

Geoffrey Wainwright-an Appreciation.

Professor Geoffrey Wainwright, who died on Tuesday 17 March 2020, aged 79, was the most outstanding Methodist liturgist and ecumenist of his times. He was a prolific scholar in both fields. At the relatively early age of sixty, he received the honour of being presented with a large festschrift at a time when he already had 203 separate publications to his own credit¹. Wainwright was a robustly loyal British Methodist and, throughout the half of his lifetime spent teaching in the States, remained a minister in connexion with the British Conference rather than becoming, as did his close friend and fellow liturgist, David Tripp, a minister in an American conference.

Ever since the time of John Wesley and his famous *Christian Library*, a compendium of spiritual writers from varying traditions, Roman Catholic as well as Puritan and Protestant, Methodists have believed in benefitting from the spiritual riches of traditions other than their own. Humble learning from the insights of others was further commended by the first of several great British Methodist ministers whose work anticipated the later development of spiritual ecumenism. William Shrewsbury (1795-1866) reminded the Methodists that they were the debtors of all, Anglicans, Puritans and continental pietists². Other late nineteenth and early twentieth century Methodists complemented his work, most notably, Benjamin Gregory (1820-1900), Hugh Price Hughes (1847-1902), John Scott Lidgett (1854-1953) and Newton Flew (1886-1952), the last two also contributing to the early development of the Ecumenical Movement. However, none worked on quite as wide a canvass as Wainwright, whose lifetime from 1967 was split between teaching in Britain, Cameroon and the USA.

Wainwright's formation.

Wainwright was a Yorkshire man, brought up in the north of England in its biggest county where Methodism was traditionally strong and where the people had a strong sense of regional pride and character. Yorkshire people are famous for being plain spoken, 'calling a spade a spade' to use an old English expression. Forthrightness and clarity in expression were virtues that Geoffrey Wainwright respected in others and practiced for himself.

In the late eighties, I was present at a meeting for the British Methodist Faith and Order Committee. It was a time when feminists and others were challenging patriarchal language and concepts. We were discussing the admissibility, or otherwise, of using the terms Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer alongside, or possibly even as an alternative to the traditional 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Geoffrey, still technically a member of the committee, wrote a magisterial note to us warning us to do no such thing since we would then be departing

¹ *Ecumenical Theology in Worship, Doctrine and Life. Essays Presented to Geoffrey Wainwright on his Sixtieth Birthday*, edited by David S, Cunningham, Ralph Del Colle and Lucas Lamadrid (1999). Bibliography, pp. 283-293.

² Shrewsbury, W.J. *A Scriptural Account of the Wesleyan Methodist Economy* (1840), pp.89-90.

from the Apostolic Tradition'³. The deepest bedrock of Geoffrey's theological stance was loyalty to the triune God as revealed in Jesus Christ and the sending of the Spirit. More than once he quoted his favourite summary of the ultimate Christian hope, from Wesley's sermon 'On the New Creation'.

'And to crown all, there will be a deep, an uninterrupted union with God, a constant communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ through the Spirit; a continual enjoyment of the Three-One God and of all creatures in him!'⁴

For Wainwright, the Trinity was above all, a doxological doctrine, one for which to give thanks⁵. He saw it, as Wesley had done, as encompassing both God's approach to us and our response to him in worship and life. The Father, in accordance with his eternal plan and counsel, sends the incarnate Son who reveals his fatherly love fully and carries out his mission culminating in the paschal events, in which the Son gives Himself fully to the redemptive mission and is raised by the Father in the power of the Spirit, who is, forty days later, to be poured out on the infant Church. The Church was thenceforth to worship the Father, through the mediation of Christ, in the power of the Spirit.

