

Reflections on the Reformation

Relation of Methodism to the Protestant Reformation

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Some Preliminary Remarks from a Methodist in a German Context

When in an ecumenical setting in Germany we have to describe ourselves as United Methodists, the first point we make is that Methodists stand on the foundation of the Reformation. What this means is that our theology centers on the doctrine of justification by God's unconditional love, grace that is received by faith alone. Nevertheless, despite all the ecumenical progress of the last seventy years (taking the landmark foundation of the World Council of Churches in 1948 as the start), which includes both growth in knowledge and mutual understanding, as well as official agreements with the Protestant churches in Germany and worldwide, we always need to explain that Methodists are really Protestants.¹ We have to explain that we—as other Free Churches in

1 German agreements: e.g., with the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (today twenty Lutheran, Reformed, and United regional churches—“Landeskirchen”—that form the Evangelical Church in Germany): Full Communion of pulpit and sacrament (since 1987); *Magdeburger Erklärung* (2007, Magdeburg Declaration: mutual recognition of baptism, adopted by those member churches of the National Council of Churches in Germany that practice infant baptism); *Charta Oecumenica* (signed in Europe by the Conference of European Churches in 2001, guidelines for the growing

Germany—arose from renewal movements inside the mainline Protestant churches (Reformed, Lutheran, or Anglican), that we are Christian communities who practice reception into membership in which testimony in a congregation is included.² Although Methodism spread from a revival movement within the Church of England two hundred years after the so-called Reformation era, theological roots, connections, and relationships to the Reformation always need to be defined. That is also true with regard to the relationship between Methodism and pietism in the eighteenth century, with Methodism seen as an Anglo-American variety of the German pietism in the times of the Enlightenment in the Western European cultures.³ With regard to Protestantism shaped by Lutheran confessions, the primary tenets of the *Confessio Augustana* guide the conversation as a kind of a threshold (definitions on baptism, Eucharist, ministry, and ecclesiology). Reformed theology—shaped by multiple confessions—is generally much more open to different interpretations of the Bible.

cooperation among the churches in Europe, and signed again by National Council of Churches in Germany 2003). Worldwide agreements: Dialogues of the World Methodist Council with final reports and decisions, with The Lutheran World Federation (1979–1984); The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1987); The Anglican Communion (since 1992); The Salvation Army (2003–2011); The Baptist World Alliance (2014–2018).

- 2 In recent years, I explained these difficulties in several lectures in ecumenical settings as well as in articles, e.g., Ulrike Schuler: “. . . ich liebe die Wahreheit mehr als alles’ (John Wesley) Das Reformationsjubiläum aus der Sicht evangelischer Freikirchen—Einblicke aus evangelisch-methodistischer Perspektive,” in *Theologie für die Praxis* 39 (2013): 82–111. In the following footnotes, I mention my articles of recent years in the German context in view of the Reformation in which I note publications in German as well as English on a respective topic.
- 3 See, for instance, *Geschichte des Pietismus*, 4 vols., ed. Martin Brecht and Klaus Deppermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993–2004); Thomas Kraft, *Pietismus und Methodismus. Sozialethik und Reformprogramme von August Hermann Francke und John Wesley im Vergleich* (Stuttgart: EmK Geschichte, 2001).

The Five Hundredth Anniversary of the Reformation Celebrated in Germany in 2017

The five hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in its core country, Germany, in 2017 became a huge challenge to ecumenical togetherness. The anniversary was anticipated by several years of preparatory events. In 2008, a Reformation Decade was initiated by the Lutherans with an annual focus on a special topic related to the Reformation: 2009 Confession, 2010 Education, 2011 Freedom, 2012 Music, 2013 Tolerance, 2014 Politics, 2015 Image and Bible, 2016 the One World,⁴ and 2017 the anniversary of the Reformation itself as “Christus-Fest” that began with a church congress (Evangelischer Kirchentag) in Berlin and smaller simultaneous events in so-called *Luther-Stätten*, places where Luther was active, such as Eisenach, Erfurt, Leipzig, Halle, Eisleben, and Wittenberg. The final service with about 200,000 participants took place in Wittenberg followed by programs for ninety-five days (to reflect ninety-five theses), segmented in weeks with special topics. At the end of 2016, a truck began a journey for the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation to reach sixty-eight stations in nineteen countries by May 2017 in order to connect people and collect Reformation stories. The truck ended its route in the Wittenberg World’s Fair “Gates of Freedom.” It was a huge spectacle; millions of people from all over the world attended.

