

Spiritual Guidance as Pastoral Care:
an examination of the spirituality
of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley
and their guidance to people of their own generation
as these relate to pastoral care
in congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia.

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SUMMARY

This research examines the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley and the way in which it related to their understanding of pastoral care among the communities they established. These two men reflected on their own spirituality, acted as spiritual guides to people of their own generation and set up structures that provided pastoral care for people growing in faith.

This has implications for the Uniting Church in Australia. In particular this thesis addresses the ways in which the Uniting Church fulfils its responsibilities of exercising pastoral care as ‘an expression of the fact that God always deals personally with people’,¹ and of providing an environment in which people ‘grow together into Christ, [and are] strengthened for their participation in the mission of Christ in the world’.²

Foundational to the research is the assumption that the sixteenth century in Western Europe and the eighteenth century in Great Britain were defining moments for the Christian church.³ Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley were influential leaders in the transformations of the church in their respective times. It is further assumed that this current era (late twentieth and early twenty-first century) may justifiably be identified as a similarly significant time in the church’s history. The Uniting Church in Australia has an important role (albeit, along with other fellowships in the Christian communion) in identifying the ways in which faith in Jesus Christ connects with and has an impact on the lives of people and communities.

¹ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 16.

² *Basis of Union*, paragraph 8.

³ As a general rule, in this thesis the word “church” is capitalised only when it refers to a particular denomination.

This study examines the lives and written legacies of Ignatius and Wesley – particularly the *Autobiography*, *Spiritual Exercises* and some of the letters of Ignatius Loyola and the *Journal*, *Sermons* and some of the letters of John Wesley. There is an explanation of how each man came to an understanding of himself as a disciple of Jesus Christ and grew in his own faith, and the study identifies the ways in which each one reflected on his experiences. These reflections, and their understanding of the needs of the people of their times, led each man to identify ways in which their own insights could benefit the people with whom they and their companions lived.

The thesis appraises the results of these reflections. It makes connections between the culture and needs of the people of their times and the situation in which the Uniting Church finds itself in the twenty-first century, and it considers ways in which the awareness and understanding Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley had of spiritual guidance and pastoral care can be influential within the Uniting Church as it continues to participate in the ministry of Christ in the world.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.



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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Uniting Church in Australia was inaugurated¹ on the cusp of a new era of Christian ecclesiology. In the later decades of the twentieth century, the Christian church of the Western world began to reconsider ways in which its life could better reflect the ministry of Jesus Christ to its contemporary world.

In the Roman Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council opened windows² to allow new expressions of worship, devotion and service. World-wide ecumenism was enhanced by that Church's participation, with observation status in the World Council of Churches. There was an increase in the establishment of communities of faith that were more freely aligned with one another than was the case with the congregations of the mainline denominations. Theological education that was more widely available meant that lay people could and did take leadership roles in the life of the church. At the same time, a large part of society indicated, by its comments or by its disinterest, that it no longer felt connected with the church.

All this resulted in a re-examination by theologians and ministry practitioners of what it meant for people to hear the call of Christ and become disciples. Toward the end of the twentieth century, in a study that focused on the ministry of preaching in the Uniting Church in Australia,³ I looked at the responsibility which the Uniting Church places on its leaders, to ensure that the Word of God was proclaimed in ways that enable the Gospel to be heard in

¹ 22 June, 1977.

² See Elliott, *I will be called John*, p304 ('Some windows, once open, can never be closed again.')

³ Vawser, *The Uniting Church Commits its Ministers to Preach* (unpublished Master of Theology thesis, 1999).

contemporary society. I asserted that the proclamation of the Gospel is an essential function of the church; but it became apparent that there was a need for an additional focus in the church's ministry. For the church to call people into faithful and effective discipleship⁴ of Christ requires more than simply a weekly declaration by ministers and preachers of the message of salvation.

This led me to consider ways in which the Gospel could be grounded in the daily lives of people who, having heard of God's love in Christ, wished to become more involved in following his way. Part of that study of preaching in the Uniting Church focused on the ministry of John Wesley, whose preaching invited people to enter into a relationship with God in Christ. I found that he had considered this very matter, and this invited further study.

Alongside this, my experience as a Minister of the Word over more than three decades in congregations of the Uniting Church (along with some years of leadership in the wider governance of Presbytery and Synod within that Church) made me aware that development of discipleship required more than just information. Wesley had understood that disciples appear to grow best when they were guided spiritually and cared for pastorally. A study of Wesley's style of spiritual guidance and pastoral care seemed to be called for.

The suggestion of a study of spiritual guidance kindled a memory of some minor study at the end of my theological training. In the mid-1970s I had visited certain spiritual centres of the Roman Catholic Church in Adelaide, during which I was introduced very briefly to the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola. This was

⁴ In this thesis, the term "discipleship" is used to suggest all of the activities to which followers of Jesus Christ commit themselves as they endeavour to emulate his life and participate in his ministry.

enhanced while I was considering the focus of this study by the reading of an article by Fr Brendan Byrne in which he suggested that

there are indeed striking parallels to be drawn [between Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley], both in terms of inward spiritual aspiration and the more outward pattern of their careers and religious legacy.⁵

Byrne also wrote that in his classes on Romans he identified the relationship between Ignatius and Wesley ‘with an encouragement to students from the Wesleyan tradition to go and search this out’.⁶ This thesis is, in some ways, a response to Byrne’s challenge.

It is a fundamental premise of this thesis that in the Christian religion there is a link between the people of every generation. The connection between different generations is an essential element of the historical nature of Christian faith. There is a line of continuity and succession through the ages which is expressed at its basic level in the responsibility that ‘all the baptised have ... to transmit, interpret and apply the Christian message within their own circumstances.’⁷ At another level, this is affirmed in the expressions of apostolic succession practised by different denominations in the Christian communion. This continuity is one of the essential means by which the expressions of Christian spirituality and ministry can be tested and validated.⁸ This is affirmed by the *Basis of Union* of the Uniting Church,⁹ which commits the Church to the examination of its historical roots¹⁰ and expects that examination to be done in the

⁵ Byrne, “Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley”, p54.

⁶ Byrne, “Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley”, p55.

⁷ Wainwright, *Doxology*, p136.

⁸ See Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p180, where he suggests that continuity with the apostolic community involves being both ‘creators of history’ and ‘judges of history’.

⁹ The *Basis of Union* is the document, first published in 1972, which guides the Uniting Church in its understanding of its life and work ‘within the faith and unity of the one holy catholic and apostolic church’ (Constitution of the Uniting Church in Australia, paragraph 2). All references in this thesis are to the 1992 edition of the *Basis of Union*.

¹⁰ See *Basis of Union*, paragraph 10.

context of ‘scholarly interpreters’¹¹ of earlier centuries. The premise and the affirmation are claimed in this discussion of the relationship between Ignatius Loyola in the sixteenth century,¹² John Wesley in the eighteenth century¹³ and the Uniting Church in Australia in the twenty-first century.

This thesis seeks to determine three things. The first is an identification of what the two men in question discovered about Christian spirituality in their lives and through their experiences. This will provide the background from which it will be possible to understand the second, namely how each of them developed the processes of spiritual guidance in their ministries. Thirdly, this will allow reflection on the ways in which their discoveries and their ministries have a connection with and impact on spiritual guidance and pastoral care in Uniting Church congregations.

Ignatius Loyola is acknowledged as a key advocate of Christian spiritual development. He was a product of his time, living during the years that marked the end of the medieval period and the beginning of the age of Reformation. He expressed himself in the style of Christian theology that was current at that time, and lived within the discipline of the medieval Roman church. At the same time, he accepted the validity of personal experience – his own and that of others. He believed that God worked within and through those experiences, and his reflections on those experiences were productive in encouraging others to consider the ways in which God blessed all people. His contribution to the universal church is primarily through the insights of the *Spiritual Exercises* and

¹¹ See *Basis of Union*, paragraph 11.

¹² Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556).

¹³ John Wesley (1703-1791).

by the establishment of the Society of Jesus which has reached into most parts of the world.

As Brendan Byrne has pointed out, there are parallels between John Wesley and Ignatius Loyola. Wesley also believed deeply in the importance of the church of his time and place. Throughout his life he understood himself to be a member of the Church of England, and though he argued with the hierarchy of that Church he remained firm throughout his life in his belief that he was a priest in the Church of England and the Societies he encouraged were viable parts of the Church of England. For all this, however, he became convinced that the Church of England had failed in its responsibility to present the gospel to all people. His election to a fellowship in Lincoln College set him free from the responsibilities of parochial ministry, and he allowed himself to use that freedom to share his awareness of God's gracious salvation with as many people as would listen.

So this study takes seriously the import of the two paragraphs of the *Basis of Union* mentioned above.¹⁴ John Wesley, whose influence led to the founding of the Methodist Church, is part of the direct heritage of the Uniting Church. Ignatius Loyola, as a leader of church renewal in earlier centuries, is part of the 'inheritance of ... inquiry'¹⁵ by which the ways of God may be discovered.

The thesis is made up of four sections. Acknowledging that certain terms which will be used in this thesis are open to a variety of interpretations, Section I of the thesis provides some definitions and background information. To enhance clarity and avoid confusion, it is appropriate to define the terms "Spirituality" and "Pastoral Care" as they will be used regularly throughout the study. The nature of the "church" will also be described, particularly showing how it was understood

¹⁴ Page 3 (*Basis of Union*, paragraphs 10 and 11).

¹⁵ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 11.

in the times of Ignatius Loyola and of John Wesley, and in acknowledgement that in the twenty-first century that term is construed differently in different contexts. It is also pertinent to provide an assessment of the interest in spirituality at the present time in Australia. The final chapter in this section gives some information about the similarities and differences between the three periods of time in this discussion. The sixteenth century in Europe and the eighteenth century in Great Britain will be identified as times when social, political and religious events transformed society. It will be suggested that in the twenty-first century in the Western World (and particularly in Australia) similar transformation is evident.

Section II of the thesis focuses more closely on the lives of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley. It begins by identifying some points which the two men had in common, though two centuries separated the years in which they lived. There are two brief studies which focus respectively on the development of spirituality in each man's early life, and a chapter which examines their conversion experiences. The final chapter in Section II identifies the ways in which the two men responded to the spiritual needs of their generation.¹⁶

Section III provides information about ways in which Ignatius and Wesley understood and shared various aspects of Christian spirituality. This will include consideration of the contributions made by the two men, and information from their letters. There is a discussion about the implications of the Trinitarian theology they each brought to the understanding of Christian spirituality. This is followed by insights from Wesley's sermons, the activities within the Methodist structure, and his appreciation of the importance of fellowship. Finally in this

¹⁶ It is acknowledged at the outset, that the focus of this study, and the nature of the resource material, means that there are a number of times when quotations are repeated. This is particularly so in Sections II and III, though it is also evident in the other sections.

section comes discussion about the ways in which Ignatius and Wesley valued and used spiritual discernment, evangelism, faith formation, and liturgy and mission.

Section IV begins by highlighting the human need to be able to put experiences into words. With this as a basis, the last two chapters draw together the detail from the earlier sections. This allows for a consolidation of the specific contributions which Ignatius and Wesley have made to the way in which spiritual guidance and pastoral care complement each other and so specifically provide a foundation for growth in Christian discipleship within the Uniting Church in Australia.

In a time when the church in the Western world appears to be struggling to maintain its vitality, the wisdom and insights of Ignatius Loyola and of John Wesley are valuable gifts. They each lived and served in times of religious upheaval and social confusion, but maintained their own faith and encouraged the development of faith in others. The Uniting Church in our time can benefit from the heritage they have left. Theirs is a model which can be incorporated into today's church. Their faithful ministry, and their legacies (the Society of Jesus and the Methodist communion), are reminders that the Spirit of God continues to create and re-create in every generation. As the *Basis of Union* says:

The Uniting Church acknowledges that God has never left the Church without faithful and scholarly interpreters of Scripture, or without those who have reflected deeply upon, and acted trustingly in obedience to, God's living Word.¹⁷

In light of this, we may add that in every generation God has blessed the church with insight into ways in which the Gospel shall be proclaimed and lived. In our

¹⁷ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 11.

day, followers of Jesus are encouraged to consider, understand and express their spiritual experiences. In consequence they will become more eager to care for the people with whom they live, and the lives of many will continue to be transformed. Community and society will be called to justice and peace, and the presence of Christ in each person's life will show more clearly the presence of Christ in the world.

SECTION I

Definitions and Background Information

SECTION I, Chapter 1

Defining of ‘Christian spirituality’ as it relates to the study of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

The purpose of this chapter is to make clear what is meant when the term “spirituality” is used in this study and to provide a description of some basic assumptions about “Christian spirituality” that are brought to this research.

Overall, this study has two focal points. The first is an identification of the distinctive elements of the spirituality that was a component of the lives of Ignatius Loyola in the sixteenth century and of John Wesley in the eighteenth century. This, in turn, will lead to a consideration of the ways in which these two men shared their spiritual experiences with the people in their communities. The second element in this study is a reflection on the ways in which the Uniting Church in Australia in the twenty-first century might develop spiritual connections with the people of contemporary society so as to provide a foundation for hope and peace in the world.

After providing some information about the theological and cultural context within which this research is conducted, discussion will move to some consideration of the parameters and definitions of the term “spirituality” in general, and of “Christian spirituality” in particular.

The cultural context of this study is the world of Hebrew/Christian Scriptures, as it relates in the present to the culture(s) of Australian Christianity. Biblical culture is, however, not homogeneous, and different perspectives on human nature and the meaning of life can be found in different parts of the Hebrew/Christian Bible. These reflect different times and cultures in which these scriptures were prepared and written. Notwithstanding these differences, human

nature can be understood as encompassing physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects of creation.

Early Hebrew thought was not interested in analysis of being, but provided a framework in which human life was related to an awareness of the relationship between God (the Creator) and people (the created ones). In respect of this, people are fashioned ‘in the image of God’ (Genesis 1:26*f*), and so are not in any way – physical or spiritual – to be distinguished or isolated from God, but always to be in relationship with God. The inference of verse 27, where God created them ‘male and female’, cautions us not to be too eager to omit physicality from the image, or to focus only on the spiritual in that image. Human beings, in true likeness to God, are to be generative in their own right (verses 28*ff*).

Later Hebrew thought recognised differences in aspects of human nature, but identified these with words that were somewhat fluid in their interpretation. So the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4*ff*) has ‘heart’, ‘soul’ and ‘might’ as related aspects of human being, and each of these is directed to the one activity of relationship with YHWH. These three terms are then translated in the Septuagint by the words καρδία, ψυχῆς and δυναμῶ. This translation is part of the transition of culture that was evident in the fourth to second centuries BCE, when Greek civilization was spreading through the Mediterranean region. Involved in this alternative culture was an analysis of personality that recognised a separation, in vocabulary and in thought, between various parts of life, including ‘body’

(σῶμα), ‘flesh’ (σάρξ), ‘mind’ (νοῦς), ‘soul’ (ψύχω), ‘heart’ (καρδία), ‘power’ (δύναμις), ‘strength’ (ἰσχύς) and ‘spirit’ (πνεῦμα).¹

One result of this intrusion of Greek culture into the Hebrew context saw the first of the Dominical commandments, as recorded in the Gospels of Mark (12:30) and Luke (10:27),² expanding the *Shema* to become an injunction to love God ‘with your whole heart (καρδίας σου), soul (ψυχῆς σου), mind (διανοίας σου) and strength (ἰσχύος σου)’. This further aspect of human life (διανοίας σου) completed for the Greek the awareness of the whole of life. It is clear that the early church understood that for Jesus there was no division in human being. Again, all of the parts of life were directed to the one purpose of finding and expressing the primal and ultimate relationship between each person and God.

This unity of being in human nature was carried further into early church thought, and in passages such as Paul’s letter to the Galatians (5:16-26) ‘flesh’ (σάρξ) and ‘Spirit’ (πνεῦμα) became general terms that covered the physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual aspects of human life, with ‘flesh’ being the negative aspect of the whole of life, and ‘spirit’ being the positive. (It is acknowledged that there are other passages where ‘flesh’ has a more neutral connotation, as in 1 Corinthians 15:39 where it relates to all creation.) All features of human life work together and reflect life as it is lived, whether within a true relationship with God or outside of such relationship. Paul was asserting that it was not possible at the same time to live part of one’s life within the context of divine activity and part of life denying that activity. All or nothing – the whole of life looked toward God or away from God.

¹ See Porteous, “Man ...” p242ff and McCasland, “Man ...” p246ff.

² In Gospel of Matthew (22:37) there are three parts, similar to the *Shema*: ‘heart’ (καρδίᾳ), ‘soul’ (ψυχῆ) and mind (διανοίᾳ).

This research will be dealing almost exclusively with Christian spirituality in the western world. There will be no more than passing reference to the spirituality that is part of the Eastern Orthodox churches, or the non-Christian spiritualities of oriental and “first nation” communities. There will also be very little comment made about the pagan and neo-pagan religions. It is, however, necessary, in consideration of a definition of spirituality, that we should take account of certain changes in philosophical understanding over recent years.

The western world changed during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries from one in which there were clear boundaries and frameworks for ideas and actions defined by the institutional structures of society (what is described as “Christendom” and “modernism”) to a world in which individuals are free and encouraged to find their own place and develop their own understandings of those elements that bring meaning to life (with philosophical descriptors of post-Christendom and post-modernism).

The disciplines of art, music, architecture, literature and philosophy reflected these changes and revealed the new perceptions of society. Jackson Pollock, the painter of “Blue Poles: Number 11, 1952” (which caused significant debate when purchased by the Australian National Art Gallery in 1973), justified his rejection of traditional methods of painting by saying, ‘The modern painter cannot express this age, the airplane, the atom bomb, the radio, in the old forms of the Renaissance or of any past culture’.³ In the late 1970s, Jean Francois Lyotard defined post-modernism as ‘incredulity towards meta-narratives’,⁴ and in so doing,

³ White, “Jackson Pollock: Before Blue Poles”.

⁴ <<http://www.pixiport.com/words-art-20th-centuryart.htm>> viewed 7/12/2004].

the notion of universal theories was dismissed out of hand, the argument being that such 'grand narratives' (for example Marxism) had lost all credibility. Against grand narrative, with its authoritarian connotations, Lyotard championed the cause of 'little narrative', essentially the narrative of individual human beings, which needed no foundational justification.⁵

In this post-modern society, emphasis on individualism has meant that it has become acceptable to define purpose in life by focussing on any one aspect of human nature. The argument is that according to one's personal interest one can, for example, find 'meaning' in the pursuit of physical pleasure without taking any note of intellectual, or emotional, or spiritual consequences of one's actions. Or one can invest the whole of one's life in intellectual pursuits, and allow no place for exercise or emotion in one's life.

The difficulty with this, however, is that if human nature is a whole, and there are four parts to the whole, then a lifestyle that does not take note of each of the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects will inevitably become unbalanced; and "unbalance" can be one of the characterizations of ill health, which is seen in physical disease, mental disorder, and will often lead to various kinds of destructive activity in life.

James W. Fowler has written about our desire to find equilibrium, to have our lives in balance. He suggested that it is an awareness of imbalance that is constructive in bringing us to some kind of teachable moment; but at the same time reminded his readers of the reality that living constantly in imbalance will become draining of life and ultimately destructive of relationships with self and with others. In Stage 3 of his structure (Synthetic-Conventional Faith) Fowler identified a series of patterns which for some people 'clearly anticipates

⁵ <<http://www.spaceandmotion.com/Philosophy-Postmodernism-Post-Modernism.htm>> [viewed 7/12/2004].

transition'⁶ into the next of his stages, and in others lead to a 'permanently equilibrated [sic] style of identity and faith.'⁷ Likewise, Stage 4 (Individuative-Reflective Faith) leads to either a balance of 'identity (self) and outlook (ideology)'⁸ or a 'Restless[ness] with the self-images and outlook ... [that makes] the person ready for transition'.⁹ And in his description of Stage 5 (Conjunctive Faith), Fowler proposed that 'things are organically related to each other ... attend[ing] to the pattern of interrelatedness in things'.¹⁰ At each of these stages Fowler identified that a person might come to find satisfaction in an equilibrium or might discover discrepancies that lead to movement into a further stage of awareness and understanding.¹¹ Applying these principles in the development of the life of faith in general, it becomes appropriate to affirm that healthy life and balanced life are synonymous; and balanced life will acknowledge the importance of each of the elements of life, affirming the place of the spiritual alongside of the other aspects.

In 1970, Jacques Ellul identified that his contemporary society was rejecting prayer as an activity of human existence, and he saw the problem as arising from both sociological and theological sources.¹² Under the sociological, Ellul suggested that through secularisation there had been a breakdown in awareness and acceptance of the boundaries of the sacred. (In this the rejection of meta-narrative, as identified by post-modernist theory can be recognised.) This

⁶ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p161.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p182.

⁹ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p183.

¹⁰ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p185.

¹¹ In Fowler's structure, most people will find equilibrium in one of Stages 3,4 or 5. Very few move through to Stage 6. Of these, Fowler said (p201), some would find their own balance in fanatical faith (he named Jim Jones in Guyana and the aged Ayatollah Khomeini), and others in significantly productive life (naming Ghandi, Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, in the last years of his life, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Dag Hammarskjöld, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Abraham Heschel and Thomas Merton).

¹² See Ellul, *Prayer and Modern Man*, especially chapter 3.

had resulted in a ‘spirit of realism and skepticism [*sic*],’¹³ which demanded that all activity and experience be able to be proven effective. As an outcome of this there was a questioning of all aspects of religious faith due to the growing realisation that there was no real way to prove the efficacy of prayer.¹⁴ All this led to a reduction of Christianity to simply one style of morality alongside many, and a corresponding breakdown of language from being a means of communication within relationship to being merely a means of transmission of information. This limited the human capacity to be in touch with an other, or to develop the deepest of relationships with others, or with one’s self, or with God. Ellul then saw that this all worked out theologically in the clichéd phrase, ‘man comes of age’, and its correspondent ‘death of God’.

Putting this change in societal consciousness into the context of spirituality, Kornelis Moskotte reminded us that ‘Prayerlessness is indicative of a fundamental loneliness.’¹⁵ This loneliness, Miscotte said, arose within the being of everyone because all people have within them a deep longing for some sense of connection with the elemental universe. (Had Miscotte lived into the late twentieth century, he might well have responded to the suggestion that human beings, in a cosmic bond with the whole universe, are “stardust” and experience humanity at its best when each one recognises the relationship that exists between human self and all creation through the agency of divine being.¹⁶) The loss of this connection, as in the assumption that humanity is capable of standing alone in

¹³ Ellul, *Prayer and Modern Man*, p73. Ellul qualified ‘realism’ as ‘in the colloquial sense’ and said that ‘Such realism implies that we are shut up in *this* world ... with no other dimension or access.’ (p74)

¹⁴ See Ellul, *Prayer and Modern Man*, p79: ‘Prayer is ridiculed because its effectiveness is entirely unpredictable, and statistical techniques are able to show that the percentage of “answers” to prayer corresponds exactly to the percentage of success which would have been the case had events been allowed to take their own course, and without prayer.’

¹⁵ Miscotte, *The Roads of Prayer*, p17.

¹⁶ See Denis Edwards: *Made from Stardust: Exploring the Place of Human Beings Within Creation*.

life, brings an ultimate sense of isolation. As a result of this rejection of the capacity to satisfy the deepest and ultimate needs, connections with other human beings fracture and intimacy is lost.

David Tacey, a contemporary Australian commentator on spirituality, has put this in a more positive way: ‘Spirituality is a desire for connectedness’.¹⁷ Coming as it does out of his study that includes aboriginal and youth cultures, Tacey’s definition of spirituality is usefully broad, encouraging and allowing many forms of “connectedness”. It can be argued that where individuals and societies are disconnected and have no effective spirituality in this sense, they eventually become lost and broken. The signs that Ellul identified of breakdown in spirituality are valid in so far as they relate to a society in which there was a clear framework for spiritual connection. Now that the society characterised by a Christendom model of life has broken down, the need to identify the elements of spirituality that will lead to a reconnection of individuals to one another and to the community in which they (despite all appearances to the contrary) belong becomes specially important.

It is important to acknowledge that in some contexts the spiritual journey is to a point where the seeker is set apart from everything except the focus of the search,¹⁸ and also that there is a place for solitude in certain Christian communities and fellowships.¹⁹ Essential to this sense of being “alone”, however, is a sense of yet being still in communion with Christ and with the people of Christ. When Augustine of Hippo reminded the Christian community that ‘our

¹⁷ Tacey, *ReEnchantment*, p17.

¹⁸ This is expressed in *The Cloud of Unknowing* which identified four states of Christian life, ‘Common, Special, Solitary, Perfect’ in which the ultimate human state is ‘solitary’, prior to the eternal state of ‘perfection’ (see §1, p51).

¹⁹ As, for example, in the Society of Friends.

hearts find no peace until they find their rest in you'²⁰ he was expressing the understanding that it is only in relationship that human being is fulfilled, and in the ultimate relationship with God that human being is fulfilled ultimately. Whether human relationships flourish or people live in isolation, fullness of life is possible only when the relationship with God is allowed, encouraged and affirmed.

It should be noted here that Tacey's broad definition takes no account of what is referred to as "piety", by which is meant any structured way of addressing the questions that provide answers about the meaning and purpose of life. The structures of piety may be established in one of the communions of faith, but may also be according to any of the many alternative "faiths" which develop from time to time, having greater or lesser public appeal.

At this point, then, it is possible to list the following elements of spirituality.

- There will be an acknowledgement of the need to understand meaning in life beyond the primal urges of food, shelter and procreation.
- Alongside of this will be an awareness of some purpose in life, and some destination for life's journey.
- There will also normally be a desire to participate with others in the examination of the questions, arising out of an acceptance of the need to relate to others in the search for meaning.
- There will often be an increasing awareness of some encouragement from within the person. This may well be

²⁰ Augustine, *Confessions*, §I-1, p21.

expressed in terms that imply some external guidance, and often this will be expressed in terms of some “higher being”.

- This leads to the development of some “religious” awareness, where the understanding of the “higher being” is formalised within the person’s culture into some traditional image.
- When this development is viewed in the context of “Christian” spirituality it is possible to see a progression from “higher being” to “idol” to “primitive god” to “god” within one of the great cultural religions to “the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob” who is then acknowledged as “God of Jesus Christ” and “my own Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer”.

Further to this, it is necessary to define “Christian” spirituality. Here, it is important to acknowledge two features which, while not being independent of each other, are none-the-less distinct from one another.²¹

One feature of Christian spirituality is identified in the form of spiritual heritage. This is what has been passed down through the generations in the life of the various communities whose formation is around specific spiritual activities and behaviour. A definition of spirituality in this form calls for a recitation of the history of the community of faithful Christians. From the earliest days, there has been a development of certain formal activities designed to assist people in their communities to celebrate more effectively the story of God’s saving grace through Jesus Christ. This has been confluent with various social and historical movements in the various parts of the world where Christianity has existed. In this context public worship and liturgy and other aspects of corporate prayer and

²¹ The ‘dichotomy’ is identified in C.P.M Jones “Liturgy and Personal Devotion” in Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold: *The Study of Spirituality*, pp3-8,

study are important both for those who have entered into the structured religious life of monastery and convent and for those who have sought to express their Christian faith in daily living and secular activity.

The other feature of Christian spirituality is the personal spirituality that is the effective means by which the follower of Christ acknowledges the presence and activity of Christ in daily living. Important here is the story of personal commitment to following Christ's way, including some significant event (conversion) and/or growing awareness (spiritual awakening) that is at the same time foundational in the person's spiritual experience and a source of encouragement for daily living.

Personal Christian spirituality also involves the commitment to regular personal prayer and study of the Bible, reflection on the lives and works of others who have followed the Christian way, and the sharing in fellowship of faith experience and personal story. This commitment to prayer and reflection often involves some act of journaling in which insight is written down for further reflection at a later time, and sometimes to facilitate sharing of faith issues with others. This aspect of Christian spirituality leads to a desire to consider experience and story in a more structured way, resulting in theological reflection which seeks to express personal experience in terms that will be universally understood and relevant.

Acknowledging the difference between these two aspects of Christian spirituality affirms the importance of both corporate need and action on the one hand and personal awareness and desire on the other. Christianity is in the broadest sense an historical religion, meaning both that it has connections to historical figures and that expressions and representations of its life continue to

develop through the generations of its adherents. This implies that it is not appropriate or necessary for the essential elements of faith to be redefined in every new generation.²² Nevertheless, these essential elements do need to be expressed anew in each generation in ways that are suitable to the contemporary community, and in language and form that is understandable and relevant to each individual.²³ Christian spirituality provides for a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which something of the *imago dei*²⁴ is developed and perfected in each one. That image of God in each individual is tested against the image as it is seen in former generations and in contemporary people and circumstances.

These two aspects of Christian spirituality combine when we begin to consider the ways in which the Christian faith is communicated. There is an expectation (if not a requirement) that those who proclaim the faith will themselves have experienced the spiritual benefits of the Christian way.²⁵ At the same time, it is important that they be aware of the heritage within which they make their proclamation. It is equally important that those who receive the message are aware that they are not expected to pursue the experience of faith in isolation, but will have the support of others who are seeking and journeying with them into a fuller understanding of the spiritual life.

Philip Sheldrake summarises the discovery of and participation in a relationship with God in this way:

[T]he self-transcendence involved in referring life to something beyond is a gift of the Spirit of God which

²² The detail of these elements are set out in The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, the Reformation Catechisms, *et al.*

²³ So the Uniting Church in Australia *Basis of Union* paragraph 9: 'commits its ministers and instructors to careful study of these creeds and to the discipline of interpreting their teaching in a later age.'

²⁴ On this, see for example Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold: *The Study of Spirituality*, *s.v.*

²⁵ For information about the relationship between experiencing the faith and proclaiming the faith, see Vawser, *The Uniting Church Commits its Ministers to Preach*, unpublished thesis, pp118, 136, 143, 160, 183, 196, 202.

established a life-giving relationship with God, in Christ, within a believing community. In other words, contemporary Christian spirituality is explicitly Trinitarian, Christological, and ecclesial.²⁶

It is acknowledged that the terms “Trinitarian”, “Christological” and “ecclesial” retain elements of the meta-narrative decried by post-modernism, but they are necessary connections to the language and thought of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley. These are the traditional expressions of relationship with God who exists in community, with God who shares human existence, and with the fellowship of people who share a common experience of that relationship with God. In this, many would describe contemporary Christian spirituality in terms of connectedness and shared journey both with Christ and with each other.

At the same time as we “narrow” the definition of Christian spirituality with a Trinitarian, Christological and ecclesial focus, it is necessary to remember that the current era is one in which people will deconstruct the traditional symbols of Christian faith, to re-create and affirm those elements in new ways in their own lives. In an address to the Mission Expo at the 2004 meeting of the Uniting Church Synod of South Australia, Tim Hein spoke about this process among the contemporary generation of young people who move into and out of faith and faith community. Contrary to the ways of previous generations, these people are unwilling (indeed, may be unable) to accept or take for granted established frameworks, insights, knowledge and systems – no matter how effective and valuable others might have perceived them to be. It is important for them to experience for themselves not only the events and encounters of life, but also to

²⁶ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, p53.

create for themselves the language, expression and sign of those experiences.

‘We need a community’, Hein said,

where young people are allowed to break their eggs and form their identity in transition, where they’re allowed to adjust and sit in the tension of what it is to create and recreate their master story, ... where symbols are demythologised – I mean you’ve got to allow them to get past the symbol because they will deconstruct it, and find the meaning and let them interact with the meaning and explain it.²⁷

Further to this, we live in an interesting milieu where people take permission to draw from all kinds of traditions. This, too, is an outcome of the post-modern assertion that meta-narrative is no longer credible, and that ‘little narratives’²⁸ are the vehicle by which meaning is assimilated into individual and community life. Since the mid-twentieth century there has been an increase in the availability of and access to knowledge that provided opportunity for individuals and groups to draw on expressions and experiences from many cultures. With the acceptance in the Western world of the validity of what can be called “multiculturalism” has come an acceptance of various kinds of spirituality. This has brought with it an “opening up” of spiritual activity, so that distinctive Christian spirituality can be expressed, spoken about, described and enacted in many different ways.

This raises the question of boundaries. Where does particularly “Christian” spiritual language and action begin and end? How does Christian spirituality differ from the spiritualities of other religions? What Christian religious symbols are necessary for spirituality to be defined as Christian, and what symbols are determined more by the culture in which the symbol was first identified?

²⁷ Hein, “Address to Mission Expo”, Audio CD: 30’35”.

²⁸ See above, p13.

Alongside these broader questions are issues of particular expressions of Christian spirituality. The iconography of the Orthodox Church for instance may be relevant to other Christian cultures, or it may be not, or it may need to be translated into the second culture before it becomes effective. The use of the rosary in one culture and era might become less effective in another. The expectation that each participant will use, underline and make notes in a book called the Bible might be superseded by use of application software on a mobile phone.

The difficulty with these issues is that there can be very few definitive answers to the questions. One must assume that basic tenets of Christian doctrine will hold true, but different communions of the Christian church will assert as basic some tenets which others will define as secondary. For the purposes of this research, it will be appropriate to affirm the expressions of faith that are summarised in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, to acknowledge the principles of Christian community that were extant during the sixteenth century, particularly in its Roman Catholic form, and during the eighteenth century in England, and to assert the expression of church life that is found in the Uniting Church's *Basis of Union*.

It will be a part of this study to consider the physical, intellectual and emotional aspects of the lives of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley and to identify the ways in which their understanding of these parts of their lives helped reflection on their respective spiritualities.

There will be a focus on the ways in which Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley found balance in their own lives, and in which they encouraged others to find a similar balance.

This study acknowledges that for Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley the validity of the universal was unquestioned. It will examine the ways in which they engaged the 'grand narrative' in their own lives and in the lives of the people whom they encountered and influenced. It will be necessary to consider the extent to which boundaries of understanding and expression can be set aside, whether there are essential parameters for the expression and practice of Christian spirituality, and if so, what those parameters might be.

In the development of this study it will be necessary to look specifically at the lives of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley and to discover how both men understood themselves to be living within the framework of the Christian tradition as it was expressed in their respective generations. Both the corporate and the personal aspects of Christian spirituality will be important focal points in the wider discussion of the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, for each of these men was a product of his own time, and each was influenced by and reacted against the various forms of spirituality evident in their historical milieu.

For each of them, Christian spirituality was a personal experience of faith in Jesus Christ who, through the Holy Spirit, provided guidance in daily life, enabled reflection on matters of faith and doctrine, and afforded insight into ways of communicating the faith. This study will ask how Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, in their own generations, integrated physical, intellectual and emotional activity into the expression of Christian spiritual experience. It will be necessary to identify the particular social contexts in which they reflected on spiritual questions, and to consider the differences between their ages and the present age, asking how these differences affect a contemporary expression of their spirituality. There will be consideration of their spirituality in its relation to the

expression of faith of the church culture in which they lived, and some identification of the way they accepted, adapted and communicated the Trinitarian, Christological and ecclesiological expressions of the faith they received and the spirituality they experienced.

In looking at the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, it will be important to consider these three aspects of Christian doctrine and spirituality. Each of these men was faithful to a Trinitarian theology; each emphasised the place of Christ in the saving action of God; and each was committed to developing his own relationship with God, and encouraging others in theirs, within the context of the community of faith. In due course it will be appropriate to identify and describe how each one understood the doctrine of the Trinity, and how that understanding was developed in the spiritual guidance each offered to the people around. Likewise it will be necessary to examine their respective understandings of the person and work of Christ, and to consider the import of this on their teaching and leadership of others. And along with these two focal points it will be necessary for us to give attention to the expression of these things in the context of the Christian community of worship, fellowship and service.

It is important to realise that the Uniting Church describes the local congregation as ‘the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ.’²⁹ The wording of the *Basis of Union* statement clearly echoes the wording of the both the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, and so puts the whole of the definition of “congregation” in the context of the Trinitarian doctrine which is expounded in those creeds. There is a clear Christological emphasis in the

²⁹ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 15(a).

definition. In addition to this, the elements of congregational life – worship, witness and service – are descriptors of the ecclesiality which Sheldrake has identified.

This will, therefore, provide a significant point of connection between the insights of Ignatius and Wesley and the ethos of the Uniting Church.

SECTION I, Chapter 2

Pastoral Care: A Christian Responsibility

The first chapter of this dissertation has provided a definition of Christian spirituality, and begun to identify some of the connections between Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley and the Uniting Church in Australia. This chapter brings a similar spotlight onto pastoral care as it is practiced in the life of the church.

In the opening sentence of the Preface to her book *Introducing Feminist Pastoral Care and Counselling*, Nancy Gorsuch acknowledged the breadth of pastoral care: ‘All persons of faith are called to care for others as an extension of the ministry of Jesus Christ.’¹ The three-way correlation between the holding of faith, participation in the ministry of Jesus and the relationship between other persons is acknowledged to be fundamental to a Christian lifestyle.

A similar understanding is expressed in the *Basis of Union* of the Uniting Church in Australia, which

affirms that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant. It acknowledges with thanksgiving that the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ’s Church with a diversity of gifts, and ... there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ.²

The earthly ministry of Jesus Christ was seen in many activities, and each activity was a different expression of the love of God. Jesus’ ministry was an expression of care for each individual and community with whom and with which he came

¹ Gorsuch, *Introducing Feminist Pastoral Care*, pxi.

² *Basis of Union*, paragraph 13.

into contact. The Uniting Church understands itself ‘to be a fellowship of reconciliation’,³ and

sees in pastoral care exercised personally on behalf of the Church an expression of the fact that God always deals personally with people, would have God's loving care known among people, and would have individual members take upon themselves the form of a servant.⁴

Through the mystery of resurrection and ascension Jesus Christ’s ministry continues in every age. Resurrection and ascension have freed Christ from the human limitations of temporality and locality; his presence and ministry have become available to all. No-one need feel herself or himself outside the parameters of divine grace. And in the work of the Spirit, celebrated in and through the experience of Pentecost, each Christ-follower is called and equipped to share God’s redemptive and reconciling work.

Pastoral care will, therefore, be considered as a universally Christian responsibility. It is assumed that in the church, professional exponents of the more formal “Pastoral Counselling” and “Pastoral Care Consultation” take up their roles as an expression of their understanding of this Christian responsibility and as an expression in their own lives of their participation in the ministry of Christ. It is also understood that these people formulate the theories of their discipline, and develop formal definitions of pastoral care, theology and counselling, within that same context.

This whole study looks at the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley and the way in which that spirituality shaped the care they offered to the people who followed them and participated in Christian discipleship under their guidance. One of the focal points of the research is, therefore, the development of

³ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 3.

⁴ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 16.

Christian spirituality and the influence this has on pastoral care in individual relationships, in the local congregation and in the wider community.

The comments above, from the *Basis of Union* and by Nancy Gorsuch, arise out of an understanding of God's gifting of Christian disciples which affirms that all who follow Jesus are called into a life-giving relationship with God. A consequence of this is that each person is also brought into a relationship with other people, and indeed with their own selves, that discerns and encourages attitudes and activities that lead to the fulfilment of life. This study will examine an understanding of Christian spirituality that influences the kind of care and the caring actions that people will on the one hand provide for themselves, and on the other hand offer to one another, to others who are seeking faith, and indeed to people in need outside the faith.

It is important to affirm that each person controls for himself or herself the way in which that care is received. The example of caring that Jesus gave is an expression of the divine order, which seeks to bring life to its fullest expression but at the same time respects the needs of those who are without power. So Jesus gave the man by the pool of Bethesda the option of being healed,⁵ he asked the blind beggar what he wanted him to do,⁶ and by entering into theological conversation with the Samaritan woman he acknowledged her right and need to participate in discovery of who he was and what he could do for her.⁷ The story of the "rich young man"⁸ who could not give up his wealth is the reminder that Jesus compelled no-one to participate in his life. This pattern of caring on the other person's terms becomes an essential part of all Christian pastoral care.

⁵ John 5:6

⁶ Mark 10:36,51 (=Luke 18:41)

⁷ John 4:10ff.

⁸ Matthew 19:16-23 (=Mark 10:17-23, Luke 18:18-24)

It is this care, both offered and received, that we will call ‘pastoral’, using the term in its broadest sense and framing it in the context of the care which Christ had for his first disciples, for the people with whom he came into contact, and for himself. Jesus himself used the image of the ancient shepherd who led the flock, cared for it in pleasant and in dangerous moments, according to the need of the sheep.⁹ That image was taken up in the first letter of Peter as a model upon which all Christians would relate to each other. It provides a foundation for community relationship that is different from structures in other contexts and cultures. Instead of leaders having power to determine the responses of those in the group, the charge is to ‘not lord it over ... but be examples to’¹⁰ those in the leader’s care, again echoing Jesus’ own style of ministry.

The definition of “pastoral care” found in *The New Dictionary of Pastoral Studies*,¹¹ viz.:

Those activities of the Church which are directed towards maintaining or restoring the health and wholeness of individuals and communities in the context of God’s redemptive purposes for all creation¹²

is useful. It recognises that the expected results of pastoral care do not come from and are not limited to those situations in which the carers need to have special education in the social sciences. While it is acknowledged that there are circumstances in which particular carers will need professional training to facilitate the restoration or maintenance of health and wholeness, the focus of this study is on the responsibility of all Christian people, and not only of those specially trained. In many cases, and often in the first instance, the results of

⁹ John 10:1-16, Luke 15:4-7,

¹⁰ 1 Peter 5:1-3

¹¹ Edited by Wesley Carr, London: SPCK, 2002.

¹² *The New Dictionary of Pastoral Studies*, sub verbum.

pastoral care can be achieved by individual Christians engaging in simple and effective conversation with others. People who themselves have experienced the effects of God’s creative and restorative love in their own lives, and have seen and heard the same in the lives of others, are in a special place to be able to offer to others an invitation into the scheme of God’s redeeming power.

In an entry in the *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Expanded Edition*¹³ entitled “Pastoral Care (Contemporary Methods, Perspectives, and Issues)”, W.E. Oates puts the proposition that the ones who exercise pastoral care will normally be the designated pastors and preachers within the religious community. But the methods Oates identifies as significant in pastoral care – ‘Scriptural instruction, interpretation, proclamation ... Preaching and pastoral care ... Pastoral use of initiative ... Prayer, contemplation, meditation, spiritual direction’¹⁴ – are not the sole bailiwick of Christian “professionals”. Assuming a basic level and combination of education and experience, all of these elements of pastoral care identified by Oates are within the capacity of all Christian men and women. We will see below¹⁵ that both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley were aware of the capacity of all kinds of people to experience and identify the ways in which God touched their lives, and to participate in various levels of leadership and pastoral care.

For many years and increasingly throughout the twentieth century, the opportunity has developed for people outside the religious professions to have insight into the interpretation of Scripture, and in the ways of prayer and meditation, that are the foundation and framework of relationship with God. In

¹³ Edited by Rodney J. Hunter, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.

¹⁴ *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Expanded Edition*, p832f.

¹⁵ Section IV, Chapter 2: “Pastoral Insights from Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley”.

the Uniting Church, the *Basis of Union* acknowledges the ongoing responsibility of reflection and scholarship ‘to sharpen its understanding of the will and purpose of God by contact with contemporary thought.’¹⁶ The implication throughout the *Basis of Union* is that all who follow the way of Christ are called to participate in the ministry of Christ according to their gifts. So all who are capable, whatever their training, are invited to be involved in the discovery and expression of Jesus’ ministry in all its forms.

For the purposes of this study, it will be helpful to use the term “pastoral care” in the broadest sense, and to allow terms like “pastoral counselling” or “pastoral care consultation” to identify the more specific activities of trained and specialised people. Gorsuch defines pastoral care as ‘the help and nurture offered in a relationship between a representative of the church and persons seeking care that reflects, as much as possible, the justice and compassion of God.’¹⁷ In similar vein, Rodney Hunter defines pastoral care in terms that allow for its practice by any Christian person:

any form of personal ministry to individuals and to family and community relationships by representative religious persons (ordained or lay) and by their communities of faith, who understand and guide their caring efforts out of a theological perspective rooted in a tradition of faith.¹⁸

The important points here are first that pastoral care can be offered by any person who is part of the community of the faithful, and second that this is the responsibility of anyone who has perceived and understood for themselves the ‘justice and compassion of God’ and is able to relate to the ‘theological perspective rooted in a tradition of faith’. Of course, it is understood that each

¹⁶ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 11.

¹⁷ Gorsuch, *Introducing Feminist Pastoral Care*, p2.

¹⁸ Hunter, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Expanded Edition*, px.

person might need help to develop skills in defining and describing their understanding of the experience of God's care in ways that can be understood and assimilated by other people. It might also be necessary that there be some education in methods of sharing the insights discerned.

By way of contrast, each of the resources referred to in the paragraph above suggests that pastoral counselling is 'a more specialised and structured form of religiously based care',¹⁹ 'involving an intentional process of identifying problems and discerning and implementing possibilities for change and healing.'²⁰ Again, it is necessary to exclude this more formally structured aspect of pastoral responsibility from the present study.

As a way of focussing thought, it is appropriate to recognise some of the essential elements of pastoral care. In his book *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings*, Robert C. Dykstra has gathered images of pastoral care that reflect the development of understanding of pastoral theory, beginning in each section of the book with a foundational theorist and gathering the work of those who have critiqued and developed the theory. Among other images, Dykstra identifies the traditional images of shepherd and Samaritan, the paradoxical images of clown, wounded healer, wise fool and intimate stranger, and the contemporary images of moral coach, storyteller and midwife. Each of these images suggests characteristics of pastoral care that provide a focus for that care. In each case, of course, the care is offered for one purpose – that of enabling a person to move from despair to hope, from broken-ness to wholeness, from anguish to affirmation.

¹⁹ Hunter, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Expanded Edition*, px.

²⁰ Gorsuch, *Introducing Feminist Pastoral Care*, p2.

The carer who is shepherd and the one who is Samaritan reaches out to the person in need in a way that is determined by the circumstances of the person. One part of Dykstra's discussion of shepherd and Samaritan focuses so much on the person in need that the needs of the carer are fully set aside for the time being. The carer in this image is seen to be selfless, and even self-sacrificing. Further development of this discussion, particularly by Jeanne Stevenson Moessner,²¹ acknowledges that in fact the shepherd and the Samaritan both set boundaries in place, by which their own needs are supplied at the same time as they are providing for the needy. Stevenson Moessner uses comments from the Samaritan's story to highlight that he has simply provided the basic aid, and he 'finished his journey. ... He loved himself and he loved his neighbour.'²² Whether self-denying or self-caring, the image of the shepherd/Samaritan can easily be applied to the care that any Christian offers in fulfilment of her or his ministry in the name of Jesus.

In Dykstra's list of 'paradoxical' models of care²³ "wounded healer", "wise fool" and "intimate stranger" have reasonably easily identified connections to Biblical metaphors, and "clown" is a more contemporary image. The wounded healer is one who is alert to her own woundedness, making her aware of the common lot of those to whom she makes herself available. At the same time her acknowledgement of her woundedness makes others aware of her availability to be a source of guidance and healing for their needs. The wise fool (reflecting among other images that of the court jester) is often the only one who can 'speak

²¹ in Dykstra (ed), *Images of Pastoral Care*, pp62ff.

²² Dykstra (ed), *Images of Pastoral Care*, p66.

²³ Dykstra (ed), *Images of Pastoral Care*, p69ff.

truth to power',²⁴ because he is acknowledged to be outside the normally accepted structures of power. Wise fools see differently the circumstances of those around them, and through unexpected comments and conclusions bring alternative insights into the situations people find themselves in. The intimate stranger is the person whose experience of being in places where the other has not been brings new possibilities for resolution of problems. At the same time this image assumes the ancient obligation of hospitality, so that those who find themselves in unknown places can be certain of succour for their need. The paradox of the clown is that she is highly skilled but appears to be an amateur, that she has well rehearsed routines but appears to be, and indeed needs to be, spontaneously creative. She has the capacity to connect with others mainly because she is perceived to be imperfect and inadequate.

This first cluster of images has two focal points. On the one hand, the care-giving brings an awareness that the need resides also in the life of another person who in many ways shares the suffering and human failings. On the other hand the care is given by a person who, in his or her own life, stands beside the needful person in his or her struggle sharing the experience of both struggling and surviving. The pastoral care that is shown by every Christian will express the same incarnational relationship that was evident in Jesus' life – there will be a continuing desire to care for the needy by sharing their pain and distress and offering hope for an experience of new life.

The third type of image that Dykstra offers is summarised in the activity of the moral coach, the story-teller and the midwife. In this aspect of care, the carer offers to the person in need the experience of reflection on his or her

²⁴ Dykstra (ed), *Images of Pastoral Care*, p71.

situation. The moral coach offers an exploration of personal issues and difficulties that is ‘collaborative, noncoercive, nonjudgemental’.²⁵ The storyteller gives to the person being cared for a view of the world in which ‘deep metaphors and core beliefs are anchored in the story of God’s relationship with God’s people’.²⁶ The image of midwife, the one who assists in the birthing of new life, focuses on pastoral caring as the process by which a needful person is coaxed, comforted and encouraged through painful experience into an awareness of the presence of God and of God’s participation in new and renewed life.

Each of these contemporary images of pastoral care provides a way in which the one who has discerned the presence of Jesus and experienced Christ’s ministry can enter into the journey of another who will benefit from that same ministry and grow within that same presence.

The common element in each of these models of pastoral care is, clearly, that of Christ. So Nancy Gorsuch has suggested that in the Christian context ‘a defining sense of self is given in relation to God, and the purpose of the self is known through faith in Jesus Christ as guided by God’s Spirit’.²⁷ The focus of Christian spirituality is the development of this deeper and more sustaining relationship with God in Jesus Christ. Pastoral care, being one aspect of this relational development, is not to be confined to the activity of the professional pastor or counsellor, but is the responsibility of every Christian. One of the outcomes of a life that has discovered faith in Jesus Christ, is the responsibility of helping others on their way through the process of defining their own selves within and through a relationship which God initiates.

²⁵ Dykstra (ed), *Images of Pastoral Care*, p154.

²⁶ Dykstra (ed), *Images of Pastoral Care*, p181f.

²⁷ Gorsuch, *Introducing Feminist Pastoral Care*, p140.

This provides the framework within which this dissertation will consider a model of pastoral care within the ministry of spiritual guidance that Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley offered to their times and which might be offered to people in the twenty-first century through the ministries of the Uniting Church in Australia.

SECTION I, Chapter 3

Church and the Development and Encouragement of Spirituality

This chapter will look briefly at how Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley understood the concept of “church”, and then, because this thesis is set within the context of the Uniting Church in Australia, there will be some discussion of the nature of “church” as it is given in the Uniting Church’s *Basis of Union*. Following that, there will be a brief consideration of some more recent reflections on the nature of “church”.

In both the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, during which Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley lived and worked, the understanding of the concept of “church” was under serious examination. It is clear that in both eras “church” had a clearly defined structure, function and place in society, but in the time of Ignatius, theologians of the Renaissance and of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations were reviewing the ways in which Christians expressed their faith in community life. In England, by the time of Wesley, the government Act of Toleration (1689) had opened the way for people to gather in Christian community in diverse ways (though the law required registration of buildings as “Dissenting Chapels” where the gathering was not in the parish church).¹

Ignatius Loyola

For Ignatius, “church” was a structure and activity centred on Rome, under the oversight of the Pope.² It was bureaucratically organised, and had a clearly defined hierarchical structure with people at each level of the church’s life fulfilling relatively clearly defined roles. At most levels of the church, obedience

¹ It should be noted that section XVII of the Act of Toleration denied the privilege to adherents of the Roman Catholic church and to any who denied the doctrine of the Trinity.

² It is accepted that the relationship between the Western (Roman) and Eastern (Orthodox) churches at this time in history was almost non-existent. In this part of this study the focus is entirely on the Western church in its Roman and Reformation forms.

to the higher functionary was expected, and authority to work and act at any level came from the immediately superior level. This had the effect of providing a clear and precise awareness of what could or could not be done. Permission to function in any way was referred to the higher authority; direction and approval to act was given to the subordinates. Action without permission and approval was reproved and disciplined.

The church of that time was also historically validated, defining legitimate activity according to the precedents of earlier generations. Into the Middle Ages, the foundation for all well-founded dogma and practice was a combination of Scripture and Tradition. In this context, Tradition can be understood as the supportive proof of the authority of Scripture, or it can be the extension of Scriptural revelation into the era beyond the lifetime of Christ.³ On either understanding, the history of the church – that is, the insights and activities of those who have lived the faith in previous generations – became a criterion by which the life of the church was determined to be appropriate. From this point of view, innovation and originality were always suspect and liable to fail the test of prior occurrence. If a doctrine, understanding or practice was not evident from Scripture and had not already been seen in the life of the church, it was difficult to establish its authenticity as an aspect of Christian faith or spirituality. Likewise, when a practice was newly established, it was generally assumed that it would conform to similar and currently existing customs and procedures. We will see, later in this thesis,⁴ that when Ignatius chose to structure the activities of the Companions with no formal requirement to meet in a traditional gathering such as choir, it met with disapproval from some quarters of the church.

³ See Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation*, p54f.

⁴ Section III, Chapter 1: “Ignatius and Wesley – Their Responses to their Times”.

Partly as a result of this bureaucracy and of the closed view of acceptable spiritual activity, the sixteenth century saw the church struggling with levels of neglect and abuse. This resulted in a situation which George Ganss described in this way:

Many of the priests did not correctly know the formula of consecration in the Mass and earned their living as laborers [*sic*]. It was almost unheard of that parish priests should preach. Many people did not know how to recite the Our Father or Hail Mary, and superstitions, hatreds and immorality were rife among them.⁵

This abuse and neglect undermined the authority of the church and the function of its services, creating among the laity a confused perception of participation in worship. When the community gathered for the Mass, it became a gathering in which each person ‘isolate[d] himself from the rest of the congregation to recite [pious formulas] to himself’.⁶ There was no concept of the Mass as an event of the Body of Christ, praying, listening, acting and being built up together.

Ignatius lived in an age when people were becoming better educated, and the doors of social ferment were being prised open. Abuses and neglects were being confronted, and by the beginning of the sixteenth century, ‘efforts were made to simplify the presentation of religion, adapting it to pastoral needs.’⁷ The changes advocated at this time, both by those within the Roman Church and by the Protestant reformers, sought to focus spiritual and devotional life on principles based in Scripture and on the heritage of the generations but with an openness to the changes in education and social awareness that were making a significant impact on the lives of people and communities. They sought to make function accountable not only to those in authority, but also to those who were being

⁵ Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p10f.

⁶ Leclercq et al, *A History of Christian Spirituality, Vol II*, p497f.

⁷ Leclercq et al, *A History of Christian Spirituality, Vol II*, p496.

served. And they sought to restore the church to its primary task of proclaiming and providing salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

For all its difficulties, “church” was seen in Ignatius’ time as *the* valid expression of the spiritual life, and was accepted as a central focus of community life. Belonging to the church, and participation in the church activities (as defined by common devotional practice) was seen as the sole means of salvation and so of acceptance into eternal life. God was the only arbiter of eternal justice, the Pope was God’s representative on earth, and his authority was delegated to the cardinals, bishops and priests beneath him. The “keys of the kingdom” were held firmly and used selectively.

For Ignatius himself, and for the community that gathered around him, ‘the Church held an extraordinarily exalted position, and therefore its authority was limitless and absolute’.⁸ In the “Rules for Thinking, Judging and Feeling with the Church” Ignatius described the church as ‘the true Spouse of Christ our Lord’ and ‘our Holy Mother’,⁹ and he identified “church” in terms of a community that took precedence over the individual, so that attendance at the Mass and participation in other forms of worship,¹⁰ including veneration of the heritage of the church,¹¹ was required, without demur.¹²

All of this, however, did not inhibit Ignatius from developing and utilising the *Spiritual Exercises* as a means of enabling people to be led further into a relationship with Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. The discipline of reflection on Scripture and experience, which were the essential elements of the *Spiritual*

⁸ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p98.

⁹ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §353; in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p211.

¹⁰ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §355; in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p211.

¹¹ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §358; in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p211.

¹² See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §365; in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p213.

Exercises, were added to the other structures of church life, particularly the Mass and its devotional exercises, to enable people to learn and to grow.

John Wesley

In Great Britain, when John Wesley was exercising his ministry during the eighteenth century, the definition of “church” was also reasonably clear. It involved an identification of the various practices which were codified in “The Articles of Religion” by which the Church of England had in the sixteenth century declared its doctrinal position in relation to the Church of Rome.¹³

For John Wesley, therefore, the definition of “church” was that echo of Reformation confession, expressed by “The Articles of Religion” as

a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.¹⁴

This is clear: “church” was defined by divinely ordained action. It was the ‘pure Word of God’ that was preached, and it was the Christ-instituted Sacraments that were enacted. And the assumption was that the Word of God and the ordinance of Christ would be easily demarcated. What was written in the Biblical record, and what was seen in the life of Christ as told in the canonical Gospels, were the sum total of the church’s declaration and action. All who congregated gathered within the frame of that declaration and action and were pronounced truly to belong.

¹³ In the context of this thesis, it is not necessary to discuss the definition of “church” that was held by those in England who followed one of the other expressions of the Christian which were evident at that time, including the English form of the Church of Rome, or the Puritan, the Quaker and the Presbyterian communions.

¹⁴ *Articles of Religion*, XIX. in *Book of Common Prayer*, p379.

This 19th Article was followed in “The Articles of Religion” by a declaration ‘Of the Authority of the Church’ in which, allowing for the disclaimer against approving anything that was contrary to Holy Writ, the Church had the right ‘to decree Rites or Ceremonies’.¹⁵ This meant that alongside the statement of divine ordination was placed a structure for weekly worship and daily prayer that was intended to provide guidance to the faithful in the development of their relationship with God in Christ.

But, like that of Ignatius, Wesley’s ministry came at a time when the church was in a state of disrepute. The political situation in England through the previous two centuries had meant that numbers of dissident Christian thinkers and leaders had left the country, many to establish their religious systems in the new world of America. The acceptance of the Catholic Church amongst the political hierarchy was at an ebb, unpopular though not outlawed. At the same time, the Church of England was ‘established’ as the official agent and mode of social religious activity. This provided an environment in which various abuses, which we may see as echoing those of the church in Ignatius’ time, flourished. Uneducated and absentee clergy, lifeless liturgy, poverty of preaching, lack of involvement in worship on the part of the laity, were but some of the ecclesiastical abuses. And alongside these was a commensurate level of social neglect and exploitation among the lower classes. The hierarchy of the Church of England was counted among those with power. The abuse of that power in the Church was compounded by the reality of parish clergy who were poorly trained for pastoral ministry and often left unsupervised. In consequence of this, the physical and the spiritual needs of ordinary people in the parishes were

¹⁵ *Articles of Religion*, XX. in *Book of Common Prayer*, p379.

overlooked, ignored and even denied. The capacity of people to participate in worship and other aspects of Christian ritual life was severely compromised, so that people either ignored corporate Christian activity all together, or gathered in one place but followed individual devotional patterns and piety.¹⁶

During his ministry, Wesley became aware of these abuses, both of clergy not fulfilling their ordinations and of people being in material and spiritual poverty, and he expressed his own aversion to this in a number of places. For instance, and particularly, in the second section of Part II of “A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion”¹⁷ Wesley described a society in which at every level there was evidence of failure on the part of those who held office in the community. So, in declaring it ‘a point of good-breeding to put God far away,’¹⁸ and in asking ‘how many are they ... who profane the Sabbath with a high hand?’,¹⁹ Wesley painted a picture of a society which had broken from its spiritual roots. And he extended his picture to include also the ‘Priests and Prophets’²⁰ who ‘presume with those unhallowed hands to touch the mysteries of God; ...[who] utter his name or his word with those unhallowed lips’.²¹ ‘The present contempt of the Clergy’²² arose, he said, from their failure to be ‘watchful and zealous to gain souls’²³ and from their habit of merely ‘taking care to preach ... once or twice a week; and to procure one to read Prayers on the other days, and to do what is called *the parish duty*’.²⁴

¹⁶ See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p21f.

