

THE GLOBALIZATION OF METHODIST HYMNODY

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ABSTRACT

The growth of Methodism into a global movement after the Wesleys' lifetimes resulted in a greater global awareness and participation in the Protestant missionary movement beginning with the establishment of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in 1818. Correspondingly, the supplements and changes introduced to John Wesley's 1780 hymn book and the production of new hymn books by seceding Wesleyan groups show an increase in songs devoted to the theme of missions. These hymn books demonstrate a shift in theology from a focus on intercession and millennial expectations to exhortations to use human agency and other means to accomplish the evangelization of the world.

Keywords: globalization, hymns, missions, Thomas Coke, Richard Watson, Hugh Bourne

The early globalization of Wesleyan Methodism was both reflected in and stimulated by its hymnody. As Methodism began to spread around the world in the decades after John and Charles Wesley's lifetimes, missionary hymns were increasingly added to the hymn books published by the various expressions of the movement. The analysis provided in this article encompasses most of the distinct expressions of the Wesleyan movement that arose in England in the first fifty years following the death of John Wesley in 1791, specifically highlighting the key people involved in promoting global missions and in compiling hymn books that reflected this commitment to globalization for their congregations. It traces the evolution of the section devoted to the theme of global mission in

the 1780 authorized hymn book to subsequent publications, demonstrating a shift in the theological understanding of how the evangelization of the world would be accomplished. While Charles Wesley's hymns and John Wesley's writings contained the expectation that God would do the work of establishing his kingdom, newer hymns as well as published sermons and other writings were increasingly advocating use of 'means' such as the creation of missionary societies to select and commission missionaries and to raise funds for their support.

S T Kimbrough Jr has proposed a definition of what it means 'to be global' within the field of hymnology: 'to look beyond ourselves to the larger world that God has made and to acknowledge that God made it and that we are part of the larger whole.'¹ Adding to this perspective, C. Michael Hawn identifies two waves of global hymnody in recent centuries, the first consisting of the spread of European and North American hymns around the world during the missionary movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indeed, 'Mission hymnody during this era became the global musical currency.'² The second wave, which tends to receive more attention from scholars and practitioners, was the growing awareness in European and North American churches of 'music produced by Christians from non-Western cultures' in the late twentieth century.³ As Swee Hong Lim explains, this second wave also challenged the family of non-Western churches to 'look beyond its western missiological heritage' and allow 'the incarnational work of God to engage its cultural settings and transform its worship expressions.'⁴ Building upon this work, this article examines a third expression of global awareness in Western—specifically British Methodist—hymnody concomitant with the first wave, that of missionary songs sung by Western congregations to facilitate and celebrate the missionary movement. These songs are sometimes seen negatively as conveying

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1. S T Kimbrough Jr, 'Global Song and the Church', in S T Kimbrough Jr, ed., *Music & Mission: Toward a Theology and Practice of Global Song* (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, GBGMusick, 2006), 8.

2. C. Michael Hawn, 'Christian Global Hymnody: An Overview', in Kimbrough, ed., *Music & Mission*, 23.

3. Ibid. For examples of scholarship in this field, see Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, ed., *The Sunday Service of the Methodists: Twentieth-Century Worship in Worldwide Methodism: Studies in Honor of James F. White* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1996); C. Michael Hawn, *Gather into One: Praying and Singing Globally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

4. Swee Hong Lim, 'Music and Hymnody', in William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 341–2.

Western superiority, constituting 'a barrier that must be broken in order to introduce the new global song'.⁵ While evidence of attitudes of cultural superiority and colonialism can be uncovered in these missionary songs, an analysis of this genre is nevertheless valuable in exploring the changes in the ways British Methodists viewed the larger world God had made and their place within that larger whole.

The Wesleys and the 1780 Authorized Hymn Book

The 1780 *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists* was originally compiled by John Wesley, primarily from songs written by his brother Charles, and is 'commonly regarded as Methodism's first authorised hymnal'.⁶ The introduction by John Wesley and the topical arrangement of the table of contents indicates that Wesley designed it to 'meet the needs of the Methodist Societies and their individual members' rather than to structure the liturgy of a congregation.⁷ The global perspective found in this hymn book is expressed in the section on 'Interceding for the World'.⁸ The following verse, composed by Charles Wesley, expresses the overall tenor of the hymns in this section, specifically capturing unfulfilled longing for the completion of God's plan of salvation.

Lord over all, if thou hast made,
Hast ransomed every soul of man,
Why is the grace so long delayed,
Why unfulfilled the saving plan?
The bliss for Adam's race designed,
When will it reach to all mankind?⁹

This longing is subsequently coupled with the prayer that God would make his goodness known to the Gentiles and would show his judgements to the nations, that God would 'awake them by the gospel-call' and 'shine in every Pagan-heart'.¹⁰ The prevailing theological theme suggests that God will accomplish

5. Carlton R. Young, 'Old and New Global Song and Mission', in Kimbrough, ed., *Music & Mission*, 13.

6. Martin V. Clarke, *British Methodist Hymnody: Theology, Heritage, and Experience*, Routledge Methodist Studies Series (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 13.

7. *Ibid.* 14.

8. John Wesley, *A Collection of Hymns, for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (London: J. Paramore, 1780), 414–46.

9. *Ibid.* 417.

10. *Ibid.*

this task, and that it will occur when Jesus Christ returns to establish his kingdom. It is noteworthy that the role of the people of God in this process is muted in these songs. The one hymn in this section that includes the human dimension is once again a prayer that as God's people are 'cloathed [sic] with the spirit of holiness' they will 'prove the plenitude of gospel-grace, the joy of perfect love,' and that Jesus would spread their light 'beyond the reach of mortals,' suggesting that as God's people everywhere were revived, their sanctified lives would provide all needed testimony.¹¹

However, even in the final decades of the eighteenth century, the effort to spread the gospel around the world was rapidly becoming a manifestly human endeavour. Various missionary agencies were established and missionaries were commissioned and supported by the churches in Britain to proclaim the gospel and gather converts into viable churches. Though the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) was not established until 1818, Methodists had been actively involved in missionary work for several decades prior to its official organization. While the eschatological expectation remained the same, practical concerns had necessitated a change in Methodist hymnody; it became a space that introduced a new sense of globalization.

The headings in the 1780 *Collection* suggest that it was organized 'according to the personal experience of salvation for the "real" Christian,' with 'Interceding for the World' being the culmination of the fourth part of the book.¹² As Methodists gradually lost their connection to the Church of England, it was inevitable that additional hymns corresponding to liturgical practices would be needed, as the hymnal's use was no longer limited to personal devotions or social gatherings, but now encompassed the public worship of Methodist congregations on Sunday mornings as well. Likewise, the rapidly growing missionary movement of the nineteenth century would prompt the inclusion of hymns reflecting those concerns in the newer songbooks being published.

