S T Kimbrough, Jr.

Some years ago I prepared a bibliography of translations of Wesley hymns without geographical limitation. It was subsequently published in the *Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society* (2001). The translations were listed alphabetically by first line of the original Wesley hymn. In some instances it was possible to determine the year in which a translation had been made. I learned quickly, however, that determining the name of the translator, the date of translation, and source and date of first publication were sometimes very difficult. Often translations were not properly copyrighted and it has not been a general practice of hymn publications to include the date of a translation.

One of the primary tasks of the research for this paper was to study Wesley hymn translations in European languages since the end of World War II, i.e. 1945. Once again, I have been confronted with the problems I faced before. Nevertheless, the significant number of Methodist hymnbooks published in the last thirty to forty years has been extremely helpful. Though I have not had access to all of them, many people have been willing to provide helpful information. To them I am indeed grateful.

Some of the translations I have studied may have been made before 1945, but to the best of knowledge, shared generally from indigenous persons and available sources, all that are included post date that year. However, translations predating 1945 that have been reworked and revised are included in the study. Adequate information from some European countries in which there is a Methodist presence, such as Bulgaria and Poland, has not been available. Therefore, such information needs to be added. There is a vast array of European hymnography that has not been covered in this survey, i.e. hymnbooks from other denominations in which Wesley hymn translations have been included have been examined only partially. Particularly the translations of Wesley hymns in the Salvation Army hymnbooks of Europe need careful study, since it has a strong connection to the Wesleyan tradition. While some of John Wesley’s own hymn translations from German into English have been translated into a few languages of Europe, the central focus of this study is on the hymns of Charles Wesley which have received the primary attention of translators and editors of hymnbooks. There has been significant translation activity among Portuguese- and Spanish-speak-

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ing Methodists of Brazil and Argentina, and some other Spanish-speaking countries of South America. Since these translations are accessible to Europeans who speak those languages, their translations of Wesley hymns have been included in the survey. Given the advantages and disadvantages of this study, it is but a first step toward determining the extent of European-language translations of Wesley hymns since the end of World War II.

The history of the translation of Wesley hymns in European languages has not been well documented; nevertheless, his hymns have a distinctive presence in the development of European Methodism. John Wesley had an interest in European hymnody that extended far beyond English, though it was mainly in translating hymns and psalms from German, French, and Spanish into English. We are fortunate to have many of those translations extant today.

Some of the earliest translations of hymns in the Methodist tradition were into French. Beginning in the late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century there was a series of French-language Methodist hymnbooks published for Methodists of the French-speaking islands between France and England. As early as 1818, Jean de Queteville edited *Recueil de Cantiques a L’Usage de la Société appelée Methodiste* which was published on the Isle of Guernsey. There followed subsequent editions in 1828, 1868, and 1893. Unfortunately the documentation of the hymns is gravely lacking and it is difficult to determine the origin, authors, and translators.

It is not the purpose here to trace the history of the translation of Wesley hymns in European languages from the late eighteenth century to the present. This study addresses the Wesley translations from 1945 onward. However, if one follows the history of Methodist missions in Europe, inevitably one encounters the role of Wesley hymns in the life of the indigenous community. Often one discovers some of the earliest translations in church publications, rather than hymnbooks, since hymnbooks generally were not available in an indigenous language early in the life of a mission. Two examples come to mind. The earliest known Latvian translation of a Wesley hymn is “A charge to keep I have” published in the Russian-language publication *Khristianski Pobornik* (Riga, Latvia, 1918) and the earliest known Russian-language translation of a Wesley hymn is “Jesus, Lover of my soul” published also in the *Khristianski Pobornik* (St. Petersburg, 1910).² Most certainly many of you present know of examples of the first translation of a Wesley hymn into your own mother tongue.

One of the dangers of this particular study is that translations of Wesley hymns into European languages prior to 1945 have been excluded, except for those that have been reworked and revised. This is dangerous, because the early translations indicate what some people saw as important emphases in the theology and practice of the people called Methodists, at least as emphasized in the hymns of Charles Wesley. As I examine the available material

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² *Khristianskii pobornik* or *Russian Christian Advocate* was published by the Methodist Episcopal Church from the early 1900s into the 1920s.
since 1945 there seems to be an increasing effort to translate a much broader spectrum of Wesleyan hymns into the languages of continental Europe. Keep in mind, however, that the languages of some European countries in which there is a Methodist presence are not represented in this study.

The languages present in this study are the following: Albanian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Slovakian, Spanish, and Swedish. This is a total of nineteen European languages. Without question there are a few Wesley hymn translations in Polish and Bulgarian that pre-date 1945, but no new translations since that date have been made available to me.

