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S T Kimbrough, Jr.
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Charles A. Green
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societies and emphasizes the assurance that God who has brought us through the past will continue to do so “till we can sin no more” in death. It appeared as one of several Wesley hymns in Richard Allen’s 1801 *A Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns, Selected from Various Authors*,³ the first hymnal compiled expressly in North America for use by an African American congregation.⁴

The character of the eighteenth-century Wesleyan movement in Great Britain was vibrantly formed in the “way of salvation” by the spiritual practice of singing together in community. This occurred through the contributions of John and Charles Wesley that shaped Methodism as a “lyrical religion,” joining theology and poetry. The phrase “lyrical religion” has long been used to speak of this joining, beginning with the Temple and synagogue worship of Jesus’ day and the Psalm singing traditions that bridge Hebrew and Christian worship practice.⁵

God’s Gift of Communal Singing

Singing is an embodied holistic process—involving breath, body, emotions, spirit, and both hemispheres of the brain. Music is a gift from God and can serve as a bridge between humans and God, and between humans with each other.

Alice Parker, composer and champion of congregational singing, speaks of the power of music to create identity and community:

Singing is the most human, most companionable of the arts. It needs no materials or tools [other than ourselves]. Music joins us together in the whole realm of sound, forging a group When we sing together, we create a community, a communion in sound. It is a paradigm of union with the Creator.⁶

Michael Joncas⁷ and Don Hustad⁸ have pointed out the value of music both inside and outside worship, as *koinonia*, community, one of the New Testament marks

³ *A Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns Selected from Various Authors by The Rev. Richard Allen*, (Philadelphia, 1801; reprinted with introduction by J. Roland Braithwaite, Nashville: A.M.E.C. Sunday School Union, 1987).

⁴ Eileen Southern, “Hymnals of the Black Church,” from *The Black Christian Worship Experience: A Consultation*, published in 1986 and found in *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship*, compiled and edited by James Abbingtion (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2001), 137–140, lists three Charles Wesley hymns; others claim more or less. This author has not been able to verify other than the text listed.

⁵ Including Augustine Smith’s *Lyric Religion: The Romance of Immortal Hymns* (New York: The Century Co., 1931), a study of hymns, which lamented the tendency of congregations to “listen in” rather than participate in the singing. Connection with the Temple and synagogue pointed out by Carlton R. Young, e-mail, 1/26/2007. The classic study on this subject is Eric Werner’s *The Sacred Bridge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959; reprint New York: DaCapo Press, 1970). See also supplemental volume 2, *The Sacred Bridge: The Interdependence of Liturgy and Music in Synagogue and Church in the First Millennium*, 1984.

⁶ *Melodious Accord: Good Singing in Church* (Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 1991), 34–35, 115.

⁷ “Music as Worship” in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, edited by Paul Bradshaw, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 328.

⁸ *Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing Co., 1993), 23.

of the church. This identity-creating function of communal singing is reinforced by denominational hymnals, as they seek to present Christian beliefs theologically focused by denominational perspectives.⁹

An Episcopal priest, Tom Ehrich, pondering why anyone would sing in church since we sing rarely elsewhere in daily life, gives a description that might well have described a Methodist class meeting:

In a sense, it is a wonder we sing at all . . . we don't like the sound of our own voices, we are trapped in cycles of sin and despair that leave us wanting only to hide. To stand in church and sing such words as *lost* or *joy* takes more courage than many can muster. And yet some congregations do sing. . . . What makes the difference, I think, is that they are the broken. They know their need of God. . . . They know failure, they know unfairness, they know pain, they know grief. They simply must sing to the God of all hope.¹⁰

Thomas Troeger speaks of this in terms of salvation and worship:

Singing can manifest salvation—congregational singing is a witness to our belief that worship is based not on the adequacy of our efforts, but on the saving, gracious character of the One we praise.¹¹

Musicam sacram, 1967, by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship of the Roman Catholic Church, named five functions for Christian worship music, of which the second reads: Music has potential to unify the assembly of worshippers.¹² Ed Foley takes this a step further to suggest that this unity correlates with the understanding of a God who seeks engagement with humans.¹³

“Happy the souls to Jesus joined” was published in *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745). Saved by grace and following the statutes of Jesus, we find joy in connection with Jesus, and thus God, and with the church on earth and in heaven, especially at the communion table.

EXAMPLE 2

Happy the souls to Jesus join'd,
 And sav'd by grace alone,
 Walking in all thy ways we find
 Our heaven on earth begun.

⁹Two interesting examples of this within the Wesleyan connection are Richard Allen's aforementioned hymnal, published in 1801, years before the inaugural General Conference of the denomination in 1816, and *The Methodist Hymnal* (1935) a joint publication of the three Methodist branches which would merge in 1939: The Methodist Episcopal Church; The Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and The Methodist Protestant Church.

¹⁰Tom Ehrich, “Singing in church requires admission of our inadequacies” in *The Columbus Dispatch*, March 10, 2000, 2C.

¹¹Thomas H Troeger, *Preaching and Worship* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003), 67–68.

¹²Quoted in Joncas, 329.

¹³Quoted in Joncas, 327; cf. Edward Foley, “Toward a Sound Theology” in *Ritual Music: Studies in Liturgical Musicology* (Beltsville, Md.: The Pastoral Press, 1995), 117.

The church triumphant in thy love
 Their mighty joys we know,
 They sing the Lamb in hymns above,
 And we in hymns below.

