John Wesley on Justice
A Paper Prepared for Presentation at the
9th Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies
Oxford, England
July 28, 1992 - August 7, 1992
Thomas Wm. Madron, Ph.D.
Email: tmadron@ewc-inc.com

John Wesley, the eighteenth century founder of Methodism, has sometimes been portrayed as a "folk theologian," although it becomes clear that as more familiarity develops with Wesley's works that this is not so. What Wesley did not do was to present a systematic exposition of his theological position. Wesley was more of a pragmatic theologian in that when he thought it necessary to expound on some issue, he did so. Moreover, sometimes he responded to the real circumstances of his day when events dictated a theological response--what today we call praxis oriented theology. Nowhere is this more true than with the concept of *justice.* The purpose of this article is to explore Wesley's understanding of *justice* in some detail. Note that most of the categories of *justice* evaluated below can be applied to specific systemic processes such as economics or politics. *Economic justice*, for example, implies *justice* as equity, as fairness, as truth, and as legitimacy. Here, however, the focus will be on more general principles of *justice*, leaving the reader to make the appropriate and obvious applications.

Particularly about *justice* Wesley has been rather poorly treated. H. Richard Niebuhr once remarked, for example, that Wesley "regarded movements toward equality as concessions made out of love rather than as demands of justice."[1] More recently, James Cone, also speaking to the issue of *justice* in Wesleyan thought, erroneously suggested that Wesley said little about slave holding "and did even less."[2] Cone further suggests that Wesley's "preoccupation with sanctification and what that entails seems to have distorted his picture of the world at large." The issues raised by Niebuhr and Cone are somewhat different but they are both inappropriate in that they result from a limited understanding of what Wesley was saying. Regarding Wesley's concerns about slave holding, for example, Thomas Wm. Madron[3] and Frank Baker[4] have amply demonstrated that Wesley was vehemently and passionately opposed to slavery and that his tract, *Thoughts upon Slavery*, was widely distributed in both England and the United States. As will be seen, not only was Niebuhr's view of Wesley inadequate, he committed a common fault in distinguishing *equality* from *justice* rather than seeing that *equality* was one of the defining categories of *justice*.

In the latter decades of the Twentieth Century ethicists and theologians have once again looked at what stands as the source for justice and discovered what Wesley already knew: Christian love is a powerful underpinning for any Christian concept of justice. Stanley Hauerwas, for example, has revived Wesley's ideas concerning love as the foundation for ethics and along with Wesley, has rejected concepts of natural law and contract theory as a foundation for ethical thinking.[5] In many ways Wesley's idea of *justice* with its origin in the love concept is similar to contemporary Latin liberationist theologians like Enrique Dussel, Gustavo Gutierrez, and Porfirio Miranda. Like Wesley, the *origins* of *justice* seems to lie for Latin liberationist thought in "love" and "scripture." There can be no *justice* without love.[6] The *justice* of God represents divine love for those who suffer.[7] Turned around, God's love is God's justice for the oppressed.[8] In this concept of love it is seen as the foundation of praxis.[9]

Also like the Latin liberationists, Wesley was acutely aware that poverty itself can define *injustice*. That is, poverty, in and of itself, constituted injustice. He wrote, for example, that without "money, you can have no more law; poverty alone utterly shuts out justice."[10] He could have been writing for the 20th Century as he expanded on the theme:

> Suppose a great man to oppress the needy; suppose the rich grinds the face of the poor; what remedy against such oppression can he find in this Christian country? If the one is rich and the other poor, doth not justice stand afar off? And is not the poor under the utmost improbability (if not impossibility) of obtaining it?[11]

In these passages Wesley was clearly implying *justice* as equity, as right, and as legality, for he rhetorically asks, "But 'cannot an honest Attorney procure me justice?' An *honest* [emphasis Wesley's] Attorney! Where will you find one?"[12]

What is Justice?

