

Andrews University

## Digital Commons @ Andrews University

---

Faculty Publications

---

2005

### Post Reformation Ecclesiology and Missiology--From the Radicals to Wesley: Moving out of the Shadow of Luther and Calvin

Woodrow W. Whidden

Andrews University, whiddenw@andrews.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Whidden, Woodrow W., "Post Reformation Ecclesiology and Missiology--From the Radicals to Wesley: Moving out of the Shadow of Luther and Calvin" (2005). *Faculty Publications*. 1140.  
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs/1140>

This Contribution to Book is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact [repository@andrews.edu](mailto:repository@andrews.edu).

## Chapter 2

\* \* \*

# POST REFORMATION ECCLESIOLOGY AND MISSIOLOGY—FROM THE RADICALS TO WESLEY: MOVING OUT OF THE SHADOW OF LUTHER AND CALVIN

WOODROW WHIDDEN

Whidden's essay compares the key theological/ecclesiological factors of the Magisterial Reformation tradition with the Radical and Wesleyan ethos and their respective visions of discipleship, theology, ethics, and mission. He then argues that movements which are Arminian in their soteriology; *functional*, not *institutional*, in their ecclesiology; and emphasize discipleship (including strict discipline), sanctification, and Gospel ethics are more likely to have a missional bent.

One of the truly puzzling questions in the history of Christianity is, Why did it take the churches of the Protestant Reformation tradition so long to catch a vision for the evangelization of non-Christians? This essay does not purport to be a piece of original research. It is a historical/theological reflection on what factors seem to have played a role in Protestantism's tardy embrace of the missiological vision of the New Testament. More positively, these reflections will seek to identify the theological/ecclesiological factors which seem most conducive to a missiological priority.

Can it be that theological convictions, including ecclesiology, play a role? For instance, are churches and movements that are self-consciously oriented to emphasizing sanctification and the ethical implications of the teachings of Jesus and the New Testament apostles more likely to have a missiological bent? What role does discipline play? Could it be that Christian traditions which are in the free-church tradition and strong on discipline are more likely to develop the will to transcend religion and culture to communicate the gospel to unbelievers? Does the issue of irresistible predestination vs. Arminian free will play any theological role in the pursuit of mission?

We will first review the ecclesiology of Luther, Calvin, and the Anabaptist or Radical Reformers. Then we will leap to Wesley and his concerns for church and mission. In our review and assessment of Wesley we will have to pay some attention to the way both Puritanism and Pietism (especially the Moravian version of Pietism) informed Wesley's passion for evangelizing—not only the disinherited of Augustan England, but also non-Christians of the New World.

### **The Ecclesiology of the Magisterial Reformers**

The ecclesiology of the sixteenth-century Reformers almost always unfolded over against the thought of Augustine of Hippo. B. B. Warfield's well-known historical summary provides an interesting point of departure: "The Reformation, inwardly considered, was just the ultimate triumph of Augustine's doctrine of grace over Augustine's doctrine of the church."<sup>1</sup>

For the magisterial reformers, there was a certain triumph of Augustine's doctrine of grace, but this triumph of grace over the doctrine of the church seems a bit overstated. While both Luther and Calvin were indebted to Augustine for their understanding of anthropology and hamartology (and thus the primacy of grace), the irony is that their doctrine of grace, as it relates to justification by faith, was not a triumph of Augustine's view of grace. It was Augustine's understanding of justifying grace which prevailed at Trent, not in Wittenberg or Geneva. Furthermore, the magisterial Reformers came much closer to Augustine's institutional view of the church than their Roman opponents would ever admit.

The major challenge to the ecclesial developments of Luther and Calvin erupted out of the predicament presented by the Radicals on the left and the Roman Catholics on the right. The papal partisans charged them with being schismatics in breaking away from the Roman church, a body which they

claimed was the visible institution which possessed historical continuity with the apostolic church. The Radical (Anabaptists, or Mennonites) Reformers made a counterclaim that the true church was in heaven, with no institutional manifestation on earth which merited the name “church of God.” Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli all sought some sort of a “middle way” between these two extremes—a middle way which did not always appear consistent (especially to the Radicals).

