THEOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTIONS

and HISTORICAL AGENDA

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INTRODUCTION

An Intrusion by an Interloper: – I come as an interloper to this working group on 19th and 20th century Wesleyan Traditions. I do not have a specialty in history. I taught courses at Pacific School of Religion (PSR), 1975-84, on Pacific and Asian American theology and ministries and UMC History/Doctrine/Polity. During my time in the active episcopacy, 1984-2000, I pursued my primary interest in theological foundations for promoting wholeness in mission amid our diversity in The United Methodist Church (UMC). After my retirement from the active episcopacy, 2000, I returned to PSR and taught introduction to theology and UMC studies.

Rationale: – My work in theology has come to a point when I need to consult historians at two levels. One level concerns historical facts. Are there historical grounds for the theological proposals? The facts in question will become obvious in the paper.

The second level is more theoretical. It has to do with modes of perception in the historian's craft and our task in theology. As objective as historians are expected to be, we generally acknowledge values influence what historians study and narrate. Because doctrines describe who God is and what God does in individuals, societies, and nature, they shape values which influence choices of events which are built into narratives. This paper proposes to reformulate selected doctrines and will therefore suggest a distinct hermeneutic for historical research and writing. The process involves a measure of circularity. The proposed doctrinal revisions reorders narratives; the reordered narratives revise doctrinal formulations. Is this acceptable or objectionable?

Procedure: – In Part I, I will begin by summarizing my personal faith journey and the church's involvements in historical developments. Both prompted a cognitive dissonance with traditional doctrines. While the church's involvements primarily refer to the last half of the 20th century, they dramatize practices traceable to earlier expressions in the 18th and 19th centuries. I will claim these practices were better than our doctrines. In Part II, I will summarize the inadequacies of our traditional doctrines. In Part III, I offer biblical foundations for a more adequate Doctrine of Salvation beyond the "straight jacket" in the Order of Salvation. In Part IV, I similarly offer biblical foundations for a more adequate understanding of the Witness of the Spirit beyond the "warm fuzzies" it has become. I will conclude in Part V, with questions and suggestions this approach raises for reflection and research by historians.

I. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THE CHURCH'S PRACTICE

I will begin with a brief personal journey in faith and ministry that explains my theological perspective. The journey indicates support for the church's participation in broader developments and longer time frame.

A. Personal Involvements: – An evangelical pastor and his spouse, who graduated from Asbury College and Seminary in the 1940s, led me in the summer of 1947 to answer God's call to ordained ministry and to accept Christ as personal Savior and Lord.[1] By the time I graduated Union Theological Seminary, 1957, and entered pastoral ministry, I basically agreed with the "neo-orthodoxy" characteristic of the school.

Efforts promoting racial integration in the 1950s, led in the late 1960s to join racial and ethnic minority liberation movements and those who re-casted their theology accordingly. These domestic endeavors extended in the mid-1970s to the international scenes when I supported human rights struggles of immigrants to the U.S. from Soviet Jewry, South Korean, and the Philippines as well as their vulnerable relatives in their homeland. Equally, since the 1970s, it made sense to support feminists and womanists, persons with handicapping conditions and alternative sexual orientations. These personal involvements were, of course, part of a broader global and domestic engagements covering a longer time frame. Personal support for the progressive voices in the denomination deepened the dissonance I felt between the denomination's doctrinal standards and practices of ministry, and therefore the need to reconstruct doctrines.

B. Wider Scope and Longer Time Frame: – Historians have said the end of WWII in 1945 also signaled the end of the Vasco de Gama era. They had in mind reversing the awesome historical momentum in European colonialism which began in the age of European Exploration, morphed into Expansion, and culminated in Exploitation. The escalating momentum roughly covered the last half of the second millennium in the common era, 500 years. The costly and exhausting victory of allied forces in WWII and the devastation in defeated nations created space to ventilate a ferment for freedom in the "revolution of rising expectations" among the historic European colonies. The dismantling of European colonialism required equally momentous changes, but took approximate 50 years.

Within three years, 1947-49, virtually one third of the human family gained independence from foreign domination, including, India and Indonesia in 1947 and China in 1949. At mid-point in the next decade, 1955, twelve nations gathered in Bandung, Indonesia, and declared they would be non-aligned nations, and were later called, along with other underdeveloped societies, the Third World. They tried to carve out a course between the neocolonialism of the First World in the West and the Second World based in the Soviet Union. Also, in the 1950s, liberation movements spread to North Africa, when Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Morocco all gained their independence. With the exception of Algerian independence in 1962, the scene shifted to sub-Sahara Africa in the 1960s. Liberation movements created twenty new nations in 1960 alone. Protracted struggles spread down the continent through the 1960s, 1970s, and l980s. Finally, in 1993, whites in South Africa yielded to the liberation movement, thus completing the first phase of independence in Africa.

In the Americas, Fidel Castro toppled Fulgencio Batista in Cuba,1959. Rumblings for liberation spread across Central and South America from the 1960s. Other peoples took courage and pushed toward the same end, including Island peoples from the 1970s.

