THE ROLE OF THE SPIRITUAL SENSES IN CONTEMPORARY MISSION WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO JOHN WESLEY’S EMPLOYMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL SENSES: A REVISED CORRELATIONAL APPROACH

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JACQUELINE HANOVER

SCHOOL OF ARTS, LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
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Statement of Length

This thesis does not exceed 80,000 words, including footnotes and references but excluding bibliography.

Number of words: 79978.
ABBREVIATIONS

Works  

Works (Jackson)  

Libronix, ANF  
ABSTRACT
The University of Manchester
Jacqueline Hanover
Doctor of Philosophy

The Role of the Spiritual Senses in Contemporary Mission with Particular Reference to John Wesley’s Employment of the Spiritual Senses:
A Revised Correlational Approach.

11th September 2017.

This thesis explores the potential role of the spiritual senses in contemporary mission. Responding to the development of a new type of non-religious spirituality known as contemporary spirituality, which has emerged in response to cultural change in the West, this thesis enters into a conversation between contemporary spirituality, contemporary Christianity and John Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses. The theme of the spiritual senses has a rich history and this thesis aims to discover if a revisit of Wesley’s particular employment of the spiritual senses has the potential to offer a meaningful contribution to Christian mission in the twenty-first century.

Using Gordon Lynch’s application of Don Browning’s revised correlation, seven key motifs within contemporary spirituality are identified as foundational and used to develop the conversation. The thesis proceeds to use these motifs namely, creation spirituality, individualism freedom and choice, innate spiritual perception, the physical senses and spirituality, the sacred within, a call to community, and religious pluralism, to embark on a conversation between contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity. In all of the key areas points of convergence are noted, along with some differences, and suggestions are made concerning further engagement. It is argued that, whilst the findings of this conversation, and the practical applications that flow from them, can be used to engage with contemporary spiritual seekers, nevertheless all would benefit from a renewed framework that responds more particularly to the foundational motifs of contemporary spirituality and that Wesley’s application of the spiritual senses might offer this framework.

Following this, an investigation of Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses, in his own terms, is embarked upon, where his key tenets are discovered. This section confirms the unity between the spiritual senses and the restoration of the life and image of God, moving from complete cognitive unawareness of God or the spiritual world, through prevenient grace to awakening and the new birth including faith, assurance and sanctification. These basic tenets are then developed showing the spiritual senses to be drawn from the creative moment, personal and yet inclusive, accessible, experiential, centered on both healing and forgiveness, based on the value of the individual, freedom, and choice, based on restored, intimate, and ongoing relationship with the creator, facilitating transformation, communal, and working in harmony with reason. Given the similarities to the key motifs of contemporary spirituality, it is affirmed that Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses has potential to make a significant contribution to the conversation between contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity.

Finally the conversation between all three parties is developed. Here the information gathered in the previous conversation is correlated and synthesised to specifically identify the contribution that the spiritual senses might offer to contemporary mission. Based on the findings of the conversation, a reconstructed gospel message is presented that, it is argued, both correlates with the aspirations of contemporary spirituality and yet is grounded in the Christian tradition, thus affirming the significance of the role of the spiritual senses to contemporary mission.
DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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But above all to God, who has taken this pathway to discovery and illuminated my heart, mind and soul, enabling me to discover, what is for me, a holistic truth in the spiritual senses that resonates deeply within. Consequently, I will never be the same again.
I will, as always, seek to use this resource
To His Glory And For The Extension Of His Kingdom.
An identified cultural shift in the West has given rise to a significant new phenomenon which has become known as contemporary spirituality. Contemporary spirituality, which is attracting many and diverse followers, is a quest for spiritual experience that is embarked upon outside of traditional religious norms. This new way of approaching spirituality is attributed to have arisen in response to the failure of the modernity project to adequately recognise and respond to the spiritual needs of the populace and the corresponding rise of postmodernity, where people are willing to question and challenge established ideologies. The rise of this new form of spirituality has caused great concerns for contemporary Christian thinkers, particularly in the light of falling Church attendances. But even as Christian missiologists grapple with the challenge of developing a missional response to this crisis, this new phenomenon offers the opportunity for a re-examination of Christian spirituality as it pertains to mission and particularly evangelism.

Some responses from contemporary Christian missiologists have largely been based on an ecclesiocentric perspective rather than in direct response to intentional engagement with contemporary spirituality.\(^1\) Other responses demonstrate a tendency towards introspection.\(^2\) Still others have demonstrated a genuine attempt to respond to selected key motifs from within this new form of spirituality.\(^3\) However, a gap exists as responses to date have fallen short of offering a comprehensive, adequate and meaningful missional response embracing the full spectrum of central motifs within contemporary spirituality. Drawing from suggestions arising from both contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity, it is proposed that key areas for development should centre on a conversation between the key parties. The aim of this conversation is to offer something more fundamental than new tactics to make the church effective; namely a fresh look at the content of the gospel, a reconstruction of evangelism, the discovery of a new social language for spirituality and a meaningful response from the Christian tradition concerning the invisible mechanics of spiritual engagement.\(^4\)

A re-visit of John Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses, uncovering his particular priorities and focus, has the potential to offer a significant contribution to the conversation. Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses has enjoyed some interest in recent years. Amongst

\(^1\) Part One, p. 35.
\(^2\) Part One, p. 60.
\(^3\) Demonstrated throughout Part One.
\(^4\) Part One, pp. 66-67.
others, Albert Outler, Gregory Clapper, Rex Dale Matthews, Randy Maddox, Theodore Runyon, Stephen Long and, more recently, Mark Mealey have shown interest in the theme, all exploring it within their particular areas of interest or expertise. This research differs from others, as it is conducted with the intention of correlating Wesley’s application of the spiritual senses to the foundational motifs of contemporary spirituality, building on responses from contemporary Christian thinkers to date, and offering a missiological response appropriate for the twenty-first century.

**Problem Statement**

The rise of contemporary spirituality in Western culture, with its strong emphasis on personal experiential spirituality, requires a meaningful response from a Christian missiological perspective.

**Research Aims**

The aim of this thesis is to respond to this problem as follows: Firstly, to research contemporary spirituality in order to identify the key motifs and discover if there is any correlation between these and the contemporary Christian response. Secondly, to identify the central tenets of John Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses. Thirdly, to discover if John Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses might build on the response from contemporary Christian thinkers and make a meaningful contribution to the identified aspirations of contemporary spirituality.

In so doing, this thesis intends to respond to the stated gap in current research by:

i. Identifying the central motifs that are foundational to contemporary spirituality.

ii. Considering a range of responses from contemporary Christian thinkers in order to discover if there is any correlation between the two parties.

iii. Re-visiting Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses and identifying his particular focus and priorities in applying the theme, in order to discover if they might contribute to the current conversation.

iv. Correlating and synthesising these findings in order to identify the potential role of the spiritual senses for twenty-first century mission.

**Methodology**

In response to the call for a meaningful conversation between contemporary spirituality and the Christian tradition, Gordon Lynch’s application of Don Browning’s revised
correlation has been selected as an appropriate methodology to guide this conversation.\textsuperscript{5} Sitting within the field of practical theology, this approach enables a conversation that involves questions and answers from both culture and religious tradition in a mutually critical dialogue that enables them to learn from each other and review their respective philosophies, principles and practices.

The revised correlational method will be guided by Gordon Lynch’s suggested methodology\textsuperscript{6} which consists of three stages. Following selection of the particular aspect of contemporary culture that is being explored, stage one, ‘descriptive theology,’ will attempt to understand the ‘horizon’ of the topic being studied; that is, the topic’s scope, meaning and significance. An essential aspect of the revised correlational method is that the topic should be ‘described “on its own terms,” without reference to external religious or ethical judgements.’ For this thesis the topic being explored is contemporary spirituality. Exploring this ‘horizon’ will also involve exploring how religious groups, in this thesis contemporary Christian thinkers, have responded to this form of popular culture.\textsuperscript{7}

The second stage will explore another ‘horizon’ and engage in ‘historical theology.’ This involves discovering what relevance the particular tradition of the student, in this case the Christian tradition, might have to the form of contemporary culture being explored.\textsuperscript{8} For this thesis the historical aspect of the Christian tradition being explored is Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses.

The third stage, ‘systematic theology,’ involves bringing the two horizons together in a mutually critical conversation. The conversation entered into in Part One is expected to uncover gaps in both arguments. This will offer the potential for identifying and developing further conversation, particularly relating to Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses discussed in Part Two. It is expected that application of this historically and theologically grounded Christian doctrine will have the potential to make a meaningful contribution, and offer direction, to the ongoing conversation between Christian thinkers and contemporary spirituality and result in ‘new insights for belief and action.’\textsuperscript{9} It is

\textsuperscript{5} Don Browning, \textit{A Fundamental Practical Theology} (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), pp. 44-54.
\textsuperscript{7} Lynch, \textit{Understanding Theology}, pp. 106-108.
further hoped that the findings of this research will not only contribute to contemporary Christian mission, but will act as a basis for further research.

**Literature Review**

This thesis is essentially a conversation between proponents of contemporary non-religious spirituality, Christian missiologists, and John Wesley. As such it is a literature-based thesis. Consequently, there are three main categories of interlocutors, all chosen for their expertise in their field. This literature review identifies the key interlocutors in each category and offers an explanation for their selection.

**Proponents of Contemporary Non-religious Spirituality**

The contributing proponents of contemporary spirituality have been selected for their expertise in this relatively new arena. Additionally, these interlocutors have been selected because each demonstrates a unique perspective, whilst also ascribing to the wider scope of the recurring themes that represent contemporary spirituality as it stands at the moment. A brief summary of their personal spiritual journey is recorded here, providing the background for the development of their spiritual convictions.

**William Bloom**

Doctor Bloom is one of Britain’s leading proponents, educators and authors in a holistic approach to health, well-being and spirituality. He is a practitioner of contemporary spirituality. His spiritual journey took him from a Jewish and Lutheran background, through an exploration in Eastern and tribal spiritualties, to further study, including three years psychoanalysis. He recalls spiritual experiences in nature as a child and came to realise that there was spiritual strength within him.\(^{10}\)

In *The Power of Modern Spirituality*, Bloom promotes an accessible, individual, experiential and holistic, nonreligious spirituality with benefits for well-being as people connect to the wonder and energy of life. He is particularly interested in spiritual experience within the context of nature and the cosmos.\(^{11}\) His book explains a process of spiritual fulfilment that enables spiritual seekers to choose and develop their spiritual pathway based on their individual personal spiritual experience. This spiritual pathway is

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\(^{11}\) Bloom, *Power*, pp. 3-5, p. 39, and Chapter 3.
drawn from an eclectic mix of all Bloom finds wholesome in the spiritual arena.\textsuperscript{12} All of these aspects hold significance for this thesis.

**Nicolya Christi**

Nicolya Christi is described as ‘an author, visionary, and evolutionary guide.’\textsuperscript{13} She is a proponent and practitioner of contemporary spirituality.\textsuperscript{14} After undertaking intensive training in psychosynthesis, Christi embarked on further training which she identifies as the ‘single most profound and transformational experience’ of her life\textsuperscript{15}.

Christi asserts that spiritual development has its genesis in conscious evolution, meaning the capacity for human beings to evolve consciously and not simply by chance.\textsuperscript{16} She upholds consciousness as the spiritual source.\textsuperscript{17} For Christi, awakening to one’s true consciousness will ultimately enable personal fulfilment.\textsuperscript{18} Within this thesis Christi’s voice contributes to the conversation concerning creation spirituality,\textsuperscript{19} individualism, freedom and choice,\textsuperscript{20} innate spiritual perception,\textsuperscript{21} the sacred within,\textsuperscript{22} a call to community,\textsuperscript{23} and religious pluralism.\textsuperscript{24}

**Lama Surya Das**

Lama Surya Das embraces contemporary spirituality. His unique contribution to this thesis is that his voice is added specifically from within a continuing alignment to Buddhism which he has integrated with the contemporary spirituality arena. He has been selected as an example of how, in embracing the motifs of contemporary spirituality, a specific religious outlook can engage with contemporary spiritual seekers and yet direct them towards that specific outlook.\textsuperscript{25} Das contributes to the arguments for creation spirituality,\textsuperscript{26} innate spiritual perception,\textsuperscript{27} the sacred within,\textsuperscript{28} and a call to community.\textsuperscript{29}

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\textsuperscript{12} Bloom, *Power*, pp. 4-5.  
\textsuperscript{13} Nicolya Christi, *Contemporary Spirituality For An Evolving World* (Rochester: Bear and Company, 2013), back cover.  
\textsuperscript{14} Christi, *Evolving World*, pp. 92-96.  
\textsuperscript{17} Christi, *Evolving World*, p. 6-7.  
\textsuperscript{19} Part One, p. 32.  
\textsuperscript{20} Part One, p. 39.  
\textsuperscript{21} Part One, pp. 43-44.  
\textsuperscript{22} Part One, p. 57.  
\textsuperscript{23} Part One, pp. 59-60.  
\textsuperscript{24} Part One, p. 63.  
\textsuperscript{26} Part One, p. 32.  
\textsuperscript{27} Part One, p. 43.
David Tacey

Professor Tacey is a leading proponent and practitioner of contemporary spirituality. He is an enquirer, author and university lecturer in modern spirituality, psychology and culture. Raised in Australia with a Western education and British colonial upbringing, Tacey describes himself as ‘mystical, anti-fundamentalist and humanist.’ His spiritual journey took him from the Christian West, through Aboriginal indigenous religion, to the Jungian tradition of depth psychology. Tacey advocates a spirituality that is formed within the individual, is multifaceted, accessible, experiential, intimate and transformational, all of which hold significance for this thesis. *The Spirituality Revolution* seeks to demonstrate how individuals might experience spirituality and fulfilment through connecting with their inner spiritual force. It presents a cultural overview and offers both spiritual direction and pitfalls for contemporary spiritual seekers. A number of these are referenced throughout Part One of this thesis.

Throughout his book, Tacey raises some criticisms of what he calls traditional religions, including Christianity, often based on personal experience. He is particularly critical of the Roman Catholic Church, of which he has had experience at Parish level. Whilst not wishing to raise an attack on the Roman Catholic tradition, the issues that are an antinomy to Tacey concerning the conveyance of grace, or experience of spirit, through the ecclesial mediation of grace are addressed within this thesis.

Contemporary Christian Respondents

Tim Dearborn

Professor Dearborn has wide experience as an author, pastor, professor of theology, mission and social ethics. His heart is to enable people to participate in God’s mission and meaningfully reach out in the love of God. *Taste and See* has been selected for its pragmatic approach to spirituality. Dearborn calls for a ‘visible theology,’ where the knowledge of God is made evident to our senses. It makes a practical connection between

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28 Part One, p. 56.
29 Part One, p. 60.
31 Currently Academic Professor at the La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.
37 Dearborn, *Taste and See*, pp. 51-71; p. 87.
38 Dearborn, *Taste and See*, p. 10.
the physical senses and the spiritual senses, and links this to the practice of spirituality.\textsuperscript{39} Dearborn’s insights make a meaningful contribution to the conversation between contemporary spirituality and the spiritual senses.

**David Hay**

Doctor Hay is a zoologist who has a keen interest in human spirituality. His life’s works in this respect took an interdisciplinary route. Out of his publications, *Something There*\textsuperscript{40} has been specifically selected as significant for this thesis as it summarises a number of his key areas of research. Hay has been selected as a contributor to the contemporary Christian response as he acknowledges that, in addition to being a scientist, he comes from a position of Christian faith.\textsuperscript{41}

Part One of *Something There*, summarises Hay’s extensive empirical research into the wideness and variety of spiritual experience in Britain at the turn of the millennium. Part Two widens the conversation to explore spirituality in the light of the individual, culture and religion in order to discover whether spirituality exceeds traditional parameters. When these aspects are woven together, Hay concludes that spirituality is a primordial attribute that is present within the human species. Part Three offers a summary of supporting material from science, history, philosophy, psychology, economics and culture. Chapter nine particularly summarises the spiritual state of the Western world, weaving multiple strands together from the Renaissance to the present day. In the light of the preceding evidence, in Part Four, Hay proceeds to offer suggestions for a new approach to spirituality in Western culture.

Part One of this thesis demonstrates that Hay’s argument correlates with the key foci of contemporary spirituality. Whilst Hay offers a well-presented argument concerning the primordial nature of human spirituality, his argument falls short of offering a theological rationale concerning exactly how this might work. The critical conversation in Part Three offers a theological solution, drawn from Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses, which underpins Hay’s assertion concerning a primordial spirituality.

\textsuperscript{39} Dearborn, *Taste and See*, p. 62, p. 66, p. 67, p. 70, p. 74, p. 80, p. 82, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{41} Hay, *Something There*, p. 244.
Gordon Lynch

Professor Lynch is a leading authority in the changing patterns of modern religion and culture. Out of his extensive works, *Understanding Theology* and *The New Spirituality* have been selected as contributors to this thesis, as they contain sufficient summaries and developments of his thinking to speak meaningfully into the conversation with contemporary spirituality. Lynch has a keen interest to enable a developing and ongoing conversation between culture and religion. In *Understanding Theology*, he develops Browning’s revised correlation and offers helpful steps to guide its use. This thesis is built around Lynch’s adaptation of this methodology.

Lynch acknowledges two personal interests in writing *The New Spirituality*; firstly as an objective academic researcher, and secondly as a participant in progressive spirituality, and he notes the complexities of being more than a neutral observer. Nevertheless, whilst the book is brimming with academic rigour, it reads as a handbook for progressive spirituality and Lynch’s alignment to that particular phenomenon is very apparent. On occasions he presents an alternative perspective that would doubtless be challenged by the mainstream. The unique contribution to this thesis is the apparent connection between what Lynch offers in *The New Spirituality*, and his desire to correlate Christianity with popular culture, as indicated in *Understanding Theology*. Consequently, within this thesis Lynch’s contribution is placed within the contemporary Christian responses.

Philip. F. Sheldrake

Professor Sheldrake has contributed to the field of Christian spirituality for thirty-seven years. He is a teacher and author who specialises in the history, theology and practice of Christian spirituality. From his extensive works, *Explorations in Spirituality* has been selected particularly for its introductory essay, which sets spirituality in the context of Western culture and defines its Christian genesis. Further contributions in this thesis are drawn from Chapter Three, where Sheldrake highlights a broadening in theological method which incorporates experience and practice, values and lifestyles, transformation and development.

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47 Part One, p. 40.
relationship with the divine, into theological reflection and practice. Further contributions are gleaned from Chapter Six, which highlights the practical implications of a genuine Christian spiritual life that should be lived out within the context of practical ministry to the wider community.

Wesleyan Theologians

Kenneth J. Collins

Professor Collins is an academic with a keen interest in Wesleyan studies. Amongst his publications two have been selected for this thesis, namely *The Scripture Way of Salvation* and *The Theology of John Wesley*. Collins offers a critical voice to the claims of Outler and Maddox concerning Wesley’s use of the Eastern metaphors, particularly in the area of soteriology. Part Two of this thesis highlights the Maddox/Collins debate in the context of Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses.

Richard Heitzenrater

In addition to being an academic and world-renowned Wesleyan expert, having edited Wesley’s *Works*, Professor Heitzenrater is an author, lecturer and Christian minister. Within this thesis Heitzenrater offers an alternative view to the debate concerning Wesley’s use of the Eastern Fathers.

Randy L. Maddox

Professor Maddox is an academic and an ordained Christian elder. His primary academic interest is in the theology of John and Charles Wesley and theological developments in the later Methodist/Wesleyan tradition. Maddox acknowledges the potential role of the spiritual senses, particularly in revelation and the perceptibility of grace. He is a strong advocate concerning influence of the early Eastern Fathers in Wesley’s thinking, and his voice offers a significant contribution to the critical conversation in this regard.

Additionally, within this thesis, Maddox’s observations are used as a counter argument to both Theodore Runyon and Kenneth Collins. There is a debate between Maddox and

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Collins concerning concepts of grace within Eastern and Western theology and Wesley’s utilisation of this. When the spiritual senses are added to the equation, this debate holds significance for the correlation between the spiritual senses and contemporary spirituality, and it is highlighted accordingly. Although some of the views of Collins are upheld, this thesis argues that, within his use of the spiritual senses, Wesley emphasised the Eastern motifs, and that this correlates with the key motifs of contemporary spirituality. Nevertheless, some of the areas where Maddox goes beyond Wesley are questioned. Maddox’s voice offers an additional contribution in the conversations throughout Part Two and Part Three.

Rex Dale Matthews

Doctor Matthews’ thesis recognizes the spiritual senses as the place where Wesley grounds, ‘all our knowledge of God.’ Matthews particularly acknowledges the centrality of the concept of the spiritual senses to Wesley’s overall theological premise. Within this thesis Matthews’ voice contributes to the conversation concerning Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses, empiricism and Wesley’s alternate concept to innate spiritual perception.

Mark T. Mealey

For Doctor Mealey, the spiritual senses function within the Christian as ‘the reception of the supernatural habit of grace,’ bringing about an immediate experience of God. Furthermore, for Mealey, this knowledge is received directly within the Christian, in the same way as through the physical senses, and demands immediate cognitive assent, rendering it intuitive, or natural. Mealey’s contribution has been added as he brings an alternative voice to the conversation.

Albert Cook Outler

No substantive work on John Wesley would be complete without the inclusion of Professor Albert Outler. He was a Methodist pastor and world-renowned Wesleyan theologian, having contributed to Wesley’s Works. He understands Wesley’s spiritual senses as ‘An

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55 Part Two, pp. 113. -114; Part Three, p. 182.
57 Part Two, p.107-108; Part Three, p. 156.
58 Part Three, p. 158.
especial emphasis in Wesley’s theory of religious knowledge…”\(^{62}\) Outler’s contribution can be seen throughout this thesis and particularly in the debate concerning the linking of Wesley’s doctrine of perfection to ancient Eastern metaphors.

**Theodore Runyon**

Professor Runyon has wide experience as a Christian minister and in academia.\(^{63}\) His main area of interest and publication is in systematic theology. In *The New Creation*,\(^ {64}\) Runyon is interested in both the theological foundations and the experiential underpinnings of Wesleyan texts that make his thinking relevant for today.\(^ {65}\) Within this epistemology, Runyon offers a short but fluid overview of Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses. For Runyon, the spiritual senses enable the perception of divine grace, enabling human perception of the revelation of God’s love, and ultimately facilitating the understanding of revelation and faith. The spiritual senses are therefore central to Wesley’s understanding of the Christian life.\(^ {66}\) Runyon’s voice contributes to the conversations throughout Part Two and Part Three.

Whilst those identified above are the key interlocutors in this thesis, their contributions are supplemented by others who play a lesser, but nevertheless important role, in either supporting or challenging the claims of the key interlocutors. Brief biographical details are offered within the body of the thesis.


\(^{63}\) Pitts Theology Library, Archives, EMORY University, Candler School of Theology, Rita, Atlanta, Georgia 30322 USA and Manuscripts Department. http://pitts.emory.edu/archives/text/mss322.html


\(^{66}\) Runyon, *New Creation*, p. 79.
PART ONE

THE QUEST FOR SPIRITUAL ENGAGEMENT IN POSTMODERN CULTURE

INTRODUCTION

There has been a shift in the West, where the term *spirituality* has taken on a new prevalence. This shift has been acknowledged within the scientific, anthropological, contemporary spirituality and Christian arenas. Following extensive research from within the scientific field Hay notes ‘an astonishing surge of interest in spirituality throughout the Western world.’¹ In anthropology, Paul Hiebert sees this as a rapidly spreading ‘new view of the world,’ that promises to fulfil the Western search for personal well-being and success.² Within contemporary spirituality, Tacey notes a new interest in the ‘reality of spirit.’³ Ewert Cousins refers to a ‘spiritual awakening in the West.’⁴ Christi argues that it is a ‘global evolution.’⁵ Bloom notes a ‘rise of spiritual temperature.’⁶ Clive and Jane Erricker⁷ refer to this increase in spiritual awareness as ‘possibly the most significant challenge we face our contemporary world.’⁸

Within the Christian arena, Sheldrake agrees that the term ‘spirituality’ has increasing currency within the contemporary West.⁹ Lynch speaks of changing patterns in religion and spirituality in the West that are developing across and beyond a range of religious traditions.¹⁰ Dearborn responds to a sensory-orientated world where people long to encounter the spiritual.¹¹ Following extensive empirical research, Yvonne Richmond¹² notes a new spiritual awareness in people of no apparent faith.¹³ A report by the Pontifical Working Group on New Religious Movements, that aimed to educate on contemporary forms of spirituality, noted that ‘In Western culture in particular, the appeal of

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¹ Hay, *Something There*, p. xi.
⁷ Clive and Jane Erricker are both academics and authors with a keen interest in religion and spirituality.
¹² Yvonne Richmond is a researcher and ordained Christian minister.
“alternative” approaches to spirituality is very strong. This noted increase in spiritual temperature has given rise to a new phenomenon that has become known as contemporary spirituality. Experts in this field attribute this new way of approaching spirituality to have emerged out of the failure of the modernity project and the corresponding rise of postmodernity.

**Contemporary Nonreligious Spirituality**

Tacey describes contemporary spirituality as an ‘individual quest for meaning,’ that is embarked upon ‘outside the formalised traditions.’ However, due to multiple uses of the term, its meaning can be ambiguous. It is therefore appropriate to offer an explanation of how the term ‘contemporary spirituality’ will be used within this thesis.

Tacey acknowledges the ambiguity of the term. Citing Jacques Derrida’s assertion that ‘Today the word “religion” is inadequate’ to describe spiritual experience, Tacey suggests that the term Derrida is searching for is ‘spirituality.’ David Elkins calls people to discover spirituality beyond the constraints of religion, offering a foundation for a new nonreligious spirituality where the terms soul, sacred and spirituality are redefined in nonreligious ways and are accessible to every human being. Following a declaration that traditional religion has been discredited, Tacey proceeds to offer an overview that redefines spirituality. For Tacey, ‘spirituality’ is an umbrella term for an all-embracing, inclusive spirituality, which is separated from religion. It is about a ‘relationship with the sacredness of life, nature and the universe,’ that is not confined to religious rites and practice. As such, contemporary spirituality has ‘superseded religion,’ and is promoted as a new, higher authority that Tacey terms ‘a kind of people’s religion called spirituality.’

Contemporary spirituality draws from the global spiritual market place. As such, it is aligned to religious pluralism in that it draws from many differing religious concepts. Yet it cherishes individualism, as each individual is encouraged to autonomously select their

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16 For example see, Bloom, *Power*, p. 12; p.18. For further references please see Appendix I.
19 Professor Elkins is an academic and author with a keen interest in nonreligious spirituality.
23 Part One, p. 63.
own spiritual construct according to their personal preferences. Consequently, there is no unified form of contemporary spirituality, but rather numerous individual contemporary spiritualities, as the spiritual construct and experience of each individual is unique. This makes drawing out the key motifs of contemporary spirituality challenging, as every proponent forms their own construct, and this is reflected in published material. In this thesis the key motifs were identified from recurring themes within the works of the various interlocutors.

Whilst Sheldrake is correct in arguing that the term ‘spirituality’ has its origins within Christianity, the term ‘contemporary spirituality’ has been used in a number of differing ways. For example, it can be used to describe accessible individual spiritual experience or nonreligious spiritual experience as above, or in reference to the New Age Movement which is part of the broader contemporary spirituality arena. It is also used to describe contemporary reflective practice within Christianity and diverse contemporary expressions of Christian spirituality. Throughout this thesis, giving priority to the language used by proponents of contemporary nonreligious spirituality in accordance with the model of revised correlation, the term ‘contemporary spirituality’ is used as an umbrella term to denote a contemporary nonreligious, all-embracing and yet individual spiritual experience as described above.

**Contemporary Spirituality and Culture**

Where might this new spirituality sit in terms of culture? Raymond Williams asserts that culture is ‘one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language.’ He notes an historical distinction between what is known as high culture, which is ‘a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development;’ and popular culture, which is ‘a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group.’

It might be applicable to discover where contemporary spirituality sits relating to culture in these terms, however thorough research into this would be beyond the scope of this thesis.

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24 Part One, pp. 39-40.
27 For example Sheldrake, *Explorations*, p. 7.
29 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, Revised Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). Raymond Williams was a cultural historian.
30 Williams, *Keywords*, p. 90.
Tacey certainly uses the term, ‘popular spirituality’, but it could be argued that, given its wider impact including the arenas of higher education, general education and welfare, contemporary spirituality might span both fields of high and popular culture. In support of this theory, Williams notes a lessening of tensions between these two fields and it would seem that this particularly could be applied to the cultural alliance of contemporary spirituality, and that its place could therefore be noted generally within the arena of contemporary culture.

Given the aforementioned rise of interest in the spiritual realm demonstrated across the cultural spectrum, from a rise in popular spirituality to a more serious academic acceptance of the spiritual dimension of humanity, how might Christian thinkers respond to the opportunities afforded by this cultural development? In the light of these cultural changes, there is a call from both sides for the development of a meaningful conversation between contemporary spirituality and Christian thinkers. This would seem a positive way forward to discovering a renewed theological and missiological foundation for engagement into the coming century.

**Methodology**

A pioneer in the development of a conversational missional methodology between culture and Christianity is Paul Tillich, who was interested in responding theologically to the questions posed by culture, with the goal of mutual benefit. Tillich’s methodology is known as the correlational approach; an approach where religious tradition is seen to correlate with the questions posed by culture and seeks to answer them. Whilst expressed in a contemporary and accessible language, Tillich’s approach takes the form of a responsive apologetic, based on his conviction that an accessible apologetic approach was the most appropriate for the situation of his day. Tillich asserted that theology should

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34 Williams, *Keywords*, p. 92.
35 For example see, Miroslav Volf & William Katerberg, ‘Retrieving Hope,’ in Miroslav Volf and William Katerberg (eds.), *The Future of Hope* (Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), p. xi. For further references please see Appendix II. Professor Volf is a theologian and author. Professor Katerberg is an academic and author with an interest in the history of religion.
37 Tillich, *Shaking*, p. i.
explore and answer the questions that culture is actually asking, rather than assuming those questions and his application is a good demonstration of his convictions. Developments of Tillich’s correlational approach can be found in the works of David Tracy and Don Browning. These approaches enable a conversation, involving questions and answers from both culture and religious tradition, in a mutually critical dialogue, which appreciates equally the contribution of both parties in terms of both questions and responses. Additionally, the method, sometimes called ‘revised correlation,’ embraces the notion that contemporary culture can be a mediator of truth and goodness. Consequently, both culture and religious tradition can learn from each other, opening up the possibility that their respective philosophies, principles and practices can be revised as a result of the conversation.

In an attempt to suggest a renewed theological and missiological foundation for spiritual engagement into the twenty-first century that is both sound and deep, and not only critiques culture but is itself developed in response to culture, this thesis will engage in theological reflection in the form of a conversation based on revised correlation. The conversation will be an attempt to discover two things. Firstly, if there might be any congruence between the proponents of contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christian respondents. Secondly, to discover if there is any scope for the role of the spiritual senses to speak into both culture and religious tradition and offer a sound way forward for future spiritual engagement.

Lynch offers a suggested methodology for those undertaking theological reflection in the form of revised correlation. Three important principles of this approach are highlighted; a demonstration of respect for the traditions of others, the potential to engage with a wide range of participants speaking from another perspective, and the potential for practical transformation within both facets. Lynch suggests the use of various questions, which this thesis will draw upon. However, the revised correlational approach allows for flexibility within the methodology applied, the exact methodology being drawn and developed from the complexity of the subject matter itself. Tillich asserts, ‘A method is a tool, literally a way around, which must be adequate to its subject matter. Whether or not a

38 Tillich, Theology of Culture, pp. 201-212.
39 As his selected sermons demonstrate, Tillich, Shaking.
41 Browning, Fundamental pp. 44-54.
42 Lynch, Understanding Theology, pp. 105-109.
43 Lynch, Understanding Theology, pp. 105-106.
method is adequate cannot be decided a priori; it is continually being decided in the cognitive process itself,’ since it is ‘an element of the reality itself.’

As detailed in the Introduction, this thesis will employ Lynch’s methodology in order to progress through the three stages of revised correlation. Stage one, ‘descriptive theology,’ will explore the horizon of contemporary spirituality; stage two, ‘historical theology,’ will examine John Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses; and stage three, ‘systematic theology,’ will correlate and synthesise the two horizons with the aim of gleaning new insights for belief and action.

Lynch notes that the revised correlational approach is not a prescribed process, but that the process followed must be developed by the researcher in relation to the specific concept being explored. The missiological focus of this thesis attempts to correlate and synthesise an interaction of the scholarly and philosophical works of practitioners of contemporary spirituality, the theological views of contemporary missiologists, scientists and philosophers, and the historical works of John Wesley in order to discover the potential role of the spiritual senses in contemporary mission. In this respect, this thesis offers a Western view of ‘contemporary nonreligious spirituality,’ that is drawn from the literary works of theology and philosophy, rather than ethnography.

What follows in relation to contemporary spirituality, is a summary of literary research conducted under the revised correlational heading ‘descriptive theology,’ and using the methodology suggested by Lynch. In order to fit the model, the theme of contemporary spirituality will be ‘described “on its own terms” without reference to external religious or ethical judgements,’ in order to ‘draw clearer description of their concerns, beliefs, values, practices and experiences.’ Therefore, as reflected in the title, the content of Part One contains less critique and more description. Nevertheless, contemporary Christian responses are highlighted in order to note correlations or divergences between contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christian thinkers. These will be carried forward to form part of the critical conversation in Part Three.

Proponents of contemporary spirituality note a shift in Western society. Where there was once a spiritual void, proponents of contemporary spirituality assert that people are beginning, in increasing measure, to demonstrate a hunger and acknowledge their need, for spiritual engagement. Tacey asserts that where once the interests of modernity precluded people from acknowledging spiritual interest, there is now a return of spiritual impulse giving people the freedom to openly express spiritual interests and needs. Bloom notes an upsurge in spiritual awareness, with a corresponding search for meaning that reaches beyond the familiar secular and religious norms. Tacey acknowledges the challenge of gathering accurate statistics, with some strong criticism of what he calls ‘institutions,’ who he claims fail to issue them because they ‘do not like to notice them.’ However, there is evidence of extensive research undertaken within contemporary Christian mission and the scientific arena, which confirms a rise of interest in spirituality.

Many proponents of contemporary spirituality agree that this significant rise in spiritual interest is perceived to have emerged out of the modernity project and secularism. Bloom argues that people have responded, and continue to respond, to the failure of these projects to deliver on their promises. Tacey argues that this rise in spiritual interest is a reaction to society’s failure to adequately assess and satisfy humanity’s natural spiritual yearning, and offer any meaningful alternative. Furthermore, he asserts that people no longer wholeheartedly and uncritically accept the claim that science, politics and reason will usher in progress, deliver a better world free from religious myths and impulses, and bring freedom, health, progress, financial stability and prosperity. Erricker adds spiritual benefit to the frame.

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50 Martin Robinson and Dwight Smith, *Invading Secular Space* (London: Monarch Books, 2003), p. 123. Dr. Robinson is a Christian minister and author. For further references please see Appendix III.
Thus, Tacey claims, the secular age has lost its reputation and the human spirit that has been repressed for so long has responded.\textsuperscript{56} Christi calls for a departure from the hitherto recognised and respected social order as contemporary spirituality rises to meet the spiritual needs of humanity.\textsuperscript{57} However, the failure and loss of confidence in modernity is not the only reason cited for this upsurge in spiritual interest. Here proponents of contemporary spirituality begin to express their autonomous views, a feature that will become evident throughout this thesis.

Christi refers to a ‘psychological and conscious evolution,’ within both the self and the collective, that is stirring the awareness for a ‘more authentic expression of spirituality and speaks to who we are now in the twenty-first century.’\textsuperscript{58} Cousins notes an awakening with the arrival of alternative spiritual understandings from the East in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{59} Bloom highlights changes in educational practice and the free flow of information across the World Wide Web. These have given rise to increased self-awareness and resulted in a variety of knowledge and practices that have produced unprecedented changes in Western society, not least to spirituality.\textsuperscript{60} Tacey claims that it is all a matter of faith. He asserts that as people lose faith in the institutions of the enlightenment such as politics, science, humanism and the church, they emerge ‘ready to reconsider what [they] had once thrown out: religion and spirituality,’\textsuperscript{61} and this spirituality is directed by the ‘individual conscience.’\textsuperscript{62}

Whatever the origin, this surge of interest in spirituality could provide the opportunity for a robust debate between people who are embarking on of the new form of spirituality and those who have been guardians of the faith for centuries, particularly Christian thinkers. But proponents of contemporary spirituality argue that the church remains largely introspective, even in its attempt to respond to the current climate. In the light of the claim that contemporary spiritual seekers are not primarily interested in attending traditional church, Tacey perceives a dogmatic attitude and reactions of self-protection, defensiveness, suspicion, confusion, judgementalism and fear within institutional religion.\textsuperscript{63} He concludes that these defensive reactions are because this new spiritual

\textsuperscript{56} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, pp. 16-18.
\textsuperscript{57} Christi, \textit{Evolving World}, pp. 218-225.
\textsuperscript{58} Christi, \textit{Evolving World}, pp. 18-19.
\textsuperscript{59} Cousins, ‘Forward,’ in \textit{Contemporary Spiritualities} p. xi.
\textsuperscript{60} Bloom, \textit{Power}, pp. 16-20.
\textsuperscript{61} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{62} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{63} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 21.
expression clearly does not fit within its defined religious systems and doctrines. Christi highlights the distortions of traditional religions, philosophies and spiritual ideals that, she asserts, held humanity in a vice-like grip for thousands of years. She further claims that the traditional religions have sought to guide human beings through a misinterpretation of sacred texts, and to control with rules and regulations designed to manipulate the mass consciousness. Christi asserts that this has left humanity exposed to ‘a version of worship and religion that has had the pure heart ripped out of it,’ and she identifies that heart as ‘love.’

Here proponents of contemporary spirituality are voicing strong criticisms, often based on generalisations with little evidence offered to support such views. The following sections offer some selected contemporary Christian responses in order to discover the kind of scholarly reactions that have been published, and uncover points of correlation or divergence between the views of contemporary spirituality and the contemporary Christian responses.

**Contemporary Christian Responses**

Like proponents of contemporary spirituality, Christian scholars acknowledge a rise in spiritual temperature in recent years, and cite the shift from modernity to postmodernity as a key factor for the change of spiritual climate in the West. Hay argues that enlightenment thought was a major influence to the ‘extreme form’ of scepticism and hostility concerning religious experience that resulted in the ‘social destruction of spirituality’ in Europe. Hay’s research confirms the rise of interest in personal spirituality amongst those who do not attend church and have no interest in traditional religion. Furthermore, Maidstone acknowledges that this rise in spiritual interest is a key factor in changed and changing attitudes towards the church. Stephen Croft, Yvonne Richmond, Anne Richards and Rob Frost assert that the current cultural climate presents a missional opportunity.

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70 Steven Croft, ‘Preface’ in *Spiritual Age*, pp. xi-xii. Bishop Croft is an academic and author.
71 Richmond, ‘A Spiritual Snapshot’ p.15.
72 Anne Richards, ‘Reflections,’ in *Spiritual Age*, pp. 59-60. At the time of publication, Ann Richards was Mission Theology Advisor to the Archbishops Council.
It is from within this state of flux, between the ‘what was,’ of modernity and the ‘what is to come,’ of postmodernity that contemporary Christian thinkers attempt to respond to the ongoing cultural shift. However, Christian respondents note that they are faced with huge challenges. Daniel Johnson and Graham Cray both cite the challenge of blindness within some branches of the church concerning their alignment to the ideals of modernity and postmodernity. Robinson and Smith cite a continued search within some Christian circles to find a solution in a cultural structure that no longer exists. Alan Roxburgh notes a failure, by some, to respond to this new and developing cultural environment. These are all cited as reasons for the opening of the gap in spiritual exploration which has been filled by contemporary spirituality. However, Green and Robinson note that the church has been confronted by cultural change throughout its history and survived, indicating its resilience and adaptability. Moreover, there is strong evidence within contemporary Christianity of encouraging attempts to respond to the current cultural challenge.

The following section will continue to follow the ‘descriptive theology’ methodology outlined above, with the topic of contemporary spirituality being ‘described “on its own terms.”’ A requirement of the methodology is that reference to religious or ethical judgements should be kept to a minimum. Here the diverse voices of proponents of contemporary spirituality lead the conversation within selected themes. The following headings, reflecting recurring themes derived from the literary research into contemporary spirituality, will be used; Creation Spirituality; Individualism, Freedom and Choice; Innate Spiritual Perception; The Physical Senses and Spirituality; The Sacred Within; and Religious Pluralism. Each heading will contain some contemporary Christian responses in order to discover and note any correlation or divergence. This conversation will be carried forward to Part Three with the aim of entering into a developing critical conversation between contemporary spirituality, contemporary Christian thinkers and the historical theology of the spiritual senses presented in Part Two.

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73 Rob Frost, ‘Evangelism Beyond the Fringes,’ in *Spiritual Age*, p. 100. Rob Frost was involved in interdenominational Christian ministry and was an author.
1. CREATION SPIRITUALITY

Bloom notes that the new spirituality is ‘creation-centred.’ In this arena, nature becomes the major environment where people can achieve a sense of enjoyment in spiritual connection. He experiences spirituality in nature has a particular significance for Bloom, who speaks of connecting with the ‘wonder and energy of life,’ with ‘all that is’ ‘creation, existence, the cosmos, the natural world.’ He draws out the sensations and feelings, the ‘awareness’ associated with this connection asserting that ‘This is not an intellectual issue…It is simply about remembering and coming home to your awareness that there is a wonder to life.’ Bloom further asserts that the accessible spiritual renewal, that is available within nature, carries with it the possibility of personal transformation, healing and well-being. This offers the potential of wider impact that would benefit people and the natural world.

In developing their spiritual pathways, seekers are particularly encouraged to draw on Earth Mysteries that find spiritual connection with the natural order. These include Sacred Land, Feng Shui, Sacred Geometry, Megaliths and Earthworks, Archeoastronomy, Earth Energies, Landscape Lands and Green Spirituality. Each of these has associations with wider spiritual ideologies, many of which find their roots in ancient ideologies, spreading the search for spiritual fulfillment further still. These would include, but are not exclusive to, Australian Aboriginal spirituality, Native American spirituality, Buddhist spiritual texts, I. Ching, Chinese astrology, traditional Chinese medicine, Ancient Egyptian Wisdom, Mayan Prophecy, Ayurveda, Energy, Shamanism, Paganism, Wicca, Fairies and The Goddess. Bloom particularly calls for a response from the traditional religions concerning the ‘invisible mechanics’ of spiritual engagement.

Tacey concurs that there is great interest in ancient religious practices and cults. He notes that contemporary spirituality is an emerging mode of spiritual enrichment that offers a credible form of ‘new personal religion’ for the twenty-first century. He asserts that it is concerned with human connectedness and relatedness to other realities and existences and

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81 Bloom, Power, p. 42.
82 Bloom, Power, p. 39.
83 Bloom, Power, p. 40.
84 Bloom, Power, pp. 40-41.
85 Bloom, Power, p. 8; Tacey, Spirituality Revolution, p. 187.
seeks ‘relationship with the sacredness of life, nature and the universe.’ Here, it is argued, spirituality is not confined to specific locations but rather is accessible and readily available to everyone. Tacey notes that peak, transformational and pivotal experiences of the sacred are frequently recounted in ‘rural districts… parks, deserts, mountains or beside the sea.’

Both Bloom and Tacey assert that there is a strong connection between human experience and creation where the immanence of the sacred, accessible as a universal incarnational presence, can be sensed which calls people to strive for wholeness and integration. Tacey reminds us that ‘The world itself is revelatory of God’s presence’ and God ‘reveals itself… in the minor revelations of everyday life.’ Affirming the importance of nature and drawing from Buddhism, Das suggests that meditating within nature is a pathway that is useful for connecting with the natural inner Buddha.

From within the context of this eco-spirituality flows recognition of the fragility of the world, a renewed sense of environmental and ecological urgency and recognition of the responsibility to care for creation. Tacey, using the language of witchcraft and spells, suggests that this renewed sense of love for the earth might flow from intelligent forces in the universe, or Gaia, the Earth Mother, or the feminine face of the divine. Christi highlights sustainability as one of the six core values in our evolving world. Whatever the source, people are drawn to care for nature in a renewed and practical manner.

Arising out of this concern for ecological preservation Tacey raises a criticism against the church which, he argues, has not enough to say about experience of the sacred in creation or how to live in harmony with nature. Furthermore, he notes that the church has claimed ‘power and “dominion”’ over the earth for too long. There is a corresponding call for the development of a spirituality that helps people to understand their place in creation and

90 Tacey, *Spirituality Revolution*, p. 81.
92 Tacey, *Spirituality Revolution*, p. 79.
95 Tacey, *Spirituality Revolution*, p. 182.
their oneness with it.\textsuperscript{98} Here two areas of interest warrant a response, firstly ecological concerns, followed by accessible spirituality.

\textbf{Contemporary Christian Responses}

\textbf{i. Ecological Concerns}

Jurgen Moltmann makes a strong counter argument to Tacey’s critique concerning the church’s lack of action in ecological matters. He points out that other arenas have equally claimed superiority over nature, particularly modernity and progress, specifically, science and technology. Here, it is argued that science itself has established human beings as the image of God and claimed power and dominion over nature\textsuperscript{99} with the resultant destruction of nature in terms of environmental damage.\textsuperscript{100} Consequently one of the greatest threats in respect of potential global disaster is now ‘human in origin.’\textsuperscript{101}

Noting that one of the goals of progress and the globalization of human power is ‘to make the earth habitable, not to dominate and possess it,’\textsuperscript{102} Moltmann suggests a theological response. He refocuses the term ‘ecumenism’, drawing out its meaning in Greek ‘\textit{oikoumene},’ meaning ‘the whole, inhabited globe.’ He proceeds to use this as a model to correct the course of the modern world’s development.\textsuperscript{103} Moltmann argues that the aim of true ecumenism should be ‘to make a keeping fit for the dwelling of human beings.’\textsuperscript{104} Therefore human beings should be willing to dwell peaceably with the ecosystem and not act in ways that are hostile to its well-being and ultimately its longevity.

However, just over fifty years ago Lynn White\textsuperscript{105} introduced his influential paper wherein he explored the roots of the world’s ecological crisis.\textsuperscript{106} Taking an historical anthropological approach, he traces ecological destruction in northern Europe back to the seventh century and acknowledges the consequential role of modern Western technological and scientific progress in the increasingly developing crisis.\textsuperscript{107} Whilst acknowledging the contributions of science and technology, White insists that the solution to the crisis could

\textsuperscript{98} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, pp. 78-80.
\textsuperscript{99} Moltmann, ‘Progress and Abyss,’ in \textit{The Future of Hope}, pp. 6-7; Johnson, ‘Contrary Hopes,’ pp. 43-44.
\textsuperscript{100} Moltmann, ‘Progress and Abyss,’ pp. 13-14.
\textsuperscript{101} Johnson, ‘Contrary Hopes,’ pp. 43-44.
\textsuperscript{102} Moltmann, ‘Progress and Abyss,’ p. 25.
\textsuperscript{103} Moltmann, ‘Progress and Abyss,’ p. 24.
\textsuperscript{104} Moltmann, ‘Progress and Abyss,’ p. 24.
\textsuperscript{105} Professor White was an academic and historian with a personal and professional interest in the impact of Christianity upon history and technology.
\textsuperscript{107} White, ‘Historical Roots,’ pp. 2-3.
only be discovered in addressing the fundamental human attitudes and practice upon which science and technology are based. Drawing from an interpretation of the biblical creation story where humankind was given dominion over nature to exploit it for their own purposes, he traces the practical outworking of this anthropological approach through history.\textsuperscript{108} He furthermore aligns these fundamental approaches, drawn from within the Judeo-Christian heritage, as those that underpin science and technology.\textsuperscript{109} Asserting that, since the roots of the ecological crisis find their origin in religion, the remedy must be essentially religious, White suggests adopting an approach where ‘the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man’ is rejected.\textsuperscript{110} He commends an approach drawn from Saint Francis of Assisi who tried to ‘substitute the idea of the equality of all creatures, including mankind, for the idea of man’s limitless rule of creation.’\textsuperscript{111}

Decades later the church’s slow response and historical and theological failings regarding humankind’s relationship to nature continues to be acknowledged from within, alongside the continuing environmental failings of science and technology. In acknowledging an ongoing need to move forward in addressing ecological concerns, these views concur with Tacey’s critique concerning the church’s slow response to the ongoing ecological crisis and also with the need to resolve the crisis theologically, scientifically, and in practice. This correlates with contemporary spirituality’s focus on environmental concerns, and raises a call for all people to enter into meaningful discussion and join in intentional action regarding the future of our planet.

