

Restoration:
A Wesleyan Model of Recovery

by

Elizabeth Raigan Vowell Miskelly

Date: _____

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Wesley's systemic model of discipleship through Societies, Bands, and Classes provides the foundation for a uniquely Wesleyan model of recovery. John Wesley's early methods of *psyches therapeia*, "a spiritually-based psychotherapeutic method for healing the human soul and producing real soul-change"¹ is still relevant today and is a proven method for transformation as is evidenced in both the Holy Club, the Oxford Group, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

Addiction is known to cross all ethnic, gender, and socio-economic lines. Addiction permeates and affects every segment of society. Today addiction extends beyond drugs and alcohol and can include many other deeds, actions, and conduct. Despite the widespread proliferation of addiction, it has traditionally been relegated to the shadows as a topic of conversation. What is conspicuously absent in most conversations involving addiction is any mention of the church and its role in the process of rehabilitation and recovery.

This is surprising given the clarity of Jesus' mission as defined in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."² Rather than live out the messy incarnate mission and message of Jesus Christ "to seek and to save the least and the lost," the church has remarkably outsourced recovery to drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers. The church, for the most part, has relinquished any role it might play in recovery to secular players, and in doing so, a much-needed voice on the topic of recovery has been silenced. In remaining silent and abdicating its calling, the church has forced persons to rely on mere behavioral modification programs. As a result, recovery programs advocate sobriety from a substance or behavior without addressing the real need for change and transformation of

¹ Chesnut, 79.

² New Revised Standard Version.

the soul itself. Consequently, one's current addiction is frequently exchanged for a different one. Programs that do not treat addiction at a spiritual level will continue to graduate participants that simply trade one addiction for another, and this will continue until the underlying issues of sin, brokenness, attachment, and denial are appropriately and thoroughly addressed.

The United Methodist Church and its congregations do not know how to effectively address issues of addiction and recovery within a Wesleyan framework. Consequently, the United Methodist family is left to use recovery materials developed by other denominations that simply do not match the ethos, culture, and theology of the United Methodist Church. *Restoration: A Wesleyan Model of Recovery* seeks to rectify this and offer a unique Methodist resource, to be used as a means of salvation and healing based upon the rich culture and heritage of the people called Methodist. The text is supported by an abundance of resources including videos, sermons, and a daily workbook.

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This project would not have occurred without the devastating impact that addiction has had upon my life and family. From journeying with a teenager in and out of the criminal justice system and through numerous rehab attempts, I was given the chance to see that our societies approach for addressing addiction is flawed. I glimpsed this truth when after four attempts at rehab, my step-son finally confessed that the only way you can successfully deal with addiction is through the power of Jesus Christ. Walker, I had no idea that our struggle as a family, would reveal this truth in your life. I praise God for your restoration and thank you for the gift that you are.

On May 10, 2016, I received word that my father had been rushed to the emergency room after being discovered passed out (for over 12 hours) in his bedroom floor. For days, we were baffled by his diagnosis, only to slowly learn that his alcoholism had spiraled out of

control and that while in the depths of dark depression he had attempted to do irreparable harm to himself. Quite simply, I was devastated. I questioned how the darkness of addiction could become so great and heavy that a man who seemed to love every minute of life would want anything other than life itself.

Over the past two years, I have seen my dad restored. He has been a living witness that addiction does not get to have the last word, and that a life lived in Christ, can take what appears to be death and bring forth life and resurrection. This project would not have developed had it not been for his living witness that life can be restored. Dad, I love you. I am proud of the man you are, and I praise God for your healed body, soul, and mind. I give thanks for the healing work that is now your mission. Glory be to God.

1. Sin as Addiction

A recent phenomenon in American culture is the celebrity admission of addiction. Whether reported on television, revealed in a blog post, or conveyed through social media, a large number of celebrities are speaking openly about their struggles with addiction. From Michael Phelps, the most decorated Olympian of all time, to child star Drew Barrymore, to a teenage heartthrob like Zac Efron, to “American Idol” judge and country singer Keith Urban, notable personalities have now shared openly about their struggles with drugs, alcohol, depression, and dependence.

Addiction has traditionally been relegated to the shadows as a topic of conversation. Terms like “addict,” “crackhead,” “druggie,” “drunk,” “junkie,” “stoner” and “wino” are just a few degrading designations that are commonly used and, consequently, have stigmatized the culture of recovery. As superstars openly discuss their personal struggles, the idea of recovery has become more acceptable. Rehab and recovery have gone mainstream as addiction is seen more as an illness and less as a character flaw. However, the rich and famous are not the only ones struggling with dependence.

Addiction is known to cross all ethnic, gender, and socio-economic lines. No respecter of persons, addiction consistently permeates and affects every segment of society. Today addiction extends beyond drugs and alcohol and can include food, sex, work, internet, pornography, relationships, technology, and gaming along with many other deeds, actions, and conduct. I would suggest that we are all addicted to something. Whether it is an addiction to control, power, or one’s ideology, caffeine, money, success or even one’s reputation, everyone is bound by the constraints of brokenness and sin.

What is conspicuously absent in most conversations involving addiction is any mention of the church and its role in the process of rehabilitation and recovery. This is surprising given the clarity of Jesus’ mission when he says in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of

Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”³ In Luke 5:31-32 Jesus echoes a similar sentiment when he says, “I did not come for the healthy, but for those who need a doctor.”⁴ Jesus was intentional about going to the point where the pain exists. His life, ministry, and mission were to heal, restore, and to recover through salvation the perfect relationship that was lost at the fall. Rather than live out the messy incarnate mission and message of Jesus Christ “to seek and to save the least and the lost,” the church has remarkably outsourced recovery to drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers.⁵ The church, for the most part, has relinquished any role it might play in recovery to secular players, and in doing so, a much-needed voice on the topic of recovery has been silenced. In remaining silent and abdicating its calling, the church has forced persons to rely on mere behavioral modification programs. As a result, recovery programs advocate sobriety from a substance or behavior without addressing the real need for change and transformation of the soul itself. Consequently, one’s current addiction is frequently exchanged for a different one. In programs that do not treat addiction at a spiritual level, this merry-go-round of trading one addiction for another will continue until the underlying issues of sin⁶, brokenness, attachment, and denial are appropriately and thoroughly addressed.

1.1 An Analysis of Sin

Maia Szalavitz is the author of *Unbroken Brain: A Revolutionary New Way of Understanding Addiction*. In her work, she defines addiction as a brain problem that results

³ New Revised Standard Version.

⁴ The Jerusalem Bible.

⁵ This is not to negate the importance of medical treatment administered with significant withdrawals.

⁶ According to Maia Szalavitz, some scholars do not believe that addiction is a sin. *Unbroken Brain: A Revolutionary New Way of Understanding Addiction* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2016), 3.

from a learning disorder. Szalavitz states, “Once we understand that addiction is neither a sin nor a progressive disease, just different brain wiring, we can stop persisting in policies that don’t work, and start teaching recovery.”⁷ The problem with Szalavitz’s position is that she limits addiction to a mere learning disorder, as poor decisions made over time that ultimately rewire the brain, but she fails to address the origin of why poor decisions were made in the first place. She focuses on addiction as a medical condition, and even fights against any moral argument for addiction. I propose that addiction consists of both medical and moral issues. The context of this chapter will be to explore the moral implications of addiction as a “dis”-eased⁸ state of the soul that originates with an understanding of sin.

1.1.1 Sin as Breaking Covenant: “Hattah”

One reason for confusion concerning sin as addiction is that as various persons speak of sin, they make an assumption (wrongly) that they share a common understanding of sin. However, a study of sin within the Old Testament quickly identifies different understandings of sin. “Hattah” is a Hebrew word that represents the most common notion of sin. “Hattah” has been translated in secular circles to mean, “to miss,” as in missing the mark. Further study shows that within a religious context, “hattah” refers to “a failure to meet an obligation or to observe a duty owed someone in a relationship.”⁹ Sin became known as a failure to honor a duty or covenant of relationship. Therefore, “hattah” became known as a sin against the one owed a duty.¹⁰ Sin was seen as an act or violation

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Throughout the paper I use the term “dis”-eased to play off the disease model of recovery and the disordered nature of the soul due to sin.

⁹ Patrick McCormick, *Sin as Addiction* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 16.

¹⁰ Ibid.

of the whole community of Israel as sin fractured its covenantal relationship with Yahweh.¹¹

Therefore, salvation or perdition became a national matter. When covenant with God is broken, sin creates discord and unholiness within the person/community. Because Yahweh is holy, the sacred is forbidden to touch the secular.¹² Sin as “unholy” is a dominant theme within the Old Testament. The Levitical laws provide ample evidence of “law as holiness.”

1.1.2 Sin as Burden: “Awon”

“Awon” is another Hebrew word that defines sin as “twisted, crooked or bent.”¹³ The notion refers to a defect in character and manifests itself as a weight or burden. “Awon” has come to be understood as sin as an experience of guilt. In the Old Testament “awon” is seen as a burden that one carries which can be handed over in expiation. Understanding expiation informs one’s concept of “scapegoat” and the process by which sacrifice results in forgiveness of sin and freedom.¹⁴

1.1.3 Sin as Rebellion: “Pesha”

“Pesha” is a Hebrew word that is translated as “rebellion.” This is a volitional act of rebellion against a given order. In the Old Testament, “pesha” is understood as a rising up against Yahweh, disloyalty or a malicious hardening of the heart against the loving

¹¹ John Coventry, “Sixteenth and Twentieth Century Concepts of Sin,” *The Way Supplement*, Fall 1983, 51.

¹² *Ibid.*, 18.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

kindness and mercy of God. This state of sin as an act of rebellion against God's will is demonstrated in the Garden of Eden and exists within every individual.

The theological notion of original sin has developed as a consequence of the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The idea of original sin can be understood as the first initial sin in human history, or it can be understood as an inherited state of being for all humanity. Most Christians understand the notion of original sin as the latter and believe that because Adam was the first human, his corruption has tainted all humanity. Some theologians understand this as a kind of biological transmission theory that humanity has inherited an original diseased state of being.

Preceding the original fall, God created us out of love, so God gave humanity free will so that our expression of love toward our Creator would not be a forced sentiment. Eden clearly testifies that temptation and attachment exist. We were made for freedom, and yet our attachment to created things, like power and the desire to be like God, tempts us to rebel from God's will and ultimately makes people prisoners to their impulses and disorderly desires. Gerald May concisely describes the threefold spiritual condition of humanity: "God creates us for love and freedom, attachment hinders us, and grace is necessary for salvation."¹⁵

1.1.4 Sin as Stain, Defilement, and Contamination

Leviticus 11-16 defines sin as a stain or defilement. Humanity is at fault and is seen as defiled, corrupted and contaminative. The stain model of sin presents a dichotomy between what is clean and holy with that which is evil. The standard measure becomes clean versus unclean or pure versus impure. To be labeled as unclean or impure means

¹⁵ Gerald May, *Addiction & Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions* (New York: HarperOne, 1988), 92.

that one is to be separated from those that are clean and holy, including Yahweh. The problem with the "sin as stain" model is that the sinner realizes his or her sinfulness, guilt, and shame ("awon") apart from God. We see the similar result of shame/dread in Genesis as Adam and Eve hide in the presence of God after their transgression. It is the combination of sin, guilt, and shame that isolates one from God, rather than pursuing the One who makes a right relationship with God possible.

The stain model also sees defilement as contaminative. Leviticus defines the sin or impurity that comes with touching dead bodies, the flow of blood or fluids, clean or unclean foods and thus renders moral evil as a contaminative force that is passed on from person to person. Not only is the unclean or impure person isolated from the community and forbidden to enter into holy places, further isolating them from God, but the model of sin as stain and defilement creates a system of legalism clearly demarcating who is in and who is out. Another problem with the model of "sin as stain" is that no attention is given to whether an action is voluntary or involuntary. Inadvertent actions still result in sin and defilement. Under this model, sin is not concerned about rejecting covenant with God but rather being defiled for violating taboos. Once a person is defiled as a result of sin, offerings, sacrifices, and cleansings must occur to be pronounced as clean and pure.¹⁶

Under the "sin as stain" model, sin is relegated to external standards and therefore, the conversion of the heart never occurs. The goal is ultimately to placate a wrathful God that cannot be defiled by one's impurity. The sinner is portrayed as an unprotected victim that at any moment could become unholy and contaminated. There is never any discussion about the power of an Almighty God overcoming the sin and stain with mercy, grace, and forgiveness. Therefore, the sin as stain model is extremely narrow in its grasp, but

¹⁶ This included sacrifices or oblations that served as rites of expiation, along with ritual washings to cleanse the taints of sin.

unfortunately, it continues to present itself in many present-day churches, especially when it comes to dealing with recovery and addiction.

Addiction has often been seen as a moral sin. Just until recently, junkies, crackpots, meth heads and other addicts have been exorcised from the community of faith. The sin and shame of an addict can prevent the addict from seeking help. Many addicts believe that due to their addiction, they have become stained and defiled, even broken and beyond repair. Their isolation from the faith community continues to affirm this false belief. The church's response has been to send them away to a good rehabilitation program to get their life in order before coming back to be among the "holy," but the good news of Christ is that Jesus meets us in our brokenness. Contrary to the "sin as stain" model, one is not asked to clean up previous sins in order to come before the holy. In fact, Jesus routinely confronts the norms of a sin-stained and defiled society as he touches unclean lepers and a bleeding woman.

1.1.5 Sin as Crime

One of the most dominant models of human sinfulness is sin as a crime. Theologians across the centuries have defined sin as a willful violation of God's law. Thomas Aquinas states that sin is "fittingly defined as a word, deed, or desire which is against eternal law."¹⁷ John Wesley's Sermons have defined sin as "an actual, voluntary 'transgression of the law; of the revealed, written law of God; of any commandment of God acknowledged to be such at the time that it is transgressed.'"¹⁸ The Lord's Prayer invites one to pray for the Lord to forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against

¹⁷ *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Anton C. Pegis, vol. 2, *Vice and Sin in General* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 567.

¹⁸ John Wesley, "The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God," ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 1 of *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 436.

us. The sin as crime model involves a sense of action and willful violation that rebels against God and, specifically, God's divine law.¹⁹ This model relegates the sin not only as a crime but the sinner as a criminal. Since laws have willfully been violated, a juridical or penal response must be warranted for justice to prevail. Justice often consists of "public accusation, judgment and some sort of civil punishment."²⁰ Under this model, there is also an exclusive emphasis on the individual's responsibility for sins, thus abrogating any idea of social, cultural or national sin.

How did the sin as crime model become so prominent? Several historical trends and developments contribute to its prevalence among religious circles. First, the sin as crime model gained tremendous traction in the Western world with its almost exclusive attention to individualism. Secondly, the intimate relationship between political and ecclesial structures placed the juridical response in the realm of the Church. Thirdly, it has been said that the sin as crime model also gained traction due to the "practice of the sacrament of private confession"²¹ throughout Catholicism in the west. This sixth-century practice not only individualized sin, but assigned a penance based on the severity of the transgression. Lastly, analytical thinking prevailed in the west into a myopic vision of cause, context, and consequence.²² This individual and privatized model isolates the sinner from the larger society and relegates them as a willful act of disobedience that must be punished. The sin as crime model possesses many limitations and, therefore, does not serve as a useful model for understanding the nature of sin.

The emphasis upon the willful violation of the sinner casts them in a judicial arena that leaves little room for mercy, grace, and forgiveness. The emphasis of sin as crime

¹⁹ McCormick, 55.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

²¹ Gerald McHugh, *Christian Faith and Criminal Justice* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 166f.

²² McCormick, 57.

fixates on an act of sin resulting in an ensured punishment. Under this model, sin becomes not only privatized, but morality becomes legalized. The sinner becomes isolated from the community and assumes that the sinner is different, rather than coming to the realization that we are all sinners in need of God's grace. This model creates a false sense of innocence that relegates sin and evil to a group of individuals that are to be put away and sentenced to punishment. The sin as crime model creates a dissociative process "by which the community of the 'innocent' project the shared experience of moral and religious evil onto the 'guilty.'"²³ This model proves to be "intrinsically immoral, radically violent and profoundly un-Christian."²⁴

The scandal of Jesus' ministry is that he publicly challenged the sin as crime model by directly associating with the sinners themselves. Jesus met a woman at a well and asked for water. He had his feet bathed by a prostitute. He is known to dine with sinners. All of these behaviors were taboo and forbidden, yet Jesus did not disassociate himself with sinners but became one of them for "he who knew not sin became sin for our sake" (2 C. 5:21). The scandal of Jesus was his forgiveness and transformative love that reconciled and redeemed sinners.

Unfortunately, the sin as crime model has become the most prevalent response in dealing with addicted persons. Our prisons are filled with addicted individuals that are labeled as criminals. Among the 2.3 million inmates, in the United States, 1.5 million are classified as substance abusers or addicts. Another 458,000 were under the influence (either alcohol or a controlled substance) when they were arrested. When combined, the groups mentioned above, nearly eighty-five percent of America's prison populations, are

²³ Rollo May, *Power and Innocence: A Search for the Source of Violence* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1972), 47-64.

²⁴ Karl Menninger, *The Crime of Punishment* (New York: The Viking Press, 1966).

filled with substance abusers.²⁵ Unfortunately, only eleven percent of those struggling with addiction receive any treatment. The *Behind Bars II: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population* study reports that:

In 2005, federal, state and local governments spent \$74 billion on incarceration, court proceedings, probation and parole for substance-involved adult and juvenile offenders. In contrast, these governments spent less than one percent of that amount--\$632 million--on prevention and treatment for such offenders.²⁶

The sin as crime model has become an epidemic in our society regarding addiction. Unfortunately, our criminal system considers that the violation of the law is willful, addicts must be punished, and their willfulness must be broken by isolating them because of their sin. Studies have shown that this is not the most effective means of dealing with the addiction epidemic. The evidence presented by the documented failures of the prison system show that there must be a better way to deal with addicted persons.

1.1.6 Sin as Personal

The contemporary mind understands sin as personal, but this would have been a foreign concept to ancient Hebrews. The people of Israel saw sin as a violation of covenant (hattah). As a result, the entire nation was called to repentance. The entire nation of Israel was covenanted to Yahweh, not just as individual persons. The idea of personal culpability came later in Jewish thought. The Western mindset of individualism proclaims sin as personal. This idea gained momentum as society rooted itself in the dark soils of individualism. Early in the twentieth century, Catholic priests emphasized the penitential practice.²⁷ The act of confession was almost entirely bent towards individual

²⁵ The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, *Behind Bars II: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population*, Feb. 2010, 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, ii.

²⁷ McCormick, 60.

transgressions. The shift became an emphasis in act analysis as individual sins became highlighted over those of communal transgressions. Sin became known as an alienation from God. Unfortunately, this idea of individualism limits sin and alienation to a person. The emphasis on individualism negates institutional, societal, corporate, and social sin.

1.1.7 Sin as State of Being

The Gospel of John begins with an early announcement by John the Baptist, "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29). "John is speaking here of a state of hostility that precedes, tempts, and infects the will of the individual. Sin refers to a state of enmity between God and the world."²⁸ Each model of sin as previously presented fails to address the character of sin. When persons focus on the individual act, they fail to see the repetitive nature of sin itself. Individuals love to worship the idea of free will. We understand the Augustinian notion that we have fallen due to free will, but fail to realize that we are not able to rise from our fallen state by our own will.²⁹ Somehow sin resists one's efforts to change, and in fact grows even more powerful in one's attempt to master it. The pathological part of one's nature cannot be merely defined by an act of transgression. Sin is understood as a part of one's being that seeks to enslave the individual. Any attempt based on one's will and spirit to eradicate such evil proves futile. Sin becomes not merely an occasional annoyance, but instead is "a disintegrating, malicious, even quasi-personal power which eludes every attempt to destroy it."³⁰ Paul speaks to the ever-elusive nature of sin in his letter to the Romans 7:18-24:

²⁸ Timothy O'Connell, "A Theology of Sin," vol. 21:3, *Chicago Studies* (Chicago: Civitas Dei Foundation, Fall 1982), 279-280.

²⁹ In a conversation with a professor from Duke Divinity School (Warren Smith 2016, oral communication, 14th December).

³⁰ McCormick, 108.

For though the will to do what is good is in me, the performance is not, with the result that instead of doing the good things that I want to do, I carry out the sinful things I do not want. When I act against my will, then, it is not my true self-doing it, but sin which lives in me. In fact, this seems to be the rule, that every single time I want to do good, it is something evil that comes to hand...This is what makes me a prisoner of that law of sin which lives in my body.

Paul understands sin according to each model presented. He often addresses sin as transgression (Rom. 5:14; 2:23; 4:15), an act of willful disobedience (Rom. 5:15; 2 Cor. 5:19), a voluntary failure (1 Tim. 6:10; 2 Tim. 3:13), and as a power that enslaves the sinner and rules over them.³¹ The power of sin and darkness can also be understood as a model of sickness/disease.

