

FORMS OF VITA APOSTOLICA ET EVANGELICA:
AN ESSAY ON MENDICANTS AND METHODISTS

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OUTLINE

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GENERAL OUTLINE OF THIS PROJECT AS A WHOLE

INTRODUCTION

From out of the looming centuries between Constantine the Great and Martin Luther, John Wesley admired a few select individuals (for instance, Bernard of Clairvaux) as exemplars of "heart religion." Otherwise, he shared his Church's aversion to medieval Christianity. Correspondingly, and for a pair of reasons, his knowledge of this era was scant. First, was this Protestant prejudice. Eighteenth century Anglicans, including the Wesleys, continued to be very negative about the medieval church. They took serious account only of the Bible, the eastern ancient church, Augustine, and the Caroline Divines. They knew Calvin and Calvinism, as well, but little else from the sixteenth century be it Roman Catholic, Protestant, or Radical Reformation. The medieval centuries, identified with papacy and corruption, were despised. Wesley accepted the conventional judgment about what were better and worse eras in church history. Secondly, the scholarly critical study of medieval history was in its infancy in his time.

Thus, as we might expect, few scholars in world Methodism have taken an interest in the medieval church. Methodist Episcopal Bishop John F. Hurst (d. 1903) seems the earliest. Then came Britishers Herbert B. Workman (d. 1951), Henry Bett (d. 1953), and R. Newton Flew (d. 1962). Today there is Principal Rupert E. Davies of Great Britain and United Methodist Bishop William R. Cannon. Of these only Workman and Bett had their main scholarly interest in things medieval.

Workman's brief 1909 essay for the New History of Methodism, "The Place of Methodism in the Catholic Church," appeared separately as well, and remains the classic attempt to speak to the question it raises. Like Hurst and Bett he was more interested in medieval dissenters such as Joachim of Flora (d. 1201/2), John Wycliffe (d. 1384), and John Hus (martyred 1415).

No one has made a detailed comparative study of Wesley's Methodism with the powerful Church renewal movements of the High Middle Ages.

Nevertheless, as contemporary Anglican scholarship is happy to acknowledge, there are significant continuities from the Church in to the Church of England. The English Church retained more of the medieval heritage than did any of the other movements which broke with Rome in the sixteenth century. Thus Anglicans, including the Wesleys, were more Catholic than they knew, or than Methodists have subsequently appreciated. This makes it all the more fascinating, and instructive, to discover similar dynamics and phenomena operating in both the old Catholic Church and in this evangelical movement in the reformed catholic Church of England.

TWO NEW MOMENTS IN WESTERN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Mendicancy and Methodism arose at historical turning points; times of social crisis brought about by economic, and in the latter case technological, revolutions. Both were more urban than rural in terms of the populations they served. Both sought to be Church responses to eras radically different from those immediately preceding. Francis said, "God raised up the brothers." Wesley said, "God raised up the Methodist preachers."

The vast differences in the technology and scale of production, as well as in the number and concentrations of population, between the medieval Urban Revolution and the modern Industrial Revolution may have caused us to overlook commonalities between these two religious movement. Hugely different phenomena may have obscured our view of underlying shared dynamics, and even phenomena, in the "works of God" called mendicancy and Methodism. The great divide of the sixteenth century also leads us to assume there is little to be learned from comparing Methodism with the medieval church.

Research shows that both mendicancy and Methodism offered the love of God in Christ Jesus to despised and downtrodden people. The evangelistic thrust of Methodism is well known. It is less well known, at least among Protestants, how the mendicants, like the Methodists, reminted the Pauline model of urban evangelistic outreach. Mendicancy and Methodism sought to "look to the quarry from which the church was digged, and the rock from whence it was hewn"--vita apostolica et evangelica, "primitive Christianity." Both aimed to reform society, especially the Church, by renewing the people in the life of holiness (perfection).

THE MENDICANT AND THE METHODIST CENTURIES

The opening of the second millennium of the Christian era brought a new day to Western Europe. Beginning in the late tenth/early eleventh centuries, a commercial and urban revival produced a Europe much changed by the time of Dominic and Francis in the 1200s. Some historians go so far as to speak of a medieval industrial revolution between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. One writes, "It is fascinating to see that the social

prerequisites for the modern British Industrial Revolution were virtually the same as those for the medieval industrial revolution" (Gimpel, p. 229).

I think this claims too much. There certainly was ever increasing production from the turn of the millennium to the Black Death, but the medieval world did not achieve the power technology nor produce the population level requisite to an industrial revolution and mass production. Water mills and windmills were the most sophisticated medieval power technology. The former made a numerical quantum jump from the eleventh century. Domesday Book (1086) records 5,624 water mills in England, an average of one for every fifty families. This process continued in the 1100s, then stabilized until the fifteenth century. Windmills were introduced around 1180 from the East (Marcorini, I:99, 105).