Wainwright was brought up in the strong Yorkshire Methodism of the immediate post-war years. He Himself testifies that he learnt to sing his faith through the words of Charles Wesley, words that he was so often to quote in his own writing. Arguably, it was those hymns that were the core of instruction in the faith, in what John Wesley called vital piety, that they were both the liturgy of the ordinary Methodists of that generation and their understanding of the saving work of the Trinity. It was to Methodism that the English speaking world owed the habit of hymn singing, previously unknown.⁶

The late Canon Donald Allchin, an Anglican expert on both Methodism and Orthodoxy, used to point out that one of the features which characterised all three traditions was their liturgical style of theologising, looking to liturgy and worship as key sources in contrast to the more scholastic approach of Rome from the Middle Ages till the first half of the 20th century and the magisterial tradition of the continental reformers⁷. Orthodox as well as Methodists look to hymns, St Symeon the New Theologian being one of only three fathers styled theologian by the Orthodox⁸. Wainwright's work was to exemplify this approach,

³ For Wainwright's detailed argument on this matter, see his *Worship With One Accord-Where Liturgy and Ecumenism Embrace*, ch 14 'Trinitarian Worship' where he deals with this very issue

⁴ Cited in his *Methodists in Dialog* (1995), p. 273.

⁵ See e.g. his *Methodists in Dialog* (1995), pp270-272.

⁶ Though there were earlier English hymn writers, their work was not normally used in congregational worship. The Church of England was strictly confined to the words of the Prayer book. Scots' Presbyterians and non-conformists usually confined singing to metrical psalms. Catholics, like Orthodox today, would only use 'plumbed in' office hymns. Methodism, however, to use John Wesley's own expression, was 'born in song.' Germany, of course, already had the Lutheran hymnic tradition.

⁷ See Allchin, A.M. (ed). *We Belong to one Another. Methodist, Anglican and Orthodox Essays* (1965).

⁸ The other two being St John the Divine and St Basil the Great.

using, on a scale previously unmatched by any earlier Methodist scholar, the riches of early Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox liturgical sources.

Geoffrey Wainwright went from an ancient foundation grammar school to Cambridge where he read Modern Languages and then Theology, thus equipping himself not simply to read and use important French and German theological sources but also to write himself in both those languages, plus Italian.

The next stage of his life was the candidating experience for those with a call to Methodist ministry, followed by acceptance and being sent to Headingley College, Leeds (the largest town in Yorkshire) for ministerial training⁹. In the light of his future career, the Connexion had made the right choice out of the six colleges then available since it was there that he came under the influence of the Principal, Raymond George, modern British Methodism's pioneer liturgical scholar, who also had considerable ecumenical experience¹⁰. At the same time, Geoffrey would meet an exact contemporary, David Tripp, who shared his enthusiasm, interests and, indeed, his scholarly and linguistic ability. Both early produced a significant liturgical study, Wainwright in his *Christian Initiation* and Tripp with *The Renewal of the Covenant in the Methodist Tradition*.¹¹

Many years ago, a contemporary student, told me how excited and delighted the Principal had been during their years to have two such students, who were virtually his intellectual equals. In 2003, Geoffrey was to pay Raymond George, the posthumous tribute of editing many of his papers, thus enabling a biography to be written of a man who had spent almost all his career in ministerial training as well as being a formative influence on the revision of the British Methodist eucharistic liturgy in 1975¹².

The final stage in Wainwright's formation was his studying at Bossey, and at the University of Geneva for a doctorate, which he was to write on the eschatological aspect of the eucharist. Here he came under the rich influence of ecumenists and liturgists from a whole variety of traditions, but amongst whom he particularly valued the teaching and insights of an Orthodox, Nikos Nissiotis (1924-86) and a reformed pastor, F. J. Leenhardt¹³.

⁹ The system of offering for ministry in British Methodism lasts several months from local to district (regional) level to final acceptance at Conference level.

¹⁰ A. Raymond George, 1912-1998.

¹¹ Published in 1969.

¹² A. Raymond George-*Memoirs, Methodist and Ecumenical*, edited by Geoffrey Wainwright (2003). Pp 73-4 for George's reference to Wainwright and Tripp.