1.1.8 Sin as Sickness/Disease

Kevin O' Shea describes the power of sin as a virus, sickness or disease in what he calls the "Sin of the World":

Biblical thought about sin is dominated by the theme of the Sin of the World. We should write it with a capital: the Sin, the Sinfulness of the world. Modern thought about sin is dominated by the idea of the "human act" in which "sin" happens. St. Paul would have called that a "transgression", he would not have called it "Sin." Sin is a deeper thing, a powerful virus of evil which has a history of its own, on the cosmic plain.

The Sin of the world is a virus of evil which entered the world as a personal force through original sin and dynamically unfolds itself and tightens its grip on humanity and on the world in an escalating fashion down the ages of history. It is the hidden power which multiplies transgressions in the history of humankind. They are merely its symptoms; it is greater and deeper than all of them. It forms human history into what we might call "perdition history" (to coin the opposite of "salvation history").³²

A biblical study of disease derives from this notion of sin. However, sin as disease or sickness was seen as an expression of divine wrath for a willful violation of divine laws.

³¹ James Gaffney, *Sin Reconsidered* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 62-64.

³² Kevin F. O'Shea, "The Reality of Sin: A Theological and Pastoral Critique," *The Mystery of Sin and Forgiveness*, ed. Michael J. Taylor, (S.J. New York: Alba House, 1971), 94-95.

Health and wealth become clearly associated with the favor of God. Job's friends reiterate this belief as they inquire about ways in which Job sinned and thus deserved the wrath of God. Jesus employs the model of sin as disease when he refers to himself as the physician who has come to heal the sick (Lk. 5:31). Jesus' stance is contrary to that of his contemporaries, particularly when he does not see sin as crime, but instead sees sin as illness. This distinction allows Jesus to address the real sin of the soul by offering healing, restoration, and forgiveness.

Sin as disease points to the chronic state within every individual that threatens true freedom. No longer is sin relegated to a specific act or transgression, but rather a state of being that permeates the totality of humanity. Therefore, a response to sin is not to criminalize it through the judicial system, but rather to heal that which is broken and sick with sin. A critique of the disease model of sin is the fear that it absolves individuals from taking responsibility for their sin and its detrimental effects. This model does not advocate abandoning one's moral responsibility, but rather recognizing the limit of one's human freedom, thus creating an opening for a greater dependence on God. Sin as illness, sickness or disease invites us to consider a final model of sin as addiction.

1.1.9 Sin as Addiction

In its most basic form, sin can be understood as an aversion to God. In a state of sin, we seek to supplant God by looking to other things that tempt us to believe that we can be godlike. Based on our "dis"-ease we refuse to accept our limitations and believe the lies of the serpent that we can have and be more. This false belief causes one to worship the created rather than the Creator, an idolatry that becomes an addiction that enslaves one with progressive compulsions. The paradox of sin as addiction is that it promises freedom, when, in actuality, our free will continues to enslave us and alienate us from God and

neighbor. Sin, like addiction, ultimately leads to death. Therefore, sinners deny their dependence upon God by placing worship of the creation ahead of worship of the Creator, thus usurping God's rightful place resulting in a world of delusion and deception. After that, the downward spiral of alienation accelerates, ultimately resulting in death.

The sin as addiction model offers another way of considering sin that is not based on guilt or innocence, as the crime model suggests, but offers a continuum of freedom as one chooses to worship the Creator or the created. Further analysis of the addictive model shifts the response of sin from judicial to therapeutic and healing. The judicial model focuses on culpability, judgment, and punishment, whereas therapeutic models engage in treating, healing and curing. Treating sin as addiction allows the community to engage in the healing process while practicing the gospel model of repentance and forgiveness.

The analysis of various sin models is an attempt to allow the reader to realize that we are all affected by the addictive nature of sin that results in a "dis"-eased state of the soul. I wish to expand the limited understanding of addiction to include not only chemicals and substance, but also the addictive sin that exists within everyone. It is through this study that we are reminded that sin is not what we do, but who we are. In defining the nature and essential characteristics of addiction, I hope that persons can determine areas of addiction in their lives and identify areas where they too are enslaved by sin.

1.2 What is Addiction?

Gerald May in his seminal work *Addiction and Grace*, defines the root of sin and addiction as attachment. Attachment to certain people, behaviors, desires and things ultimately enslaves a person, until the attachment itself becomes a preoccupation and

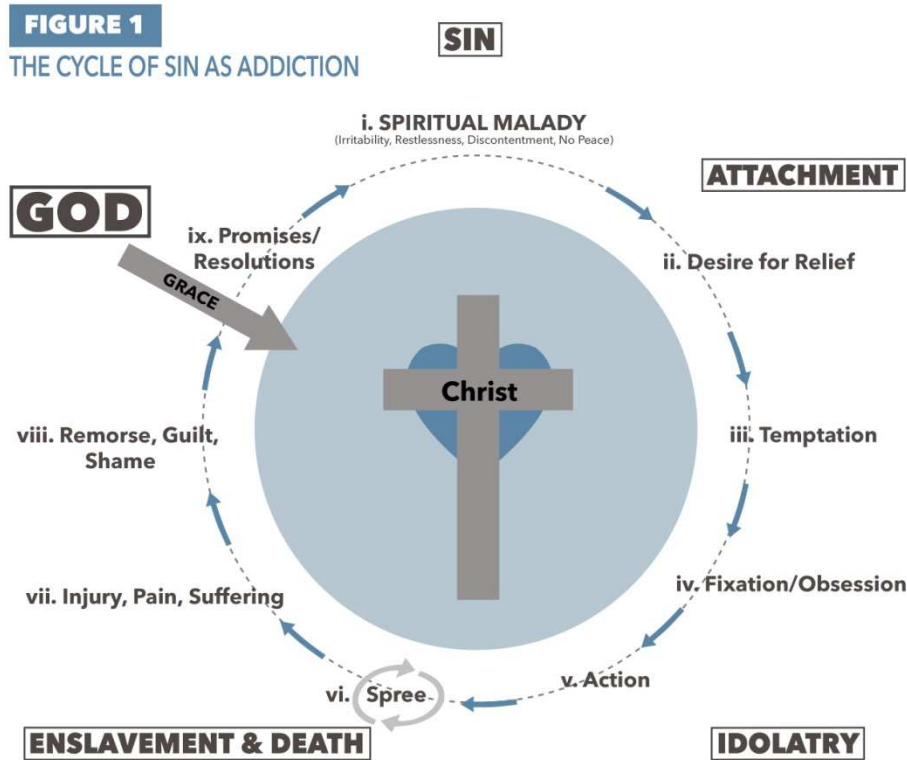
obsession that rules one's life. The word attachment derives from the Old French word, *atachier*³³ meaning to fasten or fix. Attachment fastens or fixes our desires to objects and creates addiction. In essence, this enslavement to objects results in idolatry and prevents one from truly loving God and neighbor. The objects of one's false worship commandeer the best of one's time, energy, and effort, usurping room for love. As a result, addiction replaces one's pursuit of God's love as the highest object of desire and affection, with a fastening of one's body, mind, and soul on where and when the next fix or high might occur. Adrian van Kaam refers to addiction as "a counterfeit of religious presence."³⁴ Addiction not only robs one's freedom, but also supplants one's desire to worship God by creating false idols of attachment. Gerald May expounds upon this notion of attachment as he defines addiction: "Addiction is any compulsive, habitual behavior that limits the freedom of human desire."³⁵ In looking at the nature of addiction, I will outline essential characteristics that mark the cycle of sin as addiction.

³³ Dictionary.com. <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=attachment&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

³⁴ Adrian van Kaam, "Addiction: Counterfeit of Religious Presence," *Personality Fulfillment in the Spiritual Life* (Wilkes-Barre, PA: Dimension Books, 1996), 123-53.

³⁵ May, 24.

1.3 The Cycle of Sin³⁶ as Addiction



The Cycle of Sin as addiction begins with a i) Spiritual Malady called sin (as has been addressed above). Characteristics of restlessness, irritability, and discontent point to the fact that something is broken, and a ii) Desire for Relief ensues (Rom 8:22-23). This is the time that iii) Temptation presents itself as the belief that desire can be met with a false counterfeit (Rom 12:2). Next becomes a iv) Fixation or Obsession upon the idol itself and often results in v) Action. The action moves to a vi) Spree of worshipping the created rather than the Creator. The spree enslaves individuals as they drink to drunkenness, find themselves consumed with the bottle or substance, and as they give their time, energy, and

³⁶ Adapted from Matt Chandler and Michael Snetzer, *Steps: Gospel-Centered Recovery* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 2015), 31.

thoughts to the idol itself. A worship disorder occurs and embodies the lie that the idol itself will fulfill one's deepest desire. Ultimately, the result of the spree is a series of small deaths as one faces the consequences of vii) Injury, pain and suffering. The consequences are then followed by a sense of viii) Remorse, guilt and shame. Promises and Resolutions (ix) are then made never to do it again. The problem is that the Spiritual Malady still exists, and before one knows it, the individual is engaging in the Cycle of Sin all over again. It has been said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results. This cycle of sin is why a Gospel-Centered Recovery is essential for addressing the origin of sin as addiction and shame.

1.4 Moral versus Medical Model of Addiction

A consistent argument in recovery circles is whether or not addiction is seen as a moral issue or medical disease. Part of the moral dilemma is how it has been narrowly defined. The moral model values self-control, sober judgment, and self-reliance. Therefore, based upon these characteristics, the addict is broken and is believed to possess the ability to muster sufficient internal strength to produce healing and recovery. It is all about effort! I have attempted to expand the moral model by arguing sin as addiction. This does not negate the significance of the medical model in dealing with addiction. The primary aim of this body of work is to address the spiritual dimension of addiction and sin, ultimately creating a Wesleyan model of recovery.

1.4.1 Medical Model of Substance and Chemical Abuse

Since 1956, the American Medical Association has accorded formal recognition to addiction as a disease. This recognition means that the disease can be described, the course of the illness is predictable, the disease is primary, and if left untreated can be

terminal.³⁷ The disease model views addiction as a complex physical and psychological disorder. Dr. Nora Volkow, the Director of the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), defines chemical and substance addiction in this manner: “Drug addiction is associated with altered cortical activity and decision making that appears to overvalue reward, undervalue risk, and fail to learn from repeated errors.”³⁸ The consistent use of mind-altering drugs has been proven to cause long-term effects within the brain. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that aids in movement, cognition, pleasure and motivation. Dopamine is required for brain reward, and as the brain continues to adapt to the presence of a drug, the reward pathways in the brain are hijacked. They become hard-wired based upon the effects of the drug. The reward center of the brain is also responsible for judgment, learning, and memory. The repeated pattern of drug use produces long-lasting emotional memories that make the person vulnerable to craving and relapse, even after active recovery. Once the repetitive drug seeking behavior becomes a habit, the drug user now becomes transformed into an addict.³⁹ The addict now finds him/herself attached to the drug of choice, by fastening or fixating upon the created substance as a god. This is where Maia Szalavitz’s work on addiction as a brain/learning disorder then comes into play. She proposes attachment happens through a threefold process of learning, habit formation, and struggle.⁴⁰

The first step in the process of attachment is the learning stage. In this stage, actions are linked with either pleasure or pain responses. The brain learns to associate these responses in predictable ways. If the response is pleasurable, an association will be made

³⁷ Nora Volkow. “Addiction Basics.” Orientation Lecture, Clearview Recovery Center, Moselle, MS, May 20, 2016.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Szalavitz, 57.

between the behavior and experience and the brain will push for a repeat performance. If the response is weaker, a reenactment for the brain must occur to solidify the association. Every time the behavior occurs, the association is reinforced, resulting in conditioning.⁴¹

The second step involves seeking the behavior for the desired effect. This need for the desired effect results in an increased frequency of repetitive behavior that solidifies the formation of a habit. Triggers in the brain now associate the behavior with conditioned patterns and experiences. Often people do not realize that they are engaging in their behavior for the desired effects. This attachment usually becomes apparent when something prevents the addict from engaging in the desired behavior, resulting in a struggle.

By now the behavior has become entrenched, a habit is formed, and its effects have become an integral part of the addict's life. The struggle slowly builds up for the addicted and a tolerance develops with a need for always wanting more. What used to satisfy no longer does the trick. Not only does a tolerance build up but also symptoms of withdrawal present themselves. Two types of withdrawal symptoms can occur. The first is a stress response that automatically happens when the body becomes deprived of something that it has grown accustomed. Stress reactions can range from "mild uneasiness and irritability to extreme agitation with rapid pulse, tremors, and overwhelming panic."⁴² The second kind of withdrawal is a rebound or backlash. The symptoms of this type of withdrawal present themselves directly opposite from those that caused the addictive behavior. If a person had been taking uppers, for example, the withdrawal might be depression and lethargy. If a person is addicted to approval and does not receive it, the stress of rejection can present

⁴¹ Ivan Pavlov's study of conditioned behavior in dogs has influenced the conditioned response in addictive brains. Pavlov's studies confirm a nature that learns, adapts, and responds to the world around us.

⁴² May, 27.

itself resulting in ill feelings towards oneself. The difficulty of identifying withdrawals for the user is in large part due to the next characteristic of addiction, self-deception.

Dorothy Marie England, in her work *Smoke and Mirrors*, defines the inner workings of a chemically dependent person. The premise of her work explains masterful addicts as magicians with their uncanny ability to deceive not only others but themselves. The chemically hijacked brain subverts any attempt to control its behavior and tricks the person with denial and rationalization, resulting in loss of willpower. Addicts then begin to make resolutions to stop their behavior, to change their ways, or to manage their addiction. What occurs is that the mind makes the addict believe that they can stop, only to realize that they cannot, resulting in a disgust of one's self and a stronger foothold for the addiction to reign. The fifth characteristic of addiction is the distortion of attention. The distortion of attention is when the mind becomes fixated or preoccupied with the created rather than the Creator. These fixations or attachments result in idolatry, where the worshiped "thing" becomes more important than God. John Wesley addresses the origin of sin as disease as he explains the theology of original sin.

1.5 John Wesley's View of Sin

In John Wesley's sermon on Original Sin⁴³ he takes a Pelagian viewpoint by compounding the model of total depravity with the view of sin as disease. His theology of sin hints of the Eastern Orthodox tradition where sin is seen as a spiritual sickness or self-perpetrating illness. The sin of disease distorts the image of God, diminishes divine likeness, disfigures one's true understanding of the world as it is, and distracts the person

⁴³ John Wesley, "Original Sin", ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard Heitzenrater, of *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 325-34.

from experiencing his/her true medicine found in communing with the great Physician, God and Jesus Christ. Wesley states:

God's method of healing a soul which is *thus diseased*. Hereby the great Physician of souls applies medicine to heal *this sickness*; to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties. God heals all our atheism by the knowledge of himself, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; by giving us faith, a divine evidence and conviction of God and of the things of God- in particular of this important truth: Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.⁴⁴

The state of one's original diseased state, however, does not negate the person's ability to respond to God's prevenient grace and, henceforth, be justified by grace through faith alone. Wesley's theology was influenced by many traditions. The next chapter will explore the context into which John Wesley was born and the formative spiritual influences that helped construct Wesley's theology. John Wesley's relentless pursuit for spiritual healing helped define his systematic structure and organization for discipleship. I propose that Wesley's paradigm for change and transformation can be used today in the twenty-first century as model of restoration, healing, and wholeness in recovery.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 333.

2. Shifting Tides and Religious Turmoil: Reformation, Restoration, and Revival

John Wesley was the fifteenth child of parents Samuel and Susanna Wesley.⁴⁵ He was born in Epworth, a sleepy village in northern England on June 17, 1703. His father was the parish priest in Epworth for forty years at St. Andrews, Church of England. John was raised learning the tenets of the faith through the Church of England. Wesley's theology first took root as he listened to his father's weekly sermons. The development of his faith, however, was fueled largely by his mother Susanna's teaching. She planted roots of personal spiritual formation within her children that would ultimately shape and influence the course and direction of the Methodist movement. To fully appreciate Wesley's theology and beliefs, one must explore the world into which Wesley was born.

2.1 Reformation

Europe had been plagued by religious, spiritual, and theological confusion for two hundred years before Wesley's birth. There had been great dissent over religion and royalty, which ultimately led to the Reformation. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle church,⁴⁶ rejecting the use of selling indulgences to expiate sin.⁴⁷ In Luther's Theses, he also addresses the need to limit papal power. Those that were loyal to the Pope remained Roman Catholic, and those that adhered to the premises of Luther became known as Protestants. As the Reformation

⁴⁵ Samuel and Susanna had eighteen children. Only ten of them lived.

⁴⁶ History.com Staff. *Martin Luther and the 95 Theses*. Documentary. A&E Networks, 2009.

⁴⁷ This act was also known as the "Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences."

spread to England, it ushered in almost two hundred years of tension and conflict for the British monarchy.

Henry VIII wanted badly to have a male heir, prompting him to seek an annulment of his eighteen-year marriage to Catherine of Aragon so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. The annulment was not approved by the Pope, and Henry VIII decided to separate the English church from the Church of Rome. In 1534 Henry VIII broke from papal authority and declared himself head of the Church of England, and, therefore, assumed authority over both church and state. This meant that all issues about church doctrine, discipline, and polity would have to go through the British Parliament.⁴⁸

Despite Henry VIII's efforts to separate the English church from Roman Catholicism, the Church of England maintained its Catholic theology and practice. The only thing that appeared different was that the monarch was head of the Church instead of the Pope and worship was in English instead of Latin.⁴⁹ After Henry VIII's death, his son Edward VI made efforts to align the Church of England with mainstream Protestantism. Under Edward's reign, the Book of Common Prayer was adopted as the official liturgy of the church, and in 1553 the Forty-Two Articles were accepted as a standard of English orthodoxy. Edward VI died on July 6, 1553, before his sixteenth birthday.⁵⁰ Upon his death, his older sister Mary, a staunch Roman Catholic, assumed the throne.

Mary would be remembered in history by her nickname, "Bloody Mary." She was adamant that her reign would restore the Church of England to its proper relationship with Roman Catholicism. She restored the Church of England to Catholic doctrine and practice,

⁴⁸ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley, and the People Called Methodists*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abington Press, 2013), 5.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

including papal authority. Mary ordered that Protestant leaders and Anglican bishops be burned at the stake. This edict caused tremendous religious upheaval. Mary attempted to solidify England's ties with Rome, but her exile of Protestants and her religious burnings only fueled the Protestant faith and created an anti-Roman sentiment among the British. Mary would be succeeded on the throne by her sister Elizabeth I who would return the Church of England to Protestantism. Her desire was to restore the Church of England to the time of her father's reign.

Elizabeth soon learned that too much time had passed since her father's formation of the Church of England. Exiles had returned having experienced Protestantism elsewhere. They brought with them Geneva Bibles which they used for devotional life and as a guidebook for church reform.⁵¹ These English Calvinists became known as Puritans. They believed that the Church of England still had too much Catholic influence and, therefore, needed to be purified. John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* was also published during Elizabeth's reign and continued to solidify an anti-Catholic movement. Elizabeth was faced with a country in discord and desired greatly to unify her people. She knew that to do so would require an established order in the church. Her framework would ultimately influence English religion for years to come.⁵²

In 1559 the Acts of Supremacy declared Elizabeth as "Supreme Governor" of the church instead of "head" of the church. The Act of Uniformity declared that the Book of Common Prayer, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the Book of Homilies were to be used as the standards for doctrine, theology, and liturgy. Calvinist Puritans and Roman Catholics abhorred the changes that Elizabeth made. Richard Hooker wrote an influential work

⁵¹ Ibid., 7.

⁵² Ibid.

addressing church polity and doctrine entitled *On the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.⁵³ This work would ultimately shape the thinking of John Wesley and Methodism as it defined scripture, tradition, and reason as authority to discern ecclesiastical structure and thought.⁵⁴

Following Elizabeth's death in 1603, James VI, the king of Scotland, became the king of England and Ireland. Like Elizabeth, he too desired unity among the English and a balance between Protestantism and Catholicism. Therefore, he held the Hampton Court Conference to serve as dialogue that resulted in a new biblical translation known as the King James Version of 1611. Charles I succeeded James VI. King Charles married a Roman Catholic and adhered to high church forms of Anglicanism.⁵⁵ This adherence created great discord among the Puritans and gave rise to the English Civil War. Puritans now held the primary positions in Parliament and abolished the monarchy along with the Church of England.⁵⁶ On January 30, 1649, Charles I, the King of England, was executed and England became a Commonwealth. Oliver Cromwell took over England's leadership as the leader of Puritanism. He removed any semblance of Roman Catholicism while in leadership, and after ten years of his fanatical ways, the English Parliament longed for a King once again.

2.2 Restoration

Charles II, son of Charles I, was crowned King of England and the period of Restoration began. The Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity were yet again put into effect. The Book of Common Prayer, Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, and the Book of

⁵³ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Adam Hamilton, *Revival: Faith as Wesley Lived It* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014), 20.

⁵⁶ Heitzenrater, 13.