Part of the problem in dealing with anyone's concept of justice is that the term itself is extraordinarily rich in meaning. Moreover, people who have addressed the issue systematically have tended to focus on specific subsets of justice rather than attempting to produce a theory of justice that is inclusive of all possible meanings. One important contemporary example of this is the work of the secular ethicist, John Rawls, who has produced a detailed theory based on *justice as fairness*.[13] Historically *justice* has been defined by or used as a synonym for not only fairness, but also for equality/equity, right/righteousness, truth, and constitutionality/legality/legitimacy. In the twentieth century United States *justice* has probably been most frequently associated with equality or equity, particularly the demand for the *equality of opportunity*. The biblical notion of *justice* probably has most affinity with the term righteousness.[14] The broadest distinction made among the meanings of *justice* is that it has both ethical (theological/philosophical) and jurisprudential (or legal) connotations. In the English common law as it is applied in both England and the United States, *justice* carries mainly the jurisprudential meanings of constitutionality, legality, and legitimacy. The widespread use of *justice* to signify that which is *due* each person also has jurisprudential antecedents.

Justice as truth has probably been examined less systematically than in the other contexts already mentioned. For *justice* to exist, there must also be *truth*fulness. *Truth* and its root word, *true*, seem to be less frequently posited as components of *justice* than are *equality*, *fairness*, and *right*. One meaning of the adjective *just*, however, is the attribute of being "agreeable to truth or fact; true; correct: *a just analysis*." The attribute of *accuracy* is the primary quality of *truth*. Most of the other synonyms for *truth* carry the concept of *correctness* or *accuracy*: authenticity, candor, exactness, fact, frankness, gospel, precision, reality, sincerity, validity, veracity, and verity. *Truth* and *justice* are not commutative, however, for there can be *truth* without *justice*, but there cannot be *justice* without *truth*. In this sense, therefore, *truth* helps define *justice*, but *justice* does not contribute to the definition of *truth*.

Of the five components of *justice* that have been identified, equality/equity, fairness, right, truth, and constitutionality/legality/legitimacy, Wesley tended to use these terms separately and distinctly rather than as systematic components of a larger concept of *justice*. It was typical of him, however, to associate one or another of these five terms with the word *justice*, thus implying a relationship among them. More system has been imposed on Wesley's thought than he imposed on himself, but this analysis accurately reflects his ideas. Wesley's concept of the source of *justice* (love) will first be described, followed by a recounting of the ways in which Wesley thought of justice. While not every writer on *justice* will cover all five of the components noted above, every author should make clear what s/he means by *justice*, for the meaning of *justice* is not self-evident. Like the idea itself, the way in which Wesley used *justice* was fairly rich. He addressed four of the five components although he did not have an explicitly articulated concept of *justice* as fairness. For him *justice* had to do with equality, righteousness, truth, and constitutionality. Fairness is, however, implied by these other components of justice and was so in Wesley's writing. In several passages Wesley asked whether an action was "just" or "fair," but the point is that he did not use the concept

of fairness in any systematic manner. Secular ethicists such as John Rawls have generally made more of fairness than have theologically oriented ethicists.

The Source(s) of Justice

For Wesley, justice was not founded on natural law or on natural rights, but rather on the demands of love as set forth in his interpretation of the New Testament revelation. Second, since governmental authority had its source in God, those upon whom the mantle of authority falls should rule consistently with God's demands for justice arising out of love. The very purpose of those who govern was "to execute justice on earth, to defend the injured, and punish the wrongdoer!" Governors should be holy as God is holy, "No respecters of persons, as He is none; but rendering to every man according to his works; like Him inflexibly, inexorably just, though pitiful and of tender mercy!"[15] When government ceased being just, it no longer operated according to God's will and authority. The love concept and the principle of God-given authority provided the twin foundations for Wesley's concept of justice.

