PAPERS PRESENTED
AT
THE 16TH ANNUAL MEETING
OF
THE CHARLES WESLEY SOCIETY
September 30–October 4, 2005
Hotel Teuchelwald
Freudenstadt, Germany

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Introduction

“Charles Wesley’s Life and Poetry in German” by Martin E. Brose is a discussion of German-language biographies and other resources which have helped to bring Charles Wesley out of the shadow of his brother John in the German-speaking world, as well as to address the subject of his knowledge of German. Three biographies are discussed: Karl Gottlieb Eißele, *Karl Wesley: Sänger des Methodismus*, and Frederick C. Gill, *Charles Wesley, The First Methodist*, and Brose’s own volume *Charles Wesley: der Methodistische Liederdichter*. He addresses the positive aspects of Eißele’s volume, such as his treatment of Wesley as a preacher and poet, but also notes the lacunae such as Wesley’s work as an editor, difficulties with Methodists in a variety of arenas, and the importance of his journal, letters, and poems. While Eißele had relied largely on secondary sources, Brose notes that Gill frequently used original sources thus enhancing the quality and authenticity of his volume. Gill’s volume presents Charles Wesley as evangelist, churchman, and poet, allowing him to speak for himself. Following Richard P. Heitzenrater, however, Brose does not share Gill’s view that Charles was “the first Methodist.”

Brose also discusses his own volume *Charles Wesley: der Methodistische Liederdichter* published in 2002, which has not been translated into English. He covers the following aspects of his life: preaching, singing, poetry, itineracy and persecution, family life, musical life in London, old age and death. Brose also relied strongly on original sources.

Finally, Brose discusses to what extent Charles Wesley may have known German. After reviewing the previous endorsements of the view that he had some knowledge of German, he cites for the first time support for this position from Johann Gottlieb Burckhardt’s *Vollständige Geschichte der Methodisten in England* (1795).

The two articles which follow examine the emergence of Methodist hymnody in Germany. Helen Shephard looks more closely at the British Methodist influence and Friedemann Burkhardt at the American Methodist influence.

In “The Inculturation of Wesleyan Spirituality and Hymnody in the German Language Context,” Helen Shephard examines early German-language Wesleyan hymnals of John Lyth and the Order of Administration translated by John Cook Barratt. She sets the context in Württemberg for a Wesleyan movement which at first was within the shadow of the Lutheran state church, but which with the appointment of John Lyth as superintendent was increasingly “Wesleyanized,” which precipitated considerable tensions. She describes effectively the role of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society’s work in Württemberg and tensions that arose with the advocates of the American Methodist Episcopal Church Mission in Germany. One of Lyth’s primary contributions was that he
introduced a corpus of German-language, Wesleyan literature, which brought closer ties to English Wesleyanism.

A distinctive mark of Lyth’s hymnbook, *Zions-Harfe*, published in 1864, was that it contained seventy-one hymns by Charles Wesley and twenty-one of the hymns translated by John Wesley from various German writers. Lyth was careful to choose the Wesleyan hymns according to their advocacy of Wesleyan theology and practice.

John Cook Barratt from England was Lyth’s successor and continued the process of Wesleyanization. The early newsletter, *Sonntags-Gast*, begun by Lyth was renamed the *Methodisten-Herold* under Barratt and this enhanced the Wesleyan Methodist profile in Germany. Barratt’s primary contribution was the German translation of the order and liturgies of the church, e.g., *The Sunday Service of the People Called Methodists* and Holy Communion.

Shephard shows effectively how English transplanted Methodism became an indigenous German movement and church.

In “Wesleyan Spirituality and German Methodist Hymnody” Friedemann Burkhardt begins with a brief discussion of the historical origins of Methodism in Germany from its earliest beginnings with Christoph Gottlob Müller and the involvement of Methodists from England and North America (the Methodist Episcopal Church). He also addresses some of the German-language Methodist influences from North America.

Burkhardt offers a brief survey of the development and content of German Methodist hymnody. The strong Lutheran context in which early German Methodism emerged reveals the struggle for identity reflected clearly in the predominance of hymns and melodies, which were distinctively Lutheran in origin or from German Pietism. Burkhardt begins with W. Nast’s hymnbook of 1839 and points out that, in spite of Nast’s view to the contrary, it was not Methodist in character and included only five Wesley hymns translated into German. “He assigned German melodies to the songs, and only gave the English versions in brackets.” Even though the Württemberg Methodists somehow felt connected to the American Methodists through Nast’s book, it was nothing more than a variant of the hymnbook of the Lutheran state church of Württemberg.

The article concludes with a survey of Wesley hymns in the German Methodist hymnbooks from 1839 to 1926.

Rüdiger Minor’s subject is “Experiences of Incultration of Methodism in Russia.” In the first section of the discussion, “Russian Culture and Methodism,” he examines three facets of religious life and culture, which have influenced reborn Methodism in Russia: Russian Orthodoxy, Russian Evangelical Protestantism, and Russian “religious mood.” Minor describes the most significant elements of each, which play a role in the shaping of United Methodism in Russia today: Russian Orthodoxy (roots of the Eastern Fathers of the church and their influence on Wesleyan spirituality, the “Social Position” and worship of the
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Russian Orthodox Church); Russian Evangelical Protestantism (the influence of the roots and hymnody of the Pietistic movement [Erweckungsbewegung] of England, Germany, and Scandinavia, particularly the critical posture of this movement against Orthodoxy [though Methodism "has not positioned itself as contra-Orthodox"]; Russian “religious mood” (the influence of the Russian language and the equation of being Russian with being Orthodox).

Minor’s second section examines “Charles Wesley’s Hymns in the Russia United Methodist Church hymnbook, Mir Yam (Peace be with you) of which there are thirteen, twelve by Charles Wesley and one by John, i.e., one of his English translations from German which has been translated into Russian. He provides a list of the original Wesleyan first lines and discusses briefly the origin and quality of the translations.

Two persons who have been engaged in translating Wesley hymns into German, Walter and Annegrete Klaiber, provide a very helpful examination of “Aspects of Modern Translations of Wesley Hymns into German.” Much of their interest grows out of their direct involvement with the translations for the new hymnal of The United Methodist Church in Germany, Gesangbuch der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche (GBEmK) of 2002.

Their experience leads to a very helpful discussion of the question: “What are the special difficulties and challenges with the reception of the hymns of Charles Wesley?” They address linguistic and theological challenges and suggest a series of translation aids.

The concluding section provides “Examples for difficulties and solutions for the translation.” The series of English original and German translations side by side are extremely helpful for anyone seeking to establish principles for the veracity of translations and to discern how meaning and poetry are transmitted through translation.

Kristin Chiles Markay was one of the editors of the first hymnal of the United Methodist Church of Lithuania. Drawing on her experience, she writes on “The Hymns of Charles Wesley from a Lithuanian Perspective.” She provides some of the background of the origin of the hymnal and explains that of the fifteen Wesley hymns in the new hymnal only three could be found in any existing Lithuanian hymnbooks. Hence, it was necessary to enlist the services of indigenous persons to translate the other twelve. In addition to the list of the Wesley hymns included in the hymnal, she has asked two members of the United Methodist Church in Lithuania to express in their own words what the Wesley hymns mean to them. Here one senses once again the strong pastoral value and impact of Wesley’s hymns.

She suggests that in a post-Soviet period when people desperately need hope, the Wesley hymns are a great source of faith, encouragement, and food for the soul.

S T Kimbrough, Jr., Editor
Charles Wesley’s Life and Poetry in German

Martin E. Brose*

1. Charles Wesley, as seen through German-language biographies

Yes, Charles Wesley steps out of the shadow of his prominent brother John and the picture we have of him today in German-speaking countries is becoming increasingly clearer. This reality will be discussed here from two perspectives: (1) the German-language biographies of Charles Wesley, and (2) Charles Wesley and the German language.

The German-language biographies

During the course of ca. 150 years two biographies were published by German authors and one was translated from English.

1. Karl Gottlieb Eißele, Karl Wesley: Sänger des Methodismus

In 1930s Karl Gottlieb Eißele (1891–1978), a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Germany, wrote a paper on Charles Wesley’s life. Afterwards “the assembly of ministers of the Stuttgart District” asked him to publish it, which he gladly did, as he states in his preface, in order “to fill, in a modest way, a gap in our German Methodist literature, for to my knowledge a biography of Charles Wesley in the German language has never been published before.” So in 1932 the first biography in German was printed in the church owned Publishing House, “Anker-Verlag,” in Bremen. It was a small book with 119 pages under the title Karl Wesley: Sänger des Methodismus (Charles Wesley, Singer of Methodism).

Eißele used three sources:


*All translations from the German of works for which there are no existing English translations are by this author.

1 Bremen: Anker-Verlag, 1932.
2 The first German CW biography was advertised like this: “An important book for each Methodist. No Methodist who loves his church may miss this book. All our young people must own this outstanding biography. If they have no job or don’t have money to buy it right away, each youth group should buy a few copies and lend it to them.” Der Evangelist, Bremen, 27. März 1932.
3 Henry Bett mentions in his article German Books on Wesley’s Hymns Eißele’s biography of CW: “The work is an admirable biography of Charles Wesley, and an enthusiastic appreciation of his devotional verse. But the most remarkable feature of Herr Eißele’s book is his translation into German of several of the best of Charles Wesley’s hymns.” Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society 21 (1938): 181. The editor points out “that the tribute paid by Dr. Bett to the translator belongs to his namesake, Rev. K. Eisele, of Fürth, Bavaria.”
In nine chapters (without headings) EiSele unfolds in chronological order Charles Wesley’s life, emphasizing the following three items:

1. The first is revealed in the subtitle: “the singer of Methodism.” Hence the main emphasis lies on the poetical work of Charles Wesley. This is apparent in a very condensed form on pages 79–84, but also finds expression in the sixteen pages of the appendix,4 which was written by the co-author preacher Karl Eisele (1878–1971). Here 12 hymns5 of Charles Wesley are presented,6 each of them has a short introduction, including “O for a thousand tongues to sing,” “Where shall my wond’ring soul begin,” “Wrestling Jacob.” In addition, EiSele quotes from 11 other Charles Wesley hymns. If one adds the six Charles Wesley hymns in the *Gesangbuch der Bischoflichen Methodistenkirche*7 of that time (which are mentioned in the appendix), then in the thirties of the last century through EiSele’s book it was possible to have access to 29 Charles Wesley hymns.

2. The second topic emphasized by EiSele is “Charles Wesley the preacher.”

3. The third emphasize is the successful attempt to describe multiple facets of the life of Charles Wesley. The reader gets to know him as student of Westminster School in London and of Oxford University, secretary of the governor in Georgia, doing pastoral work in prisons, parish priest, itinerant and field preacher, who proclaims the “glad tidings of salvation” at huge open-air assemblies and suffering abuse and persecution, husband and father of three very talented children, highly cultivated poet, Christian with a profound knowledge of the Bible, close co-worker of his brother John, but also one afflicted from various diseases and depression.8

What is EiSele’s opinion of Charles Wesley? EiSele makes every effort to arrive at a well-balanced representation of Charles Wesley’s strong and weak points. He has little to criticize and much to praise. Some quotations will prove that, but we begin with the three points of which he is critical:

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4 In the appendix there are two mistakes in Karl EiSele’s “Annotations to translations of Charles Wesley hymns”: It is “emphasized that he [Charles Wesley] is not rich in poetical forms” and that “lyric poetry was not his line.”
5 The number of selected stanzas varies from 1 to 9. Only in three cases is the English original mentioned.
6 At the end of the appendix there is this explanation: “in the frame of this book only a few samples of his poetry could be presented, but it should be sufficient for showing the beauty of it.”
7 *Gesangbuch der Bischoflichen Methodistenkirche* (Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church) (Bremen: Methodist Publishing House, 1926).
8 “However occasionally he was in two minds and fell into temptation. . . . Before and after meetings he was quite often heavily depressed, sometimes ‘exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death’ [Matt. 26,38].” (p. 44) “His diathesis to strong emotional depressions caused him many heavy hours” (p. 90).
1. “Charles Wesley had all sorts of peculiarities and was quite eccentric. . . . In complete contrast to his brother John, we often miss calmness, prudence, and cleverness in his demeanor” (p. 89).

2. “On the one hand, he was highly delighted to watch modern developments, on the other hand, his heart stuck to opinions which were incompatible with these innovations, which he daily violated” (p. 97).

3. “In interpreting Bible texts he does not always stick to the text . . . , for example, he puts words of the prophet into the mouth of Jesus” (p. 78).

What is Eißele’s opinion of Charles Wesley as a preacher? “Charles Wesley was a talented and abundantly blessed preacher (p. 75) . . . an impressive speaker, who could proclaim eternal salvation in simple, but powerful words (p. 76) . . . . He was a restless evangelist (p. 50) . . . with relentless toughness against himself (p. 18) . . . a great zealot for God (p. 20) . . . a burning love for his Savior filled his heart” (p. 32). The subjects of Charles Wesley’s preaching are mentioned in only a few places, but the description is to the point.

Eißele describes Charles Wesley’s significance as a poet for early Methodism like this:

“It is difficult to overestimate his merits as a poet of the revivalist movement (p. 79) . . . . The spirit and the essence of Methodism has never been expressed with clearer and more eloquent words, not even in John Wesley’s sermons, than in the hymns of his singer (p. 83) . . . . There is no experience of Christian life which Charles Wesley has not expressed in his hymns. For all the feasts of the church year, occasions and opportunities of the Christian congregation and family, he had a hymn in his heart, and there is hardly a section in the hymnal to which he has not contributed. As a poet of sacred songs he belongs to the most productive ones of all times and languages” (p. 80).

Unfortunately Eißele’s biography of Charles Wesley has some deficits. The following topics are not mentioned at all:

- Charles Wesley as editor;
- Charles Wesley’s importance for hymnody;
- Charles Wesley’s difficulties with the Methodists because of his musically talented sons, Charles and Samuel;
- Charles Wesley and the lay-preachers;
- the breadth and importance of Charles Wesley’s journal, letters, poems.

Furthermore there are no indexes or pictures in his book. Eißele’s biography however had an important function, because during a time when the English language was not so widely understood as today, his book conveyed a much more

9 Charles Wesley preached “Justification of the sinner by faith alone” (p. 32). He proclaimed “Jesus Christ and his complete sacrifice on the cross, his great love for sinners, the power of his cleansing blood, and that there is access for everyone to God’s throne of mercy” (p. 79).

10 On page 9 two sentences refer to Charles Wesley’s Journal. It is not mentioned that the journal includes the years 1736–1756 only, and that all of those years are not complete.
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A comprehensive impression of Charles Wesley than earlier writings had done. Many quotations inform the reader at least fragmentarily about Charles Wesley's Journal.

2. Frederick C. Gill, Charles Wesley, der erste Methodist (Charles Wesley, The first Methodist)

In 1968, thirty-six years after Eišele’s biography—a translation11 of Frederick C. Gill's Charles Wesley, The first Methodist12 was published (Gotthelf-Verlag, Zürich and Stuttgart). In comparison to Eišele’s small volume, Gill’s biography of 293 pages was a big step forward. A much more detailed picture of Charles Wesley and his work resulted. By quoting frequently from the original sources Gill produced a biography of high authenticity. He points out in his introduction: “Unlike John Wesley, he has had few biographers, and their work is mostly out of date” (p. 11). After enumerating a series of previously published biographies13 of Charles Wesley by Whitehead, Jackson, Telford, Wiseman, Jones, Brailford, and Edwards, Gill emphasizes that “Baker’s Charles Wesley as Revealed by his Letters (1948)14 offers a concise and reliable summary and is the best extent guide.”