Some examples of this approach in action would include firstly, Forest Church, a Fresh Expression of church. A Fresh Expression of church is a recognised term to describe an innovative, mission-focused and culturally relevant form of church that is established primarily for the benefit of people who do not attend church. This form of church is not traditional in its form, but rather presents as a new and alternative way of being church.\textsuperscript{112} Forest Church aims to journey with all seekers of any tradition or none, participating in creation with the ultimate goal of experiencing moments of wonder which might lead to the divine revelation of the Lordship of Jesus.\textsuperscript{113} Forest Church offers an environment

\textsuperscript{108} White, ‘Historical Roots,’ pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{109} White, ‘Historical Roots,’ pp. 4-5.
\textsuperscript{110} White, ‘Historical Roots,’ p. 6.
\textsuperscript{111} White, ‘Historical Roots,’ p. 6.
\textsuperscript{113} http://www.mysticchrist.co.uk/forest_church. Accessed on 4th October 2015.
consistent with the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers, including a concern for ecology.\textsuperscript{114} Furthermore, it presents the opportunity for individuals to decide if this is a meaningful spiritual journey for them personally, where they can choose a Christian spiritual pathway that presents an alternative to traditional form. But again it fails to engage with the deeper theological question of exactly how a connection with the divine being might occur.

Secondly, responding to the tendency for concerns with ‘green issues’ to quickly turn to a quest for an ‘eco-spiritual’ experience,\textsuperscript{115} Frost advocates a worshipful and pragmatic Christian theology that rediscovers a new awareness of the ‘holy’ in creation and a fresh acknowledgement of creator God. As with contemporary spirituality, from here flows the practice of caring for the world, alongside a focus on creating opportunities for connection and conversation with the wider community.\textsuperscript{116} Building on this, Frost offers an alternative Christian missional tool for spiritual seekers in the form of the \textit{Essence} course.\textsuperscript{117}

However, whilst \textit{Essence} presents a genuine attempt to connect on an experiential level using material drawn from nature, examination identifies that the course is ecclesiocentric. Regretfully, it assumes the spiritual seeker’s willingness to embrace Christian thought, makes a number of assumptions concerning a prior knowledge of Christian tenets, and presumes the superiority of the Christian tradition. Additionally, a deeper theological explanation of exactly how human beings and the divine might connect through nature is missing.\textsuperscript{118} Centuries earlier Wesley aligned his view of stewardship of the land with his understanding of the image of God. Part Two and Three will look at Wesley’s views in detail and attempt to find further correlation with contemporary spirituality.

\textit{ii. Accessible Spirituality}

The above responses most certainly correlate with the call from proponents of contemporary spirituality to embrace eco-spirituality. Nevertheless, they do not directly address the aspirations of contemporary spirituality that beckon for a deeper explanation of how a spiritual relationship can be directly formed with the essence of creation.\textsuperscript{119}

However, whilst the horizons of contemporary spirituality revealed a number of assertions

\textsuperscript{116} Frost, ‘Beyond the Fringes,’ p. 110-111, pp. 116-121.  
\textsuperscript{117} Frost, ‘Beyond the Fringes,’ pp. 121-124.  
\textsuperscript{118} Frost, R. \textit{Essence} (Eastbourne, Kingsway Communications and CPAS, 2001).  
to spiritual experiences in creation/cosmos/nature, there were very few suggestions from within this arena as to the deeper context of exactly how this might occur.

**Arguments from Science**

An exception is Bloom who identifies scientific developments in psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) and neuroethology where biological responses to spiritual experiences have been confirmed.\(^{120}\) Bloom goes on to affirm that spiritual connection is a natural aspect of being human\(^ {121}\) and specifically applies these scientific developments to support his personal and yet eclectic view of spirituality that draws from a variety of ideologies.\(^ {122}\)

The idea of scientific developments that support spiritual experience is upheld within contemporary Christianity. David Hay affirms the wide scientific research that has been undertaken in recent decades\(^ {123}\) and has personally conducted extensive research into human spiritual experience. He maintains that spiritual experience is unique to human beings, that it extends across the spectrum of humanity and that it is biologically ‘built in’ as a natural part of our being as part of our psychological make-up.\(^ {124}\) Hay’s argument correlates with that of contemporary spirituality as he sees spirituality as prior to religion.\(^ {125}\) Hay terms this biological process of human spirituality ‘relational consciousness.’ This is primordial spiritual awareness which, interpreted through language and culture, leads to religious and spiritual expression, or indeed represses it, as in the case of those under the influence of the tradition of the European Enlightenment.\(^ {126}\)

Here, contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity find congruence in agreeing that spirituality is a natural part of the human make-up and consequently experienced by all. Part Three will demonstrate further congruence with Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses concerning the nature of the invisible mechanics that make spirituality part of the human make-up.

Secondly, Bloom adopts Edward Wilson’s *Biophilia* which asserts that humans evolved as beings who are naturally interwoven with the intricacies of nature, and that this natural

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\(^{120}\) Bloom, *Power*, p. 72.

\(^{121}\) Bloom, *Power*, p. 42.

\(^{122}\) Bloom, *Power*, p. 73.


\(^{124}\) Hay, *Something There*, pp. 48-49, p. 142, p. 244.

\(^{125}\) Hay, *Something There*, pp. 48-49.

\(^{126}\) Hay, *Something There*, pp. 139-142.
accord with nature remains ingrained in our make-up. Bloom integrates this philosophical and scientific concept to develop an understanding of spirituality born out of humankind’s indissoluble link with the greater cosmos and explain how human beings can have a spiritual connection to the natural world. Ultimately, for Bloom, this expresses itself in ‘felt and sensational experience,’ which works in cooperation with the guidance of cognitive awareness and helps to connect people with the entire cosmos and, ultimately, with divine energy, ‘God’s body.’

From within contemporary Christianity, Adrian Smith attempts to address this issue in offering a revision of the anthropological concept that varying constructs of God are formed through the need for human beings to attribute aspects of humanity to the divine; to create God in their image. Smith asserts that it is possible to ‘create a concept of God which relates to present-day knowledge, one more akin to what science is saying based, not on an image of the human person but on the energies and fields which are the basis of all creation.’ Smith offers a new construct of God ‘as manifest energy.’ He argues that since God can only be manifest through his creation, God is creative energy. All things in the universe are interconnected through this divine energy.

Corresponding to Wilson, Smith refers to the Big Bang which was an explosion of this divine creative energy, an explosion of God’s love given in material form. Therefore creation is a continuous bursting forth of this divine energy, but this energy is a common consciousness, representing one Field of consciousness in which all human beings participate. It is through this ‘Field’ that human beings experience the flow of divine energy. Because God is the Supreme Consciousness, human beings are able ‘to feel, to know and to detect energy,’ and Christ’s invitation is for humanity to finally identify their consciousness with the consciousness of God. God can be known in the universe only through a faith response to experience. Smith uses a fusion of spirituality, science

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130 Bloom, *Power*, p. 73.
131 Adrian Smith is a Catholic priest and author.
133 Smith, *The Field*, p. 3.
135 Smith, *The Field*, p. 17, p. 27.
136 Smith, *The Field*, p. 43, p. 27.
137 Smith, *The Field*, p. 43.
138 Smith, *The Field*, p. 27.
139 Smith, *The Field*, p. 44.
140 Smith, *The Field*, p. 46.
and human sciences to frame his theory and, in so doing, appears to be attempting to respond to the call to find a new spiritual language that might relate to present day knowledge.

At first glance Smith appears to uphold the central tenets of Christian theology, demonstrating a strong foundational Trinitarian allegiance with ‘creative energy’ being equated to God, or spirit or grace; the ‘life force’ being the Holy Spirit; ‘divine energy’ being Christ. The ‘field’ is interconnected human consciousness with the aim that this will finally become identified with the consciousness of God, which equates to our eternal destiny, heaven. However, upon further examination Smith’s theory openly challenges and reconstructs most of the foundational tenets of the Christian faith. Areas challenged include human beings being created in the ‘image of God,’ the ‘fall,’ the ‘divinity of Christ,’ the ‘incarnation,’ the ‘cross,’ the ‘resurrection’ and the ‘new creation.’ In Smith’s hypothesis the nature of the divine is altered along with the connection between human beings and the divine. There is no room for relationship with the divine, for how can one form a relationship with an abstract entity such as energy? Furthermore, in holding such a strong bias towards science and the human sciences, Smith fails to connect with the wider scope of contemporary spirituality’s agenda regarding the forming of relationship with nature/creation/creator/the divine. Instead the belief in forming of such a relationship is openly criticised. Consequently and regretfully, Smith’s hypothesis fails to deliver in terms of the expectations of both contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity.

The above responses from contemporary Christian thinkers find some congruence with the key elements of ecological concerns and accessible spirituality. They also find a connection in arguing that spiritual experience stems from the earliest point of human development. However, they fall short in either demonstrating specifically the internal mechanics regarding how this might be so, or in offering a theological response that sits

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142 Smith, *The Field*, pp. 35-36.
143 Smith, *The Field*, pp. 69-82.
145 Smith, *The Field*, p. 70.
148 Smith, *The Field*, p. 71, pp. 75-76.
149 Smith, *The Field*, pp. 102-111.
150 Smith, *The Field*, p. 77.
152 Smith, *The Field*, p. 83.
within the central tenets of the faith and sufficiently correlates with contemporary spirituality. This thesis asserts that further exploration of Wesley’s spiritual senses will not only support but develop the response from Christian thinkers, offering a theological framework concerning the reason for humankind’s responsibility to care for creation and the source of the inner mechanics of primal spiritual awareness. The conversation will continue in Part Three.

2. **INDIVIDUALISM, FREEDOM AND CHOICE.**

Tacey draws out a key aspect of contemporary spirituality where spiritual authority is in the hands of the individual.\textsuperscript{153} Here, the individual is considered to be inherently good and sacredly embedded.\textsuperscript{154} Tacey notes the tendency towards an understanding of the individual, where it is assumed that the individual knows best and where gaining control over our personal lives is the desired outcome, and acknowledges that this attitude is a product of the ideology of individualism stemming from modernity.\textsuperscript{155} Nevertheless, for Tacey, this individualistic experience remains highly valued.\textsuperscript{156} Other proponents of contemporary spirituality emphasize the importance of the individual. Christi argues that human beings have reclaimed their human power and freedom to choose their personal spiritual route\textsuperscript{157} and this is assisted though the exploration of one’s deeper understanding of the self.\textsuperscript{158} Bloom supports an understanding of spirit as a personal encounter, which is experienced within the human being. This personal quest for spirituality, says Bloom, has placed spiritual development in the hands of the individual as opposed to being led by monks, priests, scholars, gurus, institutions or belief systems.\textsuperscript{159} He asserts that in contemporary society there is expectation of personal spiritual growth through exploration of the diverse spiritual expressions that are now widely available.\textsuperscript{160}

Although many positive experiences are recounted within the contemporary spirituality arena, Tacey conversely warns that the concept of ‘spirit’ as some kind of personal possession or inward endeavour carries with it certain risks associated with ‘operating the
spirit for our own needs. He warns of a darker side when this new form of spirituality fails to deliver on its promises. These include transferring idealistic hopes and dreams from one ideology to another; failing to recognise the sacred source of spirit and consequently inflating individual significance beyond what is normal; failing to transform spiritual energy to embrace others; and failing to utilize spiritual energy to embrace a wider public morality, social meaning and responsibility.

Here a picture is built where hope is placed in the individual. There is a cherishing of the individual that encourages the elevating of the self to divine status and an expectation that the individual instinctively knows best. Some dangers of this approach are highlighted by Tacey, who nevertheless continues to value the centrality of the individual in the spiritual life. Two headings for Christian responses are offered, firstly cherished individualism, followed by responding to the dark side.

**Contemporary Christian Responses**

**i. Cherished Individualism**

Lynch celebrates the individual’s right to personal spiritual experience and freedom of choice, including choices drawn from within religious diversity where individuals can form their personal expression of spirituality. For Lynch, the ongoing development of human beings is a natural part of the unfolding of the cosmos that derives from creation spirituality. Human beings are attuned to the divine presence and dependent upon the divine life for their existence. Progressive spirituality has a positive view of the individual and understands ‘self’ as an aspect of the divine intelligence and energy. Rather than being separated from God at Eden, the divine is ‘completely here, close with us.’ There is therefore no need for people to pursue the divine through gaining special knowledge or religious conversions. Consequently humanity’s spiritual journey is to discover the God already present.

This view correlates with contemporary spirituality’s desire for a close individual relationship with the divine, as it upholds individual rights and assumes no separation from the divine. There are aspects of Lynch’s argument that challenge the Christian tradition,
particularly individuals forming their personal expression of spirituality, a link to evolution, the ‘self’ being an aspect of the divine, no separation at Eden and no need for religious conversion. Part Three will demonstrate that Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses offers a solution that meets the aspirations of contemporary seekers whilst being more acceptable to the wider Christian tradition.

Hay upholds the importance of individuals to the Christian God who loves, cherishes and ministers to each individual to the extent that ‘God the Holy Spirit speaks to everyone,’ yet his argument falls short of offering a theological explanation about how the invisible mechanics might work. Nevertheless, he contests the view of twenty-first-century self-interest which, he argues, has ‘totally repudiated’ the development of genuine spirituality. He contends that the rise of individualism has left people bereft of the core of their humanity. The response of Christian thinkers demonstrates that there is some congruence between contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity concerning the value of the individual. This will be developed with the exploration of the potential role of the spiritual senses in Part Three.

### ii. Responding to the Dark Side

Nick Spencer’s research indicates that within contemporary society, since the world, and hence individuals are viewed as inherently good, sin is an ‘irrelevant’ concept that is not generally acknowledged or accepted. However, Tacey reminds us that all is not perfect in the world or with human beings, which is expressed in dysfunctional terms and this obliqueness can lead to the anthropological challenges noted above. Tacey, Hay and Bloom all note that this contributes to an environment which, when combined with the cultural state of flux and experimental exploration of ancient and new spiritualties, forms a volatile spiritual climate that is open to abuse, particularly from commercialism and consumerism. But whilst the term ‘sin’ is evaded, Hay’s research indicates that there is some acknowledgement of the presence of evil. Tacey acknowledges the demonic, although he portrays this as a person’s own shadow, a part of the dark side of humanity’s

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167 Hay, *Something There*, p. 244.
168 Hay, *Something There*, pp. 190-206, p. 239.
169 Nick Spencer an author and is Director of Research at the think-tank Theos.
170 Spencer, Nick, ‘Attitudes to Christianity and the Church’ in *Spiritual Age*, pp. 52-53.
inner psychic force,\textsuperscript{175} rather than a spiritual personality or force. This, of course, is contradictory to the claim that human beings are inherently good.

Within contemporary Christianity there is a growing recognition that the positive message of salvation is often presented in a negative manner. As Douglas Trotter notes, the ‘way of salvation’ is ‘sin-oriented’ and may be described as a “fight against sins.”\textsuperscript{176} Richards notes that the term ‘sin’ no longer elicits a positive human response, that it is found to be repugnant and can prevent many from exploring Christianity.\textsuperscript{177} Furthermore, Matthew Fox\textsuperscript{178} contends that the idea of original sin is a ‘dangerous’ concept that is control-orientated and can lead to low esteem, disillusionment and rejection.\textsuperscript{179} Yet forgiveness from sin remains a leading contender in proclaiming the Gospel message.\textsuperscript{180} This is certainly an area where a new language or approach is required. This thesis argues that Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses will speak into this situation and help to develop a new language and approach to the Gospel presentation. Part Three continues this exploration.

3. INNATE SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION

Tacey asserts that the concept of spirituality as an innate human need that represents a continuous thread of human nature, reaching from the creative moment through to the present, flows from creation spirituality.\textsuperscript{181} The term ‘creative moment’ is used here to denote the coming into existence of human beings, by whatever process, form or theory that might have occurred. This term has been selected as proponents of contemporary spirituality and Christian thinkers alike are accepting of some form of creator or divine/sacred/energy that exists beyond the human realm, and are accepting of diverse creation stories. Tacey further argues that society increasingly values humanity’s inherent and personal spirituality.\textsuperscript{182} Bloom concurs that people are by nature spiritual beings.\textsuperscript{183} Tacey asserts that this natural yearning for spiritual connection is more ‘primary or

\textsuperscript{175} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, pp. 26-29.
\textsuperscript{176} J. Douglas Trotter, \textit{Wholeness and Holiness: A Study in Human Ethology and the Holy Trinity} (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1945), p. 188.
\textsuperscript{177} Richards, ‘Reflections’, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{178} Matthew Fox is a controversial priest, theologian and author with a keen interest in alternative spirituality.
\textsuperscript{179} Matthew Fox, \textit{A New Reformation} (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2006), pp. 25-59.
\textsuperscript{180} For example, Nicky Gumbel, \textit{The Alpha Course: Explore The Meaning Of Life} (London: Alpha International, 1995), pp. 16-24. For further references please see Appendix IV.
\textsuperscript{182} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, pp. 18-20.
fundamental’ than organised ecclesiological religion.\(^{184}\) Bloom asserts that the idea that religious or spiritual experience can only happen within the confines of religious or sacred circumstances is being liberated.\(^{185}\)

Again, diverse applications are noted according to personal choice. For example, for Tacey, religious tradition represents ‘form.’\(^{186}\) He argues that, in the current cultural climate, this ‘form’ is working against the personal experience of spirit, favouring the gathered formality of religious institutions to any personal experience.\(^{187}\) For Tacey, traditional religion is absorbed with self-preservation, void of ongoing communication with the spirit and dwelling in a time warp. Whereas, he sees contemporary spirituality as representing ‘essence,’ all that is good in spiritual experience, bringing wholeness, inner direction and authority.\(^{188}\) For Christi, contemporary spirituality is ‘a language of the heart,’ which ‘calls upon gnosis, intuition, and a deep felt knowing…’ Thus Christi rules out reason in spiritual exploration.\(^{189}\) Bloom argues that in fact ‘we are perpetually inside a spiritual experience… all that ever changes is whether or not we are conscious of it.’ However, Bloom asserts that, upon reflection, an individual may well observe that they have actually always sensed the spiritual dimension of life.\(^{190}\) Das concurs with this but links it with others, arguing that it is upon encountering the right teaching and environment for spiritual experience, that one’s ‘soul lights up.’\(^{191}\)

There is agreement that contemporary spirituality emphasises the priority of personal experience and spiritual exploration.\(^{192}\) Tacey notes that the new spirituality does not require proof or theories about the existence of God, because the proof is within the experience.\(^{193}\) This spirituality manifests deeply and personally, touching people’s innermost being and enriching their day-to-day existence. Contemporary spiritual seekers are encouraged to follow their inner conscience and explore experience unilaterally through unlimited means including self-reflection, reading, meditation, conversations with

\(^{184}\) Tacey, *Spirituality Revolution*, p. 20.
\(^{185}\) Bloom, *Power*, p. 46.
\(^{187}\) Tacey *Spirituality Revolution*, p. 34.
\(^{189}\) Christi, *Evolving World*, p. 95.
\(^{191}\) Bloom, *Power*, p. 50.
friends, spiritual direction,\textsuperscript{194} retreats, social workshops, gatherings or by attending conferences or activist meetings.\textsuperscript{195} Tacey argues that this is in contrast to the traditional religious practice of committing to a particular expression of the faith demonstrated through adherence to doctrine, respect for clergy and weekly gathering for worship.\textsuperscript{196}

Ultimately, experience is not only the starting point but also the aim of contemporary spirituality, for it is claimed that it is through experience that its accessible, innate nature becomes manifest. Tacey argues that spiritual experience, which was once felt to be the living, emotional core of religion, has become the property of those who are not very religious. Thus Tacey asserts that ‘religious practice and religious feeling’ have ‘parted company.’\textsuperscript{197} Bloom notes that this deep accessible spirituality can be developed and has the potential to enrich one’s day to day existence\textsuperscript{198} through whatever means selected by the seeker. Proponents draw out that this would include a sense of psychological and physical well-being,\textsuperscript{199} wholeness,\textsuperscript{200} awareness,\textsuperscript{201} illumination leading to enlightenment,\textsuperscript{202} or through a deepening knowledge of one’s own psychological, conscious and spiritual evolution.\textsuperscript{203} Not only so, but Bloom argues that this renewed spiritual vigour can become a transferable experience, as others sense the radiated energy of the cosmos.\textsuperscript{204} For Das, it can be an experience of being loved consciously.\textsuperscript{205} For Christi, it is an individual psychological, conscious and spiritual evolution that restores connectedness and support to the wider psychological, conscious and spiritual evolution of the collective.\textsuperscript{206}

Continuing with his critique of traditional religions, Tacey asserts that, within ‘traditional Christianity’, personal relationship with God is not generally encouraged and spiritual connection is considered to be a rare achievement attainable only by an elite group of individuals. He asserts that this can only be achieved through self-discipline, purification, cognitive, or what he terms metaphysical means. Here Tacey is referring to rituals, ‘the offer of grace coming ‘only through the agency of God, through ritual activity and external

\textsuperscript{194} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{195} Lynch, \textit{New Spirituality}, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{196} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{197} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{198} Bloom, \textit{Power}, pp. 87-89.
\textsuperscript{199} Bloom, \textit{Power}, pp. 90-96.
\textsuperscript{200} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{201} Das, \textit{Awakening}, pp. 2-3.
\textsuperscript{204} Bloom, \textit{Power}, pp. 201-203.
\textsuperscript{205} Das, \textit{Awakening}, pp. 161-178.
authority,’ meaning the ecclesial mediation of grace.\textsuperscript{207} He raises a critique against the ‘Catholic faith,’ where he asserts that the understanding of those at parish level is that of a magical view of God and the sacramental.\textsuperscript{208} Here he contends that the priest ‘is a sort of latter-day shaman or magician who performs magic in the sacraments…turning them into the body and blood of the Redeemer.’\textsuperscript{209} He claims that, from his experience, it is this sort of supernatural model of religion that is causing many Roman Catholics to abandon their faith.\textsuperscript{210} Tacey argues that modern perception has destroyed the heart of the Catholic faith, and calls for a return to a wider understanding that the presence of God is always near, in creation, and that this close presence can be heightened and intensified in high liturgical moments.\textsuperscript{211}

Here, within the contemporary arena, a picture is formed of a concept of spirituality that is an innate human need stemming from the creative moment. There is a renewed interest in spirituality and as individuals explore their spiritual needs they can come to experience the divine in a very tangible way. Unlike traditional forms of religion, each individual’s spiritual experience is unique according to the pathway that they have chosen. Nevertheless, this spiritual experience can have an enriching effect on the lives of both individuals and communities. Strong criticism is raised against traditional religions which, it is claimed, are not accepting of accessible personal spiritual experience. This raises three points of response from within contemporary Christianity, namely innate spiritual experience, perfection, and spirituality conveyed by the ecclesial mediation of grace.

\section*{Contemporary Christian Responses}

\subsection*{i. Innate Spiritual Experience}

Building on his argument for a primordial spirituality that is a biological characteristic common in the human species, Hay argues that in consequence, this common spirituality is prior to religion. ‘Therefore there are secular as well as religious expressions of spirituality.’\textsuperscript{212} This argument is in congruence with contemporary spirituality’s quest for a spirituality that embraces all people.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{207} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, pp. 77-80, p. 23, p. 36, p. 83.
\bibitem{208} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 166.
\bibitem{210} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 167.
\bibitem{211} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 167.
\bibitem{212} Hay, \textit{Something There}, pp. 48-49.
\end{thebibliography}
Sheldrake challenges the critique of contemporary spirituality about the reluctance of the Christian tradition to embrace individual religious experience. He notes a shift in reflective practice where experience is now taken more seriously and theology has developed from focusing on ‘a deductive, transcultural, approach to reflection on the experience of God…’ leaving reflection on experience and practices ‘at the heart of theological method.’\textsuperscript{213} He goes on to list an impressive array of theologians who uphold experience as a valid spiritual route, including Bernard Lonergan, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Jurgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg.\textsuperscript{214}

Many missiologists affirm the place of experience in the contemporary spiritual search, recognising the missional opportunities that this affords. For example, Graeme Nicholson asserts that ‘Human beings experience God at points of destiny in their lives, and not only where they have sought God.’\textsuperscript{215} Richards highlights the need for the church to respect an individual’s personal journey and experiences in the respectful sharing of stories.\textsuperscript{216} Richmond notes that Graham Cray recognises the power of personal experience to draw people to faith. Nevertheless, she also notes the challenge concerning the secularization of some elements of the church that renders it incapable of responding to the current increased spiritual awareness.\textsuperscript{217} Frost’s research affirms the assertion that significant numbers of people are interested in spiritual experience\textsuperscript{218}

The fact that Christian thinkers acknowledge personal experience as a valid means of theological formation and practice indicates a limited understanding on Tacey and Bloom’s part. Furthermore, it opens the door for conversation with proponents of contemporary spirituality, particularly if Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses can add further clarity and validity to this developing argument.

Lynch understands personal experience to be the ultimate arbiter of spiritual authority. He traces its roots back through church history via the nineteenth century Romantic Movement’s celebration of the interior life, through the Calvinist’s cult of sensibility, to the Reformation’s assertion of personal authority and conscience in the reading of

\textsuperscript{213} Sheldrake, \textit{Explorations}, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{216} Richards, ‘Reflections,’ p. 73.
\textsuperscript{218} Frost, ‘Beyond the Fringes,’ p. 100.
But what exactly is the source of Lynch’s theory and what might it mean? Demonstrating an alignment with the practice of contemporary spirituality to draw from and integrate the practices of other belief systems, Lynch references Philip Shallcrass, a practicing pagan, in relation to a ‘spark of the divine essence’ inherent in every human being, and Freitas concerning the ‘inner goddess.’ Here Lynch is drawing directly from theories that come together particularly in the Druidic and Wicca practices that find their roots in ancient Celtic and Gnostic traditions. It is futile to attempt to draw out any congruence of thought or practice in relation to either the divine spark or the inner goddess since each individual is able to form their own model of the universe and follow their own construct. It is possible, however, to identify that Shallcrass relates to the goddess Ceridwen and has constructed his personal view of a goddess whom he calls Celi from whom he draws ‘divine energy,’ and also connects with the God Woden.

Lynch attempts to appropriate Shallcrass’s model of the divine energy by reconstructing it, asserting that Shallcrass’s version of the ‘divine spark’ ‘does not require liberation from the lower, material body.’ However, there is no indication that Shallcrass embraces a reconstructed, intellectualised version of Paganism as opposed to the more traditional
literal model - quite the opposite in fact. Shallcrass specifically records his initial adoption and then rejection of an intellectualised version in favour of a model that embraces the reality of the goddess.\(^{232}\) He also acknowledges the Druidic tradition of death as ‘liberation and a rebirth.’\(^{233}\)

Whilst syncretizing these aspects from other spiritual traditions assists Lynch’s model in correlating with contemporary spirituality’s theme of innate spiritual perception, it nevertheless veers away from the fundamental tenets of the Christian tradition, particularly in relation to the Godhead, the Trinity, Salvation and the believer’s final destination. As such it risks bringing uncertainty and confusion to basic Christian understanding. Furthermore, if the practice of syncretizing other ideologies into the Christian faith system were to continue ad infinitum, as it has the potential to do in the case of progressive spirituality, over time the main tenets of the Christian tradition would become unrecognisable from its foundations. Each Christian would have constructed their personal understanding, literally each one having created their own personal image of God. This might lead to congruence to the culture and contemporary spirituality in particular, but would result in divergence within the basic tenets of the Christian tradition itself. However, since within contemporary spirituality an individual is encouraged to reconstruct ideologies to fit their own conceptions, in embracing this ideology, Lynch is perfectly entitled to reconstruct, not only other ideologies, but the Christian tradition as well.

Amongst all of this Lynch does attempt to integrate an ancient Christian view into his argument through referencing John O’Donoghue’s account of the human soul being the ‘divine ground in which we both share in the divine spirit and encounter the movement of this spirit in the universe.’\(^{234}\) However, O’Donoghue\(^{235}\) is quoting from the Greek Platonic philosopher Plotinus.\(^{236}\) This fails to work for Lynch’s particular Panentheistic view which acknowledges the divine ‘already here with us in the very fabric of our beings...’\(^{237}\) as opposed to Plotinus’s ‘sharing in and encountering the divine spirit.’ For within Plotinus,

\(^{232}\) Shallcrass, ‘Priest of goddess,’ p. 163.
\(^{234}\) Lynch, New Spirituality, p. 56.
\(^{235}\) Dr. O’Donoghue was a poet and philosopher with an interest in ancient spirituality.
\(^{237}\) Lynch, New Spirituality, p. 57.
not only are varying degrees of participation in the divine acknowledged, but also dissimilarity and alienation.\textsuperscript{238}

Regretfully, whilst drawing from other ideologies to attempt to form an acceptable correlation between Christianity and contemporary spirituality, Lynch fails to develop a recognisable example from within the Christian tradition regarding the deeper aspects of how this relationship might actually occur. However, the conversation in Part Three will attempt to offer a solution from the Christian tradition that correlates with Lynch’s aspirations, and with those of contemporary spirituality, concerning an innate spiritual experience. Although all of these suggestions, and the practical applications that flow from them, can be used to engage with contemporary spiritual seekers, all would benefit from a renewed missiologically sound framework, drawn from within the Christian tradition, concerning the invisible mechanism through which human beings might actually experience God.

\textbf{ii. Perfection}

From within contemporary spirituality, Tacey and Bloom raise criticisms that Christian spirituality can only be achieved by the elite through self-discipline or purification that aspires to perfection.\textsuperscript{239} From within contemporary Christianity, Sheldrake notes significant changes in what has previously been understood as ‘spirituality,’ which is no longer limited to monastic-clerical elites and has broadened ‘beyond attention to prayer and contemplation to include reflection on the values and lifestyles of all Christians.’\textsuperscript{240} Furthermore, Sheldrake notes that Christian spirituality has moved on from emphasising ‘perfection’ in the abstract, to understanding human transformation within the context of a developing and vibrant relationship with God. In the words of Rowan Williams,\textsuperscript{241} Christian spirituality should touch ‘every area of human experience, the public and the social, the painful, negative, even pathological byways of the mind, the moral and relational world,’ and should ultimately lead to wholeness.\textsuperscript{242}

These responses demonstrate that the views of proponents of contemporary spirituality are misinformed concerning Christian spirituality which has undergone some considerable development in recent years. Finding congruence with contemporary spirituality, within

\textsuperscript{238} Plotinus, \textit{Enneads}, IV.4, 832.
\textsuperscript{239} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, pp. 36-37, p. 76; Bloom, \textit{Power}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{240} Sheldrake, \textit{Explorations}, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{241} Rowan Williams is an academic and author. He was Archbishop of Canterbury until 2012.
twenty-first-century Western Christianity the pursuit of spirituality is now in the public domain, is considered accessible to all, and can bring wholeness to individuals and communities. Part Three will demonstrate how Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses, and a developed understanding of his view of Christian perfection, might contribute to this debate.

iii. Spirituality Conveyed by the Ecclesial Mediation of Grace.

Tacey specifically raises a criticism against the Roman Catholic Church concerning the emphasis of some denominations to convey spirituality through the means of rituals and liturgy, particularly through the ecclesial mediation of grace. It is a fact that there are still some branches within Christianity that hold firmly to the conveyance of the divine presence by the ecclesial mediation of grace. For example post Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church retained the ‘ontological’ status of the Bishops. This means that upon the consecration of ordination they are inserted ‘into the mystery of the apostolic succession,’ bringing about in them ‘a change in being.’ This empowers them to conduct the ‘munera’, the messianic works of Christ and his Church.

By virtue of their ordination Priests also undergo an ‘ontological participation’ to the munera of Christ, enabling them to implement sacramental and episcopal duties in Christ’s name and in the name of the Church. All of the orders of the Roman Catholic Church operate in recognition of an ontological change, via consecration, operating a hierarchical system that reaches from the newly ordained Priest through to the Pontiff. Therefore the Bishop and his ‘co-operators,’ the Priests, are the stewards ‘of the grace of the supreme priesthood,’ meaning Christ, especially in the eucharist, by which the Church continually lives and grows.

By means of their initiation into the Church though the sacraments when the grace of the Lord is received, and their continuing celebration of the eucharist, the laity participate in the prophetic office of Jesus Christ and bear witness to the gospel. The Holy Spirit anoints and equips them, and they receive a very personal and intimate knowledge of the faith of

245 Priests in the Early Church, Note 1, paragraph 4-5. Accessed on 4th October 2015.
the Church, namely the *sensus fidei*.\(^{248}\) Henceforth, they become participants in the divine nature. The *sensus fidei*, is not cognitive, but is a ‘natural, immediate and spontaneous reaction to the Holy Spirit…by which the believer clings spontaneously to what conforms to the truth of faith…’\(^{249}\) They are therefore called in a special way to make the Church present in the world, particularly through prayers, apostolic endeavours, ordinary married and family life, work and relaxation.\(^{250}\) Since Vatican II the Roman Catholic tradition acknowledges the availability of the Holy Spirit not only to the wider church, but also to the non-Christian.\(^{251}\) The means of revelation to the non-Christian is via the Holy Spirit, yet the ultimate aim is that people will come to into the knowledge of Christian revelation as the Holy Spirit leads them to all truth.\(^{252}\)

Here the Roman Catholic Church is holding two aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the human heart in tension. The laity receives grace and the ministry of the Holy Spirit by means of the sacraments, and is supernaturally empowered for a particular ministry. Yet that same Spirit is available to the non-Christian, bringing revelation to those who have not partaken in the sacraments of initiation. However, this revelation does not signify intimacy. Whilst there are some contemporary voices from within calling for a different\(^{253}\) or broader\(^{254}\) view, for the Roman Catholic Church the seven sacraments continue to be the normal means through which grace is mediated. They are therefore the starting point for personal and intimate relationship with the divine. These continue to be conferred via the mediation of the Ordained, which effectively makes direct and intimate access to the divine subject to the initiation rites and rituals of the Church.

Luther forged the way in reforming the sacramental system. Understanding sacraments as outward signs that accompany a promise, he honed the sacraments down to two; baptism and the eucharist.\(^{255}\) However, he recognised Christ himself as the ultimate sacrament to


\(^{249}\) *Sensus Fidei*, §53-54.


\(^{254}\) For example Donald M. Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments* (London: Faber & Faber, 1957), pp. 42-46. Baillie makes a distinction between sacrament and sacramental. God can use any of his created elements and use it to convey grace. It could then be said to have sacramental power.

whom the sacramental signs point. Additionally, the sacraments did not possess any power in themselves to bestow grace, for this was dependent on the Word and the Holy Spirit, and not the power of the priest or the mass itself.\textsuperscript{256} Thus Luther affirmed the Augustinian stance of the sacraments as ‘the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace,’\textsuperscript{257} but rejected that the medium itself had any power to effect change.\textsuperscript{258} Although the reformers shared common ground in their critique of the Roman Catholic sacramental stance, they were unable to agree on a unified way forward.\textsuperscript{259} Nevertheless, their united efforts in refuting the traditional sacramental understanding successfully refuted the claim that the Roman Catholic Church was the sole dispenser of grace, stripping the priesthood of what some have called its ‘quasi-magical pretensions.’\textsuperscript{260}

Some members of the wider Christian tradition embrace a broadening understanding concerning both the essence of God and access to God. For example, Hans Urs von Balthasar\textsuperscript{261} advocates a ‘sacramental principle;’\textsuperscript{262} Patrick Sherry argues that ‘the spiritual can be conveyed through the material;’\textsuperscript{263} and Pannenberg acknowledges a reciprocal arrangement between experience and doctrinal reflection.\textsuperscript{264}

Whilst the practice of the ecclesial mediation of grace is incompatible with the objectives of contemporary spirituality this is not the only model within Christianity. The aforementioned calls encouraging alternate views from Roman Catholic thinkers indicate that there is openness to a broadening of thought. Tacey’s critique concerning a ‘magical’ element within Christian rituals has been addressed through Luther’s assignment of the sacraments as the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace, and the continuing alliance of the reformers in acknowledging that grace is bestowed by means of God alone, removed the quasi-magical element from the priesthood. Alongside the further theological developments concerning the sacramental principle, spirituality conveyed through the material and the role of experience in doctrinal reflection, the sacramental concept is brought nearer to the accessibility objectives of contemporary spirituality.

\textsuperscript{256} Luther, ‘The Babylonian Captivity of the Church,’ pp. 167-168.

\textsuperscript{257} Augustine, \textit{The First Catechetical Instruction}, Joseph P. Christopher (trans.) (New York: Newman Press, 1946), p. 34, p. 82.

\textsuperscript{258} This continuing stance is identified in \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part Two, The Celebration of the Christian Mystery}. http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a2.htm.


\textsuperscript{260} Jones, ‘Reformation Theology,’ p. 567.

\textsuperscript{261} Hans Urs von Balthasar was a priest, author and world renowned theologian. He had a wide range of theological interests, including spirituality.


\textsuperscript{263} Sherry, Patrick, \textit{Spirit and Beauty: an introduction to theological aesthetics} (London: SCM, 2002), p. 139. Professor Sherry is a theologian and author.

\textsuperscript{264} Sheldrake, \textit{Explorations}, pp. 66-67.
The Salvation Army is an example of a non-sacramental stance. Their Handbook of Doctrine affirms that, although God created all things, the material world ‘is not part of, nor does it flow from, the divine being.’ Creation is a means through which human beings can become aware of a creator. Human beings have a part to play in caring for creation and worship involves actively responding to all God is and participating in all He does. However, unaided, human beings ‘can make little progress in any quest to discover…him.’ Although God is eternal and supreme, he is also personal and through divine revelation, enables human beings to discover his reality through many means. Prevenient Grace is the means through which the Holy Spirit conveys God’s reality to the human being. Salvation is freely received through faith in God, by means of grace alone. It is The Salvation Army’s conviction that ‘no particular outward observance is necessary to inward grace’ but that ‘God’s grace is freely and readily available to all people, at all times and in all places.’ Consequently, although every Salvationist is free to partake in communion services in Christian gatherings, The Salvation Army does not celebrate communion but holds Christ’s atoning sacrifice at the centre of its corporate worship. Believing that Christ did not ordain the rite of Holy Communion and that the early church remembered Christ in the context of every day meals, the Salvation Army encourages the remembrance of Christ’s sacrificial atonement in the Love Feast and at every common meal. A key concept is that ‘Christ is the one true sacrament, and sacramental living – Christ living in and through us – is at the heart of Christian holiness and discipleship.’ Dearborn’s concept of encountering God within the mundane, where ‘all activity becomes a place of communion,’ supports this view.

Although The Salvation Army acknowledges God’s action through prevenient grace, it fails to acknowledge the spiritual senses, rendering the significance of the interaction between God and the human being by means of prevenient grace incomplete. However, the Salvation Army’s understanding correlates with the objectives of contemporary spirituality, particularly in relation to accessibility to the divine presence. Yet, along with the other examples above, it fails to offer a sufficiently complete theological explanation concerning the mechanism of how communication between the divine and human beings

266 TSA Handbook of Doctrine, p. 3.
267 TSA Handbook of Doctrine, pp. 32-35.
268 TSA Handbook of Doctrine, p. 3.
269 TSA Handbook of Doctrine, p. 165.
270 TSA Handbook of Doctrine, p. 296.
271 TSA Handbook of Doctrine, p. 295.
273 SA Handbook of Doctrine, p. 300.
274 Dearborn, Taste and See, pp. 51-71, p. 87.
actually occurs. Therefore, whilst this stance is a welcome addition to the Christian offering, at the moment it falls short of offering sufficient substance to the debate. However, John Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses has potential to bring further clarity to this conversation.

4. THE PHYSICAL SENSES AND SPIRITUALITY

Proponents of contemporary spirituality promote the concept that the physical senses provide access to the divine, particularly in the arena of nature or creation, where the physical sensory apparatus plays an important role in mediating spiritual experience. Bloom advocates four core skills for individuals to develop spiritual awareness: ‘Pause and be mindful; Relax, centre and ground in your body; Observe what is happening in a kind and good-natured way; Yield to the feeling of the experience.’\(^{275}\) Tacey asserts that nature has a life of its own and it therefore can be questioned by human beings, and they can expect a response, deep within.\(^{276}\)

Whilst the philosophical and psychological understanding of such experiences includes the concepts of connection outlined under the heading Creation Spirituality above, suggested practical means of obtaining these experiences include walks, listening to the sound of waves, seeing the moon, viewing the night sky,\(^{277}\) landscapes, sunsets, eclipses, birth, feeling bathed in the earth’s light, discovering the earth’s aura and meditation.\(^{278}\) In addition, research has highlighted more diverse modes of experience such as eating, shopping, technology and clubbing as well as astrology, alternative medicine and drug culture.\(^{279}\) Here the physical sensory apparatus plays a central role with sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch aiding the mediation of spiritual experience.

**Contemporary Christian Responses**

Within the Christian tradition the physical senses play an important role in Christian worship and spirituality. Donald Baillie\(^{280}\) and Gordon Graham\(^{281}\) highlight how the celebration of the Mass has historically contained an element of drama as the liturgy is

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\(^{275}\) Frost, ‘Beyond the Fringes’, p. 107-108; Bloom, *Power*, p. 62; Specifically for nature see Earth Mysteries, in Bloom, Hall, Peters (eds.) *Mind Body Spirit*, pp. 244-261. However the majority of pathways highlighted would include experience through the senses in some way.

\(^{276}\) Tacey, *Spirituality Revolution*, p. 188.

\(^{277}\) Tacey, *Spirituality Revolution*, p. 186.

\(^{278}\) Frost, ‘Beyond the Fringes,’ p. 108.


\(^{280}\) Baillie, *Theology of the Sacraments*, p. 94.

acted out, and this continues to play an important role which enhances and works alongside the traditional metaphysical elements. Many churches incorporate the physical senses into worship. Music, candles, readings, drama, art, incense, bells and food have been utilized in varying degrees to accompany the central elements of the sacraments/Mass in traditional expressions of church or the proclamation of the Word in non-conformist churches. Additionally, there are alternative expressions of Christian worship that readily embrace the role of the physical senses.\(^{282}\)

Dearborn links the physical and spiritual senses and calls for a ‘visible theology – the knowledge of God made evident to our eyes and ears, hands and hearts.’\(^{283}\) For Dearborn, this is more than just knowledge; this is an ‘encounter’ with God, knowing him with ‘our whole lives and selves - not just our minds.’\(^{284}\) He longs for grace to be transferred from our head to our heart.\(^{285}\) Dearborn’s book is full of stories where God uses natural events to awaken our spiritual sense to him; events that are marked by tangible happenings that result in spiritual insight.\(^{286}\) Drawing from sacramental theology, Dearborn asserts that ‘…the physical can actually be a vehicle for encountering the spiritual. An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.’\(^{287}\) This is achieved through the indwelling presence of Christ. Whilst he applies this to the sacraments that are transformed by the Spirit ‘into life-giving encounters’\(^{288}\) and consequently ‘whet our appetite and stimulate our senses,’\(^{289}\) he also applies it to mundane everyday life.\(^{290}\)

This response demonstrates a wide range of contemporary Christian practices that are intentionally embracing the concept that the physical senses play an important role in spiritual experience. This correlates with the contemporary spiritual seekers’ desire for meaningful spiritual experience mediated through the physical senses. Part Three will further explore this theme through introducing the dimension of the spiritual senses to the conversation.

\(^{282}\) Part One p. 47; Part Three, pp. 163-167.
\(^{283}\) Dearborn, *Taste and See*, p. 10.
\(^{284}\) Dearborn, *Taste and See*, pp. 10 – 11.
\(^{286}\) For example, Dearborn, *Taste and See*, pp. 10-16, pp. 34-35, pp. 89-91.
\(^{287}\) Dearborn, *Taste and See*, p. 34.
\(^{288}\) Dearborn, *Taste and See*, p. 49.
\(^{289}\) Dearborn, Taste and See, p. 45.
\(^{290}\) Dearborn, *Taste and See*, p. 54.
Within contemporary spirituality the smooth transition between the sacralising of nature and the sacralising of self is based on personal, inherent spiritual yearning, hunger, and perception. When recognised, this can give rise to genuine and accessible individual spiritual experience with the divine/sacred/God/energy/consciousness/connection. Tacey notes a rise of spiritual interest across the cultural sphere in Western society. He asserts that this is having a significant effect on the lives of a diverse range of ordinary people in mainstream society as they begin to ‘remember their sacredness’ and their ‘dormant religious life’ awakens.\footnote{Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, pp. 14-18.}

Again, diverse outlooks are presented as proponents adopt their individual approach. Das acknowledges that ‘what we seek is naturally within us all.’\footnote{Das, \textit{Awakening}, pp. 367-368, p. 371.} Tacey refers to spiritual forms being born out of humankind’s own psychic life,\footnote{Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 27.} as people respond to the long forgotten, neglected or rejected, innate desire ‘for a safe relationship to the psychic forces with himself.’\footnote{Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 28, p. 12.} For Bloom, the spirituality that is experienced within is a renewed ‘connection’ with the wonder and energy of life.\footnote{Bloom, \textit{Power}, p. 8, Chapter 3.} For Eileen Campbell, the awakening of the ‘higher self’ is the goal of human life and with it comes transformation.\footnote{Campbell, Eileen and Brennan, J. H. \textit{The Aquarian guide to the New Age} (Thorsons: Aquarian Press, 1990), p. 10. Eileen Campbell is an author and speaker with a keen interest in spirituality.}

Tacey sees the world as ‘graced by the presence of God,’ therefore the sacred can be encountered within the self as one explores beyond the subjectivity of selfishness and moves towards an inward objectivity of the sacred.\footnote{Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, pp. 82-83.} Furthermore, there is an increasing awareness that this spiritual dimension is part of the human make-up, ‘We are by nature religious beings… and we are remembering our sacredness.’\footnote{Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 18.} He notes that human beings are able to respond to the sacred\footnote{Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p.138, p. 19.} and it is through responding and nourishing ‘something deep within themselves’ that they are able to discover ‘the God within.’ Hence the self can become a ‘legitimate doorway into the sacred,’ and be understood as an ‘instrument of God,’ rather than an ‘obstacle to God.’ This, Tacey asserts, is in contrast to the doctrines and practices of established religion that discourage the development of the
inner life and views ‘self’ as distant from God and sinful. In consequence, argues Tacey, established religion claims that people are unable to sense the presence of the sacred for themselves.\textsuperscript{300}

Christi upholds consciousness as the source of our being and the true domain of the individual, the collective and the cosmos; ‘it is all Existence, all that is; God, creator, source, divinity.’\textsuperscript{301} She identifies the pure heart of spirituality as ‘love.’\textsuperscript{302} For Christi, the key to enabling a life lived in pure love is to awake to one’s true essence, ‘a fluid energy that sources our very being, rejuvenating, cleansing and healing our deepest levels...and awakening our Spirit.’ She advocates the concept that people have never been separated from God/creator/source, but rather ‘we have only been separated from ourselves.’\textsuperscript{303} Christi highlights the benefits of exploring one’s deeper understanding of self, with the aim of discovering insights and truths that will aid the achievement of a holistic understanding of the self.\textsuperscript{304} She asserts that this shift will help people to change their focus from religion to spirituality.\textsuperscript{305} In consequence, it is argued that they will ultimately move towards personal and conscious co-creation, enabling collaborative action and the forming of a better world.\textsuperscript{306}

Here a picture is formed where proponents of contemporary spirituality find congruence in the argument that the internal sacred/divine/God/energy/consciousness can be discovered within the individual, and people can choose to respond and grow as they explore this inner spirit through the many avenues open to them. This has the potential to transform the individual. Bloom outlines some of the benefits of spirituality including: consistency, meaning, purpose, inner peace, well-being and healing, building personal integrity and joy.\textsuperscript{307} As Ursula King\textsuperscript{308} puts it, a social and practical spirituality enables ‘human beings to cope with the world rather than inwardly to escape from it.’\textsuperscript{309}

\textsuperscript{300} Tacey, \textit{Spirituality Revolution}, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{301} Christi, \textit{Evolving World}, p. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{302} Christi, \textit{Evolving World}, pp. 17-19, p. 74, p. 82, p. 90, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{303} Christi, \textit{Evolving World}, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{304} Christi, \textit{Evolving World}, pp. 94-95.
\textsuperscript{305} Christi, \textit{Evolving World}, pp. 76-77.
\textsuperscript{307} Bloom, \textit{Power}, pp. 3-6, p. 8, pp. 94-95, pp. 201-227.
\textsuperscript{308} Professor King is a theologian and author with an interest in spirituality.
Contemporary Christian responses

Flowing from the concept of a God who is not separate from the cosmos but is ‘bound up with its fabric and life,’ Lynch upholds the sacralising of the self.\textsuperscript{310} The divine life is an aspect of the self and ‘the whole cosmos, including ourselves, participates in the divine life.’\textsuperscript{311} God is ‘the breath within our breath’\textsuperscript{312} and as such he is wholly within. Lynch’s use of the term ‘self’ as the seat of divine/human convergence correlates with contemporary spirituality’s foundational understanding of the sacred or divine, energy, consciousness within where the idea of awakening the ‘higher self’ is the goal of human life.\textsuperscript{313}

Conversely, challenging contemporary spirituality’s sacralisation of the self, Hiebert connects the concept of the ‘sacred within’ with the deification of the self. He sets this within the context of the modern worldview where he argues that human beings became placed at the pinnacle of nature. Here however, human beings faced a crisis, for with God gone, and only scientific and humanist claims to guide them, leaving personal health, comfort and prosperity as their goal, Hiebert argues that they lost their soul and meaning in life.\textsuperscript{314} In order to recover a sense of meaning ‘Western philosophers coined the term self to replace the concept of soul’ and for the autonomous self, now a god, ‘individual well-being became the highest good.’\textsuperscript{315} Hiebert notes how this represents a radical shift from the biblical view of human beings being created in the image of God, with individual independence taking the place of dependence upon the creator. Debates concerning the nature of the self ensued, some arguing for the priority of reason and others for the priority of feeling. However both views ‘agreed that meaning is to be found in self-fulfilment, in the good life here and now.’\textsuperscript{316} Hiebert asserts that this view ultimately led to a ‘new Western religion based on self-realization, not forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God and others.’\textsuperscript{317}

These trends can be seen in the ideology of contemporary spirituality, particularly in the depth of faith in the ability of the individual to choose their own spiritual pathway and values drawn from a selection of ideologies. It can also be identified in the elevation of self-
to divine status and the elevated hope in the goodness of human kind. Recognising the inner seat of the divine presence and building on Hiebert’s theory, which somewhat correlates with Tacey’s recognition to move beyond the subjectivity of selfishness in the quest for the sacred, Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses offers something new to this conversation and to the debate concerning sin. This will be carried forward to the critical conversation in Part Three.