Wesley's entire social ethic, not just his view of justice, was founded on love. The law of love which emanates from God was a "copy of the eternal mind, a transcript of the divine nature."[16] This premise was so important to Wesley that he once remarked that "love is to be preferred before truth itself."[17] Love prescribes total behavior "with regard to the Author of our being, with regard to ourselves, and with regard to every creature which He has made."[18] If a person truly loves God, s/he must love the rest of humanity as well. This did not mean just the human race in the abstract, but every single individual.[19] Moreover, this concept of love was to be regarded as dynamic rather than static. It was not merely an emotion in the individual but a social relationship since "Christianity is essentially a social religion. . . . To turn it into a solitary one is to destroy it."[20] In suggesting that the essence of the Christian religion was the general principle of love, Wesley developed a basis for normative values to guide behavior. Love was not natural to humanity but appropriated by people as a result of God first loving the human race.[21] God should, in turn, become the first object of human love.[22]

Unfortunately, Wesley's social ethics have often been misstated and this has arisen out of a superficial analysis of precisely what his social ethics were.[23] He began by saying that God knows no particular providence (for one geographical area, or class, or race).[24] For Wesley the only significant foundation for ethics generally and justice in particular was Christian love. In this concept could be found the totality of all ethical standards. Religion, for Wesley, could be set forth in two principles: 1) "None go to heaven without holiness of heart and life"; and 2) "whoever follows after this (whatever his opinions be) is my 'brother and sister and mother.'"[25] "Holiness" in this context referred to sanctification and perfection. The former was a process of growing in the participation in the love of God and other people. The latter was the complete or "perfect" acquisition of the love of God and humankind. Sanctification is what makes goodness possible and "goodness" is to be exhibited in behavior conditioned by the perspective that love is a social relationship.[26] It was social in the sense that love was a relationship among people. The manifestation of love should be, primarily, social service. Such service was evidence of a "love of our neighbour, as can only spring from the love of God."[27]

The Components of Justice in Wesley's Thought

Equity/Equality

Wesley argued for the essential equality of all people from theology, ethics, and anthropology. The theology Wesley propounded was, according to Maldwyn Edwards, "democratic in its implications."[28] There was in Wesleyan theology an equality of evil, an equality of grace, and

an equality of freedom. In his sermons to the people of England, in the fields, and in his writings, Wesley declared "plainly, the Scriptures had concluded them all under sin;--high and low, rich and poor, one with another."[29] He went on to assert the universal attributes of God's grace. If by nature all people were equally damned, then by God's grace all people had an equal opportunity to be saved.[30] In his sermons he proclaimed that God's redemptive act had been meant for all classes of people: "I preached at Bolton, and felt an uncommon degree of the presence of God, among an handful of poor, despised people. O how precious is the least of these in His sight, who bought them with his own blood!"[31] To be saved, however, it was necessary for all people to be able to respond freely to God's gift. In the doctrine of prevenient grace Wesley found the concept which he thought accounted for the possibility of all persons responding freely to God. Freedom and conscience for people, then, arose out of God's prevenient grace. Therefore, while all people were depraved, God willed that all should have the possibility of being saved. The possibility of universal salvation provided the spark of freedom necessary for people to choose willfully either salvation or damnation. Thus, the "Christian experience was possible to everyone. Wesley declared that it came not through birth nor culture nor intellect, but through a change of heart."[32]

He was fond of quoting from Prior's *Solomon* (ii, 242) the following line: "Love, like death, makes all distinctions void."[33] How love formed the base for Christian social ethics has already been described. In love, however, all people could find equality in their relationships with one another. Hence, while love provides a general source of authority for *justice*, it also specifically supports the argument for equality in Wesleyan thought. In a very fundamental manner the theological and ethical foundations of Wesley's view of equality were part of Methodism's contribution to democracy, "this assumption of the worth of anybody's soul."[34] Wesley's doctrine of equality as it applied to race are summed up in a charge he made to those engaged in the slave trade: "'The blood of thy brother [the African slave]' (for, whether thou wilt believe it or no, such he is in the sight of Him that made him) 'crieth against thee from the earth; from the ship, and from the waters.'"[35] Thus the love ethic was the core of Wesley's understanding of equality buttressed by his theological understanding of sin, grace, and free will. All people shared equally in the problems and opportunities associated with all four issues.

