

“Let Us Thy Mercy Prove”: A United Methodist Understanding of the Eucharist

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In 1742, John Wesley published an essay on “The Character of a Methodist” in order to demonstrate to questioners from within and without the new movement that Methodism was “plain old Christianity” and not distinct from the Christianity practiced by “real Christians.” Methodist approaches to worship and to the sacraments were, therefore, not to be substantively different from those of other Christians. Rather than proposing something new, the early Methodists advocated a recovery of practices and understandings that they believed to be in accord with “scriptural Christianity.”

American Methodists, as well as the denominations that came to make up the Evangelical United Brethren Church, always emphasized their commitment to Scripture and, in a “catholic spirit,” to the wider church. Such an affirmation was borne out by a willingness to participate in interdenominational camp meetings and revivals, and from the late-nineteenth century onwards, in broader ecumenical conversations and mutual endeavors. Many of these cooperative ecumenical efforts also took on a liturgical shape: the United Brethren, the Evangelical Church, and several branches of Methodism were involved in the 1930s with the work of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America to promote worship education at all levels and to introduce (or restore) the liturgical year in “free church” congregations. More recently, the participation of The United Methodist Church in the World Council of Churches and in various bilateral and multilateral dialogues has caused the denomination (once again) to measure its theological reflection and liturgical practices against those of other Christian groups. These ecumenical conversations, along with the liturgical renewal that swept across the churches especially in the past forty years, prompted The United Methodist Church to place into its orders for Lord’s Day worship, if not yet into its practice, the expectation of a normative service of Word and Table.

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In discussing a “United Methodist” theology of the Eucharist, therefore, one should not expect major theological distinctions from other Christian bodies. For example, it is not surprising to see the strong affirmation by the United Methodist Council of Bishops to the consensus document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (*BEM*, also known as the “Lima Document”), produced in 1982 by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (the final redaction of which was chaired by a British Methodist!). Although they acknowledged some United Methodist peculiarities, on the whole the bishops strove to locate The United Methodist Church firmly within the consensus. Indeed, they noted that in some places where there was divergence *BEM* could serve as a corrective.¹

BEM develops the meaning of the Eucharist under five headings: thanksgiving to the Father, *anamnesis* of Christ, invocation of the Spirit, communion of the faithful, and meal of the Kingdom. Although the carefully worded contents under these five headings represent the results of contemporary ecumenical conversations, the subjects addressed are not new: explorations of these themes in third- and fourth-century writings informed modern theologians in their deliberations. Even the early Methodist movement in its sacramental revival identified these and similar issues and spoke to them through sermon and hymn in order to encourage a deeper appreciation of the Lord’s table. Specifically, this meant recognizing a need for the sacrament that could be satisfied by frequent (preferably “constant”) communion, acknowledging Christ’s real presence at the table, celebrating the union of the “saints above” with the “saints below” in anticipation of the heavenly banquet, and actively linking the grace received at the table with acts of mercy toward neighbor and stranger.

To set forth a United Methodist theology of the Eucharist requires familiarity with the theological content of the current and previous official orders of service for Holy Communion (the current rite having affinities with both early Christian and contemporary orders; and the former Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren rites carrying the distinct genetic material of Anglicanism). Official responses to ecumenical documents like *BEM* and the theological texts produced for and by the predecessor denominations of The United Methodist Church should also be taken into account. In particular, John Wesley’s sermons “The Means of Grace” and “On the Duty of Constant Communion,” as well as *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper* (1745), consisting of 166 hymn texts, need to be consid-

ered. These texts contain Wesley's fullest statements on the sacrament (although brother Charles was the principal lyricist for the hymns, John affixed his name as coauthor of the collection). The two sermons were readily studied in North America and, on occasion, read from the pulpit. Although no edition of *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* was ever published in the United States, certain hymns from the collection were put to use on this side of the Atlantic either in official hymnals or in other sources: a book of sermon outlines kept by early Methodist preacher Philip Gatch contained fifteen hand-copied Lord's Supper hymns.² The *Hymns* are an underrecognized United Methodist (and Anglican!) theological treasure, yet serve as an important point of conversation in dialogues, especially with Roman Catholics and the Orthodox.³

Many of the hymns from the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* are more suited to private meditation or theological reflection than to singing in a liturgical context. Their very density makes them a valuable resource in delineating the doctrine of the Eucharist held by the Wesleys and the early Methodists. In this respect, hymn number 53 may be drawn upon in order to develop several key points of teaching:

O God of truth and love,
Let us Thy mercy prove;
Bless Thine ordinance Divine,
Let it now effectual be,
Answer all its great design,
All its gracious ends in me.

