

# RESEARCH REPORTER



May/June 2006

*Repentance says,  
"without him I can do  
nothing." Faith says, "I  
can do all things though  
Christ who strengthens  
me." Through him I can  
not only overcome, but  
expel, all the enemies of  
my soul.*

– John Wesley  
"Repentance of  
Believers," 1767



## A Review of *Holiness as a Root of Morality: Essays on Wesleyan Ethics In Honor of Lane A. Scott* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006) Edited by Dr. John S. Park

This special edition of the *Research Reporter* continues to celebrate Dr. Lane A. Scott's scholarship and leadership as professor, associate dean, and interim dean of the Haggard School of Theology. President John Wallace writes in his "Tribute to Lane A. Scott" that "Lane has been my mentor, advisor, counselor, and above all else, gentle tutor in all things Wesleyan" for almost thirty years. Dr. John S. Park has edited this *Festschrift*, a volume of essays by diverse authors collected and published in honor of a colleague, by linking these articles to the broad theme of Wesleyan theology and ethics. Essays by the following current APU professors are reviewed below: Dr. Ralph P. Martin, Dr. John S. Park, Dr. Don Thorsen, Dr. John Culp, Dr. John E. Hartley, Dr. Lane A. Scott, Dr. Marsha D. Fowler, and Dr. Steve Wilkins.

Dr. Ralph P. Martin analyzes carefully Acts 26:28 and posits that this verse implies "in a short time you [Paul] are trying to make me [Agrippa] profess Christianity." Paul's desire to bring Agrippa and others "to a real – as opposed to a make-believe – understanding of the messianic faith" Martin links

## APU Office of Faculty Research

to John Wesley's sermon "The Almost Christian" (second in Wesley's *Fifty-Three Sermons*) based on this verse. Martin carefully traces the evolution of Wesley's distinction between being "almost Christian" (formally religious, even honest, generous, sincere, and evangelistic) and being "altogether" Christian (dynamically loving God, pleasing Him in all things, loving even the enemy, celebrating true saving faith). Martin writes, "The faith that purifies the heart is the insignia of the 'altogether Christian.'"

Lest Wesley sound too judgmental of the "almost Christian", Martin notes that he draws from his own deeper conversion into a vital faith expressed in genuine love of God and others: "My own conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost that all this time I was but 'almost a Christian'". Dr. Martin's fine commentary on Wesley's moving homily challenges the reader to analyze his or her own commitment to Christ: almost or altogether? ("The Almost Christian": John Wesley's Sermon and a Lukan Text" (Acts 26:28))

– Carole Lambert

Dr. John S. Park, editor of this interesting *Festschrift*, audaciously combines close study of specific theologians with a chronological survey of understandings of Christianity in the pre-modern, modern, and post-modern eras. In the pre-modern epoch, "the church could lead and define society and culture." Modernity reveals the struggle between God's authority and reason's primacy. In post-modernity "the profane defines the holy": "Preaching lost its focal content of Jesus, and communication technique replaced the content."

Although he mentions several notable thinkers of the modern era, such as Newton, Locke, Hegel, and Feuerbach, Park structures his essay around key examples of three ways of knowing God: rational and cognitive (Kant), experiential and psychological (Schleiermacher), and multifarious and practical (Wesley). Kant "rejects human beings' dependence on powers beyond themselves." Jesus Christ becomes for Kant an "archetype" whose "idea itself. . . can give us power" to make choices conforming with this "morally perfect teacher."

Park notes that this "religion of reason" lacked a means for the expression of feeling. This gap was filled by

Schleiermacher's emphasis on "feeling (or sensibility, taste) for the infinite" which superseded "metaphysical interpretation or moral concepts" and is "a more influential source for theology than the witness of Scripture, church tradition, or the historical statements of the church." Consequently, "Schleiermacher accepts diversity or plurality of 'different worships' in religious consciousness. . . . from primitive animism to monotheism."

Wesley also participated in the modern era, but he privileged Scripture over his other sources of authority: reason, experience, and tradition. Reason helps the believer to recognize "the holiness that is in God and Christ" and therefore to strive for holiness and perfection. Sanctification is expressed in love for all, and it results from God's grace and indwelling Spirit.