¹³ Author of *Two Biblical Faiths-Protestant and Catholic* (ET 1964), a classical early work of showing how both Catholic ritual and sacramentalism and Protestant emphasis on Word and prophecy had biblical roots and could be seen as complementary rather than antagonistic.

Outline of Wainwright's Career.

Raymond George was the key person who initially forwarded Wainwright's ecumenical career. George was asked to nominate a young theologian to attend the Faith and Order Committee of the World Council of Churches in Aarhus (Denmark) in 1964. He sent Wainwright, thus beginning his long career, reaching through to 1991, working with that body, most notably on the Baptism, Ministry, Eucharist process, resulting in the convergence statement under that name of 1982.

The next stage was Wainwright's stationing from 1964-6 as a probationary minister in Liverpool, an area famous for the post-Vatican II close friendship and co-operation of the local Anglican bishop and Roman Catholic archbishop. Wainwright was minister in a local ecumenical partnership church, another key learning experience since it involved him in pastoring a mixed Anglican-Methodist congregation and close collegiality with Anglican clergy¹⁴. Ordination followed in 1966, followed by serving as a theological teacher at the Protestant Faculty of Theology in the University of Yaounde in Cameroon. From 1973-8, Wainwright taught at Queen's College, Birmingham, by then a joint Anglican-Methodist seminary, again a pioneering ecumenical venture.

In the late sixties, Wainwright carried out the research for which he earned his doctorate in 1971 from the University of Geneva. It resulted in his first major publication, *Eucharist and Eschatology*, the significance of which will shortly be discussed in more detail.

In 1978, he accepted a post at Union Theological Seminary, New York. Not entirely satisfied with what he regarded there as the over liberal and somewhat cavalier approach to the Great Tradition of the Church, Wainwright then moved to Duke University in 1983 as Robert E. Cushman Professor of Systematic Theology, remaining there happily and very fruitfully till retirement in 2012. Sadly, his last years were affected by dementia, though I am told by Karen Westerfield Tucker, that any piece of interesting information or theological writing he received would be carefully lodged in a special drawer that he kept for such purposes.

The legacy of his work.

I will now look at Wainwright's huge legacy both to Methodism and the wider Church through the lens of his two major scholarly publications and then his contribution to ecumenical dialogue.

Eucharist and Eschatology.

¹⁴ Local Ecumenical Partnerships were then a very recent innovation and Wainwright served in one of the very first to be set up. Today, there are several hundred of single congregation LEPs, including two or more separate denominations, most frequently Anglican, Methodist and URC. There are also looser multi-congregation LEPs where there are separate denominational congregations, but close co-operation in local witness and service.

The first is his doctoral thesis of 1971, published almost immediately afterwards by the official British Methodist Epworth Press under the title *Eucharist and Eschatology*. It was hailed by a then veteran Anglican scholar as a stellar work¹⁵. Wainwright's aim was to set forth an aspect of the understanding of the eucharist, previously long neglected in the west, which would complement and enrich its overall understanding and use in worship, particularly in the western churches. He sought to set the eucharist firmly in the context of the revived understanding of the importance of eschatology, as already adumbrated by prominent western scholars, and to reveal the rich treatment of this perspective as given in so many early and eastern liturgies. He insisted that the Last Supper had to be seen in the context of the many meals of the kingdom shared by Jesus with others during his ministry and thus as a proleptic anticipation of the Kingdom. Wainwright discussed the early interpretations of the Lord's Prayer, insisting that those that who took the phrase 'give us our daily bread' eucharistically as implying the bread of the eucharist and not simply the bread consumed for basic existence, had a valid point that might well have been taken for granted by the first Christians who stood so near to the source of the Lord's Prayer and the Lord's Supper alike¹⁶.

