

**WESLEYAN THEOLOGY AND
THE CHRISTIAN FEMINIST CRITIQUE**

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The Wesleyan tradition, in both its Methodist and Holiness forms, is generally considered to have played an instrumental or, at least, supportive role in the modern struggle to affirm women in Christian ministry.¹ Its contribution to the reevaluation of women's status and roles in the family and the larger social setting is less clear but some positive influence is arguable here as well.²

The Problem of Historical Precedents

One should be careful, however, about drawing from these historical generalizations any sweeping conclusions concerning the correlation between Wesleyan theology and recent Christian feminist theology.³ In reality, many of the apparent feminist *actions* of Wesley and his followers were instituted *in spite of* some of their central biblical and theological *affirmations*.

For example, it is true that Wesley allowed women to preach. However, he did this despite the fact that he was convinced this practice was contrary to the *normative* teaching of Scripture. At first he justified women speakers by means of a questionable distinction between “testifying” and “preaching.” Eventually, he simply appealed to the obvious giftedness of the women and God's blessing of their ministry as evidence that God did allow women preachers in “extraordinary” situations such as his revival.⁴ Similar circumstances and parallel arguments can be found in the later holiness movement.⁵

This *qualified* endorsement of women's ministries undoubtedly formed the background for the subsequent embarrassment about and resulting marginalization or denial of women's ministries in both the Methodist and Holiness traditions as they became establishment churches.⁶

As the preceding example suggests, any adequate consideration of possible affinities between the Wesleyan traditions and the contemporary Christian feminist critique will ultimately have to move beyond questions of fluctuating historical practice to the level of central theological commitments.

The Situation at the Level of Theological Commitments

What is the situation at this level of theological affirmations? In a recent paper, I summarized the most basic theological concerns of the Christian feminists and attempted to assess these concerns from an evangelical standpoint. My assessment was generally positive, concluding that the feminists' concerns often entailed valid, biblically-warranted, critiques of traditional theological positions and formulations. At the same time, I admitted that each of the various Christian theological traditions would find differing points of tension, if not incompatibility, with the feminist critique.⁷

To my surprise (at the time) one of the original respondents to this paper suggested that it was easier for a Wesleyan to dialogue with or appropriate the feminist perspective than for those of other traditions. On further reflection, I have come to believe this may be the case.

Indeed, in the original paper I had highlighted Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism and Calvinism as examples of traditions which would find significant tension with at least some aspect of the feminist critique but had said nothing about Wesleyanism.⁸ While this omission had not been intentional, it did reflect unconsciously a conviction which I would now like to argue more explicitly: namely, that the Wesleyan tradition shares a distinctively kindred theological spirit with contemporary Christian feminists. While there are many traditional Wesleyan practices and theological formulations that would be viewed critically from a feminist perspective, I would contend that the two movements are attuned in their most *fundamental* convictions.

Systematic Comparison of Christian Feminism and Wesleyan Theology

Support for the preceding claim can best be suggested by a brief systematic comparison of the fundamental theological convictions of the Christian feminist critique with those of the Wesleyan tradition.⁹

A. *The Nature of Theology*

Christian feminists have repeatedly criticized abstract, theoretical and deductive models of theological reflection. By contrast to such models, they emphasize the praxis-related and constructive nature of all theological expressions. Among other things, this emphasis entails the realization that all theological formulations are fallible and thus continually open to critical reformulation.

While the Wesleyan traditions have occasionally been influenced by other theological currents to adopt deductive fundamentalist or abstract metaphysical approaches to theology, the founder and the central stream of the tradition both have favored a more praxis-related and constructive model of theology. Indeed, they have often been judged pejoratively due to this option.¹⁰

B. *The Sources of Theology*

The primary feminist concerns regarding the sources of theology are two: 1) that we self-consciously admit the role that experience, reason and tradition play in our reading of Scripture— thereby shattering any “Bible-only” pretensions; and 2) that we attempt to recover and utilize the neglected areas of *women's* experience and tradition in our theological reflection.