O might the sacred word
Set forth our dying Lord,
Point us to Thy sufferings past,
Present grace and strength impart,
Give our ravish'd souls a taste,
Pledge of glory in our heart.

Come in Thy Spirit down,
Thine institution crown;
Lamb of God, as slain appear,
Life of all believers Thou,

Let us now perceive Thee near,
Come, Thou Hope of glory, now.

Eucharist: Work of the Triune God

At the sacrament of the table the triune God is manifest, as is also true at the sacrament of the font. The three-stanza structure of hymn 53 reflects this reality: each stanza corresponds to one Person of the Godhead, with the coinherent work of all Three subtly maintained. Such unity is expressed from the outset in the first line of the first stanza, where "truth" suggests the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and "love" hints at the outpoured Comforter. Yet it is to the First Person that the hymn speaks, for it is because of the Father's originating work in creation, redemption, and sanctification that communion is both offered and fulfilled. The petitions to the Father throughout the hymn hint at the classic structure for prayers of thanksgiving (at least since St. Basil's fourth-century treatise *On the Holy Spirit*) by which prayer is addressed to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. The threefold sequence corresponds to the tripartite structure of the Great Thanksgiving in the official rite of The United Methodist Church, which was developed in light of ecumenical conversations and of rediscoveries made by the liturgical movement. This Antiochene, or West Syrian, structure for the eucharistic prayer that predominated in much of twentieth-century liturgical revision was not unknown to the Wesleys. Their liturgical interest in matters Patristic and Eastern attracted them to the so-called Clementine Liturgy in the eighth book of the fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions*, which mostly follows the now-familiar Antiochene pattern. However, in providing a liturgy for the Methodist people in his *Sunday Service of the Methodists* (1784), John opted to depend upon the 1662 Communion service of the Church of England.

Use of the Antiochene structure for the eucharistic prayer has made overt in the liturgical text what United Methodists and their predecessors have always known: the Holy Spirit is present and active at the Lord's Supper. However, prior to the most recent liturgical revisions, mention of the place and work of the Holy Spirit at the sacrament could be nonexistent in the rites of United Methodism's ecclesiastical ancestors unless the Collect for Purity was used ("Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open . . . cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit . . .") and a

trinitarian reading was given to the *Sanctus* ("Holy, holy, holy . . ."). An exception was the Evangelical United Brethren rite from 1951 that, echoing the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, asked the Father to "bless and sanctify with thy Word and Holy Spirit these thy gifts of bread and wine." The singing of hymns that made reference to the work of the Spirit—for example, the line "Come in Thy Spirit down, Thine institution crown" in "O God of truth and love"—thus was essential to convey to those in attendance that the fullness of God was at work in the Eucharist. The use of the tripartite prayer, and particularly the addition of an *epiklesis* by which we "call down" the Spirit upon the eucharistic gifts and the people, has alerted attentive United Methodist congregations to the eucharistic work—and presence—of each person of the Godhead. Unfortunately, the all-too-common practices of reducing the Great Thanksgiving to the words of institution or the *epiklesis* alone, or of dividing up the Great Thanksgiving among different readers (with the elder only praying the words of institution, the *epiklesis*, or both), has fractured the theological wholeness intended by the structure of the prayer.

The Presence of Christ

It is by the power of the Holy Spirit poured out upon the gathered community that hearts are gladdened and spirits joined. It is also by the power of the Holy Spirit that the historic words of Jesus become living and effective, thus making present him who was crucified and risen and who now reigns eternally. When sacramental remembrance of his saving work is made according to his own institution (*anamnesis*), Christ becomes visible to the eyes of faith. To use the text of our standard Great Thanksgiving, "When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit."⁴ Or in the poetry of hymn 53, the "sacred word set[s] forth our dying Lord," and by the Spirit the "Lamb of God, as slain appear[s]"; the reader then petitions, "Let us now perceive Thee near; Come, Thou Hope of glory, now."