Wainwright felt that the retrieval of a joyful sense of eschatological expectation added a dimension that had been sadly lacking for so long in western eucharistic theology and practice. Traditional western theologians, Protestant and Roman Catholic, had locked theological horns over sacrifice and memorial (in the pre-anamnesis sense) and had ignored the expectant joy and anticipation which should be part of a full eucharistic experience. The eastern Orthodox churches, Byzantine and, even more, Oriental Orthodox had continued to emphasise the eucharist as 'the antepast of heaven'¹⁷, and as pointing forward to the coming of Christ in glory and the consummation of all things in the New Creation. In his second and third chapters, Wainwright makes his point with copious illustrations from patristic sources, early sacramentaries and liturgies. He also pointed to the rich imagery of Charles Wesley's huge compendium of eucharistic hymns, the vast majority of which have since been largely neglected by Methodists, not appearing in official Methodist hymnals¹⁸.

At the core of Wainwright's argument about the eucharist as anticipation of the Kingdom, new creation and heaven, we find four key points. First, that the eucharist is an anticipatory taste of the Kingdom, but not its fullness, secondly, that 'the eucharistic meal expresses the structure of the reality in which God has chosen to bind himself together with men'. Christ takes the food we need for life and invests the bread and wine with a further significance, announcing and beginning to 'effect God's good pleasure not merely to provide necessary sustenance but also the means to enter into communion with himself, Christ

¹⁵ By David Edwards describing it as 'magisterial' on the back cover blurb.

¹⁶ *Eucharist and Eschatology*, p. 32.

¹⁷ The title of his second chapter, but also a term used by the Wesleys.

¹⁸ Wesley, Charles. *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745).

being 'food, table fellow and host.' Thirdly, it expresses the fact that the kingdom 'has to do with the whole of creation and the whole of man', finally to express the fact that the material creation has its positive value only by its spiritual destiny of mediating personal communion between God and man. Eating and drinking, suggests Wainwright, have only to do with the Kingdom *insofar* as they express righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (cf Rom 14:17)¹⁹.

One may add that this last statement sums up everything that needs to be said about our enjoyment of God's creation. We may enjoy and use it, but must do so thankfully, to and before God and justly in the sense of sharing with others, particularly those in need, and in ways that do not exploit and exhaust nature. Wainwright was writing well before the ecological crisis became as severe as it now is, but he clearly had a sharp premonition of what might come, and, of course was speaking in the prophetic tradition of Isaiah and Micah²⁰.

Wainwright concludes his study with positing seven key conclusions. These include the polarity between the 'already' and the 'not yet'. Joy is not yet complete, we are still imperfect in obedience and 'eucharistic joy is marred by our persistence in sin' (one may add this is true even for saints, since they remain aware of the sin around them that still frustrates the achievement of the pleroma)²¹. The fourth and fifth emphases are that eschatology embraces the material as well as the spiritual, that it is universal in scope, relating to the entire new creation as well as human kind. Particularly relevant to the is the sixth stress that 'at the eucharist, the future is invading the present to fill the moment with content that is part of God's eternal purpose but which is still future in his dealings with men'. Wainwright stresses that the eucharist can effect transformative experiences in individuals and communities even though these are far from complete and await the final transformation.

To his seven points he adds four images the eucharist may offer in the interim between 'already and not yet'. It is a taste of the kingdom, a sign of it, an image of it; finally, it 'epitomises the divine mystery'. To the eyes of faith, it is the revelation of God's design for salvation in Jesus Christ'. In support of his stress on taste, he adduces Charles Wesley in two hymns.

'yet onward I haste

To the heavenly feast;

¹⁹ *Eucharist and Ecclesiology*, pp. 58-9.

²⁰ Isaiah 2, 1-4., Micah 4, 1-7.

²¹ *ibid*, pp. 147-8.

That, that is the fullness, but this is the taste'²²

and

'How glorious is the life above

Which in this ordinance we taste'²³.