¹⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, pp146-180.

¹⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p148.

¹⁹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p160.

²⁰ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p174.

²¹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p175.

²² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p179.

²³ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p177.

²⁴ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p178.

For all that, again as in the time of Ignatius, “church” was recognised as being the institution that provided opportunity for people to come into a state of grace. In answering criticism that he was undermining and destroying the church, Wesley quoted the 19th Article of Religion and argued that his own activities and the activities of others in the Methodist movement maintained faith and encouraged both the preaching and hearing of the Word of God and participation in the Sacraments.²⁵

Notwithstanding this, Wesley did recognise that more was needed than was provided in the traditional parish church. When people were influenced by his preaching, he offered them a further element of “church” – the opportunity to meet in small groups to share experiences and stories, to receive teaching and guidance, and to be accountable to others on the Christian pilgrimage. “Church” as it was instituted in eighteenth century England could do none of this.

Uniting Church in Australia

The *Basis of Union* of the Uniting Church gives a number of insights into the way in which “church” should be defined.

The foremost point is that the church is ever the “body of Christ”. The *Basis of Union* declared the readiness of the uniting Churches (Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian)

to go forward together in sole loyalty to Christ the living Head of the Church ... commit[ing] their members to acknowledge one another in love and joy as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, to hear anew the commission of the Risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, and daily to seek to obey his will.²⁶

²⁵ See Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p32.

²⁶ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 1.

This comment is the beginning of a recitation of detail about this fundamental focus of all church life in the Uniting Church – the acknowledgement of the authority, presence and power of Jesus Christ as foundational to all the church’s existence. Without this reference to Christ, the Uniting Church (in concert with all other historical Christian communities) loses its focus and reason for existence.

For this reason the *Basis of Union* continues to assert the Uniting Church’s commitment to Christ in almost every paragraph:

- Paragraph 2 commits the Church to bearing witness to ‘a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries’;²⁷
- Paragraph 3 is titled in the 1992 edition of the *Basis of Union*, “Built Upon The One Lord Jesus Christ”, and rehearses the Church’s understanding of the work of Christ in the world. It
 - preaches Christ as ‘the risen crucified One’;²⁸
 - confesses Christ ‘as Lord to the glory of God the Father’;²⁹
 - remembers Christ’s announcement of ‘the sovereign grace of God’;³⁰
 - recalls God’s confirmation of Christ as ‘a representative beginning of a new order of righteousness and love’;³¹
 - asserts Jesus’ status as ‘Head over all things, the beginning of a new creation, of a new humanity’;³²

²⁷ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 2.

²⁸ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

- acknowledges God's gift in Christ of the Holy Spirit 'as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation',³³ and
- affirms that '[t]he Church's call is ... to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole, an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself';³⁴
- Paragraph 4 extends this commitment with the acknowledgement that it is only through Christ's presence, action and word that the Church 'is able to live and endure through the changes of history';³⁵
- Paragraph 5 identifies that the Biblical witness which the Church receives is the testimony to Jesus Christ who is the 'Word of God on whom salvation depends';³⁶
- Paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 identify the significance of the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, through which the presence of Christ is revealed in the lives of individual disciples and in the corporate life of the Church;
- Paragraphs 9, 10 and 11 are reminders that the Church relies on the historical witness which has provided interpretation in each successive age of the meaning 'of the centrality of the person and work of Christ',³⁷ and of the effect of Christ's justifying grace;

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 4.

³⁶ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 5.

³⁷ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 10.

- Paragraphs 12, 13 and 14 are about the role of individual members, lay and ordained, declaring that ‘all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ’;³⁸
- Paragraph 15 is about the place these individual members have in the structure of the Church, such that Christ ‘may speak ... through any of its councils’;³⁹
- Paragraph 16 declares that the Church has a responsibility to act in ways that show the personal concern which God has for all people – a concern shown in Christ’s own ministry – and calls all the members to live as Christ did, in ‘the form of a servant’;⁴⁰
- Paragraph 17 requires that the Church’s law be always ‘under constant review so that its life may increasingly be directed to the service of God and humanity, and its worship to a true and faithful setting forth of, and response to, the Gospel of Christ’;⁴¹ and
- Paragraph 18 contains the affirmation that the Church, belonging to God, and gifted by the Spirit, ‘will use its worship, witness and service to God’s eternal glory through Jesus Christ the Lord’.⁴²

It is therefore appropriate to say that any study that looks for a Uniting Church in Australia definition of “church” should take account of the place of Christ as the Head of the Church. This means that all other definitions of church that can be found in the *Basis of Union* will be secondary, though not less important. The value of these secondary definitions is in their capacity to

³⁸ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 13.

³⁹ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 15.

⁴⁰ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 16.

⁴¹ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 17.

⁴² *Basis of Union*, paragraph 18.

describe the life of “the body of Christ”, with implications for every activity of the Church.

An important factor in the Uniting Church’s understanding of “church”, and particularly of its own life, is its relationship with all other expressions of church. The fullest expression of “church” is found ‘within the faith and unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.’⁴³ By acknowledging the ‘Ecumenical Councils of earlier centuries’,⁴⁴ recognising the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds,⁴⁵ and accepting the various Reformation witnesses cited in paragraph 10 of the *Basis of Union*,⁴⁶ the Uniting Church declares its belief in the processes by which the faith of the church has through the ages been focused and re-focused according to the needs of the time. It understands that there is not one definitive expression of faith. In particular it sees that its own expressions of faith will continue to be challenged at every point,⁴⁷ so that errors, misconceptions and faults can be corrected. In this way, the Uniting Church is committed to being an organic church that by God’s grace and with the Spirit’s guidance continues to grow as an effective agent of Christ’s mission.

As an expression of this, the Uniting Church is committed to participation in ecumenical conversation and activity within Australia, throughout the Asia Pacific region and across the world. It ‘declares its desire to enter more deeply into the faith and mission of the Church in Australia, by working together and seeking union with other Churches.’⁴⁸ It is committed ‘to seek special

⁴³ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 2.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ See *Basis of Union*, paragraph 9.

⁴⁶ Scots Confession of Faith (1560), Heidelberg Catechism (1563), Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), Savoy Declaration (1658), and John Wesley’s Forty Four Sermons (1793).

⁴⁷ See *Basis of Union*, paragraph 18.

⁴⁸ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 2.

relationships with Churches in Asia and the Pacific.’⁴⁹ And the Uniting Church acknowledges with gratitude the fact that ‘the uniting Churches were members of the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies’,⁵⁰ and declares an expectation that it will continue to be a member of such organisations so that it can participate in the work of Christ wherever and however it hears the call of Christ.

The *Basis of Union* encourages new and alternative expressions of church. Because ministry within the church is identified as an expression of the one ministry of Christ,⁵¹ there is not one person or group of people who have authority to control the life of the church. Each person who follows Christ is responsible for an expression of Christ’s work in her or his own place. For this reason, the Church can no longer assume that all congregations will function in the same way. In fact, the definition of “congregation” in the Uniting Church – ‘the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ’⁵² – directly calls each community to address for itself, for its participants, and for its own local setting, the best ways in which it can express its praise, share its understanding of Christ’s presence, and reach out in service to those in need.

The Christ-centred focus of the Uniting Church means that the activities people share when they gather, whatever form the gathering may take, will reflect the activities of Jesus. As Gordon W. Lathrop points out,⁵³ service in the church must be a reflection of the style of ministry which was seen in Jesus’ life. So,

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ See *Basis of Union*, paragraph 13.

⁵² *Basis of Union*, paragraph 15(a).

⁵³ “The Gospels on Ministry”, in *Uniting Church Studies*, Vol 15, No 2, pp1-10.

Lathrop says, authority for ministry comes not from ‘writing, copying, and debating the significance of texts’⁵⁴ but from ‘enact[ing] this gospel ... in announcing forgiveness, in welcoming the excluded, in healing and acting for the sake of life ...’⁵⁵; not from a regal style of presidency, but from being ‘servers at the communal table and ... baptizers in the water ... to follow where that cup and baptism both lead—into the serving and life-giving death of Christ.’⁵⁶ When every member is a minister ‘hav[ing] a part in the ministry of Christ,’⁵⁷ the variety of ministries is restricted only by the variety of people and their circumstances. Individuals and communities are called to faithful service in the name, and according to the way, of Christ. So the focus of activity will always include looking beyond individual or corporate “self” to the needs of others, and with a particular focus on the poor, the captives, the blind and oppressed,⁵⁸ on those who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick and in prison.⁵⁹

Awareness of the activities that look outward to the lives of people who are not yet participants in the community of Christ comes to the church from the Biblical stories that teach God’s faithfulness, mercy, forgiveness and grace. It is in and from this teaching that individual relationships between God in Christ and persons of faith develop, and are foundational in the spirituality of the people of the church. The stories about Jesus and the record of life in the early church which are found in the New Testament, as well as the stories and understandings of God’s involvement in human society which are found in the Hebrew scriptures, are essential elements of this teaching, and the Uniting Church ‘lays upon its

⁵⁴ Lathrop, “The Gospels on Ministry”, p5.

⁵⁵ Lathrop, “The Gospels on Ministry”, p6.

⁵⁶ Lathrop, “The Gospels on Ministry”, p7.

⁵⁷ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 13.

⁵⁸ See Luke 4:18 (*cf.* Isaiah 61:1).

⁵⁹ See Matthew 25:31-45.

members the serious duty of reading the Scriptures'⁶⁰ as a way in which the faith of each may be nourished.

All of this means that the Uniting Church lives with the conviction that the spirituality of people within the Church should be centred on the life of Jesus Christ, based on enquiring and well-informed knowledge of the Christian scriptures, open to Spirit-guided insights for every place and time, eager to learn from other disciples and communities, and committed to showing forth the ministry of Christ in the present day.

Alternative Expressions

As in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, so into the twentieth and twenty first centuries; the inherited structure and function of “church” is open to insightful extension.

In 1997, the Uniting Church Assembly required its Commission on Doctrine to investigate ‘questions about alternative communities of faith’.⁶¹ Following due process, in which the Commission on Doctrine studied these and related questions and consulted with various councils of the Church and with people who were involved in early expressions of these alternative communities, a document entitled “Ecclesiology: Alternative Communities of Faith” was produced for the Ninth Assembly in 2000. In this document, the Uniting Church was reminded of the importance of the classic marks of the church – “unity”, “holiness”, catholicity” and “apostolicity” – and of the marks of the church which were identified by the reformers – “the Word of God purely preached and heard”

⁶⁰ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 5.

⁶¹ Assembly minute 97.16.03(a).

and “the sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution”.⁶² The writers of the document questioned the adequacy of these marks, on the basis that they required no acknowledgement of “service to the poor” as one of the roles of Christian community.⁶³ Correcting this omission, the Church was called to be a community in which God’s word was proclaimed, Christ’s sacraments were shared and through which Christ’s ministry is offered to the world.

The writers of the document then proceeded to offer to the Uniting Church an alternative style of faith community which was free from some of the constraints of structure and accountability that were expected of traditional “congregations”. Permission for the establishment of “faith communities” opened the way for groups of people to express their relationship with Christ and with the world in ways that did not require the systemic assumptions of size, location or venue that were generally identified with “congregation”, and in this way, connections could be made with people and cultures which for many reasons found established church structures unhelpful.

Receipt of this document by the Assembly meant that the other councils of the church (synods, presbyteries and congregations) were given permission, at one level, to identify ways in which the Church could connect better with people in Australian communities and, at another level, to encourage people to find ways in which their own awareness of Christ’s presence could be shared. In this way the Uniting Church continued its commitment to review and renewal, following the models of former generations (as expressed in the historical documents mentioned in paragraph 10 of the *Basis of Union*).

⁶² See *Scots Confession of Faith*, chapter 18, in Owen, *Witness of Faith*, p71.

⁶³ See UCA Assembly Doctrine Working Group, “Ecclesiology”, p5f.

In the late twentieth century, outside the Uniting Church, a number of studies have offered alternatives to what might be called “traditional” expressions of “church”.

One instance of an alternative expression can be found at the beginning of Chapter Five in Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch’s book *The Shaping of Things to Come*, they have considered the question of a definition of “church”. As the subtitle to their book indicates,⁶⁴ these two men set out their own insights into the way the church would develop into the twenty-first century. Their argument is that the term “church” had by the twentieth century been overlaid with so many layers of meaning that the term has become confusing to many people. Frost and Hirsch themselves acknowledge that in their use of the term there are ambiguities – to the point where some would want to suggest that ‘any old bunch of believers sitting together in the same room is a church.’⁶⁵

Writing out of a Protestant evangelical tradition, Frost and Hirsch are quite specific in their definition of “church”. For them, the church will give evidence of

six features that seem to inform ... three broad commitments:

Communion (in Relationship with Christ)

- God’s Word— ... where the Christian community puts itself in places where it can hear God speak
- Worship— ... the opportunity ... to respond to God

Community (in Relationship with One Another)

- Learning— ... the formation of individuals and the Christian community as a whole into the likeness of Christ
- Fellowship/friendship— ... the church being an organic network or web of friendship

Commission (in Relationship with the World)

- Serving/giving— ... Selfless, humble, and gracious hospitality

⁶⁴ “Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church”

⁶⁵ Frost and Hirsch: *The Shaping of Things to Come*, p76.

- Gospel telling/sharing— ... webs of friendship developed by socializing, sharing and hospitality, together with prayer ... and ... teaching ... creates a potent community, fully incarnated and totally missional in its orientation.⁶⁶

In a world that is showing signs of distress, where there is evidence among many people of lost hope and broken life, these three elements – Communion, Community and Commission – become important focal points. The church is called to provide ways in which a relationship with Christ, with others and with the world can be established, affirmed and renewed.

It can be expected that the commitment to Communion will be shown in any one of three ways. It might take the form of revival of the structures of past years, in which the activities, programs and patterns of the past are brought to new vitality. Or it might be seen in insightful development of previous systems and programs, in which former patterns are reshaped to fit new circumstances while retaining some of the connections with the earlier structures. Or it might come in the form of entirely new activities, where the substance and practices of the faith are expressed in ways that have never been experience before.

However it might be seen, and in whatever form it might take, there will be a sign of the activity of God in the world, an expression of the participation of Christ in each one's daily life, and a guarantee of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. The church will provide different settings which, each in its own way, will enable God's Word to be heard, and within which people will be able to make responses that enhance the experience of discernment of that Word. Each will in turn provide a setting that shapes a pattern for living by which other people can see something of divine activity in human life.

⁶⁶ Frost and Hirsch: *The Shaping of Things to Come*, pp78f.

Likewise, the commitment to relationship with one another (Community) will be found in traditional learning environments of teacher and class, of professor and pupil, where formal curricula are followed and knowledge is imparted from one to another. But there will also be processes of less formal education, in which people with a little experience share their insights with people entering into the faith, and people together set out on journeys of discovery in which interpretation of experience and discovery is tested in shared practice and conversation until proved valid (or not). In both contexts, the elements of fellowship and friendship are essential, either in acceptance of one with greater knowledge and authority or in affirmation of levels of openness and trust as discoveries are assessed and proved.

In the area of Commission also, the demonstration of faith-formed relationship with the world, seen in service and in gospel sharing will take forms that most intimately connect with the circumstances of the community at large. No longer can the church assume that programs suitable in one context will be effective in another. Nor will one form of expression that might work in one particular community be expected to speak to, or be heard or understood in, another.

From a different tradition, that of the Roman Catholic Church, and with an alternative purpose and view point,⁶⁷ but with a similar outcome, Maria Harris suggests that “church” can be identified from the

classical activities of ecclesial ministry: kerygma, proclaiming the word of Jesus’ resurrection; didache, the activity of teaching; leiturgia, coming together to pray and to

⁶⁷ Frost and Hirsch were writing for people involved in reviewing church structures and in planting new congregations in the wider community. Maria Harris’ focus was on the development of a curriculum for Christian education.

re-present Jesus in the breaking of bread; koinonia, or community; and diakonia, caring for those in need⁶⁸

and that these five ministry actions constitute ‘the primary curriculum of the church, the course of the church’s life’.⁶⁹

Harris looks at “church” as ‘a community of memory, of vision, and of hope.’⁷⁰ In this community people find realities that govern their lives in ways which have connection with the past and respond to the needs of the present world, and which, while continuing to acknowledge that ‘we find ourselves surrounded by bruised and broken community’,⁷¹ seeks to show the alternative way of living modelled by Christ.

She sees the church ‘living out its pastoral vocation to worship and to pray’,⁷² both personally (‘the time we spend alone in the company of the Divine’⁷³) and corporately (where we ‘create and re-create our identity as a people’⁷⁴). In its worship and prayer activities, the church

integrate[s] sacred and secular ... acknowledge[s] differences in world views ... anguish[es] over the dimension of depth in worship and the power of the symbolic imagination ... challenge[s] all present to their own best possibilities ... affirm[s] the attempts of people to live religiously and morally in the midst of life.⁷⁵

Harris recalls that in its earliest form, the church’s teaching activity ‘was a form of Torah: direction, instruction, information, guidance on the road.’⁷⁶ Thus the teaching function is broader than the activities which are seen in the structured classroom. To catechesis and preaching are added ‘the act of reinterpreting,

⁶⁸ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p16.

⁶⁹ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p17.

⁷⁰ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p78.

⁷¹ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p80.

⁷² Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p95.

⁷³ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p96.

⁷⁴ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p98.

⁷⁵ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p101.

⁷⁶ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p110.

questioning, analyzing, and even at times rejecting and resisting'.⁷⁷ These activities are often seen in personal conversation and mentoring, and in the confidentiality of small gatherings.

Kerygma, for Harris, is bi-directional. She asserts that kerygma is for 'All peoples, everywhere. ... [T]he me is you, the we is us, the other is myself.'⁷⁸ So the proclamation of Christ must be both heard and spoken, both taken up and lived out, and in this way it 'provok[es] us toward a curriculum of justice ... recognized as fidelity to the demands of all our relationships and to the truth that we are related, quite simply, to everything.'⁷⁹

By its service, its diakonia, both towards guests and on behalf of the poor, the church celebrates its gratitude for gifts and grace received and attempts to redress an imbalance in the sharing of those gifts, 'as a work of joy, delight, appreciation—and justice'.⁸⁰ For Harris the starting point of this service is compassion, as illustrated in the life of Christ, and the expression of this service is in 'social care', 'social ritual', 'social empowerment', and 'social legislation'.⁸¹

In each of these ways, "church" moves beyond a social structure with parameters around its activity limiting action to particular rites and programs, and becomes a community in which Christ's way is lived and Christ's life is shown. Through their connection with Jesus, people are able in their local situation to connect with one another, enhancing their own and the wider community through prayer and sacramental activity, in the discovery, announcement and sharing of

⁷⁷ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p116.

⁷⁸ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p130.

⁷⁹ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p131.

⁸⁰ Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, p147.

⁸¹ see Harris, *Fashion Me A People*, pp148-155 for explanation of these terms.

the effect of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and in service that embodies the eschatological community in this present world.

Conclusions

Two conclusions can be drawn from this exploration of "church".

First, both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley lived and worked in eras where there were well accepted understandings of the nature and function of church. At its best, this created a confidence, an awareness of the importance of church as an expression of and participation in God's will for the world, but at its worst it provided the conditions in which systems could be abused and people oppressed by leaders who became corrupt with knowledge, power and wealth. So it was that alongside the acceptance of a received structure of church there existed a process of revision of those understandings in an attempt to make the church's activities more relevant to people living in the world in which the church existed. This means that both men were developing their own and their community's awareness of Christian spirituality in ambiguous contexts – both a traditionally structured church environment and a contemporaneous expression of Christian community.

Second (and in some ways like the first) the Uniting Church was formed in the context of a traditional structure of church life, but has found itself in a changed and changing environment. Church union took place in 1977 with a significant part of the preparation being done in the 1950s and 1960s. The foundational documents of the Uniting Church⁸² were published in 1959, 1963 and 1971 respectively. This meant that planning for the Uniting Church took

⁸² *The Faith of the Church; The Church, Its Nature, Function and Ordering; and The Basis of Union.*

place at the end of an era which had seen the establishment and consolidation of styles of worship, service and church structure that were generally accepted and had become well entrenched in social and community culture.

Into the twenty-first century some parts of the Uniting Church continue to express the styles of church activity and structure of previous generations. There are still many congregations that are populated by people whose activity and memory were founded in the years before church union. These churches are sometimes bastions of the past, clinging to outmoded forms of worship that use archaic language in hymns and prayers with activities that are often disconnected from the majority of people in the local community. Often these congregations are dominated by gate-keepers who cannot understand why their community does not continue to support the activities that are offered, and their strategy is to become more intransigent towards alternative expressions of church life.

At the same time, many parts of the Uniting Church are making significant attempts to connect with the cultures of present-day society through broader understandings of church life. Work in the Mission Resourcing Network of the Presbytery and Synod of South Australia⁸³ encourages the development of alternative ways of engaging in church life that provide ‘[o]pen and inclusive welcome’, ‘[d]evelopment of genuine relationships’, [o]ppportunity to share faith’ and ‘[s]earching for one’s own faith’.⁸⁴ Attitudes and activities such as these have always been essential for connection with people, and are components of the communities established by Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley.

As the Christian community continues to follow Jesus Christ in local communities it will be necessary for every congregation, faith community and

⁸³ See Stoner, *Fresh Directions*, Keswick: MediaCom Education Inc., 2010.

⁸⁴ Stoner, *Fresh Directions*, pp51f.

disciple to be intentional about enabling welcoming relationships in which faith can be discovered and fostered.

SECTION I, Chapter 4

An Assessment of Spirituality in 21st Century Australia

A dichotomy exists in the Western world in the early twenty-first century.¹ On the one hand there is a sceptical attitude to all expressions of organised religion; on the other hand there is a deep desire expressed for some guidance in relation to the human quest for meaning in life. In the Christian church throughout the Western world, and so for the church in Australia, the existence of this dichotomy has created a need to re-examine essential components of the church's life, including its understanding of participation in the ministry of Jesus Christ and its capacity to communicate with the wider community.

The scepticism about organised religion has come at least in part from an increased awareness of the contrast between the way religious practice is promoted and the activity of religious groups. It is not difficult to point to a number of significant international events in the past two centuries to illustrate this. Organised religion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries became equated with nationalism, colonialism and militarism.² In recent decades also, various groups that have claimed to be Christian have come under social scrutiny for many kinds of abusive and subversive behaviour.

This has led to a public perception that organised religion is at best simply another form of manipulation of people in community, and at worst a betrayal of humanity through an abuse of structures that should enhance the spiritual needs of

¹ It is acknowledged at the outset that the issues in this chapter are related to Western society. In respect of other parts of the world (some parts of Asian, South American, African and "First Nation" societies) the comments made here may not be appropriate.

² This is elaborated below, in Section I, Chapter 5: "Social and Ecclesial Contexts for Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley and the Uniting Church in Australia".

people. In the context of international and intra-national conflict, most of the factions in the European wars during the twentieth century claimed a Christian heritage and each claimed that God was “on their side”. Likewise, sectarian violence between differing communities claiming allegiance to the same religion has been and continues to be evident in a number of countries. Brutality by religious fundamentalist groups in many communities has become more evident.

This was one result of the situation that by the nineteenth century saw national borders in Western Europe often being also boundaries of Christian denominations. In very general terms the Lutheran Church was most evident in Germany, the Low Countries and Scandinavia; Roman Catholicism was strong in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and France; the Church of England was focused in England; the Calvinist Reformed expression of Christian doctrine and polity was found in Switzerland, Scotland and Holland.

From the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on, citizens from European countries including Spain, Netherlands, Germany, England and France travelled around the globe. This travel, and the consequent European settlement in the “new” world, had a number of underlying purposes. For some people it was the quest for increased knowledge. For others, increased wealth was the goal. Others again were the agents of governments looking for solutions to social and demographic problems. And some went with the deeply held conviction that they had a divinely ordained commission to impress their own religion and philosophy on the rest of the world.

Sadly, on many occasions the first two of these reasons were abused in ways that led to information being gained in inappropriate ways (particularly as it related to the lives of native peoples in their communities) and to wealth being

extracted at a significant cost – often of life, health and wellbeing – to indigenous communities. Under the third and fourth justifications, societies with significant cultural heritage were nearly always required to set aside long held religious belief and its corresponding ritual and lore which were foundational to community self-awareness. This inevitably resulted in a breakdown of social, family and personal life amongst the indigenous community.

This colonisation was usually accompanied by some form of military expansion, justified as being necessary for the security and safety of the European settlers, but also effective in imposing the wishes of the incomers on the (usually) less well defended indigenous population.

It is apparent that this nationalism, colonialism and militarism continues into the current generations. Sometimes more subtly than in the past, but with no less invasive outcomes, certain communities continue to intrude on other communities, with resultant loss of identity on the part of those other societies. As on many occasions in the past, good reasons are given for the intrusion, usually citing apparent failures on the part of the indigenous community to maintain appropriate care for themselves, their children, their governance and legal structures. It is noted, however, that again and again little or no effort has been made to recognise and understand the ways in which the indigenous culture fulfils its own mandate of care and support.

It can be argued that the so-called “Northern Territory intervention” by the Australian Federal Government in 2007 is a case in point. An inquiry established by the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory into the protection of aboriginal children from sexual abuse provided recommendations which used terms such as

‘establish a collaborative partnership’,³ ‘commitment to place children’s interests at the forefront in all policy and decision-making’,⁴ and development of ‘long term funding programs that do not depend upon election cycles nor are limited by short-term outcomes’.⁵ In response to the report, the government chose to intervene in aboriginal communities by sending ‘troops and police into more than 70 Aboriginal townships’,⁶ without significant consultation with the leadership of those communities.

The impact of incursions such as these in the latter part of the twentieth century has been compounded by the cumulative effect of years, and in some cases generations, in which indigenous people have been told that their culture is inadequate and their capacity to provide for their community is unacceptable. This was seen during a Uniting Church consultation with an aboriginal community which was trying to remedy inappropriate decisions about provision of services. I was privileged to be part of that consultation.⁷ During the two days of conversation in which both indigenous and non-indigenous shared options for new directions, the non-indigenous participants reiterated that any decision for change must be made by the indigenous community. We understood that the European-heritage church had no right to determine the way in which the indigenous church should be structured. But at the end of the time, a number of aboriginals came to the representatives of the white church and indicated that they felt that they did not have the capacity to make the decisions that were needed.

³ Wild and Anderson, “Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle “Little Children are Sacred”: Report of the Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse”, p82, Recommendation 1.

⁴ Wild and Anderson, “Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle “Little Children are Sacred”: Report of the Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse”, p82, Recommendation 2.

⁵ Wild and Anderson, “Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle “Little Children are Sacred”: Report of the Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse”, p82, Recommendation 3.

⁶ Malkin, “Australia’s Aboriginal intervention racist, UN says”, *The Telegraph*, 24 Feb 2010.

⁷ The consultation took place in 2004, when I was Moderator-elect of the Uniting Church in South Australia.

They were effectively saying, “You have always told us what to do. Please tell us now.” For them, the intrusion of foreign systems had taken from them their confidence in the processes of their culture and community to make effective and valid decisions.

Because there is nearly always a significant connection between any society’s culture, government and religion, negative outcomes of nationalism, colonialisation and militarism can be seen, at least in part, as expressions of that society’s religious attitudes. Many arguments against the value of religion begin with criticism of the abuses that have been perpetrated in the name of some religious principle or other.

In a post-modern context, where meta-narrative is questioned and local and personal story is encouraged, people have become critical particularly of institutionalised religion. Once, society looked for evidence of similar experiences in the past or in the lives of other people, and so determined that there were certain principles which could be shown to be the foundation upon which interpretations of life could be made. In this context, as Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke suggest, ‘the term *postmodern* implies the rejection of certain features of the modern project, such as its quest for certain, objective, and universal knowledge’.⁸ In place of certainty and objectivity, society now encourages reflection on personal experience and the establishment of one’s own relationship with the world, society and people.

While this change of philosophical focus from acceptance of formal religious practices to encouragement of greater individualism has been going on, there have been religious groups which have distanced themselves from society

⁸ Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, p21.

and have suggested inappropriate answers for the human misery experienced by many in the world. Apocalyptic sects have refuted common sense and logic, and have deceived their followers into sometimes devastating acts of self-harm. Religious communities have withdrawn from social contact with the world at large, have denied the reality of human suffering, and have disseminated information suggesting that natural disasters and medical crises are merely the result of human sin and can be survived by following certain (allegedly God-ordained) practices. Adherents of fundamentalist religious movements have set aside the usual human powers of reason and compassion, and there is evidence that the leadership of such movements have attempted to brainwash those who join. People have used their awareness of these eschatological associations as a reason for their reduction in participation in the activities of organised religion.

So it is possible to see that scepticism about organised religion in the twenty-first century has its roots in issues ranging widely from abuse of religious fervour to equation of religion with “civilised” behaviour to disapproval of the idea of foundational principles to exploitation among religious leaders of their power over their devotees.

The other side of the dichotomy is a desire for increased awareness of those parts of human life that cannot be quantified. At one level, this can be seen as a reaction to the confidence which European communities had in scientific knowledge during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the same time, it is a further expression of the post-modern critique of meta-narrative, and the consequent affirmation and encouragement of personal story and insight.

The desire for awareness of knowledge alternative to that promulgated by science, and for guidance in assessment and use of this “spiritual” knowledge, is

seen in various guises. The interest expressed in individualistic religious practices, including spiritual activities claiming some foundation in the Buddhist and Hindu religions, is on the increase in Australia. The article entitled “Religious Affiliation” in *Year Book Australia 2006*⁹ confirms that ‘8% of Christian affiliates were aged between 18 and 24 years, compared with 13% of Buddhist affiliates’. There has been an increase in participation in so called “new age” activities such as aroma, crystal and psychic therapies, and occult and wiccan practices. In all of this there is a sign of a deep longing for some connection with an “Other” that will bring a level of meaning and purpose to one’s life, particularly at times when life becomes unbalanced by the stress of living in a society that apparently fails to take account of the needs of an individual.

In addition to this increase in interest in expressions of “new age” and other alternative spiritualities, an increasing number of people in Australia (along with people in other Western colonial nations) have begun to examine more closely the expressions and heritage of indigenous spirituality.

Contrary to the perception of European settlers in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Australia, the indigenous people inhabiting the land formed a series of communities that were rich in culture and in spirituality. The Europeans, who were used to having monuments ‘to reflect and remember the gifts we’ve been given and the legacy we’ve received’,¹⁰ failed to comprehend communities whose culture and religion was founded in story and geography. European

⁹ Chapter 12, in <<http://abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/bb8db737e2af84b8ca2571780015701e/bfdda1ca506d6cfaca2570de0014496e!OpenDocument>> [viewed 21/03/2010].

¹⁰ McManus, *An Unstoppable Force*, p64.

settlers by and large denied the existence of any spirituality among the aboriginal peoples.

In recent times, in a parallel development with the rise in affirmation by first nation peoples of the validity of their own culture, heritage and religion, there has been an acceptance of the invalidity of the arguments of earlier Western generations who had determined to remove all vestige of aboriginal culture, including language and religious story. At all levels of government, and at a personal level for many individuals in Australia, there has been a move to redress some (at least) of the wrongs of earlier years.

It is not surprising that in Western society this increase in pseudo-religious and personalised spirituality should be evident, especially alongside the decrease in participation in the activity relating to organised Christian religion. At the same time, it is acknowledged that human beings are quintessentially spiritual beings. The term James W. Fowler takes from Ernest Becker, *Homo poeta*, identifies the human as 'the meaning maker'.¹¹ This is the human capacity to connect with the world in a way that goes beyond the physical and material and makes it possible to yearn for and develop an understanding of meaningful life. Human life that denies this aspiration to meaning will diminish into animal existence, with a constituent diminution in memory and community that will lead to a failure to experience any relationship with others or with the history of community.

In recent times in Western society there has been an increase in comments 'that reflect the attitude of "Jesus, Yes! Church, No!"'¹² When individuals yearn deeply for some direction in making life meaningful, but the structure of society

¹¹ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p4.

¹² Frost and Hirsch: *The Shaping of Things to Come*, p39

causes institutions to be distrusted, the focus of the yearning will be directed towards single entities, be they modern gurus establishing themselves with simple answers to complex questions, or ancient prophets whose teachings appear to have been subverted by the very institutions established to promulgate those teachings.¹³

Until recently in Australian society, religion (at least in its Protestant Christian expression) was a personal experience, and generally not spoken of in public venues other than by professional preachers and teachers. It was, and for many people remains, a major taboo subject. The basic beliefs which a person holds about God and about the meaning of life have come to be understood as information of the most intimate nature, not to be shared even with those (family and friends) who share other intimacies of one's life.

This, then, has repercussions for the life of the church. For many congregations¹⁴ there is no expectation that people will share their personal experiences of faith or tell even the smallest part of the story of their relationship with God. Indeed it goes even further in many places to an unspoken prohibition on such sharing. Many people hold an (often unacknowledged) assumption that it is the sole responsibility of the clergy, as the paid personnel of the church, to speak about matters pertaining to faith and belief. And after some generations of this way of thinking, many who begin to feel a desire to share information find themselves hampered by a personal lack of proficiency and a dearth of precedents on which to base their own practice. Their response to this situation is to retreat

¹³ It will be the responsibility of another researcher to consider whether there is a similarity between the ways in which the disaffected adherents of Judaism, Islam and Christianity have interpreted the Torah, the Koran and the Christian Scriptures to justify their personal campaign to redefine what is "meaningful" in life.

¹⁴ Here I speak from over three decades' experience of leading Uniting Church congregations.

behind the excuse of poor education and inadequate information to share, fearful of questions they will be unable to answer and of comments they will have difficulty responding to.

Researchers and writers including David Tacey and Dairmuid Ó Murchú have shown that society in the Western World in the twentieth century (and continuing into the twenty-first century) has developed a cynicism about spirituality that rejects any traditional relationship with organised religion. At the same time, these researchers have documented the depth of yearning that is evident in people's lives, and suggest that the church must become more sensitive to the needs of people who express themselves spiritually in ways that do not reflect traditional Christian terminology. Other researchers like Hugh Evans have shown that there is a strong desire among young people to bring change in societal attitudes that will have a positive impact on the world.

In an article entitled "Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness: Postmodernity, Post-Christianity, and the Coming Age",¹⁵ David Tacey highlighted some of the issues relating to spirituality in modern day Australia. He suggested that

[w]e are in a long, dark night of desolation and disenchantment, and it is difficult to discern in this long winter what the signs of hope or re-enchantment are. Some youth ask the question: What is there to celebrate in a collapsed world? for those who see no hope beyond the wasteland¹⁶, there is simply the expectation of 'making do' with what they have been bequeathed by previous generations of destructive and ruinous activity, a destruction expressed theologically as the 'death of God', culturally as the collapse of high culture, morally and ethically as the collapse of certainty and truth, and literally as war, violence, and genocide.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Interface: A Forum for Theology in the World*, Vol 2, No 2, Oct 1999, pp22-37.

¹⁶ Tacey uses the imagery of T.S.Eliot's poem "The Wasteland" extensively in this article.

¹⁷ Tacey, "Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness", p24.

On the other hand, Hugh Evans¹⁸ has offered an alternative to that of David Tacey. In a speech at the launch of the book of essays entitled *The Future by Us*, Evans said, speaking of and to his own generation,

[w]e ... are at a unique point in history, where we can reshape the direction of our country. ... [I]n the midst of this sea of despair sails a ship of opportunity. It's the opportunity to reshape the fundamentals¹⁹

While the generation of people represented by Hugh Evans sees a “sea of despair” or (to use Tacey’s phrase) “a collapsed world”, the desire to “make do” gives way to a yearning to make change. A similar yearning in the lives of Ignatius and Wesley, caused them to respond to the particular difficulties of their own eras.

This longing to discover ways of coping with, and even amending, the difficulties encountered in life can be encouraged (or hampered) hampered by differing perceptions of formalised religion. There are many people for whom ‘it is virtually incomprehensible that spiritual yearnings, feelings or values can arise apart from the context of formal belief; in other words, religion is perceived to be the only fountain from which spirituality can spring forth.’²⁰ This is well with people who have an affirming relationship with expressions of formal religion. For others, however, who do not feel that connection, Ó Murchú has given the reminder that ‘human experience suggests otherwise and has done so over many millennia.’²¹

Echoing Ó Murchú, Tacey suggested that there was an increase in interest in spirituality that was not in the first instance based in formal religion, and especially not based in the ways of Christian religion. He went on to say that

¹⁸ Young Australian of the Year 2004.

¹⁹ Evans, “The Future by Us Launch”.

²⁰ Ó Murchú, *Reclaiming Spirituality*, p2.

²¹ *Ibid.*

‘[t]his new “outbreak” of spirituality is a desperate attempt by youth culture to counter the advances of the profane and secular society, with its appalling materialism, disillusionment and absence of hope.’²²

Following on from his comment about spirituality that does not arise initially from religious practice, Tacey asked the question, ‘can old religion learn to understand and respect new spirituality?’²³ He cited the historian of religions, Mercea Eliade, as a source for the insight that in the spirituality developed within youth culture ‘there are a number of apparently non-religious phenomena in which one can decipher new and original recoveries of the sacred’.²⁴ Tacey went on to say that ‘old religious form often hates and despises the new, not only because the new revelations challenge the authority of the old, but because the old religion thinks of *itself* as final, absolute, and beyond challenge.’²⁵

In discussing further this awareness of the survival of ‘new spirituality’ Tacey came to a discussion of the growth of ‘panentheism [as] the awareness of the incarnational presence of the divine in embodied reality’.²⁶ The centuries old development of doctrines of sin and fallen creation had, in Tacey’s observation, been compensated for by an ‘urgent need to re-sacralise and celebrate the physical world, including the world of our own bodies and lives.’²⁷ For this reason, Tacey suggested that ‘[i]n falling out of its traditional religious containers, God seems to have fallen into the soul’.²⁸

²² Tacey, “Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness”, p28.

²³ Tacey, “Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness”, p29.

²⁴ Cited by Tacey, from *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, in “Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness”, p29.

²⁵ Tacey, “Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness”, p30.

²⁶ Tacey, “Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness”, p33.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Tacey, “Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness”, p34.

So, for people (and it seems especially for young people) in recent years, spirituality has become a subject for extensive discussion, with implications beyond the personal and private sphere. Tacey has suggested that this openness to spiritual reflection is seen by these people

as the basis for a new sense of human community, as a cure for racism, as an essential ingredient of the new ecological awareness, as an antidote to domestic violence and civil unrest. Spirituality ... has acquired a public conscience²⁹

In so doing, spirituality has moved to become a latch concept opening possibilities for people into renewed experiences of human community.

One important expression of this awakening interest in non-traditional spirituality is seen in the increase in interest in such formalities as Anzac Day commemorations. This particular meta-narrative, of the way in which Australian and New Zealand forces struggled against overwhelming odds to fulfil their responsibilities out of a colonial relationship with the United Kingdom, has become an important focal point for many, especially young, people. But it has taken the shape of a “little narrative”. While the story is told and retold with newly discovered information, and now extends beyond the memorial at Anzac Cove into the fields and towns of France (particularly Villers-Bretonneaux and, more recently, Frommelles), it is evident that people who make pilgrimage to these “sacred sites” do so for very personal reasons. It often relates to an awareness of fallen relatives, though most times now the soldiers who served and died are of a generation unknown personally to the people remembering them. It seldom has to do with any expectation of the development of the community. At best it might be shared with an immediate partner or family member. There is no

²⁹ Tacey, *Re-Enchantment*, p187.

anticipation of returning to a community in Australia to “tell the story”, or “share the experience”.

In Australia, as in other parts of the Western world, people are sceptical about institutional religion while at the same time yearning for personal meaning. It is anticipated that the insights which Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley gained from their experience of Christian spirituality, and consideration of the ways they shared this with the people who gathered them, will provide some guidance about ways in which the Uniting Church might address this situation.

SECTION I, Chapter 5

Social Contexts for Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley and the Uniting Church in Australia

In a discussion about the spirituality of a person or community, it is important to set the subject in the context of each one's time and circumstances. This research into the pastoral impact of the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, and the way this might relate to pastoral care in the Uniting Church in Australia calls for some consideration of the similarities between the contemporary scenes of these two men and that of twenty-first century Australia. In later chapters of this thesis more detailed information will be given about the respective cultures, influences and circumstances in which Ignatius and Wesley found themselves. This chapter, all be it selectively, will look briefly, in the case of Ignatius Loyola, at issues facing society and the church in sixteenth century western Europe, and for John Wesley, at conditions in society and the state of the church in the United Kingdom during the eighteenth century. Likewise, there will be some brief comments on the social and ecclesial situation in Australia in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries.

Each of these three eras – the sixteenth, the eighteenth and the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries – can be described as times when circumstances combined to impact human life and thought in ways that significantly influenced future generations. The similarities are remarkable (though it should be acknowledged that in each case the reasons for the similarities are unique). Each of the eras can be seen as a time of significant social upheaval; each shows signs of poverty in education and, paradoxically, of significant increase in technology and knowledge; each is a time of noteworthy

expansions in awareness of other cultures and peoples; each is a period of renewal in understanding of the church and how the church should function.

One way of looking at a comparison of these three eras is to identify similar categories of change in each time. The purpose of this comparison is to identify some of the ways in which the church in these times has intersected with a rapidly changing society.

The sixteenth century saw a printing revolution, the eighteenth century saw an industrial revolution, and the twentieth century saw a technological revolution. In the sixteenth century European society was recovering from the epidemic of black death, in the eighteenth century the United Kingdom struggled with outbreaks of cholera and typhus, and the world in the twenty-first century is aware of the dangers of HIV/AIDS and global influenza pandemics. During the sixteenth century the Roman church was continuing its attack on heresy through the authority of the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition¹ and Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition,² in the eighteenth century Europe was terrified by both the American Revolutionary War³ and the French Revolution⁴, and in the twentieth and twenty first centuries the threat of both nuclear war and of global terrorism have become acknowledged and significant causes for anxiety for people in many nations. In the sixteenth century, Spain and Portugal were extending their empires particularly into South America, by the eighteenth century British and French colonisation was taking place in North America, Asia and Oceania, and since the mid-twentieth there has been evidence of an expanding assumption and imposed expectation that the kind

¹ This Spanish inquisition was established in 1478 by Pope Sixtus IV.

² This Roman Inquisition was established in 1542 by Pope Paul III.

³ 1775-1783.

⁴ 1789-1799.

of democracy practiced in the United States of America is appropriate for all nations, including those in the Middle East.

Reflection on these categories shows that each of the three eras has a significant place in the development of the Western world in which the Uniting Church in Australia exists. Each has seen an information revolution. In each, human existence has been threatened both by significant and virulent disease. During each century there has been a threat to human life through the agency of human aggression and violence. Within each era there has been an expansion of a particular culture into other cultures, at the expense of the customs of the occupied peoples.

During each of the three eras under discussion, there have been significant advances in knowledge and technology, but large parts of the general population have struggled with a lack of education. In each century, it has been possible for people to receive significant education, according to the standards of the time. Universities had first been established in Europe during the tenth and eleventh centuries, had begun to flourish by the time of Ignatius Loyola, and were well established when John Wesley began his academic life. But it is evident also that receiving an education was not a possibility for many people. In the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries girls and women in general were much less likely than boys and men to be granted a formal academic education, and generally only boys and men whose families were already well educated were given the opportunity for themselves. Anyone who was born into a working class family could expect to be educated in trade or craft, but not in other fields.

In Australia in the twentieth and twenty-first century, primary and secondary education is supposedly available to all children, and university

entrance is open to all people. Not everyone, however, is able or inclined to take advantage of this access. People of indigenous background are considerably less likely to be found in tertiary education than non-indigenous⁵ and people from lower socio-economic groups are likewise less well represented in education statistics than people from wealthier families. Of the people who proceed through secondary and into tertiary education, there is increasing evidence that specialisation has meant that a person who is erudite in one discipline may be totally ignorant of other areas of knowledge and skill.

In each of these centuries, there is an educational paradox. On the one hand there is increasing availability of education. People can learn, and so know more. The increase in knowledge, and its open availability, has meant that each of the generations in question has had access to more information than its previous generation, and so has had the capacity to build human society to new heights. But at the same time, in each generation there has been a tendency for available knowledge to be focused amongst an elite group of (often wealthy and powerful people) with a consequent diminution of power in all who are outside that group. Moral capacity, awareness of the needs of others, and insight into ways of improving the lot of all people has usually not been concomitant with the gaining of greater knowledge. So the effectiveness of education and its impact on the community as a whole has been compromised.

At least one of the defining moments that marked the ending of the period popularly known as “medieval” was the invention of the printing press. This meant that in the time of Ignatius Loyola there was a capacity for the

⁵ In 2001, “5% of Indigenous people aged between 18 and 24 were attending university compared with 23% of non-Indigenous people.” See <<http://www.education.monash.edu.au/indigenous-ed/viewinfo.html?id=2>> [viewed 25/5/2010].

dissemination of information in a way that had never been possible before. The use of a mechanical printing device made books relatively inexpensive, accurate and portable, and so allowed larger numbers of people than ever before to be made aware of current issues, and to participate in discussion about those issues. Until this time in western Europe, access to knowledge was limited to a minority of people – generally those who were in holy orders, or who were wealthy (and interested) enough to afford tutorship. From the middle of the fifteenth century⁶ it became possible for anyone with the basic skill of reading (which for many years, of course, was still a limited section of the population) to begin to discover and contribute to conversation about religious, social and political issues.

This propagation of knowledge contributed to and corresponded with a rise in concern for personal, community and national welfare, which in turn meant that some of the institutions of the medieval period came to be questioned and indeed openly attacked. Amongst the structures of society that were threatened at this time were the feudal system and the principles of chivalry, the status of the church and particularly of the papacy, and intellectual and philosophical certainty.

One other outcome of the development of mechanical printing was the availability of information in the common language of the people. The work of people like John Wycliffe in translating the Bible into the vernacular took on new importance when the result was able to be accessed by larger numbers of less affluent people. The reformation principle of “sola scriptura” could only be developed and become an effective agent of transformation of church and society

⁶ Johannes Guttenberg’s development of mechanical printing began around 1436.

when the Bible could be read and understood by ordinary people rather than being ‘the monopoly of a corrupt clergy.’⁷

Ignatius himself was one of the beneficiaries of the printed text. He recorded that during his recovery from wounds suffered in the siege of Pamplona in 1521, he was able to read two books – Ludolph’s *Vita Jesu Christi* which, after many manuscript copies, was first printed in 1472 and then translated into other languages (including Catalan),⁸ and Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend* which was in manuscript form from the late thirteenth century and then printed numerous times. (The version Ignatius read would appear to have been printed in Toledo in 1511.⁹)

The impact of society’s capacity to provide the printed word to the wider community has continued through the centuries that have followed. The invention and development of methods by which power could be produced, and power then harnessed to printing presses, meant provision of greater numbers of books and pamphlets, and in consequence, wider influence through the dissemination of ideas. This was one of the means by which John Wesley was able to expand his influence in the evangelical revival of the eighteenth century. There is no doubt that Wesley’s capacity to bring together the thoughts of others, both in his own writing and especially in the library that he made available to the Methodist community, was a significant contributing factor in the increase in faith of those who came under his influence. These ‘Extracts from, and Abridgments of, the choicest Pieces of practical Divinity which have been published in the

⁷ Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, Vol II, p328.

⁸ See Ganns, *Ignatius Loyola*, p19.

⁹ See Ganns, *Ignatius Loyola*, p16.

English Tongue,'¹⁰ were Wesley's attempt to ensure that those who came into a relationship with Christ would grow in their understanding of God's work in the world. As W.H. Fitchett pointed out, 'A Methodist might be poor, but Wesley was determined that he should not be illiterate.'¹¹ The original fifty volumes which he brought together in this "Christian Library"¹² provided the members of the Methodist classes and bands with a resource that would 'conspire together to make "the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work."¹³ Without the technology of the printing press, knowledge, and the development and enrichment of faith that it engendered, would have been significantly curtailed.

The development in the early 1990s of what is now known as the internet, has broadened the parameters of printing, so that according to the multi purpose household survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2008-09,

72% of Australian households had home internet access and 78% of households had access to a computer. Between 1998 to 2008-09, household access to the internet at home has more than quadrupled from 16% to 72%, while access to computers has increased from 44% to 78%.¹⁴

It should not be considered, however, that this revolution in the availability of knowledge was alone in impacting the world in which Wesley lived. More significant for the eighteenth century in the United Kingdom was the revolution in industry. A century that had begun with most people living in rural communities, supported by the produce of the land, ended with multitudes having moved for employment to the centres of industry, but often living in poverty

¹⁰ Wesley's subtitle for the "Christian Library", see *Wesley, Works*, Vol 14, p220.

¹¹ Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, p370.

¹² For a description of the "Christian Library", see Schmidt, *John Wesley*, Vol 2, Part 1, p110.

¹³ *Wesley, Works*, Vol 14, p222.

¹⁴ See Australian Bureau of Statistics, <<http://abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/8146.0>> [viewed 08/06/2010].

under abusive labour regimes which allowed for long working hours, in unsafe working environments, with little remuneration. While these conditions were not new (work in pre-industrial rural communities was harsh and involved all members of the family) the impact of cramped living conditions, with the negative environmental effects of power generation for the machinery, created a crisis in issues relating to health and human welfare.

The social and economic changes of eighteenth century England meant that society was divided into three groups of people. The poor were no better off than they had ever been, and they were to all intents and purposes powerless to change their circumstances. The landed gentry remained an elite class, separated by title, wealth and education from others. Theirs was the responsibility of governing society, but many (if not most) were unaware of the reality of life for the majority of the population. An emerging “middle class” was able to assert itself through the new wealth and influence that came from its industrial enterprises. For many in each of these groups their circumstances militated against any consideration of the place of God in their lives or of the church in the wider social structure. In generalities, the poor saw a God who was apathetic to their needs and a church which condemned them for failing to live productively; the gentry saw the church as an agency of their own power and authority; the middle classes were comfortable in their newfound status, did not feel the need of a God whose activity was either judgemental or benign, and could see little reason for participating in a church that made no connection with their circumstances. Into this social and economic morass the Methodist movement spoke words of hope and provided acts of compassion by which the poor could know themselves

affirmed, and the middle classes and the gentry could participate in the renewal of society.

The effects of the industrial revolution have extended into the twentieth century, and combined with the impact of nineteenth century liberal philosophy have laid a foundation on which the western world has built a structure of human endeavour where there would have appeared to be nothing that could hinder the development of all that was beneficial for humankind.

That was, until the effects were felt of two world wars, the Cold War, nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and environmental catastrophe not seen in human history. The twenty-first century has begun with a legacy of disaster and inhumanity on a scale that had never been anticipated and for which few are able to conceive of any solution. At the same time, the revolution in information and communication technology which has enabled people to be in correspondence in real time with others throughout the world has opened opportunities for new insights to be shared and power over others to be abused. This revolution can be seen to have begun with the invention of telegraphic and telephonic communication. From those primitive beginnings has grown profusion of methods of communication, including personal computers, mobile phones, the internet and all their corresponding technologies and equipment.

These revolutions were the result of human invention. Disease is another category that impacts the life of the world, and while human activity might contribute to the effect of disease on individual life, its source is generally somewhere in the natural world.

At the end of the Middle Ages, society in Western Europe was ravaged by the plagues known as “The Black Death”. There is no doubt that this was a time

when populations were decimated and communities destroyed, and for that reason the very principles of community life were seriously compromised. No-one was safe from the plague: wealth apparently provided no security; location was not necessarily a factor; occupation seemed to have no influence (although those such as doctors and clergy, who regularly came into contact with the sick, were naturally more at risk). Anyone could become ill, and death usually attended within days. The result was that communal life was often brought to a standstill. Rural and urban economy was seriously disrupted, and general fear seriously impeded normal community interaction. As one contemporary, Angolo di Tura, said, 'Father abandoned child, wife husband, one brother another'.¹⁵

'In the absence of adequate medical knowledge, speculation about the cause of the plague was prone to superstition'.¹⁶ It became a point of issue for everyone that this pestilence was 'sent from God as a just punishment for our sins',¹⁷ and the fear of mortal death was compounded equally by the church's 'disciplinary and penitential structure, its preaching ... of Hell, [and] Purgatory'¹⁸ and by the fact that because of the absence of clergy (both through death and through fear) many died without the sacramental last rites.

Although the threat of Black Death had diminished by the time of Ignatius Loyola, there were still serious health issues particularly amongst the poor. In his *Autobiography* Ignatius tells of his own contact with the plague. His comments indicate something of the concern that was felt by those who came into contact

¹⁵ "The Plague in Siena: An Italian Chronicle".

¹⁶ Nuth, *God's Lovers in an Age of Anxiety*, p27.

¹⁷ Giovanni Boccaccio, "A Most Terrible Plague".

¹⁸ Swanson, *Religion and Devotion*, p92.

with the disease ('those in the college who knew that he had entered the plague-ridden house fled from him and would not let him enter'¹⁹).

In the United Kingdom during the eighteenth century the significant and rapid movement of population from countryside to city created a level of crowding in the urban areas that provided the classic circumstances for water-borne diseases including cholera and typhus. This was on top of the constant threat which came from smallpox during the century.²⁰ Amongst the poor of the time, high levels of malnutrition combined with inadequate understanding of hygiene, led to a low resistance to these diseases. In this context, the value of human life was diminished, though many in the middle class and among the gentry took little time to consider the situation, and so failed to understand the impact that work place and environmental issues had on the way people lived.

At the same time, there were many, both in the established church and amongst the revivalists in England, for whom, in the words of Samuel Johnson, "Charity, or tenderness for the poor" was ... considered as "inseparable from piety."²¹ It is well documented that Wesley was aware of the necessity for various kinds of connection with people who were suffering from serious illness. He encouraged the visitation of the sick,²² and when other means proved ineffective, he undertook to 'give them physic myself.'²³

In the late twentieth century the impact of HIV-AIDS was similar to the impact of pandemics in earlier centuries. In the earliest days of its spread, many

¹⁹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §84, in Ganss, *Ignatius*, p104.

²⁰ For example, records from the parish of St Peter Chesil in Winchester indicate that smallpox deaths accounted for 55% of burials in 1755, and in the combined parishes of St Maurice and St Mary Calendar 31% of burials in 1753 and 25% in 1757. See "Smallpox in Eighteenth Century Winchester", <http://www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk/PDF/LPS1/LPS1_1968_35-40.pdf> [viewed 18/05/2010].

²¹ Quoted in Madden, "Medicine and Moral Reform", *Church History*, Vol 73, No 4 (Dec, 2004), p750.

²² Sermon XCVIII is focused entirely "On Visiting the Sick", see Wesley, *Works*, Vol 7, p115ff.

²³ Wesley, *The People Called Methodists*, XII,2, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p264.

made the same superstitious response to the disease which characterised reaction to the plagues of Black Death. It was seen as punishment by God for sinful activity – this particularly because the homosexual community was seriously impacted by the disease, and conservative religious elements equated HIV-AIDS with homosexual activity. Medical research into the disease, and corresponding development of pharmacological response to the disease, has meant that most people have set aside this quasi-religious explanation. But lack of awareness, inadequate education and poor hygiene means that in many communities, particularly in Africa and Asia, it continues to devastate family life, and provides serious concerns for both governmental and non-governmental agencies. The threat of influenza pandemic has also loomed over the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Viral infections such as Asian Influenza (H2N2), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Avian Influenza (H5N1) and Swine Influenza (H1N1) have at various times in recent decades threatened large numbers of people across many countries. The most recent of these have been exacerbated by the ease of international travel, and have required significant control mechanisms to be put in place in an attempt to minimise the spread of the disease. Throughout the world people have reacted to these pandemics variously, from expressions of deepest fear leading to isolation from others, through action to provide infection control and family safety, to an attitude of acceptance that refuses to allow any threat to disrupt personal life. And the reasons for each response can often be identified in terms of the sense of personal and communal security that individuals have at any particular time.

In consideration of the issue of violence and war, there is more evidence than enough that this has always been part of human experience. In the sixteenth

century Europe, was recovering from an era which had experienced the Hundred Years' War, which included the Peasants' Revolt, the Hussite Wars in Bohemia, the Wars of the Roses in England, and the Thirteen Years War (between the Prussian Confederation and the Teutonic Knights). The Holy Wars between Christians and Muslims, some of which were known as the Crusades, had begun in the eleventh century, and continued into the fifteenth century in Spain and in the Slavic and Baltic states. In addition to the recovery from these earlier conflicts, the sixteenth century saw its own violence – in the Battle of Cerignola, the Italian War including the Spanish conquest of Navarre (in which Ignatius Loyola participated), the Spanish conquest of Mexico, the Peasants' War, the Münster Rebellion, and the Anglo-Spanish War.

In the eighteenth century the Great Northern War that eventually overthrew Sweden as the dominant power in northern Europe, the Anglo-Spanish War, the French and Indian War in America and the Seven Years' War in Europe, the American War of Independence (American Revolutionary War), the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, not to mention the various wars fought by Britain and France on the Indian sub-continent, all attest to the disturbance of human life and community that occurred during that time.

The twenty-first century likewise is heir to a legacy of national and international conflict. Australian military forces have participated in the two World Wars, the Korean War, the Malayan Emergency, the Vietnam War, and in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition to these conflicts, Australian defence forces have also served in peace-keeping duties in many places. During the century there have also been numerous civil wars across the globe, and the Cold War

between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics created international tension that was felt throughout the world.

In and within each era, the relationship between the Christian church and the warring powers has taken various forms. On occasions, as in the Crusades, it was the church itself that was one of the aggressors, and there is evidence that the Peasants' War in 1524 was the result of extreme interpretations of Luther's teachings.²⁴ In other circumstances the official view of the church was to sanction the struggle as appropriate for its own nation, and this often caused the paradox of different parts of the one holy catholic and apostolic church encouraging each protagonist with God's blessing for victory! On many occasions, international conflict was simply accepted as the worldly context in which the church did its spiritual work, and on those occasions, the church simply stood within the community and waited for whatever outcome might be. Every now and then, one or other parts of the church would take a stand against the conflict itself, though on these occasions, there was usually some (and occasionally significant) opposition to the declared opinion of the church. The best example of this relates to the Vietnam War, which polarised many communities in the western world.

The fourth category of similarity between the three centuries being studied is that of imperialism and colonisation. As stated on page 78 above, each century was significant for national expansion. In the sixteenth century, it was Spain and Portugal who reached into South America and began to make contact with Asian nations. Beginning in the seventeenth and developing into the eighteenth century, British and French interests expanded first into North America and then into the

²⁴ See Gonzalez, *History of Christian Thought*, Vol 3, p78.