Homilies once more defined structure, doctrine, and liturgy for the Church of England. Pastors were required to submit to an Act of Uniformity, which required, among other things, that every clergyman declare an "unfeigned assent to all and everything contained and prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer."⁵⁷ Over two thousand pastors refused to sign the Act of Uniformity and became known as dissenters or nonconformists. The grandfathers of John Wesley, John Westley (paternal) and Samuel Annesley (maternal) were both dissenters. Samuel and Susanna Wesley were both committed Anglicans and supported high church and the use of liturgy defined by the Book of Common Prayer. They adhered to the Thirty-Nine Articles and read the Book of Homilies. John Wesley was born into a family that represented the religious tension that existed during England at this time: namely, a world that had grown skeptical of religious zeal and fanaticism. The previous two hundred years, religion had created change, discord, and even war. This religious dissonance would ultimately influence Wesley's pursuit of holiness and shape the course of Methodism forever.

During the Age of Enlightenment, an interest in intellectualism, science, and rationalism prevailed. In response to the anti-religious sentiment of the age, an emphasis on piety and holy living emerged. German Pietism gave structure towards "holiness of heart" and created small groups known as *collegia pietatis* or "colleges of piety."⁵⁸ These were small groups that gathered to focus on the study of scripture and prayer, resulting in works of social holiness. In England, a similar model materialized known as religious societies. Anthony Horneck started the religious societies in the 1670's. After twenty years, these religious gatherings were established as the Society for Promoting Christian

⁵⁷ John Kirk, *The Mother of the Wesleys: A Biography* (London: Henry James Tresidder, 1864), 11.

⁵⁸ Heitzenrater, 21.

Knowledge (SPCK). Samuel and John Wesley both became members of the SPCK with a sole desire for holiness of the heart. This model of spiritual formation would ultimately give rise to the Methodist movement.

John Wesley was a man influenced by his history and culture. He possessed a desire, like his grandfathers, for the Church of England to expand its reach with the transforming message of Jesus Christ. He was influenced by Pietist thought in an Age of Enlightenment and sought holy living through strict devotion and prayer. The Puritan influence weaved its way into Wesley's heart in regards to moralism and a rigorous adherence to God's Word. John Wesley would create systems and models for spiritual growth, but the Age of Enlightenment and reason, along with his desire for moralistic perfectionism, would prove burdensome to those that Wesley led, including himself.

2.3 John Wesley's Spiritual Growth and Influences

John Wesley received his first religious training at the feet of his mother, Susanna. Susanna was responsible for the early education of the children and the management of the Epworth household. Mrs. Wesley regulated everything from food eaten to the amount of sleep allowed, even refusing her children the right to cry. She fully believed and wrote, that "in order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will and bring them to an obedient temper . . . I insist upon conquering the will of children because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education."⁵⁹ Susanna believed that when children are governed by the piety and wisdom of their parents, they can learn to obey the will of another. She believed that her methods would ultimately translate from

⁵⁹ Kirk, 139.

children obeying their parents to obeying the will of their God. She saw the mastery of the will as one of her greatest responsibilities as a mother, for she believed it would predicate salvation or damnation of the soul as the child grew and matured. We will see that this obsession with self-mastery, which began as a child, influenced John Wesley throughout his life and significantly affected his spiritual development.

Susanna instructed her children for six hours each day, but she also stressed the importance of cultivating the soul. Before her children could speak, they were taught to perform a blessing over their food using signs, thus learning, at an early age, their dependence upon God.⁶⁰ Each Sunday evening family devotions were held around the kitchen table. Susanna also made it a point each week to spend one hour alone with each child. This is a remarkable feat when one remembers that Susanna had ten living children. With her undivided attention on that particular child, Susanna would inquire, "Are you praying?" "Are you reading scripture?" "Are you struggling with sin?" Her questions were geared to the well-being of her children's souls as she asked about their faith, hopes, fears and dreams.⁶¹ From John's earliest memories, his faith was being shepherded, formed, and accounted for through the love and diligent inquiry of his mother. John Wesley would later codify this methodical accountability by asking Methodists to commit to a weekly gathering so that they might inquire about one another's souls. The questions that were posed in these meetings reflect the early examination of the soul that Wesley experienced at the feet of his mother.

At the age of ten, John Wesley attended the prestigious Charterhouse School in London. As do many students when they leave home, Wesley experienced a waning in his

⁶⁰ Kirk, 151.

⁶¹ Hamilton, 24.

faith as outward restraints were removed. Wesley confesses that he consistently felt guilty of his outward sins even though they were not seen as scandalous in the eye of the world. He still read his Bible and prayed, he wrote, "I hope to be saved by: 1) Not being so bad as other people; 2) having still a kindness for religion; and 3) reading the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers."⁶²

John Wesley began to take his spiritual quest in earnest in 1724 as he prepared for his Master's Degree and ordination. Several writers deeply influenced Wesley's faith. Wesley read Jeremy Taylor's *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* and noted that he was "exceedingly affected" by Taylor's work.⁶³ Taylor's 1650 publication taught Wesley that everything one does could be for the glory of God. Taylor states, "[E]very action of nature becomes religious, and every meal is an act of worship...as well as an act of prayer."⁶⁴ Taylor's words convicted Wesley, and at the age of twenty-three he wrote, "Instantly, I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced, there was no medium, but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself, that is, in effect, to the devil."⁶⁵ As a result of Taylor's influence, Wesley began to keep a diary to record his progress in holy living.⁶⁶ A year later Wesley began studying Thomas a' Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ*. Kempis emphasized the inward religion of the heart. Wesley states, "I saw, that giving even all my life to God supposing it possible to do this, and go no farther would profit me nothing unless

⁶² John Wesley, May 24, 1738, *Journals and Diaries*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol. 18 of *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 243.

⁶³ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, ed. Thomas O. Simmons (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1910), 14-20.

⁶⁴ Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*. (New York: Restoration Editors, 1847), x.

⁶⁵ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 4.

⁶⁶ Heitzenrater, 40.

I gave my heart, yea, all my heart to him."⁶⁷ In 1730 Wesley read William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. Wesley asserts, "These [books] convinced me, more than ever, of the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian; and I determined, through his grace, (the absolute necessity of which I am deeply sensible of;) to be all-devoted to God, to give him all my soul, my body, and my substance."⁶⁸ Wesley would go on to preach one of his most famous sermons entitled, "The Almost Christian." We see in Wesley's spiritual development that he hungered for more. It was Wesley's insatiable desire for faith, devotion, and discipline that led him to respond to his younger brother's request to spiritually mentor a group of young men as they sought to become Christians altogether. Wesley would later state that these gatherings, known as the Holy Club, would serve as the first rise of Methodism.

2.3.1 Oxford: The Holy Club

On June 17, 1729, John Wesley arrived in Oxford after responding to a plea from his younger brother Charles for the need of discipleship. Charles had been attending Christ Church and realized the struggles that come with adhering to the faith on a college campus. Charles longed for a revival of faith and sought his older brother's wisdom on what to do to grow in holiness. John and Charles Wesley, William Morgan, and Bob Kirkham gathered together to read and study the Scriptures, pray, attend church, tend to the sacraments regularly, and examine their lives by documenting their daily actions within a journal while holding one another accountable to a life of piety. In the summer of 1730, William Morgan made the suggestion that the group begin visiting the debtors and felons in the Castle

⁶⁷ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 4-5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

prison. Morgan's proposal would spur his colleagues to consistently engage in social holiness through works of mercy and grace. Morgan's contribution to the Holy Club made it a unique group among its peers. Other students would gather for Bible study and prayer, but combining acts of mercy by visiting prisoners, teaching school children, and caring for the elderly set the Holy Club apart.

John Wesley continued his search for holiness. He became fanatical in his pursuit of pious and holy living. His assurance of salvation was based upon his sincere desire to lead a Christian life. Colleagues saw Wesley's strenuous spiritual efforts as "legalistic works-righteousness grounded in an obedience ethic, rather than an attempt to imitate the life of Christ by means of a life of meditative piety grounded in Christian virtue ethic."⁶⁹ Wesley believed that if he could become more holy, then he could transcend the evil of this world. His attempts at transcendence were bound to his obsessive practices and scrupulous details in an effort to measure his holiness. What happened is that he found himself bound by his rigorous discipline and rules rather than transcended.

Wesley's methods and theology were not fully formed at this point in his life. He demanded obedience that was out of obligation rather than a joyful response to God's grace. The Holy Club was often criticized for their extreme behavior and soon the derogatory term, "Methodist," was used to refer to the group and their methodical ways. Due to the severe and strict nature of the group, turnover was high. These early Oxford Methodist meetings were not regular, and attendance was not mandatory. The life and rhythm of a college student tended to promote the wax and wane of consistent gatherings. The Holy Club

⁶⁹ Douglas M. Meeks, ed. *The Portion of the Poor: Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995), 59.

disbanded after John Wesley left Oxford, but the first rise of Methodism ensured the effectiveness of a model of discipleship.⁷⁰

In 1735 John Barton approached Wesley about going to Georgia as a Christian missionary. Wesley believed that this was a demonstrable and sacrificial way that he could prove his love to God. Wesley accepted the invitation to be an American missionary and convinced his brother Charles to go with him. Wesley notes in a letter to a friend that his chief motive for going to America "is the hope of saving my soul."⁷¹ Wesley believed that his missionary trip to America would give him the opportunity he was looking for to withdraw from the world in his attempt to pursue Christian holiness. Little did Wesley know that God would use Wesley's fear and failures in America to lead him to an assurance of faith that he had always longed to have.

2.3.2 Georgia: Fears and Failures

On October 14, 1735, John Wesley embarked on his trip to America as he boarded the Simmonds ship. He had never been on a ship much less at sea. His journey would take a little over three months. While at sea, Wesley and the crew experienced some brutal storms, and Wesley even feared for his life. On January 25, 1736, the Simmonds faced tumultuous times as sea. When all the crew believed that they were perishing due to the storm, Wesley was moved by the confident assurance of faith of the Moravians. While passengers were screaming in terror, the German Moravians quietly sang a psalm. Wesley longed to have an inner assurance in God that they clearly exhibited. The Atlantic storms

⁷⁰ William Walter Dean, "Disciplined Fellowship: The Rise and Decline of Cell Groups in British Methodism." (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1985), 71.

⁷¹ "To America and Back," Wesley Center Online, 1999. Accessed September 14, 2016, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesley-the-methodist/chapter-vi-to-america-and-back/>.

would force Wesley to see the limitations of his cerebral faith. The journey to America had already begun to challenge Wesley's faith.

Wesley arrived in America with high hopes to convert the colony. He picked up in America where he had left off in England by pursuing God with rigor and discipline. Wesley's approach alienated people instead of drawing them to God. There was a small group of young men and women that desired to seek God with all of their hearts. Wesley was pleased to find that Robert Hows, the parish clerk, had already formed a religious society in Savannah. Wesley spent time investing in teaching, exhorting, and reproofing members of the Society. The members would meet various nights of the week, and Savannah's religious society seemed to thrive under Wesley's leadership. Wesley would refer to Georgia as the second rise in Methodism because the religious society resembled that of Oxford Methodists.

Wesley was also trying to reach the Society in Frederica. Despite his best efforts, he never made any progress with the people. Prayer services were discontinued, meetings were absolved, and Wesley's attempt to reach the Indians with the message of Christ proved futile. Wesley invested the best of his energy in Savannah where God appeared to be moving.

Wesley had always had an affinity for teaching and mentoring the young. He found in Savannah sensitive souls that were willing to learn about God. He invested his time in discipling some of these young men and women. One woman was Sophie Hopkey. She and Wesley shared a romanticized spirituality. Sophie wanted to marry Wesley, and Wesley's journal indicates he had strong feelings for Sophie. Seeing that Wesley was not going to marry her, Sophie married another man. John Wesley was heartbroken upon hearing the news. His emotions interfered with his duties as a priest, and he ended up refusing Sophie Hopkey Williamson communion on the basis that she had been deceitful and refused to

repent. John Wesley was brought up on charges by the Chief Magistrate, Thomas Causton, who also was Sophie's guardian. Wesley was charged with various accounts of deviating from the rules and regulations of the Established Church. He was also charged with inconsistent measures that affected the happiness of the colony.⁷² In December 1737 Wesley left by night for Charleston and boarded a ship bound for England. He crossed the Atlantic once again facing the storms of his life that left him feeling like a defeated failure. Little did he know that he had finally reached the bottom and that change and transformation were soon to come. Wesley's heart would soon be strangely warmed, and religious revival would spread throughout England and subsequently the world.

2.3.3 London: A Heart's Religion

Wesley's trip to America exposed him to Moravian German Pietism. He marveled at the assurance of faith shown by the Moravians in the midst of storms and possible death on the Simmonds. While in America, Wesley spent time with Moravians in worship, singing hymns, studying scripture, and praying. August Spangenberg was the Moravian leader in America and asked Wesley about his personal state of salvation: "Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" Wesley answered as best as he could, but felt dejected by his answers. He writes in his journal, "I fear they were vain words."⁷³ Upon returning to England, Wesley was in the depths of despair questioning his faith and vocation. He remembered the deep heartfelt faith of the German Moravians and sought out Peter Bohler, a Lutheran minister ordained by Zinzendorf as a Moravian missionary on his way to America. Wesley confided his grave concern about his lack of assurance of faith.

⁷² Heitzenrater, 77.

⁷³ Heitzenrater, 67.

After many conversations, Bohler convinced Wesley that his issue was not about a weakness of faith, but one of unbelief. According to Bohler, Wesley lacked “that faith whereby alone we are saved.”⁷⁴ Bohler contested that one does not have degrees of faith; a person either has faith or does not. When one has faith, the faith is always accompanied by “a sense of assurance and evidenced by freedom from sin, fear, and doubt.”⁷⁵ Wesley confessed to Bohler that he was going to stop preaching until he regained his faith. Peter Bohler responded with his famous words: “Preach faith till you have it, and then, because you have it, you will preach faith.”⁷⁶ Wesley heeded Bohler’s advice. He began to preach salvation by faith alone and lay the groundwork for his own and others’ experience of grace.

John and Charles Wesley met James Hutton while they were both at Oxford just prior to the brother's departure for Georgia. Hutton attended more than one of the old religious societies in London and had been instrumental in forming new societies along the way. John Wesley attended a London society meeting of Hutton's where seventy people gathered for prayer, for the singing of hymns and psalms, and for Bible study. Wesley noted to Bohler that Hutton's society had little supervision or organization.⁷⁷ On May 1, 1738, Bohler called together a like-minded group of individuals to organize a band. As they gathered at John Hutton's house two rules were established: 1) meet weekly, confess their faults, and pray for one another, based upon James 5:16, and 2) include others that might have a sincerity of intention to grow in holiness.⁷⁸ These rules garnered the foundational

⁷⁴ Ibid., 84.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 85.

⁷⁶ Theodore Wesley Jennings, Jr. “John Wesley on the Origin of Methodism,” *Methodist History*, January 1991, 84.

⁷⁷ W.N. Schwarze and S.H. Gapp, trans., “Peter Bohler and the Wesleys”, *World Parish*, November 2, 1949, 5-8.

⁷⁸ David Lowes Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1987), 197.

structure for the Fetter Lane Society. The only stated requirement for participation was a sincerity of intention. John Wesley would offer growing leadership to the young society as Peter Bohler left for America. Soon after John began leading the Society, Charles Wesley and other Moravian followers joined. Some even experienced an assurance of faith. Charles Wesley testified to having an experience in which he was able to say, "I believe, I believe!"⁷⁹ resulting in a deep peace with God. Other participants had similar experiences. John Wesley longed for such an assurance. Little did he know that his experience of assurance would happen just three days after his brother Charles' assurance of faith.

On May 24, 1738, John went unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street in London. While there Wesley felt his heart strangely warmed. He experienced God's abundant grace, forgiveness of sins, and an assurance of salvation through faith. Wesley describes the events in his journal:

In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, "This cannot be faith, for where is thy joy? Then was I taught that "peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of your salvation but that, as to transports of joy- that usually attend the beginning of it especially in those who have mourned deeply- God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of his will.

After my return home, I was much buffeted with temptations, but cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes and he "sent me help from his holy place." And herein I found [in what] the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yes, fighting with all my

⁷⁹ Charles Wesley, *The Manuscript Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, ed. S.T. Kimbrough, Jr., and Kenneth G.C. Newport, vol. 2 (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2008), 1:106-8.

might under the law as well as under grace. But I sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror.⁸⁰

For thirty-five years John Wesley had tried mightily to earn his salvation. Despite his best efforts, he never experienced the assurance of faith that he longed for until that night at Aldersgate. Wesley was finally able to quit striving for grace and instead receive God's abundant gift. Wesley was set aflame with his newfound faith and longed to study the Moravian way of life. Despite Wesley's new enthusiasm for faith, he struggled with Bohler's theology that there were no degrees of faith. Wesley felt the assurance of his salvation through faith alone. However, he still occasionally felt doubts, the abiding joy that Bohler testified did not constantly remain, and he continued to struggle with issues of sin instead of feeling free from sin. Bohler's theology allowed no room for doubt or fear and required the manifestation of the full measure of the fruits of the Spirit as a result of one's salvation. Wesley decided to go to Germany in search of answers as he studied the Moravian faith from whence its theology was conceived.

Wesley quickly discovered that the German Moravian theology was different from the English Moravian faith that Bohler prescribed. Wesley's trip to Germany helped him realize that he was trying to fit a Lutheran theology into an Anglican mindset. Bohler collapsed the idea of justification and sanctification into one, stating that the assurance of salvation would result in a full expression of the fruits of the Spirit. Wesley's theology would differentiate justification and sanctification along with an understanding of imputed righteousness versus infused righteousness.⁸¹ The issue of English Moravian theology

⁸⁰ John Wesley, May 24 and 25, 1738, *Journals and Diaries*, ed. Albert C. Outler,.

⁸¹ Richard P. Heitzenrater on p. 91 in *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* notes that imputed righteousness is a forgiveness of sins and infused righteousness is freedom from sin. Wesley struggled with the English Moravian's notion of infused righteousness because he still felt the struggle of continued sin and even experienced thoughts of doubt. This particular understanding will be instrumental in shaping a Wesleyan Model of Recovery.

would continue to be a problem for Wesley. Wesley would wrestle with the differences in Moravian and Anglican thought. This time of testing would help to establish the central tenets of the Methodist faith.

2.3.4 Bristol: From Restoration to Revival

After Wesley's heart was strangely warmed, he preached with an enthusiasm and zeal about converting people to the faith that resulted in him being barred from pulpits and churches. By 1738, there were only five churches in London that would allow Wesley to preach.⁸² Wesley's fanatical, overzealous approach to the gospel impacted a populace that had grown tired of years of conflict over religion. They were content to be lukewarm and had grown accustomed to having very little expected or asked of them regarding their faith. England was in need of revival, and Wesley was uniquely positioned and gifted (with his exceptional organizational skills) to help a religion of the heart flourish.

In March of 1739 George Whitefield, a participant of the Holy Club in Oxford whom Wesley had mentored years before, wrote to Wesley requesting that he come to help preach and minister to the people of Bristol. Bristol was a port city and had a large population of coal miners living in the slums of Kingswood. Their work schedules and their poverty did not allow them to participate in the organized church. Therefore, Whitefield, who, like Wesley, had been banned from preaching in many churches, also began to preach in the open air a practice known as field preaching. Wesley notes in his journal his initial reaction to field preaching:

I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields...having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls *almost a sin* if it

⁸² Hamilton, 88.

had not been done *in a church...* At four in the morning, I submitted to "be more vile," and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people.⁸³

During Wesley's first month of preaching in Bristol, he records that 47,500 people came to hear him outdoors.⁸⁴ He continued to preach to mass audiences and invited people who had "a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins"⁸⁵ to attend a religious society meeting to grow in grace. Conversion and transformation happened not only in the open-air settings, but also in these small group settings. Lives were being transformed, and soon the religious societies grew so that they could not accommodate all of the people. The two largest societies, Nicholas Street and Baldwin Street, decided to purchase land and build a structure large enough to house them both. John Wesley stepped in to help with finances when contributions fell through. He also agreed to help manage the societies. The United Societies erected the "New Room"⁸⁶ in Bristol in 1739.

As the Kingswood societies continued to grow, Wesley was diligent in creating bands. Bands were small groups of five to ten people that gathered together for spiritual nurture and support. The singular purpose of these bands was for spiritual growth. The Bristol bands were formed with the Moravian influence of homogenous groups. There were women's bands, boys' bands, and men's bands. The separation was to create the highest degree of honesty and openness within the bands.⁸⁷ Wesley saw this model of ministry while he was in Herrnhut and advocated its creation in Bristol and among the Fetter Lane

⁸³ John Wesley journal entry for March 29 and April 2, 1739.

⁸⁴ Heitzenrater, 110.

⁸⁵ *Wesley, Works*, 9:256-57.

⁸⁶ It was first called "our room" and later changed to "New Room." This would become the first headquarters of the Methodist mission.

⁸⁷ Heitzenrater, 115.

Society. While Wesley was attending to the new growth and movement in Bristol, he received word of discord at the Fetter Lane Society in London.