The issue seems to boil down to the following: The Magisterial Reformers worked out of a paradigm that was essentially *reformation*, while the Radicals built their doctrine of the church on the vision of *restitutio*.<sup>2</sup> But again, the issue is not neat and clean: The Magisterial thinkers’ *reformatio* vision was institutionally informed (assuming the historic continuity of the visible, from the apostolic church through the Roman tradition), but their justification for institutional schism involved a reluctant *restitutio* of the purity of apostolic doctrine. Of course, the key issue orbited around the doctrine of grace, which the Protestant Reformers claimed Rome had grossly distorted. The Radicals would have none of the institutional argument, but sought a complete purging of all corrupt elements, especially those which involved ethical compromise and the union of church and state.

### **Luther’s Ecclesiology**

For most of Luther’s reforming career, the thought of schism was unthinkable. Even as late as the Colloquy of Regensburg (Ratisbone) in 1541, there were high hopes for reconciliation with Rome. But with the failure of Regensburg, the convening of the Council of Trent in 1545, and its clarifications of papal doctrine and condemnations of Protestant positions, it had become clear that a permanent cleavage had transpired. For the magisterial Protestants, the question of the true identity of the church became critically important. This was the question which preoccupied the second, rather than the first generation of reformers. If Luther was concerned with the question, How may I find a gracious God? his successors were obliged to deal with the question which arose out of this—Where can I find the true church? (McGrath 1999:202). Luther, however, did not totally delegate the task to the second generation.

The early views of Luther very much reflected his optimistic emphasis on the Word of God as its goes forth conquering and gaining true obedience to God. Where this is happening, there is the church:

## 14 A Man with a Vision: Mission

Now, anywhere you hear or see [the Word of God] preached, believed, confessed, and acted upon, do not doubt that the true *ecclesia sancta catholica*, a “holy Christian people” must be there, even though there are very few of them. For God’s word “shall not return empty” (Isaiah 55: 11) . . . . And even if there were no other sign than this alone, it would be enough to prove that a holy Christian people must exist there, for God’s word cannot be without God’s people, and conversely, God’s people cannot be without God’s word. (ibid., 202-03)

As to who would proclaim the gospel which is contained in the Word, Luther probably enters into his most revolutionary ecclesial convictions. The practical implications of the “priesthood of all believers” clearly points to a *functional* understanding of the church, as opposed to the primacy of the historical, visible, *institutional* church. If the preaching of the Word is essential to the identity of the church, then an episcopally ordained ministry is not necessary to safeguard the existence of the church. And with the relativizing of episcopal ordination, the absolute distinction between priest and laity goes by the wayside. “Luther insisted that the distinction in question was functional,” not ontological/institutional. And thus the “only distinction . . . relates to the different ‘office’ or ‘function’ (*ampt*) and ‘work’ or ‘responsibility’ (*werck*) with which they are entrusted” (ibid., 203). Luther put it this way:

It is an invention that the Pope, bishop, priests and monks are called “the spiritual estate” (*geistlich stand*), while princes, lords, craftsmen and farmers are called “the secular estate” (*weltlich stand*) . . . . All Christians truly belong to the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them apart from their office (*ampt*) . . . . We are all consecrated priests through baptism, as St. Peter says: “You are a royal priesthood and a priestly kingdom” ( 1 Peter 2: 9) . . . . All are of the spiritual estate, and all are truly priests, bishops, and popes, although they are not the same in terms of their individual work. (ibid., 202)<sup>3</sup>

Despite his trenchant anti-sacerdotalism, Luther could appear quite inconsistent. To his Radical critics his ecclesiology could sound almost totally institutional when he would “confess that in the papal church there are the true Holy Scriptures, true baptism, the true sacrament of the altar, the true keys to the forgiveness of sins, the true office of the ministry, the true catechism in the form of the Lord’s prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the articles of the Creed’ (ibid., 203-04).

Thus Luther would have to respond by suggesting that the “False church has only the appearance” of a true church through its possession of the Chris-

tian offices. Even though it resembles the real, it is really something different. Just as the Galatians church of the New Testament was departing from the gospel at points, it could still be treated as a Christian church. But it, like the church at Rome, was a church that had “fallen from grace.” But what about the evangelical churches? Were they perfect?

Luther would readily admit that they were not perfect and that they were like the field filled with the wheat and the tares. But then his Radical opponents would remind him that he had early on argued that the moral shortcomings of the medieval church had called into question its claim to be a true church. It was this objection which finally forced Luther to insist on the priority of theology over morals. Thus his moral critique became secondary to his charge that Rome had fallen from grace due to its theological deficiencies.

