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Edited by

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MAINSTREAM LITURGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

KAREN B. WESTERFIELD
TUCKER

In a letter dated 9 September 1784, John Wesley stated his conviction that the Book of Common Prayer (1662) of the Church of England exceeded all other liturgies, ancient or modern, in its expression of a 'solid, scriptural, rational piety'. Despite such an affirmation, Wesley acknowledged the imperfections and deficiencies in the Prayer Book when measured against what he perceived to be the ideal worship found in scriptural and apostolic Christianity. He exhibited a restrained liberty in adjusting the established Anglican texts, rubrics, and canons while also taking up additional practices deemed expedient for spreading the gospel. Thus we find within Mr Wesley himself a pattern and tension that would persist among later generations of Methodists in various places and times: the desire for clearly defined liturgical forms; the freedom within reason to depart from, emend, or supplement those forms; and reliance upon the witness of scripture and Christian antiquity to support both approaches.

EARLY METHODIST LITURGICAL PRACTICES AND THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

Because of its origin as a movement or 'society' within the Church of England, Methodism from its inception was linked with the English liturgical mainstream by means of the rites and ceremonies of the Book of Common Prayer. John Wesley, who throughout his life claimed to resist separation from the Church of England, expected the people called Methodist to attend Lord's day worship in the local parish church and thus imbibe the Prayer Book's liturgies, which for Sunday morning consisted usually of Morning Prayer, the Litany, and the first part of the Order for Holy Communion inclusive of the sermon or homily (the 'ante-communion') that was prior to the sacramental section. To encourage—or at least not inhibit—such participation, Methodist 'preaching' services consisting principally of Scripture reading, preaching and/or exhortation, prayer, and song were to be held outside 'church hours' on Sundays, typically very early in the morning and late in the afternoon; these Methodist gatherings were ideally to be a complement to, and not a replacement of, parish worship. With the legal requirement that the documentation of both births and marriages be kept at the parish church, many Anglican-Methodists who were lukewarm to the established church nonetheless also experienced the liturgies of the Prayer Book at baptisms and weddings. Even persons affiliated with Methodism who were not communicants in the Church of England (e.g. Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, and Moravians) would have been exposed to selected liturgical material of the Prayer Book via the Methodist gatherings. Methodist preachers of Anglican background quoted or paraphrased material from the Prayer Book in their sermons, and snippets from the collects and other formal prayers would probably have appeared in some extemporaneous prayers because such prayer language was familiar to both ear and heart. Many of Charles Wesley's hymns contain direct quotations from or allusions to the contents of the Prayer Book liturgy—at a time when the use of recently composed hymnody was not permitted during Anglican worship proper. For example, a hymn with the heading 'Therefore with Angels and Arch-Angels, &c.' from *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739), which reappears in the collection of *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745) as Hymn 161, draws directly upon the Sanctus and its introduction from the communion rite:

Lord and God of heavenly powers,
Theirs—yet oh! benignly ours;
Glorious King, let earth proclaim,
Worms attempt to chant thy name.

Thee to laud in songs divine,
Angels and archangels join;
We with them our voices raise,
Echoing thy eternal praise.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
Live by heaven and earth adored!
Full of thee, they ever cry,
Glory be to God most High!

Another hymn, originally published in the second part of *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), repeats from the Order for the Burial of the Dead the long-controversial phrase that committed every deceased person to the ground in 'sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life'. Charles Wesley's hymn subtly addressed the concerns the Puritan wing and others had for the phrase by expressly identifying the departed as a professing believer:

Come, let us who in Christ believe
With saints and angels join,
Glory, and praise, and blessing give,
And thanks, to love divine.

Our friend in sure and certain hope
Hath laid his body down;
He knew that Christ shall raise him up,
And give the starry crown.

To all who his appearing love
He opens paradise;
And we shall join the hosts above,
And we shall grasp the prize.

Then let us wait to see the day,
To hear the joyful word,
To answer, Lo! we come away,
We die to meet our Lord.

The Church's liturgical year also found hymnic expression in Charles's repertoire with both single texts and special collections that addressed Advent/Christmas, Epiphany, Good Friday (Crucifixion), Easter, Ascension, Whitsunday (Pentecost), and Trinity.

