



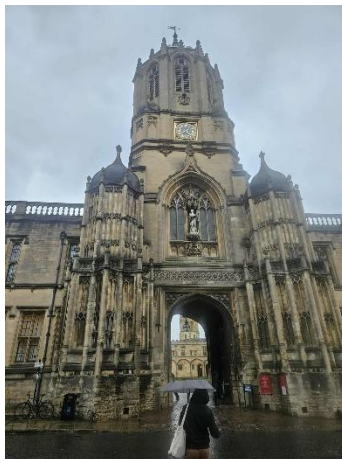
CHRIST CHURCH
500 YEARS | 1525—2025

Pilgrimage to Christ Church, Oxford

by

Rev. Roderick Andrew Lee Ford, Litt.D., Esq.

[26 October 2025]



“[T]he families which live by faith look for those eternal blessings which are promised, and use as pilgrims such advantages of time and of earth as do not fascinate and divert them from God.”

-- St. Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God* (Book 19, Sec. 17)



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500 YEARS | 1525 – 2025

“Pilgrimage to Christ Church, Oxford- A Homily”

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[26 October 2025]

Psalm 131: 1-3

“A Humble Heart”

A song of ascents. Of David.

1. My heart is not proud, Lord,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.
2. But I have calmed and quieted myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.
3. Israel, put your hope in the Lord
both now and forevermore.

Shalom!

And happy Sunday morning.

In Psalms 120 through 134, we find very special “songs of ascent” which are said to have been written for the Israelites or Jews while making their pilgrimages to Jerusalem at various times throughout the year.

Psalms 131 is one of those passages.

I have selected it because it certainly accurately describes the humility with which I accepted the task of making a journey to our mother country of England just last week, and to deliver a speech to distinguished guests at the historic Royal Society of Arts.¹

Up to this point, I had always been an avid reader of English and British history, and an admirer of several English or British theologians, political philosophers, and scientists – since at least the late 1980s.

And so, the enormity and magnitude of my journey to England and of the tasks that I was assigned to perform were not lost upon me.

Verse one of Psalm 131 says, “*my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*” These sentiments prevailed upon me, as I set forth in the execution of the planning of my journey and my speech.

Earlier this year, I lost my mother. My friends in England, who were receiving me as their special guest, had been so kind as to coordinate a Roman Catholic mass in commemoration of her. Hence, the planning of this trip to England continuously placed my mother in my mind.

¹ See **Exhibit A**, “The Chancellor’s Brochure,” by clicking the following link:

<https://nebula.wsimg.com/a602df737311d323cea39cddb2378142?AccessKeyId=CFD051C099636C9F5827&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>

All this enabled me to connect the fact that England is our mother country; and that I was traveling, as an American citizen, to the Mother country of the United States for the first time in my life. Hence, the meaning of my journey to England would be that of a solemn “pilgrimage.”

The second and third verses of Psalm 131 next came into play:

“Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is

Weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.”

I resolved, therefore, to make my journey to England into a “pilgrimage.”

Preface and Introduction

The LORD has placed upon my heart to deliver this special homily, or sermon, on that journey. Indeed, this was no ordinary trip or journey – it was in every conceivable respect a *pilgrimage*.

A pilgrimage has deep religious or spiritual meaning and significance.²

“A pilgrimage is a journey to a holy place, which can lead to a personal transformation, after which the pilgrim returns to their daily life....

“Pilgrimages frequently involve a journey or search of moral or spiritual significance.

“Typically, it is a journey to a shrine or other location of importance to a person's beliefs and faith....”³

² See, e.g., “Pilgrimage,” Wikipedia (online).

³ Ibid.

The Christian interpretation of all sorts of pilgrimages in the Bible is to treat them as a metaphor for the Christian life, which is understood as a journey towards a spiritual destination.

Life's spiritual journey involves faith, obedience, and perseverance as believers are "conformed to the image of Christ" and prepared for their "heavenly inheritance."

The symbolism of the "pilgrimage" also highlights the important fact that believers are temporary residents on Earth, and their true home is with God.