In fourteen chapters Gill arranges Charles Wesley’s biography in chronological order. In addition, he provides a list of plates, table of contents, chronology of Charles Wesley, and an index. In his introduction he writes: “My aim has been to meet the demand for a new and clearer image of the co-founder of Methodism, who deserves to be seen in his own dimension, distinct from that of John, and in the light of his own considerable achievement. . . . He is presented here in his threefold character of Evangelist, churchman, and poet. I have kept as far as possible to his own and contemporary records and allowed him to speak for himself” (p. 11).

Concerning the question of why Charles Wesley, apart from his hymns, has been ignored so long, Gill has three answers:

1. Charles Wesley was a modest man, who did not enjoy being the center of attention.
2. He was overshadowed by his brother, John, who exercised a strong influence over him.
3. Charles Wesley adhered zealously to the Church of England, even when Methodism increasingly diverged from it. “Charles’ attempts to preserve its original aim had failed. As a result, his memory has suffered . . . no clear cut image has survived” (p. 292).

The subtitle “The first Methodist” and the quotation from his introduction point to Gill’s emphasis that in some important instances Charles was ahead of

11 Charles Wesley, der erste Methodist, trans. by Hugo Mayr and Eugen Thiele (Bremen: Anker-Verlag, 1932).
13 After Charles Wesley’s death John Wesley had planned to write the biography of his brother and asked his niece Sally to help him in that matter. But his plan was never realized. Gill, Charles Wesley, der erste Methodist, p. 283.
his brother John. He maintains that Charles founded the "Holy Club" in Oxford, which was very important for early Methodism; and he was the first of the two brothers to experience conversion, and then aided John and George Whitefield to have the same experience. Gill relates the popular version of founding the "Holy Club" in Oxford, which goes like this: Charles Wesley, "The first Methodist," founded (in May 1729) the "Holy Club" and turned over the leadership of the "Methodists" to his brother John in November 1729. "In fact, however," writes Heitzenrater in his introduction to Diary of an Oxford Methodist, Benjamin Ingham, 1733–1734, "there was no group in May 1729 . . . the term "Holy Club" was not coined until November 1730 . . . and the name "Methodist" does not appear until the summer of 1732." In this author's view it is appropriate to portray Charles Wesley as an independent person with considerable achievements of his own and beyond the bounds of his brother's shadow. Nevertheless this does not justify calling him "The first Methodist." Gill inappropriately has taken perhaps Charles's own memory late as an exact account, which results in a distorted picture of the origin of Methodism and its primary poet.

3. Martin Brose, Charles Wesley: der methodistische Liederdichter

The biography, Charles Wesley: der methodistische Liederdichter (Charles Wesley: the Methodist Hymnwriter), by the author of this article and published in 1999 in Stuttgart, originated, in contrast to Gill's biography, from a different context. In 1997 I presented a paper on "Today's significance of Charles Wesley" at the conference "On the way to a new hymnal" and was asked by the director of the Methodist Publishing House in Stuttgart if I would be interested in writing a Charles Wesley biography, which would be published in the near future. I accepted the invitation and after approval, the following parameters were set for the volume:

1. The biography will be published in a paperback edition of ca. 160 pages.
2. It will be written in a style that is interesting for both laypersons and clergy.
3. It will reflect the latest state of Charles Wesley research.

The first half of the book tells the story of Charles Wesley's life in chronological order up to his evangelical conversion in May 1738. The second half introduces in eight chapters important aspects of his life: Charles Wesley the preacher, Charles Wesley learns to sing, Charles Wesley the poet, travel and per-
secution, wedding and family, concerts in London, Charles and John, old age and death. In making this selection the author knew that because of the defined parameters it was not possible to present other interesting aspects in enough detail, for example, such subjects as “Charles Wesley and the Church of England,” “Charles Wesley the editor,” and “Charles Wesley’s ‘sung theology.’” Annotations, selected bibliography, index, family tree of the Wesley family, historical chronology of Charles Wesley, two maps, and thirty-three pictures complete the biography.

In order to present a Charles Wesley biography as authentically as possible, a large number of quotations from his journal, letters, and other contemporary sources were used.\(^{20}\) In addition, a number of mistakes in previous biographies were corrected.

In all three biographies, though differently emphasized, Charles Wesley’s unique lyrical theology is clearly given expression, which is summed up in the following four points:

1. Charles Wesley proclaimed the free grace of God and constantly preached about God’s inclusive love revealed in Jesus Christ. The sinner is justified “by faith alone.”

2. By accepting the grace of God the believer becomes part of the Christian fellowship. Bands, classes, and societies are important places of spiritual experiences.

3. Through word and sacrament the believer is spoken to in a holistic way (“heart and head”).

4. Out of the love to God grows the love of neighbor \(\text{(diakonia)}\), which is visible in “good works.”

A second fact is to be found in all three biographies, which I noted in the introduction (pp. 9–10) to Charles Wesley: \textit{der methodistische Liederdichter} in the following way:

Even today, after over 200 years, Charles Wesley is a fascinating person whose exceptional life as a conscious Christian has a lot to tell us. Surely not everything can be transferred to our time, but these are things, which should inspire us across the centuries:

- honest and intensive search for God,
- devoted teamwork with his brother,
- untiring proclamation of God’s love,
- glowing love for people,
- intensive communication with God through prayer, and
- profound knowledge of the Bible.

\(^{20}\) "The selected bibliography" (pp. 183–87) shows the sources used.
A view toward the future:

There are two requisites for a critically correct and comprehensive biography of Charles Wesley.

1. The biographer must become thoroughly acquainted with the Bible, church history, and especially with the early fathers, English language and classical education in the eighteenth century, music of the same period with regard to the newly developing congregational singing and also to the transition of Baroque to Rococo, and eighteenth-century English-language literature.

Acquiring the necessary knowledge in all these fields is a difficult task. Therefore, the biographer must rely on experts in theology, history, musicology, philosophy, literature, and other fields. A comprehensive Charles Wesley biography will have to present all facets of his life: On the one hand, Charles Wesley is a husband, father, poet, theologian, preacher, spiritual adviser, minister of the Church of England, who cares for his family, the lay-preachers, etc. On the other hand, he is of outstanding importance to the early Methodist movement and the development of congregational singing.

2. The second requisite is that a critically exact publication of Charles Wesley’s works (journal, sermons, letters, and poems) must be available for research. For example, the journal must include a transcription of all shorthand passages and previously omitted portions of the MS Journal. Besides this, the sources of all quotations from literature, poems, and hymns should be cited.

In the German-speaking countries we are far from this goal. Only the 1738 section of the Journal has been published to date and of Charles’s sermons only “Awake, thou that sleepest” based on Eph. 5:14 has been printed. From the beginning of German Methodism there have been attempts to translate a large number of his hymns and to find a corresponding poetical form, but only in a few instances are the results convincing.

On the other hand, some progress has been made.

- In 2007 the “Studiengemeinschaft für Geschichte der EmK” will publish Charles Wesleys Tagebuch 1736–1738.
- Martin E. Brose has translated and edited a selection of Charles Wesley sermons in German, which has been published by Edition Ruprecht in 2007: Charles Wesley: Die Predigten.

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21 The 18th century was a time of many radical changes. They were not only recognized in the field of music, but also in politics, technology, science, industry, philosophy, and literature. “The transitions in English culture that these changes wrought cannot be overlooked in a careful analysis of Wesley’s life.” Heitzenrater, The Elusive Mr. Wesley, vol. 2, p. 210.

22 A new edition of the MS Journal which accomplishes these tasks will be published by Kingswood/Abingdon Press in 2007.


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- The new hymnal of the Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche (2002) contains twenty-two Charles Wesley hymns, for which Martin E. Brose has written interpretation and commentary. Eleven of them have been published in Werkbuch zum Gesangbuch der EmK, edited by Hartmut Handt as an unbound sheets edition. The remaining hymn commentaries will be published subsequently.

2. Charles Wesley and the German language

Charles Wesley knew English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French, but what about the German language? Did he know any German at all or did he have only a smattering of German? Or did he know German as well as his brother John and perhaps translated German hymns into English? These are simple questions, but difficult to answer!

The information handed down concerning this topic is contradictory: While his son Samuel (1766–1837) reported that his father was able to read and understand German texts, his daughter Sally (1759–1828) had her doubts. Although she cared for the Wesley manuscripts after the death of her father and uncle John in a circumspect and accurate manner, she only could speculate about the proper answer to this question. There is no evidence—neither a quotation of her father nor any witness.

Baker discussed this question in Representative Verse of Charles Wesley: "From the evidence furnished by Charles Wesley’s manuscript hymn-books," he argues, "it is clear that he either did have at least a sufficient smattering of German to enable him to do some translating for himself, or that he transcribed into volumes of what seem otherwise to be his own verses some of his brother’s, and was even bold enough to correct them!"  

This is not the place to enter into a full discussion of the problem, but the basic facts may be stated. It would appear true that during the voyage to Georgia Charles did not see as much of the Moravians as John, and that while John was learning German he (as a newly-ordained minister) was preparing sermons. In Georgia he apparently also did not come into contact with the Moravians very much. When he wrote to Count Zinzendorf in 1737, it was in Latin, the common language of scholarship, and they conversed in Latin (as did John and the Count).

25 John Wesley knew that his brother Charles had an excellent knowledge of Latin and Greek. On December 7, 1764, he wrote to him: "Translate for me into good English the Latin verses that occur in the Earnest Appeal; and why not those three Greek ones?" The Works of John Wesley (Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 12:127.


One subject, however, of Charles’s conversation with Zinzendorf was a proposed visit to Germany,\(^{29}\) which he could hardly attempt without at least a smattering of German. Indeed a basic knowledge seems to have been picked up via his elder brother’s enthusiasm (for the German language\(^{30}\)) on board the *Simmonds*. The very sentences which Dr. Bett quoted from John Wesley’s sermon 117, however, to prove that John was the translator, can also be used to prove that Charles could speak German, and was therefore a potential translator: “My brother and I, in our voyage to America, became acquainted with the (so-called) Moravian Brethren. . . . Every day we conversed with them, and consulted them on all occasions. I translated many of their hymns. . . .”\(^{31}\)

While the use of the singular in the last sentence excludes Charles Wesley without any doubt, the last sentence quoted indicates that he might have had at least a basic knowledge of German. Beckerlegge joins this point of view and says: “It would indeed be strange if Charles had no knowledge of German, but we have no indisputable concrete evidence of the fact.”\(^{32}\) Rattenbury points out that Charles must have known some German, since it was he who taught English to Peter Böhler.\(^{33}\)

There are the following lines (42–45) in Charles Wesley’s *Epistle to Howel Harris:*\(^{34}\)

Or GOD the Father our “Pappa” shall be
And GOD the H[oly] Ghost a Monstrous She,
“Mother of Jeshua, our dear heart’s flamelein,”
Our Everlasting GOD – “our Brother Lamblein!”

It is striking that Charles Wesley is using the German in three cases when he is vehemently criticizing Harris’s “blood and wound Theology” (line 37). Apparently he does this in order to elucidate his critic:

1. Line 42: Here he is using the German word “Pappa” (“Daddy”), which is a term of endearment for “Abba, Father” (Mark 13:36; Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6);

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\(^{29}\) “He much pressed me to go with him to Germany; which I am very willing to do, if I can get clear of the Trustees.” CWJ, 1:67 (Feb. 2, 1737).

\(^{30}\) “I was more than ever convinced that the French is the poorest, meanest language in Europe, that it is no more comparable to the German or Spain than a bagpipe is to an organ.” JWW, 21:79.


\(^{32}\) Oliver A. Beckerlegge, *Introduction/The Sources of the “Collection”* in *JWW*, 7:34.


2. Line 44: Charles Wesley adds the German diminutive “lein” to the English word “flame.”


Charles Wesley is using both altered words as rhyme-words. This passage of the Epistle strengthens the assumption, that Charles Wesley had a good knowledge of the German language.

In our discussion one important statement of the German theologian Johann Gottlieb Burckhardt (1756–1800) must be noted. Who was he? Burckhardt was born in February 1756 in Eisleben, Saxony-Anhalt. After attending primary school, he joined the Gymnasium in Halle. He then studied at Leipzig University. In 1777 he became Magister atriun, and in May 1780 defended his dissertation De memoria. Burckhardt had planned an academic career and was a candidate for headmaster of the Gymnasium in Halle, but things developed in a totally different direction. On May 12, 1781, the twenty-five-year-old theologian set out on a journey to London, where he took up the post of minister of the German-Lutheran Marienkirche in Savoy and chair of the German School, founded in 1708. He preached his first sermon at the Marienkirche on Trinity Sunday 1781. He served the church and school up to his death on August 10, 1800.

Michel Weyer writes in his introduction to Burckhardt’s Vollständige Geschichte der Methodisten in England (Complete History of the Methodists in England): “It wasn’t long till he got to know Methodism in the English capital. To him Methodism seemed to be a variation of his pietism at home. Therefore the Lutheran theologian from Saxony at once had a high opinion of Methodism. The intensive study of John Wesley’s writings, whom he got to know personally, had increased his enthusiasm for Methodism.” Burckhardt’s Vollständige Geschichte der Methodisten in England, published in 1795 in Nürnberg, takes a special place among his thirty-five publications, because this is the first self-dependent German monograph of Methodism.

In chapter two “Progress and Growth of Methodism” he describes the journey to Georgia, “which John Wesley, his brother Charles, and the two congenial friends Ingham and Delamotte” undertook in 1735. Then follows the decisive sentence: “The Wesleys at once started learning French and German in order to be able to preach the word of God to the various emigrants both on board and in the colonies in their mother tongue” (pp. 25–26).

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35 The following biographical information is based on Michel Weyer’s Introduction to a facsimile reprint of Burckhardt’s Vollständige Geschichte der Methodisten in England (Nürnberg: Verlag der Raw’schen Buchhandlung, 1795) published by the Christliches Verlagshaus in Stuttgart, 1995, and edited by Weyer.

36 There were five congregations for the 6,000 German-speaking Protestants in London. The Savoy-congregation was founded in 1692, it was the largest of the five congregations.

As far as I know, this quotation has never been mentioned before in the discussion of Charles Wesley's knowledge of German. Baker confirmed this in a letter to the author dated July 12, 1995: "To the best of my knowledge this quotation has not been utilized in any discussion of Charles Wesley's knowledge of German, for which I have contended in print."

The title of Burckhardt's book mentions "reliable sources." In the introduction he states about himself: "I was lucky to get to know the honourable John Wesley personally, who is still alive; I have repeatedly joined his company." In his letter of November 28, 1782, he asked John Wesley for "authentic material" for his book about the Methodists in England. In his introduction to the facsimile reprint of Burckhardt's volume Michel Weyer characterizes Burckhardt (p. 26) as follows: "... his way of argumentation is differentiated." So Burckhardt may count as a trustworthy informant. Therefore, in my opinion his testimony is the keystone of this discussion.

Has the probability increased that Charles Wesley translated the six sacred poems entitled "From the German"? Baker and Beckerlegge have suggested that they think it likely that Charles Wesley translated "Wie wohl ist mir, O Freund der Seelen" by Wolfgang Christoph Dessler (1660–1722) and "Zeuch hin mein Geist, in Jesu blut und wunden" by Christian Friedrich Richter (1676–1711), both hymns are from Das Gesang-Buch der Gemeine in Herrn-Huth 1737 (No. 762,753). In Charles Wesley's "translations" the first lines run like this: (1) "O how happy am I here, / How beyond Expression blest" and (2) "Melt happy Soul in Jesu's Blood, / Sink down into the Wounds of God."