Over the centuries, the matter of how Christ is present at the sacrament has been a subject of debate—and schism. Generally, for the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century ancestors of United Methodists, Christ's real presence at the table was never in doubt, because there was the expectation of an encounter with the divine as was intended in the fullest meaning of *sacrament*; the Lord's Supper was never just a bare memorial. Real presence certainly was not meant in the sense of transub-

stantiation, which, according to the eighteenth Methodist Article of Religion, "is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions."⁵ Neither was presence defined in terms of consubstantiation, a theological interpretation sometimes connected with Luther. Writing in 1858, Methodist Orceneth Fisher commented that when our Lord says, "This is my body, this is my blood, . . . his words are to be taken, not in a gross and literal, but in a spiritual and heavenly sense."⁶ Christ is really and truly present, but in a manner that defies precise definition.

Eventually, however, the perspective of many of our ecclesiastical ancestors shifted away from a positive understanding of real presence. This shift was brought about by fears that the phrase was indeed associated with transubstantiation (occasioned in part by an increase in the immigration of Roman Catholics) and by the heightened rationalism that permeated all aspects of American life. In 1864, the Methodist Episcopal Church introduced an alteration to the Communion text: the phrase from the Prayer of Consecration, "receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion," was shortened to "receiving these memorials of the sufferings and death of our Saviour Jesus Christ." This change lasted only one quadrennium, though, before the older form was restored. However, the die was cast: there was a greater tendency to read the Supper as a memorial of the absent one (a position often associated with Anabaptists and the Swiss reformer Huldreich Zwingli), with the bread and wine—and the entire liturgical event—as "mere" (meaning ineffective) symbols. Lord's Supper hymns selected for official hymnals articulated the memorial aspect, thereby capturing the theological position frequently found in denominational literature. Alterations made to the Communion service by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1932 (and kept, after merger, by the Methodist Church) expressed this change. In the Prayer of Consecration, "a perpetual memory of his precious death" became "this memorial of his precious death"; and, rather than partaking "of his most blessed body and blood," communicants partook "of the divine nature through him." In a fashion similar to this latter revision, "eating the flesh" and "drinking his blood" in the Prayer of Humble Access became "these memorials of Thy Son Jesus Christ."⁷

What United Methodist theological and liturgical reflection on the

sacraments has done, thanks to influences from the liturgical and ecumenical movements, is to invite Christ once again to his own table. Recovery of our own Wesleyan heritage has also assisted us in this matter. In the hymn "O Thou Who This Mysterious Bread," included in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (number 613) and originally from *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, we sing using present, active verbs by which we repeat the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: "Return, herewith our souls to feed, and to thy followers speak. . . . Open our eyes to see thy face, our hearts to know the Lord. . . . Talk with us, and our hearts shall burn with flames of fervent love." Christ's real presence at the sacrament is unmistakably affirmed in the final stanza of the hymn "Victim Divine, Thy Grace We Claim," also from *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* and printed in *The Faith We Sing* (number 2259): "To every faithful soul appear, and show thy real presence here!" (It is in the first part of this stanza that the text refutes Calvin's notion of the communicant's spiritual assent to heaven—"We need not go up to heaven, to bring the long-sought Savior down.") By recognizing the work of the Spirit—and the entire Godhead—in the celebration at the table, Christ's presence is acknowledged. Moreover, the full meaning of the sacrament—as an effective sign and a means of grace—may also be recovered. What Christ has promised, through the power of the Holy Spirit, he gives to us at his holy meal.

A Means of Grace

The phrase *means of grace* is not a distinctively Wesleyan term. John Wesley acknowledges his indebtedness to wider church usage in his sermon on "The Means of Grace":

By 'means of grace' I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end—to be the *ordinary* channels whereby he might convey to men preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace.