Park deftly shows Wesley's way of knowing God to be superior to Kant's and Schleiermacher's, and he affirms that, despite Wesley's historical locus in the modern era, "Wesley stayed in this [the pre-modern] era" in his way of knowing God. We still see his much needed influence in the post-modern era as well. ("Religious Epistemology: John Wesley and His Contemporaries") – Carole Lambert

**Dr. Don Thorsen** writes on the limits, possibilities, and original intent of the "Wesleyan quadrilateral". This interconnection between revelation, tradition, reason and experience serves as a source of authority in the Christian life. The fear, though, is that the last three will dilute the importance of the first: Scripture. Yet it is very easy to see how infeasible a total reliance on Scripture is: it does not interpret itself, revealing the authors' original intent, nor does it offer immediate answers to public policy disputes, which we must confront if we believe our faith has relevance to the world. It is, after all, not Scripture but God who stands as our sole authority – a God who is over all things and is reflected in all aspects of the human experience, and, accordingly, who gives importance to *all* major ways of knowing his will. Hence, the role of Scripture is not weakened but given even greater significance when read through the quadrilateral; it is significantly more inspired, but it shares at least a portion of that inspiration with its co-authorities. Dr. Thorsen points out how the idea remained implicit throughout much of church history, held as a general assumption about orthodoxy and the world; Wesley himself only summed up what everyone already knew in his reflections on the Christian life and the way that the core of it has something that transcends churches and denominations. That variety of faith traditions is, of course, the distinctive face of American evangelicalism today: it is rooted in a wide array of backgrounds, many of them conflicting in serious ways; at the same time, though, those conflicts turn into complements when we see that each is

only an emphasis on one of four very important pieces of the whole. Bringing those pieces together is the goal of those who realize that evangelicalism is not going away – and that it can even be an exciting step in the story of the faith should we choose to be a part of it. ("The Wesleyan Quadrilateral in Contemporary American Evangelical Theology") – Kevin Walker

**Dr. John Culp** carefully analyzes the approaches to the moral sense and the aesthetic sense of Enlightenment thinkers Earl of Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, and Thomas Reid whose theories about these "non-physical senses" can be compared and contrasted with John Wesley's concept of the "spiritual senses". All were influenced by John Locke's empiricism, and all "assumed a divine role in knowing."

Wesley believed that "knowledge of God came only through the individual's direct experience with God. Only the spiritual senses provided this direct knowledge of God." This "direct knowledge of God" was a gracious gift from God, requiring a response, or else the spiritual senses could be lost. This loss could be serious, for "the spiritual senses called sinners to the experience of God and gave moral guidelines according to God's expectations." Indeed, "the purpose of the spiritual senses was to bring the individual into relationship with God rather than only to provide information about God."

Wesley privileged the "spiritual senses" over the moral and aesthetic senses. He agreed with Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Reid that experience was "the source of knowledge," but he differed with them in positing that the "spiritual senses were gifts from God rather than a human capability that could function independently of God's action." Thus the concept of "non-physical senses" such as the moral and aesthetic senses was a part of Wesley's intellectual environment, but "the moral-aesthetic tradition was not the source of Wesley's concept of the spiritual senses."

Wesley's "spiritual senses" provide a means for the potential convert to Christianity and the maturing believer to grow experientially in their faith while subordinating themselves to Scripture, tradition, and reason. Although Wesley's "spiritual senses" cannot be proven physically, they can be reasonably affirmed among Enlightenment philosophers theorizing about moral and aesthetic senses, the other "non-physical senses." ("First Perceived in the Senses: Wesley's Spiritual Senses in Relation to Morality and Beauty") – Carole Lambert