Thee in thy glorious realm they praise,
 And bow before thy throne,
 We in the kingdom of thy grace,
 The kingdoms are but one.

The holy to the holiest leads,
 From hence our spirits rise,
 And he that in thy statutes treads
 Shall meet thee in the skies.¹⁴

ST. ANNE
 attr., William Croft, 1708



Hap - py the souls to Je - sus join'd, And sav'd by grace a - lone,

Music of the Heart

My use of the phrase “music of the heart” comes from the book with this title¹⁵ by Carlton R. Young, editor of hymnals for The Methodist Church (1966) and The United Methodist Church (1989). “Lyrical theology” is a similar concept put forth about the Wesleys by S T Kimbrough, Jr., in articles in the *Journal of Theology* in 1984 and *Theology Today* in 2006.¹⁶ It has also been used to describe the work of Luther and Calvin in fostering lyrical theology in their distinct ways and repertoires.

Young traces the importance of *heart* in Scripture then continues: “The eighteenth-century Wesleyan revival is a distinctive heart movement with a unique theology—a heart repentant, assured, and forgiven; a heart overflowing in joyous response; a heart of love, and a heart of perfect intention.”¹⁷ John’s Aldersgate experience was a change of *heart*, rather than of *life*: “the change which God works in the heart,” “I felt my heart strangely warmed,” “what I now first felt in my heart.”¹⁸ Thus, I suggest that “music of the heart” not only resides in the heart and shapes its work, it is music that transforms, a sonic space where God resides.

¹⁴ *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper* (Bristol: Farley, 1745) #96, 83–84.

¹⁵ *Music of the Heart: John and Charles Wesley on Music and Musicians: An Anthology* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing Co., 1995).

¹⁶ “Lyrical Theology” *Journal of Theology* (1984):18–43, and “Lyrical Theology: Theology in Hymns,” *Theology Today*, 63 (2006):22–37.

¹⁷ Young, *Music of the Heart*, 12.

¹⁸ Young, *Music of the Heart*, 52–53, quoting John Wesley’s *Journal*, May 24–25, 1738, para. 14, 15, 17, in *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 18:249–50.

Young describes the uniqueness of “music of the heart” in the work of Anglican priests and Methodist preachers John and Charles Wesley.

Charles and John Wesley discovered that the most effective means to create the personal and corporate memory of a heart and life filled with self-emptying love is in music of the heart—uniting text and music in a symphony of aesthetic emotion, musical/poetical art, and intellect with Christ’s self-giving love at the center. The Wesleys committed their lives to shaping the musical and textual memory of God’s people . . . [so that] the faith community could remember who it is and what it is to do. Charles became the lyricist, and John became the astute collector and publisher of tunes.¹⁹

John’s famous “Directions for Singing,” 1761, explain the concept of lyrical theology, particularly in his final direction:

Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing [God] more than yourself, or any other creature. . . . attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually . . .

Young’s *Music of the Heart* is the first attempt to study Charles’s Journal from the exclusive standpoint of music and hymnody.²⁰ There are almost daily mentions of singing, such as these excerpts:

Towards ten, my brother [John] was brought in triumph by a troop of our friends, and declared ‘I believe’ [following his “heart-warming experience”²¹]. We sang a hymn with great joy . . .

We prayed and sang alternately, till faith came, God blew with his wind, and the waters flowed.²²

The *shout* of the King was among us.²³

In his 2006 article “Lyrical Theology: Theology in Hymns,” S T Kimbrough, Jr., reminds us that Charles’s writing grew out of spiritual disciplines: Scripture reading, prayer, participation in the Eucharist, fasting, and regular service to, with, and among the poor.²⁴

Singing strong theological texts, joined with “music of the heart” in community, creates and expresses lyrical theology. Again, Young,

Lyrical theology, hymn singing, is dependent upon the informed, active, and full participation of each person in the congregation. In Wesleyan-style congregational song, each is informed through study and rehearsal;²⁵ the compelling music

¹⁹ Young, *Music of the Heart*, xiii.

²⁰ Young, *Music of the Heart*, 119, from *The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.* In Introduction and Occasional Notes by Thomas Jackson (2 volumes, 1849. Reprint: Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1980).

²¹ May 24, 1738, quoted in Young, *Music of the Heart*, 53.

²² Aug. 27, 1739, quoted in Young, *Music of the Heart*, 130.

²³ Nov. 17, 1740, quoted in Young, *Music of the Heart*, 135.

²⁴ Kimbrough, “Lyrical Theology: Theology in Hymns,” 27–31.

²⁵ Young, e-mail, notes rehearsal might include John’s preface of lessons on notation, theory, and vocal technique, “The Gamut” to *Sacred Melody*, 1761.

prompts the memory and the imagination, as well as the kinesthetic response, so that all move with and within the music; and the tune is so memorable and compelling that it invites others to sing.²⁶

The Spiritual Practice of Communal Singing in the Wesleyan Tradition

Craig Dykstra says, “Christian practices . . . are patterns of communal action that create openings in our lives where the grace, mercy, and presence of God may be made known to us . . . forms of participation in the practice of God.”²⁷ Dykstra goes on to say that these practices heal the division between thinking and doing.

