illustration – H.S. guy

Judges 21:25

Psalms 40:12

Sins have overtaken me

We are all sinners

Romans 7:21-24

All of us in this predicament

Romans 3:10-12

There is grace

Prevenient grace

Awakening us to identity as sinners

Drawing us to God

Leading us to repentance

Wooring us to relationship with holy God

Illustration

Muslims coming to faith in Jesus

Song Disaster

Trying to fix self

Heal self of sickness of sin

Cannot heal ourselves

There is grace

Good News

Rescue

Matthew 1:21

All far from God

Unable to find solution to sin

God provides answer – Jesus

Isaiah 53:11

Suffering servant = Jesus

Describes passion of Jesus

Isaiah 53:4-5

Voice translation says it better

It was our suffering he carried, our pain and distress, our

sick-to-

the soul-ness

Cannot do for ourselves God does for us

Romans 5:9

1 Corinthians 15:3

In O.T. sin requires a sacrifice

Spotless lamb

Day of Atonement Yom Kippur

Jesus completes that

1 John 2:2

Justified

Made right with God

Back in alignment

Romans 7:18-25

Who will rescue me

Thanks be to God

Ending

Awakened by grace – prevenient grace

Led to repentance – prevenient grace

Reconciled/justified – justifying grace

Thanks be to God who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Sermon Outline – New Birth

A New You

John 3:1-8

Lead in

Nicodemus

Seeks Jesus

Jimmy Carter in 1970's

Made it popular to be “born again Christian

No such thing as Christian not born again

New birth comes along with forgiveness of sins

Born anew

Justification and new birth

Separate actions of God

Take place almost simultaneously

Paul describes

In Christ

Describes new relationship with Jesus Christ

God takes us as we are

Come to Jesus once get life straightened out – not point

Transforms us

John 1:12-13

Believing in Jesus

Results in being born anew

1 Peter 1:3

New birth result of resurrection

Galatians 2:20

Crucified w/Christ = old me is dead

Alive in Christ = born anew

Romans 6:4

New life language

Galatians 6:15

Ethnicity means nothing

New creation is standard

What matters is new birth

2 Corinthians 5:17

Different now than when came to know Jesus?

Being saved = new you

Born anew means dead to sin

Dead to sin=alive to Christ

Turn from sin

Not sins

To Jesus

New beginning

Romans 6:6

Old self

New self

Romans 7:15

Life ruled by sin

Conversion – justification

No longer controlled by sinful desires

New birth

Titus 3:5

Repentance and asked forgiveness

Reborn as new creation

New birth is beginning point of sanctification

Sin no longer dominates

1 John 3:9

Born again not make practice of sinning

Wesley very much here

Person in addiction recovery

Eliminate everything of old life

When converted we are recovering sinners

Get rid of old self

Born again

New creation in Christ Jesus

New birth

Begin new life = initial sanctification

Leading to holiness

Leading to perfection

Sermon Outline – Assurance

Child of the King

Romans 8:12-17

Lead in

Times of doubt

Doubt salvation

Doubt identity as child of God

Who are we

If

Your spirit awakened by Holy Spirit

Repented of sin

Forgiven by grace

Justified and born anew

Then

Child of God

John 1:12

New birth language

Born of God

Galatians 4:6

No longer a servant

1 Peter 2:24

Die to sin

Born as child of God

Faith of a child

Obey out of love as child

No longer obey through faith of servant

Adopted

Holy Spirit assures our spirit

Adoption papers signed at the cross

Adoption papers stamped at empty tomb

No doubt

1 John 3:1

lavished

1 John 5:13

Believe

Not just with mind

Eternal life

Begins now

John Wesley

Early doubted salvation

May 24, 1738

Heart strangely warmed

Know with certainty

Assurance is privilege

All born anew

Romans 8:16

Holy Spirit assures us

Gift from Holy Spirit

3 Corinthians 13:5-6

Examine self

Prayer of examen

Identity

When born again child of king

No longer considered sinner

Redeemed child of King

Shape who you are

Member of royal family

Child of THE KING

Sermon Outline – Growing in Holiness

Rooted

Philippians 3:8-11

Lead in

New baby

Growth does not just happen

Growth requires nurturing and nutrients

What happened after your confession of Christ?