The Wesleyan Sources

First of all, we will examine the Wesleyan sources used for the translations in question. I have identified the original sources from which the texts come that have been translated. This does not mean, however, that the translators have had the original sources at their disposal. In many instances they have used existing English-language hymnbooks that were available. Some translations note the original year of publication of the Wesley text, but many do not. It is now possible to access the entire repertory of published Wesley hymn material online. The availability of these Wesley hymn texts online should in large measure transform the options for translation in the future.

Let us examine briefly the Wesleyan sources represented in this paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. of hymns</th>
<th>Abbrev.</th>
<th>Primary sources:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>HSP 1739</td>
<td>Hymns and Sacred Poems (1739)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>HSP 1740</td>
<td>Hymns and Sacred Poems (1740)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>CPH 1741</td>
<td>Collection of Hymns and Psalms (1741)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>HSP 1742</td>
<td>Hymns and Sacred Poems (1742)</td>
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<td>HSP 1749</td>
<td>Hymns and Sacred Poems (1749)</td>
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<td>Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution (1744)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Hymns in Difference with Moravians (1745)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Nativity Hymns</td>
<td>Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord (1745)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Resurrection Hymns</td>
<td>Hymns for our Lord’s Resurrection (1746)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pentecost Hymns</td>
<td>Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father (1746)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Redemption Hymns</td>
<td>Hymns for those that seek and those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ (1747)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hymns for New Year’s Day 1750 (1749)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hymns of Intercession for all Mankind (1758)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Funeral Hymns (1759)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Select Hymns with Tunes Annex (1761)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures, 2 vols. (1762)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Hymns for Children (1763)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family Hymns</td>
<td>Hymns for the Use of Families and on various occasions (1767)</td>
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Methodist History

Hymns on the Trinity (1767)

Secondary sources:

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In his volume, Representative Verse of Charles Wesley, Dr. Frank Baker lists some sixty-two publications of hymns and sacred poems by John and Charles Wesley during their lives. Twenty of those are found in the corpus of translated hymns, which includes ca. 107 hymn texts. Seen against Charles Wesley’s output of ca. 9,000 hymns and poems during his lifetime, this is a miniscule number (.01%).

While it is precarious to speak in generalities for all of continental European Methodism about the significance of translations from this spectrum of Wesley hymn sources, it is important at least to observe the broad picture of this selectivity. The early collections titled Hymns and Sacred Poems (1739, 1740, 1742), bearing both John’s and Charles’s names are well represented, as well as the 1749 volume with that title that was edited only by Charles. He refused to let his brother John edit this two-volume work published the year of his marriage to Sarah Gwynne. Charles’s hymns for the Christian year are represented by selections from Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord (5) and Hymns for our Lord’s Resurrection (1). Of course, some of his most well known hymns for Christmas and Easter were published in Hymns and Sacred Poems of 1739, namely, “Hark, how all the welkin rings,” “Christ the Lord is risen today,” and “Hail the day that sees him rise.” Two of the largest groups of hymns come from Hymns on the Lord’s Supper (1745) and Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures (1762). The former is the largest collection of hymns for Holy Communion in the English language and the latter is a two-volume commentary on the Bible from Genesis to Revelation written in poetry. It might be seen as a counterpart to John Wesley’s biblical commentary, Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament. On the whole, the translations come from published sources from 1739 to 1767, a twenty-eight year period of the publishing career of Charles Wesley. In addition, they also include a number of hymns and poems not published during his lifetime. Some of the unpublished poems that have been translated were included by Osborn in his thirteen-volume work of the Wesleys’ poetry. Another group of unpublished texts that have been translated in part into Danish, German, French, and Spanish, come from the songbook Songs for the Poor, which I published in 1993 and 1997 with

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Charles Wesley’s Hymns in Languages of Continental Europe 77

co-editors Timothy E. Kimbrough and Carlton R. Young.5 These are poems on life and ministry with the poor that I had discovered largely had not been included in any Methodist hymnbooks. Most had remained in unpublished manuscripts of Wesley. A few appeared in his original published works. The following have recently been translated:

“Come, thou holy God and true” (Danish, German, Portuguese, and Spanish)
“Jesus justifies expense” (Spanish)
“O God, who knowest the things we need” (German, Portuguese)
“Savior, how few there are” (German, Spanish)
“The poor as Jesus’ bosom friends” (German)
“Which of the Christians now” (German)
“While preaching gospel to the poor” (German, Spanish)
“Wouldst thou require what cannot be” (German, Portuguese)

The Latin American theologian Miguez Bonino has remarked that these hymns, which address ministry with and among the poor, are important to the conversation with Liberation Theology. All the more, they are vital to the life of the community of faith, namely, that it celebrates this strong Wesleyan emphasis in its worship.