Pilgrimage in the Tanakh (i.e., Old Testament):

In the Torah, we find Abraham and Jacob taking significant journeys that represent "pilgrimages," because these journeys carried divine purpose and meaning.

For instance, in the Book of Exodus, the 40-year journey which the Israelites took through the wilderness to the Promised Land may be characterized as a "pilgrimage."

In the Book of Deuteronomy, we find in the Law of Moses several laws which required the Israelites to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times a year for major festivals like Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

We find in the New Testament that the family of Jesus, as practicing Jews, kept those same laws and made those same pilgrimages. Likewise, Jesus himself, together with all of his disciples, made those same pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

Pilgrimage as a Spiritual Metaphor

Since the resurrection of Christ, the Early Church continued to develop liturgical, ritualistic, and symbolic practices, including the practice of making pilgrimages to holy sites.

Early Christians later developed the tradition of visiting sites in the Holy Land associated with Jesus and the apostles.

Thus using this same allegorical method of the pilgrimage, I made my journey to England into a “pilgrimage.”

In 597 A.D., Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine of Canterbury to England, where the said Augustine met King Aethelbert, who converted to Christianity and made England into a Christian kingdom. England (and Great Britain) has retained that status ever since! My pilgrimage to England is an acknowledgement of that fact, and so much more.

Christ Church, Oxford

As a sort of church historian and cultural anthropologist, I was especially attracted to visiting Christ Church, Oxford during my brief sojourn in England during the past week.⁴

For one thing, the name of a college being “Christ Church” intrigued me. How could a “college” also be a “church”; or how could a “church” also be referred to as a “college,” and also remain a part of one of the world’s great research institutions in Oxford University? Therefore, I resolved to visit Oxford to find answers to these questions.

My visit to Christ Church, Oxford was part of a larger spiritual pilgrimage.

As previously mentioned, I had already determined that my trip to England was to serve as my pilgrimage to one of the great centers of the Christian faith since ancient times.

I had already resolved to set forth on a very spiritual pilgrimage⁵ to St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, where I attended a Eucharist service, and to

⁴ Sunday, October 19, 2025.

⁵ “A pilgrimage is a journey to a holy place, which can lead to a personal transformation, after which the pilgrim returns to their daily life.... Pilgrimages frequently involve a journey or search

Westminster Abbey.⁶ And, later, I resolved to make a trip to the city of Oxford, England where I would commemorate the 500th anniversary of the founding of Christ Church.⁷

For an American legal and theology scholar such as myself, the chance to visit St. Paul's Cathedral; the Westminster Abbey; and Christ Church, Oxford was an opportunity of a lifetime.

As a church historian, I have long desired to visit St. Paul's Cathedral because of its ancient roots to an original church founded on its site in, circa, 604 A.D.; and, also, because St. Paul's Cathedral is the diocesan seat of the Bishop of London. Westminster Abbey had a very similar attraction.

I have also long desired to make a spiritual pilgrimage to Christ Church, Oxford. The Christ Church Cathedral is the "mother church" for the diocese of Oxford as well as the chapel for Christ Church College.

And Christ Church College is arguably Oxford's most famous college. Over the years, I have read much about this center of academic learning. Indeed, dozens of England's most influential theologians, politicians, business leaders, and artists were graduates of this college.

Most significantly, in my mind, Christ Church also epitomized the very heart and soul of England's expression of the catholic Christian faith. Christ Church exemplified the history and heritage of England's system of law and unwritten English constitution.

of moral or spiritual significance. Typically, it is a journey to a shrine or other location of importance to a person's beliefs and faith...." See "Pilgrimage," *Wikipedia* (online).

⁶ <https://www.stpauls.co.uk/>

⁷ 1525 to 2025, A.D.

