

The Forgotten Fifth All

DAVID JULIANO

Florida Methodist pastor, David Juliano, reveals a forgotten dimension of Wesleyan theology hiding in plain sight – and asks why Methodism's greatest song isn't being sung.

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‘All must witness to their salvation’

In September 2024, researchers at the Leipzig Municipal Libraries in Germany made an astonishing discovery. Hidden among their collections was a previously unknown composition by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – a twelve-minute serenade written when the composer was barely a teenager. They named it *Ganz kleine Nachtmusik* – ‘Very Little Night Music.’ For over 260 years, this little masterpiece had been sitting on a library shelf, unheard and unplayed. When it was finally performed at the Leipzig Opera, fans queued for 400 metres to be among the first humans to hear this music in centuries. The young musicians who premiered the piece had been handed the manuscript without even being told what it was. No one could have imagined what it turned out to be.

I know how those researchers felt, because while researching for my book on Wesleyan theology, I made a discovery of my own – not in a German library, but in the *Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* (Vickers (ed.), 2000). What I found had been hiding in plain sight for over a century. I had stumbled upon, if you like, Methodism’s own lost masterpiece.

Most Methodists who know their heritage can recite the Four Alls:

- All need to be saved
- All can be saved
- All can know themselves to be saved
- All can be saved to the uttermost

These four statements beautifully summarise the Wesleyan gospel, but what I discovered is that in 1909, Dr George Eayrs added a fifth clause: ‘All should declare their salvation.’ Decades later, at the Ecumenical Methodist Conference in 1951, Dr W.E. Sangster put it even more forcefully: ‘All must witness to their salvation.’

Must. Not ‘should’ or ‘might want to consider.’ Must.

For over a hundred years, this ‘Fifth All’ has gone virtually unnoticed – even among Methodist evangelicals. When I stumbled upon it, I felt like Indiana Jones discovering the Lost Ark. Here was a crucial piece of our heritage, right there in the published record, and almost no one seemed to know about it.

A SONG THAT MUST BE SUNG

The theme of this edition of RE:VIVE is ‘This is my story, this is my song.’ I want to suggest that the Fifth All does not merely fit that theme – it is the theme. After all, what is a testimony if not the Fifth All in action? A saved person singing the song of what God has done.

Think of it this way: the Four Alls are a magnificent composition. They lay out the full scope of salvation – its necessity, universality, assurance and fullness. It is breathtaking theology. But without the Fifth All, it is a beautiful song that lies on the composer’s desk and is never sung. Glorious music that no one ever hears.

Bayrs and Sangster understood something vital: theology without practice is incomplete. Or as the apostle James warns, ‘faith without works is dead’ (James 2:17). You can have the most beautiful theology in the world, but if you never share it with anyone, what good is it? The Four Alls describe what God has done for us. The Fifth All describes what we must do in response: tell someone.

I believe the decline of Western Methodism is connected to our forgetfulness of this Fifth All. In 2022, Dr John Hayward, a Christian mathematician at the University of South Wales, analysed church data using the same ‘R’ rate technique that became familiar during the pandemic. His research suggests that at current rates, British Methodism could face extinction by 2036 – almost exactly 300 years after God raised up the Wesleys ‘to reform the nation, particularly the church, and to spread scriptural holiness over the land.’

I do not share these figures to throw stones from across the pond. British Methodism shaped my faith and my calling, and I love it dearly, but I believe we have the remedy – and it has been hiding in our own tradition all along.

There are, at the end of the day, only two kinds of churches: a telling church and a dying church. That conviction is what drove me to write my forthcoming book on the Five Alls. I did not write it as an academic exercise. I wrote it to put a tool in the hands of ordinary Christians so they could share the gospel with confidence and joy.

MY STORY, MY SONG

My connection to British Methodism is personal. I first encountered the Four Alls as a young minister serving in the Tamworth and Lichfield circuit in the early 1990s. They never left me, but my journey to the Fifth All took some unexpected turns.