There is a group of eleven hymns that seem to have received more translation activity than others in recent years. They are the following: “A charge to keep I have,” “And are we yet alive,” “And can it be that I should gain,” “Christ the Lord is risen today,” “Come, thou long-expected Jesus,” “Hark! the herald angels sing,” “Jesus, Lover of my soul,” “Love divine, all loves excelling,” “O for a thousand tongues to sing,” “Rejoice, the Lord is King,” and “Ye servants of God.” Can we speak of these as a “requisite” Wesleyan repertory for the people called Methodists? What are the emphases that these hymns provide the community of faith, if it takes them seriously? There is one over-arching aspect of his hymns that one should keep in view at all times—Wesley’s thoughts and language are rooted in Holy Scripture.

(1) “A charge to keep I have” (Short Hymns [1761] 1:58-59), based on Leviticus 8:35, emphasizes the importance of Christian vocation and obedience to God’s call. (2) “And are we yet alive” (HSP 1749, 2:321–22), based on Philippians 3:8-9 reminds the community of faith what it does when it assembles: recognizes the bond of friendship, questions the vitality of its life, affirms God’s love as the singular source to sustain life, and commits itself to the way of the cross. (3) “And can it be that I should gain” (HSP 1739, 117-19), based on Acts 16:26, is a powerful hymn that stresses the mystery of God’s redemptive love in Jesus Christ. Here Wesley emphasizes that the only way to live out this awesome mystery is to be willing to ask yourself throughout life—how is it possible that God should die for me? In this hymn Wesley teaches us to be vulnerable and ask soul-searching questions.

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(4) “Christ the Lord is risen today” (*HSP* 1739, 209-11), based on 1 Corinthians 15:54, celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the reality that God’s love has defeated death. We suffer, we die, and we rise with Christ. This hymn originally has eleven stanzas and unfortunately usually only three to four stanzas are translated. This is tragic, for the powerful conclusion and point of the hymn is missed. In stanza 11 Charles Wesley defines eternal life in this manner: “Thee to know, thy power to prove, / Thus to sing, and thus to love.” (5) “Come, thou long-expected Jesus,” (*Nativity Hymns*, 1745, Nr. 10. 14) is a hymn that anticipates the freeing power of God’s Incarnation. Like many of Wesley’s hymns, it is a prayer for the freeing of all people. This is not just spiritual freedom, rather holistic freedom—“from our fears and sins release us,” he prays. As one sings, Wesley’s prayer becomes the prayer of the whole church. (6) “Hark! the herald angels sing,” (*HSP* 1739, 206-08), is the hallmark of Charles Wesley’s life and its message is at the center of the Wesleyan movement. Amid war, violence, and unrest among peoples of the earth, the church sings the song of the angels, “Peace on earth and mercy mild, / God and sinners reconciled.” As long as peace does not reign on earth, this hymn will never be out of date.

(7) “Jesus, Lover of my soul” (*HSP* 1740, 67—68) pictures the reality of every human life. Life is not lived without conflicts, which force us to ask ourselves—what do we really want out of life? Unless we discover that there is no other refuge but God, who loves us beyond all measure, our lives will not be meaningful. (8) “Love divine, all loves excelling” (*Redemption Hymns*, 1747, Nr. 9, 11-12) is one of Charles Wesley’s most eloquent prayers that should be prayed daily by Christians. More than anything else Wesley wanted to be swallowed up in God’s love and this prayer emphasizes four ways to pray that assist one to live in this way. Pray as one acknowledging God as the source of all love. Pray not just for yourself but that “every troubled breast” will be freed by love. Pray to receive God’s grace. Pray to be made new. (9) “O for a thousand tongues to sing” (*HSP* 1740, 120-123) is part of an eighteen-stanza hymn that celebrates the anniversary of Charles Wesley’s conversion and is sung triumphanty throughout Methodism as its hallmark hymn. The omission of certain stanzas, however, in translation denies the church the opportunity to ask a question Charles is ever asking in this hymn—“Is the church really for everyone?” In stanzas often omitted he brings together the praise of God and the mission of the church.

Harlots and publicans and thieves,
   In holy triumph join!
Saved is the sinner that believes
   From crimes as great as mine.

Murderers and all ye hellish crew,
   Ye sons of lust and pride,
Believe the Savior died for you;
   For me the Savior died.

Another stanza, sometimes translated, is often misunderstood throughout
If these lines are understood only spiritually, one will miss the importance of God’s hospitality to all. Who should be welcomed in the church and its worship—the deaf, the mute, the blind, and the physically challenged?

(10) “Rejoice, the Lord is King” (Resurrection Hymns, 1746, Nr. 8, 14-15), based on 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, outlines the life perspective of the Christians and the church, or in other words, it defines why it is they rejoice and sing: the Lord is King, Jesus the Savior reigns, his Kingdom cannot fail, and Jesus the judge shall come. (11) “Ye servants of God” (Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution, 1744, Nr. 1, 43), based on Revelation 7:9-12, was written in a context of riots, violence, and persecution of Methodists and calls upon the community of faith to stand up, be counted, and face all adversities with confidence and trust in God. Again, the stanzas that would make this specific connection are usually not translated.


