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

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

Helen Shephard

## **Introduction**

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

### *Historical background*

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

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

### *What was the WMMS trying to achieve in Germany?*

The WMMS had to work hard to justify its missions in Europe. At home there were always those ready to question the allocation of limited resources to coun-

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

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

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

#### *Lyth’s task in Germany*

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> It was a young Joseph Rayner Stephens, cf. M. S. Edwards, *Purge this Realm. A Life of Joseph Rayner Stephens* (London: Epworth Press, 1994); henceforth cited as Edwards, *Realm*.

<sup>3</sup> Edwards, *Realm*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Rott, *Beziehungen*, *passim*.

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

#### *The role of literature in promoting Wesleyanism in Germany*

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

#### *The need for a German Wesleyan hymnbook*

When Lyth arrived in Germany in 1859 two hymn books were available for the use of the Wesleyan fellowships: that of the established church, and that of the American Methodist Episcopal Church, which had been conducting a mission in Württemberg since 1851.<sup>8</sup> Until the 1870s, and in isolated cases even beyond that, the relationship in Germany between the Wesleyans and those following the Methodist Episcopal Church was very strained. Jacoby, the leader of the American mission, made frequent attempts to assimilate the Wesleyan mission into his own, and there were accusations in later years of American “sheep-stealing” of new Wesleyan converts in areas where both branches of Methodism were trying to extend their mission. The American Episcopal Methodists did not

<sup>5</sup> Home and General Minutes, Meeting of January 12, 1859.

<sup>6</sup> Lyth to WMMS, October 6, 1864.

<sup>7</sup> Home and General Minutes, meeting of April 12, 1862.

<sup>8</sup> K. Steckel and C. E. Sommer, *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Methodistischen Kirche. Weg, Wesen und Auftrag des Methodismus unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der deutschsprachigen Länder Europas* (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1982), 88.

always display the same reverence for established church order. Much of the anti-Methodist feeling that emanated from the established church in the 1860s was due to American Methodists offending the Lutheran state-church order. Wesleyans were included in the opposition because of their shared name, and felt that they suffered unjustly. So it is no surprise that Lyth initially preferred the Wesleyan societies to use the hymnbook of the established, Lutheran state church.

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

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

#### *The Zions-Harfe and the children's hymnbook*

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

<sup>9</sup>Lyth to WMMS, April 20, 1863.

<sup>10</sup>The German hymns translated were originally by Lutheran Pietists and Moravians. The Moravians whose hymns were translated were Maria Bohmer (1), Anna Dober (1), Spangenberg (1) and Zinzendorf (8). The Lutherans were Arnold (1), Deszler (1), Gmelin (1), Gotter (1), Ernst Lange (1), Joachim Lange (1), Rothe (1), Winckler (1), Freylinghausen (2), Richter (2) and Tersteegen (2). (Whaling, *Wesley*, 66). There is some uncertainty about the respective contributions of John and Charles Wesley to the translating of the German hymns. F. Whaling, *John and Charles Wesley. Selected Writings and Hymns* in the series: *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 17, 66 (volume henceforth cited as Whaling, *Wesley*), takes the view that John translated all 33. F. Baker (*Representative Verse of Charles Wesley* [London: Epworth Press, 1962], lviii–lix) however, argues that Charles may have been responsible for some of the translations.

<sup>11</sup>Lyth to WMMS, April 20, 1863.

tion of the 150 Wesley hymns translated into German by C. G. Müller in the 1830s.<sup>12</sup> The failure to draw on Müller's contribution is typical of the missionaries sent to Germany by the WMMS who felt that the founder of Wesleyan Methodism in Germany did not bring true Wesleyan organization and discipline to the movement.<sup>13</sup>

