

**The Movement of the Spirit:
A Constructive Comparison of Divine Grace in Paul Tillich and John Wesley**

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“...if God ‘worketh in you’ then ‘work out your own salvation...’ ...salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) ‘preventing grace,’ including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will...” — John Wesley¹

“...I keep the term ‘theonomy...’ At this point the word is used for the state of culture under the impact of the Spiritual Presence.” — Paul Tillich²

Thesis and Scope

The thesis of this dissertation is that John Wesley’s conception of the operative nature of grace—particularly the way in which he describes the activity of *preventing* (now referred to as *prevenient*) grace, but also the broader activity of Wesley’s grace—is clearly visible in Paul Tillich’s concept of *theonomy*. An examination of the similarities will inform not only the theologies of faith communities within the Wesleyan tradition, but also the praxis of ministry as those faith communities seek to engage culture. Tillich’s correlative schema (his *method of correlation*), which posits (broadly speaking) that religion offers answers to the existential anxieties of life, might benefit from the deeply pastoral, practical, and embodied faith of Wesley. This examination will connect the understanding of both the activity and the availability of grace in the thought of Wesley with the more recent theological framework of Tillich. Exploring this intersection will provide insights into the role of faith communities in a divided society, as those communities should be grace-focused groups seeking to live into theonomy and called to advocate for justice as they also speak prophetically.

Statement of Problem

Wesley’s understanding of the availability of divine grace to all, and his understanding of the ways in which that grace is made manifest in the lives of humans, is a central theme in his theology. God’s grace, for Wesley, is actively working in and through the world to enable

¹ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley. Vol. 3: Sermons III: 71-114*, ed. Albert Cook Outler, vol. 3, The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 203.

² Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3: Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 249.

individuals to respond in faith, and to enter into relationship with God. Put another way, grace is working *operatively* to restore the brokenness of Creation, as well as *co-operatively* within individuals who begin to recognize that working, with the goal of reuniting fallen humanity with its divine, creative source. Historically, that theme carried forward into the various faith traditions which arose from his work. More recently, however, the operative/co-operative natures of divine grace have received less emphasis in many churches, and, in some instances the universality of divine grace has been questioned.³

Contained within the systematic theology of Paul Tillich is a concept he refers to as *theonomy*—the state of living “in the fulness [sic] of the Kingdom of God.”⁴ While the fullness of the meaning of theonomy is complex (and described across Tillich’s entire *Systematic Theology* and addressed in other works as well), theonomy provides space for the reunion of *being* with the *Ground of Being* (which is commonly described by the symbol *God*). Individuals may obey the rational self (*autonomy*), which is constrained by the limits of existence—“the law of subjective-objective reason; it is the law implied in the *logos* structure of mind and reality.”⁵ Conversely, *heteronomy* is an external law, which “issues commands from ‘outside’ on how reason should grasp and shape reality;” this is usually expressed in terms of “myth and cult,” although it may also be expressed through political power. Both autonomy and heteronomy are “rooted in theonomy, and each goes astray when their theonomous unity is broken,” coming into conflict with each other. In a complex semi-contrast to both (yet containing both), theonomy is

³ An odd yet deeply problematic example of this ignorance of the distinctive Wesleyan theology of grace occurred during the United Methodist Church’s 2012 General Conference, when a petition was considered which stated that “God’s grace is available to all.” While the petition was submitted as part of a heated debate over human sexuality, the fact that it passed with only 56% approval attracted the attention of Wesley scholars. “Preamble to UMC Social Principles (20544-CA-159),” The United Methodist Church - umc.org, May 1, 2012, <http://calms2012.umc.org/Menu.aspx?type=Petition&mode=Single&number=544>.

⁴ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 54.

⁵ Tillich, 84. Italics his.

“autonomous reason reunited with its own depth;” that is, the sought-after reunion of being and Ground of Being.”⁶ In the third volume of his *Systematic Theology*, he explores the potential of theonomy more fully, describing it as “the state of culture under the impact of the Spiritual Presence,”⁷ although he consistently maintains that theonomy never fully obtains under the “conditions of existence,” although communities of faith, such as the church, provide the conditions where it might exist in relative fullness.⁸

One critical point needs to be made clear at the outset: Tillich’s use of the term *theonomy* is radically different from other uses, most notably its use in Reformed Theology. While both seek to honor the literal meaning of the term (God’s law), Tillich is decidedly not suggesting the formation of a theocracy, or the reformulation of secular laws to fit Biblical models, nor the “subjection of a culture to divine laws, imposed from outside and mediated by a church.”⁹