Outside Islamic Spain (tenth century Cordova probably had 500,000 inhabitants) medieval urban populations before 1000 were puny. End of thirteenth century Paris may have had 228,000 people, making it by far the largest city in Europe (Christian reconquista in Spain was accompanied by precipitous urban decline). Next largest were Venice, which grew from 70,000 to 100,000 during the 1200s, and Genoa from 30,000 to 85,000. Florence went from 15,000 to 60,000 in the thirteenth century and at its peak in 1500 had only 70,000 inhabitants. Bruges never rose above 35,000-50,000. Cologne's population was 50,000 to 60,000, Mainz and Regensburg about 25,000. Nuremberg with only 10,000 persons was still a large city by medieval standards. Thirteenth century London had between 40,000 and 45,000, and would not be much more than 50,000 even in 1500 (Chandler, pp. 107-125, 159, 187-188, 198, 204, 205, 208).

Industrial operations were correspondingly small scale. The chief industries of the Middle Ages were textiles, mining, and construction. Most textile production was done in homes, each part of the process carried out at a different site, and the whole operation held together by agents of the men who provided the raw materials and sold the finished goods. Not until the 1400s in England did a trend develop where rich entrepreneurs collected workers and placed them near their work centers. The state owned shipyard of Genoa, employing perhaps 5,000 men, was altogether exceptional.

Europe's renewed urbanitas produced significant distress for those whose labor made it possible. A third phase of guild history was beginning in the thirteenth century. In addition to merchant guilds (chambers of commerce) and craft or trade guilds (manufacturers associations), and staunchly opposed by them, the workers moved to organize their own guilds (labor unions). Only guilds of their own could win them economic leverage and political participation. Associations of journeymen, apprentices, and manual laborers were not welcomed by city councils whose membership was drawn from the commercial and entrepreneurial elite. The movement was not generally successful. Medieval workers did not create a viable corporate life.

This workers' struggle was a major theme of the century of Dominic and Francis. Clashes over the issues of money and power were carried to the streets. In Bruges the craft guilds literally fought their way to seats on the city council in the early 1300s.

Thus the cities of the 1200s were places of new concentrations of old social problems: exploitation of labor in boom times; unemployment and poverty in the down cycles; high visibility of persons unable to provide or care for themselves, and victims of injury, disease, and death.

As early as the mid-1000s concerned monks and clerics generated a number of parallel, uncoordinated responses to this situation. This is called the vita evangelica movement. It resonated with the larger reform movement--the Gregorian reform--which claimed to be a renewal of ecclesia apostolica et evangelica.

In the late twelfth century single, working class women, the beguines, living together in voluntary poverty, practiced vita apostolica et evangelica in the cities. Their male counterparts, the beghards, were usually from textile worker families. Originating in the Netherlands this lay movement spread to France and Germany. The Humiliati (or Poor Catholics) were found in the towns of northern Italy. Best known were the Waldenses, originating in Lyons, soon declared heretical, and today a living Church. All of these were lay movements with an apostolate of ministry to the needy.

The vita apostolica et evangelica movement of the High Middle Ages found its classical orthodox expression in the mendicant orders of the thirteenth century. The Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) and the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) are the famous ones. Carmelites, Hermits of St. Augustine, Williamites, Mercecarians, and Servites were also thirteenth century mendicant orders.

Added to urban social problems rooted in wages and working conditions, another prominent feature of thirteenth century European social history was religious dualism. Labeled heresy by the Church, this movement was powerfully influential through its own Albigensian or Cathar ecclesial structure. The Order of Preachers, the Dominicans, emerged to counter Catharism. This large topic of heresy (moderns might say dissent from the Catholic cultural consensus), however, is both tangential to the project we have immediately in hand and too large to be introduced here. The Methodists certainly were an Order of Preachers, but there is greater generic affinity between Franciscans and Methodists.

The revolution occurring in Georgian Britain was an industrial, economic, and urban revolution. Methodist scholars have this history well in mind. Only a few reminders are needed to bring it forward.

The Industrial Revolution may be dated from 1709 at Coalbrookdale, Shropshire when Abraham Darby succeeded in using coke rather than charcoal to melt iron ore. Its symbol Ironbridge, the world's first cast iron bridge, visited by John Wesley a few months before it was thrown across the Severn River

GENERAL OUTLINE OF THIS PROJECT
AS A WHOLE

FORMS OF VITA APOSTOLICA ET EVANGELICA:
MENDICANTS AND METHODISTS

Introduction

The rationale for this comparative history.

I. The Social Contexts

Urban revolution of High Middle Ages and Industrial
Revolution of Georgian England and how mendicants
and Methodists responded to these social changes.

II. Evangelizare Pauperibus

The soteriologies of the movements.

The social groups they served.

III. Vita Apostolica of Mendicants and Methodists

Economies of the means of grace, especially the eucharist, as disciplines of the interior life.

Poverty and radical stewardship as practices of amor Dei.

IV. Ecclesial Connections and Connectionalism

Relations with the canonical Church, and structures of identity, unity, and discipline within the movements themselves.