The Wesleyan tradition is sympathetic with the first concern, having long given at least lip-service to the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral.”¹¹ We have not yet, however, addressed adequately the exclusion of women's experience and

traditions in our theological reflection, though works like *Women in New Worlds* are an important step in that direction.

C. The Doctrine of the Trinity

There is an emerging conviction among feminist theologians that the medieval shift, seen clearly in Thomas Aquinas, from a foundationally trinitarian understanding of God to the focus on God as a unitary supreme being who is only subsequently acknowledged to have trinitarian aspects, was a disastrous detour for theology.¹² In particular, this move has fostered a hierarchal monistic understanding of reality—monarchism, and a correlated individualistic and elitist view of human social structures. By contrast, Christian feminists argue that a truly trinitarian understanding of God and its correlated relational understanding of reality are more biblical.

Many Wesleyan summaries of theology never directly address the issues of monotheism and the trinity because of their focus on the *ordo salutis*. However, those that do deal with these issues tend to follow the lead of Aquinas, treating first the doctrine of the One God (Theism) and only subsequently the doctrine of the Trinity.¹³ We would do well to devote careful consideration to the feminist claims that a more foundationally trinitarian approach to theology is more biblically sound.

D. The Doctrine of God (Father/Creator)

It is often popularly assumed that feminist theologians want to replace worship of the male God (Father) with that of the Goddess (Mother). This is clearly *not* the concern of most Christian feminist theologians. Rather, they are primarily interested in reaffirming the classical theological doctrine that *all* language about God is analogical, including the designation “Father.” As such, *neither* gender should be attributed to God in any literal sense. On the other hand, *both* male and female analogies for God have biblical warrant and provide instructive disclosures of truth about God and God’s relationship to humanity.

In addition to this basic concern, feminists are critical of certain traditional theological models of God. In particular, they reject models that are hierarchal and abstract such as “First Cause” and “World Governor.” Even more specifically, they reject the hierarchal understanding of God’s omnipotence which construes it as *power over*, opting instead for a more egalitarian understanding of power as *power for* or enabling power. In each of these cases they argue their alternative model is both more biblical and more inclusive of women’s experience which, Carol Gilligan has shown, focuses more on relationships and empowering than on authority and independence.¹⁴

Wesleyan theology can make no claim to having consistently remained conscious of the analogical status of God-language, thereby avoiding the tendency to construe God as more properly male than female.¹⁵ Nor have they been distinctively suspicious of abstract and hierarchal models of God.¹⁶ However, the protest against absolutistic understandings of God’s omnipotence which undercut human responsibility is at the heart of Wesleyanism.¹⁷ This is a significant area of correlation between Christian feminism and Wesleyanism, in stark contrast to several theological traditions.

E. The Doctrine of Christ

There are two distinctive elements in feminist discussion of Christology. First, on analogy with their understanding of God as Creator, they are

suspicious of abstract and authoritarian models of Christ. Their model of preference is Christ as Representative—*both* Representative of God to humanity and Representative of True Humanity. Implicit in this model is a rejection of any substitution Christology or soteriology that would undercut our human responsibility to become ourselves re-presentations of true humanity.

Secondly, they have struggled with the question of how women can relate to or find themselves represented by a male savior. While a few have appealed to the idea of androgyny in this regard, the majority have instead insisted that Christ's maleness, while a historical fact, was not a theological or soteriological necessity.

Neither of these positions could be construed as uniquely Wesleyan or anti-Wesleyan. At most, one could argue a basic shared sympathy for avoiding models of soteriology that undercut human responsibility. However, most Wesleyans would be suspicious that a model of Christ as Representative could easily become Pelagian. Thus, there is room here for a fruitful dialogue between Wesleyans and Christian feminists.