The focus on Luther has touched and agitated minds very differently. In 2013, Roman Catholics asked the question at the ecumenical church congress (Ökumenischer Kirchentag) in Munich, “To whom do the Reformation and even Luther belong?”⁵ Although Luther of course had a central influence on the breakthrough of reforming efforts

⁴ For reflection on all these topics from a Methodist perspective, see Ulrike Schuler, “Reformatorische’ Impulse aus evangelisch-methodistischer Perspektive,” in *Freikirchenorschung*, vol. 26 (Münster: i.W., 2017), 176–204.

⁵ See Deutsches Historisches Museum, dem Verein für Reformationsgeschichte und der Staatlichen Geschäftsstelle “Luther 2017,” in *Wem gehört Luther?* (Halle, Germany: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2015); Matthias Matussek, “Wem gehört Luther?” *FOCUS Magazin* 42 (2016), https://www.focus.de/magazin/archiv/geschichte-wem-gehoert-luther_id_6069655.html.

that had already been attempted for centuries, to limit attention to him personally around the fabled posting of his ninety-five theses at the portal of the Schlosskirche in Wittenberg is—as several scholars have shown—historically an inappropriate reduction of what happened.⁶ Also, there was public criticism by other churches, atheists, and agnostics because the German state invested heavily (annually €5 million) to support preparations of this event, with conferences, publications, renovations, and the facilities around the final celebration itself. All this finally forced a broader perspective on the sixteenth century, including reforming events as well as the reforming actors.

The open accusations of other churches related to the monopoly of the Reformation by Lutherans finally launched many projects of the twenty German Landeskirchen (territorial churches—Reformed, Lutheran, and United who constitute the Protestant church in Germany) in an ecumenical outreach. That extension became a huge challenge for the small Free Churches in Germany (Baptists, Mennonites, Methodists, and others) who now were involved, although they often did not have enough professional scholars to participate in conferences or publications reflecting on the main theological topics of interest from a mainly Lutheran perspective.⁷ Others frequently criticized the topics themselves because they were often not in the center of interest for congregations and churches that focus on the believer's scriptural readings and faithful right conduct. But finally, a lot of very inspiring ecumenical projects and publications came out of this and—last but not least—a common statement of the member churches of the Council of Christian Churches in Germany, titled “Reconciled with One Another.” The common guilt for the division of the church, “the

6 See Wolfgang Marchewka, Michael Schwibbe, Andreas Stephainski, *Zeitreise. 800 Jahre Leben in Wittenberg. Luther. 500 Jahre Reformation* (Göttingen: Zeit Reise, 2008), 39.

7 I explained this challenge and dilemma for German Free Churches in the following article: Ulrike Schuler, “Das Reformationsjubiläum aus der Sicht evangelischer Freikirchen. Einblicke aus evangelisch-methodistischer Perspektive,” in *Ökumenische Rundschau* 3 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2017), 325–42.

alienation of Christians from one another in the individual denominations” that “gave rise to many prejudices and assumptions,” and its painful consequences were confessed: the common responsibility for obfuscating the liberating power of the gospel that hindered the spread of the gospel.⁸

From my perspective, for Methodism to be involved in multiple projects was a fruitful challenge to reflect on and define our opinion, relationship, and perspective on central topics of Protestantism. It was also a chance to bring up our specific emphasis on scriptural understanding and add topics that are meaningful from the Methodist point of view and that were not so much in the center (e.g., the personal relationship to God and the process of holiness in its three dimensions: relation to God, myself, and others—in other words, the focus is theologically on holiness and social holiness and, finally, on faithful discipleship).