Wainwright thus shows that the eucharist, as the song of a joyful pilgrim Church en route for the final triumph of all God's redeeming plan, is central for Christian worship and hope. In showing this, he performed a valuable service for his own Methodist tradition which, despite the priceless legacy of the Wesley brothers' early acquaintance, via the non-jurors, with the eastern eschatological understanding of the eucharist, and despite the classic and comprehensive eucharistic hymnody, essayed and published by Charles in 1745, had tended to celebrate the eucharist rather infrequently up till the 1960's²⁴.

In 1975, British Methodism produced a new eucharistic rite, The Sunday Service which included in the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving, immediately after the words of institution, the threefold affirmation by all the people,

'Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again'²⁵.

And concluded with the final general thanksgiving

'We thank you Lord,

that you have fed us in this sacrament,

united us with Christ,

and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet

prepared for all mankind'²⁶.

The work on this rite was directed largely by Wainwright's first liturgical teacher, Raymond George, and was strongly influenced by the Liturgical Movement in general. Nevertheless,

²² *Methodist Hymn Book* (1933), no 406.

²³ *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, (1745)., no 101

²⁴ Hunter, F. *John Wesley and the coming Comprehensive Church* (1968), pp. 9-44 is excellent on this early background knowledge via the non-jurors. In British Methodism, the eucharist when celebrated between the 1790's and 1960's usually occurred at the very end of a preaching service with many of the congregation departing and thus not partaking.

²⁵ *Methodist Service Book* (1975), p. B13.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. B17.

Wainwright's book will have reinforced the case for the change. The new rite soon superseded the use of the 1662 Anglican Communion rite, which had been that authorised in most British Methodist churches since the time of the Wesleys²⁷.

One has to admit, however, that the hope of both Wainwright and his first teacher that the new Sunday service, with homily and scripture readings, would become the normal Sunday routine in most churches has not been fulfilled. Both a lack of available presbyters to preside in British Methodism and a distinct preference for 'traditional' Methodist services of the Word played a part in this²⁸.

Doxology.

This book is arguably Wainwright's most significant. It followed logically from his earlier achievement in Eucharist and Eschatology and from his instinct, nourished by the excellent exposure he had experienced to liturgical studies on the broadest ecumenical base, that the living tradition of worship was 'the place where the vision of God's desired future comes most clearly into focus'²⁹. In his conclusion 'Rewards' (i.e. of liturgical theology), he argues,

'It is in worship that most believers catch the Christian vision...worship embodies and doctrine sub-serves the divine kingdom and human salvation...a function of liturgy is by word and sacrament, image and rite, to evoke the future in which God's kingdom and our salvation will be firmly achieved. In its light, we appreciate our inheritance'³⁰.

Wainwright clearly felt excited that the common Liturgical Movement of his time would help to draw the churches closer to unity. He saw it as involving 'a genuine return to the common Christian tradition', in which 'the core substance of Christianity will be confirmed by joyful discovery of common elements and a common pattern, while the openness of the communities to one another is likely to bring both challenge and enrichment.'³¹

Wainwright gives thorough attention to the ancient tag, *lex orandi, lex credendi*. He accepts that it is capable of a double interpretation, either that what is prayed determines what is to be believed or that it is belief that should determine what is prayed. He argues that many of the essentials of worship can be dated right back to Jesus, who is simultaneously *pattern* for worship (this established in his own prayer habits and, in particular through the Lord's Prayer as deliberately commended by him), *mediator* in worship and *recipient* of worship, the last two of course resulting from the confirmation of the Resurrection. Jesus' pattern of

²⁷ In this it was more successful than the new Anglican revisions of 1980 which, though widely used, did not supersede completely the 1662 service, which remained widely used.

²⁸ The first has been a problem since the days of the Wesleys. The second stems from the fact that as so many Methodists in smaller chapels, who very much relied on local (i.e. lay) preachers to conduct worship, became accustomed to a diet of word and preaching services and only rarely experienced a communion service.