The Fetter Lane Society had taken on a greater Moravian influence under the leadership of James Hutton. Some of the Fetter Lane Society members believed that they needed some more consistent leadership and, therefore, wrote to Germany for help. Philip Henry Motlher was sent from Germany and arrived in London on October 18, 1739. Almost immediately, a doctrinal struggle ensued between Motlher and John Wesley. Motlher convinced many in the Fetter Lane Society that they were not truly saved if they felt any doubt or fear. He told them to abstain from tending to the ordinances, including the Lord's Supper, and even taught that the ordinances were not means of grace. Motlher taught a doctrine of stillness, that individuals were to wait until they received true faith.⁸⁸ Motlher convinced many within the Fetter Lane Society that their faith was defective. Once again, the Moravian controversy ensued, and John Wesley was forced to clarify his theology and what he understood as true religion.

2.3.5 London: The Foundry

John Wesley was approached by acquaintances to distance himself from the Fetter Lane Society by purchasing the abandoned Royal Foundry. Wesley was loaned money to update the former cannon factory and prepared space for the Foundry Society. John and Charles Wesley were still participating in the Fetter Lane Society and took every opportunity to meet with Hutton and Molther to reconcile their theological differences. On July 16, 1740, Wesley saw that the breach was beyond repair. Four days later he publicly

⁸⁸ Howard A. Snyder, *The Radical Wesley: Patterns for Church Renewal* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 48.

read a statement outlining his theological disagreements, and then he and eighteen of the sixty persons present walked out, dissolving his leadership with the Fetter Lane Society. These disparate views of theology led Wesley to chart his own course in the creation of religious societies, classes and bands.

Throughout John Wesley's life, he organized societies in Oxford, Georgia, Bristol, and London under the auspice of the Anglican church. Religious societies were common within the Church of England during this time. John Wesley built upon this foundation and gave further structure and organization to discipleship. The resulting method of these societies would ultimately define the Methodist movement.

Wesley knew that groups could serve as a powerful tool in helping aide change and transformation, for he understood Methodist societies as "having the form and seeking the power of godliness."⁸⁹ What Wesley meant is that the group served as the form that provided the opportunity for the power of God's grace to work resulting in godliness within the individual and group.⁹⁰ Elie Halevy denotes the power of societal change and transformation when he credits Wesley and the Methodists in helping England avoid a violent revolution like that of France near the turn of the eighteenth century.⁹¹ Wesley advocated a prudential means of grace, through the use of groups, that he knew had the form and power to change and heal the hearts, minds, and souls of individuals.

2.4 John Wesley: Restoration, Healing, and Holiness

⁸⁹ Wesley, 1743, *The Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies*, ed. Rupert E. Davies, §2, *Works*, 9:69.

⁹⁰ Matthew A. Mobley, "Common Bound: The Small Groups of Methodism" (DMin diss., Duke Divinity School, 2016), 5.

⁹¹ Elie Halevy, *The Birth of Methodism in England*, trans. Bernard Semmel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

John Wesley's history is important in establishing the foundation upon which a Wesleyan Model of Recovery is built. Wesley was born into a world apathetic towards religion and its two-hundred-year history of chaos. Religion was not seen as something advantageous to help change or transform a life. John Wesley believed that the answer to a changed life was a religion of the heart. Therefore, he created systems that would instigate spiritual change. These systems served as a prudential means of grace that Wesley experienced firsthand and proves essential in recovery.

Change theorists know that forcing a person to change their behavior by threatening them or promising punishment does little to change a life.⁹² Changed behavior is a result of seeing and believing an alternative vision for one's life. This vision oftentimes emerges as people share their stories of how their story has changed from a life of bondage to a life of freedom. These testimonials are important in recovery settings. It is sharing in a kinship of suffering that people relate and garner hope. This hope can aid in the development of a concrete vision that if change can happen for one person then maybe change can happen for another as well.

John Wesley observed a different level of God-consciousness as he drew near to the Moravians on his journey to America. The Moravians presented Wesley with proof of a deep assurance in the abiding love of God. He witnessed a courageous faith when he thought his life was in peril on the Simmonds ship. The storms on the Atlantic mirrored Wesley's inner spiritual storms as he witnessed calmness among his brethren. Wesley observed proof that seeing is believing, and he witnessed a life and, therefore, garnered a vision of a holiness of heart that he longed to have.

⁹² Alan Deutschman, *Change or Die: The Three Keys to Change at Work and in Life* (New York: Harper, 2007).

John Wesley lived in an age of Enlightenment that was filled with intellectual skepticism about God, tradition, and belief. Testimonials of life-change became an evangelical tool that combated intellectualism with tangible proof that God was real and that a life had been changed. Wesley returned from Georgia feeling defeated and overwhelmed by his failure. He carried incredible resentment and anger towards those that sought to persecute him. On May 24, 1738, Wesley was experiencing a particularly dark day of depression and felt that he was damned to hell because he could not control the thoughts in his head.⁹³ It appears that Wesley may have suffered from some type of obsessive-compulsive behavioral condition or perfectionism. He had spent years attempting to control his faith and relationship with God. When Wesley hit bottom and found himself at his depth of despair, he surrendered. It was then and there at Aldersgate that he felt his heart “strangely warmed”. Following this transformational moment a series of changes followed that mirror a movement toward effective recovery.

In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.⁹⁴

After all of the years that Wesley worked to earn God’s love and be assured of his salvation, it was only when he surrendered that he became truly free. Wesley experienced a freedom that night in Aldersgate that no longer bound him to his past, but propelled him into the future unhindered, forgiven, and free. His relationship with God was transformed

⁹³ Glenn F. Chesnut, *Changed by Grace: V.C. Kitchen, the Oxford Group, and A.A.* (New York: iUniverse, 2006), 25.

⁹⁴ Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley*. Journal entries for Wednesday and Thursday, May 24 and 25, 1738.

from Wesley feeling that he had to earn God's approval to his realization that he had already been accepted, approved, and adopted as God's beloved son.

Before Aldersgate, Wesley found himself in the depths of despair. He recognized that his life was broken due to sin, and despite his best efforts he was unable to manage life nor his relationship with God.⁹⁵ Wesley earnestly believed in God's ability to restore his life.⁹⁶ Despite his resistance to going to Aldersgate, God's prevenient grace had gone before preparing the way, resulting in a life forever changed, restored, and renewed by the assurance of faith and love of Jesus Christ. Wesley had finally surrendered his life to God⁹⁷ and experienced the freedom of God's justifying grace. Once Wesley experienced his new-found freedom in Christ, he felt compelled to testify or to confess to the group about the change that had occurred.

I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner spitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart.⁹⁸

Wesley practiced a means of group testimonial that would become a major part of the evangelical movement. Not only did Wesley transparently examine his moral character,⁹⁹ but he also openly confessed his sin to himself, to God, and to those that he trusted that night.¹⁰⁰ Wesley also knew that he needed to deal with the anger and resentment towards the people in Savannah. He was unable to make direct amends to those culpable for his pain, but he was able to pray for them and ultimately extend them forgiveness, having

⁹⁵ Restoration Model of Recovery: *Recognize* that I am broken due to sin and am powerless to manage my own life.

⁹⁶ Restoration Model of Recovery: *Earnestly* believe in God and his ability to restore my life.

⁹⁷ Restoration Model of Recovery: *Surrender* my life and will to God.

⁹⁸ Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley*. Journal entries for Wednesday and Thursday, May 24 and 25, 1738.

⁹⁹ Restoration Model of Recovery: *Transparently* examine my moral character.

¹⁰⁰ Restoration Model of Recovery: *Openly Confess* my sin to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

himself been forgiven and set free.¹⁰¹ This method of examination, confession, restitution, and testimony would prove as an effective means of accountability used within classes and bands to aide in spiritual growth and change. Even as Wesley testifies to the change in his life, he admits the struggle and temptation that ensued.

But it was not long before the enemy suggested, "This cannot be faith, for where is thy joy? Then was I taught that "peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of your salvation but that, as to transports of joy-that usually attend the beginning of it especially in those who have mourned deeply--God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of his will.

After my return home, I was much buffeted with temptations, but cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes and he "sent me help from his holy place." And herein I found [in what] the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yes, fighting with all my might under the law as well as under grace. But I sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror.¹⁰²

Before Wesley's Aldersgate experience, he found himself confused about his sense of assurance in God when doubt or temptation remained. The Moravian leader, Peter Bohler, convinced Wesley that real faith leaves no room for fear or doubt.¹⁰³ In the aftermath of Aldersgate, Wesley discovered the erroneous nature of Bohler's theology and learned that when doubt and darkness arise, all one has to do is to turn to God. Daily self-examination and prayer,¹⁰⁴ along with orienting one's life to the ordinances of God,¹⁰⁵ allowed Wesley to partner with God in God's ultimate plan of restoration, healing, and holiness. Wesley's Aldersgate experience would serve as a catalyst of change and recovery within Wesley that would prove vital for the evangelical movement. The following chapter will explore Wesley's model of change theory and its effect on spiritual growth, healing, and recovery.

¹⁰¹ Restoration Model of Recovery: *Respond* to God's grace. Ask for God to remove my shortcomings and character defects. Trust in God's forgiveness by extending it to myself and others.

¹⁰² Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley*. Journal entries for Wednesday and Thursday, May 24 and 25, 1738.

¹⁰³ Heitzenrater, 85.

¹⁰⁴ Restoration Model of Recovery: *Inventory* my life through daily self-examination and prayer.

¹⁰⁵ Restoration Model of Recovery: *Orient my life to the ordinances of God- "Thy will be done."*

3. Religious Revival and Change Theory

John Wesley understood the spiritual life to be about movement. His desire was for everyone to not only flee the wrath to come, but also to move into a deeper relationship with God. He contends that this deepened relationship can be achieved through growth in grace and holiness. Wesley's model of discipleship was effective in bringing about change. Change theorists have taken an interest in Wesley's organizational models. They have studied what factors influence behavioral change and how precise goals are vital in determining group effectiveness. This chapter will explore the early influences of the Christian evangelical movement, Wesley's structure for intentional community, and its effects upon behavior change in light of modern change theory.

3.1 *The Evangelical Movement*

The evangelical movement emerged as a religious phenomenon in the 1730s as a result of spiritual revivals in Britain and New England. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) was an influential Congregationalist pastor in Massachusetts. He was elected as the first president of Princeton University and was considered a key theologian during this formative time in America.¹⁰⁶ John Wesley (1703-1791), a priest of the Church of England, served as Edwards' British contemporary. Both of these men were extremely educated. History recalls that "Edwards was the best native-born philosophical theologian in American history, and the only one to rank with the truly great names of European theological history."¹⁰⁷ Wesley was a scholar and fellow of Lincoln College. He was fluent

¹⁰⁶ Jonathan Edwards, *Basic Writings*, ed. Ola Elizabeth Winslow (New York: New American Library, 1966).

¹⁰⁷ Chesnut, 7.

in classical Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, the classical Arabic of the Koran, French, and Spanish.¹⁰⁸ Both Edwards and Wesley were conversant with the leading thinkers of their time. They were well aware of Newtonian physics and the writings of John Locke, whose writing on the ideas of associationism heavily influenced and lead to the development of modern psychology. Neither Edwards nor Wesley saw any conflict between science and religion. This awareness is critical to note, because the rise of modern science and the Enlightenment would significantly begin to assault traditional Christianity during the eighteenth century.

3.1.1 Enlightenment Attacks on Traditional Christianity

The Enlightenment was an intellectual movement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that emphasized individualism and reason over tradition and belief.¹⁰⁹ Significant thinkers and writers like Voltaire, Locke, Hume, Newton, Kant, and Rousseau used Enlightenment thinking to argue a deadly philosophical attack on belief in God. This movement was the beginning of considerable skepticism in Christian spirituality. As long as spirituality rooted itself in medieval thought, it could not defend itself against Locke's arguments. Edwards and Wesley used their brilliance to take their informed knowledge about Enlightenment philosophy and spark a revival. Locke believed that all real knowledge is based on personal experience. Edwards and Wesley both took advantage of this Enlightenment thought and preached a spirituality based on personal experience. The idea of "seeing is believing" became a prominent means of testifying to the transformative work of Jesus Christ. The Enlightenment philosophers found it difficult to argue with verifiable evidence of change happening in the lives of others. Both Edwards and Wesley taught of an experiential spirituality that testified to the power of change and

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Webster's Dictionary, "enlightenment."

transformation. The power of testimony and experience would later become a vital force in expanding the influence of Alcoholics Anonymous and the logical proof that "seeing is believing."¹¹⁰

3.1.2 Jonathan Edwards and Change Theory

When Jonathan Edwards served as pastor of the Congregationalist Church in Northampton, Massachusetts, he began to preach a new style of sermon that led to a religious revival in the area. In 1737 Edwards published a study *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*. This study was based on what he had done in his New England parish. Edwards was an excellent pastor and psychologist that longed to create lasting change in the hearts of his people. He believed that in order to create permanent change, the character of a person must also be changed. Edward's work *On the Freedom of the Will* observed that adults have pre-established character traits. If there was to be any lasting change, it was essential that the character traits of an individual must be changed as well. This change was not an easy task. Edwards observed that a person could sometimes be threatened to change by altering external conditions. Punishment might affect someone's behavior for a period, but it does not change underlying issues of character defects. Edwards notes explicitly in his work that "alcoholism as a behavior could not be eliminated by threats of external punishment, no matter how severe."¹¹¹

As Edwards studied the nature of change, he realized that only the true light of God could illuminate the darkness within individuals. His goal as a preacher was to partner with

¹¹⁰ Richmond Walker in his work, *Twenty-Four Hours a Day*, writes in his journal on April 25: "I don't believe that A.A. works best because I read it in a book or because I hear people say so, I believe it because I see people getting sober and staying sober. An actual demonstration is what convinces me. When I see the change in people, I can't help believing that A.A. works. We could listen to talks about A.A. all day and still not believe it, but when we see it work, we have to believe it. Seeing is believing."

¹¹¹ Jonathan Edwards, *On the Freedom of the Will* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 66, Kindle.

the Holy Spirit and allow God's light to shine into the heart and mind of each person. The attractiveness of God's light would then penetrate the heart of the person. An authentic conversion would result in character change.¹¹² In other words, the only way to eliminate deeply ingrained character defects was to replace them with good character attributes that produced good motives.¹¹³ Edwards realized that threatening punishment or directly attacking the bad motive did no good. Scolding an individual for bad behavior or threatening eternal punishment produced nothing that transformed the soul. The pull for immediate gratification was more significant than the threat of some delayed punishment. Edwards learned that if the character is to change, then there has to be something more significant that compels the individual. The preacher must present something more desirable that rivals one's old way of living. The nature of a changed lifestyle must become so attractive that people are compelled to change, for seeing is believing. Edwards documented the lasting effects of change in his *Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*. After a riveting revival that he preached, he noticed that some people who responded to the Gospel and proclaimed to be transformed did not exhibit lasting change. Edwards decided that their response was one of emotionalism. However, there were some that responded to the Gospel message, and their lives indicated lasting and significant transformation and change. The reason why this study is so significant is that it proved that a spiritual solution could alter character and result in objective behavioral changes. Edwards's research showed, in an age of Enlightenment, that the spiritual realm has objective reality and can instigate lasting change.¹¹⁴ What Edwards knew is that no

¹¹² Howard Arnold Walter, *Soul-Surgery: Some Thoughts on Incisive Personal Work*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), 87.

¹¹³ Chesnut, 14.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* 15.

preaching could change a person's character; only God's grace could reach into a person's heart and reveal a life of light and love. Edwards did believe, however, that preachers could partner with God's grace in what he calls the illuminationist theory.¹¹⁵ This idea is similar to the philosopher Plato and his parable of the cave. As long as people remain in darkness and within the cave, they can continue to live in denial and illusion. It is only when they emerge from the cave and experience the light that they see the limit of their thinking and determine the many ways that they have been enslaved and trapped in bondage. Wesley defines the souls of humanity in a similar vein:

So long as a man born blind continues so, he is scarce sensible of his want. Much less, could we suppose a place where all were born without sight, would they be sensible of the want of it? In like manner, so long as men [sic] remain in their natural blindness of understanding they are not sensible of their spiritual wants.¹¹⁶

3.2 John Wesley's Model of Discipleship

John Wesley and the history of Methodism was significantly affected by the influence of Jonathan Edwards and his significant work on change theory defined throughout the *Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*. On October 10, 1738, Wesley found encouragement after reading Edward's narrative on conversions and revival in New England.¹¹⁷ He now had another witness to the credible movement of God's Spirit and its affect upon producing lasting change and transformation. Wesley, like Edwards, would make a concerted effort to prevent a conversion based upon emotionalism alone. Wesley combated the threat of conversion by emotionalism alone by creating societies,

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 16.

¹¹⁶ John Wesley, "Original Sin", 329.

¹¹⁷ Heitzenrater, 94.

classes, and bands. Wesley's structure for discipleship helped create intentional community to support and encourage lasting change.

3.2.1 Religious Societies, Bands, and Rules

Religious societies first emerged during the Restoration period in England. Henry VIII had destroyed all the monasteries, and there was no place designated for study, devotion, and discipline among people pursuing holiness of the heart. Anthony Horneck started religious societies in the 1670s as a response to politicized Puritanism.¹¹⁸ The decay of morality and the fear of religious fanaticism compelled Horneck and other Pietists to create small groups that focused on moralism and devotionalism.¹¹⁹ The religious societies were always under the leadership of the Church of England and became a formidable means of Christian piety. In the early eighteenth century, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge became a centralized organization under the auspices of religious societies. The societies' purpose was a singular desire to pursue holiness of heart. Strict duties and guidelines were given to advance spiritual holiness, and an admonishment or reprimand was permitted of any member found walking disorderly and profaning the faith.¹²⁰ Wesley would draw upon these early traditions in Oxford as he began his first small religious society known as the Holy Club.

Throughout Wesley's life, he gleaned wisdom from various people along his journey of faith. John Clayton joined the Holy Club while in Oxford and made a significant contribution to the future of Methodism when he introduced Wesley to subsidiary

¹¹⁸ Kevin Watson, *Pursuing Social Holiness: The Band Meeting in Wesley's Thought and Popular Methodist Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 17-20.

¹¹⁹ Heitzenrater, 22.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

groups.¹²¹ This would allow the holiness movement to expand and reach new people as additional religious societies formed. Wesley saw the basis of this structure expanded when he visited Germany and observed the Moravian organization at Herrnhut. Herrnhut was divided into neighborhood divisions called choirs. The divisions resulted in eleven geographical classes. Ten of the classes were defined by gender and age. Another depth of spiritual nurture at Herrnhut entailed participation in bands. Herrnhut had ninety different bands that met two to three times a week to confess their sins to one another and to pray for each other (James 5:16).¹²² Wesley was observing a structure that would ultimately influence his organization for the Methodist movement and would result in spiritual nurture and change.

Before Wesley had departed for Germany, he met with Bohler and Hutton to form the Fetter Lane Society. The society was established based on two rules:

1. That they will meet together once in a week to confess their faults one to another and pray for one another that they may be healed (James 5:16);
2. That any others, or whose sincerity they are well assured, any, if they desire it, meet with them for that purpose.¹²³

Religious societies and bands established their own set of rules. Wesley was also known to update the Fetter Lane Society rules from time to time and wrote the “Rules of the Band Societies” on December 25, 1739.¹²⁴ These became known as the “General Rules” and served as a structure from which participants would commit to examine their inward and outward holiness and be held accountable: “Do no harm, do good, and attend to the ordinances of God.”¹²⁵

¹²¹ Ibid., 50.

¹²² Ibid., 92-93.

¹²³ Watson, 197.

¹²⁴ Heitzenrater, 99.

¹²⁵ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, §1.8, *Works* 9:257.

Wesley was adamant that where there was a religious class, there also should be bands for more intimate gatherings to allow individualized spiritual nurture and support. Wesley's organization was tested while in Bristol. There were so many people coming to hear the Word of God through field preaching that Wesley always encouraged people to attend a band for spiritual support. Wesley's bands were different from the Moravians in that he allowed questioning and doubt. Wesley's bands formed to nurture, offer accountability, confession, and growth in grace as individuals gathered to fellowship with one another. These gatherings were not for the spiritually elite but rather for the average person seeking to grow in holiness. On May 21, 1741, Wesley noted in his journal the formation of select bands.¹²⁶ These were for individuals that had been justified, forgiven of their sins, and had exemplified a partnership with God in the process of sanctification. The problem was that there were no new bands for people to join to receive encouragement and guidance.