John Wesley and Martin Luther

I do not want to repeat all the insights of scholars such as Albert Outler, Gordon Rupp, Richard Heitzenrater, or Martin Schmidt and others about Luther and Wesley—their respective age when experiencing their conversion; their character, thinking, theological approaches to central theological questions; their roots of influences; and so on.⁹ It is

- 8 Ulrike Schuler, “Reconciled with One Another: Commemorating the Reformation Ecumenically in Germany,” *Holiness* 3 (2017): see especially 262, <https://www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/08-schuler.pdf>. Originally published in 2016 as “Versöhnt miteinander. Ein ökumenisches Wort der Mitgliederversammlung der ACK in Deutschland zu 500 Jahre Reformation,” <https://www.oekumene-ack.de/ueber-uns/struktur/geschaeftsstelle-oekumenische-centrale/>.
- 9 See this selection of German publications about Wesley and Luther: Philip S. Watson, *Die Autorität der Bibel bei Luther und Wesley*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der EmK, vol. 14 (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1983); Gordon E. Rupp, *John Wesley und Martin Luther. Ein Beitrag zum lutherisch-methodistischen Dialog*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der EmK, vol. 16 (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1983); Roland Gebauer, “Rechtfertigung und

of no question that theologically Luther's preface to the Epistles of the Galatians and to the Romans were of central importance for Charles's and John's spiritual conversions. Luther reintroduced the Wesleys to justification by faith alone. And they also rediscovered this central message in their own tradition—in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion (Articles IX–XVIII) as well as in the *Books of Homilies* of the Church of England (III. Of the salvation of all mankind; IV. Of the true and lively faith). That liberating scriptural knowledge had been overshadowed by a strong puritan tradition in the century before.

John Wesley's relationship to Martin Luther was mixed. He was thankful and absolutely convinced that Luther's insight on the centrality of justification by grace through faith was the theological cornerstone of the Reformation. The Wesleys also shared the Reformation's commitment to Scripture and to the priesthood of all believers. But John Wesley did not agree with all of Luther's interpretations, such as the relation of justification and holiness, the question of free will, and the impact of original sin.¹⁰ He was sure that Luther erred by downplaying or ignoring sanctification, that is, God's gift of healing sinners by transforming them to saints who are able to live holy lives. But all these different emphases did not separate him from Luther or Lutherans.

The theologian Franz Hildebrandt spoke of Wesley's more emotional than analytical analysis of Luther.¹¹ Wesley also seemed to be repelled by Luther's rough character. In 1749, Wesley wrote of Luther: "But O! what pity that he had no faithful friend! None that would, at all hazards, rebuke him plainly and sharply, for his rough, intractable spirit, and bitter zeal for opinions, so greatly obstructive of the work of

Heiligung bei Luther und Wesley. Eine Verstehensbemühung mit biblisch-theologischem Ausblick," in *Luther und die Reformation aus freikirchlicher Sicht. Kirche – Konfession – Religion*, vol. 59, ed. Volker Spangenberg (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2013), 89–106.

10 See Ulrike Schuler, "Was tun mit 2017? Die ökumenische Herausforderung des Jubiläums aus methodistischer Perspektive," in *Luther und die Reformation aus freikirchlicher Sicht. Kirche – Konfession – Religion*, 129–52.

11 Franz Hildebrandt, *From Luther to Wesley* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1951).

God!”¹² In his correspondence with Mrs. Elizabeth Hutton (August 22, 1744), Wesley wrote, “I love Calvin a little; Luther more; the Moravians, Mr. [William] Law, and Mr. [George] Whitefield far more than either. But I love truth more than all.”¹³ This statement characterizes him in a striking way: his deep interest in striving for truth while staying in a constant relationship with God. Wesley’s approach is more pragmatic than it is legal or confessional in nature. This attitude of life distinguishes him—and Wesleyan Methodism after him.

Wesley does not seem to have dealt too much with Luther’s theology. Rather, he was inspired by Luther to find his bearings about the interpretation of the Pauline doctrine of justification in various teaching traditions. He found it, as said before, in his own church but also among the church fathers of the old church. According to the God–man relationship, he discovered among the Greek church fathers (e.g., Makarios, Gregory of Nyssa, Ephraim the Syrian) the relational relevance—the interaction of God and human beings, which brings about a changed life in sanctification, in salvation, and even makes possible the promise of Christian perfection in Scripture.¹⁴ Wesley believed that with God’s guidance, humans could achieve Christian perfection during life. He understood Christian perfection as a final goal, as perfection in relation, as participation in the love of God or perfecting of that love in the human being who remains in relationship with God, the Creator. He also learned from the Greek church fathers and adopted their holistic therapeutic understanding of holiness.¹⁵ All these scripturally rooted

12 John Wesley, “July 19, 1749,” *Journals and Diaries*, in *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 20:285.