The other cornerstone of Wesley's ideas concerning equality relate to what today is called anthropological evidence. Arguments from anthropology may be seen in his views concerning slavery. In his *Thoughts upon Slavery* Wesley relied on several sources for information concerning the condition of Africans in Africa, in transit to the New World, and in American slavery, *per se*. Based on these sources Wesley argued that the "inhabitants of Africa, where they have equal motives and equal means of improvement, are not inferior to the inhabitants of Europe; so some of them they are greatly superior."[36] This is a straightforward argument for equality of opportunity in a day when opportunities were manifestly *not* equal. At times Wesley tended to idealize the status of people in Africa, though not to the point of imbibing in the eighteenth century notion of the "noble savage."[37] One of Wesley's primary efforts was directed toward refuting the argument that slavery was a civilizing agency. Even more important was the effort to strengthen opposition to the slave trade. Hence, he often tried to illustrate there was little in the European experience that would argue for European superiority: "Where shall we find at this day, among the fair-faced natives of Europe, a nation generally practising the justice, mercy, and truth, which are found among these poor Africans?"[38]

Wesley pointed out that Africans were taken by force or fraud, forced to endure extraordinarily violent conditions in transit and in the Americas. The violence was severe to the point of having cruel and inhuman punishments inflicted on them. "Did the Creator," Wesley asked, "intend that the noblest creatures [human beings] in the visible world should live such a life as this?"[39] Such laws as did exist to protect the slave were inadequate for the purpose. Any negative behavioral characteristics of Africans under such slavery, said Wesley, are "the natural effect of their

condition,"[40] something for which they cannot be blamed. This argument from negative socialization led Wesley to conclude that any negative behavior of Africans in the Americas was due entirely to that socialization process. Negative behavior was not due to any inborn inferiority of blacks to whites.

Issues concerning race have been used to illustrate the way in which Wesley dealt with questions of equality. A parallel argument could be made using his comments on the role and status of women. Although Robert Wearmouth may have overstated the case somewhat when he wrote that "the emancipation of womanhood began with [Wesley],"[41] it is nevertheless true that themes and currents in Wesley's own thought and practice led Methodism, according to Nancy Hardesty, to greater "sympathy for women and their ministries."[42]

Right, Righteous, Righteousness

Certainly there was not, for Wesley, the set of distinctions Thomas Aquinas made regarding the law. If Wesley divided it at all it was, like St. Augustine, between divine law (known through revelation) and positive law (made by people in legislatures). Positive law should correspond to divine law. When it did not, Wesley thought that the individual must follow the dictates of conscience and his understanding of God's will for humanity. How is a Christian to know God's will? Through recourse to revelation as set forth in the *Bible*. This was the ground upon which Wesley steadfastly stood.[43] About such specific rights as life, liberty, and happiness (as stated by Jefferson in the U.S. Declaration of Independence), or as life, liberty, and property (as stated by Locke), Wesley clearly maintained that all of these were dependent solely upon God's will and were received from God not as right but through grace. God had sole power and authority over life and death. Liberty was basically a function of prevenient grace. Happiness was a result of sanctification. Property was available from God for peoples' use but not for their exploitation. Many conservatives in the eighteenth century (including much of Tory ideology) rejected the natural rights thesis because of the libertarian implications. This was particularly true about the notions of equality and liberty. Wesley, however, refused to give up the ideas of liberty and equality, but he did found them on concepts other than natural rights. Thus Wesley conformed to neither the libertarian nor conservative patterns of the day.

For Wesley *righteousness* was not merely "right action." Rather, it was "a right state of mind; which differs from right action, as the cause does from the effect."[44] Thus righteousness is, "properly and directly, a right temper or disposition of mind, or a complex of all right tempers."[45] In this conception of righeousness Wesley rejected then notion that a person that has righteous behavior is automatically righteous for it is not righteousness that God infuses into humans, but love, and love itself is the "essence of righteousness."[46] Conversely, righteous behavior is the outcome of God's spirit working in the individual. Love, and therefore righteousness is often rejected, but that is a function of the freedom an individual has to reject God's will.[47] A righteous person is one who exhibits righteous behavior for the correct reasons. Righteous behavior for any reason is to be preferred over unrighteous behavior, but in the long run cause and effect must be consistent with one another. This is another way of stating the means/end problem in ethics. Clearly, however, for Wesley the existence of the right motive would always produce the appropriate behavior. It was not possible, therefore, to possess righteousness without having righteous behavior but it was not the behavior the produced the righteous person.