Conclusion

Historical reflections on and ecumenical implications of
this comparative study.

Notes

Bibliography

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in 1779, is still visible (*Works*, [Jackson], IV:146). John William Fletcher, "the Methodist parson," and vicar of Madeley from 1760 to 1785, served, among others in his rough, poor parish, the people of Coalbrookdale.

Abraham Darby II further advanced iron production by using pit-coal coke obtained by dry distillation in mid-century. But the invention by Henry Cort in 1784 of the puddling process provided the breakthrough needed to rid raw pig iron of its impurities and render it convertible to forgable iron in a reverberatory furnace, while still using coke as the fuel. These developments produced England's quantum leap forward in iron production (20,000 tons in 1720; 70,000 in 1788), and proportionate demand for coal production (4,500,000 tons in 1750; 6,000,000 in 1770; 10,000,000 in 1780) [Marcorini, I:223, 268].

The decades of Wesley's adult life also witnessed an explosion of inventions in textile manufacture. Henry Browne's machine for stamping hemp (1721); David Donald's automated cylinders for scutching and beating flax (1727); Basile Bouchon's mechanism for automatically choosing the cords to be drawn through a loom (1725); John Kay's flying shuttle (1733); the first truly mechanical spinning machine by Lewis Paul and John Wyatt (1738); James Hargreaves' hand operated spinning jenny (1764) and Richard Arkwright's water-powered spinning machine (1769).

To these advances in metallurgy and there was added the power technology of steam. Thomas Newcomen built the steam engine that was in common use in collieries from 1712. James Watt made fundamental improvements in the efficiency of Newcomen's device in the 1760s. In the final decade of Wesley's life steam engines began to be used to operate machines in the metallurgy (1783) and textile industries (1785) [Marcorini, I: 226, 231, 236, 253-254, 268-269].

England's industrial and commercial cities began to overflow with people in the eighteenth century. Key representative population changes from 1700 to 1800 are as follows: Birmingham from 15,000 to 71,000; Bristol from 25,000 to 66,000; Liverpool from 5,000 to 76,000; London from 550,000 to 861,000; Manchester from 8,000 to 81,000, Newcastle 25,000 to 36,000 (Chandler, pp. 181-189).

Through all these changes in the technology, scale, and speed of work, scores of thousands whose daily labor produced raw material and finished goods from mines, iron works, and textile mills--adults and children--were bent and brutalized under twelve to eighteen hour work days in six day work weeks, for low wages. The Church failed these people. Their new England was Methodism's original world parish.(1)

The pastoral integrity of the Georgian Church of England ought not to be universally condemned. As Anthony Armstrong summarizes, "whenever generalization is attempted, the eighteenth-century clergyman gets the worst of it; and whenever detailed study of individual clergy is made, they emerge with credit." It appears that the Church was, on the whole, "keeping

its charge" with workmanlike fidelity; its parish clergy, in the main, conscientious and dutiful, if lacking the fervor and fire of Evangelicals and Methodists (Armstrong, p. 28).

The Church, however, did not meet the challenge of its industrial new England because new parishes were not established to serve the booming cities. Before 1818, creating a new parish required Parliamentary approval. Intraparish chapels and proprietary chapels met some of the need. But new parishes in working-class areas, along with pastors drawn from and relating with worker families, were not provided (Armstrong, p. 34). An apt analogy employed by Prof. Clifford H. Lawrence to describe the mendicant era Church may be fully applied to the early Methodist period, as well.

The predicament of the thirteenth-century Church was rather like that of the British Railways in the mid-twentieth century--its layout reflected the economic and social needs of an earlier age. In the thirteenth century the majority of the population still resided in the countryside; but the significant growth points were the towns, and thenceforward modes of Christian piety and forms of ascetical life would be determined by the religious experience of townsmen (Lawrence, p. 240).

Economically, and thus socially, the European thirteenth and the English eighteenth centuries were radically different from their immediately preceding periods. Mendicancy and Methodism sought to be Church responses to human need arising from the Urban and the Industrial Revolutions. They proposed the practice of vita apostolica et evangelica, the reinstitution of primitive Christianity.

SOME MENDICANT AND METHODIST SIMILARITIES

Franciscans and Dominicans renewed the effort of the New Testament church to make the whole body of the faithful the primary subjects of spiritual direction. These mendicant friars were not cloistered monks. They worked recruiting laity to pursue the path to perfection without leaving the world for the cloister. This was a permanent contribution to the history of Christian spirituality.

The friars itinerated, but not as not free lance wanderers. They were accountable to superiors who appointed them to their work, and they lived by a prescribed regula. To be sure, the centripetal pull of institutional growth and consolidation moved the friars soon enough closely to resemble the monastic orders.

Dominicans and Franciscans were also connectional movements. The Order was headed by a Superior General or Minister General. Geographic provinces were led by provincial ministers. The local communities of friars and the lay fraternities of the order were under the discipline of a written rule of life. Connectional officers linking the local with the provincial levels had the power of enforcing discipline. Decisions for the Order as a whole were taken a periodic General Chapters.