And Christ Church also symbolizes England's political heritage and the unity of Church and State, whereby the monarch of Great Britain serves as the governor or head of both.⁸

But Christ Church also holds a special place that is near to my soul because of the Methodist revival that was begun there during the 1730s by several Oxford University students led by John Wesley (1703 - 1791) and Charles Wesley (1707- 1788).⁹ These young men were fighting to reconcile the older, traditional Christian ideals with emerging secularism, materialism, and the growing irreligion of the British empire. Nay, they sought after, and cultivated, a more simplified, authentic holiness not only for themselves but also for all of England.

Indeed, John Wesley later explained that the objective of Methodism had been to "reform the nation, and in particular the Church" and to "spread scriptural holiness over the land."¹⁰

When the label "Methodist" was first applied to these Oxford men, it was a mark of humiliation and derision. As I left the city of London and headed north for the 50-60 mile train ride to Oxford, the humiliation and

⁸ While in the United States, we have embraced "liberty of conscience" and "free exercise of religion" and the doctrine of the separation of "church and state," I have never ceased, as a devoted Christian, to be attracted to constitutional system of England and Great Britain because there, whether impolitic or not, the divinity and sovereignty of Christ is fully acknowledged. This Christian legal, constitutional, and cultural heritage is clearly exemplified in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (1159) , Henry de Bracton's *The Laws and Customs of England* (1235), Edward Coke's *Institutes of the Laws of England* (c. 1610), William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765), Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), and John Wesley's *Thoughts Upon Slavery* (1772) and other *Collected Sermons* (1730-1791). As a Christian lawyer (with ancient Hebrew inclinations), I have long been interested in these Christian foundations of Anglo-American law.

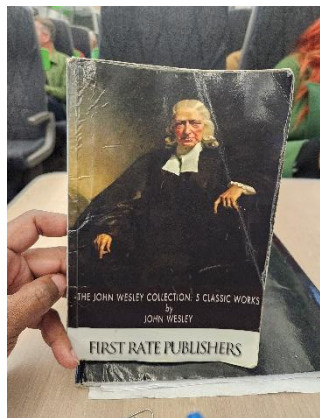
⁹ In truth, Sir Isaac Newton (1643 - 1727) is included in this listing. When Henry VIII chartered Christ Church College at Oxford in 1545, he also chartered Trinity College at Cambridge, which is the "sister" college of Christ Church, during the same year. Newton's persuasive writings on *The Book of Daniel* and the *Apocalypse of St. John* have also greatly influenced my thinking about the central place of the Christian religion upon English and British culture, law, and religion.

¹⁰ www.wisconsinumc.org.

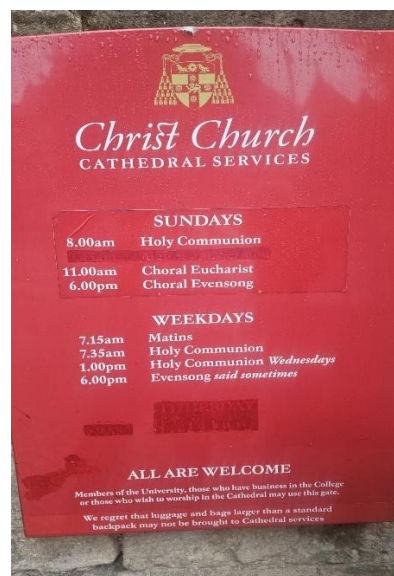
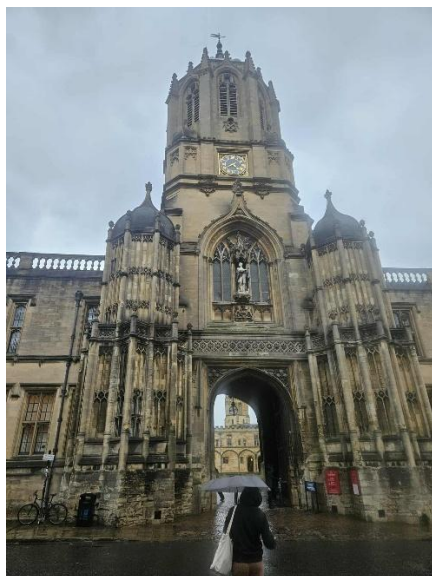
derision of these young Oxford men captivated the focus of my thoughts and attention.