John Wesley was facing massive debt in assuming financial responsibility for The New Room in Bristol and the newfound expenses of the Foundry in London. In February 1742, Wesley gathered leaders from Bristol to discuss how to alleviate the substantial debt in Bristol. Captain Foy suggested that they divide the society into classes. Each class would be comprised of twelve people, based on their neighborhood or geographic area. Each person was to give a penny a week, and the leader was to assume the responsibility for the payment should the participant be unable to pay. Classes originated out of a need to provide debt relief in Bristol. Captain Foy's suggestion of neighborhood divisions resembled the same structure that Wesley had observed in Germany at Herrnhut years before. Wesley received reports that as class leaders went to various homes to collect the

¹²⁶ Ibid., 129.

weekly offering, the leaders discovered marital discord, drunkenness, domestic disputes, and other activities that were not in conjunction with the pursuit of holiness. This follow-up became another way for Wesley to gather with his trusted class leaders and maintain a pulse on the growing spiritual movement while also offering spiritual oversight. Shortly after that, instead of going to eleven individual homes each week, members were expected to gather together with their appointed leader, to pay their one cent, and to give an account as to the condition of their souls. Whereas once these meetings were voluntary like in Oxford or the Fetter Lane Society, in 1742, Wesley decided that the class meetings would become compulsory. Wesley's desire was for every soul under his care to participate in a group where they could intentionally "flee the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins."¹²⁷

John Wesley's model for spiritual growth spread like wildfire. His small group format served as an incubator providing conditions for change and spiritual growth to prevail. Seven years after Wesley's death, Methodist society members exceeded 100,000.¹²⁸ There were another 85,000 members in England and Wales, and the burgeoning movement grew by the end of the eighteenth century to more than nine million Methodists.¹²⁹ Wesley's prescriptive process for making disciples proved useful in affecting change and transformation. The specifics are worth exploring in further detail in light of modern change theory and its influence in creating a Wesleyan model of recovery.

John Wesley believed that intimate settings that allowed honest space for confession, accountability, support, and encouragement would aid in the process of spiritual growth, maturity, and lasting change. Therefore, he created a series of small groups that

¹²⁷ Wesley, *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, §1.8, *Works* 9:257.

¹²⁸ Snyder, 64.

¹²⁹ Watson, 131.

increased in commitment and discipline as one matured spiritually. These small groups consisted of class meetings, band meetings, trial meetings, penitent bands, and select society. Larger gatherings were designed for the various classes to come together to celebrate society meetings, covenant services, and quarterly love feasts.¹³⁰ Wesley went so far as requiring tickets to be issued at each class and band meeting as a means of accountability and examination. These tickets were presented to gain entrance at each quarterly large group gathering. In order to understand the various dimensions and requirements of each group, each group must be broken down to consider its implications for effective recovery.

3.2.2 Class Meetings

Class meetings consisted of men and women that were living in the same geographic area. These gatherings today would be known as neighborhood groups or house churches. Any person that decided to flee from the wrath to come could participate in a class meeting led by the appointed leader. The class meeting became the first entry point to live in intentional formational community. These classes became the primary means of evangelism within the Methodist movement,¹³¹ and from these classes the larger society gathering emerged. In other words, the societies were the sum total of all of the various classes and bands coming together. Classes consisted of seven to twelve people that gathered to adhere to the General Rules and support one another in their pursuit of holiness. Both men and women attended the same class, and the groups consisted of men

¹³⁰ Snyder, 70.

¹³¹ William B. Lewis, "The Conduct and Nature of the Methodist Class Meeting," ed. Samuel Emerick, *Spiritual Renewal for Methodism: A Discussion of the Early Methodist Class Meeting and the Values Inherent in Personal Groups Today* (Nashville: Beacon Hill Press, 1971), 65.

and women leaders. The weekly class meetings focused on three things. First, people were held accountable to the General Rules. Second, each participant was encouraged to give money for relief efforts to help the poor. Third, each person was expected to honestly respond to the question, “How is it with your soul?”¹³² Members would speak of their experience in following Christ, and God would use their testimony to encourage others.¹³³ Class members intentionally allowed other pilgrims to watch over them in love.¹³⁴ Participants believed that the Christian life is a journey and that for one to grow in grace and sanctification, one’s life requires the support of others to persevere from the travails of the world.

3.2.3 Trial and Penitent Bands

Wesley created trial bands as a probationary requirement for newcomers before they entered officially into class membership. Wesley also formed penitent bands for rehabilitative purposes. The penitent bands were for individuals who had been found walking disorderly, had succumbed to the nature of sin, and wished to be nurtured and restored to the community of faith. The penitent bands were separated from the rest of the communities where hymns, prayers, and exhortations were adapted to meet their specific needs. The goal was healing of body, mind, heart, and soul along with restoration to the community at large.¹³⁵

¹³² Kevin M. Watson, *The Class Meeting: Reclaiming a Forgotten (and Essential) Small Group Experience* (Kentucky: Seedbed, 2014), 25.

¹³³ A similar method will be used in recovery groups to promote change and transformation.

¹³⁴ John Wesley, *The Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies*, §2, Works 9:69.

¹³⁵ Mobley, 11.

3.2.4 Bands

Bands were for individuals progressing in their salvation. Whereas classes were open to all, bands were restricted for those that had experienced justification and remission of sins. Each band was divided in the Moravian model according to age, sex, and marital status. The bands were smaller and averaged between five and ten persons.¹³⁶ A new element of confession was introduced into the bands and proved to be a useful means of spiritual growth. Bands were led by rotating leaders chosen from the members, and the facilitator was expected to provide the first example of confession. The General Rules were condensed for the bands, and on Christmas Day, 1739, Wesley established the following rules for bands:

- The design of our meeting is to obey that command of God, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another that ye may be healed." To this end we intend:
1. To meet once a week, at the least.
 2. To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason.
 3. To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour with singing or prayer.
 4. To speak, each of us in order, freely and plainly the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting.
 5. To end every meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each person present.
 6. To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest in order as many and as searching questions as may be concerning their state, sins and temptations.¹³⁷

Questions asked each week included:

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?
2. What temptations have you met with?
3. How [were] you delivered?
4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Snyder, 71.

¹³⁷ Wesley, "Rules of the Band-Societies," *Works*, 9:77.

¹³⁸ Wesley, "Rules of the Band-Societies," *Works*, 9:78.

3.2.5 Select Society

Wesley provided yet another depth of discipleship by creating the Select Society for brethren who “experienced entire sanctification or were earnestly seeking after it.”¹³⁹ These individuals were intentionally seeking inward and outward holiness. The select societies did not have a designated leader, for all participants were seen as a community of equals. The select societies were smaller than both the classes and bands. Again, Wesley specified three rules for the Select Societies, with the first maintaining absolute confidentiality.¹⁴⁰ Historians believed that John Wesley created the select society so that he too could gather with trusted souls with whom he might “unbosom his heart and receive spiritual support.”¹⁴¹ Wesley created a progressive model of discipleship that promoted spiritual change and lasting transformation. He believed that the various groups were essential to one’s salvation and sanctification. Wesley writes:

Never omit meeting your Class or Band; never absent yourself from any public meeting. These are the very sinews of our Society; and whatever weakens, or tends to weaken, our regard for these, or our exactness in attending them, strikes at the very root of our community.¹⁴²

Wesley maintained a commitment to the very root of community because he knew that transformation and change occur as one pursues holiness of heart in relationship with others.

3.3 Change Theory

The middle of the twentieth century sparked an interest in group dynamics and their influence upon behavior and change. Kurt Lewin is considered the pioneer of group

¹³⁹ Richard B. Steele, ed., *Heart Religion in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001), 43.

¹⁴⁰ Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists”, §VIII.3, *Works* 9:270.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

studies and behavior. He was the first to define a group by its commonality of purpose or shared goal. Group members were seen as socially interdependent, influencing the progress of every other member of the group.¹⁴³ Morton Deutsch expanded upon Lewin's idea and studied the cooperative versus competitive functioning of a group. He discovered that groups that work together towards a common and shared goal share in what he calls, "promotive interdependence."¹⁴⁴ The interdependence of the group promotes change and transformation as individual members reach their goals and encourage others that they too can do the same. Deutsch's work proves that cooperative groups supersede competitive groups at least where lasting behavioral change is observed. David and Roger Johnson also discovered the implications of cooperative learning and the necessary component of accountability among group members.

"Promotive interdependence" is formed fundamentally by a group identifying a common objective. Deutsch states: "A psychological group exists (has unity) to the extent that the individuals composing it perceive themselves as pursuing promotively interdependent goals."¹⁴⁵ The goals are created due to an existing tension within the individual or group, and a resolution is made associated with a desired outcome. The clarity of the shared goal has proven to motivate group members with a greater earnestness to accomplish the goal for the sake of the group more than the effort given for individual accomplishment. Lewin's study shows that the group goals take precedence over the individual goals due, in part, to the social dynamics of joy and celebration shared together in

¹⁴³ David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, "Cooperative Learning and Social Interdependence Theory," *Theory and Research on Small Groups*, ed. R. Scott Tindale (New York: Plenum Press, 1998) ix.

¹⁴⁴ Morton Deutsch, "Cooperation and Conflict Resolution: Implications for Consulting Psychology," *Consulting Psychology* 53, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 77.

¹⁴⁵ Morton Deutsch, "A Theory of Cooperation and Competition," *Human Relations* 136, no. 3 (July 1949): 136.

relieving the existing tension that led to the establishment of the goal.¹⁴⁶ When dissonance occurs within the cooperative group, accountability ensues in order to protect the sanctity of the overall goal. Often the group accountability and encouragement help align the wayfaring pilgrim with a renewed focus on the target and desired outcome. Ground rules become instrumental in allowing the group to work within established boundaries. These boundaries create an expectation within group members to commit how they are responsible for promoting the overall goal of the group. Wesley's groups epitomized these notions of group dynamics as they came together with a singular focus to "flee the wrath to come" and to pursue holiness of heart. Recovery groups also promote the cooperative interaction to help encourage a change of destructive behavior within the individual.

As was mentioned earlier, accountability is essential to maintaining movement within the group. Before group accountability can occur, openness needs to exist within the individual and group. The "promotive" group, based upon cooperative interdependence and clear goals and guidelines, creates an environment for cohesion to exist. Cohesion encourages group honesty and vulnerability. These two components are essential in recovery programs that unite one another based on a common weakness.¹⁴⁷ The openness, nurture, and support exist in conjunction with accountable goals and result in behavior change.

In Alan Deutschman's work, *Change or Die*, he identifies three misconceptions for instigating change. He calls them the three F's: facts, fear, and force.¹⁴⁸ A series of studies were done involving heart patients, drug-addicted criminals, and disgruntled autoworkers. In all three cases, facts were presented indicating they needed to change, or they would die,

¹⁴⁶ Kurt Lewin, "The Dynamics of Group Action," *Educational Leadership* 1 (January 1944): 198.

¹⁴⁷ Charles E. Thompson and William P. Kolb, "Group Psychotherapy in Association with Alcoholics Anonymous," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 110, no. 1. (July 1953): 29-32.

¹⁴⁸ Deutschman, 13.

end up in prison, or be dismissed from their employment. In each case the idea was to present facts and compel the rational side of the brain to make lasting change. The idea that “knowledge is power” assumes that people will act in their own self-interest if they are simply given the facts. Nine out of ten heart patients did not change their behavior when they were informed by their cardiologist what was required to extend their life. Data shows that facts do not create lasting change.¹⁴⁹

When facts fail to serve as a catalyst for change, people frequently resort to scare tactics. Fear is used as a means to motivate change. Both ex-convicts and drug addicts were warned that their continued behavior would result in hard jail time or even death, and yet their behavior remained unchanged. When facts and fear do not motivate change, a final measure is to use force as a means to coerce individuals. Studies show that using fear and force to change behavior actually has an adverse effect to the one desired.¹⁵⁰ Wesley did not know about twenty-first-century change theory when he created his groups for spiritual growth. God's grace, combined with Wesley's organizational acumen, Societies, Classes, and Bands provided a safe place for individuals to practice the three keys to change: “relate, reframe, and repeat.”¹⁵¹

3.3.1 Relate

John Wesley's Societies, Classes, and Bands were built upon the foundational element of change that “you form a new, emotional relationship with a person or community that inspires and sustains hope.”¹⁵² If a person is facing what appears to be a

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 3-10.

¹⁵⁰ “In the decade leading up to the 2002 Justice Department study, the states built more prisons and judges imposed longer sentences. The result? The rearrest rate actually went up by five percentage points, from 62.5 percent to 67.5 percent.” Deutschman, 13.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁵² Ibid.

hopeless situation, then another person that has experienced and emerged from similar hopelessness can actually restore hope to the person in need. This idea of common suffering becomes a formidable witness to the change and transformation that can take place. Not only do persons become living testimonies to a changed life, but they also persuade others that change can occur and that hopelessness, defeat, and despair do not have the last word. The first component of change is to relate to a person or a community of persons that inspire hope.

3.3.2 Reframe

The new relationships that exist also help people learn about aspects of their life along with alternative options for living. Before new relationships are formed any other worldview seems so foreign that changes are rarely if ever made. The new relationships offer new ways to think and act in the situation at hand. This new response occurs as a person's conceptual framework or ideology begins to change. The simple process of reframing one's life by means of intentional relationships creates an environment for accountability and change to take place.

3.3.3 Repeat

Old habits are known to die hard unless they are replaced by new (healthy) habits. Not only does the new relationship help reframe a new worldview of possibility, but it also helps a person learn new practices that will help sustain a lifetime of change. There is a tremendous amount of repetition that must take place before an action becomes automatic. Therefore, a person that can teach, equip, encourage, and even admonish becomes essential in helping new patterns of behavior emerge. The journey of change is never an isolated incident. Change occurs through a series of small decisions and actions. These are often

based upon a new worldview that has been framed by a new relationship. Change is made lasting by building on new and repeatable behaviors.

When Wesley structured his Societies, Classes, and Bands, each fostered the importance of community. These intentional relationships inspired hope within participants that a changed life could occur and that spiritual maturity could ensue through the daily practice of spiritual disciplines. Each of Wesley's formational communities fostered an expectation to learn and practice new habits while being held accountable, resulting in lasting behavior change. Edwards' initial exploration of spiritual change influenced Wesley to codify a system that would aid in spiritual transformation. Modern change theory solidifies Wesley's premise and offers an essential model for recovery and restoration. Wesley's model for change and transformation can be traced through history as its methods influence the Oxford Groups and the development of Alcoholics Anonymous. The next chapter will explore these historical connections and how their model of change continues to transform lives seeking recovery.

4. Twentieth Century: Transformed by Grace

The formation of Alcoholics Anonymous served as the most significant new spiritual movement in the twentieth century.¹⁵³ What many people do not realize is that many of Alcoholics Anonymous' practices originated with the Holiness movement that began with Methodism. Just as John Wesley navigated a changing culture in the nineteenth century that wrestled with issues of Enlightenment, tradition, and belief, Alcoholics Anonymous maneuvered the shifting tides of religion in the twentieth century and did so with a prowess better than that of many spiritual groups of that period.¹⁵⁴ The advances in twentieth century biology, physics, and psychology informed the world about the connection between body, mind, and spirit. Alcoholics Anonymous emerged within a new scientific era, and old practices resurfaced from Wesley's nineteenth century, giving credence once again to scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

4.1 Holiness and the Second Great Awakening

The Holiness movement, with its belief that the character of an individual could be ultimately and permanently changed served as a bridge between the evangelical theology of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Holiness movement struggled, as did Wesley, with differentiating the concept of infused righteousness from that of imputed righteousness. The Lutheran theology understood justification and sanctification to be an event that happened simultaneously, resulting in an assurance of salvation and a full expression of the fruits of the Spirit. Therefore, the theology of infused righteousness asserts that when a person is justified, that person is entirely free from sin. Wesley

¹⁵³ Chesnut, 76.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

separated justification and sanctification, believing that an imputed righteousness occurred at the time of justification, resulting in the forgiveness of sins. The reason why these theological nuances are so important in understanding recovery is that infused righteousness believes that one is free from sin. If a person is free from sin, then he/she should no longer struggle with sinful thoughts, desires, and practices. Wesley knew that he was forgiven of his sin even though he still struggled daily with a propensity to sin. It is very natural for persons in recovery to fondly remember and even crave past addictions. A theology of infused righteousness leaves no room for struggle once one is saved. In fact, the theological premise of infused righteousness versus imputed righteousness was so important to Wesley that it served as one of the primary reasons why Wesley went separate ways from Hutton and Molther and their shared ministry at the Fetter Lane Society.¹⁵⁵

The Holiness movement adhered to the earlier beliefs of Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley that lasting change occurs as a result of behavior modification. Specifically, there was an expectation that one's morality would be shaped by upholding a set of behavioral rules. Between 1790-1840, a new movement spread in American Methodism known as the Second Great Awakening. This movement emphasized holiness and sanctification or Christian perfection and spurred a great number of converts through revivals and camp meetings. The Holiness movement spread to England where Robert Pearsall Smith and his wife Hannah Whitall Smith were converted at a camp meeting where she learned "secrets" to devoting one's life to God and experiencing complete transformation of the soul. This experience served as a catalyst to the Smith's forming the Keswick-Holiness revival.

¹⁵⁵ Howard A. Snyder, 48.

4.2 Frank Buchman

Frank Buchman was born in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, on June 4, 1878. His mother was a devout Lutheran, and his father was a liquor distributor. These two influences within Buchman's formative life provided a foundation for Buchman to examine the destructive nature of alcohol abuse in light of the gospel message of Jesus Christ. In 1902 Buchman was ordained as a Lutheran minister and served as a pastor to a congregation in Overbrook, Pennsylvania. Within three short years, Buchman built a vibrant church with thriving outreach ministries, including a hospice house. Buchman had conflict over finances with the Chairman of the Board of Hospice, and ultimately Buchman resigned his position as pastor.¹⁵⁶ Buchman was filled with resentment and animosity at the way he was treated by the Board. He left in a depressed state and decided to travel Europe for months, which ultimately led him to an annual evangelical Christian gathering known as the Keswick Convention in England in 1908.

At the Keswick Convention, in the middle of a sermon, Buchman had an experience similar to Wesley's at Aldersgate:

I thought of those six men back in Philadelphia who I thought had failed me. They probably had, but I got so mixed in the wrong that I was the seventh wrong man . . . I can tell you I sat there and realized how my sin, my pride, my selfishness and my ill-will had eclipsed me from God in Christ. I was the center of my own life. That big "I" had to be crossed out. I saw my resentments against those men standing out like tombstones in my heart. I asked God to change me, and He told me to put things right with them. It produced in me a vibrant feeling, as though a strong current of life had suddenly been poured into me, and afterwards a dazed sense of great spiritual shaking up.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Bill Pittman, *The Roots of Alcoholics Anonymous* (Hazelden, MN: Pittman Archives Press, 1988), 114.

¹⁵⁷ Garth Lean, *Frank Buchman: A Life* (Great Britain: Garth Lean Constable and Co.,1985) 30-31.

Following Buchman's conviction, he wrote each of the men that offended him in Pennsylvania a letter of apology. The spiritual practice of self-examination, taking moral inventory, confession, and making restitution would later become prominent practices within Alcoholics Anonymous. Buchman's experience at Keswick introduced him to a pietistic understanding of a holiness of the heart. Buchman, once bound by dogmas and correct doctrine, now found himself moved by an experiential transformative relationship with God. He later returned to America as a changed man that would ultimately be used by God to help transform the lives of many.

Upon returning to America, Buchman was hired as Secretary at Penn State College YMCA. He was dealing with what he defined a godless university¹⁵⁸ and met great resistance to students that preferred hazing and drunkenness over Buchman's Christian rules and rigidity. Despite constant ridicule, Buchman did reach some students and, in time, doubled membership. Even though more students were studying the Bible, Buchman saw little change in alcohol consumption.¹⁵⁹ It was at Penn State that Buchman did discover the power of one-on-one relationship. His first convert was "Pop" Golden who gave up liquor after coming to know Christ. Other notable figures also found Jesus through Buchman's methods, and his influence spread. Suddenly Buchman, like Wesley, found himself on a college campus, creating a structure and method to reach new people for Christ.

Until this time, the early eighteenth century evangelical method was to preach to thousands of people at a time by holding revivals. Thousands of people would hear the gospel proclaimed and respond by surrendering their lives to God. The Second Great Awakening moved throughout America during the nineteenth century, and evangelical

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 33.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 35.

efforts found that camp meetings, auditoriums, open air gatherings, and schoolhouses provided the right venue to reach the masses for Christ. Like the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century experienced mass conversions, but times were changing, and in order to be faithful to reaching people for Christ, new methods would be required. Henry Drummond (1851-1897), an evangelical preacher from Scotland, stated in 1873 that the days of revivals were coming to an end, and “we need to get back to doing evangelism on individuals, just as they did in first century Christianity. Jesus may have preached sermons to large numbers of people on many occasions, but he collected his true disciples one by one.”¹⁶⁰ Buchman experienced the tension by the changing times and not only found success in one-on-one discipleship, but would have this method of evangelism confirmed as he travelled to foreign countries as a missionary.

In 1915 Buchman travelled to China and India hoping to convert distinguished men and women that could influence other lives for Christ in a significant way. His goal was to slowly transform the country one life at a time. While overseas, Buchman met some influential men that helped shape his own spiritual development. Their contribution to Buchman’s life would inadvertently help shape the efforts of The Oxford Group and then Alcoholics Anonymous.