Tillich’s use of the term *theonomy* reflects an understanding that God (as the Ground of Being) works through human culture to bring healing to the separation that exists between the Ground of Being and humanity, both as individuals and *en masse*. “Theonomy does not mean the acceptance of a divine law imposed on reason by a highest authority; it means autonomous reason united with its own depth.”¹⁰ Further, Tillich’s concept of theonomy (particularly as it relates to *ultimate concern*) is visible in his landmark work *The Protestant Era*: “A theonomous culture expresses in its creations an ultimate concern and a transcending meaning not as something strange but as its own spiritual ground. ‘Religion is the substance of culture and

⁶ Tillich, 84–85.

⁷ Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3: Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God*, 249.

⁸ Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 85.

⁹ Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3: Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God*, 249–50.

¹⁰ Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 85. Of interest also is Tillich’s statement just a few sentences later that “there is no complete theonomy under the conditions of existence” - put another way, theonomy cannot fully obtain in the physical world.

culture is the form of religion.”¹¹ Even in these brief passages, one sees the essence of Tillich’s understanding of the healing work of God occurring through culture—a concept which echoes Wesley’s understanding of the activity of divine grace.

Foundational to Tillich’s system is the distinction between “what is” and “what ought to be”—that is, the distinction between existence and essence.¹² Life is constantly ambiguous, engaging with the positive and negative elements of being in three spheres: the moral, the cultural, and the religious. In those spheres, life is continuously confronting the essence↔existence dichotomy, seeking to integrate, self-create, and transcend through its encounters with the inherent ambiguities within each.¹³ In all three spheres, the questions posed by those ambiguities may be fully addressed only by the presence and activity of the Spiritual Presence, the “aspect of God ecstatically present in the human spirit and implicitly in everything which constitutes the dimension of the spirit ... [these] have a *fundamentum in re*, a foundation in reality, however much the subjective side of man’s experience may contribute.”¹⁴ Indeed, for Tillich, the task of theology—particularly a “constructive theology of culture” such as his—is to “apply these principles to the concrete problems of our cultural existence.”¹⁵

The concept of culture permeates Tillich’s writings; when he was active, culture had become a primary lens through which philosophy viewed the human condition. Conversely, Wesley’s focus was not on the concept of culture; indeed, the idea of “culture” as a structure within which one might envision the activity of God is relatively alien to Wesley. For him, his

¹¹ Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 57.

¹² Frederick J. Parrella, “Tillich’s Theology of the Concrete Spirit,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*, ed. Russell Re Manning (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 76–77.

¹³ Parrella, 77–79; this is more fully explored in Volume III of Tillich’s *Systematic*.

¹⁴ Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3: Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God*, 283.

¹⁵ Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 149.

European culture was the only one visible and was considered normative;¹⁶ indeed, he was writing prior to (perhaps in parallel with) the theorists who were just beginning to use culture as a category and to recognize that other cultures existed in any useful way.¹⁷

Neither was Wesley a systematic theologian in the manner of Tillich. For this reason, as Randy Maddox notes, “on the terms of the reigning academic model, this omission raises grave doubts about the consistency (and ‘seriousness’) of Wesley’s theological work.”¹⁸ Maddox develops a useful counter-argument that this is, in fact, a standard that is “historically inappropriate”—even as some have taken on the task of extracting a systematic theology from Wesley’s sermons, where much of his theology is revealed.¹⁹ On this view, in Wesley’s context, “the quintessential practitioner of theology was not the detached academic theologian; it was the pastor/theologian who was actively shepherding Christian disciples in the world.”²⁰

Wesley, ever the practical theologian, provided much of his theological framework in the various sermons which are now part of the standard corpus of his works. In the sermon entitled “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” Wesley allows that all of humanity is “dead in sin by nature,”²¹ but makes it clear that, through the activity of the Spirit, no one is “wholly devoid of the grace of God.” The presence of divine grace in the hearts of humanity is understood to

¹⁶ It is, however, important not to take this assumption too far. One of his later sermons (number 106, *On Faith*) makes it clear that Wesley had started to recognize the existence of other cultures and faiths in new ways. John Wesley, *Sermons III*: 71-114, ed. Albert Cook Outler, vol. 3, *The Works of John Wesley: The Bicentennial Edition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986).