6. A CALL TO COMMUNITY

Although proponents claim that contemporary spirituality offers a sense of freedom, some note that there are risks should it fail to deliver its promises. Tacey identifies one of these risks as the loss of community spirit. He acknowledges that the new spiritual approach, which ‘encourages people to think of themselves as self-sufficient and self-enclosed,’ risks leaving people feeling unliberated, alienated, isolated and lonely.

Whilst the elevated value of the individual stands, within this context, proponents of contemporary spirituality acknowledge that recognition and value of the wider community can be compromised and undervalued. Tacey understands the embracing of wider society as a sacred imperative which should be a natural result of digging deeper into the inner self and embracing the sacred. He highlights the importance of the belief of spirit as ‘universal and collective,’ with benefits for others. Cousins argues that spirituality is not a solitary task to be embarked upon by the individual, but rather ‘it is in community that one makes the spiritual quest.’ Erricker and Erricker assert that ‘…to speak of belonging is to evoke a sense of the spiritual.’ Clive Erricker further argues that it is only in community that genuine spirituality can be achieved. Christi asserts that holistic self-enquiry carries with it the potential outcome of a deeper understanding and appreciation of the collective. Furthermore, it is only through the reclamation of the sacred relationship of love between the divine and other human beings that a selfless relationship of love in

322 Cousins, ‘Foreword,’ p. xii.
324 Erricker, ‘Faith Communities’, in *Contemporary Spiritualities*, pp. 113-114, p. 121.
action that benefits the other can be achieved.\textsuperscript{326} For Christi, this can in turn evoke a sense of belonging that embraces everyone and is outworked in relationships and service.\textsuperscript{327}

Whilst upholding the value of individual choice in the development of their spiritual pathway, proponents of contemporary spirituality also uphold the need for a developing code of values. Bloom asserts that forming a value system is the quest of the individual,\textsuperscript{328} but acknowledges that it is worked out in community.\textsuperscript{329} Conversely, Das,\textsuperscript{330} Tacey\textsuperscript{331} and Christi\textsuperscript{332} all support the need for a value system to be re-formed in community. Tacey specifically calls for those of religious tradition to collaborate in the forming of such a code, which in turn could encourage the broadening of perspective from an individualistic to a more communal approach.\textsuperscript{333}

Here we find proponents of contemporary spirituality strongly advocating that the ideology of cherished individualism is strengthened by means of a growing awareness of communal benefit and responsibility. Whilst contemporary spirituality’s emphasis on both the individual and the wider community could be interpreted as a contradiction, the following response from contemporary Christianity reveals similarities of thought and practice.

**Contemporary Christian Responses**

Contemporary Christianity highly values community but unfortunately some proponents show signs of introspection when they focus on the church community, rather than demonstrating a more inclusive approach. For example Stone’s subversive approach to evangelism holds integration into the Christian community in high regard, to the exclusion of relationships with others. Stone understands Christian conversion as ‘always susceptible to being destabilized and undercut by rival processes of formation…’ Furthermore, in order to ensure the stability of the conversion he asserts that ‘other attachments, identities, and loyalties’ should be ‘reoriented if not abandoned altogether.’\textsuperscript{334} This is an example of the aforementioned introspective approach that, in excluding others, would not correlate with the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers. In this respect, some adherents to

\textsuperscript{326} Christi, *Evolving World*, pp. 81-83, pp. 223-225.
\textsuperscript{327} Christi, *Evolving World*, p. 205.
\textsuperscript{328} Bloom, *Power*, p. 181.
Christianity would do well to listen to the aforementioned criticisms arising from contemporary spirituality concerning the need to look outward and authentically engage with others, without agenda.

Alternatively, Green and Robinson uphold the value of community by skilfully demonstrating how the social construct of the self-consumed individual is a myth. Here the call is to ‘rediscover ourselves as another.’ Drawing from Ricoeur, Green and Robinson assert that human beings daily interact with the world ‘in and through our embodied existence.’ Furthermore, ‘we are never fully available to the self-conscious ego,’ but rather ‘95% of all thought is unconscious thought transmitted through bodily processes.’ ‘Bodily existence is political existence’ and what we do with our bodies has communal consequences. Using one’s name as an example, they argue that language and signifiers mediate both a sense of individuality and a sense of otherness. One’s personal narrative holds one’s identity together. This identity is about continuity and discontinuity and is lived in relationship with others. Here the empty, shallow notions of the individuality of both modernity and postmodernity are broken down and there is no autonomous, self-interested and self-motivated individual. Applying this to the church, Green and Robinson conclude

In theological terms, the summoned self [is] defined by covenantal community loyalties and relationships and we have a much more nuanced notion of the self as another which breaks apart the limitations of identity in terms of isolated individuality.

In applying Ricoeur’s concept exclusively to the loyalties and relationships within the ‘covenantal community,’ Green and Robinson fail to acknowledge any benefit to the Christian of connecting with the wider community. This renders their approach indicative of an insular view that would have to be questioned, both theologically, and in today’s cultural climate. Whilst none of these views would correspond with the ideals of contemporary spirituality, they do challenge the ideal of cherished individualism and raise a profile of community that shapes communal values and provides a sense of unity. However, there are alternative views from the Christian tradition that directly connect with this call to community.

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337 Drawing from Polanyi, Greene and Robinson, *Metavista*, p. 86.
Whilst upholding the value of the individual, Lynch does not recommend forsaking all religious practices and recognises the value of ‘communal traditions and rituals as a framework for deepening and reflecting on spiritual development and personal experience.’ This includes the moral dimension of personal development, where the need to move away from purely individualistic thought and practice towards a developed understanding of one’s personal contribution to a wider social well-being, is acknowledged.\textsuperscript{341}

Setting religious experience in the arena of mysticism, Sheldrake notes the view of John Ruusbroec who understood the mystical life as ‘the life common to all,’ joining ‘human beings to one another in the service of all.’\textsuperscript{342} Here contemplation and action are viewed as a single whole. This approach views any spiritual attainment that concentrates on the spiritual elevation of the self, yet neglects the needs of the wider community, as aberrant. Furthermore, spiritual hierarchy is avoided since those who are spiritually experienced give themselves to all and seek to share the life of God within. Believing that spiritual formation represents movements from the mind to the heart through prayer, Henri Nouwen also affirms the importance of community in Christian spirituality. Nouwen argued that increased spiritual awareness and the selfless service of others should go hand in hand.\textsuperscript{343}

Whilst these views and practices within contemporary Christianity connect with contemporary spirituality’s call for increased communal engagement, they exceed those expectations, believing in fact that spirituality is not genuine without community engagement, or service to others. As Evelyn Underhill\textsuperscript{344} maintains, ‘the highest forms of Divine Union impel the self to some sort of active, rather than passive life,’ has always been a distinguishing characteristic of Christian spirituality.\textsuperscript{345} In this respect Tacey is correct in his assertion that the Christian tradition has a valid contribution to make to the forming of community within contemporary spirituality, a call that other proponents of contemporary spirituality might wish to embrace. The potential contribution of Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses in building meaningful community will be further developed in Part Three with reference to the concept of spiritual respiration and mirroring the attributes of the divine.


\textsuperscript{342} Sheldrake, \textit{Explorations}, p. 111.

\textsuperscript{343} Nouwen, Henri, \textit{Spiritual Formation} (London: SPCK, 2011), pp. xxvi-xxviii. Professor Henri Nouwen was a priest, theologian and writer with a keen interest in spirituality.

\textsuperscript{344} Evelyn Underhill was an author with a particular interest in Christian mysticism.

7. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Contemporary spirituality is aligned to religious pluralism in that it draws from, and is accepting of, the many differing religious ideologies offered within the global market place. Yet it cherishes the freedom of the individual to choose their spiritual route according to their personal preferences. Throughout her book, Christi demonstrates the concept by valuing and drawing from the many disciplines of religious pluralism. Bloom advocates extracting all that is good about spirituality from all that is on offer in the multifaith environment, in order to form one’s personal spirituality. Inclusivity is the key. As Christi puts it ‘all have a place at the table.’ For Tacey and Bloom the ‘new God’ of contemporary spirituality is accessible to all. This new ‘all-inclusive spirituality,’ has become an overarching term for an evolving practice that has many forms of expression, embraces diverse understandings, and reaches a wide range of people groups.

It is from within this eclectic mix of spiritual encounters that proponents of contemporary spirituality assert that it is possible to experience intimacy with the sacred, particularly since the sacred resides within. However, contemporary spirituality represents what could be termed a ‘fresh expression’ of spiritual pluralism. Unlike the conventional ideologies presented in religious pluralism, it does not follow any one particular belief system since individuals freely form their own spiritual construct from any number of spiritual ideologies. As such, each and every individual form of contemporary spirituality is pluralistically unique.

Contemporary Christian Responses

Lesslie Newbigin argues that those who embrace the concept that a spiritual pathway can be drawn from a variety of religious or spiritual ideologies have, knowingly or unknowingly, formed their world view through the lens of secular humanism, which embraces philosophical pluralism. This is, of course, the very modernist philosophy that

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347 Christi, Evolving World, p. 2.
349 Christi, Evolving World, pp 203-205.
350 Tacey, Spirituality Revolution, p. 164.
351 Bloom, Power, p. 4.
352 Tacey, Spirituality Revolution, pp. 36-39.
353 Newbigin, Bishop Newbigin was a theologian, author, missionary and missiologist.
proponents of contemporary spirituality are reacting to. Dan Clendenin identifies seven factors that have contributed towards a heightened awareness of religious pluralism in the West, including a shift in Western culture as a whole towards an identity of radical equality.

Within the Christian missiological arena, the view of religious pluralism is well documented under the three main headings of Pluralism, Exclusivism and Inclusivism. John Hick and Paul Knitter respond to the current religiously pluralistic climate by developing a Christian pluralistic response. Knitter defines Christian pluralism as ‘a move away from insistence on the superiority or finality of Christ and Christianity towards recognition of the independent validity of others.’ Stanley Samartha argues that salvation can be found in other spiritual pathways, as the Christian version of salvation history is but one example of the Ultimate’s historical salvific revelation. Therefore the differences in religions are not due to truth or falsehood, but rather due to human limitations in grasping the Ultimate.

The traditional exclusivist view is upheld by proponents such as Donald Carson. In this view, which continues to represent the majority of contemporary evangelicals, salvation is exclusively found in Jesus Christ. Alister McGrath argues that this revelation is in a class of its own and cannot be set alongside any other revelationary tradition. This position upholds the traditional exclusivist truth claims of Scripture.

An inclusivist view, as promoted by Karl Rahner, rejects both pluralism and exclusivism whilst retaining the superiority and finality of Christianity as ‘the absolute and hence the only religion for all men.’ Rahner argues that, until a person hears the gospel in a

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355 Dr. Clendenin is a lecturer and author.
357 Professor Knitter is a leading authority in religious pluralism.
359 Dr. Samartha was an academic, an author and a leading figure in inter-religious dialogue.
361 Hick and Knitter, Myth, p. 204.
363 Professor McGrath is a priest, academic, theologian, public speaker and author.
365 Carson, Gagging, p. 27.
366 Karl Rahner was a world renowned theologian, Jesuit priest and prolific author. His diverse theological interests included a response to religious pluralism and spirituality.
367 Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, Volume 5 (London: Dartman, Longman & Todd Ltd, 1966), p. 120.
manner that makes it significant for them, non-Christian religions have both a ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’ knowledge of God by means of grace, available to everyone, everywhere.\textsuperscript{368} In this sense a non-Christian religion can be recognised as ‘a lawful religion’ in the respect that ‘there are supernatural, grace-filled elements in non-Christian religions.’\textsuperscript{369} In this view salvation is through Christ alone, but non-Christian religions are valid and can be a means of mediating the saving grace of God, until the gospel is made known to their adherents.\textsuperscript{370} A faithful adherent of a non-Christian religion is known as an ‘anonymous Christian.’\textsuperscript{371}

Newbigin offers what could be called an intermediary approach that embraces all three tenets: pluralism, as God works in the lives of all people; exclusivism, in affirming the unique truth of the revelation in Jesus Christ without denying salvation outside of the church; and inclusivism, in refusing to limit the saving grace of God but rejecting the idea that non-Christian religions are vehicles of salvation.\textsuperscript{372}

A contemporary response is offered by Lynch’s model of progressive spirituality. This model follows contemporary spirituality’s pluralistic stance in advocating the integration of varying religious ideals, but with a particularly Christian focus.\textsuperscript{373} In advocating that all people participate in the divine nature, Smith’s alternative Christian presentation represents an inclusivist view.\textsuperscript{374} Sheldrake represents an exclusivist view which reinforces the source of the very word, ‘spirituality,’ pointing out that so much richness is lost through failing to connect spirituality with its traditional historical Christian roots.\textsuperscript{375}

Adherence to religious pluralistic practice means that the particularity of each faith is lost. This is evident in the case of contemporary spirituality, where the individual is encouraged to draw their spiritual pathway from a myriad of ideologies and merge a variety of concepts into a personal spirituality. The risk is that values become unclear, resulting in the aforementioned ethical and cultural uncertainty and ambiguity. As Grace Jantzen points out, the ethics and rituals of each religion inform both the mystical journey to God and its impact on the mystic’s life. This makes the experience different in accord with each

\textsuperscript{368} Rahner, Investigations, Vol. 5, p. 119, p. 121.  
\textsuperscript{369} Rahner, Investigations, Vol. 5, p. 121.  
\textsuperscript{372} Newbigin, Pluralist Society, p. 182.  
\textsuperscript{373} Part One, pp. 47-49.  
\textsuperscript{374} Part One, pp. 37-38.  
\textsuperscript{375} Sheldrake, Explorations, p. 1, pp. 4-7.
tradition, historical and political situation and gender.\textsuperscript{376} In the case of contemporary spirituality, where the ethics and rituals are merged into an individualist ideology, the experience becomes isolated and the communal aspect, that plays a key role in the formation of an ethical code, is lost. This thesis argues that Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses can speak into the arena of pluralism. Further conversation centering on bridge building, and the role of the Holy Spirit, has the potential to offer a suggested way forward for the spiritual arena in the twenty-first century. This theme will be further developed in the critical conversation contained in Part Three.

CONCLUSION

Discovering the horizons of contemporary spirituality and considering the contemporary Christian responses, particularly from a missiological perspective, has raised a number of points of contact that offer the potential for engaging with Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses. These will be carried forward for further conversation in Part Three. Proponents of both contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity express a need to discover a way forward in conversation. Volf and Katerberg call for an engagement with culture, ‘participating in it, drawing on it, critiquing it, and witnessing to it.’\textsuperscript{377} Tracy, Browning and Lynch would add, ‘and being critiqued by/learning from it.’\textsuperscript{378} The inadequacy of some of the contemporary Christian response is recognised, as Roxburgh suggests; ‘Much of what is being offered today as “missional” are tactics for making the church more successful or effective.’\textsuperscript{379} He further contends that ‘Something more fundamental than new tactics to make the church effective is required.’\textsuperscript{380}

From within both contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity come various calls. Of particular interest concerning religious experience is Bloom’s call for a meaningful response from the Christian tradition concerning the ‘invisible mechanics’ of spiritual engagement.\textsuperscript{381} He argues that the primary function of religious agents is to ‘be a facilitator of the energy, ambiance and wonder...’\textsuperscript{382} Further calls include the need for the

\textsuperscript{376} Freitas, \textit{Goddess}, p. 235.
\textsuperscript{377} Volf and Katerberg, ‘Retrieving Hope,’ p. xi.
\textsuperscript{378} Part One, pp. 24-25.
\textsuperscript{379} Roxburgh, \textit{Missional}, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{380} Roxburgh, Missional, p. 89.
discovery of a new social language for spirituality,383 ‘a fresh look at the content of the gospel,’384 and ‘a reconstruction of evangelism.’385

Tacey employs Derrida’s argument on the linguistic structural concept of religion as ‘re-ligion’ being ‘what succeeds in re-turning’386 arguing that, if religion does rise again it will ‘clearly not be in the old form, but in a new form…’387 However, this is in contrast to Derrida’s broader understanding when he asserts that what ‘re-turns’ constitutes a ‘re-visitation’ of what has passed. As such it is a return of ‘a primordial impression that engenders itself.’388 Derrida’s grasp of that which re-turns captures both the primal returning of what has been, and the resurgence of what might be, but for Derrida there is continuity, what is past is not replaced but is foundational for what is to come.

Part One of this thesis has built a picture where proponents of contemporary spirituality argue that spirituality in many different forms and expressions is re-emerging as a contender in the spiritual arena. The premise of this thesis is that, in conversation with others, a re-visitation and adaptation of Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses can speak into contemporary spirituality and Christian mission, and help to develop a new perspective on the points of contact unearthed in this section. As the conversation with culture develops, it is expected that re-visiting Wesley’s doctrine of the spiritual senses will address the calls from both contenders that have been summarised above. It will respond to these calls through a re-visit of the historical view concerning the invisible mechanics that enable deep communication between the creator and humankind. It will suggest a new language based on something much more than new tactics to make the church more effective. This will enable a fresh look at the gospel and a reconstruction of the evangelistic message. In so doing, this will engage with both contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity, and suggest movement towards establishing a renewed theological and missiological foundation for spiritual engagement into the twenty-first century.

383 Stone, Christendom, p.10.
384 Robinson and Smith, Invading, p. 171.
385 Lynch, New Spirituality, p. 29.
387 Tacey, Spirituality Revolution, p. 132.
PART TWO

THE SPIRITUAL SENSES IN THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY

GENERAL HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE SPIRITUAL SENSES

The ‘spiritual senses’ enjoys a rich history in Christian theology. Seed conceptions can be found as far back as in Clement of Alexandria’s *Stromata*, where he refers to the Word doing something which will ‘be seen, heard and grasped by a new eye, a new hearing, and a new heart…’¹ This theme is systematically developed by his apprentice, Origen, recurrently appearing throughout his contemplations.² The concept continued to present as a strong theme in the writings of the Patristic Fathers with contributors including, Athanasius, Augustine, Clement of Rome, Ephraim Syrus, Justin Martyr, Macarius and Methodius.³

Karl Rahner picks up the theme, tracing its development in the arena of mystical experience, with reference to such key figures as Origen⁴, Evagrius, Diadochus, Pseudo-Macarius and Augustine. Through the middle ages he notes Bernard of Clarivaux, William of St Thierry and Alcher of Clairvaux, Peter Lombard, William of Auxerre, William of Auvergne, Alexander of Hayes, Albert the Great, and particularly Bonaventure. He continues to trace the theme through the 15th century citing Bernardino of Siena, Pierre d'Ailly, de Gerson, Denis the Carthusian and Hendrik Herp, and the 16th century referring to Blosius, St Ignatius Loyola, Rudolf of Biberach, Juan de Polanco, Gilles Gonzales, Saint Teresa of Ávila and Saint John of the Cross.⁵ Hans Urs von Balthasar rejects the mystical aspect that Rahner finds in Origen in preference for a specific Pauline ‘Christian and Biblical dualism.’ He traces the concept following Rahner, from Origen through the Medieval phase and notes an increasing mystical and intuitive interpretation.⁶

Following this period and into modern times, von Balthasar picks up the concept with reference to different uses exercises and meditations such as ‘The Exercises of Ignatius.’⁷ On the other hand, Rahner notes the ‘disappearance of this notion,’ until the more modern

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² Origen, *Contra Celsum*, Henry Chadwick (trans.) (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1980), pp. 44-45. Origen refers to the ‘sensations of the mind,’ including faculties of the mind, such as vision, hearing, taste, smell and touch. For further references to the spiritual senses in Origen please see Appendix V.
³ For references to the spiritual senses in the Patristic writers please see Appendix VI.
period, citing ‘absence of a specific doctrine of the spiritual senses in classical modern mysticism’ as a possible cause. He notes the resurgence of interest in the ‘more modern period.’ Interestingly, neither Rahner nor von Balthasar note any link in the modern period between John Wesley and the spiritual senses. A reason for this might be because Wesley’s Anglican, Puritan, Moravian and Evangelical heritage was not the line they were pursuing. More recently however, John Wesley’s contribution has been acknowledged alongside the additions of Nicholas of Cusa, Jonathan Edwards, Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar.

An early general overview of the concept of the spiritual senses can be gleaned in the first developed source of the doctrine in Origen, who offers one of the clearest definitions in *Contra Celsum*. Referring to the ability of human beings, namely the prophets, to ‘hear and see… the word of the Lord,’ but not through the physical senses of sight or hearing, he asserts that human beings are capable of discovering an awareness of the divine, which is the property of those who are ‘blessed’ and those who seek, find this ‘divine sense.’ This awareness of the divine, which is related to direct experience of the divine, takes the form of the ability to see, hear, taste, smell and touch spiritual realities in a manner that departs from, but is similar to, the natural sense capacities. Within the numerous references to the spiritual senses in the writings of the Fathers, the concept is most often grounded in individuals who have an established faith. For example, in this text, Origen firmly grounds the spiritual senses in the faith of the mature Christian.

Origen further clarifies the nature of the spiritual senses in *On First Principles*, where the concept of the spiritual sense of sight is developed to understanding and knowing God. Terms used for the natural senses are applied to the soul where a ‘divine sense’ exists, in addition to the natural senses, and by means of this divine sense the ‘worthy’ can see God. There is a correspondence between the use of the terms ‘heart,’ ‘mind’ and ‘soul,’ these being used interchangeably, and it is here where the immortal and intellectual ‘divine sense’ is seated. This divine sense is active in conveying knowledge of God by means of an ascending spiritual pathway leading through contemplation to perfection.

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11 For examples of the spiritual senses being grounded in the faith of the mature or elite within the Fathers, please see Appendix VII.
Whilst the passages cited offer a basic outline of Origen’s most elementary principles concerning the spiritual senses, they by no means reflect the extent of his developed doctrine, a restating of which is not the focus of this essay. However, Rahner and von Balthasar both offer a detailed historical overview of the spiritual senses. Of particular interest to this thesis are the following observations. The spiritual senses are not possessed by every human being. The essentials of the doctrine are dependent upon an already established faith. It is only once this faith is deepened that the spiritual senses are animated by reliance on grace and the Logos. The spiritual senses permit human understanding. The communication they convey is irresistible. Their activity depends on the training and personal practice of the individual. They enable a deepening knowledge of God by means of an ascending spiritual pathway leading through the mystical path of contemplation to perfection.\textsuperscript{14}

Wesley’s concept of the spiritual senses diverges from these fundamental principles in two ways. Firstly, in line with his emphasis on soteriology and secondly, because of his desire to ground Christian practice in theology and render it accessible. Therefore, an exploration of Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses is of particular interest to mission. Part Two seeks to trace the concept of the spiritual senses, particularly through the publically articulated and self-published sermons of John Wesley, with the aim of discovering what contribution his use of the concept might make to the conversation between contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christian thinkers. Wesley’s sermons have been selected for three reasons. Firstly, because Wesley states that his sermons contain ‘in the clearest manner,’ his basic doctrines and insists that his sermons, in particular, contain his own thoughts, without ‘entangling’ them with the thoughts of others.\textsuperscript{15} Therefore, it can be deduced that an investigation of his sermons will offer the most unsullied insights into his thinking. Secondly, because Outler notes that Wesley chose the sermon as the medium of his theology.\textsuperscript{16} Thirdly because, Gavrilyuk and Coakley note that following the Protestant Reformation preaching became the main form of communicating Christian teaching.\textsuperscript{17} For these reasons it is expected that using his sermons for the foundation of this study will uncover all of the key motifs in his use of the spiritual senses. These will then be augmented by other works as appropriate.

\textsuperscript{15} The Sermons, Preface and Introduction, An Introductory Comment, \textit{Works}, Vol. I.
\textsuperscript{17} Gavrilyuk and Coakley, \textit{Spiritual Senses}, p. 9.
JOHN WESLEY AND THE CHURCH FATHERS

This Part of the thesis seeks to understand how John Wesley used the spiritual senses within his soteriology. Lynch’s methodology, ‘revised correlation,’ was applied with the aim of drawing out Wesley’s delineation of the spiritual senses in his own words. Initially this was done, following the recommendation of Mark Mealey, without any reference to contemporary theological debates, in order to attempt to obtain a clear understanding of Wesley’s thoughts. However, as it transpired that the Eastern metaphors were pertinent in Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses, the need to acknowledge the debate concerning Wesley’s use of themes from the Eastern and Western theological perspectives became clear.

i. The Selection of John Wesley and his Connection to Ancient Sources

Part One has highlighted the importance of ancient religious sources for contemporary spiritual seekers. In the light of this, it would seem prudent to explain why John Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses has been selected as the historical focus, particularly since he lived and ministered in the modern era. Wesley shared a conviction with his fellow Anglicans that the ideals of primitive Christianity might be re-established in order to reform English Christianity. It is during this time that Wesley began a rigorous study of the doctrine, discipline and principles of the early church. Consequently, whilst Wesley was indeed a product of his era, his theology is richly embedded within the thought and practices of the Patristic era, which he developed and applied in line with his emphasis on soteriology and accessible theology. The fact that he accredited the fundamental tenets of Methodism to the early Fathers is evidence of his esteem. The interest of this thesis, in this regard, is to call attention to the connection between Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses and the earliest developed sources of the theme, in order to demonstrate correlation with contemporary spirituality concerning the use of ancient sources. As such, this conversation concerning the spiritual senses covers a separation of time, similar to the way in which Wesley applied his knowledge of the Fathers to his own era. It is the Fathers’ thinking as brought to Wesley, speaking through Wesley’s interpretation, and how he

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18 Part Two, p. 82.
19 Part One, pp. 31-32.
22 An Earnest Appeal, §12, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.
applied it to the modern church, in order to draw out its potential contribution to the current era.

ii. Arguments Concerning Wesley’s Ancient Sources

There has been some debate in recent years concerning Wesley’s reliance upon, and alignment to, the ideas of the early Church Fathers. Wesley’s sources have been traced from what Wesley termed ‘Christian antiquity,’\(^\text{23}\) or ‘primitive Christianity,’\(^\text{24}\) meaning the Patristic era, through the Middle Ages to the 16th century.\(^\text{25}\) Over recent years there has been an assertion that Wesley drew significant sources for his vision of the church and the Christian life from the patristic era. Most notably, Albert Outler is credited with playing a significant role in first highlighting these ancient connections,\(^\text{26}\) citing as sources Pseudo-Macarius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Ephraim Syrus,\(^\text{27}\) St. Irenaeus and Origen.\(^\text{28}\) Nevertheless, he also acknowledged alternative sources though which the ideas of the early church could have been transferred to Wesley.\(^\text{29}\) Furthermore, Outler argued that Wesley formed a significant amount of his theology through the lens of Eastern Christianity.\(^\text{30}\)

A group of theologians who concur with this idea include Ted Campbell\(^\text{31}\) who examined the influence of the early Church Fathers with an interest in understanding the influence of Christian antiquity on Wesley’s vision for religious renewal.\(^\text{32}\) Campbell’s book reveals that he has a very high view of the influence of Christian antiquity on Wesley. He acknowledges both the centrality of his vision for restoring primitive Christianity\(^\text{33}\) and the endurance of this theme.\(^\text{34}\) Campbell acknowledges a range of potential sources, including direct references to the works of the Fathers themselves,\(^\text{35}\) along with a large range of

\(^{\text{23}}\) For example, Sermon 112, On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel, §II.3, Works, Vol III.

\(^{\text{24}}\) For example, Journals and Diaries III (1743-1754), Journal 8, Wed 16th Jan 1751, Works, Vol. XX; An Earnest Appeal, §99, Works (Jackson), Vol 8. Both of which also speak of the spiritual senses.

\(^{\text{25}}\) For references concerning suggested sources, please see Appendix VIII.


\(^{\text{27}}\) Introduction, §5, Wesley and His Sources, Works.


\(^{\text{31}}\) Professor Campbell is an academic, theologian, author and Christian minister. He specialises in Church history and Wesleyan and Methodist studies.


\(^{\text{33}}\) Campbell, John Wesley, pp. 118-120.

\(^{\text{34}}\) Campbell, John Wesley, pp. 41-53, pp. 118-119.

\(^{\text{35}}\) Campbell, John Wesley, Appendix 2, pp. 125-134.
potential routes through which these teachings could have emerged. In *John Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy* Maddox promotes the connection between Wesley and the Eastern Fathers. In addition to direct references, Maddox acknowledges potential routes through which these sources could have reached Wesley. Runyon affirms the influence of the Eastern Fathers in Wesley’s theology. Most recently Geordan Hammond stringently upholds the concept that Wesley’s enduring model of Methodist worship, devotional and charitable practice was modelled on the imitation of the early church. Hammond includes reference to the Fathers without prejudice, whilst acknowledging the potential that some of the ideas from the Fathers could have reached Wesley via other means.

Whilst the case for Wesley’s alignment to the Eastern Fathers has been strongly argued, there has been some debate over the legitimacy of these claims in recent years. Two theologians are of particular note. Firstly, Richard Heitzenrater, who forms a negative evaluation of the links between Wesley and Eastern Patristic texts. And secondly, Kenneth Collins who launched a substantive critique upon Randy Maddox’s interpretation of the significance of the Eastern Fathers to Wesley, particularly in two publications.

In evaluating their negative stance of Wesley’s use of the Church Fathers, both Heitzenrater and Collins draw, to different degrees, on the work of Ted Campbell. The debate seems to centre particularly on four main areas: firstly, an interpretation of Campbell’s statistics; secondly, the way that Wesley used the Church Fathers; thirdly, the willingness of any particular theologian to take Wesley at his word; and fourthly, the influence of the Church Fathers on Wesley’s soteriology. Although evaluating this debate cannot become the focus of this thesis, and recognising this limitation with an imperative that more work needs to be done, the following points are briefly noted.

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40 Runyon, *New Creation*, p. 13 and n. 3, p. 266.
41 Dr. Geordan Hammond is an academic, lecturer and author with a particular focus on Church history and Wesley studies.
45 Heitzenrater, ‘Readings and References.’
**a. Evaluating the use of Statistics**

This evaluation will concentrate on the most robust debate concerning statistics, which is between Heitzenrater and Campbell. Firstly, using selected references to Wesley’s reading of the Fathers to substantiate his view, Heitzenrater lays much weight upon references, or rather the lack of them, in Wesley’s letters, journals and diaries.\(^{48}\) However, in the light of Hammond’s recent note concerning the complexity of these documents, the weight of these references must now be viewed with renewed caution. Quoting W. R. Ward and Frank Baker, Hammond refers to research that highlights the redacted content of the published letters, journals and diaries, which were most often made public for propagandic purposes. It is possible that much of his, more detailed, private records would have been destroyed.\(^{49}\) In consequence, Hammond advises caution in the use of Wesley’s published journals to substantiate one’s point. Additionally, when gleaning statistics using diaries it is also useful to remember the spasmodic nature of Wesley’s published diary and not assume that it accounts for all of his prolific reading. Indeed, Heitzenrater acknowledges caution concerning the use of diaries.\(^ {50}\)

Secondly, Heitzenrater particularly draws on Campbell’s list of references to patristic authors and works in John Wesley’s works.\(^ {51}\) He is, however, selective in his application of Campbell’s work. Choosing to ignore all of Wesley’s general references to the Fathers, he severely redacts Campbell’s list to assert that the majority of Wesley’s references to the Fathers are contained in three of his texts.\(^ {52}\) Thirdly, using the same redaction, he loosely questions the East/West alignment of some of the Fathers, choosing to take the stance that some, whose alignment could be considered dubious, are in fact Western. He then proceeds to use this redaction to weigh Campbell’s statistics heavily on the Western side.\(^ {53}\)

Consequently, Heitzenrater draws the negative conclusion that Campbell’s statistics demonstrate that Wesley’s references to the Eastern Fathers are somewhat limited and very specifically focused in particular directions, primarily in a very few polemical works.\(^ {54}\) This is in contrast to Campbell’s positive conclusion that, in actual usage, and with the exception of Augustine, Wesley referred to Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Cyprian more than any others, adding weight to their significance for Wesley.\(^ {55}\)

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\(^{48}\) Heitzenrater, ‘Readings and References,’ p. 25.

\(^{49}\) Hammond, *John Wesley*, pp. 8-10.

\(^{50}\) Heitzenrater, ‘Reading and References,’ p. 27.

\(^{51}\) Campbell, Appendix 2, *John Wesley*, pp. 125-134.

\(^{52}\) Heitzenrater, ‘Reading and References,’ p. 27.

\(^{53}\) Heitzenrater, ‘Reading and References,’ p. 27 and n.14.

\(^{54}\) Heitzenrater, ‘Reading and References,’ p. 27.

\(^{55}\) Campbell, *John Wesley*, p. 49.
b. Evaluating how Wesley used the Church Fathers in his Writings

The Macarian Homilies as a Source for Wesley’s Doctrine of Sanctification and Perfection

Heitzenrater references Campbell to substantiate his view in disclaiming Outler’s assertion that Wesley drew from the one he knew as Macarius, and used concepts drawn from the ancient Eastern Christian tradition in forming his doctrine of sanctification. However, he fails to take account of the more recent research by Hoo-Jung Lee that supports Outler’s theory. Lee concluded that the Macarian Homilies played the most prominent role in shaping Wesley’s theology of sanctification and perfection, as a dynamic, growing process that is rooted in the life of the Spirit and aimed at perfect love. Furthermore, Lee attributes the origin of the Homilies to Syriac Christian monasticism, where they were originally composed as spiritual guides. He asserts that it is this ancient Syriac tradition that should be viewed as the patristic source for Wesley’s pneumatocentric theology and spirituality.

Heitzenrater’s use of Campbell’s ‘Configurations’

Heitzenrater appeals to the three ‘configurations, through which Campbell explores the various ways in which Wesley used the materials from the early church in his own writings. Specifically, these three distinctions are firstly, ‘polemical,’ the use of Christian antiquity to refute the practices or beliefs of opponents. Secondly, ‘conservative,’ the use of Christian antiquity to defend teachings and practices within the church. Thirdly, ‘programmatic,’ the use of Christian antiquity to support the restoration of customs, beliefs and virtues. He cites Campbell’s favouring of Wesley’s use of the programmatic distinction. However, it should be noted that Campbell bases his evaluation on all three distinctives within Wesley’s works, although he observes a greater use of the programmatic.

Heitzenrater notes that the programmatic and conservative usage of the Fathers is almost never accompanied by an actual quotation and therefore, unlike Campbell, he dismisses their usefulness in deciphering Wesley’s use of the material. It is worth noting that it is precisely these types of general uses that Heitzenrater dismissed from Campbell’s

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56 Heitzenrater, ‘Reading and References,’ pp. 28-29.
60 Campbell, *John Wesley*, p. 21.
61 Heitzenrater, ‘Reading and References,’ pp. 29-10.
appendix when forming his view on the ‘somewhat limited’ statistics concerning Wesley’s references to the Church Fathers, above. This would add weight to the observation, above, that his conclusion concerning Campbell’s statistics is flawed.

c. Taking Wesley at his Word
There is a decided difference amongst those who support the significant extent of the Eastern influence and Heitzenrater, who does not. This concerns a willingness to take Wesley at his word in relation to the extent of his personal reading of the Fathers. Heitzenrater questions Wesley’s use of the Fathers by adding two categories to those of Campbell; Wesley’s ‘aphoristic’ use of the Fathers and ‘namedropping.’ The aphoristic use includes the occasions where Wesley uses a short statement that he accredits to the Fathers, to confirm a general truth. Namedropping is any occasion where Wesley refers to the Fathers simply by name, including the occasions when he recommends the Fathers to his clergy, those in which he declares his own reading of the Fathers, and almost certainly, those occasions where he asserts that the fundamental tenets of Methodism are built upon the Fathers.62 Here Heitzenrater is particularly dismissive of Wesley’s references to the Anti-Nicene Fathers and yet, at the same time, he acknowledges Wesley’s preference for them. The emphasis in this passage is subjective, as Heitzenrater speaks of his ‘impression’ that Wesley is not drawing directly from the Fathers.

In contrast, all of those who support a strong theological influence drawn from the Eastern Fathers are willing to take Wesley at his word. The question has to be asked, whether it is acceptable for twentieth/twenty-first-century scholars to be dismissive of the direct assertions of an earlier church founder and Christian minister? Whilst some would find this within the boundaries of acceptable theological critical reflection, certainly including Heitzenrater, insofar as Wesley’s references to the Anti-Nicene Fathers are concerned; others including Outler, Maddox, Runyon, Campbell and Hammond, have chosen not to engage in such practice.

Finally, the above arguments do not centre on the influence of the early Church Fathers upon Wesley’s theological convictions. Rather the arguments centre on the precise shape of the theological and spiritual ‘genealogy’ that passed on this heritage to Wesley.63 As shown above, whilst all of those who support the influence of the Church Fathers acknowledge the direct route, they also acknowledge that Wesley could have gleaned at least some of this knowledge through other routes. For his part, Heitzenrater, whilst

62 Heitzenrater, ‘Reading and References,’ p. 30.
63 Heitzenrater, ‘Reading and References,’ p. 31.
maintaining that the route for such knowledge is by means of other sources, firmly acknowledges the influence of the early church in Wesley’s life and thought as evident in the shape of his theology and the details of his program. He also acknowledges that this influence was evident in the Church of England of his day, as well as the pietists and mystics that Wesley read. Furthermore, his conclusions are subjective, as they are not fully based on his findings, but on his instinct. He adds that much more work needs to be done on the specific channels by which that thought was transmitted as he ‘suspects’ that many of the early church ideas and practices passed through several filters before reaching Wesley from a number of sources.’

Most of the scholars referenced agree, to differing degrees, that Wesley's alignment to the ideas of the Fathers could have come from both direct reading and other sources. Whatever the source, all of the scholars cited here agree that the ideas of the Church Fathers had a significant impact on Wesley’s thinking, so much so that he continued to align the fundamental principles of Methodism to those concepts.

d. The Influence of the Church Fathers upon Wesley’s Soteriology

The most robust debate concerning the influence of the Eastern Fathers upon Wesley’s theology, particularly his soteriology, is between Maddox and Collins. At first glance, Maddox and Collins appear to be at opposite poles in this respect, with Maddox arguing for the extensive influence of the Eastern motifs and Collins’ interest being to protect the protestant aspects of Wesley’s soteriology.

However, upon further exploration, they are closer than might at first appear. Maddox’s perspectival stance, where he gives precedence to the Eastern perspective, does not ignore the Western metaphors but rather works them into this larger pattern. Whereas within Collins’ conjunctive stance, although the Western metaphors are primary, the Eastern is also acknowledged if not fully developed, although Collins often refers to these as Catholic.

Whilst there is more upon which they agree than one might at first suspect, the main thrust for Collins concerns areas where Maddox, by his own admission, ‘develops’ Wesley’s

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64 Heitzenrater, ‘Reading and References,’ p. 31.
66 Collins, Scripture Way, p. 207.
theme. Two such areas, which are explored in this thesis, are the cooperant nature of grace and Wesley’s soteriology as instantaneous or a process.

iii. Moving Forward for this Thesis
To reaffirm, the interest of this thesis is to call attention to Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses and the earliest possible Christian sources, in order to demonstrate a link with the interest of contemporary spirituality in ancient sources. For this reason, the Church Fathers are referenced and quotes are mainly taken from Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Marcius. It is worth noting that the spiritual senses do not feature in Heitzenrater’s text, and have very limited mention in those of Collins. Nevertheless, Campbell’s suggestion of Wesley’s programmatic use of the Fathers is useful for this thesis, particularly Campbell’s methodology that validates Wesley’s partial or indirect quotes, or even ideas, to the Fathers. It seems that an exploration of Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses would fit into the programmatic distinction, particularly in the area of using ancient Christian customs and beliefs as patterns which Wesley wanted to see reinstituted into Methodism. In this respect such an exploration has the potential to add to the discussion concerning Wesley’s use of the Church Fathers. Whilst this cannot be fully developed within the context of this thesis, it can be argued that those references from the Church Fathers which bear similarities to not only Wesley’s thinking, but to his words, sit within this category. They are therefore used in the hope of not only demonstrating an alignment to the earliest possible Christian sources, but also encouraging further exploration concerning Wesley’s use of the Church Fathers.

In conclusion, this thesis highlights the Eastern influence of the Church Fathers for the following reasons:

i. Whilst all of the arguments have not been addressed in this short review, there are strong opinions on both sides. As Maddox asserts, interpreters of Wesley’s theology are faced with a choice and, for the reasons stated above, my preference is to support the view that Wesley skilfully interweaves the Eastern and Western metaphors.

ii. However, this thesis acknowledges that Wesley could have gleaned his knowledge of the Church Fathers either directly, or by indirect means. Nevertheless, it will assert that the quotes relating to the spiritual senses from Origen, that are used in Part Three, fit into the methodology of Campbell’s programmatic distinction outlined above, and that this is potentially an area that merits further exploration.

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67 Part Two, pp. 113-114 and p. 130.
69 Heitzenrater, ‘Reading and References,’ p.27.
iii. But most importantly for this thesis: Firstly, the Eastern metaphors are prevalent within Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses. Consequently, this thesis supports the scholarship of Lee when acknowledging the Eastern motifs in Wesley’s themes of sanctification and perfection. Nevertheless, because Wesley balanced both the Eastern and Western motifs, both are highlighted within this thesis. Secondly, as demonstrated in Part Three, the Eastern motifs correlate significantly with the motifs of contemporary spirituality.

JOHN WESLEY AND THE SPIRITUAL SENSES

It is without doubt that the spiritual senses is a recurring motif in the sermons of John Wesley, with references using the specific term ‘spiritual senses’ spanning John Wesley’s published sermons between 1742 and 1790 and an additional specific exposition contained in the essay An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. Further references to the concept are scattered throughout Wesley’s letters and works in the form of cognate terms such as ‘eyes of our understanding’, ‘sensible’, ‘sensation’, ‘spiritual sight’ and many other references either indirect or implicit within the text.

Furthermore, the significance of this theme for Wesley should not be underestimated, for he claims the centrality of this concept to his message in his defence of the central message of Methodism. He declares this ‘religion worthy of God who gave it’ the ‘religion of love, joy and peace, having its seat in the inmost soul,’ the religion to be obtained ‘even by faith,’ to be,

the demonstrative evidence of things unseen, the supernatural evidence of things invisible, not perceivable by eyes of flesh, or by any of our natural senses or faculties. Faith is that divine evidence whereby the spiritual man discerneth God, and the things of God. It is with regard to the spiritual world, what sense is with regard to the natural. It is the spiritual sensation of every soul that is born of God.

\[^{71}\] For example, C. Wesley, Sermon 3, Awake Thou That Sleepest, §I.11, Works, Vol. I. For further references please see Appendix IX.


\[^{73}\] For example, Sermon 28, Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, Discourse Eight, §3, Works, Vol I. For further references please see Appendix X.


\[^{75}\] An Earnest Appeal, §6, §34, Works (Jackson), Vol 8; A Letter To A Person Lately Joined With The Quakers, paragraph 9, Works (Jackson), Vol 10; Sermon 7, The Way to the Kingdom, §10, Works Vol I; Sermon 19, The Great Privilege, §I.5, §I.8, Works, Vol I; Sermon 130, On Living Without God, §3, §5, Works, Vol IV.

\[^{76}\] Some Late Conversations Between The Rev Mr Wesley And Others, Conversation 1, §3, Q4, Works (Jackson), Vol 8; An Earnest Appeal, §34, Works (Jackson), Vol 8; Letters From The Reverend John Wesley, To Various Persons, Works (Jackson), Vol 13, DCCII, To The Same, Paragraph 3.

\[^{77}\] Affirmed by Outler in John Wesley, p. 384.

\[^{78}\] An Earnest Appeal, §2, 4 & 6 Works (Jackson), Vol 8.

\[^{79}\] An Earnest Appeal, §6, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.
Wesley defines this faith, as the ‘gift of God,’ through which ‘everyone who partakes is saved,’ and as ‘spiritual sensation,’ being the eye, ear, palate and feeling of the soul. Here, humanity is saved ‘from all uneasiness of mind, from the anguish of a wounded spirit, from discontent, from fear and sorrow of heart, and from that inexpressible listlessness and weariness.’ Here, ‘love of God, and all mankind,’ is found. He proceeds to declare, ‘This is a short, rude sketch of the doctrine we teach. These are our fundamental principles…’

Herein Wesley asserts the centrality of the concept of the spiritual senses to his theology. By means of a systematic exploration of Wesley’s concept of the spiritual senses on his own terms, this chapter seeks to confirm that it is an extensive motif in his theological premise which undergirds his soteriology. This analysis of Wesley’s concept of the spiritual senses will seek to uncover the way in which he chose to use the theme, revealing a significant and specific practical outworking foundational to his theological premise. The findings will then have the potential to make a significant contribution to the conversation with contemporary spirituality and ultimately speak into contemporary evangelism.

**REVISED CORRELATION STAGE TWO: HISTORICAL THEOLOGY**

**Identifying the Key Tenets of John Wesley’s theme of the Spiritual Senses.**

Whilst Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses has not been altogether neglected and has enjoyed some interest in recent years, it has mostly been expounded with the particular interests of the scholar in mind. This has left an objective analysis concerning the exact nature of Wesley’s concept of the spiritual senses, in his own words, missing. For example, whilst Outler on numerous occasions acknowledges the theme and refers to possible sources, he does not go into detail regarding Wesley’s employment of the theme. Rather, his interest centers on the historical, cultural, intellectual, scriptural and religious context.