In reaction to turbulence abroad, the US and the Soviet Union turned to counter-insurgency campaigns with frightfully repressive measures in intelligence networks, military alliances, and a multitude of para-military and covert operations. The public in the US often overlooked these conflicts because of terrifying prospects in the East-West volatile stalemate in MAD, Mutually Assured Destruction. During the Cold War, competition over capitalist and Marxist theories of development created a neo-colonialism which suppressed struggles for liberation, violated human rights, and protected national security by supporting dictators in underdeveloped satellites. Protracted and costly struggles in Central America and Southeast Asia drove the point home for the U.S., as did conflicts in Ireland for the U.K. In the case of the Soviet Union, internal struggles eventually crumbled the Soviet Union, most visible symbolized by the dismantling the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Over the same period, domestic stirring against internal colonialism in the U.S. ran parallel to these international movements. While there were decades, even centuries, of resistance and rebellion by African Americans against racial exploitation and oppression, we saw in the post-WW II a new push for integration. In the late-1960s urban uprisings and ethnic studies strikes graphically demonstrated the devastating realities of white racism. The Black leadership in the struggles clarified the issues for many others in housing and education, employment and income, public access and participation in the body politic. Other people of color and many sympathetic whites participated in efforts to overturn political, economic, and cultural domination in white racism. By the 1970s, women mobilized themselves for struggles of justice and liberation as did the white middle class generally, against the misguided military actions in Southeast Asia. Those with handicapping conditions, along with gay, lesbians, as well as bi-sexual and trans-gender persons have also pushed for equal opportunity. More recently white supremacists claimed they were overlooked and their existence threatened. Para-military actions represented extremist expressions of a much wider sense of neglect and rejection among whites. Some have assumed religious, social, and political expressions.

The ferment for political and economic freedom did not only appear as a major force throughout the world in the last half of the twentieth century. The ferment for freedom erupted in the 21st century from intensely aggressive, even if on occasion desperate and sometimes pathetic, efforts in various cultural and religious wars regardless of the society. Globally, we see cultural wars between "Jihad" and the "McWorld" to cite recent telling symbols. Cultural, religious, and military conflicts and genocides are driven by competition over basic resources, whether in energy or drugs, precious metals or costly gems, water ways or air space, cultural purity or cultural resurgence.

While many other developments might be cited, this summary indicates the breadth of the mainline denomination's participation in movements that I supported on behalf of the deprived, the defrauded, and demeaned. I turn next to explain the disparity between doctrines and the discoveries made in the church's missional involvements.

II. INADEQUACIES IN THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

A. Among Proponents for New Outreach: – All the way through these developments in the last half of the 20th century, most mainline denominations supported struggles of the marginalized, often with the brightest and best, and in some cases, with loss of life and limb. Most of the efforts contained varying combinations of three ingredients, however misguided and gone awry: – (1) liberation movements, (2) efforts to unite disparate peoples into new communities and societies, and (3) struggles for nationhood, or building livable space in the human and natural ecology.

During the early decades of the 20th century, progressive voices in mainline denominations, including those in Methodism, extended their efforts into the new missional thrusts following those in the 18th and 19th centuries. They did not, however, develop persuasive biblical and theological foundations for their efforts which bore convincing connections with the Wesleyan tradition. If practitioners appealed to traditional doctrines concerning personal salvation they saw the new missionary efforts on behalf of the poor and outcast, living out the love which grew in sanctification. These efforts themselves, however, were not an integral part of the central experience of salvation but an expression of their salvation.

By the last quarter of the 20th century, many efforts moved beyond justice which sought to alter existing institutions, to liberation from colonialism by overturning existing institutions. The disparity between doctrine and practice grew deeper. Proponents for the church's mission again sensed traditional doctrines were inadequate to explain recent missional efforts, but did not construct alternatives that bore convincing connections with the Wesleyan tradition. Some eventually turned to other traditions, especially in the neo-orthodoxies in the Reformed traditions in the middle third of the 20th century or in liberation theologies which often failed sufficiently to secure theological proposals on biblical foundations.

Without adequate theological foundations, progressive voices could have at least appealed to selected historical examples in the Wesleyan and Methodist traditions. John Wesley (1) extended personal assistance to the ailing, children, imprisoned, etc, but also (2) created institutions to address their plight. Within the movement he created classes, societies, and the connection which created avenues for poor to alleviate their poverty. He also (3) called for the end of institution of slavery through persuasion and example, but eventually (4) urged legislation to dismantle the slave trade itself and end slavery, all, however without doctrinal changes in salvation.

When it came to the war for independence of the English colonies, Wesley supported the monarchy and hoped to work within existing economic and political systems. Eventually, Wesley accepted the political independence of Methodists in North America, again without a doctrinal rationale about salvation. From their origins, however, Methodist in the colonies (1) supported the revolutionary war, (2) joined the federal union, and (3) built the infra-structures for livable space in the emerging nation. Their participation in these three efforts parallels the three lines of action I noted earlier in the missional practices in the last half of the 20th century. And, just as Wesleyan revivals in the 19th centuries Methodist participated in these three kinds of efforts, so too we see in the late 20th century, revival of faith spreading among people of faith (1) sought independence, (2) a new unity, and (3) development of their society and natural resources. We will return to the evangelistic consequences of participation in the sweep of history we noted.

Other historical precedence in the 19th and early 20th centuries could be cited in abolition of slavery and demon alcohol, as well as work with the poor, immigrants, and women. Nevertheless, noting a few basic parallels between efforts in the last half of the 20th century with the late-18th and early-19th centuries must suffice for the moment.

This succinct review indicates that progressives failed to articulate cogent Wesleyan theological foundations or to cite historical precedents for their missional efforts. They intuitively sensed traditional doctrines were inadequate and therefore occupied themselves with an apologetics related to implications in scientific discoveries and in philosophical challenges. They failed to cite historical precedents because the future consumed their interests. Criticism of convincing theological foundations was predictable.