¹⁷ I am thinking here of Johann Gottfried Herder, whose work in exposing the pluralistic nature of culture is nicely described (albeit critiqued) in David Denby, “Herder: Culture, Anthropology and the Enlightenment,” *History of the Human Sciences* 18, no. 1 (n.d.): 55–76.

¹⁸ Randy L Maddox, “Reading Wesley as a Theologian,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 30, no. 1 (1995): 17.

¹⁹ Even this is somewhat lacking, however; Wesley’s journals, letters, and other writings – particularly his essays responding to controversial subjects – reveal a depth of theological thinking far beyond what one might envision in sermons.

²⁰ Maddox, “Reading Wesley as a Theologian,” 18.

²¹ Wesley, *Sermons* 3, 3:207. Emphasis his.

restore enough of the natural image of God that humans are able to respond to God's invitation to relationship. Wesley, following not only Arminius but Augustine as well, referred to that activity as *preventing grace*.²² That understanding of grace (now referred to by the term *prevenient grace*) became a cornerstone of Wesleyan theology and has continued to inform the practical theology of the various faith groups that emerged from Wesley's life and work, offering a distinctive theological response to real human issues. Prevenient grace is the work of the spirit working operatively, in the lives of every human; indeed, for Wesley, the work of prevenient grace is, in a sense, irresistible, even if the outcomes of that work (i.e. "salvation") are dependent on the response of each individual.²³

In Wesley's framework, grace also works co-operatively in the lives of those who have recognized (to some degree) the effects of grace via the *means of grace*. These are intentional actions, some of them ritualized, others primarily focused on personal behaviors and commitments, which—while having no salvific power in and of themselves—create opportunities for the believer to encounter divine grace, and to mature in their faith.²⁴ To a degree, these actions—particularly those which encourage individuals to engage in Christian community—foster participation in groups which are likely to be (at least somewhat) theonomous in nature. In terms of maintaining a coherent theology within faith groups based in Wesleyan traditions, it is critical

²² This term may be somewhat confusing in that it reflects an archaic use of the word *preventing*. Here, the term essentially means 'going before,' and one (admittedly simplistic) understanding would be that this is the activity of God's grace that draws people toward relationship. In more conservative circles within the Wesleyan traditions, it is often described as the 'grace that goes before salvation,' whereas in more liberal circles, the emphasis is not on salvation, but relationship.

²³ Wesley, Sermons 3, 3:207. Here, Wesley makes it clear that preventing grace is present in and for all; "Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man." This manifestation of divine grace is evident in both "good desires" and "conscience," such that "no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath."

²⁴ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley. Vol. 1: Sermons I: 1-33*, ed. Albert Cook Outler, vol. 1, The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 378ff.

that Wesley's understanding of grace continue to be preserved clearly as a foundational theological concept.

As both Wesley and Tillich are focused on the way(s) in which the Holy Spirit/Spiritual Presence work in the lives of people, Tillich's thoughts *extend* that of Wesley in some important ways (this is not to suggest that Tillich intentionally builds on Wesley, although he was familiar with—and briefly mentions—both John and Charles Wesley in his writings). Tillich clearly proposes (in terms of both the individual and in the broader context of existence in the world) specific activities of the Holy Spirit, which are described as different manifestations of God's divine grace.

From these brief sketches of theological frameworks developed in very different eras, one can see a commonality between Tillich's conception of theonomy and Wesley's conception of prevenient grace. Both reflect an understanding of God's activity in the world, through the presence of God's Spirit, working to heal the brokenness that separates humanity from God. My hypothesis is that these two concepts are deeply interrelated—although I am not claiming that they are coterminous—and that each can inform the other in helpful ways. The driving questions for Wesleyan theology would be: how does Tillich's concept of theonomy intersect Wesley's conceptions of the activity of divine grace, and how would those intersections help to provide a renewed (or clarified) understanding of Wesley's conception of operative grace? Even though it is clear that Tillich is more of a pastoral figure than some academicians might initially think, he does bring a systematizing framework to the operation of divine grace, while Wesley focuses on community-centered praxis. Tillich's approach is helpful in that it describes a correlative construct which makes specific claims about the ability of faith to answer existential struggles;

Wesley's approach is helpful in that it makes similar claims that are based in human relationships, as well as the intentional actions and rituals of faith communities.