Aside from the authorized hymn books of various Methodist denominations, collections of hymns were also published by private individuals following the pattern set by John and Charles Wesley, who published a multitude of songbooks on a variety of topics and occasions. These could consist of minor changes made to the authorized hymn book by a church leader responding to the needs of particular congregations and published as 'supplements' to the hymn book. Often these changes were a recognition that the congregations were already singing songs not included in the authorized collection, providing

11. Ibid. 418.

12. Teresa Berger, *Theology in Hymns? A Study of the Relationship of Doxology and Theology According to 'A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists' (1780)*, tr. Timothy E. Kimbrough (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995), 71.

evidence of the dynamic of Christian communities shaping congregational singing and making it locally meaningful.¹³ Other songbooks published by individuals were smaller books, often on a particular topic and frequently including the compilers' own compositions.¹⁴

Globalization Outside of Britain

The first wave of global music, as suggested by Hawn, spread rapidly among the Methodists. In the United States, it was not Wesley's 1780 *Collection* but his 1787 *Pocket Hymn Book for the Use of Christians of All Denominations* that gained popularity and was reprinted in 1790 as the authorized hymn book.¹⁵ Individuals such as Richard Allen (1760–1831), founder and bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), published supplemental books for the needs of his congregations as early as 1801, with *A Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns, Selected from Various Authors*, including camp meeting-style songs.¹⁶ After the formation of the AMEC in 1816, Allen published an authorized and larger hymn book for his congregation and omitted camp meeting songs in favour of ones written by Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts, a Congregationalist hymn writer from the generation that preceded the Wesleys.¹⁷ Joshua Marsden, a Wesleyan missionary, published *The African Hymn Book* in 1810 for both enslaved and freed people in Bermuda.¹⁸ Methodist hymn books were also published in non-English languages, the first being in French, *Nouveau Recueil de Cantiques* ('A new collection of hymns') (1786), by Robert Carr Brackenbury,

13. On musical localization, see Monique M. Ingalls, et al., 'Introduction: Music as Local and Global Positioning: How Congregational Music-making Produces the Local in Christian Communities Worldwide', in Monique M. Ingalls, et al., eds, *Making Congregational Music Local in Christian Communities Worldwide* (London: Routledge, 2018), 3.

14. Most of the hymn books examined in this article are found in the extensive hymn collection and Methodist printed book and periodical collections of the John Rylands Research Institute and Library of the University of Manchester.

15. Anastasia Van Burkalow, 'Expanding Horizons: Two Hundred Years of American Methodist Hymnody', *The Hymn*, 17/3 (1966), 78.

16. Eileen Southern, 'Hymnals of the Black Church', *The Black Perspective in Music*, 17/1–2 (1989), 153–5.

17. Christopher N. Phillips, 'Versifying African Methodism, or, What Did Early African-American Hymnbooks Do?' *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 7/3 (2013), 328–9.

18. Joshua Marsden, *The African Hymn Book, or, Hymns, Composed for the Black and Coloured People of These Islands* (St. George, Bermuda: Edmund Ward, 1810). I am grateful to Terese Austin, Head of Reader Services at the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, for providing a scan of this hymn book.

pioneer Methodist missionary to Jersey.¹⁹ This was followed rapidly by several more French songbooks published by Jean de Quetteville, who established Methodism in Guernsey.²⁰ Similarly, a Methodist missionary in Wales, John Hughes, published a Welsh hymn book, *Diferion y Cyssegr* (Drops from the sanctuary), in 1802; another book, *Casgliad o Hymnau* (A collection of hymns), was published as an authorized hymn book in 1817.²¹ Further afield, the first fifty years after the death of John Wesley saw a number of hymn books published by Methodists in other parts of the world. Robert Newstead, one of the early missionaries to Sri Lanka, published a book of songs for public worship in Indo-Portuguese in 1818 with another edition in 1823.²² Elijah Hoole translated hymns from John Wesley's collection into Tamil in south India in 1825.²³ In North America, Methodist missionary Kahkewaquonaby, or Peter Jones, published *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of Native Christians of the Iroquois* in 1827 and another for Chippewa Christians two years later.²⁴ In South Africa, *Le yincwadi yamaculo okuvbunywa gamaxosa eziskolweni zaba-Wesley* ('This is the Book of Songs that are to be sung by the Xhosa in the schools of the Wesleyans') was published in the Xhosa language in 1835, with an expanded edition four years later.²⁵ In the South Pacific, Wesleyan missionaries published

19. Robert Carr Brackenbury, *Nouveau Recueil de Cantiques* (London: R. Hindmarsh, 1786). I am grateful to Christian Dettlaff, Curator of John Wesley's House & The Museum of Methodism in London, for providing a scan of the title page and index of this book.

20. S T Kimbrough Jr, 'Mille voix . . . pour Te chanter / A Thousand Tongues to Sing to You: The First French-language Hymnal for United Methodists in Europe and Africa', *The Hymn*, 66/2 (2015), 11.

21. 'Hymn Books', Yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd yng Nghymru / The Methodist Church in Wales website, <http://www.synodcymru.org.uk/historical-society/hymn-books/?LMCL=OkrbJD>, accessed 1 March 2021.

22. [Robert Newstead], *Cantigas por adoração publico, em lingoa Portugueza de Ceylon de Robert Newstead, missionario Wesleyano* (Colombo: Impressado de Officina Wesleyana, 1823). For the 1818 publication, see William Martin Harvard, *A Narrative of the Establishment and Progress of the Mission to Ceylon and India* (London: For the author, 1823), 461–2.

23. [Elijah Hoole, tr.], *Hymns, Translated from the Collection by the Rev. J. Wesley, A.M.* (Madras: Wesleyan Mission, 1825); Elijah Hoole, *Madras, Mysore, and the South of India, or, A Personal Narrative of a Mission to Those Countries from MDCCCXX to MDCCCXXVIII*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1844), 322–5. A copy of the hymn book is found in the hymn collection of the John Rylands Library but is dated 1835 in the catalogue.

24. Ouh Kahkewagwennaby, *Collection of Hymns for the Use of Native Christians of the Iroquois: Tahkoopahahtawun kiya Nahmindt Ahnishenapa Nahkahmoohwenun* (New York: Printed at the Conference Office by A. Hoyt, 1827). See Hugh D. McKellar, *Hymn Texts in the Aboriginal Languages of Canada: Three Historical-Bibliographical Studies* (Fort Worth, TX: The Hymn Society, 1992), 32.

25. Wm. H. I. Bleek, *The Library of His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B.: Philology*, vol. 1, pt 1: *South Africa* (London: Trübner and Co., 1858), 61–2.

hymn books in the Tongan (1831), Fijian (1838), and Maori (1837) languages.²⁶ The rapid globalization of Methodist hymnody evidenced by these numerous hymn books in diverse languages and geographical regions highlights the importance of congregational singing among the Methodists. While many of the inclusions were translations of Charles Wesley's hymns, new songs consonant with indigenous music and culture were composed by foreign missionaries and indigenous Christians and included almost from the beginning of these globalization efforts.²⁷

However, rather than analysing the hymn books published by Wesleyan missionaries around the globe, the aspect of globalization this article explores is the reciprocal impact of overseas missionary work and of the formation of the WMMS on the hymnody of Methodist congregations in Britain. British Methodists had engaged in cross-cultural ministry in other parts of the world prior to the formation of the WMMS, but it was the first meeting of the District Auxiliary in Leeds in 1813 that established a pattern for the involvement of local congregations in the global enterprise. The movement to establish local mission societies culminated in the formation of the General Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in 1818 in order 'to put existing missions on a more businesslike footing.'²⁸ Interested individuals and congregations would gather to pray, to receive information, and to collect and disburse funds to support missionaries and ministries overseas. The impact of these gatherings on the hymnody of the church was twofold: they reflected an increasing global awareness in the lyrics of new hymns being written, and the gatherings themselves created a demand for hymns that would be suitable for singing on such occasions. While the earliest of such hymns focused on the desperate plight of the heathen without the gospel and on intercession for those nations, the growth of the missionary movement also meant a rising need for hymns that would be

26. Gary A. M. Clover, *William Woon 1803–1858: Wesleyan Printer in Tonga and New Zealand* (Manurewa: Wesley Historical Society of New Zealand, 2014), 23–4, 41; G. Grey and W. H. I. Bleek, *The Library of His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B: Philology*, vol. 2, pt 3: *Fiji Islands and Rotuma* (London: Trübner and Co., 1859), 28; Marvyn McLean, *Maori Music* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1996), 291.