Not automatic growth

Growth must be intentional

Grow

2 Peter 3:18

Called to grow

Grace

Knowledge

Relationship w/God

2 Corinthians 5:17

New creation in Christ

Need to grow

Lifetime pursuit

Know vs knowing about

Colossians 2:6-7

Origin in Christ

Grow in Christ

Romans 12:2

Formed by Jesus not the world

Rooted in Christ

Molded by God

Intentional growth

Knowing Jesus

1 Peter 2:2

Illustration – baby and milk

Nourishment/life

Spiritual milk

Grow in salvation

Philippians 3:8

Knowing Jesus

Most important thing

Important above everything

Paul

Philippians 3:10

Paul gave everything to know Jesus

Goal

Grow into holiness

1 Peter 1:15-16

Be holy

Not perfect as in w/o blemish

Holy – set apart

Ephesians 3:17-19

Rooted and established in love of Christ Jesus

What a goal

Description of holiness

John15:5-7

Abide in Jesus

Starts with decision to grow

Commit to take necessary time

Time study scripture

Time in prayer

Lord's Supper

Christian conferencing

Proposal

Wesley believed sanctification happened in community

Social holiness

Meet weekly

Questions as guide

Love God

Learn God's story

Live for Christ

Build the kingdom

How might it change?

Spiritual atmosphere of our congregation

Your connection with Christ

Your connection to the Body of Christ

Sermon Outline – Perfection

The Goal of Our Faith

Philippians 3:12-16

Lead in - Remember

Heart awakened confirmation

Knowing I'm a sinner

Seeking forgiveness

Discovering identity

Falling in love w/Scripture

Wesley

Not just "go to heaven"

Be like Jesus

Goal of faith = holiness

Called to be holy

God's call throughout scripture – be holy

Leviticus 11:44b & 11:45

Be holy for I am holy

Not suggestions or recommendations

Commands

1 Peter 2:9

Holy, set apart people

Salvation begins at

Awakening

Repentance

Justification

New birth

Does not end

Colossians 1:22

At one time sinners

We are reconciled

So we might be holy

Sanctification

Move forward from justification

Being made right with God

To sanctification

Being made holy

Only God can do

Perfection

Illustration – ordination

Historic Wesley questions

Are you going on to perfection?

Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?

Are you earnestly striving after it?

Fearful questions

Only by God's help

Perfection

Does not mean perfect/no flaws

Perfectly loving God and neighbor

All who claim Jesus as Lord called to perfection

What does it mean to be holy

Luke 1:74-75

Fully serving God in everything

Definitions

Justification – being freed from penalty of sin

Sanctification – being freed from power of sin

Sanctification

Still tempted by sin

No longer under power of sin

Galatians 2:20

Being made holy

Dying to self

Romans 14:7-8

Holiness

Belonging completely to Jesus

Making life completely available to him

Not

Set restrictive rules

Matter behavior alone

Matter of heart

Wesley - Holiness of heart and life

Rest of the story

Jesus came among us

Died on cross

Raised on 3rd day

THAT WE MIGHT BE HOLY PEOPLE

Appendix D

Class Outlines

CLASS OUTLINE

Original Sin

G.K. Chesterton

What is wrong with the world?

Corrupt politicians

Greed

War

Unjust laws

“I am.”

Something in us tells us we don't measure up

Reinhold Neibuhr

Each one born a sinner

I sin because I am a sinner

Why do we sin?

Genesis 2 & 3

Humanity created in image of God – icons

The Garden

The prohibition

The serpent

The disobedience/rebellion

Romans 5 & 1 Corinthians 15

What happened in Eden didn't stay in Eden

What went wrong in the garden marks everything that followed

Adam's sin brings judgment of death

Adam's sin makes all sinners

Sin is an equal opportunity employer

Something w/in us is corrupt from the beginning

We carry Adam's (Eve's) sin - inherited

Do not love what is good

Our hearts deeply inclined to evil

We *could* have done differently but didn't

We doubt God's commands

Did God really say that?

Christianity depicted as religion of "thou shall nots"

We doubt boundaries of God's commands

Doubt the consequences

Should there be boundaries?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer "Creation and Fall"

Why the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the center of the garden?

That is where God belongs in our lives

If we keep returning we will find the One who will save us and this broken world

"For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God." (Romans 8:19-21)

We wait for that day

CLASS OUTLINE

Wesleyan Understanding of Grace

Wesley's understanding of grace

- Rooted in Christian tradition and teaching

- Provided distinctive emphases

Wesley's definition – God's bounty, or favour: his free, undeserved favour, man having no claim to the least of his mercies. It was free grace that 'formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into him a living soul,' and stamped on that soul the image of God, and 'put all things under his feet.' ... For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God's hand."

- Wesley summarized his understanding of the work of grace in his sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation"

- Describes 3 movements of grace to create distinctive emphases for fully living in response to God.

- Contains parts of sermons "Salvation by Faith," "Justification by Faith," and "The Circumcision of the Heart."

- Grace affects us in 3 different ways

- Prevenient grace

- Justifying grace

- Sanctifying grace

Prevenient grace

- Grace that goes before

- Includes all that is frequently termed "natural conscience."