Even though the Book of Common Prayer constituted England's liturgical mainstream, the Methodists turned to little-observed instructions in the book to justify a few of their liturgical 'innovations'. The Methodist watch night, an extended service of praise, thanksgiving, and prayer typically held on Friday nights nearest a full moon, was, in addition to apostolic precedent and Moravian custom, inspired by the Prayer Book's direction for 'vigils' as indicated by 'A table of the vigils, fasts, and days of abstinence to be observed in the year'. Anglicans who complained about the inappropriateness of Methodist midnight gatherings were

reminded of their own Prayer Book's provision. The Wesleys' desire for Methodists to participate regularly in the eucharist, each week if possible, was invited by Scripture (cf. Matthew 6: 11; Acts 2: 46), early Christian praxis, and a rubric near the conclusion of the Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper that allowed for weekly reception of the sacrament at cathedral and collegiate churches.

While the Wesleys and other early Methodist leaders remained connected with the Prayer Book and its resources, they also mined the liturgical riches of the early church for practices not found in Anglicanism that could stoke spiritual fires in hearts grown cold. In recovering selected practices, the Methodists employed the three-pronged strategy of classical Anglican theology utilizing the norms of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason, to which was added another: a pragmatism determined by spiritual efficacy in both the individual and the community. Yet their efforts to reclaim aspects of Christian antiquity associated them with the stream of Prayer Book dissent and unofficial liturgical revisions that looked to recover material from earlier versions of the Prayer Book (especially 1549) and from texts believed to originate during the apostolic and Nicene periods (especially the *Apostolic Constitutions*). The Wesleys were familiar with some of these liturgical experiments from their own century and the previous one, and had acquaintance with such revisers as the Arian William Whiston (*The Liturgy of the Church of England, Reduc'd Nearer to the Primitive Standard*, 1713), the Non-Juror Thomas Deacon (*A Compleat Collection of Devotions*, 1734), and the Unitarian Theophilus Lindsey (*The Book of Common Prayer Reformed According to the Plan of the Late Dr. Samuel Clarke*, 1774). Even though the Wesleys distanced themselves from such sometimes theologically suspicious work, John in particular was sympathetic to certain of their conclusions, for example, that the Athanasian Creed with its so-called 'damnatory clauses' might not be appropriate for liturgical use. Among the dozens of Prayer Book revisions or substitutes produced during the century and a half, the Methodist adoption of the love feast (the primitive *agapē*) was apparently unique, although it was a practice shared with minority communities of Separatists, Baptists, Anabaptists, and Moravians.

THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS

Perhaps the greatest evidence of the Book of Common Prayer's significance to John Wesley was his use of it for the creation in 1784 of a collection of services for the Methodists in North America. Rather than abandon the Prayer Book as some of his

contemporaries had done, Wesley instead abridged it, and in so doing both long-standing complaints against the book made by various factions within and outside the Church (especially the concern about the inclusion of 'unscriptural' material) and what he perceived to be the liturgical need of the Methodist communities in the newly emancipated American colonies.

Wesley's revisionary spirit was first displayed as a priest in Georgia when, according to his diary dated 5 March 1736, he made unspecified alterations to the Prayer Book and the Psalter. Almost twenty years later, in 1755, he revealed in the essay 'Ought We to Separate from the Church of England?' some of the substance of his editorial inclinations. In that essay he declared theologically and scripturally indefensible the Prayer Book's inclusion of the Athanasian Creed, sponsors in baptism, the office of confirmation, the absolution in the visitation of the sick, the thanksgiving in the burial office, and the assumption of an 'essential difference' between bishops and presbyters. All these matters he dealt with directly in 1784 in what he termed an edition of the Prayer Book: they simply were deleted; and bishops became 'superintendants' [*sic*], though the issue of the 'essential difference' was left unresolved by Wesley's choice to have them 'ordained' to that office. Wesley's editorial hand did not stop there, however. Operating principally by a method of excision, Wesley removed full rites—private baptism, the visitation of the sick (but leaving the communion of the sick), the churching of women, the commination, and prayers to be used at sea and for observing the accession of the reigning monarch—and also such components as sung liturgical texts, readings from the Apocrypha (sparing only a reading from Tobit in the communion office), various statements from the two baptismal rites, and the giving of both bride and ring in the marriage rite. The sanctoral calendar along with certain liturgical seasons and holy days disappeared. Instructions and tables not deleted were substantially truncated. Psalms and portions of Psalms deemed inappropriate for Christian lips, such as the so-called 'cursing' psalms, were excised from the Psalter. So also were selected passages that referred to musical instruments played during worship—e.g. Psalm 149 disappears and verses 3–5 of Psalm 150 are dropped—a move consistent with Wesley's preference for unaccompanied congregational singing; inexplicably, however, Psalm 147: 7 survives. Probably to avoid redundancy and to answer complaints regarding the length of the Sunday liturgy (with or without the eucharist), the Nicene Creed was removed from the order for communion since that office was generally preceded by Morning Prayer which contained the Apostles' Creed. Even though Wesley's pruning substantially reduced the Book of Common Prayer, his dependency upon that liturgical source is unmistakable in the prayers and services that remained: Morning and Evening Prayer; certain collects and stipulated Scripture readings for particular days; the Litany; rites for the Lord's Supper, baptism of infants and those of 'riper years', matrimony, communion of the sick, and burial of the dead; and ordination rites for deacon, elder (presbyter), and 'superintendent'.