When the *Zions-Harfe* hymnbook was published in January 1864 it contained 613 hymns. Seventy-one were by Wesley, all but 3 translated by Lyth, and 6 were hymns of Lyth's own composition. In addition there were 26 hymns by other English writers, of which the largest number (8) are by Isaac Watts. Twenty-one of the hymns translated by the Wesleys from various German writers found their way into the book. In his analysis of the source of the German hymns which the Wesleys chose to use for English purposes Frank Whaling notes that there was almost an equal division between the number of hymns from Herrnhut and those from Lutheran authors, but that Zinzendorf was the writer who had the largest number of hymns translated.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, in the *Zions-Harfe*, there are hymns from both sources. Zinzendorf is more prominent than he was in Wesley's collection (15 hymns). On the Lutheran side it is Tersteegen who comes to the fore (14).<sup>15</sup> Burkhardt notes that, in addition to the above, the Württemberg Pietist tradition was strongly represented as well as more recent German hymn-writers.<sup>16</sup>

#### *The theology of the Zions-Harfe.*

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

We have already seen that the *Zions-Harfe* was produced in order to give the Wesleyan movement in Germany a strong Wesleyan identity, and that Lyth chose the hymns according to their reflection of Wesleyan theology and practice. In his examination of the importance for Wesleyans of hymnology and congregational singing, Burkhardt notes that in singing God's word reaches the individual in both an objective-intellectual and a subjective-existential way.<sup>17</sup> Let us first consider the objective-intellectual effectiveness of the *Zions-Harfe*. Again to quote

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<sup>12</sup> F. W. Burkhardt, "Kirchengesang und Kirchenlied," in "... das heilige Evangelion in Schwang zu bringen," ed. by R. Nägele (Stuttgart: Württembergische Landesbibliothek, 1996), 225; henceforth cited as Burkhardt, "Kirchengesang und Kirchenlied."

<sup>13</sup> Lyth to WMMS, March 21, 1860.

<sup>14</sup> Whaling, *Wesley*, 66.

<sup>15</sup> *Zions-Harfe*, 1863.

<sup>16</sup> Burkhardt, "Kirchengesang und Kirchenlied," 228.

<sup>17</sup> F. W. Burkhardt, "Singing with Grace in our hearts to the Lord. Eine hymnologische Untersuchung des Singens in der methodistischen Erweckung unter soteriologischen, dogmatischen und ekklesiologischen Aspekt," *Mitteilung der Studiengemeinschaft für Geschichte des Methodismus*, Oktober 1999/Heft 2: 8; henceforth cited as Burkhardt, "Singing."

Burkhardt, the book has a “strictly dogmatic shape.” The *Zions-Harfe* hymns were ordered under 4 headings: About God; About Humanity; About the Church of Christ and About Time and Eternity and a section for miscellaneous titles. Under each section there are sub-headings (Hymns of praise and thanks, God’s being and character, the love of the Father, the Incarnation of the Son, to name some from the first section.) Key words at the top of each page remind the reader of the aspect of theology addressed in the hymn. As Burkhardt shows, the sub-sections reveal a specifically Wesleyan theology: in contrast to the way in which it would be presented in a Lutheran hymnbook, the section “Love of the Father” is highlighted by separation from that of God’s being and character. Attention is given to the names and the roles of Christ. In the second section dealing with humanity the Wesleyan understanding of holiness and Christian life emerges. In the section on the church there are hymns for specifically Methodist forms of meeting, particularly a separate section for the characteristically Methodist prayer meeting. Given the task with which Lyth had been charged by the WMMS and the intentions expressed in his letters regarding the preparation of the *Zions-Harfe*, there can be no doubt that the answer to Burkhardt’s question “was J. Lyth pursuing strong catechistic intentions and was the *Zions-Harfe* intended as a kind of Methodist dogmatic in a Pietist context?”<sup>18</sup> is a definite “yes.”

*The subjective-existential assimilation of Wesleyan spirituality*

But we must not neglect the other contribution of congregational singing: what Burkhardt calls the subjective-existential assimilation of truth about God, first, the very process of singing songs such as these was an experience which was unique to Methodists in Germany. Burkhardt shows that singing played a very small part in the liturgy of the Württemberg state church, as well as the Pietist meetings.<sup>19</sup> From the early days of Wesleyanism in Württemberg under Müller singing was an important part of the meetings. In addition, the lively tunes favored by the Wesleyans were a stark contrast to the lugubrious music of the German chorale.<sup>20</sup> Singing lively tunes in the small fellowship group was then, in itself, the mark of distinctively Methodist practice and therefore of identity in Württemberg.