An illustration of this can be demonstrated by reference to Outler’s introduction and notes on section II.4 of *The New Birth*, the section specifically dealing with the spiritual senses. Here Outler makes no reference to the spiritual senses, centering rather on historical, cultural and religious issues. Every note in section II, bar two, simply refers the reader to

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scriptural references. Of the two references mentioned, note 29 refers to a theological and cultural interest, and note 35 grounds the pneumatology historically.

Apart from the exceptions noted in the two sermons that follow, this pattern is generally held throughout the selected sections. In the Witness of the Spirit Discourse 1, note 84, a passage making direct reference to the spiritual senses, Outler directs his readers to §1.12, a section referring to Wesley’s reluctance to go into detail regarding the exact nature of the interaction between the divine and humankind. In his notes on Awake Thou That Sleepest, Outler acknowledges the place of the spiritual senses in Wesley’s theory of religious knowledge, notes some suggested sources, and also offers a basic definition. Again he refers his readers to Wesley’s reluctance to go into detail as above. Additionally, whilst the concept is acknowledged in Outler’s, John Wesley, the theme of the spiritual senses was not deemed of sufficient significance to be indexed.

In his book, John Wesley on Religious Affections, Gregory Clapper pays fleeting attention to the role of the spiritual senses in Wesley’s theology, choosing to define it as ‘….nothing more than a construct which is assumed to lie behind the affection.’ Runyon offers a short but fluid overview of Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses. He emphasizes Wesley’s modification of Locke’s empirical method, suggests Wesley’s contemporary theological motivation and develops the role of the re-creation of the image of God in Wesley’s theology. Maddox is more cautious concerning the importance of the spiritual senses in Wesley’s theology and acknowledges this concept briefly, noting the potential role of the spiritual senses in revelation and the perceptibility of grace. Matthews acknowledges the centrality of the concept of the spiritual senses to Wesley’s overall theological premise, offering extended sections that develop historical and theological themes. Of all the above, Matthews gives the most comprehensive overview, but again with a purpose, as his application is specifically set in the context of the relationship between Wesley’s theology and reason.

83 Sermon 45, The New Birth, §2.4 n 29, Works, Vol. II.
85 Part Two, p. 79 n.71 and n. 72.
87 C. Wesley, Sermon 3, Awake Thou That Sleepest, §1.11 n52, Works, Vol. I.
88 Outler, John Wesley, p. 514
89 Professor Clapper is an academic, theologian, author and Christian minister.
91 Runyon, New Creation, pp. 31, pp. 74-81, p. 82, pp. 158-159.
92 Maddox, Responsible, pp. 27-28, p. 31, pp. 128-129.
93 Matthews, Religion and Reason.
More recently, Mealey advocates ‘the need to understand Wesley on his own terms’ and yet focuses on the spiritual senses as ‘a distinct power from God that is created anew.’ For Mealey, the spiritual senses function within the Christian as ‘the reception of the supernatural habit of grace,’ bringing about a ‘non-discursive, immediate experience of God’ and operating in terms of ‘faith, new birth and the witness of the Spirit.’

This section will follow Mealey’s suggestion in attempting an objective and detailed examination of Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses ‘on his own terms,’ in order to glean a thorough understanding of his employment of the concept. It is only following this analysis that the conversation concerning its potential contribution to contemporary spirituality and application to contemporary mission can be effectively undertaken.

It is certain that Wesley was not interested in formulating a systematic theology and this applies to his application of the spiritual senses as well, nor was delving into the unspeakable mysteries of the divine his aim. Consequently, he never goes into detail concerning the exact process of the operation of the Spirit of God upon the spiritual senses. In direct relation, just preceding his exposition on the nature of the new birth and the role of the spiritual senses therein, Wesley specifically indicates his reluctance to go down this route.

Moreover, the absence of a developed theological framework concerning the interaction between the divine and the spiritual senses need not indicate a lack of understanding on Wesley’s part. When noting possible sources for Wesley’s emphasis on ‘the believer’s immediate awareness of the reality of God’s gracious presence in the inmost self,’ Outler suggests that Wesley ‘never took time to master the speculative outreach of the idealistic philosophy which these men shared.’ Nevertheless, Outler also argues for ‘organic unity’ in Wesley’s thinking. Wesley indicates his reasons for articulating in a particular manner,

Nothing here appears in an elaborate, elegant or oratorical dress...I design plain truth for plain people. Therefore, of set purpose, I abstain from all nice

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98 This is well acknowledged, for example Outler, John Wesley, p17; Matthews, Religion and Reason, p23ff.
100 Sermon 45, The New Birth, §§II.2, Works, Vol. II.
102 Outler, John Wesley, p27.
and philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasonings, and, so far as possible, from even the show of learning…103

Matthews takes this up, raising the bench mark of expectation regarding Wesley’s capacity for theological comprehension and drawing out the implicit claims behind Wesley’s statement of intent:

Wesley will abstain from, but by implication is capable of, “nice and philosophical speculations,” or “perplexed and intricate reasonings.” He will refrain from a “show of learning,” but by implication processes the substances of learning. He will labor to avoid the technical terms of theological discourse, but by implication is intimately acquainted with them as a “man of reading…” He designs to forget “in some sense” all that he has ever read in his life, and by implication has an enormous wealth of reading and study behind him, informing his articulation of “plain truth for plain people.” He wishes to be, in his well-known but frequently misunderstood and often misinterpreted phrase homo unis libri, “a man of one book,” but is in fact a man of a great many books.104

In this respect Clapper is partly right when he observes Wesley’s reluctance to propagate amongst his readers ‘a speculative, theoretical understanding of the believer’s psychic make-up.’ However, this was not, as Clapper argues, because the concept of the spiritual senses was, for Wesley, ‘nothing but a construct which is assumed to lie behind the affection.’105 Rather than indicating a ‘lack of understanding,’ or ‘reluctance,’ or ‘lack of emphasis,’ for Wesley, this was a conscious decision in line with his emphasis on practical and accessible theology. Nevertheless, again in line with his emphasis on practical theology, Wesley considers the exposition that follows his statement of reluctance to be sufficiently cognitive and spiritual to provide a reasonable account conveying instruction in the faith.106 This decision not to elucidate the exact nature of the divine’s most intimate interactions with humanity, will by no means eradicate the ability for such truths to be communicated. For Wesley the onus regarding the clear communication of these truths lies with the divine and is possible only as a result of the direct action of the Holy Spirit.107 It is now time to turn to discovering Wesley’s employment of the concept of the spiritual senses by examining his own words.

103 Outler, John Wesley, pp. 88-89.
104 Matthews, Religion and Reason, pp. 28-29.
105 Clapper, Religious Affections, p. 58.
JOHN WESLEY ON THE SPIRITUAL SENSES

Charles Wesley’s Sermon 3, *Awake Thou That Sleepest*\(^{108}\) plays a key role in Wesley’s sermon corpus, being one of the four initial sermons presented. Outler notes that the sermon confirmed Charles's wholehearted identification with his brother's cause.\(^{109}\) John preached the sermon himself and included it amongst his Sermons on Several Occasions, but Outler notes that his version did not survive.\(^{110}\) Outler asserts that the four initial sermons in Wesley’s corpus ‘function as a multifaceted introductory quartet’ and ‘serve a particular function in Sermons on Several Occasions as a bloc: they proclaim the Wesleyan message in prophetic terms...’\(^{111}\) Given its key position in the corpus, not only does Charles’s sermon offer a helpful introduction to Wesley’s concept of the spiritual senses, but it also presents a comprehensive overview that epitomizes Wesley’s account of the state of humanity both prior and following the activation of the spiritual senses.

Charles Wesley personalizes his view of humanity’s natural state. The condition of such a person is that of sleep, ‘the deep sleep of the soul,’ a condition affecting all humanity as a consequence of the Fall of humankind at the beginning of time.\(^ {112}\) This resulted in a total lack of knowledge of one’s personal state, leaving one in need of the awakening voice of God.\(^ {113}\)

And first, as to the sleepers here spoken to. By sleep is signified the natural state of man: that deep sleep of the soul into which the sin of Adam hath cast all who spring from his loins; that supineness, indolence, and stupidity, that insensibility of his real condition, wherein every man comes into the world, and continues till the voice of God awakes him.\(^ {114}\)

Wesley develops his argument using terms such as ‘sleep,’ ‘darkness,’ ‘unawakened.’ He highlights humanity’s ‘insensibility’, noting that whilst they might know many things they are ignorant of their own state. From what follows it is obvious that the knowledge that is lacking is in relation to spiritual and not temporal knowledge. Humanity is a ‘fallen spirit, whose only purpose in this present world is to recover from that fall, to regain that image of God wherein he was created.’ Humanity knows no need for an ‘inward universal change,’ a ‘birth from above, that sanctification of spirit, soul, and body, without which no

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110 Journal and Diaries II (1738-1743), Note 9, *Works*, Vol XIX.
man shall see the Lord’. Not only so, but this lack of knowledge is a form of deceit since they are living in falsehood. They think they are healthy but are ‘full of diseases,’ they live in misery but are unaware of their unhappiness, they think they are living in peace but have in fact no peace, and all due to the captivating power of Satan. They are unaware, bound for the destruction of hell itself.

Such is the state of humanity that they are termed sinners, ‘satisfied in [their] sins, content to remain in [their] fallen state, to live and die without the image of God… ignorant of [their] disease and the only remedy for it…’ These people have either never heard or responded to the warning voice of God. Furthermore, although Charles here highlights the plight of the sinner, he points out that the ‘sleeper’ might equally be someone who has ‘a form of godliness,’ someone termed a ‘Christian,’ someone who outwardly lives an exemplary Christian lifestyle but actually knows nothing of their real standing before God. Such a person embraces a form of religion but lacks the breath of the ‘spirit of the living God’ in their life and, as such, is in the strongest of terms declared spiritually ‘dead.’

Using Ephesians 2:1, and returning to a more general view, those in a state of sleep are declared ‘dead unto God…‘dead in trespasses and sins.’’ Furthermore, using Romans 5:12, ‘Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned:’ and Genesis 2:17 ‘But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,’ Charles links this death with the aforementioned loss of the image of God.

Here Charles highlights the fact that he is speaking of that crucial separation between God and humankind at the beginning of time, the dissolution of the union of the human soul with God, which resulted in the key to this loss of knowledge of self and God, spiritual death. ‘Not bodily (unless as he then became mortal) but spiritually: thou shalt lose the life of thy soul; thou shalt die to God, shalt be separated from him, thy essential life and happiness.’ The only way to resolve this situation is through the intervention of the ‘Second Adam,’ Christ, who ‘becomes a quickening spirit to us, till he raises the dead, the dead in sin…’ But before the soul that is dead can live again, one must ‘hear (harken to) the voice of the Son of God,’ which will bring awareness of their lost estate.

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Now the concept of the spiritual senses is introduced. Those who sleep, those who are dead in sin, those who are deceived, those devoid of knowledge of spiritual realities, those who have lost the image of God and are spiritually dead, have not got senses capable of discerning spiritual good and evil, they are incapable perceiving or understanding the realities of God.

And most certain it is that one dead in sin has not 'senses exercised to discern' spiritual “good and evil.” “Having eyes, he sees not; he hath ears, and hears not.” He doth not “taste and see that the Lord is gracious.” He “hath not seen God at any time” nor “heard his voice” nor “handled the Word of life.” In vain is the name of Jesus “like ointment poured forth,” and “all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia.” The soul that sleepeth in death hath no perception of any objects of this kind. His heart is “past feeling,” and understandeth none of these things.  

It is because of the lack of spiritual senses, which act as an entry point for gaining spiritual knowledge, including awareness of self and of God, that humankind has no means of receiving the things of the Spirit of God. Moreover, they deny their very existence and that of spiritual sensation, which is self-evident when the life of faith abides within.

And hence, having no spiritual senses, no inlets of spiritual knowledge, the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; nay, he is so far from receiving them that whatsoever is spiritually discerned is mere foolishness unto him. He is not content with being utterly ignorant of spiritual things, but he denies the very existence of them. And spiritual sensation itself is to him the foolishness of folly.

Interestingly, upon examination of this first section of Charles Wesley’s *Awake Thou That Sleepest*, being situated as it is in a significant position in his sermon corpus, it can be observed that it contains key themes that are foundational to Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses. These key themes not only span the sermons containing specific reference to the spiritual senses, but can be identified throughout his theological premise and work together to form an organic unity in Wesley’s thinking. Not only so, but an analysis of the reiterative pattern and modulation, according to context, reveals a correlation that produces a harmony in his employment of the spiritual senses that particularly applies to his salvific premise. This specifically relates to the human situation from before they have any awareness of the knowledge of God, to the definitive conclusion, thus offering the potential to speak into evangelism.

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It is the intention of this chapter to identify these themes, outlining both their specificities and interconnectedness according to Wesley’s selected context, demonstrating how they build up into a cohesive whole and how they permeate Wesley’s practical theology. An exploration of Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses reveals a strong interconnection between the spiritual senses, the image of God and the salvific journey. Consequently, Outler identifies Wesley’s concept of the image of God as equivalent to Wesley’s other phrase about our ‘spiritual sensorium’ - the spiritual senses. Outler notes that “the restoration of our corrupted and disabled “image” to its pristine capacity is, indeed, the goal of Wesley’s ordo salutis.”

It is through the restored image of God that humanity has the capacity to know and respond to God’s prevenient, justifying and sanctifying activities. Such is the extent of this interconnection that any examination of the spiritual senses separated from the image of God and the order of salvation would render it not only incomplete, but incomprehensible. Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses is most fully developed in the arena of the restored image of God, but the fullness of the impact of the spiritual senses can only be understood in the light of an understanding of his developed theme of the image of God within the context of the order of salvation.

THE SPIRITUAL SENSES AND THE IMAGE OF GOD

The Image of God is a significant and complex theme in Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses. The connection between the one that sleeps, surrounded by darkness, spiritually dead, lacks sensibility, discernment or perception of the things of God and the image of God has already been noted with reference to Awake Thou That Sleepest and this connection is reinforced in other passages. Here Charles asserts that human beings were endowed with the image of God at Creation and, as a result of the Fall, lost that image and, in consequence, now live in isolation from the God who created them.

The theme is further developed in The New Birth, where Wesley briefly summarises his developed argument concerning the image of God. Humankind was created in the image of God which consists of three tenets, his ‘natural image’, his ‘political image’ and

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124 Sermon 1, Salvation By Faith, Works, Introduction §1, n.5.  
125 For example, Sermon 45, The New Birth, §1, Works, Vol. II. linking spiritual death to the loss of the image of God. For further references, please see Appendix XI.  
126 C. Wesley, Sermon 3, Awake Thou That Sleepest, §1.1, §1.2, §1.4, §1.8, Works, Vol. I.  
his ‘moral image.’

Although human beings were created in the image of God, according to His will, they were placed in an arena of many differing trials. Consequently they were not created ‘immutable,’ but rather in a state of being ‘able to stand, and yet liable to fall.’

In spite of being duly warned of dire consequences by God, humankind disobeyed and rebelled, an open declaration of independence, choosing to be governed by their own will, rather than that of their maker and to find happiness in the created rather than the creator.

In that day humankind suffered ‘the most dreadful of all deaths,’ they ‘lost the life of God,’ becoming ‘separated from him in union with whom [their] spiritual life consisted.’ This quickly became evident in their behaviour in that the ‘love of God was extinguished in [their] soul,’ which thereafter was ‘alienated from the life of God.’ Fleeing from the presence of God is indicative of how they now lived in fear, and how on that day they ‘lost both the knowledge and the love of God, without which the image of God would not subsist.’ They were consequently deprived of the image of God, and ‘unholy as well as unhappy,’ they fell into ‘pride and self-will…’

It is self-evident that, since humankind continued in existence, the death experienced on the day they sinned does not refer to mere temporal death but rather ‘spiritual death, the loss of the life and image of God.’

Every human being born subsequently is ‘born spiritually dead; dead to God, wholly ‘dead in sin’; entirely void of the life of God, void of the image of God. They now bear the image of the devil in that they continue to dwell in ‘pride and self-will’ ‘in sensual appetites and desires.’ Wesley asserts that ‘the entire corruption of our nature’ is the basis of the new birth. Therefore, being 'born in sin' we 'must be born again,' every human being ‘must be born of the Spirit of God’.

With the new birth, the stated effects of the Fall are reversed it ‘is the great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life…when it is created anew in Christ Jesus, when it is renewed after the image of God.’

Here the link with the loss of the life and image of God and those who are spiritually dead is established. Additionally, Wesley specifies foundational motifs regarding the endowment of the life and image of God, the loss of the life and image of God, and the restoration of the life and image of God. These hold great significance for his employment
of the spiritual senses. A broader investigation into how Wesley develops these three aspects of the image of God provides a deeper understanding of the significant role of this concept. Furthermore, these aspects incorporate a number of the key themes concerning the spiritual senses that are indicated above. As these themes are deeply embedded in Wesley’s understanding of the image of God, a number of them will be identified and developed in what follows.

1. THE SPIRITUAL SENSES IN THE ENDOWMENT OF THE IMAGE OF GOD

According to Wesley, human beings were created in the image of God which consists of three tenets, the ‘natural image,’ the ‘political image,’ and the ‘moral image.’ These are foundational motifs concerning the image of God. An examination reveals that each of these areas is key in Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses.

i. The Spiritual Senses in the Natural Image of God

In The New Birth, Wesley summarizes the natural image as ‘a picture of [God’s] own immortality, a spiritual being endued with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections…,’ all of which hold strong association with Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses. Wesley develops this theme in The General Deliverance:

in the power of self-motion, understanding, will, and liberty, the natural image of God consisted… His understanding was perfect in its kind; capable of apprehending all things clearly, and judging concerning them according to truth, without any mixture of error. His will had no wrong bias of any sort, but all his passions and affections were regular, being steadily and uniformly guided by the dictates of his unerring understanding; embracing nothing but good, and every good in proportion to its degree of intrinsic goodness. His liberty likewise was wholly guided by his understanding: he chose or refused according to its direction. Above all (which was his highest excellence, far more valuable than all the rest put together) he was a creature capable of God, capable of knowing, loving, and obeying his Creator.

Of particular significance for the spiritual senses the themes arising from this passage which will now be developed further include ‘understanding,’ to include ‘will,’ ‘liberty’ and being ‘capable of God.’

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134 Sermon 45, The New Birth, §1.1, Works, Vol. II.
136 Sermon 60, The General Deliverance, §1-2, Works, Vol. II.
Understanding in the Natural Image of God and the Spiritual Senses

Wesley describes the understanding as ‘if not the essence… the most essential property of a spirit,’ probably able to discern ‘truth by intuition’ and ‘without blemish, perfect in its kind.’ So, in the context of the spiritual senses, how might the ‘understanding’ with which human beings were endowed be understood? It is clear that humanity was endowed with ‘understanding’ in terms of ‘reason.’ However, for Wesley, is there a broader meaning of this understanding with which humanity was endowed in the natural image of God?

Understanding as Both Spiritual Perception and Reason

Referring to an historical view of the image of God, particularly from the perspective of the Deists and Immanuel Kant, where the image was identified with ‘reason’ and ‘conscience’ respectively, Runyon rightly identifies that Wesley ‘sees the image more relationally.’ Nevertheless he immediately proceeds to equate the ‘understanding’ referred to when speaking of the natural image with ‘reason.’ This is understandable since he immediately points to Wesley’s reference in *The General Deliverance*, where addressing a different, but associated topic, and arguing that animals have a degree of ‘reason,’ Wesley intentionally exchanges the term ‘reason’ for ‘the plain word, understanding.’

However, for Wesley, the understanding in the natural image of God has a broader scope than merely reason. This is demonstrated in *On the Fall of Man* where, in speaking of the Fall, Wesley notes that ‘the serpent’ was ‘endued with more understanding than any other animal in the brute creation,’ and that this understanding possessed by the serpent is ‘that reason which is now the property of man.’ The text implies that the serpent had cognitive understanding about God in that he offers certain insights into His character and nature, but what he lacked was a relational understanding of God, in that there is no indication of any actual relationship with God whatsoever. Wesley’s observation here is that the Serpent was endued with a level of understanding that is attributed to humankind, post-Fall. From this we can provisionally deduce that the level of understanding with which human beings were originally gifted in the natural image at creation was very different to that which they now possess and this is evidenced in two ways. Firstly, that pre-Fall people’s reason was enhanced in comparison to that which they now possess and

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secondly that, in addition to reason humankind enjoyed a relationship with God, indicating a relational understanding of God.

Throughout his sermons Wesley repeatedly makes reference to ‘the eyes of the understanding,’ which he identifies as one of the spiritual senses. It would appear that Wesley only makes specific reference twice to the eyes of the understanding being endowed at creation. Firstly, and most specifically, in The Image of God, he notes that the ‘Lord of nature ‘giveth the spirit of wisdom, and enlightens the eyes of their understanding, after the likeness in which they were created.’ Secondly, in Walking by Sight and Walking by Faith he makes a fleeting allusion to the prevenient action of God being communicated to humanity via the eyes of the understanding at creation, so much so that Outler picks up on the theme.

Further details can only gleaned as the result of searching and analysing his references in other areas, one such area being from Wesley’s observations from the negative perspective post-Fall. Specifically referring to the spiritual senses, in The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law, Wesley notes that humankind’s rebellion against God resulted in ‘the eyes of his understanding’ being darkened in the same measure as his soul was ‘alienated from the life of God.’ This indicates the existence of the faculty of the eyes of the understanding pre-Fall when human beings dwelt in complete knowledge, harmony and perfect relationship with their Creator.

Therefore, the understanding in the natural image of God comprises of two categories. Firstly understanding in terms of reason and secondly, understanding in terms of the spiritual sense of the eyes of the understanding. Since both of these were endued at creation it can be deduced that, for Wesley, this faculty of the eyes of the understanding was gifted upon human beings at Creation, along with reason, as part of a dual understanding that worked in harmony in the natural image of God. However, in line with one of his modus operandi it is possible that, on occasions, Wesley combines both of these definitions of the ‘understanding.’ For example, in The End of Christ’s Coming Wesley explicitly draws out the point that humanity’s ‘understanding [was] darkened’

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143 Sermon 141, The Image of God, §§.1, Works, Vol. IV.
144 Sermon 119, Walking by Sight and Walking by Faith, §§.8 and n. 19, Works, Vol. IV.
146 Matthews notes that Wesley ‘uses an inconsistent and sometimes confusing mixture of language about the spiritual senses.’ Matthews, Religion and Reason, p. 306.
post-Fall. The understanding referred to in this passage can be interpreted as reason, in that it involved ‘thinking;’ ‘But how was his understanding darkened, to think he could “hide himself from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden.”’ However, with a dual interpretation, this hiddenness also indicated a spiritual separation from God, ‘Thus was his soul utterly dead to God!’\(^{147}\) Here, the darkening of the spiritual sense of the eyes of the understanding, which has already been indicated is linked to the loss of the life of God in the soul, indicates spiritual death.\(^{148}\) Because this life of God is cut off, the understanding in terms of reason comprehended the relationship with God in a different manner than before, as a judge, rather than a loving creator, and consequently it comprehended the new sensation of fear. Matthews develops and confirms the argument that the reason and spiritual senses work in harmony with the direct experience of God to bring about such spiritual awareness.\(^{149}\) Here, at creation and therefore pre-Fall, the endowment of the understanding in terms of the spiritual sense of the eyes of the understanding, and the understanding in terms of reason, worked in harmony to enable a close experience of God.

The Relationship of the Eyes of the Understanding to the Other Spiritual Senses
Given Wesley’s preference for referencing the eyes of the understanding, is this a standalone spiritual sensation or is there a more substantial link between this particular faculty and the other spiritual senses? It is worth noting here Rahner’s observation that:

> one can only speak properly of an idea or doctrine of spiritual faculties when these...are found in a complete system in which five instruments are involved in the spiritual perception of immaterial realities, [nevertheless] if an author then clearly speaks of five spiritual faculties, we are justified in taking into account texts which only refer to a single faculty.\(^{150}\)

This corresponds to Wesley’s preference for referring to the spiritual sense of sight, for in other instances the five spiritual senses are referenced.\(^{151}\) However, Wesley goes to some lengths to make it clear that, when speaking of the spiritual sense of the eyes of the understanding he is referencing the other spiritual senses as well. Whilst speaking directly of spiritual senses, Wesley uses an analogy from the physical senses concerning the primary importance of physical sight:

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\(^{148}\) Please see below, pp. 100-102.

\(^{149}\) Matthews, *Religion and Reason*, p. 256 and Summary p. 5.


All the children of men that are not born of God “walk by sight”, having no higher principle. By sight, that is, by sense; a part being put for the whole, the sight for all the senses; the rather because it is more noble and more extensive than any or all the rest.\textsuperscript{152}

Here the sight represents all the senses and, acknowledging the role of the other physical senses, Wesley proceeds to argue for the primacy of the role of the faculty of sight in the attainment of knowledge, over and above all the other senses. He then proceeds to argue the case for senses capable of understanding the invisible, meaning the spiritual and eternal world. Since ‘\textit{Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu} – nothing is in the understanding which was not first perceived by some of the senses,’\textsuperscript{153} he cites primarily the concept of the spiritual sense of sight, ‘eyes of their understanding,’ in the attainment of spiritual knowledge. Following the analogy through, since he has already referred to the spiritual senses as a unit, he is using the spiritual sense of sight here as ‘a part being put for the whole, the sight for all the senses.’\textsuperscript{154}

Therefore, because Wesley explains specifically that when he is referring to the spiritual sense of sight he includes the other spiritual senses as well, when Wesley refers to the spiritual sense of sight, the ‘eyes of understanding,’ he is, at least sometimes, using a superordinate for the other spiritual senses. Furthermore, given that it has been established that human beings were endowed with the spiritual sense of sight, the eyes of the understanding at creation, the use of the superordinate indicates that they were equally endowed with the other spiritual senses at the same time.

That humanity was endowed with ‘faculties of the soul’ at creation is endorsed in \textit{The Doctrine of Original Sin}, where reference is made to ‘the faculties of his soul’ being created perfect.\textsuperscript{155} Since these faculties were rendered perfect through the ‘guidance of his unerring understanding,’ which as has been argued was only unerring since it was a dual understanding of reason and spiritual senses, using the subordinate of eyes of the understanding the presence of these spiritual senses at creation is confirmed. Since humanity’s sensibilities were active, their relational understanding being unblemished, they were created ‘capable of God.’\textsuperscript{156} Here, and throughout this thesis, the terms ‘capable of God’ or ‘capability of God’ are based

\textsuperscript{152} Sermon 119, \textit{Walking by Sight and Walking by Faith}, §3, \textit{Works}, Vol. IV.
\textsuperscript{153} Sermon 119, \textit{Walking by Sight and Walking by Faith}, §7, \textit{Works}, Vol. IV.
\textsuperscript{154} Sermon 119, \textit{Walking by Sight and Walking by Faith}, §4 -13, \textit{Works}, Vol. IV.
\textsuperscript{155} \textit{The Doctrine Of Original Sin, According to Scripture, Reason and Experience}, Part IV, Extracts from Dr. Watts and Mr. Hebden, \textit{Works} (Jackson), Vol 9.
\textsuperscript{156} Sermon 60, \textit{The General Deliverance}, §1.2, \textit{Works}, Vol. II.
on Wesley’s definition, ‘…he was a creature capable of God, capable of knowing, loving, and obeying his Creator.’

**This Understanding Guided the Faculties**

This understanding, with which human beings were endowed at creation, had specific purpose in addition to apprehension and judgement, this being ‘to discern truth from falsehood, good from evil’ and to enable human beings to live according to God’s law which was written on their hearts.

As part of the natural image of God human beings were also endowed with ‘a will with various affections…that he might love, desire, and delight in that which is good.’ The will had ‘no wrong bias of any sort, but all his passions and affections were regular.’ Another endowment was the liberty which gave human beings freedom of choice, particularly in relation to choosing or refusing good or evil. At creation both the will and the liberty were guided by this ‘unerring understanding…. embracing nothing but the good,’ the three were ‘inseparably united,’ and from the correct state and use of all their faculties their happiness flowed and increased. As already demonstrated, this ‘unerring understanding’ consisted of both spiritual sensation and reason working together.

**This Understanding Enabled Relationship with God**

If, for Wesley, the understanding was ‘if not the essence…. the most essential property of a spirit,’ this was only surpassed by the relationship that such an understanding as has been described would enable:

Above all (which was his highest excellence, far more valuable than all the rest put together) he was a creature capable of God, capable of knowing, loving, and obeying his Creator. And in fact he did know God, did unfeignedly love anduniformly obey him. This was the supreme perfection of man, as it is of all intelligent beings—the continually seeing and loving and obeying the Father of the spirits of all flesh. From this right state, and right use of all his faculties, his happiness naturally flowed….And to crown all, he was immortal.

157 Sermon 60, *The General Deliverance*, §1-2, *Works*, Vol. II. At the Fall this ‘capability of God’ was lost. This thesis argues that the spiritual senses play a role in enabling people to perceive and respond to the Holy Spirit. When the life and image of God is renewed in their lives a meaningful relationship with the divine is established which renders them, once again, ‘capable of God.’


The literary position of this statement, being the summary of a paragraph concerning the form of the natural image of God with which humanity was endowed, could indicate that it is because the full extent of the natural image of God was correctly and perfectly directed by the understanding that humanity were fully disposed towards God rendering them ‘capable of God.’ The eyes of the understanding and other spiritual senses working in harmony with reason made this possible. For Wesley it is this capability of God that distinguished human beings from the animal creation, rendering them truly human.  

Furthermore, that this knowledge is not merely rational knowledge, this being knowledge about God, but rather spiritual and relational knowledge, this being knowledge of God is clarified, especially since Wesley goes on to stress his point, ‘And in fact he did know God, did unfeignedly love and uniformly obey him.’ Not only so, but it is clear that they were able to know God due to the correct use of their understanding; that being the eyes of the understanding, indicating the spiritual senses, along with reason. Working together they guided people to love him through correct use of their will, and obey him through the correct use of their liberty, and the resultant relationship with God was the pinnacle of humanity’s perfection. Accordingly, the correct state and use of all their faculties culminated in the continual increase of their happiness.

So in summary, human beings in being endowed with the natural image of God were spiritual beings, with an understanding that befit such beings. This included reason, but was beyond the scope of reason alone, as they were in addition spiritual in nature, relational, and perfect in their kind. The spiritual senses, indicated by the superordinate of the eyes of the understanding, enabled spiritual perception and communicated this to the reason. The dual action of this understanding, that of spiritual perception and reason, enabled human beings to apprehend all things clearly, judge according to truth and discern good from evil. Accordingly the will and liberty were guided aright to embrace truth, justice and goodness and human beings were equipped to live in obedience to the law of God. This was the law of love written on their hearts, which enabled them to grow into perfection. It was from this correct use of all their faculties, guided by spiritual perception through the spiritual senses and reason working in harmony, that their happiness flowed and increased, free from any kind of evil, sorrow or pain. It is this developed definition of the understanding that will undergird all further reflections in this thesis.

166 Sermon 60, The General Deliverance, §III.11-12, Works, Vol II.
Above all of this, and resulting from the correct use of all their faculties being perfectly guided by this understanding, human beings were ‘capable of God, capable of knowing, loving and obeying their creator’ and the pinnacle of human perfection, although not the entirety of their perfection, culminated in increasing happiness. That Wesley seats capability of God primarily in the arena of the natural image of God is very significant for the developing understanding of the spiritual senses, a point that will be best demonstrated when assessing the renewing of the image of God below.

ii. The Spiritual Senses in the the Moral Image of God

Wesley summarizes the moral image of God as ‘righteousness and true holiness’, including love, justice, mercy and truth and spotless purity.’ For Wesley, this was the primary aspect of the image of God. In The New Birth, Wesley directly links the image of God to the spiritual senses, using the language of the moral image, ‘righteousness and true holiness.’

Further developments of this theme indicate that in being created in the moral image of God and dwelling in ‘righteousness and true holiness,’ human beings were ‘formed holy,’ with ‘an inward bias to virtue’ and ‘an inclination to please that God who made him, a supreme love to his Creator, a zeal to serve him…a tender fear of offending him,’ and an attitude of ‘obedience.’ The strong link with the understanding, defined as above to include the cooperation of reason and spiritual perception via the spiritual senses, is once again highlighted as in directing the right affections. Consequently, the will and liberty, enabled a close relationship with the Creator, and it is in this dwelling in God that the moral image consists.

As his understanding was without blemish, perfect in its kind, so were all his affections. They were all set right, and duly exercised on their proper objects. And as a free agent he steadily chose whatever was good, according to the direction of his understanding. In so doing he was unspeakably happy, dwelling in God and God in him, having an uninterrupted fellowship with the Father and the Son through the eternal Spirit; and the continual testimony of his conscience that all his ways were good and acceptable to God.

169 Sermon 45, The New Birth, §II.4-II.5, Works, Vol. II.
170 Doctrine of Original Sin, Part IV, Extracts, Works (Jackson), Vol. 9.
171 Part Two, pp. 90-92.
172 Indicated below in the term ‘chose.’ See also, Sermon 5, Justification by Faith, §I.1-3, Works, Vol I.
173 Sermon 62, The End of Christ’s Coming, §I.7, Works, Vol II. For the strong link between the natural image, particularly liberty and the moral image, virtue, righteousness or holiness, See also, Sermon 62, The End of Christ’s Coming, §I.6, Works, Vol II.
The moral image can be further examined with reference to a closely linked and important sub-theme in Wesley’s use of the image of God, that of the Life of God.\textsuperscript{174} Wesley directly links the spiritual senses with the life of God in the soul.\textsuperscript{175} Although closely linked to the image of God, so much so that Wesley often links the two concepts together,\textsuperscript{176} Wesley also deals with the Life of God specifically. Consistency in this theme can be seen in that it is found in the key sermon by Charles Wesley, \textit{Awake Thou That Sleepest}. Using the language of the spiritual senses people are called out of their sleep and the life of God in the soul is linked to the awakened life. Charles refers to the ‘life of God in the soul of man’ as,

\begin{quote}
...a participation of the divine nature, and “Christ formed in the heart,”
“Christ in thee, the hope of glory;” happiness and holiness; heaven begun upon earth; “a kingdom of God within thee”...“righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;” an everlasting kingdom brought into thy soul, a “peace of God that passeth all understanding;” a “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”\textsuperscript{177}
\end{quote}

\textit{The Great Privilege of Those That are Born of God}, speaks directly of the spiritual senses and indicates the reciprocal nature of this relationship. It defines the life of God in the soul as,

\begin{quote}
the continual inspiration of God's Holy Spirit: 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, and 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 an holy sacrifice, acceptable unto God in Christ Jesus.\textsuperscript{178}
\end{quote}

So it can be observed that the ‘life of God in the soul’ is consistent with the attributes of the moral image as stated, the ‘dwelling in God and God in him, having an uninterrupted fellowship with the Father and the Son through the eternal Spirit; and the continual testimony of his conscience that all his ways were good and acceptable to God.’\textsuperscript{179} It was this very indwelling that enabled humankind to live in righteousness and true holiness.

Furthermore, the spiritual senses are directly linked with the life of God in the soul,
particularly in regards to the reception and return of the breath of God into the soul, which Wesley also calls spiritual respiration.

iii. The Spiritual Senses in The Political Image of God

Wesley summarizes the political image as ‘the governor of this lower world, having dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth.’ Again, in The New Birth, Wesley links the political image of God with the spiritual senses. He notes that the political image was part of humankind’s perfection at creation and, in consequence, part of their renewal in the image of God. Living with love at the centre would include love of creation, ‘all our thoughts, words, and actions’ being acceptable through Christ Jesus.

The magnitude of the task is indicated where, in fulfilling the role of governor, people were empowered to act on God’s behalf in conveying His blessing to the natural created order. In this, people were aided by the natural image of God since the dual understanding effected a natural knowledge about the creation for which they were responsible. Furthermore, again enabled by the unerring dual understanding, the moral image of God worked in harmony with the political image endowing humankind with a love for both human beings and all creation and a correct moral attitude in dealing with them. This environment was wholesome and served to increase the happiness already experienced in humanities relationship with God.

Summary

Here a developed assessment of Wesley’s exposition of the endowment of the image of God is presented. Of significance for this thesis is the developed definition of the ‘understanding’ within the natural image of God. This consists, not merely of cognitive understanding, but is spiritual in nature and perfect in its kind. It includes the spiritual senses which worked with reason enabling people to discern the things of God and dwell in perfect understanding of Him. This dual understanding enabled people to have clear reasoning and make good choices. It also equipped them to live in obedience to the law of love, enabling growth into perfection and increasing happiness. Furthermore, this particular definition of the understanding interfaced with the political and moral image of God.
God. Consequently, it enabled humanity to form good relationships with both the creator and the created order. They participated in the divine nature and the life of God through spiritual respiration, and were full of knowledge and love for creation where they acted as conduits of God’s blessing. Of particular significance is the assessment of the understanding in the natural image of God, for it is through the interfacing of this dual understanding across the full spectrum of the image of God that experiential knowledge is possible.

Although human beings were created to live in perfect relationship with their Creator, they were not created immutable. Wesley follows the biblical narrative of the Fall and proceeds to define what humankind lost in consequence which holds significance in his use of the concept of the spiritual senses.

2. THE SPIRITUAL SENSES IN THE LOSS OF THE IMAGE OF GOD.

Above is a presentation of Wesley’s view of how people were endowed with the image of God at Creation. However, as a result of the Fall they lost that image and, in consequence, live in isolation from the creator. In The New Birth Wesley summarizes what was lost. Humankind suffered the worst of all deaths, spiritual death. They lost the life of God and were separated from union with him. They also lost the knowledge of God and the love of God in their soul, all this culminating in being dispossessed of the image of God. Consequently they experienced fear, unholiness and unhappiness, pride and self-will, so that rather than reflecting the image of God they now reflected the image of the devil. This death extended to all humanity as all future generations would be born spiritually dead. Instead of bearing the image of God, all humanity would bear the ‘image of the devil, in pride and self-will…. in sensual appetites and desires.’

From this summary, it would appear that all aspects of the life and image of God were lost at the Fall, but for Wesley, this was not the case. An analysis and development of the key themes will serve to further demonstrate the organic unity in Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses as we move on to his major exposition of the theme through the lens of the restored image of God. However, any understanding of the restored image of God would be incomplete without a developed understanding of what was endowed at creation and lost at the Fall.

187 Sermon 45, The New Birth, §1.2-4, Works, Vol II.
i. The Image of God Completely Effaced?

For Wesley, the whole image of God was indeed not lost but elements of image were retained, a point affirmed as follows:

….that part of the “image of God” which remained after the fall, and remains in all men to this day, is the natural image of God, namely, the spiritual nature and immortality of the soul; not excluding the political image of God, or a degree of dominion over the creatures still remaining. But the moral image of God is lost and defaced, or else it could not be said to be “renewed.”

So here the natural image, consisting of ‘the spiritual nature and immortality of the soul,’ remained, but that which was lost was part of the political image and the whole of the moral image. However, a different picture is painted in the sermon On the Fall of Man, where the natural image of God also suffers loss, at least in part:

Adam, in whom all mankind were then contained, freely preferred evil to good. He chose to do his own will rather than the will of his Creator. He “was not deceived,” but knowingly and deliberately rebelled against his Father and his King. In that moment he lost the moral image of God, and, in part, the natural.

Whilst Wesley’s explanation of what was lost at the fall in these summaries might appear contradictory, this is not necessarily the case and further analysis of exactly what was lost will help to clarify the position. Wesley’s themes will be analyzed with reference once again to the natural, political and moral image of God.

ii. The Spiritual Senses and Loss of the Natural Image of God

It has been established that, being created in the natural image of God, human beings were created immortal and spiritual beings and endued with understanding, a will and liberty. The understanding, with which human beings were endowed befitted a spiritual being and included not only reason but was spiritual in nature, relational and perfect in its kind. The eyes of their understanding and other spiritual senses were active, and worked in harmony with the reason, enabling people to live in perfect understanding of God. This dual understanding guided the will and liberty, and consequently the affections, to embrace nothing but good. Furthermore, this understanding had a specific purpose; to guide people in right thought and judgement, to discern truth from falsehood, good from evil and enable them to live according to God’s law perfect law which was written upon their hearts. The

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188 Doctrine of Original Sin, Part IV, Extracts, Works (Jackson), Vol. 9.
189 Sermon 57, On the Fall of Man, §II.6, Works, Vol. II.
correct use of all their faculties, rightly guided by this understanding, rendered human beings capable of God, resulted in the expansion of their happiness and led to growth in perfection.

Whilst the attributes of the natural image of God rendered them ‘capable of God,’ in that they enabled dwelling in perfect relationship with Him, they also had the potential to render them incapable of God. On the day they fell their ‘understanding was darkened,’ more specifically, their reason was darkened and ‘the eyes of [their] understanding were closed,’ indicative of all the spiritual senses. Consequently humanity was alienated from the life of God.

The eyes of the understanding being darkened had a devastating effect since all the endowments which had been guided aright were affected. Consequently, the liberty and will, including the affections, although they remained, were corrupted on that day. The liberty that enabled the freedom to choose good and refusing what was not good, was now exercised to freely choose evil. The will, that was able to direct the affections in delighting to do good, was directed to choose self-will. People choose to satisfy their sensual desires and became disordered, unable to act in harmony with the will of the Creator. Their apprehension and judgement became misguided and, unable to discern truth from falsehood or good from evil, humankind became liable to fall into ‘innumerable mistakes’ and ‘wrong affections,’ resulting in impious thought, speech and actions. Thus, people turned their eyes from the Creator and onto the created, were deceived by the serpent, and fell into various temptations leading to sin.

Furthermore, since the spiritual senses no longer rightly guided their faculties, people were ignorant of God. They were alienated from God, rendered incapable of God, incapable of living according to the perfect law of love, incapable of knowing, loving, and obeying their Creator. They were deprived of their supreme perfection, their loving obedience to God and in consequence they became unholy as well as unhappy.

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192 Part Two, p. 93. As previously noted, eyes of the understanding here being a superordinate for the five spiritual senses.
This exploration of what was lost of the natural image of God at the Fall demonstrates that there is no contradiction between Wesley’s aforementioned statements concerning the natural image remaining after the fall and the moral image being lost, and the moral image being lost and also the natural, in part. For Wesley, following the Fall human beings remained spiritual and immortal and so retained part of the natural image of God. However, of the elements remaining, the eyes of the understanding and all of the spiritual senses were darkened or closed, not removed or destroyed, and so were unable to communicate with the reason and direct the liberty and will. Without the right direction of the understanding, consisting of both spiritual perception and reason, the liberty and will were now directed towards choosing evil and self-gratification. Consequently, rather than bearing the life and image of the Creator, humanity was reduced to bearing the image of Satan. The darkening of the eyes of the understanding, representing all of the spiritual senses, and resultant alienation from God rendered human beings incapable of God, unable to know, love and obey the creator. They were no longer able to live according to the perfect law of love and so grow into perfection. Therefore, although the spiritual senses still existed within the human being, it was as if they had none.

iii. The Spiritual Senses and Loss of the Moral Image of God

For Wesley, the moral image of God, being ‘righteousness and true holiness,’ was the primary aspect of the image of God which enabled humanity to live holy, virtuous lives and inclined them to love, please and serve God in an attitude of reverence and obedience. Again the interplay between the natural and moral image is noted. Here, the dual understanding, in directing the will and liberty, enabled close relationship with the Creator through the life of God in the soul. For Wesley, it is in this dwelling, specifically through participation of the divine nature and spiritual respiration that the moral image consists.

According to Wesley the whole of the moral image was lost at the fall. Once again the interface between the natural image and the moral image is of significance. The darkening of the spiritual senses led to the corruption of the will and liberty and the consequential incorrect use of their faculties resulted in the disenabling of the close relationship with the Creator.

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201 Part Two, p. 99.
202 Part Two, pp. 96-97.
Through sin human beings also `lost the life of God: [they were] separated from him in union with whom [their] spiritual life consisted,’\(^{205}\) and so they lost all the attributes of the life of God in the soul.\(^{206}\) They were `alienated from the life of God’ and so participation of the divine nature could no longer thrive and in consequence they lost their righteousness, peace and joy.\(^{207}\) There was no longer any reciprocal relationship between God and humanity as the act of spiritual respiration ceased, and so they became devoid of the unceasing presence of God.\(^{208}\) In consequence, the whole moral image was unhinged, disjointed, broken.\(^{209}\) They lost their bias to virtue and inclination to please him, were stripped of their love and zeal to serve him and also their respect and attitude of obedience. They could no longer live in love, justice, mercy and truth and spotless purity.\(^{210}\) Consequently the close relationship was broken and the dwelling in which the moral image consisted was severed. They no longer had the assuring testimony that all their ways were good and acceptable to God and they were rendered unholy as well as unhappy.\(^{211}\)

Human beings very quickly began to display the consequences of this broken relationship, the fruits of sin, in their behaviour. Once walking in knowledge of God they were now ignorant of him; once dwelling in harmony with God they became averse to him; once their passions and affections were directed aright but now they were disorderly. All this was a sign of the `deprivation of spiritual life,’ the spiritual death which humankind experienced on that day.\(^{212}\) Wesley describes this fallen state of humanity as both diseased and sinful.\(^{213}\)

iv. The Spiritual Senses and Loss of the Political Image of God

According to Wesley, humanity lost part of the political image at the Fall.

The “image of God,” in which Adam was created, consisted eminently in righteousness and true holiness. But that part of the “image of God” which remained after the fall, and remains in all men to this day, is the natural image of God, namely, the spiritual nature and immortality of the soul; not excluding the political image of God, or a degree of dominion over the


\(^{206}\) The various attributes of the life of God in the soul are detailed in pp. 96-97 above.


\(^{213}\) For references relating to disease and sin please see Appendix XIII.
creatures still remaining. But the moral image of God is lost and defaced, or else it could not be said to be “renewed.”

From his text it is clear that the whole of the political image was not lost. Since the natural and moral image of God worked in harmony with the political image, part of the political image is subdued through the darkening of the understanding. The part of the political image affected would be firstly, the natural understanding of the creatures corresponding to the loss of the natural image of God; and secondly, perfection of love and correct attitude in dealing with the creatures corresponding to the loss of love and misdirection of affections in the moral image of God. Also, due to the break in relationship with God, human beings would no longer be empowered to act in conveying God’s blessing to the animal kingdom, and so this avenue of communication between God and the creatures was cut off.

What was left was a degree of dominion over the creatures which in itself was now corrupt. In addition the animal kingdom itself ‘suffered vanity,’ loss in its understanding, will and liberty and in consequence the loving relationship between humanity and the animal kingdom was largely cut off. In consequence, humanity and the animal kingdom suffer enmity. Just as humankind suffered physical death, so did the animal kingdom along with the pain and suffering of disease that accompanied it.

**Summary**

For Wesley, the whole of the image of God was not lost at the fall. People remained spiritual, but their spiritual sensitivity was diminished. As their darkened spiritual senses could no longer communicate with their reason the partnership between spiritual perception and reason was lost. The loss of the life and image of God resulted in reciprocal relationship with God being lost and their faculties were no longer guided aright. They became alienated from the creator, no longer able to live virtuous lives and became selfish and sinful. This incapacity affected their ability for healthy self-assessment and their relationship with God, others and the natural world suffered loss. However, the spiritual senses remained. God did not leave people without hope, but provided a way for their ‘capability of God’ to be restored through the re-awakening of the spiritual senses. The following section contains Wesley’s richest exposition of the spiritual senses that indelibly links his soteriology and pneumatology, stretching from unawareness of God, to spiritual maturity. Here themes are uncovered that that speak into contemporary mission.