The trimmed Prayer Book text received few additions from Wesley, with perhaps the most significant being an instruction for the option of extempore prayer at the conclusion of the communion office. Surprisingly no similar rubric appears in the other services (including Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, where it might be expected) despite Wesley's own willingness to interject extempore prayer when using the Prayer Book and the strong preference of many Methodists to pray without a written text. Equally bewildering is the absence of rubrics sanctioning congregational singing even though such participation would have been common—even encouraged—before, during, and after Methodist occasions of worship.

At Wesley's direction, copies of the *Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America. With other Occasional Services* were sent across the Atlantic in the company of Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vasey, and Dr. Thomas Coke, all three of whom Wesley had recently set apart for pastoral leadership. Also accompanying the three were copies of *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for the Lord's Day* (a revision of the 1741 *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*), and a letter that, along with the rubrics in the newly minted *Sunday Service*, stated Wesley's (perhaps unreasonable) expectations for the book's use and for Methodist liturgical practice in general. Although he provided no instructions on how the two orders were to be fused (and thus avoid multiple recitations of the same text, e.g. the Lord's Prayer), Wesley specified that Morning Prayer and the Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper were to be celebrated every Lord's day—an expectation considerably more generous than the Church of England's canon. Evening Prayer was also to be said each Sunday, but, like Morning Prayer, was for use only on that day; extempore prayer was designated for all other days. The Litany's Sunday rehearsal was eliminated, though it was still to be said on Wednesdays and Fridays.

The *Sunday Service* was sent loose-leaf to America out of haste or from a desire to avoid the duty on bound books, and this circumstance would contribute to questions regarding Wesley's intentions for the performance of the Lord's Supper and infant baptism. Extant copies of the 1784 *Sunday Service* exist in two versions: one includes rubrics for the manual acts (the celebrant's gestures) during the prayer of consecration in the communion rite and for the post-baptismal signing of the cross in the infant baptismal rite; the other omits both. It is uncertain which actions reflect Wesley's original plan and which may have been the preference of Dr. Coke, who Wesley claimed had altered material without his knowledge. The survival of the manual acts and the absence of signation in the infant rite in later editions of the *Sunday Service* only contribute to the puzzle.

In 1786, Wesley (probably with the assistance of Coke) brought out a revision of the 1784 book, with the principal changes made in the baptismal services (including the removal of references and allusions to baptismal regeneration). Two versions were produced, one for the 'United-States of America', and the other intended for the British context since references to royalty in rubrics and

under two titles: *The Sunday Service of the Methodists* was almost certainly meant for use in Britain itself; and the other, with the added referent of '*His Majesty's Dominions*', was intended for Methodist mission areas such as Antigua, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. Subsequent editions published in England with Wesley's oversight had only minor alterations mostly related to the exclusion or inclusion of royal language. A 1788 edition apparently destined for Methodists in all locations included *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for the Lord's Day* as had the 1786 edition, but now for the first time in continuous pagination with the liturgical texts. Although designated for the United States, a 1790 version oddly contained prayers for the King in the daily office and communion liturgies. No location was specified on the title page of a 1792 edition, published the year after Wesley's death, but the contents indicate the recipients were to be Methodists in Britain and the 'British Dominions'.

METHODIST RECEPTION OF THE *SUNDAY SERVICE*

In the United States

The Methodist preachers attending the Baltimore Christmas Conference of 1784 agreed, in Richard Whatcoat's words, 'to form a Methodist Episcopal Church, *in which the Liturgy* (as presented by the Rev. John Wesley) *should be read*, sacraments to be administered by a superintendent, elders, and deacons, who shall be ordained by a presbytery, using the episcopal form, as prescribed in the Rev. Mr. Wesley's prayer book' (Sandford 1843: 363). The *Sunday Service* was not the first source to provide a structured ordering of worship for some Methodists in the 'New World': persons with even a marginal relationship to the Anglican parish church would have been acquainted with particular liturgies from the Book of Common Prayer; and a few Methodists in the South probably experienced the liturgical patterns for the administration of the sacraments drawn up at the controversial Fluvanna Conference of 1779, in which the Lord's Supper according to the 'Church order' was proceeded by singing, prayer, and exhortation (Connor 1970: 107–8). The adoption of 'Mr Wesley's prayer book' may have been motivated principally out of duty to their 'venerable Father', but the expediency of such a resource would also have been recognized by many of the preachers who themselves came from an Anglican background. Nevertheless, certain Methodists were reluctant to accept any directives from England so soon after the struggle for independence, and some