F. *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*

In the history of Christian tradition the Holy Spirit has often been conceived as female, both analogically and literally. In general, feminist theologians resist any literal identification of the Spirit as female, because of their understanding of the analogical nature of God-language, while they appreciate female *models* of God as Spirit. However, even this appreciation has a limit if these female models are used to "feminize" the Spirit. Feminists argue that the Spirit has all-too-often been construed through the patriarchally-distorted image of the feminine as being quiet, recessive and dependent. By contrast, they find in Scripture an understanding of the Spirit as the Power of the very Presence of God. Clearly, such a model would be more likely to entail *reformist* views of Christian life in the Spirit.

The other major concern of Christian feminist theologians relative to the Holy Spirit is to emphasize that the Spirit's work is inclusive; i.e., the Spirit gives *both* the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit to *both* women and men.

While not without some reservations, feminists have generally found the Wesleyan emphasis on the transforming power of the Spirit and the Wesleyan recognition of the inclusive nature of the gifts to be exemplary of a proper understanding.¹⁸

G. *The Doctrine of Creation*

The primary goal of Christian feminist reflection on theological understandings of creation has been to expose and overcome the residual elements of "male" hierarchal and dualistic thinking in the traditional Christian worldview. Examples of such dualism would include: God *versus* world, spiritual *versus* physical, humanity *versus* world and culture *versus* nature. Feminists not only consider such dualisms unbiblical, they argue that they are an underlying cause of our contemporary ecological and social crises.

Perhaps Wesleyans are not the worst offenders in this regard. Wesley's Anglican roots gave him a high sacramental view which mitigated at least the spiritual/physical dualism somewhat.¹⁹ In general, however, Wesleyan theology shares the guilt of the rest of the Western world in overplaying

these dualisms. Here we have much to learn from the feminists and others. Fortunately, we are already beginning.²⁰

H. *The Doctrine of Humanity*

Obviously, the feminist critique of hierarchal dualism in general would apply as well in the area of theological anthropology. Its most pointed focus in this regard is the male/female hierarchy that characterizes human society at large. It is undeniable that most of Christian tradition has also operated in terms of an assumed male/female hierarchy and has attempted to justify this by Scripture. Nevertheless, Christian feminists argue that the patriarchalism in Scripture is descriptive of *sinful* human life and that the clear call of the Word of God is to egalitarian relationships.²¹

It should be noted, however, that this argument for male/ female equality does not exhaust the feminist critique of traditional theological anthropology. At an even more foundational level, they consider traditional (“male”) understandings of humanity to be individualistic, abstract and alienating. By contrast, they argue that a truly inclusive and biblical anthropology would construe humanity in intrinsically social and relational terms. We are human only in and through relationships with God, others, self and world.

We noted in our introduction that the Wesleyan tradition has an ambivalent history regarding male/female relationships. For this ambivalence to be overcome, we must undertake the careful exegetical work which can convince us and our people that God’s Word calls unambiguously for egalitarian relationships.²²

What about Wesleyans and a relational/social understanding of humanity? The situation of Wesley himself is somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, he has been accused by feminist and liberation theologians of having an incurably individualistic anthropology.²³ On the other hand, many Wesleyans argue that the primacy of the category of love in Wesley’s theology entails a fundamentally relational perspective. In fairness, it appears that the feminists are right about Wesley’s explicit formulations and those of most of his followers.²⁴ At the same time, there is no apparent inherent problem in transforming Wesley’s anthropology in a relational direction. Indeed, the attempts at such a transformation already underway seem to provide anthropologies more consistent with Wesley’s other commitments.²⁵

I. *The Doctrine of Sin*

The feminist commitment to a social understanding of human nature is clearly evident in their discussion of sin. Resisting the privatistic, dualistic and individualistic definitions that are so common in Christian tradition and piety, they stress the social, structural and systemic forms that sin can take. Ultimately, sin is anything that dehumanizes us and leads us to dehumanize others. Such evils can easily become institutionalized or otherwise socially-embodied.

In addition to stressing the social and structural nature of sin, feminists have also alerted us to the contextuality of sin. That is, they have shown that the particular forms of sinful destruction of relationships can vary relative to the experience of males and females, rich and poor, slave and free, etc.