Since the gathering of twelve disciples by Jesus, Christian discipleship has included fellowship, study, and prayer together. By the time of the Wesleys, small groups were already meeting for Christian fellowship across England, as Wesleyan scholar Richard P. Heitzenrater reminds us.²⁸ Through the gathering of an Oxford band of students and his experience of the *Singstunde*, singing hour, of the Moravian bands on the ship to Georgia, John Wesley became convinced of the two-sided nature of faithful living—the longing for a personal religion . . . and the speedy realization that this could only be preserved through a living Christian fellowship.²⁹

Heitzenrater talks about how John began to use hymns to foster a “living Christian fellowship” in his time in Georgia:

One attractive, unique feature of the worship services in Georgia was their use of hymns, facilitated by the Wesley’s publication of *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns* in 1737 These texts, many translated from the German, express the heart of a pietism grounded in Scripture and elucidate the themes that are central to Wesley’s spiritual quest—utter dependency upon grace, the centrality of love, and the desire for genuine fire to inflame his cold heart.³⁰

(It might be remarked here that Charles’s terrible experience on St. Simons’ Island was in part because of the lack of Christian community that he found here.)

In December 1738 John drew up “Rules of the Band-Societies.” The third rule was: “To begin . . . exactly at the hour, with singing or prayer.”³¹ Intimacy to the point of confession was emphasized, including questions to be asked regularly.

²⁶ Young, *Music of the Heart*, 29.

²⁷ On website http://www.practicingourfaith.org/prct_what_are_practices.html “The Practices: What Are Christian Practices” part of the Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People of Faith; accessed 2/1/2010.

²⁸ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 17–32. See also W. O. B. Allen and E. McClure, *Two Hundred Years: The History of The Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge 1698–1898* (London: SPCK, 1898), 87–93; see the 16-page appendix to Samuel Wesley, *The Pious Communicant Rightly Prepar’d*, in *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, vol. I, Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp (London: Epworth Press, 1965); both mentioned in Heitzenrater, footnote #5, page 216. It might be noted that one of these groups, the Epworth Society, began with a nucleus of choristers.

²⁹ Davies and Rupp, 214.

³⁰ Heitzenrater, 69.

³¹ Found in David Lowes Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1995), Appendix E, 200.

David Lowes Watson, in his important work on Methodist class meetings includes a variety of descriptions of the meetings themselves and the singing. My favorite, published in 1817, is “A Description of Class Meetings in an Epistle from A Young Lady of the Methodist Connexion, to a Female Acquaintance,” of which the second stanza reads:

At length sedate, our *Leader* takes his stand,
 With pious Wesley’s hymn-book in his hand;
 Of an appropriate hymn he thence makes choice,
 Inviting all to join with heart and voice
 In praising God, for his abundant grace
 So richly show’r’d upon the human race.³²

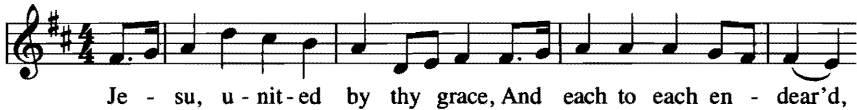
In the hymn, “Jesu, united by thy grace,” note the activity of grace, the first thing in this text, uniting us with Jesus and each other. J. Ernest Rattenbury suggests that the second stanza of this 1742 cento is a vivid description of Wesleyan class-meetings:³³

EXAMPLE 3

Jesu, united by thy grace,
 And each to each endear’d,
 With confidence we seek thy face,
 And know our prayer is heard.³⁴

CHRISTMAS

Harmonia Sacra, 1812; arr. from G. F. Handel, 1728



EXAMPLE 4

Help us to help each other, Lord,
 Each other’s cross to bear,
 Let each his friendly aid afford,
 And feel his brother’s³⁵ care.³⁶

³² Watson, 231–232; section concludes: “And those whose voices are not tun’d to sing / May yet a tributary offering bring / For, inwardly retir’d, the pious mind / Sweet seasons of refreshment oft will find.” See also Paul Chilcote’s article, “Charles Wesley and Christian Practices,” *Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society* 12 (2008): 35–47, which discusses hymn singing as Christian practice particularly around Wesley and women’s lives.

³³ J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley’s Hymns* (London: The Epworth Press, 1941), 328.

³⁴ *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (Bristol: Farley, 1742), “A Prayer for Persons joined in Fellowship,” Part IV, stanza 1, 86; henceforth cited as *HSP* (1742) followed by poem citation and page number.

³⁵ Using the original texts prevents one from making the text more inclusive, to fit current times.

³⁶ *HSP* (1742), “A Prayer for Persons joined in Fellowship,” Part I, stanza 3, 83.

PETERBORO (LAVINGTON)
The Musical Instructor, 1803

Help us to help each oth - er, Lord,
 Each oth - er's cross to bear,

In this hymn, which sometimes begins with its original first stanza, “Try us, O God, and search the ground,” Jesus’ love is described as a lodestone or magnet, drawing us to God and each other. In the fourth stanza are the quintessential Wesleyan lines of simultaneous love toward God and neighbor:

EXAMPLE 5

Touch’d by the loadstone of thy love,
 Let all our hearts agree,
 And ever towards each other move,
 And ever move towards thee.³⁷

ST. AGNES
 John B. Dykes, 1866

Touch’d by the load - stone of thy love,
 Let all our hearts a - gree,

As Young states: “Methodist class meetings used the singing, recitation, and study of hymns to form a member’s faith and prayer, and through tonal memory between preaching services to inform, recall, and sustain their faith in the saving power of God in Christ.”³⁸ Young notes that evening services, Sunday School singing, and Wednesday prayer meetings also supplied these qualities of repetition and faith formation, with hymns bridging these events.³⁹

³⁷ *Ibid.*, “A Prayer for Persons joined in Fellowship,” Part IV, stanza 4, 86.