**Dr. John E. Hartley** provides eleven principles of orientation which are foundational to God's holy people in Biblical times and today. His careful analysis of Genesis 1-11 reveals

how God wants His people to live and how His desires set His people apart from their neighbors. First, Genesis's creation account shows that "matter is dependent on God for its existence, but God is not dependent on matter." Hence, "the world should ever dissolve, such a disaster would be no threat to God nor cause him any deprivation." Second, Israel was to shun "all forms of magic and divination", for God spoke through his prophets not through the reading of animals' entrails. Third, God places "firm boundaries at strategic junctures in the created order. . . . so that each of [God's respective orders] may function and flourish according to God's design." This is in contrast to the sphinxes and centaurs of pagan mythologies. Fourth, "God created all in wisdom": "All that God proposed while creating came to pass as he purposed. Conflict was not an essential ingredient of the creation account as was the case in many Near Eastern cosmogonies." Fifth, "only the one God is holy." Moreover, this holy God is mobile, as symbolized by Ezekiel's moving chariot and God faithfulness to His people in Babylon after the destruction of their Temple in Jerusalem. Sixth, "God created all humans, both male and female, in his own image"; hence all have intrinsic worth, and every human life is to be cherished.

Dr. Hartley's final distinctions emphasize Israel's understanding of sin, death, interconnection with all peoples, and concern for justice. Human disobedience to God introduced disharmony in "the most central relationships in the created order: between God and humans, between natural forces and lowly creatures on earth, and among humans themselves." As a result, "all humans die. . . not by reason of the fact that they inhabit flesh. This view differs radically from that of Israel's neighbors who hold that death is inevitable for humans." Yet, despite such differences in thinking, Israel is indeed connected to "all peoples, races, and nations." Israel was special "solely because God had elected her, not because he had made her first. . . or superior to all other peoples." This nation elected by God must manifest justice to all as God demonstrated his justice in the flood account. God's relationship with Abraham, however, shows Him to be more than a fair judge for He seeks intimate relationship with His chosen friend built upon loving trust: Abraham's "faithful obedience led God to proclaim him righteous. Here righteousness is grounded in the character of one's relationship with God rather than in a judgment of a person's activities." The intimacy of that loving relationship only increases with Jesus Christ's advent and with the Holy Spirit's dwelling in each believer. "Indeed, these principles energize the quest for a holy life in Christ." ("Principles of Orientation for Holy Living as Found in Genesis 1-11")

— Carole Lambert

**Dr. Lane A. Scott**, in whose honor this book was produced, writes on the development of John Wesley's teaching on "saving faith" as a component of experience. What exactly does the Spirit do when He works in our lives? Obviously it is an improvement in character and understanding, but, practically, what is it like to experience such improvements? And how can we know that we have experienced them? These are the questions that Wesley mulled over for many years, and these compelled him through several stages that each contributed to his overall teaching. Saving faith was originally an assent to truths established by pure rationalism, but it later became a matter of trust for Wesley, particularly after his experience with the Monroviaans on the way to Georgia in the famous storm incident. The willingness to trust that love is stronger than death – to know that the good is greater than the true – became the basis of saving faith; it was, for Wesley, a personal experience, albeit one that still had to be judged and assessed in terms of meaning; it could not be mere feelings, but a perceptible sense of transformation in the individual. ("Experience and Scripture in John Wesley's Concept of Saving Faith") – Kevin Walker

**Dr. Marsha D. Fowler** courageously tackles the problem of how to prepare committed Christian faculty to integrate their faith into courses that seemingly have little relevance to Christianity. She answers James Burtchae's pessimistic judgment in *The Dying of the Light* that "the more generic the religious discourse, the more vulnerable [the university is] to being displaced by an attitude or ideology." Dr. Fowler questions "whether a more generic religious discourse does in fact reflect an inner drift from roots and a 'dying of the light.'"

She effectively shows as a case in point how the Wesleyan Quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience can be used as (1) a template for assessing APU's faculty who prepare to integrate their faith into the courses they teach, (2) "a guide for planning content to develop faculty ability in theological method," and (3) a means to help faculty "construct curriculum for students that shepherds the student's theological reflection upon the discipline or some aspect thereof that encompasses each of the four elements of the quadrilateral."

