Amidst the *Gemeinschaft*-ing *and Gesellschaft*-ing: The Atomization of Societies and the Communal Bonds Built by the Wesleyan-Holiness Women

March 19, 2019[*]
Marie Joy Pring, M.S.T.

I. A Development Trade-off: From *Gemeinschaft* To *Gesellschaft*

Humanity has never experienced development as rapid as in the past hundred years—industrialization, modernization, and globalization transformed not only people's way of life but also people's worldview. Science and technology made the world seem smaller, as though it could be held in one's hand, and solutions seem conveniently available at the end of one's fingertips. Nevertheless, this is only one side of the development narrative. Development comes at a cost, and at times it comes with high stakes. Scholars then and now articulate that trade-offs inevitably occur as the economic and political systems of society transform.

One of the most notable theories of transformation in society is how it moves from being *Gemeinschaft* (pre-modern community) to *Gesellschaft* (market society). While *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* have been used by other German-language philosophers, it was Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936) who introduced these words as dichotomous analytical categories (Bond 2011, 1189; Waters 2016, 1; Tönnies 1957, 37–102). Tönnies understood that development is social evolution, a process wherein the *Gemeinschaft* community that used to be built upon personal relationships, loyalty, and shared values transforms to a *Gesellschaft* society that is characterized by impersonal relationships, fixed-term contracts, and individual advantages (Tönnies 1957; Waters 2016, 1–2). On the one hand, Tönnies thought of the *Gemeinschaft* bonds as emerging from what he called the "natural will"—solidarity is naturally established among those who have the same ethnicity or religious persuasions or social location. On the other hand, he thought of the *Gesellschaft* bonds as emerging from "rational will"—attachments

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[*] This paper was presented by Marie Joy Pring in honor of Women of Faith by the APNTS Gender and Development Committee.

are rationally constructed depending on one's approximation of a relationship's value (Tönnies 1957). Typically, *Gesellschaft* bonds are gauged through monetary measures (Bond 2011, 1187–1188). Tönnies thought of *Gesellschaft* as the more progressive society since it represents the advantages of modernity and it annuls the inefficiencies that come with the sentimental biases evident in *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies 1957; Cahnmann 1995; Bond 2011, 1197–1199).

Another scholar who used the *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as analytical categories is his fellow German thinker, Max Weber (1864–1920). Following Tönnies, Weber placed *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* at the heart of his sociology (Weber 1968, 4–41; Radkau 2009, 413–415). Nonetheless, Weber slightly differed from Tönnies. While Weber affirmed the economic and political advancement of the latter, he did not essentially see it as superior over the former. Weber supposed that the price *Gemeinschaft* pays to transform to *Gesellschaft* is the community's very heart and soul (Weber 1968; Waters 2016, 3). For Weber, modernity transforms people from being a community of warm affection to a society of cold, calculated rationalism (Weber 1968). Relationships and people are objectified in *Gesellschaft*, and the overarching paradigm that governs transactions in a consumeristic society is, "What is in it for me?" Furthermore, if Tönnies perceived this societal transformation as necessary, inescapable, and unidirectional historical transition, Weber did not. Specifically, he did not see *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as mutually exclusive from each other, but rather, he thought of the two as in an on-going, interactive tension that will never be quite resolved (Weber 1968). Weber expanded Tönnies's idea by introducing the gerunds *Vergemeinschaftung* and *Vergesellschaftung,* which crudely translate to *Gemeinschaft*-ing and *Gesellschaft*-ing. The fluidity in Weber's idea of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* can be likened to when one attempts to mix water and oil—resisting each other albeit coexisting (Cahnmann 1995, 109–110; Waters 2016, 4).

Despite the differences in Tönnies's and Weber's understanding and use of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft,* both agree that development atomizes society. It is apparent that as the socio-economic and political landscape changes, relationships break down and the focus turns to individual interests. *Gesellschaft* includes the atomization of relationships even among the

most intimate social units such as close-knit neighborhoods and families (Tönnies 1957). For instance, the *Gemeinschaft* community of the feudalism era was overcome by the *Gesellschaft* society of the industrialization age. Traditional family ties and loyalty that used to be upheld as the utmost values in *Gemeinschaft* were supplanted by rationalistic and mechanistic value assessment in *Gesellschaft*. *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* reveal that development is two-faced indeed—the good side wherein it helps, and the other side wherein it hurts.