Far East and Oceania. These colonial interests were expanded into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and at the same time the Netherlands and Germany also saw opportunities for growth in Asia, Africa and the Pacific region. As a result of increased national assertiveness the twentieth century has seen significant movements towards independence in countries in Africa and Asia, which have led to substantial reductions in the empires of European nations.

At the same time, there has been in the last and present century a considerable increase in the cultural and political influence of the United States of America around the world. This has been magnified by the collapse of communism in the late 1980s and the break up of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with a corresponding decrease in influence from the former “Eastern Bloc”. Technological expansion in its myriad of forms has meant that American language, fashion, and media have infiltrated communities across the globe, so that little by little the ethnic and cultural uniqueness of each place is being lost. At the same time, the United States’ position as the “sole superpower” means that it has taken authority to act in many places in an attempt to broker peace and limit acts of aggression amongst other nations. In its turn, this has meant that the guiding principles by which the United States is governed have been imposed on cultures that are significantly different from the one out of which the United States itself grew, and this imposition has meant that the affected nation has not had the founding experiences within which those particular principles developed. So there has been a form of imperial expansion that has limited the development of culture by enforcing a foreign culture onto an often unwilling people.

It is important to note that in each of these imperial and cultural expansions, the church has been involved to a greater or lesser extent. The

enforcement of Christian law on indigenous peoples has been seen in most eras as one of the responsible outcomes of colonising activity. Every colonial power named in this chapter has believed itself to be founded in the Christian religion, and every assessment of the validity and truth of any occupied culture has been based on the principles that were understood to make up the Christian faith.

It should be acknowledged, of course, that the interpretation of Christian values in each of the colonising counties was often compromised by the influence of acquisition of wealth and power on the part of individuals and governments. So the church has variously condoned, encouraged and initiated activity that may in hindsight be considered inappropriate or even harmful to human existence. For this reason there have been individuals in most eras who have spoken out, but often their efforts have been limited by their inability to influence the church's hierarchy and they have suffered, even to the point of martyrdom, for their cause. Neither Ignatius Loyola nor John Wesley was known for his stance against the imperialism of his time. Both accepted the principle that the Christian faith was supreme amongst religions, and encouraged the people of their time to turn from every other expression of religious experience. Ignatius' encounter with the Moor on the road to Montserrat²⁵ is evidence that he had no place in his world view for the Muslim faith, and Wesley, in his sermon entitled "Causes of the inefficacy of Christianity"²⁶ stated bluntly that humankind could 'be divided into thirty parts, nineteen parts of these are still open Heathens, having no more knowledge of Christianity than the beasts that perish.'²⁷ Their own focus was to bring as many as could be into faith in Jesus Christ.

²⁵ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §15f, in Ganss, *Ignatius*, p74.

²⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 7, pp281ff.

²⁷ Sermon CXVI, §3, Wesley, *Works*, Vol 7, p282.

The church in the twenty-first century is compelled to acknowledge and address contemporary issues in its time, and utilise those technologies that are available to address the issues. The developments in technology that began in the fifteenth century continue to have an impact on the lives of people. The printed word in its multiple forms has become both a tool and a weapon. It can be used to manipulate people into understanding the world in which we live from very narrow perspectives, and it can be the means by which the diversity and variety of the world's cultures may be celebrated. The church in Australia during this time must decide which direction it will take.

This chapter has shown that the times in which Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley lived and worked are similar to the time in which the Uniting Church in Australia is living out its Christian mission. Ignatius and Wesley addressed their spiritual experience to human circumstances that parallel those faced by the Uniting Church. As a consequence of this, it is possible to recognise some of the insights which the earlier men discerned, and from which they developed activities and programs that were effective in their generations. This might provide answers to some of the questions which the Uniting Church finds itself asking and give guidance to the Church as it seeks to be 'ready when occasion demands to confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds.'²⁸

²⁸ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 11.

SECTION II

Basic Information about Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

SECTION II, Chapter 1

Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley: Souls in Communion — Reflections on Lives Lived Two Centuries Apart

The only formal connection between Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley is traced in the comment in Wesley's journal for August 16th, 1742:

'On *Wednesday* and *Thursday*, in riding from Evesham to Bristol, I read over that surprising book, "The Life of Ignatius Loyola;" surely one of the greatest men that ever was engaged in the support of so bad a cause! I wonder any man should judge him to be an enthusiast: No; but he knew the people with whom he had to do: And setting out (like Count Z——) with a full persuasion that he might use guile to promote the glory of God, or (which he thought the same thing) the interest of his Church, he acted, in all things, consistent with his principles.¹

Here, from Wesley, is praise for one who stands within a different culture from his own, and acknowledgement of similar style and purpose in ministry, even though that ministry was within a church of which Wesley declared, 'we detest and abhor the fundamental doctrines'.²

Some of Wesley's detractors identified a connection between the two men. Around 1750, Bishop George Lavington of Exeter identified links between Wesley and a number of Roman Catholic luminaries ('St Francis, ... St Dominic, ... St Ignatius Loyola, ... St Anthony of Padua, ... Catherine of Sienna, Teresa, Clara, Magdalen of Pazzi, &c'³). In particular, he suggested that 'The Methodist, if he pleaseth, shall ... "... be inflamed, like St Ignatius, with a zeal of promoting God's honour; referring all his actions and purposes to God's greater glory ...".⁴

¹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p393f.

² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p456.

³ Lavington, *Enthusiasm*, p6.

⁴ Lavington, *Enthusiasm*, p7.

He recalled how both Ignatius and Wesley encouraged ‘field preaching’,⁵ he criticised Wesley for boasting of austerities similar to those exercised by Ignatius,⁶ and he drew comparisons between the conversion experiences of Wesley and Ignatius (and any one of a number of others) who ‘by a sudden light receives faith, and the complete perfection of divine sanctity.’⁷

Ten years or so later, William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, also found similarities between the experiences of Wesley and Ignatius, quoting the above comments from Wesley’s journal and saying ‘Mr J. Wesley appears to have studied this Master well’.⁸ Later he identified that each of the two men responded to the writings of Erasmus with the same objection, that they ‘insensibly damped the inflammation of his Zeal.’⁹

There is also a link between the Wesleys (Charles¹⁰ in this case) and Ignatius in the words of the fourth verse of the hymn “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,/One in Three, and Three in One”:¹¹

Take my soul and body’s powers;
Take my memory, mind, and will,
All my goods, and all my hours,
All I know, and all I feel,
All I think, or speak, or do;
Take my heart, but make it new.

Here echo the words of Ignatius’ prayer in the *Spiritual Exercises*:

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will—all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given all that to me. I now give it back to you, O Lord. All of it is yours. Dispose of it according to

⁵ Lavington, *Enthusiasm*, p8f.

⁶ See Lavington, *Enthusiasm*, p21f.

⁷ Lavington, *Enthusiasm*, p28.

⁸ Warburton, *Doctrine of Grace*, p382.

⁹ Warburton, *Doctrine of Grace*, p426.

¹⁰ Here it is important to note the comment in Edwards, *Sons to Samuel*, p33: ‘Charles Wesley was the least ambitious of men; by temperament, equipment, and desire, he was content to follow, provided he approved the leader’, and p34 (quoting Charles’ letter to John): “‘It is through your means I firmly believe that God will accomplish what he began in me.’”

¹¹ Methodist Hymn Book (1933), #574.

your will. Give me your love and your grace, for that is enough for me.¹²

The problem here, however, is that there is no firm evidence that either of the Wesleys ever read the *Spiritual Exercises*. We do not know which “Life of Ignatius” John had been reading, nor whether that “Life” included the prayer from Section 234 of the *Exercises*. Further we have no certainty that John guided Charles in his thought in preparation of the hymn, though we note the common assumption that John and Charles were of “like mind” ... in matters of theology and the church’.¹³ While this echo of thought might be from John’s own memory of a prayer read while reading of Ignatius, it might also, of course, be simply a coming together of similar thought through similar spiritual experience in two men. Indeed, it might be a common development of thought in two people who had been influenced in their spiritual journey by similar writers.¹⁴

So the possibility of a relationship between John Wesley and Ignatius Loyola is, at first sight, limited. The two men were separated by two centuries during which time huge changes took place in the life of the church. And they were separated by two ecclesial cultures – one medieval and the other renaissance, one structured from within the Holy Roman Empire and the other influenced by the Lutheran, Calvinist and English Reformations.

Yet, a relationship between the two has been noted positively in a number of other places. Gordon Wakefield has suggested that ‘John Wesley, who was not without admiration for Ignatius and recommended meditation, would not have

¹² Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §234; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p177.

¹³ Kimbrough, S T (ed), *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian*, p11.

¹⁴ At very least, we know that both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley had read Thomas á Kempis’ ‘Imitation of Christ’.

disapproved',¹⁵ the influence of Ignatian spirituality on all Christian denominations including those of Wesleyan heritage. It is Brendan Byrne¹⁶ who identified the connection between the Wesleyan hymn and the Ignatian prayer, and in that same article Byrne suggested an 'interesting convergence [*sic*] of psychological or subjective process'¹⁷ in their understanding and expectation of conversion.

Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) grew up in the Basque country of Spain and in the Catholic church of the Holy Roman Empire. His education till his early adulthood was courtly and military, and in his maturity, he took up an academic education which embraced only the beginnings of the early renaissance and humanist understandings, and so reflected the emphases of the late medieval period.

'Ignatius was hardly touched by the Renaissance at all'.¹⁸ He continued to be influenced by the imagery and style of medieval Christianity, and his commitment after his conversion to pilgrimage to Jerusalem was typical of the earlier era. The books which influenced him after his conversion and which became foundational when he began to formalise his *Spiritual Exercises* (Thomas á Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, Garcia de Cisneros' *Ejercitatorio Espiritual*, Zerbolt's *Spiritual Ascensions* and *Rosary of Spiritual Exercises* by Mombaer) were late medieval, and show Ignatius to be 'a follower of the *devotio moderna*'.¹⁹

¹⁵ Wakefield, *Methodist Spirituality*, pxxviii.

¹⁶ Byrne, Brendan. "Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley: Experience and Strategies of Conversion", *Colloquium*, Vol 19, No 1, October 1986, pp54-66.

¹⁷ Byrne, Brendan. "Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley: Experience and Strategies of Conversion", *Colloquium*, Vol 19, No 1, October 1986, p61.

¹⁸ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p69.

¹⁹ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p85.

For all this, however, Ignatius was not entirely untouched by the new developments. In place of the ‘determinism and pessimism’²⁰ which characterised the medieval response to the sinfulness of humanity, Ignatius

had the outgoingness and confidence of the early humanists. He felt his strength, with God’s help, was sufficient to overcome all trials, physical and spiritual.²¹

John Wesley (1703–1791) was English and deeply committed to the established Church of England. His parents were of dissenting heritage – Susanna’s father ‘had been a prominent Nonconformist divine’²² and Samuel’s grandfather and father had been evicted from their livings under the Act of Uniformity, in 1662, as a result of their refusal to utilise the Book of Common Prayer.²³ Wesley’s education was entirely religious and academic, first at home under the tuition of Susanna his mother, and then (following formal schooling at Charterhouse School) at Oxford in an era of significant Anglican influence in that university.

Wesley thrived within the scholarship of his age. He studied Aristotelian and later scholastic logic, ‘was also much influenced by Lockeian empiricism’,²⁴ and believed in and encouraged the study of the ancient languages.²⁵ He looked to the church in antiquity to find models for the Christian communities in which the people gathered who were converted under his preaching.²⁶ Wesley also contributed to the scientific developments of his age. He wrote a treatise on the

²⁰ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p89.

²¹ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p89f.

²² Green, *The Young Mr. Wesley*, p46.

²³ see Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, p13.

²⁴ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p65.

²⁵ Wesley wrote “Short Grammars” for English, French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

²⁶ see Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*.

uses of the newly discovered “electricity”,²⁷ and he studied medicine in order to better minister to the poor.²⁸

In spite of the different cultures and backgrounds of these two men, there are points of similarity.

Both Ignatius and Wesley were men of strong character, being assertive, self-confident, self-assured. Both had come through considerable trial and struggle (Ignatius, physical; Wesley, emotional: Ignatius, through his military service; Wesley, through his family life). Both were engaged in their own search for salvation, and both saw the needs of those around them for that same salvation.

Each in his own way thought early that progress toward the goal of their life would be made through some physical journeying — Ignatius to Jerusalem, Wesley to America — each seeing his journey as an opportunity to put into practice some of the principles which he had discerned as beneficial to his own spirit.

As part of his conversion experience, Ignatius became convinced that God was calling him through pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This pilgrimage was ‘the peak of [medieval Christian] spiritual aspirations’,²⁹ and Ignatius anticipated both development of his own personal devotion and the opportunity to ‘help souls’.³⁰

In a similar way, shortly after his ordination Wesley went to Georgia to live out his dream of a church founded on the principles of Christian antiquity.

²⁷ The Preface to “The Desideratum: Or, Electricity made plain and useful” is included in Wesley’s *Abridgements of Various Works*, revised in *Works*, Vol 14, pp241ff; See also Wesley, *Works*, Vol 2, p517 (= Journal: 31 October, 1759).

²⁸ See Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodist”, §XII,2: ‘At length I thought of a kind of desperate expedient. “I will prepare, and give them physic myself.” For six or seven and twenty years, I had made anatomy and physic the diversion of my leisure hours; though I never properly studied them, unless for a few months when I was going to America, where I imagined I might be of some service to those who had no regular Physician among them. I applied to it again.’ In *Works*, Vol 8, p264.

²⁹ Aveling, J.C.H. *The Jesuits*, p72f.

³⁰ Ignatius, *The Autobiography*, §45, in Du Brul, *Ignatius: Sharing the Pilgrim Story*, pxli.

Wesley ‘originally saw the Georgia mission as an opportunity to restore ancient Christian disciplinary and liturgical customs in an environment similar to that of the ancient Church.’³¹ At the same time, he acknowledged in a letter ‘to a friend’ that his ‘chief motive [in embarking for Georgia] ... is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel of Christ by preaching it to the Heathen.’³²

Later in each life this journeying motif remained. Though Ignatius himself never travelled far, spending his life in administrative function within the Society, he encouraged the members of the Society to travel widely through the world, and there is a sense in which their travels were vicarious journeyings for Ignatius. Wesley spent the rest of his life after his Aldersgate experience travelling throughout Great Britain and Ireland, preaching and establishing communities in which people could be affirmed and confirmed in their new-found faith.

There is also a common thread in the ways in which the two struggled in their human existence with physical and psychological distress. In respect of Ignatius, Terence O’Reilly has said:

It is well known that at Manresa in the summer of 1522 Ignatius passed through a period of acute doubt and temptation during which he feared that his sins had not all been forgiven, and that this inner torment, which lasted several months, drove him to the point of suicide before it was resolved.³³

And this is echoed by Philip Caraman:

He became depressed. He was suffering from the effects of excessive fasting, from sleeplessness, remorse and hypersensitiveness. In this state his prayers, his attendance at

³¹ Campbell, Ted A. *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, p34.

³² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 12, p38.

³³ O’Reilly, *From Ignatius Loyola to John of the Cross*, pVI, 103 (using the pagination of the book, which follows the original page numbering of the articles – see “Publisher’s Note” on pvii.).

Mass, from which he had derived such devotion, were now drained of spiritual comfort.³⁴

Around this time, Ignatius' prayer was,

Help me, Lord, for I find no remedy in men nor in any creature; yet if I thought I could find it, no labor [*sic*] would be hard for me. Yourself, Lord, show me where I may find it; even though I should have to chase a puppy that it may give me the remedy, I will do it.³⁵

For Wesley, there were many occasions when he expressed a lack of certainty about his salvation. His health waned on many occasions, with the possibility of 'a psychosomatic element in some of these bouts of illness (... and Wesley's health improved as his religious stability increased).'³⁶ Wesley struggled with an awareness of his own sinfulness. In the Journal entry for May 24th 1738, in the description of the state in which he perceived himself to have been, he said,

In this vile, abject state of bondage to sin I was indeed fighting continually, but not conquering. Before, I had willingly served sin; now it was unwillingly; but I still served it. I fell, and rose, and fell again. Sometimes I was overcome, and in heaviness³⁷.

Both Ignatius and Wesley had sea voyage experiences which were significant to their understanding of their relationship with God. For Ignatius the experience meant that he

examined his conscience and prepared for death. He had no fear of what might await him because of his sins: "he was only overwhelmed," he said, "with confusion and sorrow for the poor use he had made of the gifts and graces God had given him".³⁸

³⁴ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p38.

³⁵ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §23; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p78.

³⁶ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p69f.

³⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p101 (= Journal: 24 May, 1738).

³⁸ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p97.

Wesley had two responses to sea storm experiences. At one point the experience provided him with ‘a lively conviction what manner of men those ought to be who are every moment on the brink of eternity.’³⁹ On another occasion, he ‘was awaked by the tossing of the ship and roaring of the wind, and plainly showed that I was unfit, for I was unwilling, to die.’⁴⁰

For both men, Thomas à Kempis became a special influence. For Ignatius, ‘*The Imitation of Christ* ... became his favourite spiritual book’.⁴¹ And Wesley, in his reflections on the experiences that led to May 24th 1738 said, ‘the providence of God directed me to “Christian Pattern” [i.e. the *Imitation of Christ*], I began to see, that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God’s law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions.’⁴² Each felt indebted to the insights which were written in “*The Imitation of Christ*”, and both utilised those insights in the development of the processes by which they encouraged others to grow in faith.

This recognition of Christ as “model” for life was expanded in each man’s understanding. Both saw in the lives of saints and Christian heroes expressions and examples of the life of Christ which each sought, in part at least, to emulate. For Ignatius at the time of this conversion, it was following the patterns of life exemplified by Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Dominic which ‘brought him serenity and comfort.’⁴³ And Wesley ‘was aided in his growth in confidence by identifying with the roles of various scriptural figures, even Christ himself, and by becoming a travelling preacher’.⁴⁴

³⁹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p 18 (= Journal: 31 Oct, 1735).

⁴⁰ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p 19 (= Journal: 23 Nov, 1735).

⁴¹ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p77.

⁴² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p99.

⁴³ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p24.

⁴⁴ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p152.

In the early days after his conversion, Ignatius maintained an attitude which echoed this lifestyle. He ‘acted as a private Christian gentleman. His only intention was to set his own soul in order.’⁴⁵ Showing a similar attitude, Wesley resisted pressure from his father and brother (Samuel junior) to enter parochial ministry at Epworth for reasons that can only be interpreted as personal piety. In one of the cycle of letters to his brother on this matter John said that he ‘could not throw up any part of [life at Oxford] without manifest hazard to my salvation.’⁴⁶

Eventually, however, their spiritualities developed beyond this personal focus. As each man grew in his own relationship with Christ, so there grew in each an awareness of a clear relationship between their own salvation and a task of saving the souls of others which necessitated activity in community service. This was, of course, an extension of Ignatius’ own understanding that he was following ‘the supreme Captain General of the good ... Christ.’⁴⁷ He took Christ as his model and ‘acted towards his fellow men generally with charity and tenderness, for Christ too had loved man and died on the cross for him.’⁴⁸ Likewise, ‘Wesley ... affirmed that Christians should imitate Christ in going about and doing good: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and prisoners and making “all these actions subservient to a higher purpose, even the saving of souls from death”.’⁴⁹

For both Ignatius and Wesley, the development of a deeply private faith into a discipleship that was expressed in community meant that they each had to move beyond familiar practices. Each allowed himself, to use Rack’s description

⁴⁵ Foss, *Founding of the Jesuits*, p70.

⁴⁶ February 13, 1735, in Telford, *Letters of John Wesley*, Vol 1, p180.
http://wesley.nnu.edu/john_wesley/letters/1735.htm [viewed 27/01/2007].

⁴⁷ Foss, *Founding of the Jesuits*, p71.

⁴⁸ Foss, *Founding of the Jesuits*, p99.

⁴⁹ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p89.

of Wesley, ‘to respond to the test of experience even against his own inherited prejudices’.⁵⁰ Ignatius began his spiritual journey with a conviction that he could ‘spend his whole life doing penance’,⁵¹ but as he reflected on the situation of his life and as different circumstances intruded on his experience, he was able to review that decision (and others like it) and come to new commitments that ultimately led him to found and lead the Society of Jesus.

In his own time and way, Wesley also moved into a more developed understanding of ministry and church community. Sometimes this was out of necessity. When the time he had at his disposal could not provide all the ministry required, he had to find others to preach and to lead new Christians in their growth. At other times it was the evidence of the Spirit working in lives and through ministries that caused him to reassess his perceptions of what was appropriate. One example of this is seen in the change in his understanding of who could preach. In 1748, in a letter to Thomas Whitehead,⁵² he used the texts 1 Corinthians 14:34-5 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 ‘to oppose any suggestion that women might have a part in the preaching ministry of the church’,⁵³ but by the 1760s he ‘conceived of lay preaching, male or female, as ... a gift of God ... to be exercised with a profound sense of responsibility.’⁵⁴

In following their experiences to their logical extensions, both men found themselves connecting with people who till then had not been perceived by the church as having a particularly important place in the church’s activities. Ignatius ‘drew the simple folk to hear him, the wives of artisans, a priest’s housekeeper, a

⁵⁰ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p121.

⁵¹ Ignatius, *The Autobiography*, §12, in Du Brul, *Ignatius: Sharing the Pilgrim Story*, pxxiii.

⁵² February 10, 1748, see Telford, *Letters of John Wesley*, Vol 2, p119.

⁵³ Vawser, *The Uniting Church Commits it’s Ministers to Preach*, p188.

⁵⁴ Chilcote, *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism*, p118.

vine-dresser, apprentice girls, a student's wench and some women of easy virtue'.⁵⁵ At the same time, Ignatius also developed associations with people of higher social and ecclesial status. His correspondents included Isobel Roser, 'a noble lady of Barcelona',⁵⁶ Francis Borgia, one time Duke of Gandía,⁵⁷ and Teresa Rejadell, 'a holy Benedictine nun'.⁵⁸ In a similar way, the people whom Wesley served were also from all levels of society, from the aristocracy (Lady Huntington⁵⁹ and Lady Maxwell⁶⁰) to the children of Welsh colliers.⁶¹

This connection with people from all walks of life was not, however, always seen to be appropriate. Each man in his own time was the subject of criticism from the Church. In November 1526, Ignatius was summoned before the Inquisition to explain his activity.⁶² It was the first of a number of times when he was questioned, though on every occasion he was released with little more than a warning not to engage in heretical activity. His response when questioned in Salamanca was to deny preaching, saying that 'we speak informally of the things of God with certain persons ... who invite us.'⁶³

Wesley was also subjected to various attacks on both his person⁶⁴ and his activity. Of this second, one of the most significant and long running was that (already referred to) of the Bishop of Exeter, George Lavington, under the title "The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compar'd." '[S]upporting his thesis

⁵⁵ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p61.

⁵⁶ Ganss, *Ignatius*, p327.

⁵⁷ See Ganss, *Ignatius*, p346.

⁵⁸ Ganss, *Ignatius*, p332.

⁵⁹ See letters in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 12, pp462f.

⁶⁰ See letters in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 12, pp334-352.

⁶¹ See Ayling, *John Wesley*, p113.

⁶² See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §58, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius*, p92f.

⁶³ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §65, in Du Brul, *Ignatius: Sharing the Pilgrim Story*, pliii.

⁶⁴ See numerous references in Wesley Journal, as for example in Vol 1, p266 (April 1, 1740), and s.v. "mobs" and "riots".

with unkind selective quotations from Wesley's own *Journal*,⁶⁵ Lavington criticised Wesley for 'ostentation ..., specious address, ... innovations of doctrine ..., zealous professions of piety, ... and high pretensions to inspiration'.⁶⁶ These criticisms were aimed at undermining the revival which was being evidenced through the preaching of Wesley and others, and being consolidated by the organisation of societies, bands and class meetings that Wesley insisted upon. Wesley's response was to continue to find the foundation of his ministry in the Scriptures and the stories of the heroes of the faith.

Conclusions

It is not appropriate to suggest that there was any direct connection between Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley. It does not appear that Wesley ever studied Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*, nor did he model himself or his ministry on any insights he might have learned from Ignatius.

But there is a sense in which the two men grew in similar ways in their understanding of God's call upon their lives. The souls of each discerned similar needs within themselves, and within the lives of the people around them. They both perceived that their generation was lacking in awareness of the grace of God for salvation, and reflecting on his own experience each identified ways of sharing the knowledge and inviting others to experience the grace he had been given.

It is, therefore, appropriate to look more carefully into the experiences and insights of each, to compare and contrast their writings, and to examine the ways

⁶⁵ Ayling, *John Wesley*, p154.

⁶⁶ Lavington, *Enthusiasm*, p55.

in which each has contributed to the development of spirituality, spiritual guidance and pastoral care in his own time and in time since.

In a generation in which there is diminishing interest in narrow, “denominational” ways of thinking and increasing multi-culturalism, it is useful to learn from the experiences of two men from different generations and cultures who, none-the-less, had levels of common consciousness of their place in the kingdom of God and of their opportunities to enable others to discover for themselves the presence of Christ in daily living.

SECTION II, Chapter 2

Development of Spirituality in the Early Life of Ignatius Loyola

Ignatius Loyola was born, in 1491, when Europe was still working out the political implications of the Ottoman Turkish victory over the Byzantine Empire, which came with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Pope Nicholas V recognised the Ottoman siege and victory as a severe loss to Christendom and tried in vain to raise another Crusade, but ‘[t]hough princes hastened to collect reports on the fall of the city and writers wrote horrified laments ... no one was ready to take action.’¹ One positive result came, however, from the Ottoman victory and the subsequent failure of the European princes to respond. This was an exodus of many scholars from the Byzantine regions into Italy and other countries of Western Europe, and a consequent flourishing of scholarship into the Renaissance. The increase in scholarship was contributive to the renewal of the church that developed in the sixteenth century, in which Ignatius Loyola was a participant.

During the decades before the fall of Constantinople, the knightly system of chivalry held dominance in Europe.

The work of saving Constantinople, which the rulers of the West had abandoned through indifference, jealousy or political caution, was taken up with a high sense of virtue by many private Western gentlemen. These men demonstrated an aspect of Western conduct which had been quite common in the early Middle Ages—the disposition of an individual to be possessed by an ideal which transcended political expedience, and perhaps even common sense.²

¹ Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople*, p166.

² Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p6; and on the ‘causes’ and ‘consequences’ of the Crusades, see also Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe*, p102f.

Ignatius grew up in this chivalrous environment. François Vandenbroucke has suggested that there is a direct connection between the sense of piety felt by those lay people who went to the Crusades and by those who remained at home. As was the case for people in holy orders, there was ‘a sense of spiritual vocation ... something truly sacred’³ in the lay understanding of chivalry. Each knight who entered into the orders of chivalry was charged ‘to defend himself and to protect the Church against the enemies of the cross of Christ and of the Christian virtues.’⁴

‘In his youth [Ignatius] had always before him the ideals of military chivalry’.⁵ In his own words, he was ‘full of tales like Amadís de Gaul and such books’,⁶ and the ideas expressed in these books became the model for a life of chivalry to which he strove ‘as a gentleman in virtuous and gentle discipline’.⁷ In the service of the Duke of Najera, he ‘acted with an elegance and compassion worthy of the highest chivalric ideal: he refused to join in the plunder of the town, for an *hidalgo* served for honour and not riches.’⁸ Religious elements associated with rites of chivalry can be seen in some of Ignatius’ actions as he developed his own spirituality in the service of the church. One of the most particular of these was in his vigil before the altar of Our Lady of Montserrat, where he ‘resolved to lay aside his garments and to don the armor [*sic*] of Christ.’⁹

It is appropriate to note some of the chivalric axioms that are part of the romance of *Amadís de Gaul*. In that tale, King Perion said to his beloved,

³ Leclercq et al, *A History of Christian Spirituality*, Vol 2, p277.

⁴ Vandenbroucke, in Leclercq et al, *A History of Christian Spirituality*, Vol 2, p279.

⁵ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p64.

⁶ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §17; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p75.

⁷ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p67.

⁸ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p66. “Hidalgo” is a term for members of Spanish gentry.

⁹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §17, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p75.

Elisena,¹⁰ ‘all my life shall be spent in your service.’¹¹ Amadís himself, as a boy took the side of one weaker than himself against one stronger, and declared, ‘I had rather you would strike me ... than that anyone before me should dare to beat my brother.’¹² When, in another encounter, Amadís had been accused of being a traitor he said, ‘I am no traitor, and shall defend myself well from treason.’¹³

Each of these ideals can be seen at different times in Ignatius’ life. He committed his whole life to the service of another (in his case, Christ); he took the cause of justice, against those who would abuse the weak; and when accused by the Inquisition, he demanded that a decision be made proving that his actions were not against or disloyal to the church. In later life, this sense of chivalry led to Ignatius understanding Christ as ‘the new King that [he] was now serving, ready for his sake, like the knight of the romance of chivalry, to answer his call, endure hardships and undertake any task he might be given.’¹⁴

Ignatius’ conversion came after he was wounded during the defence of Pamplona against the French. During his convalescence, to stave off boredom, he read the only material available—‘a life of Christ and a book of the lives of the saints in Castilian’.¹⁵

These “Lives”¹⁶ highlighted for Ignatius the similarity and the difference between two lifestyles – that of chivalry which he had known and that of sanctity which was now brought into focus for him. Both ways were ‘types of perfection

¹⁰ In the story, Perion and Elisena will become the parents of Amadís.

¹¹ Lobeira, Vasco, *Amadís of Gaul*, p4.

¹² Lobeira, Vasco, *Amadís of Gaul*, p20.

¹³ Lobeira, Vasco, *Amadís of Gaul*, p35.

¹⁴ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p41.

¹⁵ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §5; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p70.

¹⁶ The *Vita Christi* by Ludolph of Saxony (d. 1377) and the *Flos Sanctorum* or *Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus de Varazze (d. c1298).

... reached only through sacrifice and training.’¹⁷ But it became clear to Ignatius that he had been committed to the lesser of the two. What future he saw in chivalry was tainted by the suffering he endured in his convalescence – as Foss says, ‘poor reward for some twenty years of training and service’¹⁸.

Ludolf’s *Life of Christ* offered an alternative challenge –

A man can have no foundation other than Jesus Christ. ... Therefore, whoever wishes to escape the damnation due to his sins and be corrected in spirit, must not forsake that foundation, because there he will find remedies for all his needs.¹⁹

In contemplation of this, pausing in his reading, Ignatius found that while he gained pleasure from immediate thoughts about the chivalrous life, the pleasure faded afterwards:

he found himself dry and dissatisfied. But when he thought of going to Jerusalem barefoot, and of eating nothing but plain vegetables and of practicing all the other rigors that he saw in the saints, not only was he consoled when he had these thoughts, but even after putting them aside he remained satisfied and joyful.²⁰

For all this, some of the essentials of the chivalric model remained with him. ‘To Ignatius, the individual soul wandered in the no-man’s-land between the armies of God and of the devil, and that soul must be persuaded to range itself under God’s banner.’²¹ When he called others to join him, it was with the invitation to ‘whoever desires to fight under the sacred banner of the Cross’.²² This chivalric model, of men who gave themselves in private and individual service to a feudal lord, would be carried into the community of those who came

¹⁷ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p68.

¹⁸ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p68.

¹⁹ Quoted from *Life of Christ*, in Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p68f.

²⁰ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §8; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p71.

²¹ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p93.

²² From the Papal Bull “Regimini militantis Ecclesiae” (September 27, 1540) see http://bibliotecapleyades.net/vatican/esp_vatican13.htm.

under Ignatius' influence. They would enter into a society 'of a vast network of enterprising individuals who, while keeping close communication with those in authority and receiving guidance and "consolation" from them, adapted to local needs and tried to seize opportunities as they presented themselves',²³ and all this in the service of Christ and of his earthly representative, the Pope. It is observed that within that network Ignatius himself was

able to inspire [others] with a unity of purpose without imposing a rigid uniformity. He trusted all and left all free, restraining some, goading others, presenting to all the Exercises as a process of exploring the Godhead, issuing in an ardent personal devotion to their "Lord and Master".²⁴

The era in which Ignatius lived was, in Europe, the time of Renaissance development of thought and knowledge. The 'uniformity of faith'²⁵ which had been encouraged by the ecumenical councils of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and which found expression in the works of people like Anselm of Canterbury, Bonaventure, Abelard and Thomas Aquinas, was being shaken by new philosophical and scientific study. The status of the church, the power of the papacy, the primacy of theology – all once unquestioned – were now being scrutinised, and in various ways found to be wanting. 'The increasing separation between the religious and the secular ... forced the men of the age to rely more and more on their individual judgement.'²⁶

As a man of his own generation, Ignatius was influenced by the imagery and style of medieval Christianity. His commitment after his conversion to pilgrimage to Jerusalem was typical of the earlier era. From 1332, 'the Franciscans of the Holy Land ... organised processions, sermons, and spiritual

²³ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p11.

²⁴ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p88.

²⁵ Swanson, *Religion and Devotion*, p52.

²⁶ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p38.

exercises appropriate to particular holy sites.²⁷ He wanted to immerse himself into the ‘ritual *ordo peregrinationis*’²⁸ which was part of the medieval pilgrimage program.

The books already mentioned that were significant in his development²⁹ were products of that earlier time. But there were other books which influenced him after his conversion. Thomas à Kempis’ *Imitation of Christ*, Garcia de Cisneros’ *Ejercitatorio Espiritual*, Zerbolt’s *Spiritual Ascensions*, and *Rosary of Spiritual Exercises* by Mombaer were written during the late mediaeval era and reflected some of the changes in that era’s understanding of church and faith.³⁰ These were foundational as he began to formalise his *Spiritual Exercises*.

So Ignatius was not entirely untouched by the new developments. By the fourteenth century, the medieval period had become ‘a violent, tormented, bewildered, suffering and disintegrating age’.³¹ The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had imposed on all people the requirement that they confess their sins to the parish priest and receive the sacrament of Eucharist at least once per year, and had weighted this requirement with the stipulation that non-compliance would lead to their being ‘cut off from the Church (excommunicated) during life and deprived of Christian burial in death.’³² In place of this ‘preoccupation with sin, confession, penance, and fear of eternal damnation’³³ which characterised the mediaeval response to the appalling experiences of that time, Ignatius ‘had the

²⁷ Chareyon, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, p3f.

²⁸ Chareyon, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, p84.

²⁹ Above, p103.

³⁰ Some of these changes are identified in Section II, Chapter 1 above.

³¹ Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Century:1307-1399*, pxiii, quoted in Nuth, Joan M. *God’s Lovers in an Age of Anxiety*, p26.

³² “Canon 21”, *Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215*, <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/lateran4.html>>, [viewed 17/05/2010].

³³ Nuth, *God’s Lovers in an Age of Anxiety*, p29.

outgoingness and confidence of the early humanists. He felt his strength, with God's help, was sufficient to overcome all trials, physical and spiritual.³⁴

Further to this was the opportunity for freedom of expression which Ignatius offered to those who took the *Spiritual Exercises* where

no single method is prescribed—different methods helped different people.

Ignatius's most fundamental teaching was that individuals had to find the way that suited them best, but he and the other first Jesuits saw that all methods should lead to “familiar conversation” with God.³⁵

This freedom to judge for oneself the most appropriate way of discerning God's will was signified in such comments as

The Spiritual Exercises should be adapted to the disposition of the persons who desire to make them, that is, to their age, education, and ability. ... [E]xercitants should be given, each one, as much as they are willing to dispose themselves to receive, for their greater help and progress.³⁶

It was an outcome of that opening up of thought which was one of the hallmarks of the Renaissance.

Ignatius was born into a family which had ‘shown the familiar qualities of border chieftains—independence and a touchy pride in their nobility, both the irascibility and the endurance of soldiers.’³⁷ This predisposed his personality for the style of life which he was to follow after his conversion. Concerning his early life, we know that he was the youngest of thirteen brothers and sisters, that his mother had died when he was very young (possibly while ‘he was still an infant’³⁸) and his father when Ignatius was about 16 years old.³⁹ We also know that by the time he was 15 years old Ignatius ‘knew how to read and write, [and]

³⁴ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p89f.

³⁵ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p48.

³⁶ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §18; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p126.

³⁷ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p61.

³⁸ Tylenda, *A Pilgrim's Journey*, pxv.

³⁹ See Tellechea Idígoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, pp41ff.

was sent to be trained for court life in the house of Juan Valázquez de Cuéllar'.⁴⁰ This education established him as 'a dapper little man elegantly got up, with a sword and dagger at his side, ... a quick-tempered young man, but a gallant and a lover too, as chivalry demanded.'⁴¹

It has already been pointed out⁴² that he maintained this lifestyle. Though he 'acted as a private Christian gentleman'⁴³ the reason for doing so was simply to maintain his soul. This he did by various penances, performed with the discipline and the perseverance of a soldier. But during this time, the 'dapper little man' was subjugated as

he gave himself up to a regimen of prayer, fasting, self-flagellation, and other austerities that were extreme even for the sixteenth century. He surrendered all care for his appearance and, in defiance of convention, let his hair and fingernails grow.⁴⁴

This deprivation led, ultimately, to such distress that Ignatius became aware that he was not capable in himself of finding a solution to his problem. In the *Autobiography* he expressed this distress in the prayer already quoted:⁴⁵

Help me, Lord, for I find no remedy in men nor in any creature; yet if I thought I could find it, no labor [*sic*] would be too hard for me. Yourself, Lord, show me where I may find it; even though I should have to chase a little puppy that it may give me the remedy, I will do it.⁴⁶

In time Ignatius discerned that his attempts to discipline his physical body, outwardly successful as they were, did nothing to bring him peace or spiritual understanding. He came to feel 'disgust for the life he led'⁴⁷ during the time

⁴⁰ Ganss (ed), *Ignatius*, p14.

⁴¹ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p64f.

⁴² Above, p104.

⁴³ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p70.

⁴⁴ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p25.

⁴⁵ Above, p102.

⁴⁶ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §23; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p78.

⁴⁷ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §25; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p78.

when he was doing significant physical penance. He was convinced that it was the Lord who had 'deigned that he awake, as from sleep'⁴⁸ and so had delivered him from the pain of scruples which had clouded his life. His life was refocused to a point where 'his pre-occupation with himself lessened, [and] he was able to devote more time to helping others He was learning that eccentricity is often a barrier between men.'⁴⁹

In a somewhat similar experience, Ignatius also became aware of a need to study. His earliest commitment was to be a pilgrim in Jerusalem, to walk in the steps of the saints, and even of the Lord Jesus Christ. This option closed to him, however, when for his own safety he was effectively expelled from Jerusalem by the Franciscan Custodian of Holy Places.⁵⁰ Though others could well have seen mere human political and religious contrivance at work, Ignatius saw divine guidance in the demand that he not remain in Jerusalem. In this, as in the earlier discernment of his need to refocus his life, he identified clearly that God was directing the change in his circumstances. By studying 'he would be able to help souls'.⁵¹ He was discerning that if faith was to provide an effective source of salvation it needed to be established on 'a solid exposition of Church teaching',⁵² and was convinced that study would provide this foundation.

His own account in the *Autobiography* of the fields of study on which he focused⁵³ suggests a desire to become grounded in the basic principles of the church's understanding of itself. In this, the three scholars mentioned are among the pre-eminent expression of later Medieval rather than Renaissance and

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p74.

⁵⁰ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §46; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p87.

⁵¹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §50; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p89.

⁵² Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p79.

⁵³ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §57; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p92.

Humanist knowledge. His studies may have been ‘a strange mixture of subjects for someone just entering the academic world’,⁵⁴ but they provided a legitimate foundation from which Ignatius could speak to others of his own experiences, and encourage them to discover the love of God in similar ways.

Parenthetically, it might here be suggested that Ignatius’ silence in respect of the work of Desiderius Erasmus could arise from this fact – that in his studies he was seeking to provide himself with some credentials for the work he felt called into. While in the *Enchiridion* Ignatius ‘may have found much that was meaningful and applicable to him’,⁵⁵ there was in other of Erasmus’ work material that ‘would have been distasteful to Ignatius for their caustic and sarcastic criticism of the abuses, venality, and superstition in the church.’⁵⁶ This would have been unhelpful as Ignatius tried to develop his own *bona fides*, and encourage others to use the processes of the church to enter into life-giving relationships with God.

Ignatius was gathering his thoughts into what would become the *Spiritual Exercises*, and developed ‘a passionate longing to share with others his spiritual experiences, talking, listening, praying with them and encouraging them to love God’.⁵⁷ In his own terms, ‘he sought out ... all spiritual persons to converse with’,⁵⁸ though he immediately noted that he was unable to find such people in either Barcelona or Manresa. ‘Always his conscious aim remained that of the Exercises [*sic*], just to serve God faithfully and bring others to do the same’,⁵⁹ and indeed, ‘the *Exercises* essentially taught nothing more than that human beings

⁵⁴ Tylenda, *A Pilgrim’s Journey*, p65.

⁵⁵ Olin, “Erasmus and St. Ignatius Loyola”, p78.

⁵⁶ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p261.

⁵⁷ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p40.

⁵⁸ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §37; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p83.

⁵⁹ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p170.

were “to love God above all things, with all their heart, all their mind, all their soul, and all their strength.”⁶⁰

This emphasis on spiritual things, both in his own life and in his encouragement to others, seems to have focussed Ignatius’ interest in practical rather than speculative knowledge. This was encouraged by his appreciation of the “Devotio Moderna”, and particularly the “Imitation of Christ”, now attributed to Thomas à Kempis but during the fifteenth century attributed to Jean Gerson.⁶¹ In following this way, Ignatius took seriously ‘the moral concern and simplicity of Kempis [and] the strong practicality of Zerbolt’⁶² and found his interest and expertise in a spirituality which was based on the authority of the Scriptures as expressed in the life of the Church.

The way in which Ignatius’ conversations focused on daily and personal issues can be seen in the advice he offered to his various correspondents. To Teresa Rejadella he wrote:

Do not worry about bad or obscene or sensual thoughts, not about your wretchedness or lukewarmness when you experience them against your will. Saints Peter and Paul did not wholly escape the onset of all this. ...

Many persons given to prayer and contemplation find that, because they have been using their minds before the time of sleep, they are so intent on the things they have been meditating on that day, or preparing for the next day, that they cannot close their eyes. The enemy’s (devil’s) tactics then are to present all good thoughts he can to the mind, his purpose being to exhaust the body by depriving it of sleep.

...

There are other forms of meditation ... too often forgotten today which are full of peace ... and cause no strain on the interior faculties of the soul. No effort is required either interior or physical. Meditation of this kind does not weary the body at all.⁶³

⁶⁰ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p38f.

⁶¹ See Tylenda, *A Pilgrim’s Journey*, p34.

⁶² Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p90.

⁶³ Quoted in Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p99.

Here we have an example of the way in which helping others in the practical application of spiritual principles became a clear and necessary aspect of Ignatius' own faith and a characteristic of the group of friends who formed around him. This characteristic was so marked that

[a]mong the Roman populace their reputation began to improve. Not only was it unusual for clergy to preach and exhort so diligently from the pulpit, but it was nothing short of miraculous for priests to take heed of their own exhortations and practice Christian charity among the poor.⁶⁴

As already mentioned,⁶⁵ he 'drew the simple folk to hear him, the wives of artisans, a priest's housekeeper, a vine-dresser, apprentice girls, a student's wench and some women of easy virtue'.⁶⁶ Helping people, and its concomitant effect of influencing all kinds of people, was of course an extension of Ignatius' own understanding that he was imitating Christ.

The commitment to obedience to the Vicar of Christ which Ignatius included in the *Constitutions* establishing the Society of Jesus⁶⁷ was a further expression of Ignatius' practical spirituality. In this, Ignatius echoed the later mediaeval thought of both Thomas Aquinas ('The vow of obedience is the chief of the three religious vows'⁶⁸) and Thomas à Kempis ('Whosoever ... would fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ, must endeavour to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ'⁶⁹). Obedience was to be directed first to God (and particularly to the Pope as Christ's representative on earth), and was to be seen in actions directed towards the people whom God loved in Christ. This dual focus –

⁶⁴ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p119f.

⁶⁵ Above, Section II, Chapter 1: "Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley: Souls in Communion — Reflections on Lives Lived Two Centuries Apart", p100.

⁶⁶ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p61.

⁶⁷ See particularly Ignatius, *Constitutions*, §7 in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p284.

⁶⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part II of the Second Part, Question 186, Article 8, p660.

⁶⁹ Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, Chapter 1 §2.

obedience to Christ and service to people – was summed up in the words of the Constitutions:

The end of this Society is to devote itself with God's grace not only to the salvation and perfection of the members' own souls, but also with the same grace to labour strenuously in giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of the souls of their neighbors [*sic*].⁷⁰

The “Rules for Thinking with the Church”, which conclude the *Exercises*, are a further expression of Ignatius' understanding (indicated above⁷¹) that ‘the Church held an extraordinarily exalted position, and therefore its authority was limitless and absolute’.⁷² This means that for Ignatius, and so for his companions, the Church (in the person of an order's superior, and ultimately in the Pope) was more than simply the object of faithful obedience. It was also the source of spiritual insight, and the only environment in which the spiritual life could be fulfilled. Elaboration of this understanding has been identified above, in Section 1, Chapter 3 of this thesis – “Church and the Development and Encouragement of Spirituality”.

Conclusions

Thus we come to draw together the elements that we can gather from this brief account of the development of spirituality in Ignatius Loyola's early life.

The first factor to be highlighted is the importance of a commitment to some cause or person. For Ignatius this began as a commitment to the ideal of chivalry, but ultimately it was refocused onto the person of Jesus Christ, and the lifestyle that he engendered. For Ignatius this began with his desire to follow the

⁷⁰ Ignatius, *Constitutions*, §3, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p283f.

⁷¹ See p42.

⁷² Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p98.

examples of the saints whose stories he had read while convalescing after his wounding at Pamplona. It moved into his commitment to spend his life in the Holy Land, to live where Christ had lived and to ‘help souls’.⁷³ When these plans became untenable, Ignatius’ commitment to a cause became focused on the development of a system through which people of all classes and levels of society could become more closely connected to Christ and participate more fully in the expansion of Christ’s mission through the church.

This then, led to the development of his own vocation as a servant of Christ. In this capacity, from the time of his meeting with his first “companions” to his reluctant election as the first Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius developed the process of Spiritual Exercises which enabled the Jesuits and those whom they influenced to grow in their awareness of the presence of God in their lives, and in their discernment of the sacred in everyday life. This consciousness of the participation of God in daily living is another of the important focal points of Christian spirituality that is highlighted in the life of Ignatius.

But this focus on the relationship between an individual and Christ, and the attendant appreciation of God’s presence in the routines of human life was not limited to or focused exclusively on personal salvation. There was for Ignatius a strong need to develop a society which did not ignore the needs of the impoverished. In his own life he was committed to the care of the poor and the ill, and to providing opportunities for teaching the uneducated. This focus was then written into the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, so that those who were admitted into the Society should imitate Christ ‘by loving [the Creator] in all

⁷³ Ignatius, *Autobiography* §45, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p87.

creatures and all of them in him'.⁷⁴ So the spirituality that developed in the life of Ignatius Loyola, and through him in the heritage he has left for the whole church, is seen to be outward looking, focused on helping others using Christ's own servanthood as the model for service in the world.

In this we can see that for Ignatius both personal experience and a belonging to community were important. Without personal experiences awareness of the life of Christ and the work of God were at best mere theory and at worst disconnected information that was unrelated to human life. Without a community of people who participated in discovery and reflection, personal experiences would be poorly scrutinised and so would risk being grounded in inappropriate conjecture. Idiosyncratic experience provides no point of sharing; collective naivety brings no benefit to people or society. But when personal faith is experienced in the context of community life the result is a valid expression of the breadth of the ministry of Christ.

It is interesting to note a parallel between Ignatius' trust of individuals to discern their own service to God⁷⁵ and what the Uniting Church in Australia recognises as the ministry of every member. The Uniting Church *Basis of Union* says, 'the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ's Church with a diversity of gifts, and that there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ.'⁷⁶ While remaining within the context of the heritage of the church, each member is expected and allowed to participate in the mission of Christ in whatever way Christ's call is heard. The full development of this ministry of every member requires a milieu in which each disciple is

⁷⁴ Ignatius, *Constitutions*, §288, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p292.

⁷⁵ See above, p115.

⁷⁶ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 13.

enabled, encouraged and permitted personally to identify the particular ways in which God in Christ has touched her or his life. This affirmation of an individual's right and responsibility to experience God's presence and power in a unique way is essential to the affirmation of the ministry of Christ in which all disciples participate.

It is also appropriate to highlight the fact that Ignatius became aware in his spiritual journey of a sense of the new life in Christ. Early after his conversion in convalescence he became conscious of his own sinfulness, and was constantly overwhelmed by scruples to the extent that 'it seemed to him that he had not confessed certain things.'⁷⁷ But during his time at Manresa, following the advice of his confessor, he was able to live in freedom from scruples. In this positive experience of life in the presence of Christ Ignatius was able to focus on the glory of God in all things – events in his own life, experiences of his companions, and discoveries in the lives of people whom he inspired and encouraged.

For all this, however, it must be clearly understood that the development of the spiritual life is undeniably built on a commitment to scholarship that both examines the traditions of the church and promotes emergent streams of experience and expression. In this way, both foundational structures and contemporary enunciations are affirmed in appropriate ways for each generation. Again, this echoes the commitment of the *Basis of Union*, to 'confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds.'⁷⁸ This focus on personal discernment in the context of relevant scholarship gives permission (at least within the bounds of fundamental Christian doctrine) for new expressions of Christian faith and practice that can connect into the lives of people in different generations and cultures. In this way,

⁷⁷ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §22, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p77.

⁷⁸ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 11.

Christian spirituality will remain open to whatever directions God might take, and will be open to whatever change of focus might be necessary in its commitment to fulfil the divine mission of Jesus Christ.

The final comment that can be drawn from the development of spirituality in the life of Ignatius is that undergirding his insight into the Christian life is an awareness of and a commitment to the authority of Scripture. For Ignatius, the Biblical record was the source of all understanding about the ways of God and the relationship that is established between God and humanity. Reflection in particular on the stories of Jesus was for him the foundation for discovery of the ways in which we are saved by God's grace, called to live in obedience to Christ and commissioned to serve the world in which we live. This acknowledgement of the importance of the Scriptures is also endorsed in the Uniting Church's *Basis of Union*. In the books of the Bible, the people who would follow Christ and live his life in today's world are called to hear God's Word and to be nourished and regulated in faith and obedience.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ See *Basis of Union*, paragraph 5.

SECTION II, Chapter 3

Development of Spirituality in the Life of John Wesley

Samuel and Susanna Wesley were Anglicans who had converted from the dissenting religious principles of their respective parents, ‘under circumstances,’ to quote Albert C. Outler, ‘that made Susanna a zealot and Samuel senior a bigot’.¹ Susanna’s religious fervour was seen in her commitment to a breadth of Christian insight that came from many quarters. She was not averse to finding expressions of her faith in the writers of her own or previous generations. Samuel on the other hand closed his mind to alternative forms of Christian expression, even to the extent of denying validity to the spirituality of the people in his own parish.² In consequence of this, John grew up in an environment influenced by a strongly fundamental, and stubborn, belief in the authority and soundness of the established church but tempered by an awareness that other insights into faith could be considered.

When John Wesley was born the Church of England was

the dominant church in the country and had at least the nominal allegiance of 90% of the population. It was dominant not only in numbers but also in legal rights and privileges, social weight and influence Anglicans saw it as the best-constituted church in Christendom, with the best liturgy, avoiding (as one seventeenth century churchman put it) “the meretricious gaudiness of the Papist and the squalid sluttishness of dissenting conventicles”.³

Samuel and Susanna believed thus of the Church of England, even to the point where Samuel’s parish ministry was threatened by the hatred he engendered from his parishioners, ‘partly because he was so aggressively Christian, and partly

¹ “Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit: Plundering the Egyptians”, Fondren Lecture 1, 1974.

² See Edwards, *Sons to Samuel*, p15.

³ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p10.

because he was a fierce Tory partisan, with a stern, High Church attitude towards Dissenters.’⁴ With this strong attitude towards the established church within his home, it is understandable that John Wesley’s spiritual search should begin within the structures of the Church of England. At the same time it is important to be aware of the strong influence of his mother, Susanna, that would bring him into some contact with the Roman Catholic traditions of the church.

But it must also be noted that in eighteenth century England there was a

concern with the state of the Church and the spread of unbelief. ... “No age,” wrote Daniel Defoe in 1722, “since the founding and forming of the Christian Church, was ever like, in open avowed atheism, blasphemies, and heresies, to the age we now live in.”⁵

Social and intellectual developments in England and Europe, including the freedom offered to many for publication of pamphlets and permission to criticise any matter, contributed to the development of rationalism, deism and scepticism. So ‘the early years of the eighteenth century saw the effective opening of the religious crisis’ in which ‘the divorce between religion and the people became more marked.’⁶ This gap between the emphases of religion and the needs of society was aggravated by the perceived necessity for a subservient labour force in the newly industrial environment. It was to the interest of the middle and upper classes that the working class should remain under educated and superstitious.⁷

Wesley’s spirituality developed, therefore, in an environment of social struggle and the potential for revolutionary change.

The home in which Wesley grew up

⁴ Vulliamy, *John Wesley*, p3.

⁵ Green, *The Young Mr Wesley*, p15. The quote from Defoe is from an article he wrote “On the Death of Toland, The Infidel Writer”, in Lee, William (ed), *Daniel Defoe: His Life, and Recently Discovered Writings*, Vol II, p500.

⁶ Green, *The Young Mr Wesley*, p16.

⁷ See Vulliamy, *John Wesley*, p93.

was Puritan and Prayer-book too. The Bible was at its heart, but Susanna in particular sympathised with later non-conformists of a different kind, the “non-jurors” as they are more precisely called, those Anglicans who could not accept the religious settlement of 1689. There was, therefore, a touch of the old non-Roman, non-ritualistic high churchmanship, strong for the legal state connection and strict about prayer and fasting.⁸

So there was also a strong element of Puritan heritage influencing Wesley’s perspective on life in church and society.

In actual fact, Wesley ‘had been exposed to the Nonjurors’ opinions early in his life; his mother, prior to John’s birth, had refused to say “amen” to Samuel’s prayers for William and Mary.’⁹ Indeed, it is recorded that John was conceived during the reconciliation after marital separation caused by this disagreement between Samuel and Susanna.¹⁰

Any reflection on the spirituality of John Wesley must take account of two critical dates in his life: first is September 19th, 1725 — the date of his ordination to the diaconate (he was ordained priest in September 1728); second is May 24th, 1738 — what came to be known as the “Aldersgate experience”. These are clearly watershed moments in his spiritual journey; neither is the end and each in its own way is a new beginning to that process by which he understood his own relationship with God in Christ and confirmed his desire to share the knowledge with others.

Before 1725 there is clear evidence of Wesley’s spiritual struggle. He was aware of his heritage, but the awareness was intellectual, and he despaired of ever knowing in his heart and soul what he was aware of in his mind.

⁸ Wakefield, *Fire of Love*, p11.

⁹ Campbell, *Christian Antiquity*, p28. See also Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p48f.

¹⁰ See Green, *The Young Mr Wesley*, p55 and Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, pp48f.

It is clearly understood that Wesley's childhood was controlled by his mother. Samuel senior has been variously described as 'learned, zealous, pious, affectionate when his prejudices were not aroused',¹¹ 'obstinate, passionate, partisan and pedantic'¹² and '[r]ash and hasty, ... a man of principle and courage but prone to self-dramatization'.¹³ He was alternately absorbed in his work at Epworth and in his writings, and distracted by the difficulties created by his lack of business acumen such as to be imprisoned a number of times for debt. For all this, Samuel shaped the lives of his sons by influencing them in three ways which became critical to the development of their own spiritualities – accepting that the young Samuel followed his path fully into the life of the established church, while John and Charles followed their paths differently. Samuel senior 'gave them a love of books and sound learning',¹⁴ 'a sturdy orthodoxy with a strong evangelical emphasis',¹⁵ and a 'love of the Anglican Church and more especially of its liturgy and its sacraments.'¹⁶

Susanna, on the other hand, was the better organised parent. Hers was the 'dominant personality',¹⁷ and '[i]t was clearly [her] influence which counted most'¹⁸ in John Wesley's early development and education. Her own words, written in her forty first year, show clearly her own focus in life:

There is nothing I now desire to live for, but to do some small service to my children, that as I brought 'em in to the world, so that it might please God to make me (though unworthy) an instrument of doing good to their souls.¹⁹

¹¹ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p49.

¹² Green, *The Young Mr Wesley*, p48.

¹³ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p50.

¹⁴ Edwards, *Sons to Samuel*, p9.

¹⁵ Edwards, *Sons to Samuel*, p12.

¹⁶ Edwards, *Sons to Samuel*, p16.

¹⁷ Green, *The Young Mr Wesley*, p46.

¹⁸ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p51.

¹⁹ Letter to Samuel, Jr, 11 October 1709, quoted in Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, p12.

The historic record of the fire which destroyed the rectory at Epworth in 1709 has been interpreted as an omen of Wesley's special place in the divine plan. In 1711, Susanna reminded herself in prayer 'to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child that thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavours to instil into his mind the disciplines of thy true religion and virtue.'²⁰

It is therefore to be expected that some of Susanna's own spirituality had a bearing on John's. Religious disciplines were added to the already clear discipline of schooling which Susanna provided in the family home, thus placing John's educational regime on a different level from that of his siblings. John's spiritual development was guided by Susanna's 'deep devotion to her faith'²¹ through which '[o]ur children were taught, as soon as they could speak, the Lord's Prayer, ... a short prayer for their parents, and some collects, a short catechism, and some portion of Scripture, as their memories could bear.'²²

Under Susanna's tutelage the programme for the school day in the rectory at Epworth was circumscribed with Psalms and Scripture:

Psalms were sung every morning when school was opened, and also every night when the duties of the day were ended. In addition to this, at the commencement and close of every day, each of the elder children took one of the younger and read the Psalms appointed for the day and a chapter in the Bible, after which they severally went to their private devotions.²³

Nor did Susanna mind 'repeating a thing twenty times over if, after that, the infant retained the information.'²⁴

²⁰ Quoted in Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p57.

²¹ Tabraham, *The Making of Methodism*, p8b.

²² Letter of Susanna to John, quoted in Tabraham, *The Making of Methodism*, p9a.

²³ Tyerman, *Life and Times*, Vol 1, p18.

²⁴ Harrison, *Son to Susanna*, p17.

In addition to this, '[t]he spirituality of the home [in which John Wesley grew up] included small groups of earnest seekers who met in the rectory as well as the reading of spiritual writers who on Susanna's part included *The Christian's Pattern* or *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis as well as the Catholic Lorenzo Scupoli's *Spiritual Combat*.'²⁵ In this are the beginnings both of John Wesley's own search for spiritual maturity and of his development of a system of pastoral care which set his evangelical work onto a different plane from that of other preachers and evangelists of his time. It is an interesting fact, and important in the overall development of John's spirituality, that Susanna's strong influence should open for him some contact with the Roman Catholic traditions of the church as well as those of his Anglican heritage. Though there are numerous disparaging comments about the Roman Catholic Church in Wesley's writings, Susanna's openness to this alternative tradition meant that John was prepared to look for guidance in spiritual matters wherever it might be found.

In a letter to the editor of the "London Chronicle" Wesley himself wrote that 'I have by the grace of God been in some measure "serious in religion," ... ever since I was six years old',²⁶ and it is recorded that 'his father admitted him to the communion table when he was only eight years old'.²⁷ When reflecting on his childhood, Wesley declared that 'till I was about ten years old I had not sinned away "that washing of the Holy Ghost" which was given me in baptism'.²⁸ It was around that age that Wesley began his time at Charterhouse School. When Wesley left home to enter Charterhouse, he discovered a freedom which he may only possibly have experienced following the 1709 fire, when the children of

²⁵ Butler, *Methodists and Papists*, p20.