In 1992 S T Kimbrough, Jr., and Oliver A. Beckerlegge in volume 3 of The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley published four poems with the heading "From the German" in the section "Hymns of doubtful authorship." The first lines of these four poems are:

1. Behold the Saviour of Mankind / Patient & good, and meek of Mind
2. My Saviour, thou didst shed / Thy precious Blood for me
3. The Cross, the cross, O that's my Gain!
4. Beloved Saviour, Prince of Life, / to us thy Spirit give

The four poems, however, appear in the English-language hymnbook, A Collection of Hymns, With several Translations from the Hymn-book of the

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38 The author of this study pointed to this sentence in his book Zum Lob befreit: Charles Wesley und das Kirchenlied (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1997), p. 286.

39 George Whitefield writes in his letter from December 30, 1736, to Charles Wesley: "All friends like the German Hymn admirably." Is this an indication of one of the six hymns "From the German"? George Whitefield's Letters, Facsimile of The Works of George Whitefield 1771 (Edinburgh, 1976), p. 488.


41 Although both poems have the same title "The Life of Faith I, II" they are independent poems with different metre. See Beckerlegge's chapter about the translations from the German in JWW, vol. 7, pp. 33–38.
Moravian Brethren, the second edition (London, 1743). While other hymns in this hymnbook are designated as being “From the German,” these four poems do not bear that designation. One of them, “The Cross, the cross, O that’s my Gain!” is attributed to Clare Taylor, an English Moravian. Randy Maddox, who discovered the poems’ presence in the hymnbook just cited, has suggested to S T Kimbrough, Jr., that “they were all originally in English, and Charles copied them because he liked them!” To date no German source of the three other hymns has come to light and it is possible that they were originally in English.

That Charles Wesley had a significant knowledge of German is likely but that he translated poems 1, 2, and 4 above is highly unlikely, unless future research proves to the contrary. A German source for these poems is not known. Of course, the most likely sources might be the Gesang Buch der Gemeine in Herrnhuth (1735) and in Neues geistreiches Gesang-Buch published by Freylinghausen in Halle (1714), which together contain 2,572 hymns. Hence, until thorough research of those hymnbooks is made the question must remain open.

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42 S T Kimbrough, Jr.’s email dated October 17, 2006.


The Inculturation of Wesleyan Spirituality and Hymnody in the German Language Context

A study of the circumstances surrounding the production of German Wesleyan hymnals by John Lyth and the German Order of Administration translated by John Cook Barratt.

Helen Shephard

Introduction

This article explores some of the ways in which Wesleyan spirituality and hymnody were introduced to the German language context. It will do so by examining two Wesleyan publications which appeared in German: a hymnal of 1864 produced by John Lyth, and the German translation of the Order of Administration produced between 1873 and 1874 by John Cook Barratt. We will ask ourselves why each publication was produced, looking at the stage of development that the Wesleyan mission to Germany had reached in these particular years, and examining the motives behind the role each publication played in the furthering of the growth of Wesleyanism in Germany.

Historical background

The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) mission in Germany was centred on Winnenden in Wurttemberg. It began in 1831 and was led by Christoph Gottlob Müller, who had been converted to Wesleyan Methodism in London. During this time of German lay leadership of the mission the WMMS remained firmly in the background, sending only a small amount of financial support to Müller each year, and otherwise taking no part in the running of the mission.

Müller’s death in 1858 led to a watershed in the WMMS’ relationship to Germany. When it became evident that there were several contenders for the role of Müller’s successor the WMMS sent two ordained Wesleyan ministers to take stock of the situation of the Wesleyan movement in Germany, and it was as a result of this that, after much consideration, the Reverend Dr. John Lyth was appointed as the first of three English superintendents of the WMMS mission in Germany. The transfer of leadership of what was essentially a movement for spiritual renewal within the Wurttemberg state church from an indigenous lay member of that church to an ordained clergyman of a foreign church was an enormous step. It had huge implications for the way in which the movement was viewed by the clergy and the secular authorities in Wurttemberg, and it also represented a fundamental change in the WMMS’ relationship with the mission. The missionary society now had direct control of and involvement in the mission.

What was the WMMS trying to achieve in Germany?

The WMMS had to work hard to justify its missions in Europe. At home there were always those ready to question the allocation of limited resources to coun-
tries with a Christian heritage, and Württemberg was a particularly difficult case as the WMMS could not fall back on the excuse, which it used later for Bavaria and Austria, of ministry to a predominately Catholic population. There was also the problem in the receiving country of those who saw themselves as "missionaries." The WMMS, on the surface, seemed anxious to avoid this. In 1827 it issued a statement which identified its European missions as serving the purpose of ministry to expatriates, with the secondary purpose of encouraging a growth in spirituality amongst the indigenous population.\(^1\) However, the WMMS was not entirely consistent in its application of these principles. Even as the statement was being issued, a young English minister was chosen to oversee the WMMS mission to Sweden.\(^2\) The criteria for his selection was his ability to speak Swedish, which suggests that mission to Swedes was not to be a mere "accident" of his ministry to expatriates, but was part of a strategy.\(^3\) In Württemberg from 1831 onwards also the WMMS, while not at the forefront of what was happening, nevertheless gave financial support, albeit limited, to Germans who were seeking to minister not to expatriates but to their fellow countrymen.\(^4\)

On the other hand, the political and ecclesiological difficulties associated with mission in a Protestant country kept them very much in the background of Müller's enterprise. In 1859 all that changed. Lyth's move to Germany raised questions about the relationship of the German Wesleyan movement to the state church as well as the question of Protestant mission in a predominately Protestant country, questions with which the WMMS was to grapple for the next thirty-five years.

**Part 1. The mission under Lyth and the translation of the hymnal**

Lyth's task in Germany

Lyth had a very difficult job to do in his leadership of the Wesleyan German mission. He had to maintain the status of the movement as a renewal movement within the Württemberg Lutheran state church and to keep the good relationship which Müller had built with the civil and religious authorities. On the other hand, he was charged by the WMMS with bringing a stronger Wesleyan identity to the movement, the outworking of which was inevitably to undermine his first aim. The stronger the Wesleyan identity of the movement became, the more its relationship with the state church would come under strain.

The delegation, which the WMMS had sent to Germany, found that Müller's movement had fallen out of Wesleyan practices and recommended that they be re-introduced with a firm measure of discipline. Lyth's task was to "[carry] out

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\(^1\) Reports of the WMMS, 180ff, Report 1827, 4f. cited in L. Rott, *Die englischen Beziehungen der Erweckungsbewegung und die Anfänge des wesleyanischen Methodismus in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Studiengemeinschaft für Geschichte des Methodismus, 1958), 100; henceforth cited as Rott, *Beziehungen*.


\(^3\) Edwards, *Realm*, 3.

\(^4\) Rott, *Beziehungen*, passim.
Methodism among the societies gathered by the late Mr Müller as far as [he] may be allowed by law to do so."⁵ This "Wesleyanization" (or "re-Wesleyanization") of the movement was something that was begun by Lyth and continued after his return to England by his successor, Barratt. The process was begun by Lyth through the introduction of stricter discipline regarding class meetings and the collection of class subscriptions, the organisation and oversight of circuits, the introduction of Sunday Schools and an unofficial seminary. Most importantly for our purposes, he also introduced a body of German, Wesleyan literature.

The role of literature in promoting Wesleyanism in Germany

The purpose of circulating Wesleyan literature in Germany was for Lyth threefold. First, it fulfilled the aim of acting as an influence for the spiritual good of German society in general. Lyth observed in 1864: "There is a strange lack of cheap and popular religious literature in Germany, and this is a sphere of usefulness we ought to occupy as soon as we have the means of doing it."⁶ To this end, from 1863 Lyth published the monthly *Sonntags-Gast* paper, with an occasional supplement containing missionary news, as well as circulating tracts. Second, Wesleyan literature could inform the still suspicious ecclesial authorities about the doctrines and practices of Wesleyan Methodism. At Lyth’s request theological texts were sent by the WMMS to the library in Tübingen university.⁷ Third, literature had an important role to play, as it had in Müller’s time, in tying the German Wesleyan fellowships to English Wesleyanism by promoting both doctrine and practices. Lyth was very keen to translate and publish Wesley’s *General Rules* just before he left the mission in 1865. The production of a hymnbook was in this third category.

The need for a German Wesleyan hymnbook

When Lyth arrived in Germany in 1859 two hymn books were available for the use of the Wesleyan fellowships: that of the established church, and that of the American Methodist Episcopal Church, which had been conducting a mission in Württemberg since 1851.⁸ Until the 1870s, and in isolated cases even beyond that, the relationship in Germany between the Wesleyans and those following the Methodist Episcopal Church was very strained. Jacoby, the leader of the American mission, made frequent attempts to assimilate the Wesleyan mission into his own, and there were accusations in later years of American “sheep-stealing” of new Wesleyan converts in areas where both branches of Methodism were trying to extend their mission. The American Episcopal Methodists did not

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⁵ Home and General Minutes, Meeting of January 12, 1859.
⁶ Lyth to WMMS, October 6, 1864.
⁷ Home and General Minutes, meeting of April 12, 1862.
always display the same reverence for established church order. Much of the anti-
Methodist feeling that emanated from the established church in the 1860s was due
to American Methodists offending the Lutheran state-church order. Wesleyans
were included in the opposition because of their shared name, and felt that they
suffered unjustly. So it is no surprise that Lyth initially preferred the Wesleyan
societies to use the hymnbook of the established, Lutheran state church.

After two years of overseeing the mission, Lyth changed his mind, and
expressed his reservations about the Lutheran hymnbook: "It is sadly deficient in
experimental Hymns, as also Hymns of an awakening character, the Hymns are
too long, and many are for our purposes totally useless; further we want Hymns
for lovefeasts, covenant services."9

Lyth’s other fear was that, if his members were not supplied with a hymnbook
of their own, some would purchase the book of the Methodist Episcopal Church,
others that of the Evangelische Gemeinschaft, another German-American group
with a mission in Württemberg, and there would be no uniformity among them.
(As well, of course, opening the members of the Wesleyan fellowships to the
influence of American Methodism.) The role of the new hymnbook was there­
fore very clearly defined: it was to play its part in the establishment of a clear,
strong, Wesleyan identity. It was to contain hymns that reflected Wesleyan teach­
ings about the experiential nature of religion, and about the individual’s need for
a crisis of spiritual awakening. It was also to contain hymns that were to be used
in distinctively Methodist (in this case Wesleyan) forms of service. It was defined
by the fact that it was not Lutheran, not Episcopal Methodist and not of the
Evangelische Gemeinschaft. It was specifically a German Wesleyan hymnbook.

The Zions-Harje and the children’s hymnbook

By April 1863 Lyth had already selected from the English Methodist
Hymnbook the original 33 German hymns which the Wesleys had translated into
English.10 Twenty other Wesley hymns had been translated by Lyth and by some­
one working for him. He planned to add 40–50 more Wesley hymns and about
500 from other sources, of which he specifically mentions Herrnhut. Herrnhut
hymns, he felt, were “admirably suited to our purposes.”11 Lyth makes no men-

9Lyth to WMMS, April 20, 1863.
10The German hymns translated were originally by Lutheran Pietists and Moravians. The
Moravians whose hymns were translated were Maria Bohmer (1), Anna Dober (1), Spangenberg (1)
and Zinzendorf (8). The Lutherans were Arnold (1), Deszler (1), Gmelin (1), Gotter (1), Ernst Lange
(1), Joachim Lange (1), Rothe (1), Winckler (1), Freylinghausen (2), Richter (2) and Tersteegen (2).
(Whaling, Wesley, 66). There is some uncertainty about the respective contributions of John and
Charles Wesley to the translating of the German hymns. F. Whaling, John and Charles Wesley.
Selected Writings and Hymns in the series: The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist
Press, 1981), 17, 66 (volume henceforth cited as Whaling, Wesley), takes the view that John translated
all 33. F. Baker (Representative Verse of Charles Wesley [London: Epworth Press, 1962], Iviii–lix)
however, argues that Charles may have been responsible for some of the translations.
11Lyth to WMMS, April 20, 1863.
tion of the 150 Wesley hymns translated into German by C. G. Müller in the 1830s. The failure to draw on Müller's contribution is typical of the missionaries sent to Germany by the WMMS who felt that the founder of Wesleyan Methodism in Germany did not bring true Wesleyan organization and discipline to the movement.

When the Zions-Harfe hymnbook was published in January 1864 it contained 613 hymns. Seventy-one were by Wesley, all but 3 translated by Lyth, and 6 were hymns of Lyth's own composition. In addition there were 26 hymns by other English writers, of which the largest number (8) are by Issac Watts. Twenty-one of the hymns translated by the Wesleys from various German writers found their way into the book. In his analysis of the source of the German hymns which the Wesleys chose to use for English purposes Frank Whaling notes that there was almost an equal division between the number of hymns from Herrnhut and those from Lutheran authors, but that Zinzendorf was the writer who had the largest number of hymns translated. Similarly, in the Zions-Harfe, there are hymns from both sources. Zinzendorf is more prominent than he was in Wesley's collection (15 hymns). On the Lutheran side it is Tersteegen who comes to the fore (14). Burkhardt notes that, in addition to the above, the Württemberg Pietist tradition was strongly represented as well as more recent German hymn-writers.

The theology of the Zions-Harfe.

We turn now to the inculcation of Wesleyan spirituality and hymnody in the German-language context, and for the following I am deeply indebted to Friedemann Burkhardt's work on the importance of hymnody to the Wesleyan Methodists, and the place of the Zions-Harfe in the context of the church music tradition of Württemberg.

We have already seen that the Zions-Harfe was produced in order to give the Wesleyan movement in Germany a strong Wesleyan identity, and that Lyth chose the hymns according to their reflection of Wesleyan theology and practice. In his examination of the importance for Wesleyans of hymnology and congregational singing, Burkhardt notes that in singing God's word reaches the individual in both an objective-intellectual and a subjective-existential way. Let us first consider the objective-intellectual effectiveness of the Zions-Harfe. Again to quote

13 Lyth to WMMS, March 21, 1860.
14 Whaling, Wesley, 66.
15 Zions-Harfe, 1863.
Burkhardt, the book has a “strictly dogmatic shape.” The Zions-Harfe hymns were ordered under 4 headings: About God; About Humanity; About the Church of Christ and About Time and Eternity and a section for miscellaneous titles. Under each section there are sub-headings (Hymns of praise and thanks, God’s being and character, the love of the Father, the Incarnation of the Son, to name some from the first section.) Key words at the top of each page remind the reader of the aspect of theology addressed in the hymn. As Burkhardt shows, the subsections reveal a specifically Wesleyan theology: in contrast to the way in which it would be presented in a Lutheran hymnbook, the section “Love of the Father” is highlighted by separation from that of God’s being and character. Attention is given to the names and the roles of Christ. In the second section dealing with humanity the Wesleyan understanding of holiness and Christian life emerges. In the section on the church there are hymns for specifically Methodist forms of meeting, particularly a separate section for the characteristically Methodist prayer meeting. Given the task with which Lyth had been charged by the WMMS and the intentions expressed in his letters regarding the preparation of the Zions-Harfe, there can be no doubt that the answer to Burkhardt’s question “was J. Lyth pursuing strong catechistic intentions and was the Zions-Harfe intended as a kind of Methodist dogmatic in a Pietist context?” is a definite “yes.”