- Believed it prevents total destruction of the divine image in us

- Present in all creation – **there is no one without grace**

- The **porch** on the house of God's salvation – where we prepare to enter the house

- The **desire** to begin a trip.

- John 1:9

- 1 John 4:19

- Romans 5:8

Justifying grace

Pardoning grace

Justification = "forgiveness of all our sins, and ... our acceptance with God"

The assurance of forgiveness that comes from repentance

Being reconciled and realigned with God

Doorway into the house of God's salvation

God's actions

Reconciles us to Godself

Adopts us into the life death, & resurrection of Jesus

Gives us our identity as sons and daughters

Incorporates us into the body of Christ

Aldersgate experience May 24, 1738

That evening he reluctantly attended a meeting in Aldersgate. Someone read from Luther's Preface to the Epistle to Romans. "About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."

Essence of justifying grace our identity and worth rooted in the one to whom we belong

Accepting that identity is to enter the doorway into a new existence

The doorway of the house - walking through the doorway

Packing the bags, joining the guide, and setting out for the destination

Galatians 3:10-14

Ephesians 2:4-6

Romans 3:21-26

Sanctifying grace

Sanctification begins at justification/new birth

God perfecting us

Recognized God's goal for us is complete restoration of the divine image

Conformity of all creation to the image of Jesus Christ

God's freely given presence and power to restore the fullness of God's image in which we were created

Sanctification – entire

Perfection

Being made perfect in love

Removing the desire to sin

Perfection does not imply exempt from ignorance, making mistakes, infirmities, or being tempted

“While the grace of God is undivided, it precedes salvation as ‘prevenient grace,’ continues in ‘justifying grace,’ and is brought to fruition in ‘sanctifying grace.’” (Book of Discipline)

Philippians 2:12-13

Philippians 3:10-14

John 15:5-11

CLASS OUTLINE

Means of Grace

“Outward signs, words, or actions ordained of God, and approved for this end – to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace.”

Means of grace

Without means of grace we limit our capacity to receive sanctifying grace

God will not make us holy w/o our participation

We cannot become holy through our own efforts

Transformation ultimately God’s work

Desire for transformation comes from God

Ability to respond & act inspired by God

Transformation itself empowered by God

Means of grace – practices in which we may participate by which the Holy Spirit moves us forward in life of faith

Way of discipleship

Illustration: sailor & sail boat

Sailor did not create boat

Sailor did not create water in which boat floats

Sailor did not create wind which fills the sails & propels the boat

Sailor did not create laws of physics which allow boat to sail

Sailor cannot control wind

Sailor can

Learn to read the wind

Steer the rudder

Boat will never sail from one place to another w/o efforts of sailor

3 categories

Sacraments

C of E affirm 2 sacraments: baptism & Holy Communion

Practices ordained by Jesus as outward & visible signs of inward & spiritual grace