³⁸ Young, *Music of the Heart*, 31. Cf. Kenneth Cracknell and Susan J. White, *An Introduction to World Methodism* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 147.

³⁹ Young, e-mail. The events Young mentions are those regular weekly formational times at which singing played an important role. Camp-meetings, revivals, Methodist quarterly meetings, and shape-note sings provided additional times of singing which awakened and sustained faith, although

To continue these ideas in the vein of Wesleyan perfection or holiness, consider Alice Parker’s idea of *perfection* in music-making: “Perfection itself is keeping-going, the continual inviting into the game, of new players, and of valuing all the varied viewpoints . . . to keep the melody alive, the song singing, and the energy refreshing to everyone within hearing.”⁴⁰

To return to the Wesleys, John described the means of grace as “outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby God might convey to us preventing, justifying, and sanctifying grace.”⁴¹ Hymn singing, as a communal spiritual practice in Methodist societies and bands and classes, became a means of grace.

The Core Repertoire of Charles Wesley’s Hymns for Community

The 1780 *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*⁴² contains sixty-two hymns in the section on “The Society” (Meeting, Giving Thanks, Praying, Parting), all written by Charles in the 1740s. Of these sixty-two hymns for “The Society,” there are fifteen⁴³ that continually appear throughout Methodist hymnbooks in the United States, most into the twentieth century. These appear not only in the hymnbooks of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church, but consistently in the early hymnbooks of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AME Zion), the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), and the Christian (Colored) Methodist Episcopal Church (CME).⁴⁴ Throughout the nineteenth century all these hymnbooks contain almost all of the fifteen. After the turn of the century, consistently they drop about half of these fifteen hymn texts from their books.

those often intense experiences were different than the intimate times of regular class meetings and services whose repetition lends itself to communal spiritual practice. Yet those intense experiences provided touchstones for believers, as Jean Miller Schmidt notes about a revival experience: “An account in the spiritual journal of the Reverend Samuel Huber, a United Brethren minister, describes a religious revival among the United Brethren in 1815 in which ‘old women and young girls, when their souls were blest and made happy, would break forth into singing—shouting—praising—exhorting—prophesying—and talking about the Saviour in public congregations, to the utter consternation of the old dry Pharisees.’” *Grace Sufficient: A History of Women in American Methodism 1760–1939* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 65.

⁴⁰ Alice Parker, *The Anatomy of Melody*, (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2006), 126.

⁴¹ John Wesley, sermon, “The Means of Grace,” II.1.

⁴² Henceforth cited as *1780 Collection*.

⁴³ Close observers will notice that this study combines the discussion of two texts now generally joined as a cento, “Jesu, united by thy grace” and “Try us, O God, and search the ground.”

⁴⁴ Computation of the AME, AME Zion, and CME hymnbooks was based on Jon Michael Spencer, *Black Hymnody: A Hymnological History of the African-American Church* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), chapters 1–3, and the online reference <http://www.hymnary.org/>, accessed 3/29/2010, a collaboration of the Hymn Society of the United States and Canada, The Calvin Institute for Christian Worship, Calvin College, and Christian Classics Ethereal Library.

These hymns still appear in current denominational hymnals: United Methodist, British Methodist, AME, AME Zion,⁴⁵ Nazarene, Free Methodist/Wesleyan hymnal, *Covenant Hymnal*, *Voices United* (Canada), *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (Anabaptist), and *With One Voice* from Australia and New Zealand. All but one⁴⁶ appeared in the 1780 *Collection*. In one sense they are the inner circle of Charles's hymns for community that have survived over 250 years and are still sung. We will look briefly at the remainder of these hymns—three have been mentioned already.

"All praise to our redeeming Lord" (1747) witnesses to the unspeakable joys of harmonious Christian fellowship, with Jesus drawing us to a common center. Stanza three reads:

EXAMPLE 6

He bids us build each other up,
And gather'd into one;
To our high calling's glorious hope
We hand in hand go on.⁴⁷

ARMENIA
Sylvanus B. Pond, 1836

The musical notation for Example 6 consists of two staves of music in 3/4 time, with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are: "He bids us build each oth - er up, And gath - er'd in - to one;". The first staff covers the first line of lyrics, and the second staff covers the second line. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a mix of quarter and eighth notes.

"And let our bodies part" (1749) speaks not only of the parting at death as many other Wesleyan hymns on community did, but also of the parting at the end of each time of the society, class or band.

EXAMPLE 7

And let our bodies part,
To different climes repair,
Inseparably join'd in heart
The friends of Jesus are.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ The CME's adoption of the *New National Baptist Hymnal* in 1987 meant that their Wesleyan heritage for the most part is not included in this their most recent hymnal; see Spencer, 46–58.

⁴⁶ "All praise to our redeeming Lord."

⁴⁷ *Hymns for those that seek and those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ* (London: Strahan, 1747), "At the Meeting of Friends," #32, stanza 1b, 43; henceforth cited as *Redemption Hymns* (1747).

⁴⁸ *HSP* (1749), 1:317, "At Parting," 43, Part I, stanza 1a.

