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## Wilderness Beauty: A Means to Resolve Volitional Doubt

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## Wilderness Beauty: A Means to Resolve Volitional Doubt

### Abstract

Doubt is often part of Christian spiritual life. Matured doubt will influence the will (the volition) so as to keep the Christian doubter from acting like a Christian or even desiring the Christian life. This essay seeks to construct a theory designed to engage and help resolve volitional doubt by use of wilderness beauty. This theory incorporates three areas of study—Land and Leisure Management, Abraham Maslow's metamotivation theory, and Jonathan Edwards' aesthetic theology—to demonstrate the uniqueness and usefulness of wilderness beauty for resolving volitional doubt. Subsequent to the construction of the theory, practical suggestions for its application are given.

### Keywords

Volitional Doubt, Motivation, Inspiration, Beauty, Wilderness, Jonathan Edwards, Abraham Maslow, Transcendence, Aesthetics, Land and Leisure Management

### Cover Page Footnote

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## INTRODUCTION

### IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

Doubt is something many Christians either experience or will experience: it is the wrestling between differing, and usually, contrasting positions. Said another way, religious, Christian doubt is vacillation between whether to follow God or to abandon Him, and it is acknowledged and discussed in Scripture (James 1:6, Matthew 6:25, and the Psalms (143:7, 35:23, 38:21-22, and 42:11). Doubt may be broken down into several more specific subcategories: factual, emotional, and volitional.<sup>1</sup> Of the three, volitional doubt is the most dangerous.<sup>2</sup> When doubt has matured, it will result in the Christian's unwillingness to live as a disciple of the Lord Jesus.<sup>3</sup> Volitional doubt is a problem of the will: a believer chooses—by use of their will—not to act for God. It is titled “volitional” because it involves faculty of the will, and it is called “doubt” because it pertains to a believer's unwillingness to act for God, or put another way, to ‘choose for faith’.<sup>4</sup> It is not that he cannot; rather, he will not. A volitionally doubting person will have little to no external indicator of his discipleship. This is a dangerous position because no one can say he or she follows Jesus and not become like Jesus (1 John 2:6) and do the works that He does (John 14:12). Although it is—without a doubt—the heart which matters to God, Jesus taught that what is in the heart makes itself known externally (Luke 6:45).<sup>5</sup> Still, many volitional doubters have a glowing ember of faith left, and this ember of faith might be fanned in a wilderness environment. Os Guinness says the remedy “is [to] relearn to choose and commit themselves to the consequences of

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1. Gary Habermas, *Dealing With Doubt* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1990), under 39, 63, & 91. The categories can be more specific than this. Os Guinness in his book, *God in the Dark*, gives seven different categories. These seven categories can be roughly grouped into the three offered in this paper. Factual doubt is doubt caused by the supposed non-corroboration of facts. Emotional doubt is due to inner, non-rational fears; its emphasis is on the small percentages of doubt produced by uncertainty. And this uncertainty does not have the amount of significance to cause doubt which the emotional doubter gives it; rather, the high level of doubt accredited to the uncertainty really comes from emotions.

2. Gary Habermas, *The Thomas Factor: Using Your Doubts to Draw Closer to God* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999), 43-44. As Os Guinness also notes, this type of doubt is defined by the unwillingness to make choices for or in view of faith. Guinness agrees that this is a volitional problem, but designates it “lack of commitment.” Volitional doubt is perilous because the remedies necessary to overcome doubt are often ‘faith prescribed’, meaning that, one must be willing to enact the suggestions made by Scripture, but this is precisely what the doubter is unwilling to do. Even worse, a volitional doubter may be apathetic about the entire ‘faith crisis’: simply, the concern over his/her doubt is just not worth the effort.

3. Discipleship can simply mean here, “the mimicking of Jesus.” It is recognized that applying Jesus' teaching, life, and model to the 21<sup>st</sup> century has a number of problems. Still, it is trusted that many Christians can practice a great deal of what Jesus taught and model: I.e. forgiving, service, fasting, praying, etc.

4. ‘Choosing for faith’ means to commit to the consequences of being a disciple. This phrase is borrowed from Os Guinness, in his book, *God in the Dark*.