By the Spirit we are recipients of grace through participation

Different from just remembering and/or making testimony to what God already done

Affirmed infant baptism as means of salvific grace

Provided they raised to grow fully into their baptism through training

Encouragement & participation in fellowship of Christ –
Church

Frequent attendance at communion

Lord's Supper involve

Words of institution

Confession of sin

Words of absolution

Consecration of bread & wine

Open table – communion available to believers & nonbelievers

Could be converting ordinance b/c Christ truly present at
the table

Works of mercy

Means of grace through which we extend God's love to those in need

Matthew 25:31-46

Means of participating in God's love for those in need in obedience to
scripture

Means for our own growth in holiness

Works of piety

Prayer, reading Bible, fasting, Christian conferencing

Participation in small groups

Class meetings & bands

Organized for growth in holiness

Support, encouragement, spiritual direction

Accountability for believers' in participation in all means of grace

CLASS OUTLINE

Wesley's Discipleship Model

Wesley believed holiness fundamental part of Christian life

Not only for Methodists

Not optional matter for religious elite

Best nurtured through supportive and disciplined community

Holiness is social – worked out in community

An 18th century model for 21st century Christians

Societies – method of learning

Not replacement for the C of E

Time of teaching and exhortation

Large group

Meet regularly

Included all local Methodists

Open meeting – Sunday evening visitors welcome

Closed meeting – early Sunday morning only members

Required ticket received at class meeting

Occasional Saturday meetings – alternative to going to the pub

Teaching done by local & itinerant preacher – lay helpers

General rules

Do no harm, do all the good you can, observe the ordinances of

God

Classes – method of changing behavior

Most important element of Wesley's system

10-12 members

Leader had to meet w/ each member at least once/week

Leader must meet w/ minister & steward weekly

Collection received for relief of the poor

Initially collected to pay debts of Society

Maintain rules of the Society along with means of grace

Primary membership requirement – to flee the wrath to come

Membership mixed men & women

Purpose

Working out your salvation – Philippians 2:12

Pursue a holy life – Hebrews 12:14

Bands – method of changing emotions and motives

4-6 people- all same gender, marital status, similar age

Voluntary membership

Wesley's favorite group

Intended for people who wanted to grow inside, in purity of intentions

Members shared & examined motives & impressions of their hearts

w/total honesty

Closed meetings

Membership only by invitation

Select society

From among most faithful men & women

Wesley trained in doctrines & methods of Methodism

Some people found classes & bands not challenging enough

Absolute confidence

Not a prize or reward for attaining perfection

No special rules

Why system so effective

Principles

Human will is free, human nature perfectible by God's grace through group

Learning come by doing the will of God

Spirit & practice of primitive Christianity can & must be recaptured

Gospel must be presented to the poor

Primary function of leaders is to equip others to lead

Group strategies

Point of entry is behavioral change followed by change emotions

Everyone takes part in activity of the classes (or lose ticket to Society)

Individualized care & multiple accountability

Cognitive, affective, & behavioral functions separated (society, class, and band)

Leadership principles

Untrained laypeople could become leaders

Leaders appointed by Wesley himself

Leaders recognized & trained

Other

Thinking of people also formed by songs expressing theological truths

Even the poorest gave gifts

Wesley published much cheap & good literature

Schools for poor children opened

CLASS OUTLINE

Holiness

Wesley believed holiness fundamental part of Christian life

- Aim of his life

- Organizing center of his thought

- Spring of his action

- One abiding project

Purpose of Methodist movement – spread scriptural holiness throughout the land

No holiness but social holiness

- Necessity of Christian fellowship

- Countering privatized notion of Christian faith

 - Christian faith is personal but not private

Modern tendency to individualism

- Methodist understanding of piety and individualistic

- Reading Wesleyan emphasis on sanctification/holiness as individual experience

Wesley frequently describes holiness as renewing the whole image of God

- Not in purely individualistic way

- Used eschatology & creation theology in reflecting on holiness

 - Horizon of holiness was whole world, created and recreated

Holiness of life described in terms of perfect love

- Involved social relations including environmental relations

Spreading scriptural holiness entails

- Transformation of economic & political order

Establishment of Pentecostal communalism

Abolition of war

Holiness nothing less than a new creation

Holiness

Striving for holiness together

Cannot be done as individuals

Classes & bands methods for growing in holiness

Produced by genuine faith

Regenerative process cannot help but find expression in improved character

Grounded in command be holy as God is holy (Leviticus 19:2 and others)

Matthew 5:48 – Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect

True Christian discipleship requires loving God & neighbor - Matthew 22:34-40

Christian perfection i.e. entire sanctification

Instantaneous second work of grace

Or gradual working of the Spirit.

Yes

Salvation must produce holiness of heart and life

Not viewed as ladder of ascents

Christian holiness biblically as linear movement forward

Despite inner assurance & regeneration of character resulting from justification

Never long before believer discovers still root of sin

Wesley believed sanctification could occur before death

CLASS OUTLINE

Wesley & Perfection

‘A Plain Account of Christian Perfection’

“Entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, is neither more nor less than pure love; love expelling sin and governing both the heart and life of a child of God.”

“ ... to be renewed in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.”

Perfection = entire sanctification

Christians could attain perfection in this life

“... that habitual disposition of the soul which, in the sacred writings, is termed holiness; and which directly implies being cleansed from sin, ‘from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit’; and by consequence, being endued with those virtues which were in Christ Jesus; being do ‘renewed in the image of our mind,’ as to be ‘perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect’ (*A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, p. 12)

Attained by faith

What perfection is not

Not perfect knowledge

Not free from ignorance

Not free from mistake

Not infallible

Sin

That which is contrary to the nature and character of God

To miss the mark

Don't put out enough effort to be obedient

Focus on something other than God's will

Rebellion = blatant defiance of God

Sins of omission = neglect to do what is right

Perfection

Commanded of us (Matthew 5:48)

Not flawless or spotless

Complete

Possible to be perfect w/o being entirely free from sin

Can possess fullness of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:13)

Can be full of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

Even perfected Christian needs mediation by Christ

To atone for their omissions, shortcomings, mistakes in judgment & practice

All are deviations from the perfect law & need atonement

Wesley found no place in scripture where we could not fall back into sin

Ordo salutis of Christian perfection – instant justification, gradual sanctification, instant

entire sanctification (perfection), instant loss of entire sanctification, repeat