BOYLSTON
Lowell Mason, 1832



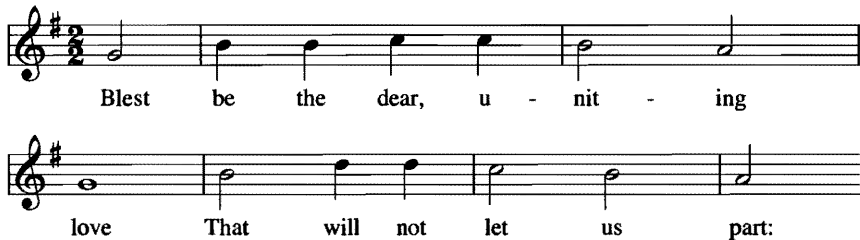
Writing in 1911, Charles Nutter and Wilbur Tillet, tell of the frequent use of "Blest be the dear, uniting love" (1742) at Annual Conferences before the "reading out" of the appointments of itinerant preachers for the coming year.⁴⁹ Notice the parallels with Romans 8 in stanza seven, printed here with the first stanza. This text was sung with the tune PETERBORO, occasionally spelled PETERBOROUGH.

EXAMPLE 8

Blest be the dear, uniting love
That will not let us part:
Our bodies may far off remove,
We still are join'd in heart.

Partakers of the Saviour's grace,
The same in mind and heart,
Nor joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place,
Nor life, nor death can part.⁵⁰

PETERBORO (LAVINGTON)
The Musical Instructor, 1803



In "Christ, from whom all blessings flow"⁵¹ (1740) Charles pleads for more of what Christ offers to those who are his "saints" and "mystic body," asking Christ to actuate us, that is, "set us in motion," empowering us to do his will.⁵²

⁴⁹ Wilbur F. Tillet and Charles S. Nutter, *The Hymns and Hymn Writers of the Church: An Annotated Edition of the Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Smith & Lamar, New York: Eaton & Mains, 1911), 124.

⁵⁰ HSP (1742), "At Parting," 159–160.

⁵¹ Taking his opening line from the familiar doxology by Thomas Ken, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," 1674.

⁵² Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1990, s.v. *actuate* and *move*.

EXAMPLE 9

Christ, from whom all blessings flow,
 Perfecting the saints below,
 Hear us, who thy nature share,
 Who thy mystic body are:

Join us, in one spirit join,
 Let us still receive of thine,
 Still for more on thee we call,
 Thee, who fillest all in all.⁵³

CANTERBURY
 adapt. from Orlando Gibbons, 1623

Christ, from whom all bless - ings flow,
 Per - fect - ing the saints be - low,

“Come, and let us sweetly join” (1740) was written for the many Love Feasts, times of testimony, which became a spiritual alternative to drunken parties and brawls. Notice in the third stanza the difference from Holy Communion in that this hymn invites Christ to our feast, whereas in communion Christ is the host. This hymn still appears, in part, in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989) #699, with the tune CANTERBURY.

EXAMPLE 10

Come, and let us sweetly join
 Christ to praise in hymns divine;
 Give we all with one accord
 Glory to our common Lord:

Hands, and hearts, and voices raise,
 Sing as in the antient days,
 Antedate the joys above,
 Celebrate the feast of love.

Jesu, dear, expected guest,
 Thou art bidden to the feast;
 For thyself our hearts prepare,
 Come, and sit, and banquet there.

⁵³ *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: Strahan, 1740), “The Communion of Saints,” Part IV, stanza 1, 194; henceforth cited as *HSP* (1740) followed by poem citation and page number.

Sanctify us, Lord, and bless,
 Breathe thy Spirit, give thy peace,
 Thou thyself within us move;
 Make our feast a feast of love.⁵⁴

CANTERBURY

adapt. from Orlando Gibbons, 1623



Come, and let us sweet-ly join Christ to praise in hymns di-vine;

"God of love, that hear'st the prayer" (1747) focuses the community on Christ, as opposed to the world. Subsequent stanzas ask God to save us from the temptation of prosperity, from seeking fame in the world, and to keep us humble and unknown.

EXAMPLE 11

God of love, that hear'st the prayer,
 Kindly for thy people care,
 Who on thee alone depend,
 Save us, save us to the end!⁵⁵

MERCY

arr. from Louis M. Gottschalk, 1854



God of love, that hear'st the prayer,



Kind - ly for thy peo - ple care,

"Jesu, great Shepherd of the sheep" (1749) tells also of the evils that lurk outside the fold of Jesu the Shepherd and the need for the flock to remain united. Stanzas 1, 4 and 6 give a taste of this text.

EXAMPLE 12

Jesu, great Shepherd of the sheep,
 To thee for help we fly;
 Thy little flock in safety keep,
 For O! The wolf is nigh.

⁵⁴ HSP (1740), "The Love Feast," Part I, stanza 1 (eight lines), 181; Part II, 1b, 2b, 182.

⁵⁵ Redemption Hymns (1747), #15, "To: 'Jesus, dear departed Lord,'" stanza 1a, 19.

We laugh to scorn his cruel power,
 While at our Shepherd's side;
 The sheep he never can devour,
 Unless he first divide.