Are these not the emphases of these eleven hymns the major emphases of the theology and practice of Methodism that should be evident in the life of the church in continental Europe? Is it not admirable that new translations since 1945 have given them new life? Half-heartedly one might say, “Yes,” but not whole-heartedly, because of one glaring omission in many continental contexts of Methodism, namely, the omission of Wesley Hymns on the Lord’s Supper, one of his greatest contributions to English-language hymnody. Both John and Charles Wesley saw the life-blood of the church as issuing from Holy Communion. It was there that God’s hospitality of love was displayed as nowhere else and the Lord’s Table was for them the point of origin for mission, for it was Christ’s body and blood that sent one forth in the mission of Christ’s love. They viewed the church as evangelical and sacramental, but never one at the expense of the other.

Out of the twelve texts of Wesley from Hymns on the Lord’s Supper that have been translated or revised since 1945, seven are the provenance of Scandinavia: Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Two have been newly translated into Russian, one into Lithuanian, and I make no mention of the translations into Portuguese and Spanish, since these were made in Latin America not in Europe. One hymn for Holy Communion, “Come, sinners, to the
gospel feast” (*Redemption Hymns*, 1747, Nr. 50, based on Luke 14:16-24),
that does not appear in *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper*, has been translated or
revised in Danish, Finnish, German, and Portuguese. This hymn originally
had twenty-four stanzas and was titled “The Great Supper.” Its message is
vital for the church as everyone is invited to the table of salvation. The table
itself is an expression of God’s inclusive love, for no one is excluded. As
Charles Wesley says, “Ye need not one be left behind.”

In spite of the fact that Bishop Asbury’s and Bishop Coke’s first pocket
hymnbook published in America in 1785 included more hymns for Holy
Communion than John Wesley’s pocket hymnbook, one of the great faults
of North American Methodist hymnody has been the exclusion of Wesley’s
*Hymns on the Lord’s Supper*, which no doubt has influenced many spheres
of European Methodism. Thankfully this has not been, however, a fault
of British Methodist hymnody! Wesley’s *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper* are
one of the richest expressions of Wesleyan theology and one of the most
important ecumenical links to dialogue with confessional churches, such
as Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Lutherans, Anglicans, etc. The link of the
Wesleyan movement to evangelical churches is evident in the strong pres-
ence of Wesleyan hymns in evangelical church hymnody. There, however,
one finds generally the absence of his Eucharistic hymns.

**Other often Omitted Wesley Hymns of Theological and Historical Importance**

A few other hymns, integral to the Wesleyan movement and its theology
and practice but that have had little translation activity, should be noted. (1)
“Come, let us use the grace divine” (*Short Hymns*, 1762, 2:36-37), based on
Jeremiah 50:4–5, is often called the “Covenant Hymn” and has traditionally
been used in the covenant service which John Wesley appointed for use by
the Methodist societies generally on the first Sunday of January each year.
Through this hymn the community of faith vows to give up self to live and
die for God. Those who make this covenant will not forget it; they will not
forsake God; they will be filled with awe in God’s presence. Fortunately
there are at least three new translations of this hymn in German, Norwegian,
and Russian.

(2) “Hail the day that sees him rise,” titled “Hymn for Ascension-Day,”
appears near the end of *HSP* 1739 along with well known hymns for Christian
festivals: “Christ the Lord is risen today,” “Hark, how all the welkin rings,” a
hymn for Epiphany and one for Whitsunday or Pentecost. To my knowledge
the only translation of this hymn into a European language since 1945 is into
Lithuanian in 2005.

(3) “Come, O thou Traveler unknown” (*HSP* 1742, 115-118), based on
Genesis 32 (the story of Jacob wrestling with the angel), is historically one of
the most important hymns or poems written by Charles Wesley and even if a
congregation is not going to endure singing twelve stanzas, this text should
be available in every language of Methodism for study. In one sense, it is
autobiographical of Wesley’s own conversion experience and relates how
one moves from the quest for salvation to the confession “’Tis Love! ’Tis
Love! Thou diedst for me . . . / Thy nature and thy name is Love.” The first six stanzas relate Charles’s quest for salvation and from stanza seven onward the time after his awakening in Christ. Unfortunately there does not appear to be a translation of this complete text in any European language. It has been partially translated into Portuguese and Spanish by two Latin American poets.