Central component to holy life God wants from his people

All should pursue it as normative

Personal holiness & devotion to God genesis of doctrine

APPENDIX E

Ethical Considerations

Consent Form Template

Date _____

Dear _____

I am a Doctor of Ministry participant at Asbury Theological Seminary and I am conducting research on the topic of Wesleyan distinctives at St. Andrews United Methodist Church. I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group helping me to gather information pertaining a class on distinctives of the Wesleyan faith. I want to assure you that other than focus group participants and myself your responses will be kept confidential. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to participate as much or as little as you choose in the focus group. The focus group sessions will be audio recorded and then transcribed. Once the research is completed in approximately three months, I will destroy the audio recordings and keep the transcriptions electronically for an indefinite period of time, at least until my dissertation is written and approved. I realize that your participation is entirely voluntary and I appreciate your willingness to consider being part of the study. Feel free to call or write me at any time if you need any more information. My number is 574-457-4111 and my e-mail is ed.beedle@asburyseminary.edu.

If you are willing to assist me in this study, please sign and date this letter below to indicate your voluntary participation. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Ed Beedle

I volunteer to participate in the study described above and so indicate by my signature below:

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

Please print your name: _____

Date _____

Dear _____

I am a Doctor of Ministry participant at Asbury Theological Seminary and I am conducting research on the topic of Wesleyan distinctives at St. Andrews United Methodist Church. I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group helping me to gather information pertaining to a sermon series on John Wesley's order of salvation. I want to assure you that other than focus group participants and myself your responses will be kept confidential. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to participate as much or as little as you choose in the focus group. The focus group sessions will be audio recorded and then transcribed. Once the research is completed in approximately three months, I will destroy the audio recordings and keep the transcriptions electronically for an indefinite period of time, at least until my dissertation is written and approved. I realize that your participation is entirely voluntary and I appreciate your willingness to consider being part of the study. Feel free to call or write me at any time if you need any more information. My number is 574-457-4111 and my e-mail is ed.beedle@asburyseminary.edu.

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Ed Beedle

I volunteer to participate in the study described above and so indicate by my signature below:

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

Please print your name: _____

Date _____

Dear _____

I am a Doctor of Ministry participant at Asbury Theological Seminary and I am conducting research on the topic of Wesleyan distinctives at St. Andrews United Methodist Church. I would like to invite you to participate in a survey helping me to gather information pertaining to a class series on distinctives of the Wesleyan faith. I want to assure you that other than myself your responses will be kept confidential. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to participate as much or as little as you choose in the focus group. The focus group sessions will be audio recorded and then transcribed. Once the research is completed in approximately three months, I will keep the surveys only until my dissertation is written and approved. Please know that you can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions on the survey. I realize that your participation is entirely voluntary and I appreciate your willingness to consider being part of the study. Feel free to call or write me at any time if you need any more information. My number is 574-457-4111 and my e-mail is ed.beedle@asburyseminary.edu. If you are willing to assist me in this study, please sign and date this letter below to indicate your voluntary participation. Thank you for your help.

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Ed Beedle

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Your signature: _____ Date: _____

Please print your name: _____

Date _____

Dear _____

I am a Doctor of Ministry participant at Asbury Theological Seminary and I am conducting research on the topic of Wesleyan distinctives at St. Andrews United Methodist Church. I would like to invite you to participate in a survey helping me to gather information pertaining to a sermon series on John Wesley's order of salvation. I want to assure you that other than myself your responses will be kept confidential. . Once the research is completed in approximately three months, I will keep the surveys only until my dissertation is written and approved. Please know that you can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions on the survey and you are free to stop participating at any time you choose.. I realize that your participation is entirely voluntary and I appreciate your willingness to consider being part of the study. Feel free to call or write me at any time if you need any more information. My number is 574-457-4111 and my e-mail is ed.beedle@asburyseminary.edu. If you are willing to assist me in this study, please sign and date this letter below to indicate your voluntary participation. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Ed Beedle

I volunteer to participate in the study described above and so indicate by my signature below:

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

Please print your name: _____

Date: September 28, 2015

To: Administrative Council of the St. Andrews United Methodist Church:

I am a Doctor of Ministry participant at Asbury Theological Seminary and I am conducting research on the topic of Wesleyan distinctives at St. Andrews United Methodist Church. I would like to invite people in the congregation to participate in a survey concerning a sermon series on John Wesley's order of salvation both before and after the sermons are preached. The entire congregation is invited to participate in these surveys. I want to assure you that the responses will be kept confidential and I will not ask for names on the surveys. The data will be collected using a code and all of the surveys will be collated to give a blended view rather than identify any one person. I believe the recovery our heritage as Wesleyans is vital to ensure a thriving congregation and I believe the findings from these surveys will allow me to assist congregations as they seek to deepen their understanding of our common heritage as Wesleyans. My hope is that churches from around the country will be helped because you and others like you have taken the time to participate. Once the research is completed in approximately six months, I will destroy the individual surveys and keep the anonymous data electronically for an indefinite period of time, at least until my dissertation is written and approved. Please know that any member of the congregation can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions on the survey. I realize that participation is entirely voluntary and I appreciate your willingness to consider being part of the study. Feel free to call or write me at any time if you need any more information. My number is 574-457-4111 and my e-mail is ed.beedle@asburyseminary.edu. The signature of the chairperson of the Administrative Council indicates the willingness of the congregation of the St. Andrews United Methodist Church to participate voluntarily in this study. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Ed Beedle

The congregation of the St. Andrews United Methodist Church volunteers to participate in the study described above and so indicates by my signature below:

Your Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please print your name: _____

Confidentiality Template

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into as of 05/01/2016 by and between Rev. Edward Beedle, (the "Disclosing Party"), located at 1308 N. Long Drive, Syracuse, Indiana 46567, and Ms. Jill Corson, (the "Recipient" or "Receiving Party"), located at 1413 N. Long Drive, Syracuse, Indiana 46567.

This agreement is entered into pursuant to Transcription of Interview Recordings. Recipient shall be acting as administrative assistant.

Throughout the duration of this Agreement, the Disclosing Party may deem it necessary to disclose or share certain proprietary information with the Recipient. Therefore, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants contained within this Agreement, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, both parties hereto agree as follows:

Confidential Information

For all intents and purposes of this Agreement, "Confidential Information" shall mean and include any data or information that is deemed proprietary to the Disclosing Party and that which is not generally known to the public, whether in tangible or intangible form, whenever and however disclosed, including, but not limited to, (i) any form of marketing plan, strategies, financial information or projections, operations, sales quotes or estimates, business plans,

performance results which may be related to the past, present and/or future business activities of said party, its subsidiaries and affiliated companies; (ii) plans for products or services, and customer or supplier lists; (iii) any scientific, technical or data information, invention, design, process, procedure, formula, improvement, technology or method; (iv) any concepts, reports, data, knowledge, works-in-progress, designs, development tools, specifications, computer software, source code, object code, flow charts, databases, inventions, information and trade secrets, trademarks and copyrights; and (v) any other information that should reasonably be recognized as confidential information of the Disclosing Party. Confidential Information need not be novel, unique, patentable, copyrightable or constitute a trade secret in order to be designated Confidential Information. The Receiving Party acknowledges that the Confidential Information is proprietary to the Disclosing Party, has been developed and obtained through great efforts by the Disclosing Party and, as such, the Disclosing Party regards all of its Confidential Information as trade secrets.

Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing statement to the contrary, Confidential Information shall not include any such information which: (i) was known by the Receiving Party prior to receiving the Confidential Information from the Disclosing Party; (ii) becomes rightfully known to the Receiving Party from a third party source not known, after diligent inquiry, by the Receiving Party to be under an obligation to the Disclosing Party to maintain confidentiality, (iii) is or shall become publically available through no fault or failure to act by the Receiving Party in breach of this Agreement; (iv) is required to be disclosed in a judicial or administrative proceeding, or is otherwise requested or required to be disclosed by law or regulation, although the requirements of Compelled Disclosure shall apply prior to any disclosure being made; and

(v) is or has been independently developed by employees, consultants or agents of the Receiving Party without violation of the herein contained terms and conditions of this Agreement or reference or access to any Confidential Information.

Confidential Information Disclosure

The Disclosing Party may deem it necessary, from time to time, to disclose or make available to the Receiving Party Confidential Information. It shall then become the responsibility of the Receiving Party to: (i) limit the disclosure of any Confidential Information belonging to the Disclosing Party to the Receiving Party's directors, officers, employees, agents or representatives (collectively herein referred to as "Representatives") who have a need to know such Confidential Information in connection with the current or contemplated business relationship between the parties to which this Agreement relates, and only for that purpose; (ii) advise its Representatives of the proprietary nature of the Confidential Information and of the obligations set forth herein this Agreement and require such Representatives to keep the Confidential Information confidential; (iii) shall keep all Confidential Information strictly confidential by way of exercising a reasonable degree of care, but not less than the degree of care that the Receiving Party would exercise in safeguarding their own confidential information; and (iv) not disclose any Confidential Information received to any third parties, unless otherwise provided for herein this Agreement.

Therefore, each party shall be responsible for any breach of this Agreement by any of their respective Representatives.