The Dominicans established houses in the towns. As their chief apostolate was preaching in defense of Catholic orthodoxy against the heretics, they built churches to accommodate large crowds. Sometimes they sent brothers to the smaller towns and the villages to conduct evangelistic campaigns of several weeks or months duration. Dominicans were also prominent in the thirteenth century missions to North Africa, northeast Europe, the Middle [Near] East, India, and China.

This Order of Preachers was strongly committed to informed preaching. From their beginning, schools for members of the Order were important. By 1229, only fourteen years after their founding, they established their first chair of theology in the University of Paris, however reluctant the secular masters may have been to have them around. Not only did they produce much practical literature on preaching, but within one generation they gave the Church both Albert the Great and his stellar pupil Thomas Aquinas.

It is, however, the first great mendicant order of the thirteenth century that is more prominent in the Protestant image of the medieval church, owing to the universal appeal of Francis of Assisi. It turns out that early Methodism had more in common with the first Franciscans than with the Dominicans. Francis and his "little brothers" were helpers of the poor and the sick, especially lepers. They were also itinerant urban, and sometimes rural, evangelists. If anything, the Franciscans were even more active than the Dominicans as missionaries, and they led in the mission to Mongol China.

In the early years, the Friars Minor resisted education and the establishment of permanent houses. The struggle over issues related to institutionalization produced a tragic history even prior to Francis' death. Before the thirteenth century was over these two great orders had grown very similar. Not surprisingly, however, their "denominational rivalry" lived on. At all events the Franciscans too produced great theologians in the century of their founding; thinkers like Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus. In the fourteenth century the English Franciscans, preeminently William of Ockham, were among the most creative thinkers in the Church.

The story of the mendicants takes on added interest for Methodists at the point of the development of the First, Second, and Third Orders within the general Order; "the threefold army" as Francis put it. The First Order was the friars under vow. Some friars were ordained--Francis was a deacon, Dominic was a priest--while others remained lay. A Second Order of the mendicant organizations was provided for women who took vows, lived under a rule, and often devoted full time to the apostolate of the Order. Social service and the teaching of children were the usual activities of the Second Orders; work associated with the woman's role in that society. The Franciscan "Second Order," however, the Poor Clares (1212) were strictly cloistered. They participated very little in the apostolate of the First Order. The Third Order was for men and women who remained in secular life.

In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, Benedictines and Premonstratensians began to respond to requests from groups of devout laity for spiritual guidance. At that time such developments were not widespread and cannot be spoken of as a movement across the church. Reference has already been made to the lay societies of the late 1100s, beguines and beghards, Humiliati, and Waldenses.

These latter groups had an aspect of social protest about them. They expressed dissent in the idiom of the accepted Catholic cultural consensus. Some of them called particular attention to the contrast between the economic status of Christ and the apostles and that of contemporary aristocracy--lay, clerical, and religious--and thus created the potential for a popular demand for social change. One group founded in the 1170s, the Poor Men or Poor Catholics of Lyons, better known as the Waldensians, went within a decade from acceptance to proscription (1184). All of the other dissenting groups either dried up, blended with the mendicant phenomenon, or were suppressed. Of the medieval religious movements which fell under ecclesiastical condemnation, only the Waldensians survive.

The Franciscans came very close to being a repeat of the Waldensian story. That they were not speaks of the resilience of the church and her ability to domesticate revolutionary impulses in ecclesial life. Not only were the Franciscans permitted to remain in the church, they, **and** the Dominicans, provided a channel for the rising tide of lay piety through the agency of the Third Order.

The Franciscans made the greatest use of the Third Order. Francis, in cooperation with Count Cardinal Ugolino (Pope Gregory IX, 1227-41), wrote the tertiary rule. This 1221 Rule regularized a popular relationship to the Order which was probably practiced as early as 1209. At all events, Pope Benedict XV (1914-22) credited the Franciscan tertiary movement as the first effort by a religious order to open the religious life to everyone (Masseron and Habig, pp. 401-07).

The 1221 Rule has eight chapters. It describes the distinctive dress of the men and women. "They are not to go to unseemly parties or to shows or dances." They and their households could not contribute to actors. Fasting and abstinence were required.

Franciscans were to be reconciled with their neighbors, including, if need be, restitution of what belonged to them. They would pay all tithes, past and future. They were to take formal oaths only when legally necessary. Oaths in ordinary conversations were also to be avoided. They were not to use lethal weapons or carry them on their persons.

Applicants for membership had to meet the conditions regarding debts, tithes, and reconciliation. These novitiates were in probationary status for a year before being eligible for full membership. A married woman had to have her husband's consent before joining. The only ways out of Third Order membership were to enter a religious Order full-time or be expelled. Expulsion from the Order did not carry with it excommunication from the Church. Expelled members could be reinstated.