(4) “Where shall my wondering soul begin” (HSP 1739, 101-103) is believed to be the hymn text Charles wrote on May 23, 1738 commemorating his conversion experience on May 21st and that he sang with his brother John and friends on the evening of May 24th after John arrived in Charles’s room in the home of Mr. Bray confessing “I believe.” It embodies a vital paradigm for one who decides to follow Christ, indeed for the Methodist movement. Be filled with awe and wonder. Yearn to share the story of God’s redemptive love. Begin with the most unlikely people: murderers, prostitutes, and thieves. Be a personal example of repentance, trust, and belief. Again the Scandinavians lead the way in translations of this text, for there are translations in Danish and Swedish. Bishop Federico Pagura of Argentina has also made an excellent Spanish translation.

(5) “O thou who camest from above” (Short Hymns, 1762, 1:57) is based on Leviticus 6:13, “The fire shall ever be burning on the altar; it shall never go out.” This is also a hymn of historical and theological importance. It is reported that late in life John Wesley was once asked by some of the preachers to tell them about his own experience of God, just as he had often asked them to do. It is said that he replied by quoting the following stanza from this hymn:

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Jesus, confirm my heart’s desire
To work and speak and think for thee;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up thy give in me.
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Fortunately, there is a very fine new German translation (2000) by Bishop Walter Klaiber and his wife, Annegret; an unpublished one in Russian by Vitaly Klimov; one in Swedish by Tomas Boström; and two more by Simei Monteiro (Portuguese) and Bishop Federico Pagura (Spanish).

These five hymns are very important theological and historical additions to the European-language Wesley repertory.

**Major Translation Projects of Wesley Hymns**

We turn now to a series of major translation projects of Wesley hymns that have been undertaken within the last decade in Europe. First, the Gesangbuch der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche published in 2002 for use in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Bishop Klaiber and his wife presented an interesting paper, “Aspects of Modern Translations of Wesley

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Hymns into German,” at the 2005 meeting of The Charles Wesley Society in Freudenstadt, Germany. They outlined the difficulty of the reception of Wesley hymns in the German context moving from sixty Wesley hymns in *Zionsharfe* (1863) of the Wesleyan Methodists and twenty-five in the *Deutsches Gesangbuch der Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche* (1865/88) to only six Wesley hymns in both the *Gesangbuch der Methodistenkirche in Deutschland* of 1926 and the *Gesangbuch der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche* of 1969. The Klaibers note that four Wesley translations from the 1926 songbook were taken over into the 1969 songbook with two new translations that were made in the 1950s and 1960s.

As they suggest, there were important impulses that changed the possibilities for a new reception of Wesley hymns. The German-language hymn supplement *Leben und Loben*, for which new singable Wesley translations were sought, was published in 1987 and 1989. In addition, the bilingual songbooks for the Faith Conferences in Hollabrunn, Austria, edited by the Rev. Helmut Nausner, included new German-language translations of Wesley hymns by pastors Lothar Pöll, Christoph Klaiber, and Walter Klaiber. These developments created the right climate for work on new and revised Wesley translations that would be included in the *Gesangbuch der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche* (2002). “The result was that this hymnbook included twenty-two translations of hymns of Charles Wesley: two from the nineteenth century (one revised), three from the 1950s and 1960s, and seventeen newly translated since 1985.” One advantage that the translation process for the new hymnbook of 2002 had was that there was a group of translators at work who understood the importance of singable translations that convey the central message of the Wesley text. They were able in many instances to accomplish this effectively.

Anyone interested in translating Wesley hymns into another language would do well to read the Klaiber article, particularly the section addressing the linguistic and theological challenges for translating Wesley hymns into German. Their analysis with some adaptation in large measure will apply to most any language. Additional articles that shed light on the development of hymnody in German-language Methodism, including translations of Wesley hymns, may be found in the volume “. . . im Lied geboren,” edited

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8 Leben und loben: neue Lieder für die Gemeinde (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1987).

Second, we turn to the translation project of the Rev. Tomas Boström of Sweden. It is a very unique endeavor, as it is the work of a single individual. When the astute Charles Wesley scholar, Oliver A. Beckerlegge died, I was asked by his daughter if I knew someone who would be interested in purchasing her father’s thirteen-volume set of Osborn’s *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*. I told her I knew just the person, namely, Tomas Boström, who had a great love for Wesley poetry. Eventually those thirteen volumes found a home on the Swedish island of Gottland in Tomas’s study. He began an intensive project that involved translating over forty Wesley hymns into Swedish. His approach was somewhat different from the usual translator. Not only did he translate the hymns into Swedish but he composed a melody for each translation as he worked. Therefore, the homogeneity of his Charles Wesley work as poet and musician is unique. Also, he did not seek so much to achieve literal translations, rather to paraphrase Wesley’s thought and to set the words in contemporary musical idioms and modern Swedish to which he hoped Swedish-speaking Methodists and others would respond positively.