II. A Wesleyan Trajectory for Transformational Development

The truth that development hurts because it atomizes relationships now poses a considerable challenge to the evangelical paradigm of development. The Christian philosophy of development, otherwise known as Transformational Development, understands the inevitability of modernization. In this age of rapid progress, this approach upholds that meeting the spiritual needs of people must also include meeting their physical needs (Myers 2011, 7). Moreover, Transformational Development advocates for the marginalized to have the freedom to access the economic and political advances that come with modernization. Concepts of modernization theorists such as Loomis, Rostow, and Newbigin largely informed Transformational Development in its inception (Balaam and Dillman 2011; Myers 2011, 28–29; Offutt 2012, 38).

While Transformational Development is largely associated with efforts to improve the material aspect of people's lives, its hallmark remains its emphasis on relationships. Poverty is understood to be caused by humanity's fractured relationship with God, with one another, and with the rest of creation (Jayakumar 2011; Myers 2011, 65). The absence of peace in relationships is perceived as equivalent to abject poverty. Hence, Transformational Development views the healing of these relationships as the corrective intervention to undo poverty (Myers 2011, 17). Moreover, the end goal of Transformational Development is cosmological *shalom* wherein all people stand to have a wholly restored relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation.

Transformational Development is evidently faced with a theoretical dilemma as it attempts to make two polarities meet. On the one end is its

emphasis on relationships—the signet of this development paradigm. On the other end is its affirmation of modernization—the process that breaks down relationships. Also adding to the burden of this conflict is the reality that Transformational Development cannot evade the *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* premise for two important reasons: (1) most academicians like Durkheim, Jameson, Tönnies, Veblen, and Weber support it and (2) this is a premise phenomenologically reinforced by history itself (Dingley 2008, Tönnies 1957; Weber 1968).

With this theoretical dilemma, Transformational Development could perhaps prime a discussion for resolution by looking at Weber's concept of *Vergemeinschaftung und Vergesellschaftung*. Weber's fluid concept, unlike Tönnies' absolute distinction, conveys the possibility that a community can be *Gemeinschaft*-ing while *Gesellschaft*-ing at the same time. This means that *Gemeinschaft* bonds can exist amidst *Gesellschaft* contracts—just as a film production team in a broadcast network can turn into a small family, or a department in a corporation can become a group of friends, or a small company of dressmakers can become a sisterhood. In other words, Weber's concept opens a possible space where a community can strive for development without losing its communal bonds or letting its relationships corrode.

It is also precisely in this tension-filled gap between *Gemeinschaft*-ing and *Gesellschaft*-ing that Transformational Development can begin to explore a new trajectory forward, one where a community minimizes the risk of relationship breakdown as it simultaneously pursues progress. More specifically, this trajectory can be informed by voices from the Holiness heritage. Offutt noted that it is mostly those from the Reformed tradition who have been steering Transformational Development discussions (Offutt 2011, 45). Tim Tennent, the president of Asbury Theological Seminary, conjectures that Christianity could now be on the verge of a "Wesleyan moment" (Offutt 2011, 45). In line with this, one cannot help but think of engaging the challenges that come in the wake of development such as broken relational ties in a dialogue informed by the distinctly Wesleyan doctrine of social holiness.

The words, "No holiness but social holiness," are more than just a doctrinal axiom or a dogmatic syntax to those who belong to the Wesleyan

tradition. While salvation is understood to be a posture of the heart that results in personal piety, the people of the Wesleyan heritage also emphasize that salvation has a social dimension which should result in social justice, and eventually, *shalom* (Velasco-Sosa 2015, 350; Lebese 2015, 353; Manswell 2015, 357). Wesley and his group were unlike most Christians of their days—they dedicated more time in discharging their social duties than in spiritual introspection and musing of rapture (Rattenburg 1928, 234). They concretely demonstrated holiness in the seemingly mundane horizons of everyday life—they worked to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, and to set the oppressed free. To the early Methodists, holiness is a social phenomenon—it "happens" when God's people huddle and the presence of the divine manifests within the daily social realities and constraints of human existence (Lodahl 2013, 46–47).