5. However broken this connection might be, any model of discipleship should teach *some* connection between heart and actions.

their choice [the choice of faith] ... As they do this, trusting in God's help...a sense of reality will return to their faith as well as their lives." So they must relearn how to choose to live like Jesus; they must choose to live out their faith. But how can this 'relearning' be facilitated? Certainly, a conducive environment for relearning faith is paramount. The wilds are arguably just such an environment due to their potent effects on man.

What is needed is motivation and inspiration in order to facilitate behavior change since such behavior change implies that the volition has changed as well; the volitional doubter also needs something to jar him out of his rigid doubt.<sup>6</sup> It has long been known that beauty and the wilderness influence man's motivation, inspiration, and overall health.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is proposed that a volitional doubter may have significant behavioral changes because of the effects of wilderness beauty.<sup>8</sup> It is true that the Scriptures support the idea that the heavens declare the glory of God and that humans can be influenced by this (Rom. 1:20, Ps 19ff). To supplement this truth, the proposed theory to follow incorporates research concerning wilderness and beauty from three areas of study: land management, psychology, and theology. By way of preview to the following thesis, the relearning which Guinness says is needed can happen in a wilderness environment, which not only provides an environment for relearning, but also generates the motivation and inspiration needed for behavioral (and volitional) change.

#### THE AESTHETIC-EFFECTIVE THEORY

This theory contends that beauty, specifically, beauty in the wilderness, is a potent means through which the desire to relearn how to choose for faith may be facilitated.<sup>9</sup> The beauty of the wilderness engenders motivation and inspiration, both of which may serve the purpose of encouraging the volitional doubter to choose for faith and seek God. Therefore, the main goal of this paper is to construct a theoretical method as to how the beauty of the wilds may be used for engaging and dissolving volitional doubt—an Aesthetic-Effective Theory.

To demonstrate how wilderness beauty might dissolve volitional doubt and reinvigorate the pursuit of God, three areas of study are used: Jonathan Edwards' aesthetic theology, Abraham Maslow's metamotivation theory, and Land and Leisure Management.<sup>10</sup> This last area of study demonstrates the effective practice

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6. Assuming that the behavior change is not due to coercion.

7. Plotinus, "Ennead One," in *The Enneads* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991).

8. Wilderness beauty is the collective unity and harmony of diverse mutually agreeing natural constituents—e.g. harmony from the combined unity of such things as trees, sun on the horizon, stream, sounds of nature, animals, grass, rolling hills, mountains, plains, etc.

9. "How to choose for faith" means to commit to the consequences of being a disciple.

10. Land and Leisure Management is a designation for the professional field involved in land management, parks and recreation, and leisure services. Although discussing an entire field may be reductionistic towards the complexities therein, it is the generally accepted maxims in the *professional provision of services* which contribute to this work. This paper does not claim to be able to represent the vast differing of opinion in this field's research branch.

of uniting Maslow's motivation theory with the wilderness environment: i.e. the aesthetic need which all humans have can be satisfied by wilderness beauty (this will be further explained later). Complementing Edwards' aesthetic theology, as will be seen, is Land and Leisure Management's philosophical affirmation that the wilds can help humans transcendentalize themselves.

First, the professional field of Land and Leisure Management has made thorough and regular use of Maslow's theory. This field has demonstrated that the aesthetic need of humans can be met in the wilderness. Prior to Maslow's theories, the notion that wilderness and the beauty therein had rehabilitative effects upon man was advocated by men like Emerson and Thoreau, both of whom have become widely cited as the natural ancestors of the current Land and Leisure Management field.<sup>11</sup> The 21<sup>st</sup> century presuppositions about aesthetics<sup>12</sup> which are held by those in the field of Land and Leisure Management is the natural outgrowth of the union of Maslow's conceptions about humans' need for aesthetics and the philosophical contributions of men like Emerson and Thoreau:<sup>13</sup> just such a synthesis is evidenced by books like Mannell and Kleiber's *A Social Psychology of Leisure*,<sup>14</sup> symposia discussing topics such as *Therapeutic Uses of Adventure-Challenge-Outdoor-Wilderness: Theory and Research*,<sup>15</sup> and resulting practical fields like Wilderness Therapy.<sup>16</sup> So this field demonstrably contributes the value humans place on the wilds, the satisfying and rehabilitative effects the wilderness has upon humans, and the fruitful affirmation that the wilds can potentially help man transcendentalize himself.<sup>17</sup>