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215 Part Two, p. 98.
3. THE SPIRITUAL SENSES IN THE RESTORATION OF THE IMAGE OF GOD

The significance of Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses can only be fully appreciated within the framework of a developed understanding of what was bestowed and what was lost of the image of God, for it is in the restoration of the image of God that Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses is fully developed. This section will trace Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses according to the themes identified in the endowment and loss of the image of God. The breadth of his understanding of the topic will be extracted from an array of his writings and brought back to a cohesive whole. In doing so both the specificities and interconnectedness of the themes will be demonstrated, along with how they build into a cohesive whole that permeates Wesley’s theological premise and presents the opportunity to speak into contemporary evangelism. When looking specifically at Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses a particular language is detected that denotes the ordo salutis within that theme. This section sets Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses within this ordo salutis as follows: a. the state of the natural man; b. prevenient grace; c. awakening, to include conviction; d. the new birth; e. the Christian life; e i. faith; e ii. holiness.

i. The Spiritual Senses and the State of the Natural Man, or Spiritual Sleep, Insensibility, Lack of Spiritual Perception or Spiritual death

Spiritual death is a significant theme in Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses and is particularly significant to the new birth. Spiritual death is associated with the ‘natural state of man’ as ‘the deep sleep of the soul,’ this sleep being described as ‘utter darkness’ that renders humanity ‘insensible’ of his real condition. Here the term ‘one who sleeps’ refers to that portion of humanity that have either not heard or not responded to the warning voice of God, specifically termed ‘a sinner satisfied in his sins.’

Furthermore, Charles refers to those who outwardly live an exemplary Christian lifestyle but who know nothing of their real standing before God, who embrace the form of religion but have no spiritual life who, in spite of their claims to faith do not hold God in their thoughts, do not know him, have no fellowship with him and have no association with God or the invisible world. Knowing many things, Charles identifies these as ‘Christians’ as having no real knowledge of self, God or spiritual realities, and so they are further described in stronger terms as those who abide ‘in death’ being ‘dead in trespasses and sins.’

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217 C. Wesley, Sermon 3, Awake Thou That Sleepest, §1.1-5.
218 C. Wesley, Sermon 3, Awake Thou That Sleepest, §1.5-8; Works, Vol. I; See also, Sermon 130, On Living Without God, §1, §6 & 8, Works, Vol IV.
219 C. Wesley, Sermon 3, Awake Thou That Sleepest, §1.6, Works, Vol. I. This idea of a Dead Christian is emphasized in Wesley’s doctrinal summary Of True Christian Faith, extracted from the Homilies of the Church of England, Outler, John Wesley. p129.
It is in this arena that Wesley specifically introduces his developing concept of the spiritual senses as it relates to people who are spiritually unaware.\textsuperscript{220} Based on an eighteenth century understanding of the pre-natal condition, Wesley draws a comparison between the state of an unborn child who is unable to exercise its senses and consequently has no understanding of the natural world, and that of a person who is not born of God.\textsuperscript{221}

While a man is in a mere natural state, before he is born of God, he has, in a spiritual sense, eyes and sees not; a thick impenetrable veil lies upon them. He has ears, but hears not; he is utterly deaf to what he is most of all concerned to hear. His other spiritual senses are all locked up; he is in the same condition as if he had them not. Hence he has no knowledge of God, no intercourse with him; he is not at all acquainted with him. He has no true knowledge of the things of God, either of spiritual or eternal things. Therefore, though he is a living man, he is a dead Christian.\textsuperscript{222}

There are two noteworthy points here, firstly the fact that, for Wesley, the person who is insensible of God is still in possession of their spiritual senses. ‘He has eyes but sees not…has ears, but hears not… their spiritual senses are all locked up.’ rendering them in the same position as if the spiritual senses were non-existent. This supports the assertion above that at the Fall the spiritual senses were ‘darkened’ not ‘removed or destroyed.’\textsuperscript{223} Secondly, a key reason for the lack of spiritual sensitivity is because ‘a thick impenetrable veil lies upon them.’ Elsewhere Wesley discloses that this veil is a veil of blindness which is imposed by ‘the god of this world,’\textsuperscript{224} serving to interrupt ‘the light and voice, the knowledge and love of God.’\textsuperscript{225} Both these aspects impede connection with the divine.

This text not only correlates with the darkening of the eyes of the understanding but in relating this to the lack of sensibility in an unborn child, Wesley directly introduces the experiential theme to the salvific process.\textsuperscript{226} Accordingly he applies his concept of the spiritual senses empirically. Alignments between Wesley’s concept of the spiritual senses and the historical, philosophical and religious empirical interests of his day are well-known and widely explored, a re-examination of which goes beyond the scope of this thesis. However two points of particular interest to this thesis are noted here, firstly from an historical context and secondly from the context of Wesley’s contemporary environment.

\textsuperscript{220} Sermon 45, \textit{The New Birth}, §I.3-4, in \textit{Works}, Vol. II.


\textsuperscript{222} Sermon 45, \textit{The New Birth}, SS.1.4, \textit{Works}, Vol. II.

\textsuperscript{223} Part Two, p. 102.


\textsuperscript{225} Sermon 19, \textit{The Great Privilege}, §I.4, 7 & 10.

\textsuperscript{226} Sermon 119, \textit{Walking by Sight and Walking by Faith}, §7, \textit{Works}, Vol. IV.
Firstly, in regard to Wesley’s grounding the activity of the spiritual senses in human beings prior to any conscious awareness of God, Wesley’s link between the spiritual senses and Christian antiquity has already been noted above. That the primary activity of the spiritual senses is most often grounded in the arena of faith and Wesley’s divergence from this has also been introduced. Wesley’s concept of the spiritual senses diverges from the usual pattern in line with his emphasis on soteriology and practical theology, the activity of the spiritual senses being prior to any awareness of God being a key example. Rather than the activity of the spiritual senses being the property of the spiritually elite, ‘the blessed’ or ‘worthy’ alone, through this medium Wesley presents an accessible spirituality, the Holy Spirit in direct communication with all people via the spiritual senses. Here Wesley affords a degree of sensitivity to God and awareness of God prior to any spiritual conversion. This supports his soteriological emphasis of process in the salvific journey within the context of his use of the spiritual senses, as discussed below.

The second point of interest relates to the context of the philosophical and theological interests of Wesley’s era. The spiritual senses as a theme employed by Wesley is often placed primarily in the arena of epistemology, particularly in the branch of empiricism, with the assertion that knowledge is derived from the senses. Famously it was George Croft Cell who first termed Wesley’s adaptation of what was seen to be John Locke’s empiricism as Wesley’s ‘theological empiricism,’ a theological premise in which the spiritual senses play a key role. A number of scholars have also emphasized this epistemological connection, for example Runyon, Maddox, Outler, Matthews and Mealey.

Given that each of the selected passages also refers to the loss or acquisition of the knowledge/understanding/discernment or perception of spiritual things in connection with

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227 Part Two, pp. 71-79.
228 Part Two, pp. 69-70.
229 Outler notes that Wesley develops the concept of the spiritual senses ‘as a major resource for communicating the gospel – in bringing faith home to the heart, in accenting the deeply personal character of true religion.’ Outler, John Wesley, p. 210.
230 Both terms used by Origen. Part Two, p. 69.
232 Runyon, New Creation, p. 73ff, p. 146ff,
233 Maddox, Responsible, p. 27ff.
234 Outler, John Wesley, p. 384; Also see, The Sermons, Preface and Introduction, §4, Theological Method, paragraph 7 in Works, Vol. I. See also, C. Wesley, Sermon 3, Awake Thou That Sleepest, n. 52, Works, Vol. I. Where Outler refers to the spiritual senses as ‘An especial emphasis in the Wesley’s theory of religious knowledge…’, and Sermon 45, The New Birth, §II.4 n.29, Works, Vol II, where Outler refers to the spiritual senses being ‘basic to Wesley's intuitionist epistemology…’
235 Matthews, Religion and Reason, p. 247ff. See particularly p. 257 where Matthews cites and notes the sources of Gerald Cragg, Yoshio Noro, Frederick Dreyer and Richard Brantley, Mitsuo Shimizu, John English and Albert Outler, all who primarily seat the spiritual senses in the school of epistemology.
the spiritual senses, and given the scholarly recognition in Wesley’s interest in empiricism, it could appear that the primary purpose of the spiritual senses is to impart knowledge of God. However, this thesis has already established that, for Wesley, the loss of the knowledge of God was but one of the outcomes that followed the darkening of the eyes of the understanding at the Fall. As such, as far as Wesley is concerned, the gain of spiritual knowledge is not a means in itself, but rather has a specific purpose. Working with the Holy Spirit, what Wesley elsewhere terms ‘experimental knowledge,’ which comes via the spiritual senses, reveals spiritual realities directly to human beings which they perceive, ‘not by a chain of reasoning, but by a kind of intuition, a direct view.’ This revelation enables human beings to come to a decision about a response so that the life and image of God might be restored in their lives, rendering them once again capable of God.

Countering Outler’s claim that Wesley had an ‘intuitionist epistemology,’ Matthews notes that there is only one occasion when Wesley uses the term ‘intuition,’ and asserting that,

…the use of the term “intuition” is well qualified: “a kind of intuition.” The sharp contrast which Wesley intends to draw here is between “seeing” God and the things of God indirectly, through a “chain of reasoning,” and “seeing” directly through the “spiritual senses”...

Matthews rightly concludes, ‘The whole tenor of Wesley’s epistemology is in fact, thoroughly empiricist, not intuitionist.’ However, in using the word ‘intuition’ in this context, Wesley very cleverly links his concept of the spiritual senses to the image of God in that elsewhere he uses the same term to describe how the first human beings discerned truth. ‘And probably the human spirit, like the angelical, then discerned truth by intuition,’ again qualifying this statement by the term ‘probably.’ Mealey further qualifies this in arguing that Wesley speaks of the knowledge acquired through spiritual sensation as ‘a direct, immediate experience of the spiritual object prior to any act of

237 Sermon 9, The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption, §I.1, Works, Vol. I. For other references please see Appendix XIV.
238 Part Two, pp. 99-104.
240 Sermon 62, The End of Christ’s Coming, §III.1, Works, Vol. II.
242 Cited above, Sermon 62, The End of Christ’s Coming, §III.1, Works, Vol. II.
244 Matthews, Reason and Religion, p. 307.
reason or affective response.’ Furthermore, the knowledge acquired is ‘not a conclusion based on evidence,’ as in the case of knowledge received from the natural world or physical sensations, but rather ‘a direct form of evidence that demands an immediate [cognitive] assent.’ 246 For Mealey, there is no room for doubt in the cognitive interpretation of spiritual sensation via the spiritual senses, and in this respect it is intuitive, or natural.

The current passage in question goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge since it is an example of Wesley’s key focus in restoring the life and image of God. Firstly, the passage notes that the individual has ‘no knowledge of God,’ then ‘no intercourse [intimacy]’247 with him’ is ‘not at all acquainted [has no relationship]’248 to him.249 Here knowledge of God is enabled though spiritual perception without any prior awareness of God. When the spiritual senses become aware of the Holy Spirit’s activity, this knowledge, which as has already been noted works with reason, fulfills its purpose in enabling human beings to come to a decision and respond to the overtures of God. Consequently the life and image of God are restored, renewing relationship and rendering human beings once again, capable of God. Accordingly, the key emphasis of the role of the spiritual senses for Wesley, rather than being the acquisition of knowledge, is to restore right relationship between humanity and God.

Matthews notes that Wesley ‘uses an inconsistent and sometimes confusing mixture of language about the spiritual senses.’250 Examples of this can be seen above in the relation to Wesley’s reference to knowledge and also in relation to spiritual death where he uses a mixture of terms, sleep,251 not sensible,252 darkness,253 dead,254 all indicative of the same interpretation, those who are without God in the world. In each case those termed as such are totally void of any spiritual awareness. They are incapable of discerning such reality either as it relates to themselves, God or the spiritual world. In each case what humanity lacks are any ‘spiritual senses’ which if activated would mediate divine perception. Outler notes that ‘Sin (‘sleep’, ‘death’) deadens all spiritual stimuli,’255 but more specifically it is the consequences of sin, this being the condition of humanity following the Fall. Here the

247 My bracketed terms.
248 My bracketed terms.
249 Sermon 45, The New Birth, §II.4, Works, Vol II.
250 Matthews, Religion and Reason, p. 306.
darkened eyes of the understanding, indicative of all the spiritual senses, along with the thick impenetrable veil imposed by Satan, rendered humanity void of the life and image of God, spiritually dead and thus incapable of God. It is the combination of all of this that ultimately renders humanity incapable of receiving any spiritual stimuli and consequentially any knowledge of, or relationship with, God.256

Being spiritually dead/asleep/insensible/in darkness, incapable of receiving any spiritual stimuli,257 humanity requires ‘awakening,’258 an ‘inward change, that spiritual birth, that life from the dead,’259 ‘to be made sensible of God.’260 The eyes of the understanding, part of the natural image of God darkened at the Fall, require opening.261 The spiritual senses require activating in order to receive spiritual stimuli.262 But in order for this to happen they first need to become sensitive to God, and for Wesley this mediation is achieved by pneumatological means, specifically the intervention of the Holy Spirit.263

ii. The Spiritual Senses and Prevenient Grace

Because the spiritual senses were closed at the fall, rendering humanity spiritually dead, human beings became totally unaware of their need of God because these things are spiritually discerned.264 For Wesley, it is impossible for humankind to find their own way back to God; this has to be accomplished through the sovereign action of God alone,

Seeing all men are by nature not only sick, but “dead in trespasses, and sins”, it is not possible for them to do anything well till God raises them from the dead…. it is…impossible for us to “come” out of our sins, yea, or to make the least motion toward it, till he who hath all power in heaven and earth calls our dead souls into life.265

Here Wesley specifically emphasises the dual state of the human condition in that they are both sick and sinful. This emphasis on the Eastern therapeutic metaphor and the Western forensic metaphor of the human condition, which is further developed in Part Three, is

noted by scholars as a strong theme in the unity of Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses, prevenient grace, the image of God and his salvific theology. Wesley draws both aspects out, making it clear that fallen humanity requires both healing and forgiveness. But as yet human beings are not aware of their state and although the invisible world is all around, their spiritual senses are ‘as yet’ incapable of perceiving it; it is as if a thick veil exists between humankind and the spiritual world and humanity are incapable of penetrating it. But God has prepared a way, just as spiritual death embraced all humanity, so it is with prevenient grace,

No man living is entirely destitute of what is...properly termed “preventing grace.” Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man...Everyone has some measure of that light, some faint glimmering ray, which sooner or later, more or less, enlightens every man that cometh into the world.

In embracing all humanity prevenient grace enables them to perceive their need of God drawing them to him, awakening an increasing awareness of a desire after him,

...all that is wrought in the soul by what is...“preventing grace”; all the “drawings” of “the Father”, the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more; all that “light” wherewith the Son of God “enlighteneth everyone that cometh into the world”...all the convictions which his Spirit from time to time works in every child of man.

However, prevenient grace does not work in isolation. Being spiritually dead, void of the life and image of God, with the spiritual senses asleep and therefore the inlets of spiritual knowledge closed, humanity has no means of perceiving the overtures of God. There is a strong interdependence between prevenient grace, the spiritual senses and the restoration of the image of God. Using the language of spiritual senses Charles Wesley’s sermon asserts.

And, first, the state of a “natural man”. This the Scripture represents as a state of sleep. The voice of God to him is, “Awake, thou that sleepest.” For his soul is in a deep sleep. His spiritual senses are not awake; they discern neither spiritual good nor evil. The eyes of his understanding are closed; they are sealed together, and see not. Clouds and darkness continually rest upon them; for he lies in the valley of the shadow of death. Hence, having
no inlets for the knowledge of spiritual things, all the avenues of his soul being shut up… He is utterly ignorant of God, knowing nothing concerning him as he ought to know.  

And yet, God wills that his voice is perceived, and he has already provided a way through that which remained of the natural image of God, the spiritual senses. The persistent voice of the Holy Spirit ministering in prevenient grace enlightens the darkened eyes of the understanding:

And, first, as Satan began his work in Eve by tainting her with unbelief, so the Son of God begins his work in man by enabling us to believe in him. He both opens and enlightens the eyes of our understanding. Out of darkness he commands light to shine, and takes away the veil which the god of this world had spread over our hearts…

Removing the veil imposed by Satan, God initiates this breakthrough of communication between the divine and humanity enabling the beginning of spiritual perception. The communication between the Holy Spirit by means of prevenient grace and the eyes of the understanding, being a superordinate for the spiritual senses, causes the human being to awaken out of their spiritual slumber. Outler refers to this opening of the eyes of the understanding which were darkened at the Fall as Wesley’s significant theory of illumination. Outler asserts, ‘Salvation begins with…“preventing grace...”’ But this statement can be misleading as prevenient grace is not salvific in itself.

Within the context of Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses, prevenient grace is not a salvific change within the human being. Collins agrees that, in contrast to the Western Protestant emphasis of justifying grace bringing new birth, or sanctifying grace bringing holiness, prevenient grace does not produce a new ‘state’ within the human being. Therefore, it is not saving grace. Rather, within the context of the spiritual senses, prevenient grace is the voice of the Holy Spirit communicating with human beings, as in the Eastern emphasis of God’s presence graciously awakening and nurturing loving response. In this respect it would be more accurate to say that this illumination marks the beginning of the conscious

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274 Part Two, p. 106.
279 Maddox, ‘Prelude,’ p. 93.
salvific journey. The spiritual senses, on the other hand as noted above, are the God-given means by which human beings perceive that voice of the Holy Spirit. The spiritual senses are the property of all human beings at birth, but they are awakened by means of the overtures of the voice of the Holy Spirit in prevenient grace. It is impossible to say exactly when, according to Wesley, the spiritual senses are awakened within human beings, for one can only recognize their awakening in hindsight, after they become aware of the voice of the Holy Spirit. Moving beyond Wesley however, as Wesley insists that even very young children can be convinced of sin and sanctified,\textsuperscript{280} there is potential that the awakening of the spiritual senses could be from birth as one of the initial benefits of prevenient grace.

**a. Grace as Divine/Human Cooperation?**

This raises the debate, previously referred to, between Maddox and Collins concerning the cooperative nature of grace. With the Eastern perspective as his starting point, Maddox argues in favour of the resistible nature of prevenient grace.\textsuperscript{281} Whereas, whilst upholding the protestant soteriological position of justification and sanctification, Collins appears to insist that grace can be irresistible in Wesley’s theology.\textsuperscript{282}

Maddox confirms that, in prioritizing the Eastern notion concerning the ongoing cooperant interaction between God and humanity he is, at times, moving beyond Wesley’s thinking. Therefore, when Wesley’s overall soteriological position is taken into account Maddox upholds Collins’ assertion that Wesley, in fact, upheld both divine/human cooperation and God’s unilateral action at the decisive moments within the \textit{via salutis}.\textsuperscript{283} On the other hand, although he strongly refutes Maddox’s prioritizing of the Eastern motifs, it is evident that when Collins is speaking of the irresistibility of grace, he uses the terms either ‘free grace’ which he connects to prevenient grace,\textsuperscript{284} and ‘sheer grace’\textsuperscript{285} or ‘sheer favor,’\textsuperscript{286} which he connects to both prevenient grace and justifying grace.\textsuperscript{287} He argues that both are the work of God alone. Nevertheless, he agrees with Maddox that Wesley’s soteriology contains elements of responsiveness\textsuperscript{288} and particularly notes the resistibility of the grace of God both before and after the moment of justification.\textsuperscript{289} This means for Collins that

\textsuperscript{280} \textit{Journals and Diaries III} (1743-1754), Sun 16th September 1744, \textit{Works}, Vol. XX.

\textsuperscript{281} Maddox, ‘Prelude,’ p. 95.


\textsuperscript{283} Maddox, ‘Prelude,’ pp. 95-96.

\textsuperscript{284} Collins, \textit{Theology}, pp. 81-82.

\textsuperscript{285} Collins, \textit{Scripture Way}, p. 49; p. 93.

\textsuperscript{286} Collins, \textit{Scripture Way}, p. 97.

\textsuperscript{287} Collins, \textit{Scripture Way}, p. 98.

\textsuperscript{288} Collins, \textit{Scripture Way}, p. 98.

aspects of the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart prior to justification, or as Maddox would put it, prevenient grace, is resistible. However, neither Collins nor Maddox develop what this means as far as the role of the spiritual senses is concerned.

When the role of the spiritual senses is taken into account, Wesley’s use of both the irresistibility and resistibility of grace are highlighted. As noted above, the initial awakening of the spiritual senses in the opening of the eyes of the understanding that enables people to perceive the overtures of the Holy Spirit in prevenient grace is the work of God alone, as such it is irresistible. However, this is not justification, but an initial restoration of the capability for the person to perceive God. Once the eyes of the understanding are opened enabling the overtures of the Holy Spirit to be discerned, there comes a moment when the potential for deepening spiritual engagement with the divine in the form of salvation, requires a response from the individual, a decisive moment, enabling the relationship with God to develop. The individual can choose to accept or reject this offer. As such, the offer of salvation is resistible. Upon that response, the new birth in the heart of the individual, the actualization of justification and then of sanctification, is the work of God alone. The power of the divine presence indwells the individual, bringing both healing of the relationship and justification from sin. In this respect it is irresistible in the moment of actualization because it is actually a change in the being, or the state, of the individual, a new birth. The ongoing voice of the Holy Spirit calling the person towards full sanctification is irresistible, God speaks to the individual and they perceive this via their spiritual senses. Nevertheless, the individual remains free to choose whether to obey God’s voice, and in that respect, it is resistible.

b. Salvation as Instantaneous or a Process?

A second aspect of the debate between Maddox and Collins, which is very closely related to the cooperant nature of grace, concerns whether Wesley considers salvation to be a process or instantaneous. Again, they seem to take opposite poles. Maddox supports the concept of process. However, this is another area where Maddox confirms that he sometimes goes beyond Wesley. Maddox goes beyond Wesley in arguing that the mature Wesley was moving toward a more fundamentally Eastern view where the instantaneous is not the sole or mandatory expression of God’s gracious work. In so doing Maddox is accrediting regenerative universality to prevenient grace in suggesting that Wesley embraced the possibility ‘that some who have not heard of Christ might enter into

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saving relationship with God. Nevertheless, Maddox acknowledges that Wesley embraced the Western concept that instantaneous transactions are necessary within salvation.

In order to counter this claim, Collins vigorously defends the instantaneous, asserting that a saving relationship with God is defined by decisive instantaneous moments. However, it is noteworthy that when Collins refers to the instantaneous motif, he is in fact referring specifically to justification. Consequently, Collins acknowledges that Wesley’s soteriology contains elements of process. Collins points out that this is particularly evident concerning the responsive requirement of repentance, which he highlights as the ‘decisive element’ within ‘the soteriological process prior to justification.’ This means, Collins concedes, that ‘for Wesley…people are in some sense responsible for whether or not they are justified, although they cannot justify themselves.’ Furthermore, whilst Collins argues that Wesley upholds the instantaneous within sanctification, he also acknowledges the process within sanctification as the ongoing growth and development ‘that is a normal part of any vital spiritual life.’

It is without doubt that, as detailed above, when specifically examining the role of the spiritual senses, Wesley employs both the Eastern concept of process and the Western concept of the instantaneous. Therefore, as far as Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses is concerned, the whole soteriological journey, from before any conscious knowledge of spiritual matters through to sanctification can be framed within a process. However, that process is marked by significant, life changing, instantaneous moments.

Bearing this in mind, as the individual begins to respond to the overtures of the Holy Spirit they move to the next stage of the salvific journey. Not only does the enlightening of the eyes of the understanding enable human beings to begin to perceive the things of God, it also marks the beginning of the restoration of the image of God whereby relationship with God might be restored. The reopening of the eyes of the understanding is the first sign of an awakening in those who have been spiritually asleep.

292 Maddox, Responsible Grace, pp. 29-30, p. 31.
293 Maddox, ‘Prelude,’ pp. 96-97.
295 Collins, Scripture Way, p. 98.
297 Collins, Scripture Way, p. 100.
298 Collins, Scripture Way, p. 95.
299 Collins, Scripture Way, p. 100.
301 Collins, Scripture Way, p. 98, p.100.
iii. The Spiritual Senses and Awakening

The Holy Spirit communicating with the human spirit or soul through prevenient grace and enlightening the eyes of the understanding marks the beginning of the renewal of a capability of God within humanity. The effects of the fall begin to unravel. When human beings become receptive to the communications of the Holy Spirit, this awakening takes a number of forms, all concerned with the restoration of the image of God. The renewed activity of the spiritual senses plays a key role.

In *The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption*, Wesley confirms that the opening of the eyes of the understanding mark the initial stages of the salvific journey. Here the opening of the eyes of the understanding enable another awakening, this time revealing humanity’s post-Fall state before God. People are now able to perceive the true nature of God, who is loving and merciful, but also just and holy, and understand the appropriateness of fearing him.302 ‘Horrid light breaks upon his soul,’ through prevenient grace. By means of the Holy Spirit working sovereignly, ‘without any means at all,’ they become aware of the ‘inward spiritual meaning of the law of God,’ which reveals their true state before God.303 Through the reopening of the spiritual senses they not only hear, but feel, the Word of God with such piercing affect that they become conscious, or convicted, of their shortcomings in failing to have an active, healthy respect and regard for the offer of salvation.304 Using a direct analogy of the Fall, Wesley counts humanity’s sins laid bare before God and they understand themselves to be predisposed to ‘unrighteousness and ungodliness.’305

Directly confirming the superordinate of the eyes of the understanding with the spiritual senses and, in turn, the spiritual senses’ relationship with reason, Wesley proceeds. Because the eyes of the understanding are opened, they come to understand, by means of spiritual sensation, that their sinfulness merits eternal punishment and so their temporal happiness vanishes and they can find no rest.306 They ‘feel,’ and so recognize, the misguided direction of their affections, passions and will, and begin to understand remorse and a strong sense of a renewed fear of God. Along with this comes fear of the devil and of those who would lead them away from God, and they know a sense of being a wounded spirit.307 Yet resolving against sin and desiring to break loose from it they find that they are

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incapable of freeing themselves, for their will is not free but can only wander further from God. Try as they might to break free, they continue in bondage and fear, still slaves to inward and outward sin and unholiness, consistently repenting but sinning again.\textsuperscript{308} They long for ‘liberty, power and love,’ but remain in fear and bondage, awaiting the transforming grace of the Lord.\textsuperscript{309} Charles Wesley calls upon those in need of such an awakening to recognize their need to ‘participate in the divine nature,’ for ‘righteousness, and peace, and joy’ and to become ‘a new creation.’\textsuperscript{310}

Here is a demonstration of the organic unity of this concept in Wesley’s theology as the pneumatology of the spiritual senses, and consequential conscious awakening of human awareness concerning their state before God, merges with the theme of the image of God. The beginnings of an understanding of God’s nature through relationship, the renewal of a healthy fear of God, and the recognition of the spiritual meaning of the perfect law of love are early signs of a renewal of the image of God. The recognition of their unholy and unhappy state, of the misdirection of their passions, affections and will, and a growing desire for true liberty and love, alongside the call to participate in the divine nature and experience righteousness, peace and joy, are all signs of the beginnings of a hitherto unknown awareness of the post-fall state. All of this is made possible because of the awakening of the eyes of the understanding and represents the early stages of the salvific journey.\textsuperscript{311} There are also new revelations concerning humanity’s need for God. The recognition of their sinfulness and the inability to break free in their own strength; recognition of the need for power to overcome a fear of the devil and others who might lead them from God; the call to faith that works by love and to become a new creation are all signs of the beginning of a renewal.\textsuperscript{312}

For Wesley, with the enlightenment of the eyes of the understanding, indicative of the opening of the spiritual senses, comes an increasing awareness of humanity’s need for God, an awareness of their short-comings, and an awareness of a reliance on God to overcome their state. It is only when the eyes of the understanding are enabled to guide aright the endowments debilitated at the Fall and restore full capability of God, that the life

\textsuperscript{308} Sermon 9, \textit{The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption}, §II.7-8, \textit{Works}, Vol. I.
\textsuperscript{309} Sermon 9, \textit{The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption}, §II.10, \textit{Works}, Vol. I.
\textsuperscript{310} C. Wesley, Sermon 3, \textit{Awake Thou That Sleepest}, §II.8, 10 & 11, \textit{Works}, Vol. I.
\textsuperscript{311} Runyon, \textit{New Creation}, p. 27. Runyon links prevenient grace to Wesley’s doctrine of repentance as the ‘porch’ of the religion. Wesley’s description of ‘repentance or conviction of sin’ is the beginning of the salvific journey and involves prevenient grace and the spiritual senses (although such terms are not used), in that individuals ‘feel within themselves the heavy burden of sin…’ leading towards repentance.
and image of God can be restored. With the correct guidance of these faculties human beings are enabled once again to choose aright, according to God’s will. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, for Wesley, whilst the overtures of the Holy Spirit to the heart of humanity is the act of God alone, and consequently irresistible, the call to renewed relationship through those overtures of prevenient grace is ultimately resistible. Just as the liberty, guided by the understanding, was endowed with freedom of choice, it remains so. Consequently it is possible for human beings, by means of the spiritual senses, to become aware of and yet reject the overtures of the Holy Spirit. In the language of the spiritual senses, it is possible for them to ‘turn [their] eye away from him.’

For Wesley this awakening of the spiritual senses by means of the Holy Spirit communicating through prevenient grace, upon a positive response from an individual, progresses to the new birth.

iv. The Spiritual Senses and the New Birth
Wesley’s unity of the themes of the spiritual senses, the image of God and the salvific journey gain momentum in the arena of the new birth as the image of God becomes restored in humanity. The Holy Spirit, thorough prevenient grace stirs the spiritual senses, particularly the eyes of the understanding, marking the beginning of the salvific journey along with the first signs of the restoration of the image of God in humanity. As human beings respond to his overtures of grace, the opened and enlightened eyes of the understanding, working with reason, enable them to believe in him, and the veil that was placed over their hearts by Satan is finally removed. The culmination of this is, through the opened eyes of the understanding, the spiritual senses, they can ‘see, not by a chain of reasoning….but by a direct view,’ that they are reconciled to God through Christ and their sins are forgiven. By faith they know that they are children of God and experience a peace that releases them from fear and doubt.

In ‘The New Birth,’ Wesley cites the ‘entire corruption of our nature’ as the ‘foundation of the new birth,’ that in ‘being born in sin we must be born again,’ ‘born of God’, ‘born of the Spirit.’ For Wesley, this is the nature of the new birth, ‘that great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life: when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.’ By means of the Spirit of God it is ‘created anew in Christ Jesus…’renewed after the image of God…’ and this includes

314 Part Two, pp. 110-115.
315 Sermon 62, The End of Christ’s Coming, §III.1, Works, Vol. II.
both healing and forgiveness. This is the moment of justification and is the act of God alone. Although it follows the cooperative offer of relationship with God and a positive response by the individual, it is a God given change in the state of the very being of the individual; as such, it is irresistible.

The following brief outline of what is restored in the image of God, through the activity of the Holy Spirit with the spiritual senses, is drawn from several of Wesley’s key sermons. It demonstrates the organic unity in Wesley’s argument and presents a comprehensive overview of the results of the activity of the spiritual senses in the restoration of the image of God, setting it in the salvific process of the new birth.

a. The Spiritual Senses and Restoration of the Natural Image of God in the New Birth

The spiritual senses, already stirred into action and producing an awakening to the things of God by the Holy Spirit through prevenient grace, play a key role in the new birth. Wesley once again raises the empirical theme where human beings can experience God by spiritual sensation. Drawing from the analogy of the child in the womb, Wesley’s observations can be translated back to creation, where human beings dwelt in perfect harmony with their creator and, aware of him in their lives, they could see, hear and feel his presence. The spiritual senses that were active at creation but darkened at the Fall, are reactivated by the grace of the Holy Spirit, once again enabling this close communion.

The eyes of the understanding, stirred by the Holy Spirit through prevenient grace in awakening, are ‘now opened,’ revealing the light, love and power of God ‘in the face of Jesus Christ.’ Following the revelations concerning their post-fall state, human beings are now able to perceive God’s mercy towards the sinner and understand that they are pardoned, reconciled and beneficiaries of His promises through the love of Jesus. The darkness in which they dwelt is completely swallowed up in the light of God’s countenance. The other spiritual senses are now openly acknowledged as exercised, or opened, or awakened. The liberty and freewill are once again directed to right use as human beings become willing to hear and obey the inward voice of God, which can now be discerned through the spiritual sense of hearing. They are no longer slaves to guilt, fear and sin, as they are enabled by the correct use of the eyes of the understanding to yield their ‘members as instruments of righteousness onto God. The graces of the Spirit of God can now be felt at work in the heart though spiritual sensation. By the use of all the

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318 For example in a sermon that specifically deals with the spiritual senses, Sermon 9, The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption, healing, §III.3 and forgiveness: §I.8-12, Works, Vol. I.
319 Sermon 9, The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption, §II.4-5, Works, Vol. I.
320 Sermon 9, The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption, §3.5, Works, Vol. I.
spiritual senses the individual is once again able to rightly discern spiritual good and evil and being once again ‘capable of God,’ the perfect law of love is discernible in their heart. They are brought to life and have ‘clear intercourse with the invisible world.’ Love of the world is destroyed. They are able to ‘feel’ and daily increase in the love of God and humankind and the knowledge of God, Jesus Christ and all things pertaining to the inward kingdom. Now they may properly be said to live: Being quickened by the Spirit, those who were rendered spiritually dead are now spiritually ‘alive to God through Jesus Christ.’

b. The Spiritual Senses and Restoration of the Moral Image of God in the New Birth
Because the effects of the Fall are reversed in the natural image of God, the effects of the Holy Spirit awakening the spiritual senses also impact the moral image. Because of the perception enabled by the spiritual senses and the human response, the individual is raised from a life of sin to a life of ‘righteousness and true holiness.’ This is ‘the image of God stamped upon the heart,’ restoring their love, peace and joy. They are enabled to once again to live holy, virtuous lives and inclined to love, please and serve God and humankind. The sin that separated them from God no longer has power over them. Their affections are once again guided aright as the eyes of the understanding and other spiritual senses once again prompt them to turn to virtue and righteous intent. Consequentially, rather than being ruled by evil intent, human beings are now endowed with humility, meekness, and a sincere, tender, disinterested love for all mankind and with gifts of ‘mercies, kindness, gentleness, long-suffering.’ So their happiness is restored, as their affections are once again correctly guided by the liberty and will, by means of the eyes of the understanding. All is redirected from an ‘earthly, sensual, devilish mind’ towards the ‘mind which was in Christ.’

Now that they are born again, the life of God is restored and dwells in humanity and so they again participate in the divine nature. Immediately the reciprocal relationship that they once enjoyed with God is received by faith, God continually breathing upon the soul and their soul returning that breath. This involves the receiving of grace and the returning

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of love, prayer and praise. This represents ‘intercourse between God and man, through
spiritual respiration… fellowship with the Father and Son.’ 333 This relationship is sustained
and developed, and with it the individual grows in ‘spiritual strength, motion and
sensation’ 334 due to the renewed capability of the spiritual senses continuously guiding the
faculties aright in ‘discerning spiritual “good and evil.”’ 335 By ‘manifesting himself’ in this
way, God destroys the works of the devil and restores humanity to full relationship with
himself. 336

c. The Spiritual Senses and the Restoration of the Political Image of God in the New
Birth
For Wesley, the ‘whole animated creation’ will find their liberty and deliverance from the
consequences of the Fall upon the culmination of the eschatological plan. More
specifically, the animal kingdom will one day be delivered from the current bondage of
corruption, unto ‘something better…after death.’ 337

Until that day part of the political image remains, in that human beings retained ‘a degree
of dominion over the creatures.’ 338 But rather than interpret this as a role of domination,
Wesley calls human beings to a role in caring for creation, effectively instructing them to
renew their role as conveyors of God’s blessing, ‘imitate him whose mercy is over all his
works.’ 339 This expectation is reflected in that he calls parents to educate their children not
to harm, but to care for the creatures. 340 He calls humankind to a renewed responsibility
towards creation as they wait for the redemption at the end of the age ‘when God makes all
things new.’ 341 Accordingly, Wesley called those who enjoyed that renewed relationship
with their creator to understand ‘that mercy of God which is “over all his works”’ 342 and so
to demonstrate a renewed, God-initiated, concern for all creation.

Furthermore, Wesley relates the faculties of the immortal spirit, including ‘the
understanding,’ to the task of good stewardship. 343 Here, in referring to ‘the
understanding,’ Wesley is not speaking of reason, but of the employment of the soul, the
use of the faculties endowed in the immortal spirit at creation. Here it is the ‘eyes of the
understanding’ since Wesley is speaking of the faculty of the immortal spirit, that work

333 Sermon 45, The New Birth, §II.4, Works, Vol. II.
335 Sermon 45, The New Birth, §II.4, Works, Vol. II.
336 Sermon 62, The End of Christ’s Coming, §II.7, §III.2, Works, Vol. II.
337 Sermon 60, The General Deliverance, §III.9, Works, Vol. II.
341 Sermon 60, The General Deliverance, §III.8, Works, Vol. II.
342 Sermon 60, The General Deliverance, §III.8, Works, Vol. II.
with reason and guide knowledge of God and self, the will, the affections, love and joy
aright, in good stewardship, particularly in relation to creation.¹⁴⁴

All of the faculties referred to here are aspects of the natural and moral image of God,
which is renewed by means of the interaction between the eyes of the understanding and
the Holy Spirit ministering in prevenient grace. Human beings are called to employ these
under the ‘express directions’ of the creator and to be ‘God’s stewards’ over all that he has
entrusted to them.¹⁴⁵ So the link between the spiritual senses, the restoration of the natural
and moral image of God, and the restoration of the political image of God is established in
the responsibilities that accompany the restoration of the political image in humankind.

Summary
In the new birth the spiritual senses are active prior to any awareness of God whatsoever.
In facilitating an awakening to the things of God the spiritual senses enable human beings
to perceive God and come to know him through experiential knowledge. This experiential
knowledge works in harmony with their reason, but this knowledge has a purpose beyond
itself, to restore the life and image of God and enable unique reciprocal relationship with
the creator. This consists in participation of the divine nature and spiritual respiration. For
Wesley, this renewed relationship is a ‘real change’ in the lives of those who believe, a
work that God performs ‘in us’.¹⁴⁷ As such the moment of the new birth is irresistible, for
it is the work of God alone. Having explored the restoration of the image of God in the
new birth exploration now turns to drawing out the role of the spiritual senses in further
key aspects of Wesley’s soteriology.

d. The Spiritual Senses and the Empirical Theme in the New Birth
The empirical theme is strong in Wesley’s developed understanding of the new birth.
When comparing the spiritual sensitivity of human beings to that of a toad devoid of any
empirical sensation due to being trapped in a tree for many years, and how the state of the
toad changed upon release, Wesley cites all five spiritual senses. The spiritual senses
worked with the Holy Spirit and enabled spiritual perception of the divine.¹⁴⁸ Here the
spiritual senses, previously awakened by prevenient grace, play their part in the salvific
act.¹⁴⁹ Again Wesley uses the theme of illumination but this time the spiritual senses, by

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¹⁴⁴ Specific references to creation are found in Sermon 51, The Good Steward, §I.1, §II.3, Works, Vol. II.
¹⁴⁵ Representing all of the spiritual senses.
¹⁴⁶ Sermon 51, The Good Steward, §II.3, Works, Vol. II.
¹⁴⁸ Sermon 130, On Living Without God, §9-11, Works, Vol. IV.
¹⁴⁹ Sermon 130, On Living Without God, §16, Works, Vol. IV.
means of the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit, are active in communicating spiritual truths leading the individual into new birth.

Firstly, the Holy Spirit opens the spiritual eyes, bringing spiritual sight to individuals who have previously no perception whatsoever of spiritual things. Then, through this spiritual sense of sight, He reveals the individual’s need of God and the role of Jesus in the salvific journey. Through the spiritual sense of hearing the individual perceives the inviting voice of God, and submits to its claims, which proceed to govern ‘all his thoughts, words, and actions.’ By the same means they can taste and see the graciousness of the Lord and are enabled to ‘enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,’ taste ‘the powers of the world to come’ and experience, by spiritual sensation, the love of Jesus that is better than wine.’ They experience, by spiritual sensation, the aroma of God, and discover the reality of scripture where it says ‘All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia.’ They then feel ‘the love of shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given to him.’ Wesley sums these incredible experiences up in one word, ‘faith, taken in its widest sense…’ which, to some degree, is the property of every person who believes in the name of the Son of God. This ability to perceive God, this ‘faith,’ ‘is the change from spiritual death to spiritual life, which is properly the new birth.’

This passage corresponds to the restoration of the life and image of God in that the salvific journey commences with the illumination of the spiritual sense of sight. The eyes of the understanding, representing all spiritual senses, are opened revealing spiritual realities and truths about both the state of humanity and the role of the divine. On being enabled to discern the voice of God the individual willingly submits their liberty and freewill to His will, and in so doing is restored to obedient living where the voice of God governs ‘all his thoughts, words, and actions.’ Through a deep spiritual experience of ‘tasting and seeing’ the individual is enabled to both discover and feel the mercy, love and power of God and the spiritual world within their innermost being. They move from spiritual death to spiritual life and the image of God is restored; for the individual ‘all things are become new.’ With this new birth the individual’s whole soul is now sensible of God and the culmination of all this is that they are capable of God once again, God dwells within them and they once again know how to love and obey their creator. Three points are worthy of note here. Firstly, whilst the communication of the Holy Spirit via the spiritual senses

350 Sermon 130, On Living Without God, §9, Works, Vol. IV.
351 Sermon 130, On Living Without God, §10, Works, Vol. IV.
352 Sermon 130, On Living Without God, §11, Works, Vol. IV.
353 Sermon 130, On Living Without God, §11 and §12, Works, Vol. IV.
results in new birth, they are active throughout the salvific journey. Secondly, the purpose of the empirical theme is to restore right relationship with the creator through the renewal of the life and image of God. Thirdly, the perception of God is the work of God alone, therefore it is irresistible. Having perceived the spirits promptings, it is possible for people to reject the offer of restored relationship with God, making that offer, resistible. However, once the offer of restored relationship is accepted in the decisive moment, the ‘real change’ is the act of God alone and, as such, is irresistible.

e. The Spiritual Senses in the Christian Life

i. The Spiritual Senses and Assurance

Wesley asserts that, when the spiritual senses are rightly disposed, it is possible for the Christian to be totally assured of their relationship with God. This is because the image of God is restored and they now experience the attributes related to participating in the divine nature of God and have the life of God within. The Holy Spirit communicates this assurance directly to the soul by spiritual perception. This witness is evidenced by the fruit of the spirit that works within the Christian. Those who experience this assurance by the witness of the Spirit are urged to press forward in their quest for holiness, indicating a process. For the one that is born again, who has the gift of faith and the assurance of their state before God, the spiritual senses continue to be active in the work of Faith.

ii. The Spiritual Senses and Faith

In terms of the spiritual senses Wesley uses the term Faith in at least four different ways. Firstly, Faith corresponds to the new birth. Faith is the spiritual eye, ear, palate and feeling of the soul and the specific details of what is perceived through the Holy Spirit via the spiritual senses aligns with the revelations outlined above in the new birth. This faith, this ‘internal sensation’ is the gift of God, not to the worthy, but to the ungodly and unholy, who cry ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’ The link with prevenient grace is established since there is ‘no merit in human beings that precedes the forgiving love of God.’ As previously discussed, the gift of faith as the new birth is the work of God alone and is instantaneous.

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358 Sermon 130, On Living Without God, §II.12, Works, Vol. IV.
359 Men of Reason, §7, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.
360 Men of Reason, §34, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.
361 Men of Reason, §11, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.
Secondly, in *The Witness of Our Own Spirit*, the connection between faith, the spiritual senses and the restored life and image of God can be clearly seen. Here Wesley identifies faith with those who are partakers in Christ. This faith ‘alone is that evidence, that conviction, that demonstration of things invisible, whereby the eyes of our understanding being opened, and divine light poured in upon them, one can 'see the wondrous things of God's 'law…’ This faith enables human beings to perceive spiritual realities about themselves and God. It enables them to experience the love of God and others, to live according to the law of God written on their hearts and to obey Christ. This corresponds with the correct guidance of the liberty and will to the law of God.\(^{362}\) Faith is, 

…that divine evidence whereby the spiritual man discerneth God, and the things of God. It is with regard to the spiritual world, what sense is with regard to the natural. It is the spiritual sensation of every soul that is born of God.\(^{363}\)

It is ‘the gift of God,’\(^{364}\) ‘the life of God in the soul….a new creation,’\(^{365}\) ‘an intercourse between God and the soul…walking with God… a citizenship of heaven…an inhabitant of eternity.’\(^{366}\) It is ‘the comprehension of love of Christ which passeth knowledge’ and the means of being ‘filled with all the fullness of God,’\(^{367}\) and so one might just conceive that ‘all things are possible to him that’ thus ‘believeth’.\(^{368}\)

Here the activity of the spiritual senses are applied to people of faith, to what is termed as ‘the spiritual’ person; the person whose eyes of the understanding have received and responded positively to the overtures of the Holy Spirit by means of prevenient grace. In consequence they have been awakened, have come to understand their state before God and the need for the image of God to be renewed in their lives. Here the attributes of faith, enabled by the communication of the Holy Spirit via the spiritual senses, enable individuals to experience more of the fullness of God. In this respect, faith is irresistible.

Thirdly, Wesley was keen to impress that Christianity was more than merely cognitive assent. Yet at the same time he was keen to demonstrate that Christianity was a ‘reasonable religion.’\(^{369}\) However, this is a reasonable faith of a particular kind where the experiential evidence of the spiritual senses renews the relationship with the divine reason, through

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restoring the knowledge of God via spiritual perception. Consequently, people are able to love God and all humankind, serve God and submit to him in obedience.\footnote{Men of Reason, §28, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.} This divine reason first reveals their true state and proceeds to make them ‘truly wise, virtuous, and happy… as every thinking mind (perhaps from some implicit remembrance of what it originally was) longs to be.’ All of this is indicative of, and aligned with the restoration of the life and image of God, restoring the ‘essential nature of things; the nature of God, and the nature of man, with the relations necessarily subsisting between them.’\footnote{Men of Reason, §28, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.}

However, Wesley was keen to indicate that this divine reason does not work in isolation, but in unity with human reasoning, so he proceeds to justify the use of reasoning from Scripture.\footnote{Men of Reason, §30, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.} He encourages ‘all who seek after true religion, to use all the reason which God hath given them, in searching out the things of God,’ reminding them of the importance of having the right premise for reasoning.\footnote{Men of Reason, §31, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.} For Wesley, the premise of reasoning devolves from the senses, and it follows that knowledge of God comes via the internal senses capable of discerning spiritual things. This experiential knowledge, this faith, provides the correct premise for perceiving the deep things of God which God himself reveals by his Spirit.\footnote{Men of Reason, §32, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.} In this respect it is irresistible. It is not possible for the reason to discern these things without the spiritual perception enabled via the spiritual senses.