### **Calvin on the Nature and Role of the Church**

As the major Reformer of the second generation of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, Calvin unfolded his ministry with the full realization that irrevocable divisions had descended on the Western church. Thus it is no surprise that he gave sustained attention to the doctrine of the church. His two key marks (*nota*) of the true church were that (1) the Word of God should be preached and (2) the sacraments be rightly administered. These marks do not differ from Luther’s identifying characteristics. He clearly understood his work to be that of reforming the historic, imperfect institution of the church in the “magisterial” mode of church and state working together as a Holy Christian commonwealth. This was anathema to the Radicals, who continued to deny the legitimacy of the historical, institutional church (both Catholic and Magisterial Protestant) and affirm the holiness of a gathered and disciplined church.

The distinctive contributions of Calvin were threefold: while his minimalist marks of the True Church would justify the split with Rome, he would meet the criticisms of the Radicals by (1) instituting a specific form of ecclesiastical order (the fourfold offices of pastor, doctor [or teacher], elder, and deacon), which would not only minister the Word and the sacraments but would also cooperate with a consistory to (2) administering ecclesiastical discipline. The discipline would maintain doctrinal purity and restrain moral declension. The final contribution of Calvin involved the (3) distinguishing between the visible and the invisible church (*ibid.*, 209).

While Calvin did not make ecclesiastical discipline an essential feature (*nota* or mark) of the church (in the same sense as the preaching of the Word and the proper administration of the sacraments), he did argue that “there are specific scriptural directions regarding the right order of ministry in the visible church, so that a specific form of ecclesiastical order now becomes an item of doctrine.” Thus a specific form of ecclesiastical administration is included in his understanding of how the “gospel is purely preached” (*ibid.*, 209).

The doctrine of ecclesiastical order represents Calvin’s distinctive contribution to the doctrine of the church. While Luther regarded the specifics of church organization as a matter of “historical contingency, not requiring theological prescription,” Calvin held that a definite pattern of church government was prescribed by Scripture. This emphasis on one particular form of church government “gave Calvin a criterion by which to judge (and find wanting) his catholic and radical opponents. Where Luther was vague, Calvin was precise” (*ibid.*, 210).

As to the question of the role of the church, Calvin’s views can be quite succinctly stated: the visible body needs the discipline (doctrinal and ethical guidance and correction) of the ministerial offices and the consistory so that the members may experience the process of sanctifying grace. Calvin would argue that the Incarnation teaches that salvation is always carried out in the flow of history. Therefore the church, defective though it may be, is the divinely ordained instrument to aid lovingly in the transformation of its members. Thus the church is not only marked by faithfulness in proclaiming the Word and properly ministering the sacraments, but it will also be explicitly *functional* in its role of bringing transforming discipline to the flow of salvation history. While the Catholic (Roman and Eastern) tradition would more formally exercise its sanctifying discipline in the religious sphere (the monastic settings), Calvinism would exercise it in the secular sphere (the parish and the public square).

Could it be that the more self-conscious any movement is about sanctifying grace, the more likely it is to be concerned about church structures and the offices which teach, nurture, and discipline? And Calvin did proclaim a very clear teaching on sanctification and transforming ecclesial structure.<sup>4</sup> This was to have important historical developments in the Puritan and Methodist experiences in both Great Britain and North America. Church structures which promote both character transformation, revival, and discipline would become matters of church doctrine.

## The Radical/Anabaptist Restorationism

We have already suggested some of the elements of the Radical ecclesiology during our discussion of the magisterial Reformers' attempts to navigate the narrow passage between the institutional challenges of their papal critics and the more functional, ethical, and disciplined vision of their right-wing Radical opponents. But further elaboration is needed.

Beginning with their challenges to Zwingli's reforming efforts, the Radicals clearly took the following position on the church: The church is primarily *functional*, and its *institutional* ontology was almost totally defined by its attempts to restore the moral purity of the primitive church. To this end, the church is a freely gathered group whose membership is initiated in adult baptism, and the major function of the church is to bring about voluntary discipline in an attempt to institute the ethics of Jesus in the life of the free church. Richard Hughes has characterized the Anabaptist vision of *restitutio* as "*ethical primitivism*." This is in some contrast to the "*ecclesiastical primitivism*" of the Reformed tradition and the "*gospel primitivism*" of Luther (Hughes, 1986: 213-14).