found prohibitive both the expense of the books and the necessity of transporting them into remote areas. In addition, stipulated orders for worship along with printed prayers were alien to many Methodists (especially rural and lower-class) who had no direct Anglican affiliations, who valued freedom of expression in worship, and whose piety gravitated towards a more extempore and informal style—even though, in America as in England, prayer, hymns, and the reading and interpretation of Scripture constituted the repeated and stable liturgical core of all Methodist gatherings.

The publication of multiple editions of the *Sunday Service* allocated for the US during John Wesley's lifetime, and comments recorded principally in diaries and journals of the clergy, indicate that the book received some usage. Reflecting on the years immediately after the Christmas Conference, Methodist elder and historian Jesse Lee noted that 'in the large towns, and in some country places, our preachers read prayers on the Lord's day: and in some cases the preachers read part of the morning service on Wednesdays and Fridays' (Lee 1810: 107). By 'preachers' Lee would have meant the ordained clergy, since approved legislation did not allow lay preachers to 'read our liturgy'—that is Morning and Evening Prayer and Litany—without written permission of the elder or superintendent/bishop. Lee's observation is silent about the realization of Wesley's instruction regarding the Lord's Supper every Lord's day; only elders and superintendents/bishops were authorized to perform the sacrament, and while these men might experience weekly eucharist as they presided in various locations, not all the far-flung Methodist communities would have the same opportunity. However, despite this limitation, Methodists valued the sacrament and arranged to receive it whenever possible, often at the quarterly meeting. Where the Lord's Supper was celebrated, it might be preceded or followed by observance of the love feast, which though it lacked a formal ritual text, had the characteristic components of hymn singing, prayers, the sharing of bread and water, a collection of alms, testimonies, and addresses or exhortations (Ruth 2000: 103–55, 214–15).

The reality that only a minority of leaders were authorized to 'read our liturgy', coupled with the majority's preference for worship not taken from a book, contributed to the laying aside of Wesley's plans for Lord's day worship. Even so, some standard contents for Methodist worship were expected. Jesse Lee notes that the short-lived Council, concerned for uniformity in Lord's day worship, in 1789 made recommendations for both the time of worship (with 10 o'clock preferred) and its form ('singing, prayer, and reading the Holy Scriptures, with exhortation or reading a sermon in the absence of a preacher') (Lee 1810: 152–3). This truncated form for Sunday morning was authorized at the general conference convened in 1792 (the year after John Wesley's death), when the Morning and Evening Prayer services, the Litany, the Psalter, the abbreviated lectionary, and the propers were replaced by a set of rubrics in the section 'Of Public Worship' in the *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*:

Quest. What directions shall be given for the establishment of uniformity in public worship amongst us, on the Lord's-day?

- Ans. 1. Let the morning-service consist of singing, prayer, the reading of a chapter out of the Old Testament, and another out of the New, and preaching.
2. Let the afternoon-service consist of singing, prayer, the reading of one chapter out of the Bible, and preaching.
3. Let the evening-service consist of singing, prayer, and preaching.
4. But on the days of administering the Lord's Supper, the two chapters in the morning-service may be omitted.

The conference also voted that Wesley's rites of baptism, Lord's Supper, marriage, burial, and ordination be abbreviated, altered, and placed into a thirty-seven page section of 'Sacramental Services, &c.' in the *Discipline*. With the action of 1792, American Methodists lost a prayer book per se; yet the collection of sacramental and occasional services (later known as the 'Ritual') preserved much of Wesley's revision, though in subsequent years all the texts underwent significant adjustments in the different Methodist/Wesleyan denominations.

Wesley's services for the Lord's day received renewed attention in the second half of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth (Westerfield Tucker 2001: 16–23). For example, the Methodist Episcopal Church (South), in 1866, approved the printing of *The Sunday Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (1867) which restored for optional use, with some alterations, the Sunday-related and festal material that had been jettisoned in 1792 and affixed it to that body's currently approved sacramental and occasional services. Almost fifteen years later, the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1880 took a similar approach to reintroducing 'Wesley's Prayer Book'. The 1965 *Book of Worship* of the Methodist Church reproduced 1784 Morning Prayer in a section of 'Services in the Methodist Tradition'. The revision of that book, the *United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992), included orders for daily prayer, but neither drew directly from the 1784 texts nor expected the morning office to be observed on the Lord's day. In the early twenty-first century, only a few fragments from the *Sunday Service* remain in the official liturgical texts of Methodists in the US, with the most preserved by the African Methodist Episcopal Church's *Book of Worship* (1984).

