

## 499 Enrollment Form

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Check all that apply: \_\_\_\_\_ 499 A     499 B    \_\_\_\_\_ 499C

*Please type your responses using an electronic copy of this form. Contact Joy Drinnon for a copy or visit the Office of Undergraduate website.*

Enrollment Term and Year:   Spring 2014  

Student Name(s) and Contact Info: Albertus Pumpernickel (AEPumpernickel@my.milligan.edu)

Faculty Mentor(s): Craig Farmer

Student Major and Expected Graduation Date: Humanities; May 2015

Desired prefix for this 499 (e.g., BIBL, HUMN, PSYC): HUMN

Relevant Prerequisite Courses/Experience: Taken both semesters of Church History (HIST 341/342)

Anticipated Expenses or Special Equipment Needs: not applicable

Planned research activities (499A): *Please attach a list of research activities you and your mentor plan to do this semester.*

Research Proposal (499 B): *Please attach a typed research proposal which follows the attached guidelines.*

Conference Plans (499C only): *Please attach a description of any conferences or journals where you hope to share you research. Please attach a copy of an abstract and bibliography of your research thus far. (Note: The committee may request additional information if this is a new project and you do not already have a 499B proposal on file with the Office of Undergraduate Research.)*

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Area Chair's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of UR Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Introduction and Purpose of the Study**

I would like to explore John Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection. I am a Methodist, but I never heard about this idea until I took Dr. Farmer's Church History II class, where I wrote a short analytical essay on a passage in which Wesley discusses the idea. I would like to know more about Wesley's idea so that I might better understand my own heritage and because I think Christians today should give a hearing to this idea, which is just as relevant today as it was in the eighteenth century.

## **Statement of the Problem**

I would like to know more about how Wesley defended his idea of Christian perfection on the basis of Scripture. Texts like Romans 7, where Paul talks about doing the things he does not want to do, would seem to contradict the notion that Christians can attain a state of perfection in this life. My plan is to delve into some of Wesley's biblical commentaries on the Pauline epistles in order to see how he handles those texts that would seem to jeopardize his idea of Christian perfection.

## **Approaching the Problem**

I plan to present the findings of my research in a formal research paper. Fortunately, all of Wesley's biblical commentaries are in the public domain and are available online. I have already consulted some secondary literature, but I will need to consult more. My plan is to devote the first half of the semester to reading (primary and secondary sources), organizing my thoughts, and formulating my thesis. Over Spring Break I plan to draft a detailed outline of the paper. Then over the course of the three weeks subsequent to Spring Break I will compose my first draft. Next, I will submit my draft to my mentor, who will give me feedback. For the remainder of the semester, I will try to incorporate his feedback into my final draft, while making other tweaks and adjustments as necessary. My ultimate hope is to take a 499C course in Spring 2015 and present this paper at the Stone-Campbell Journal Conference during that semester.

## **Preliminary Review of the Literature**

Berghdorfer, Sidney. *A Strange Warming?: Christian Perfection in the Early Works of John Wesley*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

A helpful introduction to the doctrine of Christian perfection, but it does not discuss Wesley's biblical commentaries.

Clackenspiel, Percival. *Paulus Methodistus: John Wesley as Reader of the Pauline Epistles*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1991.

A very good account of Wesley's approach to biblical interpretation, but it does not talk about how Wesley supported his understanding of Christian perfection on the basis of Paul.

McGillicuddy, Hamish. *John Wesley and the Pursuit of Holiness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

He does discuss Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection, but like Berghdorfer, he does not have much to say about how Wesley supports that notion from the Bible.

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Suzuki, Michiko. *John Wesley: a Guide for the Perplexed*. Washington, D. C.: Abingdon Press, 1992.

This book contains a chapter on Christian perfection that mentions that Wesley believed that this idea was compatible with Paul's theology. Although the author does not elaborate on this point, there are several footnotes in this chapter that list some books and articles that appear to be relevant to my project.