Each local unit (fraternity) was led by two persons called ministers, and a treasurer, all three (s)electd annually. There was also a connectional officer, the Visitor, who had disciplinary power over all tertiaries and who related the fraternity with the provincial minister.

They said the seven canonical Hours daily. They were required to make confession and receive Communion at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. (The 1215 Lateran Council's stipulation of minimal obligation for all the faithful was the Easter confession and Communion.)

Once a month all Franciscan tertiaries of a city would meet in a church designated by the ministers and assist at services.

There was a regular collection for the sick, poor, and members of families of deceased Franciscan sisters and brothers. Detailed guidance was given for ministry to the sick.

It was acknowledged that some mayors and governors might be ill-disposed toward the Order (Habig, ed. [1983], pp. 165-75).

Luchieius of Poggibonsi and his wife Buona of Segni (both d. 28 April 1260) were the first Franciscan tertiary couple. He was a merchant and grain speculator. They distributed their wealth among the poor, retaining only a field for themselves.

The last General Chapter of Francis's life reported thirteen Franciscan provinces; six in Italy and one each in Spain, Provence, Aquitaine, France, Germany, England, and Syria.

In the Wesleyan movement the emergence of the United Society as a distinctive association within the evangelical revival can be discerned from mid-1739 through the first half of 1740. This was the year of the developments of the New Room in the Horsefair in Bristol and of the Foundery in London. "For the members of the Foundery and New Room Societies Wesley was the supreme authority, their Father in God ... Every responsibility undertaken by others in the organization of these Societies was authority delegated by Wesley" (Baker [1965], I:220). In 1742 the third corner of a triangle of major centers would be secured when construction began on the Newcastle Orphan House. Wesley was on his way as the personal leader for the next fifty years of an identifiable people, the people called (denominated) Methodists. Both Frank Baker and Albert Outler identify Wesley's ministry as that of the superior general of an order (Baker [1965], I:242; Outler [1964], pp. 19, 306).

Rapid evolution of Wesley's Methodism into a movement that exhibits the essential marks of a religious order came as the result responding to a number of challenges. Above all, a discipline was needed for the nurture of those who wanted "to flee from the wrath to come and be saved from their sins." Wesley also felt compelled to expand the Methodist outreach into new territories. Each of those challenges carried with it the challenge of exercising the teaching office so that the evangel--what was being preached--would be distinctive amidst the welter of theologies in the revival. Finally, the growing movement required a system of government and measures that would secure the continuance of Methodism after Wesley's death.

The Wesleyan movement evolved into the reality, if not the official status, of an order. Wesley did not initially have a grand design for his ministry. As the movement grew, he developed or recognized pragmatic ways (prudential means) to advance it and to secure the gains. Many of these adjustments became Methodist institutions, distinguishing marks of the Wesleyan order. One of the first, lay preaching, was definitely not of his choosing. At first offended by Thomas Maxfield's temerity, he changed his mind across that winter of 1740/41. The full-time preachers, Wesley's "Sons in the Gospel" (Phil. 2:22) were designated as helpers or assistants. These Wesleyan "brothers, friars," itinerant lay preachers, were the primary agents of the Methodist apostolate of evangelism, including social service, to the first generation of workers in and victims of the Industrial Revolution.

So it was with the class system from 1742. At first, as primary groups for nurture (Christian conference), so-called bands met once a week. Then the stewards of the Bristol society divided the membership into groups of about twelve to make weekly personal contact and collect a penny toward the debt on the New Room. They soon learned the pastoral and disciplinary utility of this system. Wesley adapted Captain Foy's scheme, and the class emerged as the characteristic forum for Christian conference in the Methodist economy of the Christian life, though not to the total disappearance of the bands, especially in the large societies (Baker [1965], I:222).

While Wesley produced rules aplenty for his people, especially the preachers, there is no single document that compares to the Franciscan Rule. The core Methodist rule of life document was the General Rules. They were published late in February, 1743, at Newcastle in a pamphlet entitled The Nature, Design, and General Rules, of the United Societies in London, Bristol, King's-wood, and Newcastle upon Tyne. Here the kinds of rules that Wesley had drawn up for bands were applied to the emerging order. "Methodism" meant an identifiable discipline for anyone who continued in the United Societies, and we are justified in attributing to the General Rules the character of a regula.

Though not set forth in this sequence, the Rules have three parts, following the introductory historical paragraphs. First, the condition of membership in the Society: "a desire 'to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins'." Then, assignment to a class for spiritual nurture and for attention to the temporal needs of the Society: "... how their souls prosper; ... give toward the relief of the poor ... any that are sick, or ... that walk disorderly ... to pay to the Stewards ... account of what each person has contributed."

The third part comprises the rules themselves and there are three of them. Actually, they are more like three principles with specific examples attached. "... wherever this [desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from sin] is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits." So Wesley required that members of the United Societies "evidence their desire of salvation." The first evidence was "doing no harm, ... avoiding evil of every kind." The second evidence was "doing good, ... being, in every kind, merciful ... doing good of every possible sort .