Together let us sweetly live,
 Together let us die,
 And each a starry crown receive,
 And reign above the sky.⁵⁶

PETERBORO (LAVINGTON)
The Musical Instructor, 1803

Je - su, great Shep - herd of the
 sheep, To thee for help we fly;

“Jesus, Lord, we look to thee” (1749) was originally subtitled “For a Family” as echoed in the final stanza when angels fly us to “to the family above.” In this text everyday life is considered—the jarring nature of our strife, stumbling-blocks, anger and pride, and the desire to replace these with religious affections or tempers. Here we ask Jesus to enable us to be a witness to “how true believers live and die,” in stanzas 4 and 6:

EXAMPLE 13

Let us each for other care,
 Each his brother's burthen bear,
 To thy church the pattern give,
 Shew how true believers live.

Let us then with joy remove
 To thy family above,
 On the wings of angels fly,
 Shew how true believers die.⁵⁷

NUREMBERG
 adapt. from Johann R. Ahle, 1664

Let us each for oth - er care, Each his broth - er's bur - then bear,

⁵⁶ HSP (1749) 1:230, #137.

⁵⁷ HSP (1749) 1:248, #147.

“Jesus, we look to thee” (1749) appears in several hymnals in the opening/gathering/praise section. The first two stanzas explain:

EXAMPLE 14

Jesus, we look to thee,
Thy promis'd presence claim,
Thou in the midst of us shalt be
Assembled in thy name:
Thy name salvation is,
(Which now we come to prove)
Thy name is life, and joy, and peace,
And everlasting love.⁵⁸

ST. THOMAS
Aaron Williams, 1770



Je - sus, we look to thee, Thy prom - is'd pres - ence claim,


The musical notation for Example 14 is a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a final half note. The lyrics are written below the staff.

“Lift up your hearts” (1749) encourages the Christian community to live by hope and love. The fourth and fifth stanzas read:

EXAMPLE 15

Who for his sake count all things loss,
On earthly good look down,
And joyfully sustain the cross,
'Till we receive the crown.
Then let us stir each other up,
Our faith by works t'approve,
By holy purifying hope,
And the sweet task of love.⁵⁹

HUMMEL
Heinrich C. Zeuner, 1838



Who for his sake count all things
loss, On earth - ly good look down,

The musical notation for Example 15 is presented in two staves in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the staves.

⁵⁸ HSP (1749), 2:322–323, #237.

⁵⁹ HSP (1749), 2:332, #245.

The Wesleys thought very highly of frequent communion, and “Saviour of all, to thee we bow” (1742) makes reference to the presence of Christ found there, particularly in the fifth and sixth stanzas:

EXAMPLE 16

O let us on thy fulness feed,
 And eat thy flesh, and drink thy blood,
 Jesu, thy blood is drink indeed,
 Jesu, thy flesh is angels’ food.

The heavenly manna faith imparts,
 Faith makes thy fulness all our own,
 We feed upon thee in our hearts,
 And find that heaven and thou art one.⁶⁰

LINWOOD

adapt. from Gioachino Rossini

O let us on thy ful - ness feed,
 And eat thy flesh, and drink thy blood,

What can we say about these hymns as a whole?

1. They are uniquely Wesleyan/Methodist. Looking for them in current mainline denominational hymnals of North America is disappointing—of the hymnals mentioned at the beginning of this section only two are not directly part of the Wesleyan/Methodist family: the *Covenant Hymnal* (1996, Evangelical Covenant Church) with one text, and *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (Anabaptist, 1992) with two. This is very much in contrast to the variety of both Protestant and Roman Catholic hymnals that include Charles’s festival hymns, such as “Hark! The herald angels sing” and “Christ the Lord is risen today.”

2. They are all written during the 1740s. In the 1740s several major events occurred in Charles’s life:⁶¹ the first conference of Methodist preachers, persecution of the Methodists,⁶² the death of his mother, and his courtship and marriage to Sarah Gwynn. Charles was undergoing an incredibly exciting and creative time, fueled by his experiences of God and Christian community. In the face of persecution, it was particularly important for the Methodist movement to

⁶⁰ *HSP* (1742), “Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans,” Part III, 300.

⁶¹ Born in 1707, experiencing “conversion” in 1738.

⁶² My thanks to the 2009 Charles Wesley Society meeting for pointing out this important factor.

draw together and strengthen their sense of community. These hymns reflect the energy, enthusiasm, and prayers of Charles during this time.

3. The texts are consistently focused around the Second Person of the Trinity, named as *Jesus/Jesu* twenty-five times, as well as other adjectives and nouns. *God* appears eleven times, *Lord* eleven times, *Head* four times, and *Spirit* seven times.

4. The texts are written in the present tense, most often with the imperative of prayer language. Reference to the past occurs minimally about God’s promises already kept, and there are only a few references to the future.

5. Scriptural references are frequent, spanning Genesis to Revelation. These texts demonstrate Charles’s inclusion of the breadth of Scripture, which will be seen later in *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures* (1762), where he composed hymns and poems on every book of the Bible.⁶³

6. As one looks at the poetic nature of the texts, their meters are all familiar, as are their use of rhyme and accent.⁶⁴ Poetic devices abound—primarily *anaphora* (the repetition of words at the beginning of lines or phrases), metaphor (most often, the body of Christ), alliterations, catalogue, and parallelism.⁶⁵ The diction consists primarily of short Anglo-Saxon words which, with the familiar meter and simple rhyme schemes, give the texts energy, and makes them accessible to the singer.⁶⁶

7. Rhetorically the texts are addressed either to Jesus or to the gathered community. These are not “I” hymns, but “we” hymns. Those that pray, ask for the loving mind of Jesus that we might live in harmony, for the guidance of God that we might witness to living and dying to God, and for more of the good gifts of community. Those that are more narrative (remember, in the present tense), give thanks for the love that binds us inseparably to our Savior and each other, affirm that God who has “brought us through” will do so again, and describe the joys of Christian fellowship.⁶⁷

8. These texts are very clear about who Jesus Christ is within the Triune God: *perfecter, Head, giver of all blessings and diverse gifts, lodestone, guide, grace, truth, dear and uniting love, companion, our all in all.*

⁶³ My thanks to Carlton R. Young for noting this in an e-mail.