It is not difficult to envisage how social holiness could engage communities experiencing the encumbrances of societal atomization in the tension-filled process of *Vergemeinschaftung und Vergesellschaftung*. In other words, if corrosion of communal bonds is one of the persistent developmental challenges, social holiness could possibly mitigate this negative effect of development. This is not to claim that social holiness is the panacea that will end the problem once and for all—just as Weber posited, the conflicts brought by *Gemeinschaft*-ing and *Gesellschaft*-ing will never be fully resolved. Even more, social holiness is a doctrine that is still being reconstructed to meet the challenges of the 21st-century context. Scholars like Assmann, Rieger, and Crawford agree that social holiness today needs to confront the postmodern structures of capitalism, exclusion, and oppression (Assmann 1988, 26–37; Rieger 2001, 10–11; Crawford 2014, 144).

To put this plainly, the task that needs to be started is to identify concepts in the Wesleyan doctrine of social holiness that can help communities keep relationships intact while they inevitably go through the changes demanded by progress. The discussion that follows will bring to the table voices that need to be heard today. The following is a survey of ways in which women of the Wesleyan tradition lived out social holiness and how their efforts helped forge relationships.

III. Communal Bonds Built by Wesleyan-Holiness Women

Wesley and the early Methodists did not primarily think of informing developmental conversation when they served the people, more so the women who worked in the Foundry. Their concentration was on feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and giving shelter to the homeless. Nonetheless, even without the intent to participate in such discussions, the Wesleyan ethos of social holiness seemed to flow seamlessly, naturally, and inescapably into a Christian paradigm of development. Howard Snyder, one of today's foremost Wesleyan thinkers, identified distinct Wesleyan themes (Snyder 2011, 18). Three of these themes embody social holiness and engage the theoretical conflict of Transformational Development at hand: (1) love for the poor, (2) a renewed missional church, and (3) salvation as the restoration of God's image (Snyder 2011, 19–27; Offutt 45–46). This part of the paper explores the ways in which women of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition wove these three themes into their ministry to developing societies.

Love for the Poor

Wesley and the Methodists were considered a radical group in the 18th century because of their *caritas* in action and priority towards the poor. The Foundry, a building in Moorfields that Wesley bought as a meeting place for the Methodists, doubled as a shelter for the vagrants of London. The city at that period was at the dawn of the British industrial revolution. The women and men of Wesley's group provided the basic needs of the widows and poor children and afforded funds for those unemployed who wanted to begin small enterprises (Southey 1847, 390).

Evangelism and ministry to the people of the lower echelon of society are inseparable for the Methodists. In his sermon, "The General Spread of the Gospel," Wesley commented, "'They shall know me,' said the Lord, not from the greatest to the least but 'from the least to the greatest.'" He continued, "In this order the saving knowledge of God ever did and ever will proceed." Furthermore, Wesley commented that "the greatest miracle of all" is a church who reaches out and associates with the poor—people will not be able to do such ministry unless empowered by the Spirit and captivated by the character of Christ (Wesley 1958, 227; Snyder 2011, 22). Loving the poor is an expression of a life that is only possible if one has truly been

sanctified by the Spirit of God.

In this respect, Catherine Booth can be considered as a woman whose life embodied the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Together with her husband, William, Catherine worked and served the poorest of the poor in then developing England from the 1860s until 1890, which was the year of her death (Leclerc 2010, 111; Green 2015, 32). Catherine and William not only served the economically disenfranchised in the community, but also took under their wings the rejects of the society—the prostitutes, alcoholics, and gamblers—and led them to a life of repentance (Leclerc 2010, 110). They began to serve people living in extreme poverty in a work named the Christian Mission (Green 2015, 21). The Christian Mission, later called the Salvation Army, aimed to expand evangelism efforts from merely sharing the faith to meeting the physical and social needs of the poor. Hence the three S's of the organization were framed: soap, soul, and salvation.

Catherine, dubbed the Mother of the Salvation Army, lived out social holiness in a day and age where London was transitioning from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. The population exploded, people were flocking to the large cities for industrial work, and both the government and the church were unable to cope with the flood of chaos caused by industrialization (Green 2015, 20). London became an industrial jungle where only the fittest could survive. The Salvation Army, under the leadership of the Booths, stepped in and did the vital work of caring for those who were weak in the society; they created a unified community in a segmented society—a band of brothers and sisters who shared the common goal of evangelism and social welfare. The legacy of Catherine, along with her husband William, lives on today in over 120 countries where the Salvation Army continues to bring the gospel and humanitarian aid.

Renewed Missional Church

Wesley desired to see the Church of England vivified through missions. He perceived Methodism as an instrument to transform Christians' apathy to empathy (Snyder 2011, 29). Wesley envisioned in Sermon 74 a transforming church that builds up one another, encourages one another, and equips one another despite differences. Furthermore, the church must also call others to return to Christ and live a life filled with the power of the Spirit.