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

<sup>18</sup> Burkhardt, “Kirchengesang und Kirchenlied,” 230, (this author’s translations).

<sup>19</sup> The fact that the Pietist Rescript of 1743 had restricted the singing of songs to those permitted by the church, and that it recommended the reading of hymns, but only as a secondary activity to the reading and discussion of the scriptures, is perhaps testimony to the power of song in the context of religious fellowship.

<sup>20</sup> Burkhardt, “Kirchengesang und Kirchenlied,” 223.



places of their being.”<sup>21</sup> This was an aspect of the singing of hymns which Lyth was anxious to encourage in his selection of hymns of “an experimental and awakening nature.” Bett in *The Spirit of Methodism* (1937) drew attention to the way in which in England Charles Wesley’s hymns were an essential part of the formation of the Wesleyan identity at a congregational and personal level: “Those hymns were our devotional and experimental standard. They expressed and safeguarded the norms of Methodist experience, and helped to re-create it from generation to generation, because they were in constant use both in public worship and private devotion.”<sup>22</sup> In the same way, Wesleyans in Württemberg who sang from the *Zions-Harfe* hymn book in their fellowship with one another, were undergoing a process of Wesleyanization which was taking place on an intellectual, emotional-experiential and practical level.

The *Zions-Harfe* continued in use with some revisions, which we will discuss later, until the unification of the Wesleyan Methodist mission in Germany with that of the American Episcopal Methodists.<sup>23</sup> During these years the Wesleyan mission, and the singing of these hymns, extended beyond the borders of Württemberg to Baden, Bavaria, Austria, Westphalia, Bohemia, Silesia, and Saxony.

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

### *Historical résumé*

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

### *The Württemberg Dissidentengesetz, 1872*

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

<sup>21</sup> Burkhardt, “Singing,” 18 (this author’s translation).

<sup>22</sup> H. Bett, *The Spirit of Methodism*, (London, Epworth Press, 1937), 241–42, cited in Whaling, *Wesley*, 61.

<sup>23</sup> Burkhardt, “Kirchengesang und Kirchenlied,” 233.

Wesleyan fellowships, which still officially considered themselves a renewal group within the established church, with a problem. Barratt solved the dilemma by declaring to the Württemberg consistory that he was going to take advantage of the law: in 1872 Wesleyan Methodists in Germany officially became dissenters.

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

#### *Barratt's Ordnungen, 1873*

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

<sup>24</sup> J. J. Sommer, *Aus der Morgendämmerung des Methodismus in Deutschland* (Bremen: Verlag des Traktahauses, n.d.), 80.

<sup>25</sup> P. E. Hammer, *Geschichte des Bezirks Waiblingen und Waiblingen-Hegnach der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche* (Waiblingen: Eigenverlag der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche, 1977), 65. German titles: *Die Ordnung bei der Austeilung des heiligen Abendmahls* (1873). *Die Ordnung bei Verwaltung der Sakramente des heiligen Abendmahls und der Taufe, sowie bei Einsegnung der Ehe, Begräbnisfeier und Ordination der Prediger* (1874).

<sup>26</sup> Barratt to WMMS, January 8, 1873. (Up to 1839 English Wesleyans had used Wesley's abridgement of the BCP, or the BCP itself.) With the rise of Tractarianism, Conference issued the Order of Administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism in 1839. Subsequent editions included the forms for Matrimony, Burial and Ordination. The *Form for Ordaining Candidates for the Ministry in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion* was produced in 1846. Before that membership of Conference was considered to be a form of ordination. *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, Vol. 2, ed. by R. Davies, A. R. George, and G. Rupp (London: Epworth Press, 1978), 127, 157.