B. Among Opponents to the New Outreach: – I turn from those supported the new missional practices, to those who opposed those practices because they accurately recognized the disparity between love and struggles for justice. They demanded Wesleyan doctrinal foundations for the outreach. The division actually emerged in the 19th century. It ruptured the denomination and spawned Holiness revivals which engaged in social reform. The conflict between proponents of the denomination's mission and their opponents intensified within the denomination in the Social Gospel and liberation movements in the 20th century. Partly because of the condescension and contempt evangelical experienced from proponents, opponents have created a "virtual denomination" within the denomination. They eventually joined others in promoting a culture war within denominations and in society as well as engaging in aggressive campaigns to take-over the denomination, following the right wing take over in the Southern Baptist Convention.

While conservatives and evangelicals were correct in exposing the minimal biblical foundations and lack of meaningful connections with Wesleyan doctrines among progressives, they were not as biblical as they claimed they were. In point of fact, they were more doctrinal than biblical. By that I mean their adherence to traditional doctrines may reflect certain strands of the biblical witness, but they were not open to neglected canonical strands.

To be specific about their doctrinally appeals and biblical foundations, conservatives and evangelicals urged 20th century Methodists to return to the *ordo salutis*. The doctrine exhaustively summarized salvation, beyond what Trent, Martin Luther, or John Calvin offered. We were saved by grace in Jesus Christ through faith inspired by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:1-3; Eph 2:8). That grace appeared in prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace, and led to perfection in love. The doctrine based on scripture validated their experience of salvation. Evangelicals could not, however, see salvation in social outreach. Works of outreach followed faith, and care for the poor and stranger meant faith was active in love (Gal 5:6). Outreach was a derivative, secondary, or even

secular pursuits beyond salvation summarized in the *ordo* (or more recently, *via*) *salutis* .

One might speak of the outreach as “social holiness,” but that notion basically referred to individuals in society spreading the holiness or perfection they experienced or desired for other individuals, and not to systemic evils in society. Or, social holiness referred more likely than not to an aura of holiness in society which became larger than the sum of the holiness in individuals. And then, social holiness might include creating institutions which could convert individuals and nurture them in Christian life. This did not specialize in improving existing institutions and, even more, liberating people by overturning sinful or evil institutions. Therefore, appeals to a Wesleyan phrase, “social holiness,” do not with integrity provide an adequate doctrinal foundation for newer missional outreach.

In summary, since the new missional practices did not fit into traditional Wesleyan doctrines which had scriptural support, conservatives rejected the practices. Conservatives were not open to adjusting doctrine on the basis of neglected strands in the biblical witness. When we examine those neglected strands, we will see that the frightful judgment Jesus directed to his self-righteous religious opponents applies. “For the sake of tradition, you make void the Word of God.” (Mt 15:6. See too, Mk 7:8, 9.) Doctrinal orthodoxy nullifies and muffles the Word of God.

With this succinct review we can say that neither the proponents nor opponents adequately responded doctrinally with scriptural foundations to new missionary efforts. I will therefore offer a process of recasting two historic doctrines concerning salvation and the witness of the Holy Spirit and then correlate them with neglected biblical foundations. In the Conclusion, I as an interloper in historical studies will risk questions about historical facts and implications for new hermeneutic in Wesleyan historical studies.

III. RECASTING THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION
With a Study of Ezekiel 36:22-28

I claimed the missional practices exposed inadequacies in the traditional doctrines. I also noted the dissonance goes back even further than the last quarter of the 20th century, with several issues back to the 19th and 20th century Wesleyan movements. Together, they were better than our doctrines. We did not, however, reformulate the Doctrine of Salvation in the light of our practices.

A. The Steps in Constructing a New Doctrine: – Reflections on the long-standing disparity into the second half of the 20th century, first led me (1) to **recover** neglected strands in the biblical witnesses to God’s salvific efforts, and thus (2) to **recast** traditional doctrines. This did not mean, however, that we cast

aside traditional doctrine. Reflections on saddening developments in the late 20th century, led me (3) to **respect** traditional doctrine and propose it become a part of the new, broader biblical witness to God's work and revised doctrines.

B. Biblical Foundations in Ezekiel 36:22-28: – Wesleyan theologians generally turn to the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34 (reappearing with slight variance in Hebrews 8:8-12) to undergird the doctrine of salvation with biblical foundations. I found, however, in Ezekiel 36:22-28 a more appropriate foundation for the *ordo salutis* as well as for the broader sweep of salvation history in three stages which we saw occurring in the last half of the 20th century. I will also cite fascinating parallels to the Lord's Prayer. Recovering these neglected witnesses has several major doctrinal implications. I will comment on them in the order they appear in the text so that it will be easier for readers to follow.

1. Scriptural Holiness (36:22-23a): – What we first notice is the holiness at issue in salvation. In this promise of salvation for the Babylonian captives, Yahweh said, **"I will sanctify my great name**, which has been profaned among the nations." (36:23a) What immediately catches our attention is **the holiness at issue is not human holiness, but the holiness or sanctity of the divine name, Yahweh**. If we define words by their functions in the text, Yahweh means Lord and Savior, and not simply Lord or Sovereign. The question at issue is whether the one who was a savior from Egyptian enslavement and "lorded it" (reigned) over Pharaoh's legions when they were drowned in the Red Sea, is true and can be trusted to do the same for the Babylonian captives. By brushing aside this God and going after other gods, the Israelites desecrated the holiness or the sanctity of that great name, Yahweh. The sanctity of that name, Yahweh, needed to be restored.

We draw two points from **this scriptural holiness**. First, when the early church said Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, they were saying that Jesus fulfilled what the Hebrew Bible had in mind when they called their God Yahweh, more than 5 thousand times. Scriptural holiness has to do with restoring the holiness or sanctity of that awesome name trivialized by chumminess in turning this God into a fetish or charm. "Hollowed be thy name," begins the prayer Jesus taught us, (Mt 6:9) as Ezekiel begins his report of Yahweh's promise of salvation for Babylonian captives.