Truth

"And is not truth, as well as 'justice, fallen in our streets?'" asked Wesley.[48] In this question Wesley associated truth and justice although he probably thought of them as somewhat different though related concepts. Wesley, following St. Augustine, defined a lie as "a falsehood, known to

be such by the speaker, and uttered with an intention to deceive."[49] If an individual is true to God, thought Wesley, then s/he will speak the truth from "the heart; putting away all wilful lying, in every degree."[50] In the tradition of Thomas Aquinas Wesley suggested there are three forms of lies: malicious, harmless, and officious.[51] Like Aquinas and Augustine, Wesley believed that wilful lying in any form was wrong and had the effect of doing injustice to someone. But there were degrees of seriousness. Malicious lies, in particular, were designed to hurt someone else and were, therefore, clearly a justice issue. While he recognized that many people told "harmless" (what is now called a "little white lie") lies, he nevertheless believed that a Christian would not even use a lie of that sort. With "officious" lies, however, the issue becomes a means/end argument for officious lies are those that are told for good purposes. Quoting the writer of Ephesians, however, Wesley comes to the conclusion that indeed, the ends do not justify the means and lying should not be used as a tool for even good ends. Truth leads to justice, lies to injustice is the clear implication.

Constitutionality

In thinking about justice, the category "constitutionality" includes the notions of "legality" and "legitimacy." Under this rubric what is *just* is that which is constitutional, legal, and/or legitimate. In the context of traditional political philosophy this is the issue of power and authority. What is *just* is that which issues from legitimate authority. Wesley defined *power* as the ability to decree the continuance of life and the further ability to take life away. As a result of these abilities, the possessor of power had the capacity to determine attributes of liberty, property, and "all things of an inferior nature."[52] Thus, Wesley's view of power was essentially descriptive in form with no normative prescriptions or proscriptions and in this point-of-view he is consistent with many modern analysts.

It is when Wesley's ideas concerning authority are analyzed that it is possible to see a divergence not only from much of modern political analysis but also from the Lockean tradition. The most important question for Wesley was: by what authority is power used? This interest arose out of his desire to link God with the political order. Wesley argued that the state had the power of capital punishment which it exercised authoritatively. Since this authoritative power can come only from God, then it must receive this power from God for only God is capable of giving the right of capital punishment. God's role as creator and sovereign provided the sole ability to confer authority on others for the execution of the death penalty. No person, only god, "can give the power of the sword, [or] any such power as implies a right to take away life."[53] The logic behind this position is circuitous for Wesley seems to say that because the state can take life away authoritatively it must have authority from God because it is obvious that it has the authority to take life away. Wesley attempted a demonstration of authority which begins and ends with the same phenomenon.

Wesley was, obviously, convinced that authority came "from God, who constituted all in general, and permits each in particular by His providence."[54] It is clear, however, that Wesley thought that God conferred authority on a wide variety of governments. The precise form of government, therefore, was irrelevant. The point that Wesley was most concerned with making, however, was there "is no subordinate power in any nation, but what is derived from the supreme power therein."[55] One of the major reasons why Wesley is often termed a Tory is that Whig concepts of authority were based largely on the Lockean precepts of contract and consent rather than on God.[56] Tory concepts, on the other hand, were based on theological premises similar to those of Wesley and are illustrated by such writers as Swift and Johnson.[57] The democratic temper of other elements of Wesley's thought--such as his ideas concerning equality and liberty--significantly differentiated him from typical Tory thinking, however.