27. For an example from South Africa, see Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa: 1450–1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 221. For a later example involving American Methodists, see Alan M. Guenther, 'Ghazals, Bhajans, and Hymns: Hindustani Christian Music in Nineteenth-Century North India', *Studies in World Christianity*, 25/2 (2019), 145–65.

28. Andrew F. Walls, 'Methodists, Missions and Pacific Christianity: A New Chapter in Christian History', in Peter Lineham, ed., *Weaving the Unfinished Mats: Wesley's Legacy—Conflict, Confusion and Challenge in the South Pacific, Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society of New Zealand*, 83–4 (Auckland: Wesley Historical Society of New Zealand, 2007), 19.

appropriate for singing at services for sending missionaries. As the nineteenth century continued, entire songbooks were devoted to the topic of missions.

An Interdenominational Hymn Book from Bristol, 1798

The first hymn book being examined is not a Methodist hymn book, but rather one prepared for interdenominational gatherings in the city of Bristol. The book, *Hymns Intended for the Use of the United Congregations of Bristol at Their Monthly Prayer Meeting for the Success of the Gospel at Home and Abroad*, was published in the final years of the eighteenth century. The preface implies that churches from various denominations had decided to gather in a show of unity to pray for the success of the evangelistic efforts in Britain and overseas.²⁹ The formation of missionary societies, such as the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, the London Missionary Society in 1795, and the Church Missionary Society by Evangelicals in the Church of England in 1799, could be seen as the product of such prayer meetings as well as serving as a motivation for increased prayer. The establishment of these voluntary societies changed the English church significantly by creating spaces for the participation of the laity.³⁰ Within Methodism, such involvement by the laity had been present much earlier because the effectiveness of the movement ‘depended upon the activity of lay people, on class leaders taking pastoral responsibility, on average members of the society bringing in family and workmates, on corporate discernment of gifts.’³¹ That Methodists had been active in missionary work overseas for several decades was acknowledged by the editors of this hymn book, who made specific mention of the work of Methodists and the Moravians in various parts of the world.³²

The motivation for creating the hymn book was to facilitate unified congregational song. As Christians from various denominations would gather, the songbooks they brought with them were diverse, making it difficult to sing together. Therefore, the prayer meetings for missions were the impetus for compiling a new hymn book that could enhance community attempts at prayer and worship. The interdenominational group of editors selected hymns from

29. *Hymns Intended for the Use of the United Congregations of Bristol at Their Monthly Prayer Meeting for the Success of the Gospel at Home and Abroad, Begun in 1797* (Coventry: N. Merridew, 1798), 3–4.

30. Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 249–51.

31. Walls, ‘Methodists, Missions’, 20.

32. *Hymns Intended for the Use of the United Congregations*, 3. On the recognition of the existing Methodist missionary work by the BMS and the LMS, see Walls, ‘Methodists, Missions’, 18–21.

each denomination, giving priority to those with which each congregation was best acquainted.³³ Aware that hymns were likely to contain doctrinal emphases peculiar to specific denominations, care was taken to exclude phrases that another group might find offensive. As the preface suggests,

We hope none of our people will be offended that we have, on this occasion, attempted to please them all, and have mutually endeavoured to suppress such peculiar phrases as might hurt any one's conscience to adopt. None of us mean to sacrifice truth to peace, but we trust we have learnt to speak the truth in love. We will not willingly offend one another, nor will we be easily offended.³⁴

Predictably, the largest topical section contained twenty-four hymns 'For the general spread of the gospel', a third of which were written by Charles Wesley, another third by Isaac Watts, and the remainder by other composers. None of the songs in the section for 'Believers Interceding for the World' in the 1780 *Collection of Hymns* was selected for the interdenominational book. Rather, five of the compositions by Charles Wesley were poetical reflections on passages from Isaiah, taken from his *Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures* (1762). A comparison of the edited versions with the original publications demonstrates that some of the deleted phrases referred to the Methodist understanding of unlimited atonement. In Wesley's hymn, 'Sing Ye Heavens, and Earth Rejoice', this supplication in the final verse was omitted:

Come, thou universal friend,
Human miseries to end,
Jews, and Turks, and heathens call,
All receive, who diedst for all.³⁵

Likewise, in Wesley's song, 'Father of Boundless Grace', the first four lines of the song were omitted, removing the reference to 'boundless grace', along with later mentions of the inclusion of people from every tongue and nation.³⁶ It would appear that the editors sought to avoid offending those with a strong commitment to a Calvinistic understanding of limited atonement. What is evident from the lyrics that *were* included is an expectation of Jesus Christ fulfilling

33. *Hymns Intended for the Use of the United Congregations*, 4.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Charles Wesley, *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures*, 2 vols (Bristol: Farley, 1762), I:354–5. Quotations from Charles Wesley's publications are obtained from <https://divinity.duke.edu/initiatives/cswt/charles-published-verse>.

36. *Short Hymns*, 390.

prophecies regarding the establishment of his millennial kingdom, a kingdom that would be global in its extent.

While its efforts to encourage ecumenical singing and intercession on behalf of global missions are important, this hymn book holds another distinction, that of possibly being the first British hymn book to include a song written by a convert from Hinduism. This was an isolated incident, however, because British Methodist hymn books, as well as those by other denominations, were much slower in incorporating hymns composed by contemporary believers outside of Britain. The final hymn in the book was ‘Who Beside Can Man Recover’, under the heading, ‘a hymn, composed in the year 1788, by an Hindoo, translated by Mr Thomas, imitated in verse, for the use of English Christians.’³⁷ The composer was Ram Ram Basu, a writer who had served as the language teacher for John Thomas, an independent missionary who began his ministry in Bengal in 1787, six years before the arrival of William Carey.³⁸ When Carey arrived in Bengal, he, too, employed Ram Basu as his teacher. As more missionaries joined the group, they would gather on Sunday mornings and sing this hymn as well as other translated hymns in the Bengali language.³⁹ Thomas sent a translation of the hymn to Britain, where it was published along with a version more adapted to English congregational singing.⁴⁰ It was this adapted version that was included in the hymn book. Its inclusion demonstrates not only an increasing global awareness, but an acknowledgement that Christians from another culture and another part of the world could make a valid contribution to British worship as equal members of the family of God. As such, despite its being an isolated example, the song serves as very early evidence of Hawn’s second wave of global song, demonstrating an awareness of music produced by Christians from non-Western cultures.

Thomas Coke and Missionary Efforts

The chief Methodist promoter of overseas missions in the last quarter of the eighteenth century was Thomas Coke (1747–1814). As early as 1784, Coke had published a ‘Plan of the Society for the Establishment of Missions amongst the Heathen’, but it was not implemented at that time.⁴¹ Coke was soon busy with his

37. *Hymns Intended for the Use of the United Congregations*, 51.

38. David W. Music, “‘The First Indian Tune That Ever Was Wrote Out’: An Early Example of ‘World Hymnody’ from the Subcontinent”, *Asian Music*, 37/2 (2006), 122–3.

39. *Ibid.* 127.

40. ‘The Hindoo’s Hymn’, *The Evangelical Magazine*, 1 (1793), 304.