I use this expression, 'means of grace,' because I know none better, and because it has been generally used in the Christian church for many ages: in particular by our own church, which directs us to bless God both for the 'means of grace and hope of glory'; and teaches us that a sacrament is 'an outward sign of inward *grace*, and a *means* whereby we receive the same.'⁸

Principal among these means, says Wesley, are prayer, searching the

Scriptures (and reading and hearing the Word), and the Lord's Supper. To this list of "instituted means of grace" are often added public worship, family and private prayer, and fasting.⁹

The impetus for Wesley's sermon came from the controversy at London's Fetter Lane Society regarding the use of the means of grace. Under the influence of Philip Henry Molther, some baptized Moravians and Methodists claimed that they should be "quiet" and wait upon the Lord, and thereby abstain from any means of grace until they had experienced full assurance of faith—or, in the terminology of that period, "conversion." Wesley countered this position by arguing that those persons with some degree of repentance and faith should participate in the means of grace even if they did not yet know full assurance. In fact, he says, the means could supply the grace—preventing, justifying, or sanctifying—specifically needed. Hence, the Lord's Supper could be a "converting ordinance" to those baptized in infancy, for it could produce in the heart the requisite assurance.¹⁰ Yet Wesley was as much against an understanding of the power of the sacrament as due to its human performance as he was against Fetter Lane spiritualism. The key for Wesley is trusting "that it is God alone who is the giver of every good gift, the author of all grace."¹¹ Because of God's generosity, "is not the eating of that bread, and the drinking of that cup, the outward, visible means whereby God conveys into our souls all that spiritual grace, that righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which were purchased by the body of Christ once broken and the blood of Christ once shed for us? Let all, therefore, who truly desire the grace of God, eat of that bread and drink of that cup."¹²

Because the Lord's Supper is an *ordinary* means of grace, Christians may be confident that grace will be given. Christ's word is true; therefore, the bread and the wine will convey what is promised. The text of hymn 53 proceeds under this assumption: "Bless Thine ordinance Divine, Let it now effectual be, Answer all its great design, All its gracious ends in me." Supping at the Lord's table imparts "present grace and strength" and "give[s] our ravish'd souls a taste." It is to "believers"—those who have at least a modicum of faith—that such grace is given. The necessity of faith prior to the reception of the sacrament is a theological position set out in United Methodism's historic documents. According to Methodist Article 18, "to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup

of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ." Article 6 of the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church follows a similar line: "Those who rightly, worthily and in faith eat the broken bread and drink the blessed cup partake of the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner until he comes."¹³

How is the Eucharist efficacious? The Wesleys were hesitant to offer an explanation and their spiritual descendants have also refrained from theological and philosophical speculation. But the Wesleys unhesitatingly affirmed that the sacrament *does* work, though later Wesleyans seemingly have not been so confident. The hymn "O the Depth of Love Divine" from *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* and in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (number 627) emphasize that trust in the promise of God on this matter is paramount. "Who shall say how bread and wine God into us conveys! How the bread his flesh imparts, how the wine transmits his blood, fills his faithful people's hearts with all the life of God!" Even the angels "bow to search it out, in vain." Nevertheless, despite the absence of an elaborate explanation, by "the Father's wisdom" the "feeble elements bestow a power not theirs to give"; "these the virtue did convey, yet still remain the same." The appropriate human response thus is neither analysis nor despair but simply to "wonder and adore."

Although the Eucharist as a means of grace is not a concept unique to United Methodism, perhaps a Wesleyan contribution to the churches is an understanding of the means of grace as both *obligation* and *opportunity*. In his sermon on "The Duty of Constant Communion," John Wesley put these two points side by side in identifying the reasons why Christians should frequent the table and the excuses (even the ones used today!) that are often given for absence. It is the duty of Christians to receive the sacrament, said Wesley, because Christ commanded that we "do this." But the Christian should also receive as often as he or she can because the benefits are so great: "the forgiveness of our past sins, and the present strengthening and refreshing of our souls."¹⁴ This is what we sing in "O Thou Who This Mysterious Bread": "Enkindle now the heavenly zeal, and make thy mercy known, and give our pardoned souls to feel that God and love are one." It is precisely because the means of grace *do something* that their reception is so important for Christian life and growth. For this reason, among others, John Wesley in 1784 advised Methodist elders "to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day."¹⁵ In the same vein, our

spiritual ancestors insisted on keeping one another accountable regarding the regular *practice* of the means of grace. Such accountability was, in certain periods of our history, committed to explicit and firm legislation. The General Rules that stand among the United Methodist doctrinal standards in the *Book of Discipline* give a glimpse of these previously held convictions. Indeed, the General Rules call United Methodists again to spiritual practices and accountability: "It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation . . . by attending upon all the ordinances of God."¹⁶