When Barratt made his declaration to the Württemberg consistory in 1872 that he intended to “make use of the Rights granted by the law, especially with reference to the Administration of the Lord’s Supper,” he added the proviso that it was not his intention to “institute an unlimited administration of the Holy Sacraments” but said that he would “comply with any request that may be made on this subject.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, he was leaving it up to the membership to decide the extent to which the Wesleyans in Württemberg would engage in separatist activity. This continued as the first Communion service was held in Stuttgart in January 1873. Barratt instructed his preachers not to “press or persuade any single member to communicate with us on this occasion, but simply to state that we intend to do so.” One hundred four people took part in the service. Barratt knew at the time that this action would “bring down a storm” on the Wesleyans, not only from the state church, but also from Wesleyan members who preferred not to have the status of dissenter conferred upon them.<sup>28</sup>

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

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

#### *Barratt’s Ordnungen, 1874*

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

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<sup>27</sup> Barratt: To The Royal Evangelical Consistory, September 23, 1872. (In the correspondence).

<sup>28</sup> Barratt to WMMS, January 8, 1873.

<sup>29</sup> Barratt to WMMS, July 7, 1873.

<sup>30</sup> Barratt to WMMS, October 25, 1873.

<sup>31</sup> Barratt to WMMS, March 17, 1874.

<sup>32</sup> Barratt to WMMS, March 17, 1874.

this would not only significantly increase the numbers of those able to administer Communion, but would also give the German preachers a certain standing in the eyes of the membership which would enable them better to respond to the opposition of the Lutheran clergy.<sup>33</sup> Barratt had prepared his second version of the *Order* in time for the service.<sup>34</sup>

#### *The content of the Order of Administration*

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

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

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

#### *The role of the Communion service outside of Württemberg*

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

<sup>33</sup> Osborn to WMMS, June 18, 1875.

<sup>34</sup> Barratt to WMMS, June 18, 1875.

<sup>35</sup> F. W. Burkhardt, *Gottesdienst und Abendmahlsfeier in der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche in Deutschland. Rezeption und Adaption wesleyanischer Liturgieformen in Gottesdienst und Abendmahlsfeier der methodistischen Gemeinde in Württemberg*. *Praktisch-theologische Arbeit in Rahmen der Konferenzstudien der Kandidatenzeit in der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche*. Dec. 16, 1995. Unpublished MS in ZAEmk, Reutlingen, 5; henceforth cited as Burkhardt, *Gottesdienst*.

<sup>36</sup> Burkhardt, *Gottesdienst*, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Burkhardt, *Gottesdienst*, 10. The BCP had been revised under Elizabeth I, and held to a form that, while Protestant, was not too offensive to those with Catholic sympathies. The form in the BCP was that used by Wesley in his *Sunday Service for the People Called Methodists*. Thus it would have provided a contrast to the liturgy used in Protestant worship.

there were circuits or preaching stations in Austria, Baden, Catholic and Protestant Bavaria, Westphalia, Silesia and Bohemia. Naturally there were various difficulties to face in opening Wesleyan missions in places where there were restrictive laws on the non-state-registered religious groups which were often applied with a great deal more stringency than had been the case in Württemberg even before the *Dissidentengesetz*.

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

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

There was not the religious freedom in Austria which would allow the setting up of a separate Methodist church without special permission from the government. At this stage all Barratt could do was ask the WMMS to consider the options with him. The ability to give Protestant Communion to Austrian members was an issue. He considered having Dieterle, the German preacher in Vienna, ordained to meet the need. The only problem was that there was at this point no precedent in the rest of the Wesleyan movement for the ordination of a German preacher, but Barratt made the comment that in Austria the Wesleyans were not "under the obligations, which in [Württemberg] in some respect circumscribe out usefulness."<sup>38</sup> This can only be a reference to the refusal to offend Lutheran church order which Barratt obviously did not feel needed to be extended to the state church in Austria. There appears to have been no reply to his request from the WMMS and the matter was dropped until after 1872.

After 1872 there are frequent references in Barratt's correspondence to the administration of Wesleyan Communion in other territories. Specifically mentioned are Vienna in 1875 and 1876,<sup>39</sup> Glogau in 1878,<sup>40</sup> and Nuremberg in 1883.<sup>41</sup> We can assume that after the ordination of Wesleyan German preachers it was a more regular occurrence, but these dates refer to visits from Barratt when he administered Communion. There was the intention to administer to the soci-

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<sup>38</sup> Barratt to WMMS, August 22, 1871.