41. G. G. Findlay and W. W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, 5 vols (London: Epworth Press, 1921), I:64–5.

duties as the newly appointed superintendent (later, bishop) of the Methodist work in the United States of America.⁴² His passion for global missions continued, however, as he advocated strongly for evangelistic outreach to the West Indies as well as to regions in Africa and Asia, and ministers responded to his call by becoming missionaries without the backing of an official missionary society. As the British Conference made plans to send their first missionaries to Sri Lanka in 1813, he pleaded with them for the opportunity to participate in the expedition and departed at the end of that year.⁴³ Coke never reached his destination because he died on the voyage, but his example of sacrifice in the cause of global missions became the impetus behind the organization and expansion of the Wesleyan missionary movement. The remaining missionaries continued their journey to Sri Lanka and established the Methodist mission there and subsequently in India. In England, his promotion of the establishment of local auxiliaries to further the work of the Missionary Committee had already resulted in such missionary societies being set up in Leeds, and would spread to other regions as well.⁴⁴

While his work in America and in the cause of missions globally is well known, Coke's contribution to Methodist hymnody is not. He was one of the first to publish a revised edition of the 1780 *Collection of Hymns*. Coke's revision in 1804, though subtitled *A New Edition, Much Improved and Enlarged*, retained most of the hymns in the original *Collection* and much of Wesley's topical organization.⁴⁵ With regard to hymns on the theme of global missions, Coke made only a few changes, incorporating an additional hymn by Charles Wesley in the section 'For Believers Interceding' and another also by Wesley in a section of 'Additional Hymns' at the end of the book. The latter was one entitled 'Come, Thou Conqueror of the Nations,' which the Wesleys had first published in a small booklet, *Hymns on the Expected Invasion*, at a time when England braced itself for an invasion by French troops during the Seven Years' War.⁴⁶ After his death, Coke's revision was republished repeatedly with minor additions. One of the songs added to the 'Additional Hymns' in the 1816 edition was 'Hark! The War Has Still'd Its Clangor' written after the initial victory over Napoleon and

42. John A. Vickers, *Thomas Coke: Apostle of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1969; repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 68–75.

43. *Ibid.* 347–8.

44. *Ibid.* 353–4.

45. Thomas Coke, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists by the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., Late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford: A New Edition, Much Improved and Enlarged by the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D.* (Dublin: John Jones, 1804).

46. John Wesley and Charles Wesley, *Hymns on the Expected Invasion 1759* (n.p., 1759), 11–12.

his exile to island of Elba.⁴⁷ The hymn first appeared as a poem published in the *Methodist Magazine* of 1815 where it was attributed to 'J. Redfern, Hanley, January 6, 1815'.⁴⁸ Because it immediately follows an elegy to Dr Coke, it may have been composed in Coke's honour. The hymn itself differs from the intercession hymns by Charles Wesley in a couple of significant ways. It still rejoices in the hope of Christ's millennial reign on earth, but rather than focusing on intercession, it underscores action.

Rise, ye heralds of salvation,
Blow the Gospel-trumpet, blow;
Go to ev'ry tribe and nation,
Hear! Your Master bids you go.⁴⁹

In this verse, the use of means in establishing Christ's kingdom is now strongly advocated, and believers are challenged to 'go'. Additionally, British imperialism, particularly its naval dominance, is seen as a gift of divine providence for the purpose of spreading the gospel.

By a heav'nly arm protected,
See her head with glory crown'd;
For a noble cause elected—
Gospel truth to spread around.⁵⁰

The hymn did not become widely popular but one of the offshoots of the Primitive Methodists, the Female Revivalists, included it in both editions of its hymn book, although it omitted the first two more triumphalist verses.⁵¹ Ann Carr had been active as a preacher among the Primitive Methodists, but had faced opposition in Leeds to her method of free evangelism. 'Independent

47. Thomas Coke, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists by the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., Late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford: A New Edition, Much Improved and Enlarged by the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D.* (Dublin: R. Napper for the Methodist Book-Room, 1816), 514–5.

48. J. Redfern, 'Hark! The War Has Still'd Its Clangor', *Methodist Magazine*, 38 (1815), 240. A possible identification of the author is Joseph Redfern (1790–1855), uncle of Jabez Bunting.

49. Coke, *A Collection of Hymns*, 514.

50. *Ibid.*

51. *A Selection of Hymns for the Use of Female Revivalists* (Dewsbury: J. Willan, 1824), 165–6; *A Selection of Hymns for the Use of Female Revivalist Methodists: A New Edition with Additional Hymns* (n.p., 1838), 159–60.

HYMN IX.

- 1 **H**ARK! the war has still'd its clangor,
 Heaven has bid contention cease;
 Friendship reigns instead of anger,
 And the world is hush'd to peace.
 Britain, all the storms out-braving,
 Rests securely at her ease;
 Girt with power, the trident waving,
 Sovereign of the swelling seas.
- 2 By a heav'nly arm protected,
 See her head with glory crown'd;
 For a noble cause elected—
 Gospel truth to spread around.
 See her stately ships in motion,
 With their swelling sails unfurl'd,
 Ride majestic on the ocean,
 Bound to cross the wat'ry world.
- 3 Rise, ye heralds of salvation,
 Blow the Gospel-trumpet, blow;
 Go to ev'ry tribe and nation,
 Hear! your Master bids you go.
 Hark! his word, his Spirit urges,
 Count no enterprize too hard,
 Dauntless cross the mountain surges,
 Christ himself will be your guard.
- 4 God protects, what pow'r can harm you,
 Winds and seas obey his power;
 What threat'ning evil shall alarm you,
 What furious foe devour.

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FIGURE 1 J. Redfern, 'Hark! The War Has Still'd Its Clangor', in Thomas Coke, *A Collection of Hymns . . .* (Dublin: R. Napper for the Methodist Book-Room, 1816), 514.

and unpaid, she and her associates assumed the license to preach when and where they were called, provoking resistance from the circuit authorities.⁵² Consequently, Carr founded a separate society known as Female Revivalists, established several chapels, and published several editions of a hymn book that 'legitimated the newly formed society'.⁵³ The 1824 edition of the hymn book has a lengthy section of twenty-one hymns on 'Christ's Kingdom and Gospel' but the focus is more local than global. Where mention is made of the gospel news 'sounding to nations far and near', the context is an exhortation for the hearers to respond to the message themselves before it is too late.⁵⁴

52. Deborah M. Valenze, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 192.

53. *Ibid.* 196.

54. *A Selection of Hymns* (1824), 168.

One hymn that does have a global focus is 'Rejoice, the Saviour Reigns', written by John Ryland:

The cause of righteousness,
And truth and holy peace,
Design'd our world to bless,
Shall spread and never cease.⁵⁵

A subsequent verse, taken from another of Ryland's hymns, exhorts:

Ye who have known his name,
Subserve his glorious plan?
Proclaim to all your race
The Friend of God and man.⁵⁶

John Ryland had been one of the founders of the Baptist Missionary Society as well as its secretary for many years, making this hymn another example of transcending denominational boundaries in its call for believers to proclaim the gospel to all the world.⁵⁷

In a 1783 sermon that gives the clearest expression of John Wesley's understanding of how the gospel was to be spread to all nations, he addressed the issue of the use of 'means'. He preached that many Muslim and heathen nations could be evangelized by the Christians who lived among them or with whom they had intercourse through trade, once those Christians had themselves been spiritually revived. Wesley suggested, however, that the nations without any such contact with Christians were God's responsibility. In response to those who asked, quoting the epistle to the Romans 10:14–15, 'How shall they hear without a preacher?' and 'How shall they preach unless they are sent?', he responded:

Yea, but is not God able to send them? Cannot he raise them up, as it were, out of the stones? And can he ever want means of sending them? No: were there no other means, he 'can take them by his Spirit', as he did Ezekiel, (3:12) or by his angel, as he did Philip, (Acts 8) and set them down wheresoever it pleaseth him. Yea, he can find out a thousand ways, to foolish man unknown.⁵⁸

55. Ibid. 161.

56. Ibid. 162. For the attribution to Ryland, see John Ryland, *Hymns and Verses on Sacred Subjects* (London: Daniel Sedgwick, 1862), 14, 34.