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11. Both of these men are often called the 'transcendentalists' which is a reference to their stance that nature offers a way for man to 'self-transcendentalize' themselves or their surroundings. This designation for them should be consistently connected for their concern for the wilds, because they were both philosophically speculating and advocating for the importance of managing and conserving wilderness. For a glimpse of these men's contribution towards advocacy for both wilderness and transcendentalism, see Thoreau's *Walden* and Emerson's *Nature*.

12. Here aesthetics means "beauty in nature."

13. Joan Maloof, "Measuring the Beauty of Forests," *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 67, no. 3 (2010), 431-32. Douglas Knudson, Ted Cable, and Larry Beck, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources* (State College, PA: Venture Inc., 2003).

14. Roger Mannell, and D.A. Kleiber, *A Social Psychology of Leisure* (State College, PA: Venture, 1997).

15. H.L. Gillis, "Therapeutic Uses of Adventure-Challenge-Outdoor-Wilderness: Theory and Research," January, 1992, Coalition for Education in the Outdoors Symposium, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu> (accessed June 22, 2010).

16. "Open Sky Wilderness Therapy," 2009-2010, Open Sky Wilderness, [http://Retrieved from http://www.openskywilderness.com/](http://www.openskywilderness.com/) (accessed June 24, 2010).

17. Jill Suttie, "Wilderness: A medium for improving psychological Health," *The Environmentalist* 4, no. 4 (December 1984), 295. Christine Norton, "Into the Wilderness—A Case Study: The Psychodynamics of Adolescent Depression and the Need for a Holistic Intervention," *Journal of Clinical Social Work* 38 (2010), 226-235. Betty Rossman, "Psychological Reward Values Associated with Wilderness Use: "A Functional-Reinforcement Approach,"" *Environment and Behavior* 9, no 1 (1977: March), 41-66.

Next is Abraham Maslow, who is most famously known for his hierarchy of needs.<sup>18</sup> Specifically, this essay follows Abraham Maslow's 20<sup>th</sup> century meta-motivation theory.<sup>19</sup> From this theory, three major things stand forth. First, there is the widely accepted fact that all humans have aesthetic needs. Accordingly, the higher aesthetic needs, like truth, beauty, goodness, and justice, need to be experienced in any human's life in order for him or her to be most healthy, both physiologically and mentally. Second, Maslow affirms that the need for beauty can be gratified by beautiful surroundings. And finally, the human experiencing beauty, as a consequence, will act differently. Hence, if action changes, then implicitly, so did volition.

Lastly, Jonathan Edwards' conception of beauty is expressed through his aesthetic theology, most fully captured in his *Dissertation on the Nature of True Virtue*.<sup>20</sup> In this view, beauty leads to something beyond itself (i.e. God), is objective,<sup>21</sup> and can be known.<sup>22</sup> First, for Edwards, beauty is broken down into two subcategories: primary beauty and secondary beauty. For now, all that is necessary to note is that secondary beauty is wilderness beauty;<sup>23</sup> therefore, any reference hereafter to *wilderness beauty*, *beauty of the wilds*, or *natural beauty* are all secondary beauty. Primary beauty comes only by moral beings (angel, human)

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18. Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954). Abraham Maslow, *Towards a Psychology of Being* (J. Wiley & Sons, 1999). This motivation theorizes that humans must first meet basic needs before meeting the higher ones. The basic needs are deficiency needs which must be met before the 'needer' can be motivated to fully and adequately seek to meet the higher needs. A simple description of the needs, from basic to highest, may be summarized as follows: physiological, growth (social), intellectual, aesthetic/self-actualization.