The subjective-existential assimilation of Wesleyan spirituality

But we must not neglect the other contribution of congregational singing: what Burkhardt calls the subjective-existential assimilation of truth about God, first, the very process of singing songs such as these was an experience which was unique to Methodists in Germany. Burkhardt shows that singing played a very small part in the liturgy of the Württemberg state church, as well as the Pietist meetings. From the early days of Wesleyanism in Württemberg under Müller singing was an important part of the meetings. In addition, the lively tunes favored by the Wesleyans were a stark contrast to the lugubrious music of the German chorale. Singing lively tunes in the small fellowship group was then, in itself, the mark of distinctively Methodist practice and therefore of identity in Württemberg.

In addition, there is the phenomenon of the “subjective-existential” assimilation of truth which goes on during the singing of hymns in the fellowship. Burkhardt’s observations on Wesley’s understanding of the role of singing for his English followers in the eighteenth century are no less true of their German counterparts in the nineteenth: “Music and song are means through which God’s healing powers can bring a healing touch and change people in the very deepest

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19 The fact that the Pietist Rescript of 1743 had restricted the singing of songs to those permitted by the church, and that it recommended the reading of hymns, but only as a secondary activity to the reading and discussion of the scriptures, is perhaps testimony to the power of song in the context of religious fellowship.
places of their being." This was an aspect of the singing of hymns which Lyth was anxious to encourage in his selection of hymns of "an experimental and awakening nature." Bett in *The Spirit of Methodism* (1937) drew attention to the way in which in England Charles Wesley's hymns were an essential part of the formation of the Wesleyan identity at a congregational and personal level: "Those hymns were our devotional and experimental standard. They expressed and safeguarded the norms of Methodist experience, and helped to re-create it from generation to generation, because they were in constant use both in public worship and private devotion." In the same way, Wesleyans in Württemberg who sang from the *Zions-Harfe* hymn book in their fellowship with one another, were undergoing a process of Wesleyanization which was taking place on an intellectual, emotional-experiential and practical level.

The *Zions-Harfe* continued in use with some revisions, which we will discuss later, until the unification of the Wesleyan Methodist mission in Germany with that of the American Episcopal Methodists. During these years the Wesleyan mission, and the singing of these hymns, extended beyond the borders of Württemberg to Baden, Bavaria, Austria, Westphalia, Bohemia, Silesia, and Saxony.

**Part 2: The production of the Order of Administration under Barratt**

*Historical résumé*

We now move forward in time ten years to a very different stage in the development of the WMMS' mission in Germany and to a very different Wesleyan, German publication. Lyth had left Germany in 1865. His successor, John Cook Barratt, maintained and extended the Wesleyanization of the mission which Lyth had begun, through the insistence on Wesleyan practices and teachings. He continued the practice of providing the university library in Tübingen with Wesleyan publications and ensured that the Minutes of Conference were circulated amongst the German preachers. In 1872 the *Sonntags-Gast* became the *Methodistener-Herald*, thus promoting the profile of Wesleyan Methodism in Germany much more clearly. Important theological works including sermons and lectures were made available in translation and there was a thriving tract ministry.

*The Württemberg Dissidentengesetz, 1872*

If 1859 and the arrival of Lyth in Germany was a watershed in the life of the German mission, then the passing in 1872 in Württemberg of the *Dissidentengesetz* after a long period of consultation and debate was another. The law granted freedom to all groups outside of the state church to hold private and public meetings and to have their own constitutions without needing to seek official permission. This law, however, only applied to groups outside of the church, and left the

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21 Burkhardt, "Singing," 18 (this author’s translation).
Wesleyan fellowships, which still officially considered themselves a renewal group within the established church, with a problem. Barratt solved the dilemma by declaring to the Württemberg consistory that he was going to take advantage of the law: in 1872 Wesleyan Methodists in Germany officially became dissenters.

While it cannot be denied that this was a very significant step in the relationship of the Wesleyans with the state church, without which the separatist actions of the 1870s and beyond could not have happened, it is interesting to note how little and how late the Wesleyans actually took advantage of the freedoms available to them. The administration of Communion by Barratt was the first to be exercised, and then only intermittently. Wesleyan church services were not moved to coincide with those of the established church until 1874, and even then not universally among all Wesleyan congregations; the first German Wesleyan ministers were not ordained until 1875; the first Wesleyan confirmation took place the same year. It was 1877 before there was a Wesleyan burial and even in the 1890s Wesleyans were still turning to ministers of the state church for the performance of these rites instead of their own preachers.24

*Barratt’s Ordnungen, 1873*

These events provide the background against which Barratt translated the Wesleyan rites into German, and produced in 1873 the *Order for the Distribution of Holy Communion*, and in 1874 the *Order for the Administration of the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism, as well as the Consecration of Marriages, Funerals and the Ordination of Preachers*.25 The fact that the Order for Holy Communion alone appeared first is a reflection of its importance in the eyes of German Wesleyans who pressed for its administration by their own preachers. The freedom to administer communion had been fought for by the Episcopal Methodists and the *Evangelische Gemeinschaft* from the mid 1860s, and had become the issue over which many of their preachers and members had left the state church. The Wesleyans were not so hasty, there had been numerous requests to Barratt to institute a Wesleyan Communion service,26 but he had waited for the opportunity of the *Dissidentengesetz* to do so.

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26 Barratt(24,604),(129,629) to WMMS, January 8, 1873. (Up to 1839 English Wesleyans had used Wesley’s abridgement of the BCP, or the BCP itself.) With the rise of Tractarianism, Conference issued the Order of Administration of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism in 1839. Subsequent editions included the forms for Matrimony, Burial and Ordination. The *Form for Ordaining Candidates for the Ministry in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion* was produced in 1846. Before that membership of Conference was considered to be a form of ordination. *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, Vol. 2, ed. by R. Davies, A. R. George, and G. Rupp (London: Epworth Press, 1978), 127, 157.
When Barratt made his declaration to the Württemberg consistory in 1872 that he intended to "make use of the Rights granted by the law, especially with reference to the Administration of the Lord’s Supper,” he added the proviso that it was not his intention to “institute an unlimited administration of the Holy Sacraments” but said that he would “comply with any request that may be made on this subject.”27 In other words, he was leaving it up to the membership to decide the extent to which the Wesleyans in Württemberg would engage in separatist activity. This continued as the first Communion service was held in Stuttgart in January 1873. Barratt instructed his preachers not to “press or persuade any single member to communicate with us on this occasion, but simply to state that we intend to do so.” One hundred four people took part in the service. Barratt knew at the time that this action would “bring down a storm” on the Wesleyans, not only from the state church, but also from Wesleyan members who preferred not to have the status of dissenter conferred upon them.28

When Barratt held a Communion service at the end of the District Meeting in May 1873, 145 people took part, therefore not that many more than had in the New Year.29 Towards the end of the year, however, there were requests from societies all over the German district for Wesleyan Communion, and Barratt appealed to the WMMS to send him a second English, ordained minister to assist in the administration.30 By March 1874 Barratt was holding two Communion services each Sunday all over the District.31

For those who partook of the Communion services the joy of being able to do so under Wesleyan rites was the source of blessing. Barratt notes in 1874: “spiritually, these sacramental occasions have been seasons of great blessing. In three or four places the manifestation of the presence of God was almost overwhelming. My own soul has been greatly quickened and blessed.”32

Barratt’s Ordnungen, 1874

By April 1874 Barratt found the pressure on himself and his ordained English assistant to administer Communion across the whole District too great. Conference in England recommended that Wesleyans take Communion once a month, and Barratt suggested that the German preachers be ordained, or at least authorised to administer the sacrament in order to make this possible. Thus communion, the first step towards the independent existence of Wesleyanism in Germany, led to the next, the ordination of preachers. The ordinations took place in 1875, with Osborn, Barratt’s father-in-law and tutor of Richmond college, presiding. Osborn recognized that if the German Wesleyan preachers were ordained,

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27 Barratt: To The Royal Evangelical Consistory, September 23, 1872. (In the correspondence).
28 Barratt to WMMS, January 8, 1873.
29 Barratt to WMMS, July 7, 1873.
30 Barratt to WMMS, October 25, 1873.
31 Barratt to WMMS, March 17, 1874.
32 Barratt to WMMS, March 17, 1874.
this would not only significantly increase the numbers of those able to adminis­
ter Communion, but would also give the German preachers a certain standing in
the eyes of the membership which would enable them better to respond to the
opposition of the Lutheran clergy.33 Barratt had prepared his second version of
the Order in time for the service.34

The content of the Order of Administration

Once again, I am indebted to the work of Friedemann Burkhardt for the infor­
mation in the following section. Barratt’s 1874 Order of Administration was a
direct translation of that used by English Methodists and contained in Wesley’s
The Sunday Service of the People Called Methodists. The English form of ser­
vice was to a Württemberg congregation “rather exotic” and “foreign.” Of the
Württemberg state church service Burkhardt notes:

[It] had always been more strongly characterised by the spoken word than the
sacrament, song or liturgical elements. The main Sunday service is not based on
the liturgy of the mass, but is . . . exclusively a service of the sermon of the word
in which all other parts of the service are grouped around the central sermon text
and sermon. The characteristic mark of the Württemberg service is therefore its
inherent completeness even without communion.35

By contrast the Wesleyan Methodist service drawing on the Book of Common
Prayer contained a rich liturgy, with the Communion (the altar and not the pulpit)
at the centre.36 As well as having a richer liturgy, Wesleyan Methodists sang
more, they stood to sing in their meetings and knelt to pray, all of which was con­
sidered by their Württemberg contemporaries as behavior reminiscent of
Catholicism.37 The 1874 edition of the Barratt’s Order was accompanied by a
paragraph from the Book of Common Prayer, which defended the liturgy against
accusations of Catholicism.

The role of the Communion service outside of Württemberg

Barratt’s superintendency was characterized in the first fifteen years at least,
by the expansion of the Wesleyan movement far beyond the borders of
Württemberg where it had been confined since its beginnings in 1831. By 1880

33 Osborn to WMMS, June 18, 1875.
34 Barratt to WMMS, June 18, 1875.
35 F. W. Burkhardt, Gottesdienst und Abendmahlsfeier in der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche
in Deutschland. Rezeption und Adaption wesleyanischer Liturgieformen in Gottesdienst und
Abendmahlsfeier der methodistischen Gemeinde in Württemberg. Praktisch-theologische Arbeit in
36 Burkhardt, Gottesdienst, 11.
37 Burkhardt, Gottesdienst, 10. The BCP had been revised under Elizabeth I, and held to a form
that, while Protestant, was not too offensive to those with Catholic sympathies. The form in the BCP
was that used by Wesley in his Sunday Service for the People Called Methodists. Thus it would have
provided a contrast to the liturgy used in Protestant worship.
there were circuits or preaching stations in Austria, Baden, Catholic and Protestant Bavaria, Westphalia, Silesia and Bohemia. Naturally there were various difficulties to face in opening Wesleyan missions in places where there were restrictive laws on the non-state-registered religious groups which were often applied with a great deal more stringency than had been the case in Württemberg even before the Dissidentengesetz.

Having taken the decision to become Dissenters in Württemberg, taking on the same role in other German territories was apparently no longer a problem to the Wesleyans. Anyway, in the case of Catholic territories the same hesitancy to offend church order which had characterised the Wesleyan’s behavior in Württemberg until 1872 did not apply. Back in 1871 Barratt had shared his dilemma over the mission to Austria with the WMMS:

In Württemberg all our members are still members of the state church, and we do not administer the Lord’s supper to our German societies at all ... But in Vienna our position is different. All these converts have hitherto been Romanists, and several of them have already said that they cannot go back to the ‘idol temple’, and they desire that we shall provide them with all the means of grace. It can scarcely be expected that we should hand over these souls given to us by God to the Lutheran church.

There was not the religious freedom in Austria which would allow the setting up of a separate Methodist church without special permission from the government. At this stage all Barratt could do was ask the WMMS to consider the options with him. The ability to give Protestant Communion to Austrian members was an issue. He considered having Dieterle, the German preacher in Vienna, ordained to meet the need. The only problem was that there was at this point no precedent in the rest of the Wesleyan movement for the ordination of a German preacher, but Barratt made the comment that in Austria the Wesleyans were not “under the obligations, which in [Württemberg] in some respect circumscribe out usefulness.” This can only be a reference to the refusal to offend Lutheran church order which Barratt obviously did not feel needed to be extended to the state church in Austria. There appears to have been no reply to his request from the WMMS and the matter was dropped until after 1872.

After 1872 there are frequent references in Barratt’s correspondence to the administration of Wesleyan Communion in other territories. Specifically mentioned are Vienna in 1875 and 1876, Glogau in 1878, and Nuremberg in 1883. We can assume that after the ordination of Wesleyan German preachers it was a more regular occurrence, but these dates refer to visits from Barratt when he administered Communion. There was the intention to administer to the soci-

38 Barratt to WMMS, August 22, 1871.
39 Barratt to WMMS, July 12, 1875, December 11, 1876.
40 Barratt to WMMS, December 4, 1880.
41 Barratt to WMMS, December 14, 1883.
Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society 2005

ety in Kladno, Bohemia in 1884, but the minister of another evangelical church had already done so when the visiting Wesleyan preacher arrived. While Prussian law granted religious freedom in Silesia, the administration of Wesleyan Communion in Austria and Bavaria in these years is astonishing. In the Austrian Empire only the Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed churches had any legal right to exist. While the 1870s was a decade in which the Austrian Wesleyan work was allowed to grow relatively unchallenged in comparison to later years, nevertheless, a licence had to be obtained for every meeting. Often when permission was not forthcoming, the meeting had to take the form of domestic worship in the preacher’s home. It is therefore astonishing to read of Barratt administering Communion in a public meeting hall to 11 members, of which 9 were Austrian and former Catholics.

The administration of Communion to the Nuremberg Wesleyans in 1883 is equally bold. Bavaria’s constitution promised to uphold freedom of conscience, and the conscientious distinction and protection of that which belonged to the State and the Church,” which in reality meant the freedom, again, to belong to the Catholic, Lutheran or Reformed churches. Religious lectures were permitted, but there was to be no praying or singing and no collections. Wesleyans were not granted the status of a Private Church society until 1885. Even after this happened the transfer of membership from a state-recognized church to such a society was very difficult, and it was forbidden to give Communion to someone who was a member of a state-recognized church.

The appendix to the Order, which had been intended to smooth the acceptance of the Wesleyan service in Protestant Württemberg had the opposite effect in Catholic Vienna. The Articles of Faith attached to the translation in German of the Order of Administration were to provoke the greatest storm in the life of the Wesleyan mission in Vienna. In December 1891 two copies were taken from the Wesleyan preacher and a Wesleyan layperson in Vienna. The articles referred to the doctrine of transubstantiation as contrary to scripture and to the idea that the mass was a sacrificial offering as blasphemous and dangerous. On the basis that the teachings of one of the state-recognized churches was being disparaged the Viennese authorities declared the Articles illegal and forbade the Vienna preacher to hold any services.