Fourthly, because the nature of this new birth, or faith, was relational due to the restoration of the life and image of God, Wesley wanted to impress on his listeners the reality of that restored relationship. God had provided an avenue for restored relationship by means of the prevenient grace, the Holy Spirit communicating with the spiritual senses. Upon the individual’s positive response the life and image of God would once again dwell within. This indwelling of God enabled human beings to once again live in perfect relationship with their creator, capable of God, capable of knowing, perceiving, loving, obeying and serving him.\footnote{Men of Reason, §98, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.}

### iii. The Spiritual Senses and Holiness

The spiritual senses continue to enable spiritual perception in the Christian life of Holiness. Here the theme of the spiritual senses in the soteriological journey reaches its climax as the...
unity of the theme is completed. Wesley links the life of God in the soul and ‘righteousness and true holiness’ in defining the moral image of God and the significance of the spiritual senses to this theme has already been noted above. 376

Using sermons with a direct reference to the spiritual senses the following influence of the spiritual senses can be gleaned. The link between the spiritual senses and the new birth has already been established above. 377 The new birth is necessary for holiness which is the image and life of God stamped upon the heart. This consists of all heavenly affections, implies a continual, thankful love towards God and enables the believer to ‘present their bodies and souls, all they are and all they have, all their thoughts, words, and actions, a continual sacrifice to God…’ 378 There is a confirmation to the link with faith, and so with the spiritual senses, since in *Awake Thou That Sleepest*, Charles also claims that it is by faith that the believer is sanctified. 379 The link to the spiritual senses, the life of God in the soul and spiritual respiration has already been established above. 380 It is by means of spiritual respiration that the individual’s spiritual life is not only sustained but increased day by day, together with spiritual strength, motion and sensation which itself grows and increases. 381 They experience the continual inspiration of the spirit through unceasing presence of God, which in turn enables them to live this life as a holy sacrifice, 382 achieved via the Holy Spirit’s continued communication with the spiritual senses. 383

With the spirit continually working in them through the renewal of the life and image of God, enabled via the activation of the spiritual senses, they are able to experience the love of God in their hearts and the love of humankind. 384 Their love is turned from the love of this world and they are delivered from misdirected affections and evil deeds. 385 All of this is evidenced through the fruit of the Spirit, demonstrated in the life of the believer that is inwardly growing and outwardly doing good to others. This is identified as clear evidence that the spiritual senses are rightly disposed. 386

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376 Part Two, pp. 97-98, pp. 102-104, pp. 120-121.
377 Part Two, pp. 118-124.
378 Sermon 45, *The New Birth*, §III.1, *Works*, Vol. II and n52. Outler notes Wesley's letter to his father, Dec. 10, 1734, ‘By holiness I mean, not fasting, or bodily austerity, or any other external means of improvement, but that inward temper to which all these are subservient, a renewal of soul in the image of God.’
380 Part Two, pp. 97-98, p. 121.
383 Part Two, pp. 120-121.
384 Part Two, pp. 105-123.
For Wesley, the aim of holiness is the restoration of perfect love made possible because human beings are enabled once again, through the enlightened spiritual senses and resultant renewed relationship with God, to obey the perfect law. The perfect law was inscribed on the hearts of human beings at creation and is re-inscribed on the hearts of all true believers. This perfect law comprises of all the virtues of the unchangeable reason, the eternal mind, the divine nature, it is the perfect law of love. By this law of love believers learn once again what it means to love God and their fellow human beings, and this love Wesley defines as the ‘medicine of life.’ It is this perfect law of love that convinces the world of sin, brings sinners to life in Christ, and keeps them in Christ. They are then enabled to understand their potential as they live in obedience and realize the hope of receiving ‘grace upon grace,’ in order to ‘attain the fullness of his promises.’ For Wesley, this perfect law of love is synonymous with Christian perfection.

Christian perfection does not imply an exemption from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations; but that it does imply the being so crucified with Christ, as to be able to testify, “I live not, but Christ liveth in me,” (Gal. ii. 20,) and hath “purified my heart by faith.” (Acts xv. 9.) It does imply “the casting down every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” It does imply “the being holy, as he that hath called us is holy, in all manner of conversation;” (2 Cor. x. 5; 1 Peter i. 15;) and, in a word, “the loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and serving him with all our strength.”

Linking Wesley’s concept of Christian perfection to the early Eastern traditions, Outler identifies that Wesley’s interpretation of Christian perfection is not based on the Latin word ‘perfectus’ meaning ‘perfected perfection,’ an absolute perfection that is finished and complete. Rather his concept of Christian perfection was based on the Eastern word, ‘teleiosis’ meaning ‘perfecting perfection’ implying continuing movement and growth

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390 Sermon 76, On Perfection, §1.4, Works, Vol. III. See also, Sermon 30, Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, §27, Works, Vol. I. In the introductory comment to this sermon Outler asserts that this love of God and neighbour was the definition of Wesley’s Christian perfection.
391 Men of Reason, §3, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8. Note the link to the image of God and the therapeutic metaphors.
393 Men of Reason, §55, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8.
towards maturity.\textsuperscript{395} As such, this perfection is the goal of holiness, a continued movement towards imitating perfect love, the law of love discernible in a person’s heart by means of the indwelling of the life of God in the soul.\textsuperscript{396} This, in turn, is enabled through the Holy Spirit’s ministry to human beings via the spiritual senses. This is a representation of Wesley’s use of the Western concept of Christian holiness and perfection as instantaneous because it begins at the moment of the new birth, as supported by Collins and Heitzenrater, but also the Eastern concept of perfection developing as a process, as supported by Maddox and Lee.

Although Wesley’s concept of perfection is one of continuing growth and movement towards maturity, he is eager to demonstrate the Christian’s ability to live a holy life without sinning and here also the spiritual senses continue to fulfil their role. Therefore, whilst a person is born of God\textsuperscript{397} and remains in relationship with God, not only does such a person not commit sin, but whilst this indwelling of God continues Wesley asserts that they cannot sin.\textsuperscript{398} This is made possible through the restored relationship enabled via the spiritual senses. This is a representation of the Western, protestant concept of sanctification as irresistible as supported by Collins.

Nevertheless, Wesley acknowledges that the reality of sin can be present in the lives of believers, which he succinctly explains as a ‘process from grace to sin.’ This includes the initial temptation, a warning from the spirit, and an initial giving way in some degree to the temptation. They grieve the Holy Spirit and in consequence the individual’s faith is weakened and their love for God grows cold. This is followed by a sharper reprimand from the spirit which causes pain to the hearer who turns away from the painful voice of God and towards the pleasing voice of the tempter. In this way evil desire begins to take hold until faith and love are completely lost. The individual is left in a position of being capable of committing direct outward sin because the power of the Lord is departed from them.\textsuperscript{399} Wesley acknowledges the presence of sin prior to faith being lost, ‘the sin of omission at least,’ and this sin of omission involves ‘taking the loving eye of the soul away from God.’ However, faith is already lost before such a person is able to commit outward sin.\textsuperscript{400}

\textsuperscript{395} As mentioned above, this link to the Eastern notion is contested by some, but in recent scholarship Lee has affirmed this link. Lee, ‘Wesley and Macarius,’ pp. 197-212.
\textsuperscript{396} Wesley defines being created anew in Christ Jesus as ‘Perfection,’ Sermon 76, \textit{On Perfection}, §I.7, \textit{Works}, Vol. III.
\textsuperscript{397} Sermon 19, \textit{The Great Privilege}, as described in Introduction, §2, §I.8-10 & §IV.2-3, \textit{Works}, Vol. I.
\textsuperscript{398} Sermon 19, \textit{The Great Privilege}, §II.1, \textit{Works}, Vol. I.
\textsuperscript{399} Sermon 19, \textit{The Great Privilege}, §II.9, \textit{Works}, Vol. I.
\textsuperscript{400} Sermon 19, \textit{The Great Privilege}, §III.1, \textit{Works}, Vol. I.
renders even the gift of restored relationship with God resistible, at the point where the individual can choose to reject it, even following initial restoration.

The key to being able to resist temptation is the ‘continuance of the divine life within,’ consisting of keeping the eye of the soul fixed on God, continually abiding in the life of God, the continual act of spiritual respiration. This focus enables the individual to experience and return continual love to God.\textsuperscript{401} It is through the continued interaction of the Holy Spirit with the spiritual senses that the child of God is enabled, by divine power, to continue in this state of holiness, specifically identified as ‘a recovery of the image of God, a renewal of the soul after his likeness.’\textsuperscript{402} Here is an example of a conjoining of both the cooperant nature of the relationship with God as supported by Maddox and the holding of it in divine power as supported by Collins.\textsuperscript{403}

**Summary**

The spiritual senses are active in the sanctification of the believer. The communication enabled through their activation results in the restoration of the life and image of God and they continue to be involved in the deepening relationship with God as spiritual sensation increases, expressing itself in Christian holiness. The movement towards perfection is enabled through obedience to the perfect law of love re-inscribed on their heart, a part of the renewed image of God. This is enabled through the enlightened spiritual senses and resultant ongoing relationship with God. The ability to continue in a state of holiness and not to sin is enabled through keeping the eyes of the understanding fixed on God. Divine action enables the increase in spiritual sensation, as the individual constantly abides in the life of God through the continual act of spiritual respiration through which the relationship with God continues to thrive.

As noted above, Wesley employed both the Eastern and Western metaphors within his concept of holiness; ‘*perfectus,*’ indicating absolute perfection, an instantaneous act of God and ‘*teleiosis,*’ indicating a process. However, when examining sanctification in the light of the spiritual senses, as above, the Eastern concept of process outweighs the Western concepts of instantaneous as demonstrated in the following summary.

Engaging with the theme of process Wesley includes the following: A continual, thankful love towards God; the link with faith; the link to spiritual respiration increasing the


\textsuperscript{403} Part Two, pp. 113-116.
spiritual life day by day; the growth and increase of spiritual strength and motion and sensation; the continual inspiration of the Spirit; the Spirit continually working in them through the renewal of the life and image of God; the continual growth of the fruit of the spirit, and the move to Christian perfection which is achieved through continued movement towards imitating perfect love. This is achieved by means of the indwelling of the life of God in the soul. Even following initial restoration the continuance of the divine life, alongside the continual experience of divine love, are enabled through continuing reciprocal relationship of love between God and the individual. The process from grace to sin indicates that even the gift of restored relationship with God is resistible, at the point where the individual can choose to reject it.

The following areas involve both process and the instantaneous: Whilst the new birth forms part of a process towards sanctification, the act of the new birth is the work of God alone, and is instantaneous. The renewal of the perfect law of love that keeps people in Christ, enabling them to receive ‘grace upon grace’ in order to ‘attain the fullness of his promises’ indicates a process. Yet it is re-inscribed upon the heart of the believer, an act of God alone. As such, at the moment of re-inscription it is instantaneous. The ability to resist temptation is dependent on the continuance of the divine life within, where the individual keeps the eye of the soul fixed on God and abides in the life of God, consisting of spiritual respiration. In this sense it is a process. Yet divine power ultimately makes this achievable. In this sense it is the act of God alone.

CONCLUSION

Here is presented the unity between the spiritual senses and the restoration of the life and image of God. Wesley employs the theme of the spiritual senses throughout his ordo salutis, moving from complete cognitive unawareness of God or the spiritual world, termed spiritual death or sleep, through prevenient grace to awakening and conviction of their state, the new birth which involves healing and forgiveness, faith, assurance and sanctification. Accordingly, the theme of the spiritual senses is presented as a major concept that spans Wesley’s salvific understanding.

Through the organic unity of Wesley’s practical theology, which consists of an accessible spirituality that stems from creation, the spiritual senses are presented as the property of each and every human being. Consequently, all who were once alienated from God in consequence of the Fall have the potential to be healed, forgiven and restored to
relationship with the Creator; to become fully human. This is both initiated and achieved through the Holy Spirit communicating in prevenient grace to the spiritual senses before a person has any spiritual awareness whatsoever, rendering this spirituality accessible to all. In this respect prevenient grace is irresistible.

Once the Holy Spirit enlightens the spiritual senses, there is a new mode of understanding God, by experience. People can sense or feel God and, upon a positive response, all aspects of the image of God and the life of God are restored in their inner being. In being able to exercise their freewill to accept or reject the offer of restored relationship, the offer is resistible at this stage. In accepting the offer of restored relationship, the new birth occurs. This is a change of state in the individual and is the act of God alone, and as such is irresistible.

The restoration of this right relationship enables human beings to participate in the divine nature and the relationship is retained and developed through spiritual respiration. The life of God is restored in the soul. In consequence they enjoy an ongoing and developing relationship with God that is experiential, the Holy Spirit fills and indwells them and, by means of the ongoing activity of the spiritual senses, they truly sense his presence. The activity of the spiritual senses in relationship with the creator spans the whole of Christian life and enables people to grow in holiness and live in respect and love of God, others, nature and the created order. However, Wesley was keen to retain both the cooperative aspects and the divine aspects of the life of holiness. Therefore, it is possible, at least in theory, for an individual, even at this stage, to reject the offer of ongoing relationship with God, rendering even this resistible. But nevertheless, the ongoing life of God in the soul and growing relationship is enabled by God alone; in this respect it is irresistible.

For Wesley the focus of the spiritual senses is not primarily to restore knowledge of God, although knowledge is restored. The primary focus of the spiritual senses is concerned with restoring right relationship with God. A relationship that is ‘real’ meaning that, since a full relationship cannot be merely cognitive, it is necessary for human beings to experience the presence of God, as they did at creation. The spiritual senses enable this to happen. By means of the experiential nature of the exchange between the Holy Spirit and the spiritual senses the relationship becomes intimate. This does not mean that human faculty of reason is neglected, for the spiritual senses work in harmony with reason in enabling awareness of God.
It is a premise of this thesis that this examination of Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses will add to the conversation between contemporary spirituality and the Christian tradition, and that a re-visitation and re-application of this doctrine has the potential to offer a meaningful contribution to Christian mission in the twenty-first century. Part Three will now continue this conversation with motifs arising from contemporary spirituality taking the lead.
PART THREE

THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE ROLE OF THE SPIRITUAL SENSES IN CONTEMPORARY MISSION

INTRODUCTION

Recognising that a new wave of non-religious experiential spirituality is flowing over the West, the premise of this thesis is that an exploration and development of John Wesley’s use of the theme of the spiritual senses might offer a meaningful alternative Christian response to the aspirations of twenty-first-century spiritual seekers. Using Lynch’s revised correlation as a guide, Part One drew out the key motifs of contemporary spirituality through an exploration of the horizons of this relatively new phenomenon. A number of Christian missiological responses were identified and their significance to the rudiments of contemporary spirituality was assessed.

Part Two explored the historical theology of John Wesley. Wesley’s concept of the spiritual senses was explored through his own words, confirming it as an extensive motif in his theological premise that undergirds his soteriology and uncovering the way he chose to apply the theme. This revealed a significant and specific practical outworking, foundational to his theological premise, where, through accessible spirituality the image and life of God is restored. This resulted in a renewed and ongoing relationship with the creator. This theme has potential for making a significant contribution to the conversation between contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christian thinkers.

Whilst this thesis has an interest in acknowledging historical connections regarding the spiritual senses it is more concerned to draw out this historicity where it correlates with contemporary spirituality. In addition to using the historical data pertaining to John Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses, reference will be made to the early developed historical sources, those of the Patristic era where appropriate. The reason for this is twofold as noted in Part Two. Firstly, to note the earliest possible connections with the Church Fathers in order to correlate with contemporary spirituality’s desire to connect with ancient thought and practices. Secondly, to draw out the strong similarities between Wesley’s thinking concerning the spiritual senses and those of the Church Fathers. Although further exploration goes beyond the scope of this thesis, the suggestion is that
these distinctions sit within Campbell’s programmatic methodology and so highlight the potential for further exploration.

Drawing on and developing the horizons explored in Part One and the exploration of historical theology in Part Two, Part Three engages in revised correlation’s ‘systematic theology.’ Using Lynch’s methodology, this section further develops the conversation between contemporary spirituality, contemporary Christian thinkers and Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses. This section aims to suggest a meaningful missiological response to the phenomenon of contemporary spirituality, resulting in an authentic means of communicating the Christian message to twenty-first-century spiritual seekers.

**REVISED CORRELATION STAGE THREE: SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.**
A Developed Conversation between Contemporary Spirituality, Contemporary Christian Thinkers and Wesley’s theme of the Spiritual Senses, in Order to Identify the Potential Contribution of the Spiritual Senses to Contemporary Mission.

**1. CREATION SPIRITUALITY**
Using Lynch’s ‘descriptive theology,’ Part One built a picture of contemporary spirituality that acknowledged nature as a major environment for spiritual engagement. The differing views of the interlocutors found a point of convergence in drawing spiritual experience, or connection, from nature with identifiable benefits for the individual, the wider community and nature. This interest in creation evokes a renewed sense of environmental and ecological concern and people are drawn to care for nature in a practical manner. The response from Christian thinkers saw nature as a valid route to engender spiritual connection. Furthermore, it highlighted the potential for partnership in caring for the world and identified contemporary research, commissioned from within the Christian arena, which supported the concept that spiritual accessibility is a natural part of the human make-up.¹

**i. Accessible Spirituality**
Part One presented a view of contemporary spirituality that derives its view from ancient spiritual practices where the universe is sacralised; spiritual connection is a natural part of

¹ Part One, pp. 31-39.
being human; the sacred can be experienced, directly and intuitively; and all human beings can experience a primal innate connection, or relationship, with nature.

As such, a general alignment with pantheism could be assumed where, according to Tacey, God is equal to ‘the shape and size of material things,’ or according to Hay, ‘the universe is God.’ However, in spite of similarities to pantheism, each practice is formed within the context of individual selection. For example, Bloom draws from a blend of historical Christian, shamanic, pagan and tribal religions to form an eclectic view of spiritual connection within nature. Alternatively, understanding a new image of God that is ‘intimate, intense and immanent,’ yet ‘a mystery at the core of ordinary reality,’ Tacey states an alignment to panentheism, where ‘God is greater than things, while also present in them.’

There are contemporary responses from the Christian tradition that would embrace a more panentheistic, rather than pantheistic view. Varying degrees of sacralisation can be seen within the responses from contemporary Christianity offered in Part One. Smith’s argument embraces the divinization of nature. Lynch notes that within progressive spirituality nature is sacralised, but there are different degrees of sacralisation. These range from the actual ‘divinization of nature’ through nature being understood as ‘sacred and holy, a manifestation of the divine life,’ to understanding ‘nature as sacred by virtue of it being a site of divine life and activity.’ Lynch falls short of embracing the notion of equating the divine with everything that is in the cosmos, yet asserts that ‘the whole of the cosmos, including ourselves, participates in the divine life.’ Alternatively, Forest Church and Frost offer examples of practical solutions which aid both human and divine encounters within creation. Hay argues for a biological connection, where spiritual awareness is rooted in the psychological make-up of human beings.

In response to the practice of contemporary spirituality which draws from systems that embrace ancient spiritual practices, Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses has strong

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6 Part One, pp. 37-38.
8 Part One, p. 58.
9 Part One, pp. 34-35.
10 Part One, p. 36.
11 Part One, p. 31.
historical connections, as indicated in Part Two. However, for John Wesley the genesis of the spiritual senses reaches back even further than the Church Fathers for it is in the act of creation itself that the spiritual senses transpire, offering a theological explanation regarding the deep rooted invisible mechanics concerning transformational spiritual power.

**a. Wesley’s Account**

To summarise a very complex theme drawn from Part Two, for John Wesley, human beings were created as spiritual beings endowed with the image of God. As such, they were endowed with spiritual senses that perceived spiritual data and conveyed this to the human reason, enabling spiritual understanding of God. Thus, with all their faculties directed aright, they lived in perfect, virtuous, loving, relationship with their creator and were predisposed to care for creation. In Wesley’s terms they were ‘capable of God.’

However, in Wesley’s theology of the Fall human beings were estranged from God. Consequentially, their spiritual senses were dulled and their capability of God was disrupted rendering continuation of that close relationship impossible. Nevertheless, being part of every human being’s make-up, both reason and the spiritual senses remained, albeit that the capacity of reason was altered and the spiritual senses became dormant and in need of re-awakening. This relational breakdown at the Fall represents all relationships, including not only that with God but with other human beings and all the created order.

**b. Drawn from the Creative Moment**

Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses presents an alternative understanding of the sacred/human relationship based on the genesis of the known created order that correlates with contemporary spirituality. In this respect, not dissimilar to Bloom’s argument that presents a spiritual reality which is ingrained in our make-up, or Smith who responds with a claim to inherent connections through energy, Wesley’s interpretation draws on a particular understanding of how the cosmos came into being. He builds upon this to explain how human beings might experience a relationship with the creator. However,

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12 Part Two pp. 71-79.
15 Part Two, pp. 89-99.
16 Part Two, pp. 89-96.
17 Part Two, pp. 99-104.
18 Part Two, pp. 127-128.
19 Part One, pp. 36-37.
20 Part One, pp. 37-38.
unlike Bloom and Smith, for Wesley the link between the sacred and human beings does not arise from within the created order itself, but rather stems from the very image of the creator.

The assertion from proponents of contemporary spirituality is that a relationship can be formed with either the indissoluble link between human beings and the rest of creation, or the energy of the cosmos. The question arises, how does one form a relationship with an abstract entity such as energy? For Smith and Christi, the means is through a common consciousness. For Wilson, humanity is indelibly linked to nature in consequence of the link to the creative moment and this is understood cognitively. For Tacey, it is through the human psychic life. For Bloom, it is through felt and sensational experience in cooperation with cognitive awareness. For Wesley, it is through direct spiritual perception by means of the spiritual senses that are a natural part of the human make-up endowed at creation. It is because human beings sought a relationship with the created order rather than the creator that their ultimate estrangement from the sacred ensued. Spiritual fulfilment can only be achieved through an experienced reconciliation. This is accomplished when the spiritual senses are activated again, releasing the freewill and directing it to respond to the spirit and re-form a relationship with the creator, in contrast to the created as proposed by proponents of contemporary spirituality.

**Points of Convergence**

Followers of contemporary spirituality are accepting of the concept of spirituality drawn from nature/evolution/creation, along with the idea of a creator/sacred/divine being. Furthermore, all of these views are formed within recognised, if multiple and merged, ideologies. As the concept of the spiritual senses is also formed within a recognised ideology, there is scope for conversation concerning the potential validity of the concept of the spiritual senses, embedded in human beings at the creative moment, as a credible way forward for spiritual exploration drawn from the Christian tradition. Those who accept the Christian creation story, or are willing to consider the possibility of humans as created beings, could appreciate the concept of the spiritual senses being embedded in humanity at creation in the same manner as the physical senses.

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21 Part One, p. 37, p. 57.
22 Part One, p. 56.
23 Part One, p. 37.
24 According to research a wide selection of individuals accept creation as a valid option. Nick Spenser, “Beyond The Fringe?” p. 25.
Therefore, proponents of contemporary spirituality would benefit from advocating a more open approach to Christian stories, corresponding to that demonstrated to the stories of other ideologies. Christians would benefit from discovering the stories used by contemporary spiritual seekers and developing a language that correlates with their culture. The term ‘creator’ could be used more frequently in conversation. Furthermore, the Christian creation story could be broadened to respond to the call to discover the invisible mechanics, in terms of the spiritual senses, embedded in humanity from creation, which enable the forming of relationship with the creator and, hence, spiritual fulfilment.

ii. Personal and Accessible Spirituality Grounded in a Specific Tradition

In Part One, contemporary spirituality raised a critique against Christianity for limiting spiritual connectivity with God to the confines of ritualised Christian practice, leaving no room for personal spirituality. The view is promoted that ‘spirituality’, in terms of non-religious contemporary spirituality, has, rightly, superseded ‘religion.’ It was noted that Sheldrake challenges the current tendency to redefine spirituality by detaching ‘spirituality’ from ‘religion’ and, in so doing, disconnect spirituality from its historical roots. Sheldrake asserts that accounting for continuity of religious tradition within a developing framework of spirituality would balance the tendency for an over-emphasis on individualist personal experience, allowing for the spiritual expression and relationship with others in community. For Sheldrake, only acknowledgement of the foundational and enduring union between traditional religion and spirituality offers a satisfactory, transformative and activist framework for spiritual development. Such a framework acknowledges the continuing presence and action of God, since the aim of spirituality is always to interpret sacred texts within the historical particularity of cultural context.

Conversely, derived from the sciences, Hay argues that spiritual awareness is biologically present in all human beings and, as such, transcends the constraints of traditional arguments and religious boundaries. For Hay, because spirituality is a facet of all members of the human species, it is prior to religion. Consequently, he believes that there are many secular as well as religious expressions of spirituality.

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25 Part One, p. 31.
26 Part One, pp. 44-45.
27 Part One, p. 22.
28 Part One, p. 65.
29 Sheldrake, Explorations, pp. 6-7, p. 76, pp. 79-82.
31 Part One, p. 36.
32 Hay, Something There, p. 48-49.
In line with Sheldrake, John Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses is specifically linked to the Christian tradition, being embedded both within Christian history, and reaching back to the creative moment itself. Furthermore, it underpins Hay’s theory with a credible historical and theological account concerning a mechanism within each and every person, which enables direct spiritual perception. Because it stems from the creative moment, it is a natural aspect of humanity and, as such, avoids being considered supernaturally imparted as in Hay’s assessment of Jonathan Edward’s sense of the heart.33 For Wesley in practical terms, people perceive spiritual data by means of the spiritual senses in a similar way to how the physical senses enable the perception of material data. According to Wesley, through embedding the spiritual senses as part of the human being’s make-up at creation, the creator has provided, within every person, a way for each of them, as individuals, to tangibly experience God.34 Because the spiritual senses are located within the human being, the divine being can be experienced anywhere, at any time, including within nature. Christian scripture and tradition specifically identify ‘what has been created,’ as a valid means of communicating the reality of the creator.35

**Points of Convergence**

Sheldrake advocates a contemporary development of Christian spirituality that has been broadened beyond contemplation and prayer to include reflection on the values and lifestyles of all Christians. This embraces ‘all aspects of human experience and existence,’ including the experience of God and Christian practices.36 As such, Christian spirituality embraces the individual, the Christian community and the wider community. Whereas the primary formation of the spiritual pathways advocated by proponents of contemporary spirituality are drawn from an eclectic fusion of philosophy, human sciences, science and spiritual or religious ideologies,37 Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses is formed from within the Christian tradition. A re-visitation of the concept of the spiritual senses offers an alternative and yet distinctly Christian understanding that responds to the call for spiritual accessibility from within both contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity. It presents a mode of reception that is divinely bestowed at the creative moment and located within the human being. Spiritual experience is therefore possible in nature and everyday life, but also in rituals, worship and the stuff of community. Because

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33 Hay, *Something There*, p. 149.
35 Romans 1: 20.
the mode of reception is within every human being, this form of spirituality is rendered both personal and accessible, two aspects of spirituality that are of importance to seekers of contemporary spirituality. From a Christian perspective, Wesley’s embedding of this accessibility to the divine within every human being prior to any known experience of God, renders it missional.

iii. Ecological Concern and Action
Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses has a valid contribution to make to ecological concerns. According to Wesley, at creation the political image of God endowed human beings with a natural propensity to care for creation. They partly lost this at the Fall but Wesley calls those whose spiritual senses are awakened, those with a renewed relationship to the divine, to responsibility that embraces the political image of God. Here, an alternative view is offered in contrast to White’s assertion in Part One that Judeo-Christianity has historically advocated ‘dominion’ over nature.

Wesley calls people to be ‘good stewards,’ and embrace a heightened awareness of ecological responsibility not only in terms of the environment, but also the care and conservation of animals. This ecological call could be termed holistic, as the whole person, the very soul, the self, the will and the affections, is beckoned to use all the faculties, spiritual as well as mental and physical, to actively care for creation. In so doing human beings fulfil their role as participants in the divine nature and conveyors of God’s blessing. Wesley links this to education, calling parents to educate their children in caring for the world.

Points of convergence and divergence
The correlation between this and the focus of contemporary spirituality is evident in the call to care for the created order. However, there is divergence in relation to motivation, since contemporary spirituality respects creation because God/sacred/divine/energy/is within its very fabric, whereas Wesley respects creation because God endows humanity with a sense of responsibility through the renewed political image of God. This would not be possible without the awakening of the spiritual senses. Regardless of differing motivations, on a practical level both parties could unite and discover partnership in the

38 Part Two, p. 98.
39 Part Two, pp. 103-104.
40 Part Two, p. 121.
active love and care of nature. This could offer an avenue for continuing discussion regarding spiritual matters.

**iv. Ancient Connections**

Part Two outlined the recent debate concerning the specific spiritual genealogy of Wesley’s sources.\(^{41}\) The link between Wesley’s thinking and that of Christian antiquity is evident\(^{42}\) and a point of agreement amongst scholars, by whatever route this thinking reached Wesley. A strong resemblance between Origen and Wesley can be detected in *Contra Celsum*\(^ {43}\) which may well fit into Campbell’s programmatic methodology. Here Origen acknowledges the existence of the spiritual senses within human beings at creation, along with the closing of these at the Fall, and the need for their reawakening through the fulfilment of Christ’s mission.\(^ {44}\) Origen links the spiritual senses, particularly in the form of the eyes of the mind [understanding] used as a superordinate, with the image of God and the creator, as the means through which human beings, those made pure in heart, are rendered capable of knowing God.\(^ {45}\) Macarius recognises the darkening of the soul at the Fall and the connected continuing inability for spiritual perception that can only be awakened by the eyes of the soul being enlightened, leading to recognition of the virtues of the spirit and love of the Lord. Furthermore, these spiritual eyes, once enlightened with the light of God, are able to behold and recognise the Lord.\(^ {46}\)

This specific link between Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses and early Christian antiquity, reaching back to the creative moment itself, opens up the possibility of interest from twenty-first-century spiritual seekers through their interest in ancient spiritual modes and experiential spirituality. Of significance is the divergence here from the generally emphasised aspect of the spiritual senses as being grounded in the individual who has an established faith.\(^ {47}\)

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\(^{41}\) Part Two, pp. 71-79.

\(^{42}\) Please see Appendix XVII for examples of themes found in the Fathers that are also found in Wesley.

\(^{43}\) A close resemblance to Wesley’s theme can be found in Origen, ‘*Contra Celsum,*’ Henry Chadwick, (trans.) (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1980), pp. 426-427.

\(^{44}\) Origen, *Contra Celsum,* Chadwick, pp. 426-427.

\(^{45}\) Origen, *Contra Celsum,* Chadwick, p. 421. Here it is clear that Origen is referring to the ‘eye’ of the mind in accordance with the form of the surrounding chapters.


\(^{47}\) Part Two, pp. 69-70.
Arguing specifically against a Calvinist interpretation of the spiritual senses, where some people are predestined to receive intellectual revelation and others do not, Sarah Coakley favours the multi-levelled and progressive nature of the pre-modern spiritual senses tradition as described in Part Two. However, in line with the missional aims of this thesis to find correlation between contemporary spirituality and Wesley’s spiritual senses, it has been argued that both the Fathers and Wesley broaden them to all humanity at creation. Furthermore, this thesis has argued that, for Wesley, the spiritual senses are not limited to the process of holiness, but are active throughout the salvific journey.

In this respect this thesis concurs with Coakley that activity of the spiritual senses results in a gradual transformation. However, this is a transformation that occurs in the heart, mind and soul of the individual due to their ability to perceive the Holy Spirit. Contrary to Coakley’s assertion that the spiritual senses themselves undergo transformation in the life of the Christian, for Wesley the spiritual senses are fully awakened in the Christian at the new birth. It is not the spiritual senses themselves per se that undergo a continuing transformation within the Christian, for the spiritual senses are but the spiritual sensory apparatus for perceiving the Holy Spirit. They are stirred through prevenient grace prior to any knowledge of God whatsoever and are fully awakened at the new birth. People themselves are transformed as they respond positively to the activity of the Holy Spirit which is perceived by means of the spiritual senses. As Part Two has demonstrated, several aspects contribute to the individual’s transformation. Firstly, the ability to perceive the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the awakened spiritual senses. Secondly, the renewed ability to reason with spiritual insight. Thirdly, the redirecting of the liberty, will and affections towards God resulting in the individual ‘yes’ to God. All three aspects combine to result in the continuing transformation of the Christian, which starts with the new birth. This new birth comprises of the renewed image of God, heavenly affections and love that enable the individual to finally direct their will, liberty and all of their being towards the God. It is the restored relationship with God, the renewed image and life of God in the soul, consisting of participation of the divine nature and spiritual respiration, that results in transformation. This transformation continues within the individual’s heart, mind and soul, resulting in growth and maturity. Whilst, once awakened, the spiritual senses are not

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49 Professor Coakley is an academic and author, with a current interest in epistemology.
50 Part Two, pp. 69-70.
51 Coakley, *Power and Submissions*, p. 131.
transformed per se, they continue to play their part as being the vehicles through which the individual perceives the Holy Spirit.

**Summary**

Wesley’s particular use of the spiritual senses as seated in every human being at creation offers renewed missiological scope in the twenty-first-century spiritual climate that correlates with contemporary spirituality’s expectation of a historically grounded, open and accessible spirituality that can be located in the creative moment. This underpins Hay’s assertion concerning a primordial spirituality, and responds to calls from within contemporary Christianity for an integrated spirituality that is connected to its Christian roots. Additionally, it addresses the concern for care of the environment. Recognition of the neglected doctrine of the spiritual senses within both the Christian tradition and contemporary spirituality would open up a point of contact offering an avenue for spiritual exploration that is drawn from ancient sources and yet is faithful to the Christian tradition.

According to Wesley’s theory the endowment of the spiritual senses ultimately provides a way for every human being to have a relationship with God. However, the spiritual senses do not work in isolation but form part of a process that ultimately provides experiential access to the divine, an aspect that correlates with contemporary spirituality’s desire for innate spiritual perception. In order to meaningfully respond to the needs of contemporary seekers, contemporary Christians would benefit from instruction in order to understand that this mechanism, the spiritual senses being endowed at creation, is the property of every human being, offering direct access to God.

**2. INDIVIDUALISM, FREEDOM AND CHOICE**

i. Cherished Individualism

The importance of individualism to contemporary spirituality has already been noted in Part One. Within this context inherent goodness and freedom of choice are key values. Part One highlighted concerns regarding isolation. Responses from contemporary Christianity were noted, some of which acknowledge and respond to the potential of isolation rising from cherished individualism and the concept of inherent goodness, and others that challenge the role of the “self”. It was noted that Hay upholds the importance of the individual whilst recognising the challenges of individualism.

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52 Part One, pp. 39-41.
53 Part One, p. 41.
Wesley upheld the importance of the individual within the framework of the Holy Spirit ministering to individuals in prevenient grace. As noted in Part Two, whilst the initial overtures of prevenient grace are irresistible, the individual is able to use their free will to accept or reject the offer of renewed relationship conveyed, in this sense they are resistible. Therefore, for Wesley, the illumination of the human heart by means of the Holy Spirit through prevenient grace does not result in a fully restored relationship with God for every individual. The individual is required to make a choice to follow the revealed desires of the creator and form an ongoing, developing, relationship with that creator. Wesley’s concept upholds the priority of human freedom, but this is not for the furtherance or pleasure of the self. Rather it is for a specific purpose, that of choosing to maintain a living relationship with the creator. It is through the re-opening of the spiritual senses that the individual is able to perceive the Holy Spirit and their reason, enhanced by this spiritual perception, enables them to make choices that are both spiritually and cognitively informed.

**Points of Convergence**

There is convergence between contemporary spirituality, contemporary Christianity and Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses for they all uphold the value of the individual and freedom of choice. The recognition and application of such a concept has the potential to address fears of manipulation within the Christian tradition and presents opportunities for conversation between spiritual seekers and evangelists concerning the journey of spiritual connection.

**ii. Responding to the Dark Side**

**a. The Problem of Sin**

Part One noted that the term sin does not sit comfortably within contemporary spirituality and is neither used nor acknowledged. That the term ‘sin’ is not acceptable to society is acknowledged within the Christian tradition along with the call to find a new language to convey the gospel message. Wesley’s response to sinfulness centres on his doctrine of original sin. Before exploring this further a brief overview of the concept of original sin will be offered.

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54 Part Two, p. 114.
55 Part Two, p. 114.
56 Part Two, pp. 114.
57 Part Two, p. 118.
58 Part Two, p. 118.
59 Part One, pp. 39-42.
John Portmann\textsuperscript{58} attributes the doctrine of Original Sin to Augustine,\textsuperscript{59} whilst Tatha Wiley\textsuperscript{60} has traced it in the works of pre-Augustinian Fathers, the Early Church and Scripture.\textsuperscript{61} Portmann offers a summary of the traditional concept:

\ldots the fall of Adam and Eve forever spoiled humanity. The concupiscence of lust that leads to sexual intercourse between a man and a woman passes along Original Sin to each new generation; each child is born stained. Unless the stain is washed away in baptism, a person’s soul cannot attain heaven.\textsuperscript{62}

However, alternative views are emerging. Fox asserts that the Christian tradition of human sinfulness promotes God as the ‘Punitive Father,’ a term, says Fox, that is not only unacceptable but ‘very dangerous’ and the foundation for fundamentalist religiosity.\textsuperscript{63} This is the basis for Fox’s reconstruction of the creation story to one of original blessing\textsuperscript{64} and for the publication of his ‘ninety-five thesis for the current era.’\textsuperscript{65} However, the doctrine is more complex than the mere inheritance of a blot or stain. In the Roman Catholic tradition original sin is the both the sin that Adam committed and the consequences of that sin for all human beings, these consequences being i. death and suffering; ii. concupiscence, or a predisposition to moral evil; iii. the absence, or privation, of sanctifying grace.\textsuperscript{66} Gary Anderson\textsuperscript{67} interprets sin in a more personal manner ‘When one sins, something concrete happens; one’s hands become stained, one’s back may become burdened, or one may fall into debt.’\textsuperscript{68} Wiley insists that whilst both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament assume the universality of sin neither uphold the origin of sin of primary importance.\textsuperscript{69} In spite of many diverse views on human sinfulness, Part One acknowledged that the concept of sinfulness as the primary aspect that separates humankind from God, and the need to escape punishment as the primary requisite for salvation, continues in mainstream Gospel proclamation today.\textsuperscript{70} It further suggested that Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses might offer a new way of thinking and language for this era.

\textsuperscript{58} Professor Portmann is an academic and author with a keen interest in the nature of sin.
\textsuperscript{60} Professor Wiley is a theologian and author.
\textsuperscript{62} Portmann, \textit{History of Sin}, p. xv.
\textsuperscript{64} Fox, \textit{New Reformation}, pp. 41-108.
\textsuperscript{66} Gary A. Anderson is an academic, a theologian and an author.
\textsuperscript{69} Part One, pp. 41-42.
Part Two noted Wesley’s link with sin, the Fall, the loss of the spiritual senses, the loss of the image and life of God in the soul, the consequential loss of relationship with God, and resultant selfish approach to life and living.\(^71\) It further noted that these consequences were inherited by the whole human race and that it is impossible for human beings to restore relationship with God without divine intervention.\(^72\) Wesley recognises this state of the human condition as both diseased and sinful and therefore the restoration of right relationship with God requires both healing and forgiveness.\(^73\)

The following brief outline of Wesley’s understanding of the pardoning (forensic in accordance with the Western salvific perspective) and healing (therapeutic in accordance with the Eastern salvific perspective) aspects of forgiveness, along with his understanding of sinfulness is not included with the intention of re-visiting scholarship in this area. Rather it is intended to demonstrate the alignment of this to the spiritual senses and its potential contribution to the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers.

b. Forgiveness

Wesley maintained that human beings require forgiveness,\(^74\) with salvation being manifest in the pardoning effected by Christ’s sacrifice that opens the way to restored relationship.\(^75\) His use of forensic language, that of a guilty offender in need of forgiveness/pardon,\(^76\) is argued by Runyon,\(^77\) Maddox,\(^78\) Outler\(^79\) and Collins\(^80\) respectively. Runyon notes Deschner’s observation concerning Wesley’s use of both the forensic and therapeutic metaphors, and with further evidence concludes that the Eastern, therapeutic motif, is the underlying theme.\(^81\) Lee concurs that Wesley stressed an underlying theme of healing in order for human beings to be created anew.\(^82\) However, this thesis argues that the therapeutic motif is not Wesley’s underlying nor preferred motif but rather, when speaking of the spiritual senses, Wesley places healing first.\(^83\) This then makes sense of, and enables awareness and acknowledgment of the need for what follows, namely forgiveness.

\(^71\) Part Two, pp. 99-104.
\(^72\) Part Two, p. 110.
\(^73\) For references to disease/healing and sin/forgiveness please see Appendix XIII.
\(^74\) Sermon 85, On Working Out Our Own Salvation, §III.3, Works, Vol. III.
\(^75\) Wesley, Sermon 9, The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption, Works, Vol. I, §I, §II, §III.
\(^76\) Sermon 44, Original Sin and ‘Preface’ §3 n63, Works, Vol. II.
\(^77\) Runyon, New Creation, p. 28.
\(^78\) Maddox, Responsible, p. 23, p. 95.
\(^79\) Preface and Introduction to the Sermons, 5, Wesley and His Sources, The Anglican and Puritan Traditions, in Outler, Works, and Introduction to Works, Vol. II.
\(^80\) Collins, Scripture Way, pp. 88-91.
\(^81\) Runyon, New Creation, pp. 28-29.
\(^83\) Part Three, pp. 149-150.
However, before this is fully demonstrated it would be helpful to clarify Wesley’s understanding concerning the state of humankind following Adam’s original sin.

c. Guilty of Original Sin?
Again, Wesley followed the Western concept that, in consequence of the first sin of Adam, all subsequent human beings were born corrupt. However, in one of his later sermons Wesley makes his position clear, that a person is not held ‘guilty’ of sin due to Adam’s violation, but rather on account of their own contraventions. For Wesley, it is when people wilfully sin that they become guilty for their own sins. Therefore, it is not the ongoing or imputed guilt of original sin that separates human beings from God; it is the ongoing consequences of that sin. Within the context of his use of the spiritual senses, for Wesley, it is the disease of the soul and the deadening of the spiritual senses in all humanity that renders people incapable of God. For Wesley it is precisely because the spiritual senses are disabled and the image and life of God has been lost that people are not born in perfection, or what contemporary spirituality would term inherently good, like their first parents. The only remedy is the restoration of that relationship through the restored image and life of God enabled by the Holy Spirit communicating via the renewed spiritual senses. But before this can happen people first need embark on the journey of salvation.

d. Healing
Specifically, in terms of the human condition being void of the life of God and based on what scholars have identified as the Eastern therapeutic metaphor, Wesley acknowledges the need for restored relationship through healing. Maddox notes that Wesley embraced the Eastern concept that the image of God was not totally debilitated at the Fall. This is certainly evidenced in the exploration of Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses in Part Two. For Wesley this meant that whilst the image and life of God were cut off from human beings, rendering them incapable of God, what remained was as a vestige of the natural image of God in the form of the spiritual senses, albeit that they were dulled or rendered inactive, as if they were dead. Also remaining were the will and liberty, but without the correct direction enabled by active spiritual senses, and due to the veil imposed by Satan, they became wrongly directed and liable to choose evil and self-direction which was deemed sin. In consequence the image and life of God was lost and there was no longer any reciprocal relationship. They could no longer live according to the perfect law of love.

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85 Sermon 59, God’s love to Fallen Man, Part II, §14, Works, Vol II.
86 Part Two, p. 85, p. 104.
87 Maddox, Responsible, p. 66.
that was written on their heart and so grow in perfect love. They were rendered incapable of God, unable to know, love and obey the creator. Accordingly, the spiritual senses are diseased/asleep/as if dead and require healing/awakening/bringing back to life, in order for the relationship between God and human kind to be restored.

Maddox asserts that ‘when dealing with the problem between the human sinner and God Wesley typically took up the juridical language of guilt and forgiveness,’ and ‘when attention turned to the sinner per se, his preference switched to therapeutic language.’ However, when speaking of the restoration of the spiritual senses the remedy is firstly in the divine healing power which restores spiritual perception. Here Wesley clearly uses the healing metaphor:

Heavenly, healing light now breaks in upon his soul. He “looks on him whom he had pierced,” and “God, who out of darkness commanded light to shine, shineth in his heart.” He sees “the light of the glorious love of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.” He hath a divine “evidence of things not seen” by sense, even of “the deep things of God;” more particularly of the love of God, of his pardoning love to him that believes in Jesus. Overpowered with the sight, his whole soul cries out, “My Lord, and my God!” For he sees all his iniquities laid on him who “bare them in his own body on the tree;” he beholds the Lamb of God taking away his sins. How clearly now does he discern “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; . . . making him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him!” And that he himself is reconciled to God by that blood of the covenant!

In this passage it is precisely this spiritual perception, by means of the spiritual senses, ‘by sense,’ made possible by divine healing power, which enables the human being to discern their sinful state and understand the pardoning, saving, (forensic) power of Christ. Whilst this is only evident in the pattern in Wesley’s sermons and he didn’t specifically flesh this out here, when speaking of the spiritual senses, Wesley places healing first. In this respect, this could be seen as going beyond Wesley. The pattern, healing first of the diseased human soul resulting in restoration of the spiritual senses and spiritual perception, followed by a recognition of the need for pardon followed by forgiveness itself, is repeated in a number of sermons. Although these sermons do not necessarily refer directly to the spiritual senses, they refer to the restoration of the human facilities that are directly related

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88 Part Two, pp. 100-102.
89 Part Two, pp. 109-110.
90 Maddox, Responsible, p. 74.
91 Sermon 9, The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption, §.III.3, Works, Vol. I. The fuller account of the process can be seen in §.I, II and III.
to the restoration of the image and life of God. This thesis argues that this occurs by means of the activity of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual senses.

**Points of Convergence**

Wesley’s recognition of the human predicament as the consequences of original sin, namely the disabling of the spiritual senses and consequential loss of the image and life of God, builds on other arguments from within contemporary Christianity. This offers a renewed arena for conversation between proponents of contemporary spirituality and Christian thinkers. Recognition of the dynamics of healing prior to forgiveness brings the Christian message closer to the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers. For the contemporary seeker the concept of a healing of the relationship between the creator and humanity, presented as holistic well-being embracing body, mind and soul, would be neither alien nor judgmental, and would offer the opportunity for further exploration.

For contemporary Christianity, it represents a re-visitedation of a long neglected concept and a reconstruction of the evangelistic message. Rather than speaking first of sin and forgiveness, the Gospel message is reconstructed to become more holistic and include the concept of healing of the relationship between God and humankind first. The prioritising of the healing metaphor when speaking of the spiritual senses means that the reactivation of the spiritual senses via prevenient grace would result in healing power, bringing illumination to the individual’s heart and mind. This would result in the experiential and cognitive spiritual perception to understand the validity of the act of forgiveness. There is an additional step in the salvific process, namely healing, avoiding the culturally unacceptable presentation of a gospel message at the point of human sinfulness.

**3. INNATE SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

Part One noted that proponents of contemporary spirituality view spirituality as a primal, innate human need that represents a continuous thread of human nature, reaching from the creative moment through to the present. It is within this context that a link with the sacred source is formed through many and diverse means, each of them being equally valid, as

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93 In terms of the *ordo salutis* used in Part Two the term here would be ‘convicted.’

94 Part One, pp. 41-42.
Spirituality is deeply personal and experienced within the self where, it is felt, divinity resides. This connection causes a deep hunger and yearning for sacredness.\textsuperscript{95} This ultimately points to the sacralisation of self. It was noted that Tacey argues that this is in contrast to ecclesiastical religion where, he asserts, spirituality is mediated through the priestly role.\textsuperscript{96} The view presented in Part One represents an elevation of the self which affiliates with the ideology of individualism.\textsuperscript{97}

That humanity possesses a hunger and yearning for the divine or sacred, energy, consciousness which is already residing within raises a question. Namely, if the divine already resides within the human being, why is it that they hunger and yearn after spiritual connection? Would direct access to the divine not be inevitable because it already resides within? If humanity is inherently good, what is it that impedes what would seem to be a natural connection with the divine? For contemporary spirituality the response would undoubtedly concern the stifling of all things spiritual throughout the period of modernity resulting in a widespread ignorance of the spiritual.\textsuperscript{98}

Responses from contemporary Christianity noted several avenues where the church encourages a broad scope of spiritual awareness, upholds the importance of the individual’s personal spiritual journey, responds to the upsurge in the quest of spiritual experience and expresses a renewed interest and acceptance of experience as valid within spirituality. It was suggested that Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses could add something to the conversation. Here five aspects will be explored, namely Wesley’s intermediary step; the role of grace; empiricism; Wesley’s alternative concept to innate spiritual perception; and a response to the criticism raised concerning the ecclesial mediation of grace.

i. Wesley’s Intermediary Step

Within contemporary spirituality the sacralisation of nature leads smoothly to the sacralisation of self, whereas for Wesley, the shift from the spiritual senses being a natural part of the human make-up endowed by the creator, to the ability to develop a real and meaningful relationship with the creator, requires an intermediary step. Part Two noted that, following the closing of the spiritual senses at the Fall, human beings not only lost their relationship with God, but became completely unaware of their need for that

\textsuperscript{95} Part One. pp. 42-43.
\textsuperscript{96} Part One. pp. 44-45.
\textsuperscript{97} Part One, pp. 32-41.
\textsuperscript{98} Part One, p. 27-28.
relationship. It is as if Satan imposed a veil which has to be removed. For this reason Wesley’s understanding of the route to spiritual perception is not inherent in the same way as that of contemporary spirituality. While, in the form of the spiritual senses, the spiritual apparatus remains a natural part of each human being, it is unreceptive in itself. Wesley retained the basic Christian tradition’s concept that it is impossible for humankind to find their own way back to God, the self is not elevated and so cannot penetrate the veil imposed by the evil one; this has to be accomplished through divine intervention.²⁹ Exploring the role of the spiritual senses in Wesley reveals that, in this context, it is both the veil and the unreceptivity of the spiritual senses that impede the natural connection with the divine.³⁰ Wesley argued that it is impossible for the spiritual senses to reactivate themselves. It is only through illumination by means of prevenient grace that the spiritual senses can be reawakened, enabling human beings once again to be capable of relationship with God.