57. Ryland, *Hymns and Verses*, v–vii.

58. John Wesley, Sermon 63, 'The General Spread of the Gospel', in *Sermons II* [vol. II of *The Works of John Wesley*], ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 497. For

The following year, in response to Thomas Coke's proposal for a missionary society, Wesley consulted with other ministers and concluded that they had received no call, no invitation, and no 'providential opening of any kind'.⁵⁹ This reluctance to advocate the use of human efforts as a 'means' to spread the gospel to heathen nations, and the accompanying proposition that God alone would accomplish the work miraculously, were objections William Carey had sought to overcome among the English Baptists in 1792. Carey began his treatise by insisting that prayer for the conversion of the world must be accompanied by other human action as well. 'As our blessed Lord has required us to pray that his kingdom may come, and his will be done earth as it is in heaven, it becomes us not only to express our desires of that event by words, but to use every lawful method to spread the knowledge of his name.'⁶⁰ He went on to argue that rather than waiting for additional openings and 'leadings of Providence' or for certain prophecies to be fulfilled, Christians needed to embrace those opportunities God had already provided and recognize that the gospel was proving successful in initiating conversion in many places in the world.⁶¹

Samuel Woolmer and His *Original Missionary Hymns*

Just as Charles and John Wesley had published a plethora of songbooks containing hymns for special occasions, Wesleyan Methodists also began publishing private collections, including some on the theme of missions. The first of these was Samuel Woolmer's 1820 songbook entitled *Original Missionary Hymns* containing a dozen hymns on missionary themes.⁶² Woolmer (1772–1827) had converted to Methodism under the preaching of Thomas Coke in Barbados, where he had been sent to work after both his parents died.⁶³ He returned to England in 1793 and was admitted on trial as an itinerant Methodist preacher four years later.⁶⁴ Woolmer's hymns reflect the themes typically laced throughout the section

an analysis of how Wesley's sermon fits in the broader context of his earlier teachings and involvement in missions, see Henry D. Rack, 'John Wesley and Overseas Missions: Principles and Practice,' *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, 5 (2013), 30–55.

59. Christi-An C. Bennett, 'John Wesley: Founder of a Missionary Church?', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 50/5 (1996), 163.

60. William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792; repr. London: Baptist Missionary Society, 1934), 3.

61. *Ibid.* 11–12.

62. Samuel Woolmer, *Original Missionary Hymns* (Kingston-Upon-Hull, n.p., 1820).

63. Jacob Stanley, 'Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Woolmer,' *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 53 (1830), 291–2.

64. *Ibid.* 293–5.

'Interceding for the World' in the 1780 *Collection of Hymns*. There is a strong expectation of the spread of the rule of God throughout the world till 'every land obey their Saviour and their God'.⁶⁵ In addition to songs that celebrate that expected reality are others that include prayers that God would accomplish this by sending healing to the 'wretched outcasts' in the heathen world.⁶⁶

Now, Jesus, now thy power display,
Fulfil the promise made to earth;
Hasten that great auspicious day!
And pour thy Holy Spirit forth:
Thy oath confirm, thy truth maintain,
That all the world may own thy name.⁶⁷

While the prevailing thought was that the spreading light and truth of the gospel would accomplish God's will, prayer was also made for the 'faithful missionary' so that he would not weary in destroying 'Satan's power and works' and 'snatch from misery myriads for his crown of joy'.⁶⁸ But the mention of human agency and the use of 'means' to accomplish a divinely appointed task is largely absent, in contrast to many later missionary hymns. None of Woolmer's original hymns seem to have been republished in later hymnals, though a copy of one hymn made its way to America rather quickly.⁶⁹ The importance of this little hymn book, then, is that it was published at all, as an aid to groups of Methodists gathered to support missionary efforts, and that it was published in Hull just a few years after a Methodist Missionary Society had been formed there.

Richard Watson and the 1831 Supplement

In 1813, six Methodist missionary societies were established in the regions of Hull and Leeds.⁷⁰ Two of the key people involved in organizing the regional societies were Jabez Bunting (1779–1858), minister in the Leeds Circuit, and

65. Woolmer, *Original Missionary Hymns*, 2.

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.* 6.

68. *Ibid.* 4.

69. An anonymous sermon, 'On the Necessity and Duty of Evangelizing the Aborigines of America' in the *Methodist Magazine* that same year quoted Woolmer's first hymn in the context of a detailed exhortation to use God-appointed means to accomplish the missionary task. *Methodist Magazine*, 43 (1820), 361–9.

70. Edward Royle, 'Leeds in 1813 and the Origins of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 59/6 (2014), 214–26.

Richard Watson (1781–1833), minister nearby in the Wakefield Circuit. Both men would later gain national prominence among the Methodists, and both were involved in establishing and leading the General Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in 1818.⁷¹ Watson, who served as one of the secretaries of the WMMS from 1816 to 1826, and again from 1832 to his death in 1833, had preached the sermon on the occasion of the forming of the first Methodist Missionary Society in Leeds in 1813, exhorting his hearers—clergy and laity alike—to obey the Lord’s command to ‘Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature’, if not by direct evangelizing of the heathen then through furthering the work by prayer and financial support.⁷² As secretary, he continued to speak and write on the subject of missions; his biographer Thomas Jackson wrote, ‘It seemed to be one great business of his life to rouse the Christian community with which he was united to a sense of their duty in regard to the unenlightened part of mankind.’⁷³ Watson also prepared a system of rules to guide missionaries in their work that emphasized pursuing personal piety, reading widely, maintaining unity, and avoiding politics.⁷⁴ At one point, he was commissioned by the Conference to collect materials for a history of Methodist missions and accordingly sent out a detailed questionnaire to missionaries, culminating in the publication of a book defending the work of Methodist missionaries in the West Indies.⁷⁵

Along with the theological works for which he is best remembered and his notable contributions to the founding and running of the WMMS, Watson also made a significant contribution to Methodist hymnody. He was involved with the first major revision of the 1780 hymnal authorized by the annual Conference. As early as 1822 he had forcefully expressed his opinion on the music that was being used in the churches. In a preface to a book of tunes edited by Charles Wesley’s son, Charles, he insisted, on the one hand, that congregational singing ‘is a religious ordinance of so high an antiquity, one which has been so signally

71. Findlay and Holdsworth, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, I:72–3, 107–8.

72. Richard Watson, ‘Ezekiel’s Vision of the Dry Bones’, in *Sermons and Sketches of Sermons* (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1840), I:9–20.

73. Thomas Jackson, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Richard Watson, Late Secretary to the Wesleyan Missionary Society*, 2nd edn (London: John Mason, 1834), 163.

74. *Ibid.* 275–82.

75. Richard Watson, *A Defence of the Wesleyan Methodist Missions in the West Indies: Including a Refutation of the Charges in Mr Marryat’s ‘Thoughts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade, &c.’ and in Other Publications; with Facts and Anecdotes Illustrative of the Moral State of the Slaves and of the Operation of Missions* (London: Thomas Cordeux, 1817), 14. A copy of the detailed questionnaire that he sent to the missionaries can be found in the Richard Watson Collection (1796–1833), MAM PLP 111.7.32, Methodist Archives, John Rylands Research Institute and Library.

owned of God for comforting and edifying his church, and for alluring even those who are without her services, that too great care cannot be taken to render it attractive, so that our “praise be *comely*” and devotional.⁷⁶ But on the other hand he denounced ‘the rage for new tunes’, which had ‘deluged the Connection with base, dissonant, unscientific, and tasteless compositions, utterly destructive of that rich and solemn melody, which best becomes religious services.’⁷⁷ Watson pleaded for a return to simplicity and solemnity so that the tune would enhance the poetry of the hymn rather than overwhelm it. His commitment to the hymnody of the Methodists was given further expression when, as part of the committee appointed to revise the 1780 hymn book, he was the one who selected most of the hymns to be included in the extensive supplement. His biographer characterized him as having an extensive knowledge of ‘that species of sacred literature’, and ‘an exquisite perception of the beauties of good hymns.’⁷⁸