42 Barratt to WMMS, October 18, 1884.
45 Europe Synod Minutes 1887, Germany Report on 1886.
46 Something that had been done since the time when Wesley published the abridged Order from the BCP. A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, Vol. I, 270. Here there is also the reference to the lack of official authority of this document in British Methodism, in contrast to America.
Facing the dissolution of the Austrian work if any importance was attached to these Articles, Barratt argued that they had been prepared by Wesley in 1784 for use in America, and, being adapted from the sixteenth-century Church of England prayer book, came from an era "in which it was custom to speak in strong language." Had the Articles been prepared in 1890, they would have been expressed quite differently. It was never the intention of Wesleyan Methodism to speak with "mockery and defamation" of any national church, but only to "lead sinners to Christ and to edify those who have believed in the saving of their souls." In addition, the Articles formed no part of the "Standards of Doctrine or Discipline" of Wesleyan Methodism, which were founded on the Bible, Wesley's sermons and Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament. They were never referred to in any official capacity by the Wesleyan Conference. The majority of English Wesleyan preachers had probably never read them, and certainly were not required to teach them. They had never been intended for circulation in Austria, having been translated for use in Bavaria when the Wesleyan mission was seeking legal recognition there. Their only importance was "historical (or antiquarian)." Barratt's arguments became the content of the official WMMS appeal against the Austrian government's prohibition of Wesleyan Methodist meetings in Vienna.

After two years of unsuccessful appeals to the Austrian government to restore the right to meet to the Wesleyan society there, a visiting English Wesleyan preacher quietly reinstated Wesleyan services in Vienna. There was something of a stalemate between the Austrian government and the Wesleyans at the time. It had become apparent that the objection to the Articles had been more of a pretext for preventing Wesleyan meetings when Lutheran, not Catholic, clergy in Vienna had complained about them. The Austrian government was greatly embarrassed by the amount of publicity which this case received in the secular press, and was anxious not to be branded an intolerant state. Finally, in 1897, the ban on meetings was lifted.

**Conclusion**

I would like to address three points that have to do with the inculturation of Wesleyan spirituality and hymnody in the German-language context through these two publications that we have been examining.

First, as we have seen, from 1859 onwards, the WMMS was keen to bring about in Germany through its ordained missionaries, a body of members with a strong Wesleyan identity. This was achieved by the teaching of Wesleyan doctrines and the introduction of Wesleyan practices, as well as by giving German Wesleyans a strong link to the parent body in England. Both of the publications we have considered today played their part in forging that relationship. Not only were the Zions-Harfe hymns carefully selected for their reflection of Wesleyan teaching, many of them were translations of those sung by Wesleyan Methodists in England. The Order of Administration was an exact copy of that used in England.
Second, each of these publications is an indication of the stage of development which the Wesleyan mission in Germany had reached when it was published. In 1864 the movement had just gone through its first watershed, passing from German to English leadership, and was in the process of shaking off the accretions of Pietism which it had gained in the last years of Müller’s life in its adoption of a Wesleyan identity. The main means of inculturation of Wesleyan spirituality at this time was the fellowship meeting at which singing played a large part. The singing of Zions-Harfe hymns and the resulting intellectual and emotional assimilation of Wesleyan teaching which it provided were the most effective way of developing the movement in the direction which the WMMS wished it to take.

The second publication followed the second major watershed which the Wesleyan movement in Germany experienced. At this point, the main issue for the movement was not merely increased Wesleyanization, but the beginnings of its growth towards the status of an independent church. The German Wesleyan publication which we have examined from this era, the Orders for the administration of Wesleyan rites, is the product of this development, and could only have appeared in the post-Dissidentengesetz climate of the mid to late 1870s.

Finally, I would like to comment very briefly on the idea of “inculturation.” As we have seen, the attempts by the representatives of the WMMS to bring Wesleyanism to Germany often involved more translation than the adaptation of their material to the culture of those to whom they wished to minister. The first edition of the Zions-Harfe, while it contained many German hymns, also contained a large number of English ones. When a revision was undertaken in 1875 the number of English hymns was reduced from 120 to 40. Burkhardt traces this change to German nationalism as well as to the availability of more German hymns in the Methodist tradition from the pen of Gebhardt.47 We have also looked at the way in which the translation from the English of the Order of Administration had difficulty gaining acceptance outside Wesleyan Methodist circles in both Protestant Württemberg, where it was considered too Catholic, and Catholic Vienna, where it was considered too Protestant. It could be argued that these publications attempt to engrat, rather than to inculturate Wesleyan spirituality.

The translation of English material into German that formed the basis of the first Zions-Harfe and the Order of Administration was part of a wider WMMS policy of taking Wesleyanism to Germany, which involved close ties with the sending body at home through the adoption of the same practices, literature and materials, and by the maintenance at the head of the mission of at least one, sometimes as many as three, English missionaries. In John Cook Barratt, the missionary who led the German mission for the longest period of time (1865–1892), the WMMS sent a career-missionary, who had begun his work in the West Indies.

With the exception of a very few circumstances, Barratt and the WMMS seem to have been incapable of viewing the German mission as in any way different from their missions to countries without a Christian heritage. Christian Dieterle, one of the German preachers, had to remind the WMMS that “Germany is a great part of the cultivated Europe.”

The mission had suffered from its earliest days from the accusation of being an English transplant, inappropriately grafted onto German religious life. These accusations grew with the arrival of English superintendents and with the growing sense of German nationalism after 1871. It affected not only the opponents of the mission within the state church, but also the members and preachers. As the German ministry, trained under Lyth and Barratt, matured it became more vocal about the inappropriateness of English control of German Wesleyanism, and one of the arguments for uniting it with the American Episcopal Methodist mission was that this body allowed to its German preachers and members a greater amount of self-government than the WMMS to the Wesleyan mission. A prelude to the movement towards unification with the American Methodists was the call, by Wesleyan preachers, for a German Wesleyanism that was more “adapt [sic] to the German mind” and which would give the German preachers more control over the work.

In making these observations I do not wish to leave the impression that the Zions-Harfe and the Order of Administration were merely the products of a cynical attempt to impose an English Wesleyan culture on the German movement. Both of them were produced by men who firmly believed that they were instrumental in bringing spiritual renewal to the people of Germany. However, as we have seen, the means chosen to do so were heavily marked with the stamp of their English origin. The German Wesleyans at the time of their unification with the American Episcopal Methodist church were asking themselves what the cause of their failure to grow as a movement in the last twenty or so years might have been. They mused on the possibility that their English identity might be a contributing factor. I believe that they were right to do so, and that while it was not the sole cause of the decline of Wesleyanism in Germany, it played its part. Methodism was able to grow more successfully in Germany when it was truly inculturated.

Edmund Rigg was the third and last English superintendent appointed by the WMMS, and he oversaw the unification of the Wesleyan mission in Germany with that of the American Methodist Episcopal Church. He, more than any other

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48 Dieterle to WMMS, June 28, 1880.
49 Urech and Pope to WMMS, June 28, 1889.
50 As well as clerical and nationalist opposition which focussed on the “Englishness” of the movement, I would also suggest as reasons for its decline: the growth of the Gemeinschaftsbewegung, the financial problems experienced by the WMMS and it changing policy towards European (mainly Protestant) mission, competition from other religious and political groups and emigration.
English leader of the mission, understood how important a truly German Methodism was. I will close with his words on the subject: “They must appear as a German church as well as be one. Until this is done, the Methodist church in Germany can never hope to prosper, it will always be a foreign church and therefore will never be trusted by the ordinary German.”

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51 Rigg to WMMS, December 8, 1893.


At the end of the eighteenth century, long before Methodism was introduced to Germany in 1830, it became a German-speaking phenomenon in North America.1 Two church fellowships related to the Methodist tradition were formed there: the Kirche der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo and the Evangelische Gemeinschaft. Over fifty years later, the Methodist Episcopal Church began its own mission among German immigrants, so that in the middle of the nineteenth century German-speaking Methodism in North America was represented by three church communities.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, various short-lived attempts to form Methodist fellowships had also been seen in Germany. In the 1820s, Christoph Gottlob Müller (1785–1858), a butcher and a Methodist in London who had been born in Württemberg, came to his old hometown Winnenden several times on visits and introduced Methodist religious practices to the Pietist circles there. When he came on a visit in the summer of 1830, he began to hold Methodist meetings. An awakening followed and, before he left, a fellowship had formed very much in the manner of English Methodism. This group viewed itself as an independent body and decided to continue to follow the principles of Methodist piety.

At the beginning of 1831, the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society in London decided to begin a mission to Württemberg.2 In the wake of the great movement of immigration to North America in the 1830s, members and workers from Müller’s group of Methodist fellowships came to North America. They were accepted into the work among the German immigrants that was being carried out by the Methodist Episcopal Church.3 Through the contacts that the Methodist immigrants to North America had with their relatives and with Müller, their spiritual father, a variety of relationships had arisen between the Methodists in the New World and those in Württemberg by 1840. These connections intensified through subsequent visits, in particular a visit that William Nast paid to Germany in the winter of 1844–45, which included meetings between Müller and Nast.

Against the background of a serious lack of workers in Müller’s constantly growing fellowship, and of the freedom of religious opinion and freedom to hold religious meetings that were consequences of the Revolution, Nast asked the

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1 F. Burkhardt, Christoph Gottlob Müller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2003), pp. 203–313.
2 Ibid., p. 207ff.
3 Ibid., p. 314ff.
bishops of his church to send a missionary to Germany. In the early summer of 1849, the Methodist Episcopal Church finally decided to assume the mission in Germany and to send two missionaries.4

As knowledge of the Methodist Episcopal Church mission initiative spread, the Evangelische Gemeinschaft began to consider whether it also had a responsibility towards Germany, a consideration that led in 1850 to the beginning of a second North American mission to Germany. Finally, just twenty years later, the Kirche der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo also began a fourth Methodist mission in Germany.

Thus, at the turn of the nineteenth century, a meeting of Continental European Protestantism and Anglo-Saxon Methodist Christianity occurred within the increasingly international network of Protestantism in Württemberg as well as in North America.

In addition, there were interactions that did not simply lead to German Lutherans becoming Methodists in Germany and North America. Methodism also underwent a process of sustained modification in the course of its nineteenth century reception by German-speaking Protestant groups in Germany and North America. This evolution led to a loss of some basic characteristics of Methodist piety and to an alignment of Methodism with conditions in Continental European Protestantism. This development can be seen especially in the liturgy, the congregational singing, and the forms of fellowship and congregational life in the various German-speaking Methodist churches and missions. This emerging difference between German-speaking and Anglo-Saxon Methodism, which is obvious today, has never been adequately described or explained. Furthermore, many questions persist concerning the adaptation and reception of Methodist piety in the churches and missions, as well as how the Methodist socialization of their leading figures was effected.

**Nast’s 1839 hymnbook as a case study**

A significant example of this process of modification is the first hymnbook of the Methodist Episcopal Church’s German mission, published in 1839, and the subsequent developments in its influence over the course of the next hundred years in North America and German-speaking Europe.5

After 1740, the German Methodists in North America and the Methodists in Württemberg maintained contact through letters. Members of the Württemberg fellowship had immigrated to the New World and had joined the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church among immigrants. These North American contacts meant that the Methodists in Württemberg were no longer solely dependent on

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4 Ibid., p. 365ff.
Wesleyan Spirituality and German Methodism

the London center for materials. Now they were regularly supplied with Methodist literature from North America: Der Christliche Apologete, the weekly magazine of the German Methodists in North America, as well as a variety of smaller publications. The advantage of receiving literature from Cincinnati was that everything did not first have to be translated into German. Thus, at the beginning of the 1840s the hymnbook of the German North American Methodists arrived in the Wesleyan fellowship in Württemberg. In 1843, C. G. Müller wrote to Cincinnati:6

Dear Brothers, ... for a while now, it has been our habit to sing the spiritual songs of our American brothers in our meetings, and we are glad that we can be one with them at least in doctrine and in spirit, if not in external practices. For alas! our religious freedom is very limited.

This hymnbook was put together under the leadership of the Württemberg theologian William Nast, who had immigrated to North America and founded the German branch of the American Methodist Episcopal Church in 1835. This collection of hymns was, however, not the first Methodist hymnbook in German. There were already nine German hymnbooks in the other two German Methodist churches, which were older.7

In any case—and this is what I am leading up to—neither these nine older hymn books nor Nast’s 1839 hymn book, were Methodist in their conception and content. Nast says of his hymnbook that it is for Methodists and that the songs must therefore breathe a Methodist spirit.8 He criticizes the length of many German hymns and praises the liveliness of English melodies. In practice, however, Nast found it difficult to attribute significance to the Methodist spirit. He assigned German melodies to the songs, and only gave the English versions in brackets. An obvious difference between his and most German hymnbooks, and

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7For an overview of the development of German Methodist songbooks see Carlton R. Young, Companion to The United Methodist Hymnal (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), pp. 75–89, 92–93. The first German-language hymnbook of a church, which in the context of North American Methodism was founded among German immigrants, the United Brethren in Christ, was published just four years after John Wesley’s death under the title Das Aller Neuste Harfenspiel (Pennsylvania, 1795). Additional hymnbooks appeared in 1808, Lobgesang zu Ehren des Heiligen und Gerechten Israel (Hagerstown, 1808); 1816, Herzens Opfer, eine Sammlung Geistreicher Lieder (Lancaster, 1816); and 1830, Eine Sammlung von Geistlichen, Lieblichen Liedern (Harrisburg, 1830). The first hymnbook of the Evangelische Gemeinschaft appeared in 1810 with the title Eine Kleine Sammlung aller und neuer Geistreicher Lieder (Reading, 1810), but the first official hymnbook followed in 1817, Das Geistliche Saitenspiel (Neu-Berlin, 1817). Additional collections of hymns of the EG were published in 1810, Die kleine Geistliche Völe (Neu-Berlin, 1818); 1821, Eine Sammlung neuer Geistlicher Lieder (Neu-Berlin, 1821); and 1824, Zween Geistreiche Lieder (Neu-Berlin, 1824).
8In his church newsletter of Oct. 25, 1839, Wilhelm Nast presented his completed hymnbook. In this introduction he describes the criteria for the selection of hymns: “The fundamental principles which guided us in selecting the hymns cannot be better described than by outlining the essential qualities of a church hymn as excellently defined by A. Knapp in his Foreword to the evangelical hymn corpus.” Nast then summarizes Knapp’s conclusions. Later in this edition he makes further comments regarding Knapp’s Foreword. (Cf. Der Christliche Apologete 1:43 [Oct. 25, 1839]: 170–73.)
the only similarity of form with Methodist hymnbook practice, was the printing of the songs as poetry and not prose. Apart from this feature, Nast's hymnbook reflected nothing of the character and arrangement of the English hymnbooks of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The difference is apparent particularly in the list of hymns that made up the book and their organization. The early American Methodist hymnbooks were all dominated by Wesley hymns. The specifically Methodist content of Nast's book is limited to five Wesley hymns translated into German, a song by John Newton, and two others from unknown English writers. Nast took his content mainly from the Evangelischer Liederschatz, which his friend Albert Knapp (1798–1864), deacon of the Stuttgart hospital church and the preparer of a new Württemberg hymnbook, had published two years earlier. Two thirds of the hymns came from the Evangelischer Liederschatz. Other sources, also used by the Pietists, were the hymn collections by Philipp Friedrich Hiller, Johannes Goßner, Carl Heinrich von Bogatzky, Ernst Gottlieb Wolltersdorf, and Josef Winckler.

The index of Nast's hymnbook is comparable to that of a dogmatic treatise. It follows Knapp's model and what was up to that point the usual hymnbook arrangement in Württemberg. The choice of this arrangement is simultaneously a decision against the Wesleyan principle of arrangement, which organized the hymns according to the course of an ideal Christian biography and thereby brought the experiential aspect into sharp focus. When the Methodist Episcopal Church began a mission in Germany in 1849, the missionaries were surprised to learn that their hymnbook was already being eagerly used in the Wesleyan fellowships in Württemberg. In the very first year of the North American mission, preparations were underway for printing the hymnbook in Germany. In the spring of 1850, the leader of the North American mission, Ludwig Sigismund Jacoby (1813–74), asked the Wesleyan Mission Society in London to introduce his printed hymnbook into their Württemberg societies. In 1851, it was officially introduced.