During this train ride, I read a pamphlet titled *The John Wesley Collection: 5 Classic Works*. I read two of the five works within the pamphlet, namely, "On Prayer," and "Advice to People Called Methodist."

Understanding the nature of this epiphany, something moved me to snap a quick photo of the book, as I rode the train from London up to Oxford, viz:



And then I meditated. I then prayed and began to prepare myself for the solemnity the precise moment when I would first step foot upon the hallowed grounds of the Christ Church, Oxford.



History and Founding of Christ Church, Oxford

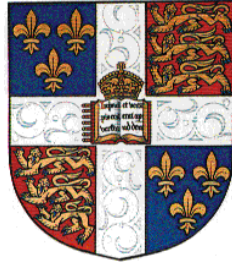
In 1525, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey initially named the school “Cardinal College” before he later fell from the grace of King Henry VIII, who later reorganized the school as Christ Church in 1546. Since the 1980s, I had read all about Cardinal Wolsey and his run-ins with Henry VIII, but only recently did I learn about his connections to Christ Church, Oxford.

I am holding in my hands a booklet titled, “Friends of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford 2024-2025,” that I received at the entrance of the Christ Church Cathedral, and it contains a beautiful portrait of Cardinal Wolsey. And so, both the church and the college have in no way severed its Roman Catholic legacy or connections to Cardinal Wolsey.

In fact, Christ Church continues to bear Cardinal Wolsey’s original coat of arms, as set forth below:



The Christ Church College is one of the constituent colleges of Oxford University. The Christ Church Cathedral, on the other hand, serves as both the college’s chapel as well as the cathedral for the entire Oxford Diocese.



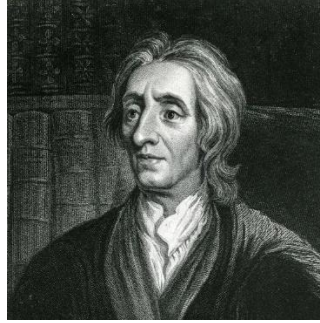
Christ Church Cathedral Arms

“At least thirteen British prime ministers have been educated at Christ Church, including Sir Robert Peel (Prime Minister 1834–1835 & 1841–1846), Anthony Eden (1955–1957) and William Ewart Gladstone (1892–94, 1886, 1880–85, & 1868–74). At least ten Chancellors of the Exchequer have also been educated at Christ Church including Nigel Lawson (1983–1989) and William Murray (Lord Chief Justice 1756–1788 and Chancellor of the Exchequer 1757) as well as other prominent UK politicians such as Quintin McGarel Hogg (Lord Chancellor 1979–1987). Christ Church has also educated many people who have gone on to take prominent political roles abroad, such as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (former Prime minister of Pakistan), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari (Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party), S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (Prime Minister of Ceylon (later Sri Lanka)) and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney.”

Four Christ Church Alumnus Who Influenced Me the Most

Four Christ Church alumnus have had a most profound influence upon my Christian theological development and career as a civil rights or constitutional lawyer.

The first Oxford alumnus of note is the physician and political philosopher John Locke (1632 - 1704). Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* has been in my personal library since at least 1989. I have re-read and analyzed this work over again since then.



John Locke (1632 - 1704)

Several years ago, I memorialized Locke's influence upon my spiritual, intellectual, and professional development in an essay titled "Christian Philosophy of John Locke," which can be retrieved at the following link:

"Christian Philosophy of John Locke"

Web Link

<https://nebula.wsimg.com/872db9af6a9f85a6c74e7028a793b085?AccessKeyId=CFD051C099636C9F5827&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>

The second Oxford alumnus¹¹ who profoundly influenced my understanding of the Christian religion, Protestantism, and Puritanism was the Quaker William Penn (1644- 1718).

Here, I am convinced that Penn's Quaker social and political philosophy became the predominant form of Christian worship and Christian governance in the United States.