Could constitutional arrangements never change for Wesley? Certainly it could. The theological basis for change lay in two aspects of Wesley's thought. First, because of Christian

conversion, Wesley thought that the individual could undergo radical psychological change within a short time. Like most people of an evangelical persuasion, both then and now, he believed that if conversion happened in sufficiently large numbers the social order itself would undergo change. It is this viewpoint that has caused criticism of Wesley over the years. Yet Wesley tempered his evangelical perspective by the second basis for change: the Christian's conscience. He thought that people might resist government and the constituted order when conscience demanded that course of action. No one, said Wesley, is obligated to obey the command of even the King if in all good conscience it is determined that the command goes against the law of God or the law of the land.[58] Even the Pauline dictum regarding the origin of power Wesley modified slightly so his interpretation allows that "some particular exceptions" must be made to the general proposition regarding the authority of the government.[59]

Wesley was not opposed to, and in fact advocated, orderly and lawful change as is demonstrated by his advocacy of such proposals as the abolition of the slave trade. Moreover, even though slavery was, at the time, lawful, Wesley rejected the argument from law as a defense of slavery. Law, said Wesley, cannot make evil good, and "notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right, and wrong is wrong still."[60] Thus, he declares that because the law allows slavery does not make it right nor does it make it either just or merciful.[61] In this instance Wesley did not hold that the powers that be were ordained of God.

The obvious and occasional need for change in an unjust society led Wesley to develop an incipient right to revolution. He did think there might be times when even a King must be deposed as illustrated by his advocacy of the Revolution Settlement. Moreover, he thought that God sometimes directly entered the historical process, and that God, in doing this, sometimes worked through social upheavals. This is amply illustrated in Wesley's later analyses of the American Revolution which, even though he opposed it, when it was successful he interpreted as an instance of God's will. More tantalizing is the brief comment he made on the French Revolution. In 1790 Wesley wrote:

> One would hope the time is approaching when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Indeed, the amazing revolutions which have [been in] Europe seem to be the forerunners of the same grand event.[62]

In March of the same year he wrote that God "is doing great things in many parts of Europe such as have not been seen for many generations; and the children of God expect to see greater things than these."[63] This concept of the dynamic role which God may play in history taken together with his ideas concerning conscience form the basis for a notion of the "right" of revolution. The point Wesley often made about this "right," however, was that it was necessary to be very sure that revolution was actually the only alternative left in a given situation.

Under ordinary circumstances Wesley argued, essentially, that *justice* was best served by reference to constitutionality, legality, and legitimacy but that governors and governments could, at times, get to a point where they not longer had God's authority--they were not longer legitimate and under such circumstances, dictated by conscience and condoned by God, the people could replace their governors.

Wesley and Justice

Justice, for Wesley, was clearly an issue that affected the dispossessed to a greater degree than anyone else. The fundamental components of *justice* considered by Wesley were equality/equity, right, truth, and constitutionality/legitimacy. In this Wesley rather systematically covered what is meant by *justice*. Wesley's concept of *justice* is comprehensive and contains a

reasonable degree of precision. It is not, however, contained in a single systematic discourse on *justice* and is, therefore, somewhat difficult to track down. Then too, for Wesley, there was an important interaction between motive and behavior. For the Christian, at least, *justice* was not only right action, but also "a right temper or disposition of mind, or a complex of all right tempers."[64]

The origin for *justice* was to be found in Christian love conceived as the foundation of all social ethics:

> "But St. John saith, 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous.'" Yes, it appears he is, by his doing or practising "righteousness." "But where doth the Scripture speak one word of a righteousness infused into us?" Where it speaks of "the love of God" (the essence of righteousness) "shed abroad in our hearts."[65]

In this connection love was viewed as both an internal motive and a set of social relationships characterized in one fashion by *justice*. Thus *justice* was not merely a "concession" made out of love, but an essential part of the larger definition of love itself. Love was the motive, *justice* the consequence.

Notes

1. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957).

2. James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Second Edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986 [original edition, 1970]), p. 34 and p. 146, n. 12.

3. Thomas Wm. Madron, "John Wesley on Race: A Christian View of Equality," *Methodist History*, July, 1964, vol. ii, no. 4 (new series), pp. 24-34.