The use of this hymnbook was significant in the forming of an identity among the Württemberg Methodists. They had felt themselves connected to the German Methodists in North America even when, with Nast's hymnbook, they really only had a variant of the hymnbook of the Protestant church in Württemberg.

The third edition of Nast's hymnbook contained about twenty-five English hymns, among which were fourteen by Charles Wesley. In 1868, with the first publication of a hymnbook for Germany, this number was reduced.

### Wesley hymns in hymnbooks

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This tendency continued in the new *Bischöfliche Methodistenkirche* hymnbook in 1896, in which the number of English songs was limited to eighteen. Among them were twelve by Wesley and two by Isaac Watts.

The committee that put together the hymnbook commented on the relatively limited number of English hymns in the 1896 book:

> Furthermore, up to now the “English” hymn has been dominant and must be limited to a healthy number; since however, it has proved itself to be a source of blessing in the historical development of our church, and some of the hymns fill a gap, a complete removal was not feasible, without arousing the feeling of loss, which would have been more subjective than objective. Although we were aware that it would not raise the musical and poetic value of the hymnbook, the best among the translations of English hymns were retained. . . . We would have liked to have separated the chorales from the spiritual folksongs and the hymns of English origin, but for reasons of expediency we refrained.

This development, found only in Germany at that time, is striking for two reasons. First, it would have been possible in Germany to introduce a genuinely Methodist hymnology to a greater extent. Müller had already translated some Wesley hymns, which were sung in his fellowships. After Müller’s death, the English minister Dr. John Lyth published his own hymnbook three years after his arrival in Germany as superintendent of the British mission. That hymnbook contained 613 hymns, about 100 of which were translated from English, including 71 by Charles Wesley. What was strikingly different about this hymnbook also was that the songs were not printed as prose but as poetry.

Second, in the German hymnbooks of the Methodist Episcopal Church in North America during the course of the nineteenth century, the number of Wesley hymns constantly increased: the first edition in 1839 had five, the third in 1846 as many as fourteen, and the new hymnbook of 1888 contained twenty-four hymns by Charles Wesley.

The hymnbooks of the *Evangelische Gemeinschaft* and the *Kirche der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo* in America, however, remained completely unaffected by attempts to take on Methodist hymnody. Throughout the decades, they presented a relatively closed collection of hymns. Neither in the nineteenth nor in the twentieth century were they inclined to adopt Methodist hymns.

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Summary

The first Methodist hymnbook that the Methodist fellowships in Württemberg received from North America in the 1840s, and which was officially introduced by the London Mission authorities in 1850, was (according to content and arrangement of hymns) a variant of the hymnbook used at that time in the Württemberg Lutheran state church. The same themes, criteria, and songs that had formed the model for the Württemberg hymnbook of 1841 were definitive for this hymnbook, Evangelische Liederschatz, which was produced in 1839 by Albert Knapp, the leader of the Methodist Episcopal Church’s mission to the Germans.

In North America, English hymnody, primarily Wesleyan, found increasing acceptance in the hymnbooks of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the second half of the nineteenth century. A contrary movement, however, is noticeable in the hymnbooks of the German mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church: English hymnody was systematically removed. And in the German Methodist denominations of North America and Great Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century, a non-Wesleyan hymnody became accepted, and even the biographically and experientially oriented Wesleyan outline was given up in favor of a dogmatic outline in the manner of continental European Protestantism.
Experiences of Inculturation of Methodism in Russia
Rüdiger Minor

1. Russian Culture and Methodism

As we are looking at the example of inculturation of Methodism in Russia, it will be helpful to remember some characteristics of Russian culture. First of all, we should note that it is a culture, deeply influenced by Christianity. I would even maintain that this influence is stronger than in contemporary Western European culture. Let me mention three components of this Russian Christian culture in Russia and Methodist attitudes toward them: the (official) Orthodox Church, Russian Protestantism, and the “religious mood,” popular climate of intellectual-spiritual customs and values, usually labeled as *dukhovnost* (spirituality), which could be characterized as integrating a diffuse “Christian” self-understanding with strong national as well as superstitious elements and a traditional value system.

a. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC)

Since the meeting of two cultures is a process of reciprocity and mutual giving and taking, we should not look only on elements of our tradition that we would like to “give,” but recognize the importance of the host culture as the roots for an “inoculation” of Methodism.

- The influence of the Eastern Fathers on the formation of Wesleyan spirituality (though not appreciated by all Wesley scholars) is creating an important kinship with Russian culture. The importance is not on theology in the first place, though there is an interesting “fraternization” of conservative Evangelicals (among them Methodists) centering on traditional positions in dogmatics and ethics.
- While this is probably best understood as a part of Ecumenical church politics, there is indeed a strong influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on social-ethical positions in the traditional (Baptist, Pentecostal) Protestant communities in Russia. When in 2000 the ROC published its “Basic Social Concept,” so as to claim the field of social relations and activities in Russia as their own, the traditional Protestant denominations followed in 2003 with their “Social Position,” which in large measure simply copied the Orthodox text. The Russia United Methodist Church did not participate in this process. We have our Social Principles that are quite different from those two documents, however the church struggles with this cultural difference and feels the influence of the majority position on its rank and file members and even pastors (for example, the status and role of women, the acceptance of certain minorities).
- Getting closer to the subject of this gathering The Charles Wesley Society, Orthodox worship, seen by the majority of the population as the only normative form of worship, is strongly influential. The relationship is
ambivalent. The specter stretches from strong rejection of Orthodox worship forms by the majority of traditional Protestants to the careful approach of United Methodists in using elements of Orthodox worship and to the creation of “Evangelical-Orthodox” forms, most of them quite artificial (and for my taste more “artisan” than art of worship). There is, however, one important common element. As you know, the word *Pravoslaviye* (Orthodoxy) does not mean right thinking or teaching, but the right praise of God. And those Christians, who are not Orthodox, are called *Inoslaviye* (Heterodox), literally translated, they are not praising God in the “right” (*pravy*) way, but in a “different” (*iny*) way. But they are praising God, anyway. Even Russian Baptists, despite three or four sermons which are either Sunday school lessons of biblical narrative or dry dogmatic essays, in their worship they sing: church, and youth choir, and men’s choir, and women’s choir. I need to come back to this when I am speaking about the religious mood of the people.

### b. Russian Evangelical Protestantism

Despite the overwhelming influx of American missionaries over the last fifteen years, it needs to be emphasized that traditional Russian Protestantism has its roots in the German, British and Scandinavian Evangelical movement (*Erweckungsbewegung*) of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

- A part of its legacy are the hymns, most of them well known to Methodists of my generation and older in Europe and America. Some of Charles Wesley’s hymns belong to this common spiritual treasure of Russian Protestants; I found them even in the hymn book of the Lutheran Church of “Ingermanland,” a very conservative almost Catholic group of Finnish origin, living mostly around St. Petersburg. (They would probably have problems even to spell “Methodism” correctly.) To take their hymn book as an example, it contains “Jesus, lover of my soul,” “Love divine, all loves excelling” (naming a certain “N. Ludwig, 1725” as the author), “Hark! the herald angels sing.”

  Among other groups are also well known (and there are probably more): “O for a thousand tongues to sing” and “And can it be that I should gain.”

  Therefore, we can rightly say that Charles Wesley was present in Russia independently from the missionary endeavors of Methodism in the late nineteenth and again late twentieth centuries.

- I don’t have the time to tell the story of the cultural clashes and adaptation in modern United Methodism, since there was not only the Russian “host” culture but also the cultural “carrier systems” of American, Korean, and European Methodism within the young movement. There has been a temptation to follow a traditional Protestant model in relationship to Orthodoxy and especially Orthodox worship, a purism that condemns
everything that is not "biblical" in the sense of "Evangelical main line" (which is "main line Protestantism" in Russia). This meant objection to the liturgy, condemnation of icons as idols, etc. In contrast, Methodism has not positioned itself as contra-Orthodox but from the very beginning developed an attitude of appreciation of genuine Orthodox spirituality and worship, looking for their biblical roots and positive role for devotion. (More on Methodist worship later)

c. Russian "religious mood"

As mentioned earlier, Russian culture has been strongly influenced by Christianity, and the "Russian soul" has been penetrated by Orthodoxy, which can be traced even in contradictory form of the Soviet atheist period.

- It was at the 1999 consultation between Orthodox and Methodist theologians at St. Vladimir's Seminary near New York City, where three persons from the Russia United Methodist Church were present. At the third day, my United Methodist colleagues turned to me and said: "We are more Orthodox than all these Western priests and monks together." To be Russian is to be Orthodox. Our souls resonate.

- In a paper delivered at the 2003 Annual Conferences in the Euro-Asia Episcopal Area, Elena Stepanova spoke on "John Wesley and the Revival of Methodism in Russia." In a splendid way, she was showing the parallels between Wesley's mission and thought with the great themes of Russian literature and philosophy, which are also the burning questions of being human in Russia today. She identified the need to understand the "problem of what it means to be a person," not in an individualistic but an existential sense. She states that "John Wesley was convinced, that God gives freedom to every person, and that freedom is a supernatural divine gift to restore the fallen creature to responsibility and accountability. The gift of freedom gives to the conscience the ability of perception and to the will the power to choose the good and resist evil." Another problem is the quest for a living faith that is able to sustain the personal life, as well as support society. According to Wesley, this is "a process, which goes on during the whole life and develops in a person spiritual maturity," striving for perfection not as a personal goal, but for the resurrection of the image of God in humankind. This is the renewal of the church in a "Catholic Spirit" that overcomes the divisions and works for a renewed world. Stepanova was summing this up in a quotation by V. Solovjev: "Genuine Christianity . . . ought to be universal; it ought to be extended to all humankind and to all human deeds . . . . All deeds and relationships common to all humankind have to be ruled by the same ethics . . . , namely, by the ethic of love, free concord, and brotherly unity."
Russian language has not only maintained a lot of its religious and biblical references, more than other European languages (much more than English and even more than German). It has also translated “church language” (mostly from the Greek) into genuine Russian or created new Russian words, which are used in everyday Russian, too. To give one example: the word *Voploscheniye*—Incarnation (literal translation) is used to express the high quality and very essence of a thing (while “the devil incarnate” or *eingefleischt* have a rather negative meaning in English or German). While biblical literacy is low in Russia, biblical imagery is used frequently. Biblical allusions, as we find them in Charles Wesley’s hymns, are something very natural, are natural in the Russian language, too.

As was already mentioned, praise is very close to the Russian soul and, therefore, an important element of worship. Methodist worship in Russia is characterized by a longing for the “beauty of the Lord.” As mentioned earlier, Russian Methodism has been begotten by various blends of Methodist culture and worship style. And there had been attempts to make it more American or more Korean or more European, even by Russians themselves as true disciples of their spiritual parents. What has emerged, however, over a period of several years of experimenting and sharing is a liturgy that people are recognizing as their own. There was not much need to transform the worship order of Word and Table, because our United Methodist Book of Worship has been restoring the “common template” of the universal church’s worship to a high degree. I remember the pleasant surprise of a Russian Orthodox priest as I showed him the order of the Methodist communion service in Russian. He did not fathom that Protestants would have such a rich and “correct” worship, thinking of it just as alternating preaching and singing. More significant is the adaptation of Russian customs in worship. People can “light a candle” with a prayer, our worship places are not void of pictures (one of our pastors wrote his master’s thesis on proclamation of the gospel through icons). The order for marriage ceremonies and funerals have elements from Russian rituals, replacing “Western” customs. There had been some discussion whether we were mixing traditions; however, the Book of Liturgy was accepted gladly. People feel at home in those culturally matching worship services.

2. Charles Wesley’s hymns in the RUMC Hymnbook, *Mir Yam* (Peace be with you)

The hymnbook of the Russia United Methodist Church was published in 2002. It is mainly the work of a very gifted woman, Ludmila Garbuzova, a pastor of the RUMC and a professional musician and choir director. Even before she became a Christian believer, she was profoundly knowledgable and deeply committed to Russian (and other) sacred music. Under the gentle, patient, and persistent coaching of ST Kimbrough, Jr., and Carlton R. Young she has given to the
Russian Christians (not only Methodists) a real treasure of spiritual and musical value. This is what she has written about the book:

What makes this book different from others? Its particular virtue lies in the fact that many kinds of Christian songs are presented in such a small volume. Within this diversity one finds:

- Hymns of different Christian denominations (Russian Orthodox canticles, Old Believers' songs, songs of the Taizé community, early Russian Protestant hymns, as well as Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist hymns, created by the Wesley brothers and others);
- Hymns of different epochs, from age-old psalms to contemporary spiritual songs;
- Hymns of different cultures and nations—global songs—that are well known in churches of many countries around the world and were translated for the first time into Russian by parishioners of the Russia United Methodist Church, and by parishioners of other denominations;
- Hymns that were created in local congregations of the Russia United Methodist Church today.

Out of a total of 297 hymns, 13 are by Charles Wesley and one by John. The final section of the book is devoted to “Hymns by the Wesley Brothers on Biblical Texts.” Seven of the hymns are translated by Daniil Yasko, a Ukrainian Baptist, who has also translated other hymns from English into Russian. Three translations by unknown authors belong to the common heritage of Protestant hymns; three have been translated by Russian United Methodists, one by a Russian Orthodox layman, living in the US. Of special interest is “Jesus, lover of my soul,” which is presented in two different forms (more about it later).

The tunes to the hymns are the usual American ones. However, it should be noted, that Ludmila Garbuzova wrote a new tune for “And can it be” to replace the “anticlimactic” traditional one (which is also included in the book). As could be expected, the translations are of different quality. I am refraining from making public statements about the quality of Russian poetry as literature. Trying to comment on other qualities, I would state, that most of them transmit the message of Charles' hymns fairly well. The language is full of biblical allusions, sometimes different from Wesley's and even more than in his text. As the main message comes through quite well, some of the subtleties of Wesley’s theology are lost. As an example, I cite the second stanza of “Love Divine, all loves excelling” with a literal re-translation of the Russian text:

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit;
   let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
   Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
   set our hearts at liberty.

Spirit of love, pour out richly (Rom. 5:5)
into our timid hearts,
fill with your power,
open the Father’s love.
Be our Alpha and Omega
destroy every sin.
Make us whiter than snow,
keep in us a strong faith.
Gone is the "second rest" and the taking away our "bent to sinning"—allusions to the doctrine of perfection; however (in my mind) the main message of the "love of God, shed abroad in our hearts" is maintained.

I would like to use the two versions of "Jesus, lover of my soul" for a final observation about the Russian translations. As mentioned earlier, there is an older one, part of the common heritage of Russian Protestantism. It is in a very simple language, I dare to say, poor poetry, but full of biblical allusions, even replacing the phrase "make and keep me pure within" with "create in me a clean heart." However, the message of personal protection and the proclamation of justification is clearly pronounced. The second version is by a Russian Orthodox clergyman, Father Ioann Ekonomtsev. According to my Russian experts, it is much better poetry, but it has become just a personal outpouring of a troubled soul. Both versions carry some of the content of Wesley's great hymn, which is, as his other works, great Christian poetry, because it unites a deep personal passion with profound and sound Christian teaching (as it was said that the whole content of John's writing could be extracted from Charles's hymns). While Father Ioann keeps this "existential" moment, the traditional translation tells about the message. As a pastor, I prefer the latter.