After my time in England, I lost my calling. I returned to the United States defeated and unsure of my faith. I needed a job, and the only thing I was trained to do was preach. So, when a District Superintendent rang and asked me to serve two little rural churches in

Tennessee, I said yes – not out of spiritual conviction, but out of necessity.

I describe it this way: imagine a trained paramedic who decides the whole thing was a mistake. Then, driving home, he comes upon a terrible crash. People are bleeding in the road. He doesn’t say, ‘Well, I decided not to be a paramedic.’ He jumps in and helps. That’s what I did. Somewhere in the midst of visiting hospitals, preaching sermons and caring for souls, my calling came flooding back – not through a dramatic experience, but through the simple act of sharing the gospel with people who needed it.

The Fifth All, lived out, brought me back to life before I even knew it had a name.

Years later, a woman in my congregation named Diana approached me with a vision: it was of an evangelism group she wanted to call ‘Grow and Go.’ It would involve ordinary church members going into the community to share their faith at shopping centres, the county fair, anywhere people gathered. I was terrified and thrilled in equal measure, but I knew this was a movement of the Holy Spirit.

What happened next astonished me. When I invited these lay people to share their testimonies during worship, many confessed that trying to share their faith had exposed their own spiritual need. One woman said, ‘I thought I was a Christian because I went to church and tried to be a good person, but when Diana asked me to share my faith with strangers, I realised I didn’t really have anything to share. That’s when I understood I needed to be born again.’

Another said, ‘The first time we went to the shopping centre, I was terrified. But as I started talking to people about what Jesus meant to me, I discovered he meant more to me than I ever realised.’

These were Wesley’s ‘Almost Christians’ becoming altogether Christians – and it happened because they tried to live out the Fifth All.

ONCE I WAS BLIND

As the father of children with disabilities, one of whom is blind, I find the story of the man born blind in John 9 profoundly personal – and the ultimate model of witnessing. The religious leaders demanded theological explanations he could not provide. His response was devastatingly simple: ‘I only know one thing: once I was blind, but now I see’ (John 9:25, paraphrase).



You don’t have to be a theologian. You don’t need a degree in divinity. People can argue with your theology, but they cannot argue with a changed life. You just need to tell what Jesus has done for you.

This is my story. This is my song. And it must be sung.

Mozart’s *Ganz kleine Nachtmusik* sat unplayed for 260 years. When it was finally performed, people were overwhelmed. The Fifth All has gone unnoticed for over a century, but the composition is complete. The theology is sound. The song is written.

Now it needs to be sung – by you, by me, by every Methodist who has tasted grace and knows it is too good to keep to ourselves. Who in your life needs to hear your story? Your testimony doesn’t have to be polished or dramatic. Like the blind man, you simply need to say what is true.

As Charles Wesley wrote: ‘O let me commend my Saviour to you.’

That is the Forgotten Fifth All. And it is time we remembered it.

REV DAVID JULIANO

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PRAYER FOCUS

THE FORGOTTEN FIFTH ALL OF METHODISM

Pray for this forgotten Fifth All of Methodism to be spread abroad; for the Holy Spirit to convict people of the necessity of ‘telling our story’; courage for people to step out in faith into the unknown to talk about what Jesus means to them, a ‘must’ to witness about our salvation; pray for the church to wake up and sing our song! (Matthew 5:13-17; 1 Peter 3:13-15).

FOCUS ON THE CHURCH

Revival: Pray for the wind of God’s Spirit to blow through the church, bringing repentance and a turning

away from all that is not holy; pray for a return to our foundational roots of spreading Christian holiness across the land; pray for an acceptance and a desire to seek the work of the Holy Spirit; for all in positions of leadership within the church to uphold godly values (2 Timothy 4:1-4; James 4:4-10).

Cliff College: Pray for the Principal, Rev Andrew Stobart, and staff; for spiritual growth and confidence for all students; suitable placements and experiences for students to share their faith and reach out to others; for more students to come to the college to explore