The distinctive features of the Radical understanding of the church involved the church as a freely chosen fellowship, separate from the corrupting influences of the magistrate (the power of the political state), and its key function was to discipline its members in such a way that they would institute the ethics of Jesus in their personal and ecclesial witness. Thus the Anabaptist ecclesiology is almost totally *functional*, and the key function is the institution of ethical rigor. Any institutional ontology mostly involves structures and procedures which promote the primitive ethics of Jesus (especially the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount) and radical separation from the corrupting structures of the state and the fallen, compromising "magisterial" churches (papal and Protestant). And thus the main mission of the church is to role-model the ethical witness of the disciplined lifestyle (both personal and corporate/social).

For the Radicals, if you "talk the talk" and don't "walk the walk" of the ethics of Jesus, they will have little use for either your "gospel" or "ecclesiastical" *restitutio*. This is why the Radical/Anabaptists could derisively refer to the Lutheran preaching house as a *Mundhaus* (literally a "mouth house").<sup>5</sup> Bard Thompson has suggested that the Magisterial Reformers were mainly concerned with developing a church of *believers*, while the Radicals were seeking to form a church of *disciples*.<sup>6</sup>

It should come as no surprise that a large part of their story involves the basics of survival for these ethically heroic disciples. They have certainly had their witness and mission, but could it be that when a movement is involved in a radical struggle for survival, it will find it hard to engage in transcultural witness to non-Christians?

### **The Wesleyan Struggle with Ecclesiology**

John Wesley never intended to be a schismatic in any of the innovations that he introduced into his wing of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival. He died an ordained priest in the Church of England and persistently proclaimed his Anglican loyalties to the very end. Having said this, though, it needs to be pointed out that, in the finale, Wesley never shied away from doing what he thought necessary to advance his Methodist outreach. This was especially true when it came to ministry to the “poor” who were caught in the social and spiritual crossfire of the early Industrial Revolution of Augustan Britain. It is in this context that we will seek to identify the major factors that contributed to the development of Wesley’s ecclesiology and missional aspirations. For Wesley, it was always his mission and the threat it posed for schism which provided the context and impetus for the development of his ecclesiology.

There appear to be two main factors which brought on the schism: (1) doctrinal and (2) ecclesiological. We shall consider the doctrinal issues first, but it appears that—it was matters having to do with the practical issues of parochial turf—evangelistic method, social outreach, and pastoral nurture—that became the main points of contention between the Anglican establishment and the insurgent Wesleyan revivalists.

### **Doctrinal Contention**

Though John and Charles Wesley had a family heritage of dissent from both maternal and paternal grandparents, their parents were thoroughgoing Church of England partisans. These famous sons of the Anglican parsonage drank deeply of their parents’ partisanship for the established church. There was, however, a deep strain of devotional piety nurtured in a setting of earnest sacramentalism and aspirations to holy living evident in the Epworth ministry of Samuel and Susannah Wesley. Thus it should come as no great surprise that the piety of both John and Charles Wesley unfolded in the setting of Anglican orthodoxy reflected in the canonical standards of the Thirty-nine Articles, the

Book of Common Prayer, the Edwardian Homilies, and the devotional classics of English Protestantism.

There appear to be three main bones of doctrinal contention: (1) justification by faith, (2) Christian perfection, and (3) the “witness of the Spirit.”

### ***Justification***

The issue involved in John Wesley’s advocacy of justification by faith largely stems from the influence of the pietistic Lutheranism of the Moravians, especially Peter Bohler. It was this discovery that divine forgiveness is the basis of holy living, rather than the reverse, that seemed to be the key to Wesley’s evangelical awakening. In the weeks and months leading up to and subsequent to his “Aldersgate experience,” he stoutly proclaimed the doctrine and experience of justification by faith alone to all who would hear. This brought considerable discomfort to many of the Anglican divines of the day, who had been very much nurtured in the moralism of Enlightenment rationalism. Justification by faith alone, as proclaimed by Wesley, was perceived by many Anglican clergy to be a serious threat to moral formation. Wesley’s response to such criticisms was to refer his critics to the articles on justification in the Thirty-nine articles (numbers XI-XIV), and especially to the Edwardian Homilies (1547; Leith 1982:230, 239-66), which addressed the subject (probably written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer). The evangelical (mostly Calvinist) Anglicans and independents largely supported Wesley in this emphasis.