The emphasis on the social and structural nature of sin highlights another paradox in Wesley. On the one hand, he was very concerned about particular social evils of his day such as slavery and alcoholism.²⁶ On the other hand,

it is undoubtedly true that Wesley was unable to see the structural nature of the problems with which he was trying to grapple, and that his sensitivity to the social evil of patriarchy in particular was not very keen.²⁷ A greater awareness of the structural and systemic nature of sin remains a pressing need among Wesley's descendants.²⁸

J. The Doctrine of Redemption

The implications of our preceding discussion for a feminist perspective on the doctrine of redemption should be obvious.

In the first place, feminists reject any type of cosmic, social or individual determinism or antinomianism that would undercut our human responsibility for engaging in reformist activity. God may be the ultimate source of all redemption but God calls us to become responsible mediators of that redemption.

Secondly, feminists stress the wholistic and social nature of redemption. For them, conversion is never simply an inner spiritual affair. It is a turning of the entire person from a dehumanizing way of life to a liberating and serving way of life. Moreover, salvation deals with more than the conversion of individuals. Distorted social structures must also be redeemed.

To put the preceding points in a traditional framework, feminists see salvation as embracing *both* justification and sanctification—i.e., both our acceptance while yet sinners and the gracious transformation of our sinful lives. If anything, their emphasis is on sanctification.

It should come as no surprise that this is the point of affinity between Christian feminism and the Wesleyan tradition that is most often mentioned.²⁹ The emphasis on sanctification as a real transformation is one of the most distinctive elements of Wesleyanism. Moreover, Wesley constantly stressed that this transformation was not simply personal, it had social implications. At the same time, it must be admitted that Wesley formulated these implications almost totally in terms of social *service*, not social *transformation*.³⁰ While the emphasis on perfection or holiness per se may be *implicitly* reformist,³¹ feminists would encourage Wesleyans to make it more explicit and systematic.³²

K. The Doctrine of Church and Ministry

An obvious feminist concern regarding ecclesiology is the defense of the participation of women in all areas of ministry, including the ministry of Word and sacrament. However, their most fundamental concerns lie deeper than this. Ultimately, they see the exclusion of women from ministry as simply one of the many destructive and self-crippling effects of traditional hierarchal and clerical conceptions of Church and ministry. Feminists consider all such hierarchal models to be unbiblical and dehumanizing. They reject any type of clergy/laity distinction that overlooks the variety of ministries present in the whole community and that makes laity dependent on clergy. Their clear preference is for models of Church and ministry which emphasize empowerment and service rather than exclusiveness and authority.

Such concerns are obviously not foreign to the Wesleyan tradition. Indeed, we noted that Wesleyans were among the first in the modern age to ordain women. Likewise, it could easily be argued that Wesley's classes and the holiness prayer-meetings and revivals were often egalitarian and mutually empowering arenas for ministry.³³ However, we have also noted

that the practice of ordination was ambivalent. Likewise, most of the early experimental forms of ministry in the Wesleyan traditions were soon replaced by more traditional institutional churches. Apparently, early Wesleyan practice had run ahead of their theological and exegetical underpinning.³⁴ If contemporary Wesleyans are to develop more enduring egalitarian expressions of ministry and worship, we must provide a thorough exegetical and theological base for women's ministries³⁵ and for alternative models of Church and ministry.³⁶

L. The Doctrine of Eschatology

Christian feminist perspectives on the doctrine of eschatology are direct implications of the preceding sections. They stress that the ultimate eschatological hope must include a just and egalitarian transformation of the entire created order. More importantly, they reject all other-worldly futurist eschatologies and all spiritualized realized eschatologies, in favor of an inaugurated eschatology which preserves the tension between the *already* and the *not yet* status of the hoped-for transformation. Thereby, they retain the reformist nerve that is central to their critique.