A Sign of Christian Fellowship

Although the Eucharist is oftentimes construed as simply a private affair between the individual and God, its corporate aspect was a hallmark of the early church and, with the recovery of ancient Christian practices, is so of the churches today. The Wesleyan sacramental revival strongly affirmed the corporate dimension of the Supper alongside the personal. In the hymn "O God of truth and love," both first-person plural and first-person singular pronouns are used: "Let us Thy mercy prove [meaning "experience"]," "Point us to Thy sufferings past," and "Let us now perceive Thee near"; but also, "Answer all its great design, All its gracious ends in me." But because of the stress upon personal piety and individual freedom in our preaching and teaching, it has sometimes been overlooked or even forgotten that communion is with God *and* with other Christians—the whole church—in every time and place. The pastor praying the Great Thanksgiving reminds us of this connection toward the end of the standard prayer by the words "make us one with Christ [and] one with each other."¹⁷ The return in many United Methodist churches to use of the common loaf and the common cup serves as a visible reminder of the unity that is to be found in Christ. Yet it also testifies to the reality that the oneness of the church for which Jesus prayed (John 17:20-21) has still to be accomplished.

The pastor celebrating the Supper makes another claim for the corporate dimension of the sacrament immediately before the congregation joins in the *Sanctus*: "And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven."¹⁸ The union of "your people on earth" with "all the company of heaven" was a frequent theme in the Wesley hymns, both eucharistic and otherwise (of the latter category, for example, is "Come, Let Us Join Our Friends Above," number 709 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*). None of the

hymns in *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* with this theme are found in the current hymnal, though one appeared in its predecessor of 1964¹⁹: the second stanza of "Happy the Souls to Jesus Joined" (number 535) reads, "The Church triumphant in thy love, Their mighty joys we know; They sing the Lamb in hymns above, And we in hymns below." Another hymn, "How Happy Are Thy Servants, Lord" (number 328 in the 1964 book), emphasizes the earthly fellowship by which "Our hearts and minds and spirits join, And all in Jesus meet." Holy Communion is precisely that—communion.

The interconnection of believers around the common table and the effectiveness of the sacrament should have the consequence, according to the standard United Methodist Great Thanksgiving, of making us "one in ministry to all the world."²⁰ This is one of the "gracious ends" of the "ordinance Divine" spoken of in the hymn "O God of truth and love." Recovery of the ancient link between worship (*leitourgia*) and service (*diakonia*) is a feature of the modern liturgical and ecumenical movements, and in light of this emphasis, the concept is articulated in our official liturgical text. As "imitators of Christ" (cf. Eph. 5:1f), Christians not only gather to pray "in [his] name" (Matt. 18:20) but also have the example of Christ himself who "went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38). Yet the framers of the Great Thanksgiving recognized as well that the relationship between worship and service was a central facet of the Methodist revival in the eighteenth century. Indeed, one Wesleyan contribution to the ecumenical conversation was precisely on this point, since in early Methodism, scriptural and primitive Christian models were used that connected liturgical praxis with care of the needy (e.g., the love feast with its collection of alms for the poor). The "work" of worship was to issue forth in works of mercy and charity. Christians are to put into practice what they preach and pray. The ministry that emanates from the strengthening meal at the table is summed up by the General Rules in the *Discipline* in two words: "doing good." Christians come to the table for pardon and renewal, but they should also come in order to be sent out for discipleship and mission.

An Anticipation of the Heavenly Banquet

The Eucharist draws upon the past; it is anamnetic. The benefits of the one-time sacrifice of Jesus—all that he accomplished for the sake of the world and all that he promised—are brought into the present. The sacrament also looks to the future; it is proleptic. It is an anticipation, a foretaste,

of the Lord's banquet at which the church triumphant and the church militant together will feast (Matt. 26:29; 1 Cor. 11:26). At the Supper, time is collapsed into the present; earth and heaven meet. The redemptive work that God has done and will do is summed up with the bread and the wine. Hence, our response is one of gratitude, joy, and thanksgiving (*eucharistia*).