Her findings are fascinating. The Wesleyan quadrilateral makes room for Catholics, Calvinists, Arminians, Pentecostals, and others who may be severely wounded in their faith. It allows faculty to learn with appropriate research tools how to gain depth in their understanding of the Bible and to experience enhancement of their understanding of the rich spirituality to be found in denominations outside of their own. It also provides them

with a practical model of how to incorporate faith into the courses they teach, something often lacking in theoreticians' discourses about the need for faith integration across the curriculum.

Dr. Fowler's reflections on the results of the two courses she has taught under the Lilly Endowment Grant of 2002 strongly indicate that the "light" is not about to die at APU; to the contrary, it is hot and bright. Through her courses she shows the reader that a committed Christian faculty from diverse denominations can indeed carry the light of an informed faith forward in their classrooms. ("Salvaging Scripture, Reclaiming Tradition, Renewing Reason and Curbing Enthusiasm: Faculty Development for Faith Integration in the Wesleyan Tradition") – Carole Lambert

**Dr. Steve Wilkens** shows that "the evangelical label" is insufficient to guide a Christian university in its decisions and growth. Realistically aware that the identity of institutions is always changing, for better or for worse, he ponders "how they [Christian universities] can successfully maintain their Christian identity when so many others have failed." He acknowledges that "biblicism, conversionism, and evangelistic activism" are distinctive qualities of evangelicalism, but these are inadequate resources when the following issues arise: "whether non-believers should be admitted, where we draw the line between education and indoctrination, whether women will be allowed to major in or teach the biblical and theological disciplines," and others. "A theological rudder" is needed that will keep the Christian university on course despite buffetings from "market concerns such as enrollment figures, academic respectability,

legal or accreditation pressures, or the whims of potential donors."

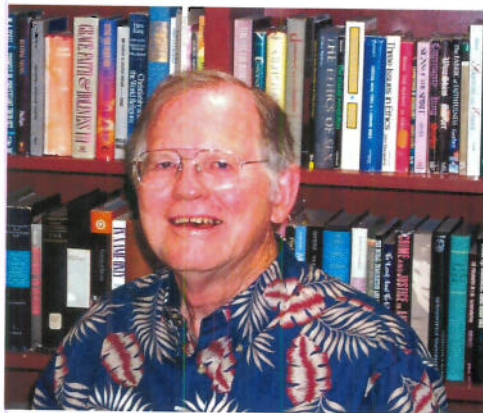
Much of his article explores how "the Wesleyan theological tradition" may "provide the foundation necessary for a Christian liberal arts institution." With its emphasis on Scripture, Christian tradition, reason, and experience as authoritative for making decisions of integrity, challenging issues like those mentioned above can be studied under these lenses. Final outcomes can be substantively justified, avoiding both the vagueness of "evangelicalism" as an authoritative foundation and the pressures of immediate concerns. Dr. Wilkens's superb contribution to this *Festschrift* provides clear guidance to all who are concerned about maintaining the moral integrity of a Christian university. ("Is 'Evangelical' Any Way to Run a University?: Theological Tradition and the Christian Liberal Arts") – Carole Lambert

## APU FACULTY RESEARCH

*The Office of Faculty Research and the Office of Sponsored Research and Grants work to assist APU faculty with their research and dissemination endeavors, provide external research funding, and promote an academic climate that celebrates and strengthens the Azusa Pacific University community of Christian scholars and researchers.*

### Office of Research Personnel:

Director, Office of Research: Dr. Carole Lambert ([CLambert@apu.edu](mailto:CLambert@apu.edu))  
Consultant, Office of Research: Dr. Beverly Hardcastle Stanford ([BStanford@apu.edu](mailto:BStanford@apu.edu)); Director, Office of Sponsored Research and Grants: Dr. Luman Wing ([LWing@apu.edu](mailto:LWing@apu.edu)); Grants Services Specialist: Kevin Walker ([KMWalker@apu.edu](mailto:KMWalker@apu.edu)); Administrative Assistant: Lydia Tracy ([LTracy@apu.edu](mailto:LTracy@apu.edu))



*Just as we know about the physical world through sensations received by the physical senses, so we have experiences from the Holy Spirit through impressions that come through the spiritual senses. The physical senses are our natural means, but the spiritual senses are a supernatural gift from God.*

– Dr. Lane Scott