⁶⁴ Seven are in Common Meter (86.86, including doubled), four in 77.77 and three in Short Meter (66.86, including doubled). The Short Meter and Common Meter hymns are in ABAB rhyme scheme and iambic feet; the 77.77 in AABB and trochaic feet. The rhymes are clear, with a few “eye” rhymes (e.g., love/remove) and a few consonant or half-rhymes (e.g., bestowed/God, endeared/heard).

⁶⁵ See *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, selected and edited with an Introduction by Frank Baker (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), xxv–xxxv, for a full discussion of Charles Wesley’s poetic devices.

⁶⁶ The three-plus-syllable words used are inherently related to the themes, including, *together, fellowship, harmony, uniting, crucified, salvation, assembled, perfecting.*

⁶⁷ It is interesting to note that all of these texts end with our absorption into Christ/God, often in death—round the throne, not separated even by death, gaining Jesus and the crown, true believers dying, possessing the mind of Christ and Christian perfection, and finding Christ as our all in all.

The texts are also clear about the human condition: *having the nature of Christ*, yet we struggle with *troubles, conflicts, fights, fears, burdens, anger, pride, death, sin*.

Yet the words on the human condition often appear only once. What balances what we hear about Jesus in the texts, are the words on what human community (the society, class or church) can be and is: *restored, building up, gathered into one, hand in hand, delight, love, think and speak the same, cordially agree, harmony, sweet fellowship, one in heart, happy*.

Community Today and Singing

In our day studies abound about the loss of community—loss of a sense of neighborhood, individuals bowling alone, sitting in isolation and surfing the Internet, cocooning in front of TiVO. Yet we also live in a time of deep spiritual hunger for connection. People of faith and twelve-step groups know that that connection can only be found in God and through each other. Christians have the great awareness of God Incarnate, who knows our experience, models a way to live in community, and calls us to that experience. T. S. Eliot said it well in “The Rock”: “There is no life that is not lived in community / And no community not lived in praise of God.”⁶⁸

Singing is the clearest way we have of involving body, mind, and heart in praise, that is, lyrical religion. In one sense singing together seems illogical, as we sing together almost nowhere else and we are tentative to participate in this spiritual practice, and yet it meets the criteria of many hungering for a mystical experience—to be present in the moment at the same time one is connected with God and with others throughout time and place. Here are two caveats in undertaking this spiritual practice:

1. Concentrate on voices alone. This is not about “sounding great” but “sounding like us.” Instruments do not breathe as human beings do.

2. Your song leader needs to be someone who understands what it means to *animate* or *enliven* group singing; not someone who has an operatic voice, but someone who will listen to the group and draw forth its own song.

Charles has given us texts for meeting/gathering, for praying, witnessing and encouraging others, and parting/leaving. Here is liturgical movement as well of gathering, prayer and praise, and parting, all in the name of Jesus, taking intentionally community that is church at its best.

Some Recommendations

1. From John Wesley’s “Directions for Singing”: See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let no weakness or weariness hinder you.

⁶⁸ T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909–1950* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1952, 1958), 101.

If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing. And above, all sing spiritually.⁶⁹

2. Examine your congregation’s repertoire to see what other texts you are using that call that congregation to be the best they can be in “life together.” Shape your churches and small groups by speaking and singing these hymns. Consider using single stanzas around gathering, praying or parting on a regular basis.

3. Use hymns as the basis for Sunday school and choir repertoires to draw on the strength of the tradition and link children to worship and the future with music of the heart.

4. Take up singing together as a spiritual practice—in spite of human brokenness, in spite of what uncaring music teachers or choir directors may have told us as children—and rediscover the joy of creating sound together, that we might experience the transcendent moments that will carry us through the mundane.

5. Explore new musical settings of these texts, including those by Mark Miller, Carlton R. Young, Swee Hong Lim, Patrick Matsikenyiri, Ludmila Garbuzova, Mary K. Jackson, Ivor Jones, Jane Marshall, Per Harling, Pablo Sosa, *et al.*⁷⁰

May we continue to invite others into “music of the heart,” that unites text and music with emotion, art, and intellect con-centered around Christ’s self-giving love, in ways that we can remember whose we are and what we are to do.⁷¹

⁶⁹ John Wesley’s “Directions for singing,” III and VII, from *Select Hymns with Tunes Annexed* (London, 1761).

⁷⁰ S T Kimbrough, Jr., “To Serve the Present Age: New Charles Wesley Hymn Settings from around the World” in *The Hymn* 60:3 (2009):26–37. This article includes a thorough citation of every new setting of a Wesley hymn in the Global Praise Program of General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

⁷¹ Cf. Young, *Music of the Heart*, xiii.