Prevenient grace is but one manifestation of grace that Wesley develops; sanctifying grace, the grace which nurtures a Christian toward a life of deeper holiness, would also appear to have a relationship to Tillich's theonomous work of the Spirit (in a way that is co-operative, rather than operative). Secondary questions, then, are: How does Tillich's concept of theonomy, and perhaps his method of correlation, help to 'fill out' Wesley's understanding of the activity of grace in human culture? How might insights in this area inform the work of faith communities?

Tillich's method of correlation posits that all existential anxieties are answered by faith, and that the Spiritual Presence is continually working toward a restoration of relationship between humanity and God; Wesley's conception of the indwelling nature of divine grace, as well as the ways in which grace works around individuals *as* individuals, as well as individuals in community, reflects a deeply restorative work as well. What does this tell us—in practical terms—about the work of faith communities, and the ways in which they interact with individuals and with the broader culture in which they (both the faith communities and the individuals) operate? Faith communities would be well-served to frame their ministry efforts within the context of seeking to identify where and how the Spiritual Presence is already working, helping individuals discover where the Spirit has already been restoratively working in, around, and through them.

Further, Tillich (in a lesser-known series of lectures), identifies the need for Protestantism to recover elements of the prophetic tradition, stepping out from a focus on spiritualism (which

itself becomes an inward turn) and prophetically speaking against the idolatries of the age.²⁵ Similarly, recent Wesley scholar Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore calls for “retrieving and reinterpreting the living Wesleyan tradition of prophecy,”²⁶ The resonances of these two writings, in different eras, constitute clarion calls for communities of faith (groups in which, for Tillich, theonomy *might* be at its fullest) to speak into the divided societies in which we live. Tillich’s work on *creative justice*²⁷ has garnered some recent attention as well,²⁸ including recent work by Peter Slater calling for “principled theonomous political action”²⁹ in recent cultural and societal conflicts. Here, Tillich and the Wesleyan heritage of social justice clearly intersect, demanding in-the-world responses from communities of faith.

Theory and Method

The task of bringing the two theologians into conversation with each other is a correlative, rather than a historical one (in other words, the goal is not to impose any sort of historical influence of Wesley onto Tillich, nor to simply explore the histories of each, although their histories are relevant and will be discussed in this project). The correlative framework to be utilized will take into account the areas in which Tillich and Wesley offer similar understandings, and the ways in which they differ. As noted, Wesley’s theology, while fairly thorough, is less systematized than Tillich’s—therefore, part of the task may involve examining those areas where Wesley’s thought is less complete, and begs questions that might be answered

²⁵ Paul Tillich, “The Recovery of the Prophetic Tradition in the Reformation,” in *The Ground of Being: Neglected Essays of Paul Tillich*, ed. Robert M Price (n.p.: Mindvendor Publications, 2015), 201–53.

²⁶ Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore, “Prophetic Grace: A Wesleyan Heritage of Repairing the World,” in *A Living Tradition: Critical Recovery and Reconstruction of Wesleyan Heritage*, ed. Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore, Kingswood Books (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2013), 203ff.

²⁷ Examined in Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3: Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God*.

²⁸ Much of which examines Tillich’s *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

²⁹ Peter Slater, “Tillich on Spiritual Presence and Principled Theonomous Political Action” (Annual Meeting of the North American Paul Tillich Society, Boston, MA, 2017).

by Tillich. This is not to say that this project will focus on systematizing Wesley's thought; rather, Tillich's systematic approach will inform Wesley's deeply practical, pastoral one.

David Tracy's *critical correlation* model (which has origins in Lonergan's correlative work in his *Method in Theology*³⁰) provides a useful framework for this analysis.³¹ His model holds "that a contemporary fundamental Christian theology can best be described as a philosophical reflection upon the meanings present in common human experience and language, and upon the meanings present in the Christian fact."³² His "Revisionist Model" is based on five theses, which explicitly identify sources for theology, provide for investigation of those sources and a critical correlation of the results, take into account the phenomenological aspect of human religious experience, examine the texts from both historical and hermeneutical perspectives, and provide opportunities to employ transcendental or metaphysical reflections on the results.³³ This model is appropriate and useful in that it provides space not only for correlation, but also for constructive synthesis of the results. In this synthesis, areas of praxis will be visible in Tillich's correlative model, and new areas of structure will be visible in Wesley's practical approach. Whether Tracy's model will work "as-is" or inspires a modified version, Tracy's correlations seem well-fitted to this project.