While in China, Buchman spent three months travelling with H.A. Walter, a Protestant missionary who believed that the only way to effectively produce soul change within a person was through individual discipleship. Walter wrote a book *Soul-Surgery: Some Thoughts on Incisive Personal Work*. In his book, he outlines the 5 C’s for effective

¹⁶⁰ Howard Arnold Walter, *Soul Surgery: Some Thoughts on Incisive Personal Work*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932; 1 ed. Pub. 1919), 9-10.

evangelism: “Confidence, Confession, Conviction, Conversion, and Conservation.”¹⁶¹ The goal is to establish confidence within an individual by confessing or sharing one’s own moral shortcomings and how God effectively removed them. This transparency creates intimacy and fellowship between the two people. A level of confidence must also be established beyond a superficial intimacy so that the person is believed to be trusted to hold another’s sin in confidence. An effort is then made for the other person to confess his/her own failures and become convicted that he/she is helpless to overcome shortcomings without the help of God. This confession ultimately leads to a conversion and a changed heart where concerted efforts are made in following weeks to conserve the work that God has done and to help people refrain from returning to their old ways. Buchman took the practices learned from his missionary travels and implemented them into evangelical efforts to reach students at Cambridge University, Oxford University, and elite men and women who were uniquely positioned to influence others through personal evangelism.

Before returning to the University, Buchman experienced conflict among his fellow missionaries while he was overseas. He returned to America feeling like his missionary efforts had been a failure. Both he and Wesley experienced a dark night of the soul upon returning from their missionary work, and God used their broken spirits to reveal the power of God’s truth upon both of their lives. Buchman reflected upon his missionary journey, and he remarked, “one day that it had only been in China that (he had learned) the confession of one’s own shortcomings, privately or publicly, was an important way to help others.”¹⁶² This discovery would later become a foundational component of Alcoholics Anonymous.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 101-106.

¹⁶² Lean, 63.

A changing culture that demanded new methods of reaching people for Christ, a perceived missionary failure, and formative spiritual friendships would ultimately serve as a catalyst for the development of the Oxford Group. The Oxford Group would adopt Buchman's methods for personal evangelism and learn that the only way to connect with people is through one's own personal experience. Buchman served to leverage relationships in such a way that lives were changed and moral character was remade. The Oxford Group was an essential vehicle that God used through Buchman to transform lives throughout the world one person at a time.

4.3 The Oxford Group

The Oxford Group first originated on the campus of Oxford University. Frank Buchman was invited to join a group of students while they engaged in philosophic combat. For hours Buchman listened to the debate and remained silent. Buchman was asked his opinion and in minutes the mood of the room changed. Instead of talking philosophy, Buchman gave witness to the power of change in his own life. He also made a compelling case that similar change, real change, was available to everyone. Buchman followed up his initial conversation to interested students by inviting them to a house party in Cambridge.

House parties were comprised of the upper echelon of society. Frank Buchman believed that if he could reach the elite with the message of Christ, then they could have considerable influence upon others. It was stated by one of Buchman's close associates that Buchman was "dazzled by the elegance and wealth"¹⁶³ of the social elite. House parties consisted of mixed guests, those that had experienced life change through Jesus, and those that were invited to explore the possibility of a life with Christ. A house party could easily

¹⁶³ Ibid., 11.

include foreign diplomats, members of Parliament, rectors, students, actresses, bankers, military generals, doctors¹⁶⁴, and whomever else God might encourage through the power of influence and association to draw people into a surrendered relationship with God. Rumor had spread that there was a new religion known as “Buchmanism,” whose main attraction was the confession of sins by self-proclaimed sinners.¹⁶⁵ These confessions were often referred to as “Sharing” and involved both the confession of sins and the witness of God’s deliverance from a life of past bondage.

4.3.1 Sharing: Confession and Witness

Confession was always directed towards God and to any person, if led by the Holy Spirit, with the goal being the release from guilt and shame. Confession has always been an essential practice of growth, development, and sanctification. From the biblical witness of St. James,¹⁶⁶ to the practice of the Ephesus community under the apostle Paul’s leadership, to John Wesley’s Holy Club and love feasts, confession was an integral part to growth in holiness. The ultimate aim was a right relationship with God. For one to grasp the power of confession and the forgiveness of sins that God so freely gives, sharing became a necessity for Oxford Groupers to appropriate God’s unconditional love and justifying grace. What the groupers also learned through the process of transparent confession was the depth of mutual fellowship and accountability. Frank Buchman discovered that when the elements of confession, accountability, and witness are combined, lives are changed.

The second element of sharing involved the witness of lives that had been changed by God’s grace. When people found themselves delivered and set free from a life of

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 52.

¹⁶⁵ Kitchen, 50.

¹⁶⁶ James 5:16, NRSV.

bondage, they could not help but want to share the freedom found in Christ with others. All Oxford Groupers believed that their purpose was to save some not through argument, but rather attesting to their experience of change. Once again, this method attests to Paul's efforts in founding the church when he routinely started with his own story of change.¹⁶⁷ What Paul discovered, as well as the pagans of Frank Buchman's time, is that when a Christian frankly admits and confesses sins, then pagans believe. When the church was struggling with converts, the Oxford Group consistently witnessed lives being changed and transformed. The Oxford Group held no membership, was interdenominational in nature, and did not see themselves as a new movement but rather a continuation of the early church fellowship. The Oxford Group was not a church but desired for spiritual growth to occur among ecclesial communities as Groupers returned to their home churches with changed lives.

The idea of sharing, including both confession and witness, also required restitution to be made to others harmed by one's past sins. It was simply not enough to confess, but just as Buchman felt compelled to make amends and write each of his Pennsylvania colleagues a letter of apology, restitution became an essential element of healing and witness. Groupers learned that making amends was an essential act in true freedom. Sin led to a life that spun out of control. By making amends, individuals were able to take personal responsibility for their behavior, and the practice gave them an element of control in claiming a future that was no longer bound by their past. The power of confession and restitution would later be codified into Alcoholics Anonymous. Step five encourages people to admit their wrongs to another person, and step nine encourages them to make amends to

¹⁶⁷ 1 Timothy 1:15, NRSV.

those harmed whenever possible. Persons ultimately learned that the only way one could address such issues of sin and shame was to ultimately surrender their life to God. The notion was that as they surrender their life to God, they would then receive a power to resist self-destructive behavior. This power ultimately came from having a relationship with God.

The goal of the Oxford Group was to produce real, lasting character change. The Oxford Group's spiritual methods were meant to help replace character defects with positive traits. A person exhibiting completely changed behavior determined the measure of effectiveness within the Oxford Group. The radical change of behavior was the result of partnering with God to transform a life from the inside out. Change was not imposed by external authority figures, but rather became an internal journey that resulted in change for a lifetime. Alcoholics Anonymous would adopt the Oxford Group's methods for change and create a method that would help individuals address their dis-eased state.

4.4 Bill Wilson and the Birth of Alcoholics Anonymous

Bill Wilson, the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, is considered one of the most important persons in the twentieth century. Bill W. was a self-proclaimed alcoholic in recovery who testified to being a rotten drunk who was saved by divine grace, and was gifted to bring the world sobriety through Alcoholics Anonymous.¹⁶⁸ The foundation of A.A. traces its roots to the Oxford Group practices. Had it not been for John Wesley's Holy Club, along with the evangelical holiness movement and the Oxford Group's efforts, the world might never know Bill W. and the transformative practices of Alcoholics Anonymous.

¹⁶⁸ *Pass It On: The story of Bill Wilson and how the A.A. message reached the world.* Alcoholics New York, New York: Anonymous World Services. 1984.

Bill Wilson experienced a traumatic upbringing when his father and mother divorced, and both left him at a young age. Eventually, his maternal grandparents adopted him. Bill attests to being filled with shame as a child of divorce in the early 1930s. He remembers neighbors gossiping about him and his situation. The stigma, combined with the awkwardness of teenage years, created in Bill an obsession and perhaps even a neurosis to win out and overcome any handicaps that others perceived him to have. By the end of his high school career, he sat first chair as a violinist in the orchestra, was captain of the football team, and served as the president of the student body. He also experienced a devastating heartbreak when his high school love, Bertha, died unexpectedly in surgery. Bill attests that it took years for him to get over the sudden loss of his first love. In 1915 Bill married Lois Burnham, a daughter of a Brooklyn physician. Bill was a country boy and felt that he could never rise to Lois's family's level of sophistication. Bill would spend a lifetime seeking status and approval from the upper echelon of society. A desire to avoid his continued awkwardness, combined with the pressure to fit in, led Bill to have his first drink. Little did he know that the drink that he referred to as "the elixir of the gods"¹⁶⁹ would become a god to him and cause him to lose almost everything that he loved.

After the war, Bill moved to New York in 1925, where he connected with people in the world of finance. He had a knack for studying financials and how to analyze large amounts of information that he would distill down into trends that he would send back to Wall Street. This knack resulted in financial gain. His success as a Wall Street securities analyst ended abruptly when he lost everything in the stock market crash on October 29, 1929. Bill turned to the bottle for relief from his failure, disappointment, and misery. By

¹⁶⁹ *Bill W: A Documentary about Bill Wilson, the Co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous*, directed by Dan Carracino and Kevin Hanlon. Page 124 Productions, May 18, 2012.

1934 he was deep in his “dis”-eased state as an alcoholic and routinely would steal grocery money from his wife’s purse and even panhandle to feed his addiction. Bill found himself hospitalized several times and would commit to never drink again, only to find himself returning to the bottle for relief.

One November day Bill received a call from one of his old drinking buddies, Ebby Thatcher. Bill and Ebby had not seen each other for years, and Bill anticipated them spending time catching up over the bottle like old times. Ebby quickly announced that he was not drinking. He then informed Bill that he had found religion after having a transcendent experience. Ebby had been visited in jail, after he had been incarcerated due to his drunkenness, by members of a group known as the Oxford Group. Ebby testified that he had yielded his life to God and that six months ago he had been released from his desire to drink. Ebby spent the remainder of their time sharing with Bill the Oxford Group message and the need to adhere to a Higher Power by confessing his need for God. Thatcher and Bill met several times following their initial meeting, and Thatcher convinced Bill to attend an Oxford Group meeting with him at Calvary Episcopal Church that served as the local headquarters for the Oxford Group. Bill was adamantly opposed to religion and mustered up the courage to attend the Oxford Group only after having become drunk. Bill was moved by the testimonials that he heard that night and even committed to live a changed life. This lasted less than a day when Bill went on a three-day binge that resulted in another hospitalization.

Bill found himself admitted to Towns Hospital, where he met Dr. William D. Silkworth. Dr. Silkworth treated alcoholism as a disease. He referred to it as a manifestation of an allergy. When Bill lay drying out in the hospital, Lois asked Dr. Silkworth why her husband could not stop drinking. Silkworth explained alcoholism as an obsession of the mind that condemned Bill to drink against his will. Silkworth’s

understanding of alcoholism as a disease was revolutionary for his time. In Bill White's historical work *Slaying the Dragon*, he outlines the history of addiction treatment and recovery in the opening decades of the twentieth century.¹⁷⁰

Psychiatric asylums were the primary resource for alcoholics outside of sobering up in jail. Most people thought that there was no such thing as alcoholism as a disease or as a primary disorder. Alcoholism was instead seen as an untreated underlying psychiatric illness. Therefore, alcoholics were subjected to asylums and mandatory sterilization laws. Patients would undergo electro and chemo compulsive shock therapies and would even participate in pre-frontal lobotomies on the theory that if there was an alcoholic personality, then they could alter it by brain surgery in an attempt to cure their alcoholism.¹⁷¹ Dr. Silkworth's revolutionary understanding of alcoholism as a disease would ultimately influence the thinking of Bill Wilson and alter the abusive methods for treating the dis-eased state of the soul.

Ebby Thatcher heard that Bill was once again in the hospital. On December 14, 1934, Ebby visited Bill, and at Bill's request, Ebby shared again his method for conversion and healing: "Realize you are licked, admit it, and get willing to turn your life over to the care of God."¹⁷² Ebby expounded upon elements of the twelve steps that would later be codified by Bill himself. Ebby encouraged Bill to get honest with himself and with another person about himself. He invited Bill to a time of internal housecleaning where he would cleanse away the debris of his past. This transformation was to begin for Bill by him praying to God, as he understood God, to direct his life and to expel his obsession with

¹⁷⁰ William L. White, *Slaying the Dragon: The History of Addiction Treatment and Recovery in America*, Second ed. (Bloomington, Illinois: Chestnut Health Systems Publication, 1998).

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Tim Stafford, "The Spiritual Roots of the Twelve Steps," NIV Recovery Devotional Bible Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Viii.

alcohol. Ebby ended his conversation with Bill by saying, “It is as simple as that, nothing more, nothing less.”¹⁷³ Thatcher left Bill, and later that day Bill fell into a great depression. Bill found himself crying out, “If there is a God, let him show himself! I am ready to do anything!”¹⁷⁴ At that point, Bill recounts that the room lit up, and he was transported to a place of ecstasy. He remembered standing on top of a mountain with wind blowing and being filled with peace. He emerged from his religious experience assured that everything was going to be all right, and that he was finally a part of life by having loved the ultimate reality, God. After Bill’s religious experience of having found freedom and peace in the presence of God, Bill never took another drink.

The newly converted Bill Wilson started attending the Oxford Group at Calvary Church. There he was encouraged by the Episcopal rector Sam Shoemaker. Shoemaker was the most well-known Oxford Group leader in America and would help influence the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. Bill would write, “The early AA got its ideas of self-examination, acknowledgment of character defects, restitution for harm done, and working with others straight from the Oxford Groups and directly from Sam Shoemaker, their former leader in America, and from nowhere else.”¹⁷⁵ Little did Bill Wilson know that Shoemaker was a devout follower of Frank Buchman, whose teachings traced its way back to a vital heritage rooted in the evangelical movement.

On June 10, 1935, Bill traveled to Akron, Ohio to engage in a potentially lucrative business deal. That day the deal fell flat, and Bill was overwhelmed with feelings of failure and doubt. His temptation was to again turn to the bottle. Instead, he called a local

¹⁷³ *Bill W: A Documentary about Bill Wilson, the Co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous*, directed by Dan Carracino and Kevin Hanlon. Page 124 Productions, May 18, 2012.

¹⁷⁴ Stafford, Viii.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

clergyman asking for information about the local Oxford Group. He connected with Henrietta Seiberling and informed her, "I'm from the Oxford Group, and I'm a rum hound from New York."¹⁷⁶ She immediately invited him over and later introduced him to her surgeon friend, Bob Smith. Bob was the exact opposite in personality from Bill. Whereas Bill was outgoing and even obnoxious when he drank, Bob was a silent drinker who was distant and stern. The Oxford Group had been praying for Bob, and Bob had even engaged in their methods to help his alcoholism. It was not until Bob met Bill that his life changed. Within a month of their meeting, the surgeon who once had to take a drink to steady his scalpel took his last drink, and the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous united. Bill and Bob recruited other alcoholics to join the Oxford Group with a new emphasis. The goal was not to stop drinking, but to not start drinking.

Bill and Bob continued their efforts to help alcoholics in need of healing. The two men encouraged their followers to attend the local Oxford Group meetings. After five years, Bob and Bill realized that the Oxford Group's focus was different from theirs. Whereas, the Oxford Group's goal was Jesus Christ, for Bill Wilson the goal was sobriety. Over time the alcoholics found the Oxford Group meetings to be too religious. The alcoholics felt that the Groupers were more interested in telling them what they needed, and they were not interested in having alcoholism as the principle subject. As a result, the New York and Akron recovering alcoholics split ways with the Oxford Group and dedicated themselves to a fellowship with the sole purpose to help one another stay sober. With this move, Alcoholics Anonymous was officially born.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

4.4.1 Twelve Steps

By 1937, forty people had been sober for a significant amount of time. The A.A. group felt that they needed to write a book to help others learn to stay dry. The group was adamant that the book was necessary to help people understand the solution for alcoholism and not just the problem. Bill Wilson felt in writing the book that the book needed a concrete principle. Bill went about defining the principles that currently existed within the program and was pleased to discover that the existing tenets comprised of twelve steps. The Twelve Steps drew heavily from Christian traditions and paralleled the religious practice established by the Oxford Group. Today, over sixty different recovery programs currently use the twelve steps:

The Twelve Steps include:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol- that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

These Twelve Steps have held up over time. The steps are broad enough to be relevant throughout one's lifetime of recovery. The same Twelve Steps that people understand in the first hours, days, and weeks of recovery can still be reinterpreted even after fifty years

of sobriety. What began as a program for how to stop drinking evolved into a means of spiritual growth. The “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous as it came to be commonly referred to was first published in 1939 under the title *Alcoholics Anonymous; The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered from Alcoholism*. Since then, the Big Book has sold over thirty million copies and has been printed in more than sixty different languages. The Twelve Steps are used in recovery programs, such as Al-Anon Family Groups (1951), Narcotics Anonymous (1953), Gamblers Anonymous (1957), Overeaters Anonymous (1960), Neurotics Anonymous (1964), Debtors Anonymous (1971), Nar-Anon (1971), Sexaholics Anonymous (1979), Cocaine Anonymous (1982), Workaholics Anonymous (1983), and Co-Dependents Anonymous (1986). Alcoholics Anonymous is active in over seventy countries with more than 115,000 groups and an active membership of over 2,000,000 people.¹⁷⁷ Despite the great success of Alcoholics Anonymous, critics have voiced their concerns about the program and its many limitations. In the following section, I will explore some of the arguments made and their merit in influencing the continued study of addiction and healing.

4.5 Criticism of Alcoholics Anonymous

Maia Szalavitz is recognized as one of the leading thinkers on addiction. In her work *Unbroken Brain: A Revolutionary New Way of Understanding Addiction*, she proposes that addiction is not a disease but rather a developmental learning disorder. Szalavitz established her position after overcoming cocaine and heroin addiction. She combines her testimony with twenty-five years of experience in studying addiction, science, and recovery.

¹⁷⁷ *Bill W: A Documentary about Bill Wilson, the Co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous*, directed by Dan Carracino and Kevin Hanlon. Page 124 Productions, May 18, 2012.

She argues that “addiction is a learned relationship between the timing and pattern of the exposure to substances or other potentially addictive experiences and a person’s predispositions, cultural and physical environment, and social and emotional needs.”¹⁷⁸ Szalavitz suggests that the learning disorder strengthens, as does any habit, with repetition over time. The pattern of behavior forms memories of pleasure that offer relief. The brain begins to seek relief and craves what it has learned through disordered living. People cannot become addicted unless they learn to associate a drug with pleasure or relief. Szalavitz defines family history, timing, frequency, peers, chemicals, and culture as contributing factors that combine to create illness and the dis-eased state of addiction. Based on her discoveries of addiction as a learning disorder, Szalavitz argues that our criminal system and our recovery options fail primarily because of a misunderstanding of the addicts and their disordered states.

By 2000, ninety percent of recovery programs were Twelve Step based programs. The Alcoholics Anonymous program approaches recovery from a primarily moralistic perspective. The steps begin with recognition of one's "powerlessness" followed by a "surrendering" to a "Higher Power." Later comes a confession of sins through the moral inventory and an attempt to reform one's character defects. The premise of Alcoholics Anonymous is that it is a disease, and yet the recovery process does not treat it like one. Szalavitz argues against psychiatrists telling depressed persons that they need to surrender to God or take a moral inventory. Szalavitz further defends that there is a conflict between viewing addiction as a disease and a crime, particularly if one believes that punishment will help cure an addict’s disease.¹⁷⁹ Her analysis of Twelve Step programs is that its methods

¹⁷⁸ Szalavitz, 4.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 188.

are not necessarily the best approach for treating a disease, but they could prove to be useful strategies in address learning disorders.

Szalavitz's scrutiny of the Twelve Step method stems from her belief that spirituality and medicine need to remain separate. After Alcoholics Anonymous' fame spread, due to their 1941 article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, membership quadruped and medical professionals began to adopt their treatment methods in in hospitals.¹⁸⁰ Szalavitz argues that as a result of this method, morality and spirituality have been misused in professional care and that addiction serves as the only court-ordered program where prayer and confession are required. She contends that an emphasis has been placed on the importance of the addict hitting bottom before healing can occur. Szalavitz denotes historical evidence of how some treatment programs have become abusive in their attempt to force an addict to hit bottom. She argues that the medical system and the Twelve Step programs were never intended to coexist. The initial intent of the Twelve Steps was for mutual accountability, not professional therapy.

Szalavitz believes that understanding addiction, as a learning disorder, is key to developing better prevention, policy, and treatment.¹⁸¹ Szalavitz is not alone in her criticism of Alcoholics Anonymous and its methods. Gabrielle Glassier examines the "Irrationality of Alcoholics Anonymous" in her April 2015 article in the *Atlantic*.¹⁸² Gabrielle seeks to debunk the dominant plan of A.A. as the sole method for treatment and sobriety by introducing alternative approaches based on science, medicine, and therapy.