### ***Perfection***

When it came to the Wesleyan emphasis on Christian perfection, the partisanship was somewhat reversed: The Calvinistic evangelicals suspicioned Anglican moralism, even papal, Tridentine influences. The establishment vicars and prelates were more indifferent.

The issue was to remain controversial, especially with evangelicals--both in the established church and among dissenters. Most of the opposition came from the Calvinistic wing of the evangelical revival led by Selina, the Countess of Huntington, and her chaplain, the redoubtable itinerant and sometime ally of the Wesleys--George Whitefield.

The gist of the Wesleyan understanding of perfection went like this: just as there was an identifiable moment of grace called conversion and justification, so there was also a second or subsequent work of grace called variously

perfection, perfect love, fullness of faith, or simply the blessing of holiness. Very few Anglicans would deny that there was, subsequent to conversion and justification, the experience of sanctification and growth in grace. Where the Wesleyan understanding became controversial had to do with the insistence that this second work of grace was instantaneous and essential for salvation. While Wesley held that it could come at any moment subsequent to justification, it more normally came in the crisis of holy dying.

The recipient of this second blessing was supposed to receive the direct witness of the Spirit that full deliverance from the power of sin had taken place; and while remissible, it was taught that the perfect had all original, or birth, sin purged away in an instant. What it really came down to for Wesley was this: there was to be a specific moment in the believer's experience when there would no longer be willful sins of premeditation. There would be left the effects of sin, many miscellaneous and minor defects, but no specific acts of or tendencies to knowingly and willfully go against the will of God.

This vision of scriptural holiness, proclaimed and wrought out in the nurturing setting of the Methodist United Societies (with their bands, classes, and emphasis on devotional piety, Christian service, and sacramental observances), was deemed by Wesley to be the distinctive contribution of the Wesleyan revival to Christian thought and experience. Furthermore, the spread of "Scriptural holiness over the land" was understood to be Methodism's central excuse for existence.

### *The "Witness of the Spirit"*

Closely connected with Wesley's emphasis on the importance of the experience of both justification and sanctification (including the fullness of perfect love) was his understanding of the "Witness of the Spirit." Drawing on Paul's concepts found in Romans 8:14-17, Wesley held that Christians should experience the direct witness of the Spirit to their minds and hearts that they had come into a saving, forgiven relationship to God through Christ. The Spirit, that witnessed to their initial salvation. However, was also deemed to be the Spirit which would witness to their experience of fullness of faith—the second work of perfect love.

It was this concept, dubbed by one Wesleyan opponent (the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton) as "perceptible inspiration," which seemed to stir up the most opposition. Wesley's opponents were not slow to suggest that this version of

the personal witness by the Spirit was the source of revivalistic “enthusiasm” (the eighteenth-century epithet for religious fanaticism). Especially troubling to many of the rationalistic Anglicans was the evident emotionalism which had been manifested in the early stages of the revival as it moved into the fields and streets of Britain. Such a direct link to the Spirit also seemed to inspire what appeared to many to be a species of spiritual elitism.

### **Ecclesiological Issues**

The expression “ecclesiological” is used here in a rather broad way to describe a whole range of issues having to do with the parochial, parish boundaries of the Anglican Church, evangelistic techniques (such as field preaching and the use of lay preachers—Wesley’s “sons in the gospel”), parachurch structures of nurture (the Societies with their bands, classes, and various ministries to the poor), public criticisms of the clergy, and ordination as it relates to the administration of the sacraments.<sup>7</sup> It is in these more practical issues that we find the most yeasty elements for the schism that finally erupted.

### **“The World Is My Parish”**

As the Wesleyan wing of the evangelical revival rapidly unfolded in the late 1730s and early 1740s, it did so in the setting of “field preaching” (open-air proclamation) by Whitefield and the Wesleys. The established church did not appear to have any burden to reach out to the alienated masses, and thus the Methodists (both Calvinistic and Wesleyan) felt led to take the revival to them where they were.