While Wesley's eschatology is primarily implicit, it can easily be argued that he also preserves this "inaugurated" tension.³⁷ Unfortunately, many of his liberal descendants have veered toward realized eschatologies while many of his conservative descendants have been attracted to futuristic dispensational eschatologies. Thereby, both have lost Wesley's more biblical balance.

Conclusion

What conclusions emerge from the preceding survey? In the first place, it does indeed appear that the Wesleyan tradition shares a distinctively kindred theological spirit with contemporary Christian feminists. We noted several areas of explicit agreement in fundamental convictions. More importantly, while we also noted several areas of traditional Wesleyan theology and practice which feminists would view critically, none of these areas were necessary implications of essential Wesleyan convictions.

Thus, to a degree significantly greater than much of the Reformed tradition (with its distinctive emphasis on the sovereignty of God—often at the expense of human freedom), Roman Catholicism (with its distinctive endorsement of hierarchal views of Church and non-reformist views of tradition) or Lutheranism (with its distinctive stress on justification by faith (*sic*) which often renders talk of sanctification problematic), Wesleyanism presents to Christian feminists a theological tradition with which they will find strong affinities and on which they can build.

At the same time, the Christian feminist critique, if taken seriously, could help us in the Wesleyan tradition to rethink many of our practices and convictions with the goal of making them more biblical, more inclusive and more faithful to our vision of the Coming Reign of God.

Notes

1. For an extensive collection of positive evaluations of the role of Wesley and Methodism in supporting women in ministry see *Women in New*

Worlds (2 vols.), edited by Keller, Queen & Thomas (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981–82). Other helpful works include Earl Kent Brown, *Women of Mr. Wesley's Methodism* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1983); *idem*, "Feminist Theology and the Women of Mr. Wesley's Methodism," in *Wesleyan Theology Today*, edited by T. Runyon (Nashville, TN: Kingswood, 1985), 143–50; Nancy Hardesty, "The Wesleyan Movement and Women's Liberation," in *Sanctification and Liberation*, edited by T. Runyon (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981), 164–73; and Jean Miller Schmidt, "Toward a Feminist Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition: Insights from Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Wesleyans," in *Wesleyan Theology Today*, 137–42. For similar surveys of the holiness tradition see Donald Dayton and Lucille Sider Dayton, "Your Daughters shall Prophesy: Feminism in the Holiness Movement," *Methodist History* 14 (1976): 67–92; Donald Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1976); Nancy Hardesty, D. Dayton & L. S. Dayton, "Women in the Holiness Movement: Feminism in the Evangelical Tradition," in *Women of Spirit*, edited by R. Ruether and E. McLaughlin (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 226–54; Nancy Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1984); Rosemary Keller & Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, "Women and Revivalism: The Puritan and Wesleyan Traditions," in *Women and Religion in America*, edited by R. Ruether & R. Keller (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983) 2:316–28; and Letha Dawson Scanzoni & Susan Selta, "Women in Evangelical, Holiness and Pentecostal Traditions," in *Women and Religion in America* 3:223–65 (1986).

2. For an argument that his mother provided John Wesley with a non-traditional model of the woman in the home see Frank Baker, "Susanna Wesley," in *Women in New Worlds* 2:112–31. For a rather tenuous argument that it was Wesley's "liberated" attitude toward women that was at the base of the notorious "Sophy Hopkey affair" see Alan Hayes, "John Wesley and Sophy Hopkey: A Study in Wesley's Attitudes Toward Women," *ibid.*, 29–44. By contrast, clear evidence of Wesley's rather traditional views on women in family and society are noted in Brown, *Women*, 52, 75–77. On the resulting role of mothers in Nineteenth-Century Methodism see Joanna Bowen Gillespie, "The Sun in Their Domestic System," in *Women in New Worlds* 2:45–55. Likewise, while it is true that the evangelical revivals had a "leveling" effect that created for women a sense of release from prior restraints in worship and a new self-esteem (cf., Schmidt, "Feminist Theology," 137), the overall status and roles of evangelical women in family and society were not significantly changed.