13 J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Conversion of the Wesleys: A Critical Study* (London: Epworth Press, 1938), 171.

14 See Walter Klaiber and Manfred Marquardt, *Gelebte Gnade. Grundriss einer Theologie der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche* (Göttingen: Ruprecht, 2006), 347.

15 For the influence of Eastern Orthodoxy on John Wesley, see S. T. Kimbrough Jr., ed., *Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002); S. T. Kimbrough Jr., ed., *Orthodox and Wesleyan Scriptural Understanding and Practice* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s

and experienced ideas are hard to believe for a Lutheran or Moravian as Lutheran pietism. This view on Eastern Orthodoxy is from my perspective most evident in the ecumenical process of communication today whereby Methodists can bridge between confessions that lost track of each other (especially to Eastern Orthodoxy).

Something else seems to be important: Lutheran theology was mediated to the Wesleys by German Lutheran pietists from Herrnhut and Halle, with a strong emphasis on the concrete everyday relevance of the doctrine of justification by faith. Wesley (ideally) believed he could find this emphasis reflected most likely among the Lutheran pietists of his time. Thus, Wesley made a trip to Germany to the centers of life of the Moravians around Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf as well as the pietists in Halle, inspired by August Hermann Francke. Wesley had conversations with Zinzendorf and also met Gotthilf August Francke, the son of the then-deceased August Hermann Francke. He participated in services, feasts, gatherings for guests, gatherings of various small congregations, and singing lessons of the Moravians—but he seems to have remained at the critical distance of an observer, and he had been evaluated as a restless man (*homo perturbatus*), so he was not admitted to the Lord's Supper. Wesley also made empirical surveys of conversion experiences of members of the communities.¹⁶ He was interested in the question of Christian experience, which for him, along with Scripture, tradition, and reason, was a criterion of theological reflection and still belongs to the hermeneutic method of Scripture interpretation of the Methodists. That theological method

Seminary Press, 2005). Summarizing the Orthodox influence on Methodism according to a therapeutic aspect of holiness, see Ulrike Schuler, "Heiligung als Gestaltungsprozess," in *Die Frage nach Gott heute. Ökumenische Impulse zum Gespräch mit dem "Neuen Atheismus"* Beiheft zur *Ökumenische Rundschau*, vol. 11, ed. Ulrike Link-Wieczorek and Uwe Swarat (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2017), 195–207.

16 Especially Martin Schmidt describes these meetings and relationships in much detail in his three volumes about John Wesley's life and work: *John Wesley. Leben und Werk* (Zürich: Gotthelf Verlag, 1987–1988). See also Sung-Duk Lee, *Der deutsche Pietismus und John Wesley* (Gießen: Brunnen Verlag, 2003).

of interpretation also bridges other confessional theological interpretations and can be mentioned fruitfully when participating in dialogue.¹⁷

A Broader View on the Reformation

Wesley's way of "doing theology" by validating theological statements in Scripture as well as in other church traditions is exemplary for our reflections on the Reformation. We have to remember that limiting reformation to the sixteenth century is misleading. Renewal movements have been around since Christianity assumed its privileged position as the imperial church in the Holy Roman Empire. In the center of renewal (reform) was always the question of the Christian's way of life—according to the scriptural core values of Christian living and the consistency of faith and action. Along with different monastic ascetical movements and then again their renewals during the Middle Ages, Petrus Valdus, John Wycliffe, and John Hus led the most successful reform efforts. Each tried to put the Bible into the vernacular and emphasized individual conversion. Also, the sixteenth-century reformation did not occur in a vacuum. There were revivals of religious feelings like the Brethren of the Common Life, who accomplished renewal in Western Christianity. They stressed the connection of mystical experience and subjectivism. These examples bring to mind several reformations. All these have always attempted to address the troubling area of being a Christian, namely, the lack of consistent seriousness, the authenticity of the faith, and the missed holistic penetration of Christian life in faith and action. It was always about the connection between a deep relationship with God, which permeates the daily life and leads to action, the so-called fruits of the faith.