Such an outreach seemed inevitably to incite the parochial instincts of the established clergy who accused Wesley and company of not respecting their parish boundaries and prerogatives. When Wesley was challenged about his obvious disregard for such established boundaries, he replied that his Oxford ordination to the Anglican priesthood gave him access to the entire kingdom. In fact, he would proclaim that not only his Oxford ordination, but also the great needs of the masses and the evidences of the abundant harvest in such nonparochial ministry, justified him to conceive the whole “world” as his “parish.” Things were simply spiraling beyond the wildest dreams of the Methodist revivalists, and there was not much time to pander to the insecurities and proprietary claims of the settled vicars.

The problem, however, became even more acute when Wesley felt the need to use the services of itinerant laymen to serve as his “preaching assistants” or “sons in the gospel.” Their work was not only to win new believers, but also to minister to the growing multitudes of awakened and converted sinners who were being gathered into the burgeoning United Societies of the Wesleyan wing of the Methodist revival. Ordained itinerants such as Whitefield and John and Charles Wesley were one thing, but to have to contend with an invasion of fervent and mostly uneducated lay itinerants was just about more than many vicars could bear. And it was the question of the role of these “sons in the gospel” that would eventually precipitate many questions about ordination and the lay preachers’ rights to administer the sacraments to the Wesleyan converts being steadily gathered into the classes, bands, and preaching houses of Wesley’s highly organized United Societies.

The three questions of (1) ordination, (2) administration of the sacraments, and (3) the Wesleyan preaching houses would be the main issues that would eventually precipitate schism.

A number of other problematic factors need to be considered—especially the very existence of parachurch assemblies (the Societies and their band and classes).

First of all, it must be noted that religious societies were nothing novel in early eighteenth-century Britain. There were numerous small groups which had gathered for nurture or some specific ministry (such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts [SPG] and the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge [SPCK]). The difference between these groups and what would develop under Wesley’s organizing genius is that the former groups were always under the sponsorship of the Anglican ministry, while Wesley’s groups were under his ultimate extra-parochial direction.

So while Wesley urged his people to attend services at the local parish church (and especially the sacramental occasions), it should come as no surprise that the Wesleyan Methodists of the United Societies came more and more to find their ecclesial identity in their local societies and the various ministries of outreach and nurture found outside the care of the church. This was all exacerbated by the often hostile attitudes of the local parish priests and some bishops.

Furthermore, when the Wesleyan converts did show up, it was for communion and the resources of the vicar, and his parish would be overwhelmed with the large groups seeking sacramental fulfillment. On many occasions officiants

seemingly did not try to hide their annoyance. In other words, many Methodists did not feel welcome at the church's sacramental seasons and viewed the clerical officiants as critical and corrupt.

This tense state of affairs would greatly contribute to a growing undercurrent pushing for the ordination of Wesley's "assistants." Wesley had strenuously sought to unite his efforts with the parochial clergy (especially those with more evangelical leanings), but his efforts were only slightly successful. In fact, the lack of sacramental opportunity for Methodists in North America, during and after the Revolution, was one of the main factors that forced Wesley's hand to ordain Thomas Coke, who would in turn go to North America and ordain Frances Asbury (the rest is schismatic history). The Anglican vicars both before and after the Revolution were so sparsely stationed (and often inept) that the developing Methodists needed their own ordination to go forth with the full panoply of ministerial credentials needed for the North American situation.

### Summation

In terms of the ecclesial distinctions between groups that pursue a *reformatio* in contrast to a *restitutio* self-understanding seems to matter little in terms of missionary zeal. Most certainly the Magisterial Reformers' emphasis on *reformatio* worked out to a greater preoccupation with *institutional* identity. But both Luther and Calvin did manifest a strong streak of *restitutio* burdens: for Luther it was "gospel primitivism," and for Calvin there was a sense of "ecclesiastical primitivism." Furthermore, both Luther and Calvin were strong in their emphasis on irresistible election, though the Lutheran tradition did not retain this strong predestinarian accent of Luther. And yet both groups were very slow to missionize non-Christians.

The Radical/Anabaptists were "ethical primitivists" and thus almost totally concerned with the burdens of *restitution*, and their ecclesiology was thus overwhelmingly *functional* rather than *institutional*; yet their ethical restorationism and functional ecclesiology did not quickly manifest themselves in reaching out to non-Christians.