In Great Britain

Although in 1786 John Wesley prepared an edition of the *Sunday Service* for use in Britain, no direct mention of its existence—or the existence of the 1788 and 1792 versions—appears in the Minutes of the conferences for the span of those years. Two items preserved in the Minutes during that time, however, give hints to the

liturgical situation in the last years of Wesley's life. First, Wesley advised that preachers 'read the Psalms and Lessons, with part of the Church prayers', in circumstances where Methodist services during church hours were warranted, as a means of 'endear[ing] the Church Service to our brethren, who probably would be prejudiced against it, if they heard none but extemporary prayer' (*Minutes* 1786: 191). Second, regarding the question 'What further directions may be given concerning the Prayers of the Church of England', the answer stated that the assistants, on non-eucharistic Sundays in the parish church and with agreement from the local society, could read the 'prayer book' in Methodist preaching houses on Sunday mornings (*ibid.* 1788: 208). While these recommendations might reference the *Sunday Service*, they more likely speak to Methodist use of the 1662 Prayer Book for Lord's day morning worship, supplemented by the informal preaching service on Sunday afternoons and evenings and on other days of the week. But there is evidence that the *Sunday Service* quickly found a place in a few Methodist places of worship—and that Wesley himself, perhaps conforming to canonical requirements, in practice preferred the 1662 liturgy to his own abridgement—if Methodist preacher Samuel Bradburn's report is accurate:

Mr. Wesley abridged the 'Book of Common Prayer', first for the Americans; and afterwards, with some variations, published it for the Methodists at large. I found this in use at Snowsfields and Wapping Preaching-Houses, when I was appointed for London in the year 1786. I used it a few times, 'till Mr. Wesley came to Town. I then said many things against continuing to do so, and he gave me leave to do as I pleased; I accordingly laid it aside. My reason for this, was not that I believed it wrong to use it, or that any thing in it was injured by Mr. Wesley; but because he and his curates continued to use the old one [the Prayer Book]. I saw no propriety in this conduct, and therefore bore my testimony against it. But many people who called themselves strict church-folks, had other reasons for not using it. When they saw that all the Saints' Days, the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds, several of the Articles of Religion, and many of the Psalms, were left out, they rejected it with disdain, and it is not used yet but in a very few towns in England.

(Bradburn 1792: 13–14)

Questions had long been raised about the administration of the Lord's Supper in Methodist chapels and societies, and after Wesley's death, debates on sacramental celebration as well as the topic of services during church hours intensified as Methodists struggled to define their relationship with the Church of England. To stave off division, 'Articles of Agreement for General Pacification' were approved in 1795 that dealt substantially with liturgical matters, including leadership for baptism and the burial of the dead (*Minutes* 1795: 322–6). Persons authorized by the conference were permitted to administer the Lord's Supper on Sunday evenings when it had not been made available in the morning at the parish church; some exceptions were allowed for church hours. The Prayer Book liturgy for Holy Communion (not Wesley's revision) was always to be used in England, but with the addition of hymns, extempore prayer, and exhortation. For places where

non-eucharistic worship was approved during church hours, it was stipulated that the officiant read 'either the Service of the Established Church, our venerable father's Abridgement [i.e. the 1792 version], or at least, the Lessons appointed by the Calendar,' with preference given to the first two. This meant, ideally, Morning Prayer and Litany, though following Anglican custom, the sermon from the ante-communion would have been included. Hymns, exhortation, and extempore prayer would probably have found a place as well. The phrase 'or at least, the Lessons appointed by the Calendar' is revealing, for such a minimum recognized that in many places neither the Prayer Book nor Wesley's revision would find a home. The Minutes recorded after 1795 indicate that enforcement of the Articles was an ongoing problem.

Although apparently the *Sunday Service* was used minimally for British Methodist worship since preference was given either to the Prayer Book or to the preaching service according to local custom (with the common components of Scripture readings, four or more hymns, extempore prayers, and a sermon), it survived as a separate publication into the first decade of the twentieth century as a liturgical resource for what became the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion. From 1816 (the next edition after 1792) to 1910, at least twenty-eight versions of the book were published under the title *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, though not always with the same ritual contents and the same wording in the texts. Two short-lived variants are notable: a truncated version sold as *The Sunday Morning Service of the Methodists* (1812), which contained texts from *Sunday Service* permitted under the Articles, with some alterations, and an incomplete daily New Testament lectionary; and *Selections from the Sunday Service of the Methodists; Designed for the use of Sunday-Scholars on the Morning of the Lord's Day* (1838, 1842), which included Morning Prayer, the Litany, collects, Wesley's Select Psalms, and the Order of Holy Communion to the end of the collects for the monarch. In addition, separate books were published between 1839 and 1881 containing the sacramental texts from the *Sunday Service*, to which after 1848 the rites of marriage, burial, and ordination were added (Swift 1957-8: 112-18, 133-43).