3. Our criterion for distinguishing "Christian" feminist theologians is whether *they* believe their expressions of feminism are in line with the critically-assessed central teachings of Scripture.

4. A detailed analysis of this issue can be found in Brown, *Women*, 25–31. Cf. Earl Kent Brown, "Women of the Word," in *Women in New Worlds* 1:69–87.

5. While there were occasional attempts in the Holiness Movement to argue that a "better" reading of the biblical texts supported women's ministries,

it was usually by an almost exclusive appeal to Gal. 3:28. Moreover, it is clear that the truly *decisive* factor in motivating and justifying women preachers was their *experience* of the work of the Holy Spirit and a strong stress on the need to testify to that experience in order to keep it. Likewise, there were many appeals to the argument that God would not give gifts that could not be used. Cf. Hardesty, *et al.*, “Women in the Holiness Movement,” 243–46; and Hardesty, *Women*, 78–103.

6. As Methodism became established, following Wesley’s death, there was clear embarrassment about the existence of women preachers (cf., Brown, *Women*, 175) which led to the denial of ordination for women in the main Methodist church until the mid-twentieth century. While the early holiness “sects” were progressives, with as many as 25% of their clergy being female, this number dropped steadily as they became “churches.” It is now closer to 5% (cf., Hardesty, *et al.*, “Women in the Holiness Movement,” 244–46; and Dayton, *Evangelical Heritage*, 97–98). While ordination is still allowed in most holiness denominations, it is exceedingly difficult to get churches to accept women pastors. *Ironically*, this has led to a circumstance that women in holiness traditions who are interested in ministry are now often counseled to transfer to the United Methodist or other main-line churches! Cf., *Herald of Holiness*, 1 August 1986, 16–17.

7. Randy L. Maddox, “Toward an Inclusive Theology: The Systematic Implications of the Feminist Critique,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 16 (1986–87): 7–23.

8. *Ibid.*, Conclusion. These traditions were chosen for mention on a primarily impressionistic basis—there being few explicit studies available of the affinity or conflict between specific theological traditions and feminist theology. It is interesting to note, however, that a study of Lutheranism and feminism has since appeared which confirms my impressions relating to that particular example. [Cf. issue 24.1 of *Dialog* (Winter 1985). Note in particular Mary Pellauer’s comments about the incompatibility of a feminist perspective and the common dualistic understanding of law and gospel in much Lutheran theology—an understanding which makes them suspicious of those who emphasize sanctification. *Ibid.*, 24].

9. Our summary of the major concerns of the Christian feminist theologians is drawn from Maddox, “Inclusive Theology.” Documentation and more detailed demonstrations of these concerns can be found there.

10. Cf., Randy L. Maddox, “Responsible Grace: The Systematic Perspective of Wesleyan Theology” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 19.2 (1984): 7–22; or *idem.*, “Responsible Grace: The Systematic Nature of Wesley’s Theology Reconsidered” *Quarterly Review* 9 (1986): 24–34.

11. For a helpful discussion of the dynamics and problematics in the quadrilateral, see William Abraham, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral,” in *Wesleyan Theology Today*, 119–26. For an identification of the Wesleyan emphasis on experience and on the need to evaluate Scripture in light of experience, reason and tradition as a point of contact with feminism, see Hardesty, “Wesleyan Movement,” 165–67.