Second, by comparison **we focus on our holiness**. We do so for good reason. The Scriptures say, "You shall be holy for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). What has happened, however, is that we have essentially reduced "Scriptural Holiness" to human holiness. The holiness we have in mind most often refers in the vernacular to purity in moral acts and pious deeds. We have forgotten what we say is Psalms 23: Yahweh "restores my soul; he leads me in right paths **for his name's sake**" (Ps 23:3), as well as the spirituality in Anglican collects that regularly led us to glorify God. By humanizing holiness, our salvation has become self-indulgent and diverts attention from the primary Holiness at issue in

salvation. These considerations are no trivial matter. Our salvation has become idolatrous, because Yahweh is no longer the one before us.

2. Evangelism in the History of Salvation: – "I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, . . . and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, . . . when through you I display my holiness before their eyes." (36:23b) Through human agencies, people will come to know Yahweh as believer advance the History of Salvation. Contrary to those who opposed Christians in liberation movements because it averted attention to evangelism, Ezekiel claims those who advance liberation movements will evangelize people. Evidence appears in nations where Methodists promoted liberation in South Korea, the Philippines, and on the African continent. This evangelism is nothing like the methods, however, well intentioned in church growth theories expensively peddled around the world in scores of techniques. In what follows, we find the most immediate way people will come to know Yahweh as God's people advance the History of Salvation (36:24), before Ezekiel turns to the Order of Salvation in individuals (36:25-27), which is our obsession in evangelism.

3. History of Salvation (36:24): – The History of Salvation in Ezekiel is so succinct we can quote it directly. Yahweh says, "I will **take** you from the nations, and **gather** you from all the countries, and **bring** you into your own land." (36:24) The same three words and their cognate appear together in no less than seven places in Ezekiel. (Ez 20:34-35, 40-42; 34:13, 22-25; 36:24; 37:21; 39:27-28. See too, Ex 6:6, 7, & 8.) The frequency of these three words, overlooked in prominent commentaries, suggests it might have functioned as Ezekiel's credo of God's saving activities in history, or as clue words which brought to mind the three stages in broader narratives. The three words summarize what Yahweh will do for Babylonian captives as was done for the Hebrews slaves in Egyptian bondage. **Take** refers here to Yahweh staging another liberation from Babylonian captivity. **Gather** recalls the gathering the tribes scattered in captivity as at Sinai. **Bring** refers to Yahweh bringing the people home to rebuild a livable space socially and in nature with enough to eat, as was done for the children of Israel in the Promised Land.[2] One might say that we have moved from the first petition in the Lord's Prayer, "hallowed be thy name," to the nitty gritty petitions for things of this world, "daily bread" because God's will is fulfilled on earth as in heaven (Mt 6:10-11) through the History of Salvation.

What is important to note is the parallels between the three events noted earlier in the Methodist missional outreaches in the last half of the 20th century. (1) Liberation restages the "taking"; (2) uniting people into a new nation recalls "gathering"; and (3) nation building or building livable space refers to "bringing." If doctrinal translations help, we can speak of liberation as Redemption or Deliverance; uniting as Reconciliation; and building livable space as Re-creation or New Creation. The series of sevens in the book of Revelation suggest God making "runs" on re-creation as the final salvific activities in creating the New Heaven and New Earth. **In Ezekiel, God is acting through human agencies in**

the three efforts in the History of Salvation with evangelistic outcomes. The sweep of the story is not secondary nor secular, because this is Ezekiel's version of "salvation history" as biblical scholars have called similar biblical stories for decades. No, this is not profane history, but "holy history," or salvation history—what Germans call *Heilsgeschicte*.

What does Ezekiel have in mind when people come to know Yahweh? (Ez 36:23 as in Ex 6:7.) In Ezekiel, "knowing" represents the fullest way to relate to God, with one's whole self in relating interactively with God. There was an evangelistic consequence when vast number of people came to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior in North America through Methodists who (1) supported the American revolutionary war, (2) formed the federal union, and (3) built up the nation, illustrating the three promises noted above. (Ez 36:23b) From the earliest days, John Wesley's historical questions of candidates appropriately asked if they knew Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. To repeat, we noticed parallels to this story in recent decades in the last-half of the 20th century into the present with the same evangelistic consequences in nations that (1) struggled for liberation, (2) united disparate peoples in a new nation, and (3) sought to build a new nation.

This does not deny that liberation movements go sour, as in South Korea, Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, and African countries. A dismaying messiness and outrageous moral failures accompanied the story in the U.S. These developments do not mean liberation, unity, and building infrastructures were wrong. Good things simply go awry in human history and therefore require new spirals of liberation, unity, and new creation.

Beyond another round of the History of Salvation, however, we also need something more**. Nelson Mandela illustrates the need for the Order of Salvation in the History of Salvation.** While he never lost his passion for (1) liberation, (2) unity of blacks and whites, and (3) building the infrastructures to create a new nation, **Mandela did not neglect the personal transformation required of him**, perhaps learned in his early exposure to Methodism in South Africa. **Thus, we can appreciate Ezekiel including the Order of Salvation within the History of Salvation.**

4. The Order of Salvation (36:25-27): – Only after Yahweh stages the History of Salvation do we find a promise of what we call the Order of Salvation. We have, as it were, turned from the prayer for bread in the History of Salvation, to the next petition in the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us" (Mt 6:12), suggestive of what launches the Order of Salvation.