Boström then produced a CD titled *Ad populum* (to the people) containing nineteen Wesley hymns and one by George Herbert. The CD booklet includes all of the Swedish translations. Boström’s work is particularly important, since it is the result of a one person’s efforts. Hence, his translations and paraphrases provide continuity of language and thought for Wesley’s theology in Swedish. In addition, the translations are done by a pastor/musician who understands the importance of the wedding of language, theology, rhythm, and music.

Third, it is important to mention the efforts to translate Wesley hymns into Serbian, Croatian, and Slovak languages. A number of persons have been involved in these efforts, but one of the most energetic translators has been Daniel Sjanta, who has translated eleven Wesley hymns into Serbian. Jano Sjanta, Daniel’s wife, has also assisted with translations into Serbian and Slovakian. There are some eight new translations into Slovakian and three into Croatian.

Fourth, the renewal of Methodism in Lithuania in 1995 sparked interest in the first United Methodist Hymnal for the reorganized congregations of that country. While four Wesley hymns newly translated or revised for the Lithuanian Baptist hymnal published in 1999, namely, “Christ the Lord is risen today,” “Christ whose glory fills the skies,” “And can it be that I should gain,” and “Jesus, Lover of my soul,” were included in the Lithuania United Methodist Hymnal of 2005, an additional nine were translated for the first time into Lithuanian for that hymnal. An older translation of “Love divine,

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10 Hartmut Handt, “. . . im Lied geboren”: Beiträge zur Hymnologie in deutschsprachigen Methodismus (Frankfurt am Main: Medienwerk der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche, 2010), Band 54.

all loves excelling” was used, making the total number of Wesley hymns fifteen in the 2005 hymnal. They included hymns for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Ascension Day, and Holy Communion.

Fifth, in 1997 a interdenominational hymnal, *Vaimulikud laulud*, in which United Methodists participated, was published in Estonia. While it is difficult to determine the dates of the translations of the eight Wesley hymns included, possibly the translation of “Rejoice, the Lord is King” by Hilja Kuusk (1926-1996) postdates 1945. What is important, however, is that in this first hymnal for United Methodists in Estonia after World War II, Wesley hymns have a reasonably strong presence including “O for a thousand tongues to sing,” “Christ the Lord is risen today,” “Hark, the herald angels sing,” “Give me the faith that can remove,” and “Rejoice, the Lord is King.”

Sixth, Hungarian United Methodism published its own hymnal, *Dicséretek*, in 2004. It includes 517 hymns and liturgical selections of which eleven are Wesley hymns, though among these there appear to be two translations of “O for a thousand tongues to sing” (Nrs. 12 & 55) and two of “Jesus, Lover of my soul” (Nrs. 398 & 399). Among them from the standard repertory are “O for a thousand tongues to sing,” “Hark! the herald angels sing,” “Christ the Lord is risen today,” “Love divine, all loves excelling,” “Jesus, Lover of my soul,” and “Give me the faith that can remove.” The names and dates for a few hymns are known. “O for a thousand tongues to sing” was translated by Erzsebet Turmezei probably in 1986 and “Give me the faith by Frigyes Hecker in 1996. All of the other translations appear to be from a much earlier period. Though not included in the hymnbook, Dr. László Gerzsenyi was commissioned by the Hungarian UMC to make a new Hungarian translation of “And can it be that I should gain” in 2007-2008 for the Tercentenary celebration of Charles Wesley’s birth.

Fortunately in 2009, an academic thesis by Kodolányi János Főiskola titled “Charles Wesley’s Hymns in Hungary” was completed. It contains helpful information regarding Wesley hymns that have been translated into Hungarian. The author notes that every Hungarian Protestant hymnbook includes some Wesley hymns. Five hymnbooks were consulted for this study: *Énekeskönyv, Magyar reformátusok használatára* (Songbook for Hungarian Reformed Usage, one hymn), *Evangélikus Énekeskönyv* (Hymnal of the Lutheran Church, one hymn), *Magyar Református Énekeskönyv* (Songbook of the Hungarian Reformed Church, two hymns), *Baptista Gyülekezeti Énekeskönyv* (Baptist Congregational Songbook, eight hymns), and *Dicséretek, a Metodista Énekeskönyv* (Hymnal of The United Methodist Church, eleven hymns). Two other Baptist publications for choirs and one Hungarian Christian songbook published in the US in 1985 are also mentioned as including Wesley hymns.

Except for three or four instances, the author of the thesis does not pro-
vide the dates of the translations, therefore, it can only be mentioned here with certainty that the following hymns have been translated into Hungarian since 1945: “And can it be that I should gain” by Dr. Gerzsenyi Lázló in September, 2006 and by Bácsi Sándor in 2008; “Rejoice, the Lord is King” by Dr. Gerzsenyi Lázló July, 2000; and “Lo, he comes with clouds descending” by Dr. Gerzsenyi Lázló in April, 2009. Though the new translation of “And can it be that I should gain” by Dr. Lázló was commissioned by the UMC in Hungary, it would appear that most of the Hungarian translation efforts regarding Wesley hymns have been outside the Hungarian UMC.