When I came to Russia thirteen years ago, there were basically two hymns that were known in our fledgling Methodist church: "What a friend we have in Jesus" and "How great Thou art." They were sung every Sunday, sometimes both. United Methodists now "sing their faith" as a source of power and strength for their daily lives and as a message and invitation to their neighbors. Thank you, Charles Wesley (and a few others)—and glory to God!

Appendix: List of hymns of the Wesleys in the Russian hymnal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>O, for a thousand tongues to sing</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Hark! the Herald Angels sing</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> #388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Christ, the Lord, is risen today</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> #439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>And can it be</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> 527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156, 297</td>
<td>Jesus, lover of my soul</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> #125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td>Thou hidden source of calm repose</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> #89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174</td>
<td>Love divine, all love excelling</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> #283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240</td>
<td>Truly baptized</td>
<td><em>Global Praise</em> #63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>247</td>
<td>Let Him, to whom we now belong</td>
<td><em>1780 Collection of Hymns</em> #416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>291, 292</td>
<td>Rejoice, the Lord is king</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> #483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>293</td>
<td>Jesus, thy blood and righteousness</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> #127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>294</td>
<td>A charge to keep I have</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> #150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>295</td>
<td>Lo, he comes with clouds descending</td>
<td><em>UMH</em> #364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>296</td>
<td>Give us this day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The reception of Charles Wesley’s hymns in the German-language regions is no success story. There have been early examples of translations, however, and not only by Methodists. Christian Friedrich Schwarz (1726–1798), a Lutheran missionary in India, translated *Jesus, lover of my soul*, one of the few hymns which found its way also into non-Methodist hymnals. In the nineteenth century, however, the translation and propagation of the hymns of Charles Wesley was essentially Methodist business. It was indeed a very active period. The *Zionshalje* (1863) of the Wesleyan Methodists had no less than sixty hymns of Wesley and the *Deutsches Gesangbuch der Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche* (1865/88) at least twenty-five. The translators normally are not named, but Dr. John Lyth was unquestionably one of the most industrious and skillful of them.

It is important to observe, however, that the translations by Ernst Gebhardt and others of the new hymns of the Holiness movement and the evangelistic crusades were received quite readily by pietistic circles outside Methodism but not the hymns of Wesley. Even the new *Gesangbuch der Methodistenkirche in Deutschland* of 1926 (*GB26*) had only six Wesley hymns and the *Gesangbuch der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche* of 1969 (*GB69*) took over four of those and added two new ones, which were translated in the fifties and sixties. Obviously even in German-speaking Methodism there were some difficulties with the reception of the hymns of Charles Wesley.

This changed only in the 1980s. There were two impulses: the Faith Conferences in Hollabrunn, Austria needed a bilingual song book, and the hymns of Charles Wesley could not be overlooked. Lothar Pöll translated a number of them, and although this was only a first beginning it demonstrated that it is worth doing. The second impulse came from the publication of a supplement to the German-language hymn supplement, *Leben und Loben* (1987), for which viable translations of Wesley hymns were sought. Some older translations were revised, others were newly written, and almost all of them were well received and often sung. This fostered continued interest in translations for the new hymnal, *Gesangbuch der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche* of 2002 (*GB02*). The result was that this hymnbook included twenty-two translations of hymns of Charles Wesley: two from the nineteenth century (one revised), three from the 1950s and 1960s, and seventeen newly translated since 1985. Interestingly enough two “classics,” “And are we yet alive” and “Jesus, lover of my soul,” which were still in the hymnal of 1969 were not accepted (and when one looks at
the translations, one easily understands why). Whether these new translations will have a stronger echo outside Methodism remains to be seen. Up to the present this does not seem likely.

**What are the special difficulties and challenges with the reception of the hymns of Charles Wesley?**

*The challenges for translation of the hymns of Charles Wesley into German*

There are a number of peculiarities and difficulties for the translation of the hymns of Charles Wesley which should be mentioned.

**a. Linguistic challenges**

There are a number of exceptional linguistic features in the hymns of Charles Wesley—some of them are common to contemporary English, some of them peculiar to Wesley—which creates a number of challenges to those who attempt to translate Wesley texts into modern German. I want to mention some of them, though the following list is by no means complete:

- Many meaningful notions in Wesley’s English are monosyllabic whereas the German equivalent has two syllables (*love/Liebe, grace/Gnade, truth/Wahrheit, faith/Glaube*).
- This poses special problems when these words form the rhyme; it leads to the predominance of “masculine” rhymes, whereas the German needs the “feminine.”
- The hymns of Wesley are often characterized by a very dense reflective poetry, which contains many allusions to striking images.
- The plethora of biblical quotations and allusions, which are typical for Wesley’s poetry, are difficult to translate.
- Wesley uses a number of stereotype theological formulas, which have no equivalent in German theological language, e.g., blood applied.”
- Based on the above realities, as a rule of thumb one could say that you would need double the space in German to express the same thoughts and sentiments of Wesleyan English.
- The typical “pathos,” which Wesley’s texts may share with others of the eighteenth century and which forms an important ingredient of its special effect, is difficult to repeat in modern German.
- That points to a general problem. We have to translate eighteenth-century English texts for German speaking people of the twenty-first century in a way that they may use them for their own praise and confession in the present age!

This refers us to another level of the issue which touches the question of the translation only indirectly but which is very relevant for the task of inculturation.
b. Theological challenges

Charles Wesley represents with his hymns very distinctively the faith of the young Methodist movement. Many hymns are doctrine in song. But not all of these doctrinal thoughts are readily receivable to German-speaking minds, which are shaped by the theology of Luther and Calvin.

The following examples suffice to illustrate this point.

- An important figure of speech in Wesley’s hymns is the parallelism between the events in heaven and on earth. This leads to impressive but sometimes strange phrases.
- Although Charles is sceptical about his brother John’s doctrine of entire perfection, the aim of fully overcoming sin was an important theme for Charles in his hymns.
- In this context their special view of the doctrine of justification is important. Although the Wesleys, too, taught that our righteousness remains always God’s own righteousness, they were convinced—in contrast to Zinzendorf—that Christ’s righteousness becomes also our own which proves itself in good works. As Charles writes in the last verse of “And can it be”:

  No condemnation now I dread,
    Jesus, and all in him is mine.
  Alive in him, my living head,
    and clothed in righteousness divine,
  bold I approach th’eternal throne,
    and claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Is it possible to translate this? Christoph Klaiber has chosen the following words:

  Verdammnis schreckt mich seither nicht.
  Ich lebe: Jesus ist nun mein.
  Er ist mein Haupt und Lebenslicht.
  Gerecht bin ich durch ihn allein.
  Kühn fordere ich vor seinem Thron
  die Krone, die durch ihn mein Lohn.

Although we may admire the boldness of these words this remains a difficult statement. This was obviously true also for some contemporaries of Wesley. The Moravian Christian Gregor added to Count Zinzendorf’s hymn Jesu, thy blood and righteousness (which was translated by John Wesley), two verses which show an almost anti-Wesleyan affect and points succinctly to the difference between the Wesleyan and Lutheran doctrine of justification:
Und würd ich durch des Herrn Verdienst
auch noch so treu in seinem Dienst,
gewönn den Sieg dem Bösen ab
und stündigte nicht bis ins Grab,
so will ich, wenn ich zu ihm komm,
nicht denken mehr an gut und fromm,
sondern: Da kommt ein Sünder her,
der gern fürs Lösegeld selig wür.

Translated this would mean: Even if I should win the victory over sin and evil, I
would only plead in the last judgment to be saved because of the ransom paid
through the death of Jesus Christ. John Wesley translated the second stanza of
the original hymn in his own way:

Bold shall I stand in thy great day;
for who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved through these I am,
from sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

But after this short excursion into the question of inculturation, back to the task
of translation.
Are there aids to overcome the difficulties for this task?

  c. Aids for the translation of the hymns of Charles Wesley

The goals of translation:

• The first goal is a hymn that can be sung! The translation may not neces-
sarily meet highest poetical standards, but text and tune should fit together
and people should like to sing the hymn.
• The second goal is that each stanza—and the entire hymn—must have an
authentic message which people can accept and with which they can agree.
Given the wealth of meaning in Wesley’s hymns, it is often necessary to set
priorities and to make a choice among them.
• The translation of a hymn should not only be correct (and therefore some-
times abstract and neutral), but meet also the emotional atmosphere of it.
The associative transfer of images and metaphors is very important to reach
this goal.

Realizing the goals of translation:

• First learn the tune and sing it until you know it by heart.
• Sing the original English hymn stanza by stanza.
• Make a rough version of the translation without considering rhyme or
rhythm.
• Work on single formulations and try a first evaluation.
55 Aspects of Modern German Translations of Wesley Hymns

- Test the areas of meaning of different words and notions and observe the change of meaning they have undergone throughout history.
- Start with the actual translation and begin with that part which attracts you most.
- Continue this with the entire text. This may be easier if you do it while singing.
- Critically evaluate your first draft of the text, noting whether the translation is linguistically correct, understandable, and fits the tune.
- Enlist the insight of others. Such joint critical evaluation is sometimes difficult, but in most cases it is very valuable.
- It is more fruitful to deal with gaps, uneven phrases, and weak expressions through dialogue with others. New solutions for difficulties can be expected.

After all of the above, another test with the sung text is necessary and this is achieved by asking the following questions:

- Do the words, emotions, and message of the text correspond to the profile of the tune?
- Are the key notions assigned to the stressed parts of the time?
- Are there linguistic dilations or compressions or word reductions which can be avoided?
- Can one do without weak rhymes, if there are no good ones?

During this work there may be phases of resignation and enthusiasm, there will be tough rethinking of problems again and again, and the playful task of working with a puzzle in which the different parts finally come together into a whole. How good this will be is another question. There still may be doubts on the possibility of "entire perfection"!

d. Examples for difficulties and solutions for the translation

1. The density of notions and thoughts
   The translation of A Charge to Keep I Have (UMH 411, cf. GB02 547, "Ein heilig Amt ist mir vertraut") in two instances needs two stanzas to translate one of the verses of Charles Wesley. See Example 1.

2. The "pathos" of the poetry of Charles Wesley
   The old, as well as the new, German translation of "O for a heart to praise my God" (UMH 417, cf. GB02 270: "Schaff in mir Gott zu deinem Ruhm" [Dienst]) have difficulties in rendering the flow of the original. In addition, there is the problem of the change in the sequence of the stanzas, which disturbs the train of thought of Wesley's hymn. See Example 4.

3. The representation of the Wesleyan doctrine
The hymn, "Spirit of Faith come down" (UMH 332), has in stanza 4 a short summary of an important part of the Wesleyan doctrine—but even in the original not in a satisfying poetic form. The German translation, “Komm, Geist des Glaubens, komm” (GB02 252) concentrates on two metaphors, which try to render the abstract thoughts of the original. In the same hymn we find the typical phrase of “blood applied” (stanza 1), which is very difficult to translate. Another example is found in “Come let us use the grace divine” (UMH 606:3; cf. GB02 263:3: “Kommt, nehmt die Gnade Gottes an”). See Examples 2–3.

Difficult to translate is also the phrase “Salvation to God,” cf. “Maker in whom we live” (UMH 88:2, see GB02 42:2, “Schöpfer der ganzen Welt”) and “Ye servants of God” (UMH 181:2+3; see GB02 43:2+3 “Dient freudig dem Herrn”). See Examples 6–7.

4. The richness of metaphors

The plethora of metaphors and images of the poetical language of Charles Wesley can often be translated only in some sort of selection. Some of his allusions are difficult to understand, cf. “And can it be” (UMH 363:2+3; see GB02 293:2+3, “Kann es denn sein”). But there are also examples of very good solutions, cf. “O for a thousand tongues to sing” (UMH 57:3; see GB02 1:3, “Mein Mund besinge tausendfach”). See Examples 8–9.

Regarding “Hark! the Herald Angels sing” (UMH 248,3), it may be questioned as to whether the more literal translation “Hört die Engelchöre singen” (GB02 176,3) or the rather free paraphrase “Freut euch, freut euch Menschenkinder” (GB02 177,3) is more adequate! See Example 5.

It also was not easy to decide whether to translate the first line of “Come, sinners, to the gospel feast” (UMH 616:1) rather literally or with a more “invitational” sense; cf. GB02 522:1, “Kommt alle, kommt” See Example 10. This hymn also illustrates the problem of the selection of stanzas.

If we examine the translations carefully, we have to admit that among the “good” translations there are only a few which in themselves are good German poetry. This will limit their reception in other theological traditions. But some translations may pass this test (cf. GB02 87, 242, 269).
Examples of translations of hymns by Charles Wesley

(GB02 represents Gesangbuch der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche)

1. A Charge to Keep I Have (UMH 411)—Ein heilig Amt ist mir vertraut (GB02 547)

1. A charge to keep I have,  
a God to glorify,  
a never-dying soul to save,  
and fit it for the sky;

2. To serve the present age,  
my calling to fulfil;  
O may it all my powers engage  
to do My Master’s will!

2. Zu retten vor dem ewgen Tod  
die teur erkaufte Welt  
ist mein Beruf und sein Gebot,  
dazu bin ich erwählt.

3. Drum sei all meine Zeit und Kraft  
Ihm, meinem Gott geweiht.  
Für ihn, der neues Leben schafft,  
bin ich zum Dienst bereit.

3. Arm me with jealous care,  
as in thy sight to live;  
and Oh! thy servant, Lord, prepare  
a strict account to give.

4. Help me to watch and pray,  
and on thyself rely,  
assured, if I my trust betray,  
I shall forever die.

4. Ach rüst mich, Herr, mit deiner Kraft;  
und heiligem Eifer aus,  
der unermüdlich wirkt und schafft.  
am Bau an deinem Haus,

5. Lass mich vor deinem Angesicht  
stets leben recht getreu,  
dass ich in deinem reinen Licht.  
nicht einst verwerflich sei.

6. So hilf mir denn, mein Herr und Gott,  
stets wachsam sein und flehn  
und lass mich fest auf dich vertraun  
und wohl vor dir bestehn.
2. Spirit of faith come down (UMH 332)—Komm, Geist des Glaubens komm (GB02 252)

1. Spirit of faith come down,
   reveal the things of God
   and make to us the Godhead known,
   and witness with the blood.
   'Tis thine the blood to apply
   and give us eyes to see,
   who did for every sinner die,
   hath surely died for me.

4. Inspire the living faith
   (which whosoe'er receives,
   the witness in himself he hath,
   and consciously believes),
   the faith that conquers all,
   and doth the mountain move,
   and saves whoe'er on Jesus call,
   And perfects them in love.

1. Komm, Geist des Glaubens, komm!
   Mach Gott uns offenbar!
   Zeig, wer er ist, was er getan,
   was Christi Opfer war.
   Lass deine Augen seh'n
   den, der für Sünder starb,
   dass er, der alle Welt erlöst,
   auch mir das Heil erwarb.

3. Come let us use the Grace divine (UMH 606) Kommt, nehmt die Gnade Gottes an (GB02 263)

3. Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
   let all our hearts receive,
   present with thy celestial host
   the peaceful answer give;
   to each covenant the blood apply
   which takes our sins away,
   and register our names on high
   and keep us to that day.

3. Wir öffnen unsre Herzen dir,
   Gott, Vater, Sohn und Geist,
   gemeinsam mit dem Himmelsheer,
   das Frieden uns verheißt.
   Das Blut des Bundes tilgt die Schuld
   und macht von Sünden rein.
   Schreib uns für deinen großen Tag
   ins Buch des Lebens ein.
4. O for a heart to praise my God (UMH 417)—Schaff in mir, Gott, zu deinem Ruhm (GB 270)

1. O for a heart to praise my God, 
a heart from sin set free! 
A heart that always feels thy blood, 
so freely spilt for me!