For Wesley, whilst human beings might be unaware of the initial overtures of the Holy Spirit, the persistent voice of the Holy Spirit, through prevenient grace, breaks through to the individual, penetrating the veil imposed by Satan and communicates with the spiritual senses. This is the beginning of spiritual perception. Outler terms this Wesley’s theory of ‘illumination’ which marks the beginning to the conscious salvific journey.³¹ For Wesley, in embracing all humanity, prevenient grace represents direct communication with the divine and enables each individual to perceive their need of God, drawing them to him. It is through prevenient grace that the Holy Spirit makes overtures to the spiritual senses and all before a person has any personal spiritual awareness or knowledge. In this sense it is best termed direct and immediate spiritual perception. Direct, because spiritual perception is received directly from the sacred source, the Holy Spirit. Immediate, because spiritual perception is immediately perceived within the human soul. However, the enlightening of the spiritual senses requires the individual’s response before they can embark on their spiritual journey.³²

Just as the darkening of the eyes of the understanding had a profound effect on humanity, so with the enlightening of those same spiritual senses the effect is equally profound. Wesley asserted that the Holy Spirit, through prevenient grace, begins to unravel the effects of the Fall and the veil imposed by Satan starts to disintegrate. Rather than the self

²⁹ Part Two, pp. 110-113.
³⁰ Part Two, p. 106.
³¹ Part Two, p. 113.
³² Part Two, pp. 114.
being elevated, the self is humbled as people begin to understand their short-fallings, gain an increasingly deeper appreciation for the nature of God, and understand the potential of intimate relationship with him. They ‘feel’ their estrangement from the divine, and so yearn for a change of direction, for the power to overcome their challenges, connect with the divine, and move towards freedom and love. They start to long, or in the words of contemporary spirituality, ‘yearn’ to ‘participate in the divine nature.’ In short, they long for a renewal of the image of God within. As they become more open to the overtures of the Holy Spirit their whole being responds to God and their spiritual journey begins. This response is the first sign of an awakening in those who have previously been spiritually insensitive and marks the beginning of the restoration of the image of God through which relationship with God might be re-established.\textsuperscript{103}

**Points of Convergence and Divergence**

Wesley’s theory concurs with that of Hay that ‘God the Holy Spirit speaks to everyone.’\textsuperscript{104} The connection between prevenient grace and the spiritual senses underpins Hay’s theory with a theological explanation concerning the internal mechanics as to how this might happen. Unlike within contemporary spirituality, where it is the human being that searches for spiritual fulfilment, Wesley agrees with Lynch that there is no need for people to pursue the divine.\textsuperscript{105} This is because for Wesley, it is not the human being that is searching for God, but rather, out of love, God through prevenient grace is constantly communicating with the spiritual senses and searching for a response. By this means the sacred source operating within initiates the primal, innate human need advocated by proponents of contemporary spirituality.

However, similar to Lynch’s theory where human beings were not separated from the creator at the Fall,\textsuperscript{106} when speaking of the role of the spiritual senses, for Wesley, the key to human separation from God lies in the fact that they are insensitive to God, which in turn is the result of the veil imposed by Satan.\textsuperscript{107} Once this veil is weakened as the illumination of the Holy Spirit proceeds, the communication between the Holy Spirit and the spiritual senses produces an increased longing, or yearning after God within the individual. Consequently, the relationship between God and the individual can be restored. The desired outcome is achieved and, in agreement with Hay, Lynch and proponents of

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{103} Part Two, pp. 116-118.
\textsuperscript{104} Part One, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{105} Part One, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{106} Part One, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{107} Part Two, pp. 109-110.
\end{footnotes}
contemporary spirituality people discover the divine who is ‘completely here, close with us.’\textsuperscript{108} This is due to the interaction between prevenient grace and the spiritual senses which enables people to experience inward and personal spiritual perception.\textsuperscript{109}

**Prevenient Grace: Ancient Connections**

Traces of Wesley’s concept of prevenient grace and its link to the spiritual senses can be found in the writings of the Church Fathers. For example, noting the divine working within those who are unaware, Augustine says:

\begin{quote}
As I grew more miserable, you were drawing me nearer. Already your right hand was ready to seize me and pull me out of the filth, yet I did not know it.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

Speaking of the individual’s gradual drawing towards God before any conscious knowledge of the spiritual:

\begin{quote}
But salvation is far from sinners, and a sinner I was at that time. Yet little by little, without knowing it, I was drawing nearer.\textsuperscript{111}
\end{quote}

Linking the removal of the dark veil imposed by Satan to grace and the spiritual senses with allusions to the image of God and illumination Macarius says:

\begin{quote}
When man first transgressed the commandment, the devil covered the soul all over with a covering of darkness. Then grace comes, and wholly removes the veil, so that the soul, now cleared, and regaining its proper nature, created without blemish and clear, continually beholds clearly with its clear eyes the glory of the true light and the true sun of righteousness beaming in the heart itself.\textsuperscript{112}
\end{quote}

Although Wesley does not specifically reference the Fathers in these passages, Part Two notes that Wesley read Augustine and Macarius and that the Fathers had a significant influence on his theology.\textsuperscript{113} Although the exact words used might differ, the concept is there, so the references and quotes here fit into Campbell’s methodology relating to his programmatic distinction.\textsuperscript{114} Nevertheless, as the interest of this thesis is to call attention to connections to Wesley’s thought and that of the Fathers, correlation is established between the aspirations of contemporary seekers to ground spirituality in ancient practices.

\textsuperscript{108} Part One, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{109} All from Part Two, pp. 110-115.
\textsuperscript{110} Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{111} Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 130.
\textsuperscript{113} Part Two, pp. 71-79.
\textsuperscript{114} Part Two, pp. 78-79.
ii. The Role of Grace.

Grace plays a key role in the outworking of Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses. A threefold term often applied to Wesley’s work of grace is Prevenient Grace, Saving or Justifying Grace, and Sanctifying Grace, which, if taken on face value, can lead to the misconception that there are three graces. Part Two demonstrates that, when Wesley is speaking of the spiritual senses, grace is presented as a continuum whereby every individual has access to the spiritual life through the communication of the Holy Spirit with the spiritual senses. As demonstrated in Part Two, this accessible spirituality spans the complete soteriological journey. This spiritual life is understood and developed through an experiential and cognitive response to the Holy Spirit’s renewed presence within the human being. In this sense Runyon is correct in his observation that prevenient grace spans ‘the entire works of God,’ for all grace could be termed prevenient since God’s initiative always comes first.

Within his use of the spiritual senses, Wesley demonstrates a spiritual pathway, but unlike alternative concepts outlined in Part Two. The awakening of the spiritual senses is not the end goal, nor does endowment with the spiritual senses require strict personal achievement, asceticism, or progress along that spiritual pathway. Rather, the spiritual senses are a natural attribute of all human beings. Stemming from the creative moment, they play a distinctive role in all people as receptors of, firstly the initial overtures, and then upon a positive response, the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit. Part Two demonstrates Wesley’s application of both irresistibility and resistibility of grace in this respect.

iii. Empiricism

The climate in Wesley’s era involved a strong debate in the arena of epistemology with a particular emphasis on whether human understanding had its primary source in rationalism by cognitive means, or in empiricism by means of the senses. Scholars acknowledge Wesley’s support of Locke who argued for the priority of the sense data but this theory left Wesley with a challenge as it excluded the possibility of spiritual knowledge being obtained through means of sense data. Wesley’s application of the spiritual senses and the ability for human beings to be capable of God by means of spiritual sensation mediated

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115 Runyon, *New Creation*, p. 36.
116 Part Two, p. 70.
117 Part Two, p. 113-114.
118 Part Two, pp. 107-109.
by prevenient grace, not only aligned with his soteriology and pneumatology, but also provided a way forward in the epistemological debate.

Matthews particularly provides an excellent example of a scholar who systematically demonstrates the uniqueness and fullness of Wesley’s argument concerning empiricism in the context of spiritual sensation. Clarifying dualist criticisms raised against Wesley, Matthews also dismisses every suggestion concerning innate ideas and identifies Wesley’s epistemology as thoroughly empirical. Furthermore, he grounds Wesley’s empiricism in the inadequacy of the human senses to perceive spiritual reality; in the substance of faith; and in the supernatural action of God. Utilising George Cell’s term ‘transcendental empiricism,’ alongside knowledge of God through reason, Matthews draws out the transforming, supernatural power of prevenient grace on the spiritual senses as the instrument that enables human beings to experience God through spiritual sensation. Alongside this, Part Two of this thesis emphasises the awakening of the spiritual sense of the eyes of the understanding by means of prevenient grace. In harmony with the renewed capacity of reason this enables knowledge of God; perceived (felt) spiritual experience, and not merely cognitive knowledge about God. Part Three emphasises the priority of spiritual sensation in communicating spiritual perception to the reason. The knowledge gleaned has a specific purpose, the restoration of right relationship between God and human beings.

**Points of Convergence**

This thesis has demonstrated that contemporary spiritual seekers are not merely interested in cognitive knowledge of the divine, but are particularly drawn to a co-operative relationship that they believe can be gained through personal experience, that is literally a felt, sensory, spiritual experience. A re-visitation and integration of this empirical theme correlates with the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers whilst offering an alternative source that is thoroughly grounded historically in the Wesleyan Christian tradition. This corresponds with current responses from contemporary Christianity and opens up the possibility for further exploration of the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers. The validity of a developing relationship with God, that is deeply felt in the inner

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123 Part Three, pp. 179-182.
124 Part Two, p. 109, p. 124, p. 133.
being and yet wholly grounded in the divine action, could be redefined and integrated into the Christian message.

**Wesley’s Empiricism: Ancient Connections**

In the cluster of Origen’s writings in *Contra Celsum* already cited above, Origen clearly links knowledge of God with the spiritual sense of sight within the mind. This spiritual knowledge is enabled by God:

> The knowledge of God is not derived from the eye of the body, but from the mind which sees that which is in the image of the Creator and by divine providence has received the power to know God.\(^{125}\)

Speaking of the first parents, the fact that he is referring to the sense of the mind, the eye of the mind, is affirmed a little later, along with the relational link to God:

> But it was those eyes of the soul, with which for a time they saw while they rejoiced in God and His paradise, which they closed, I think, because of their sin.\(^{126}\)

The link between the spiritual senses in the form of the eyes of the mind and knowledge of God is further affirmed in *First Principles* where Origen makes it clear that he equates the eyes of the mind with ‘seeing’ (or beholding) God with the heart and ‘seeing’ with understanding and knowledge;

> …for what else is it to “see God in the heart,” but understand to and know him with the mind, just as we have explained above? For the names of the organs of sense are often applied to the soul, so that we speak of seeing with the eyes of the heart, that is, of drawing some intellectual conclusion by means of the faculty of intelligence. So too we speak of hearing with the ears when we discern the deeper meaning of some statement. So too we speak of the soul as being able to use teeth, when it eats and consumes the bread of life who comes down from heaven… So Solomon says, “You will find a divine sense.” For he knew that there were in us two kinds of senses, the one being mortal, corruptible and human, and the other immortal and intellectual, which he here calls “divine.” By this divine sense, therefore, not of the eyes, but of a pure heart, that is the mind, God can be seen by those who are worthy.\(^{127}\)

Here, for Origen, as for Wesley, knowledge of God comes initially via the divine sense of the heart, the spiritual senses; it is empirical. Nevertheless, Origen does not exclude

\(^{125}\) Origen, *Contra Celsum*, Chadwick, p. 421.


reason, but rather acknowledges the role of reason in the process as an ‘…intellectual conclusion by means of the faculty of intelligence…’ For Origen it is a seamless transaction. For Wesley also, reason is not excluded from the process and is directly related to the spiritual senses. Yet primacy goes to the sensory perception as the initial means of obtaining knowledge. The spiritual senses both receive the spiritual sensory perception and transmit this to the reason, thus working in harmony with reason to enable spiritual awareness. The experiential evidence of the spiritual senses renews the relationship with the divine reason and ultimately restores knowledge, love, service and obedience of God, and love for human kind.128

iv. Wesley’s Alternate Concept to Innate Spiritual Perception

There continues to be considerable debate concerning whether Wesley considered the spiritual senses to be an innate human faculty. Matthews outlines Outler’s tendency to use the term ‘latent’ in referring to Wesley’s understanding of the spiritual senses asserting that his use of this term ‘seems to underestimate Wesley’s emphasis on… the “radically disruptive” effects of the Fall…’ particularly in relation to the ‘complete effacement’ of the image of God. As such, according to Matthews, the Holy Spirit through prevenient grace ‘…implants’ the faculty of conscience ‘in every soul that comes into the world…’ 129

This thesis has asserted that, in Wesley’s thought, whilst the effects of the Fall had a profound impact on humanity, the image of God was not in fact completely effaced, but certain aspects remained within the human being, including the spiritual senses. These were not obliterated, but rather rendered dormant/dead/asleep/insensible/in darkness.130 It could be conceded that if the spiritual senses were only concerned with faith, perhaps the focus would be solely on the conscience. However, the scope of the spiritual senses embraces the whole soteriological journey, from before one even is aware of the spiritual dimension right through to spiritual maturity. This thesis has argued that, with the response of the spiritual senses, the restoration of the whole image of God is enabled, which embraces a broader scope than conscience and faith alone. Whatever term might be used, inherent/innate/inbuilt/fundamental/intrinsic, for Wesley, the spiritual senses are a faculty of humanity that remain embedded within every human being from creation. They render all people capable of receiving, understanding and responding to the communication of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, for Wesley the spiritual senses are indeed initially activated, not

129 Matthews, Religion and Reason, p. 304.
130 Part Two, pp. 99-104.
by nature, but solely by means of prevenient grace allowing Wesley to retain the emphasis on salvation by grace alone, maintaining the initiation and supreme action of God alone in all matters salvific. As Runyon says:

…righteousness… is not of his [the Christian’s] own making – it is not inherent in that sense – but is the product of Christ’s spirit. Nevertheless, it does result in a new creature whose life at its core cannot remain the same but is transformed, a creature who is reborn of God.  

Given what has been said, this argument could be applied to the spiritual senses which, although they are part of the human make-up, are dormant. Yet because of prevenient grace they do not do not remain dormant but are transformed in their awakening. Upon the human ‘yes’ the individual is recreated after the image of God. This is particularly valid since it is only when this transformation occurs that the restoration of the image and life of God, facilitated by the spiritual senses, enables righteousness to be achieved. Here, the spiritual senses are firmly embedded within all humanity and the doctrine of ‘donum superadditum’, viewing the spiritual senses as a supernatural gift, is averted.

**Points of Convergence**

Wesley’s use of the role of spiritual senses as a natural part of the human make-up, embedded since creation, correlates with the previously gleaned objectives of contemporary spirituality. The spiritual senses both receive and respond to the overtures of prevenient grace, embracing both the sensory and enhanced rational understanding of God that ultimately results in the renewed capability of God. Here spirituality is indeed located within the individual who also has direct communion with the divine. The empirical element fully embraces the experiential expectations of the twenty-first-century seeker. Yet it differs as, in recognising the prior initiative of the Holy Spirit, it upholds the primary role of God and not ‘self’ in spiritual communication. By including the rational it exceeds the merely experiential and offers room for embracing spirituality that is based on both what is truly experienced and what is carefully considered.

**v. Spirituality Conveyed by the Ecclesial Mediation of Grace**

The twenty-first century presents a very different arena from that which Wesley was facing in the eighteenth century, due to the renewed spiritual climate outlined previously. Following the period of Modernity with its emphasis on reason, the Christian tradition is

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132 For arguments concerning imputed or imparted righteousness/grace please see Matthews, *Religion and Reason*, p. 305; and Runyon, *New Creation*, pp. 90-91.
now being challenged to both accept and demonstrate the possibility of a holistic approach; involving body, mind and spirit, yet some of the old challenges remain. Because twenty-first-century spiritual seekers value spirituality that is fully accessible to individuals Tacey, Christi and Bloom raise a critique against the church for merely offering a form of spirituality where accessibility is limited to traditional religious practices and rules.133 Tacey, in particular, argues that contemporary spiritual seekers are searching for a spirituality offered outside the confines of the church’s rituals, particularly beyond those bestowed by means of the ecclesial mediation of grace. This, he argues, is empty of genuine spiritual encounter offering little scope for the individual’s personal spiritual journey.134

The contemporary Christian response in Part One presented a historical outline concerning the ecclesial mediation of grace, together with a contemporary response that indicated both alternative and renewed thought and practice in this arena. The acceptance of personal experience as a valid means of spiritual connection within contemporary Christian thinking was highlighted. These responses somewhat correlated with the objectives of contemporary spirituality, but failed to address the deeper challenge to explain the mechanics of how innate spiritual perception might occur.135

Runyon and Maddox identify that Wesley was distinctly interested to address the mediation of divine grace through what they term, ‘Metaphysical’ means, meaning the ecclesial mediation of grace.136 Runyon notes that, for the Anglicans, historically grace was imparted through the sacraments by the authorized clergy via ontological means. Upon ordination the clergy were ontologically changed and thus authorized to administer the sacraments. Upon receipt of the sacraments, particularly those of baptism, confirmation and holy orders, the participants became recipients of grace. In these specific cases an ontological change in their very nature and being took place independent of human consciousness. For the Calvinists one’s predestination depended wholly on God’s election which, equally, operated independent of human consciousness. Runyon notes that Wesley’s era was one of significant change and challenging the ecclesial means of receiving grace was topical. Furthermore, he argues that church authorities were beginning to lose grasp of their power to convince creative thinkers, and even their own flock, that

133 Part One, pp. 28-29, pp. 42-43, p. 57.
134 Part One, pp. 43-45.
135 Part One, pp. 50-54.
136 Runyon, New Creation, pp. 149-152; Maddox, Responsible, p. 86.
genuine religious change could be imparted outside of human consciousness. People had begun to expect to participate in the experience.\textsuperscript{137}

Through key moments in his life Wesley’s personal experience convinced him that personal spiritual experience was fundamental to the Christian life, but he wanted to be able to demonstrate theologically, and from Christian tradition, that this was the case. For Wesley, this meant an experiential knowledge of God and his firm belief in prevenient grace and the spiritual senses enabled him to accomplish this. Although it is generally argued that Wesley developed a theory that shifted from metaphysics to epistemology, in reality Wesley’s alternative to metaphysics was primarily pneumatological. Wesley was able to demonstrate that knowledge of God, or relationship with God, was not merely accomplished through the rites and rituals of the church, nor through any innate human spiritual perception. Rather such knowledge is gained through the primary act of the Holy Spirit, ministering in prevenient grace via the spiritual sensory apparatus, the spiritual senses. As determined in Part Two, this experiential knowledge of God was not merely rational knowledge about God. Perception gained via the spiritual sensory apparatus enabled people to respond to the initial overtures of prevenient grace resulting in the ‘real change’ that occurred in the hearts of believers,\textsuperscript{138} thus offering a meaningful alternative to the ‘real change’ of the sacramental system.\textsuperscript{139} What starts with the beginnings of a renewed, experiential knowledge of God has a purpose; to renew the image of God within the human being, enhancing their experiential and rational knowledge of Him and ultimately restoring right relationship with the creator.\textsuperscript{140}

\textbf{Summary}

In contemporary spirituality, spirituality begins with innate personal experience, is accessible, may be perceived by anyone in any place, and is grounded in ancient history. For Wesley spirituality begins with prevenient grace. Drawing from Christian history, Wesley’s understanding of how prevenient grace via the Holy Spirit acts as the medium and mediator of spiritual life via communication with the spiritual senses, presents an accessible spirituality. Here the spiritual senses facilitate direct communication affording an empirical element that is founded on pneumatology. This deeply felt sensation by means of the direct activity of the Holy Spirit prior to any spiritual conversion or cognitive

\textsuperscript{137} Runyon, \textit{New Creation}, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{138} Part Two, pp. 122-124.
\textsuperscript{139} Sermon 19, \textit{The Great Privilege}, §2 and n.2, \textit{Works}, Vol. I.
\textsuperscript{140} Part Two, pp. 105-124.
knowledge of God, offers a meaningful response from the Christian tradition concerning spiritual awareness in human beings.

Research indicates that it can be assumed that, at some point, every human being will experience spiritual connection, or a longing, or yearning after spiritual reality. From a Christian perspective, in the light of Wesley’s assertions and building on Hay, this longing is a sign of the Holy Spirit by means of prevenient grace working in the heart of a spiritual seeker via the spiritual senses. Given contemporary spirituality’s stance that the divine can be found/dwells within, Wesley’s concept of the inward seat of the spiritual senses which responds to the inward prompting of the Holy Spirit through prevenient grace, offers an alternative concept from within the Christian tradition that correlates with this view. Spirituality is mediated directly to individuals by the Holy Spirit, bringing immediate and experienced knowledge of God. This offers an alternative to the ecclesial mediation of grace and corresponds with the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers for direct, inward, contact with the divine source.

The implication for the contemporary spiritual seeker is that there will be occasions when they have had a ‘spiritual moment,’ actually experiencing the reality of spirit in their inner being, drawing them towards his love and into relationship. It is highly likely that they will have perceived the divine at some stage in their lives; they will have seen/understood something spiritually. The sacred will have spoken to them and they will have heard his voice in some way. They will have had some sort of spiritual feeling, felt his touch, and tasted the goodness of the creator. It might be an experience in nature where they have seen, touched, smelt, tasted or heard something beautiful and their inner being has reacted with joy or wonder. This would be attributed to the awareness of their spiritual senses.

Building on Wesley’s concept and finding confidence in the views of Hay and recent scientific research, the evangelist can interact with people knowing that some form of spiritual experience is a natural part of being human and be released to discuss spiritual experiences. This provides opportunities for open conversations about how God makes himself known to the human heart through spiritual sensation and to join people on their spiritual journey. The initial conversations would concern spiritual experience and move on to the possibility that it is the divine/sacred/creator/God communicating, leading to discussing the possibility of healing the spiritual relationship with the creator. If this theory

142 Part One, p. 29, pp. 35.
is correct, when the moment is right, when someone has experienced healing of the rift between them and God and the spiritual senses are stirred, they will be more appreciative of the concept of sin and forgiveness.

In practical terms this means that the Christian gospel message can be reconstructed, or revisited, to assume that God has already been active in people’s lives and that this can be experienced, or literally felt, through spiritual perception. A re-visitation of the doctrine of prevenient grace and the role played by the spiritual senses could bring direction to the Christian tradition. This would enable a reconstruction of the gospel message that respects all individual spiritual experience, renders a wide inclusivity and accessibility to the message, and opens up the potential for further conversation with contemporary spiritual seekers, in a non-confrontational manner.

4. THE SPIRITUAL SENSES, THE PHYSICAL SENSES AND SPIRITUALITY

Given the role of the physical senses in both contemporary and Christian spirituality explored in Part One, it would be appropriate to explore the possibility of whether the physical senses might act as a conduit in transmitting physical sensation to the spiritual senses. This would aid understanding about how the two might combine in facilitating an individual’s openness, in both perception and reason, to the overtures of the Holy Spirit in communicating experience/knowledge of the God. To date most arguments in this arena have been concerned with theological issues, such as dualism. Whilst the validity of this argument is recognised, the interest of this thesis will be in exploring this as a missiological opportunity. Attitudes to the role of the physical senses in spirituality have developed over the years and this will be briefly explored within the aims of this thesis to discover correlation between the objectives of contemporary spirituality and the Christian tradition, and the potential impact of the role of the spiritual senses.

i. Connections Ancient and New

Origen was very keen to separate the spiritual and physical senses, to the extent that he advocated the growth of the spiritual senses within the believer at the expense of the diminishing of the physical senses. This is one of the reasons why he was an advocate of asceticism to advance spirituality by bringing the physical senses into order.

143 Part One, pp. 54-56.
145 For example, Origen, Contra Celsum, Chadwick, p. 427.
Wesley rejected such a notion as he advocated that the spiritual senses were awakened by prevenient grace before the individual had any spiritual awareness whatsoever, in other words, without any effort on the human being’s part. However, there are other examples from both church history and contemporary Christianity that support the concept that the spiritual senses and physical senses need not be mutually exclusive but can work in harmony.

Von Balthasar identifies concord between the spiritual and physical senses in the sixteenth century writings of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.\textsuperscript{146} The \textit{Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius} include the use of the five bodily senses and the interior senses in contemplative meditation, with an emphasis on increased self and spiritual understanding through the developed application of feelings and interior knowledge.\textsuperscript{147} An extended explanation of the workings of the Exercises is too lengthy for inclusion here, but von Balthasar notes that, for Ignatius, the experiential ‘feeling’ of the mystery of faith is what carries the greatest weight.\textsuperscript{148} Von Balthasar identifies that both the corporal and mystical sensibility ‘seem to be included by Ignatius and they certainly were to be found as living realities in the author of the Exercises himself, without their mutually suppressing or jeopardizing one another.’\textsuperscript{149} Here, meditation aids the physical sensory experience to realize spiritual sensory perception.

In the same century the Swiss reformer Huldreigh Zwingli strongly advocated the view that the sacraments convey meaning via the physical senses. Zwingli argued against transubstantiation, insisting that the mediation of grace is wholly the work of the Holy Ghost and that the sacraments are truly and only a sign and a symbol of the grace that is already present. Furthermore, he argued that the sacraments mediate the divine reality to the senses of the recipient in no small manner, opening up the divine reality to the mind for contemplation, through faith. All of this is achieved exclusively through the work of the Holy Spirit who may work through the sacrament, but is also free to work outside the sacramental system.\textsuperscript{150} Although Zwingli was obviously aware of the spiritual senses he

\textsuperscript{146} Von Balthasar, \textit{Glory}, pp. 373-380.
\textsuperscript{148} Von Balthasar, \textit{Glory}, p. 375.
does not appear to have formed a link between these, the physical senses and spiritual perception.151

Moving on to the present era there are numerous signs that the physical senses are becoming more widely accepted in Christian practice, particularly in worship. Prime examples include Nancy Goudie, a Christian teacher, event organizer and conference speaker, who encourages the use of the five physical senses in her presentations and publications.152 Both focus on spiritual perception through the use of the five senses and can be used in worship and outreach. Born out of extensive research Rob Frost’s Essence course is a genuine attempt to encourage the Christian community to engage with spiritual seekers on an experiential level, through a range of exercises that engage the use of the physical senses.153 Frost also notes a number of instances within the ‘Emerging Church’ where sensory experience would be central.154 Sue Wallace,155 a Christian minister interested in alternative worship, and Rick Blackwood,156 a Christian pastor and academic, have published books on the theme of Multisensory Worship and Multisensory Preaching and Teaching respectively. Both encourage and resource the use of the physical senses in worship. Amongst a wide array of explorative Christian outreach, ‘Fresh Expressions’ in the United Kingdom encourage the use of the five senses in worship in order to ‘help us develop a holistic understanding of God.’157 In addition an internet search reveals a vast array of resources and research on the topic, indicating the rise in interest over recent years in using the physical senses in developing spiritual awareness.

Although there is a lot of interest in sensing the divine/God often the physical senses are not related to the spiritual senses. However, the link is clearly established in Dearborn’s work. In addition to asserting that the physical senses can be vehicles for spiritual experience,158 Dearborn links the physical and spiritual senses, offering evidence of the five physical senses being used ‘as vehicles for encountering and worshipping God’ through the five spiritual senses.159

152 Nancy Goudie, 50 Creative Worship Ideas (Eastbourne: Kingsway Communications Ltd, 2002; Goudie, Journey to the Cross, C.D. (Thornbury, NGM).
153 Frost, Essence.
154 Frost, ‘Evangelism Beyond the Fringes’, pp. 107-120.
155 Sue Wallace, Multi-sensory Worship (Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2009).
156 Rick Blackwood, Multi-sensory Preaching and Teaching (Michigan: Zondervan, 2008).
158 Part One, p. 55.
159 Dearborn, Taste and See, p. 62, p. 66, p. 67, p. 70, p. 74, p. 80, p. 82, p. 85.
Corresponding to the aspirations of contemporary spirituality, he argues that through the incarnate Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, ‘…our spiritual senses are awakened to make the most mundane moments of life places of encounter with the Living God.’ Journeying through the church’s ministry, from walking the streets through Christian community to evangelistic practice, Dearborn gives examples of how the ‘Spirit opens those [physical] senses to their spiritual counterparts’ and how the two work together, enabling people to ‘form conclusions about what we do see [or experience] based on an encounter with what we don’t see.’ [but nevertheless experience]. Here the physical and spiritual senses work in harmony with reason to form holistic spiritual encounter. For Dearborn, there are no barriers to God utilising the physical senses to stimulate the spiritual senses and enable the perception of spiritual reality, in so doing every mundane moment has eternal significance.

This aligns with von Balthasar’s investigations that support the unity of the human being. ‘It is with both the body [the seat of the physical senses] and soul [the seat of the spiritual senses] that the living being experiences the world and consequently, also God.’

Corresponding with the concept presented in this thesis that the spiritual senses form a natural part of the human make-up, von Balthasar argues that ‘…man is a sensory-spiritual totality’ and has ‘two distinctive functions from the standpoint of a common centre in which the living person stands in a relationship of contact and interchange with the real, living God.’ Von Balthasar demonstrates this unity by using language that unites the two. Here it is through the unity of the spiritual and physical senses that spiritual perception is achieved, ‘the senses…are the basis for all spiritual thinking and willing and the vehicle which sets these in motion.’ The initiative comes from the divine, ‘God [confronts] him through his incarnation in the midst of the sphere of the senses…It is senses that perceive God’s humility sensually…’ the senses receive the message and the human being understands. Here again the physical and spiritual senses work in harmony with reason to enable holistic spiritual encounter.

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160 Dearborn, *Taste and See*, p. 54.
162 Dearborn, *Taste and See*, p. 89.
ii. Wesley’s View

In *On the Discoveries of Faith* Wesley acknowledges the role of the physical senses in acquiring knowledge and yet clearly dismisses their ability to convey any knowledge of the ‘invisible world.’ Nevertheless, whilst fully acknowledging faith in the acquisition of knowledge pertaining to the invisible, eternal and spiritual worlds, and using the language of the spiritual senses, the link with the spiritual senses is alluded to. Here Wesley stops short of specifically expressing any congruence between the interpretation of the spiritual senses and that which is received via the physical senses. However, in *The Imperfection of Human Knowledge*, Wesley clearly upholds the concept of revelation via the created order. In line with Wesley’s support of empiricism, this would invariably involve the physical senses and, again in line with his empiricism, he demonstrates a link between the interpretation of natural revelation and the spiritual senses. This supports the concept in Wesley’s thinking, albeit implicit, that the physical and spiritual senses work in harmony in helping people to perceive God.

This would support the themes presented in this thesis. Firstly, that the spiritual and physical senses both formed, and continue to form, part of the human make-up since the creative moment and both contribute to the whole human being. Secondly, that the spiritual interests of our time are recognised, explored and defended by proponents of contemporary spirituality, non-religious spiritual seekers, scientists, theologians, missiologists and practitioners alike. Thirdly, that there is a renewed acknowledgement that the spirit and spirituality is not restricted by human constructs. In the light of this, it would be appropriate in the twenty-first century to recognise the sovereign ability of the Holy Spirit to minister in grace via both the physical and spiritual senses and enable spiritual awakening, as the two play their part and work in harmony with reason in enabling human spiritual enlightenment.

**Summary**

Here correlation can be identified between contemporary spirituality and the Christian tradition. The spiritual senses provide the means for everyday physical experiences to hold the potential for spiritual awareness, even in the most mundane moments. This opens the door for free-flowing conversation concerning shared experiences between spiritual

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167 Which for Wesley is indelibly linked to the spiritual senses. Part Two, pp. 118-119, pp. 123-124, pp. 125-127.
171 For a fuller explanation see Part Three, pp. 181-182.
seekers from both schools as they journey together. However, reason continues to play its part, working in harmony with the physical and spiritual senses to enable holistic spiritual encounter with the ultimate aim of restored relationship with the divine.

For the evangelist this means that conversations can ensue around the area of spiritual accessibility and physical and spiritual experience. This opens up the potential for developing the theme into specific areas where the wonder of creation, the world and life experiences of both the seeker and the evangelist, and even people they know, can become vehicles for the reality of God making himself known. This would be achieved by the Holy Spirit ministering spiritual experience and reality in their lives through their spiritual senses. However, according to Wesley’s employment of the theme, this can be done with the assurance that the Holy Spirit will always minister with the ultimate aim of restoring right relationship with God, who draws close to the seeker, manifest as the life of God within.

5. THE SACRED WITHIN

Part One noted that, within contemporary spirituality, the smooth transition to the sacralisation of the human being is based on the elevation of the individual. Within this context divinity resides within and forms part of the human make-up. Therefore, it is claimed that there are no limitations to experiencing the sacred and enjoying the holistic transformational benefits afforded therein.\footnote{Part One, pp. 56-57.} This is seen to be in contrast to the doctrines and practices of established religion where it is argued that people are unable to sense the presence of the sacred for themselves.\footnote{Part One, p. 56.} Contemporary Christian responses were noted including Lynch, who upholds the sacralising of the self and conversely, Hiebert, who finds connection between modern propensity to deify the self and the traditional understanding of the soul. Part One concluded that two terms find some congruence with contemporary spirituality in respect of the inner seat of the divine.\footnote{Part One, pp. 58-59.}

Within this context an exploration of Wesley’s theory concerning, ‘the seat of the divine,’ ‘participating in the divine nature,’ ‘spiritual respiration’ and ‘perfect love’ offer potential for interest. These aspects closely align with the goal of the restoration of the image of God in the next stages of Wesley’s soteriological understanding. In the ‘new birth’ or ‘new creation,’ the effects of the Fall are reversed as the individual responds to the overtures of
the Holy Spirit in prevenient grace and accepts, or rejects, the offer of salvation. The human ‘yes’ results in the complete reactivation of the spiritual senses. This proceeds, through assurance and faith, to holiness where a dynamic and experienced connection with the creator is re-established as the image and life of God are restored in the soul.

Key themes from Part Two include the opening of the hearts and minds that were closed; the perception of God’s law of love that enables love of God, humankind and the world; reorientation from selfishness to selflessness; growing in the mind of Christ; the restoration of virtue and the removal of the power of sin, as people’s spiritual senses are once again guided aright through the communication of the Holy Spirit. The positive response of the individual, a decisive moment amid the process divine/human cooperation, results in the new birth, which is the act of God alone. This represents an instantaneous moment within the process of divine/human cooperation. With the renewed capability of God comes holiness, which is an act of God alone at the moment of actualization. Again this represents an instantaneous moment amid the process of divine/human cooperation. All of this is facilitated through the Holy Spirit’s continued communication that is experientially received by the spiritual senses and cognitively assimilated by reason.

With the life of God restored in their soul people again ‘participate in the divine nature,’ and the reciprocal relationship with the creator that they once enjoyed is received by faith in the form of ‘spiritual respiration,’ representing intimate relationship with the divine. As the relationship is sustained and developed the individual proceeds to grow in spiritual strength and experience due to the continuous renewed capability of the spiritual senses, which enable the faculties to be guided aright. By revealing himself in this way, God destroys the works of the devil and restores humanity to relationship with himself and others.

i. The Seat of the Divine

For Wesley, the divine is indeed located within, but unlike contemporary spirituality where the divine is part of the ‘self,’ the Holy Spirit communicates with the individual via the

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175 Part Two, 118-122.
176 Part Two, p. 118, p. 120.
177 Part Two, pp. 124-130. For the debate between Maddox and Collins see Part Two, pp. 113-116. For this being set within the ordo salutis see Part Two, pp. 105-131.
178 All from Part Two, pp. 118-121.
179 Part Two, pp. 120-121.
180 Part Two, pp. 127-130.
spiritual senses, which are seated in the heart or soul.\textsuperscript{181} Once the relationship with the divine is established through the new birth the individual participates in the divine nature and experience spiritual respiration as the image and life of God is formed and present within the ‘heart’ or ‘soul.’

**Points of Convergence**
At first glance it might appear that reference to ‘self’ and ‘soul’ are poles apart. As noted previously, there is continued debate regarding the use of terms such as soul in Wesley’s works. As the interest of this thesis is to find correlation between contemporary spirituality and the Christian tradition from a missiological perspective, Hiebert’s explanation about how the term ‘self’ has replaced ‘soul’ indicates that both parties are referring to the same seat of sacred presence.\textsuperscript{182}

**ii. Participation in the Divine Nature**
Whilst the references to the divine/sacred/God dwelling in the ‘soul’ or ‘self’ have their roots in an inward location for sacred presence, there are nevertheless fundamental differences in the way that proponents of contemporary spirituality understand this and the way that Wesley drew this out. It was during the exploration of the possible link between Christian thinking in his day and the Church Fathers that Wesley examined the seventeenth century critical editions of the Greek Fathers.\textsuperscript{183} From here he gleaned the concept of ‘deification,’ ‘divinization’ or ‘theosis’ which he promoted as ‘the life of God in the soul.’\textsuperscript{184}

**Points of Convergence and Divergence**
Although there is some correlation between the aspirations of contemporary spirituality and the Christian tradition, particularly in the use of the language of Wesley’s ‘participation of the divine nature’, contemporary spirituality’s ‘sacred within,’\textsuperscript{185} and Smith and Lynch’s concept of every human being participating in the divine energy,\textsuperscript{186} nevertheless there are distinctions. Runyon helpfully draws out important nuances of theosis. Firstly, by referencing the Eastern understanding of the image of God as a *mirror* that ‘reflects something beyond itself.’ Unlike within contemporary spirituality, Runyon argues that, for Wesley, ‘the essential qualities are not to be found within humanity but in

\textsuperscript{181} For examples of the use of both ‘heart’ and ‘soul,’ Part One, p. 80, p. 86.
\textsuperscript{182} Part One, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{183} Part Two, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{184} Part Two, pp. 127-131.
\textsuperscript{185} Part One, pp. 56-57.
\textsuperscript{186} Part One, p. 37, p. 58.
that which humanity is called to reflect." It is through participating in the divine nature that humanity is enabled to reflect the image, the love, character and goodness of God. Secondly, Wesley’s understanding of divinization (theosis) is not exactly the same as contemporary spirituality’s concept of the elevation of the self; rather, it has to do with ‘becoming more fully human…becoming what God created humanity to be…” Rather than being sacralised, the human being reflects the image of God because the communication of the Holy Spirit, the awakening of the spiritual senses, and the human ‘yes’ to God, renders them once again ‘capable of God’, able to participate in his divine nature. The human being becomes a partner and shares in the divine life. As previously noted the two are not merged into one as the distinction between the human being and God remains, and the two exist in close relationship. Thirdly, Wesley’s concept of participating in the divine nature differs to that of both Smith and Lynch who assert that every human being participates in the divine energy or nature. Within Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses, it is only when the life of God is restored within, that people again begin to participate in the divine nature, signifying restored relationship with the creator. This is contrary to within contemporary spirituality, where the energy/consciousness in which people participate is within the created order and they are already part of it. In this respect Wesley’s understanding is neither pantheistic nor panentheistic, but thoroughly theistic.

**Ancient Connections**

Again, elements of Wesley’s thinking can be traced to the Church Fathers. In Origen the divine sense is located within and participation in the Trinitarian God renders human beings capable of God, particularly in the respect of receiving the ability to employ the full extent of their rational nature and make the right choices towards God and in life. This enables individuals to move into holiness, live a virtuous and spiritually empowered life, and become ‘such as his Creator wished him to be,’ truly human and abiding in continuing and renewed reciprocal relationship with God.

It is particularly in Macarius that parallels can be found. Here, the individual in spiritual terms passes ‘from death unto life’ and is ‘born of the spirit in the inner man.’ They are

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188 2 Peter 1:3-4. A scripture often used by Wesley.
190 Part One, p. 37, p. 58.
191 Part Two, pp. 120-121.
‘set free from the darkness of this world’ and know the thoughts of God, have deep communion with him, not of their own volition but because ‘It has seemed good to God to make man partaker of the divine nature.’ God dwells in the soul of individual, in their inner being, and they are made in his image. Yet whilst God dwells within the human being, ‘there is nothing common to His nature and to that of the soul.’ It is through God’s love that he desires to dwell in human beings in order to make his goodness known. Accordingly the ancient link in Wesley’s concept is established.

iii. Spiritual Respiration
An important aspect of participation in the divine nature is spiritual respiration. According to Wesley the ‘life of God restored in the soul,’ constitutes a reciprocal relationship through spiritual respiration. Not only does a person experience the divine life within, but they also return what is received as they offer ‘…all the thoughts of our hearts, all the words of our tongues, all the works of our hands…’ to God. As God dwells within, so the individual grows in love and manifests this love to God and to others with all the actions of their being. For Wesley, from creation human beings were endowed with the gift of love and accordingly, people at creation were full of love, ‘which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words and actions.’ Because of the re-opening of the spiritual senses and the role they play, people are enabled by means of spiritual respiration, to return that love to God and breathe out that love upon others and to all creation.

Points of Convergence and Divergence.
There is correlation with contemporary spirituality as Wesley’s ‘life of God in the soul’ corresponds with the spirit within. Likewise, spiritual respiration corresponds with terms used in contemporary spirituality within meditative practice, where people are encouraged to cooperate with spirit in mindfulness as they breathe deeply, to relax, centre and ground. However, according to Wesley, rather than being a product of the human psyche or consciousness, participation of the divine nature is the product of the restored image of God, enabled through prevenient grace communicating with the spiritual senses and the

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199 Part Two, pp. 121-122, p. 127.
201 Part Two, pp. 127-130.

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restored relationship with God through the new birth. For the contemporary spiritual seeker this means that individuals have direct access to the divine/sacred/God who dwells within and can both experience him, and manifest him to others through spiritual respiration. For the evangelist the gospel message is re-visited and advanced to embrace language similar to that used in the contemporary spirituality arena. This new language includes the idea that the ‘self’ and the ‘soul’ represent the same seat for divine dwelling, and that people can find relationship with the creator, participate in his nature and experience him through spiritual respiration, breathing him in and returning that breath to him and others.

iv. Self-Betterment – Perfect Love

Part One noted that within contemporary spirituality the pinnacle is to attain one’s full potential by means of the development of the higher self, the holistic perfecting of oneself in self-growth and well-being. This self-betterment would include the development of a value system resulting in positive influence for the wider community. A criticism raised against the church is that it expects an unattainable mode of perfection and in consequence this is often reserved for the few people who are able, or willing, to take a very austere route to work out their spirituality. The contemporary Christian response noted a shift in emphasis from “perfection” in the abstract towards a Christian spirituality that embraces ‘every area of human experience.’

For Wesley, human beings were created to live in perfect relationship with God. When their spiritual understanding/senses were darkened they were rendered incapable of God and were deprived of their supreme perfection. For Wesley this was ‘the continually seeing and loving and obeying God’. For Wesley, a pinnacle of the salvific journey is the restoration of the human being’s supreme perfection, an often misunderstood term. For sure, when Wesley read Thomas à Kempis he thought he had discovered the route to real communion with God and approached this through self-denial and works, striving, unsuccessfully, for a number of years to work out his salvation in this way. Eventually, Wesley applied his learning from the Patristic era and discovered that perfection was not an austere route, but rather a renewed desire in the human soul resulting from the

204 Part One, p. 28, pp. 39, pp. 43-44, pp. 56-57.
205 Part One, p. 60.
206 Part One, p. 44, p. 49.
207 Part Two, p. 49.
208 Part Two, p. 95.
209 See Journal for 24th May 1738, *Works (Jackson)* for an understanding of how Wesley’s reading of à Kempis affected him.
recovered operation of the spiritual senses and the restored image and life of God.\textsuperscript{211} Contrary to the concerns of contemporary spirituality regarding the unachievability of Christian perfection, for Wesley Christian perfection is achievable. This is because, accepting the influence of the Greek Fathers, he did not base his concept on the Latin word *Perfectus* meaning ‘perfected perfection,’ an absolute perfection that is finished and complete. Rather Wesley drew from the Greek word, *Teleiosis* meaning ‘perfecting perfection,’ implying continuing movement and growth towards maturity.\textsuperscript{212} Accordingly, this perfection is the goal of the Christian life, what Wesley called ‘holiness,’ but it is not a static state. Lee affirms Outler’s claim that, for Wesley, a Christian believer is “‘indwelt and led by the Spirit within rather than being possessed by the Spirit as if by some force.’”\textsuperscript{213} As such it is a continued movement towards imitating and mirroring the perfect love of the law of God by means of the indwelling of the life of God in the soul.\textsuperscript{214} For Wesley perfection is not ‘…the absence of ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations…’ as Wesley specifically acknowledges signs of sin in the life of the believer and the pitfalls therein.\textsuperscript{215} It is rather ‘…loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and serving him with all our strength.’\textsuperscript{216}

Following the prompting of the Holy Spirit through prevenient grace, the awakening of the spiritual senses, the positive response of the human being and the restoration of the image and life of God, people are once again rendered ‘capable of God’ and the ‘perfect law’ is re-inscribed on the human heart.\textsuperscript{217} However, rather than simply conforming to a set of rules, this law is the ‘perfect law of love’ and obedience to this law consists of, and exists in, spiritual respiration. In the words of Runyon:

\begin{quote}
…obedience is the continuing openness to welcome life from the creative source, to receive love, justice, mercy, and truth from God, and, as the image of God, to exercise and communicate further what we have received.\textsuperscript{218}
\end{quote}

Obedience itself is relational. Rather than stemming from an elevated sense of human perfection, this ‘perfect love’, stems from the divine, and consists of all the virtues of the

\textsuperscript{211} Part Two, pp. 128-129.
\textsuperscript{213} Lee, ‘Wesley and Macarius,’ p. 199.
\textsuperscript{216} Part Two, pp. 128-129.
\textsuperscript{217} Runyon, *New Creation*, p. 18.
divine, the unchangeable reason, the eternal mind and the divine nature. This love Wesley defines as the ‘medicine of life,’ the language linking it to the therapeutic theme. By it, people learn once again what it means to truly love God and their fellow human beings. In this sense living the perfect love of God corresponds with Bernard Lonergan’s concept of religious experience as being in love with God, a place where ‘the love of God will transvalue our values and the eyes of that love will transform our knowing.’ For Lonergan, ‘this is conscious on the fourth level of intentional consciousness,’ corresponding with contemporary spirituality’s language of consciousness. This is a divine consciousness that moves people beyond themselves. It ‘deliberates, makes judgements of value, decides, acts responsibly and freely’ and has its basis in the freedom of the love of God, as this love ‘takes over the soul.’

Although Wesley’s concept of perfection suggests continuing growth and movement towards maturity, he nevertheless believed, at least in theory for he would be the first to acknowledge his own shortcomings, in the possibility for the Christian to live a perfect life. This would be a life without sin based on perfect love, and here also the spiritual senses play their role. Therefore, when a person becomes a new creation, when the image of God is restored in their inner being and their spiritual senses are opened, they remain in relationship with God through the renewal of the life of God. They experience continual spiritual respiration, the action of God upon their lives, enabling them to aspire to perfection in terms of living a love inspired life. The divine’s action and human reaction of perfect love enables them to live a wholesome life void of any malice or wrong doing.

Once the one born of God, the new creation, is restored in the image of God and has the life of God and perfect love for God and others re-instated in their inner being, this focus of love renews them personally. In other words restores their well-being, and also drives them to an outward expression that is fulfilled in community.

219 Part Two, pp. 128-129.
220 Men of Reason, §3, Works (Jackson), Vol. 8. Note the link to the image of God and the therapeutic metaphors.
221 Sermon 76, On Perfection, §1.4, Works, Vol. III. See also, Sermon 30, Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, §27, Works, Vol. I. In the Introductory Comment to this sermon Outler asserts that this love of God and neighbour was the definition of Wesley’s Christian perfection.
223 Sermon 19, The Great Privilege, as described in the Introduction §2, §1.8-10 & §IV.2-3, Works, Vol. I.
Points of Convergence

Wesley’s holistic view of Christian perfection finds congruence with, and adds to the arguments contained in, the contemporary Christian responses to aspire to a transformational and relational form of spirituality that embraces every area of human experience. It also correlates with the aims of contemporary spirituality concerning self-betterment, ultimately bringing about personal renewal and driving people towards others through divine interaction. This emphasis on perfection as process, in terms of aspiring to live a love inspired life, correlates with the calls of proponents of contemporary spirituality to reclaim the ‘sacred relationship of love between the divine and other human beings.’ This in turn has the potential to embrace an intentional, ‘conscious co-creation enabling collaborative action and the forming of a better world.’ Recognition on the part of both the proponents of contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity concerning the potential for humanity to enter into such co-working, would enable both twenty-first-century seekers and Christians to form community and work together for the betterment of the creation, the world and humankind.