19. Abraham Maslow, "A Theory of Metamotivation: The Biological Rooting of the Value-Life," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 7, no. 93 (1967), 93-127. Many theories of motivation only considered physical phenomena as motivating factors. Maslow differed and offered the idea that abstractions motivate humans as well. The "meta" part of "metamotivation" signifies that humans can be motivated by abstract ideals and immaterial realities. For instance, justice is not material yet many humans value this very highly as a means to motivate their actions. It must be carefully noted that although Maslow affirmed these things as abstract ideals, he understood their existence to be biologically rooted, as the title above suggests. These ideals were socially constructed.

20. Jonathan Edwards, "A Dissertation on the Nature of True Virtue," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2005), 122-30.

21. Edward Farley, *Faith and Beauty: A Theological Aesthetic*, Ashgate Studies in Theology, Imagination and the Arts (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), 47. Although qualifying Edwards view of beauty as objective is fair, it is not descriptive enough to fully grasp Edward's position. Farley discusses that Edward's model for primary beauty is based on the active benevolence of the persons of the Trinity towards one another. Therefore primary beauty, even as situated in the persons of the Trinity, is intersubjective, in as much as this beauty is active and demonstrable between persons. Therefore, it is more accurate to say with Farley that primary beauty for Edwards is a relationship, between a human who consents, agrees with, or conforms to the Godhead. Thus, even the primary beauty between a human and God is relational, and is thus both subjective and objective. Farley is careful to note that Edwards' position in no way can be reduced to isolated subjectivity, a feeling, or a pleasurable sensibility.

22. Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 125.

23. Or most strictly speaking, secondary beauty includes wilderness beauty, along with a host of other secondary beauties: e.g. architecture, human countenance, cities, etc.

benevolently communing with God. It takes a proper orientation towards God, consenting to God's holiness or righteousness both in belief and deed, to know this primary beauty.<sup>24</sup> That Edwards thinks secondary beauty can lead to primary beauty complements biblical truth well.<sup>25</sup> Edwards' aesthetic theology as used in this Aesthetic-Effective Theory acts as the crux to make this theory notably serviceable to the Kingdom of God. His theology provides the explanation of how wilderness beauty acts to positively cultivate, support, or restore communion between a human and God.

With this introductory discussion of Jonathan Edwards' conception of beauty, a poignant point for broader Christian aesthetic theology is noteworthy: i.e. accessible objective beauty. Edwards' aesthetic theology allows humans to participate in primary beauty – that beauty centered in the Godhead – and this participation assumes accessibility by humans. If any true apprehension of the divine is to occur through an objective, graspable world (*dinge in den sich*: that is, grasping things as they are in themselves), then arguing that objective beauty is attainable is direly needed. Both Romans 1:20 and Edwards' aesthetic theology are endangered if the objective world is not graspable. Beauty and preference/taste must be differentiated. Beauty is not in the eye of the beholder. Returning to a classical, and thereby, objective understanding of beauty will remove the rampant subjectivity of beauty which has led to the loss of beauty. Although a classical notion of beauty is different from a Christian conception of beauty, the two are compatible because both are objective.<sup>26</sup>

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24. Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 127. Both holiness and righteousness have been used because, for Edwards, holiness is moral excellence. However, 'holiness' is often a designation of God's utter otherness. Thus, to capture the clear meaning of Edwards, both terms have been offered. Moral excellence or holiness is benevolence (goodness) perfectly applied for the highest benefit of all with a clear view of the entire creation and its Creator, with all its connections, relationships, and consequences. On a different note, Edwards' discussion of the 'highest good' has an Augustinian flavor. Also, Edwards' aesthetic theology can be said to be analogical.

25. It is complimentary because it holds that beauty can be known (Exo 28:2, 40) and that even one and the same object—in this case, a priestly garment—can convey both glory and beauty. Psalm 19:1-2 shows that the heavens, which have been crafted by God, declares the glory of God and continually “reveals knowledge (also see Romans 1:20).” Although the word “beauty” is not explicit in this text, the Psalmist is reveling in God's “handiwork.” Thus, through relishing the beauty of nature with a former knowledge of Scripture, both God's glory and knowledge can be gained. The Psalmist knew of Yahweh and his word (v. 7ff) which enabled the Psalmist to attribute creation's excellence to the Creator.