. . . to all . . . to their bodies . . . [and] to their souls . . .
" Third, was "'attending upon all the ordinances of God." The ordinances he listed were: public worship; the ministry of the Word; the Lord's Supper; prayer; searching the Scriptures, and fasting or abstinence (Works, [Jackson], 8:269-71).

One discerns in these rules a dynamic of desire for salvation and disciplines appropriate to those who are working out their salvation. Working out one's salvation does not mean earning it, but following the way of a disciple. The discipline itself is that of cleansing (doing no harm; avoiding evil), filling (doing good to the bodies and souls of all), and feeding (attending upon the ordinances of God). Finally, the context of the discipline is the class and the society (a company having the form and seeking the power of godliness). Neglect of either the disciplines or the company resulted in expulsion from the United Societies. A person so excluded was not excommunicated from the Church, merely dropped from among those who had the privileges of the Wesleyan order.

Larger institutional forms became necessary. The circuit system was in place by 1746 and may have origins to 1742. In June, 1744, Wesley presided over the first Methodist Conference when six Anglican priests and four laymen advised him and received his decisions on matters, mostly doctrinal, affecting the order. The Conference met annually thereafter. Herbert B. Workman saw the Conference as similar to the General Chapter of the Cistercians in the 1100s and the Franciscans in the 1200s. The medieval organizations were the first expressions of connectionalism in the Western Church in the sense of churchwide self-regulating organizations which were still part of and loyal to the larger Church (Workman, p. 64).

The Methodist Conferences of 1744-48 emphasized doctrine: "What to teach." In 1749 discipline and polity were the major concerns. The dream of that Conference was "that there might be a General Union of our Societies throughout England, with Wesley as Vicar General, the Assistants as his Agents, and the Foundery Chapel in London at the heart of an intricate network receiving reports and despatching both instructions and help" This proposal was a logical extension of the new system of Circuit Quarterly Meetings, an experiment begun the preceding year to strengthen the cohesion of the societies. The Foundery would have been the hub of the United Societies. Assistants would have inquired at every Quarterly Meeting about every local Society, relaying information and questions to the Foundery, and receiving answers from the Stewards there (Baker [1965], I:239, 242).

The Minutes of Conference, in particular the "Disciplinary Minutes" constituted the canons of this order's general chapter. "The 'Disciplinary Minutes' were revised and enlarged in 1753 to form a codified body of regulations, known as the Large Minutes" Five more revisions were published in Wesley's lifetime. This was the basic governance document for both British and USA Methodism into the early nineteenth century (Baker [1965], I:243).

The Methodists also established preaching houses. These were not priories to be sure, but some of them, such as the New Room, Foundery, and Orphan House had permanent residency aspects. The

first of these was in Bristol. By 1750 there were twelve Methodist preaching houses and at Wesley's death there were 588 in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland combined.

To maintain the connectional unity of the societies who used these preaching houses, the 1763 Conference adopted a Model Deed. Each trust deed to a Methodist preaching house was to state that following the deaths of John Wesley and William Grimshaw the right to appoint the preachers should belong to the Conference. Further, no doctrine contrary to Mr. Wesley's Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament (1754) and four volumes of Sermons (1746-60) was to be preached in those houses.

The Model Deed was merely a document of the Conference. Some more binding action was needed if its provisions were to stand against a challenge. After long deliberation, Wesley executed the Deed of Declaration (Deed Poll) in 1784. By it he constituted the so-called Legal Hundred as the official decision making Conference, and made them self-perpetuating, to govern Methodism after his death. The Deed Poll accomplished the "legal establishment of Methodism" (Baker [1965], I:228-30). Thus did the Wesleyan order gain official status, but not in the Church.(2)

Wesley also left the order a quintet of core documents as standards of both doctrine and discipline: The General Rules (1743); Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament (1754); Sermons on Several Occasions (4th edn., 1787); A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People Called Methodists (1780), and the Large Minutes (1789).

Parallels between Mr. Wesley's Methodism and the great orders of the medieval Church go beyond regula, permanent foundations, connectional structures, and standards of doctrine and discipline. Methodism may also be seen as having its First, Second, and Third Orders. The ordained persons among the Methodists--the Wesleys, William Grimshaw, John Fletcher, for example--were like the ordained friars. The lay preachers were the brothers, the lay friars. Together these "Methodist friars" comprised the First Order among the Wesleyans.

The analogy holds even to the extent of celibacy being a distinct advantage, though not a requirement, for early Methodist preachers (and, of course, for missional rather than evangelical reasons). A preacher who married without the prior approval of the other preachers could not expect the Conference to include his spouse in the appropriations for preachers' wives.

At first, something of the principle of mendicancy was evident as well. The preachers were prohibited from taking any money from the people. In 1752 the Conference established an annual allowance for both preachers and their families, but nonpayment by the circuits was a frequent and continuing problem. Every year preachers had to be helped from connectional funds raised to assist with the building of chapels. Yet, if a preacher could not give full-time itinerant service, he was not retained by Wesley as a traveling preacher under appointment. He might become a local preacher. Local preachers did much to strengthen Methodism, but they were no longer members of Conference, the Wesleyan First Order (Baker [1965] I:234-38; [1970], pp. 81-84).