²⁹ *Doxology*, p. 3. He talks of the vision in worship as having 'a sharp focus, a concentrated expression'

³⁰ *ibid*, p. 437

³¹ *ibid*, p.442.

celebrating the coming kingdom in his table fellowship is, as we have already observed, naturally related to the eucharists of the early Church, especially as seen in the Didache³².

Wainwright's mastery of biblical, dogmatic and liturgical theology allowed him to see the way in which the Church saw the events of the original pascha as a new divine deliverance, comparable to the Exodus, and constitutive of their faith and life. He insisted on the importance of the image of God in humankind as the key hermeneutic principle, the logos being at work in both. He cited Pauline teaching on Christ as the first born Son and Schillebeeckx on Jesus as 'both the definitive parable of God and the definitive paradigm of humanity.'³³ He cited both Tom Torrance and the principle of the *communicatio idiomatum* to explain how Christ can both be understood as fully God and yet also as a mediator in that the Father remains the arche or source of the Godhead and thus Christ relates to him in both his humanity and divinity in a filial relationship³⁴. Christian worship remains directed to the Father as source and arche of the godhead. At the same time, Christ mediates actively by taking our imperfect prayers up into his own perfect worship of the Father, a point that we find later reflected in his work within the international Methodist-Catholic dialogue³⁵.

At the same time as Wainwright carefully tracked key aspects of Christian worship to their source in the risen Christ in the apostolic age, he also argued that, from the first generation of the Church, the principle of worship being controlled by balanced belief had to be invoked, as for example by Paul in his dealings with the Corinthians, who, in Wainwright's belief were guilty of an over-realised eschatology which took no account of their own limitations and sin and which certainly minimised the ethical demands of the Gospel³⁶. Wainwright argued that there can be developments in worship which need to be 'nipped in the bud'³⁷.

He accepted, however, that room needed to be left for development in doctrine. The question also arises as to how far human words in response to God can be relied upon. Wainwright stressed the teaching of his teacher, Nissiotis, on this point, to the effect that the celebration of the eucharist depends on an action of the Trinity that has to be the subject of petition. The Father is asked to send the Spirit in order to render Christ present in his self-gift in and through it. Wainwright also mentions Luther's denunciation of the Mass as a human work and his counter-stress on it as Christ's self-gift to us. In this context, though at another point in his overall thesis, Wainwright stressed that a high doctrine of Incarnation, kenotically conceived, was the best safeguard against any anthropologically or

³² with its prayer for the 'passing of the present age and the coming of grace'

³³ *Doxology*, p. 35.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 64.

³⁵ *Encountering Christ The Saviour. Church and Sacraments* (MRCIC report 2011) p 35 for its reference to 'the eternal self-giving of the Son to God the Father in the love of the Holy Spirit'.

³⁶ Wainwright insists that a magisterium has always been needed. *Doxology*, p. 253.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 247.

ecclesiological conceived triumphalism³⁸. 'God gives Himself to us to bring us to self-giving'. One may further add that there is a sense in which all the key points of Christian worship (including personal worship in the home, are indicated in the gospels. Our Lord's teaching on prayer, his gift of the Lord's Prayer as exemplary, finally his institution of the eucharist as a perpetual anamnesis, 'his own appointed way'³⁹ for the ecclesia to meet and receive his self-gift, all these are from the beginning, whilst still being capable of development in forms adapted to particular later churches and cultures.

Wainwright looks carefully at the heritage of the Reformation era and the deformations and lacunae of both Protestant reformers and the Counter-Reformation, respectively relating to didacticism and rubricism and the lack of any adequate way of relationship between the sacrifice on Calvary and the sacrifice in the Mass. He mentions the work of the French theologians L. Dussaut in his 'L'eucharistie, paques de toute la vie, which he thinks might win Protestant approval through its stress on the commemoration of the whole of Christ's life in its ethical content'⁴⁰.