Methodists have given the Order of Salvation a sacrosanct status by using a Latin name, *ordo* or *via salutis*. Scholars frequently say salvation is at the heart of Wesleyan theology, which means this abbreviated version of salvation misrepresents what God intends.[3] The doctrinal tradition in the *ordo salutis* by

itself indeed nullifies and muffles God's additional work and word in the History of Salvation. In this passage, Yahweh promises (1) to "**sprinkle clean water**" and (2) to give them **"new heart"** and (3) put a **"new spirit"** within them, so that they will **follow [Yahweh's] statutes** and be careful to **observe [Yahweh's] ordinances**"—the last point sounds like perfection. What comes to our attention is the sequence follows the doctrines in Order of Salvation, unlike Jeremiah who actually reverses it.[4]

25 I will sprinkle clean water	**Justification**
26 A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit	**Sanctification**
27 I will . . . make you follow my statute	**Perfection**
. . . observe me ordinances	

In summary, **what is proposed for an adequate Doctrine of Salvation based on biblical foundations is to include the personal, social, and natural dimensions of our existence.** (Ez 36:22-38) By (1) **recovering** the neglected biblical witness in Ezekiel, we can say the history of mission in the last half of the 20th century is part of the stories of salvation. Hence, we can (2) **recast** the doctrine of salvation so it incorporates what was previously excluded as secondary and secular, and outside of salvation. This is the biblical foundations for bridging the divide between those advocated social and ecological transformations and those who limited their advocacy to personal transformations. At the same time, we can (3) **respect** the tradition which focused on personal salvation because it has become so urgent when we see what happens to people who accomplished liberation and also promised unity among people and livable space. As George Orewell warned in *Animal Farm*, that liberators can turn into tyrants they overturned.

Despite an affirmation of the History of Salvation in the Doctrine of Salvation, work remains. Those who participated in struggles for liberation, for unity, for a new creation among their people, were consistently accused of being moved by an evil spirit. They were not only labeled secular, but had fallen prey to heresy in Marxism. By recasting the doctrine about the witness of the Holy Spirit offers a corrective.

IV. RECASTING THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:
A Corrective from the Witness of the Spirit to Jesus

As in the case of the doctrine of salvation, I will begin by summarizing the traditional doctrine. I will then recast the doctrine by tracking what the witness of

the Spirit meant for Jesus. The recasting will again not cast aside the tradition, but incorporate it, in this case, with a serious corrective into the new formulation.

A. WITNESS AND WORK IN BELIEVERS
According to the Wesleyan Doctrines

The following summarizes the traditional understandings of the work of the Spirit upon believer in a chart and elaborate briefly.

Grace: Witness of the Spirit **>JUSTIFICATION**

Rom 8:16

Graces (Fruit) of the Spirit **>SANCTIFICATION**

Rom 5:1-5; Gal 5:22-23; Col 3:12-16; 2 Peter 1:5-7

Gifts of the Spirit **>SERVICE**

Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Rom 12:6-8

What we notice here is that the tradition covers the range of the key works of the Holy Spirit. By recovering neglected biblical witnesses to the work of the Spirit, however, we will find grounds for considerable recasting of the witness of the Spirit that has turned into "warm fuzzies," especially in justification.[ii] The witness of the Spirit to Jesus in his baptism and transfiguration and what the early church heard in them are a model for witness of the Spirit to believers (Rom 8:16) and will provide the leads for a radical corrective.

B. WITNESS AND WORK IN JESUS CHRIST
According to Neglected Witnesses

As a Beloved Son

at Baptism	**Luke 3:22 (Mt 3:17; Mk 1:11)**
at Transfiguration	**Luke 9:35 (Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7)**

At his baptism, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. The anointing brought a witness that Jesus is the **Beloved Son**. At his transfiguration, a witness utters the same witness. Jesus is the **Beloved Son**. When Jesus had occasion to

explain the anointing of the Spirit, he turned to passages from the prophet Isaiah in Hebrew scriptures. The passages Jesus quotes appear on the left margin; interpretations appear on the right margin.

B. 1a. A SERVANT Practices KINDNESS and Promotes JUSTICE
Matthew 12:18-21, from Isaiah 42:1-4

18 "Here is my **servant** , whom I have chosen,	**>Servant**
my **beloved** , with whom my soul is well pleased.	**>Beloved**
I will put **my Spirit upon him** ,	**>Anointed**
and he will **proclaim justice to the Gentiles** .	**>Proclaim justice**
19 He will not wrangle or cry aloud,	
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.	
20 **He will not break a bruised reed**	**>Practices kindness**
or quench a smoldering wick	
until **he brings justice to victory** .	**>Brings justice**
21 And in his name the Gentiles will hope."	

B. 1b. A SERVANT Practices KINDNESS and Brings LIBERATION
Luke 4:18-19, from Isaiah 61.1; 58:6

18 "The **Spirit of the Lord is upon me**,	**>Anointed**
because he has anointed me	
to bring good news to the poor.	**>Practices kindness**
He has sent me	
to proclaim release to the captives and	**>Proclaims liberation**
recovery of sight to the blind ,	**>Practices kindness**
to let the oppressed go free ,	**>Brings Liberation**
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."	

According to the account in Matthews 12:18-21 (**B.1a**), Jesus uses a "servant song" from Isaiah 42 to say the Holy Spirit and not an evil spirit prompted him to violate traditional religious taboos as he ushered in the reign of God. In Luke (**B.1b**), Jesus uses another "servant song" from Isaiah 61, plus another reference, to clarify what the anointing of the Spirit prompts him to do. Both passages assert **an anointed servant practices kindness, promotes justice, and brings liberation, but in doing so, those actions will prompt persecution**. I first discovered the role of the Holy Spirit in liberation movements in the book of Judges, where Judges or liberators who overcame oppressors, came from the least expected. (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:28; 15:14)

I turn next to an interpretation of Jesus as the **Beloved Son** who is **an Heir**. Neither the witness at baptism nor the transfiguration directly makes this claim. According to biblical scholars, however, contemporaries of Jesus would have recalled in those witnesses **two passages from the Psalms which assumes a son is an heir**, as they appear in Romans 8:17.