The United Societies also had a Second Order in the sense of having women leaders in the work. Sister was a form of address applied to all Methodist women. Among them there was an identifiable group of single (unmarried or widowed) women who were important leaders in the movement as a whole. While they were not admitted to the ranks of the friars, they were more than ordinary class and society members, and Wesley found ways to encourage them within the emerging structures of the connection.

Earl Kent Brown has shown that the Wesleyan sisters carried out three major types of work: speakers of the Word, itinerants, and support-group leaders. While Wesley never appointed women as itinerants--they had to remain always a "second" order--some of them traveled extensively, doing the same work as the male traveling preachers. From the 1740s to the 1780s Wesley grew in his acceptance of their ministry. By the latter date he was using the same arguments to justify the "extraordinary" ministry of women that he had employed forty years earlier in defense of lay men preachers.

The Methodist friars and sisters were the leaders of the brothers and sisters at large--the members of the classes and societies the Wesleyan Third Order. The minister or lay preacher, as Wesley's appointed assistant, maintained Methodist discipline among the tertiaries. In 1741, Wesley instituted quarterly renewal of the class ticket. Applicants for membership underwent a three month trial period (changed in 1780 to at least two months). The minister or lay preacher in charge alone decided about admission and expulsion. So too in the matter of local society leadership. Stewards, class leaders, and band leaders were appointed and removed by the minister or preacher (Baker [1965], I:223, 226).

The Wesleyan counterparts of Luchsius and Buona were people like George and Hannah Cussons of Scarborough. He worked as a joiner and cabinet maker thirteen hours a day, from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Then he "usually attended preaching, when the chapel was open for that purpose, or public prayer meetings, or meetings for Christian communion; or if not engaged in any of these, then in reading and prayer." Childless themselves, the Cussons anonymously provided a "plain and useful education" for scores of children whose families were as poor or poorer than they (Church [1949], pp. 226-30).

Thus in their lives--avoiding evil, doing good to the bodies and souls of others, and attending the ordinances of God, as the General Rules stipulated, in their plainness of apparel, as the Large Minutes prescribed, and in their fellowship with the sisters and brothers, as Society discipline required, the Wesleyan tertiaries were an identifiable people. They were "the People called Methodists." For the most part members of the Wesleyan Third Order were workers in and victims of the first generation of the Industrial Revolution. Scholars are beginning to document and assess the impact of the Wesleyan Third Order on the social history of Georgian England (Andrews, Jennings, Marquardt, Semmel).

At Wesley's death in 1791 there were some 72,000 Methodists in society and perhaps 500,000 general adherents in Britain (Harrison [1985] p. 279). In addition, there was a new denomination in the USA and work in all parts of Britain's remaining American dominions.

Here we have been able to detail only a small part of the dynamics and phenomena which were shared by mendicancy, especially

Franciscanism, and Methodism. Other areas which are proving, or hold promise of being, fruitful for comparison are the following: Francis' and Wesley's expressed intention for the "extraordinary" ministry of their friars/preachers to inspire the ordinary pastors to do a better job. Some of Francis' wording is virtually the same as Wesley's.

How mendicants and Methodists employed a Pauline paradigm of itinerant, connectional urban evangelism and discipline.

The global missionary impulse of both mendicancy and Methodism.

The importance of preaching and the comparison of what was preached. Redemption was their shared homiletical theme.

Eucharistic devotion.

Christian perfection and the imitation of Christ. This is the whole area of mendicant, especially Franciscan, and Methodist spirituality. Love was central in both.

Use of music from popular culture. Francis used Provencal troubadour tunes for his canticles.

Social ministry activism. Both promoted philanthropy rather than direct political reform. Also looking at the social implications of their acceptance of and respect for all persons, and the "evangelical economics" (Jennings) of Franciscan poverty and Wesleyan stewardship.

Comparative ideals of "Christian antiquity" (T. Campbell); vita apostolica et evangelica and primitive Christianity.

Christcentric devotion and continuous presence of the Spirit (Outler [1985]).

Second generation social domestication of the movements with attendant schisms involving elements which insisted on loyalty to the original vision and program of the founder; Conventual vs. Spiritual Franciscans; Wesleyan vs. Primitive Methodists (1821).

SOME MENDICANT AND METHODIST DIFFERENCES

Almost as an appendix I should like to point out some differences between the Franciscan and Methodist movements, some of which need to be treated in any extended writing on this topic.

Wesley was a scholar and provided a theological typos for a world Christian communion. Francis was not a scholar and did not produce a distinctive Franciscan doctrinal construct.

On the other hand, Franciscans immediately after Francis became prominent in universities and influenced theology churchwide. Methodists did not.

Wesley was less loyal than Francis to bishops and clergy.

The Franciscans achieved more within the Church on the long term.