²⁶ Telford, *Letters of John Wesley*, Vol 4, p106.

²⁷ Tyerman, *Life and Times*, Vol 1, p18f.

²⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p98 (= Journal, 24 May, 1738).

Samuel and Susanna were billeted out with other families while the rectory was rebuilt. In his reflection back on that experience of being located away from the immediate influence of his mother Wesley appears to have discovered an ability to think and decide for himself, in which he perceived that he distanced himself from the Christian heritage of his parental home.

Henry Rack has proposed that this backward reflection suggests the beginning of his long search for salvation, which search led him through his studies at Oxford, into Georgia, and thence back to England and the new style of ministry which showed itself after his Aldersgate experience. 'This sounds,' Rack wrote, 'very like the remembered impact of the transfer from the sheltered home environment to that of an eighteenth-century public school.'²⁹

It was during this time that there are stories of ghostly apparitions affecting Wesley's family. Tyerman has suggested that 'Thus, from this early period in his history, Wesley's mind, wisely or unwisely, superstitiously or otherwise, was full of the supernatural.'³⁰ He went on:

Isaac Taylor thinks that the strange Epworth episode so laid open Wesley's faculty of belief, that ever after a right of way for the supernatural was opened through his mind; and, to the end of life, there was nothing so marvellous that it could not freely pass where "Old Jeffrey" had passed before it. Taylor adds: "Wesley's most prominent infirmity was his wonder-loving credulity; from the beginning to the end of his course this weakness ruled him."³¹

But Tyerman objected to Taylor's implication about Wesley's 'wonder-loving credulity'. In its place he proposed that '[w]e have little doubt that the Epworth noises deepened and most powerfully increased Wesley's convictions of the existence of an unseen world; and, in this way, exercised an important

²⁹ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p58.

³⁰ Tyerman, *Life and Times*, Vol 1, p22.

³¹ Tyerman, *Life and Times*, Vol 1, p23.

influence on the whole of his future life.’³² Whatever we might make of the ghost stories, there is no doubt that Wesley looked carefully, saw clearly, and was confirmed in an ‘awareness of the unseen world’³³. He became convinced of an extra dimension in life, beyond the physical, material world, and came to understand that this spiritual dimension to life was a doorway through which he and others might pass, to participate in the fullness of life.

In what Rack described as ‘his very severe self-criticism of 1738’³⁴ Wesley remembered his spiritual life at Charterhouse:

I was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins, which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the eye of the world. However, I still read the Scriptures, and said my prayers, morning and evening. And what I now hoped to be saved by, was, 1. Not being so bad as other people. 2. Having still a kindness for religion. And, 3. Reading the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers.³⁵

The references to “outward duties”, “outward sins”, and the obvious activities of “reading the Scriptures” and “saying prayers”, along with the hope of salvation through these external actions, are significant. But whether as a boy he knew the error in this is difficult to determine. Further into his *Journal* entry for May 24th, 1738, Wesley identified that he was about twenty-two years old when he ‘began to see, that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God’s law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions’.³⁶ Significantly, this increasing awareness came for Wesley in the period leading up to his ordination into holy orders in 1725.

³² Tyerman, *Life and Times*, Vol 1, p24.

³³ Green, *The Young Mr Wesley*, p63.

³⁴ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p58.

³⁵ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p98 (= *Journal*: 24 May, 1738).

³⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p99 (= *Journal*: 24 May, 1738).

Wesley entered Christ Church College in Oxford in 1720, though '[n]ot much can be said about Wesley's life as an undergraduate ... until the diaries and surviving letters provide a record from 1724 to 1725.'³⁷

In the year leading up to his ordination in 1725, Wesley developed relationships with members of the Kirkham family (Robert, Sarah and Betty), and with Mrs Mary Pendarves. The nature of Wesley's personal expectations of the relationship between himself and these women is considerably disputed: Tyerman points to 'an important fact, that Wesley was in love with Betty [actually Sarah³⁸], Kirkham's sister' and records Robert's description of "Varanese" as 'one that is so dear to you [Wesley]', but immediately follows this with 'Wesley soon became far too much immersed in more serious things to have time to think of wooing',³⁹ Vulliamy decried any romantic relationship between Wesley and Betty (=Sarah⁴⁰) Kirkham as 'highly improbable';⁴¹ and Rack, speaking both of 'a high-flown correspondence, in accents of religion mingled with romance, with Mrs Pendarves' and of 'Wesley's strongly affectionate friendship with Varanese',⁴² pointed out that Wesley 'was also attracted by Sally's sister Betty. He was also entangled with Kitty Hargraves, a neighbour at Epworth'.⁴³

For all this, the relationship between Wesley and at least some of these people was significant in the spiritual journey on which Wesley was embarked. Sarah was religiously inclined, and encouraged Wesley in his considerations of the spiritual life. She 'appears to have introduced him to Jeremy Taylor's books

³⁷ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p69.

³⁸ Varanese (of whom Tyerman is speaking) was Sarah (or Sally) Kirkham. This mistake is made by Vulliamy also. A comment about this error is made by Elsie Harrison in *Son to Susanna*, pp40f.

³⁹ Tyerman, *Life and Times*, Vol 1, p50.

⁴⁰ See above, note 38.

⁴¹ Vulliamy, *John Wesley*, p33.

⁴² Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p78.

⁴³ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p79.

on *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* and *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*, and to the *Imitations of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis'.⁴⁴ Albert Outler has also suggested that Sarah was responsible for introducing Wesley to William Law.⁴⁵

It is evident that as Wesley approached his ordination 'he began to be more seriously religious'.⁴⁶ 'At the same time,' Wesley himself said, 'the providence of God directing me to Kempis's "Christian Pattern," I began to see, that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions'.⁴⁷ It is interesting, remembering that Susanna had herself been guided by the writing of Thomas à Kempis, to hear that Wesley perceived this guidance from God as new for him. Maybe Susanna did not clearly share with John the source of her understanding, or maybe John's discernment of the value of "The Christian Pattern" was subconsciously provided from his childhood learning. When we come to reflect on the lessons for spirituality that can be learned from Wesley's life we will see two things here. First there is a reminder of how important it is to be clear when sharing with others spiritual insights that have been helpful in one's own experience. The second is an affirmation of the value of every experience, even those that are forgotten or hidden.

Between 1720 and 1735, Wesley was obviously influenced in Oxford by the culture of the Anglican Church, including the various Societies (especially the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, under whose auspices he went to Georgia). During this time, his friendship with John Clayton involved him with

⁴⁴ Schmidt, *John Wesley*, Vol I, p73.

⁴⁵ See Outler, *John Wesley*, p7.

⁴⁶ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast.*, p70.

⁴⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p99 (= Journal: 24 May, 1738, §4).

the Nonjurors of Manchester, including Dr Thomas Deacon, who ‘built up his ecclesiastical and liturgical practice entirely upon the “Apostolic Constitutions”, a Church Order of the third century.’⁴⁸ This appealed to Wesley’s already developing interest in Christian antiquity.⁴⁹ The use in the Oxford Club (and during the difficulties of Wesley’s time in Georgia) of fasting and other devotional activities imitating early church practices can be traced to this association between Wesley and the Manchester Nonjurors. Throughout this time, the central place of reading was embedded in Wesley’s life. This would ultimately mature into his commitment to the provision of a library which would provide a resource for all who sought to follow the Christian way.

This is the beginning of the development of Wesley’s commitment to establish in Georgia and among the Indians a church organisation where the pure religion of the early church could flourish. His plan was to evangelise the Indians and create with them a community of faith which was founded on primitive Christian principles, with none of the entrapments of the church’s structure of later generations. His interest in Christian antiquity led to Wesley’s development of a spiritual discipline which included ‘worshiping together at daily canonical hours, observing Wednesdays and Fridays as fasts, [and] celebrating the eucharist weekly’.⁵⁰ In the end, he was to spend little time with potentially new Christians from the Indian tribes, and he became frustrated by the settlers who were established in their religious practices and offended by his attempts to introduce new activities, however reflective they might have been of early Christian practices.

⁴⁸ Schmidt, *John Wesley*, Vol I, p103.

⁴⁹ Mary Pendarves give him the nick-name, “Primitive Christianity”. See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p78.

⁵⁰ Campbell, *Christian Antiquity*, p36.

‘The Moravians ... provided another model of primitive Christianity, closer to the apostolic age than the Fathers, and the two versions of “primitive” Christianity jostled uneasily together in Wesley’s mind.’⁵¹ Wesley’s association with the Moravians began on the ship to Georgia where he met with people who were certain of their own spiritual state, and who challenged Wesley (outwardly and by implication) to the point where he felt himself to be at a loss, concerned at his fears of dying and uncertain of his personal knowledge of the things of the faith. His own perception was not, however, echoed by those he met. After conversation with A.G. Spangenberg, the leader of the Moravians in Georgia, Wesley described his own opinion about his relationship with Christ as ‘vain words’,⁵² but Spangenberg observed ‘that grace really dwells and reigns in him’⁵³

The impression gained by Wesley’s poor opinion of himself is of one who is constantly in despair, but this is belied even in his own letters written during his time in Georgia. In letters to William Wogan, Esq. and to Mrs Chapman, Wesley described religion in the following way.

I entirely agree with you, that religion is love, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; that, as it is the happiest, so it is the cheerfulest thing in the world; that it is utterly inconsistent with moroseness, sourness, severity, and indeed with whatever is not according to the softness, sweetness, and gentleness of Christ Jesus.

...

I am convinced, as true religion cannot be without cheerfulness, so steady cheerfulness cannot be without true religion. I am equally convinced that religion has nothing sour, austere, unsociable, unfriendly in it; but on the contrary, implies the most winning sweetness, the most amiable softness and gentleness.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p114.

⁵² Wesley, *Works* Vol 1, p23 (= Journal: 7 February, 1736).

⁵³ Quoted in Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p115.

⁵⁴ Letters written from Savannah in March 1737, quoted in Tyerman, *Life and Times*, Vol 1, p138..

Wesley's discovery in 1738, during the meeting in Aldersgate St, was indeed a turning point for him. Suddenly he understood that his personal salvation was not determined by his own actions; it was as Luther had reaffirmed, an act of grace on God's part, which simply required a human response of acceptance to be made effectual. This was the satisfaction of Wesley's need – the awareness that he was, by God's saving grace, freed 'from the law of sin and death.'⁵⁵ From this time, Wesley's ministry was focussed towards others, telling them of God's gift, and encouraging them to find for themselves the same assurance he had.

For all that, the Aldersgate experience was not the end of Wesley's struggles; even on the night of his heart-warming he struggled for a time with an uncertainty rising from his expectation that faith and joy should exist together. In his Journal he records that in the days following he was also beset with 'heaviness because of manifold temptations',⁵⁶ and 'God hid his face, and I was troubled'.⁵⁷ Each time, however, Wesley was brought back to the 'comfort, and peace, and joy'⁵⁸ that characterised for him the new experience of God's presence.

Conclusions

The development of spirituality in John Wesley's life provides us with several important insights into the way in which spirituality can be promoted in human life.

For Wesley, one important aspect of spiritual growth was through his relationships, with family and with friends and colleagues. His early family life

⁵⁵ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p103 (= Journal: 24 May 1738).

⁵⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p104 (= Journal: 26 May 1738).

⁵⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p105 (= Journal: 29 May 1738).

⁵⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p106 (= Journal: 6 June 1738).

provided important foundations to his life and ministry. These were seen particularly in the influence of his mother, and in the contributions of other people by which he was put in the way of certain writers who would be influential in his understanding of the Christian way.

The influence of these relationships, however, cannot be taken for granted. There is an important lesson to be learned in taking care that spiritual insights are shared in ways that connect directly into the experience of those who seek to find the way of Christ. At the same time there is a reminder that all experience is of value, even when memory fails, or time diminishes clarity of understanding. The reality is that the Holy Spirit's guidance will never be lost from those who continue to seek a full and passionate relationship with God in Christ.

One of Wesley's most important contributions to Christian spirituality was his expectation that all people who came into a new experience of the love of God would join a community of faithful people who would share with one another the joys and struggles of discipleship.⁵⁹ Together they would grow as they shared insights into daily experiences of grace and forgiveness. They would support each other, and keep each other accountable to their individual callings to be followers of Jesus.

Wesley also provided for a community of faith that was based on primitive Christian principles. Though in his American experiences, this focus on Christian antiquity was fraught with trouble, yet later in his life he encouraged the use of such disciplines as daily prayer and reading of Scripture and of participation in the sacraments as means by which God's grace could be discovered and received. In this he was prepared to set aside some of the

⁵⁹ See below, Section III, Chapter 6: "'Society', 'Class' and 'Band' as Means of Spiritual Development among Early Methodists".

formality that had grown up over the centuries. He forsook the traditional framework of church structure, and was ready to enter the places where people were to share, the good news of God's love and care.

For Wesley, Christian spirituality was more than simply a set of disciplines – reading Scripture and saying prayers. He became aware that God's presence was experienced first in the heart, and from there it showed itself in thoughts, actions and words that reached into the lives of other people. So the Christian faith was always more than simply a striving for personal salvation. At its core, faith in Christ called an individual into a connection with others, to learn and to share, to serve and to be served, to call one another into a growing relationship with the God of grace.

An account of Wesley's life shows that he was aware of an extra dimension to life. For him, the physical and material world were but part of the whole of God's creation, and being alert to whatever element of this spiritual dimension of life he might experience, he was ready to take seriously its implications for his own life and to share these in whichever ways were possible. He never gave up his search for spiritual maturity, and he learned that the Holy Spirit continued to guide the faithful disciple, with new discoveries throughout life. It took time for him to accept that he could think, discover and decide for himself. He sought in early years to find faith through the experience of other people, including Samuel and Susanna. But the joy and cheerfulness of faith were to be experienced immediately, not vicariously. He could not rest secure in his parents' faith; he needed the assurance of his own faith, Christ's presence and activity in his own life, that could then be shared with others.

Wesley's discovery of a Christian way of spirituality took place in an age of social upheaval in which many were abandoning religious belief and activity. There can be no doubt that Wesley's time was not one in which the Christian church was at its most faithful. But through his own experience, Wesley was able to connect with many whose lives were broken, or whose ways were perplexed, and through sharing his own discoveries he was able to provide for many a means to a new life. In this there is a paradigm for the Uniting Church in the twenty-first century. No need to wait for a new social disposition or to look for signs of God's Spirit already moving. God's blessings will come when people who have discovered the presence of God begin to share their experience with other people.

SECTION II, Chapter 4

Reflections on the “Conversions” of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

Definition of Conversion

Before any consideration of the processes that led to the “conversions” of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, it will be necessary to identify the phenomenon known as “conversion”.

In the first place, it is appropriate to affirm the New Testament understanding of conversion. In the Acts of the Apostles (15:3) the word translated “conversion” (ἐπιστροφή) has the focus of “turning about” or “turning towards”, and in its context relates to the action of people outside the Jewish faith who had come to follow Christ. There are other places, however, where the term “conversion” itself is not used, but where the meaning has to do with turning from sinful life towards life in the kingdom of God. John the Baptist’s message was clearly one of turning from former life to a life focused on God’s way (Matthew 3). Jesus himself, at the commencement of his ministry, called people to ‘repent, and believe the good news’ for the kingdom of God had come near (Mark 1:15). This call was then echoed by those whom Jesus sent out, as they ‘proclaimed that all should repent’ (Mark 6:12). This turning from one way of living to another is, then, one of the basic elements of all Christian explanations of “conversion”.

In a series of the Gifford Lectures at the beginning of the twentieth century, William James began two lectures on “Conversion” saying that the term ‘denote[s] the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities.’¹ The breadth of this definition is at the same time useful and unhelpful. It is a reminder that conversion, because it relates to human beings, is unique to the

¹ James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p194.

individual. Each person will experience the process in a different way, even though as James identified there is a development from negative to positive aspects and attitudes in life that is common to most experiences.

It is the uniqueness, however, that creates a problem with the definition. It should not be assumed that conversion is always from negative to positive. There are experiences of conversion that bring a complete reversal in a person's lifestyle and attitude to life and to the people and the creation about them. But there are also experiences where the change would more aptly be described as "reorientation" – an intellectual, emotional or spiritual development from one point of view to another, from one attitude to another – where the former and the latter are able to be understood as being of similar value, in the same range or part of a continuum. A person does not need to feel 'divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy' to be open to some new awareness of existence that leads to a review of life's objectives.

James W. Fowler has offered a simpler suggestion – that 'Conversion has to do with changes in the *contents* of faith'.² It is significant, though, that he has differentiated between '*evolutionary* changes in the way faith imagines (development), and *revolutionary* changes in its "centering" (conversion).'³ For Fowler, the contents of faith are focused in three areas: 'the *centers of value* ... the causes, concerns or persons that ... have the greatest worth to us'; 'the *images of power* ... with which we align ourselves to sustain us in the midst of life's contingencies'; and 'the *master stories* ... by which we interpret and respond to the events that impinge upon our lives'.⁴ This focuses the definition of "conversion" more sharply. It relates to, and has an affect on, the focal points of a person's life, and in this the very essence of the person's life is changed.

² Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p281.

³ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, p34.

⁴ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, pp276f.

Fowler's identification of the difference between development and conversion is helpful. On the one hand, as a person matures in life, there will always be some development of understanding and knowledge. In general terms and under normal human development, information and detail of the world around will expand, and the person will become more aware of her or his place in life. In terms of faith, the same development will (or should) happen; greater understanding and more knowledge will lead to deeper awareness of the person's place and participation in the religious community.

Conversion, on the other hand, changes the fundamental viewpoint from which the person reflects on the information and knowledge that he or she has of life and the world. This is revolutionary change, for (whether it is 'gradual or sudden'⁵) it is transformative of the person's whole being and life. Even when there is no increase in knowledge or understanding, in conversion there will be a new awareness of the relationship between the person and (in the Christian context) God who is revealed in Jesus Christ, and between the person and other people, both those who also share that relationship with God in Christ and those who do not.

In her reflections on human development in partnership, Letty Russell has suggested that 'Every partnership ... is formed around a center' and that 'unity in Christ is the center of our partnerships as Christians.'⁶ So any definition of conversion must include reference to the focal point of the partnership that is created or extended through the conversion.

David W. Lotz, in his article on Pietism, defined conversion as 'a one-time decision to accept God's offer of grace and thus to experience a "breakthrough" from the lostness of sin to the new life of "Christian perfection"'.⁷ In this, Lotz

⁵ Terms used by William James.

⁶ Russell: *Growth in Partnership*, p34.

⁷ In Jones, Wainwright, Arnold (eds), *The Study of Spirituality*, p450.

echoes the focus that James had made, of a realignment of life from the negative state of sin to the positive state of perfection in and through Christ.

But in the same book, in an article on Puritan spirituality, Gordon S. Wakefield, after asserting that for the Puritans personal religion ‘had its origin in the divine initiative and the awesome and overwhelming call of God’, described conversion as ‘a necessity – a recognition of the call, its sovereignty and precedence over the whole of life ... to seek total and unwavering confidence in ... the unalterable decree of God.’⁸

Here then is the reminder, in the context of Christian faith, that no human response to God is possible without God’s first act. This fact is built on the awareness that God has entered into a relationship with all people, individually and communally, and that relationship is based on the speaking of God’s word into human life.

It follows that a person who has heard the voice of God should make some response to the word that is spoken; and that response will be life changing. This is not simply an increase in information or knowledge; it is the individual’s discernment of an essential change in the purpose of his or her human life. So, in the context of William James’ assertion that conversion is from negative to positive, the lost is found, the empty is filled, the broken is healed. Or in the context of James Fowler’s understanding, locally and in the world at large, the values of life are centred anew, the images of power in life are redefined, and new master stories provide alternative interpretations and responses to the events of each day, focused now through Christ who is ‘the image of the invisible God’.⁹ In Letty Russell’s image, the partnership between the Christian and Christ is reassessed and made new, with the effect that the person becomes more aware of

⁸ In Jones, Wainwright, Arnold (eds), *The Study of Spirituality*, p439.

⁹ Colossians 1:15 (NRSV).

‘the social, political, economic, racial and ecclesial contradictions and ... take[s] steps together with others to change them.’¹⁰

It must be noted that this allows for many experiences of conversion. If, as James suggests, conversion is a process that takes a person from division to unity, and if, following Fowler, conversion relates to (even revolutionary) re-centering of values, images of power and master stories, and if conversion is a breaking through to new awareness of God’s call and one’s response to that call and an associated entering into a new or renewed partnership with God in Christ, then it follows that “moments of conversion” can be experienced on numerous occasions throughout a person’s life. Indeed, no single conversion could suffice in any life. Following each conversion will come a time of development in faith and understanding, and in practice of faith. This will eventually lead to new focus in life, with an accompanying awareness of life coming together and of response to the voice that is heard afresh.

This is the point of the comment made by Gordon Dicker in his article entitled “The Aldersgate Tradition and its Critics”, that ‘Wesley never made the mistake of thinking that when a person claimed to be converted nothing more was needed.’¹¹ It echoes the comment by Albert Outler, that Wesley was convinced conversion was ‘never more than the bare threshold of authentic and comprehensive evangelism.’¹² Conversion, then, is the beginning of a process which involves continued and lifelong growth in grace.

This leads, in the context of this reflection on the lives of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, to a composite definition of conversion: “Christian conversion is the process by which a human life is from time to time transformed or reoriented through an experience and awareness of the presence and activity of God in Christ.” This definition allows for regular re-examination of the values

¹⁰ Russell: *Growth in Partnership*, p75f.

¹¹ In *Uniting Church Studies*, Vol 14, No 1, p41.

¹² Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit*, p23.

and focal points of life. It may, on the one hand, lead a person to a denial of all that has been central to the person's life and so produce a refocusing of values, attitudes to power, and foundational stories. And it might be evidenced in a reassessment of personal life that leads to a reorientation of values and stories resulting in renewed commitment to expressions of Christian discipleship.

With this definition it is possible now, in looking at the lives of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, and particularly at the experiences that are described as their "conversions", to see five particular key themes in their experiences. These are

1. a movement from negative to positive attitudes and awareness of unity and wholeness in life,
2. a reorientation of thought and spiritual perception leading to a review of life commitments,
3. revolutionary changes in centres of value, in images of power and in master stories,
4. creation or re-creation of partnerships with God, with people and with self,
5. recognition of a call and a response to the initiative of God.

Ignatius Loyola

The experience that is identified as the conversion of Ignatius Loyola occurred in 1521, when he was recovering from wounds he received during the battle of Pamplona. Up until that time, Ignatius described himself as 'a man given to the vanities of the world'.¹³ As a result of his wounds, and of the surgery performed at the time, Ignatius showed the 'symptoms that usually point to death.'¹⁴ After receiving the sacraments on the eve of St Peter and St Paul, his

¹³ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §1, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p68.

¹⁴ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §3, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p69.

recovery began at midnight, and Ignatius saw this as a sign of Christ's activity in his life.

As has been described earlier,¹⁵ during his convalescence, he sought to pass the time in reading more of the books of chivalry that had 'provided him with a model of courage, gallantry and romance'.¹⁶ These had been the focus of his life until this time. As there were none of these books available, however, he had to be content to read 'a life of Christ and a book of the lives of the saints in Castilian.'¹⁷

For Ignatius, here was a reorienting of his life, from one focus to another (Key Theme 1). He still looked in literature for heroes to emulate, but the heroes were now saints, and his 'supreme and true leader'¹⁸ was Christ.

In reflection on his reading, Ignatius became aware of differences in his reaction to the religious readings compared with his response to the chivalric readings. Where once he had found himself 'dry and dissatisfied', now he was 'consoled ... [and] even after putting them aside he remained satisfied and joyful.'¹⁹ It is important to note here that Ignatius himself did not at first realise the change that was taking place. In the same passage from his *Autobiography*, he asserted that the discovery of this change in his feelings only came with reflection on experience – 'some thoughts left him sad and others joyful' – leading to the beginning of discernment of a diversity of spirits, from the devil and from God.

These two "moments" – his experience of healing and the understanding of a developing discernment of spirits that grew from his reading – reflect the reorientation of life that comes with conversion (Key Theme 2). There is evidence that Ignatius already participated in the religious practices of his time. It

¹⁵ See above, pp111f.

¹⁶ Coleman, *Walking with Inigo*, p2.

¹⁷ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §5, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p70.

¹⁸ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §143, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p155.

¹⁹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §8, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p71.

is suggested that his devotion to Mary began in his childhood, when he prayed before a painting of the Annunciation that had been brought into the household by his sister-in-law Magdalena,²⁰ and William Bangert proposed that at his baptism Ignatius received the name Iñigo in honour of the Benedictine saint Iñigo de Oña, thus being ‘marked by his father for a career in the Church’.²¹ The experiences he had in 1521 were built on earlier experiences, and in his increasing awareness of the activity of God he was able to understand the earlier ones better.

There are two clear illustrations of Key Theme 4 in the story Ignatius told of his journey into faith. One occurred while he was still domiciled at home, recovering from his injuries and surgery; the other occurred after he had begun his expected pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Firstly, at Loyola, he said that ‘his brother as well as all the rest of the household came to know from his exterior the change that had been wrought inwardly in his soul.’²² Here was a new relationship with the people living with him. Then, a while later, when he had left Loyola and had come to the River Cardoner, he experienced a powerful awareness of God’s involvement with him, so that ‘the eyes of his understanding began to be opened ... with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed new to him.’²³

In his account of the journey along the road from Loyola to Montserrat and on to Manresa, there were a number of moments when Ignatius focused on his desire to ‘please and gratify God’,²⁴ ‘thinking as he always did of the exploits he would like to perform for the love of God’,²⁵ but it was in that moment beside the river that he experienced the “revolutionary changes in the master story of his life” (Key Theme 3) that would remain with him for the rest of his life. At no point in his life would he experience ‘an interior enrichment comparable to that

²⁰ See Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p27 and Coleman, *Walking with Inigo*, p10 (where her name is written “Magdalen”).

²¹ See Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, p3.

²² Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §10, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p72.

²³ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §30, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p80f.

²⁴ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §14, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p73.

²⁵ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §17, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p75.

which he enjoyed at the Cardoner.²⁶ In this, he found himself drawn into a relationship, a new partnership, with God (Key Theme 4) which confirmed, but went greatly beyond, his own personal desire to serve and love because it was in truth initiated by God (Key Theme 5).

Later in his life he continued to build on these experiences, and as he continued to reflect on his own life in Christ, and as he refined the “Spiritual Exercises”, so he understood better for himself (and helped others to understand for themselves) the ways of God in Christ within the church and in daily life.

John Wesley

In John Wesley’s life also, there were a number of moments that should be highlighted as significant. To the oft related “Aldersgate Experience” can be added the moment in 1725 when he made his decision to enter holy orders. There was also his experience as a missionary in Georgia when he understood the importance of sharing the gospel with those who had not heard (in that case the native Americans), and there was the time in his student years when he was first alerted to the methodical reflection on Scripture and in prayer. These are in addition to moments in his childhood when he was made aware of his relationship with God.²⁷

It is obvious that not all of these experiences are of the same importance; but there are implications in each for John Wesley’s ministry.

As mentioned in Section II, Chapter 3, in his Journal reference to the Aldersgate experience, Wesley reflected back on his childhood, school and student years, and his early ministry. He spoke first of the “washing of the Holy Ghost” which was given me in baptism’.²⁸ The very use of the term ‘washing’ fits this experience into the category of “conversion”. Though Wesley referred

²⁶ Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, p8.

²⁷ Further information about these experiences is given in Section II, Chapter 3: “Development of Spirituality in the life of John Wesley”.

²⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p98 (= Journal: 24 May 1738).

negatively to this experience²⁹ his reflection on the experience shows signs of an awareness that his life found a unity, a wholeness, in that sense of belonging to the Christian community that baptism affirmed. In this sense, he understood that his baptism and early education within his family was formative for the religious truths that he held throughout his life. Time and again, as he reflected on his life, he was aware of the movement from negative to positive attitudes in life (Key Theme 1).

A few months earlier, in his Journal entry for 29 January, 1738, Wesley had expressed his exasperation at the effects of his sojourn in Georgia. While the actual entry said, 'I went to America to convert others, but was never myself converted to God',³⁰ in later editions Wesley added a footnote that reads 'I am not sure of this.'³¹ And where a little further on in the same Journal entry Wesley described himself as "“alienated” ... from the life of God' and "“a child of wrath”",³² he later added the footnote, 'I believe not.'³³ The point here is that it was only later in his life that Wesley became aware of the importance of some of the experiences from the earlier part of his life. His "conversion" was a process, for the experience and the awareness were not contiguous. Key Themes 2 and 3 are in play here.

The "Aldersgate experience" is typically identified as the moment of Wesley's conversion, but it too is seen as only a part of a process. In the days following the experience, and indeed to the end of his life, Wesley continued to reflect on the experience and (in terms of the above definition of "conversion") to understand the 'creation and re-creation of partnerships with God, with people and with self' that is identified in Key Theme 4. On 26 May 1738 he wrote that

²⁹ The full comment is 'I had not sinned away that "washing of the Holy Ghost" which was given me in baptism'.

³⁰ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p75f. I am indebted to comments in Laurence Hull Stookey's *Baptism: Christ's Act in the Church* (p179) for this reference.

³¹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p76 (= Journal: 29 February 1738).

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

his ‘soul continued in peace, but yet in heaviness of manifold temptations’,³⁴ and two days later he ‘waked in peace, but not in joy.’³⁵ On 4 June he ‘saw more than ever, that the Gospel is in truth but one great promise’³⁶ and on 6 June he ‘had still more comfort, and peace, and joy’.³⁷ So the experience and the awareness developed, and he came more to understand the implications of his conversion for the life he lived, and the ministry he offered.

The development of Wesley’s awareness is seen also in the conversations he had with the Moravians, in which he questioned their assertions about faith and stillness. This Wesley mentioned in both the Preface to the second part of his *Journal*,³⁸ and in his journal entry for 31 December 1739.³⁹ He criticised the suggestion that ‘There are no degrees of faith’;⁴⁰ his own experience told him otherwise.⁴¹ He had become aware of the development of his own faith – at this stage (only eighteen months after the Aldersgate Experience) he had evidence that his faith was developing from ‘some degrees of it ... [to] the full assurance of faith, the abiding witness of the Spirit, or the clear perception that Christ dwelleth [with]in’.⁴² Later on in his life, the awareness of God’s grace to him became more complete, extending back into his life even before 24 May 1738.

So it is that when, in 1738, Wesley reflected on his decision in 1725 to enter holy orders, he expressed the experience both negatively and with some affirmation. His refusal to acknowledge his own decision (he claimed, ‘my father pressed me to enter into holy orders’⁴³), and his self-deprecating comment “‘doing so much, and living so good a life,” I doubted not but I was a good Christian’,⁴⁴ show him denying the development of ‘justifying faith’.⁴⁵ At the

³⁴ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p104 (= Journal: 26 May 1738).

³⁵ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p105 (= Journal: 28 May 1738).

³⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p106 (= Journal: 4 June 1738).

³⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p106 (= Journal: 6 June 1738).

³⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p79ff.

³⁹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p256ff.

⁴⁰ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p256 (= Journal: 31 December 1739, §1).

⁴¹ See Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p257 (= Journal: 31 December 1739, §1).

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p99 (= Journal: 24 May 1738).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

same time, however, he affirmed that ‘I began to see, that true religion was seated in the heart’, that ‘I had frequently much sensible comfort in reading [à Kempis’s “Christian Pattern”]’ and that ‘I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life’.⁴⁶ So he expressed an acceptance of growth in faith and relationship with Christ which was a process that had begun long before he could express it in the words, ‘I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation : and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.’⁴⁷ In all his comments about the faith he accepted and shared, it is clear that Wesley was convinced that it was by God’s own initiative, and as an expression of divine grace, that his life was (and the lives of others could be) transformed. His conversion was indeed a ‘recognition of a call and a response to the initiation of God’ (Key Theme 5).

Conclusions

The conversion experiences of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley are useful models that help in identifying the ways in which people can be brought into relationship with God in Christ. The movement, reorientation, changes and partnerships that belong with the discovery and recognition of the call of and response to God, are foundational experiences and expressions of Christian spirituality. Consideration of these focal points will be part of later discussion about spiritual guidance and pastoral care in the life of the Uniting Church in the twenty-first century.

Before that, however, an examination is necessary of the ways in which different aspects of the lives and ministries of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

⁴⁵ Wesley used this term in “The Principles of a Methodist”, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p367.

⁴⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p99 (= Journal: 24 May 1738).

⁴⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol I, p103 (= Journal: 24 May 1738).

give evidence for the value and significance of spiritual guidance and pastoral care in Christian discipleship.

SECTION III

Information about Christian spirituality from the lives, experiences and ministries of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

SECTION III, Chapter 1

Ignatius and Wesley – Their Responses to their Times

Chapter 5 of Section I (above)¹ has suggested that the circumstances in which Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley carried on their respective ministries echoed the circumstances which are in evidence in the twenty-first century. That chapter recognised the similarity of the three eras (sixteenth, eighteenth and twenty first centuries) being times of great change in many aspects of life, including religion and the church.

It is quite appropriate, therefore, in a study of the spiritualities of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, to consider the ways in which they might have seen their respective generations. This chapter will look for the responses they made to the changes they observed, and how they participated in, and to what extent they facilitated, the changes.

As has been noted, Ignatius lived during the end of what is now known as the Medieval Period, and into the beginning of the western Renaissance and the period in church history of both Protestant and Catholic Reformation. Before and during his lifetime the heritage of previous generations came under increasing criticism. The development of the printing press, coupled with advances in education, meant that increased knowledge was available to more people. The work of both Catholic and Protestant reformers meant that the certainties of the church in medieval Europe came under increasing scrutiny.

Within the context of these changes, Ignatius discovered the importance of a relationship with Jesus Christ. Rather than viewing the changes of his time as

¹ “Social and Ecclesial Contexts for Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley and the Uniting Church in Australia”, pp77ff.

cause for despair or desolation² or even simply an acceptance of the status quo leading to a sense of ‘making do’,³ Ignatius followed his intuition and was guided to a new awareness of God’s presence in his life. He discovered new insights into the consequences of discipleship for his own life, and extrapolated these into a system that was offered as guidance for the lives of those with whom he lived.

Early in his life, Ignatius was passionate about chivalry. For him, as for many people, its focus on attainment of a level of perfection in all things, from courage in battle to relationships with women to excellence in hunting and jousting to protection of the weak and poor, ‘came to be looked upon as something truly sacred.’⁴ It became, however, a poor alternative to the new experience he had following his wounding at Pamplona. Through the reading he did during his convalescence, of the “Life of Christ” and the “Lives of the Saints”, an alternative to chivalry was presented to him. It refocused the desire for chivalric perfection into a passion for the development of means by which he could understand better and express more clearly the implications of the call to follow Christ in everyday life.

Instead of focusing on a collapsing world, Ignatius developed, through his *Spiritual Exercises*, a process by which he and his companions could discern, express and extend their experience of God’s activity in their own lives and in the life of the world in which they lived. Rather than trying to survive a ‘long, dark

² It is noted that for Ignatius ‘desolation’ came not through the difficulties of his generation but in the context of his examination of his own discipleship.

³ This is a term used by David Tacey and quoted above (Section I, Chapter 4: “An Assessment of Spirituality in the 21st Century”, p72) from “Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness”, p24.

⁴ Leclercq et al, *History of Christian Spirituality*, Vol II, p277.

night of desolation and disenchantment'⁵ they came to understand an alternative way by which they could know more of God's participation in the world.

The development of the *Spiritual Exercises* and the formulation of the *Constitutions for the Society of Jesus* had a focus that was different from any of the expressions of church order that had been developed in earlier generations. The founding Jesuits had to argue their reasons for not establishing their Society with expressions of monastic prayer and life that were similar to those of established orders like the Benedictine and Augustinian orders (and to a lesser extent the Dominican and Franciscan orders). In those orders, routines of prayer were shared "in choir", in a formal and highly regulated structure. Ignatius argued that the need of the church of his time was for a Society that allowed freedom from the constraints of formal ecclesial hours and offices. At Item 586 of the *Constitutions* Ignatius acknowledged that

Because the occupations which are undertaken for the aid of souls are of great importance, proper to our Institute, and very frequent; and because, on the other hand, our residence in one place or another is so highly uncertain, our members will not regularly hold choir for the canonical hours or sing Masses and offices.⁶

In Ignatius' view, the old way of heavy commitment to gathering for canonical hours had left the church without pastoral oversight and clear expression of apostolic responsibility. He and his companions sought a new way that passed through the wasteland to rise above a perceived immanent collapse of elements of church structure.⁷

⁵ This phrase is used by David Tacey and quoted above, p72, from "Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness", p24.

⁶ Ignatius, *Constitutions*, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p306.

⁷ See Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, Notes for The Constitutions, #71, p470.

In a situation somewhat parallel to that of Ignatius, John Wesley grew up in a time of upheaval in England. By the eighteenth century English society had begun the transition from an entirely rural economy to one that relied on major urban-based industry. Social classes were increasingly divided into wealthy educated people and poverty-stricken illiterate people. What came to be known as the Enlightenment created significant opportunity for people to question any matter, including the tenets of the faith. As already noted,⁸ the era saw the rise of rationalism, deism and scepticism, and the consequent increase in ‘atheism, blasphemies, and heresies’.⁹ The Establishment of the Church of England biased the structure of the church toward the rich and powerful in the land and away from the poor and uneducated, and the correlation between the church and proclamation of the Gospel was diminished.

Into this environment John Wesley was ordained into the priesthood in 1725. During the years to 1738 he tried unsuccessfully to identify a clear message to preach and a simple means by which people could be brought into fellowship with God and grow in faithful discipleship. As it was for Ignatius, so for Wesley also the time could be described using David Tacey’s already quoted words: ‘a long, dark night of desolation and disenchantment ... a collapsed world ... the wasteland’.

With his experience at Aldersgate on 24 May 1738, however, Wesley (like Ignatius) discovered an alternative to the despair and hopelessness that he had been feeling. He learned that it was not his own effort that would bring change, but the powerful action of God in the world seen in the lives of individual people. He had perceived in society around him a collapse of culture and morality, and a

⁸ In Chapter II, Chapter 3: “Development of Spirituality in the Life of John Wesley”, p127.

⁹ Lee, *Daniel Defoe*, p500.

lack of knowledge with an accompanying confusion about certainty and truth. In contrast, he began to see an alternative way created by the affirmation of the grace of God. Though a long dark night had been created by a failure of social, economic and ecclesial structures, the Son's light could dispel the darkness and create a new world. Wesley began to see an 'opportunity to reshape the fundamentals',¹⁰ and in this, his evangelistic work was enhanced by his commitment to the provision of education, medical services, community support, and other means of social development.

The work of Ignatius and Wesley focused both on the development of personal Christian spirituality and on participation in the activities of the life of the church. It is a point to consider, whether they saw the religious practices of their times as a necessary component in the development of personal spirituality, or (conversely) whether they saw the development of personal spirituality as a stage in the process towards a person's participation in the activities of structured religion. Was the corporate activity of the church dependent on the spirituality of individuals, or did personal spirituality require an ecclesial structure in which to express itself? The answer to this may well be that personal growth and shared experience are in fact intertwined, each requiring the other for fullest expression.

Both Ignatius and Wesley lived in societies that are now classified as "Christendom". This term is used here to express the social environment of Western Europe (and North America) in their respective generations where the Christian church was recognised to be fundamental in every part of life. Because of this, it is inconceivable that either of these two men ever thought of a valid

¹⁰ A phrase used by Hugh Evans, and quoted above (Section I, Chapter 4: "An Assessment of Spirituality in the 21st Century", p73) from a speech at the launch of a book of essays entitled *The Future by Us*, <http://www.hughevans.com.au/speeches?id=101>, [viewed 21/09/2010].

spirituality that might be expressed in any way other than through the liturgy and ritual of the Christian religion. Both of them were aware that the Jewish and Islamic religions were part of the world scene, and each was committed to the conversion of people who held to those religions. Further, Wesley was not even prepared to accept Catholic (“Popish”) spirituality. Indeed, his reflection on reading “the Life of Ignatius Loyola” was to describe his as ‘surely one of the greatest men that ever was engaged in the support of so bad a cause!’¹¹

At the same time, it is possible to suggest that both Ignatius and Wesley were aware that the development of spirituality within a person would in fact lead to a deeper relationship with the community of the faithful who make up the gathered people of God, which in their eras meant a relationship with the church. There was an absolute understanding in each man, born out of each one’s own experience, that complete communion with Christ came through participation in the Eucharist. Each expected that individuals who experienced the presence of God, either through the guidance of the Spiritual Exercises or through hearing the gospel preached, would be drawn into a community of people who had themselves had similar experiences. So the “Complementary Norms” to the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* state clearly that members ‘belong to a community of friends in the Lord’,¹² and Wesley required all who came to faith through his preaching to commit themselves to participation in the Classes – small groups of people who met weekly to share about their journey in faith.¹³

¹¹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p393f (= Journal: 16 August, 1742), and see above, p95.

¹² Norms 311, *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, p317.

¹³ In addition to the Classes, the Bands and Societies were also opportunities for people to gather with the intent of developing further their understanding of their discipleship. See Section III, Chapter 6: “‘Society’, ‘Class’ and ‘Band’ as a Means of Spiritual Development among Early Methodists”, below.

It is appropriate to consider also the extent to which Ignatius and Wesley were innovators in their own ages. In this they questioned the old styles of religious expression, and so challenged the structures that other people held dear. Both men were persecuted by the religious authorities of their times. Ignatius was called before the Inquisition a number of times, and Wesley had his licence to preach refused or withdrawn on a number of occasions. The ire of authority was focused on each of them because people saw evidence that each was acting outside the norms of the church's life.

Nevertheless, each was faithful to his own experience of the Spirit's work in his life, and each was convinced that his work was consistent with the call of Christ and the history of the church. 'Old religion'¹⁴ might rail against new expressions of spirituality, but in his own time each of our subjects believed that the new expression was valid, and in each case, the 'new revelations'¹⁵ proved to be significant for the ongoing life of the church, even beyond the generations in which they were founded.

One example of the new revelation that is common to both Ignatius and Wesley is this. While both were significantly aware of sin and evil in their own lives and in the life of the communities in which they lived, both also came to see the gracious presence of God in the whole of life. In the early parts of their lives both men showed an inclination to depressive expressions about their lives: Ignatius struggled with a negative awareness of his human frame; Wesley spoke often of the illnesses he suffered. But in time each came to experience, and caused others to experience, the beauty of the creation and the peace of God's

¹⁴ This is a term used by David Tacey and quoted above (Section I, Chapter 4: "An Assessment of Spirituality in the 21st Century", p74) from "Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness", p29.

¹⁵ This is a term used by David Tacey and quoted above (Section I, Chapter 4: "An Assessment of Spirituality in the 21st Century", p74) from "Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness", p30.

presence in their own being. Neither forgot or left aside the significance of sin and evil – it is a significant part of the first week of the Spiritual Exercises, and it is the foundation of the beginning of many of Wesley’s sermons. But each in his own way offered to his generation a new and positive vision of God’s activity in people’s lives.

Both Wesley and Ignatius were responsible, in their own generations, for undoing the lids of ‘traditional religious containers’¹⁶ in which the blessings and prizes of Christian spirituality were contained, even entombed. From within their own church structures they reflected on their own experiences of God’s presence, Christ’s salvation, and the Spirit’s power. The result of that reflection provided others, contemporary with Ignatius and with Wesley and in each generation since, with the opportunity to find and celebrate the relationship that God’s grace has established with each one.

Many parts of the church in Australia in the twenty-first century struggle with a sense of being ‘old religion’, uncertain how to understand the ‘new spirituality’ that is developing within and outside its structures. In their own times Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley were able to find ways through their ‘long dark nights’, to connect into the life of the church people who had discovered new spiritual awareness. They survived harassment and bullying from the old structures that could not (or would not) understand the new ways, and discovered ways in which God was actively and affirmatively present in the world and in people. In his own time each of these men consolidated the expectation that followers of Christ should function together, participating in communities of

¹⁶ This is a term used by David Tacey and quoted above (Section I, Chapter 4: “An Assessment of Spirituality in the 21st Century”, p74) from “Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness”, p34.

faithful people who, in sharing their experiences, continued to learn of the way of Christ.

Ignatius and Wesley cause the church in this generation to continue to encourage people to find new expressions and experiences of the life of Christ in our world. Their experience and their success provides a paradigm for the church today to hear the criticism and to open again the 'traditional religious containers', to see God once more entering into the lives of people, communities, nations and the whole creation. Through the insights they have provided, the church in twenty-first century western society is challenged to declare, against the individualism of our time, a clear commitment to a culture in which spiritual relationship with Jesus grows through communal activity of Jesus' followers. In doing so, the church is charged with the responsibility of providing the communities in which people learn, grow and share the experiences of faith, and through which disciples of Jesus can participate in the mission of Christ to care for the poor, the broken, and the lost.

SECTION III, Chapter 2

The Contributions of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley to the Development of an Understanding of Christian Spirituality

Foundational to this research is the awareness that one of the contributions made by Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley to the church in their respective times was an attention to and understanding of Christian Spirituality. This involves the discovery and enhancement of a relationship between a person and God as revealed in Jesus Christ. The relationship is established by God, who in grace reaches out to human beings in an act of self-disclosure by which people can discern God's presence and experience God's love. This relationship is expressed in relationship with other people in which experience is shared and service is rendered to the world in the name of Christ. Both Ignatius and Wesley encouraged people to discover this relationship for themselves, and provided an environment in which people could grow in their awareness and understanding of the relationship and its effects on their lives. The discernment of these effects was never instantaneous, but matured through learning from others and through reflection on experience.

As was mentioned earlier,¹ in the eras in which Ignatius and Wesley lived, significant parts of the Christian community had lost awareness of any commitment to a relationship with Christ that touched the daily life of the individual. In Ignatius' time, there was considerable scandal relating to the lives of priests and bishops, and the papacy was held in low regard.² There was little capacity for uneducated people to be guided in their personal spiritual journey,

¹ See particularly Section I, Chapter 3: "Church and the Development and Encouragement of Spirituality".

² See Leclercq et al, *History of Christian Spirituality*, Vol II, p481ff.

and those charged with pastoral responsibility were neither trained nor encouraged to lead people into relationship with Christ. Likewise in Wesley's day there was a lack of commitment on the part of many Anglican clergy to their own responsibilities as pastoral guides, and the culture of that time meant that those who were illiterate and poor were not credited with a capacity to discern spiritual ways, nor encouraged or provided with opportunities to develop meaningful personal relationships with God.

Into these scenarios Ignatius and Wesley brought their own experiences of God's presence and its impact on their lives, and they developed their capacity to share their experiences with others.

What did Ignatius contribute?

In answering this question, it is important to set aside any suggestion that Ignatius' contribution to spirituality was entirely new. Much of what he discovered and experienced was a development of what others before him had experienced. What Ignatius did that was different, however, was to express his own experience and reflect on his own discoveries in ways that were easily understood by others.

There is a fundamental simplicity in Ignatius' understanding and development of Christian spirituality. On the whole, 'the *Exercises* essentially taught nothing more than that human beings were "to love God above all things, with all their heart, all their mind, all their soul, and all their strength."³ From the time of his convalescence, Ignatius discerned the effects of God's presence. As he reflected on the response of the saints, and his own participation in that

³ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p38f.

response, he was ‘consoled when he had these thoughts, [and] even after putting them aside he remained satisfied and joyful.’⁴

For Ignatius, spirituality related to daily living. The events of his own life, from the time of that conversion which occurred during his convalescence from his injuries until his last days when he acknowledged his own awareness of the imminence of his death,⁵ Ignatius constantly identified the ways in which he experienced God’s presence in his own life. So Karl Rahner was able to say that Ignatius and those who have followed him ‘do not reject the immediate nearness of God but learn to know and accept it.’⁶ This immediate nearness of God is seen in many ways.

Ignatius made use of nature as a source of contemplation. In his reflections on Ignatius’ life, Philip Caraman asserts that ‘flowers always lifted his soul to the contemplation of God’⁷ and ‘The sight of a plant, flower, leaf, shrub or fruit, even a small insect, would set him off in contemplation.’⁸ This capacity to be ‘lifted’ and ‘set off’ was a response to the relationship between himself and God of which Ignatius was becoming increasingly conscious. The God who had created all things was the same God who had given him life.⁹

It was an extension of this contemplation of God through the experience of beauty (or terror) in nature that led Ignatius to see a relationship between human physical experience and spiritual experience. In his own life, and by

⁴ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §8; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p71.

⁵ Concerning Ignatius’ death, see the letter from Juan de Polanco to the Provincials dated August 6, 1556, in Rose, *St Ignatius Loyola and the Early Jesuits*, pp596ff.

⁶ Rahner, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p16.

⁷ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p57.

⁸ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p59.

⁹ See, for example, Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §29; in Ganss (ed) *Ignatius of Loyola*, p80, and *Spiritual Exercises*, §236, 237; in Ganss (ed) *Ignatius of Loyola*, p177.

extension in the lives of others, Ignatius was able to see God's activity. When he was recovering from his injuries, he reflected on his own feelings:

some thoughts left him sad and others joyful. Little by little he came to recognize the difference between the spirits that were stirring, one from the devil, the other from God.¹⁰

Reflection on his own physical and emotional experiences remained a significant part of his discernment of God's presence throughout his life, and was written into the "Spiritual Exercises". In the "Rules" suitable for the First Week and for the Second Week¹¹ Ignatius continually referred the exercitant to reflection on human experiences. So, for example, he pointed out that 'delights and pleasures'¹² might be evidence of the work of 'the enemy ... to hold them fast and plunge them deeper in their sins and vices',¹³ and might be 'characteristic of the good spirit to stir up courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations, and tranquility.'¹⁴ Contrariwise, 'gnawing anxiety, ... sad[ness], and ... obstacles'¹⁵ could be evidence of an evil spirit in some people, and of a good spirit in others.¹⁶ 'Consolation' and 'Desolation' are the terms used throughout these "Rules" to identify the alternate feelings and reactions to the joyful and disturbing experiences people perceive. For Ignatius these terms were the recognition of the presence or absence of God's guidance, and he encouraged affirmation and acceptance of the positive feelings.

In *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear* David Lonsdale has stated that

Ignatian spirituality, ... far from establishing or maintaining a division between "sacred" and "secular" times and places in life, actually points to the hidden but discoverable

¹⁰ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §8; in Ganss (ed) *Ignatius of Loyola*, p71.

¹¹ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §313-336; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p201ff.

¹² Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §314; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p201.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §315; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p201.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §314-315; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p201.

presence of God even in the most secularised and apparently godless situations.¹⁷

This acceptance of the blurred boundaries between sacred and secular is a significant offering that Ignatius made to Christian spirituality, enhancing as it does the capacity to find evidence of God's activity in all things. In desolation as well as in consolation Ignatius was aware that God remained present. '[E]ven though the Lord has withdrawn from us his abundant fervour, augmented love, and intensive grace, he still supplies sufficient grace for our eternal salvation.'¹⁸

All this is echoed in the very commonplace nature of the ideas in the *Exercises*¹⁹. In the first week of the *Exercises* the exercitant is reminded that awareness of God comes not from knowledge but from experience and reflection on experience – 'what fills and satisfies the soul consists, not in knowing much, but in our understanding the realities profoundly and in savouring them interiorly'.²⁰ Later in the first week, the exercitant is encouraged to use the human senses to address the reality of the punishment for sinfulness.²¹ Further to this, in three methods of prayer that are offered to the exercitant:²² one endorses simple consideration of one's keeping or failing to keep the Commandments,²³ another encourages reflection on 'the word *Father*, [to] continue to consider the word as long as meanings, comparisons, relish, and consolations connected with it are found',²⁴ and a third offers the exercise where 'with each breath taken in or expelled, one should pray mentally, by saying a word of the Our Father, or of any

¹⁷ Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*, p193.

¹⁸ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §320; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p203.

¹⁹ See O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p46.

²⁰ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §2; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p121.

²¹ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §65-70; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p141.

²² See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §238-260; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p178ff.

²³ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §239 in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p178.

²⁴ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §252; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p180.

other prayer that is recited.’²⁵ The sanctioning of the use of common human experience and feelings in reflection on the activity of God in a person’s life opened the way for many people, not only those who were formally educated, to enter more deeply into a relationship with God in Christ.

Permission for people of all levels of intellect and education to enter into a deeper relationship with God was further developed through Ignatius’ encouragement of ‘the creation of vivid and concrete imagery’.²⁶ Anyone could understand the presence of God in their lives who was able to imagine (bring an image into their mind) the stories of the Scriptures, and particularly the stories that related to Jesus. Two contemplations, one of the Incarnation and one of the Nativity, were suggested in the Second Week of the *Exercises*,²⁷ and repeated twice, each time noting ‘some more important points where some insight, consolation, or desolation was experienced.’²⁸ This was followed by a fifth contemplation of the Incarnation and the Nativity, this time using the five human senses.²⁹

It was not, however, only through the *Spiritual Exercises* that lay people were encouraged to participate in the development of spirituality. John W. O’Malley has pointed out that when the Jesuits had ministered in a town, before they left ‘they chose a man who could read, gave him the catechism book, and then instructed him on how to teach it.’³⁰ This identification of appropriately gifted people, with resourcing and support, was a clear statement that discipleship, the expression of a close relationship with Jesus, was not limited to

²⁵ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §258; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p181.

²⁶ Dickens, *The Counter Reformation*, p78.

²⁷ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §101-117; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p148ff.

²⁸ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §118; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p150.

²⁹ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §121-126; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p151.

³⁰ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p126f.

people with status given by the church or qualifications gained through formal study. Indeed the experience and the sharing of faith was the province of anyone whom God had graced.

When he applied his own experience to the experience of others, Ignatius understood that there was a relationship between answering physical need and addressing spiritual need. As O'Malley again has indicated, no expression 'occurs more frequently in Jesuit documentation—on practically every page—than “to help souls.” ... [B]y “soul” Jesuits meant the whole person.'³¹ So the contribution Ignatius made involved the discernment that spirituality relates to the whole person. And this was expressed in his commitment to be involved with those who were in hospital and ill.³² Helping others, particularly the sick and those without education, became a clear and necessary aspect of Ignatius' growth in faith and a characteristic of the group of friends who formed around him. For Ignatius this was an expression of the relationship he had with Christ and an attempt to follow the example set by Christ. As mentioned above, he 'acted towards his fellow men generally with charity and tenderness, for Christ too had loved man and died on the cross for him.'³³

In the *Spiritual Exercises*, and in his correspondence with others, Ignatius provided 'practical spiritual advice'.³⁴ In his formal study he had focussed his interest in practical rather than speculative knowledge, and this emphasis on practical spirituality was further encouraged by his reading of such books as Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, and his consequent interest in the

³¹ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p18.

³² See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §83; in Ganss (ed) *Ignatius of Loyola*, p103.

³³ See p104 above, quoting Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p99.

³⁴ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p152.

“Brethren of the Common Life” who ‘lived calm, hidden and useful lives’³⁵ Thus it was that he reminded Inés Pascual that ‘the Lord does not require you to do anything exhausting or harmful to your person. He wants you to live taking joy in him’.³⁶ Likewise, in a letter to Francis Borgia, commenting on fasts and abstinences, he suggested that ‘for our Lord’s sake you ought to protect and strengthen your stomach and other physical faculties, not weaken them.’³⁷ As Philip Caraman says, ‘what he said was simple but memorable, unoriginal but striking’.³⁸

What did Wesley Contribute?

John Wesley’s contribution to a development of an understanding of Christian Spirituality is marked at least in part by a reaction to the deficiencies he saw in the expressions of spirituality of the Church of England of his time. In this he reflected a similar reaction in Ignatius Loyola to the Catholic Church of his time. The comment which Jeronimo Nadal made in his own journal shortly after Ignatius’ death is telling:

The Society has the care of those souls for whom either there is nobody to care or, if somebody ought to care, the care is negligent. This is the reason for the founding of the Society. This is its strength. This is its dignity in the Church.³⁹

This too was Wesley’s concern.

In many parts of the Church of England in the eighteenth century, there was little expectation that people would develop within themselves any effective

³⁵ Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p90.

³⁶ Letter to Inés Pascual, December 6, 1524; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p327.

³⁷ Letter to Francis Borgia, September 20, 1548; in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p347.

³⁸ Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p87.

³⁹ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p73

relationship with God: preaching did not expect conversion; prayer was assumed to be impersonal; personal or ecclesiastical spiritual discipline was seen to be the concern of only a select, and unusual or even eccentric, few who were accused of being “enthusiasts”; and relationship with God through the instrumentality of the established church was perceived to be the privilege of the few who were educated or rightly born.

Wesley’s reflection on his own experience led him to an awareness, following the discovery at Aldersgate, that the grace of God was freely offered to all people, and this became the foundation of all his work. From early in his life, he sought some consolation for his deep concern about his own salvation. He spent many years trying to “earn” his salvation – even saying of his time in Savannah that ‘I sought to establish my own righteousness’.⁴⁰ A transformation took place in his understanding, when

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.⁴¹

The discernment of this assurance became for Wesley the stimulus to encourage many to know the same experience.

It is to be noted here that this experience of Wesley’s can be compared with that of Ignatius Loyola at Manresa. After a time of serious discontent, during which he ‘began to have much trouble with scruples’,⁴² Ignatius had an experience which he described as ‘the Lord deigned that he [Ignatius] awake, as

⁴⁰ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p101; (= Journal: 24 May, 1738, §9).

⁴¹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p103; (= Journal: 24 May, 1738, §14).

⁴² Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §22; in Ganss (ed) *Ignatius of Loyola*, p77.

from sleep.⁴³ This became the turning point from which Ignatius was able to recognise the fullness of God's grace to enable him to understand his relationship with God and to serve in Christ's name the people of God. As was the case with Wesley and the Methodists, for the early Jesuits, the 'paradigm for the turning of one's life and will over to the care of God was the conversion of Ignatius'⁴⁴ and that experience gave validity to the experiences they had as they participated in Ignatius' *Exercises*.

In the first instance, it was his preaching that focused Wesley's desire to lead others to salvation. Because he was an ordained priest of the Church of England, he had (before May 1738) been preaching in churches in England and in America. Following his Aldersgate experience, also, he was able to preach in various churches, though in his Journal there are numerous entries that echo the comment of 4 February 1738: 'I was afterwards informed, many of the best in the parish were so offended, that I was not to preach there any more.'⁴⁵ This enforced exclusion from parish churches led to Wesley's decision on 2 April, 1739 when, he said,

At four in the afternoon, I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people.⁴⁶

This style of preaching was "new" for Wesley, though it had been the practice for some time of other revivalists in that generation. In this, as the others had, so did Wesley go to where the people were, to offer them in their own place the 'glad tiding of salvation'.

⁴³ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §25; in Ganss (ed) *Ignatius of Loyola*, p78.

⁴⁴ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p19.

⁴⁵ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p84; (= Journal: 5 February, 1738. See also, for example, 12 February, 7 May, 9 May).

⁴⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p185; (= Journal: 2 April, 1739).