Let me now add some important rediscoveries and extensions to the focus on the Reformation in the sixteenth century by sharing a few examples from a variety of motivating and inspiring movements,

17 See Ulrike Schuler, "Die Autorität der Heiligen Schrift allein. Die Notwendigkeit der hermeneutischen Reflexion—das Wesleyanische Quadrilateral," in *Die Bibel im Leben der Kirche*, ed. Walter Klaiber and Wolfgang Thönissen (Göttingen/Paderborn: Ruprecht, 2007), 105–26.

reformers, and theological understandings as well as ascertainment of what it means to be justified by God's grace through faith. In this way we rediscover those who first seemed to have been forgotten in the five hundredth anniversary: the radical reformers, those who were pursued and who were, for centuries after the Peace of Augsburg (1555), by law condemned to death. Among them were the Anabaptists (like Balthasar Hubmaier and others),¹⁸ who shifted the believer's baptism to the center for the beginning of Christian life, and the Spiritualists, such as Thomas Müntzer.¹⁹ In the former German Democratic Republic, the territory in which all Lutheran places of action are located, it was Müntzer who was remembered as the original true reformer of the sixteenth century and fought for justice, for the influence and freedom of peasants. Luther compromised with feudal authority and finally handed the responsibility for the Reformation over to the aristocracy so that the movement became a reformation from above. In opposition to this, the revolt of the peasants at the grassroots level, supported and partly led by Müntzer, was brutally quelled. The Peasants' War in 1525 was Europe's largest and most widespread popular uprising prior to the French Revolution (1786).

Two examples of forgotten women reformers also must be remembered. First, we remember the remarkable dispute of the abbess of a monastery of the Poor Clares in Nuremberg, Caritas Pirckheimer.²⁰ She had a successful dispute with Philipp Melanchthon in 1525 when she argued that justification by faith does not consistently mean to obligatorily discharge all nuns from their monastic vows and to leave

18 E.g., Andrea Strübind, *Eifriger als Zwingli. Die frühe Täuferbewegung in der Schweiz* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 2003).

19 E.g., Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Thomas Müntzer. Revolutionär am Ende der Zeiten. Eine Biografie* (München: Beck, 2015); Günter Brakelmann, *Müntzer und Luther* (Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 2016).

20 About important women in the Reformation, see Martin H. Jung, *Nonnen, Prophetinnen, Kirchenmütter. Kirchen- und frömmigkeitsgeschichtliche Studien zu Frauen in der Reformationszeit* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2002); *Frauen mischen sich ein. Katharina Luther, Katharina Melanchthon, Katharina Zell, Hille Feicken und andere* (Wittenberg: Evangelisches Predigerseminar Lutherstadt Wittenberg. Drei Kastanien Verlag, 2004).

the monastery. Caritas Pirckheimer biblically argued for her right to decide on a life consecrated to God by living celibately in a monastery. Finally, the aldermen in Nuremberg had to embrace the nun's decision in a city that had as one of the first in the Holy Roman Empire implemented Protestantism and had decided to dissolve all monasteries. But it needs to be said that this freedom of conscience for the nuns in Caritas Pirckheimer's care was very limited: the nuns no longer received pastoral care by their father confessors, and they also were unable to receive the sacraments because they lost the presence of their priests.²¹

The second example of an influential woman of the Reformation time is Katharina Zell. She was the wife of a reformer, Matthäus Zell, in Strasbourg. She was very well educated, and as a reformer's wife she corresponded with a lot of other reformers, such as Martin Bucer, who celebrated the Zells' marriage, as well as with others whom the couple knew well. Katharina wrote a huge number of letters, most remarkably to wives of persecuted Anabaptists. Finally, against opposition she preached at her husband's funeral. She can be seen as a groundbreaker for female ministry.²²

There are many more women of the Reformation time who can be identified because, as a result of being reformers' wives and well educated, they left written sources.

I conclude with some final theses:

- The Reformation cannot be reduced to a century or to special persons. A reform or renewal is a process that never ends and is certainly not tied to individual groups, congregations, churches, or denominations.
- The Reformation as an era of church history offers more meaningful and inspiring central developments and rudiments of renewals to us than only the focus on Luther and Calvin. For

21 Jung, *Nonnen, Prophetinnen, Kirchenmütter*, 77–120.

22 Jung, *Nonnen, Prophetinnen, Kirchenmütter*, 121–68; Gabriele Jancke, "Publizistin–Pfarrfrau–Prophetin: Die Straßburger 'Kirchenmutter' Katharina Zell," in *Frauen mischen sich ein*, ed. Peter Freybe (Wittenberg: Ev. Predigerseminar, 1995), 55–80.

our Methodist roots in the Church of England, there was also Martin Bucer, a continental reformer from Strasbourg who finally went to Cambridge and who reconciled opposing views in his time. But there were also the Anabaptists, Spiritualists, and women (some of whom were reformers' wives and who were writers), those who interpreted central Reformation topics in different ways—by word (writing), life (living according to the Reformation), and education (particularly of the next generation).