British Methodists after 1784 thus faced three competing liturgical approaches—the authorized Prayer Book, Wesley's revision, and the preaching and prayer services developed locally—whereas their kin in the US principally dealt with only two. Mr Wesley himself was able to hold these liturgical complexities together, perhaps because of his early and ongoing exposure to the Prayer Book, to the liturgical life of the parish church, and to regular informal and extemporaneous worship in the home and in small groups. Although formal, elaborate services with a printed text and informal, simple services with spontaneous expression were equally part of the Methodist/Wesleyan liturgical inheritance, Wesley's spiritual descendants on both sides of the Atlantic—and later around the globe—frequently placed them at odds. However, all Methodists agreed that two resources were essential to worship: a Bible and a collection of hymns.

ONGOING TENSIONS: SIMPLICITY AND COMPLEXITY

Prior to 1800, Methodists in both Britain and the US faced divisions, demonstrating a tendency towards fissiparousness that would continue well into the next century. Fractures resulted from disagreements concerning the authority of the leadership, the role of the laity, methods of evangelism, issues of race, class, and geography, and—though often not the primary precipitating issue—practices of worship. Leaders who, with or without denominational legislation to support them, strove to obtain some uniformity in worship in order to present a clear denominational identity both liturgically and theologically, were routinely charged with an ‘un-Wesleyan’ limitation of God-given liberties and advocacy of spiritless formalism and ‘ritualism’. Nevertheless, the majority of denominations—even if they were constituted in part over objection to printed liturgical rites and prayers or other liturgical issues—in the end (officially or unofficially) published their own resources for worship for optional use, even though the texts may have been little used. Methodists in Britain, influenced by a prayer-book culture, tended to publish discrete books of worship, while Methodists in the US and their mission communities abroad embedded liturgical texts alongside other conference-approved items in their books or manuals of *Discipline*.

The preaching service that was Methodism’s principal paraliturgical expression within the Church of England continued to be its defining liturgical event even as new and distinct Methodist denominations emerged in the years after Wesley’s death. The so-called ‘free’ style of worship was reinforced in Britain as branches of Methodism came to associate themselves with Nonconformist groups or with the conversion-oriented worship practices of the camp-meeting and revival. The evangelistic pragmatism of Methodists in the US, along with the legislated rubrics for the contents of Lord’s day public worship (singing, prayer, Scripture reading, preaching) that were typically kept as new denominations emerged, ensured the perpetuation of the locally adaptable preaching service. Inevitably the ‘free’ style carried over into the observance of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, despite the presence in some denominations of authorized (though not mandated) ritual forms and explicit legislation forbidding improvisation.

The service of Morning Prayer was used on the Lord’s day throughout the nineteenth century in a minority of congregations in Britain, among them prominent chapels in the Wesleyan Connexion. The practice was also found in the denomination’s theological colleges, and was then exported to Methodist mission areas by new graduates appointed abroad (George 1996: 34).

In general during the first part of the nineteenth century, published ritual texts for baptism, the Lord’s Supper, marriage, and burial used by Methodists on both

sides of the Atlantic were drawn directly from the Book of Common Prayer, from Wesley's abridgement of it, or from a revision undertaken of Wesley's work. Only minor adjustments were made to these rites at this time (with the baptism rites receiving the most attention) as denominations focused instead on organizational development and numerical growth, although new denominations might at the time of their creation engage in a more radical pruning of their liturgical inheritance. Textual changes tended to reflect shifts in theology (e.g. variations in the relation seen between baptism and the spiritual experience of regeneration), integration of dominant cultural practices (e.g. the restoration of the ring in marriage despite Wesley's removal of it), and new civil legislation (e.g. replacement of the banns with legal declarations stipulated by the British Marriage Act of 1836).