It is interesting to note here that the terms “missional church” and “emerging church”⁴⁷ being used now provide useful descriptions of the new format that Wesley adopted against the ways of the Church of England in his time. Wesley found an alternative to a style of church that expected and assumed that people would and should come to the established church; he went to where people were, and there preached the gospel as he had discerned it from his study, from his sharing with others who had travelled something of the same journey as he, and from his own personal experience. In this, as Ignatius had, he set Christian spirituality in his time as an option available to all, whatever their educational, cultural, economic, or social circumstances.

As an extension of this “field preaching”, Wesley required that all who were converted under his preaching would become part of a “band”, or “class”, or “society”.⁴⁸ In these small gatherings that always included both new and mature Methodists, Christian spirituality was offered and encouraged as a means by which issues of everyday living could be understood in the context of the salvation experienced. Without these “bands” and “classes” the impact of Wesley’s preaching would have been seriously compromised, and Wesley’s contemporary, George Whitefield, is reported to have remarked of Wesley’s ministry that, “The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class and thus preserved the fruits of his labours. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand.”⁴⁹ Wesley’s contribution to Christian spirituality includes the insight that an experience must be nurtured, and that nurturing is best done in community. It is too much to expect one who has felt the joy of salvation to

⁴⁷ See for example, Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, p23ff.

⁴⁸ For further detail see below, Section III, Chapter 6: “‘Society’, ‘Class’ and ‘Band’ as a Means of Spiritual Development among Early Methodists.”

⁴⁹ Quoted in Pollock, *George Whitefield*, p238.

maintain enthusiasm in isolation from others who have shared similar experiences.

The expectation that Methodist converts would join the “classes” provided one other contribution to the development of Christian spirituality. By insisting on membership of the “classes”, and the consequent participation in the discussions that were part of every meeting, Wesley gave permission for lay men and women to express their experiences of God’s presence. Everyone in the “classes” discovered that the grace of God was abounding in each life, and each was thus encouraged to seek in his or her own life the signs of that grace. Turning from sinfulness to new life in Christ was not, therefore, a mere academic or theoretical exercise, but an exciting, consistent and continuing process within a fellowship of growing people.

A further outcome of this was that lay men and women were equipped to encourage others to grow in the faith. Under Wesley’s ministry Christian spirituality ceased to be the province of professional churchmen and women. Ordinary people were acknowledged as being gifted for service, and were given opportunity to exercise their own ministries. So effective was the encouragement of lay people in the use of their gifts, that even as early as 1744, Wesley convened a meeting at which were determined (among other things) ‘rules for itinerant and local lay assistants, guidance for stewards, band leaders, class leaders, sick visitors, school teachers, housekeepers.’⁵⁰ Whatever the role, each person who had some function was encouraged by the guidelines offered to maintain a close

⁵⁰ Ayling, *John Wesley*, p154.

relationship with the other leaders of the Methodist movement, and to take care to continue to grow in understanding of the faith and experience of discipleship.⁵¹

Thus, a significant contribution that Wesley made to an understanding of Christian spirituality focuses on the place of lay people within the Christian community. While the established church of his time continued to proscribe activity and limit ministry generally to those “ordained and licensed”, Wesley opened the way for people who were often uneducated and socially and economically deprived to participate in the ministry of Christ, experiencing for themselves the power of Christ’s salvation, and encouraging others to discover the same for themselves.

The contribution of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

The most significant contribution which Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley made to the development of an understanding of Christian spirituality must be in their change to perception that spirituality was only for an elite community within the church. They recognised the value of the spirituality of ordinary people. While the structure of the church of their times seemed to isolate people from close connection with Christ these two men, and the communities that grew around them, provided opportunity for common people to discover a relationship with God that led them to a life-giving and fruitful experience of faith.

Uncomplicated personal reflection, and the sharing of experience with others who were involved in similar reflection, meant that people who had at that time been ignored by the church could make active contributions to the spread of the gospel. A hitherto untapped energy was released into the church with the

⁵¹ This encouragement can be seen in the answers to questions in the “Minutes of Several Conversations” in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p299ff.

result that more people were attracted to the Christian faith. This in turn opened new possibilities for ministry, particularly in the fields of teaching and caring, and as a consequence more people were lifted from poverty of body or spirit. The Biblical injunction to care for those who are poor, disadvantaged and oppressed began to be enacted as people were affirmed in their own experiences and encouraged to participate in the ministry of Christ in the world.

These are elements of Christian life that have significance in the life of the Uniting Church, as its way is described in its *Basis of Union*. Before coming to discussion of this, however, there is more information to be filtered from the lives and ministries of Ignatius and Wesley.

SECTION III, Chapter 3

On Christian Spirituality: from Selected Letters of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

Large numbers of letters from both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley are extant, and a great many of these letters relate in their subject matter, or have implications for, the topic Christian spirituality. It is obviously impossible to comment on every letter, and so it is necessary to acknowledge that the selection of letters is made simply by choosing those in which the writer speaks most openly about the subject.

One of the significant letters Ignatius wrote was to Francis Borgia, in 1548. Borgia had become Duke of Gandía in 1542, but following the death of his wife in 1546 had chosen to follow a life of prayer and spirituality, to the point early in 1548 of taking first vows in the Society of Jesus. Ignatius' letter was in response to correspondence from Borgia in which he had told of his spiritual practices, and it included comments and advice which made clear much of Ignatius' own reflection and understanding of prayer and spirituality.

It is first to be noted that in the letter, Ignatius focused on seeking the 'most holy gifts'.¹ For Ignatius, these gifts included

intensity of faith, of hope, of charity; spiritual joy and repose, tears, intense consolation; elevation of mind, divine impressions and illuminations—along with all other experiences of spiritual relish and feeling which are ordered to these gifts, with humility and reverence towards our Holy Mother the Church and her established leaders and teachers.²

In identifying these gifts as a focus for Christian spirituality, Ignatius was directing Francis Borgia away from the more personally oriented acts of his

¹ Ignatius, "Letter to Francis Borgia, September 20, 1548"; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p348.

² Ignatius, "Letter to Francis Borgia, September 20, 1548"; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p349.

spirituality, including self-flagellation and other acts of mortification and penance,³ to a spirituality that focused on God and found its expression in increased awareness of the gifts God gives for life. ‘Our intention,’ Ignatius said, ‘should be that our thoughts, words, and actions ... may be ardent, clear, and right for God’s greater service.’⁴

In this, Ignatius expressed a desire to move beyond some personal affection and satisfaction into a relationship with God that glorified God and responded eagerly to God’s call. This awareness of the importance of one’s commitment to following the way of Christ, and not simply being in a relationship with Christ, is a recurrent theme throughout the letters in which Ignatius offered spiritual advice.

In his letter to Inés Pascual (written in 1524, only two and a half years after his “conversion”) Ignatius urged her to ‘plac[e] the Lord’s praise ahead of everything else’.⁵ This focus, Ignatius suggested, would enable her to ‘avoid whatever things are harmful’⁶ and ‘to live taking joy in [the Lord]’.⁷

This, of course, echoes ‘the foundation or first criterion of all our laws’⁸ laid down by Ignatius: “Ad maioram Dei gloria” – all reflection, all work, all conversation, all service, indeed all of life, is to be done, shared, carried out and lived, to God’s greater glory.

In John Wesley’s letters also, there are comments of encouragement to his correspondents to recognise God’s goodness and to give themselves to God’s will. He wrote to Miss A—,

³ Implied in the comments ‘Regarding ... inflicting hurt upon the body for our Lord’s sake’, and ‘rather than trying to draw blood’, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p348.

⁴ Ignatius, “Letter to Francis Borgia, September 20, 1548”; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p349.

⁵ Ignatius, “Letter to Inés Pascuala, December 6, 1524”; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p326.

⁶ Ignatius, “Letter to Inés Pascuala, December 6, 1524”; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p326.

⁷ Ignatius, “Letter to Inés Pascuala, December 6, 1524”; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p327.

⁸ *Constitutions and Complementary Norms*, p69 [Norm 23].

Only cast your care upon Him, and He will do all things well:
He will withhold from you no manner of thing that is good.
O let Him have all your heart!⁹

To Miss Bosanquet he wrote, ‘I hope you will have steadiness to pursue every measure which you judge will be to the glory of God.’¹⁰ He wrote, similarly, to Mrs Madan that ‘the most excellent way ... [is] to expend all our time and all our substance in such a manner as will most conduce to the glory of God and our own eternal happiness.’¹¹

Ignatius also encouraged Borgia to be open to a variety of styles of prayer until he found that which ‘becomes clearest to you [as] the happiest and most blessed in this life ...’.¹² Openness to the prompting of God, and the encouragement of the Spirit of Christ was an essential element of the spirituality of Ignatius. He knew in his own life the importance of not being constrained by previous experiences and he encouraged all who joined him and who used the *Spiritual Exercises* to be open to every suggestion of God’s way. In the “Introductory Explanations” for the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius made clear his awareness of the need for each exercitant to be directed according to the exercitant’s situation and need. The director was always to ‘allow the Creator to deal immediately with the creature and the creature with its Creator and Lord.’¹³

This flexibility in understanding the place of prayer in the Christian life was echoed in the response sent from Ignatius through Polanco to Antonio Brandão in answer to his concern about the amount of time a scholastic should give over to prayer. Although Ignatius ‘cautioned against the sin of worshipping

⁹ Wesley, “Letter To Miss A—, November 20, 1767”, in *Works*, Vol 12, p362, Letter CCCLXII.

¹⁰ Wesley, “Letter To Miss Bosanquet, January 15, 1770”, in *Works*, Vol 12, p402, Letter CCCXXXIV.

¹¹ Wesley, “Letter to Mrs Madan, November 9, 1750”, in Telford, *Letters of John Wesley*, Vol 3, p44.

¹² Ignatius, “Letter to Francis Borgia, September 29, 1548”; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p348f.

¹³ *Spiritual Exercises*, §15; in Ganss, (ed) *Ignatius of Loyola*, p125.

learning’,¹⁴ he was careful to remind Bandão that because the main function of a scholastic was to fulfil those study requirements that had been set, the main call on his time should be those studies, and that prayer was not to intrude on that time – ‘he would not be devoting himself completely to his studies if he gave himself to lengthy periods of prayer.’¹⁵

The awareness of life as a gift of God is another theme in comments Ignatius made about spirituality in his correspondence. In the letter to Teresa Rejedal he told her of his own awareness

that, without my deserving it, his Divine Majesty has for many years now given me the desire to give as much satisfaction as I can to all, men and women, who walk in the way of his will, and also to serve those who labour in the service owed to him.¹⁶

Here is affirmation of the fact that it is God who gives both the blessings in daily life and the desire to help others. Later in the letter he would say, ‘[T]hese desires to serve Christ our Lord do not come from yourself but are given to you by the Lord.’¹⁷ These comments offer a way to overcome the weakness that comes in moments of self-criticism, when one considers one’s apparent lack of ability and believes oneself to be incapable of any effective service to Christ or to others in Christ’s name. The focus should not be on self but on God’s gifting both of life and for service.

In a letter sent to Fr Jean Pelletier, who had been appointed rector of the new college at Ferrara, Ignatius elaborated another principle of Christian spirituality – namely what would now be referred to as a holistic understanding of spirituality. There was, for Ignatius, a relationship between ‘the *edification* and

¹⁴ Reed and Prevost, *History of Christian Education*, p205.

¹⁵ Ignatius, “Letter to Antonio Bandão, June 1, 1551”; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p351.

¹⁶ Ignatius, “Letter to Teresa Rejedal, June 18, 1536”; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p333.

¹⁷ Ignatius, “Letter to Teresa Rejedal, June 18, 1536”; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p334.

spiritual advancement of the city'.¹⁸ In other words, for Ignatius growth in spiritual awareness was a necessary component of, and an instrument in, the overall development of the whole community. He understood that the value of instruction and learning in society as a whole was to be found in the way in which it encouraged individuals to grow in an awareness of the presence of God in their lives. Conversely, he believed that spiritual advancement would only take place in a society in which education was prized.

For Ignatius, this principle of holistic growth that coupled discovery of knowledge with discernment of God's participation in life applied in all situations. In respect of the Jesuit community, he determined that 'the better the men themselves are, the greater also will be their suitability to be accepted by God as instruments'.¹⁹ Within the environment of the Society, the usual disciplines were to be followed – 'weekly confession and Communion, the daily examination of conscience and hearing of Mass ..., the practice of obedience'.²⁰ These were elements of daily routine that kept each person in an active relationship with God, and with each other in the community, and maintained in each an openness to share the experience of God's love and care.

It is important to note here that Ignatius was very careful to recognise the different capacities of each of the members of the Society. He charged the rector of the college to identify 'how far each man may be entrusted with responsibility for the edification of others *without danger to himself*'.²¹

¹⁸ Ignatius, "Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551"; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p357 – my emphasis.

¹⁹ Ignatius, "Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551"; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p357.

²⁰ Ignatius, "Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551" §I-2; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p358.

²¹ Ignatius, "Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551" §I-2; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p358 – my emphasis.

In this is a reminder of how important it is to understand that no two people will ever grow in Christian spirituality in the same way. Even within communities, each one's relationship with God in Christ will be known and expressed in different ways, and each will have different gifts and capacities for various works in the church and in the community. And essential to this is the awareness that some people have gifts of responsible support to others which will be seen as pastoral oversight and community leadership.

For Ignatius, the spiritual development of each ecclesiastical community included preaching of extempore sermons. It was not on the hearing of sermons that Ignatius focused here, but on the speaking of sermons, in the vernacular, in Latin and in Greek.²² Ignatius was careful to acknowledge again, that individuals have different abilities, and it was not appropriate to expect all to function in the same way – ‘this latter may be varied,’ Ignatius said, ‘according to the capacity of each student.’²³ It seemed that Ignatius believed that the telling of the story of faith, both in its personal and its communal focus, was as important in the development of one's spiritual awareness as was listening to any recitation of that story by other people. At the same time, it is to be noted that a little further on in the same letter Ignatius did encourage the use of ‘talks ... to create in those whom the Lord may call a disposition to take the path of perfection.’²⁴ In other words, listening still had its value and place. This capacity to share insights with others was further highlighted when Ignatius suggested that ‘[t]hrough academic and

²² See Ignatius, “Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551” §I-3; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p358.

²³ Ignatius, “Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551” §I-3; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p358.

²⁴ Ignatius, “Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551” §I-6; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p358.

spiritual conversations they should strive to draw others to the way of perfection.’²⁵

The importance of conversation with others was also one of John Wesley’s points of focus. It was an essential component in the establishment and expectations of the Class Meeting. A first reference to Wesley’s discernment of the importance of companionship in the Christian life came in Henry Moore’s account of the life of John Wesley. Moore said

About this time [1729] a serious man ... said to [Wesley], “Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven. Remember that you cannot service him alone. You must therefore find companions, or make them; the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.” He never forgot this.²⁶

In his letters Wesley reiterated the need to talk with others about one’s spiritual journey. In the 1748 letter to Vincent Perronet that carries the title “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodist”,²⁷ Wesley said that the advice given to those who were ‘determined to follow “Jesus Christ and him crucified”’²⁸ was

Strengthen you one another. Talk together as often as you can. And pray earnestly with and for one another, that you may “endure to the end, and be saved”.²⁹

On a more personal level, also, Wesley directed Dorothy Furlly to ‘a poor, queer old woman in Bristol (if she is not gone to paradise) with whom it might do you good to talk. ... Her name is Elizabeth Edgecomb.’³⁰

Further into his letter to Jean Pelletier, Ignatius highlighted activities of the Jesuit staff that would be beneficial to the general community. He

²⁵ Ignatius, “Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551” §I-5; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p358.

²⁶ Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley, Vol 1*, p96.

²⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, pp248ff.

²⁸ Wesley, “A Plain Account”, §3; in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p249.

²⁹ Wesley, “A Plain Account”, §5; in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p249.

³⁰ Wesley, “Letter to Miss Furley, June 18, 1757”, in *Works*, Vol 12, p199, Letter CLXIV.

acknowledged that all people, from children through to priests needed education appropriate to their capacities and circumstances. For children, this education would take the form of ‘care to teach the catechism ... on all Sundays and feast days, or on a weekday.’³¹ Priests on the other hand would be offered ‘lectures on Holy Scripture or scholastic theology’.³² All education ‘should draw people to the sacraments of penance and Communion’,³³ and for this reason, everyone involved in the delivery of education ‘should take care to assist prisoners, ... remember the hospitals ... try to be aware of the pious works in the city ... [and] show diligence and charity in starting new works that do not exist.’³⁴

In similar vein, Wesley understood that Christian spirituality involves both a personal relationship with Christ and a responsibility for those who are in need. Many of Wesley’s letters to Ebenezer Blackwell, one of the chief benefactors in Wesley’s movement, highlighted this point. The most detailed comments Wesley made about this are in a letter dated February 4, 1750.³⁵ This letter contained no information more than detail of the dispersion of funds which Blackwell had made available to Wesley. Of ten items in account of the use of £5.5.0, six were for specifically named people in need (totalling £2.5.6), one was for ‘a poor family, for food and fuel’ (5/-), one for ‘an ancient woman in great distress’ (2/6), one was ‘distributed among several sick families’ (10/-), and one item was ‘to the Lending Stock’ (£2.2.0). This “Lending Stock” was a fund from which people could borrow money ‘not exceeding twenty shillings, to be repaid within three

³¹ Ignatius, “Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551” §II-2; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p359.

³² Ignatius, “Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551” §II-5; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p359.

³³ Ignatius, “Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551” §II-7; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p359.

³⁴ Ignatius, “Letter to Jean Pelletier, June 13, 1551” §II-9,10,11; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p360.

³⁵ Wesley, “Letter to Mr Ebenezer Blackwell (February 4, 1750-1”, *Works*, Vol 12, p173, Letter CXVII. (Note that in John Telford’s edition of *The Letters of John Wesley*, Vol 3, p 61, the year is given as 1751.)

months’,³⁶ and was thus another means by which support could be offered to those in need. Other letters commend Blackwell and his wife for their generosity in more general terms.

One of the characteristics of the letters which John Wesley wrote (echoing his practice in sermons and addresses) was his constant use of Biblical references. His mind was obviously steeped in the Scriptures, and when he was discussing spiritual matters he brought these references into his letters. In a letter to Sarah Ryan, he encouraged her to ‘Attend to the still small voice!’,³⁷ and he urged the members of the society at Leominster, in a letter to Joseph Cownley, to ‘set your hands to the plough, see that you go on, and look not back.’³⁸ Further to this, there were occasions when he made interpolations into the situation of his correspondent, so that in a letter to Lady Maxwell, he reminded her that “the Lord, whom you *serve* ... will suddenly come to his temple.”³⁹ Ignatius also had a similar commitment to the use of Scripture as the basis for growth in Christian discipleship, and in the *Spiritual Exercises* he called exercitants to personal reflection on the stories about Jesus.

In his letters, Wesley also gave something of his own experience, as a model for the Christian spiritual life. To Ebenezer Blackwell he was ready to declare that

By the grace of God, I never fret. I repine at nothing: I am discontented with nothing. ... I see God sitting upon his throne, and ruling all things well.⁴⁰

In like manner, some three years later, he wrote again to Blackwell

³⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p267, with a foot note indicating that in 1772 people could borrow up to five pounds.

³⁷ Wesley, “Letter to Mrs Sarah Ryan, November 30, 1757”, in *Works*, Vol 12, p218, *cf* 1 Kings 19:12 (KJV).

³⁸ Wesley, Letter to Mr. Joseph Cownley, September 20, 1746”, in *Works*, Vol 12, p223, *cf* Luke 9:62 (KJV).

³⁹ Wesley, Letter to Lady Maxwell, September 22, 1764”, in *Works*, Vol 12, p337, my emphasis – *cf* Malachi 3:1 (KJV) which has “seek”.

⁴⁰ Wesley, “Letter to Ebenezer Blackwell, August 31, 1755”, in *Works*, Vol 12, p183.

I have learned, by the grace of God, in every state to be content. What a peace do we find in all circumstances when we can say, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt!”⁴¹

And Wesley had already reminded Blackwell of his awareness of his own commitment to God’s way in 1752, when he wrote from Newcastle,

The people in all these parts are much alive to God, being generally plain, artless, and simple of heart. Here I should spend the greatest part of my life, if I were to follow my own inclinations. But I am not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me.⁴²

These references were reminders to his correspondents that Christian spirituality must always be focused on the work that is entailed in Christ’s call. Personal interest can only be acceded to when first the will of God is accepted, as was made very clear in the introductory words to Wesley’s Covenant Prayer:

Christ has many services to be done; some are easy, others are difficult; some bring honour, others bring reproach; some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests, others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please ourselves, in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. Yet the power to do all these things is given us in Christ, who strengthens us.⁴³

It is interesting to note, by way of style, that Wesley often put questions to his correspondents, usually implying an answer that would lead them further in their spiritual quest. To Miss Pywell he wrote,

Is your heart lifted up to God, whatever your hands are employed in? Do you rejoice evermore? ... Are you enabled in everything to give thanks?⁴⁴

To Mrs Barton, in similar vein,

Can you still give God your whole heart? Is He always present with you? Have these trials weakened or

⁴¹ Wesley, “Letter to Ebenezer Blackwell, June 5, 1758”, in *Works*, Vol 12, p186.
⁴² Wesley, “Letter to Ebenezer Blackwell, May 23, 1752”, in *Works*, Vol 12, p177.
⁴³ *Methodist Book of Offices*, p131.
⁴⁴ Wesley, “Letter to Miss Pywell, January 22, 1772”, *Works*, Vol 12, p364.

strengthened your faith? Have you a clear evidence that you are saved from sin?⁴⁵

As the recipients of these letters considered these questions, on the assumption that Wesley meant them to be answered in the affirmative, they would have been encouraged further in their discipleship.

In a letter to Elizabeth Bennis, Wesley stated most clearly his understanding of the essence of Christian spirituality.

The essential part of Christian holiness is giving the heart wholly to God. ... Your present business is ... to go straight to Him that loves you, with all your wants, how great or how many soever they are. ... You may claim this: It is yours; for Christ is yours. Believe, and feel him near.⁴⁶

Conclusions

In these ways, then, the insights in the letters of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley are important for any understanding of the development of Christian spirituality. First is the awareness that the outcome of all Christian spirituality must be the acknowledgement of the glory of God who in Christ graciously offers the gift of eternal life to all. A spirituality that claims to be Christian but focuses primarily on the person and so fails to recognise the primacy of God does not express fully the requirements of discipleship of Jesus Christ.

The second insight is an understanding that the focus of the development of Christian spirituality is not limited to any particular type or station of person, and each person will have different abilities, understanding and relationship with

⁴⁵ Wesley, "Letter to Miss Barton, February 21, 1772", *Works*, Vol 12, p377.

⁴⁶ Wesley, "Letter to Mrs Elizabeth Bennis, July 25, 1767", *Works*, Vol 12, p387.

God. It is inappropriate to require all in a community to follow the same processes in their spiritual activities, nor to expect everyone to develop equivalently through the learning of the same information. On the contrary, it is necessary to affirm that it is God who gives gifts for prayer and service to each according to God's own will. Enabling the development and maintenance of learning and discovery in each person's life is an important aspect of Christian spirituality.

A third element of spirituality highlighted in the letters of Ignatius and Wesley is an awareness of the value and importance of telling one's story. The explanation of an experience, or the process of sharing insights that have been gained through reflection, meditation and reading, become as much for the teller as for the hearer opportunities to continue to learn and understand. The extension of this is, of course, the understanding that when the story is well told, there is an impact on the lives of the listeners who may themselves then identify elements in common with their own experience. Providing the environment in which this sharing can take place must be an understanding of Christian community in its various forms, with appropriate structures in place that provide the security and trust necessary for honest and open exchange of views.

Fourth is the importance of the Scriptures as a resource from which spiritual insight can be gleaned. It must not be taken for granted, but is well highlighted that growth in Christian spirituality is founded on personal and corporate reflection on the stories of the people of God found in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. These become for all seekers models, patterns and guides for discovery and understanding of the Christian way.

A fifth insight into Christian spirituality is encouragement for those who have themselves become aware of their experience of the presence of Christ to engage in activities that reach beyond the spiritual needs of the community into the sphere of social justice, and by extension the domains of community ethics and public benevolence. Because this spirituality is not focused in the individual person but on bringing glory to God, and because it has its foundation in the stories of God's involvement with people that are recorded in the Bible, the outcome must always be seen in a commitment to those whose needs are greatest, to 'seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.'⁴⁷

Encouragement and support of these elements of Christian spirituality are essential in the life of every Christian community. They will be included in discussion of spiritual guidance and pastoral care in the Uniting Church in Australia later in this thesis.

⁴⁷ Isaiah 1:17 (NRSV)

SECTION III, Chapter 4

The Divine Trinity in the Spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley: Community and Service

It has been identified¹ that among other things, and always in addition to the expected connection between a person and God, Christian spirituality will always exhibit two characteristics.

First, there will always be a component of community. That is to say, Christian spirituality is ever an activity and an expression of the gathered people of God, the ἐκκλησία, the church. Stanley Grenz and John Franke have said that the church is ‘the fellowship of those who gather around the narrative of God at work through Christ’,² and they have suggested that it is community that recites a ‘constitutive narrative [that] stretches from the primal past to the ideal future.’³ From this perspective, Christian spirituality relies on the relationship that exists between individuals who have experienced the love of God in Christ, are determined to follow in the way of Jesus, share their experience and insight with one another, and embody God’s saving, restoring and reconciling work in the world.

And second, by logical extension, Christian spirituality will always be an expression of relationship with the world; that is, humanity and the whole creation. Albert Outler has expressed this as ‘God’s imperative that men should

¹ Section I, Chapter 1: “An attempt to find a definition of ‘Christian spirituality’ as it relates to the study of the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley”.

² *Beyond Foundationalism*, p223.

³ *Beyond Foundationalism*, p222.

love him without stint and their neighbours without self-interest.⁴ And David Augsburger has described it as “tripolar spirituality”, in which

love of God transcends and transforms love of self,
love of God and love of neighbor [*sic*] become one,
love of neighbor and love of self become one,
submission to God and solidarity with neighbor are
indivisible.⁵

On this basis, Christian spirituality can never be simply a personal piety that focuses only on private communion between a person and God. Private spirituality would, in fact, be a denial of the incarnation, through which ‘the Word became flesh and lived among us’,⁶ and also a rejection of the experience of the early disciples at Pentecost, through which people became the agents of Christ’s ministry. Both of these foundational Christian experiences of God’s presence and activity affirm the connection which God has made between God’s self and the created order. That connection, as it has been expressed in the two creation stories found in Genesis⁷ and celebrated in Hebrew worship life,⁸ places human existence at the pinnacle of God’s creating activity, and establishes the life-affirming connection between humanity and God.

These two characteristics of Christian spirituality – a relationship with God expressed in relationship with others and with the created order – arise out of the fundamental understanding that Christian spirituality is an expression of a relationship between a person and God who is revealed in Jesus Christ. And essential to this relationship is an awareness that God is by nature relational, and must be understood as being Trinity.

⁴ Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit*, p47.

⁵ Augsburger, *Dissident Discipleship*, p13.

⁶ John 1:14 (NRSV).

⁷ Genesis 1:1-2:4 and Genesis 2:4-24.

⁸ As, for example, in Psalm 8, 65 and 66, 95.

Both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley affirmed the importance of this triune nature of God.

In a passage of his “Spiritual Diary” which he personally marked as being of particular importance, Ignatius said that during the Mass he became aware

that to speak to the Father was to recognise that he was one Person of that Holy Trinity. This brought me to love that Person’s whole self; and that all the more because the other two Persons were by their very essence present in that One. I experienced the same recognition about prayer to the Son, and again about prayer to the Holy Spirit.⁹

For Ignatius there was such an overwhelming sense of the relationship between each Person of the Trinity that each would not, and he certainly could not, separate any one Person from the other. Two days later he went on:

The fact that Jesus showed himself or made his presence felt seemed to me to be in some way a work of the Most Holy Trinity.¹⁰

The essential nature of the triune God impressed itself upon Ignatius so that all his work was pursued in the context of God who was by nature “relationship”. As a consequence, the *Spiritual Exercises* must always be understood as an instruction in identifying the relationship between the exercitant and the triune God. In the second week of the Exercises the contemplation of the Incarnation specifically guides the exercitant to the ‘Three Divine Persons’¹¹ who ‘overshadow all the events of this important week.’¹²

John Wesley, likewise, was convinced of the significance of the church’s understanding of God’s triune nature. In a comment similar to that of Ignatius, Wesley says that ‘God the Holy Ghost witnesses that God the Father has accepted

⁹ Ignatius, *Spiritual Diary*, February 21, 1544, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p247.

¹⁰ Ignatius, *Spiritual Diary*, February 23, 1544, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p248f.

¹¹ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §106, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p149.

¹² Egan, *Ignatius Loyola the Mystic*, p76.

[the believer] through the merits of God the Son: And, having this witness, [the believer] honours the Son, and the blessed Spirit, “even as he honours the Father.”¹³ Also, in a letter to Lady Rawdon he affirmed her faith as a ‘real Christian’, saying,

You knew God the Father had accepted you through His eternal Son, and God the Spirit bore witness with your spirit that you were a child of God.¹⁴

For Wesley, this awareness of the Trinity was one of the prerequisites for Christian faith, but he was alert to the reality that this awareness of God’s nature, and the relationship which it enables and affirms, was not quickly or easily gained. In the sermon “On the Trinity” quoted above, he said,

I do not say that every Christian can say with the Marquis de Renty, “I bear about with me continually an experimental verity, and a plenitude of the presence of the ever-blessed Trinity.” I apprehend this is not the experience of “babes,” but rather “fathers in Christ.”¹⁵

Wesley’s showed here that only persons who, with the support of Christian companions, have allowed themselves to enter fully into a productive relationship with God, and who at the same time have given time and effort to reflection on that relationship, will come to a life-giving awareness of the fullness of God’s character.

Both Ignatius and Wesley based their relationship with God on their experience of the relationship that exists between the three persons of the Trinity. This provided the basic principle of their understanding of the spiritual life. For both Ignatius and Wesley, the doctrine of the Trinity was more than simply a moment of theological reasoning. They each experienced God in three persons,

¹³ Wesley, Sermon LV “On the Trinity”, in *Works*, Vol 6, p205.

¹⁴ March 18, 1760, in Telford, *Letters of John Wesley*, Vol 4, p87.

¹⁵ Wesley, Sermon LV “On the Trinity”, in *Works*, Vol 6, p205.

and yet were always aware that it was the one God whom they experienced. As John Zizioulas has said, ‘the oneness of God is to be found in the *Koinonia* of the three persons.’¹⁶ This is an expression of the reality of God, who is always in relationship with God – Father with Son and Spirit, Son with Spirit and Father, and Spirit with Father and Son. There can be no experience of God in isolation from the experience of each and all persons of Trinity.

This relationship within and among the Divinity has been expressed beyond the confines of the Divine Trinity. It is manifest in the relationship that God has established with humankind, which is seen most significantly through Jesus Christ and in the community of his followers, but is also in evidence throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. It follows, then, that responsive action in spiritual life has to be expressed also in relational terms – towards God in the first instance, but also and always towards the created order, and towards our neighbour.

The relationship which humans have with God will always be in response to God’s initiative. As St John says, ‘We love because [God] first loved us.’¹⁷ And that responsive love will always be directed initially toward the One who made the first move of love. So it is appropriate to assert that all Christian spiritual activity will entail conduct which expresses a response to the graciousness of God as it is experienced at many levels. The response may be in acknowledgement of God’s creative activity in the universe, in the world of nature and in the world of human endeavour. It can be focused in the realisation of God’s power to sustain life and hope, to declare truth and to bring peace. It is a

¹⁶ Zizioulas, “The Teaching of the 2nd Ecumenical Council on the Holy Spirit”, p39; quoted in Fox, Patricia A. *God as Communication*, p222.

¹⁷ 1 John 4:19 (NRSV).

growing awareness of God's commitment to justice for all who are oppressed, healing for all who are dis-eased and wholeness for all whose lives are broken. It will involve an acceptance of God's involvement with earlier generations of people, and a recognition of God's action in one's own life. This in turn will lead to a consciousness of God's own commitment to a future of joy and love in which all creation – the spheres of nature and of human living – will exist as a faithful and real expression of the image of God.

Extension of this loving response to God leads to an awareness of the community in which spiritual activity takes place. Christian spirituality is not private or idiosyncratic, but must involve participation with others in the community of God's care. Both Ignatius and Wesley knew this, and the societies they established are witness to their commitment to spiritual growth in community.

As has been mentioned above,¹⁸ from early in his ministry Wesley was convinced of the need for people who came to faith to participate in forms of community. For early Methodists, spiritual growth was shared and encouraged in classes, societies and bands. The "classes" were groups of about 12 people who met weekly for pastoral oversight and spiritual accountability.¹⁹ In the classes, each person was expected to recount their experiences of God's activity in their life during the past week, and also required to submit themselves to the class's authority to reprove and admonish whenever a member was lax or backsliding. The "societies" were larger gatherings of people who came together in the expectation of growth in spiritual awareness and development of spiritual understanding, and the "bands" were smaller groups in which those who

¹⁸ See p175f.

¹⁹ See "A Short History of the People Called Methodists", §19(2), in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 13, p310.

participated had an expectation of deeper, more intense spiritual growth and development. It is suggested that the real development of Methodism owed more to these communities than to the actual preaching of Wesley and others.

Theodore Runyon says that

only one-fourth [of early Methodists] experienced new birth in the context of preaching they heard prior to joining a Methodist society. By far the majority needed the nurture of the society, classes and bands ... before experiencing what they themselves identified as new birth.²⁰

This affirms what was acknowledged by Wesley's erstwhile colleague and sometime opponent, George Whitefield. As is noted in another place,²¹ in a letter to one of Wesley's "local preachers" Whitefield commended Wesley for ensuring that those whose souls were awakened through Wesley's preaching were linked into small groups of people where spiritual conversation would confirm the experience. So the growth in faith which was experienced by many through John Wesley's ministry was not simply the result of his preaching, but was also attributed to the establishment of class meetings where the people shared with one another the experience of Christian discipleship, learning from and being accountable to one another in Christian community.

In his own way, Ignatius also recognised the need for community. From early after the conversion that happened during his convalescence, he sought out confessors and other people who could share his spiritual (and his physical) journey. In the first couple of years, this was an unfruitful quest, and on his initial journey to Jerusalem, when he could not find in Barcelona or Manresa people

²⁰ Runyon, *The New Creation*, p115.

²¹ See above, p175.

‘who could help him as much as he wished, ... he completely lost [his] eagerness to seek out spiritual persons.’²²

He continued, however, to come into contact with people whose guidance and encouragement enabled him to discern more about his own relationship with God, and when he eventually began his studies in Paris his association with Pierre Fabre, Francis Xavier, Diego Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón, Simão Rodrigues and Nicolás Bobadilla became the foundation of what would become the Society of Jesus. The Society was established as a religious order, but stood apart from contemporary monastic orders by not requiring its members to meet for canonical prayer “in choir”.²³ Ignatius was quite specific about the reason for this departure from common practice; the active focus of the Society was to be on pastoral care, ‘the aid of souls’,²⁴ and for that reason the members of the Society were to be flexible in time and methods of observing the devotional disciplines.

But this did not lessen the importance of the sense of community that in other Orders was created by the maintenance of the prayerful routines. By the regular use of the “Spiritual Exercises”, in their prayerful and liturgical activity, and through constant epistolary communication, members of the Society were continually reminded of their fellowship with all others in the Society. Ignatius himself exemplified this connection with the members of the Society through his letters which show the degree to which he was aware both of the issues being faced by each of the members and of their personal needs. So when the activities of Simão Rodrigues caused difficulties for the Society in Portugal, ‘[w]ith

²² Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §37, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p83.

²³ See Ignatius, *Constitutions*, §586, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p306.

²⁴ Ignatius, *Constitutions*, §586, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p306.

fatherly tact and love ... [Ignatius] brought his unruly subject to the path of sorrows, penitence, and rededication to his earlier ideals.’²⁵

It is possible, then, to identify a development in understanding of Christian spirituality. This may not be a sequential advance in comprehension; it would rather be expressed as a growing awareness of insight that drew and relied on multiple experiences. It could begin with a response to God’s loving action in the wider world including in an individual’s personal life, and extend into an involvement and participation with others who shared similar experiences of God’s saving grace. This would lead ultimately to an awareness of and concern for the rest of the world that for the time being was not conscious of its part or place in the divine community. In time, such awareness and concern could become a longing for an ultimate reconciliation by which all people, and the whole creation, might come to know and participate in the love and care offered by God through Jesus Christ.

In their own lives, both Wesley and Ignatius worked extensively with people who were outside their immediate community. So it was natural that both would expect that those who grew in Christian spirituality through their ministries would also reach out beyond their own acquaintances to connect with others who needed to hear, or feel, or see the love of God in action.

In this context it is essential to understand the importance of the statements in section 106 of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

The First Point. I will see the various persons, some here, some there.

First, those on the face of the earth, so diverse in dress and behaviour: some white and others black; some in peace and others at war; some weeping and others laughing; some

²⁵ Bangert, *History of the Society of Jesus*, p25.

healthy and others sick; some being born and others dying, and so forth.

Second, I will see and consider the Three Divine Persons, seated, so to speak, on the royal throne of their Divine Majesty. They are gazing on the whole face and circuit of the earth; and they see all the people in such great blindness, how they are dying and going down to hell.²⁶

This first day of the second week of the *Exercises* is ‘devoted to the incarnation’,²⁷ and Ignatius expected that people involved in exercises of Christian response to God’s love would be aware not only of themselves and their own circumstances, but of the whole world in which they lived. This was the world into which Christ came, and this was the world of which the Divine Persons said, ‘Let us work the redemption of the human race’.²⁸ Though the people might be ‘here’ and ‘there’, and they might be ‘diverse in dress and behaviour’ and in race, culture, experience, emotion, and health, yet they all are under the gaze of the three-person God.

It is a constant recurring theme in the “Autobiography” of Ignatius Loyola, that he and his companions offered service to those in need, showing compassion to beggars, caring for pilgrims, working in hospices, teaching, ‘speak[ing] familiarly ... about the things of God’.²⁹ So it is that the dynamic of the Society of Jesus from its inception was always

to devote itself with God’s grace not only to the salvation and perfection of the members’ own souls, but also with that same grace to labour strenuously in giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of the souls of their neighbours [*sic*].³⁰

²⁶ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §106, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p148f.

²⁷ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §101, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p148.

²⁸ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §107, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p149.

²⁹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §65, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p96.

³⁰ Ignatius, *Constitutions*, §3, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p281f.

This ‘giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of ... souls’ was fulfilled through every opportunity to stand beside those who were ill, uneducated, outcast, offended or offensive. It was focused indeed toward all who were for whatever reason outside the community of God’s grace. From the earliest times of the Society there were those who travelled throughout the then-known world, sharing the gospel often in innovative and culturally sensitive ways (though not always with the approval of traditional church authorities).

An example of this is seen in the story of Fr Matteo Ricci, whose service in China was characterised by his capacity to find points of connection between the Christian faith and Confucian academia. This led to both praise and disapproval from different corners of both the Christian church and Chinese society, but Ricci maintained the importance of finding means by which ‘the academies [could be] the medium through which the Christian ferment could be introduced into Chinese society.’³¹

The story of Roberto de Nobili is similar. As a Jesuit on Christ’s mission, he arrived in the southern Indian city of Madurai in 1609 and by 1610 had ‘immersed himself in his host country’s culture’.³² His strategy, in adopting the clothing, diet, disciplines, and language of the priestly Brahmin caste, was to obtain the cultural status that would make his opinion acceptable to his hearers. Ultimately it opened the way for him to write in Tamil a treatise offering an interpretation of Christian eternal life.

In a similar way, Wesley (and the others who were part first of the Holy Club and later of the Methodist societies) visited prisoners, provided ministry of comfort to those who were condemned to the gallows at Tyburn, established

³¹ Dunne, *Generation of Giants*, p43.

³² Lowney, *Heroic Leadership*, p151.

schools, offered medical services, and provided an environment in which both men and women who hitherto had been disregarded by society could develop skills in leadership and service. Wesley and his followers also understood the importance of sharing their experience beyond the confines of their local communities. Wesley declared, 'I look upon all the world as my parish',³³ and the structure of his organisation included preachers whose responsibility was to move from place to place, to cities, towns and countryside, in an effort to connect with the people who needed to hear the message.

The Methodist spiritual focus was beyond simple prayer and personal salvation; it emphasised the principle that all people were within the scope of God's love, that every person had value in God's eyes, and so should also have worth in the eyes of the world. For Wesley and his early Methodist leaders, Christ's invitation to salvation raised the status of men, women and children. They were to be seen and treated as not being less than children of God, and this ultimately meant that community leadership became assertive in demanding due rights for workers and their families.³⁴

Conclusions

The form of Christian spirituality developed by both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley was holistic in nature. It was of primary importance to both men that the relationship of love and affirmation and cooperation seen in and between the three persons of the Trinity should be acknowledged, declared and celebrated. This was seen as a foundational element of all Christian spirituality that was in its

³³ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p201 (= Journal: 11 June 1739).

³⁴ On the raising up of leaders in the early Methodist movement, see below, in Section III, Chapter 6: "'Society', 'Class' and 'Band' as a Means of Spiritual Development among Early Methodists", especially p229f.

turn expressed in relationships between people and each other, and the creation around.

Expressions of Christian spirituality were to include a focus on self-development, so that all who would accept the love offered and enter into a relationship with God in Christ would find themselves affirmed and their gifts enabled. Going beyond a pietistic relationship with God that had no connection with the world in which people lived, it affirmed the life-giving nature of God who lives in divine self-relationship and who exemplifies the fullest expression of communion and community. In due course, this will be seen to be an essential element of the Uniting Church's understanding of Christian discipleship.³⁵

Christian spirituality as Ignatius and Wesley discerned it also recognised the importance of every action in the world that led to the satisfaction of the needs of those who were in any way deprived of the means of life. This was always to be more than merely good works intended to satisfy a moral obligation. It was understood to be a necessary expression of gratitude to God on the part of those whose experience of God's love and care brought them to an awareness of salvation, new birth, or renewal of life. Recipients of God's magnanimity were to share the blessings they had received, spiritual as well as physical, with those whose needs were great.

This commitment to the needs of the world always involved attempts to connect and converse with people in ways that were acceptable to their circumstances, and this often meant attempting to be culturally relevant. Again it will be shown that the Uniting Church is committed to identifying ways in which

³⁵ See *Basis of Union*, paragraph 13.

the gospel message can be better presented in language and style appropriate to the hearers.³⁶

In their personal lives and in the communities that they fostered, Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley both showed that Christian spirituality will always call people into personally renewing relationships with God. In the Uniting Church also, each relationship is to be founded on and to acknowledge the extravagant grace of the Father, whose divine love is shown uniquely in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and whose power is made available to all in the world through the work of the Holy Spirit.

³⁶ See *Basis of Union*, paragraphs 9 and 11.

SECTION III, Chapter 5

Christian Spirituality in John Wesley's Sermons

Arguably the best known means of communication that John Wesley used was his sermons. In these he set out his theology and his comments on the practical outworking of faith in daily life.

This chapter will naturally focus on the published sermons of John Wesley, but in a study of this size it is not possible to look at all of the sermons.¹ It is, of course, a fact that throughout the corpus of the sermons there is a repetition of ideas that makes review of the whole unnecessary. And at this point it is noted that the sermons in the 'fifth series' (numbers 134 to 141) were 'never designed by him for publication'.² This notwithstanding, there is some value in looking into these sermons that were written before he had experienced the "warming of the heart" that took place at Aldersgate Street on 24 May 1738. It will be appropriate to look for changes or to see progressive development in Wesley's awareness of the spiritual element of daily Christian discipleship either side of that watershed moment.

The process now will be to look consecutively at various sermons, highlighting matters that relate, describe or define spirituality and the relationship between spiritual issues and daily life.

¹ There are 141 Sermons published in the Jackson Edition, 151 in the Bicentennial Edition.

² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 7, p451.

Sermon I “Salvation by Faith”:³

This sermon, dated June 11, 1738, is the second of Wesley’s University Sermons (the first had been preached on January 1, 1733⁴) and it is the first of the sermons in his published editions that he ‘prefixed’⁵ as providing proof of the consistency of the doctrine he proclaimed. The first four sermons in Wesley’s collection⁶ provide the foundation for the focus of the whole – that people are saved by faith in Christ, in ‘the necessity and merit of his death, and the power of his resurrection’;⁷ that people are called to real and practical, as opposed to nominal, Christianity which is evidenced in ‘love of God’ and ‘love of our neighbour’;⁸ that this calling opens to all the ‘remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost’;⁹ and all these lead to an awareness of Christianity ‘as beginning to exist in individuals’, ‘as spreading from one to another’ until ‘the time will come when Christianity will ... cover the earth’.¹⁰

As Albert Outler has indicated, ‘The Aldersgate experience had not produced a new doctrine, but a new resolution to make the most of his opportunities to expound the one to which he had already come. ... “Salvation by Faith” was ... the first public occasion after his “Aldersgate” experience for a positive evangelical manifesto.’¹¹

In Sermon I, Wesley declared that ‘Grace is the source, faith the condition, of salvation.’¹² So from the point of view of a study of spirituality, here is a

³ The Sermon numbering in this study follows that of the Jackson Edition.

⁴ Sermon XVII.

⁵ Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, Preface, §7, in *Works*, Vol 6, p4.

⁶ The third is a sermon of Charles Wesley.

⁷ Wesley, Sermon I, §I, 5, in *Works*, Vol 5, p9.

⁸ Wesley, Sermon II, §II, 1 and 2 respectively, in *Works*, Vol 5, p21.

⁹ Wesley, Sermon III, §III, 5, in *Works*, Vol 5, p33.

¹⁰ See the opening sentences of the first three sections of Sermon IV, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 5, pp39, 42 and 45.

¹¹ Outler, *Works of John Wesley*, Vol 1, p110.

¹² Wesley, Sermon I, Intro, 3, in *Works*, Vol 5, p8.

declaration that spiritual life must acknowledge God's own activity as the source of our relationship with God. Without this grace as the first component, any response of faith is impossible, and hence salvation is not able to be received, acknowledged or affirmed. 'Of yourselves', Wesley said 'cometh neither your faith nor your salvation. "It is the gift of God;" the free, undeserved gift; the faith through which ye are saved, as well as the salvation, which he of his own pleasure, his mere favour, annexes thereto.'¹³

But for Wesley, in his own life, and in his preaching, there had to be some response to God's gracious activity. "'Then I, even I, may hope for mercy!'", he hears someone say, and he responds, 'And so thou mayest, thou afflicted one ... God will not cast out thy prayer.'¹⁴ The believer was able to seek and to know the mercy of a gracious God, and this meant that the spiritual life was filled with hope, and that the hope was confirmed by God's gracious gift.

Toward the end of the sermon, Wesley said that no-one was to be excluded from the call to hear the good news – not 'poor', nor 'unlearned', nor 'young', nor 'sinners', not even 'the rich, the learned, the reputable, the moral men' (though these 'too often except themselves from hearing') – because 'the tenor of our commission runs, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature."¹⁵ The extension of this is that no-one need consider themselves closed to spiritual life, and that means that the church must be always willing and ready to offer and encourage this in all people.

¹³ Wesley, Sermon I, §III,3, in *Works*, Vol 5, p13.

¹⁴ Wesley, Sermon I, §III,6, in *Works*, Vol 5, p14.

¹⁵ Wesley, Sermon I, §III,7, in *Works*, Vol 5, p15.

Sermon II “The Almost Christian”:

In this sermon, Wesley made the point that Christian faith, and so Christian spirituality, was a matter both of belief and of confidence. There needed to be belief in ‘holy Scripture and the articles of our faith’,¹⁶ but there was also to be confidence in God’s capacity to act in a way that is consistent with the Scripture and the articles. Only then would there be the awareness of personal forgiveness and reconciliation to God that was essential to the knowledge of salvation in Christ.

These two components, the belief and the confidence, are essential parts of the development of Christian spiritual life. Knowledge of the Scriptures and of the doctrinal expressions of the faith are a necessary part of framework for spiritual growth and maturity, but without the confidence that these things contain essential truth and that the truth impacts on one’s own life, the knowledge is abstract, and has no impact on daily life and purpose.

Further, in this section of the sermon Wesley declared that a loving heart and obedience to the commandments followed from this awareness and salvation. This thought he developed in §II, 9 where he declared that ‘good designs and good desires’ were not enough. In a list of questions posed to the hearers/readers, Wesley made it clear that the relationship between the believer and God in Christ was an essential part of the understanding and acceptance of salvation, and that this would be evident in relationships with other people and the actions that followed.

The great question of all, then, still remains. Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart? Can you cry out, “My God, and my All?” Do you desire nothing but him? Are you happy

¹⁶ Wesley, Sermon II, §II,5, in *Works*, Vol 5, p23.

in God? Is he your glory, your delight, your crown of rejoicing? And is this commandment written in your heart, “That he who loveth God love his brother also?” Do you then love your neighbour as yourself? Do you love every man, even your enemies, even the enemies of God, as your own soul? As Christ loved you? Yea, dost thou believe that Christ loved thee, and gave himself for thee? Hast thou faith in his blood? Believest thou the Lamb of God hath taken away thy sins, and cast them as a stone into the depth of the sea? That he hath blotted out the handwriting that was against thee, taking it out of the way, nailing it to his cross? Hast thou indeed redemption through his blood, even the remission of thy sins? And doth his Spirit bear witness with thy spirit, that thou art a child of God?¹⁷

Here is the reminder that spiritual life cannot be essentially introspective, but must be lived out in day to day experience through the fundamental Christian requirements of love of God and love of neighbour.

Sermon VII “The Way to the Kingdom”

In the first section of this sermon, Wesley gave his understanding of ‘the nature of true religion, here termed by our Lord, “the kingdom of God.”’¹⁸ By equating these two concepts (‘true religion’ and ‘kingdom of God’), Wesley reminded his listeners/readers that their discipleship was not simply (or even essentially) a matter of performance of ‘any *outward* thing; such as *forms*, or *ceremonies*, even of the most excellent kind’,¹⁹ but was rather to be understood as religion ‘of the heart’,²⁰ which ‘The Apostle sums ... up in three particulars, “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”’²¹

In the sermon Wesley elaborated on these three particulars. “Righteousness” was the attitude engendered by the two dominical

¹⁷ Wesley, Sermon II, §II,9, in *Works*, Vol 5, p24.

¹⁸ Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,1, in *Works*, Vol 5, p77.

¹⁹ Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,4, in *Works*, Vol 5, p77.

²⁰ Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,6, in *Works*, Vol 5, p78.

²¹ Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,7, in *Works*, Vol 5, p78f.

Commandments: love of God and love of neighbour. In these Wesley saw ‘the sum of all Christian righteousness’,²² and he styled this “holiness”. “Peace” was ‘a supernatural sensation, a divine taste, of “the powers of the world to come”’,²³ and with such peace came both the removal of doubt and fear, and the acceptance of God’s will, to be in union with Christ. Wesley styled this peace, “happiness”. “Joy in the Holy Ghost”, for Wesley, came when ‘This holiness and happiness’ were seen as ‘the immediate fruit of God’s reigning in the soul.’²⁴

By extension, this means that every spiritual life must show evidence of these three elements of God’s reign. The righteousness will be, in Wesley’s words, both ‘inward’ (love that ‘believeth, hopeth, endureth all things’²⁵) and ‘outward’ (“doeth good unto all men,” being ... “full of mercy and good fruits.”). The peace will rise as the divine Spirit assures the human spirit that the Christian is ‘a child of God.’²⁶ And the joy, being ‘heaven opened in the soul’,²⁷ will be the witness to the presence of God in every moment.

Sermon VIII “The First Fruits of the Spirit”

Wesley drew some ‘practical inferences’²⁸ from comments he had made early in this sermon about ‘who those are that “are in Christ Jesus”’,²⁹ and ‘how “there is no condemnation to them which are thus in Christ Jesus”’.³⁰ He called his hearers, those who had accepted the salvation that Christ had wrought, to

²² Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,9, in *Works*, Vol 5, p79.

²³ Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,10, in *Works*, Vol 5, p80.

²⁴ Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,12, in *Works*, Vol 5, p80f.

²⁵ Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,9, in *Works*, Vol 5, p79f.

²⁶ Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,10, in *Works*, Vol 5, p80.

²⁷ Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,12, in *Works*, Vol 5, p81.

²⁸ Wesley, Sermon VIII, §III,1, in *Works*, Vol 5, p94.

²⁹ Wesley, Sermon VIII, §I,1, in *Works*, Vol 5, p88.

³⁰ Wesley, Sermon VIII, §II,1, in *Works*, Vol 5, p89.

reflect on their own lives, and he asserted that they could put aside all fear³¹ and affirm themselves as free from ‘the bondage of slavish, tormenting fear, of guilt and self-condemnation.’³²

For Wesley, acceptance of salvation and participation in the community of the faithful required an acknowledgement that in relationship with God all negative reflection on one’s life was set aside. ‘[I]n their own breast,’ he said, ‘there is no condemnation ... no sense of guilt, or dread of the wrath of God.’³³ This expression is an affirmation of self-acceptance and even self-affirmation that is a necessary part of every spiritually mature life.

Sermon X “The Witness of the Spirit: Discourse I”

This sermon focused in part on a matter that Wesley restated on a number of occasions: ‘that there is in every believer, both the testimony of God’s Spirit, and the testimony of his own, that he is a child of God.’³⁴ This point was also made in Sermon VII, where Wesley asserted that this awareness led to a peace that ‘banishe[d] fear’,³⁵ and it became part of his correspondence, both personal (to John Bennett in 1744) and formal (to “John Smith”³⁶ in 1748). It is interesting to note that for himself, the reflection on this matter began (poorly) when in Savannah he was asked by Mr Spangenberg to answer the question “Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God?”. At the time of asking he had answered in the affirmative, though later he said, ‘But I fear

³¹ See Wesley, Sermon VIII, §III,1, in *Works*, Vol 5, p94f.

³² Wesley, Sermon VIII, §III,2, in *Works*, Vol 5, p95.

³³ Wesley, Sermon VIII, §II,2, in *Works*, Vol 5, p90.

³⁴ Wesley, Sermon X, §I,1, in *Works*, Vol 5, p113.

³⁵ Wesley, Sermon VII, §I,10, in *Works*, Vol 5, p80.

³⁶ “John Smith” is an assumed name, suggested in the Jackson Edition (Vol 12, p56) as being used by Dr Thomas Secker, then Bishop of Oxford. This suggestion is rejected in the Bicentennial Edition (Vol 26, p138), which describes “John Smith” as ‘a devout member of the Church of England, born about 1691, and confirmed about 1706 after a religious upbringing. He maintained a strong belief in the value of learning, of virtue, and of piety, and was probably (but not certainly) a clergyman.’

they were vain words'.³⁷ The assurance that came with this awareness of God's acceptance was basic in Wesley's understanding: Christ's love for the believer, Christ's own self-offering for salvation, the believer's sins blotted out, and reconciliation to God³⁸ were all affirmed by the joint testimony of God's Spirit and the believer's.

For Wesley, this testimony would always be evident in the lifestyle of the believer. '[W]e are inwardly and outwardly holy', he said,³⁹ evidence of this being in actions and attitudes that reflect the commandments of God⁴⁰ and that bear witness to the fruits of the Spirit.⁴¹

No discussion of Christian spirituality, then, can be complete without the awareness and affirmation of the Holy Spirit as the source of and resource for spiritual growth. Further to this, Christian spirituality will be evidenced in each person's life both inwardly by attitudes reflective of the life of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, and outwardly by activity that reflects the actions of Christ in his obedience and his ministry. Here is a reminder that "being" and "doing" are complementary, and reflection on Christian spirituality will take note that both elements are essential for the fullness of spiritual life. In this, neither is to be seen as primary. In Sermon X, comments about activity and about attitude are interwoven. There is no hint that one should precede or should follow the other. Indeed, it is important to remember that it was Wesley's own experience that sometimes the "doing" preceded the "being", as in the comments that Peter

³⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p23, (= Journal, 7 February, 1736).

³⁸ See Wesley, Sermon X, §I,7, in *Works*, Vol 5, p115.

³⁹ Wesley, Sermon X, §I,8, in *Works*, Vol 5, p115.

⁴⁰ See Wesley, Sermon X, §I,5, in *Works*, Vol 5, p114.

⁴¹ See Wesley, Sermon X, §II,12, in *Works*, Vol 5, p122.

Böhler made when Wesley was ready to give up preaching: ‘He said, “Preach faith *till* you have it; and then, *because* you have it, you *will* preach faith.”’⁴²

Sermon XI “The Witness of the Spirit: Discourse II”

Wesley’s second Discourse on “The Witness of the Spirit” echoed and elaborated his comments in the first Discourse. Again he focussed on the joint testimony of the Holy Spirit with the human spirit that the believer was a “child of God”. He enlarged on this, saying that

We must be holy in heart and life before we can be conscious that we are so. But we must love God before we can be holy at all, this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us: “We love him, because he first loved us:” And we cannot know his love to us, till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit.⁴³

Here is an insight from Wesley recognising that there is a process by which the Christian spiritual life is developed. One must enter the relationship with God before one can function within it; and entering into the relationship with God is a result of a response in love to God who has first reached out in Christ. Any attempt to develop a Christian spiritual life that does not take note of this process will struggle, without adequate foundation; and, Wesley has reminded us, every Christian spiritual life that begins with the awareness of the love of God should, following due process, mature into holiness in attitude and action.

⁴² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p86, (= Journal, 4 March, 1738).

⁴³ Wesley, Sermon XI, §III,5, in *Works*, Vol 5, p137.

Sermon XVI “The Means of Grace”

In this sermon, Wesley asked the question, ‘Are there, under the Christian dispensation, any *means ordained* of God, as the usual channels of his grace?’⁴⁴ At issue was the way in which a Christian would be aware of her or his membership of and development in the kingdom of God.

The sermon was a response by Wesley to the suggestion by certain people that there was no need or purpose in their participation in any of the sacramental acts. This “quietism” hinged on the (mis)understanding that Christ was the only means by which grace, and therefore salvation, could come into human life.⁴⁵ For these people, no other means were necessary. Wesley rejected this, declaring that there were three ‘chief’ means: ‘prayer, ... searching the Scriptures ... and receiving the Lord’s Supper’.⁴⁶ These were gifts of God, not having any efficacy in themselves, but being ordained by God as opportunities by which God became present in the life of the believer. The call to participate in these means was from God, and ‘because God bids, therefore I do; because he directs me to wait in this way, therefore here I wait’.⁴⁷

This is important in any consideration of Christian spirituality; for Wesley the means of grace were activities that opened the way to the new life that was God’s gift. It can be argued, therefore, that discussion of Christian spirituality must include consideration of the activities in personal life and within the Christian community that will at the same time enhance an awareness of God’s presence, be an encouragement along the Christian way, and provide opportunity for growth in discipleship.

⁴⁴ Wesley, Sermon XVI, §I,1, in *Works*, Vol 5, p185.

⁴⁵ See Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p247, (= Journal, 4 November, 1739).

⁴⁶ Wesley, Sermon XVI, §II,1, in *Works*, Vol 5, p188.

⁴⁷ Wesley, Sermon XVI, §V,4, in *Works*, Vol 5, p200f.