Wainwright regarded very positively the achievements of ecumenical dialogue and co-operation in liturgical reform as they developed during the period of his writing, the 1970's. He cites both Congar and Nissiotis on the change involved when 'one prays together' (Congar) and one makes 'a strenuous effort to share in the most intimate experience of one's partner' (Nissiotis). To these, Wainwright adds his own, 'we open our intentions to the corrective judgment of God and seek his enrichment.'⁴¹

No short summary or critique can do justice to the immense richness of this book, which will surely be a standard work for generations, but we may end appropriately by looking at the pastoral value in our present dysfunctional and now epidemic ridden world of a quotation from the last page.

'We may have a clue here as to why the second Advent and the final resurrection are still awaited. The Kingdom will only come when each and all of its beneficiaries have been irreversibly changed into the moral and spiritual likeness of God'. This was Wainwright's personal answer to the universal cry of 'how long, O Lord?' He echoed Charles Wesley's prayer, 'Finish then thy New Creation'⁴².

Methodists in Dialogue.

Wainwright made an enormous contribution to ecumenical dialogue in which he sought both to commend loyally the tradition of his own communion and to be open to challenges

³⁸ Ibid, p. 72.

³⁹ Charles Wesley's expression, 'here in *thine own appointed way*, we come to meet thee, Lord

⁴⁰ *Doxology*, p.272.

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 289-92, four of the most significant pages in the entire book.

⁴² Ibid, p. 461.

and insights which should be considered, and in some cases received, as an enrichment to Methodism from others. His book, *Methodists in Dialog* (1995) recorded both his approach to and work in multilateral and bilateral dialog, including a selection of papers that he produced in the course of such work. He outlined very clearly what Wesley's original distinction between *doctrine* and *opinions* meant in terms of those beliefs that Methodists felt were vitally central to the apostolic tradition, and thus could not be renounced without ceasing to be in that tradition as received across the ages, and those secondary opinions on which Christians could disagree without striking at the root of truths essential to salvation⁴³. He also listed six key essential characteristics of the Wesleyan tradition which Methodists could commend to the attention of all and should take care not to neglect themselves. These were, the scriptures as the primary, abiding testimony to the apostolic faith, the commitment to evangelism, the careful distinction (noted above) between doctrine and opinion, the expectation of sanctification as the quest of every Christian, concern for the poor and marginalised (a concern which brings Catholics and Methodists particularly close under the present pontificate), and, last but not least, the importance of frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper and communion at it⁴⁴.

In multilateral dialog, Wainwright's main work was done with both the inner working group, to which he was appointed in 1974, that drew up the final *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* statement of 1982 and with the later *Confessing the Apostolic Faith* document (1991)⁴⁵. He was also responsible for analysing the many responses to the former, noting the considerable variety within the Methodist responses with the British and American being the most affirmative whilst some of the continental Methodists were much more reserved, particularly over the eucharistic section⁴⁶.

The bilateral dialogues included those with Lutherans, Reformed and Roman Catholics, the last being the longest and the one in which Wainwright was most prominently involved, as Methodist co-chair, from 1983-2011. It was under his leadership from the Methodist side that the dialogue developed real momentum and dealt with serious ecclesiological and sacramental issues. The final quinquennium of his time (2006-11) showed great advances, particularly on the eucharist and won the admiration of the Anglican veteran ecumenist, Christopher Hill, who said that ARCIC would have been helped by the MRCIC document had it been available to them when they covered similar ground much earlier. The two earlier ecclesiological sessions (1981-6 and 2001-6) revealed the deep consonance of the respective ecclesiologies of Connexionalism and communion⁴⁷. They also, as Wainwright

⁴³ *Methodists in Dialog*, ch 14, 'Doctrine, Opinions and Christian unity, pp. 231-236.

⁴⁴ *Methodists in Dialog*, pp. 283-4. 'features to be strengthened in contemporary Methodism if we are to maintain our historical identity and keep on a recognisably Christian track'.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 16-19, also 189-222.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp 207-222.