The Quaker commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which Penn founded, became the bellwether of American liberty. And the neighboring state of New Jersey, where Penn served as trustee, followed suit. The city of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) and the Presbyterian College at Princeton,

¹¹ William Penn attended Oxford from 1660 to 1662 but did not graduate. He was expelled because of his non-conformist religious beliefs. However, Penn later attended law school at Lincoln's Inn. The Wikipedia encyclopedia lists "Christ Church, Oxford" as his "Alma Mater."

N.J., were Quaker-influenced strongholds that helped to set the tempo for American religious liberty, constitutional law and civil rights, and individual autonomy.

In fact, I am convinced that the American Declaration of Independence (1776) is a “Christian document” primarily because it is also a “Quaker” document. Indeed, the Declaration’s phraseology, including (a) “*the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God*”; (b) “*all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness*”; (c) “*the Supreme Judge of the world*”; and (d) “*the protection of divine Providence,*” reflects 17th- and 18th-century Quaker religious and political ideology.

The Quaker interpretation of the New Testament – especially the Gospel of John – led naturally to the type of Christian constitution which Penn and others established for the colony of Pennsylvania. The Declaration of ’76 reflected those same Quaker ideals. [See, generally, David Yount, *How the Quakers Invented America* (2007).]

Indeed, the Quakers and the Quaker-colony of Pennsylvania were the first to establish a “Christian” frame of civil government where freedom of religion and an individualized bill of rights were set forth within a written constitutional charter, while simultaneously acknowledging Christianity as the official religion of the colony.



William Penn (1644 – 1718)

William Penn’s and the Quakers’ roles in laying the constitutional foundations of colonial British North America and the new United States may be more clearly understood within the context with how the Quakers cooperated with the Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and other

non-conformist sects in shaping religious freedom and constitutional government.

Finally, the last two Christ Church alumnus who had the most influence upon my intellectual and moral development were the Reverends John Wesley (1703 - 1791) and Charles Wesley (1707 - 1788).

The Wesley brothers were both Anglican priests and co-founders of the Methodist revival at Oxford during the 1730s.



Rev. John Wesley



Rev. Charles Wesley

Growing up while attending both Methodist and Baptist churches, I had not known of the name John Wesley or of his influence in the church world and beyond. Even though I was officially baptized as an African Methodist (A.M.E.) proselyte, I was never taught about the history of the African Methodist denominations' historic link to the life and work of John Wesley.

The public schools and attendance at two great public universities never encouraged or hinted at the importance of church history. Therefore, I missed John Wesley and the Oxford Methodist movement entirely as a college and law student, and throughout most of my young adulthood.

Not until I was in my mid- 40s did I begin to read about the life and legacy of the Rev. John Wesley! I downloaded, printed, and compiled dozens of his sermons and speeches.

Similarly, I also encountered the great legacy of the Rev. Charles Wesley's poems and hymns. I had not realized that C. Wesley's musical genius had had a profound influence upon me since I was a child who grew upon in the Baptist and Methodist churches in rural northern Florida.

I knew the songs and the music, but I did not know that their author was Charles Wesley. For instance, I knew, loved, and sang the famous hymn "*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*," but I did not know that its author was the great poet, lyricist, and Reverend Charles Wesley.

During the last ten years of my life, I have become much more knowledgeable of the life and work of the Wesley brothers and of the Methodist movement.

Several years ago, I wrote a pamphlet titled "An Essay on the History and Rise of the Methodist Movement during the 18th Century," which commemorates the Methodist movement, found here:

**"An Essay on the History and Rise of the Methodist Movement"
Web Link**

<https://nebula.wsimg.com/b75e156d3d2f6bf441ad5fb262b0b703?AccessKeyId=CFD051C099636C9F5827&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>

Hence, four Oxford alumnus-- John Locke, William Penn, John Wesley, and Charles Wesley -- having had such a great influence upon my Christian faith, I could not leave England without first visiting and paying homage to Christ Church at Oxford. This was not a visit to a museum but rather to a church for a time of reflection and prayer.