4. Frank Baker, "The Origins, Character, and Influence of John Wesley's *Thoughts upon Slavery*," *Methodist History*, January, 1984, vol. xxii, no. 2, pp. 75-86.

5. Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983). It is interesting to note that while on these points Hauerwas closely parallels Wesley, Hauerwas never cites Wesley.

6. Enrique Dussel, *Ethics and the Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1978), p. 125.

7. Jose Porfirio Miranda, *Marx and the Bible: A critique of the Philosophy of Oppression* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1974), p. 99.

8. Allan Aubrey Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1978), p. 19.

9. Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1973, 1988), p. 6.

10. *The Works of John Wesley* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d. [photo offset reproduction from the authorized edition published by the Wesleyan Conference Office in London, England, 1872]), *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Vol. VIII, p. 165 (II.20). These volumes are hereinafter referred to as *Works*, prefaced by appropriate citations (*Journal*, *Thoughts on Slavery*, etc.).

11. *Ibid*., pp. 164-165.

12. *Ibid.*

13. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

14. See, for example, Miranda, p. 93, and Orlando E. Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), p. 39, n. 7.

15. *Works*, vol. vi, p. 182 (Sermon xv).

16. *Works*, vol. v, pp. p. 438 (Sermon xxxiv).

17. *Works*, vol. v, pp. 5-6 (Sermon i).

18. *Ibid*., p. 440.

19. *Works*, vol vii, p. 78 (Sermon xciv); vol. v, pp. 21-22 (Sermon iii).

20. *Works*, vol. v, p. 296 (Sermon xxiv).

21. *Ibid*., Vol. VI, p. 59 (Sermon xliv); *Selections from John Wesley's 'Notes on the New Testament*," p. 128, note on 1 John 4:19.

22. *Ibid*., Vol. VII, p. 47 (Sermon xci).

23. H. Richard Niebuhr has already been cited in this regard. Part of the problem has arisen by an incorrect interpretation of the role of the "General Rules of the United Societies," *Works*, vol. iii (first published, May, 1743), pp. 269-271. These rules do, in fact, deal only with individual behavior, but it must be stressed that these were not interpreted by Wesley to be a general ethical statement, but merely the disciplinary rules for the people called Methodist. There is no general philosophical statement concerning a general ethical position in this document. It was, rather, a statement of how Methodists should behave if they wished to remain in connection with Wesley. Thus, it is not proper to use this document as a statement of Wesley's more general ethical and moral views.

24. *Works*, vol vi, p. 325 (Sermon lxvii).

25. *Ibid*., vol. vi (to Samuel Sparrow, Dec., 1773), p. 61. Note also *Journal*, *Works*, vol iii, p. 493 (May 13, 1773).

26. See, for example, J. Brazier Green, *John Wesley and William Law* (London: The Epworth Press, 1949), pp. 87-88; and Collin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 72. See also, John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, *Works*, vol xi, pp. 366-445.

27. *Works*, vol. vii, p. 47 (Sermon xci).

28. Maldwyn Edwards, *John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century* (London: The Epworth Press, 1955, third edition), p. 179.

29. *Journal*, *Works*, vol. i, p. 198 (June, 1739).

30. *Letters*, vol. vii (to Captain Richard Williams, Nov., 1785), p. 195.

31. *Journal*, *Works*, vol. ii, p. 256 (April 18, 1752). See also vol. i, p. 186 (April 14, 1739): "I preached at the poor house; three or four hundred were within, and more than twice that number without: To whom I explained those comfortable words, 'When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both!'"

32. Edwards, p. 179. On this note, see also the comments of John M. Todd, *John Wesley and the Catholic Church* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958), pp. 103-104; and Thomas Walter Herbert, *John Wesley as Editor and Author* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 103: "But so far as the work he himself initiated was concerned, Wesley concentrated [by and large] his efforts upon something more fundamental than reform legislation and, in his opinion, anterior to it. He tried, with some success, so to condition the conscience of Englishmen that laws calculated to enforce the human ethic of Jesus as he understood it, would find the people ready and eager with their support." The import of Wesley's perspective on equality is characterized in a favorite sermon topic of his: "I preached on those words in the Second Lesson, 'There is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free! But Christ is all and in all.'" *Journal*, *Works*, vol. iv, p. 212 (July,

1781). Wesley's egalitarian spirit appeared early and is indicated in his relation to Whitefield at Oxford. Whitefield was a servitor at Pembroke College working his way through. Wesley came from more favored circumstances, but never was there the "slightest consciousness of social superiority." See Francis J. McConnell, *John Wesley* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1939), pp. 36, 37.