<sup>39</sup> Barratt to WMMS, July 12, 1875, December 11, 1876.

<sup>40</sup> Barratt to WMMS, December 4, 1880.

<sup>41</sup> Barratt to WMMS, December 14, 1883.

ety in Kladno, Bohemia in 1884, but the minister of another evangelical church had already done so when the visiting Wesleyan preacher arrived.<sup>42</sup> While Prussian law granted religious freedom in Silesia, the administration of Wesleyan Communion in Austria and Bavaria in these years is astonishing. In the Austrian Empire only the Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed churches had any legal right to exist.<sup>43</sup> While the 1870s was a decade in which the Austrian Wesleyan work was allowed to grow relatively unchallenged in comparison to later years, nevertheless, a licence had to be obtained for every meeting. Often when permission was not forthcoming, the meeting had to take the form of domestic worship in the preacher's home. It is therefore astounding to read of Barratt administering Communion in a public meeting hall to 11 members, of which 9 were Austrian and former Catholics.

The administration of Communion to the Nuremberg Wesleyans in 1883 is equally bold. Bavaria's constitution promised to uphold freedom of conscience, and the conscientious distinction and protection of that which belonged to the State and the Church," which in reality meant the freedom, again, to belong to the Catholic, Lutheran or Reformed churches. Religious lectures were permitted, but there was to be no praying or singing and no collections.<sup>44</sup> Wesleyans were not granted the status of a Private Church society until 1885. Even after this happened the transfer of membership from a state-recognized church to such a society was very difficult, and it was forbidden to give Communion to someone who was a member of a state-recognized church.<sup>45</sup>

The appendix to the *Order*, which had been intended to smooth the acceptance of the Wesleyan service in Protestant Württemberg had the opposite effect in Catholic Vienna. The *Articles of Faith* attached to the translation in German of the Order of Administration<sup>46</sup> were to provoke the greatest storm in the life of the Wesleyan mission in Vienna. In December 1891 two copies were taken from the Wesleyan preacher and a Wesleyan layperson in Vienna. The articles referred to the doctrine of transubstantiation as contrary to scripture and to the idea that the mass was a sacrificial offering as blasphemous and dangerous. On the basis that the teachings of one of the state-recognized churches was being disparaged the Viennese authorities declared the Articles illegal and forbade the Vienna preacher to hold any services.

<sup>42</sup> Barratt to WMMS, October 18, 1884.

<sup>43</sup> Patrick Streiff, *Der Methodismus in Europa im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1982), 117; H. Bargmann, *Festschrift zur Feier des fünfzigjährigen Bestehens der Methodistischenkirche in Wien* (Vienna: Im Selbstverlag der Bischöflichen Methodisten, 1921), 10.

<sup>44</sup> P. Nollenberger, *Eine Chronik der Paulusgemeinde, 1876–1958. Zur Geschichte der Methodisten in Nürnberg*. (Nuremberg: Verlag Peter Altmann, 2001), 7.

<sup>45</sup> Europe Synod Minutes 1887, Germany Report on 1886.

<sup>46</sup> Something that had been done since the time when Wesley published the abridged Order from the BCP. *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, Vol. 1, 270. Here there is also the reference to the lack of official authority of this document in British Methodism, in contrast to America.

Facing the dissolution of the Austrian work if any importance was attached to these *Articles*, Barratt argued that they had been prepared by Wesley in 1784 for use in America, and, being adapted from the sixteenth-century Church of England prayer book, came from an era “in which it was custom to speak in strong language.” Had the *Articles* been prepared in 1890, they would have been expressed quite differently. It was never the intention of Wesleyan Methodism to speak with “mockery and defamation” of any national church, but only to “lead sinners to Christ and to edify those who have believed in the saving of their souls.” In addition, the *Articles* formed no part of the “Standards of Doctrine or Discipline” of Wesleyan Methodism, which were founded on the Bible, Wesley’s sermons and *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*. They were never referred to in any official capacity by the Wesleyan Conference. The majority of English Wesleyan preachers had probably never read them, and certainly were not required to teach them. They had never been intended for circulation in Austria, having been translated for use in Bavaria when the Wesleyan mission was seeking legal recognition there. Their only importance was “historical (or antiquarian).” Barratt’s arguments became the content of the official WMMS appeal against the Austrian government’s prohibition of Wesleyan Methodist meetings in Vienna.