The second half of the century, however, saw substantial revisions to the printed sacramental and occasional rites as Methodism came to draw more substantially on the middle class for its membership, more Methodist clergy received formal theological educations, the results of the Oxford Movement were particularly felt in the largest of the Methodist denominations (positively and negatively), and new theological perspectives and societal developments arose. In the United States, attention to revision was also coupled with episcopal Methodism's emergence as a 'national' church, made visible by the construction of architecturally beautiful and socially prominent houses of worship. Of course, there was internal and external dismay about the emerging liturgical modifications—concerns about departing from the ritual course that Wesley had charted; and (especially from the Holiness branches, but not exclusively), worry about increasing ritualism and cultural accommodation ('worldliness') and their perceived partner, spiritual dryness. Signs of the loss of Methodist simplicity and spiritual fervour were believed by some to be evident by the decline of the Methodist 'great festivals': the love feast, the watch night, and in the United States especially, the service of renewing the covenant with God that had been a Methodist practice at least since 1755.

For Wesleyan Methodists in Britain, the years 1874–82 constituted a liturgical crisis. Not only were there calls to consolidate the multiple editions or impressions of the *Sunday Service* and the various books in circulation containing orders for the administration of sacramental and occasional services, but questions were also raised about the appropriateness of the Prayer Book and even the *Sunday Service* in Methodist chapels by those who feared a move by Anglicanism in a Roman Catholic direction. The Wesleyan Conference in 1874 set out to revise its liturgical resources with an eye to eliminating anything contrary to evangelical Protestantism. Yet for some this purging did not go far enough:

[I]f the history of Methodism in its life, power, and progress is associated with extempore prayers; if the general condition of Methodism calls more for a baptism of the Holy Spirit than for read prayers; if our ministry is being so much more educated to qualify them for extempore prayers, in a literary point of view; if read prayers are attended with such dangers to the vigour, freedom, and blessedness of public worship as their history shows them to be;

why, in the name of thousands upon thousands of Methodists, and of the highest weal of Methodism now and hereafter, should the question even be mooted of making a liturgical service for use in our congregations? Is the Spirit of God in this, or the spirit of the Devil? Let this be well considered. (Bate 1880: 14)

In the end, the conference published the *Book of Public Prayers and Services* (1882) and a shorter version as the *Order of Administration of the Sacraments and other Services*, which shows reliance upon both the 1662 Prayer Book and Wesley's *Sunday Service*. Morning Prayer was kept with few changes, and most of the rites received only a few alterations, the exception being the baptismal offices. Yet the conference continued to give congregations the option of using any liturgical forms previously approved, which explains why the *Sunday Service* went through additional printings after 1882.

Nowhere are liturgical changes at this time more evident than in the adjustments made to Lord's day worship in some of the churches in the US. Specified orders of worship in outline start to be produced in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, many with liturgical components not seen officially since the conference of 1792: the Lord's Prayer, responsive readings, doxologies, psalmody, the collection of money, and benedictions. The Apostles' Creed appeared in the Methodist Episcopal Church's worship order of 1896, the first time the creed was designated for regular Sunday worship since Wesley's Morning Prayer was replaced with rubrics. Also in the 1890s, the African Methodist Episcopal Church restored the Decalogue (part of Wesley's ante-communion dropped in 1792), placing it as the last reading before the sermon. Despite fierce battles to keep choirs out of Methodist worship for fear they would supplant congregational singing, choir anthems or voluntaries began to be listed in worship outlines.

Of course, throughout this time, the simple and variable preaching service remained the normative Sunday morning practice in many Methodist congregations around the world, though there was an increasing tendency in some places towards elaboration and greater complexity.

ECUMENICAL ENGAGEMENT AND LITURGICAL RENEWAL

The ecumenical conversations across the borders of denominations and world communions that began in earnest at the end of the nineteenth century and continued into the twentieth had the added result of creating a greater awareness of the worship practices—and printed worship resources—of different Christian communities. Methodists sometimes borrowed prayers or portions of liturgical

exts for transplantation, introducing turns of phrase or more substantial sections into their own proliferating printed liturgical resources, both those denominationally authorized and those produced by individuals or by ecumenical teams. International pan-Methodist dialogues provided an opportunity for Wesley's descendants to share their liturgical inheritances as well as to explore the variations that had emerged from Wesley's *Urtext* and from new developments.