The pietistic Moravians and the Wesleyan Methodists had not only a strong desire to restore the pure gospel of grace, but also a very *functional* view of the church as providing structures for both personal discipline and outreach. And though the Methodists had a much stronger view of transforming or sanctifying grace than the Moravians, they both emphasized the importance of practicing

the ethics of Jesus. Their strong “gospel restorationism,” combined with their *functional* understanding of church structures and emphasis on transforming grace, seemed to provide a strong recipe for missionary outreach.

Are there any missional implications that can be drawn from the doctrinal/ecclesial concerns of the Post-Reformation Protestants?

First of all, it is quite clear that the more *functional* the ecclesiology, the more likely it is to be missional. Without a transformed life and a strong ethical concern, there is little chance for a missional bent. This is not to say that ontological/institutional concerns are totally inimical to missional effort. It does suggest, however, that a church/movement can have all of the institutional concerns in the world and still not be interested in transcultural missions.

Now it might be objected that Roman Catholics have had a powerful missional history that was way ahead of the Protestants. This is true, but I would urge that it was only among the disciplined secular orders of the Roman tradition that we have this missional outreach. These groups, especially the Jesuits, were highly disciplined and radically functional in their dedication to the concerns of the Roman church. Thus it seems that personal and group discipline, combined with strong doctrinal convictions and a very functional vision, more naturally point the way to a powerful missional outreach.

Now when it comes to doctrinal convictions, it really doesn't matter much what the doctrines or teachings of a given group are—with one exception: the more the emphasis on ethical purity and transforming grace, the more likely the group is to be missional. While the Catholics differed from the Wesleyan Methodists and the pietistic Lutherans on the basis for the experience of transforming grace, they both did emphasize that “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). And a very important part of the fruitful works of both groups was missionary zeal for unbelievers. It did not take the pietistic Moravians and the Wesleyan Methodists long to reach out to the unevangelized. The institutional Lutherans and Calvinists were considerably slower in getting the vision for reaching the lost masses of both the Christian and non-Christian cultures. And I would further suggest that inherent in a transforming doctrine of grace and radical, ethically defined discipleship is a greater emphasis on a functional ecclesiology.

Another ecclesial issue involves the very complex question of social circumstances. What is referred to under this category has to do not so much with economic class as it does with a clear self-understanding of who one is religiously and how much energy it takes to survive. When a group is threat-

ened with either a loss of clear theological identity or severe persecution, it is hard to gather any will to missionize. Maybe one of the reasons why the more ontological/institutional Lutherans and Calvinists were slower to embrace world mission was that they had clearly to differentiate themselves from not only Rome, but also from one another. For the Radicals, it was more a matter of physical survival.

The latter group was fairly quick to develop its self-understanding, but faced long and severe persecution. In places where they do not need to fight for survival, the Radicals have been much more involved in outreach. The Wesleyan Methodists faced some initial, severe persecution, but such opposition was relatively brief in their history. Wesley and his “sons in the gospel” had a great degree of freedom to do their thing, both in Britain and the New World. The same was true with the pietistic Moravians.

One possible exception to the above contention would be those groups which emphasize a more extreme withdrawal from the world. In the history of Protestant groups that radically withdraw from the world (such as the Hutterites, Amish, and the strict Mennonites), there is such a siege mentality in the face of the corrupt world that there is little will to go evangelize that “over-the-cliff” world. When the primary goal is to maintain religious and cultural identity, missionary zeal seems to wane.

One last concern involves the doctrine of election: Is it fair to say that groups which emphasize the free grace of God (classical Arminianism and the more recent free-will theism) are much more likely to be missionary-minded than those of a more irresistible grace orientation? While it is certainly true that Methodists often preach like Calvinists and Calvinists often pray like Methodists, it does appear that the more “free-grace” types have a greater relish for the mission field than the irresistible predestinarians. With all due respect to the faithful missionary efforts of the Reformed tradition, it has been much more tardy than have Arminian Protestants (including free-will theists) and the Roman Catholics.

Most certainly the above-stated conclusions are subject to the cautions of the historical exceptions. But when the more limited exceptions are granted, there do seem to be some fairly clear lessons of history. When one combines a strong gospel primitivism and a powerful emphasis on transforming grace (in a free-will context) with a functional ecclesiology, there is a greater likelihood that such a combination will eventuate in missionary outreach to unbelievers.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Alister McGrath (1999:197). The following section on Luther and Calvin is indebted to the historical tracings of McGrath.

<sup>2</sup> For a very perceptive treatment of the *restitutio* impulse, see Hughes (1986: 213-23).