Sermon XVII “The Circumcision of the Heart”

This sermon, following on in the published sermons from “The Means of Grace”, began by reasserting that ‘the distinguishing mark of a true follower of Christ ... is not either outward circumcision, or baptism, or any other outward form, but a right state of soul, a mind and spirit renewed after the image of Him that created it’.⁴⁸

In listing the signs of the “circumcision of the heart”, Wesley defined the term ‘holiness’ as ‘the being cleansed from sin, ... and, by consequence, the being endued with those virtues which were also in Christ Jesus’.⁴⁹ This, of course, is not inconsistent with what he proclaimed in other sermons. The new life (‘cleansed from sin’) is seen in the new lifestyle (‘endued with those virtues ...’).

Wesley went on with a list of attitudes that he saw as the signs of the holiness of the Christian life – ‘humility, faith, hope, and charity’.⁵⁰ Humility enabled one to reflect honestly on one’s own life and circumstances, and to recognise that personal endeavour is not enough to raise oneself from the worst of the human lot. Faith, therefore, provided the means by which new opportunities for life were seen and grasped. This led to ‘strong consolation through hope’⁵¹ (Wesley again pointed to the ‘testimony of their own spirit with the Spirit which witnesses in their hearts that they are children of God’⁵²), and finally to the assertion that ‘If thou wilt be perfect, add to all these, charity’,⁵³ which Wesley asserted was both love of God and love of neighbour.

⁴⁸ Wesley, Sermon XVII, §Intro, 3, in *Works*, Vol 5, p202f.

⁴⁹ Wesley, Sermon XVII, §I,1, in *Works*, Vol 5, p203.

⁵⁰ Wesley, Sermon XVII, §I,2, in *Works*, Vol 5, p203.

⁵¹ Wesley, Sermon XVII, §I,9, in *Works*, Vol 5, p205.

⁵² Wesley, Sermon XVII, §I,9, in *Works*, Vol 5, p205f and see also comments on Sermons II, VII, X, XI above.

⁵³ Wesley, Sermon XVII, §I,11, in *Works*, Vol 5, p207.

Again, Wesley highlighted the need for spiritual life to be both inward and outward. There must be both a development of a personal relationship with God in Christ, and a commitment to expression of that relationship in daily living.

Sermon LXXXIV “The Important Question”

In the Introduction to this sermon, Wesley pointed out that one of the difficulties of human existence lay in an inability to speak of what one could not conceive. Of ‘a man of low estate [who cannot] speak of high things,’ he said, ‘it is not easy for him to find suitable expressions, as he is so little acquainted with things of this nature’.⁵⁴ Wesley then said that no one could understand matters relating to the kingdom of heaven, ‘till, emerging out of the darkness of the present world, he commences an inhabitant of eternity.’⁵⁵

The issue in this for Christian spirituality is that all who would develop their spirituality must be aware of the concepts that are foundational to the Christian faith. This means not only that they should be acquainted with terminology, but that they should also be informed about fundamental doctrinal and ecclesial matters. In this way they will be better able to understand the backgrounds to their spiritual quest, and to celebrate and share its results.

Sermon LXXXIX “The More Excellent Way”

In this sermon Wesley acknowledged that there were

from the beginning two orders of Christians. The one lived an innocent life, conforming in all things, not sinful, to the customs and fashions of the world; doing many good works, abstaining from gross evils, and attending the ordinances of God. ... The other Christians not only abstained from all

⁵⁴ Wesley, Sermon LXXXIV, §Intro,1, in *Works*, Vol 6, p493.

⁵⁵ Wesley, Sermon LXXXIV, §Intro,2, in *Works*, Vol 6, p493.

appearance of evil, were zealous of good works of every kind, and attended all the ordinances of God, but likewise used all diligence to attain the whole mind that was in Christ, and laboured to walk, in every point, as their beloved Master.⁵⁶

He went on to say ‘I would be far from quenching a smoking flax,—from discouraging those that serve God in a low degree. But I could not wish them to stop there: I would encourage them to come up higher.’⁵⁷ In this we are reminded that the development of Christian spirituality can never be complete. Wesley’s encouragement to ‘come up higher’ should be part of every spiritual process, an ongoing development of style and purpose in the Christian faith.

Further into the sermon, Wesley offered suggestions about the activities in a believer’s day. He encouraged a disciplined and regular life, with appropriate sleep,⁵⁸ conscientious and daily prayer and devotion,⁵⁹ and responsible participation in the life of the world.⁶⁰ Extending this in consideration of Christian spirituality, leads to the reminder that regular and disciplined activity will be effective in the development of spirituality and that there will always be a significant relationship between the spiritual life and the life of the world.

Sermon XCVII “On Obedience to Pastors”:

This sermon (written in 1785) was addressed to the people of the Methodist societies as a reminder to them of the appropriate relationship between themselves and their Pastors (‘spiritual guides’, ‘shepherds’⁶¹). It also, however, provided an opportunity for Wesley to express his understanding of what was

⁵⁶ Wesley, Sermon LXXXIX, §Intro,5, in *Works*, Vol 7, p28.

⁵⁷ Wesley, Sermon LXXXIX, §Intro,7, in *Works*, Vol 7, p28.

⁵⁸ See Wesley, Sermon LXXXIX, §I, in *Works*, Vol 7, p29f.

⁵⁹ See Wesley, Sermon LXXXIX, §II, in *Works*, Vol 7, p30.

⁶⁰ See Wesley, Sermon LXXXIX, §III,1&2, in *Works*, Vol 7, p30f.

⁶¹ These are terms used by Wesley in this sermon, being synonymous with the term “Pastor”.

necessary for a Christian to continue in the development of faith and in an awareness of the constant presence of Christ. Wesley was ready to commit the pastors to a lifestyle that not only taught the way of Christ, but also showed the way of Christ; and he required of lay people that they learn both by listening and by watching.

When, referring to Hebrews 13:17, Wesley spoke about obedience and submission⁶² he expanded the meanings of the Greek words *πείθεσθε* (obey) and *ὑπέίκετε* (submit) to assert to his readers⁶³ that their journey in faith required both understanding and action. He related obedience to understanding of the doctrine of faith, and submission to activity which expressed the faith in daily living. The first was taught to them, the second was demonstrated to them, by the one who had been placed “over” them as “spiritual guide”.

Here are two aspects of the life of faith which Wesley urged on his followers. For him, there could be no development of faith in one who did not understand the doctrines, and development of faith had to be evidenced in daily life. Because it is God who gives the responsibility to the Pastor to ‘feed’, ‘teach’, ‘warn’, ‘guide’ and ‘train’,⁶⁴ it is the Christian’s responsibility under God to receive this pastoral oversight. In this way the spiritual life involves an interdependence. Leaders and laity have an accountability each to the other. Laity may rightly expect from their leaders mentoring in the Christian way that will come in the form of teaching and of lifestyle; leaders may rightly assume from the laity a respect for God’s gifting in them and an expectation to see God’s

⁶² See Wesley, Sermon XCVII, §III,1, in *Works*, Vol 7, p112.

⁶³ Note here the comment by Wesley himself: “You that read this ...” (Sermon XCVII, §III,8, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 7, p114).

⁶⁴ See Wesley, Sermon XCVII, §I,4, in *Works*, Vol 7, p110.

life well lived. Within the Christian community growth in faith is dependent on this two way relationship.

Conclusions

It is appropriate now to draw together a number of matters which are identified in Wesley's sermons as being part of the lifestyle described as Christian spirituality. These will become part of the later consideration of the connections between Wesley's and the Uniting Church in Australia's understandings of spiritual guidance and pastoral care.

The first thing to note is that Christian spiritual life must acknowledge God's activity. For Wesley there could never be a Christian spirituality that had its foundation in human endeavour or achievement. He has reminded the church that people are saved by faith in Christ, whose death and resurrection are the full expression of the grace of God, and that God's grace is the only source of effective spiritual life. So it follows that a relationship between the believer and God in Christ is, according to Wesley's understanding, an essential part of the understanding and acceptance of salvation. The result of this is a spiritual life filled with hope that is confirmed by an increasing awareness of God's gracious gift.

It is necessary to acknowledge here the Holy Spirit's role in enabling and encouraging spiritual growth. Developing an awareness of this, Wesley affirmed that the witness of the Holy Spirit with the human spirit was an essential element of an awareness of the work of God in individual lives. Without this testimony there could be no knowledge of God's activity, nor of the personal and daily

outworking of Christian lifestyle, because there could be no awareness of one's status as a child of God.

This comes together into an understanding that people must enter the relationship with God before they can function within it. The result of entering into the relationship with God is a response in love to God who has first reached out in Christ.

Christian spirituality is based on a belief and confidence in the Holy Scripture as the testimony of the acts of God's grace. Through the history of the church, the Scriptures have been expounded into doctrinal expressions of the faith; and knowledge of both Scripture and doctrine provides the framework for spiritual growth and maturity. Mature Christian spirituality will experience this knowledge as essential truth impacting on the believer's own life.

For Christian spirituality both "being" and "doing" are complementary and essential for the fullness of spiritual life. Wesley made it clear that the Christian is called to be both inwardly and outwardly holy, and in both contexts to live out the commandments of God and to bear witness to the fruits of the Spirit. So Christian spirituality must always be demonstrated in daily living and shown in both 'love of God' and 'love of our neighbour'. In other words, a Christian spiritual life cannot be merely introspective, but must be lived out in day to day experience and common human relationships.

Further to this, it is necessary that Christian spirituality extend beyond the individual. Christian spirituality insists on communicating, spreading from one person to another, in the expectation that the whole earth will hear and receive the salvation that Christ has brought. From Wesley's point of view, none should consider themselves closed to spiritual life. God's affirmation of *each* person "in

Christ” provides opportunity for *every* person to enter the Christian way, no matter what their life circumstances might have been. This in turn leads to a self-acceptance and self-affirmation that encourages greater participation in the Christian spiritual life. Significantly, this means that the church itself must always be open to all people, and ready and willing to offer and encourage everyone in their spiritual journey.

It is Wesley’s discussion of the “Means of Grace” that makes it clear that any reflection on Christian spirituality must include consideration of both personal activities and participation in the Christian community. Both of these levels of involvement in Christian worship and service, the individual and the corporate, are necessary in enhancing awareness of God’s presence, leading to growth in discipleship. Wesley was committed to the importance of regularity and discipline in reading Scripture and prayer, in participation in fellowship including the Lord’s Supper, and in witness to the community.

One final word about Christian spirituality as Wesley perceived it – it can never be complete. Despite the fact that Wesley was committed to Christian perfection in this life, though in part because of it, there is an understanding in Wesley’s sermons that the Christian way is a journey whose end is not in this life. So anyone and everyone committed to the development of Christian spirituality will continue to find new insights, new activities, new areas of witness and service, in which are discovered the fullness of God’s gifts, the witness of the Spirit, and of the expression of the salvation that is wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ.

SECTION III, Chapter 6

‘Society’, ‘Class’ and ‘Band’ as a Means of Spiritual Development among Early Methodists

In November 1729 John and Charles Wesley with two others¹ ‘agreed to spend three or four evenings in a week together’,² participating in what came to be known (among other appellations) as the Holy Club.

The Holy Club meetings provided this group of men with the opportunity ‘to read over the classics ... and on Sunday some book on divinity.’³ By the following year, this group had ‘added social work and observance of the fasts of the church’⁴ to their activities, with the social work particularly involving ‘visiting prisoners in “the Castle” (one of Oxford’s two prisons) and also some of the city’s destitute.’⁵

This satisfied a need in Wesley and his companions, to find proof of salvation not simply in personal and emotional responses to experience, but in the evidence of changed lives. It was the beginning of a lifestyle that would look for, and see, the power of God’s activity in the lives of those who were prepared to put themselves in a community that sought to follow the way of Jesus.

In the letter to Richard Morgan, William’s father, Wesley tried to explain the activities of the Holy Club so as to set right the impression that Mr Morgan had been given, that William had died ‘as a result of the ascetic excesses of the

¹ One was William Morgan; in “A Short History of Methodism”, ca 1764, Wesley said that the other was Robert Kirkham (see *Works* Vol 8, p348), but V.H.H. Green suggests that it was more likely Frances Gore (*The Young Wesley*, p151).

² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p6.

³ Wesley, “Letter to Richard Morgan, Oct 18, 1732”; in *Works*, Vol 1, p5.

⁴ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p84.

⁵ Ayling, *John Wesley*, p46.

pious group which Wesley led'.⁶ That letter included a long section in which he listed the questions which the Holy Club 'proposed to our friends, or opponents, as we had opportunity'.⁷ This list is quoted here in full to show the extent of the consideration which these men gave to the reasons for their gathering. The questions cover the breadth of Christian reflection on activity, from following the model of Christ's own life to understanding intellectually the reasons for Christian service, from personal salvation to public welfare, from teaching literacy to reflection on theological principles.

I. Whether it does not concern all men of all conditions to imitate Him, as much as they can, "who went about doing good?"

Whether all Christians are not concerned in that command, "While we have time, let us do good to all men?"

Whether we shall not be more happy hereafter, the more good we do now?

Whether we can be happy at all hereafter, unless we have, according to our power, "fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited those that are sick, and in prison;" and made all these actions subservient to a higher purpose, even the saving of souls from death?

Whether it be not our bounden duty always to remember, that He did more for us than we can do for him, who assures us, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me?"

II. Whether, upon these considerations, we may not try to do good to our acquaintance? Particularly, whether we may not try to convince them of the necessity of being Christians?

Whether of the consequent necessity of being scholars?

Whether of the necessity of method and industry, in order to either learning or virtue?

Whether we may not try to persuade them to confirm and increase their industry, by communicating as often as they can?

Whether we may not mention to them the authors whom we conceive to have wrote the best on those subjects?

Whether we may not assist them, as we are able, from time to time, to form resolutions upon what they read in those authors, and to execute them with steadiness and perseverance?

⁶ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p83.

⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p9: "Letter to Richard Morgan, Oct 18, 1732".

III. Whether, upon the considerations above-mentioned, we may not try to do good to those that are hungry, naked, or sick? In particular, whether, if we know any necessitous family, we may not give them a little food, clothes, or physic, as they want?

Whether we may not give them, if they can read, a Bible, Common-Prayer Book, or Whole Duty of Man?

Whether we may not, now and then, inquire how they have used them; explain what they do not understand, and enforce what they do?

Whether we may not enforce upon them, more especially, the necessity of private prayer, and of frequenting the church and sacrament?

Whether we may not contribute, what little we are able, toward having their children clothed and taught to read?

Whether we may not take care that they be taught their catechism, and short prayers for morning and evening?

IV. Lastly: Whether, upon the considerations above-mentioned, we may not try to do good to those that are in prison? In particular, Whether we may not release such well-disposed persons as remain in prison for small sums?

Whether we may not lend smaller sums to those that are of any trade, that they may procure themselves tools and materials to work with?

Whether we may not give to them who appear to want it most, a little money, or clothes, or physic?

Whether we may not supply as many as are serious enough to read, with a Bible, and Whole Duty of Man?

Whether we may not, as we have opportunity, explain and enforce these upon them, especially with respect to public and private prayer, and the blessed sacrament?⁸

It becomes clear from questions like these that early in his ministry Wesley understood that the processes of personal development, community support and social welfare were not able to be sustained by individuals working alone. There was a need for people to be together in support and encouragement, and within that context, for those who were more aware to increase the awareness of others. One of Wesley's responsibilities as a Fellow of Lincoln College was 'to undertake the instruction and supervision of undergraduates in order ... to

⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, pp9ff: "Letter to Richard Morgan, Oct 18, 1732".

promote the reform of morals in the university.⁹ This instruction and supervision came together in the activities of the Holy Club, both for those who were assigned to him by the University and for those who came of their own accord.

The activities of the Holy Club provided both a structure for daily and weekly reflection on matters of faith and of lifestyle, and a support to one another as they tested themselves in their discipleship and ministry. The daily and weekly activities were focused on reading and study of Christian Scripture and spiritual writing, in personal devotion and in shared meetings. The support came as their insights were shared and they began to participate with one another in visitation to prisoners and the sick.

This became the precursor to the development that took place after Wesley returned from Georgia. When, in his own words, he ‘submitted to be more vile’¹⁰ and began to preach in the fields and the highways, he was following the practice of other revivalists of his time (including George Whitefield). But there was a significant difference between Wesley and the others. This lay in Wesley’s practice of encouraging the people who came to Christian faith through his preaching (and through the sermons of the other early Methodist preachers) to meet in various groups. This is the element of Wesley’s ministry that Whitefield admired, as has been identified above.¹¹ Here again, Wesley was providing an opportunity for people to meet together in a structure that encouraged them to support one another as they learned more about faith in Christ and its outworking in daily living.

At this point, before more discussion, it is appropriate to make some

⁹ Schmidt, *John Wesley*, Vol 1, p96.

¹⁰ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p185; (= Journal: 2 April, 1739).

¹¹ See above, p175.

comments about the Methodist use of the terms “Society”, “Band” and “Class”. First, the people who were brought to faith from amongst the large crowds listening to the early Methodist preachers, and those in whom the preaching created an interest,¹² gathered in Societies. This grouping can be interpreted to be a kind of equivalent of modern “congregations”, though it must be remembered that Wesley always believed Methodism to be a movement within the Church of England, and for him the congregation was the local parish church. These Societies provided an environment and structure for encouragement and growth in faith.

Some of the members of the Societies gathered voluntarily into Bands in which there was opportunity for intense nurture and growth. These might be likened to “accountability groups” in the present generation, where people commit to meeting regularly with one another with the declared intention of providing support and encouragement to each other, of sharing one another’s burdens and concerns, and of promoting growth in faith and in faithful activity.

At the same time, the Societies were divided into Classes (from the Latin: *classis* = “division”) which were arranged geographically¹³ and provided the system with a means of administration and oversight. In a way, these could be seen to be equivalent to the local community “cell groups” that are part of many present-day churches. In his discussion of the Classes and Bands, Theodore Runyon suggests that ‘[w]hile all Methodists belonged to classes, about one in five took the further step of joining a band.’¹⁴

¹² See above. p198, quoting Theodore Runyon that many of the Methodists who “came to faith” did so not because of the preaching, but because of the mutual development that took place in the bands and societies. (see Runyon, *The New Creation*, p115.)

¹³ See Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, p118f.

¹⁴ Runyon, *The New Creation*, p122.

The chronological development of these three groups is a little disputed. Howard Snyder suggests that the Bands and Classes were gathered into Societies,¹⁵ but another reading would suggest that in fact people were encouraged early to join one of the Societies, and it was out of these that the Classes and the Bands were formed. Wesley himself, in “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists”, wrote about the distress he and his brother perceived among the people who were coming to faith, caused by their isolation from their normal support groups (family, neighbourhood, even church) because of their association with the Methodists. In that “Account”, Wesley said that he encouraged the people to

Strengthen ... one another. Talk together as often as you can. And pray earnestly with and for one another, that you may ‘endure to the end, and be saved.’ ... Thus arose, without any previous design on either side [his own or that of the people], what was afterwards called a *Society*.¹⁶

Further to this, in “The Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies”, Wesley made it clear that ‘each society is divided into smaller companies, called *classes*, according to their respective places of abode.’¹⁷

Societies developed, then, because the people (in Wesley’s words)

wanted to “flee the wrath to come,” and to assist each other in so doing. They therefore united themselves “in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they might help each other to work out their salvation.”¹⁸

¹⁵ See Snyder, *The Radical Wesley*, p54: ‘The Methodist societies were soon divided into classes and bands. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say the societies were the sum total of class and band members, since the primary point of belonging was this more intimate level of community and membership in a class was required before one could join the society.’

¹⁶ Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists”, §1,6-7; in *Works*, Vol 8, p249f.

¹⁷ Wesley, “The Nature ... of the United Societies”, §3, in *Works*, Vol 8, p269.

¹⁸ Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists”, §1,7, in *Works*, Vol 8, p250.

The meetings of the Societies provided an opportunity for people to consider and engage in further discussion about matters that they had heard in the sermons, and an environment in which they could ‘make an open confession of Christ, ... encourage his people, and strengthen the hands of his messengers... [, and] enter into the spirit, and share in the blessing, of a Christian community’.¹⁹

The Bands were ‘small groups of men *or* women, of similar situation, with mutual cares and concerns and a more intimate fellowship.’²⁰ These were the first of the small gatherings of people who had found new faith through the preaching of John Wesley. The groupings were voluntary, between five and ten people,²¹ and provided ‘intense spiritual nurture and support.’²² According to Richard Heitzenrater,

Their primary activities were confession and prayer; their goal was spiritual growth. The membership of each band was homogeneous, in the Moravian pattern: there were women’s bands, men’s bands, even boy’s bands mentioned in Bristol. In addition to gender distinctions, they were grouped by marital status—single men, married women, etc. The purpose of this careful sorting was to allow for the highest possible degree of openness and candor within the bands.²³

In some respects because these Bands worked so well it was logical that the practice should be extended. At the same time, there came upon the Methodist Societies a pecuniary concern – the need to pay off the debt relating to the building of the meeting places for the United Societies in Bristol and London.²⁴ The arrangement that was made meant that all the members of the

¹⁹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 3, p188; (= Journal: 11 July, 1764).

²⁰ Runyon, *The New Creation*, p122.

²¹ See Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, p104, and Runyon, *The New Creation*, p122.

²² Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, p104. See also Runyon, *The New Creation*, p122.

²³ Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, p104.

²⁴ The need for dedicated buildings arose from the groups of the societies (Nicholas and Baldwin Sts in Bristol). See Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p192; (= Journal: 6 May, 1739).

Society would be recognised in Classes of up to 12 people,²⁵ with each one to pay one penny per week, this being collected by the Leader of the group. (It is recorded that when this arrangement was being planned, in an acknowledgment that ‘one penny per week’ would be too much for some of the people, Captain Foy, whose idea it was, said, “‘then put ten or twelve of them to me. Let each of these give what they can weekly, and I will supply what is wanting.’”²⁶)

This eminently material process was very soon seen, however, to have pastoral and spiritual benefits, as the Leaders become aware of ‘domestic disputes, drunkenness and other sorts of behaviour not indicative of the pursuit of holiness.’²⁷ Wesley recalled the discovery, saying ‘This is the very thing we wanted. The Leaders are the persons who may not only receive the contributions, but also watch over the souls of their brethren.’²⁸ This was the beginning of the particular function that the Class Leaders would perform in Wesley’s system. Formally, in the “Minutes of Several Conversations ... 1744 to 1789”, in answer to a question about the function of the Class Leaders, it was recorded that each Leader should ‘carefully inquire how every soul in his class prospers; not only how each person observes the outward Rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.’²⁹ Less formally, in October 1789, in a letter to John Mason, Wesley affirmed that the Leader was not to

whisper in his class; but to speak so that all who are present
may hear; otherwise how shall
Each his friendly aid afford,
And feel his brother’s care?³⁰

²⁵ Membership of the Class became a compulsory aspect of Methodism, though membership of the Band was ‘purely voluntary’; see Runyon, *The New Creation*, p122.

²⁶ Wesley, “Thoughts upon Methodism”, §5, in *Works*, Vol 13, p259.

²⁷ Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, p118.

²⁸ Wesley, “Thoughts upon Methodism”, §6, in *Works*, Vol 13, p259.

²⁹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p301.

³⁰ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 12, p455.

Wesley was convinced of the importance of scriptural principles, and the reference to James 5:16 at the head of his “Rules of the Band-Societies” is consistent with this. ‘The design of our meeting is, to obey that command of God, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.”’³¹ In section 3 of “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists”, Wesley made this quote the proof of the validity of his requirement that people meet together in ‘bands (that is, little companies ...)’³² according to gender and marital status. Thus the expectation for all who met in bands and classes was that through confession and prayer they would be made whole for the work of being disciples of the Lord whom they followed.

There are, in the Societies, Classes and Bands, a number of focal points for the development of spirituality in Methodism. These gatherings provided

- a venue for conversation about the matters heard in the sermons;
- an opportunity for ‘mutual accountability’,³³ support and encouragement;
- a safe place in which each could examine her or his own growth in faith and be examined by his or her peers (this especially in the Bands);
- a regular time for prayer and study of the Scriptures;
- a place to share testimony;
- a means by which new Christians could ‘test the spirits to see whether they are from God’³⁴;
- education in literacy (to read the Scriptures) and consequently in numeracy, leading to ‘the unsilencing of women’³⁵ and men.

³¹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p272f.

³² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p258.

³³ Runyon, *The New Creation*, p123.

³⁴ 1 John 4:1 (NRSV).

³⁵ Lobody, “That Language Might Be Given Me”, p133. See also Runyon, *The New Creation*, p119.

As well as being places where the growth of individual Christians was encouraged, the gatherings also became communities in which the individuals could develop their gifts and abilities in leadership and in encouragement of others. As Albert Outler has said,

From Methodist preaching, men and women heard about God's high evaluation of their human dignity—of the love that motivated the Incarnation and accepted the Cross. And then, in the weekly rounds of the Methodist societies, they experienced this special dignity in newly personal circumstances, new experiences of peer-group equality—with real group involvement and actual social responsibility.³⁶

In the Societies, the roles of Class and Band Leader existed alongside the functions of stewards (who had financial and property responsibilities), assistants (who in the early days were assistants to John Wesley with oversight of Societies and of Preachers and their circuits), visitors of the sick, schoolmasters. In this way, the Societies, Bands and Classes were the seedbed in which was grown the leadership of the whole Methodist movement, and also the leadership of 'the labor [*sic*] movement and the emerging middle class as well.'³⁷

The principles of Christian spirituality that are identified in early Methodism³⁸ were promoted and encouraged in these gatherings that followed the great preaching occasions: the awareness that it is the grace of God, not human endeavour, that brings one under God's rule; the affirmation of the Holy Spirit 'as the source of and resource for spiritual growth';³⁹ the importance of Holy Scripture as 'the testimony of the acts of God's grace';⁴⁰ the open invitation for anyone to enter into a life-giving relationship with Christ; the encouragement of

³⁶ Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit*, p30.

³⁷ Runyon, *The New Creation*, p124.

³⁸ See above, Section III, Chapter 5: "Christian Spirituality in John Wesley's Sermons".

³⁹ Above, Section III, Chapter 5: "Christian Spirituality in John Wesley's Sermons", p213.

⁴⁰ Above, Section III, Chapter 5: "Christian Spirituality in John Wesley's Sermons", p221.

community as an expression of the relationship with Christ; and the necessity for Christian spirituality to be lived out in common human relationships and social interaction. In the Societies, and in the Bands and Classes, these elements of Christian spirituality were developed. In Theodore Runyon's words, the classes and bands served

not only [a] corrective and restrictive function, but also the positive and catalytic function of a means of grace when, through consultation and conversation, the Spirit is able to convict, convince, and open up new possibilities for understanding and growth. The "spiritual conversation" of classes and bands allowed such growth to take place. This meeting of minds brought with it a depth of fellowship and support "which the world cannot know."⁴¹

In respect of this fellowship and support, it is of unusual comfort to hear the encouragement a veteran gave to a younger preacher as he prepared to preach to an outdoor crowd for the first time, reassuring him against anxiety about what might happen:

the majority of any crowd,' he said, 'will be bad throwers, and so only a few will hit you with their missiles. And of those that do hit you, most will strike your legs or body, which are protected by your clothes. The only ones that can damage you will be the few that strike your face, and most of these will be soft. I have never received more damage from heavy or jagged missiles, than what a day or two in bed has easily repaired.'⁴²

Here is "empowerment" for all who take up the work of proclaiming the gospel! It could only be received as helpful and hopeful advice when it was given in fellowship within a supportively encouraging community.

⁴¹ Runyon, *The New Creation*, p127.

⁴² Quoted in Runyon, *The New Creation*, p125f.

SECTION III, Chapter 7

John Wesley's Understanding of the Importance of Christian Fellowship

One of the issues to be addressed in the discussion of spiritual guidance as pastoral care arises from the fact that spirituality can be, indeed must be, perceived and expressed both on a personal level and as a corporate act. The discussion of the place of societies, bands and classes in the development of the Methodist movement is foundational to this awareness of the importance of fellowship as an integral part of Christian spirituality.

Wesley's own experience of conversion, and his journey to and in Christian spirituality, clearly confirmed for him an awareness of the personal nature of spiritual life. He preached regularly the need for a personal relationship with Christ, and urged his listeners to continuing discernment of Christ's presence in their individual lives. This is the echo of his own experience, the discovery that the love of God 'opens in each breast a little heaven'.¹ This 'little heaven' is

“... the gift of God.” No man is able to work it in himself. It is a work of omnipotence. It requires no less power thus to quicken a dead soul, than to raise a body that lies in the grave. It is a new creation; and none can create a soul anew, but He who at first created the heavens and the earth.²

This is, of course, another way of describing the experience that Wesley had had during the meeting in Aldersgate Street on 24 May, 1738. Heaven opening in anyone's heart is an absolute sign of God's magnanimous love, and no personal achievement can ever bring this about, except the simple acceptance of the gift that is given. Wesley had struggled throughout his life until 1738 attempting to bring himself into a relationship with God, only to discover while

¹ Wesley, “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion” §8, in *Works*, Vol 8, p5.

² Wesley, “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion” §9, in *Works*, Vol 8, p5.

listening to the reading from Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans that the relationship was a gift not a reward. Up till that time, his experience in the Holy Club and his conversations with the Moravians (times of fellowship with people engaged in sharing the Christian faith) had been occasions when he felt he had been shown an opportunity that he was unworthy to grasp. His response had been always some version of the comment he made while reflecting on his time in Georgia:

But does all this (be it more or less, it matters not) make me acceptable to God? Does all I ever did or can know, say, give, do, or suffer, justify me in his sight? Yea, or the constant use of all the means of grace?³

Only after his experience in Aldersgate Street did he come personally to understand fully the importance of time shared in conversation with other people who were following the Christian way.

Even at that time, however, Wesley was aware of the need for others to grow in faith within a fellowship of like-minded believers. He encouraged others to share in small gatherings during which each could be supported and guided. This was the essence of the Holy Club, and it is seen in the comment in his journal for 17 May, 1736, where in Savannah he promoted the establishment of 'a sort of little society, ... to meet once or twice a week, in order to reprove, instruct, and exhort one another.'⁴ After the Aldersgate experience, and along with the development of his preaching ministry, the importance of Christian fellowship was affirmed in the establishment of the societies, classes and bands which has been shown in Chapter 6 (above) of this Section.

³ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p76 (= Journal: 29 February, 1738).

⁴ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p30.

One of the criticisms levelled against the early Methodist movement was that it caused schism and was ‘gathering Churches out of Churches ... dividing Christians from Christians’.⁵ This objection arose out of the perception that the people being converted through Wesley’s preaching were in fact being encouraged into a fellowship in opposition to the local parish of the Church of England.

In his “Plain Account of the People Called Methodists” (1748), written to the vicar of Shoreham, Rev Mr Perronet, Wesley answered these objections by raising two issues. First, Wesley indicated to Mr Perronet that many of those who came into the Methodist Societies were not themselves part of the Church of England. They had no relationship to any Christian community and had come anew to the Christian faith. Even in 1789 Wesley bemoaned the lack of Christian discipline in England. ‘Why,’ he asks in the sermon entitled “Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity”, ‘are the generality of the people, in all these places, Heathens still? no better than the Heathens of Africa or America, either in their tempers or in their lives?’⁶ Nor was Wesley the only one to describe this lack of Christian culture in the United Kingdom of the eighteenth century.⁷ It was indeed not only the cry of other preachers of the English evangelical revival but also of representatives of the Church of England and of the political and literary worlds. People like William Law, William Wilberforce and William Carlyle each in his own way expressed disappointment at the low level of Christian knowledge, understanding and devotion.

⁵ Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists” §I-11, in *Works*, Vol 8, p251.

⁶ Wesley, “Sermon CXVI”, in *Works*, Vol 7, p285.

⁷ Tyerman says that ‘[t]he *Weekly Miscellany* for 1732 ... states that freethinkers were formed into clubs, to propagate their tenets, and to make the nation a race of profligates; and that atheism was scattered broadcast throughout the kingdom. It affirms that it was publicly avowed that vice was profitable to the state; that the country would be benefited by the establishment of public stews; and that polygamy, concubinage, and even sodomy were not sinful.’ *Life and Times of the Rev John Wesley*, Vol 1, p217

For this reason, it was Wesley's argument that the Methodists could not be said to be schismatic (Christians divided from other Christians). They were, in Wesley's mind (and from many accounts, in reality), people without either faith or belief, and were not involved either actively or passively in any Christian community. Prior to their entry into the Methodist societies they were not part of any Christian community, and so could not be said to be divided from others who held the Christian faith.

The second issue to which Wesley responded related to the actual evidence and effect of Christian fellowship. Wesley suggested that true Christian fellowship was to be seen in a number of aspects. Those who criticised the Methodist system had themselves, according to Wesley, not 'watched over [these people] in love ... marked their growth in grace ... advised and exhorted them from time to time ... prayed with them and for them, as they had need'.⁸ Wesley's argument here was that these were essential elements of all Christian Fellowship, and he asserted that without these essentials there could be no fellowship and there would be no growth in Christian living. The process of growth into and in the Christian way required an environment in which the new Christian was aware of the signs of Christian love shown to them by those who were already living in the way. It needed the advice and encouragement of those who had already begun the journey and were experienced in the practice of the faith to guide them in their new experiences of God grace and power. This, therefore, presupposed a fellowship in which prayer with and for the new Christian was a recognised action and expectation.

⁸ Wesley, "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists" §I-11, in *Works*, Vol 8, p251.

Further, Wesley intimated that Christian fellowship did not exist in the parishes of the Church of England:

Rather, are not the bulk of the parishioners a mere rope of sand? What Christian connection is there between them? What intercourse in spiritual things? What watching over each other's souls? What bearing of one another's burdens?⁹

The ecclesiastical environment in which Wesley began his ministry was characterised on the one hand by nominal allegiance of many to the Church of England, with the Church being the dominant culture and having control of legal rights and influence in the society at large.¹⁰ On the other hand, however, this nominal allegiance did not always translate into a level of commitment to weekly activity in the church. In a table of "Anglican communicants and households, Easter 1778" in his study of *The Church of England in Industrialising Society*, M.F. Snape records that of 6071 Church of England households in the Parish of Whalley, 815 people received the Eucharist on that Easter Day.¹¹ Assuming that 'households' represent more than one person, this equates to a very low proportion of the population. The proportion of Church of England communicants in that table is further lessened by Snape's acknowledgement that 'Methodists have been included within the aggregate of Anglican families'¹² – and this, for one of the canonically required days of sacramental celebration.¹³

In Wesley's understanding, development in Christian faith needed to take place in the context of Christian fellowship, with regular conversation among those who follow the way. Thus we can highlight a number of 'needs' and corresponding benefits which must be satisfied within any community which

⁹ Wesley, "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists" §I-11, in *Works*, Vol 8, p251f.

¹⁰ See above, Section II, Chapter 3, "Development of Spirituality in the Life of John Wesley", p126.

¹¹ Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society*, p19 (omitting the chapelry of Burnley whose incumbent was 'out of order and not able to officiate').

¹² Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society*, p19: note at the base of the table.

¹³ See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p20.

would label itself “Christian” fellowship. These will be taken into consideration when discussion turns later to the place of spiritual guidance and pastoral care in the Uniting Church.

First is the need to be ‘watched over’. Wesley knew that new Christians were in constant danger of wandering from the path of faith, through their own ignorance and through their failure to recognise the pitfalls which many others had recognised before. In some ways this was his own experience. He had stumbled from one experience to another, receiving advice from many (which sometimes he heeded and sometimes not) but with little consistent guidance. He therefore wanted new ‘Christian believers’¹⁴ to enter into a fellowship of faithful people in which their growth in the faith would be observed by others who had themselves gone through the processes of temptation and growth. New believers would then be guided by more experienced believers. And as the believers grew in faith so the need for that guidance, that ‘watching over’, would develop as new elements of the faith, with corresponding new paths and pitfalls, were discovered. So, as has been identified in the chapter above,¹⁵ Wesley required that within the class groups there be a constant watching over each one’s actions (which included words and thoughts)¹⁶ for signs of regression as well as of growth.

Because the discernment, discovery and development of faith in any individual takes place over various stages, sometimes quickly and sometimes slowly,¹⁷ it can be difficult for the person in whom the faith is growing to

¹⁴ This is the term Wesley used for those active in the Christian faith, in his Sermon CXXIV, “The Heavenly Treasure in Earthly Vessels”, Wesley, *Works*, Vol 7, p345.

¹⁵ Section III, Chapter 6: “‘Society’, ‘Class’ and ‘Band’ as a Means of Spiritual Development among Early Methodists”, p228.

¹⁶ See Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists” §II-7, in *Works*, Vol 8, p254.

¹⁷ Development in faith has been discussed above, Section I, Chapter 1: “An attempt to find a definition of ‘Christian spirituality’ as it relates to the study of the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley”, especially pp14f.

perceive clearly what developments are taking place. For this reason, Wesley believed it was important for all believers to continue in Christian fellowship so that there would be an environment in which advice and encouragement could be readily given. He used the word “exhort” in this context, to indicate that this advice and encouragement was not to be mere gentle and polite conversation. In his *Notes on the New Testament*, he had made it clear that “exhortation” was to be understood as ‘urg[ing] Christians to duty, and ... comfort[ing] them in trials’,¹⁸ and this was to be delivered ‘with great plainness of speech’.¹⁹

In the early years of his spiritual journey Wesley was beset by his own perceptions of failure. He could not accept his own place in the community of faith because he had not yet understood the significance of salvation by grace. He came to understand that others who shared the journey of faith made an important contribution to his own perception of faith development by being able to observe and acknowledge the signs of growth (or decline) in faith. Christian fellowship provided the opportunity for others, in one moment, to express caution when the new believer was following unhelpful ways, and in another circumstance, to celebrate moments of achievement in faith, so that the believer would be aware of progress in faith.

The third element of Christian Fellowship which satisfies the need of those growing in faith is an environment in which advice and exhortation can be given in an atmosphere of security and Christian love. Quite simply, the community in which each one is ‘watched over’ and within which each one’s journey is ‘marked’ will either become a community in which the sharing of advice and the encouragement of each member is readily accepted, or it will cease

¹⁸ Wesley, *Notes on the New Testament*, p570 – in reference to Romans 12:7.

¹⁹ Wesley, *Notes on the New Testament*, p755 – in reference to I Thessalonians 2:3.

to be a community at all. It will then become at best a gathering of people who speak only of superficial things because they are unwilling or unable to be open to one another, and at worst the atmosphere will be one of mistrust, insult and offence. Wesley was aware that the real support which came from the watching and the marking would find verbal expression in advice and encouragement to continue on the way to perfection.²⁰ No member of the community would, in this sense, be wanting for wise guidance in the ways of the faith, nor for enthusiastic support in the processes of living the faithful life.

This environment would then allow easy opportunity for the sharing of all things in prayer. Wesley was deeply convinced of the value of prayer for the discernment of God's will, and of the power of prayer for the strength needed for the continued journey in faith. Fellowship was necessary to provide the knowledge of individuals' needs and the trust in one another which would allow for prayer to be an effective means of support and encouragement. Praying with one another was a means of continued development of trust and understanding, and praying for one another became one of the signs of affirmation of each one's place in the family of God and in the Fellowship of Christ. This in turn became the sign of encouragement and expectation of effectiveness in ministry.

²⁰ On Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection, see Sermon XL, Wesley, *Works*, Vol 6, pp1 ff, and "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", Wesley, *Works*, Vol 11, pp366ff.

SECTION III, Chapter 8

On Christian Discernment: Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley and the Uniting Church in Australia

Christian discernment may most simply be defined as the process by which a person or community becomes aware of appropriate divine direction for his, her or its life. It involves consideration of the person's or group's circumstances, their relationship with other people and groups, their awareness of the presence of God who is revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or in the forms of creator, redeemer and enabler (though it must be remembered that each of these, and other, characteristics is never limited to any one of the "Persons" of the Trinity). Christian discernment assumes a relationship with Jesus Christ, in which the person or community is constantly trying to understand, develop and exhibit the lifestyle of a disciple.

This chapter will look into the ways in which Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley became aware of, and used, processes of discernment in the courses of their own spiritual journeys, and what insights they provided for the people who became part of the communities associated with their ministries. This will lead to some connections with discernment in the Uniting Church in Australia.

Ignatius Loyola

While many throughout the history of the church have come to understand the ways in which God has been leading them, and some have been able to document the process by which they have discovered this guidance, it was Ignatius Loyola who significantly encapsulated this into a formulated process. He 'developed, out of his own experience ... a practice that enables people to

understand more clearly God's movement in their hearts and God's purposes for their lives.'¹

There were specific moments in his life when he became significantly aware that his responses to events and insights were affirming of, or alternatively distracting to, his understanding of God's presence with him. When he was recovering from the wounds he received at Pamplona, he became aware that one set of books and the thoughts that attended his reading left him a joyful spirit, and another set left him with a sad spirit.

When he was thinking of those things of the world he took much delight in them, but afterwards, when he was tired and put them aside, he found himself dry and dissatisfied. But when he thought of going to Jerusalem barefoot, and of eating nothing but plain vegetables and of practicing all the other rigors that he saw in the saints, not only was he consoled when he had these thoughts, but even after putting them aside he remained satisfied and joyful.²

Ignatius also became aware of the residual effect of an experience when at Manresa he apprehended the pleasant and consoling vision of a bright eyed serpent, but 'When it disappeared, he was displeased.'³

Later on, though still in Manresa, he came to understand a connection between the consolation he felt when he was following God's way and the 'fruit which he bore in dealing with souls.'⁴ This was not simply an inner sense of his activity being comfortable to himself. There was also an awareness of outward proof that the activities were effective in work that was done, and there was affirmation of and from people who were positively influenced.

¹ <<http://www.nwjesuits.org/JesuitSpirituality/IgnatianSpirituality.html>>, [viewed 29/03/2009].

² Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §8, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p71.

³ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §19, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p76.

⁴ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §29, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p80.

For Ignatius, discernment involved an identification of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate understandings and actions. Throughout the early parts of his *Autobiography* there are numerous references to his reflection on things he was doing that were either productive or destructive. For instance, he spent considerable time and energy in acts of mortification, in which he attempted to set aside all connection with his former life as a well dressed courtier and disciplined soldier.⁵ At this time he also took great pains to confess all his sinfulness and ‘although he had confessed them all, he was not satisfied.’⁶ This caused negative effects in his life. He became ill and distressed, until eventually his confessor ordered him to desist. Ignatius recorded that

though he felt strong, he nevertheless obeyed his confessor.
And that day and the next he felt free from scruples.⁷

So Ignatius came to understand certain basic principles about discernment. Gerard Coleman has identified seven lessons that Ignatius learned during the time when he was becoming aware of the relationship that existed between God and himself:

- that it was important to ponder on what was happening to him [6]⁸
- that his thoughts affected his feelings and vice versa [8]
- that there were different spirits which produced varying thoughts and feelings [9]
- that sometimes it was not easy to distinguish which spirit was moving him [15]
- that sometimes he had to let things flow before they would become clear [19]
- that it was instructive to know how these spirits entered into his experience [25]
- that there would be some sign to confirm that he had made a correct decisions [10] & [25].⁹

⁵ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §19, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p76.

⁶ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §22, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p77.

⁷ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §25, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p78.

⁸ The numbers in square brackets give the sections of the *Autobiography* in which these ‘lessons’ are found.

⁹ Coleman: *Walking with Inigo*, 57f.

It was important, then, for Ignatius first to become aware of the events that were happening to him and about him. No discernment would be possible without reflection on these details of his life. He became well aware that it was important to consider and understand both the most commonplace and the most extraordinary things that happened to him. So he identified the significance of the meeting and discussion (or argument) with the Moor on the road to Montserrat¹⁰ and the times when he would eat with others, listening in silence until the right moment came to enter into conversation about God.¹¹

These circumstances of his life, however, did not on their own provide any insight into the ways of God with him. For that to happen, Ignatius had next to acknowledge that the events had an impact on the way he thought and the way he felt. He became aware that there were good, positive and affirming thoughts and feelings, and he was aware also of disturbing and life-denying thoughts and feelings. Evidence of these is seen in the experiences mentioned above from sections 8 and 19 of the *Autobiography*, concerning his reflections on his reading and the vision of the serpent. Ignatius grew in this awareness of the importance of identifying on each different occasion the spirit with which he responded to things that happened. There is evidence of this in his consideration of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the decision to go to Barcelona. These are recorded at various points in Sections 38 through 52 of the *Autobiography*.¹²

In addition to being aware of the various spirits, and their effect on his awareness of God's guidance, Ignatius also came to understand that it was important to allow time to elapse before accepting completely the value of the

¹⁰ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §15, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p74.

¹¹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §42, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p85.

¹² Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, pp83-90.

insight or decision. So, when he arrived in Jerusalem he was told that he could not stay,¹³ yet he determined that ‘he would not abandon his intention’¹⁴ and remained there until eventually accepting that this option was truly closed to him.

The sixth lesson that Coleman has identified shows a similar openness to the process Ignatius was developing. In considering where the guidance came from, on the one hand Ignatius took counsel from people who had some authority, such as his confessor¹⁵ and the provincial in Jerusalem.¹⁶ But he also allowed himself to take consolation from the visions of Christ he had at different times.¹⁷ There were many sources from which Ignatius would find the direction for his life with God.

In the last of the lessons, Ignatius learned that a process of reflection on the circumstances of his life, and the thoughts and feelings he had, led him to be aware that after a decision had been made there would always be some confirmation that it was correct. Though it did not always happen immediately, he was able to look back later and have a certainty about the matter. This is seen most clearly in the comment relating to that part of his initial conversion that ‘left [him] with such loathing for his whole past life’.¹⁸ The transformation in his life was such that ‘his brother as well as all the rest of the household *came to know* from his exterior the change that had been wrought in his soul.’¹⁹ This affirmation through time is also seen in phrases like ‘the effect has remained with him throughout his life’,²⁰ and ‘from that day forward he remained free of those

¹³ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §45, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p87.

¹⁴ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §46, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p87.

¹⁵ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §25, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p78.

¹⁶ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §46, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p87.

¹⁷ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §§41 and 44, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p85 and 86.

¹⁸ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §10, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p71.

¹⁹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §10, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p72, my emphasis.

²⁰ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §28, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p80.

scruples, and held it for certain that Our Lord had mercifully deigned to deliver him.²¹

For Ignatius, the place of Scripture, the stories of the people of faith, and the traditions of the church including particularly the sacrament of the Mass, provided basic tools for discernment. Early in his Christian journey, Ignatius was drawn to reflection on the life of Christ and the lives of the saints, so that he learned quickly the importance of some comparison of his own experience with that of his Lord and of others who had committed themselves to following Christ. In his own words,

in reading the life of Our Lord and of the saints, he stopped to think, reasoning with himself, “What if I should do what St Francis did, and what St Dominic did?” Thus he pondered over many things that he found good, always proposing to himself what was difficult and burdensome; and as he so proposed, it seemed easy for him to accomplish it.²²

It is not surprising, then, to find that the *Spiritual Exercises* are dotted through with references to Scripture or to scriptural stories. By this Ignatius encouraged the exercitant to focus beyond personal experience into the experience of the community of faith.²³ The frequent instructions to use such devotional tools as “Hail Mary”, the Creed, “Soul of Christ”, and “Hail Holy Queen” are also clear indications of his commitment to the culture of the contemporary Roman expression of the Christian faith.²⁴

Throughout his *Spiritual Diary* Ignatius recorded instances where the Mass was a component in his growing awareness of the direction he felt God was calling him. Time and again he wrote along the following lines, ‘Before, during,

²¹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §25, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p79.

²² Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §7, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p70.

²³ See, for example, Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §111-116, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p149f.

²⁴ See, for example, Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §253, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p180.

and after Mass, with sufficient devotion and tears, I was always with the thought ...',²⁵ and 'during the Mass there was an exterior warmth which moved me to devotion and cheerfulness of mind. ... I thought that God our Lord wanted to show me some way or manner of proceeding.'²⁶

Ignatius began the *Spiritual Exercises* by explaining that the process was nothing less than 'preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections' to allow for 'seeking and finding God's will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul.'²⁷ In the First Week of the Exercises he made it plain that the process that leads to this ordering of life involved an awareness that 'other things on the face of the earth are created for the human beings, to help them in working towards the end for which they were created', namely 'to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord', and he determined for himself, and encouraged exercitants, to 'use these things to the extent that they help me toward my end'.²⁸

So discernment would not be simply an intellectual process in which the mind waited to discover a course of action. It would also involve an observation of the world in which the seeker was placed and a reflection on all parts of that world view. This meant that there was a level of detachment involved in what Ignatius suggested, not seeking one way or another, but allowing the self to be open to insight from every experience. In this respect, discernment would be an opening of self to all possible options which might be present. This was a clear reflection on and development of the experiences that Ignatius had faced in his recovery from Pamplona and through his early pilgrimage.

²⁵ Ignatius, *Spiritual Diary*, §12, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p240.

²⁶ Ignatius, *Spiritual Diary*, §139, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p255f.

²⁷ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §1, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p121.

²⁸ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §23, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p130.

Ignatius encouraged reflection on the created order as a means of increasing awareness of God's presence. In the second exercise for meditation on sins, after calling for an acknowledgement of 'the court-record'²⁹ of one's sin and its 'corruption and foulness'³⁰ Ignatius encouraged 'an exclamation of wonder and surging emotion' arising (among other reflections) from consideration of 'the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the elements; the fruits, birds, fishes, and animals.'³¹

Reflecting this attention on the need to use other than intellectual faculties, Ignatius was, in the "Meditation on Hell",³² very specific in his expectation that an exercitant would use the physical senses to enable a fuller entry into the meditation. The exercitant was encouraged to 'see with the eyes of the imagination',³³ to 'hear',³⁴ to 'smell',³⁵ to 'taste',³⁶ and to 'touch'.³⁷ Further, in the second week of the *Exercises*, the fifth contemplation was specifically focused on the five senses – seeing the circumstances of others,³⁸ hearing their comments,³⁹ smelling and tasting the 'sweetness and charm of the Divinity, of the soul, of its virtues, and of everything there',⁴⁰ and touching by embracing and kissing the situations of others.⁴¹

Extending this capacity to make a connection between physical capacities and spiritual insight, Ignatius recorded in the *Spiritual Diary* certain clear visions.

²⁹ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §56, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p139.

³⁰ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §58, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p139.

³¹ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §60, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p139f.

³² Ignatius' description of the Fifth Exercise in the First Week, §65, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p141.

³³ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §66, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p141.

³⁴ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §67, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p141.

³⁵ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §68, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p141.

³⁶ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §69, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p141.

³⁷ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §70, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p141.

³⁸ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §122, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p151.

³⁹ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §123, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p151.

⁴⁰ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §124, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p151.

⁴¹ See Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §125, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p151.

‘I seemed,’ he said, ‘to see him or perceive him in dense brightness or in the colour of a flame of fire burning in an unusual way.’⁴² This experience was repeatedly part of a process by which Ignatius came to understand better the decision he felt he had to make at the time.

All of this highlights Ignatius’ awareness of the importance of human physical as well as intellectual capacities in being alert to the discernment of God’s participation in life.

At the same time, Ignatius did not reject the need for a follower of Jesus also to understand that in discernment ‘[w]e should pay close attention to the whole train of our thoughts.’⁴³ As Coleman suggested, this meant that Ignatius ‘let the experience flow until he was able to gain clarity’.⁴⁴ Discernment, then, was never an instantaneous discovery. It was, rather, a process of experience, observation, reflection and consideration in which time was not a significant issue.

By extension this meant that discernment, being prolonged, had a capacity to be a gentle process. Under “Rules for ... a More Probing Discernment of Spirits” in the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius used the image of a drop of water going into a sponge. The idea was that when discernment is positive, the soul is touched ‘gently, lightly, and sweetly’,⁴⁵ but in the converse, when a person was encumbered by a negative spirit the experience was sharp, noisy and disturbing.

Ignatius also became aware of the experience of spiritual consolation, and its contrary, spiritual desolation, as important aspects of the process of discernment. Consolation ‘occurs when some interior motion is caused within the

⁴² Ignatius, *Spiritual Diary*, §14, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p241.

⁴³ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §333, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p206.

⁴⁴ Coleman: *Walking with Inigo*, p48.

⁴⁵ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §335, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p207.

soul through which it comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord.’⁴⁶ Desolation is ‘darkness of the soul, turmoil within it, ... or disquiet from various agitations and temptations.’⁴⁷ Again, it is clear that this awareness was the result of Ignatius’ own reflection on his experience. He knew that following certain actions and thoughts he was more comfortable than on other occasions, and he came to understand the relationship between these consolations and desolations and his acceptance of and participation in the will of God. He went further, however, than simply being aware of these differences. He became conscious that consolations were “life-giving” and desolations were “life-denying”, that consolations provided energy for service even into the future and desolations drained energy from the present. This led him to encourage exercitants to ‘store up new strength’⁴⁸ from times of consolation and in times of desolation to ‘[draw] strength from our Creator and Lord.’⁴⁹

For Ignatius, therefore, discernment assumed a person’s capacity to reflect on experience, a sensitivity to both personal experience and personal feelings, and patience to accept the passage of time before being certain of the discernment. In his guidance for discernment, Ignatius quite clearly encouraged the use of the intellect and of the physical senses, of reflection on the Word of God and observation of the world around, and of insight from the heritage and culture of his community of faith. He was certain that with discernment came an awareness of activity being confirmed as appropriate. This led to effectiveness in service to God and to people, that showed and grew out of a consistency between a person’s understanding and that person’s activity. In the life of one who sought God’s

⁴⁶ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §316, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p202.

⁴⁷ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §317, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p202.

⁴⁸ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §323, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p203.

⁴⁹ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §324, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p204.

way, discernment was experienced in gentleness and simple development of thought and action.

John Wesley

When we look at the life of John Wesley, we see certain experiences and events that were similar to those of Ignatius, though there are obvious differences in the circumstances in each life. Like Ignatius, Wesley came to an awareness of positive and negative influences and activities in his life, and through his reflection on these he learned to discern God's will for him and for the people with whom he worked.

Like Ignatius, Wesley sought at first to withdraw from the world. And like Ignatius, he came to understand that humility was the key. But, also as in the experience of Ignatius, the process was not as simple as he had hoped. In a letter to his mother in 1732 he said

I am to renounce the world That is the very thing I want to do; to draw off my affections from this world, and fix them on a better. But how? What is the surest and the shortest way? Is it not to be humble? Surely this is a large step in the way. But the question recurs, How am I to do this?⁵⁰

It took time and considerable reflection before Wesley came to the awareness of God's will for him that would sustain him throughout his life.

Wesley's pilgrimage to faith had begun in his childhood years, and he acknowledged that even by the age of 22 years he 'began to see, that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions'.⁵¹ He sought first to find his faith and his calling through a

⁵⁰ February 28, 1732, in Telford, *Letters of John Wesley*, Vol 1, p119.

⁵¹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p99 (= Journal: 24 May, 1738).

reversion to the church of antiquity, and in formal and pietistic activities that provided a structure for personal devotion. But it was not until he had gone to Georgia and met there with members of the Moravian church that he began to be aware of resolutions to his spiritual despair.

He came to understand what Ignatius had discovered. Though it is doubtful if he ever used the terms, he discovered that consolation came through a setting aside of his own personal perspectives in favour of God's viewpoint. And desolation came in many forms, though always from misguided direction away from God, and leading to spiritual darkness and turmoil.

Following his Aldersgate experience in 1738, Wesley's capacity to discern better the way of his own discipleship became the means by which he could see more clearly, and help others to see, the direction of God's work both in his life and in theirs.

In 1747, he wrote about discernment that required an awareness both of community and of personal insight. In examining the classes that he had established, he said,

I had been often told, it was impossible for me to distinguish the precious from the vile, without the miraculous discernment of spirits. But I now saw, more clearly than ever, that this might be done, and without much difficulty, supposing only two things: First, Courage and steadiness in the examiner. Secondly, Common sense and common honesty in the Leader of each class.⁵²

It was his experience that discernment of good from evil did not take place in isolation from the community to which the people belonged. The Leader had a responsibility to each member and to the whole of the community, and was required to show the common sense and honesty without which there could be no

⁵² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 2, p48 (= Journal: 9-11 March 1747).

clear discernment. At the same time, there was another, the “examiner”, whose disconnection from the community provided a level of detachment similar to that suggested by Ignatius that allowed for better awareness of God’s breaking into the person or community.

This was a development of an earlier discovery. In the “Minutes of Late Conversations, June 26, 1744”, in answer to a question about proof of salvation, there is a reminder that discernment of faith is evidenced in at least three parts – ‘unblamable behaviour’, capacity to give ‘a distinct account of the time and manner wherein they were saved from sin, and of the circumstances’, and continuing ‘tempers, and words, and actions [that] were holy and unreprouable’.⁵³ Whether it be in proof of faith, or in discernment of God’s presence, or in awareness of participation in the plan and will of God, it was important for Wesley to have more than simply one person’s word for an experience. There had to be confirmation of change or of awareness in the person’s lifestyle and in the community to which the person belonged.

There is also evidence of Wesley’s awareness of the processes of discernment in some of his collected sermons. Sermon III, “Awake, Thou that Sleepest”,⁵⁴ contained a listing of means by which a person could know the presence of God.⁵⁵ The list was of the physical senses – sight, hearing, taste, and touch – and so was a reminder that discernment could come from an awareness of evidence of God everywhere, rather than from only one avenue.

⁵³ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, Q5, p279.

⁵⁴ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 5, pp25ff. This sermon is headed as having been “preached ... by Rev. Charles Wesley”, but its inclusion in the anthology of sermons is evidence that it contains principles which fully reflected those of John Wesley.

⁵⁵ Wesley, Sermon III, §§I.10 and I.11, in *Works*, Vol 5, p28.

This awareness of God through physical experience of creation was echoed in Sermon CXXV, “On Living Without God”.⁵⁶ Here again was an affirmation of the importance of the physical senses in assisting a person to grow in knowledge of God’s presence:

He is enabled to *taste*, as well as see, how gracious the Lord is. ... He finds Jesus’s love far better than wine; yea, sweeter than honey or the honey-comb. ... He *feels* the love God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him This change, from spiritual death to spiritual life, is properly the new birth; all the particulars whereof are admirably well expressed by Dr. Watts, in one verse:

Renew my eyes, open my ears,
And form my soul afresh;
Give me new passions, joys and fears,
And turn this stone to flesh!⁵⁷

As with Ignatius, there was also an awareness of the gentleness of discernment, the way in which the soul moved into new awareness of God’s gifts. For Wesley, in Sermon LXXII, “Of Evil Angels”,⁵⁸ our place in creation, and our awareness of God’s blessing, ‘does not advance *per saltum*, by leaps, but by smooth and gentle degrees’.⁵⁹ Reflecting on the difference between thoughts that are God-given (which in this sermon Wesley identified as ‘natural’) and those what come from evil sources, Wesley said,

The thoughts which naturally arise in our minds are generally, if not always, occasioned by, or at least connected with, some inward or outward circumstance that went before. But those that are preternaturally suggested have frequently no relation to or connexion (at least, none that we are able to discern) with anything which preceded. On the contrary, they shoot in, as it were, across, and thereby show that they are of a different growth.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 7, p349ff.

⁵⁷ Wesley, Sermon CXXV, §11, in *Works*, Vol 7, p352.

⁵⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 6, pp370ff.

⁵⁹ Wesley, Sermon LXXII, §1, in *Works*, Vol 6, p370.

⁶⁰ Wesley, Sermon LXXII, §II.7, in *Works*, Vol 6, p376.

So a gentle development in one's relationship with God is part of the process of discernment.