Confidential Information Usage

The Receiving Party herein agrees to make use of the Confidential Information solely for the purpose and in connection with the current or contemplated business relationship between both parties and not for any purpose other than that which has been stipulated and contained herein this Agreement, unless otherwise authorized by prior written consent by an authorized representative of the Disclosing Party. There shall be no other right or license, whether expressed or implied, in the Confidential Information granted to the Receiving Party hereunder. Ownership and title to the Confidential Information shall remain solely with the Disclosing Party, any and all use of the Confidential Information by the Receiving Party shall be solely for the benefit of the Disclosing Party, and any type or manner of improvements or modifications thereof by the Receiving Party shall remain the sole property of the Disclosing Party. There shall be nothing herein contained that would be intended to modify the parties' existing agreement that the parties' discussions in furtherance of a potential business relationship shall herein be governed by Federal Rule of Evidence 408 – Compromise Offers and Negotiations.

Induced Disclosure of Confidential Information

Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing clauses to the contrary, the Receiving Party may be compelled to disclose Confidential Information pursuant to any governmental, judicial, or administrative order, subpoena, discovery request, regulatory request or similar method, provided that the Receiving Party promptly notifies, to the extent feasible, the Disclosing Party in writing of any such demand for disclosure so that the Disclosing Party, at its sole expense, may seek to make such disclosure subject to a protective order or other appropriate remedy to preserve the confidentiality of the Confidential Information; provided in the case of a broad

regulatory request with respect to the Receiving Party's business (not targeted at Disclosing Party), the Receiving Party may promptly comply with such request provided the Receiving Party provides (if permitted by such regulator) the Disclosing Party prompt notice of such disclosure. The Receiving Party agrees that it shall not oppose and shall cooperate with efforts by, to the extent feasible, the Disclosing Party with any such request for a protective order or other relief. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Disclosing Party is unable to obtain or does not seek a protective order and the Receiving Party is legally requested or required to disclose such Confidential Information, disclosure of such Confidential Information may be made without liability.

Independent Development

Receiving Party may currently or in the future be developing information internally, or receiving information internally, or receiving information from other parties that may be similar to the Disclosing Party's Confidential Information. Accordingly, nothing in this Agreement will be construed as a representation or inference that Receiving Party will not develop or have developed products or services, that, without violation of this Agreement, might compete with the products or systems contemplated by the Disclosing Party's Confidential Information.

Term

The herein contained Agreement shall remain in effect July 1, 2017, and shall be subject to an extension of 12 months months if both parties are still discussing and contemplating a business transaction or relationship at the end of the original term. Notwithstanding the

foregoing, the parties' duties to maintain in confidence any and all Confidential Information that may have been disclosed during the term shall thus remain in effect indefinitely.

No Warranty

All Confidential Information is provided by Disclosing Party "AS IS" and without any warranty, express, implied or otherwise, regarding the Confidential Information's completeness, accuracy or performance.

Remedies

Both parties to this Agreement acknowledge and agree that the Confidential Information hereunder this Agreement is of a unique and valuable nature, and that the unauthorized distribution or broadcasting of the Confidential Information could have the potential to destroy and, at the very least, diminish the value of such information. The damages that the Disclosing Party could sustain as a direct result of the unauthorized dissemination of the Confidential Information would be impossible to calculate. Therefore, both parties hereby agree that the Disclosing Party shall be entitled to claim injunctive relief that would prevent the dissemination of any Confidential Information that would be in violation of the terms set forth herein this Agreement. Any such injunctive relief provided shall be in addition to any other available remedies hereunder, whether at law or in equity. The Disclosing Party shall be entitled to recover any sustained costs and/or fees, including, but not limited to, any reasonable attorney's fees which may be incurred while attempting to obtain any such relief. Furthermore, in the event of any litigation which may be related to this Agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to recover any such reasonable attorney's fees and expenses incurred.

Return of Confidential Information

Upon completion/expiration or termination of this Agreement, the Receiving Party shall immediately return and deliver to the Disclosing Party all tangible material and/or information representing or exemplifying the Confidential Information provided hereunder and all notes, summaries, memoranda, drawings, manuals, records, excerpts or derivative information deriving therefrom and all other documents, materials, notes or copies ("Notes") which may have been converted to any computerized media in the form of any image, data or word processing files either manually or by image capture or any other form of work product that may be based on or include any Confidential Information, in whatever form of storage or retrieval, upon the earlier of (i) the completion or termination of this Agreement or (ii) at such time as the Disclosing Party may so request; provided however that the Receiving Party may retain such of its documents as is necessary to enable it to comply with its document retention policies. Alternatively, with the prior written consent of the Disclosing Party, the Receiving Party may immediately destroy (in the case of Notes, at the Receiving Party's sole discretion) any of the foregoing embodying Confidential Information (or the reasonably non-recoverable data erasure of computerized data) and, upon request, certify in writing such destruction by an authorized officer of the Receiving Party supervising the destruction of the material and or information.