<sup>3</sup> For a further comment on Luther's vision of the priesthood of all believers, see Roland Bainton (1955:136-142).

<sup>4</sup> This is one of the reasons that John Wesley could say, despite numerous battles with the Calvinistic wing of the eighteenth-century English evangelical revival, that there is "but a hair's breadth which separates me from the teachings of Calvin." This was certainly true of their common emphasis on sanctifying grace (though the Calvinists would reject Wesley's idiosyncratic second-blessing perfectionism) and the numerous structures which they both developed to aid in nurture and discipline.

<sup>5</sup> See Bard Thompson's very readable treatment of the Anabaptist early history (1996:465).

<sup>6</sup> "While Luther and Calvin speak of faith, the Anabaptists speak of discipleship; while Luther and Zwingli speak of believers, the Anabaptists speak of disciples" (Thompson 1996:463).

<sup>7</sup> The classic study of the Wesleys' relationship to the Church of England is Baker (1970).

- Hull, O. P. 1852. Cited by J. Bates, "From Bro. Bates," *Review and Herald*, 3 September.
- Kinkade, William. 1829. *The Bible Doctrine of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Atonement, Faith, and Election: To Which Is Prefixed Some Thoughts on Natural Theology and the Truth of Revelation*. New York: H. R. Piercy.
- Knight, George R. 1993. *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995. *The Fat Lady and the Kingdom: Adventist Mission Confronts the Challenges of Institutionalism and Secularization*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald.
- Linder, Eileen W., ed. 2002. *Year Book of American and Canadian Churches 2002*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Loughborough, J. N. n.d. "Some Individual Experience, A Companion to the Book, 'The Great Second Advent Movement,'" unpub. ms.
- Neufeld, Don F. 1996. "Seventh-day Adventist Church." Pp. 575-81. In *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (2d rev. ed.). Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald.
- "Response from the Seventh-day Baptists," 1869. *Review and Herald*, 23 November.
- Taylor, David T. 1860a. "Our Statistical Report," *World's Crisis*, 25 January.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1860b. "Our Statistical Report," *World's Crisis*, 15 February.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1860c. "Our Statistical Report," *World's Crisis*, 8 February.
- Thomsen, Russel J. 1971. *Seventh-day [sic] Baptists: Their Legacy to Adventists*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, James. 1848. To Bro. and Sis. Hastings, 26 August.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1849. To Bro. Bowles, 8 November.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1850. "The Third Angel's Message," *Present Truth*. April.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. 1847. *A Word to the 'Little Flock.'* Brunswick, ME: s.n.

## Chapter 2

- Bainton, Roland. 1955. *Here I Stand*. New York: New American Library.
- Baker, Frank. 1970. *John Wesley and the Church of England*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

- Hughes, Richard T. 1986. "Christian Primitivism as Perfectionism: From Anabaptists to Pentecostals." Pp. 213-55. In *Reaching Beyond: Chapters in the History of Perfectionism*. Stanley M. Burgess, ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.
- Leith, John H., ed. 1982. *Creeds of the Churches*. 3rd ed. Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press.
- McGrath, Alister. 1999. *Reformation Thought*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers.
- Thompson, Bard. 1996. *Humanists and Reformers: A History of the Renaissance and Reformation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

#### Chapter 4

- Delafield, D. A. 1975. *Ellen G. White in Europe: 1885-1887*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald.
- Random House Unabridged Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1993. New York: Random House.
- Neufeld, Don. 1996a,b. *Seventh-Day Adventist Encyclopedia*. 2 vols. Rev. ed. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald.
- White, Ellen G. 1879. *Testimony for the Physicians and Helpers of the Sanitarium*. Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press.
- White, Ellen G. 1887a. Letter to [Charles and Maude] Boyd, "Broader Views of Missionary Work," 25 June 1887, Letter 12, 1887, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan (hereafter abbreviated CAR-AU).
- White, Ellen G. 1887b. Letter to [Dores A.] Robinson and [Charles L.] Boyd, 18 June 1887, Letter 14, 1887, CAR-AU.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1890. "How the Truth Should Be Presented." *Review and Herald*, 25 November: 721-722.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1898. *The Desire of the Ages*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1911. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1915. *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1941. *Christ's Object Lessons*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1948. *Testimonies for the Church*. Vol. 9. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.