Glassier traces the inception of Alcoholics Anonymous to 1935 when neuroscience was in its infancy. The program of A.A. offers a single method of recovery based upon a

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 185.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁸² Gabrielle Glaser, "The Irrationality of Alcoholics Anonymous," *Atlantic*. April 2015.

lifetime of abstinence. Abstinence according to A.A. is grounded in the process of surrendering one's ego, confessing that one is powerless over alcohol, making amends, and engaging in the practice of prayer. Studies have shown that the effectiveness of Alcoholics Anonymous is incredibly difficult to determine, based on the fact that attendance is not measured due to the core value of anonymity. Glassier proposes that Alcoholics Anonymous is one approach to recovery before other methods were available. *The Handbook of Alcoholism Treatment Approaches* is considered the most comprehensive study of effective treatments and ranks A.A. thirty-eight out of forty-eight methods. Other successful treatment methods involve counselors equipped with cognitive behavioral therapy, professional medical interventions, motivational enhancement, and even various drug therapies.

Alcoholics Anonymous offered an early solution in the medical world when there existed few methods (other than detoxification and sanitariums) on how to treat heavy drinkers. In 1956 alcoholism was diagnosed as a disease, but the method for treatment never evolved. As Bill Wilson's success stories spread, the favorable reputation of Alcoholics Anonymous grew, and medical professionals began to refer to A.A.'s methods as a valid means of treatment. Anne M. Fletcher remarks in her book, *Inside Rehab*.¹⁸³ that there are over 13,000 rehabilitation facilities in the United States. Of these 13,000 rehab facilities, seventy to eighty percent of them adhere to the twelve-step model of treatment. Pharmaceutical companies, food retailers, alcohol corporations, and even big businesses have learned how to understand and manipulate addictions within human beings. Many

¹⁸³ Anne Fletcher, *Inside Rehab: The Surprising Truth About Addiction Treatment- and How to Get Help that Works* (Penguin Random House: New York, 2013). 15.

treatment programs are found to be lacking, and relapse is a common occurrence among many addicts when they reenter society. What if there is another way?

I propose that John Wesley's early methods of *psyches therapeia*, "a spiritually-based psychotherapeutic method for healing the human soul and producing real soul-change"¹⁸⁴ is still relevant today and is a proven method for transformation as is evidenced in both the Oxford Group and Alcoholics Anonymous. Therefore, I propose that John Wesley's method of utilizing "the form and seeking the power of godliness"¹⁸⁵ through means of Society Gatherings, Class Meetings, Select Societies, and Bands offer an opportunity for the practice of accountability as individuals watch over and care for one another in love, thus aiding in the recovery process. The following chapter will outline a Wesleyan Model of Recovery and propose a Lenten Study to help individuals be changed, transformed, and restored according to Gods' grace.

¹⁸⁴ Chesnut, 79.

¹⁸⁵ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2016), 78.

5. Restoration: A Wesleyan Model of Recovery

Over the past four years as I have researched and studied the notion of renewal and restoration, my path has intersected with individuals passionate about restoring old cars, furniture, and antebellum homes. As I talked to these experts, I came to the realization that they each share an obsession with returning that which was once untouched and unspoiled to its original state. Each rehabilitation project begins similarly. A house, a car, or perhaps a love seat is found neglected, abandoned and overlooked. Most persons would deem them hopeless to rescue, but not these individuals for they recognize the promise that others cannot. They see hope, meaning, and significance in spite of the brokenness that is before them. Hours upon hours are spent researching the original glory of their respective projects. The goal is to return the piece to its unique condition. Painstaking efforts are made to find just the right part, finish, or molding to fit the correct period, model or memory. Every project or restoration can best be seen as a labor of love.

Over two thousand years ago, God's own self set out to restore that which was broken within humanity. Sin, suffering, and shame had entered the world, resulting in brokenness, heartache, and despair. God responded to the needs of humanity; he saw that recovery was possible. This paper is about restoration, which begs the question, restoration to what?

5.1 Imago Dei

John Wesley began his theological discourse by defining the nature or doctrine of humanity based on Genesis 1:26:

Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle,

and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.¹⁸⁶

Wesley's anthropology explicitly examines the potential and possibilities of humanity in light of God's intended purposes for creation. On November 15, 1730, John Wesley preached his first university sermon at St. Mary's entitled, "The Image of God,"¹⁸⁷ emphasizing creation and thus introducing the way of salvation. Wesley defines the image of God or *imago dei* as "righteousness and true holiness."¹⁸⁸ He differentiates the image of God by defining the natural image, the political image, and the moral image.¹⁸⁹ Wesley believed that the natural image was where necessary aptitudes were inscribed within humanity's soul so that a conscious relationship could be established between the created and the Creator. The capacity of the natural image is described as reason, will, and freedom.¹⁹⁰

As noted in previous chapters, Wesley was profoundly influenced by Locke and the Enlightenment. Therefore, Wesley's construct of perfect reason became a practical means of receiving empirical data to discern right order and relationship. This perfect judgment gave the ability for humanity to distinguish and compare truth from falsehood.¹⁹¹ Wesley proclaimed that humanity resembled the perfect reason of God:

His understanding was just; everything appeared to him according to its real nature. It never was betrayed into any mistake; whatever he perceived, he perceived as it was. He thought not at all of many things, but he thought wrong of none. (2.) And as

¹⁸⁶ NRSV.

¹⁸⁷ Albert C. Outler & Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. "The Image of God," *John Wesley's Sermon: An Anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 14-21.

¹⁸⁸ Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*. Vol. 1-4, *Sermons*. Bicentennial ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-87), 4:292.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:474.

¹⁹⁰ Wesley, Sermon 141: "The Image of God," 1730.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

it was just, it was likewise clear. Truth and evidence went hand in hand; as nothing appeared in a false light. . .¹⁹²

The perfect will also exists in order to allow humanity the ability to make commitments, be responsible, and establish priorities. The Enlightenment value of freedom influences Wesley's theology as it gives reason and will the ability and power to "resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves,"¹⁹³ resulting in perfect happiness.

The political image reflects God's dominion over creation. Genesis 1:28 describe God's command to "have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."¹⁹⁴ Humanity is entrusted with the stewardship of God's creation and, therefore, is called to exercise responsibility and care as the political image bearers of God.

Wesley defines the moral image as essential in the human imaging of God, for it is the life source of a living relationship between the created and the Creator. The source of all of life directly transmits and instills qualities into humanity. Wesley articulates this in his sermon:

Man was what God is, Love. Love filled the whole expansion of his soul; it possessed him without a rival. Every moment of his heart was love: it knew no other fervor. Love was his vital heat; it was the genial warmth that animated his whole frame. And the flame of it was continually streaming forth. . .¹⁹⁵

Wesley develops this notion of a relationship between the created and Creator and terms it "spiritual respiration":

¹⁹² Outler & Heitzenrater, 15.

¹⁹³ "The Baptismal Covenant I," *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989).

¹⁹⁴ NRSV.

¹⁹⁵ Outler & Heitzenrater, 15.

God's breathing into the soul, and the soul's breathing back what it first receives from God; a continual action of God upon the soul, the re-action of the soul upon God' an unceasing presence of God, the loving pardoning God, manifested to the heart, and perceived by faith; and an unceasing return of love, praise, and prayer, offering up all the thoughts of our hearts, all the words of our tongues, all the works of our hands, all our body, soul, and spirit, to be a holy sacrifice unto God in Christ Jesus.¹⁹⁶

Wesley is defining the Eastern Orthodox notion of theosis and how God actively participates through the power of the Holy Spirit within humanity so that humanity can actively participate in the life of God with a clear result:

[A]n unerring understanding, an uncorrupt will, and perfect freedom...Then indeed to live was to enjoy, when every faculty was in its perfection, amidst abundance of objects which infinite wisdom had purposely suited to it, when's man's understanding was satisfied with truth, as his will was with good; when he was at full liberty to enjoy either the Creator or the creation; to indulge in the rivers of pleasure, ever new, ever pure from any mixture of pain.¹⁹⁷

Humanity began its existence by living in perfect union with its Creator. The image bearers of God lived with an excellent understanding, an uncorrupt will, and absolute freedom that resulted in unabated happiness between the created and the Creator. God created humanity to live with a sense of passion and purpose and to live in right relationship with God's established order. Humanity's natural, political, and moral capabilities were lost, due to the effects of sin, and are in need of restoration.

Since the fall, the natural image of God has been distorted. Where reason was once sound and used correctly to discern truth and falsehood, it now is used to excuse and rationalize. The will has been replaced by the ego and is fueled by selfish desires. Freedom has ultimately led to bondage and keeps individuals enslaved as they pursue false goals and idols in their personal attempt to restore their soul. Paul speaks to the innate struggle in Romans 7:18b-19, when he states, "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 1:442

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 2:188.

the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”¹⁹⁸ Paul contends that will, reason, and freedom still exist, and yet they no longer function as they were initially intended.

The political and moral image has also been distorted as one looks around the world and sees an exploited earth. Whereas humanity was once called to be a steward, the initial aim has been usurped by an excessive need for consumption in an attempt to satisfy the cravings of the selfish soul. The ability to teach and transmit truths of love, justice, and peace has been lost. It is as if humanity has become desensitized to the grace of God and, therefore, has failed to partner with God in sharing God’s grace and hope to a world in need.

John Wesley’s *via salutis* advocates for a restoration of the image of God. The restoration of God’s image ultimately becomes the way of salvation and healing for one’s soul. Wesley states, “You know that the great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God . . . [and] all that stops short of this . . . is no other than a poor farce and a mere mockery of God.”¹⁹⁹ The goal of the Wesleyan model of recovery is to help restore the image of God by creating an intentional, relational, and accountable pathway where God’s healing grace gives way to newfound freedom in Christ.

Wesley’s theology was obviously influenced by the teachings of the Eastern Fathers who believed that sin was an illness or disease and that salvation was a means of healing, health, and wholeness. Wesley states that “the religion of Jesus Christ as *therapeia psyche* [soul therapy], is God’s method of healing a soul which is thus diseased.”²⁰⁰ The Greek word *Sozo* has been translated in Jesus’ day to mean “to save” or “to heal.” Christ’s ministry gives evidence that the Great Physician came to heal the broken, the blind, the lame, the downtrodden, and the possessed. Wesley never forgot the words that Jesus spoke to the

¹⁹⁸ NRSV.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:185.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:184.

Pharisees in Mark 2:17, when he said, “[I]t is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Wesley expanded beyond the traditional theology of his day by making sin more than a crime punishable by law. Instead, he believed that sin was an illness that could be healed through means of God’s salvation and grace. For Wesley, salvation was never believed to be solely relegated to a far-off place, but rather that God’s grace abounds, providing freedom, and new life on this side of eternity. Ephesians 2:8 states, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” Wesley exhorts upon this text:

The very words of the text itself put this beyond all question. ‘Ye are saved.’ It is not something at a distance: it is a present thing, a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, ye are not in possession of . . . [s]o that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory.²⁰¹

The journey towards healing and recovery is one that is filled with grace. Grace is the means through which God seeks to overcome the estrangement and distorted nature between the created, the Creator, and others. The Wesleyan model of recovery relies on the gift of God’s grace as a guide throughout the process of restoration.

5.2 Prevenient Grace

John Wesley’s theology has been distinctive in part due to his understanding of grace. Unlike Calvin, Wesley believes that grace is a cooperative partnership given by the Creator and received by the created. Freedom is an essential component for synergism to exist. Synergy is understood as the human working in collaboration with the divine throughout the entire process of salvation or healing. Calvinists critiqued Wesley,

²⁰¹ Ibid., 2:156.

attributing his notion of synergy as Pelagian, thus taking away the glory of God. Wesley defended his belief by espousing that synergy is entirely the initiative of divine grace.

Synergy proves essential when defining a Wesleyan model of recovery, for Wesley advocates that God's grace is continually at work. As persons come seeking healing and salvation from their "dis-eased" state, they must realize that God's prevenient grace has brought them to this place to help them explore how God is at work. Many recovery programs mandate a person to comply with an imposed plan that may or may not allow freedom of choice. Synergy is critical for effective recovery to occur. Without freedom and the liberty to choose, God would negate the restoration of *imago dei*. God could always,

act irresistibly, and the thing is done; yea, with just the same ease as when God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." But then man would be man no longer; his inmost nature would be changed. He would no longer be endowed with liberty, the freedom of choice, or self-determination. Consequently, he would no longer be capable of virtue or vice, of reward or punishment.²⁰²

The Wesleyan model of recovery begins with an understanding that God's prevenient grace goes before, and that synergy is essential as the individual works in partnership with the Holy Spirit throughout the entire process of salvation and healing. Restoration begins by inviting participants to become aware of the Holy Spirit's nudges and to recognize the promptings of God's grace.

5.3 The Cycle of Recovery as Restoration

John Wesley created a systemic model of discipleship through his Societies, Bands, and Classes that transformed the lives of millions. His methods helped create a holiness movement in which lives were consistently changed by God's prevenient, justifying, and

²⁰² *Works*, 2:288.

sanctifying grace. I believe that Wesley's theology provides the perfect foundation for a Wesleyan model of recovery. There is a void within United Methodist Churches on how to effectively address issues of addiction and recovery. The United Methodist family is left with utilizing recovery materials from other denominations that simply do not match the ethos, culture, and theology of the United Methodist Church. Other models do not have a track record of two hundred years of evidence where its methods change and transform lives. The Restoration Model of Recovery seeks to rectify this vacuum and offer a United Methodist resource, based upon its rich culture and heritage, to be used as a means of salvation and healing.



The first step of prevenient grace in a Wesleyan model of recovery is to i) recognize that persons are broken due to sin and are powerless over their own life. The spiritual malaise originates from the disobedience of Adam and Eve and exists within every person's soul. As a result of the fall, life becomes unmanageable because humanity is powerless over sin and death. Therefore, God sends the gift of Jesus to intervene for humanity. Wesley states:

God created man [sic] upright; in the image of God created he him, but man found out to himself many inventions. Abusing the liberty wherewith he was endowed, he rebelled against his Creator, and willfully changed the image of the incorruptible God into sin, misery, and corruption. Yet his merciful, though rejected, Creator would not forsake even the depraved work of his own hands, but provided for him, and offered to him a means of being 'renewed after the image of him that created him.'²⁰³

God's plan of intervention is a gift of God's prevenient grace, going before, and creating a way for restoration to occur. The second step of recovery is to ii) earnestly believe in God's ability to restore a life. God came so that life could be abundant.²⁰⁴ When persons are in the throes of addiction, they often believe that abundant living is found through continued devotion to their created idol, rather than being found in right relationship with their Creator. Eventually, persons become aware that they are in need of help as a result of their powerlessness over sin and death and their inability to manage life. Therefore, healing is required and involves iii) submitting one's will to God as persons iv) transparently examine their moral character and respond by v) openly confessing their sin to self, God and another. Wesley expounds upon what is required for soul change to occur when he states:

The first step to this glorious change is humility, a knowledge of ourselves, a just sense of our condition . . . "Know Thyself" . . . The understanding, thus enlightened by humility, immediately directs us to reform our will by charity. To root out of our

²⁰³ Outler & Heitzenrater, 14.

²⁰⁴ John 10:10.

souls all unmanly passions, and to give place to them, no, not an hour; to put away all malice, uncleanness, intemperance, 'all bitterness, wrath, and evil-speaking' ...

Thus, it is that the 'law of the Spirit of life makes us free from the law of sin and death'; thus, it restores us, first to knowledge, and then to virtue, and freedom, and happiness. Thus, are we 'delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God'; into that liberty which not only implies the absence of all pain, unless what is necessary to future pleasure, but such a measure of present happiness as is a fit introduction to that which flows at God's right hand evermore!²⁰⁵

"Restore" is defined as the ability: "1) to bring back to existence, reestablish; 2) to bring back to a former, original, or normal condition; 3) to bring back to a state of health."²⁰⁶

Everyone needs restoration. Wesley's model of restoration moves persons from prevenient grace to God's justifying grace.

5.4 Justifying Grace

Justifying grace is an essential aspect of the Wesleyan model of recovery and is the means by which one's relationship with God is restored, realigned, and renewed. The process of justification begins with vi) repentance and responding to God's healing grace. God works within the individual by convicting and illuminating the ways in which the person's reason, will, and freedom have become distorted. As a result of distortion, persons find their life constrained by self-deception and bondage. At some point, persons experience the pain and predicament of their current reality and are filled with frustration and dissatisfaction at the truth of one's dis-eased state. This discomfort can lead to a desire for realignment, restoration, and reorientation. Wesley refers to this as repentance.

Freedom is found as one admits his/her sin before self, God, and others, thus vi) repenting, seeking God's forgiveness, and responding to God's justifying grace. Wesley

²⁰⁵ Outler & Heitzenrater, 19.

²⁰⁶ Dictionary.com, "restore."

explains repentance as a “kind of self-knowledge.”²⁰⁷ As persons become self-aware, they begin to address their limitations by vii) asking for God to remove their shortcomings and character defects, all the while, viii) trusting in God's forgiveness by extending it to oneself and others. Justification ultimately transforms the relationship between God and others. Due to the effects of selfishness and sin, persons in recovery often realize that they have misused and abused the trust of loved ones for years. Justification provides the ability to not only receive forgiveness from God by being reconciled and restored with one's Creator, but it also affords a freedom to extend a similar forgiveness to others. Freedom becomes a process of admitting one's wrongs, seeking restitution, and making amends by taking responsibility for the pain and suffering as a result of the personal infliction upon others. Anytime forgiveness is received or extended, salvation as healing, or *therapeia*, occurs. This lifetime pursuit of healing, holiness, and restoration is deemed as God's sanctifying grace.

5.5 Sanctifying Grace

John Wesley knew that the power of sanctification best occurs in relationship with others. It is in group settings that God's grace continues to perfect the natural, political, and moral nature of God's image within humanity. A Wesleyan model of recovery is built around *therapeia* in community. Sanctification becomes the process of “faith working through love.”²⁰⁸ For it is in community that God's grace becomes a means of grace in change and transformation. Wesley speaks to this truth when he states,

Ye' are the salt of the earth.” It is your very nature to season whatever is round about you. It is the nature of the divine savour which is in you to spread whatsoever you touch; to diffuse itself on every side, to all those among whom you are. This is

²⁰⁷ Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1998. 1:336.

²⁰⁸ Galatians 5:6.

the great reason why the providence of God has so mingled you together with other men, that whatever grace you have received of God may through you be communicated to others.²⁰⁹

Wesley experienced firsthand the power of change and transformation as a result of community. In fact, he believed that communal gatherings had the form that provided the power of God's grace to move in a person's life resulting in holiness of heart and godliness.²¹⁰ John Wesley's communal gatherings proved the effectiveness of sanctifying grace for salvation, healing, and holiness of heart.

5.6 A Wesleyan Model of Recovery

The mission for a Wesleyan model of recovery is ultimately to call all persons to become wholly devoted followers of Jesus Christ. The Wesleyan model of recovery serves as a study outlining the process of salvation through means of God's prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. The truth of the matter is that no recovery program ultimately saves a person; only God has the power and the authority to bring about absolute healing of the dis-eased state of a person's soul. When true healing, salvation, and restoration become the goal instead of sobriety alone, God's grace facilitates the transformation of a heart that responds with a life of gratitude and love instead of simply responding to God by forced obedience. The Wesleyan model of recovery believes in holistic healing and that this truth must be authentically lived by the church and its leadership for restoration to occur.

²⁰⁹ John Wesley, "Preface to Hymns and Sacred Poems (1739)," in *Works* (Jackson), 14:321.

²¹⁰ John Wesley, *The Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies*, §2, *Works* 9:69.

5.6.1 The Church and Recovery

Recovery ministry has been stigmatized and consigned to those that society labels as addict, druggie, drunk, junkie, stoner, crackhead or wino as noted earlier American culture has dealt with recovery by isolating and henceforth, ignoring those that are in need of healing.²¹¹ Jesus' entire ministry was about healing and restoring those that are broken, and that includes all of humanity.²¹² The first aspect of establishing a Wesleyan model of recovery is to demystify recovery itself. The church was developed to be a recovery ministry where people came together to worship, to share their brokenness, be transformed by God's grace, and to go forth in the world as God's agents of change. Somewhere along the way, the church lost its vision of recovery and, instead, became a place where those that are sick pretend that they were well. Recovery ministry often focuses on behavior modification as the primary means of healing. The Wesleyan model of recovery proclaims heart transformation instead of behavior modification and believes that God's prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace has the power ultimately to heal and restore.

Many churches support recovery ministry by offering space for Alcoholics Anonymous meetings to occur. The meeting space is often hidden in a corner of the church. This practice serves to give the impression that it is better to isolate the sick and sneak them in and out of the building after hours rather than find ways to support, encourage, and extend respect to those willing to do the hard work of recovery. Addiction has flourished within people because they have learned how to effectively hide their secrets and shame by isolating themselves from community. For successful recovery, every person needs to be reminded that he/she is in recovery due to the brokenness of sin. Church leadership must

²¹¹ "The Nation's Health," *Newsmakers*: April 2010, 40 (3) E11; reports that sixty percent of inmates in America's prisons qualify as substance abusers.

²¹² Luke 5:31-12; 19:10.

testify to this truth and bring its own brokenness into the light by modeling a process of healing and restoration. This transparency not only demystifies recovery but also makes a conscious effort to return the church to its primary mission: that of healing souls! For a successful Wesleyan model of recovery to take place, recovery must become a front door ministry rather than a backdoor ministry.