Rationale for Thesis and Contribution to Scholarship

The relationship between Tillich's theonomous work of the Spirit, and Wesley's understanding of grace, creates significant doctrinal implications (in a practical sense) for the faith groups which have arisen from Wesleyan roots. Tillich's work is more recent than

³⁰ Bernard J.F Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972).

³¹ David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 45.

³² Tracy, 43.

³³ Tracy, 43–53.

Wesley's, and takes place in conversation with a much broader set of theological and philosophical traditions, with attention to cultural factors. While Wesley's understanding of the ways that prevenient grace might actually work in the world are somewhat vague, Tillich's correlative approach offers greater specificity, and provides a foundation for deeper reflection on—and engagement with—real-world issues implicated in both operative and co-operative activities of grace. Tillich's exploration of the theonomous nature of human culture is explored more deeply and more systematically, both by Tillich and others who have explored this component of his systematic theology. While this project will not be an attempt to systematize Wesley's theology, Tillich's systematic framework, and his method of correlation, provide an opportunity to consider a systematic description of the activity of divine grace articulated in Wesley's thought.

At the same time, both Tillich and Wesley recognized and emphasized the prophetic role of the Church. This is uniquely evident in Tillich's speeches and sermons,³⁴ as well as his travel and Voice of America radio broadcasts, during the rise of Nazism.³⁵ It is also omnipresent in Wesley's practical work; as Snyder notes, Wesley "held together the evangelistic and the prophetic dimensions of the Gospel. There was no split between personal salvation and social engagement."³⁶ Both saw a critical need for communities of faith to speak and act on behalf of societal issues and social justice, addressing current situational dangers and needs.

³⁴ Paul Tillich, *Against the Third Reich: Paul Tillich's Wartime Addresses to Nazi Germany*, ed. Ronald H Stone and Matthew Lon Weaver, trans. Matthew Lon Weaver (Louisville: Westminster John Knox press, 1998).

³⁵ Paul Tillich, *My Travel Diary: 1936 - Between Two Worlds*, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (New York; Evanston; London: Harper & Row, 1970).

³⁶ Howard Snyder, "Wesley's Concept of the Church," *The Asbury Journal* 33, no. 1 (1978): 46.

Significance of Research

This dissertation will provide a constructive relationship between Wesley's understanding of operative grace, and Tillich's understanding concept of the theonomous activity of the Spiritual Presence. The academic contribution of bringing these two theologians into conversation will serve to enrich the study of each in several ways: first, by employing a new framework to examine the Wesleyan understanding of divine grace; second, by examining the ways in which Tillich's concept of theonomy is operating in the theology of Wesley; third, by helping to recover an understanding of the relevance of grace in the understanding of some Wesleyan groups, and, finally, by providing direction for faith communities seeking to be prophetic voices for creative justice.

In terms of the praxis of faith communities which follow Wesley's theology (and, perhaps, even those which do not), this package of correlations will also serve to inform the ways in which those communities seek to engage with culture in new and innovative ways. If grace is available to all and is operating in all (whether they are cooperating or not), this will inform issues of doctrine and polity, as well as methods of outreach and connection. For Tillich, the transformative power of faith communities (which he refers to as communities "of the New Being" which stand the best chance of being theonomic in nature)³⁷ is significant; while the church does not control culture, nor does it operate in parallel, "culture receives its substance and integrating power from the community of the New Being, from its symbols and its life."³⁸ These communities create space for theonomic transformation, serving as a connector to "the ultimate and universal community, the community of love, transforming the will to power by creativity

³⁷ Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3: Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God*, 149ff.

³⁸ Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 149.

and the libido by *agape*...it is the task of a constructive theology of culture to apply these principles to the concrete problems of our cultural existence.”³⁹

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Wesley Meets Tillich

This will provide an overview of the project, including a brief sketch of the differences and similarities between Wesley’s understanding of operative grace (both prevenient and sanctifying) and Tillich’s concept of the theonomous work of the Spiritual Presence. Here, I will first make the claim of a relationship between the two, and provide the reader with an overview of the framework to be used in the task of critical correlation and synthesis.

Chapter 2: The Conceptual Roots of Grace

The Christian understanding(s) of grace are rooted in particular Biblical texts, with later exploration by a variety of theologians. I will provide an overview of the ways in which operative grace was developed as a concept in the theologies of Augustine and Aquinas, and examine the perspectives described later by Jacobus Arminius.