Seventh, through the rebirth of Methodism in Russia beginning in the early 1990s, there arose the need for a hymn and worship book. In 2002, the first hymnal for the Russia United Methodist Church was published with the Rev. Ludmila Garbuzova, a UMC pastor, as the editor. Fortunately a number of Wesley hymns had been translated since 1945 by Daniel Yasko through the work of the Slavic Missionary Society. Seven of those translations were included in the new hymnal. A total of fourteen hymns by Charles Wesley and one by John Wesley appear in the hymnal. Five are new translations, two of which are by an Orthodox priest and an Orthodox layman. Three by another Russia UMC pastor, Irina Mitina, and a UMC layman, Vitaly Klimov. This is the first UMC hymnal after 1945 to include, in addition to familiar Wesleyan repertory, Wesley hymns for Holy Communion (Nr. 247, “Let him to whom we now belong,” and Nr. 296, “Give us this day,” both from Hymns on the Lord’s Supper) and baptism (Nr. 240, “Truly baptized into the name”). Unique to this hymnal are some newly composed tunes for Wesley hymns, such as “And can it be that I should gain” by Ludmila Garbuzova and “Give us this day” by Carlton R. Young.

Eighth, it is important to address the developments in the Scandinavian countries. The most recent hymnbooks used in Swedish and Finnish United Methodism are ecumenical hymnals. Nevertheless, they include a significant number of Wesley hymns. The last Methodist hymnbook to be published in Sweden was Metodistkyrkans Psalmbok (1951) and there are, as this author is informed, no plans for a new United Methodist hymnal. The current ecumenical hymnal in use is Psalmer och Sånger published in 1987. The current ecumenical hymnal used in the United Methodist Churches of Finland is Hengellinen laulukirja published in 1991, which includes twelve Wesley hymns, though the dates of translation are not cited. These hymns are essentially the standard repertory that has been translated into many European languages. The dates and names for two translations can be identified: “Christ the Lord is risen today,” which appears in the Lutheran hymnal, Virsikirja (1986), was translated in 1979 by Matti Kilpiö and Heikki Vaahtoniemi; “Come, thou long-expected Jesus,” which appeared in the Methodist period-

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14 Ludmila Garbuzova, S T Kimbrough and Rüdiger Minor, eds., Mir vam!: sbornik gimnov Rossiiskoi Ob”edinennoi Metodistskoi Tserkve (Moscow: Russian United Methodist Church ; New York: General Board of Global Ministries, GBGMusik, United Methodist Church, 2002).
15 Psalmer och sanger (Stockholm: Libris Verbum, 1987).
Rauhan Sanomia was translated by Riitta Salokangas in 1980. The UMC hymnals for Denmark, *Salmer og Sange for Metodistkirken i Danmark* (2006) and Norway, *Metodistkirkens Salme Bok* (1987), are unquestionably the leading UMC publications of Wesley hymns in translation in all of Europe, for they each contain thirty-six hymns by Charles Wesley. The earlier Norwegian Methodist hymnal of 1949 included twenty-six Wesley hymns. In the Danish hymnal many of the translations of Karl Schou Jensen were revised already in 1952. There are, however, many new translations by Niels Mann Lars Ulrik Jensen, and others. It is noteworthy that the hymnals used by United Methodists in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden consistently include Eucharistic hymns from Wesley’s *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper*: “Author of life divine,” “Come, thou everlasting Spirit,” “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” “How happy are thy servants, Lord,” and “Jesu, we thus obey.” The largest number of four being included in the Norwegian UMC hymnal of 1987. It should be noted as well, that Tomas Boström has also translated Wesley hymns for Holy Communion.

Ninth, we turn to French-speaking United Methodists of France and Switzerland. In spite of the incredible publishing impetus of hymnbooks for French-speaking Methodists in the late eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth century, there has probably been no more neglected major language group of European Methodists than that of the French at least so far as the hymn material of Charles Wesley is concerned. That has its own history, which it is not the task to discuss here. However, it is important to note that, to this author’s knowledge, no French-language Methodist hymnbook was published in the twentieth century. While there is a plethora of French-language Protestant hymnbooks, many of which include a few Wesley hymns, there has not been a concerted initiative by United Methodists to provide new translations of Wesley hymns that would speak to French-speaking congregations today until work began on a United Methodist hymnbook between the years 2003 and 2005. Through the combined efforts of French-speaking United Methodists of France, Switzerland, Congo, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Cameroon a small hymnbook, *Mille voix pour Te chanter* . . . was published. Twelve of the forty-three hymns included are by Charles Wesley. Four are completely new translations, “And can it be that I should gain,” “Hark, the herald angels sing,” “Happy the one to whom ’tis given,” and “Come, thou long-expected Jesus.” Four older translations were revised and some stanzas newly translated.