B. 2. BELOVED SON AS AN HEIR: Ps 2:7-9 (Acts 4:24-26; 13:33); Ps 110:1 (Acts 2:32-36; 5:31; 7:55)

B. 2a. Psalm 2:7-10

7 I will tell of the decree of the LORD:	
today I have **begotten** you.	**>Son**
8 Ask of me, and I will make the	**>as heir of nations**
nations your heritage,	**in the**
and the ends of the earth your possession.	**>Reign and Realm**
	of God
9 You shall **break** them with a rod of iron,	**>by breaking and**
and **dash** them in pieces like a potter's vessel."	**dashing enemies.**

B. 2b. Psalm 110.1-6

1 The LORD says to my lord, **>Heir-apparent**

" **Sit at my right hand**

until I make your enemies your footstool."

2 The LORD sends out from Zion **>Heir rule amidst foes.**

your mighty scepter. "**Rule in the midst of your foes**.

3 **Your people will offer themselves willingly** >**People will offer**

on the day you lead your forces **themselves.**

on the holy mountains.
From the womb of the morning,
like dew, **your youth will come to you**."

4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, **>Heir as Royal Priest**

"You are a priest forever according **rules with**

to the order of Melchizedek." **righteousness &**

justice (Melchizedek),

& **brings peace**

(King of Shalom)

5 The **Lord is at your right hand**;

he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. **by prevailing over**

6 **He will execute judgment among the nations**, **the enemies (vs 1)**

of God

filling them with corpses; **who momentarily**
he will shatter heads over the wide earth. **reign over the nations.**

What is noteworthy is the appearance of cognate concepts in these passages in the Psalms appear in Romans 8:16ff, as if to explain more adequately the meaning of the witness of the Spirit**.** The words **son** and **heir** (above **2.a,** Ps 2:7, 8, & Rom 8:17) regularly appear together in the Bible because the widespread practice of primogenitor at the time made the son the heir. In the case of royalty, a son was therefore seated at the right of the Monarch. *Seated,* meant the son "already" shared measure of the reign, but *seated at the right hand*, meant the heir is an "heir-apparent" and "not yet" fully in charge. Meanwhile, the son had awesome responsibilities or ministries. (above, **2.b,** Ps 110:1; Heb 1:5-13) The references to violent military actions are difficult for us to read today. We can, however, attempt to surmise what the imagery meant, without adhering to them literally. In summary, the son improves and spreads the reign and realm of the Monarch.

It should be clear what the early church extrapolated from the imagery. Jesus Christ as son of God "already" shares in the reign and realm of God, but "not yet" in the full sense of the word. **Hence the Son of God announces the reign and realm of God moving in through him into creation and will become evident through repentance and faith. (Mk 1:15) So too, therefore, for believers in Romans 8.**

Suggestions of the task appeared in frightfully violent terms in Psalms 2, but becomes more manageable in Psalms 110. Unpacking the titles, Melchizedek and Shalom, in Psalms 110, explains why. The reign (*melchi* in Hebrew means royality) is characterized by righteousness (*zedek*, in Hebrew means righteousness, and frequently combined with justice) where there is peace (Shalom, in Hebrew is peace). **The end therefore is to create a space where peace reigns, based on righteous and justice, for Christ and the children of God, suggested in the History and Order of Salvation. The setting for references in Psalms 2 and 100 provoked opposition and prompted plans to kill the Son, as in the case of contemporaries who suffered loss of life and limb.** (Mt 12:14)

I have tracked the meaning of the witness of the Spirit to Jesus because I have claimed the neglected witness of the Spirit in the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus defines our identity and calling as the children of God, as I have illustrated. To be specific**, the witness to Jesus explains why believers participated in the (1) struggles for liberation, (2) efforts to create a new community, and (3) to promote the earthly necessities for fulness of life in the process of decolonization. Believers sensed the same promptings of the Holy Spirit.**

This broader interpretation of God's awesome call to promote the reign and realm of God (Mt 6:33) was muffled, even nullified (Mt 15:6-8; Mk 7:6-8) by traditional understanding. Wesleyan witness did not only fail to **read out of text** what was neglected, but conversely **read into** the texts seriously misleading eisegeses of meanings that do not appear in the text. First, the Moravian read

into the text the hankering for an answer to their *anfechtung* reminiscent of Luther's anxiety about acceptance by God.[iii] Second, under the prevailing hunger for epistemological certainty addressed by 18th century British empiricism, Wesley read into Romans 8:16 his "spiritual empiricism" to "see" God's goodness and to "hear" God's pacifying assurance.[iv]

The witness became a "warm fuzzies" tied to the Order of Salvation and all too often pacified Methodists to tolerate sin and evil in the status quo. Fortunately, despite this misleading doctrine, promptings of the Holy Spirit erupted among many other Wesleyans and Methodists in the 19th century reform movements in the US and in the 20th century liberation movements at home and abroad. One gathers that a majority at the forefront of the decolonializing movements in Africa came from Methodist missionary schools and churches.