12. This move has been perceptively chronicled and critiqued in Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., *Beyond Theism* (New York: Oxford, 1985).
13. As three representative examples, note Charles W. Carter, ed., *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1983); L. Harold DeWolf, *The Case for Theology in the Liberal Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959); and H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology*, Vol. I (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1940).
14. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).
15. To cite one example relevant to this audience, H. Orton Wiley never defends the analogical status of God-language in his *Christian Theology*. Indeed, in his discussion of God's attributes, he is highly suspicious of any attempt to suggest the human-situatedness of God-talk (cf., Vol. I, pp. 321ff). This no doubt helps explain the dearth of female images of God in his work.
16. Cf., *Ibid.*, 255ff, 430ff.
17. Cf., the discussion of "responsible grace" in Maddox, "Responsible Grace," 12–14 (27–29).
18. Cf., Hardesty, "Wesleyan Movement," p. 171; and Rosemary Keller, "The Transformed Life in Jesus Christ: Toward a Feminist Perspective in the Wesleyan Tradition," in *Wesleyan Theology Today*, 192–20; here, p. 200.
19. Cf. the classic study: Ole E. Borgen, *John Wesley on the Sacraments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1985).
20. Howard Snyder, *Liberating the Church* (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1983) is an important milestone among Wesleyans. An exemplary study (not explicitly Wesleyan) is Wesley Grandberg-Michaelson, *A Worldly Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).
21. For a survey of Christian feminist approaches to hermeneutics see Randy L. Maddox, "The Word of God and Patriarchalism," (nyp)
22. The outstanding pioneer effort in this regard is Nancy Hardesty & Letha Dawson Scanzoni, *All We're Meant to Be* (Revised; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1986). The most convincing current presentation of an egalitarian reading of Scripture is Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1985).
23. See especially José Míguez Bonino, "Wesley's Doctrine of Sanctification from a Liberationist Perspective," in *Sanctification and Liberation*, 47–63; here, pp. 50, 55. This charge is reiterated from a feminist perspective in Sheila Greeve Devaney, "Feminism, Process Thought and the Wesleyan Tradition," in *Wesleyan Theology Today*, 105–16; here, pp. 108–9.
24. Note the essentially individualistic anthropologies in Carter, *Contemporary Wesleyan Theology*, chapter 6; and Wiley, *Christian Theology*, Vol. II.

25. See especially, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1972).

26. Cf., Warren Thomas Smith, *John Wesley and Slavery* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1986).

27. Cf. Míguez Bonino, "Wesley's Doctrine," 58. As Míguez Bonino notes, Wesley simply shares a blindness of his time in this regard.

28. As a positive step in this regard, note Albert Truesdale, "Christian Holiness and the Problem of Systemic Evil" *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 19 (1984): 39–59.

29. Cf., Keller, "The Transformed Life," 192; Jean Lambert, "Towards a Wesleyan-Feminist Christology," in *Wesleyan Theology Today*, 170–79 (p. 170); and Schmidt, "Towards a Feminist Theology," 137.

30. Compare Míguez Bonino, "Wesley's Doctrine," 55, with Hardesty, "The Wesleyan Movement," 247.

31. Cf. Hardesty, et al., "Women in the Holiness Movement," 247.

32. Cf., Keller, "The Transformed Life," 200.

33. Cf., Lambert, "Wesleyan-Feminist Christology," 171.

34. Cf., David Scholer, "I Timothy 2:9–15 and the Place of Women in the Churches' Ministry," in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelson (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 193–219; here, p. 215.

35. I would suggest that it is no longer enough to argue Wesleyans can support women's ministries because we are more open to change and do not see biblical injunctions as eternal norms (cf., Donald Dayton, "The Use of Scripture in the Wesleyan Tradition," in *The Use of the Bible in Theology*, ed. R. Johnston, [Atlanta: John Knox, 1985], 121–36; p. 135). We need to demonstrate that ordination of women is an exegetically legitimate action. For an historical survey of the biblical justifications of women's ordination that have been offered in the Wesleyan traditions, see Hardesty, et al., "Women in the Holiness Movement," 244–46; and Susie Stanley, "Response to Klyne R. Snodgrass," in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, 181–88. The best exegetical defense of women's ordination presently available is *Women, Authority and the Bible*.

36. The most promising work in this regard is that of Howard Snyder: *The Problem of Wineskins* (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1975); *The Community of the King* (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1977); and *Liberating the Church*.

37. See Colin Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1960), 191–200. Cf., Devaney, "Feminism," 108.