One interesting thing was discovered in the process of exploring French-language translations of Wesley hymns. Often translators, such as Ruben Saillens, were strongly influenced by Reformed theology and this had an impact on the translation of Wesley’s texts. A much stronger emphasis on

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16 *Salmer & Sange: for Metodistkirken i Danmark* (Højbjerg ; Kurér-Forlaget, Metodistkirkens Forlag, 2006); *Metodistkirken i Norge, Metodistkirkens salme bok* (Oslo : Norsk Forlagsselskap, 1987).

a theology of the cross often comes through at the expense of the Wesleyan theology of grace.

Tenth, it is most interesting that the influence of Wesleyan hymnody has had an ongoing impact in other countries of Europe since World War II. There needs much more research to address this subject adequately. There have been translations since 1945 in the Czech Republic (“Hark, the herald angels sing,” “Jesus, Lover of my soul,” Macedonia (“Rejoice, the Lord is King,”), and Albania (“And can it be that I should gain”). Such efforts are indeed commendable and no doubt there are many more of which this author is unaware.

Conclusion

As noted at the outset of this presentation, there are many lacunae in this study due to the inaccessibility of information from some countries in which there is a Methodist presence. Nevertheless, what conclusions may be drawn from this study regarding “Charles Wesley’s Hymns in Languages of Continental Europe after 1945”?  

(1) One certainly needs a comparative study with the translations of Wesley hymns in European Methodist hymnbooks before 1945 to be able to draw appropriate conclusions regarding quality of language, number of stanzas translated, and the volume and spectrum of hymns that have been translated from the Wesley repertory. From this investigation it would appear that there has been a decided increase of interest in Wesleyan hymnody since the end of World War II in continental European Methodism.

(2) Without question the rebirth of Methodism in former East Bloc countries such as Lithuania, Latvia, and Russia has spawned considerable activity in an effort to assist the congregations of emerging and reemerging Methodism to begin their new life with the sound theology of Wesleyan hymns.

(3) While there is a core of hymn material that I have referred to earlier as “generic” which seems to be somewhat standard in the translated repertory of most languages used in continental European Methodism, this repertory has been considerably expanded since 1945 to include hymns with a much broader theological spectrum of holiness of life and heart. Also, many of the so-called “standards” have been translated anew into contemporary indigenous languages, which should make them more readily accessible in worship and private devotions. The so-called evangelical hymns of Wesley that are a part of this “standard” repertory have a strong presence in the repertories of European Methodism, perhaps not only because they belong there, but because many evangelical free churches have included many such Wesley hymns in their own repertories.

(4) An emphasis on hymns for the Christian year seems apparent, nevertheless, Wesley hymns for Epiphany, Pentecost, and Ascension Day are largely lacking. The gravest and perhaps most un-Wesleyan aspect of much of continental European Methodist hymnody both before 1945 and afterwards is the general exclusion of Charles Wesley’s *Hymns on the Lord’s
Methodist History

Supper, with the exception of Scandinavian Methodism, as previously noted.

Why is the rediscovery of these hymns important? As Geoffrey Wainwright states in his Introduction to the facsimile reprint of *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper*, “According to John’s sermon ‘The Duty of Constant Communion’ (written in 1732 and published in 1787), partaking in the Lord’s Supper, done at the Lord’s command, conveys the grace of God which ‘confirms to us the pardon of our sins and enables us to leave them’; it is for the ‘strengthening and refreshing of our souls’ and ‘leads us on to perfection.’”  The Wesleys taught that this was a meal for the baptized and that it was a confirming and converting ordinance.

The ecumenical potential of Wesley’s Eucharistic hymns is also immeasurable and in the multi-denominational context of Europe they would seem to be an imperative. However, the ecumenical potential itself cannot be realized if Methodists themselves do no live out the theology and practice of these hymns. In speaking of the saints of old who regularly communed at the Lord’s Table, Charles Wesley said:

   O what a flame of sacred love
   Was kindled by the altar’s fire!
   They lived on earth like those above,
   Glad rivals of the heavenly choir.19

   (5) Finally, the repertory of Wesley hymns translated into European languages since 1945 emphasizes two themes that are central to Wesleyan theology: the all-embracing love of God which the church is to emulate in all aspects of its life and the all-inclusive grace of God that embraces all creation and every creature within it. If Methodists live and personify such love and grace in their thoughts, words, and deeds, they will honor the heritage they bear and its biblical roots and the church will be enriched and enlivened. This is the discovery that is ever new in the hymns of Charles Wesley.

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19 *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper*, stanza 7 of Hymn 166, page 139.