Obeying the neglected stirring of the Spirit led many believers into actions better than doctrines. It also led them to military tribunals. Too many disappeared into shallow graves. No wonder the creation where they are buried cries out like Abel's blood. (Gen 4:10) That explains the sighs and groans reverberating in the world where creation writhes in labor pain too deep for words. (Rom 8:26-27) Those "first fruits of the Spirit" (Rom 8:23) in the witness of the Spirit stirred up the same sighs and groans that launched movements with intelligible meaning in campaigns for justice and liberation to create a wholesome society. Gift of unintelligible language of tongues calls for translators. (1 Cor 12:10)

This is the reading of the cognate ideas and references in the witness of the Spirit to Jesus that explain the Apostle Paul's witness of the Spirt in Romans 8:16ff. The reading prompted a recasting of the doctrine. The following quotes passages on the left margin and offers an explanation on the right margin.

C. RECASTING THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT TO BELIEVERS: Romans 8:16-17, 22-23, 26

16 it is that very **Spirit bearing witness**	
with our spirit that we are children of God,	**>Children**
and joint heirs with Christ	
17 and **if children, then heirs, heirs of God**	**>joint heirs with Christ**
	(to the Reign and

	Realm of God)
—if, in fact, **we suffer with him** so that	>**Costly struggles**
we may also be glorified with him.	
22 We know that the **whole creation**	**with groaning**
has been groaning in labor pains until now;	**of labor pain,**
23 and not only the creation, but **we ourselves,**	
who have the first fruits of the Spirit, **groan inwardly while we wait for adoption** ,	
the redemption of our bodies.	
26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness;	
for we do not know how to pray as we ought,	
but that very **Spirit intercedes with sighs**	>**unintelligible sighs**
too deep for words.	**and groans.**

In summary, by looking behind the witness of the Spirit to believers in Romans 8, to the witness of the Spirit to Jesus in the Gospel and the Psalms, we can now explain more expansively what the witness of the Spirit does for believers. **As in the case of Jesus, the anointing of the Spirit converted many who became children of God into joint-heirs with Christ in God's reign and realm. They worked with wondrous acts of kindness, courageous voice for justice, and costly hope-filled efforts for life abundant here and now. Without these gifts and tasks, the witness of the Spirit becomes "warm fuzzies," as I have claimed.**

But again, the recasting of the doctrine does not allow us to cast aside elements of the traditional doctrine. As we have seen in the case of Nelson Mandela, believers still need the **Graces for living** and the **Gifts for service** from the Holy Spirit. **The witness of the Spirit draws us into the Order and the History of Salvation.**

V. CONCLUSION AND HISTORICAL AGENDA

It is now possible to say we see adumbrations of the Holy Spirit at work, even if the mainline denomination's missionary involvements were seriously flawed at points in the last half of the 20th century,.

A. Questions: – I turn to a list of questions raised by the conclusions drawn by recasting the history and doctrines. They include the following.

1. What correctives and suggestions do the historical analyses evoke?

2. Are there additional precedents for patterns of ministry cited here?

3. Does the recasting of the doctrines have a credibility? Do other scriptural passages explain what the church has done in mission during the last half of the 20th century?

4. How might the new statement of doctrines influence the research and writing about Wesleyan/Methodist studies?

B. Suggestions: – In addition to questions, what might this line of reflection suggest for the historian's craft?

1. Both biography and history belong in historical research and writing, because the Order of Salvation and the History of Salvation are integral to the work of God. Content of the Order of Salvation are familiar, but not the History of Salvation. It includes broader sweep of events, including the overturning of principalities and powers.

2. Emerging voices can help us recover neglected traditions in the biblical witness. Studies of the marginalized therefore represent preferential options.

3. Emerging voices often come from outside traditional Euro-American ranks and regions. Those people and their areas therefore warrant careful studies.[5]

4. Historical studies requires attention to global interactions between the various centers and peripheries, especially the interactions among individuals and in communities, and not simply interplay of ideas, e.g., between Being and Non-being which produce a progeny called Becoming according to some studies of inter-religious dialogues.

5. Attention to the marginalized requires greater competence in cultural anthropology, social psychology, and political economy.

6. New regions require attention, e.g., Pacific Basin, South Atlantic, and Indian Ocean, and not simply attention to the North Atlantic civilization.

I look forward to the discussion and suggestions.

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END NOTES

[1.] The sequence from call to conversion cited here will understandably sound backward. The accepted norm is to move from conversion to call. Because my experience ran counter to the accepted "orthodoxy" of conversion and call, I went through many tortuous "dark nights of he soul" because of the normative "doctrine," questioning both my call and conversion. Fortunately, I was eventually comforted when I discovered in Acts the orthodox sequence of baptism and anointing of the gifts of the Spirit in Acts 2:38a, b, as well as in Acts 8:38, 39; but also my sequence of call to conversion on baptism, Acts 9:15-17, 18 and in Acts 10:44, 48. Sequence of events became crucial in doing theology.

[2.] Notice the sequence moves from Redemption to Reconciliation. Karl Barth decided after a long review of the Bible, that he would treat Reconciliation before Redemption. His sequence reverses what we notice in Ezekiel that moved from Exodus (Redemption) to Covenant (Reconciliation). This should not surprise us, since so much of the history of theology in the West has been preoccupied with reconciliation, such as in the at-one-ment achieved in Jesus, the mediator, once the intermediary in the Roman Caesar who interfered between God and human kind was converted. Incidentally, Barth was so consumed with Reconciliation he never turned to Redemption, as Euro-American theology has found it difficult, if not impossible, to establish Redemption as a separate, and prior divine act. Recovering the Exodus to Covenant, Redemption to Reconciliation, still has an uphill struggle among many Euro-Americans.