33. John Wesley, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, John Telford, editor (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), vol. v (to Mrs. Woodhouse, Feb., 1769), p. 127. These volumes are hereinafter referred to as *Letters*.

34. McConnell, p. 41.

35. *Thoughts upon Slavery*, *Works*, vol. xi, p. 78.

36. *Ibid*., p. 68.

37. Edwards contended that this was precisely what Wesley was doing. See, for example, pp. 116, and 102-103. Yet Wesley's strong conviction of the sinfulness of all people precludes the noble savage interpretation.

38. *Ibid*., pp. 65-66. See also Madron's comments, "John Wesley on Race," pp. 29-30.

39. *Thoughts upon Slavery*, p. 68.

40. *Ibid*., pp. 74-75.

41. Robert F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Epworth Press, 1945), p. 223.

42. Nancy A. Hardesty, "The Wesleyan Movement and Woman's Liberation," in Theodore Runyon (ed.), *Sanctification and Liberation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1981), p. 164.

43. *Works*, Vol. V, p. 473 (Sermon xxxvii); pp. 441, 446 (Sermon xxxiv).

44. *Works*, *Original Sin*, vol. ix, p. 342.

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Ibid*., p. 343.

47. *Ibid*., p. 344.

48. *A Farther Appeal*, *Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 168.

49. Albert C. Outler (ed.), *The Works of John Wesley: Sermons*, vol. 3 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1986), Sermon 90, p. 284. See also, Augustine, *De Mendacio*, iv.5 (Migne, PL, XL.491).

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.* Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.110, Art. 2: "Whether lies are rightly divided in *Officious, Jocose,* and *Mischievous* lies?" His answer is affirmative, and in Art.

3 he proceeds to the conclusion the "every lie is a sin, as also Augustine declares (*Contra Mendac*. xiv)."

52. *Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power*, *Works*, Vol. XI, p. 46. It is interesting to compare Wesley's concept of power with Robert Dahl's notion of "coercive influence." Dahl defines this as "influence based on the threat or expectation of extremely severe penalties or great losses, particularly physical punishment, torture, imprisonment, and death." *Modern Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 50. Dahl goes on to say that this notion of coercive influence is what others define as power.

53. *Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power*, *Works*, Vol. XI, p. 52. ON this aspect of Wesley's thought see also his sermon, "The Great Assize," *Works*, Vol. Vi, p. 182 (Sermon xv); and Kathleen Walker MacArthur, *The Economic Ethics of John Wesley* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1936), p. 27.

54. *Explanatory Notes*, pp. 571-572, note on Romans 8:1.

55. *Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power, Works,* pp. 47-48.

56. Note, for example, the thoughts of Benjamin Hoadley, in F. J. C. Hearnshaw (ed.), *The Social and Political Ideas of some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1923), pp. 131-137.

57. Jeffrey Hart (ed.), *Political Writers of Eighteenth Century England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), p. 10.

58. *Journal, Works*, Vol. IV, p. 100 (June, 1777).

59. *Explanatory Notes*, p. 572.

60. *Thought upon Slavery*, *Works*, vol. xi, p. 70.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

62. *Letters*, Vol. VIII, pp. 199-200 (to Thomas Morrell, February, 1790).

63. *Ibid*., p. 204 (to William Black, March, 1790). From these quotes it would seem that Wesley approved of the French Revolution, at least in its early stages. This is an interesting "reversal" from his negative attitude toward the American Revolution. Wesley had long had, however, a highly critical view of the French Monarchy.

64. John Wesley, *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, *Works*, Vol. ix, p. 342.

65. *Ibid*., p. 343.