Not surprisingly, given his involvement in the WMMS, Watson created a new section with nineteen additional hymns in the 1831 Supplement entitled ‘On the Establishment and Extension of the Kingdom of Christ.’⁷⁹ However, he was conservative in his selection, choosing mostly hymns that had been written by Charles Wesley but were not in general circulation in Methodist chapels.⁸⁰ The dominant theme of most of these hymns was once again the millennial expectation of Christ’s reign. One, taken from Charles Wesley’s collection of ‘Invasion Hymns’ published in 1759, militantly declares:

Thine the kingdom, power, and glory;
Thine the ransom’d nations are;
Let the heathen fall before thee,
Let the isles thy power declare;
Judge and conquer
All mankind in righteous war.⁸¹

76. Charles Wesley, *Sacred Harmony: A Set of Tunes Collected by the Late Revd John Wesley M.A. for the Use of the Congregations in His Connexion; an Edition Carefully Revised and Corrected by His Nephew, Charles Wesley Esq., Organist to His Majesty* (London: T. Blanshard, 1822), ix. The ‘Preface’ was subsequently published as ‘On Congregational Singing,’ *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 45 (1822), 30–4.

77. Watson, preface in Wesley, *Sacred Harmony*, ii.

78. Jackson, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Richard Watson*, 539.

79. John Wesley, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists, with a Supplement* (London: John Mason, 1831), 626–41.

80. Jackson wrote of Watson taking with him numerous early hymn books published by the Wesleys on his retreat to Brighton in order to select some of Charles Wesley’s lesser-known hymns ‘for personal and domestic use.’ Jackson, *Memoirs*, 555.

81. Wesley, *Collection* (1831), 628.

Another from an even earlier hymn book published by the Wesleys was a somewhat uncharacteristic plea for the Lord of the harvest to send forth more labourers who would preach the gospel, the ‘word of general grace,’ and ‘tell each creature under heaven, that thou hast died for all.’⁸² An analysis of Wesleyan hymnology by William Pennington Burgess in 1845 highlighted this universal aspect of the gospel as portrayed in such Methodist hymns.

All persons without exception are invited to come and partake freely of pardon and salvation, through the merit, atonement and intercession of Christ Jesus. On these points the Wesleyan creed has a great advantage over that of the Calvinist; for the Wesleyan, without any mental reserve, can honestly and sincerely invite all his fellow-creatures, even the vilest and the worst, to come and share in the blessings poured through the meritorious undertakings of the Son of God.⁸³

The six hymns not authored by Wesley that Watson chose to include in the missionary section of the 1831 Supplement were all written by Isaac Watts. These hymns included one that had by this time become a standard missionary hymn in other British denominations, ‘Jesus Shall Reign Where’er the Sun’. It proclaimed that Christ’s kingdom would ‘stretch from shore to shore’, and that ‘people and realms of every tongue’ would sing of his love.⁸⁴ Watson was not the first British Methodist to recognize the value of this hymn in expressing the aspiration of global missions; Hugh Bourne of the Primitive Methodists had added it to his hymn book seven years earlier in 1824.⁸⁵ No doubt aided by interdenominational cooperation in missionary endeavours, a genre of missionary hymns that was common across denominational lines was beginning to take shape and impact a new generation of hymn books.

82. Ibid. 636; taken from John Wesley and Charles Wesley, ‘A Prayer for Labourers’, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (Bristol: Farley, 1742), 282–3.

83. William Pennington Burgess, *Wesleyan Hymnology, or, A Companion to the Wesleyan Hymn Book: Comprising Remarks, Critical, Explanatory and Cautionary, Designed to Promote the More Profitable Use of the Volume* (London: Thomas Riley, 1845), 55.

84. Wesley, *Collection* (1831), 633.

85. Hugh Bourne, *Large Hymn Book, for the Use of the Primitive Methodists* (Bemersley: Office of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, 1824), no. 389.

Thomas Wood's View of the WMMS

Thomas Wood (1765–1826), a Wesleyan minister, was known for his numerous publications in the fields of history and biography, in addition to his theological writings.⁸⁶ While assigned to the Hull Circuit, Wood published a small collection of hymns together with George Marsden in 1803, a year prior to Thomas Coke's edition.⁸⁷ This collection, while notable for being an early hymn book published by private individuals, does not contain significant songs related to the missionary movement. Rather, a later publication written by Wood on the WMMS a year after its establishment is more significant. In it, he presents a somewhat cosmopolitan perspective of the Wesleyan Methodist missionary movement and its institutionalization. Wood lauded the work of Methodist missionaries and the formation of the missionary society to assist their efforts. While he repeated the common perception of the heathen living in darkness and under satanic control, he argued that Britain was no different before missionaries came and preached the Christian gospel, and was 'the seat of idolatrous worship and the scene of cruel superstitions.'⁸⁸ Just as Britain was transformed with the introduction of the Christian religion, he wrote, 'there is every reason to believe that equal effects will be produced' if similar opportunities were to be afforded to 'the dark places of the earth.'⁸⁹ A key motivation for engaging in the missionary task, he argued, was the need to discharge a debt of gratitude. 'The love of Christ should constrain us to act in this zealous manner, for we are descended from ancestors who were delivered from a system of cruel and abominable idolatry, by those servants of God who came over from other countries to show them the way of salvation . . . Unquestionably we are their debtors.'⁹⁰

In his pamphlet, he reviewed the work of Wesleyan missionaries in various parts of the world with a particular focus on their work in Sri Lanka, declaring that as an island nation similar to Britain, it could eventually become the means of evangelizing India, reflecting more of a cosmopolitan than an imperialist

86. Gideon Smales, *Whitby Authors and Their Publications, with the Titles of All the Books Printed in Whitby, A.D. 670 to A.D. 1867* (Whitby: Horne and Son, 1867), 39–40. See also *Time's Telescope for 1829, or, A Complete Guide to the Almanack . . .* (London: Printed for the Assignees of Sherwood and Co., 1829), 14–15.

87. *A Collection of Hymns Selected from Various Authors, for the Use of the Methodists* (Hull: W. Cowley, 1803).

88. Thomas Wood, *A View of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society: With Verses, on the Enlargement of Christ's Kingdom* (Bristol: Albion Press, 1819), 4.

89. *Ibid.* 5.

90. *Ibid.* 10.

understanding of other nations. He calculated that of the 400 missionaries of every denomination working in foreign countries, more than a quarter were Methodist missionaries. He wrote that these volunteers had been ‘carefully examined, and heartily approved, concerning the leading points of personal piety, knowledge of Christian doctrine, attachment to discipline, ministerial ability, and a special conviction of being called to engage in Missionary work’, neatly summing up what the role of the WMMS would be in preparing candidates for service.⁹¹ With regard to Wesleyan Methodism in Britain, the Society would motivate and direct benevolent feelings and exertions toward the promotion of missionary work. He saw the expansion of global missions as the fulfilment of millennial expectations. ‘The people of God, during a succession of ages, have fervently prayed for the universal spread of the Gospel of Christ; and, from the whole complexion and disposition of things, it appears that “the time, yea, the set time, is come.”’⁹² This perspective, then, illustrates a definite departure from that contained in earlier hymns focused solely on intercession with the expectation of Christ’s coming kingdom emerging sometime in the future.