This gentleness of discernment, which Ignatius saw and Wesley declared, was seen also in Wesley's own experience. Though the outward signs which Wesley saw in his own discovery of the gift of grace showed evidence of some distress and tumult, the inner process described in his long journal entry for 24 May, 1738 gives evidence of a gentle development of understanding and acceptance that is without confusion or forcefulness. Wesley was able to move comfortably into his new awareness of God's grace in his own life, and eagerly to share that awareness with others.

Because, however, there were times when Wesley's awareness came to him more quickly than at other times, he came to understand the importance of believers being part of a Christian fellowship. This was part of the reason for his insistence on attendance at the Class meetings. In these meetings the believers were able, indeed required, to share with each other their daily experiences, to pray with one another, and to be accountable to one another for their continuance in the faith. In this way they had confirmed to themselves, and they affirmed to one another, the validity of their discoveries in faith about the ways of God in their lives.

Wesley also identified a relationship between discerned awareness of God and ethical activity. In Sermon CV, "On Conscience",⁶¹ Wesley clearly connected the discernment of 'tempers, thoughts, words, and actions' with 'a knowledge of the rule whereby he is to be directed in every particular'.⁶² Extending from this discernment and knowledge Wesley saw that 'every act of

⁶¹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 7, pp186ff.

⁶² Wesley, Sermon CV, §I.11, in *Works*, Vol 7, p189f.

obedience gives to the conscience a sharper and stronger sight ... grounded on the word of God.⁶³ This idea was echoed in Sermon CXXIV, “The Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels”,⁶⁴ where Wesley said that the ‘treasure which Christian believers have’ was ‘some discernment of the difference between moral good and evil, with an approbation of the one, and disapprobation of the other, by an inward monitor, excusing or accusing’.⁶⁵

There are two sermons in which Wesley declared his belief that Christian discernment is always, in reality, a gift of God. In Sermon LXXX, “On Friendship with the World”,⁶⁶ he prayed

And may God open the eyes of our understanding; that, in spite of all the mist wherewith the wisdom of the world would cover us, we may discern what is the good and acceptable will of God!⁶⁷

And in Sermon CXXII, “On Faith”,⁶⁸ he asked how, in the extremity of his life, he would ‘discern the things that are about me, either material or spiritual objects? When my eyes no longer transmit the rays of light, how will the naked spirit see?’⁶⁹ This would be Wesley’s last sermon, preached on 17th January, 1791⁷⁰, and he began by acknowledging that

I am now an immortal spirit, strangely connected with a little portion of earth; but this is only for a while: In a short time I am to quit this torment of clay and remove into another state,
which the living know not,
And the dead cannot, or they may not, tell!⁷¹

⁶³ Wesley, Sermon CV, §I.18, in *Works*, Vol 7, p192.

⁶⁴ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 7, pp344ff.

⁶⁵ Wesley, Sermon CXXIV, §I.1, in *Works*, Vol 7, 345.

⁶⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 6, pp452ff.

⁶⁷ Wesley, Sermon CXXX, §4, in *Works*, Vol 6, p454.

⁶⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 7, pp326ff.

⁶⁹ Wesley, Sermon CXXII, §2, in *Works*, Vol 7, p326.

⁷⁰ John Wesley died on 2nd March, 1791.

⁷¹ Wesley, Sermon CXXII, §2, in *Works*, Vol 7, p326.

It seemed to Wesley that it was not possible to discern the things of the spiritual world⁷² except that God would provide the means. For him, it was ‘the Father of Lights, who hath opened the eyes of our understanding, to discern those things which could not be seen by eyes of flesh and blood’.⁷³

Finally, in respect of the sermons, it is interesting to note that in Sermon XXXVII, “The Nature of Enthusiasm”,⁷⁴ Wesley’s criticism of “enthusiasm” included the suggestion that it was a kind of “false discernment”. He said, ‘the enthusiast is generally talking of religion, of God, or of the things of God; but talking in such a manner that every reasonable Christian may discern the disorder of his mind.’⁷⁵ For Wesley, all religious “enthusiasm” had to do with disorder;⁷⁶ he saw it when people ‘imagine they have the grace which they have not’,⁷⁷ when they ‘imagine they have such gifts from God as they have not’,⁷⁸ and when they ‘think to obtain the end without using the means, by the immediate power of God’.⁷⁹ The grace, the gifts and the means were all, in Wesley’s understanding, only to be found within the true church as defined in the Thirty Nine Articles – ‘in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance’.⁸⁰ Outside the church, and without its support, grace was impure, gifts were unfruitful, and without the ‘means of grace’⁸¹ God’s blessing was ineffectual. In this case, the end would always be heretical, for it would rely on human power rather than only on God’s power. In Wesley’s understanding Christian discernment would always reflect the life of the

⁷² See Wesley, Sermon CXXII, §7, in *Works*, Vol 7, p329.

⁷³ Wesley, Sermon CXXII, §17, in *Works*, Vol 7, p334.

⁷⁴ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 5, pp467ff.

⁷⁵ Wesley, Sermon XXXVII, §12, in *Works*, Vol 5, p470.

⁷⁶ See Wesley, Sermon XXXVII, §11, in *Works*, Vol 5, p469.

⁷⁷ Wesley, Sermon XXXVII, §13, in *Works*, Vol 5, p470.

⁷⁸ Wesley, Sermon XXXVII, §18, in *Works*, Vol 5, p472.

⁷⁹ Wesley, Sermon XXXVII, §27, in *Works*, Vol 5, p475.

⁸⁰ “Articles of Religion, 19”.

⁸¹ Wesley’s term included the sacramental ordinances.

community of faith, would always fit appropriately into God's will and way. It would never lead to individual glory or personal ambition.

It is to be clearly acknowledged that all of Wesley's sermons were based on Scripture. And the importance of Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament* should not be forgotten. Both of these sources contain many instances of Wesley's strong commitment to Scripture as the resource for the discovery of God's gifts and grace.

So, in the Preface to his collection of "Sermons on Several Occasions", he declared

God himself has condescended to teach the way ... He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God. I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*.⁸²

Thus he affirmed the importance of Scripture in his own journey in faith. In Sermon XVI, "The Means of Grace", he highlighted 'searching the Scriptures'⁸³ as one of the channels by which the grace of God comes into the life of the believer. '[T]his is a means whereby God not only gives, but also confirms and increases, true wisdom',⁸⁴ he said. In *Notes on the New Testament*, reflecting on Paul's comment in Romans 8:16 about the role of God's Spirit, Wesley expounded the comment and affirmed a consistency in the relationship between divine and human life in every Christian believer, saying, 'Happy they who enjoy this clear and constant.'⁸⁵

Dotted also throughout his *Journal*, though often unreferenced, are many scriptural expressions and inferences. Many of these are his record of the texts of

⁸² Wesley, Preface to *Sermons on Several Occasions*, in *Works*, Vol 5, p3.

⁸³ Wesley, Sermon XVI, §7, in *Works*, Vol 5, p192.

⁸⁴ Wesley, Sermon XVI, §8, in *Works*, Vol 5, p193.

⁸⁵ Wesley, *Notes on the New Testament*, p548.

the sermons he was preaching, but some are indications of his own awareness of Scripture as a guide or as descriptor for his life circumstances. Thus it is that, taking one instance only, in the *Journal* on 6 April 1745, after he recorded his relief that

Mr Stephenson, of whom I bought the ground on which our House is built, came at length, after delaying it more than two years, and executed the writings. So I am freed from one more care[,]

Wesley concluded the entry with the words, 'May I in every thing make known my request to God',⁸⁶ this being a clear reference to Philippians 4:6.

Insights into Discernment

Gathering the insights of John Wesley's understanding of discernment with those of Ignatius Loyola identifies a number of similarities. Wesley and Ignatius were aware of both positive and negative influences in their lives, and through their reflection on these they learned to rely on God's will to sustain them in all the events of their lives. They learnt that consolation could be found in an abandonment of their own perspectives and a focus on those of God through the model of Jesus Christ. Like Ignatius, Wesley came to understand and to require consistency in behaviour, disclosure and action, so that ethical activity reflected an awareness of the presence of God in all things. Thus, both men insisted on effective and consistent action in both service to God and to people.

Both Ignatius and Wesley accepted the importance of the physical senses in coming to better understandings of God's activity, and expected discernment to be a gentle process of steps to improved insight. They both became conscious of

⁸⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p489 (= *Journal*: 6 April 1745).

God's gifting as the provision by which humans could come to discernment in ways of living for God and for each other, and this always in the context of God's own gracious will to sustain God's people. For both men, Scripture was a vital source of information about God and about God's involvement with the people of faith. In this context, Scripture led them to expectations of God's presence and activity in their own lives, and in the lives of the people with whom they shared their journey.

Likewise, there was for them both a connection between reflection on the Word of God and observation of the world around. Salvation and grace were evidenced in both scriptural insight and natural experience, and each expected, and even presumed, that the people they journeyed with were capable of reflecting on both. This was not a purely intellectual activity; it assumed a sensitivity to both personal experience and personal feelings, to the point of encouraging the use of the physical senses in coming to better understandings of God's activity. But neither denied the use of the intellect for reflection, and both expected that discernment would be a gentle process of steps. They encouraged patience to accept the passage of time and a simple development of thought and action.

For both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley it was the gift of a loving God to allow women and men to discern ways in which they could live for God, following Jesus Christ and serving in Jesus' name all their neighbours.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ See Luke 10:36-37.

The Uniting Church in Australia

Having identified the ways in which Ignatius and Wesley understood discernment in their own circumstances, it is now appropriate to reflect on ways in which the Uniting Church understands this aspect of Christian spirituality.

The *Basis of Union*, as the foundational document of the Uniting Church, contains the expression of the Church's elemental principles. It would, therefore, be expected that there will be found in the *Basis of Union* some important suggestions about the way in which the Uniting Church and its people are to discern the ways of God, for 'worship, witness and service',⁸⁸ for mission and ministry.

Of fundamental importance in the *Basis of Union*, and therefore essential to the life of the Church, is the commitment to 'sole loyalty to Christ the living Head of the Church'⁸⁹ and the acknowledgement 'that Christ alone is supreme in his Church'.⁹⁰ Consistent with Ignatius and Wesley, this affirms Christ as the model for the lives of Uniting Church people. As a consequence of this, the Uniting Church must continue to judge the validity of all discernment by the way in which resultant understanding and action enhances or is constrained by an awareness of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and of Christ's ongoing constitution, rule and renewal.⁹¹ In many places in the *Basis of Union* it is clear that discernment in the Uniting Church should reflect Christ's activity:

- the church is 'an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself';⁹²

⁸⁸ These three terms express the focal activity of the congregation in the Uniting Church. See *Basis of Union*, paragraph 15(a).

⁸⁹ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 1.

⁹⁰ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 15.

⁹¹ See *Basis of Union*, paragraph 4: "in his own strange way Christ constitutes, rules and renews [the people] as his Church."

⁹² *Basis of Union*, paragraph 3.

- ‘Christ reaches out to command people’s attention and awaken faith’;⁹³
- ‘Christ ... awakens, purifies and advances ... people [in] faith and hope’;⁹⁴
- baptism ‘initiates people into Christ’s life and mission in the world’;⁹⁵
- through Holy Communion people ‘are strengthened for their participation in the mission of Christ in the world’;⁹⁶
- ‘all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ’;⁹⁷
- ministries will ‘maintain the apostolic witness to Christ’,⁹⁸ be exercised by ‘those endowed by the Spirit with [fitting] gifts’,⁹⁹ and call women and men to ‘renewed participation ... in commitment to Christ’s mission, and in service of the world for which he died’;¹⁰⁰
- men and women are recognised as ‘bearing the gifts and graces with which God has endowed them’;¹⁰¹
- ‘God always deals personally with people’.¹⁰²

These comments are a gauge by which the Uniting Church and its people must continue to measure the soundness of any discernment of Christian activity or lifestyle.

The *Basis of Union* also requires that the Uniting Church find its spiritual resource in the ‘books of the Old and New Testaments’ which it has received

as unique prophetic and apostolic testimony, in which it hears the Word of God and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated.¹⁰³

Commitment to reflection on the Christian Scriptures, then, is an essential component of the Uniting Church’s understanding of itself. It is also fitting to make an interpretive connection between the activities of the councils of the Church and the ministries of the members – that ‘God’s call to enter more fully

⁹³ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 4.

⁹⁴ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 6.

⁹⁵ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 7.

⁹⁶ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 8.

⁹⁷ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 13.

⁹⁸ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 14(a).

⁹⁹ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 14(b).

¹⁰⁰ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 14.

¹⁰¹ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 15.

¹⁰² *Basis of Union*, paragraph 16.

¹⁰³ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 5.

into mission’¹⁰⁴ is a charge to understand more clearly from the scriptural record the story of Jesus and of the activities of the early church.

As Ignatius and Wesley found significance in the connections they had with their respective Christian heritages, so also the *Basis of Union* focuses the Uniting Church on its heritage. Paragraphs 9 and 10 are unreservedly clear in their declaration of the relationship which the Uniting Church has with its reformed and evangelical heritage in the context of the apostolic faith.

Scripture and Christian heritage, then, are essential components of the Uniting Church’s life, and so must always be brought to bear in any exercise that seeks to discern God’s will and way for the Church as a whole, for any council or community of faith, or for any individual within the Church.

It has been shown that both Ignatius and Wesley came to understand that discernment was a process of steps. It is interesting to note that in the Uniting Church, the *Manual for Meetings* (which sets out the rules governing Uniting Church meeting procedure) clearly indicates that when the Church makes decisions ‘it is aiming to discern the guidance of the Spirit in response to the word of God.’¹⁰⁵ In fulfilling this charge, the Church is reminded that time must be taken in building community¹⁰⁶ so that listening, assertion, conflict-resolution and collaborative problem-solving skills can be developed.¹⁰⁷ Worship, ceremonial, celebration, information, deliberation and decision-making are all important parts of community life, and assist in the processes by which the will of God is discerned.

¹⁰⁴ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 13.

¹⁰⁵ *Manual for Meetings*, §1.1.

¹⁰⁶ See *Manual for Meetings*, §1.4.

¹⁰⁷ See *Manual for Meetings*, §1.6.

It is an important development of this that one of the questions which the *Manual* requires the presiding officer to ask from time to time is, “Is there need for decision now?”¹⁰⁸ The value of this question lies in its implication that there are occasions when it is best for a matter to remain unresolved, to allow more time for consideration and discussion. Discernment comes when people are open to the working of the Spirit of God, whose timetable is not limited by human temporality.

The awareness which Ignatius and Wesley had of the value of the physical senses in discernment can also be seen in the Uniting Church. Paragraph 11 of the *Basis of Union* calls the Uniting Church to continuing conversation with all fields of knowledge and enquiry. The late twentieth century focus of theology on the created world, including affirmation of human sensual experience, is part of this conversation, and is an encouragement to all people to utilise every human capacity in the processes of discernment. This aspect of Christian spirituality is taken seriously by the organisers and participants in activities such as “Spirit Journeys”.¹⁰⁹ Its philosophy, expressed by Sue Kaldor, affirms that ‘we spend much time looking, listening, observing, reflecting, wondering, exploring and fitting in with our environment.’¹¹⁰

The requirement for consistency between knowledge of the Christian way and personal lifestyle that Ignatius and Wesley so firmly expected is also assumed in the Uniting Church. In the “Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice”, the Uniting Church calls its ministers to function always in a way that is ‘characterised by the

¹⁰⁸ See *Manual for Meetings*, §6.10.

¹⁰⁹ A program in the Uniting Church auspiced by the New South Wales Synod Board of Mission.

¹¹⁰ Kaldor, Sue. “Important Aspects Of The Spirit Journey Model”, <http://www.spiritjourneys.com.au/info/Philosophy.pdf>, [viewed 30/06/2009].

love, care and compassion that was embodied in Jesus Christ.’¹¹¹ It is not unrealistic to assume that this expectation on ministers applies to all who would be serious in following the way of discipleship to Jesus Christ. Each member of the church is called, according to his or her own gifts, into participation in Christ’s ministry. So, by extension, it is appropriate to expect not only those in leadership but every disciple to show a level of consistency between declaration and action in all Christian living.

In summary then, it is through discernment of this kind that individuals and communities are able to grow in their understanding of the call of Christ on their lives. This is not, and has never been, an instantaneous matter. The passage of time is a God-given gift by which Christians may develop their awareness of God’s presence, Christ’s ministry, and their own participation in that ministry. At the same time it is never simply a contemporary process. The story of the faith, particularly through Scripture, and the traditions and history of the church are always to be brought to bear on whatever matter is being considered. And whether the discernment relates to the life of a community or an individual it must always be attentive to both personal and communal contexts.

¹¹¹ “Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice” (July 2000), paragraph 1.6.

SECTION III, Chapter 9

The “Evangelistic” Work of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

Defining Evangelism

It is inappropriate to attempt to impose on Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley twenty-first century expectations about the ways in which they understood the work of bringing people into the Christian faith. Both men, in their respective times, were passionate about sharing with others their own experience of God’s salvation, and both worked assiduously to bring others into a relationship with God in Christ Jesus that was founded on, and involved participation in, the historical community of Christian faith. It would, however, be wrong to apply words like “evangelism” and “evangelist” in their most recent connotations to the context of our subjects. For this reason, some explanation of terms is necessary.

“Evangelism,” “evangelist,” and “evangelical” have gathered about them in recent years certain inferences that would not have been understood in former generations. These terms have long etymology, developing from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον, and in the earliest generations of the Christian church meant both the good news of new life in Jesus Christ and the proclamation of that good news. The sixteenth and eighteenth centuries saw a recovery of a focus on the word of God as it is contained in the Bible and on the proclamation of the good news that by grace God in Christ has brought new life to all who in faith would receive the benefits of Jesus’ death and resurrection. These times of reformation and revival made the term “evangelical” a focus of the life of the whole community of followers of Christ. It became the descriptor of Christian thought and activity that

was grounded in Scripture and was shown in renewal of both personal lifestyle and community life.

In the early and middle decades of the twentieth century, however, the term “evangelical” began to be used to describe a particular theological and ecclesial focus that concentrated very heavily on the Bible as the inerrant word of God even to the point of Biblical fundamentalism, and in many circumstances was associated with conservative social and political objectives. During the early years of the twentieth century, first in Wales through the agency of Evan Roberts, and then taking root in Azusa St, Los Angeles under W.J.Seymour, and then spreading across the world, there was a revival of Pentecostal fervour.¹ The Pentecostal movement, and its later corollary the Charismatic movement, provided people with insight into and some understanding of the powerful effects of the presence of the Holy Spirit in individual lives.

The same time saw the escalation of a debate between those who espoused a representation of the gospel into social action and those who asserted that the word of God was the basis upon which the world would be judged with “Christians” being called into the Kingdom and all others judged for their sinful disregard of the precepts of Holy Scripture. In this way a dividing line was drawn between “Liberals” and “Evangelicals” – the first following a predominant European theology of the late nineteenth century, and the latter encouraging Bible study that took literal interpretation at face value. In some ways, this was an extension of the argument that had begun following the publication of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*, where the division was between those who sought to understand the world using the insights of modern knowledge and those who

¹ See Jones (et al) *The Study of Spirituality*, pp549ff, and Wakefield, *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, p296f.

remained committed to a world-view that was based on the stories and understanding of the Bible, often in the most available English translation of the Authorised Version (1611).

The result was a new classification of “evangelical” that generally equated the term with inerrancy of the Bible, strong identification of essential doctrine and rejection of diverse points of view. This last characteristic has led some who espouse this to a desire to avoid connection with any groups that do not follow the truth as they understand it, and even to withdraw completely from the world which is seen as unredeemed and unredeemable. (It should be noted that expressions such as this are extremes of evangelicalism. Leaders of the modern evangelical movement like Billy Graham were usually eager to continue contact ‘with the broad spectrum of the Christian community in evangelistic efforts.’²)

It is important to acknowledge the difference between this use of the terms and the way they were understood in earlier centuries. For neither Ignatius Loyola nor John Wesley did the term mean anything other than the good news of salvation in Christ. Both understood themselves to be evangelists in the sense that Wesley identified in his sermon on “The Ministerial Office”³ where he said quite simply that evangelists are ‘to proclaim glad tidings to all the world’.⁴ Discussion of the “evangelistic” work of Ignatius and Wesley in this thesis will be understood always in this broadest sense. Their ministries were to ensure that the people of their time came to know the work that God had done in Jesus Christ – bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming release for captives, recovery of

² Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, p213.

³ Wesley, Sermon CXV, in *Works*, Vol 7, pp273ff.

⁴ Wesley, Sermon CXV, §7, in *Works*, Vol 7, p275.

sight for the blind, freedom for the oppressed and proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour.⁵

This understanding was encapsulated by Karl Barth, when in the "Commentary" at the beginning of his *Evangelical Theology* he wrote

What the word "evangelical" will objectively designate is that theology which treats of the *God of the Gospel*. ... Such theology intends to apprehend, to understand, and to speak of the God of the Gospel, ... who himself speaks to men and acts among them and upon them.⁶

Apprehending, understanding, and speaking about the God who has spoken into the human situation is precisely what Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley were about in their discovery, and sharing, of the experience of God's love. With this understanding, it is possible to identify the focal point of the evangelistic work which Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley engaged in.

Evangelistic ministry in the lives of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

At the beginning of chapter nine of his book *John Wesley's Experimental Divinity*, Robert Cushman has written that the expression of Christian spirituality known as "Devotio Moderna", which was most effectively expounded in St Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ*,

was to find its ripest expression ... in the distinctive Wesleyan proclamation of the gospel of the 18th century, first in Britain and then in America. ...
... According to both Luther and the Wesleys, ... we do not have *bona fide* Christian evangelicalism until we begin at the point of acknowledged divine judgment upon our common sinful humanity. In this, both Luther and Wesley agree with St Paul: "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom 7:24). The Wesleys had learned by 1738 that without explicit consent to this as a starting point, the New Testament witness to the way of

⁵ See Luke 4:18-19.

⁶ Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, p11.

salvation in Christ is not heard in a way that saves. ...
... Thus for à Kempis, Luther, and the Wesleys, only as the
divine judgment upon sin is owned, rather than evaded, may
saving renovation be followed with thanksgiving: “Thanks be
to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom. 7:25).⁷

The point here relates to the significant way in which Wesley understood personal sinfulness as on the one hand a hindrance to the relationship with God and on the other hand an opportunity to discover the new life that comes through the forgiveness of sin, the discovery that there is one who is able to take away that which would destroy us.

It is significant that Ignatius Loyola (who likewise was influenced by à Kempis) also focused on human sinfulness as the first step in the discovery of the relationship to a new person and God. The first week of the *Spiritual Exercises* is given over to a severe examination of one’s life, to identify ‘how many times I have deserved eternal damnation for my many sins.’⁸ As John O’Malley has observed, ‘[t]he word “conversion” does not appear in the *Exercises*, yet it is a dynamic that underlies the First Week—meaning a turning from a sinful life or, probably more often, a turning to a more devout life.’⁹ For Ignatius, there could be no declaration of salvation to anyone who had not first identified the reality of their own life. Entry by grace into a relationship with God in Christ could not be imagined without an awareness that the current relationship was flawed or even non-existent. Once a person became aware of this, however, there was an immediate opportunity to accept the invitation to ‘enter into the glory of my Father.’¹⁰ The remaining weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises* focused on the contemplation of that invitation, to find the ways, and to make one’s

⁷ Cushman, *John Wesley’s Experimental Divinity*, p132f.

⁸ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §48, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p137.

⁹ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p39.

¹⁰ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §95, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p147.

commitment to the lifestyle, that would give evidence of following Jesus. The good news was proclaimed as an invitation to become aware of and to accept forgiveness of one's sin, and so to enter into new life in Christ.

Echoing this, Charles Wesley, in his sermon "Awake, Thou that Sleepest",¹¹ said, 'God ... bids thee know thyself, thou fallen spirit, thy true state and only concern below.'¹² In the first part of the sermon, he had already described the state of sinfulness; from this point on, his desire was to declare the invitation to allow Christ to give light to the darkened soul.¹³ This invitation was extended further in John Wesley's sermon on the text of Romans 8:1, "The first fruits of the Spirit".¹⁴ Again, asserting both the need to acknowledge one's sinfulness and to accept the offer of salvation, John Wesley said

Wilt thou say, "But I have again committed sin ... And therefore it is, that 'I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'" It is meet thou shouldst abhor thyself; and it is God who hath wrought thee to this self-same thing. But, dost thou now believe? Hath he again enabled thee to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" "and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God?" Then that faith again cancels all that is past and there is no condemnation to thee.¹⁵

Thus the good news was proclaimed. Sinfulness was acknowledged and new life offered, for all who would allow themselves to receive the grace of God and to be in the presence of Christ.

In addition to the expectation that people undertaking the *Spiritual Exercises* would hear and receive the good news of salvation, there were two particular activities in which the evangelistic work of Ignatius Loyola could be seen. The first was that throughout his life after his conversion he was eager to

¹¹ Sermon III, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 5, p25ff (and see Note 54, p254 above).

¹² Wesley, Sermon III, §II-1, in *Works*, Vol 5, p28f.

¹³ The text of this sermon was Ephesians 5:14, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'

¹⁴ Wesley, Sermon VIII, in *Works*, Vol 5, p87ff.

¹⁵ Wesley, Sermon VIII, §II.2, in *Works*, Vol 5, p95.

participate in conversations and to give advice about ways of being in closer communion with God. He recalled that after his conversion as a result of his convalescent reading ‘all his time of conversation with members of the household he spent on things of God; thus he benefited their souls.’¹⁶ This was reiterated in a slightly later comment, that ‘even though he had no knowledge of spiritual matters, yet in his speech he revealed great fervour and eagerness to go forward in God’s service.’¹⁷ He was careful, however, never to speak about God until the right time. In his recollection of his time in Venice, he said that he

had the habit when he ate with anyone never to speak at table except to answer briefly; but he listened to what was said and noted some things which he took as the occasion to speak about God, and when the meal was finished, he did so.¹⁸

In this way, Ignatius took every opportunity that came to encourage other people to consider the ways in which God was part of their lives, and so offered the invitation to find saving grace in Christ.

The other evangelical activity of Ignatius was seen as he travelled after his conversion, and particularly after the aborted pilgrimage to Jerusalem, when he sought on many occasions to offer succour to the sick and destitute. He ‘went as secretly as he could to a beggar and, stripping off all his garments, he gave them to the beggar.’¹⁹ While studying in Alcalá, he (and his three companions) took alms ‘and went off to aid the poor.’²⁰ ‘In Rouen he consoled the sick man’,²¹ in Paris, ‘[c]oming upon a sick person, he comforted him and touched his [plague]

¹⁶ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §11, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p72.

¹⁷ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §21, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p77.

¹⁸ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §42, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p85.

¹⁹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §18, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p75.

²⁰ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §57, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p92.

²¹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §79, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p102.

sore with his hand',²² and in Venice '[t]he nine companions ... separated to serve in various hospices.'²³

In all this, while there seems never to have been any particular comment or imputation to connect, in the recipients' minds or hearts, these actions with a discovery of God's grace and new life, Ignatius' charitable work was always an expression of his personal commitment to model his life on the lives of the saints he had read about during his convalescence. For, he said, 'the desire to imitate the saints came to him, though he gave no thought to details, only promising with God's grace to do as they had done',²⁴ and '[h]is whole intention was to do such great external works because the saints had done so for the glory of God'.²⁵

The evangelistic work of John Wesley also revolved around two similar activities – in his case, preaching and pastoral care.

In respect of preaching, Wesley had first experimented with a style which grew out of his knowledge of the reality of sin and the expectation of divine salvation, but which was lacking in expression of his own experience. In Georgia, he 'endeavoured to convince [the congregation] of unbelief, by simply proposing the conditions of salvation, as they are laid down in Scripture'.²⁶ This proved to be ineffective, for it fulfilled only part of the evangelistic process. While it gave information, it did not offer any invitation, either for the people to consider and own their sin or for them to accept the offer of forgiveness and new life.

²² Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §83, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p103.

²³ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §93, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p108.

²⁴ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §9, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p71.

²⁵ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §14, in Ganss, *Ignatius Loyola*, p74.

²⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p30 (= Journal: 11 April, 1736).

Following his Aldersgate experience, however, Wesley showed his own growing eagerness to enable all people to discover for themselves the same assurance of faith which he had discovered. In his preaching he was prepared to go wherever the people were, and he was ready and able to make connections between the knowledge he had and the knowledge the people needed, without ever compromising the truth of the gospel he was proclaiming. In his Preface to the “Sermons on Several Occasions”, Wesley explained his understanding of what his preaching was about, how it related to the people who heard it, and how it enabled them to come to faith in Christ. ‘I design,’ he said, ‘plain truth for plain people’.²⁷ And further to this, and amending his fault in Georgia, he said, “I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart”²⁸ and he set down in his sermons ‘what I find in the Bible concerning the way to heaven’.²⁹ As Albert Outler has pointed out, what had begun as a ‘passion for truth had been transformed into compassion for persons’.³⁰

Outler has, in this context, listed the following among Wesley’s ‘favourite texts of his oral preaching’:³¹

1. Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God”;
2. Mark 1:15 “... Repent ye and believe the gospel”;
3. 1 Corinthians 1:30 “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption”;
4. Isaiah 55:6 “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near”;
5. Ezekiel 33:11 “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and

²⁷ Wesley, “Preface to Sermons on Several Occasions”, §3, in *Works*, Vol 5, p2.

²⁸ Wesley, “Preface to Sermons on Several Occasions”, §5, in *Works*, Vol 5, p2f.

²⁹ Wesley, “Preface to Sermons on Several Occasions”, §6, in *Works*, Vol 5, p4.

³⁰ Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit*, p20.

³¹ Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit*, p21.

- live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?";
6. Hosea 14:4 "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned from him";
 7. Matthew 16:26 "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange from his soul?";
 8. Acts 16:30 "... What must I do to be saved?"³²

Not many of these are texts of the printed sermons, but these show 'that Wesley's *oral* preaching was dominated by his effort to come close to people with the message of God's seeking, importunate love'.³³

It was Wesley's desire, therefore, that the gospel would be proclaimed and people would be encouraged to enter into faith communities in which their newly discovered knowledge would be nurtured and their new-found faith would grow. In the context here, where sermons preached brought people to faith, and sermons read encouraged people in their faith, it is worth pointing out that for Wesley there was 'an important difference between the principle aims of an oral and a written sermon: the former [being] chiefly for *proclamation* and invitation; the latter [being] chiefly for *nurture* and reflection.'³⁴ Both spoken and written sermons, however, continued to be means by which people would come into and grow in their faith.

This leads to consideration of the second activity by which John Wesley pursued his ministry of evangelism. This was the development of systems of pastoral care which encouraged people to consider the ways in which the call of Jesus Christ spoke into their daily lives, and to accept the invitation to journey along the way with Jesus. This development, within relatively intimate gatherings, of spiritual discernment in matters relating to personal life is an

³² Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit*, p21f.

³³ Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit*, p22.

³⁴ Outler, *Works of John Wesley*, Vol 1, p14.

important element in Wesley's contribution both to the processes of evangelism and to the life of Christian fellowship in the church.³⁵

Wesley's evangelistic activity was significantly related to this style of pastoral care and to his belief in the importance of personal growth in faith as an aspect of the development in holiness. It has been shown in Section III, Chapter 6 (above) that the development of the Societies, Bands and Classes provided an environment in which significant spiritual development could take place. It was in these gatherings that the people brought to faith through the ministry of Wesley and the Methodist preachers found pastoral care and shared support for their growing faith. To quote Outler again,

Thousands of men and women who may never have heard Wesley preach ... were attracted to the Christian life and were actually evangelized (converted, born again, nurtured and matured) by the outreaching and ingathering influence of the local Methodist people.³⁶

This understanding of evangelistic activity – conversion, new birth, nurture and maturity – was clearly more than the proclamation of a set of doctrines. It was the offering of a complete package of information, lifestyle, support and encouragement by which people would be able to grow in their awareness of the ways in which God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit continued to participate in their living.

Thus, in the “General Rules of the United Societies” Wesley reminded the members that the only requirement for people who wished to join one of the Societies was ‘a desire “to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their

³⁵ In respect of fellowship, see above, Section III, Chapter 7: “John Wesley’s Understanding of the importance of Christian Fellowship”.

³⁶ Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit*, p28.

sins:”³⁷ To this, however, Wesley added a rider – this was not to be merely a personal awareness of salvation; it would ‘be shown by its fruits ... they should continue to evidence their desire for salvation.’³⁸ Evangelism for Wesley was therefore ‘the communication of the gospel *and* the maturation of Christians in the community of the church and in the human community at large.’³⁹

Further, for Wesley the commitment to the provision of communities in which people could grow in their awareness of God’s love through the ministrations of their peers was also seen in a commitment to social recovery. Wesley was constrained by his understanding of God’s love to find ways of alleviating the poverty that beset the people he reached out to. The development of schools,⁴⁰ the establishment of a dispensary⁴¹ and houses for the destitute widows,⁴² the provision of loans to those who were struggling,⁴³ along with the preparation of a library to enhance the awareness and understanding of the preachers and of the Societies,⁴⁴ both severally and together were expressions of Wesley’s absolute determination that the love of God for any person would lift that person from dissolute life to upright living, from despair to hope, from self abasement and social ignominy to self confidence and the capacity to contribute to the betterment of society.

So for both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, evangelism was part of a whole ministry. It was the process by which people came in the first place to discover the balm for their woundedness, the healing of their brokenness and the

³⁷ Wesley, “General Rules ...” §4, in *Works*, Vol 8, p270.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit*, p15 (my emphasis).

⁴⁰ See “Plain Account”, §XIV, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p265ff.

⁴¹ See “Plain Account”, §XII, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p263f.

⁴² See “Plain Account”, §XIII, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p264.

⁴³ See “Plain Account”, §XV, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p267.

⁴⁴ See “Minutes of Several Conversations”, Q32(1), in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p315.

forgiveness for their sinfulness. At the same time, it was the means by which people could experience the love of God in practical ways, and then themselves begin to participate in service to others according to their need.

This is an expression of the two components of this study. Through spiritual guidance people are led to identify and enhance the new life that grows within a relationship between themselves and God. In pastoral care Christians ensure that the needs of each person are met with divine graciousness. This double focus of evangelism – the calling into faith and the serving as an expression of faith – can be seen also in the emphases of the Uniting Church in Australia. The Church called both ‘to hear anew the commission of the Risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, and daily to seek to obey his will.’⁴⁵ Its members are to be ‘led to deeper commitment to the faith and service into which they have been baptized.’⁴⁶ Its function is to ensure that ‘God’s loving care [is] known among people, and ...individual members take upon themselves the form of a servant.’⁴⁷ Evangelism that calls people to discover and to share God’s blessings will, therefore, be included later in this thesis as a valid aspect of the spiritual guidance and pastoral care which is offered within and by the Uniting Church.

⁴⁵ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 1.

⁴⁶ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 12.

⁴⁷ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 16.

SECTION III, Chapter 10

Faith Formation in the Work of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

Defining Christian Faith Formation

Faith formation in the Christian context can most simply be identified as the process by which people move through their lives discovering new connections that explain or affirm the relationship that exists between God and themselves. At its very least, it is (in the words of Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner) ‘simply becoming aware that God is everywhere and then learning how to be with him—in the presence of divine love’.¹ It is the process by which people are encouraged to develop an authentic relationship with God that is based on discipleship of Jesus Christ.² This is what Thomas Merton understood when he said that

The individual member of the [primitive Christian] community was “formed” and “guided” by his participation in the life of the community, and such instruction as was needed was given first of all by the bishop and presbyters, and then, through informal admonitions, by one’s parents, spouse, friends and fellow Christians.³

At the other end of the scale, Christian spiritual formation can be seen to extend into the fullness of programs that provide support and guidance in the lives of monastics and religious. These are members of the church, both ordained and lay, whose vocations call them “out of the world” and into particular communities from which some of the lifestyle and relational issues common in the ordinary

¹ Moon & Benner, *Spiritual Direction and Care of Souls*, p13.

² In this definition I acknowledge the insight of Kevin E. Lawson, who used similar terms to describe Christian Education, in “Historical Foundations of Christian Education”, chapter 1 of *Introducing Christian Education*, edited by Michael J. Anthony.

³ Merton, *Spiritual Direction*, p13.

world are absent. In comparing the situation of the earliest monastics with those of people in the general primitive Christian communities, Thomas Merton said

their deliberate withdrawal from the normal life of the visible Church was a very perilous spiritual adventure In this adventure, certain safeguards were absolutely essential, and the most obvious and important of these was the training and guidance of the novice by a “spiritual father”.⁴

The terms ‘guidance’ and ‘training’ are an indication from Merton that in monastic communities programs of spiritual formation are often more formal and focused than identified for the general Christian communities.

Whether it is in the context of the general church community or within the constraints of the monastic community, however, Christian formation was and is the process by which individual followers of Jesus and the communities to which they belong are taught, guided, trained and encouraged into the style of life that reflects the one exemplified by Jesus.

The form in which the teaching, guidance, training and encouragement take place has varied through the generations and across the cultures of the church’s life, according to the needs of the individuals and communities and in response to the circumstances in which they have lived. Mark Gibbard quoted Baron von Hügel as saying, ‘Souls are never dittos’,⁵ thus affirming that the journey to Christian maturity varies almost as much as the personalities and needs of the people who travel that way.

For all that, formation in Christian faith is not essentially individualistic, and should never be perceived as private. While it is always to a large extent personal, it must at all times be an expression of the faith of the whole church. In that, it will be historical (connecting with the generations of faithful experience),

⁴ Merton, *Spiritual Direction*, p14.

⁵ Jones (*et al*), *The Study of Spirituality*, p576.

traditional (expressing, even when developing, the conventions and practices that have been effective representations of the historical experience), and communal (associated with the faith community in which the individual sojourns, and with the wider community in which the person and the faith community live). In whatever context Christian formation is provided it will lead the follower of Jesus into more complete understanding of the Scriptures and more effective application of the discoveries of faith experience into the customs, routines, tensions and pleasures of everyday life. In other words, the result of the teaching and guidance will be to provide answers to the

three paradigmatic questions:

- Who is God?
- Who am I?
- What am I to do with my life?⁶

Asking the Questions

The Christian spiritual formation of Ignatius Loyola began in earnest⁷ during his convalescence from the battle injuries he suffered at Pamplona, when his reading of the “Lives of the Saints” and the “Life of Christ” were foundational to his discovery of the relationship between himself and God. At this stage in his life, and taking into consideration the era and culture in which he lived, it is reasonable to assume that there was no thought of considering the question “Who is God?”. The existence of God, and God’s participation in the church was a given reality for most people in Western Europe. But the questions “Who am I?” and “What am I to do with my life?” were very real indeed for Ignatius. Until the

⁶ Anderson and Reece, *Spiritual Mentoring*, p29.

⁷ We know that, as was usual in the culture of the generation in which he grew up, he was baptised into the Christian faith as an infant, and it can be assumed that in his childhood he was taught basic elements of Christian doctrine and practice. (See Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p13.)

time of his wounding he had expected to continue in courtly life, but the deformity that came with the healing of his wounds forced him into a reconsideration of his lifestyle. The answers he had given till that time to the questions about who he was and what he would do were no longer satisfactory to his circumstances.

As he considered his responses to the books he was reading, he became aware of consolations that arose as he reflected on the signs of God's presence, the experience of the saints and the call of Christ in his life. At the same time, when he considered the possibility of entering into and continuing the life of an *hidalgo*, he was left 'dry and dissatisfied.'⁸ His *Autobiography* contains numerous references to the conversations he had with different people (as well as his own personal reflections) in and through which he clarified for himself the value of different experiences. Some of these people were designated 'confessor',⁹ and others were acquaintances – some were acknowledged as 'companions',¹⁰ while others were simply people he happened to be with.¹¹ From these people, none-the less, he gained insight into the ways of God, and through the conversations he had with them he came to understand better what was the call of Christ on his life.

In the life of John Wesley, Christian spiritual formation began at a very early age. His mother, Susanna, 'believed sincerely that she was training her children to follow the will of God'¹² with the result that '[t]here was much Bible and Prayer Book instruction, which was carried out by each child taking a

⁸ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §8, in Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p71.

⁹ See instances of this in Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §§17, 22, 23, in Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, pp75, 77.

¹⁰ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §41, in Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p85.

¹¹ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §42, in Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p85.

¹² Green, *The Young Mr. Wesley*, p58

younger one aside for a quiet time each day'.¹³ Thus John Wesley grew up in an environment in which basic principles of the Christian faith were absorbed. So, as with Ignatius Loyola, the question for the adult Wesley was not "Who is God?". That could be taken as understood.

What he needed was to find answers for the questions "Who am I?" and "What am I to do with my life?", for as V.H.H. Green has it, prior to his ordination Wesley suffered 'occasional bouts of introspection and self-examination.'¹⁴ So it was in the conversations that took place in Oxford, during the meetings of the Holy Club that Wesley began to discover answers to these questions, though the answers in the first instance were expressed in highly structured lives. In the Holy Club 'the Puritan practices of self-control and self-criticism [were] intensified and formulated into an extraordinarily exacting oversight of the individual's affairs.'¹⁵ Wesley continued to develop his answers, however, in the conversations he had with the Moravian missionaries while on the way to, and in, Georgia. Later on also, in London, it was as a result of his discussions with the Moravians and with other people, that he acknowledged the 'heart-warming' he experiences at Aldersgate St. An example of the development of his answer to the questions of identity was given by Wesley in a letter to John Newton in 1765, where he chronicled his growing awareness from 1727 to 1738, concluding with the comment

And I am still persuaded, this is what the Lord Jesus hath
bought for me with his own blood.¹⁶

¹³ Harrison, *Son to Susanna*, p17.

¹⁴ Green, *The Young Mr Wesley*, p71.

¹⁵ Schmidt, *John Wesley*, Vol 1, p99.

¹⁶ Quoted in Outler, *John Wesley*, p80.

Awareness of Scripture

Christian spiritual formation, however, is not simply a matter of asking questions in conversation with others who are sharing the journey of faith. An essential element of effective formation is the development of an awareness of the Bible both as a source of information about God and as a resource for understanding the relationship that exists between God and all followers of Christ. Reading, understanding and connecting with the Bible was important in the lives of both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley.

In the *Autobiography* there is evidence that Ignatius developed in his understanding of Scripture in two ways. First, the reading he did early in his convalescence, while not directly scriptural, helped him to gain an understanding and appreciation of the life of Christ. Ludolph of Saxony's *Life of Christ*¹⁷ provided an 'immediacy with which the reader may represent the things that Jesus said or did.'¹⁸ In this reading Ignatius was able to observe the life of Christ in such a way as to become confident of following the way and sharing that life in his own time. This following and sharing was certainly the cause of his decision to visit 'the holy places'¹⁹ in and around Jerusalem. While the actual reading of the Bible is not mentioned in the *Autobiography*, it is clear from references in the *Spiritual Exercises* that Ignatius was well acquainted with the stories therein. This is most obvious in the exercises of the Third Week,²⁰ and in the 'appendage'²¹ to the *Exercises* that focuses on "The Mysteries of the Life of

¹⁷ This is one of the books referred to in Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §5, in Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p70 (as shown in the Ganss' "General Introduction", p19).

¹⁸ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, p153.

¹⁹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §§45,46,47, in Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, pp87f.

²⁰ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §§190-217, in Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, pp167ff.

²¹ This is the term used by Ganss in his "General Introduction" Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, pp53.

Christ our Lord”.²² Throughout these sections, Ignatius encouraged and provided opportunity for reflection on different aspects of the Life of Christ. For him, the stories of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection were essential elements of any seeker’s discovery of what discipleship should be. In addition to this, Ignatius included reflection on the Ten Commandments as one method of praying.²³ There can be little doubt that Ignatius’ own formation, and his expectation of the formation of others, was and would be grounded in Scriptural imagery.

John Wesley ‘was indebted for his elementary education to his mother’.²⁴ This education included a deep grounding in the Christian Scriptures. Susanna wrote that, following the rectory fire,

When the house was rebuilt, and the children all brought home, we entered on a strict reform; and then was begun the custom of singing psalms at beginning and leaving school, morning and evening. Then also that of a general retirement at five o’clock was entered upon, when the oldest took the youngest that could speak, and the second the next, to whom they read the psalms for the day, and a chapter in the New Testament – as in the morning they were directed to read the psalms and a chapter in the Old²⁵.

This scriptural foundation in Wesley’s life showed itself in all his experiences. There are references to the Bible throughout his *Journal*, in his *Sermons* and within his various correspondence. He found in the words of Scripture complete and adequate explanations of the way he was understanding God’s work in his life, and he expected others to discover and use this same resource for their own faith journeys. It is not surprising, for example, to find him describing the beginning of his “heart warming” experience on 24 May 1738 by references to

²² Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §§261-312, in Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, pp183ff. Earlier in the *Exercises* Ignatius refers the exercitant forward to these sections, (so, §132 points to §§268 and 269, §134 points to §§271 and 275, §158 points to §273, and so on).

²³ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §§239ff, in Ganss, (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, pp178f.

²⁴ Tyerman, *Life and Times of John Wesley*, Vol I, p17.

²⁵ Quoted in Ayling, *John Wesley*, p21.

three different Scripture passages – 2 Peter 1:4, Mark 12:34 and Psalm 130.²⁶ This capacity to identify appropriate passages of Scripture to describe his own experience and to guide other people in their experiences is testament to the extent to which he knew the Bible, not only as a set of words, but as an expression of his own faith and the faith to which he called others.

Gathered in Community

In the lives of both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, Christian spiritual formation was not an isolated or isolating experience. Rather, it took place within the community of faith. Though each had difficulties with the church authorities of their times, neither thought ever to walk away from the heritage and fellowship that were signified in the gathered community of disciples. And each was careful to draw into that gathered community those whom they met and ministered to. For Ignatius, this meant the gathering of a group of companions who would share the Exercises he was developing, and offer these to other people. The development of the Society of Jesus, with its Charter and Constitution, was the formal outworking of that more pastoral work and formational experience of learning and living together as the body of Christ.

In a similar way, though worked out in different activities, Wesley encouraged the use of the Societies, Bands and Classes as a means by which all people who come to faith could be formed in the faith. As has been pointed out above,²⁷ it was not an infrequent experience that curiosity aroused by listening to Wesley's preaching led, within the fellowship and conversation of the Societies

²⁶ See Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p103 (= Journal: 24 May, 1738, §13).

²⁷ See Section III, Chapter 4: "The Divine Trinity in the Spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley: Community, Service", p198.

and Classes, to a redirection of life into Christian faith and then to development of discipleship. This requirement to share with others was not limited, however, simply to these formal structures. Wesley was adamant also that ‘children could learn of God’s grace and develop the personal discipline to live in that grace’²⁸ in schools and at home. In which case, of course, parents and siblings were to be teachers and guides within that context.

Formative Activities

The extension of this, for both Ignatius and Wesley, meant that the communities they encouraged (and to a large extent created) were the places where the elements of the faithful devotion and service were taught and practiced. Activities like pastoral prayer, personal and corporate worship, study of and conversation in faith, and personal witness and testimony were essentially formative for all who experienced them. The Jesuit Companions, sharing the *Spiritual Exercises*, and the Methodist Classes, gathering to encourage one another, were in their own ways being formed to be pray-ers for, and leaders and witnesses to, the people and wider communities in which they lived.

In that way, Christian spiritual formation became the means by which the pupil became the teacher,²⁹ the member became the leader, the seeker became the guide, and the one prayed for became the one praying for others. While both Ignatius and Wesley were autocratic in much of their leadership, they were at the same time focused on creating a system which produced new leaders who would themselves bring others into a faithful and productive relationship with God in Christ. Jesuits and Methodists, each in their own time and way, were committed

²⁸ Reed and Prevost, *History of Christian Education*, p276.

²⁹ See Reed and Prevost, *History of Christian Education*, p206.

to learning the story of faith (both as heritage and personal experience) so that they could be effective in telling the story to others. According to their own gifts and abilities, they became teachers, evangelists and pastors, in answer to the call to invite others into the fellowship of the Kingdom. And this was, in turn, always in the expectation that those who accepted the invitation would be themselves formed as Christian teachers, evangelists and pastors, to continue the ministry that Christ began.

Uniting Church in Australia

In a kind of parallel to this, and it may be said in part as a consequence of it, the Uniting Church has recognised the importance of “formation” as an element of growth in the Christian life. In its 2005 worship resource, *Uniting in Worship 2*, the Church declared in the Notes to “The Sacrament of Baptism and the Reaffirmation of Baptism called Confirmation” that it has ‘a major mission strategy that puts the formation of adult disciples at the centre of congregational life.’³⁰ This focus was echoed in a report to the Eleventh Assembly of the Uniting Church in 2006, where the Church affirmed the principle that the preparation of adult candidates for Baptism ‘assumes a caring worshipping, witnessing, serving Christian community who takes responsibility for the mentoring, formation and teaching of the candidates.’³¹

In the Uniting Church, it will be appropriate that Christian spiritual formation should take into account the experience and leadership of Ignatius

³⁰ Note 7 for “The Sacrament of Baptism and the Reaffirmation of Baptism called Confirmation”, in *Uniting in Worship 2*, p64.

³¹ “Being Church Differently”, item 5, pB25-4, Report to Eleventh Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, at <http://assembly.uca.org.au/theology/images/papers/0607beingchurch.pdf>, [viewed 15/03/2011].

Loyola and John Wesley. This will provide for the enhancement of biblical knowledge, both at a personal level and within the faith community. It will include encouragement of personal reflection on the details of the faith, with appropriate response in personal awareness and service. It will acknowledge the importance of participation in the fellowship of faithful people who are guided to share personal experience and at the same time given opportunity to lead others into the commitment of faith and the activity of discipleship. Thus people who have been following the way of Christ, and people who are newly come to the journey of discipleship, will be blessed to be a blessing in Christian service to all who might receive.

These points will be included in the later discussion of the place and importance of spiritual guidance and pastoral care within the Uniting Church.

SECTION III, Chapter 11

Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley: Personal Faith and Participation in Liturgy and Mission

Liturgy is the activity of those whose experiences lead them to celebrate in worship the great things that God has done through the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ, for themselves and for the wider world they live in. Mission is a term used to identify those tasks by which the church ‘proclaim[s] the gospel of God’s love for the world expressed in the sacrifice of the Son, Jesus Christ ... [and] the humble service of the poor, care for the needy and support for those who are oppressed.’¹ Listening to God’s call, the church responds in Jesus’ name through liturgy with prayer and praise and through mission with service and advocacy.

In his study of Wesleyan evangelism, Albert Outler wrote,

For Wesley, the essence of faith was personal and inward, but the evidence of faith was public and social. ... My point is that evangelism must issue in visible social effects.²

It is appropriate in the context of this study to extend this comment to include Ignatius Loyola as well as John Wesley and to focus it into the fields of liturgy and mission. The ‘visible social effects’ of the faith of these two men can be seen in their spirituality and its relationship to pastoral care. For neither Ignatius nor Wesley limited Christian spirituality to the development of mere inwardly focused, and therefore privately personal, insights and discoveries. Each man was convinced that being a disciple of Jesus Christ meant participating in the

¹ UCA Assembly Doctrine Working Group, “Ecclesiology”, p6.

² Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit*, p25.

church's worship and reaching into the society to which one belonged and having there an impact for good.

Personal Faith

Of course, it has to be remembered and acknowledged that both of their lives were grounded in an intense personal faith. Each one was deeply aware of the moments when God in Christ had entered into his life; the particular elements of the focusing of faith in the lives of Ignatius and Wesley have been considered in Section II, Chapter 4 above.

The sense of consolation which Ignatius experienced when he read the *Lives of the Saints and the Life of Christ*³ was refined while he was in Manresa. During that time consolation came mostly from his own acts of devotion. He admitted, however, that the consolation derived from these devotions arose from the thought that he was doing as the saints had done rather than from 'any interior thing, no[t] knowing what humility was or charity or patience, or the discretion that regulates and measures these virtues.'⁴ This essentially superficial devotion led to 'a prolonged crisis of scruples'⁵ during which Ignatius struggled with the efficacy of his faith. Each time he confessed his sins he became anxious that he had not confessed completely, was 'unable to trust that God had already forgiven him'⁶ and so would begin again to make his confession. In due course, however, 'disgust for the life he led came over him ... [and] ... the Lord deigned that he awake, as from sleep.'⁷ He came to the realisation that the Lord 'mercifully

³ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §5-8; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p70f.

⁴ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §14; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p74.

⁵ Du Brul, *Ignatius: Sharing the Pilgrim Story*, p43.

⁶ Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*, p47.

⁷ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §25; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p78.

deigned to deliver him'⁸ and he was set free from his attacks of scruples. He was then able to set aside all confession of past sin, and from that time on his personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ became the foundation of his service to others. He set aside 'those extremes he had formerly practiced,'⁹ and he determined 'to place [all] trust, attachment, and expectation in God alone.'¹⁰

This awareness of personal faith can be seen also in the comments Ignatius made to the people with whom he corresponded. When, in his letter to Teresa Rejadell,¹¹ Ignatius reminded her of the 'enemy's general practice' of tempting people through 'obstacles and impediments',¹² he was recounting some of his own experience of temptation and its resolution.¹³ Likewise, in a letter to Isabel Roser¹⁴ Ignatius reflected on her 'long ailment and illness'¹⁵ and suggested that 'through an illness a servant of God ends up with half a doctorate in how to direct and order his or her life to the glory and service of God our Lord.'¹⁶ It is clear in this comment that Ignatius was reflecting on his own experience of God's blessing by which his own mental and physical suffering had been transformed.¹⁷ Ignatius continued to suffer physically throughout his life, but the later illnesses never disturbed his commitment to service for the greater glory of God and were, indeed, to be seen as 'the occasion for spiritual growth.'¹⁸

⁸ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §25; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p79.

⁹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §29; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p80.

¹⁰ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §35; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p82.

¹¹ June 18, 1536, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p332ff.

¹² Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p333.

¹³ See, for example, Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §20; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p76.

¹⁴ November 10, 1532, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p328ff.

¹⁵ Ignatius to Isabel Roser, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p328.

¹⁶ Ignatius to Isabel Roser, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p329.

¹⁷ See, for example, the experiences recorded in Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §§19-25; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p76ff. It is noted that Ignatius continued to suffer physically throughout his life, but the later illnesses never disturbed his commitment to service for the greater glory of God.

¹⁸ Coleman, *Walking with Inigo*, p72.

Wesley's extensive account of his discovery of the salvation which Christ had brought to him¹⁹ was only one occasion on which he spoke about his personal faith. In that account, he shared considerable detail of his life story, identifying his struggle to discover an experience of saving grace that would set him free from the constant effort of trying to attain a lifestyle acceptable to Christ. In his Journal and his Sermons and Letters he referred to the experiences that affirmed and focused the personal relationship with God in Christ he had discovered through his heart-warming experience.

In contrast with the hesitant way in which on the passage to Georgia he encountered the possibility of death²⁰ his deeper personal faith enabled him, in reflection on the question 'What would I do now, if I was sure I had but two days to live?' to say with confidence,

what have I more to do, but to commend myself to my merciful and faithful Creator?²¹

In a similar way, there was a turn around from his attitude during his time in Georgia, where he had felt personal responsibility for the work of establishing Christian community.²² Some time later, when there was concern about the building project for the societies at Nicholas and Baldwin Streets, Wesley's faith allowed him to assert that 'I knew "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof;" and in his name set out, nothing doubting.'²³

¹⁹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p98ff (= Journal: 24 May, 1738).

²⁰ See Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p19 (= Journal: 23 November, 1735).

²¹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 2, p49 (= Journal: 19 March, 1747).

²² See, for example, his comment to 'one who was very desirous to converse with me, but not upon religion', that 'I am sent from God to teach you', in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p33 (= Journal: 12 June, 1736).

²³ Referring to the need to find funds for a building to meet the needs of the Nicholas and Baldwin Street societies, see Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p193 (= Journal: 9 May, 1739).

Wesley's personal experience can also be seen echoing through the messages of his sermons. In "The Means of Grace",²⁴ for example, he encouraged his hearers to consider the ways in which their relationship with God would be enhanced by attention to prayer, Scripture reading and participation in Holy Communion. In arguing that these 'ordinary channels of conveying [God's] grace to the souls of men'²⁵ were not to be seen as having in themselves any power to bring salvation, Wesley reiterated something of his own experience. '[B]ecause God bids,' he said, 'therefore I do; because he directs me to wait in this way, therefore here I wait for his free mercy, whereof cometh my salvation.'²⁶

This "waiting for the mercy from which salvation comes" can be seen also in Wesley's correspondence, an example of which is in a letter to Miss Furlly.²⁷ In that letter, his own experience can be seen as the source of his reminder to her that

God has, in some measure, changed your heart And, having received the first fruits of the Spirit, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, patiently and earnestly wait for the great change, whereby every root of bitterness may be torn up.²⁸

Corporate Worship

Personal awareness of faith and the evidence of the personal relationship with Christ which the faith expressed was, however, only the beginning. In both men there was a deep commitment to the corporate expression of that faith, in

²⁴ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 5, p185ff.

²⁵ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 5, p188.

²⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 5, p200f.

²⁷ June 18, 1757, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 12, p198f.

²⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 12, p198f.

praise and prayer and in sacramental action. Ignatius and Wesley were immersed in the liturgical expressions of Christian faith of their own time and place. In her study, *Wesleyan Eucharistic Spirituality*, Lorna Khoo states that the eucharist ‘sets before Christians ... a physical, tangible reminder of who [they] are, whose they are, what they are called to be and what they are called to do.’²⁹ This understanding, developed as it is within a study of the experience of John and Charles Wesley, is none-the-less valid also as a description of Ignatius Loyola’s perception of this intrinsic element of the church’s life. In the reverse, David Lonsdale says that Ignatius

saw the Mass as a privileged occasion for personal devotion to God and to Jesus and part of the nourishment that each one needs in order to be able to live as a disciple of Jesus and to engage in service for the sake of the kingdom.³⁰

He could as easily have been speaking about John Wesley’s understanding of the Lord’s Supper.

Ignatius acknowledged that he ‘heard High Mass each day and Vespers and Compline, all sung, *finding in this great comfort*’,³¹ and in the contemplation of the ‘Mysteries of the life of Christ our Lord’³² he reminded exercitants that it was Christ who ‘instituted the most holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, as the greatest sign of his love.’³³ Further into the *Spiritual Exercises*, under the section entitled variously ‘Rules for Thinking, Judging, and Feeling With the Church’³⁴ or ‘Guidelines on Thinking with the Church Today’,³⁵ Ignatius applauded ‘frequent

²⁹ Khoo, *Wesleyan Eucharistic Spirituality*, p192.

³⁰ Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*, p184f.

³¹ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §20; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p76 (my emphasis).

³² Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §§261-312; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, pp183ff.

³³ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §289; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p193.

³⁴ See Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, pp211.

³⁵ See Fleming, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*, p231. This heading, and that of Ganss, is in fact what Ganss has called ‘an attempt ... to pack the meaning of Ignatius’ lengthy title into a short one for handy reference.’ (note 152, p429) The full title given by Ignatius is “To have the genuine attitude which we ought to maintain in the Church militant, we should observe the following rules” (Ganss’ translation).

attendance at Mass; also, chants, psalmody, and long prayers inside and outside the church'.³⁶ For him, the Mass and the attendant activities were significant elements in the structure by which disciples grew in their awareness of the relationship that existed by grace between God and themselves, and between themselves and one another. It helped to create a connection between individual Christians, contemporary and antecedent. It existed within the framework that was bounded on one side by readiness to be obedient to the church as 'the true Spouse of Christ our Lord'³⁷ and on the other by 'the great service which is given to God because of pure love.'³⁸ These were the parameters within which, Ignatius believed, discipleship would flourish.