Chapter 3: The Holy Spirit and Grace in the Thought of John Wesley

Wesley’s understanding of grace was deeply informed by the Arminian conceptions of grace, with Moravian and Pietistic influences. Wesley developed these ideas further, and—particularly in his sermons—delineated different aspects of the activity of divine grace which became central to his theology. In this chapter, I will describe those concepts, laying the groundwork for the later comparison of his ideas with those of Tillich. I will also provide an argument supporting the idea that the goal of grace in Wesley’s thought (that is, the restoration of relationships between humanity and God) is, in effect, a process of healing.

Chapter 4: The Activity of the Spiritual Presence in the Thought of Paul Tillich

Here, I will construct a summary of Tillich’s understanding of the *cleavage* which exists between the world and God—a cleavage which calls for the healing work of theonomy, and the ways in which he understood the Spiritual Presence to work theonomously through culture, through individuals, and through and within the (ideally) theonomous community that is the Church.

Chapter 5: Wesley and Tillich in Conversation: A Critical Comparison and Synthesis

Moving from the two previous summaries of the relevant areas of the theologies of Wesley and Tillich, here I will lay out the critical correlation of the two systems, exploring the areas of similarity and the areas of difference. Specifically, I will explore the conceptual framework that Tillich utilizes, and the highly relational (“heart”-based) approach that Wesley brings to the conversation. In the correlation, I will identify elements which overlap, or interact with each other, that may help us to further understand the ways in which Tillich contributes to the lived theology of Wesley, and the ways in which Wesley’s praxis-focused approach to faith contributes to Tillich.

³⁹ Tillich, 149.

Chapter 6: Conclusion: Implications

Here I will examine the ways in which the areas of synthesis contribute to academic scholarship in the theologies of both Tillich and Wesley, and to Wesleyan (and, perhaps, non-Wesleyan) faith communities in terms of their doctrine and polity, their work as faith communities, and the ways in which those communities interact with the broader (and deeply divided) culture. This work must include speaking prophetically—particularly in the interests of those with little or no voice—as well as seeking to identify and enable creative justice in the current situation(s) in which we live.

Statement of Bibliographic Method

My methodological approach is theological, focusing on textual and conceptual correlations between the writings of Wesley and Tillich, with consideration given to secondary (interpretive) literature about each. The body of writing about Tillich is significant, and the same is true of Wesley. However, as of this writing, I have found no previous studies which specifically focus on the interrelatedness between them. At the same time, the essential cores of their messages have been widely studied. Tillich's focus on the impact of culture has been the topic of numerous other writings, and his examination of the interrelations of religion and culture was certainly not unique.⁴⁰

Wesley's understanding of the prevenient activity of grace bears some relationship to Augustine's understanding of operative grace, and is certainly rooted there, given Wesley's familiarity with classic Christian writers. At the same time, his essentially Arminian understanding of grace certainly differs from Augustine's, in terms of election, predestination, and the ability or inability to resist divine grace. These similarities and differences offer rich possibilities for exploration, and will certainly inform this project; therefore, attention will be given to both Augustine and Arminius as primary sources. In addition, the influences of Pietism

⁴⁰ Here, I am thinking of H.R. Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture* (included in the attached Bibliography), although there are others who have addressed these topics, from Gilbert Meilaender, to C.S. Lewis, to the other 'Niebuhr boy,' Reinhold.

(primarily through the writings of Philipp Joseph Spener), and the Moravian Church will be examined as we seek to understand the ways in which Wesley's conception of grace was formed.

Bibliographic searches will utilize a variety of databases accessed through the Iliff School of Theology, Asbury Theological Seminary, and the University of Denver. Database searches will include ATLAS Religion, Proquest Religion, JSTOR, the Oxford Databases, WorldCat, Religious and Theological Abstracts, Prospector, ProQuest's Dissertations & Theses Full Text, Google Scholar and Book Search, Religion Online, Compass. Search terms include *Tillich*, *Wesley*, *Wefley*,⁴¹ *theonomy*, *theonomous*, *grace*, *preventing grace*, *prevenient grace*, *prevenience*, *gratia praeveniens*, *irresistible grace*, *resistible grace*, *operative grace*, *gratia operans*, *co-operative grace*, *gratia cooperans*, *means of grace*, *sanctifying grace*, *justifying grace*, *pietism*, *Moravian*, and more.

⁴¹ When historical documents are scanned, optical character recognition facilities are sometimes mistranslating the archaic *medial s* (*f*) as *an f*. As a result, search indices sometimes record *Wesley* as *Wefley*.

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