Methodist New Connexion

Leeds was not only the centre of the birth of missionary societies but also the region where the Methodist New Connexion parted ways with the Wesleyan Methodists in 1797. The New Connexion published their first hymn book three years later. The title page of the third edition, printed in 1804, notes that it was ‘designed as an appendix to the large hymn-book’, demonstrating both the movement’s commitment to the hymnody of Charles Wesley as established in the 1780 *Collection* as well as the desire to expand the hymnody to include new songs to meet the changing needs of the congregation.⁹³ The contribution of this early factional hymn book to missionary hymnody was limited, however. In a selection of ‘Miscellaneous’ hymns, all but three were once again composed by Charles Wesley. In addition to another hymn written by Isaac Watts, the editors inserted one by William Williams of Pantycelyn (1717–91), the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist preacher and hymn writer, and one by William

91. Ibid. 8–9.

92. Ibid. 10.

93. *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the Methodist New Connexion, from Various Authors, Designed as an Appendix to the Large Hymn-Book*, 3rd edn (Leeds: Edward Baines, 1804), title page.

Shrubsole (1729–97), a Congregationalist, both of whom were contemporaries of Charles and John Wesley.⁹⁴ Like Watts's hymn, Williams's composition 'O'er the Gloomy Hills of Darkness' and the one by Shrubsole, 'Bright as the Sun's Meridian Blaze', became standard missionary songs published repeatedly in hymn books by many different denominations. They served as the initial two songs in the section 'For the General Spread of the Gospel' in the interdenominational hymn book of 1798 discussed earlier.⁹⁵

Williams had contributed to the Welsh Methodist revival with both his preaching and his hymns; he is credited with writing over 850 hymns in Welsh, as well as over 120 in English.⁹⁶ 'O'er the Gloomy Hills of Darkness' was originally published in his 1772 hymn book, *Gloria in Excelsis*.⁹⁷ The Methodist New Connexion hymn book omitted three of Pantycelyn's original seven verses, but retained his strong plea that 'the everlasting gospel pierce the gloom of heathen night'.

Let the Indian, let the Negro,
Let the rude Barbarian see,
That divine and glorious conqu[e]st,
Once obtain'd on Calvary:
Let the gospel,
Loud resound from pole to pole.⁹⁸

The hymn expresses a hope in the postmillennial reign of Christ and a prayer for its early fulfilment that was equally shared by the Calvinist and Wesleyan branches of the Methodist revival. With regard to the means of its accomplishment, there is no mention of human agency. Rather the expectation was that the 'mighty gospel' would 'fly abroad', would 'win and conquer', and that its dominion would multiply and increase until Christ's rule would be established around the world.⁹⁹

Shrubsole's hymn likewise is a prayer; 'So Jesus, Let Thy Kingdom Come!'

94. *Ibid.* 214–15.

95. *Hymns Intended for the Use of the United Congregations*, 9–10.

96. E. Wyn James, 'The Longing and the Legacy: Liturgy and Life in the Hymns of William Williams of Pantycelyn', *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, 55 (2019), 65, 68.

97. W. Williams, *Gloria in Excelsis, or, Hymns of Praise to God and the Lamb* (Carmarthen: John Rose, 1772), 33–4.

98. *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the Methodist New Connexion*, 214.

99. *Ibid.* 214.

Then shall the heathen, fill'd with awe,
Learn the blest knowledge of thy law;

...

Then shall thy lofty praise resound,
On Afric's shore, thro' India's ground,
And islands of the southern sea
Shall stretch their eager arms to thee.¹⁰⁰

Shrubsole did add the supplication that this 'heav'nly light, this truth divine' would shine from Britain at this moment in time, implying some human responsibility. Accordingly, it is not surprising to find that he, like Coke and Watson, was actively promoting a missionary society, in his case, the London Missionary Society.¹⁰¹ A later song that quickly became a standard missionary hymn after its composition in 1819 was 'From Greenland's Icy Mountains,' written by Reginald Heber, Anglican Bishop of Calcutta from 1823 to 1826. It appeared in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* two years after its composition.¹⁰² Its first appearance in a Methodist hymn book was in 1838, when it was included by both the Bible Christians and the Wesleyan Association in their respective hymn books.¹⁰³

Primitive Methodists and Hugh Bourne

It was, however, the Primitive Methodists who were most remarkable for their willingness to depart from the Wesleyan canon and adopt new songs from across the Atlantic or compose new hymns to express their missionary passion. When Hugh Bourne (1772–1852) was expelled from the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion in 1808 because of his support for and participation in camp meetings, he continued his revival ministry, organizing networks that would lead to the formation of the Primitive Methodists. The following year he published

100. Ibid. 215.

101. John Morison, *The Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society: A Jubilee Memorial, Including a Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the Institution*, 2nd edn (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1844), 141–50.

102. 'Poetry', *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 44 (1821), 784.

103. *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Bible Christians*, 2nd enlarged edn (Devon: The Bible Christian Book Committee, 1838), no. 612; John Wesley, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists, with Supplementary Hymns for the Use of the Wesleyan Association* (1838 [lacking title page]), no. 712.

his first songbook, *A General Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs for Camp Meetings, Revivals, &c.*, and he would publish several more during his ministry.¹⁰⁴ That Bourne would include foreign content is to be expected because he was advocating the use of camp meeting evangelism patterned after the American practices. Since singing spiritual songs was an integral part of the camp meeting experience, the introduction of these hymns into his publications was a natural development. Bourne had been heavily influenced by the American evangelist, Lorenzo Dow, and used Dow's hymn book in his meetings.¹⁰⁵ In one sense, Bourne's 1809 hymn book demonstrates a global awareness that is distinct from the expressly missionary hymns mentioned earlier. Bourne incorporated an entirely new hymnody—one that was indigenous to America—into his hymn books. When the main body of Wesleyans condemned these forms of worship and evangelism, he chose to chart a new path, defending his use of camp meetings not only as an effective evangelistic method but also as an 'authentic expression of worship.'¹⁰⁶ Bourne appears to have been the first to publish a version of an African American spiritual in a British hymn book. One of the songs in his 1818 edition of *A General Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs* has the intriguing subtitle, 'A New African Hymn'¹⁰⁷ and can be traced to hymn books published in 1801 by Richard Allen in Philadelphia, though it also appears in some American Baptist hymn books as early as 1793.¹⁰⁸

With the consolidation of his movement, Bourne issued his *Large Hymn Book, for the Use of the Primitive Methodists* in 1824, styling it as an authorized hymn book, and expanding the topics to encompass a broader range of Christian teachings and life than his camp meeting songbooks had. Accordingly, Bourne added a section on missions, 'On the Spread of the Gospel'. While he included a couple of hymns by Charles Wesley, what is in striking contrast to Watson's 1831 publication is that most of the hymns in this section are not written by

104. John Julian, ed., *A Dictionary of Hymnology, Setting Forth the Origin and History of Christian Hymns of All Ages and Nations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), 165.

105. John T. Wilkinson, 'The Rise of Other Methodist Traditions', in Rupert Davies, A. Raymond George, and Gordon Rupp, eds, *The History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, 4 vols (London: Epworth Press, 1978), II:306–9. On the history of Dow's activities in England and his contentious relationship with Wesleyan leaders there, see Tim Woolley, "'Have Our People been Sufficiently Cautious?': Wesleyan Responses to Lorenzo Dow in England and Ireland, 1799–1819," *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, 9/2 (2017), 147–54.

106. Clarke, *British Methodist Hymnody*, 67.

107. Hugh Bourne, *A General Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs for Camp Meetings, Revivals, &c.: A New Edition Enlarged and Improved, to Which Is Prefixed, An Account of the Origin of the English Camp-Meetings, &c.* (Burselm: J. Tregortha, 1818), no. 42.

108. See <https://hymnary.org/hymnal/CHSS1801?page=0>, accessed 13 March 2021.

Wesley. Instead, most were written by Bourne and a fellow composer, William Sanders.¹⁰⁹ One such co-authored song begins:

Light of the Gentile race,
Appear in every heart;
And may the nations taste thy grace,
And with their idols part.