In like manner, Wesley encouraged the people whom he influenced to participate regularly and frequently in the service of Holy Communion. In the "Directions Given to the Band-Societies" in 1744 the expectation was clearly stated that people would 'be at church and at the Lord's Table every week.'³⁹ This was not expressed as an oppressive demand, but rather as an outcome of the 'faith that "overcometh the world."⁴⁰ Wesley understood that through their attendance, particularly at Eucharistic celebration, the early Methodists would become aware of 'the forgiveness of our past sins, the present strengthening and refreshing of our souls.'⁴¹ It is a fair assumption that this joint effect, past and present, would in consequence have a positive impact on their capacity to participate in the present and the future in the ministry of Christ, sharing their faith and meeting the needs of those around them.

³⁶ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §355; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p211.

³⁷ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §353; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p211.

³⁸ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §370; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p213.

³⁹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, III-1, p274.

⁴⁰ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p273.

⁴¹ Wesley, Sermon CI, "The Duty of Constant Communion", I-2, in *Works*, Vol 7, p148.

Both Ignatius and Wesley, then, assumed that the people who came to faith through their ministries would themselves become involved in worship as one expression of the life of Christian discipleship. It was in shared liturgical practice that the benefits of faith could be gained, and the experiences of faith discovered and shared.

Shared Service

Christian spirituality was not, however, to be simply lived out and shared in moments of celebration, in song and prayer and fellowship meal. It was seen also in Mission – in the acts of charity by which the faithful connected with deprived people in the wider community. For both Ignatius and Wesley, this meant reaching out to the people for whom life was a constant struggle. In the separate eras in which Ignatius and Wesley lived, illness was rife amongst all classes,⁴² and poverty exacerbated all the difficulties of the lower classes. In their own lives, Ignatius and Wesley both expressed concern for the ill and the socially outcast by providing medical assistance and education, and each expected the people who came under their influence to express their faith also in service in the name of Christ.

Throughout the time of his pilgrimage, from the time he left Loyola till he arrived in Rome, Ignatius was significantly involved in his many ‘personal ministerial projects ... such as work for catechumens, for fallen or endangered women, the sick, orphans, and other projects.’⁴³ This was achieved at first by

⁴² See above, Section I, Chapter 5 “Social and Ecclesial Contexts for Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley and the Uniting Church in Australia”.

⁴³ Ganss, “General Introduction”, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p44.

simply giving alms to beggars whom he encountered on the way.⁴⁴ Later on, there was more method in his charity, as when in Alcalá, asking for alms, he received not money but

bed coverings of different colors and some candle-sticks and such like things. Wrapping them all in a sheet, the pilgrim put them on his shoulders and went off to aid the poor.⁴⁵

This personal discipline of charity was, like most of Ignatius' personal experience, translated into the content of the *Spiritual Exercises*. So it was that, within the guidance offered in the *Spiritual Exercises* for making choices about one's personal life, Ignatius included a requirement for people to 'examine their resources, how much they ought to assign ... for the poor and other good works.'⁴⁶ A similar expectation was mentioned in the section on 'the ministry of distributing alms',⁴⁷ in which he used the phrase 'the acts of my distribution'⁴⁸ (alternatively paraphrased as 'my attempts to share the goods which I call my own'⁴⁹). These two comments show one of the basic principles underlying the *Spiritual Exercises*: that people growing in spiritual relationship to Christ should express that relationship in concern for others, and particularly those, poor and distressed, for whom Christ himself had been concerned. The principle is further affirmed by the interesting phrase, 'a faith which is informed by charity.'⁵⁰ It might have been expected that this phrase would be the other way around – "a charity which is formed by faith". But Ignatius was clearly of the opinion that acts of charity were part of the development of faith. This is why Fleming's contemporary reading of this part of the *Exercises* is so useful:

⁴⁴ See, for example, Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §50; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p89.

⁴⁵ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §57; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p92.

⁴⁶ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §189; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p165f.

⁴⁷ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §337; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p207.

⁴⁸ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §340; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p208.

⁴⁹ Fleming, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*, §340, p223.

⁵⁰ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* §368; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p213.

there is always the danger of so stressing the importance of faith in God and his grace for our salvation that we ignore the necessity of living out lives of active love for our neighbour and for our world.⁵¹

On Wesley's part, the story is similar. His own charitable activity was seen early in the commitment of the Holy Club to 'do what service we could to ... the prisoners, and two or three poor families in the town.'⁵² In this they were fulfilling their own requirement – to 'give to them who appear to want it most, a little money, or clothes, or physic [medical assistance]'.⁵³ In his journal Wesley records that

[i]n 1730 I began visiting the prisons; assisting the poor and sick in town; and doing what other good I could, by my presence, or my little fortune, to the bodies and souls of all men.⁵⁴

This continued through his life as he provided the poor with health care,⁵⁵ schooling,⁵⁶ and welfare.⁵⁷ This was a fundamental part of his understanding of faith in Jesus Christ, so much so that, in objecting to the focus of Philip Molther,⁵⁸ Wesley could say that he believed in the necessity for a person *seeking* faith to 'do all the temporal good he can'.⁵⁹

Again, like Ignatius, Wesley expected something of his own experience and activity to be replicated in the lives of the people around him. In many of his sermons, he expressed his mind on the importance of service to others in the name of Christ. In "The More Excellent Way", he urged an effective connection between prayer and service: 'a Christian is called ... to add piety to justice; to

⁵¹ Fleming, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*, §368, p237.

⁵² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p9.

⁵³ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p11.

⁵⁴ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p99 (= Journal: 24 May, 1738).

⁵⁵ See Wesley, *Works*, Vol 2, p39 (= Journal: 4 December, 1746).

⁵⁶ See Wesley, "A Plain Account" §XIV in *Works*, Vol 8, p266.

⁵⁷ See Wesley, "A Plain Account" §XIII in *Works*, Vol 8, p265.

⁵⁸ An ordained Moravian minister involved with the Fetter Lane society; see Tyerman, *Life and Times*, Vol 1, p297.

⁵⁹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p258.

intermix prayer, especially the prayer of the heart, with all the labour of his hands.’⁶⁰ Likewise, in “The Good Steward”, the responsibilities of those who ‘are blessed by my Father’⁶¹ are enumerated as in the parable:

Wast thou accordingly a general benefactor to mankind? feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sick, assisting the stranger, relieving the afflicted, according to their various necessities? Wast thou eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame? a father to the fatherless, and an husband to the widow?⁶²

In the “General Rules of the United Societies” also, Wesley made it quite clear that, in addition to ‘avoiding evil of every kind’,⁶³ evidence of the faith of members of the classes would include

as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible, to all men;—to their bodies ... by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick, or in prison⁶⁴.

Conclusions

For both Ignatius and Wesley Christian spirituality was more than simply a relationship with God in Christ on a personal level. Personal faith as they experienced it themselves, and as it was seen in the lives of the people they influenced, was fundamentally linked with actions that could be seen by other people. These actions, shared in worship by fellow Christians, and seen in daily living in the world by all people, were and continue to be evidence of faith in the incarnate Lord. So it is that in the Uniting Church’s affirmation of that faith, personal relationship with God in Christ will always be encouraged to express

⁶⁰ Wesley, Sermon LXXXIX, §III,2, in *Works*, Vol 7, p31.

⁶¹ Matthew 25:34 (NRSV).

⁶² Wesley, Sermon LI, §III,5, in *Works*, Vol 6, p146f.

⁶³ “General Rules” §4, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p270.

⁶⁴ “General Rules” §5, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 8, p270f.

itself in worship and in service, fulfilling the ministry of Christ. Both liturgy and mission will be elements of the Church's activity in spiritual guidance and pastoral care.

SECTION IV

Conclusions about Spirituality, Pastoral Care and the Uniting Church

SECTION IV, Chapter 1

How shall they speak, not having words?

In an interview with Rachel Kohn, on the ABC radio program *The Spirit of Things*,¹ Thomas More (a psychotherapist who was formerly a monk) said that ‘as a psychotherapist, having practiced [*sic*] for about 25 years, the great majority of people who came to me for therapy brought love into our conversations, that’s why they came, trying to sort out the love’.² His argument was that in the present era a contributing factor to many social problems is the fact that people do not generally live in effective community. They live solitary lives, and so when they enter into relationships they lack the tools for dealing with the dynamics of relationship.

One of the foundational assumptions behind this thesis is that the culture of Christian faith, founded as it is on an understanding of the Triune God and on the resurrection and ascension of Christ, shows how relationships work.³ Within the Christian faith, people experience both how to give and how to receive in intimate relationship. Behind that assumption, however, is a conjecture that all people are able to understand the principles of relationship, and particularly the characteristics of God that are foundational to the human capacity to participate in relationships.

In the first chapter of his book *Tokens of Trust*, Rowan Williams suggests that one way to begin to understand the Christian faith is by allowing the lives of

¹ Broadcast on Sunday 27/3/2005.

² “Dark Night of the Soul”, *The Spirit of Things* transcript: <<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/spiritofthings/stories/2005/1329149.htm>> [viewed 28/7/2009].

³ See above, Section III, Chapter 4: “The Divine Trinity in the Spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley: Community and Service”.

faithful women and men to model a relationship with God that might be emulated.⁴ At the beginning of the second chapter, however, Williams provides what is in effect a reality check. He “hears” someone objecting:

It’s all very well to appeal to the significance of lives lived in such a way as to point us to God ...; but you still haven’t tackled the basic question of why we should take the language of God seriously in the first place. It may well be that, once you’ve taken it on board in some way as a possibility, lives like the ones we have just been thinking about bring it alive. But what if you can’t find a way into the language at all?⁵

Consideration above⁶ of John Wesley’s Sermon LXXXIV has shown that he also was aware of the problems that arise when people do not have language skills to communicate to and with others about their experiences.

Charles Barber has said that ‘language enables us to influence one another’s behaviour, and to influence it in great detail, and thereby makes human cooperation possible.’⁷ And Hans-Jürgen Sasse has given the reminder that ‘The extinction of a language is ... a distressing matter, since the cultural tradition connected to it and the socio-cultural or even ethnic independence of the group that speaks it very often perish together with it.’⁸ These points together make more poignant the question posed by Rowan Williams.

Language is not only the means by which people communicate with each other, but it is one of the key elements through which communities are drawn together. Where language is lost (be it by genocide, by intrusion of another language, or simply by lack of use) the reduced capacity for people to connect with their heritage and to express the foundational elements of their life results in

⁴ See detail of this in Williams, *Tokens of Trust*, particularly pp20-28.

⁵ Williams, *Tokens of Trust*, p31.

⁶ Section III, Chapter 5: “Christian Spirituality in John Wesley’s Sermons”, especially p217.

⁷ Barber, *The English Language*, p27.

⁸ Sasse, “Theory of language death”, in Brenzinger, *Language Death*, p7.

the loss of their culture. Anyone who does not have the language to participate in the conversation of the community is seriously obstructed from being part of the community. Further, at a personal level, language is a necessary factor in anyone's capacity to understand. If there are no words for a concept, there can be no concept; if there is a concept but people do not understand the meaning of the words used in expressing that concept, the concept will be invalid for them. A person who wants to belong to a community or culture but does not know the meaning of the words and phrases that describe and define the common elements of that culture is seriously hampered from participation in that community. This reaches an extremity of isolation when a person is so bereft of language as to be in the situation of not knowing what they do not know.⁹ People in this situation truly 'can't find a way into the language at all.'¹⁰

This being so, one of the issues facing the Uniting Church in Australia in the twenty-first century¹¹ is the change in Australian culture that has meant that people have lost (many members of the so-called Generation X, Generation Y and their successors have never had) a vocabulary that enables them to speak about and understand their spiritual experiences from a Christian point of view.¹²

In European culture at the time of Ignatius Loyola, Latin was the language of the church, as it was of educated society. It was the medium in which the written and spoken description of the principles of the church's life was made. The church's theology was the result of scholars' attempts to communicate the

⁹ A paraphrase of a comment attributed to Donald Rumsfeld (US Secretary of Defence, 2001-2006): 'there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know', <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/d/donaldrums148142.html>, viewed 7/03/2011.

¹⁰ Williams, *Tokens of Trust*, p31.

¹¹ And, indeed, the church in many parts of the world.

¹² It is noted that one of the issues relating to spiritual communication in twenty-first century Australia (as in other parts of the western world) is the confusion of terminology that has been brought about by the increase in knowledge and practice of non-Christian (and non-monotheistic) religion.

relationship between God and the people of God, God's saving grace in and through Jesus Christ, the ways in which people could respond to that grace, and the participation of individuals in the communion of the Holy Spirit. The church's worship was the daily and weekly expression of praise and prayer, scripture reading and reflection, devotional and Eucharistic activity. Both theology and worship had been entirely Latinate. For the greater part of the laity who had little formal education, however, Latin was effectively a foreign language, and as a consequence active participation in worship and effective involvement in reflection on the doctrines of the church were limited.

One result of this disenfranchisement was the development of many personal devotional guides, with corresponding exercises and activities. While devotion to Christ and to Mary has a long history, from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries development of these forms, particularly into the devotion to the name of Jesus, to the Blessed Sacrament, to the Sacred Heart, and to the Blessed Virgin, provided opportunity for many lay people to learn and to relate to the great acts of salvation.¹³ From these medieval centuries onwards, the usefulness of the devotional guides and the "Books of Hours"¹⁴ which directed the various forms of devotion was enhanced by frequent translation into vernacular idiom. At the same time, the visual arts of sculpture, painting and stained glass provided 'what the Dominican Vincent of Beauvais (†1264) called, in his *Speculum maius*, really "an historical mirror" of the Old and New Testaments'.¹⁵

¹³ For full discussion of this, see Leclercq et al, *History of Christian Spirituality*, Vol 2, Part 2, chapters II, V and IX.

¹⁴ For an indication of the contents of these books, see Leclercq et al, *History of Christian Spirituality*, Vol 2, p493.

¹⁵ Leclercq et al, *History of Christian Spirituality*, Vol 2, p347.

Consistent with this, Ignatius Loyola experienced his own growth in faith not primarily through the reading of theological books and the understanding of concepts but through reflection on his experiences of God's participation in his life. As he read the Life of Christ and the Lives of the Saints, his response was to consider the ways in which those stories changed his own mood and feelings.¹⁶ This and similar experiences became the foundation of his *Spiritual Exercises*, with its clear instructional encouragement to reflect on the various events of Christ's life in the expectation of discovering God's presence and involvement in the exercitant's life. Any difficulties caused by lack of "language" among the seekers whom Ignatius and his followers guided were overcome by an expectation that each would use the various human senses to connect into the spiritual culture of the Christian faith.

For John Wesley in Great Britain during the eighteenth century, when it came to the problems of language, there were two issues. First was the simple reality of the different languages of different communities. On the one hand, the culture in which Wesley lived and worked was founded in the English language, and so he did not have the problem that Latin provided in Ignatius' time. In general terms, Wesley could expect the people in England to understand the words he used in his preaching. When he preached in Wales, on the other hand, he was frustrated by 'the confusion of tongues',¹⁷ and he asserted his longing 'that we could declare to them, in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God!'¹⁸ The value of preachers, and of class and band leaders, who were "local" to the communities they served cannot be overestimated here. They were able to speak

¹⁶ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §8, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p71.

¹⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 2, p87 (= Journal: 6 March, 1748).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

the message of the gospel in language that was understood. (On this point, it is noted that in the Journal reference above, Wesley's own preaching was preceded by that of 'Mr Williams, a Clergyman from South Wales'.¹⁹)

The second issue in respect of language was Wesley's awareness that not everyone would or could express their understanding of God, or their awareness of God's presence and activity in their lives. On the one side of this issue was what Wesley called 'a total ignorance of God'.²⁰ He claimed that

High and low, cobblers, tinkers, hackney-coachmen, men and maid servants, soldiers, sailors, tradesmen of all ranks, Lawyers, Physicians, Gentlemen, Lords, are as ignorant of the Creator of the world as Mahometans or Pagans²¹

and bemoaned the fact that

The English in general, high and low, rich and poor, do not speak of God. They do not say anything about Him, from day to day, from week to week, from year to year. They talk of anything beside. ... We talk indifferently on everything that comes in the way; on everything—but God.²²

When there was no knowledge of God it is not surprising that there is no desire to speak about God.

But Wesley himself chose to continue to speak of God and of God's relationship with people. In Volume 11 of the Jackson Edition of the *Works of John Wesley*, the address just quoted is followed by a number of articles whose titles begin "A Word to ...". The intended recipients of most of these comments were people who would have considered themselves outside the pale of God's love and care, but for each Wesley chose to affirm God's graciousness in words

¹⁹ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 2, p87 (= Journal: 3, 4 March, 1748).

²⁰ Wesley, "An Estimate of the Manners of the Present Time" §11, in *Works*, Vol 11, p159.

²¹ Wesley, "An Estimate of the Manners of the Present Time" §12, in *Works*, Vol 11, p159.

²² Wesley, "An Estimate of the Manners of the Present Time" §16, in *Works*, Vol 11, p160f.

appropriate to each need – to ‘a swearer’, the promise that ‘God loveth thee’;²³ to ‘an unhappy woman’ (a prostitute), the certainty of ‘a friend ... [who] loved sinners of old; and he does so still’;²⁴ to ‘a condemned malefactor’, the encouragement to ‘Cast your whole soul upon [Christ’s] love’;²⁵ to ‘a soldier’, the assurance that ‘Heaven was designed for you also.’²⁶

Alongside those who would not speak of God, there were those who could not. Towards the end of his sermon “On the Trinity” Wesley declared his understanding that everyone who claimed to be a believer in Christ should be aware of the detail of God’s three-fold nature.²⁷ He understood that everyone who had the witness of the Holy Spirit would as a consequence ‘honour[] the Son, and the blessed Spirit, “even as he honours the Father.”’²⁸ That said, he had to go on to say, ‘Not that every Christian believer *advert*s to this; perhaps, at first, not one in twenty’.²⁹ In this context, language failed because the terminology was not comprehended satisfactorily. Wesley’s next sentence identified the reality: ‘But if you ask any of them a few questions, you will easily find it [the concept of Trinity] is implied in what he believes.’³⁰

So here is evidence that Wesley looked for ways by which the difficulties of language could be overcome. He was not so committed to set terminology as to exclude any who failed to understand it. He was rather more interested in providing alternative language that could be understood, and using that to connect

²³ Wesley, “A Word to a Swearer”, in *Works*, Vol 11, p168.

²⁴ Wesley, “A Word to an Unhappy Woman” §8, in *Works*, Vol 11, p173.

²⁵ Wesley, “A Word to a Condemned Malefactor” §6, in *Works*, Vol 11, p182.

²⁶ Wesley, “Advice to a Soldier” §10, in *Works*, Vol 11, p202.

²⁷ See Wesley, Sermon LV “On the Trinity”, §§14-16, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 6, p204f.

²⁸ Wesley, Sermon LV “On the Trinity”, §17, in *Works*, Vol 6, p205.

²⁹ Wesley, Sermon LV “On the Trinity”, §18, in *Works*, Vol 6, p205. In the eighteenth century, the verb “to advert” meant “to attend to, to regard, to observe”, see Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. <<http://www.archive.org/stream/dictionaryofengl01johnuoft#page/n109/mode/2up>>, [viewed 22/02/2011].

³⁰ Wesley, Sermon LV “On the Trinity”, §18, in *Works*, Vol 6, p205.

with people, so that their conversation could be developed and their language enhanced.

As with every institution and culture, the church in twenty-first century Australia is constrained by its own language. The “jargon” of the church (when the term is used in its best sense, as “language peculiar to a particular profession or group”) connects its fundamental principles, and so its life, with centuries of knowledge, insight and understanding. The *Basis of Union* of the Uniting Church in Australia commits the present day church to continued review of that language, that terminology, by which the historical faith has been promulgated, with the expected outcome that the church will ‘be ready when occasion demands to confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds.’³¹

So the examples of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley are valuable models for the Church to emulate. In its desire to connect with people who are unaware of the language, the Church will do well if it continues to share the experience of God’s presence by encouraging people to evaluate their sensory awareness as one tool for connecting with God’s activity in their lives. What for Ignatius was focused through his reading of the life of Christ and the lives of the saints can for people in the twenty-first century be brought together also through sight and sound, movie, song, multi-media experience and computer image. What for Wesley was shared in written pamphlet and letter can in this generation also be offered through social network and blog-site. Where both strove for imaginative openness in the description of experiences of divine grace, the present-day Church will continue to be open to fresh expressions of God’s demonstrable love.

³¹ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 11.

With all this, however, it will remain part of the Church's charter to enable people to continue to grow in their capacity to share with others their own experience of God's participation in their lives. Neither Ignatius nor Wesley, in their own lives and in their dealings with others, shied away from the responsibility of learning more of the story of God's involvement with human community. They never underestimated the importance of reading and knowing Scripture, and of encouraging people to perceive their own place in the story told there. Nor did either man eschew the value of scholarship and the broader knowledge it provided in enabling people to discern better the ways of God in the world.

In the twenty-first century, it will remain an essential part of the Church's life to provide a culture in which people can read and understand the biblical narrative, learn the fundamental expressions by which God's activity is described, and be nurtured in their ability to invite others to experience for themselves the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

SECTION IV, Chapter 2

Pastoral Insights from Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley

It has already been acknowledged¹ that John Wesley recorded in his *Journal* in 1742 how, while he was riding from Evesham to Bristol, he was reading the “Life of Ignatius Loyola”. After his ambiguous observation about Ignatius (‘one of the greatest men that ever was engaged in the support of so bad a cause!’²) Wesley’s next comment was an affirmation of Ignatius’ focus. Wesley said, Ignatius ‘knew the people with whom he had to do’.³ In this comment Wesley showed his own pastoral focus, asserting the importance of Ignatius’ emphasis on a detailed knowledge of his companions and his and their knowledge of the people whom they led through the *Spiritual Exercises* and into more effective faith.

This awareness of the people ‘with whom [one] ha[s] to do’ is surely the basis on which all pastoral care must rest. Unless the leaders, and to a lesser extent the people, of a community of faith have an understanding of the lives, needs and circumstances of the people who are part of that community, all efforts to enhance the faith of each person will be severely limited. In a community where, as has been suggested earlier in this thesis, pastoral care involves ‘discern[ing] and encourag[ing] attitudes and activities that lead to the fulfilment of [Christian] life’,⁴ it behoves every person to be alert to the situations and conditions of the other members of that community.

¹ See Section II, Chapter 1: “Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley: Souls in Communion — Reflections on Lives Lived Two Centuries Apart”, p95.

² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p393f (= *Journal*: 16 August, 1742).

³ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p394 (= *Journal*: 16 August, 1742).

⁴ Section I, Chapter 2: “Pastoral Care: A Christian Responsibility”, p30.

This chapter will draw together detail about the ways in which Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley gave attention to the pastoral responsibilities they had toward their companions and correspondents, and encouraged those responsibilities in others. Both men were committed to ensuring that the relationship between individual people and Jesus Christ was the foundation of a relationship between those people and one another, in which the experience of each one was enhanced as it was shared with others.

It is important to note that in their own lives each man was aware of times when he had received the care of others. Ignatius recorded that there were times during the years of his journeying when he was unable to find “spiritual persons” to talk to. He said, for instance, that ‘neither in Barcelona nor in Manresa ... did he find persons who could help him as much as he wished.’⁵ On the other hand, there were many occasions when he knew that people were providing him with the care that enabled him to understand better what was God’s will for him. This came in two kinds. In addition to Ignatius’ frequent work of begging, there was physical support offered by various people he encountered. He recalled how in a time of very severe illness he ‘was cared for with great attention; and many prominent ladies ... came to watch over him by night.’⁶ When he was suffering during the January of 1524, he was provided with money and ‘a piece of cloth, which he folded many times and put over his stomach because of the great cold.’⁷ He received care also in the form of advice and comfort. This came in one form from those who were his confessors (though it must be acknowledged that Ignatius did not always heed the advice). His confessors encouraged him to make

⁵ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §37, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p83. (This is also noted above on pages 118 and 198.)

⁶ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §34, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p82.

⁷ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §50, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p89.

his confession, expecting that by absolution his sins would be set aside; but because he had ‘much trouble from scruples’⁸ he did not experience the comfort that was offered. Later, however, when he did follow the confessor’s guidance, he was able to experience the consolation of a new relationship with God in Christ.⁹ He was also aided on his way by the awareness of people like the woman who prayed for him that ‘my Lord Jesus Christ deign to appear to you some day.’¹⁰ And there were people like Isabel Roser¹¹ from whom Ignatius received both help and some guidance.¹²

Wesley also experienced times when expressions of care from other people were important to his spiritual development. While Wesley does not appear to have suffered greatly (in the way Ignatius did) from need of food, clothing or shelter, the *Journal* shows that there were times when he looked for and received advice relating to his understanding of his relationship with God and its effects on his life. There is, of course, the advice given by his mother throughout her life. Her own prayer, to ‘instil into [John’s] mind the disciplines of thy true religion and virtue’,¹³ was a foundation of the care that went beyond a mother’s physical succour into the discernment of those things that would bring him closer to God. Further to this, there can be little doubt that the meetings of the Holy Club were occasions when the conversation between the members went beyond ‘read[ing] over the classics, [or] ... some book in divinity.’¹⁴ They shared with each other insights into the way of following Jesus, as they encouraged one

⁸ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §22, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p77.

⁹ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §25, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p78.

¹⁰ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §21 and §37, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p77 and 83.

¹¹ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §54, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p91.

¹² See Ignatius’ letter to Isabel Roser of November 10, 1532, in which he said ‘I would rather be guided by your judgement than by my own’, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p329.

¹³ Quoted above in Section II, Chapter 3 “Development of Spirituality in the Life of John Wesley, p130, from Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p57.

¹⁴ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p6.

another to visit people who were sick or in prison. During the voyage to Georgia, in his time there and upon his return to England, he had a number of conversations with members of the Moravian Church in which they provided some guidance for him, concerning the ways in which he could experience the presence of God in his life. Spangenberg, for instance, encouraged him to consider how ‘the Spirit of God bear[s] witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God’,¹⁵ and Bohler said to him ‘do not hide in the earth the talent God hath given you.’¹⁶ Like Ignatius, Wesley was not always able to heed the advice given him, at least not until he had experienced that heart-warming in Aldersgate St. It was then that he came to understand that the love of God was a gift which he did not need to earn. Indeed, he acknowledged that

The Moravian brethren ... endeavoured to show me “a more excellent way.” But I understood it not at first. I was too learned and too wise.¹⁷

After the experience on 24 May 1738, evidence of Wesley’s receipt of pastoral care from others can be seen in comments like, ‘I had a long conversation with Mr Ingham’,¹⁸ followed by a list of points of theological agreement and disagreement. These hints indicate that there were conversations that provided reflection on his faith and its connection with the activities in which he was engaged. These conversations were occasions when Wesley’s own understanding was developed and his ministry focus was refined.

The modern images of pastoral care identified in Section 1 Chapter 3 above can be related to the lives and work of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley. It

¹⁵ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p23 (= Journal: 7 February, 1736).

¹⁶ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p91 (= Journal: 23 April, 1738).

¹⁷ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p100 (= Journal: 24 May, 1738, §8).

¹⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p321 (= Journal: 1 August, 1741).

is clear that Ignatius and Wesley both stood in a line of “wounded healers”¹⁹ whose own experiences guided their relationships with the people they sought to help. In a number of ways, they also showed themselves to be people ‘who, in his or her own life, [could stand] beside the needful person in his or her struggle’.²⁰

The letters which Ignatius and Wesley wrote have been used as a source for gaining an understanding of their spirituality.²¹ These letters also contain comments that express pastoral concern for the recipients. Sometimes the correspondence was of a personal nature, as (for example) in Ignatius’ letter to his sister-in-law, Magdalena de Loyola y Araoz.²² In that letter, he expressed his condolences to her on the death of her husband, his brother, comforting her with the knowledge that he had ‘said Mass for his soul at an altar where every time Mass is celebrated a soul is delivered from purgatory.’²³ In its context, this reminder would truly have been comfort for ‘a woman who fears God our Lord.’²⁴

Much of Wesley’s correspondence was also with people whom he knew intimately, and he also made comments appropriate to the situation of each. One example of this, among many, is in two letters he wrote to Jane Hilton,²⁵ in which he gave advice about her decision to marry. The pastoral connection in these cases usually involved some explanation of the association between the situation being faced and the person’s relationship with God whose care gave courage and strength, comfort and direction to all who struggled with the issues of life. So

¹⁹ See above, Section I, Chapter 2: “Pastoral Care: A Christian Responsibility”, p34f.

²⁰ Section I, Chapter 2: “Pastoral Care: A Christian Responsibility”, p36.

²¹ See above, Section III, Chapter 3: “On Christian Spirituality: from Selected Letters of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley”.

²² Dated from Rome on September 24, 1539.

²³ Ignatius, *Selected Letters*, §2, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p339.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Dated from Bristol on September 30 and October 8, 1768, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 12, p372.

Ignatius offered Magdalena de Loyola y Araoz advice about seeing her deceased husband in God's eternal care, and Wesley encouraged Jane Hilton to continue 'as much as ever [in] the spirit of prayer ... always sensible of the presence of God.'²⁶

There were other letters, of course, which were less intimate, and in many cases were written to be read by numbers of people. It was in this way that Ignatius wrote a letter to Fr Pierre Favre²⁷ which was in fact to be sent to all members of the Society. The letter included a reminder that they should take care when writing their own letters to the Society. (The expectation was that each letter would contain information that could be shared with all, while 'matters that were irrelevant to their business'²⁸ should be appended on separate sheets.) The need for this instruction arose from a pastoral concern for each member of the Society, when 'friends are aware that we have letters from this one and that one, and they feel offended if we refuse to let them see these letters'.²⁹ The overall concern Ignatius had was that links be made and maintained between all the members of the Society, for 'the greater service of His Divine Goodness and the greater advantage of our neighbour.'³⁰

On Wesley's side, in the letters he wrote in answer to the disputatious arguments against the Methodists³¹ he was generally careful to keep lines of communication open so as to continue the discussion. On most occasions, he closed his letters with affirming comments, inviting continued correspondence. He remained open to correction, and would assert his appreciation of the other in

²⁶ Wesley, "Letter" CCCLXXVII, in *Works*, Vol 12, p372.

²⁷ Dated from Rome on December 5, 1542.

²⁸ Letter to Pierre Favre, <<http://woodstock.georgetown.edu/ignatius/letter4.htm>>, [viewed 5/05/2011].

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ So might one describe the letters to bishops and clergy which are collected in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 9.

words like, ‘I cannot but very highly esteem you in love.’³² He knew the importance of the pastoral relationship, whether people were supportive of, or antagonistic to, him and his work. Maintenance of the pastoral connection he had with his correspondents (as with all other people he encountered) was an expression of what he saw as his most important work:

I must lay out whatsoever talents [God] entrusts me with ... in advancing the true Christian knowledge of God, and the love and fear of God among men; in reforming (if so be it please him to use me still) those who are yet without God in the world; and in propagating inward and pure religion, “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”³³

Section II, Chapter 4 of this thesis has shown that the initial conversions of Ignatius and Wesley were experiences by which they moved from negative to positive attitudes to life. Their thought and spiritual perception was reoriented toward new life commitments, with related changes in their values and their awareness of being in partnership with God. They recognised that God had called them, and they responded to the divine initiative.³⁴ There is a direct flow on from the changes in their lives, into their relationship with the people around them. When Ignatius shared the *Exercises* with others, it was in the expectation that they would experience the same transformation in their lives as he had.³⁵ This was clearly enunciated when he described the way in which the *Exercises* had been prepared, for he said ‘that when he noticed some things in his soul and found them useful, he thought they might also be useful to others’.³⁶ Similarly, Wesley

³² Letter to the Rev Dr Horne in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 9, p117.

³³ Letter to Bishop Lavington, November 27, 1750, in Wesley, *Works*, Vol 9, p21.

³⁴ See above, Section II, Chapter 4, “Reflections on the Conversions of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, p147.

³⁵ See Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §§77 and 82, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, pp100 and 103.

³⁶ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §99, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p110.

wrote to his brother Samuel,³⁷ describing his own new life, and urging his brother to

leave disputing concerning the things which you know not ... and beg of God to fill up what is yet wanting in you! Why should not you also seek till you receive “that peace of God which passeth all understanding?”³⁸

For both Ignatius and Wesley the pastoral desire was that others would themselves hear the same call that they heard, and find the same love they had found.

Further to this, the intent of pastoral care, to bring people into the ‘justice and compassion of God’,³⁹ was fulfilled within the communities established in the ministries of Ignatius and Wesley. Earlier in this thesis it was acknowledged that George Whitefield was deeply critical of the lack of pastoral follow-up from his own preaching.⁴⁰ At the same time, he strongly affirmed Wesley’s structure through which those who were converted under Wesley’s teaching were encouraged to find a place in a community that supported the new Christian’s journey. Wesley himself realised the importance of these “classes”.⁴¹ He was well aware that while there might be an actual moment of conversion, the path of Christian discipleship was long. In a letter to his brother, Charles, he said,

I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by faith, by a simple act of faith, consequently in an instant. But I believe in a gradual work both preceding and following that instant.⁴²

³⁷ Letter dated from London, October 20, 1738 (five months after Wesley’s “Aldersgate experience”).

³⁸ Wesley, *Works*, Vol 12, p34.

³⁹ Section I, Chapter 2: “Pastoral Care: A Christian Responsibility”, p33.

⁴⁰ See above, in Section III, Chapter 2: “The Contributions of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley to the development of an understanding of Christian Spirituality” p175.

⁴¹ See Section III, Chapter 6: “‘Society’, ‘Class’ and ‘Band’ as a Means of Spiritual Development among Early Methodists”.

⁴² Letter to Charles, January 27, 1767, §2, in Telford, *Letters of John Wesley*, Vol 5, p39.

But he understood that this ‘gradual work’ could not be fulfilled without a nurturing environment. The communities that were formed in the “societies”, “bands” and “classes” might, therefore, be described as the garden beds in which the seeds of faith, sown by preaching and conversation, were encouraged to grow. They were intended to be safe places where new faith could be nurtured.

Ignatius also saw the importance of ensuring that the people⁴³ who found new experiences through participation in the *Spiritual Exercises* had a sense of belonging to one another for support and encouragement. So he wrote in the beginning of the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* that

The end of this Society is to devote itself with God’s grace not only to the salvation and perfection of the members’ own souls, but also with that same grace to labor [*sic*] strenuously in giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of the souls of their neighbours [*sic*].⁴⁴

In this case, the connection between the members did not rely on being in close proximity, but was rather encouraged and enhanced by the correspondence with Ignatius encouraged within the Society. By the epistolary sharing of information mentioned above⁴⁵ the members of the Society were kept aware that they belonged to a community in which they were cared for and supported in all their activity.

Extending this awareness of the importance of community, it is recorded that the early Methodists were led not only by the educated Church of England clergy, but also by apparently uneducated men and women. These people whom Wesley described as ‘young, poor, ignorant ..., without experience, learning or

⁴³ It is acknowledged that for Ignatius this was a specifically male community. When, for a time, a female branch of the Society of Jesus was established, frictions and disagreements led to its dissolution (see Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p476, n4), and see also Reed and Prevost, *History of Christian Education*, p218: ‘He sought to remove the Jesuits from any chance of a bad reputation that could come from association with females.’

⁴⁴ Ignatius, *Constitutions*, §3, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p283f.

⁴⁵ In this chapter p318.

art',⁴⁶ were nevertheless 'simple of heart, devoted to God, full of faith and zeal',⁴⁷ and were themselves responsible for the maintenance of the new and re-newed expressions of faith, and therefore the new and re-newed lifestyle, of those who were being brought into discipleship within the Methodist societies. The simultaneous development of the Bands and the Class Meetings provided an environment in which those who were discovering faith in Jesus Christ would be cared for both spiritually and physically. Thus they were encouraged in the development of their understanding of God's presence in their lives, and in consequence trained to take leadership roles within the Methodist movement.

This can be affirmed in the case of Ignatius also. The *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* state clearly that 'when [the members of the Society] themselves have made progress they can better help others to progress for glory to God our Lord.'⁴⁸ There was clearly an expectation behind the development of the Society of Jesus that those who received the *Spiritual Exercises* would themselves become the ones who guided others through the process and enabled them to grow in their relationship with Christ. It is, in fact, inconceivable that Ignatius was the only one who had the capacity or the authority to administer the *Exercises*. If this had been the case, there would have been little extension of the Society into the many parts of the world to which the members travelled.

In this way, then, pastoral care moved beyond the development of the faith of specific individuals. As the communities grew, people were encouraged to take leadership roles and this led to a corresponding enhancement of both care and faith development within the community. The ones cared for became the

⁴⁶ In *Arminian Magazine* 1784, quoted in Tyerman, *Life and times of John Wesley*, Vol III, p455.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Ignatius, *Constitutions*, §516, in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p303.

ones who cared, and with an increase in the number of people who received pastoral care came an increase in the impact of that care in the wider community. This leaves the strong awareness that pastoral care was, for Ignatius and Wesley, not merely about comforting people in the places where they are, but also about providing them with insights which would enable them to take up and use the gifts God had given.

This understanding, and the information gathered earlier, is the foundation of the final chapter of this dissertation. In it the insights and understandings of spiritual guidance and pastoral care in the lives of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley will be applied to the circumstances of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Section IV, Chapter 3

Spiritual Guidance and Pastoral Care in 21st century Uniting Church Congregations

The purpose of this last chapter is to draw together the principles of spiritual guidance and pastoral care that have been seen in Ignatius' and Wesley's ministries. It is now appropriate to identify ways in which these might be effective means of encouraging growth in faith and discipleship within the Uniting Church in Australia in the twenty-first century.

As has been indicated above,¹ the *Basis of Union* of the Uniting Church sets out the role of the congregation quite clearly:

The Congregation is the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ. Its members meet regularly to hear God's Word, to celebrate the sacraments, to build one another up in love, to share in the wider responsibilities of the Church, and to serve the world.²

Two particular points are made in this statement. The first is that the church is most truly itself, as a community of the followers of Jesus, in its local situation. It is in the place where people live, work, learn and play that the functions of the "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church" are best fulfilled. The activities that comprise the church's worship, witness and service include celebration of the sacraments, proclamation of the Word in many forms, and participation in Christ's ministry to all people.³ These activities of the Church connect most fully with people in the ordinary situations of their lives, and that

¹ Section I, Chapter 1: "An Attempt to find a Definition of "Spirituality", p26, and Section I, Chapter 3: "Church and the Development and Encouragement of Spirituality", p49.

² *Basis of Union*, paragraph 15a.

³ For discussion of this, see above, Section I, Chapter 3: "Church and the Development and Encouragement of Spirituality".

happens best when the activities are based and carried out in the local community. As important functions of the church, spiritual guidance and pastoral care are always to be provided and shared locally.

The second point from the Uniting Church description of the role of the congregation is that there is an undeniable connection between the members of the church. The church is never an haphazard collection of individual people. Rather it is always a community of people who all share one elemental source of being, namely fellowship with Jesus Christ. This means that when the Word of God is spoken and the sacraments are celebrated, people hear, see and taste together, supporting one another's consideration of its meaning for their lives. In other words, experience of the presence of Christ through Word and sacrament does not depend on any one individual's full comprehension, but is always such that each one's awareness of God's love and call is supported by the insight and experience of others in the community.

As an extension of this, the description is a reminder that no-one participates in the work of worship, witness and service in isolation from all others whose 'ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ.'⁴ The community of followers of Jesus is always a body of many parts, all functioning in their own ways but always under the Head and for the benefit of the whole.⁵ Spiritual guidance and pastoral care, therefore, are activities in which every follower of Christ is to be encouraged to participate.

It is, then, in the context of this understanding of the Christian community that the principles of spiritual guidance and pastoral care as seen in the lives of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley are to be discussed. It is important to be aware

⁴ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 13.

⁵ See 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and Ephesians 4:15-16.

at this point that the details of how spiritual guidance and pastoral care are actually shared can never be definitively described. This is because the circumstances of each person offering and receiving these ministries are always unique. Ignatius himself acknowledged this when he reminded those who would direct others in the *Spiritual Exercises* that '[t]he Spiritual Exercises should be adapted to the disposition of the persons who desire to make them'.⁶ Earlier parts of this thesis have, however, provided information about these essential elements in the development of the discipleship of each man and of the people whom they influenced.

A number of themes have recurred throughout the various chapters. Discussion about the spiritual growth of Ignatius and Wesley⁷ has shown that knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, the significance of community (the fellowship of believers) and partnership (with God and with others living in the way of Christ), and the connection between the ideas and the actions of faith were important in the development of their understanding of the activity of God in their lives. These themes are as important for the Uniting Church in the twenty-first century as they were in the times of Ignatius and Wesley.

Scripture

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments provide wisdom about and witness to the ways in which God connected with people in ancient times. The Scriptures also provide the framework within which people could assess their own

⁶ Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, §18, in Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, p126.

⁷ See above, particularly in Section II, chapters 2 and 3, "The Development of Spirituality in the Early Life of Ignatius Loyola" and "The Development of Spirituality in the Early Life of John Wesley" respectively.

experiences. In their own contexts⁸ both Ignatius and Wesley allowed the Scriptures to influence profoundly the way they lived, and each expected others to follow their example. This is because Christian spirituality is based on much more than an individual's experience of the presence and call of Christ. There is an historic component to Christian spirituality that connects with generations of faithful experience⁹ which is sourced in the first instance from the events recorded in the Bible. Further still, it is knowledge of Scripture that provides the foundation of Christian belief (that God can act) and confidence (that God will act). The experiences Ignatius and Wesley had in their own lives provided evidence that the biblical insights and stories about God's participation in human life were a solid foundation on which to build a life of Christian ministry. They had a confidence in the validity of those insights, and relied on them for guidance in their ministries. This in turn led them to encourage other people to find in the Scriptures whatever guidance, understanding and comfort they needed in their own circumstances.

So this is one of the basic principles of spiritual guidance and pastoral care for the Uniting Church – that every person in the church be immersed in the narrative of the Bible. There, in the stories of the ancient peoples, are to be found paradigmatic experiences which are useful in beginning to identify and understand the ways in which God has related to, and continues to connect with, all people. Uniting Church congregations are communities in which this immersion is to be encouraged and enjoyed.

⁸ Ignatius lived at a time when the printing press was in its earliest form, limiting the availability of the Bible; both he and Wesley lived in times when illiteracy was common.

⁹ See above, "General Introduction" and Section III, Chapter 10, "Faith Formation in the work of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley".

The eras in which Ignatius and Wesley lived meant that there could be no assumption on their part that the people they were dealing with would be Bible-literate. Indeed each in his own way provided people with the Bible knowledge they needed for the reflection that would help them understand their place in God's care and participation in Christ's ministry – Ignatius by giving detail of the gospel stories in different parts of the *Spiritual Exercises*, and Wesley by constant reference to Scripture in his sermons and correspondence. They did not presuppose knowledge, but provided the information that allowed people to grow in their awareness of the stories of faith.

In a similar way, people in the Uniting Church must continue to give instruction to one another, and to those who are seeking, in ways that will enable all people to connect with the scriptural heritage. Setting aside the assumption that people “know their Bible”, the Church will use contemporary technology and media to help people connect their own stories with those in the biblical record. The Church will expect those people who are called to provide spiritual guidance to be themselves deeply grounded in scriptural faith, and will encourage those providing pastoral care likewise to be ready to encourage reflection on daily experience in the context of Biblical story.

Community

To the scriptural record is added the experience of contemporary companions in the faith. For both Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, “community” was particularly important. In each of their lives, the awareness that they belonged to a group of people with whom they shared both thought and action was especially important. It became a fundamental part of their

understanding of the way in which people grow in Christian faith, that everyone should belong to a community in which each follower of Jesus could be supported, guided and encouraged.

This is one of the main contributions that each man made to the church's understanding of Christian spirituality. Support, guidance and encouragement came as people spoke with one another about their experiences, listening for the ways in which the experiences connected with (or were disparate from) the general framework of Christian discipleship. For Jesuits and for Methodists there was no one person who had overall responsibility for oversight, as was the case with the monastic abbot and the Anglican bishop. Every person had a degree of responsibility for others with whom they had contact. Those who received help through the *Spiritual Exercises*, offered to lead others through those same *Exercises*; those whose faith developed in the class meetings encouraged others into those meetings so that their faith also would grow.

It has already been noted that the *Basis of Union* of the Uniting Church asserts that Christ is the only head of the church, and that every follower of Christ is called and equipped for his or her own ministry within Christ's ministry.¹⁰ So it is right that spiritual guidance and pastoral care are components of ministry performed by all people within every congregation of the Uniting Church. This means, of course, that the Uniting Church must continue to encourage connection between people in small groups. In the smallest of congregations, it is possible that the necessary care for (and corresponding care from) one another can be encouraged within the congregation as a whole. Where congregations are

¹⁰ See *Basis of Union*, paragraphs 1, 3 and 13.

larger,¹¹ it will be important for spiritual guidance and pastoral care to be offered within sub-groups of the whole, whether in formally constituted “groups” or in less formally arranged “gatherings”. In whatever form this is done, the Uniting Church will, within its structure, promote ways in which its people can meet regularly to support, encourage and care for each other in faith and in ministry.

Partnership

Further to this, within and as an extension of the scope of “community”, came a sense of “partnership” which Ignatius and Wesley espoused. At its fundamental level, in the process of their conversions they had become aware that they were not on their own, not isolated. They discovered that they did not have to rely on their own strength and skill, either for their own salvation or for the work to which they felt called. Primarily, they were in partnership with God in Christ, from whom indeed they had received their calling. It was therefore the presence of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit that gave focus to their ministry.

Undergirding this was a strong sense of their own acceptance by God. For each of them, the gift of God’s grace through Jesus Christ enabled them to perceive themselves as blessed and valued confidants of God. Wesley expressed this in words of great personal moment: ‘an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*’,¹² and Ignatius in words of deep comfort: ‘Our Lord appeared to him often, giving him great consolation and determination’.¹³ It

¹¹ It has to be remembered that in the early Methodist movement, classes were limited in size to twelve persons, and bands were generally smaller. The *Spiritual Exercises* were, of course, designed to be offered on a one-to-one basis.

¹² Wesley, *Works*, Vol 1, p103 (= Journal: 24 May, 1738).

¹³ Ignatius, *Autobiography*, §44; in Ganss (ed), *Ignatius of Loyola*, p86.

meant that they were both able to develop their ministries without having to question their place in God's plan. Spiritual guidance and pastoral care will, therefore, be means by which people in the Uniting Church are affirmed and confirmed in their relationship with the triune God.

The partnership extended, however, beyond their personal relationship with God into their relationship to and commitment with the people who surrounded them. They were the leaders of their movements, but both understood that the blessing of God went into other lives also, and through those lives it impacted many more people than they alone could have contacted. For Ignatius and Wesley, Christian spirituality was the foundation upon which the ministry of every follower of Jesus was based. It was from this foundation that pastoral care extended into the relationships individual people had with others whose needs they understood and for whose development in faith they took some responsibility.

In no sense has this need abated in the intervening years. In the Uniting Church the context for spiritual guidance and pastoral care remains the community of disciples which seeks to be obedient and faithful to the call of Christ. And within that community there remains a strong sense of shared responsibility. All people are members of the body, each with her or his own function, and all with a role in strengthening others for participation in Christ's ministry. Spiritual guidance and pastoral care in this generation must continue to invite people to discover and belong to communities where fellowship with Jesus creates fellowship with Jesus' followers. These communities must uplift every person in ways that enhance their awareness of God's call to partnership in the ministry of Christ.

At the same time as people are encouraged to hear the call of Christ in their own lives and inspired to take up that ministry which corresponds with their own gifts, however, the Church will identify ways in which people can be motivated to participate more fully in God's mission in the world. The focus for Ignatius and Wesley was never entirely on those who were committed followers of Jesus. They were each committed to the needs of all people, and they encouraged their companions to find ways in which they could serve those in need. In a similar way, spiritual guidance and pastoral care in the Uniting Church will provide a grounding from which people can share in partnership with God, transforming the whole world, responding to all the situations in life where prejudice and lack of resources create poverty, injustice and oppression, until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.¹⁴

Connection

Section III of this thesis has provided information about the ways in which the lives and ministries of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley illustrate the principles of Christian spirituality.

One particular insight which the study of Ignatius and Wesley has shown is that spiritual guidance and pastoral care relate to daily living.¹⁵ This is based in the awareness both Ignatius and Wesley had about the reality of the incarnation,¹⁶ that God had seen fit to be 'born in human likeness'.¹⁷ In the *Spiritual Exercises*,

¹⁴ See Amos 5:24.

¹⁵ See above, Section III, Chapter 2: "The Contributions of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley to the development of an understanding of Christian Spirituality".

¹⁶ See above, Section III, Chapter 4: "The Divine Trinity in the Spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley: Community, Service".

¹⁷ Philippians 2:7 (NRSV).

Ignatius encouraged the use of human senses,¹⁸ and in the Class meetings, Wesley expected members to consider the ways in which God had been present in the week's living.¹⁹

It becomes evident from this that it is not possible for spiritual guidance and pastoral care to be disconnected from ordinary life. It is in the context of daily events, within the experiences of work and leisure, and among the joys and sorrows of human relationships, that the need for and the impact of guidance and care will be felt. For this reason, it is important that Uniting Church congregations be known as places where people can discover the power of God's grace to transform their daily lives.

It is very evident that Ignatius and Wesley each saw in his own time a need in society that was not being answered by the church of his time. Both men exemplify a capacity to break out of a style of church that was becoming disconnected from the circumstances of the people of its time. And both were unconcerned about the criticism that they evoked, trusting rather the guidance they received, from Scripture and from reflection on experience, to show a new way. For Ignatius, this meant encouraging people from ordinary walks of life to consider their relationship with God through the use of the *Spiritual Exercises*. It meant breaking with the contemporary culture of monastic communities by allowing, in the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus, freedom from canonical hours of prayer. In John Wesley's case, it allowed him to act on the two insights, that preaching was not limited to the parish pulpit but could be exercised wherever people could gather, and that people should share with one another their

¹⁸ See above, Section III, Chapter 8: "On Christian Discernment: Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley and the Uniting Church in Australia".

¹⁹ See above, Section III, Chapter 6: "'Society', 'Class' and 'Band' as a means of spiritual development among early Methodists".

experiences of God's working in their lives. In these and other ways, each responded to what he saw as a requirement to make the Christian faith available to everyone, in ways that all could understand and relate to.

In this, they understood that it was possible to build flexibility into the expressions of Christian spirituality. While each man had his own experience of conversion and growth in faith, neither expected others to mimic that experience. Rather, both of them encouraged people to be open to whatever form of relationship God might establish, and to allow God to control that relationship. This meant that Ignatius and Wesley gave support to differences in style of prayer, in compassionate activities and in conversation.

It has been shown²⁰ that the writers of the *Basis of Union* identified the importance of requiring the church to extend its activity beyond what had been the norm in earlier times. The twenty-first century is a time when terms like "fresh expressions", "new ways of being church", "church plant" and "emerging church"²¹ are being used increasingly to describe a way forward for the church in the western world. It is appropriate, therefore, that the paradigm which Ignatius and Wesley lived might be a model for the spiritual development that must accompany this reorientation of the church's life. Echoing their ways, the present-day church must encourage events and activities that focus on being where people are rather than expecting people to come in to where the planning takes place. Their openness to missional and liturgical expression according to their generations' needs should continue to be evident in the spiritual guidance and pastoral care shown within the Uniting Church in this generation.

²⁰ See for example, Section I, Chapter 3: "Church and the Development and Encouragement of Spirituality".

²¹ These terms are taken from <<http://churchplanting.org.uk/church-planting-fresh-expressions-emerging-church-what-do-we-call-it-now>>, viewed 24/05/2011.

There is, of course, a danger here, of losing the connection with the scriptural and historical expressions of faith and discipleship. The setting aside of traditional Christian words and symbols, along with the commitment to encourage relationships with people who have little or no grounding in Christian concepts, can lead to a divergence from the basic tenets of the faith, and from appropriate expressions of discipleship. Ignatius and Wesley overcame these dangers by their expectation that all who came to faith should reflect regularly on Scripture, spend time in personal and communal prayer, meet and communicate with others who shared the faith journey, participate in ministry to those whom Christ would serve, and so grow in their knowledge and understanding of the way of Christ.

The way in which Ignatius and Wesley encouraged people to accept the uniqueness of their own relationship with God resulted in both men advocating for people to take leadership roles in their organisations. They sought ways to enable people to utilise whatever gifts they had in the service of the church. Consequently, in cultures where the role of women in the church was severely limited, both provided opportunities for women to take leadership; in cultures where structural limitations precluded men of various stations in life from taking leadership, both endorsed the activity of those whose actions showed that they were fulfilling Christ's ministry in the world.

The connection between this and Uniting Church polity has been identified at a number of places in this study. The assurance that all people are called to participate in the ministry of Christ is basic to the Uniting Church's understanding both of the nature of the triune God and of the way of discipleship. This heritage of Ignatius Loyola (though un-named) and of John Wesley is present in the Uniting Church's foundational principles, though sadly it is not

always seen in the daily practices of the Uniting Church. In some congregations limitations are placed on expressions of ministry and mission. This is seen when some gifts are valued more highly than others, potentially diminishing the capacity of people to use their gifts for the service of the church and the world in the name of Christ. The task for the Uniting Church in the twenty-first century is to find ways of ensuring that all participants in the church's life are aware of the gifts God has given, and are able to offer ministry in the name of Christ according to their calling.

In providing new opportunities to discover and express a relationship with God in Christ, Ignatius and Wesley did not set aside any of the basic principles of the Christian understanding of salvation. They maintained a deep appreciation of the presence of sin and evil in the world, by which people are separated from God and from each other, and they encouraged consideration of the impact of these on daily life and relationships. At the same time, they also recognised the significance of God's grace in Jesus Christ, and they urged their contemporaries to discover the blessings of that grace, allowing them to experience forgiveness and to look for the signs of God's activity in daily life. In their own conversions, there had been a reorientation of their perspective, so that practically and spiritually they looked for and saw positive evidence of the way of Christ in their lives and their world. This new focus they urged on all who lived around them.

Once again, this focus is fundamental to the Uniting Church. The Uniting Church's emphasis on the place of Christ as 'Lord' and 'Head'²² and so 'Saviour'²³ has already been shown in this thesis.²⁴ Consistent with the model given by Ignatius and Wesley, this component of the *Basis of Union* must remain

²² *Basis of Union*, paragraph 3.

²³ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 8.

²⁴ See above, Section I, Chapter 3: "Church and the Development and Encouragement of Spirituality", and Section III, Chapter 8: "On Christian Discernment: Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley and the Uniting Church in Australia".

central to the Church's continued exercise of spiritual guidance and pastoral care of the people in its congregations. The Church in consequence will take seriously the breakdown of relationship between people and God, between people and each other, and within individual lives, acknowledging the way in which these give evidence of, and are contributive to, dysfunctional society and broken lives. In so doing, it will also be increasingly eager to declare the salvation that comes through Christ, who in his own sacrifice restored the relationship with God, and who by his continuing presence in the lives of his followers calls all people to care for everyone in need.

The *Basis of Union* of the Uniting Church in Australia says:

The Uniting Church sees in pastoral care exercised personally on behalf of the Church an expression of the fact that God always deals personally with people, would have God's loving care known among people, and would have individual members take upon themselves the form of a servant.²⁵

This declaration summarises for the Uniting Church the essential elements of pastoral care. It is an activity of individual members of the Church and as such is not to be understood as a merely mechanical function that connects people to each other or to the structure of the church. As an extension of God's own activity, pastoral care brings into human circumstances all the components of God's love – constancy, inclusivity, judgement and mercy, justice and compassion, intimacy and personal connection. For this reason, there is an unbreakable link between pastoral care and spiritual guidance. Both are constituent parts of the relationship between people and God. Without deep

²⁵ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 16.

spiritual awareness, people involved in pastoral care offer each other support without effective foundation.

The purpose of pastoral care must always be to bring people more fully into the realm of the God whose 'divine Persons empty themselves into each other and receive each other's fullness'.²⁶ There, in community that is based on a relationship with God and established by God, Christians reflect in their daily living the elements of that divine emptying and filling, by commitment to one another, in support of one another, with encouragement towards one another. It is for this reason that the Uniting Church identifies servanthood as the fulfilment of Christian discipleship.

The establishment and maintenance of a community in which pastoral care reflects God's own action, therefore, requires a framework of spiritual awareness. It is not conceivable that any community could reflect the ways of God unless its members are personally and deeply aware of the nature of God. But awareness of God only comes with continual renewal of insight into God's being and activity. This means that people in the Uniting Church will continue to offer and exercise pastoral care to the extent that they continue to offer and exercise spiritual guidance with one another and with those who seek to enter into the fellowship of Christ followers within the Uniting Church's aegis. Greater levels of spiritual guidance will result in more effective pastoral care. This will be principally because the people exercising the pastoral care will be better informed and equipped to echo the nature of God. It will, however, result also in the people who receive the pastoral care becoming more aware of the divine source of that care.

²⁶ Wainwright, *Doxology*, p23.

* * *

This thesis has shown that the spiritual guidance offered by Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley in their particular times and ways has been the means by which people have been brought to and grown in the faith that is grounded in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Evangelical activity and the invitation to conversion were not simply perfunctory processes which these men felt obliged to perform. Their own pilgrimages alerted them to the importance of communication that instructed, mentored and (when the occasion required) censured people in their growth in faith. Nor was that communication simply toward individual people for the development of their personal relationship with God. Both Ignatius and Wesley reflected deeply on the way in which God called people into fellowship with one another. Thus spiritual guidance also focused on the way in which people lived out their discipleship in the presence of others who shared the pilgrimage. In this way, through personal and corporate reading of and reflection on Scripture people learned the nature of God and of the community of God. In their personal prayers and in corporate worship they listened to and celebrated the activity of the triune God. Using the gifts of the whole community they each participated in the various ministries of the church, and provided a way by which others could hear the message of salvation.

The Uniting Church, being committed to pastoral care that reflects the nature and work of God, will continue to provide spiritual guidance to its members, and to the wider community. In this, it will remember always that it is a community made up of individual followers of Christ, and will join with Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley in being alert to the direction God gives to move beyond the structured forms and established processes of former

generations. As they did, so the members of the Uniting Church will seek new ways of presenting the message about salvation that is the gift of grace through faith in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Leaders will be raised up who are prepared to take the gospel into different cultures, where by being both deeply faithful to the Christian heritage and culturally sensitive to the society in which they live, they will encourage people there to find fulfilment through the Christian way.

The first element of the twenty-first century dichotomy mentioned above – scepticism about all forms of organised religion²⁷ – may never be fully resolved by the actions of any one part of the Christian communion. But the second element – deep longing for meaning in life – can be addressed by leaders and members in the Uniting Church in Australia. In examining the lives and ministries of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, this thesis has shown the validity of the Uniting Church’s call to renew constantly both its commitment to spiritual guidance and its responsibility to provide pastoral care in response to God’s grace. In doing this, the Church, as an expression of the community of Christ, will be built up in love and the world will be transformed by the grace, hope and peace of God.

²⁷ See above, Section I, Chapter 4: “An Assessment of Spirituality in 21st Century Australia”, p63.

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