Pilgrimage Meditations on Wesley's *On Prayer* and *Advice to People Called Methodist*¹²

As I sat on the train, I re-read Rev. John Wesley's note, "*On Prayer*," in which he writes, "God's command [is] to 'pray without ceasing.'"

I paused.

This sentiment would set the tone for the rest of my trip – my pilgrimage.

Rev. Wesley next explains, "all is prayer," whether "we act or suffer for him."

I had heard this before, but for some reason, I needed to hear this again. Prayer is not simply falling to one's knees and muttering words to an invisible, all-powerful being.

Instead, prayer is a total life activity.

This sort of prayer as being a "total life activity," explained Rev. Wesley, comes from "the desire of pleasing" God.

"[T]he desire to please God," says Rev. Wesley, "is a continual prayer."

For Rev. Wesley, everything that a true Christian does with a "purified heart" is prayer.

Hence, Rev. Wesley's "*On Prayer*" helped to place me in a proper frame of mind as I disembarked off the train at the Oxford rail station and headed in the direction of Christ Church.

¹² More than a cultural excursion, this was indeed a spiritual pilgrimage the place where the Methodist revival was born and took its early shape. And so, during my train ride from London to Oxford, I prayed, meditated, and re-read John Wesley's "*Advice to People Called Methodist*," which is reprinted in a little Wesleyan handbook that I own. More than a historical marker, Wesley's masterful work is also universal, timeless, and speaks to the spiritual condition of all true believers. And so, as I re-read this work, I was placed into a state of prayer, mediation, and solemn reflection upon the hallowed ground upon which I was about to embark.

But I must hasten now, the preparation of my visitation was not yet complete....

I finally turned to several passages in Rev. Wesley's essay titled *"Advice to People Called Methodist."*

This essay helped to me to realize that John Wesley, like the Apostle Paul before him, acknowledged that being a true, sincere Christian was not an endeavor that could be undertaken lightly or without encountering resistance.

For instance, in his second letter to Timothy, Paul writes, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."¹³

Likewise, in *"Advice to People Called Methodist,"* Rev. Wesley re-states and expounds upon the same theme.

First, Rev. Wesley set forth his definition of a "Methodist" by providing several features of the typical "Methodist" Christian. The "Methodist," says he, is committed to **"holiness of heart and life, inward and outward conformity in all things to the revealed will of God."**

The "Methodist" aims to imitate God "in all his perfections...," says Rev. Wesley. The "Methodist," says he, acknowledges that it is not him, but Christ who worketh within, who enables sinners to do good deeds and to be redeemed.

Since the Methodist's "strictness of life" requires them to "abstain from fashionable diversions," to engage "in trade" in a very ethical manner, or to strictly observe the Lord's Day, their name and example unavoidably caused conflict and gave offense to all sorts of men, including "men of reason," "drunkards," "Sabbath-breakers," "common swearers," "other open sinners," and even to "friends and relations in particular."

¹³ 2 Timothy 3:12(KJV).

Rev. Wesley then goes on to give the following forewarning to these early “Methodists,” stating:

You cannot but expect, that the offence continually arising from such a variety of provocations will gradually ripen into hatred, malice, and all other unkind tempers.... [Y]ou will lose, first, the love of your friends, relations, and acquaintance, even those who once loved you the most tenderly: then your business, for many will employ you no longer, nor ‘buy of such an one as you;’ and, in due time, (unless He who governs the world interpose,) your health, liberty, and life.

How sobering and heart-wrenching a forewarning to fellow his fellow “Methodist” Christians!

Being a Christian, says Rev. Wesley, is to be engaged in an ordeal. Indeed, to be a Christian is to be engaged in spiritual warfare.

To be sure, I have over three decades been preached to, lectured to, and informed about this challenging condition of the state of being a true Christian.

And I willingly chose this Christian way of life, despite the Apostle Paul’s and Rev. Wesley’s stern forewarnings, as if they had said, “*know first what you are getting yourself into, the Christian way of life is not easy!*”

The problem, however, is that in our modern world of *materialism* and *economic monopoly*, there are definite physical needs, and needs for social acceptance and credibility – all of which have deemed laudable goals in mainstream Christianity, viz:

- the need to earn a respectable living;
- the need to accumulate sufficient earning and wealth;
- the need to possess all of the trappings of professional success and credibility;
- the need for social and professional acceptability; and

- the need for some measure of worldly success!