The church that lives out social holiness actively transforms society, not only through its pious worship, but even more through its pious commitment to embody mercy and justice (Lee 2015, 343).

Amanda Berry Smith was one of the first African-American women to become an evangelist, missionary, and social reformer from the Wesleyan-Holiness movement (Leclerc 2010, 120). Despite being born a slave, she was able to gain respect from both the black church and white church because of her spiritual fervor and works to eliminate prejudice. She also became the first black woman international evangelist when she preached throughout the United Kingdom in the year 1878. The following year, Amanda began her missionary work in India, and two years later, she moved to Africa. She worked for the education of children and the improvement of the status of women for eight years in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Alexander 2009, 9). Upon Amanda's return to the United States until her death, she served poor children through her orphanage in Harvey, Illinois (Leclerc 2010, 121). Amanda worked in societies that were not only segmented by development but also by racial and gender biases. She proved that even from her disadvantaged point, she could work for the inclusion of those who are also in the margins. Through her life's work, Amanda created a familial bond among the people she worked with, a bond which makes them a family that transcends skin colors and socio-economic backgrounds.

Salvation as Restoration of God's Image

Wesley's understanding of soteriology stands out because of its two "not only, but also" aspects: (1) salvation is not only for the propitiation of sin, but also for the restoration of the image of God and (2) salvation is not only personal, but also communal. Justification is not the end-all and be-all of salvation in Wesley's theology. In Sermon 85, Wesley explained that at the very heart of salvation is sanctification—the restoration of the image of God in humanity through transformation into the likeness of Christ. In other words, salvation is a being inducted into a new way of living; it is a being in a loving relationship with the triune God, with other human beings, and with all creation. Hence, growing in Christ pertains not merely to individual Christlikeness, but also to the thriving of a community's life into the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:12–16). Wesley called this "social Christianity" or "social

holiness," a community sanctified by loving God and loving one another.

The life of Emma Whittemore is one that best displays salvation as restoration of God's image. Emma and her family lived opulently in 19th-century New York, a time when the city was beginning to be a vital place of economic and political development in America (Whittemore 1931, 41). Intoxicated by their wealth and social status, Emma and her husband lived desensitized to the abject poverty on the other side of the metropolis. This was until Emma and her husband listened to a sermon by Jerry McAuley, an ex-convict who ministered in Water Street, a place in Manhattan which gained notoriety for its several rum shops and brothels. In such a place, Emma and her husband were confronted by what she would later refer to as their "useless lives," and they were deeply convicted of their arrogance and neglect of the things of God (Whittemore 1931, 41–48). The Whittemores knelt alongside the alcoholics and the prostitutes, and at the altar both were filled by the love of God and love for neighbor.

Emma would later work among prostitutes, providing them shelters and training for alternative sources of income like gardening, dressmaking, and poultry-raising to pull the women out of the sex trade (Stanley 2002, 3). In 1890, she opened the first Door of Hope as a rescue center for prostitutes. Ninety-seven Doors of Hope were operating by the time of her death, and later 250 more were opened to rescue thousands of fallen women (Stanley 2002, 4). Emma and the women who worked alongside her were bearing the image of Christ and through the Doors of Hope were imprinting Christ's image to women who used to be defined by guilt and shame. The love of God manifested in them not only through personal piety but also through social holiness. Amidst the negative effect of *Gesellschaft*-ing in New York that threatened to abandon these women as victims on the margins, a *Gemeinschaft* of sisters emerged—one marked by the restorative power of the love of God and love for one's neighbor.

IV. Courage to Engage the Current Context

Humanity cannot escape development and its consequences that change social structures. Modernization not only affects the economic and political landscape of a society but also people's communal bonds. Women of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition like Catherine Booth, Amanda Berry Smith,

and Emma Whittemore, along with the thousands who were unnamed in the chronicles, proved that *Gemeinschaft*s can exist among *Gesellschaft*s. They have shown that the power of social holiness can unite communities via mutual care and self-giving. These 19th-century women continue to give courage to Christians still grappling with the *Gemeinschaft*-ing and *Gesellschaft*-ing of their 21st-century context—courage to replicate their ministry to the casualties of developmental trade-offs and courage to imagine how the Wesleyan doctrine of social holiness can make new directions for a more holistic understanding of Transformational Development.

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