- As Methodists, we can be convinced by John Wesley to open perspectives on scriptural interpretations by studying the church fathers, especially those from the Eastern Orthodox tradition whose view had less influence on Western theology and who take a different approach by adding spirituality to rational text interpretations of the Bible.
- There is a broader wealth of renewing movements before and after the Reformation. Wesley reflected on them and used writings of mystics, puritans, and pietists for his *Christian Library*. Of course, after Wesley there were lots of important awakening movements in the holiness and Pentecostal movement as well.
- Finally, “re-formation” also means to be open to changes in life and perspective, including atonement where needed. The topic of the Reformation has shadow sides: Luther’s harsh and disastrous writings and sayings about Jews that were used as arguments in the Third Reich; the persecutions of Anabaptists (in 2012 the process of a Lutheran–Mennonite dialogue ended with a moving service, begging for forgiveness); and the numerous people in renewing movements who had to leave Europe to find their home in the colonies that became the United States to live with a freedom of conscience.
- Re-formation is, from a Methodist perspective, a holistic transformation that begins with each single person and his or her deepening relationship with God, which is a faithful renewal into God’s image as new creation.

- Reformation is a constant challenge. The church must renew itself constantly. This is a principle that goes back to St. Augustine and was revived by Karl Barth in 1947: *ecclesia semper reformanda*—the church is always in need of renewal by the power of the gospel of Christ.

APPENDIX

As further background of my statement, here are three other publications written in the ecumenical context in Germany during the discussions and preparations of the Reformation anniversary in 2017.

- Schuler, Ulrike. “Christliche Einheit in Zeugnis und Dienst. Eine evangelisch-methodistische Perspektive.” In *Heillos gespalten? Segensreich erneuert? 500 Jahre Reformation in der Vielfalt ökumenischer Perspektiven*, ed. Uwe Swarat and Thomas Söding, 93–115. *Quaestiones Disputatae* 277. Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder GmbH, 2016.
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John Wesley and the Protestant Reformers on Scripture

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WHAT DID JOHN WESLEY HOLD in common with the leading sixteenth-century Protestant reformers—most notably Martin Luther and John Calvin—concerning the nature and purpose of Scripture and its interpretation, and in what ways is Wesley distinctive? Studies of Wesley’s views of and approaches to Scripture often note that he shared several central commitments with the Protestant reformers.²³ At least six shared affirmations can be identified. First, Wesley and the Protestant reformers affirmed Scripture as divine revelation, as the divinely inspired Word of God.²⁴ As the divinely inspired Word of God, a second affirmation immediately follows: Scripture functions

23 See, for example, Larry Shelton, “John Wesley’s Approach to Scripture in Historical Perspective,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 16, no. 1 (1981): 23–50; Scott J. Jones, “The Rule of Scripture,” in *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation*, ed. W. Stephen Gunter et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 43, 55–56; and Scott J. Jones, *John Wesley’s Conception and Use of Scripture* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995), 121–27.

24 For studies that discuss Wesley’s view of Scripture as revelation and divinely inspired, see Jones, *John Wesley’s Conception and Use of Scripture*, 17–36; Jones, “The Rule of Scripture,” 50–51; Duncan S. Ferguson, “John Wesley on Scripture: The Hermeneutics of Pietism,” *Methodist History* 22, no. 4 (1984): 240; and Shelton, “John Wesley’s Approach to Scripture in Historical Perspective,” 37–38. For concise descriptions of Luther’s and Calvin’s affirmation of Scripture as revelation and divinely inspired, see Mark Thompson, “Biblical Interpretation in the Works of Martin Luther,” in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*, vol. 2, ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 299–302; and Wulfert de Greef, “Calvin’s Understanding and Interpretation of the Bible,” in *John Calvin’s Impact on Church and Society, 1509–2009*, ed. Martin Ernst Hirzel and Martin Sallmann (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 69–70.