Notice of Breach

The Receiving Party shall immediately notify the Disclosing Party upon discovering any unauthorized use or disclosure of Confidential Information by the Receiving Party or its Representatives, or any other breach of this Agreement by the Receiving Party or its

Representatives, and will cooperate with any efforts by the Disclosing Party to assist the Disclosing Party to regain the possession of its Confidential Information and thus prevent its further unauthorized use.

No Legally Binding Agreement for Transaction

Both parties hereby agree that neither party shall be under any legal obligation of any kind whatsoever with respect to a Transaction by virtue of this Agreement, except for the matters specifically agreed to herein. The parties further acknowledge and agree that each party herein reserves the right, in their sole and absolute discretion, to reject any and/or all proposals and to terminate discussions and negotiations with respect to any Transaction at any time. This Agreement does not create or constitute a joint venture or partnership between the parties. In the event that a Transaction should go forward, the non-disclosure provisions of any applicable transaction documents entered into between the parties (or their respective affiliates) for the Transaction shall supersede this Agreement. Should and such provision not be provided or stipulated in said transaction documents, then this Agreement shall be the controlling instrument.

Warranty

Each party herein warrants that it has the right and authorization to make such disclosures under this Agreement. NO WARRANTIES ARE MADE BY EITHER PARTY UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WHATSOEVER. The parties acknowledge that although they shall each endeavor to include in the Confidential Information any and all information that they each believe relevant for the purpose of the evaluation of a Transaction, the parties understand that no representation or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of the Confidential Information is

being made by either party as the Disclosing Party. Furthermore, neither party is under any obligation contained within this Agreement to disclose any Confidential Information it chooses not to disclose. Neither party hereto shall have any liability to the other party, or to the other party's Representatives, resulting from any use of the Confidential Information except with respect to the disclosure of such Confidential Information in violation of this Agreement.

Entire Agreement

This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the parties and supersedes any and all prior or contemporaneous understandings and agreements, whether oral or written, between the parties, with respect to the subject matter hereof. This Agreement can only be modified by written amendment signed by the party against whom such enforcement is sought.

Governing Laws

The validity, construction and performance of this Agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of Indiana or any applicable federal laws or statutes applicable to contracts made and to be wholly performed within such state, without giving effect to any form of conflict of law provisions thereof. The Federal and State courts located in Indiana shall have sole and exclusive jurisdiction over any disputes arising under the terms of this Agreement.

Waiver of Contractual Right

Any such failure by either party to enforce the other party's strict performance of any provision of this Agreement shall not constitute a waiver of its right to subsequently enforce such provision or any other provision of this Agreement.

Severability

Although the restrictions herein contained in this Agreement are considered by the parties to be reasonable for the purpose of protecting the Confidential Information, if any such restriction is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unenforceable, such provision will be modified, rewritten or interpreted to include as much of its nature and scope as will render it enforceable. In the event it cannot be so modified, rewritten or interpreted to be enforceable in any respect, it will not be given effect, and the remainder of the Agreement shall be enforced as if such provision was not included.

Notices

Any notices or communications required or permitted to be given hereunder may be delivered by hand, deposited with a nationally recognized overnight carrier, emailed, or mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid, in each case, to the aforementioned address of the other party, or any such other address or addressee as may be furnished by a party in accordance with this paragraph. All such notices or communication shall be deemed to have been given and received (i) in the case of personal delivery or email, on the date of said delivery, (ii) in the case of delivery by a nationally recognized overnight carrier, on the third business day following dispatch, and (iii) in the case of mailing, on the seventh business day following such mailing.

Transfer or Assign

This Agreement is personal in nature, and neither party may directly or indirectly assign or transfer it by operation of law or otherwise without the prior written consent of the other party, which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld. All obligations contained in this Agreement shall extend to and be binding upon the parties to this Agreement and their respective successors, assigns and designees.

Miscellaneous

The receipt of Confidential Information pursuant to this Agreement shall not prevent or in any way limit either party from: (i) developing, making or marketing products or services that are or may be competitive with the products or services of the other, or (ii) providing products or services to other who compete with the other.

Paragraph headings used in this Agreement are for reference only and shall not be used or relied upon in the interpretation of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the aforementioned effective date.

By:

By:

Edward Beedle
Senior Pastor

Jill Corson
Administrative Assistant

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