2. A heart resigned, submissive, meek, 
my great Redeemer’s throne, 
where only Christ is heard to speak, 
where Jesus reigns alone.

3. O for a lowly, contrite heart, 
believing, true and clean, 
which neither life nor death can part 
from him that dwells within!

4. A heart in every thought renewed, 
and full of love divine, 
perfect, and right, and pure, and good— 
a copy, Lord, of thine!

5. Thy tender heart is still the same, 
and melts at human woe; 
Jesu, for thee distressed I am— 
I want thy love to know.

6. My heart, thou know’st, can never rest 
till thou create my peace, 
till, of my Eden repossessed, 
from every sin I cease.

7. Fruit of my gracious lips, on me 
bestow that peace unknown, 
the hidden manna, and the tree 
of life, and the white stone.

8. Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart; 
Come quickly from above; 
write thy new name upon my heart, 
thy new, best name of love!

1. Schaff in mir, Gott, zu deinem Dienst 
ein Herz, das dir getreu; 
der du der Welt zum Heil erschienst, 
mach ganz von Sünd mich frei!

2. Dein zartes Herz fühlt immer noch 
der Menschen bittern Schmerz; 
ich schrei zu dir, ach, hör mich doch, 
erneure, Herr, mein Herz.

3. Herr, schenk mir ein zerbrochenes Herz, 
das glaubig ist und rein, 
auch demutsvoll; in jedem Schmerz 
läß es geduldig sein.

4. Ein Herz, ergeben dir allein, 
daust vor deinem Thron, 
wo niemand sonst soll Herrscher sein 
als du nur Gottes Sohn.

5. Ein Herz, verkläret in dein Bild, 
von deinem Geist beseelt, 
durch Gnade fest, recht weich und mild, 
zum Kampfe stets gestählt.

6. Ein Herz, dass sich von dir nicht trennt, 
das treu bis in den Tod 
für dich in reiner Liebe brent, 
ein solches schenk mir Gott.

GB26, Nr. 462 = GB69, Nr. 349

1. Schaff in mir Gott, zu deinem Ruhm 
ein Herz von Sünde frei, 
das fühlt, dass es dein Eigentum 
Kraft deines Blutes sei.

2. Barmherzig fühlst du immer noch 
mit Menschen ihren Schmerz. 
Ich schrei zu dir, ach hör mich doch, 
erneure, Herr, mein Herz.

3. Schenk mir ein reuevolles Herz, 
das sehnhlich nach dir schaut 
und voller Demut auch im Schmerz 
auf deine Hilfe baut.

4. Ein Herz, ergeben dir allein: 
Mach es zu deinem Thron, 
wo niemand soll bestimmend sein 
al als Jesus Gottes Sohn.

5. Ein Herz, im Denken völlig neu, 
das voller Liebe ist, 
vollkommen, rein, gerecht und treu— 
dein Abbild, Jesus Christ.

6. Ein Herz, das niemals wird getrennt 
durch Leben oder Tod 
vom Namen, den es von dir kennt:
Die Liebe bist du, Gott.
5. **Hark! The herald angels** *(UMH 240)*  
Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!

3. **Hail the Sun of Righteousness!**  
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings. Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory, to the newborn King!"

6. **Maker in whom we live** *(UMH 88)*  
2. Incarnate Deity, let all the ransomed race render in thanks their lives to thee for thy redeeming grace. The grace to sinners showed ye heavenly choirs proclaim, and cry: "Salvation to our God, Salvation to the Lamb!"

7. **Ye servants of God** *(UMH 181)*  
2. God ruleth on high, almighty to save, and still he is nigh, his presence we have; the great congregation his triumph shall sing, ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

3. "Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!" Let all cry aloud and honor the Son; the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim, fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb!

Hört die Engelchöre *(GB02 176)*  

Freut euch, freut euch *(GB02 177)*  
Freuen wird sich, wer gefunden seinen Heiland Jesus Christ, freudig wird er dann bekunden, dass er neu geboren ist. Jesus Christus ist das Leben, Gott zur Ehre uns gegeben. Das Vergangne zählt nicht mehr, nur der neue Mensch wie er. Freut euch, freut euch, Groß und Klein, selig, selig sollt ihr sein!

**Schöpfer der ganzen Welt** *(GB02 42)*  

**Dient freudig dem Herrn** *(GB02 43)*  
2. Im Himmel herrscht Gott, vollendet sein Heil und sieht doch die Not, die hier unser Teil. Die Schar der Erlösten, sie stimme mit ein: Nur einer kann trosté, nur Jesus allein.

8. And can it be (UMH 363)

2. 'Tis mystery all: th'Immortal dies!
   Who can explore his strange design?
   In vain the firstborn seraph tries
   to sound the depths of love divine.
   'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore;
   let angel minds inquire no more.

3. He left his Father's throne above
   (So free, so infinite his grace!),
   emptied himself of all but love,
   and bled for Adam's helpless race.
   'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
   for O my God it found out me.

9. O for a thousand tongues (UMH 57)

3. Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
   that bids our sorrows cease;
   'tis music in the sinner's ears,
   'tis life, and health and peace.

Kann es denn sein (GB02 293)

2. Geheimnis groß: Gott selber stirbt.
   Wer kann der Liebe Weg verstehn,
   die mir, dem Sünder, Heil erwirbt?
   Kein größtes Wunder ist zu sehn.
   So liebt uns Gott! Drum betet an,
   was unser Geist nicht fassen kann.

3. Er kommt von seines Vaters Thron.
   Nicht messbar ist der Gnade Tat.
   Nur Liebe treibt den Gottessohn,
   der sich für mich entäußert hat.
   Unendlich frei ist Gottes Gnad,
   weil sie auch mich gefunden hat.

Mein Mund besinge tausendfach (GB02 1)

3. Dein Name, Jesus, heilt den Schmerz,
   macht aus dem Leid ein Lied,
   dringt Sündern wie Musik ins Herz,
   ist Leben, Heil und Fried.

10. Come, sinners, to the gospel feast (UMH 339/616) Kommt alle, kommt zu Gottes Fest (GB02 522)

1. Come, sinners, to the gospel feast;
   let every soul be Jesus' guest.
   Ye not one be left behind,
   for God hath bid all humankind.

1. Kommt alle, kommt zu Gottes Fest,
   zu dem er euch jetzt laden lässt.
   Kein Mensch soll nun noch draußen stehn,
   zum Mahl des Herrn kann jeder gehen.
The Hymns of Charles Wesley from a Lithuanian Perspective
Kristin Chiles Markay

I'm here today because I have been shaped by the hymns of Charles Wesley. I grew up on the Methodist side of the (1968) merger (in the US, between the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church), and I've been singing these hymns all of my life. Even today, I will hear a phrase of scripture, or a comment, and I will think of a Wesley hymn. For example, a man from India, who has been attending the Methodist Church in Milan, Italy, gave a sermon in which he mentioned a phrase used in his church in India— "To whom else can we turn, O God?" And when I heard this phrase, I immediately thought of one of my favorite Wesley hymns:

Father, I stretch my hands to thee,
no other help I know.
If thou withdraw thyself from me,
ah, wither shall I go?

With this as an introduction, I'll begin my comments on the hymns of Charles Wesley in post-Soviet Lithuania.

My husband, David, and I served for six years with the re-established United Methodist Church in Lithuania. We were appointed there by the UM General Board of Global Ministries to serve as pastors. Part of our mission was to help to re-establish the churches that had been closed by the Soviets fifty years before. We were able to do this with the help of a remnant of surviving Methodists. One visiting minister, who served for six months in Lithuanian, said that he felt in these newly formed communities, that he was experiencing the closest thing to the communities written about in the Acts of the Apostles. The letters of Paul took on new meaning for us as we served in the churches. We felt that they were addressed to us, and to the young congregations there.

One of our early tasks was to search for music for the worship services. We ended up making copies of an old 1938 evangelical hymnal. This served for a time, but we recognized early on that we needed a new hymnbook that would help to shape and form the faith of the "People called Methodist" in Lithuania. Thanks to the dedication, faith and hard work of many people, we were able to dedicate the new United Methodist Lithuanian hymnbook at the end of August 2005, in Kaunas, Lithuania, after years of collecting, translating, and editing hymns. Thanks be to God.

One of the first things that the hymnal committee did, in putting this hymnbook together, was to sit down with Loni Bungardiene, one of the oldest Methodists in Lithuania. We sat by a piano, with her copy of the evangelical
hymnbook and her faded book of children’s hymns, and we interviewed her. “Did you sing this song in church before the Soviets closed the doors? What about this one?” The old favorites were keepers.

Because this was to be a Methodist hymnbook, a reflection of who we are and who we would like to be as Methodists, we searched for as many translated Wesley hymns that we could find. We found all three of them! (“Hark! the herald angels sing,” “Christ the Lord is risen today” and “Jesus, Lover of my soul). We then commissioned Nijole Latužienė and Romas Baliutavičius to translate more. Incidentally, both Nijole and Romas are Baptists. It was not easy for us to find people of faith with knowledge of music, faith language, English and Lithuanian syllabic stresses (kirčavimas).

Not all Lithuanians have knowledge of faith language. The Soviets occupied Lithuania for over fifty years. They closed churches, confiscated properties, and tried to delete a faith language. Not just anyone could translate these hymns. For example, there are two different words for the verb “sing”: dainuoti (to sing) and giedoti (to sing in church, to sing hymns).

Our younger translators would have such a difficult time translating for the worship services, and their choice of words would anger some of the older Methodists in the group who had been people of faith since before the Second World War. One translator translated Christ’s chalice as Christ’s kitchen cup! And the translators would have a tough time translating words such as: salvation, redemption, holiness, justification, prevenient grace, etc. The younger generation in Lithuania was not shaped by the church, by a community of faith. Rather, they learned lessons in school such as: Dievas (God) cannot be capitalized. It must be dievas (god).

Romas Baliutavičius, the best translator of the Wesley hymns, cannot read music. But, we would make a tape of a Wesley hymn, using piano and voice, and he would then translate this hymn into Lithuanian, fitting in beautifully the rhythms and stresses. The Lithuanian language holds many more syllables than does the English, so this was not an easy task. Here are some examples: grace = malonė (three syllables), peace = ramybė three syllables, faith = tikėjimas (four syllables.) “O for a thousand tongues to sing,” therefore, has two extra syllables at the end of the phrases making at least two extra syllables per stanza:

Te tękstančiai balsų giedos
di didžiam Karaliui šlovę!
Te garbę Dievui atiduos
ir šlovins Jo malonę!

And, of course, we had the discussion—How do you translate “tongues”? We used “voices.”

We have fifteen Charles Wesley hymns in our hymnbook, in addition to John Wesley’s rules for singing and his Covenant Prayer. We tried to include at least
one Wesley hymn for each season of the Christian year and for a number of the primary liturgies and occasions of the church.

Advent: Come, thou long-expected Jesus  
Christmas: Hark! the herald angels sing  
Lent/Passion/Good Friday: O Love Divine, what hast thou done  
Easter: Christ the Lord is risen today  
Ascension-Day: Hail the day that sees him rise  
New Year and Charge Conference: And are we yet alive?  
Holy Communion: Happy the one to whom is given

Others:

O for a thousand tongues to sing  
Rejoice, the Lord is King!  
Love Divine, all loves excelling  
Christ whose glory fills the skies  
And can it be that I should gain?  
Jesus, Lover of my soul  
Help us to help each other, Lord  
A charge to keep I have

Inara Serafinavičienė from Šiauliai, Lithuania, participated in a Methodist Conference in England and brought back S T Kimbrough’s songbook of hymns by Charles Wesley, Songs for the Poor. She later showed the book to me, pointed to one hymn and said, “This hymn [“Help us to help each other, Lord”] needs to be in our hymnal. It describes who we need to be.”

The Lithuanians are people who have suffered at the hands of the Soviets for over fifty years of occupation. The scars that remain after independence are not only in the structures of the buildings, but in the people as well. Many scars remain—lack of trust, suspicion, fear, reserved personalities focused on surviving, and many more. The effects of the Soviet system undermined trust and true community.

“Help us to help each other”: to carry our cross? to grow in love? to forgive others? to find a friend’s shoulder? These are not easy actions for people who are afraid to trust. But as we sing this hymn together and participate in the life and fellowship of the church, fears and suspicions begin to melt. Thanks be to God.

I asked Rasma Zladkovienė to write about what the hymns of Charles Wesley mean in her life today. Here is what she wrote:

“Rejoice, Rejoice! Christ the light and the Savior was born.” For me he was born with the independence in Lithuania. When I sing the songs of Jesus’ birth (“Come, thou long-expected Jesus” and “Hark! the herald angels sing”), the memories of the overwhelming feeling of happiness come back to my heart. For the first time at school we were allowed to celebrate Christmas. In candle light my students did the nativity play, sang songs, and listened to the priest who felt a bit
uneasy speaking openly about Christ at school. It brought tears to the eyes of everyone present. My heart was filled with joy and hope. ("O for a thousand tongues to sing") Our present and future are no longer emptiness or darkness. Christ is here; he is with us; he loves us; he loves me. Is there anything more precious we need in life?

Every time I sing praise to the Lord, my heart sings thanks for saving me, the sinner. ("O Love Divine, what hast thou done") I am no longer someone traveling nowhere. In my mind’s eye, I see myself sitting in the boat with the storms raging around; however, I feel no fear. My heart is at peace because Christ is with me in the boat showing me the way. He is the captain ("Jesus, Lover of my soul").

I asked the same question of Inara Serafinavičienė. Here are her words:

I am writing about the Charles Wesley hymns in our new United Methodist Lithuanian hymnbook. All of these hymns announce the gospel—the Good News for all people—God’s grace and the invitation to follow Jesus Christ. (She quotes Philippians 2:9–11.) This truth Charles Wesley proclaims in his hymns.

"O for a thousand tongues to sing" speaks about God’s glory and praise—all is done to praise the name of Jesus. It is as if the music sounds and inspires people to rise from their dark sins to a new life. "Jesus Lover of my soul" speaks about human weakness—when a person is weak, heavy-laden, weighed down by the cares of the world.

Charles Wesley hymns give hope in life, strengthen faith, and inspire joy and love. They inspire a deeper faith in me. I remember my mother. She would work quietly, humming the melodies of hymns. As a child, I wondered why she did that. Now, when I return home after Sunday’s worship, I feel in my heart the melodies of these hymns. They strengthen me and help me to love more deeply.

My favorite hymn is "O for a thousand tongues to sing." When I was attending a women’s conference in Bristol in 1998, I became acquainted with the name, Charles Wesley. While in England, I learned that this hymn was written one year after Charles’s conversion. This is an important hymn for all believers. This is our Methodist hymn. We sing it as if our hearts were singing, because Jesus’ voice calls us to new life. Therefore, I value this hymn and love to sing it. This has become my personal faith hymn. This hymn helps me to see God’s grace in the words of all of the hymns that I sing.

The hymns of Charles Wesley help to shape and form us as Christians, whether we have been journeying for a while in the faith or are newcomers. In re-establishing the Methodist Church in Lithuania, these hymns served and serve an important role in reminding Lithuanian Methodists who they are and who they are called to be as God’s people. Being a Methodist in this post-Soviet and predominantly Catholic country is to go against the grain of what society labels “normal” and “acceptable.” For this reason, Lithuanian Methodists need to be sustained and encouraged in the faith, and singing the hymns of Charles Wesley does just that—singing sustains, encourages, and provides nourishment for lives of faith.
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