The creation in Britain and in the US of two new denominations during the 1930s—each called the Methodist Church—from a reunion of separated Methodist bodies, was marked with the production of revised worship materials which, in both cases, carried the strong liturgical stamp of the largest group entering merger. In 1936 the Methodist Church in Britain brought out from its publishing house *The Book of Offices, being the Orders of Service authorized for Use in the Methodist Church, together with The Order for Morning Prayer*, which, in addition to the long-standing sacramental and occasional rites, included such services as the Thanksgiving of Mothers (a Methodist version of the Anglican 'churching' rite) and the Dedication of Sunday School Teachers. In keeping with the ecumenical thrusts of the time, the Preface to the volume explains that '[t]he wealth of liturgical devotion which is the noble heritage of the universal Church has been largely used, and forms of worship belonging to the East and the West, to ancient times and to more modern days, have all been explored to enrich these pages'. Yet sensitive to ongoing worries about ritual forms and the reality that the preaching service with extemporaneous prayer was alive and well (now routinely including five hymns, children's addresses, and musical offerings by choir and organist), the Preface also notes that the new book is not an attempt to 'disparage the practice of free prayer': 'There is no real conflict between free prayer and liturgical prayer, for the most fervent and the most helpful prayers that ever came from the inspiration of the moment will be found to owe much in their expression to the remembrance of the language of the Bible, of the great liturgies, and of the hymns of Methodism'. Similar language expressing a design inclusive of ecumenical and historical breadth, plus the need to be both 'liturgical and free', is found in the *Book of Worship for Church and Home* (1945) of the Methodist Church in the United States. The collection was the first separately published worship book with official standing in American Methodism since *Sunday Service* was laid aside—although its use was indicated to be 'optional and voluntary' and its contents (as indicated by the title) included aids for domestic worship. The *Book of Worship* also showed attention to particular days and seasons of the Christian year, expanding significantly beyond what had been found in some authorized hymnals, namely, seasonal subject headings for hymn organization and, as in the 1905 *Methodist Hymnal*, responsive readings for a few special days.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship in Britain and the Brotherhood (later Order) of St Luke in the US were born, conceived for the encouragement of informed and frequent eucharistic reception and for the cultivation

of interest in the liturgical renewal grounded in ancient Christian practices that was sweeping through other churches. Yet the first textual revision taking into consideration this renewal came neither from Britain nor the US, but from a new denomination created in 1947 from the merger of several traditions, including the Methodist of British origin. The pioneering eucharistic liturgy produced by the Church of South India in 1950 in many ways anticipated the liturgical developments of the Second Vatican Council by its attention to the normativity of word and sacrament on the Lord's day (cf. Luke 24: 13–35; Justin Martyr, 1 *Apology* 67), the doxological aspect of the eucharist, the active participation of the faithful, and the need for inculturating liturgical language and symbols in the idioms of the people.

Given the momentum of earlier years, it was to be expected that the Methodist Church in Britain and the Methodist Church in the US—after merger in 1968 with the Evangelical United Brethren, the United Methodist Church—would introduce plans for liturgical revision that took into account the major liturgical shifts generated by Vatican II, not only for Sunday morning, but also for baptism (including restoration of the adult catechumenate), weddings, and funerals. In the *Methodist Service Book* (1975) of the British church, Morning Prayer disappeared, though it would be restored, but as part of a daily office, in the *Methodist Worship Book* (1999). Along with a reprinting of the 1936 Sunday liturgy, a new Sunday liturgy of word and sacrament ('The Sunday Service') was supplied in the 1975 book that proceeded according to a structure reminiscent of the familiar Anglican/Wesleyan Order for Holy Communion, but with a eucharistic prayer patterned upon historic West Syrian/Antiochene models. Although the General Directions for the Sunday Service asserted the normativity of word and sacrament, nevertheless textual provision was made in a separate section for a service of the word without the sacrament. The United Methodist Church similarly developed a Sunday 'basic pattern' of word and sacrament using an Antiochene structure for its eucharistic prayers, but not relying directly upon the Prayer Book tradition for its ordering of the word section. A peculiarity of the *United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992) was the inclusion of full eucharistic prayers ('Great Thanksgivings') composed according to liturgical season or occasion.

EMERGING DEVELOPMENTS

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, interest continues in the liturgical renewal generated by Vatican II and by the World Council of Churches' convergence document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), particularly in the churches outside Europe and the United States that were planted by Methodist

missionaries. Many of these churches are now developing their own unique liturgical resources, informed by the best of Wesleyan and ecumenical liturgical scholarship, and attentive to the need for inculturated forms. The *Korean Methodist New Book of Worship* (2002) of the Korean Methodist Church is one such example.

Other churches, particularly those in multicultural contexts, continue to devise forms inclusive of a range of styles and voices. Experiments are underway in some places to establish an essential 'core' for services of communion, baptism, matrimony, and burial that might allow for local variety while adhering to a commonly held frame. 'Contemporary' and charismatic worship and 'emerging church' movements have engaged Methodists in different parts of the world. Yet the preaching service that eighteenth-century Methodists might recognize remains a staple for many.

Thus the dual pattern combining liturgical forms and freedom of expression that John Wesley bequeathed many generations ago remains his enduring legacy.

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