Hence, our beloved mainstream Christian churches appear to preach, to teach, and to convey that the Christian faithful should have all of these worldly things, and, indeed, that they must have all of these worldly things – and that they can have them *without* hardship and *without* controversy and *without* humiliation!

As an American lawyer, and as a Christian advocate and disciple of Christ, I now know that this is simply not true! The true Christian life comes with hardship, controversy, and humiliation!

During my pilgrimage to Christ Church, Oxford – as I rode the train while reading Wesley, I fell upon a different realization that I had henceforth been hiding from.

Hitherto, I had lied to myself about the truth of the Gospel! I had long desired a Christian way of life that is filled with worldly success without the hardship and the persecution. But now, as Rev. Wesley had so eloquently explained, persecution, misunderstanding, and hardship are to be expected when one pursues *mercy, justice, love, and truth*.¹⁴

I must hasten now... having just received the call to prepare to disembark from the train at the Oxford train station!

My spiritual preparation for my pilgrimage was about to come to an end....

¹⁴ As I sat on the train, I again questioned whether the Christian way of life was worth it; and, if so, why was I still so frustrated by the fact that, after having taken up the Christian way of life, I nevertheless remained so flabbergasted and so disappointed every time, while in pursuit of *mercy, justice, love, and truth*, I had been vehemently confronted with backlash, slander, false accusations, and ridicule.

What I recognized in that moment, however, was that what the Apostle Paul¹⁵ and Rev. Wesley had said was actually the *truth* – namely, *all* who will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall* suffer persecution.¹⁶

Seeking *mercy, justice, love, and truth*, my resolve and resolution were now even more poignantly felt as a trained lawyer. In the United States, the radical conception of the “Christian lawyer” being that of an oxymoron, I nevertheless resolved to maintain a “Wesleyan-Methodist” conception of carrying out my professional endeavors as a “Christian lawyer.”

Hence, my spiritual pilgrimage to Christ Church, Oxford was an embrace of my “Christian otherness” that will sometimes be subjected to persecution for no other reason than to abate the quest for *mercy, justice, love, and truth*.

Here, I think, to be a “Christian” is to be none other than “Spiritual Israel” – i.e., a Jew in spirit.¹⁷ Jewish persecutions often having similar implications!¹⁸ Such persecution is *redemptive suffering*.

For the first time in my life, during this pilgrimage to Christ Church, Oxford, I *lovingly embraced* and *lovingly accepted* persecution as a great honor and privilege of being affiliated with Christ, and as being a true Christian. For to live and to suffer with Christ, whose “*mercy, justice, love, and truth*” we are to help to facilitate and establish, is a great honor!

Such persecution is *redemptive suffering*. This, I now accept as honor.

“Justice, mercy, and truth,” says Rev. Wesley is **“your manly, noble, generous religion... which places religion in doing what God hath not**

¹⁵ 2 Timothy 3:12 (KJV)(“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”)

¹⁶ Id.; Wesley, “Advice to People Called Methodist,” *supra*.

¹⁷ Romans 2: 29 (“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly....”).

¹⁸ Judaism teaches “Justice, justice shall you pursue.” Deuteronomy 16:20.

enjoined, or abstaining from... the unkindness of bigotry, which confines our affection to our own party, sect, or opinion....”

My pilgrimage to Christ Church, Oxford was a spiritual revival of sorts, and a reaffirmation and rededication to those early Methodist principles set forth in Rev. Wesley’s “*Advice to the People Called Methodist.*”

For the sake of God’s *mercy, justice, love, and truth*— persecution for being a “Methodist” or for being a “Chistian,” though disheartening and inevitable, is well worth it!

Amen.



Rev. Dr. Roderick Andrew Lee Ford at Christ Church, Oxford (19 Oct. 2025)