⁴⁷ On the two later quinquennia mentioned, see my articles in *Ecumenical Trends* of Feb. 2007 (2001-6 dialog) and Oct 2011 (2006-11 dialog)

acknowledged, saw important movement in terms of an increased desire to be challenged by the other partner as to gifts that should be received in the common search for richer catholicity. Thus both communions gave account of those things that they felt challenged to receive as well as those where they challenged the partner—all this, as Wainwright happily admitted, was due to increasing mutual friendship between the two teams⁴⁸.

Wainwright also made distinguished contributions to the *Dialog with the Reformed* (1981-4) and the *Lutherans* (1977)⁴⁹. In the former he tackled the thorny issue of ‘perfect salvation in the teaching of Wesley and Calvin’, showing that there was more similarity than assumed by both in the eighteenth century and more recently⁵⁰. He once admitted to me that the problems in construing the New Testament’s teaching on the universal availability of salvation were more complex than many naive Methodists assumed. As a result of his own rigorous commitment to the truth, this had to continue to be the subject of exploration.

Wainwright also took part in valuable preliminary negotiations for an Orthodox-Methodist dialogue which sadly did not materialise because of objections at the time from the Russian Orthodox⁵¹. Wainwright was insistent that this was a dialog that Methodism badly needed. They needed ‘the body and soul exposure to the richly sacramental practice of Orthodox worship. They needed the witness to the central dogmas of Christology and Trinity. They needed the Orthodox witness to Tradition and the understanding that there could be ‘no leaping straight back to the Scriptures⁵².’

Finally

Creative as Wainwright’s influence was, both for Methodists and non-Methodists he did not achieve all his aims. His writing on the reception of BEM by his fellow Methodists reveals disappointment at some of the more negative Methodist responses which, however, must be understood in terms of their contexts⁵³. His hope that the Sunday service might become the normal weekly worship of every Methodist has also not met success, despite his numbering a stress on the eucharist as one of six key emphases that Methodism has to bring to the ecumenical table. He leaves a rich heritage, meriting re-reception both within Methodism and in the oikoumene in general. It is to be devoutly hoped and prayed that he

⁴⁸ Wainwright gives a clear account of this dialog in his *Embracing Purpose, Essays on God, The World and the Church* (2007), ch 10, esp. pp 200-1.

⁴⁹ *Methodists in dialog*, pp.109-139 for three essays on the Lutheran dialog.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, pp143-158.

⁵¹ At the time the Russian Orthodox were affronted by the appointment of four Latin rite bishops by John Paul II and the existence of the tiny Methodist churches in Estonia and Latvia. This was despite both Catholic and Methodist assurances that these developments were not intended to proselytise amongst the Orthodox faithful, but only to provide pastorally for existing communities. Bishop Kallistos Ware, however, gave the idea of a dialog his warm support.

⁵² *Methodists in Dialog*, ch 10, pp. 179-185.

⁵³ *Ibid*, pp. 207-222. He contrasts the self-confidence of the British and American conferences with the diffidence of continental conferences, often lacking good relations with the older churches.

has been received into the glory of the Lord with a 'well done, good and faithful servant'. Our Lord Himself said, 'many are called and few are chosen'. Wainwright was one chosen, particularly to inspire all who work for the unity of Christ's Church. Requiescat in pace!

David Carter.

In 2020, I published two different editions of this original paper, one in *One in Christ*, vol 54, no1, pp 83-101, the other, shortened at the editor's request in *Ecumenical Trends*, vol 49, no 6, 2020, pp. 24-6. It felt important to say something on both sides of the Atlantic about this great scholar, close friend of the late David Tripp, also a teenage friend of mine, the most learned teenager already, from whom I learnt so much about the wider Church and the catholic tradition within Methodism. May both these great men rest in eternal light and peace.