**Appendix:
Tunes and locations for texts noted,
and references to examples above**

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| 1. And are we yet alive | BOYLSTON | <i>Methodist Hymn and Tune Book</i> , 1894, Canada |
| 2. Happy the souls to Jesus joined | ST. ANNE | <i>Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church with Tunes</i> , 1878 |
| 3. Jesu, united by thy grace | CHRISTMAS/
LUNENBURG | <i>Hymns and Psalms</i> (1983), British Methodist |
| 4. Help us to help each other, Lord,
from Jesu, united by thy grace | PETERBORO | <i>The Methodist Protestant Church Hymnal</i> , 1901 |
| 5. Touch'd by the loadstone of thy love,
from Jesu, united by thy grace | ST. AGNES | <i>The United Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1989;
<i>The Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1966 |
| 6. He bids us build each other up,
from All praise to our redeeming Lord | ARMENIA | <i>The United Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1989;
<i>The Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1966; <i>The Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1935; <i>The Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1905; <i>Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church with Tunes</i> , 1878 |
| 7. And let our bodies part | BOYLSTON | <i>AMEC Bicentennial Hymnal</i> , 1984; <i>The Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1935; <i>The United Methodist Church Hymnal: Methodist Free Church Hymns</i> , 1931, U.K. |
| 8. Blest be the dear uniting love | PETERBORO | <i>A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists</i> , 1780, edited, with tunes, 1877, U.K. |
| 9. Christ, from whom all blessings flow | CANTERBURY | <i>The United Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1989;
<i>The Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1966 |
| 10. Come, and let us sweetly join | CANTERBURY | <i>The United Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1989 |
| 11. God of love, that hear'st the prayer | MERCY | <i>The AME Zion Hymnal</i> , 1996; <i>AMEC Bicentennial Hymnal</i> , 1984; <i>The Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1905 |
| 12. Jesu, great Shepherd of the sheep | PETERBORO | <i>Methodist Hymn and Tune Book</i> , 1894, Canada |
| 13. Let us each for other care,
from Jesus, Lord, we look to thee | NUREMBERG | <i>Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church with Tunes</i> , 1878 |
| 14. Jesus, we look to thee | ST. THOMAS | <i>The Evangelical Hymnal</i> , 1921 |
| 15. Who for his sake,
from Lift up your hearts | HUMMEL | <i>The Methodist Hymnal</i> , 1905; <i>Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church with Tunes</i> , 1878 |
| 16. O let us on thy fulness feed,
from Savior of all, to thee we bow | LINWOOD | <i>Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church with Tunes</i> , 1878 |

Help Us to Help Each Other: Hymns for Life and Ministry with the Poor by Charles Wesley, eds. S T Kimbrough, Jr. and Carlton R. Young (Madison, NJ: The Charles Wesley Society, 2010), 48 pages, \$7.95, ISBN 978-1-882339-06-8. Order from Cokesbury.com or 800-672-1789. CWS Members may order directly from the treasurer of the Society rwilliams@gcah.org.

This collection of hymns reminds people of faith that no one is to be left behind either at the Lord's Table or in daily living. They summon Christians to use their resources justly by sharing with the poor. They emphasize that the poor are Christ's best friends and when we serve them, we serve Christ. Charles Wesley affirms that such service is not optional, rather the Christian's duty.

Among the extensive poetry by Charles Wesley left unpublished at his death is a series of hymns and poems that address life and ministry with and among the poor. Eight of the fifteen hymn texts included in this new songbook, *Help Us to Help Each Other*, were first published by S T Kimbrough, Jr., and Oliver A. Beckerlegge in volume two of *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, 3 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon/Kingswood, 1990). They are combined with hymns from other Wesleyan hymn collections of the eighteenth century that have not appeared in the standard repertory of Methodism or other denominations. Only three hymn texts have appeared previously in some hymnbooks: "Help us to help each other, Lord," "Come, sinners, to the gospel feast," and "O Christ, the gift divine I know."

While John and Charles Wesley were actively engaged in life and ministry with the poor, it is interesting that generally this was not celebrated in the hymns of the Wesleyan movement. The texts in this songbook, however, make clear that Charles Wesley eloquently addressed this theme in his hymn writing.

Two previous printings of many of these texts with music were published in 1993 (*A Song for the Poor*) and 1997 (*Songs for the Poor*) for congregational use by the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. In those publications, with one exception, only tunes composed prior to the twentieth century were used. In the new collection, *Help Us to Help Each Other*, composers from around the world have written new musical settings for Wesley's texts that grow out of their own cultural contexts (e.g., Pablo Sosa [Argentina], Swee Hong Lim [Singapore], I-to Loh [Taiwan], George Mulrain [Trinidad & Tobago], Patrick Matsikenyiri [Zimbabwe], Ludmila Garbuzova [Russia], Tomas Boström and Per Harling [Sweden], David Pluess [Switzerland]). Hence, the global message of life and ministry with and among the poor is expressed in diverse indigenous rhythmic, harmonic, and musical styles appropriate to twenty-first century worship. In this collection some texts have been revised and additional Wesley texts added.

In *Help Us to Help Each Other* all of the hymn texts are musically scored but also appear in block texts that are preceded by biblical passages to which Wesley responded in his poetry. This enables pastors and laity to explore in depth both Scripture and Wesley's texts to enrich worship, theology, and faith practice.

Here is a collection that links the historical missional outreach of the Wesley brothers to the twenty-first century mission of the church. The lively settings and stimulating texts provide a way to awaken the consciousness of the church today to a new and vital ministry with and among the poor.