[3.] In Ezekiel's stories of salvation, we note that the order of salvation occurs within the history of salvation. The 1977 Oxford Institute reversed the perspective. The theme proposed to subsume liberation under sanctification in the order of salvation. The move represented a clear instance of theological and cultural imperialism. Confining the widespread quest for liberation around the

globe, including the Third World, people of color in the U.S., and the feminists, signaled doctrinal straight jacketing liberation or Redemption to the *ordo salutis*. I am agreeing with Jose Miguez Bonino who called the Order of Salvation a "straight jacket." The interpretation of liberation as part of the "taking" in Ezekiel's history of salvation establishes that liberation cannot be subsumed under sanctification as the 1977 Oxford Institute erroneously proposed, then and in discussions and publications that followed. "Taking," liberation, and Redemption represent a new round in the history of salvation staged in the exodus and again in the deliverance of the captives from Babylonia.

4. What is curious and ironic is the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34 (So too, 32:6-16. and cited in Hebrews 8:8-12), actually does not follow the Order of Salvation which we regard to be normative and orthodox. **The sequence of God's action in Jeremiah, moves backward** from what we would call perfection in Jeremiah 31:33, to sanctification in 31:34a, and justification or forgiveness of sin in 31:34b. However, notice that this Order of Salvation also occurs within the framework of the first and third stages of Ezekiel's History of Salvation. What is called here Redemption (31:31-33) and Recreation, New Creation in the theme for this Institute frames the Order of Salvation. In other words, Redemption or liberation is not subsumed under sanctification, but sanctification within Redemption-Recreation.

5. "Han," for some Korean theologians, has become unexpressed anguish and writhing for vindication of injustices inflicted on the masses by colonialism from abroad, or dictators from their own liberators.

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[i] In his *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), Theodore Runyan offered a sustained case to expand sanctification to cover transformation in the social and natural ecology. See especially his "Conclusion: Rethinking Sanctification." (222-233) I regret to say I was not convinced by Runyan's case, basically because he did not establish that Wesley reformulated his Doctrine Salvation beyond the Order of Salvation. See further my detailed analysis of his book in Roy I Sano, "How Do You Expect Me to be a Christian Without Being a Buddhist," 13th Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, August 12-19, 2013, End Note 16, pp. 10-12. It includes an analysis of such phrases as "social religion" and "social holiness," "reform the nation" and "political image of God." See also, Orv A. Brendlinger, *Social Justice through the Eyes of Wesley* (Ontario, Canada: The Joshua Press, 2006). Brendlinger said, "Wesley did envision a complete social reconstruction, albeit emanating from the smallest societal unit, the individual, rather than through a reformation of structures themselves." (144) Brendlinger correctly adds, "Although Wesley did not normally relate his social ethic to the structures of society, as time went

on the persons he influenced did." (145). Finally, see more recently the individualistic focus in Kevin M. Watson's study of *Pursuing Social Holiness: The Band Meeting in Wesley's Thought and Popular Methodist Practice* (NY: Oxford, 2014). It should also be noted that although we frequently refer to Order of Salvation in Wesley, Albert Outler who is generally considered the one who coined the phrase did not provide a definitive summary. We find several summaries in his Bicentennial Edition of the Sermons, but none simply listed the three phases I have noted. See for example, *Sermons Vol I*, pp. 13, 57, 75, 165 n 61, 184 n 17, and 275 n 34.

[ii] In his sermon, the "Witness of the Spirit of God, Discourse II," John Wesley said the Witness of the Spirit will mean "the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm; the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that God is reconciled, that all his 'iniquities save, forgiven, and his sins covered.' Rom 4:7 (Ps 32:1)." *Sermons, Vol I*, Sermon 11, II.4, p. 287. The 20th century scholarship on the Witness of the Spirit helpfully advanced historical reconstructions on what happened at Aldersgate and subsequently. See, Randy L. Maddox, ed, *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1990). What was not asked in those historical studies was the adequacy of the theological cogency and biblical foundations of Wesleyan understanding of the witness of the Spirit. It will of course sound sacrilegious to speak of these experience as "warm fuzzies" until one considers a very different reading of the witness of the Spirit based on the scriptural witnesses to Jesus in his baptism and transfiguration, and the passages from the Psalms the early church heard in them.

[iii] For the anxiety about acceptance by God in Luther, see Gordon Rupp, *Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms*, 1521 (Chicago: Wilcox & Follett, 1951), 26-35; and Uuras Saarnivaara, *Luther Discovers the Gospel: New Light upon Luther's Way from Medieval Catholicism to Evangelical Faith* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), 35-49.

[iv] Wesley spoke of "*spiritual* senses, exercised to discern spiritual good and evil" with the "hearing ear and the seeing eye." (Italics his) He also called them "internal senses." See, *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters,"* The Works of John Wesley (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), ed. Gerald R. Cragg, par. 32-33, pp., 56-57. An example of his use of the *spiritual* senses of seeing (apprehending) and hearing appears in his sermon, "The Spirit of Adoption," *SI*, S9, II.1, p. 255; II.3-4, p. 256; III.3, p. 260. For Albert Outler's extensive analyses of John Wesley's epistemology in "spiritual sensorium" and "intuitionism," see *SI*, S10, "The Witness of the Spirit, I," p. 276, n 46. John Wesley was originally concerned about answering charges of enthusiasm and delusion, as well as possible "presumption" on the part of those who have no grounds to claim they have the Witness of the Spirit. *SI*, S10, II,2-13, pp. 277-284; *S11*, IV.7-8, p. 295; V.2, p. 297. Hence I claim epistemological certainty was what he had in mind in his "spiritualism empiricism" that he read into the witness of the Spirit.