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

### Conclusion

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

First, as we have seen, from 1859 onwards, the WMMS was keen to bring about in Germany through its ordained missionaries, a body of members with a strong Wesleyan identity. This was achieved by the teaching of Wesleyan doctrines and the introduction of Wesleyan practices, as well as by giving German Wesleyans a strong link to the parent body in England. Both of the publications we have considered today played their part in forging that relationship. Not only were the *Zions-Harfe* hymns carefully selected for their reflection of Wesleyan teaching, many of them were translations of those sung by Wesleyan Methodists in England. The Order of Administration was an exact copy of that used in England.

Second, each of these publications is an indication of the stage of development which the Wesleyan mission in Germany had reached when it was published. In 1864 the movement had just gone through its first watershed, passing from German to English leadership, and was in the process of shaking off the accretions of Pietism which it had gained in the last years of Müller's life in its adoption of a Wesleyan identity. The main means of inculturation of Wesleyan spirituality at this time was the fellowship meeting at which singing played a large part. The singing of *Zions-Harfe* hymns and the resulting intellectual and emotional assimilation of Wesleyan teaching which it provided were the most effective way of developing the movement in the direction which the WMMS wished it to take.

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

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

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

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<sup>47</sup> Burkhardt, "Kirchengesang und Kirchenlied," 233.



With the exception of a very few circumstances, Barratt and the WMMS seem to have been incapable of viewing the German mission as in any way different from their missions to countries without a Christian heritage. Christian Dieterle, one of the German preachers, had to remind the WMMS that “Germany is a great part of the cultivated Europe.”<sup>48</sup>

The mission had suffered from its earliest days from the accusation of being an English transplant, inappropriately grafted onto German religious life. These accusations grew with the arrival of English superintendents and with the growing sense of German nationalism after 1871. It affected not only the opponents of the mission within the state church, but also the members and preachers. As the German ministry, trained under Lyth and Barratt, matured it became more vocal about the inappropriateness of English control of German Wesleyanism, and one of the arguments for uniting it with the American Episcopal Methodist mission was that this body allowed to its German preachers and members a greater amount of self-government than the WMMS to the Wesleyan mission. A prelude to the movement towards unification with the American Methodists was the call, by Wesleyan preachers, for a German Wesleyanism that was more “adapt [*sic*] to the German mind” and which would give the German preachers more control over the work.<sup>49</sup>

In making these observations I do not wish to leave the impression that the *Zions-Harfe* and the Order of Administration were merely the products of a cynical attempt to impose an English Wesleyan culture on the German movement. Both of them were produced by men who firmly believed that they were instrumental in bringing spiritual renewal to the people of Germany. However, as we have seen, the means chosen to do so were heavily marked with the stamp of their English origin. The German Wesleyans at the time of their unification with the American Episcopal Methodist church were asking themselves what the cause of their failure to grow as a movement in the last twenty or so years might have been. They mused on the possibility that their English identity might be a contributing factor. I believe that they were right to do so, and that while it was not the sole cause of the decline of Wesleyanism in Germany, it played its part.<sup>50</sup> Methodism was able to grow more successfully in Germany when it was truly inculturated.

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

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<sup>48</sup> Dieterle to WMMS, June 28, 1880.

<sup>49</sup> Urech and Pope to WMMS, June 28, 1889.

<sup>50</sup> As well as clerical and nationalist opposition which focussed on the “Englishness” of the movement, I would also suggest as reasons for its decline: the growth of the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung*, the financial problems experienced by the WMMS and its changing policy towards European (mainly Protestant) mission, competition from other religious and political groups and emigration.

English leader of the mission, understood how important a truly German Methodism was. I will close with his words on the subject: "They must appear as a German church as well as be one. Until this is done, the Methodist church in Germany can never hope to prosper, it will always be a foreign church and therefore will never be trusted by the ordinary German."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Rigg to WMMS, December 8, 1893.

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