6. A CALL TO COMMUNITY

Although contemporary spirituality places a high value on the individual, key proponents identify the need for community. There is recognition that an overemphasis on individualism encourages self-centeredness and carries risks to the social structure of society where community could be undervalued. Alongside this, there is an identified need to form an ethical framework for the good of society. Part One acknowledged the contribution of contemporary Christianity to this debate, recognising the high value of community in both theory and practice whilst acknowledging some tendency towards introspection. It was highlighted that community might provide an arena where the life of God becomes tangible, create common ground, and form a basis for building values. Alongside this there was acknowledgement that community engagement is an aspect of genuine spirituality. This thesis argues that Wesley’s understanding of the role of the spiritual senses in the developing spiritual life affirms this view.

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224 Part One, pp. 59-60.
225 Part One, p. 57.
i. Personal and Communal Values

For Wesley, following the new birth, the spiritual senses are active in communicating assurance of the new Christian’s renewed state before God. Because the image of God is restored they now participate in the divine nature of God and experience the life of God within. The activity of the spiritual senses not only enable them to understand the Holy Spirit’s communication of assurance directly to the soul by spiritual perception, but also facilitate the mirroring of God’s virtues and growth in perfect love towards God and towards others. This is evidenced by the fruit of the spirit that works within the Christian as a sign that the spiritual senses are rightly disposed.

There are two aspects to this spiritual enablement; firstly the fruit of the spirit enable personal transformation and secondly they enable communal transformation. Wesley’s key inward working and personally transformational fruits of the Spirit are, ‘love, joy, peace; bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering’. These fruit will enable a person to direct their free will and live by the perfect law of love, assuring them of a ‘good conscience before God.’ Furthermore, through means of the perception of the spiritual senses they will ‘know the testimony of the Spirit of God.’ Those who experience this assurance by the witness of the Spirit are urged to press forward in their quest for holiness, which not only includes personal holiness but an active contribution to the wider community.

The outward working fruits are ‘doing good to all men, the doing no evil to any, and the walking in the light—a zealous, uniform obedience to all the commandments of God.’ For Wesley, the awakened spiritual senses enable a person to perceive the voice of God, and their re-empowered willingness to live a love inspired life, enables them to display God-enabled characteristics such as ‘love thy neighbour and to put on meekness, gentleness, patience, temperance, and the whole armour of God.’ None of this could be achieved were it not for the natural attribute of the spiritual senses and the transformational power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual as previously outlined.

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227 Part Two, pp. 128-129.
228 Part Two, pp. 128.
230 Part Two, p. 124.
231 Part Two, p. 127-129.
Stephen Long, an expert in the field of theology and ethics, suggests that Wesley’s work might have something to offer to contemporary society in a world that has failed to deliver a promised universal ethical framework. But, for Long, unlike the modern development of virtue and morality that abandoned God in favour of faith in the human will to develop its own basis for ethics, Wesley’s ethical stance is grounded in the tradition of moral theology that sees God and the good, or doctrine and ethics, as inextricably linked and yet relevant for today. In spite of referring to Wesley’s use of the term ‘spiritual senses’ as a metaphor, Long nevertheless grounds Wesley’s moral theology in the theory of illumination, which this thesis would argue reflects the language of the spiritual senses. Long uses terms such as the new birth, the restored image of God, participation of the divine nature and spiritual respiration, Christian holiness or perfection, love of God and neighbour. But he ultimately grounds Wesley’s moral theology in his theory of perfection. A thorough analysis of Long’s deliberations require more than this thesis can offer but his theory confirms the possibility of applying Wesley’s moral theology today. However, regretfully, Long intentionally confines his deliberations concerning the spiritual senses to the experience of the Christian as ‘a gift and cultivation of an aesthetic sensibility to perceive God…’ and to ‘recognise one’s life enfolded into the very life of the Triune God…’ Therefore, it does not address how this might be extended in the wider communal context.

**Points of Congruence and Divergence**

Whilst there is some correlation with the calls of some proponents of contemporary spirituality to form cohesive community there are also differences. For Wesley, the ability to form a meaningful and transformational value system and to live by it is not drawn from an inner psyche or energy. Rather it is drawn from a real, meaningful and experienced relationship with the creator. For the contemporary spiritual seeker an exploration of the potential to aspire to live a love inspired life and display wholesome biblical fruit could be used to form a framework for a value system. Such a system would be developed using a unified relational, cognitive, spiritually perceptive, individual and communal approach. Values would mirror the attributes of the creator, support internal spiritual development,

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238 Long, *Wesley’s Moral Theology*, pp. 132-137. See also, pp. 137-141 for participation in God’s righteousness.
aid a loving awareness and respect for others, and remove isolation. For the Christian tradition, recognition of community as a place where the life of God becomes tangible could bring increased emphasis on the potential impact of living love inspired lives. Increased awareness of what it means to live lives that mirror the virtues of God, rather than the expected virtues of the church, could offer opportunities for both witness and discussion with others in their quest to rediscover virtue in the twenty-first century.

**ii. Sharing and Growing Together**

The mode within Methodism intended for discussions and journeying together was by means of small groups known as Bands. Although there is a strong historical emphasis on small groups throughout Christian history, small groups have been a focus in contemporary Christianity for many decades now, ranging from the House Group/Church Movement in the 1970s, through to Missional Communities in the 1990s to the Cell Movement in the 2000s. A contemporary form of the Methodist Bands has been advanced by Philip Meadows.

Whilst these modes of meeting might satisfy the requirements of established Christians or those who have experience of a basic Christian or religious background, based on the research highlighted in Part One, using any of these modes of meeting to initially aid spiritual growth might not meet the needs of contemporary seekers whose perspective has been formed from the current cultural climate. Accordingly, in order to meet the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers, the traditional way of doing things requires reconstructing. Contemporary spiritual seekers require freedom within their gatherings, based on genuine relationship, as opposed to ecclesia or a hierarchical form of church leadership. They also tend to view current church structures as facilitating power, and they view this with suspicion. New ways need to be discovered in cooperation with contemporary spiritual seekers themselves that are relational and non-hierarchical and yet which facilitate mutual spiritual growth.

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243 Suggestions can be gleaned from Hay, *Something There*, pp. 229-250; Richards, ‘Reflections,’ in *Spiritual Age*, pp. 67-73; Croft, ‘Transforming Evangelism,’ in *Spiritual Age*, pp. 126-147.
244 Part One, pp. 42-45.
Points of Convergence and Divergence.

Renewed, transformational community to which everyone equally contributes finds some correlation with the aspirations of contemporary seekers. However, for early seekers, the community might look very different to any of the suggested models. Correlating with the requirements of contemporary seekers it would more likely consist of informal meetings with friends and like-minded people, it would be organised from within the community itself and would centre on a non-hierarchical conversational approach with agreed aims and objectives based on scriptural norms. In this respect, modes of relational and non-hierarchical gathering of Christians could be adopted such as the ‘social’ direction, relational model, promoted by Sheldrake. Here the Trinity is taken as a model where no one person of the Godhead is more complete or significant than the others. This ‘mutual interrelation,’ suggested by Moltmann, could be an appropriate model to explore for the current era.245

For the evangelist, there would be recognition, expectation and willingness for things to look and develop very differently, but the transformational, spiritually enabled core of community would remain. What is being promoted is a community of like-minded people who meet together to discuss and share their experiences; this is unlikely to be church in the traditional manner. Knowing that the Holy Spirit continues to communicate via the spiritual senses, drawing people to the creator and moving them towards living love inspired lives will help to shape both the meeting and the conversation. With an open mind and following the leading and unction of the Holy Spirit, who works his same mode and power within established and non-established Christians, the possibilities are endless.

7. PLURALISM.

Finally, it remains to discuss pluralism. That Wesley initially understood unreached peoples of different religions to be predisposed to respond positively to their initial exposure of the Gospel is evident from his experience with the Native Americans, although that conviction eventually left him severely disappointed.246 Reflecting on his encounters with the Moravians, and following Aldersgate, Wesley’s understanding developed. He came to recognise the hopelessness of the human condition and applied his learning from the Patristics as noted above.

245 Sheldrake, Explorations, pp. 80–81.
246 Maddox, Responsible, p. 29; See also, Letter to John Burton, 10th Oct. 1735 in Works (Jackson), Vol. 12; Journal, 18th Jan. 1773 in Works (Jackson), Vol. 3, Number XII.
i. Wesley and Universal Perception.

Maddox terms Wesley’s understanding of the overtures of prevenient grace ‘Initial Universal Perception,’ arguing that Wesley demonstrates a priority of revelation via inference from creation as opposed to direct sensation through the spiritual senses. To substantiate this Maddox refers to The Imperfection of Human Knowledge where Wesley raises the matter of natural revelation via the created world. This thesis has already argued for spiritual perception and reason working together, but in order to counter Maddox’s claims, the priority of spiritual sensation has to be established. This is because, whilst it is clear that Wesley does uphold the concept of natural revelation, far from asserting it as a priority the sermon is a polemic against the ability of human reason alone to adequately and correctly interpret the avenues of both natural and revealed religion.

Wesley asserts that ‘we are unable to think one good thought,’ arguing that human understanding can only be rightly directed by means of ‘an anointing of the Holy One who abideth within us....and the inspiration of the Holy One who giveth understanding.’ These terms are clearly identified with his employment of the spiritual senses. As previously demonstrated, this is not a contradiction to Wesley’s assertion that ‘the little we do know about God…we do not gather from an inward impression, but gradually acquire from without.’ For Wesley, all spiritual knowledge is attained by means of grace through the divine action of God alone (from without the human being), working through the avenue of the spiritual senses (within). In this passage Wesley instructs people to search beyond their own reason for the divine wisdom which comes by means of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, otherwise known as grace, by faith, all with clear links to the spiritual senses. Rather than demonstrating the priority of natural revelation, here Wesley demonstrates the priority of revelation by grace, through faith, both enabled through direct and immediate perception by means of the renewed activity of the spiritual senses working in harmony with reason.

Reflecting on some of Wesley’s chronological statements concerning universal revelation, Maddox concludes that by the 1770’s Wesley had accepted that ‘God might have taught

247 Maddox, Responsible, p. 29.
249 Part Two, pp. 90-92.
250 Sermon 69, Imperfection of Human Knowledge, §IV.1, Works, Vol. II.
252 Part Three, pp. 155.
some heathens all the essentials of true religion by an inward voice,’ by means of the overtures of prevenient grace to the spiritual senses.\textsuperscript{255} Going beyond Wesley, Maddox further asserts that there is evidence that Wesley might have subscribed to the ‘possibility that some who have not heard of Christ may enter into saving relationship with God.’\textsuperscript{256} The ‘inward voice’ indeed must represent the initial overtures of prevenient grace, which brings a degree of light that ‘from time to time works in every child of man.’\textsuperscript{257} However, this is far from a mediated occurrence where people might ‘enter into a saving relationship with God,’\textsuperscript{258} ‘outside of human consciousness,’\textsuperscript{259} without experience or assurance of that relationship and with salvific consequence, as Maddox suggests.\textsuperscript{260} Granted, the initial overtures of prevenient grace form part of the salvific journey but for Wesley, unless they reach further than this, they fail to bring about the ‘real change’ mediated by the spiritual senses in restoring capability of God and enabling the restoration of the image and life of God; in short, restoring relationship with God. Therefore, without human response, the initial overtures of prevenient grace cannot bring about the saving relationship with God that Maddox asserts.\textsuperscript{261}

Furthermore, following a brief outline of a number of ideologies, including Christianity, later in the same sermon Wesley clarifies that the faith of which he is speaking here is the essentials of true religion in terms of ‘an evidence and conviction of [various] truths.’ Put another way, it is human assent by means of reason. He further asserts that, whichever ideology one follows, this mode of faith falls short of the aim of restored relationship with God because it ‘cannot save…’\textsuperscript{262} For Wesley, saving faith is an act of God alone revealed in the heart; a divine conviction of the Spirit in the heart that produces confidence and affection towards God that is ‘witnessed’ or perceived by the recipient. Wesley’s appeal, in language that can be identified as linked to the role of the spiritual senses and ultimate restored relationship with God, is that everyone might flee from sin, as if fleeing from a serpent, and seek and experience this revelation, this love, this liberty within their heart and ultimately move forward in perfect love.\textsuperscript{263}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{255} Maddox, \textit{Responsible}, p. 30; See also, Sermon 106, \textit{On Faith}, § 1.4, \textit{Works}, Vol IV.
\item \textsuperscript{256} Maddox, \textit{Responsible}, p. 34.
\item \textsuperscript{257} Sermon 43, \textit{The Scriptural way of Salvation}, § 1.1-2, \textit{Works}, Vol. II.
\item \textsuperscript{258} Maddox, \textit{Responsible}, p. 34.
\item \textsuperscript{259} Part One, pp. 50-54; Part Three, p. 151-161.
\item \textsuperscript{260} Maddox, \textit{Responsible}, p. 34.
\item \textsuperscript{261} Part Three, p. 144-145, pp. 151-152.
\item \textsuperscript{262} Sermon 132, \textit{On Faith}, §1.9, \textit{Works}, Vol. IV.
\item \textsuperscript{263} Sermon 132, \textit{On Faith}, §§1.4 & 5, \textit{Works}, Vol. IV.
\end{itemize}
ii. Accessible Spirituality

Given the religious situation of his era it is highly unlikely that Wesley would have responded positively to the suggestion of religious pluralism. However, in line with the Roman Catholic Church’s assertions following Vatican II, and given Wesley’s emphasis on prevenient grace, he would most certainly have affirmed the assertion that the Holy Spirit is not the sole possession of the church, but of the whole world [humanity]. Wesley’s convictions do not centre on the role of the church, although the church plays its part. Rather, they centre on the divine/human interrelationship, the breakdown of that relationship and the need for it to be renewed. In the spiritual senses, Wesley formed an anthropological and pneumatological understanding that advanced the activity of God in all human beings based on a thoroughly theistic Christian understanding. Far from advocating that ‘all roads lead to God’ or a general innate ‘universal spiritual perception,’ for the twenty-first-century spiritual seeker Wesley’s conviction is best re-termed ‘accessible spirituality,’ which affords in each individual ‘direct and immediate spiritual perception.’ The spiritual senses, a natural part of the human make-up, receive the communication of the Holy Spirit enabling an experienced (felt) spiritual perception which, if accepted, leads ultimately to a living and experienced (felt) personal relationship with God through the renewal of the image and life of God. For Wesley, the motivation for this emphasis on restored relationship is not merely focused on the benefit for the individual but on benefit for the wider community. This is because the right functioning of the faculties, afforded through the restored image of God, enables the life of God to flow through the individual in spiritual respiration, resulting in tangible fruit, enabling both the enrichment of their own spiritual life and the benefit others.

Nevertheless, although Wesley’s primary concern is always restored relationship with God, believing that God is true love, he indicates that those outside the Christian tradition might be enabled to receive a measure of truth. Consequently, he is unwilling to condemn to a Godless eternity those who do not receive the full Christian message but to leave them to the mercy of God.264

iii. Beyond the Salvific Theme.

So far, the debate concerning religious pluralism has tended to centre on the possibility of salvation outside the traditional response to the Christian message. Winfried Corduan265

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264 Sermon 91, On Charity, §1.3, Works, Vol. III. See also, Maddox, Responsible, p. 34. Runyon, New Creation, p. 34-35.
265 Professor Corduan is a theologian and author.
helpfully notes the benefits of moving beyond a purely salvific focus to embrace matters that might potentially lead to bridge building.\textsuperscript{266} Like Wesley, Corduan emphasizes and upholds the ultimate truth of Christianity,\textsuperscript{267} yet recognizes some truth in other religions.\textsuperscript{268} Corduan acknowledges the wide variety of human religious experiences that do not hold salvific value, which he explains through a range of experiential theories that embrace the phenomenological and the rational.\textsuperscript{269} He promotes the building of ‘conceptual bridges to non-Christian thought by emphasizing truth, morality and the need for a transcendent,’\textsuperscript{270} all of which would align with the needs of seekers of contemporary spirituality. For Corduan, the aim of such points of contact would be firstly, to facilitate evangelism; secondly, to help people to live together in a civil society; thirdly, to identify common causes; and fourthly, to facilitate ongoing theological exploration.\textsuperscript{271}

For Wesley, religious experience is through the natural faculty of the spiritual senses, which, by means of the Holy Spirit acting in prevenient grace and re-establishing capability of God, renews the image and life of God and enables a reciprocal relationship for the benefit of the individual and others. In addition to natural revelation through creation and revelation through cognitive means,\textsuperscript{272} ‘bridge building’ would undoubtedly include the means of grace,\textsuperscript{273} the fruit of the spirit,\textsuperscript{274} and the renewed affections,\textsuperscript{275} all lived in the power of the Holy Spirit and made possible through the role of the enlightened spiritual senses. The wider benefits of such bridge building would embrace those suggested by Corduan but with a specific purpose; the opening of hearts and minds to the possibility of a restored, transformative reciprocal relationship with the creator with the aim of aspiring to living a love inspired life.

\textsuperscript{266} Winfried Corduan, \textit{A Tapestry of Faiths} (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), p. 9, p. 11; See also, Runyon, \textit{New Creation}, p. 34.\textsuperscript{267} Corduan, \textit{Tapestry}, p. 11.\textsuperscript{268} Corduan, \textit{Tapestry}, p. 195.\textsuperscript{269} Corduan, \textit{Tapestry}, pp. 203-214.\textsuperscript{270} Corduan, \textit{Tapestry}, p. 220.\textsuperscript{271} Corduan, \textit{Tapestry}, p. 215.\textsuperscript{272} Part Three, pp. 181-183.\textsuperscript{273} Henry H. Knight summarizes the means of grace under the categories of the General, the Instituted or Particular and the Prudential means of grace. Additionally he adds human activity in the means of grace through which people express their love for God. Here the means of grace as both transformational and relational. Henry H. Knight III, \textit{The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace} (Metuchen & London: Scarecrow Press Inc., 1992), pp. 2-5, p. 17-18. In the context of this essay the means of grace flow through participation of the divine nature by means of spiritual respiration, with a clear connection to the role of the spiritual senses. In this respect they are means to both inward growth and outward action.\textsuperscript{274} Part Three, pp. 177-178, Part Two, p. 128.\textsuperscript{275} Part Two, p. 120, pp. 127-128.
Suggestions of avenues for bridge building have already been made. A further example, for those ascribing to sacred texts, is Cambridge University’s ‘Scriptural Reasoning,’ which, although established to facilitate dialogue between Jews, Muslims and Christians, could be adapted for groups of diverse religious ideologies meeting to share core values in their texts. Whilst active proselyting at such gatherings would not be deemed appropriate, given Wesley’s understanding of the spiritual senses and the overtures of the Holy Spirit through prevenient grace, such gatherings nevertheless present opportunities. Firstly, to increase one’s own understanding and relationship with people of other persuasions. Secondly, to do so in the confidence that the Holy Spirit is already active in the hearts of all persons present, drawing people to himself and bringing unique insights into the hearts and minds of spiritual seekers.

Points of Convergence
Aligning with the theme of accessible spirituality, the contemporary seeker might experience the overtures of the Holy Spirit at any stage in their spiritual journey, even in the midst of exploring other spiritual ideologies. Some who perceive his inner voice will take the opportunity to discuss this, increase their enlightenment of Christian spiritual experience, as outlined in this thesis, and choose to move forward on a genuine experiential Christian journey. Furthermore, Wesley’s ultimate focus on restored reciprocal relationship aligns with contemporary spirituality’s aspiration to discover a meaningful relationship with the divine source. In addition, the heart and mind of Christian participants will be open to transformation as the Holy Spirit continues his work of grace in their own lives through conversations with others.

This demonstrates that it is possible to form a theistic and missiologically sound salvific message that does not subscribe to the ideologies of religious pluralism but is anthropologically pluralistic. This is because in the spiritual senses, all human beings possess a natural ability to perceive and respond to the inward promptings of the Holy Spirit in prevenient grace. They are consequently able form an experiential, transformational and ongoing relationship with creator God. It is inclusive, because no one is excluded from spiritual experience and yet it does not ascribe to the central tenets of religious inclusivism. It is exclusivist, in that it thoroughly grounds all spiritual experience.

276 Cambridge University’s Interfaith Programme, ‘Scriptural Reasoning.’
in the activity of the Trinitarian God, from before the first awakening of spiritual perception through to maturity in perfect love.

This heightens the need for the evangelist to be armed with knowledge of the inner workings of the spiritual senses and the Holy Spirit in all people as outlined above. The responsibility of the Christian tradition is to help evangelists to understand how the Holy Spirit might be initiating these overtures to people’s spiritual senses. They can then be on hand to gently and lovingly act as spiritual directors and guides to people who are, in the words of Tacey, ‘yearning’ for spiritual reality. Within Wesley’s use of the spiritual senses there is no indication that the spiritual senses might perceive the spiritual world in general, only that they are responsive to the Holy Spirit ministering through prevenient grace. The stated claims of science and empirical research, concluding that many people have spiritual experiences outside of religion, strengthen the suggestion in Part Two that the spiritual senses are awakened at birth by means of prevenient grace. Moving beyond Wesley, if this is the case, in consequence once people are open to spiritual experience, this might explain why some individuals have spiritual experiences per se, which could include spiritual experiences within other ideologies. From a Christian theological viewpoint that embraces Wesley, it is not that they are perceiving other spiritual realities, but rather that the Holy Spirit, who can communicate in any place and at any time, is calling them to the creator in the midst of their life.

Since, in Wesley’s concept spiritual perception works in cooperation with reason, people will only start to understand the spiritual significance of this if they have been offered an explanation. Therefore, the Christian tradition has a responsibility, firstly to train Christians concerning their serious commission of appropriately proclaiming this message in the current era. Secondly, to work together with contemporary spiritual seekers in creating avenues for bridge building as outlined above. If other ideologies are quicker to offer instruction in their ways, the individual might well respond to their teaching and assume that that ideology is the source of their spiritual perception. This gives more urgency to the appropriate delivery of the Christian message to each generation. In the light of the re-working of the message of the Christian tradition that has been developed above, there should be no reason why people would not willingly respond equally to the beauty, history and reality of this message of relationship with the creator as to any other spirituality that is offered.
CONCLUSION

Guided by the revised correlation model and using Lynch’s systematic theology, Part Three has developed the conversation between contemporary spirituality, contemporary Christianity and John Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses. In so doing, it has uncovered a number of points of convergence, identified areas for potential collaboration and development, and suggested missiological responses to the phenomenon of contemporary spirituality.

Part One acknowledged some inadequacy in the contemporary Christian thinkers’ responses to date, alongside appeals for an engagement with culture that might offer something more fundamental than mere tactics to make the church more successful or effective. From within the Christian tradition it identified three calls for change. Firstly, a fresh look at the content of the gospel, secondly a reconstruction of evangelism and thirdly, a new social language for spirituality. From within contemporary spirituality it particularly identified the call to offer a meaningful response concerning the ‘invisible mechanics’ of spiritual engagement. Part Three has attempted an exploration that responds to these calls. This response is in line with Derrida’s theory of ‘religion as re-ligion’ being ‘what succeeds in re-turning.’ The suggestion is that the neglected concept of the spiritual senses might ‘re-turn’ and play a foundational and meaningful role in missiological engagement with contemporary culture, particularly given John Wesley’s application of the theme.

Building on the theological and missiological responses uncovered in this conversation, this thesis suggests that a recognition and incorporation of the spiritual senses into Christian thought and practice presents the opportunity to reconstruct the gospel message. In so doing it offers a message that is both historically and theologically sound yet is also grounded in developing contemporary cultural thought and practice. A suggested reconstruction of the evangelistic message will now be presented offering a renewed approach to communicating a meaningful and authentic Christian message to twenty-first-century spiritual seekers.

Six Key Characteristics of a Proposed Reconstructed Christian Proclamation for the Twenty-First Century.
A proposed gospel proclamation appropriate to contemporary spiritual seekers would, firstly, actively embrace the role of creation spirituality. This thesis has demonstrated that
John Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses can offer a theologically and historically grounded accessible spirituality, which reaches back through ancient Christianity and stems from the creative moment. This correlates with the requirements of proponents of contemporary spirituality for a spirituality grounded in ancient sources and creation. The message of the spiritual senses, divinely embedded in human beings at the creative moment as an avenue for the reception of spiritual experience, is formed from a story not dissimilar to other nature/evolution/creation stories. Given the foundational inclusivity of contemporary spirituality, this story has the potential to be readily explored and absorbed by contemporary spiritual seekers.

Furthermore, the concept of the spiritual senses being embedded in humanity at creation, in the same manner as the physical senses, finds congruence with contemporary scientific research. It offers a theological solution concerning the invisible mechanics of spirituality, underpinning Hay’s concept that spiritual awareness is an inbuilt biological connection that is found in every human being, at the same time aligning with Sheldrake in being integrated and specifically linked to the Christian tradition.

Being located in every individual, the spiritual senses render spiritual experience personal and fully accessible. This correlates with the aspirations of contemporary spirituality for a meaningful, personal, spirituality that moves beyond the confines of the church and its rituals, to discovering spiritual experience in the midst of everyday life. Again, as this thesis has demonstrated, this concept finds support within the contemporary Christian responses.

A further aspect of creation spirituality to be included in a reconstructed gospel proclamation is ecological concern. Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses offers renewed motivation based on a sense of responsibility through the renewed political image of God, enabled by the awakening of the spiritual senses. Here active love and care for nature in partnership with others corresponds to the aspirations of both contemporary spiritual seekers and the Christian tradition.

Secondly, a proposed gospel proclamation appropriate to contemporary spiritual seekers would actively embrace the value of the individual and their God given right to freedom and choice. This thesis has demonstrated that, in Wesley’s thought, every human being possesses spiritual senses as a natural part of their make-up. Whilst the Holy Spirit
communicates with every human being via the spiritual senses, each individual carries the gift of freedom to choose whether to respond to his invitation of restored relationship with God. Accordingly, the gospel message would be promoted respectfully, with recognition of the individual’s potential prior spiritual experience and their right to choose whether or not to follow the divine promptings. In line with the cultural approaches of the twenty-first century, a conversational method should potentially be considered as the most respectful and fruitful initial mode of gospel presentation. As suggested in the body of the thesis, upon receipt of a positive response, other culturally appropriate methods could be utilised to further experience and knowledge.

Both proponents of contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity acknowledge the need to address the problem of focusing the message of connectivity with the divine, or the Christian gospel, on human sinfulness that has its roots in original sin. This thesis suggests that this is an area that would particularly benefit from both reconstruction and a new language. Wesley argues that it is the consequences of original sin, namely the disabling of the spiritual senses and consequential loss of the image and life of God, that separates people from God. A re-visit of Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses for today would not only offer a viable reconstruction of the gospel message but would offer a new language through which to convey the message itself. Here emphasis would be placed on the need for healing of the relationship with God through the reactivation of the spiritual senses which would, in turn, facilitate illumination. The resultant direct and immediate spiritual perception and cognitive response would enable recognition of the validity of the act of forgiveness through Christ. All of these terms have been demonstrated to correlate with those used by contemporary spirituality. Recognition of the dynamics of healing prior to forgiveness would offer a more holistic concept and bring the Christian message closer to the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers. Here, the additional step in the salvific process, namely healing, avoids the culturally unacceptable presentation of a gospel message at the point of human sinfulness.

Thirdly, a proposed gospel proclamation appropriate to contemporary spiritual seekers would actively embrace the concept that the role of the spiritual senses offers an explanation concerning the invisible mechanics of spiritual engagement. This model is not only grounded both historically and theologically, but builds on the aspirations and arguments of both the proponents of contemporary spirituality and the Christian tradition.
Through prevenient grace, the creator reaches out to all individuals via their spiritual senses, resulting in direct and immediate spiritual perception, and awaits a positive response. It is the sacred source within that initiates the primal, innate human need. As the illumination of the Holy Spirit proceeds, the spiritual senses become increasingly responsive. This produces a longing, or yearning, after the creator and, upon a positive human response, the relationship with God is restored and the spiritual senses are fully awakened. The interaction between prevenient grace and the spiritual senses enable every individual to experience inward and personal spiritual perception and this continues throughout the salvific journey. All of this corresponds with the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers.

This inward, personal and spiritual perception is not merely cognitive knowledge of God, but rather it corresponds with the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers as it is direct spiritual perception, or experience, that is deeply felt within. Furthermore, this thesis argues that this spiritual perception is thoroughly empirical. A re-visitation of the gospel message would also include the role of the physical senses in spirituality. Although it is possible for spiritual perception to be mediated directly to the spiritual senses by means of prevenient grace, it is also possible for the spiritual perception received by the physical senses to be transmitted to the spiritual senses where the Holy Spirit ministers in prevenient grace, which in turn transmit to the reason, rendering it spirituality holistic. Every mundane moment has the potential for spiritual awareness. This corresponds with current responses from contemporary Christianity and opens up the possibility for further exploration of the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers. Here spiritual engagement is rooted in the prior initiative of the Holy Spirit, upholding the primary role of God and not ‘self’ in spiritual communication. In including the rational it also exceeds the merely experiential and offers room for embracing spirituality that is based on both what is truly experienced and what is carefully considered.

In upholding the concept of immediate spiritual perception, readily available to every individual via the spiritual senses, this reconstructed gospel message moves beyond the constraints of religious rites and rituals including the ecclesial mediation of grace. For Wesley, upon the human ‘yes’ to the creator, the individual spiritual awareness conveyed by the Holy Spirit, by means of prevenient grace via the spiritual senses, has the potential to bring about ongoing personal transformation. What begins with a renewed, experiential knowledge of God has a purpose, to renew the image of God within the individual,
enhancing their experience and rational knowledge of Him and ultimately restoring right relationship with the creator.

Fourthly, a proposed gospel proclamation, appropriate to contemporary spiritual seekers, would actively embrace the concept of the seat of the sacred presence as being within the individual. This correlates to both the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers and developments within the Christian tradition. As such, a renewed gospel message would embrace Wesley’s concept of the renewal of the life and image of God within the individual, enabled because of the reactivated spiritual senses. They are rendered once again ‘capable of God,’ are able to partner with God and participate in his divine nature. However, the individual is not sacralised as the two are not merged into one, but rather the distinction between the human being and God remains; the two exist in close relationship. In doing so the individual becomes truly human, that is, they become what they were created to be, enabled to discern and mirror the essential qualities of the creator and reflect his image, love, character and goodness.

This in turn facilitates spiritual respiration, the breath, or life of God in the soul. All of this is enabled through the ministry of the Holy Spirit via the reactivated spiritual senses mediating direct access to the creator, enabling the individual to both experience him and manifest him to others. The result is a process of transformation as the sacred relationship of love between the creator and the individual is re-established. Accordingly, the individual comes to aspire to live a love filled life. They move towards personal renewal, and through the medium of the spiritual senses, this holistic spirituality embraces every area of human experience, including reaching out to others, thus enabling collaborative action to build a better world.

Fifthly, a proposed gospel proclamation appropriate to contemporary spiritual seekers would actively embrace the concept of building community, particularly with contemporary spiritual seekers. For Wesley, the ability to form a meaningful and transformational value system and, most importantly, to live by it, is not drawn from an inner psyche or energy but rather is drawn from a real, meaningful and experienced, transformational relationship with the creator. This is only possible because of the renewed capability of God facilitated through the re-awakened spiritual senses. Such a gospel presentation would include the potential to form a framework for a personal and communal
value system based on aspiring to live a love-inspired life and manifesting the fruit of the spirit through mirroring the divine nature.

Sixthly, a proposed gospel proclamation appropriate to contemporary spiritual seekers would actively embrace the potential created by the reality of living in a religiously plural environment. Accepting that individuals are likely to experience the overtures of the Holy Spirit at any stage on their spiritual journey, even in the midst of exploring other ideologies, presents the opportunity for meaningful engagement. Wesley’s focus on restored reciprocal relationship, by means of the awakened spiritual senses, aligns with contemporary spirituality’s aspiration to discover meaningful relationship with the divine source.

Here key features of actively embracing contemporary culture would embrace firstly, pluralism. In the spiritual senses, all human beings possess a natural ability to perceive and respond to the inward promptings of the Holy Spirit in prevenient grace and to form an experiential, transformational and ongoing relationship with creator God. This connection might be experienced even in the midst of exploring other ideologies. Secondly, inclusivism, because no one is excluded from spiritual experience. Thirdly, exclusivism, in that all spiritual experience is grounded in the activity of the Trinitarian God, from before the first awakening of spiritual perception through to maturity in perfect love. Furthermore, the promptings of the Holy Spirit to the spiritual senses have a purpose, to form a meaningful, ongoing relationship with the Christian God. In actively embracing engagement with religious pluralism, including engaging with contemporary spiritual seekers, the hearts and minds of all parties will be open to transformation as they perceive the Holy Spirit’s activity in their lives, via the reactivated spiritual senses, through the conversations that ensue.

Drawing on the findings of the conversation between proponents of contemporary spirituality, contemporary Christianity and John Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses, this thesis has suggested a reconstructed gospel message appropriate for the twenty-first century. Here, aspects of John Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses, sometimes reworked, have been shown to correspond with the aspirations of contemporary spiritual seekers. These have given rise to the potential of a renewed missional approach that is relevant to the twenty-first century. Not only is the message reconstructed to take account of both current and historical concepts, but the way in which the message might be
presented and delivered is reconstructed to account for a renewed and inclusive collaboration between Christian believers and contemporary spiritual seekers. This message, therefore, is attuned to contemporary cultural approaches and carries a message of hope and direction for spiritual seekers in the twenty-first century.
CONCLUSION

This thesis has responded to an identified cultural shift in the West that has given rise the new phenomenon of contemporary spirituality. This new development has presented an opportunity for the Christian tradition to re-examine Christian spirituality as it pertains to mission. The aim of this thesis was threefold. Firstly, to research contemporary spirituality in order to identify the key motifs and discover if there is any convergence between these and the response from contemporary Christianity. Secondly, To identify the central tenets in John Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses. Thirdly, to discover if John Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses might build on the response from contemporary Christianity and make a meaningful contribution to the identified aspirations of contemporary spirituality.

In the light of calls from both sides for the development of a meaningful conversation between contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christian thinkers, ‘revised correlation’ was selected and used as an appropriate methodology to guide this conversation. Accordingly, Part One undertook research in the form of ‘descriptive theology’ with the aim of identifying the key motifs of contemporary spirituality and embarking on a conversation with contemporary Christian thinkers in order to discover if there is any correlation between the two parties. Under the heading, ‘historical theology,’ Part Two investigated Wesley’s employment of the spiritual senses on his own terms in order to discover his key tenets. Finally, under the heading, ‘systematic theology,’ Part Three further developed the conversation between all three parties, correlating and synthesising the information gathered in the previous sections to specifically identify the contribution that the spiritual senses might offer. The main findings are summarised within the respective parts. The following section synthesises the information gleaned to the research focus.

Part One: The Quest for Spiritual Engagement in Postmodern Culture

Drawn from the explored horizons of contemporary spirituality, seven motifs were identified as foundational and used to develop the conversation. A conversation ensued, with arguments drawn from the particular ideological and theological perspectives of both parties. The conversation was supported by additional contributions, raised from within those perspectives, which included empirical research, ecology, science, mysticism, philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, psychology, ancient practices and ethics. Captured under the designated headings, a number of points of convergence and divergence were
discovered. Those that corresponded with the stated aim were carried forward for further conversation as follows:

1. Creation Spirituality
Both parties found points of contact in respect of ecological concerns and accessible spirituality, in terms of the need to care for the environment and nature being a valid means for spiritual engagement and experience. In addition, arguments from scientific research on both sides affirmed spirituality as a natural aspect of the human make-up that is experienced by all and works outside the construct of religious forms.

2. Individualism, Freedom and Choice
Both parties upheld the value of the individual. Contemporary spirituality stressed belief in the inherent goodness of the individual, asserting that every person is sacredly embedded and is free to develop their spiritual route by merging aspects of their chosen ideologies. Within contemporary Christianity some affirmed the value of the individual through the Holy Spirit’s ministry to each person, whilst others upheld the inherent goodness of human beings through attunement to the divine being.

However, on the one hand, from within contemporary spirituality a darker side was identified. Failing to recognise the sacred source can result in inflating one’s own significance and give rise to isolation, a lack of concern for others and a deficient public morality. Here the concept of ‘sin’ is not generally acknowledged or accepted. On the other hand, contemporary Christian thinkers acknowledged the need to change the language and manner of the gospel message, which is often focused on human sinfulness and presented in a negative manner which no longer elicits a positive human response.

3. Innate Spiritual Perception
Presenting arguments from science, reflective practice and missional practice, both parties upheld the concept of spirituality as a natural part of the human condition, reaching from the creative moment through to the present. As such, it is inclusive. Each affirmed that spirituality is not limited to the traditional religious constructs and demonstrated a re-thinking of spirituality, albeit in different ways, which has come to embrace every area of human existence and can be personally experienced in the context of everyday life and living. Here, the transformational value of personal experience was affirmed, from within
contemporary spirituality, as a transferable experience, and from within contemporary Christianity, as a broadening of the concept of Christian perfection.

4. The Physical Senses and Spirituality
Both parties agreed that the physical senses play an important role in mediating spiritual experience and the validity of everyday life experiences in conveying spirituality. Contemporary spirituality additionally emphasised the role of nature. Contemporary Christianity emphasised the role of Christian worship.

5. The Sacred Within
Contemporary spirituality upheld the sacralising of self, asserting that the self and spirituality springs from our connection with the cosmos at the creative moment. Spirituality as a dimension of the human make-up was affirmed as part of the human core. Here the self becomes a legitimate doorway to spiritual experience, giving rise to personal growth and a sense of love and intimacy with the sacred.

Within contemporary Christianity an argument drawn from Hiebert challenged the deification of self. Hiebert argued that Western philosophers coined the term self to replace the concept of the soul, placing human beings at the top of nature and rendering the autonomous self a god. Here meaning was to be discovered in self-fulfilment and in instant gratification. However, the correlation between the inner seat of the self and the soul indicated that the inner seat of the divine is upheld by both parties.

6. A Call to Community
Whilst continuing to uphold the elevated place of the individual, there were calls from within contemporary spirituality for a renewed community spirit, particularly as an arena to overcome isolation and develop a meaningful value system. Contemporary Christian thinkers upheld the value of community as central to Christian spiritual practice. Here community is viewed as a place where spiritual experience can become a life common to all, where both personal and communal values can be nurtured and developed.

7. Religious Pluralism
Contemporary spirituality presented an expression of religious pluralism where individuals freely form their own spiritual construct from the vast selection of spiritual ideologies on offer. This renders every individual form of contemporary spirituality unique. Christian thinkers’ responses of pluralism, inclusivism and exclusivism are well known. Newbigin
offered an intermediary response that affirms the work of the Holy Spirit, the unique truth of the revelation of Jesus Christ and the saving grace of God. Some argued for an alignment with the pluralistic ideals of contemporary spirituality, whilst others argued for an approach that values the particularity of every faith, upholds the central traditional tenets of Christianity and finds significance in the ethics drawn from religious alignment.

In all of the above areas points of convergence were established, although there were differences. It was argued that, whilst all of these suggestions, and the practical applications that flow from them, can be used to engage with contemporary spiritual seekers, all would benefit from a renewed framework that responded more particularly to the foundational motifs of contemporary spirituality. It was suggested that Wesley’s application of the spiritual senses might offer this framework.

Drawing from suggestions arising from within both contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity, it was further proposed that key areas for development should offer something more fundamental than new tactics to make the church more effective. This would involve a fresh look at the gospel and a reconstruction of the evangelistic message. It would also include the discovery of a new social language for spirituality and a meaningful response from the Christian tradition concerning the invisible mechanics of spiritual engagement. In an attempt to forge a way forward in a conversation building on areas where thinking converged, and yet hold steadfastly to basic Christian tenets, these selected contributions were carried forward for further engagement in conversation in Part Three. But first Wesley’s understanding of the spiritual senses was to be explored.

**Part Two: The Spiritual Senses in the Works of John Wesley**

Continuing with the ‘revised correlation model,’ Part Two investigated John Wesley’s application of the spiritual senses under the heading, ‘historical theology.’ Here Wesley’s work was investigated ‘in his own terms,’ rendering the thrust of the exploration mainly a systematic analysis of Wesley’s use of this theme as it presents scattered throughout his sermons.

Wesley’s public sermons were used as a foundation and throughout the theme was linked to its roots in the Patristic period. This section confirmed the unity between the spiritual senses and the restoration of the life and image of God. It moved from complete cognitive unawareness of God or the spiritual world, through prevenient grace to awakening, the new
birth including faith, assurance and sanctification. These basic tenets were developed showing the spiritual senses to be drawn from the creative moment, personal and yet inclusive, accessible and experiential. Working in harmony with reason they centre on both healing and forgiveness, and the choices made are based on value of the individual and freedom and choice. The goal of the restored spiritual senses was a renewed, intimate, and transformative enduring relationship with the creator. They also had a communal impact. It was argued that Wesley’s concept of the spiritual senses was grounded in his passion for mission and Christian practice, and presented a foundational theme in his theological, soteriological and pneumatological premise. It was affirmed that Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses had the potential to make a significant contribution to the conversation between contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christian thinkers.

Part Three: The Potential Contribution of the Role of the Spiritual Senses in Contemporary Mission
In identifying key tenets of the theme, Part Three asserted that Wesley’s application of the spiritual senses correlated with aspirations of both contemporary spirituality and contemporary Christianity, exceeding them in some instances, and being augmented by them in others. The key motifs of contemporary spirituality were used to further engage in conversation where the significant input of Wesley’s spiritual senses was confirmed. Accordingly, it was ascertained that Wesley’s theme of the spiritual senses correlated with the aspirations of contemporary spirituality in that it:

1. Is historically grounded;
2. Is imbedded in the creative moment;
3. Is personal: embedded within all human beings representing accessible spirituality;
4. Is empirical: arguing for experienced spiritual sensation giving rise to cognitive knowledge, but knowledge with the specific purpose of restored relationship with God;
5. Is accessible: representing direct and immediate access to the God, via the Holy Spirit though the means of prevenient grace, before any conscious awareness of God through to Christian maturity;
6. Is grounded in relationship with the Creator and upholds the individual’s freedom of choice;
7. Is part of a salvific process that acknowledges humanity’s isolation from God as a result of the consequences of original sin, namely the disabling of the spiritual senses and consequential loss of the image and life of God. Here, salvation starts with healing of the disabled spiritual senses, leading to restored relationship with God which, in turn, leads to recognition of the need for personal forgiveness;
8. Is focused on the restoration of the life and image of God, seated within the heart or soul;
9. Enables the restoration of the life and image of God, resulting in participation in the divine nature and reciprocal relationship through spiritual respiration, where individuals aspire to live love filled lives;
10. Is focused the outworking of perfect love and holiness, not only in personal spiritual development, but in community through the fruit of the Spirit and renewed communal responsibility;
11. Has the capability to embrace pluralism, through engaging in like-minded action and conversation, in the confidence that the Holy Spirit is ministering to both non-Christians and Christians alike, drawing them into deepening relationship with the Creator.

Based on the findings of the conversation, and responding to the additional suggestions for development outlined at the conclusion of Part One, a re-constructed gospel message was presented that, it was argued, both correlates with the aspirations of contemporary spirituality and yet is grounded in the Christian tradition.

Limitations
There are areas presented in this thesis that would benefit from further development and application. Because of the primary concern to focus on points that correspond to contemporary spirituality, it fails to comprehensively respond to all of the actual and potential arguments against the points of contact that have been discovered. To do so would have resulted in the conversation between contemporary spirituality, contemporary Christian thinkers and John Wesley’s spiritual senses being severely curtailed which in turn would have limited the conclusions. Rather, points directly relating to the current conversation have been developed in so far as they add to the richness of the conclusions.

Areas for further development
However, these gaps open up areas for further exploration, for example further research could potentially include the following:
1. A deeper exploration of the role of participation in the divine nature and spiritual respiration in relation to contemporary spirituality;
2. The reason why, in the current climate, some scholars continue to dismiss the spiritual senses as a metaphor;
3. A detailed exploration of Wesley’s use of the Eastern Fathers using Campbell’s programmatic distinction, particularly in relation to the spiritual senses.

4. This writer has already discussed the role of the spiritual senses with some non-Christians and it would be interesting to conduct some empirical research amongst contemporary spiritual seekers to discover their reactions and opinions concerning the role of the spiritual senses;

5. Presenting such a re-constructed gospel message challenges contemporary Christianity to carefully consider the re-visited historical concept of the spiritual senses and discover how this pneumatological, epistemological and relational doctrine might be integrated into missiological practice;

6. The intentional development of meaningful and focused conversations with proponents of contemporary spirituality. Given the cultural approach of contemporary spiritual seekers, further discoveries would be best formed inclusively, working with proponents of contemporary spirituality in collaboration and conversation. Given the Holy Spirit’s direct connection with the spiritual senses in all people, this conversation in itself would be missional. Further adjustments and developments to the suggestions of this thesis would undoubtedly follow, including further adjustments in respect of appropriate language and agreeing avenues for further conversation;

7. This, in turn, would lead to developing training, creative worship and sermon outlines in order to help Christians understand the potential of the role of the spiritual senses in contemporary mission. This would include the role of the spiritual senses in their own lives as they seek to partner in God’s mission;

8. Further consideration could then be given to helping spiritual seekers explore the potential of spiritual engagement through their spiritual senses, with the ultimate aim of restoring the sacred, loving, ongoing and transformational relationship with the Creator and others.

This thesis suggests that Wesley’s re-constructed pneumatological, empirical and missional gospel, upholding direct and immediate spiritual perception via the spiritual senses, has returned with powerful potential. Given the current cultural climate, and the potential for the correlation between contemporary spirituality and role of the spiritual senses to be further developed, it is highly appropriate for the key findings of this thesis to be integrated into the Christian message in the current milieu. In the light of the re-working of the gospel message that has been developed above, there is hope that people will take the opportunity to respond to the beauty, history and reality of this message of restored relationship with
the creator and others. It has been said that the gospel is not a finished conversation.\footnote{Roxburgh, \textit{Missional}, p. 89.} It is further hoped that the conversation started here will both give rise to, and contribute to, ongoing conversations of the future.
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APPENDICES

Supplementary References for Part One

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Appendix II
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Appendix IV
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Supplementary References for Part Two

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Appendix VI
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Appendix VII
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Origen, Contra Celsum, p. 44. Other examples of the spiritual senses being grounded in the faith of the mature or elite include, Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, p. 10; Origen, On Prayer, p99; Origen, Prologue to the Song of Songs, p234; Origen, Second Commentary on Matthew, Book XI; Chapter 2, Libronix, ANF, Vol. X; Origen, Commentary on John, Book I, Chapter 24, Libronix, ANF, Vol. X.

Appendix VIII
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Appendix XI
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For example, Sermon 45, The New Birth, §II.4, Works, Vol. II. Linking spiritual death to the loss of the image of God. Sermon 19, The Great Privilege, Works, Vol I. The Introduction §2 establishes a link between the new birth and the Image of God, followed in §1.6 with the link between those who are insensible of God and are in darkness and the new birth, thus establishing the link between the image of God and insensibility or darkness. Men of Reason, §26, Works (Jackson). Comparing a ‘dead’ picture of temporal existence to the reality of existence that is image of God. Also Sermon 44, Original Sin, Introduction §4, Works, Vol II; and Sermon 141, The Image of God, §2 particularly introduction and §21, Works, Vol IV.

Appendix XII
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Sermon 34, The original, Nature, Properties, and Use of the Law, §1.4, Works, Vol I; Sermon 45, The New Birth, §II.2, Works, Vol II; The Life of God in the Soul is a substantial theme, further references include,

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Appendix XIV
Further references to page 18, n. 238.


Appendix XV
Further references to page 121, n. 331.


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Supplementary References for Part Three

Appendix XVII
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