In the sequence of benefits petitioned for in the hymn "O God of truth and love," the final request is for the "pledge of glory in our heart" that is given by the one who himself is the "hope of glory" (cf. Col. 1:27). Those hymns in *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* that focus upon "The Sacrament a Pledge of Heaven" often use terms like *pledge* or *earnest* or *title* to speak to the joyous expectation of the heavenly feast which is, nevertheless, a part of present knowledge and experience. In Christ, the Kingdom has come; the Second Coming and the final fulfillment still await. But by faith and hope at the "great Kingdom feast," the blessings of that future day may be realized now. The Wesley hymns conveyed a rich eschatological understanding of the sacrament that drew heavily upon early Christian literature. Unfortunately, the eschatological emphasis in the hymns never was paralleled in an official text for the Lord's Supper; only a few of these eschatologically oriented hymns were ever included in an authorized hymnal. Even the current Great Thanksgiving, influenced as it is by the ecumenical rediscovery of the eschatological dimension of the Eucharist, is weak compared to the eschatological perspective expressed in the hymns. The prayer simply announces that we celebrate the sacrament "until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet."²¹ Here is a place where United Methodist reappropriation of its own heritage may assist in the shaping of further ecumenical conversation regarding the Eucharist.

Reclaiming our Heritage

To be true to our ancestral "character," United Methodists should not expect our theology or practices to distinguish us substantively from other "real" Christians. But there is much from United Methodism's own distinct and often-forgotten history that is relevant for contemporary conversations about the Eucharist, both within the denomination and across the churches. Certain aspects of early Christian thinking and practice that were recovered by the liturgical and ecumenical movements of the past century were already embraced in early Methodism. For the sake of the Christian unity to which we as a denomination are committed, we should make a

concerted effort to reclaim those things in our more distant past that place us into greater conformity with other Christians. The bishops, in their response to *BEM*, made a similar observation, noting that "*BEM* encourages our generation of Methodists to recover our own Wesleyan heritage while experiencing the theological convergence with many other Christians."²² The eucharistic action itself may set the pattern: while we anticipate that day when all God's people are gathered at the one table, we recall how God's saving mercy has been with us on the journey and how Christ has been present in our midst.

O God of truth and love,
Let us Thy mercy prove.

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Endnotes

1. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982); and "United Methodist Church [USA]," in *Churches Respond to BEM*, Faith and Order Paper 132, ed. by Max Thurian (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), 2:177-99.
2. See Lester Ruth, *A Little Heaven Below: Worship at Early Methodist Quarterly Meetings* (Nashville: Kingswood, 2000), 140.
3. See, for example, "Report of the Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council, 1967-1970," in *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Methodist Conference, Denver, Colorado, August 18-26, 1971*, ed. by Lee F. Tuttle (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971; and London: Epworth, 1971), 56.
4. "Service of Word and Table I," *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), 10.
5. *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church-2000* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2000), ¶103.
6. Orceneth Fisher, *Sacramental Catechism. Part Second. The Lord's Supper. Or, A Scriptural View of the Nature, Design, Perpetuity & Subjects of the Holy Communion of the Church of Christ* (San Francisco: Whitton, Towne & Co., 1858), 206.
7. For a fuller discussion of this shift, see Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 127-37.
8. John Wesley, "The Means of Grace," in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. by Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 1:381 (2.1).
9. See, for example, "General Rules," in *The Book of Discipline*, ¶103.
10. See also John Wesley's journal entries for June 27-28, 1740, in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. by W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 19:158-59.
11. John Wesley, "The Means of Grace," 382 (2.3).
12. *Ibid.*, 389-90 (3.12).
13. *Book of Discipline*, ¶103.
14. John Wesley, "The Duty of Constant Communion," in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. by Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 3:428-29 (1.1-2).
15. "Letter to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North-America, September 10, 1784," cited from *John Wesley's Prayer Book: The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America* (Akron, Ohio: OSL Publications, 1995), n.p.
16. *Book of Discipline*, ¶103.
17. "Service of Word and Table I," 10.
18. *Ibid.*, 9.
19. *The Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1964, 1966).
20. "Service of Word and Table I," 10.
21. *Ibid.*
22. "United Methodist Church [USA]," in *Churches Respond to BEM*, 2:190.