The Church of England did not assimilate the Methodists.

The Franciscans were the "minstrels of the Lord." Wesley was a victim of Puritan black-bordered spirituality. There seems to have been more appreciation for and expression of the joy of life among Franciscans.

Francis was not an organizer. He lost leadership of the movement in the last five years or so of his life.

Wesley did not call his friars/preachers to poverty but led and called all Methodists to radical stewardship. Theodore Jennings' ideas positing Wesleyan stewardship and philanthropy

(charity) as ministries of justice (redistribution of wealth), in comparison with Francis' Synoptic Gospels strict construction interpretation of possessions and poverty holds much promise.

Franciscans did not have an equivalent of the Methodist class meeting.

Analysis of the understanding of grace in the pursuit of perfection/life of holiness. Important differences arise from the variant readings of Mark 1:15 ("paenitemini" or "repent"). This is really the great matter of the effect of the Romans 1:17 and Ephesians 2:8-10 theological revolution of the sixteenth century.

Comparative studies must take into account and try correctly to assess the differences in theological mentality between historic eras. Nevertheless, I believe affinity of spirituality, arresting similarities in First and Third Order phenomena, and global missionary--world parish--vision combine to make the early Wesleyan United Societies the Protestant equivalent of an Order of Friars Minor, albeit they would be better described as an Order of Preachers.

CONCLUSION

This research has considerable application for Churches in the World Methodist Council. First, it helps us find what Rupert E. Davies calls the Methodist element in church history. Our tradition is older than our separate history from 1739. We will be ecclesially more mature and theologically and spiritually deeper as we grow in understanding the place of Methodist-like expressions in the history of the ecclesia.(3)

Secondly, comparative studies like this and others help the historic Methodist denominations keep clear about what it means to be ecclesial bodies--Churches or rites--which have been impressed, stamped, formed, molded (typoma) by the ministry of the Wesleys.(4) If Methodism is "a work of God" as John Wesley believed, then it has distinctive marks (notae) of its own. Churches of this typos, seeking guidance for their mission, find help in picking up the thread of the Wesleyan apostolate. It is clear that evangelizare pauperibus is integral to a ritus of the Wesleyan typos in the ecclesia.

Finally, accurately delineating the place of Methodism in the catholic church provides light for Methodist ecumenical sharing participation. Reflecting on Methodism's ecclesial location and ecumenical vocation, Geoffrey Wainwright employs the paradigm of "an order in search of the church" as a working model through which Methodists "may even today find the direction for a dynamic self-understanding with which to share in the ecumenical task and pursue the ecumenical goal" (Wainwright, p. 196). Prof. Outler told the Third Oxford Institute that Methodism works best when it has a Church to work in (Kirkpatrick, Church, pp. 26-27).

Perhaps the Wainwright suggestion and the Outler assertion can be brought together by viewing Methodist Churches as rites who remember their origins as a movement like an order, a society in a Church.(5) With other Churches, Methodist Churches are now fully

Except for promoting Methodism to the rank of central organizing principle of all these movements, this search for the ecclesial location and vocation (apostolate) of Wesleyan typos Christianity is very helpful.

4) I am using here an organic triad of concepts: ecclesia (the church), typos (type, or world Christian communion or family of Churches), and ritus (rite, Churches or denominations). The Joint Commission Between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council have seen the category of typoi as a way of thinking about ecclesial traditions within the one church. Typoi are characterized by their theology, worship, spirituality, and discipline (Proc. WMC, [1987], p. 365). Classically, a rite is a self-governing ecclesial entity with its own orthodox doctrine, valid sacraments, and ordained ministry.

5) Rupert Davies offers a supplement to the church-sect typology of Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch, namely the society. "A 'society' acknowledges the truths proclaimed by the universal church and has no wish to separate from it, but claims to cultivate, by means of sacrament and fellowship, the type of inward holiness, which too great an objectivity can easily neglect and of which the church needs constantly to be reminded. . . . it calls its own members within the larger church to a special personal commitment which respects the commitment of others" (Wesley, Works [Bicentennial Edition], 9:2-3).

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GENERAL OUTLINE OF THIS PROJECT
AS A WHOLE

FORMS OF VITA APOSTOLICA ET EVANGELICA:
MENDICANTS AND METHODISTS

Introduction

The rationale for this comparative history.

I. The Social Contexts

Urban revolution of High Middle Ages and Industrial
Revolution of Georgian England and how mendicants
and Methodists responded to these social changes.

II. Evangelizare Pauperibus

The soteriologies of the movements.

The social groups they served.

III. Vita Apostolica of Mendicants and Methodists

Economies of the means of grace, especially the
eucharist, as disciplines of the interior life.

Poverty and radical stewardship as practices of amor Dei.

IV. Ecclesial Connections and Connectionalism

Relations with the canonical Church, and structures of
identity, unity, and discipline within the movements
themselves.

Conclusion

Historical reflections on and ecumenical implications of
this comparative study.

Notes

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