Thou send'st thy heralds forth,
To preach to every land;
To east and west, to south and north,
They run at thy command.¹¹⁰

Whether the God-sent heralds are human or angelic is not clear. Most of Bourne's hymns demonstrate the millennial expectation of the establishment of Christ's kingdom and consist of prayers for that to be accomplished or of celebrations of its sure arrival. The remaining hymns were written by other composers such as the prolific Irish hymn writer Thomas Kelly (1769–1855). One hymn, with perhaps the most explicit acknowledgement of foreign missions, in this section declares:

While we for British Islands care,
Be not our lives confined there;
To distant tribes we would proclaim
The mighty glories of thy name.

It goes on to talk of the 'Barbarians' thronging to Christ, pagan altars being replaced by the cross of Christ, and God alone being revered.¹¹¹ That this song first appeared in a collection of missionary hymns composed and selected for the services of the annual meetings of the London Missionary Society once again reflects Bourne's willingness to use songs from eclectic sources rather than adhering strictly to the Wesleyan canon.¹¹² As J. R. Watson notes, the Primitive Methodists 'required a hymnbook that reflected the ecstatic

109. Bourne, *A General Collection*, nos 386–416.

110. *Ibid.* no. 387.

111. *Ibid.* no. 309.

112. Woolmer, *Missionary Hymns*, 3–4.

experience of gospel grace in their camp meetings.¹¹³ It was the needs of the congregation that prompted Bourne to adopt an openness to global song such as that produced in the United States.

Arminian Bible Christians and William O'Bryan

The Bible Christians had their beginning with the evangelistic work of William O'Bryan (1778–1868) on the northern border of Devon and Cornwall. As a preacher with the Methodists, O'Bryan had been an effective evangelist but found it difficult to work within the restrictions within the society, eventually being expelled and starting a new connexion with his followers.¹¹⁴ The name of the group evolved over subsequent years, but one of the early names was Arminian Bible Christians.

Shortly after organizing the group and starting to hold annual conferences, O'Bryan published a small hymn book intended to supplement the larger one by the Wesleys, which was still in use.¹¹⁵ Within a few years, he produced a much larger hymnal to replace Wesley's 1780 book and his earlier supplement. He noted in his 'Preface' that in addition to eliminating the inconvenience and cost of two volumes, the new collection would contain 'many hymns much in use among our People, that are not in any of the Wesleyan Methodists' Hymn Books.'¹¹⁶ While Watson's 'Supplement' represents a more top-down approach, this one may be described as more bottom-up, as the editor of the hymn book adapted it to the repertoire of songs the congregation was already singing.

O'Bryan's collection adopted the growing trend of including a section on missions. In fact, he placed two sections, entitled 'Missionary Exertions' and 'Collection for Missionaries', in the first part of the book. The latter topic indicates that congregations felt the need for songs that could be sung specifically during the collection of offerings for missionaries. Of the twenty-two hymns in these sections, only three were written by Charles Wesley. Most of the others where the authors are known were written by eighteenth-century Baptist and other Nonconformist hymn writers, including Thomas Kelly,

113. J. R. Watson, 'Music, Hymnody and the Culture of Methodism in Britain', in William Gibson, Peter Forsaith, and Martin Wellings, eds, *The Ashgate Research Companion to World Methodism*, Ashgate Methodist Studies Series (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 241.

114. Wilkinson, 'The Rise of Other Methodist Traditions', II:294–5.

115. Roger Thorne, 'The First Bible Christian Hymn Book', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 55/1 (2005), 13–16.

116. William O'Bryan, *A Collection of Hymns, for the Use of the People Called Arminian Bible Christians* (Devon: Samuel Thorne, 1824), iii.

Philip Doddridge, William Shrubsole, and William Williams Pantycelyn. What remains a mystery is the identity of the author of so many unidentified hymns that appear in no other collection. One suggestion that has been made is that his wife, poet Catherine O'Bryan (1781–1860), may have written some of them.¹¹⁷ If so, a likely candidate would be the one that begins with the following verse:

Ye Heralds of truth, sent forth by the Lord,
Both ancient and youth, who publish His word;
Ye sons and ye daughters, selected by grace,
Be strong and courageous, and each fill his place.¹¹⁸

The Bible Christians were known for their early approval of female ministry, and the inclusion of 'daughters' among the heralds of truth would have been welcomed.¹¹⁹ As early as 1821 missionaries were being sent by the movement

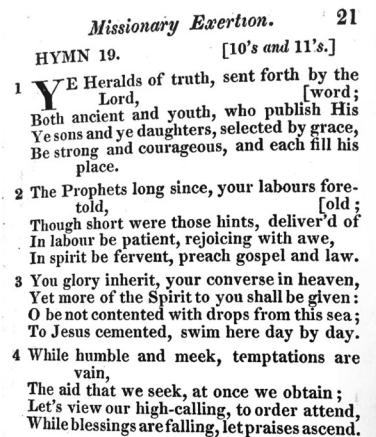


FIGURE 2 'Ye Heralds of Truth,' in William O'Bryan, *A Collection of Hymns, for the Use of the People Called Arminian Bible Christians* (Devon: Samuel Thorne, 1824), 21.

117. 'O'Bryan Family,' *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland*, <https://dmbi.online/index.php?do=app.entry&id=2086>, accessed 29 November 2020.

118. O'Bryan, *A Collection of Hymns*, 21.

119. Wesley F. Swift, 'The Women Itinerant Preachers of Early Methodism,' Part III: 'The Bible Christian "Itinerant Females"', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 29/4 (1953), 76–83.

to the Isles of Scilly and a few years later to the Channel Islands and the Isle of Wight as well.¹²⁰ In 1831, after O'Bryan had left the movement now known as Bible Christians, missionaries were also sent to Upper Canada and Prince Edward Island.¹²¹

Conclusion

An analysis of Methodist hymn books published in the five decades following John Wesley's death reveals a growing sense of connection to the institutionalization of the missionary movement, thus demonstrating a type of globalization of Methodist hymnody. The growth of the missionary movement as well as that of the establishment of missionary societies produced a noticeable evolution in the books published, both reflecting the changes already happening to the congregational singing of Methodists and stimulating further transformation. As seen with the Arminian Bible Christians, hymn books increasingly included special sections of songs related to the topic of missions, responding to congregations who were participating in greater measure in the work of sending and supporting missionaries. Most of the songs in these sections were still chosen from those written in the eighteenth century by either Charles Wesley or one of the Dissenting composers, reflecting their prevailing postmillennial eschatology and their exhortations to expectant intercession for Christ's kingdom to come. The change in emphasis was perhaps not so much a shift in theology as it was a shift in practice. Newer songs were being introduced that were in harmony with the growing conviction that God's people were required to use God-appointed means to fulfil his Great Commission—the conviction that motivated men such as Richard Watson to establish the WMMS.

As for the picture of the wider world depicted in the hymns in the missionary sections, the nations to which missionaries were being sent were described as heathens and idolaters in the hymns. But rather than simply being expressions of racial superiority or a justification for imperialist conquest, this resulted from a broader theological understanding of the fallenness of all humanity, including Britain, and of the redemption offered freely to all peoples in the gospel of Christ, as is demonstrated in Thomas Wood's pamphlet. The possibility that some of the heathen were responding to the gospel and becoming part of God's family was still seen primarily as a future possibility (however glorious) but not yet a present reality except in isolated instances such as the inclusion of Ram Ram Basu's

120. Wilkinson, 'The Rise of Other Methodist Traditions,' II:299.

121. *Ibid.* II:303.

hymn in the 1798 interdenominational hymn book and the inclusion of an African American spiritual and other camp meeting songs in Bourne's hymn books.

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