Church leadership is encouraged to participate in the healing ministry of Restoration and develop an ethos in the church that all of the church is a recovery ministry in which we are in need of God's grace. When instituting the Restoration model in the local church, I advise the staff and leadership to serve as the recovery ministry's first leaders after having experienced firsthand the power and transformative experience that occurs as a result of the Wesleyan model of Societies, Classes, Bands, and Recovery Partners.

To implement an effective recovery ministry in the local church, you must have a defined process. The Restoration model of Recovery utilizes Wesley's society gatherings, class meetings, and bands as a framework for restoration. The following provides how a practical application of the Restoration model would work within the local church.

Restoration begins with society gatherings.

5.7 Society Gathering

Society Gatherings serve as the first point of entry for participants wanting to be involved in healing, recovery, and the Restoration ministry. The Society Gatherings serve as the total of all of the various classes, bands, and recovery partner relationships coming together to worship and praise God. Each Society Gathering includes a multisensory worship experience that consists of thematic music, videos, a recitation of the R.E.S.T.O.R.A.T.I.O.N. steps, along with the biblical foundations of those steps. The Society Gathering also incorporates a personal sharing of a story of restoration and healing, a

sermon on that particular week's theme, as well as offering a challenge for the week, and concludes with a closing ritual of reciting Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

5.7.1 Restoration Story

A powerful part of each Society Gathering is to hear from a participant about his/her particular restoration journey. The participant works with a staff member and prepares in advance to share his/her story and how that step relates to the process of healing. Sharing one's story becomes a time to articulate life before God (prevenient grace), what led the person to repent and turn to God (justifying grace), and how God has worked in the person's life since finding Jesus, in regards to continued healing and restoration (sanctifying grace). As participants share their story, they begin with the words: "My name is _____, I am a new creation in Christ, and I am in recovery for _____." Alcoholics Anonymous and other recovery models begin by having participants identify themselves as their addiction. An A.A. introduction includes, "My name is _____ and I am an _____." The Restoration model does not wish to perpetuate an identity of sin and its hold upon the individual, but rather to highlight the spiritual truth: "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"²¹³ The Restoration model is built upon the belief that a person's identity is not the past, the problems, the sins, but is found in a restoring relationship with Jesus Christ. Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke wrote, "Our society may be considered as a spiritual hospital, where souls come to be cured of their spiritual diseases."²¹⁴ The Wesleyan model

²¹³ 2 Corinthians 5:17, *New Revised Standard Version*.

²¹⁴ *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. With Explanatory Notes*, by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, 10th edition. (Philadelphia, PA: Henry Tuckniss, 1798), 151.

of recovery utilizes Wesley's systematic discipleship system to begin with sin, only as a means to point participants towards salvation and healing.

5.8 Class Meeting

After the Society Gathering, all restoration participants move to a Class Meeting based upon gender. The classes are integrated issue groups²¹⁵ comprised of seven to twelve people. A class meeting creates space for an intentional, relational, and accountable community to exist where the purpose is to focus on transformation rather than information. Participants are encouraged to interpret their lives in light of the gospel message, develop a vocabulary that gives witness to what God is doing in their lives and helps them grow in faith.

Class meetings were considered the catalyst for growth in faith in Christ during the early Methodist movement. Kevin Watson in his book, *Class Meetings*, declares that “[a] strong case can be made that the class meeting was the single most important factor to the growth of early Methodism and to the retention of converts within Methodism.”²¹⁶ Wesley believed in a practical theology that not only ascribed belief in Christ, but that gave converts helpful instruction on how to live their faith. Wesley created the General Rules to help guide individuals as they sought to follow Christ. The General Rules were “Do no harm, do good, and attend upon the ordinances of God.”²¹⁷ Wesley soon discovered that the class meetings became a space where participants would “watch over one another in love,” and

²¹⁵ See #4 below for more information about integrated issue groups.

²¹⁶ Kevin M. Watson, *Class Meetings: Reclaiming a Forgotten (and Essential) Small Group Experience* (Franklin, TN: Seedbed, 2014), 22.

²¹⁷ *The Works of John Wesley*, Ed. Rupert E. Davis. Vol. 9. “The Methodist Societies History, Nature, and Design. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 73.

support each other in their growth in grace. Wesley reports the fruits of these class meetings:

It can scarce be conceived what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to “bear one another’s burdens,” and “naturally” to “care for each other.” As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for each other. And “speaking the truth in love, they grew up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, increased unto the edifying itself in love.”²¹⁸

John Wesley’s General Rules are utilized in the Restoration Class Meetings to establish a covenant of conduct. Trust is essential for recovery to take place; therefore, each participant is reminded as the Class Meeting convenes to “do no harm; do good; [and] attend to the ordinances of God.”²¹⁹ The Restoration model will utilize Wesley’s General Rules to create a covenant of conduct which include:

1. **Do no harm:** To do no harm consists of keeping conversation limited to one’s own thoughts and feelings, and refrain from commenting about what another participant has shared. Each class meeting is to maintain confidentiality and guard against gossip. As participants share, they are reminded to honor God with their words. Therefore, they avoid any use of profanity or graphic details when discussing the nature of their sins and recovery.
2. **Do good:** Community is essential for recovery to take place. To ‘do good’ is to make a conscious effort to commit to attend each class meeting. Participants are expected to have completed their daily pages and pledge to pray for the recovery of self and other class members.

²¹⁸ John Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists: in *Works*, 9:262.

²¹⁹ *The Works of John Wesley*, Ed. Rupert E. Davis. Vol. 9. “The Methodist Societies History, Nature, and Design. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 73.

3. Attend to the Ordinances of God: The Restoration model, as I have defined it, includes the engagement of what I refer to as “Daily Examine.” This is best thought of as a guided devotional that daily leads participants to identify the brokenness in their own lives. It also provides suggested steps for healing by providing participants the opportunity to examine their daily living through the process of journaling. Wesley believed that it was in a daily examination of one’s activities that one could lean into holy living. Exercises are provided for participants to dive deeper into the study of God’s Word and to reflect on how the study impacts their recovery. Each week there is room within the Class Meeting for the material to be discussed and give voice to what God reveals to each participant that particular week.

The General Rules help establish boundaries in order for a safe community to exist and for recovery to occur. After the General Rules are shared at the beginning of each Class Meeting, participants are then invited to a time of centering and prayer as they consider:

1. How is it with your soul?
2. How did God speak to you during the Society Gathering? In what ways were you challenged and/or encouraged?
3. After reviewing your Daily Pages for the week, what did you learn that is most meaningful for your recovery?
4. What commitment do you wish to make this week to help your soul prosper?

The Class Meeting leader begins by first sharing and modeling his/her own struggles and successes over the past week and helps establish the sacred space by being open, honest, and authentic. After the leader shares, other participants are then invited to do likewise. Restoration participants are encouraged to share the current state of their relationship with God and how they specifically lived out or did not live out their faith the previous week. A Class Meeting lasts fifty minutes and concludes by everyone reciting Hebrews 12:25: “Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one

another all the more. . . .”²²⁰ The passing of the peace is extended as people go forth along with a commitment to see one another the following week.

John Wesley believed that every person should participate in a Class Meeting to ensure that people were remaining connected to one another and actively cooperating with God in their growth in grace:

Never omit meeting your Class or Band; never absent yourself from any public meeting. These are the very sinews of our Society and whatever weakens, or tends to weaken, our regard for these, or our exactness in attending them, strikes at the very heart of our community.²²¹

The Class Meeting protected against any participants being left behind as their souls were accounted for each week. The formation of Bands also encouraged individuals to deepen their faith and perfect their love by partnering with God in the process of sanctification.

5.9 Bands

Restoration Bands consist of a gathering of three to four fellow participants in the recovery process to encourage one another and meet weekly for confession, honest feedback, prayer, and accountability. The bands serve as a means of honesty over formality. For many individuals in recovery, they have avoided the spiritual discipline of confession. Therefore, persons are invited to learn how to confess and be held accountable to another person, perhaps for the first time. The Band allows participants to learn how to use “I” statements rather than “you” statements. The cycle of sin as addiction often perpetuates because of the avoidance, denial, or blaming of other individuals for the participant’s current state of being. The Band provides a more intimate setting for fellow band members

²²⁰ Good News Translation.

²²¹ John Wesley, “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection,” in *Works*, Jackson, 11:433.

to learn how to honor, respect, and value other people. Oftentimes, the value of others is lost in the sickness of the dis-eased state as individuals move from persons of value to objects that are used to help gain access to whatever the person may be worshipping as an idol at that particular time. Bands serve as another means of helping people connect to God and others in a pursuit of holiness.

John Wesley drew up his Rules of Bands and Societies on December 25, 1738. They stated that the design of the meeting is to obey the command of God by “confess[ing] your sins to each other and pray[ing] for each other so that you may be healed.”²²² Band members know that life is complex and that people are riddled with brokenness, sin, and shame. The idea of confession is not to be voyeuristic in nature, but rather, to get to the root of sin. The focus of band members is always on the cure, and anything that gets in the way of being healed by God is identified and confessed. Asbury and Coke write about the efficacy of growth in grace by participating in bands in the 1798 *Doctrines and Discipline*:

Thus, does our economy, by its prudential ordinances, under the grace of God, tend to raise the members of our society from one degree of grace to another. And we have invariably observed, that where these meetings of the bands have been kept up in their life and power, the revival of the work of God has been manifest both in the addition of members to the society, and in the deepening of the life of God in general.²²³

Restoration Bands hold participants accountable to being known and loved. Many persons in recovery have lost sight of the person they once knew and once were. The Bands create a safe and loving environment to discard pretense and to begin to “walk in the light as he [God] is in the light [so that], we [may] have fellowship with one another, and the

²²² New International Version.

²²³ *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in America. With Explanatory Notes, by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury*, 10th edition. (Philadelphia, PA: Henry Tuckniss, 1798), 152.

blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us.”²²⁴ Members of the band gather and honestly answer the following questions:

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?
2. What temptations have you met with?
3. How were you delivered?
4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?
5. Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?²²⁵

Once the band members confess their sins to one another, specific prayer is then offered for the person for God’s healing, strength, and grace. The Band meeting concludes by all members reciting together 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”²²⁶ Other features of the Restoration model of recovery include the following:

1. **Discipleship Focus:** The mission of Restoration is to call all persons to become a wholly devoted follower of Jesus Christ. Restoration is a process of heart transformation rather than just behavior modification. Often, addicts modify their behavior in relationship to their idol, only to replace their worship of another created thing. This cycle of sin as addiction will continue unless a person goes to the heart of the matter and partners with God to transform the sinful passions into righteousness. 2 Timothy 2:22 states, “Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace.”²²⁷

2. **R.E.S.T.O.R.A.T.I.O.N.:** The Restoration model of Recovery is based upon a weekly theme that illuminates Wesley’s soteriology by outlining his *ordo salutis*. A

²²⁴ New Revised Standard Version.

²²⁵ *Works*, Vol. 9: 78.

²²⁶ New Revised Standard Version.

²²⁷ New International Version.

Restoration workbook²²⁸ has been created containing curriculum that participants will use for weekly worship, daily examine and journaling, class meetings, bands, and provides prompts for participants to discuss weekly with one's Recovery Partner. The weekly themes are designed to help participants discover their story in light of God's story of grace by framing the week's theme around Wesley's prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. The R.E.S.T.O.R.A.T.I.O.N. model's weekly themes include:

PREVNIENT GRACE

- Week One:** R. Recognize that I am broken due to sin and am powerless to manage my own life.
- Week Two:** E. Earnestly believe in God and God's ability to restore my life.
- Week Three:** S. Submit my life and will to God.
- Week Four:** T. Transparently examine my moral character.
- O. Openly confess my sin to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

JUSTIFYING GRACE

- Week Five:** R. Repent and Respond to God's grace.
- A. Ask for God to remove my shortcomings and character defects.
- T. Trust in God's forgiveness by extending it to myself and others.

SANCTIFYING GRACE

- Week Six:** I. Inventory my life through daily self-examination and prayer.
- O. Orient my life to the ordinances of God. "Thy will be done."

²²⁸ See additional submission, *Restoration: A Wesleyan Model of Recovery Workbook*.

Week Seven: N. Now “go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”²²⁹

3. **Attend to the Ordinances of God/Daily Pages:** Restoration and freedom are continually nourished by daily abiding in God. John 15:5 declares, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”²³⁰ John Wesley lists in his General Rules the ordinances as “the public worship of God; the Ministry of the Word, either read or expounded; The Supper of the Lord; Private prayer; Searching the Scriptures; and Fasting or abstinence.”²³¹ Wesley believed that by attending to the ordinances of God, a person could stay in touch with the power and presence of God. The practice of daily disciplines also instructs the disciple on ways to be faithful in following Jesus. Second Timothy 3:16 states, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”²³² As a person submits to God, the Creator continues to form and transform the person from the inside out and restore him/her more and more into the likeness of God.

4. **Integrated Classes:** The Restoration model of recovery integrates persons with differing issues into the same class based upon gender. Men and women meet separately in their classes. Celebrate Recovery and other recovery models mainly deal with a single issue, whether it is A.A., N.A., or Overeaters Anonymous. Restoration creates classes that support both men and women despite the nature or specifics of their sin and struggle. The single-issue group limits the depth of awareness of other addictions with which

²²⁹ Matthew 28:19.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ *The Works of John Wesley*, Ed. Rupert E. Davis. Vol. 9. “The Methodist Societies History, Nature, and Design (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 73.

²³² NRSV.

persons may struggle. For example, a woman might share that she is in recovery because of her control issues, another might be in the process of recovery for body issues, and another for her struggle with pornography. All three women would participate in the same class as each person tries to get to the root of her sin. Not only does this offer a wide array of support for healing among fellow strugglers, but sometimes God uses the confession of one participant to open the heart of another, so that they might recognize that they too struggle with a similar sin.

5. Recovery Partners (Barnabas): A recovery partner is a companion of a participant outside of Restoration. The person must be a follower of Jesus Christ and be of the same gender as the Restoration participant. This trusted guide is a person that is granted permission to speak honestly into the participant's life. The partner is encouraged to have had a previous relationship with the individual before the participant began attending Restoration and will continue to be in relationship after. The partner is a person that is committed to the spiritual growth and restoration of the participant. This person models the gospel and what it means to follow Christ authentically. The partner will pray for the participant daily and provide accountability to the participant as he/she engages the process of Restoration. The spiritual partner will also listen to the participant's moral inventory and maintain confidentiality. The Recovery Partner is to serve as a Barnabas and offer and encouragement throughout the recovery journey.²³³

6. One Night Model: The Restoration model includes a weekly time of praise, worship, sharing and teaching. Celebrate recovery often worships on Friday night and then offers studies on a different night of the week. The one-night model is unique to Restoration

²³³ See Acts 4:36.

compared to other recovery models in that every gathering happens in one night. The one-night model offers a greater opportunity to recruit and train leadership, interact with participants at different stages of their journey, and consolidate resources and expenses into one evening of excellence, rather than requiring leaders and participants to commit to the time demands of multiple evenings.

7. Participation in Home Church: Restoration is intended to offer a model of recovery, but not to replace one's commitment nor attendance in his/her home church. Addiction thrives in isolation. Therefore, Restoration participants encourage every person to commit to weekly worship and involvement in church.

8. Leadership Training: Class Leaders, Band Leaders, and Recovery Partners gather each week to share a meal before the Society Gathering. This venue provides an opportunity for consistent leadership training and encouragement by Senior Staff to fellow servants. After dinner, participants are prayed for as well as those individuals that are called to share their story/testimony in the Society Gathering that night. The weekly leadership gatherings provide support and community for fellow leaders as they seek to be faithful to God's people.

9. Commencement: Restoration is a lifelong journey. After participants complete the study, they are invited to co-facilitate a class meeting and/or serve as a recovery partner for a participant in need. Participants never graduate because recovery is an ongoing process that is all about discipleship and God's sanctifying grace. Participants are invited to embody the intentional, relational, and accountable restorative ministry of Jesus as they are called to now go and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

5.10 Restoration, Grace, and Accountability

Every program that the United Methodist Church offers should regularly be evaluated to determine its effectiveness “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”²³⁴ Recovery ministry is no exception. The rewards of a changed life are tremendous. It is important to note, however, that successful and lasting recovery is incredibly difficult. The retention rates of similar recovery models admit that only thirty percent of participants will complete the program and remain sober a year out. How then does the church evaluate the success of the Restoration as Recovery model?

Change theorists promote that a cooperative model of support increases the success rate for effective change.²³⁵ Therefore, one approach to evaluating the success of Restoration is to observe the number of church members, leaders, and participants cooperatively involved in recovery. Recovery programs within churches need to be seen as a place where those that are apparently healthy go as well as the sick. The stigma of recovery is only overcome when pastors, staff members, and leaders within the congregation give voice that they too are sinners in need of God’s grace, recovery, and restoration. Success could also be measured by assessing the number of people that complete the program and cycle back into the life of the church. Some participants may wish to become members, and others may choose to serve as class leaders, band leaders, and/or recovery partners in future Restoration groups.

When a person begins the process of recovery, the brain begins to change. At first, the brain obsesses over the idol and fixates on ways to get relief by planning on how to engage the idol again and again. Recovery participants admit that they may think of their

²³⁴ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 93.

²³⁵ See 3.3 “Change Theory” section.

drug or idol of choice over a hundred times a day. Another way to measure the success of Restoration is to periodically survey recovery participants about the number of times they fantasize about engaging in their particular idol. Romans 12:2 states, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that that you may discern what is the will of God- what is good and acceptable and perfect.”²³⁶ Over time, Restoration participants should indicate that they are obsessing about their idol less and less. Success is aided by the power of God’s grace at work in the heart and mind of the individual, as well as teaching participants how to immerse their mind in the Word of God through their daily Examine and journal pages.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of Restoration as recovery will be observed in the success stories of those that have been healed and found free from the bondage of their addiction. Specific measurements can be made about the frequency of use or engagement of an idol and the length of sobriety, but the true measure of a changed heart will be seen in the fruits of the Spirit at work in the participant. People can readily observe a metamorphosis in the character and heart of a participant when they begin to respond with “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”²³⁷

The *Restoration: A Wesleyan Model of Recovery* offers an intentional, relational, and accountable solution for the United Methodist Church regarding recovery. John Wesley’s theology was set apart from his contemporaries due to his theology of *psyches therapeia*, “a spiritually-based psychotherapeutic method for healing the human soul and producing real soul-change”²³⁸ Wesley understood the effects of original sin as a spiritual sickness or self-perpetuating illness. He believed that sin was a disease that distorts the image of God,

²³⁶ NRSV.

²³⁷ Galatians 5:22-23.

²³⁸ Chesnut, 79.

diminishes the divine likeness, disfigured our true understanding of the world, and distracts persons from experiencing their true medicine found in communing with the Great Physician.”²³⁹ As a result of the “dis”-eased state of the soul, John Wesley systematized an order of discipleship that transformed the lives of millions and became a leading force in the evangelical holiness movement. His methods of healing, holiness, and transformation ultimately influenced the Holy Club, the Oxford Group, and Alcoholics Anonymous. Over time, recovery programs have set forth to address addiction by advocating behavior modification. What Wesley knew, over two hundred years ago, is that real change comes not from behavior modification, but rather, from heart transformation. *Restoration: A Wesleyan Model of Recovery* offers a grace-filled model of healing that claims that ultimate transformation and restoration is possible.

²³⁹ See John Wesley, “Original Sin.”

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Biography

Raigan Miskelly is an Ordained United Methodist Elder and a member of the Mississippi Conference. A passionate and gifted communicator, she is currently the Chief Mission Strategist (District Superintendent) of the New Albany District. From 2012 until 2017, she served as the lead pastor of historic First United Methodist Church in Columbus, Mississippi, founded in 1823. Prior to that she served as Senior Associate at First United Methodist Church Tupelo for seven years. In this capacity she provided leadership in the areas of Christian Formation, Women's Ministry, Family Life, Young Adult Ministry, and the Prayer Ministry. The hallmark of her ministry in Tupelo was the creation of a third worship service called *The Invitation* - an emergent worship style that blended both ancient tradition and modern freshness into a compelling worship experience. Under her leadership, preaching, and teaching *The Invitation* has become the largest service at FUMC.

Raigan graduated from Centenary College in Shreveport, LA with a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Education and received her Masters of Divinity from Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California where she received the *Paul Yanger Outstanding Preaching Award*. She received a Doctorate of Ministry from Duke Divinity School with an emphasis in Leadership. She is also a certified coach, consultant, teacher, and speaker with the *John Maxwell Leadership Team*.

Her previous appointments were to Marvin UMC, Florence as Associate Pastor, Millsaps College, Jackson as Assistant Chaplin, and Grace Community United Methodist Church, Shreveport, Louisiana as Youth Pastor. She also served as associate pastor at San Ramon Valley UMC, Danville, California while attending seminary.

Raigan is married to Rocky Miskelly who is President of Renasant Wealth Management and Insurance services for Renasant Bank. Raigan is the mother of two Maguire (13), Wright (14) and the step-mother to two boys, Wesley (24) and Walker (25).