26. The platonic form of Beauty is one of the three high forms—Good, Beauty, and Truth—and is conceived as transcendent and beyond human access. If God is the center of all beauty (as later argued by Edwards), then a Christian conception of beauty must be one in which humanity has epistemic access to beauty and through which someone might also grasp God.

## THE RATIONALE OF THE AESTHETIC-EFFECTIVE THEORY

## WILDERNESS BEAUTY AS AN ANSWER TO VOLITIONAL DOUBT

This theory uses both wilderness and the beauty of the wilderness to effect behavioral change. When speaking of the two concepts (wildness and the beauty of the wilderness) together the simple phrase “beauty of the wilderness/wilds” is used. In view of psychology’s current use of the wilds, it is observed that the wilds alone have a positive influence on human behavior, but as Edwards’ aesthetic theology will argue, the main locus for this is the *beauty* inherent in nature. This theory aims to leave room for the wilds themselves, apart from their beauty, to add to positive human behavioral change and/or patterns. With this allowance identified, the Aesthetic-Effective Theory strongly affirms that it is the *beauty* in the wilds which is the main constituent which inspires, motivates, and effects behavioral change.

The effect that wilderness beauty—harmony through the diversity of agreeing things—has upon humans is multifaceted. The collective experience of wilderness beauty involves all the senses: taste, smell, vision, touch, and hearing. Such experiences are known to elicit an emotive response. That the beauty of the wilds appeals to the five senses with the resulting emotive response helps to facilitate behavior change.<sup>27</sup> Just as it physically and emotionally affects the person, wilderness beauty is known to facilitate behavior change (thus affecting volition); two theories which rely on the wilderness environment to promote behavioral change and psychological health are adventure theory<sup>28</sup> and wilderness theory.<sup>29</sup> Such changes in behavior include removal of feelings of low self-worth, learned helplessness, and the resolution of depression with its behaviors. Others have noted that the positive benefits also include physiological health: lower blood pressure, heart rate, and anxiety.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, using the benefits of the beauty of the wilds to effect positive behavioral life (i.e. reducing or removing volitional doubt) should also serve the kingdom of God. After all, Jesus Himself admonished His disciples to have confidence in the care of the Father (i.e. to help resolve some incipient doubt) from the beauty of a flower (Matt 6:29-30); they learned about God’s benevolence from natural beauty.

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27. Beauty should be understood as unity in diversity, including both the material and immaterial, that is, all the environmental stimuli, scenery, and immaterial concepts of harmony, symmetry, consent, and agreeableness between diverse objects, contributing to the unity of the whole.

28. Lee Gillis, and Keith Russell, “Role of Adventure Therapy in Mental Health Treatment of Adolescents,” *American Psychological Association Convention Presentation*, 2009, 1.

29. “Wilderness Therapy Treatment Programs: “Outdoor Behavioral Health” Programs,” 2000-2007, [http://Retrieved from http://www.wildernesstherapy.org/](http://www.wildernesstherapy.org/).

30. Won Sop Shin et al., “Forest Experience and Psychological Health Benefits: The State of Art and Future Prospect in Korea,” *Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine* 15 (2010), 38.



Many works dealing with volitional doubt attempt to break it by mainly cognitive methods, yet volitional doubters often resist these.<sup>31</sup> For instance, Gary Habermas suggests that the volitional doubter consider the wonder and inspiration of the imagery of heaven.<sup>32</sup> This method makes use of sight (reading) and cognitive reflection (meditation). Although this may work (depending on the seriousness of the volitional doubt), this method assumes that the doubter will be willing to use his or her will to choose for faith, which is precisely the problem: i.e. that he/she does not want to choose for faith. So adding an Aesthetic-Effective Theory which can complement these preexisting (mainly) cognitive methods provides another tool which may be used against volitional doubt.

Wilderness beauty is not dependent upon one or two senses, and because of this, it is not possible, once in the wilderness setting, to deny *all* the effects by use of the will.<sup>33</sup> Where cognitive methods may be blocked by the volitional doubt, wilderness beauty, by its saturating effect on the senses, can either circumnavigate the volitional doubt or penetrate unexpectedly through the volitional doubt—perhaps by what Abraham Maslow called a peak experience.<sup>34</sup> The volitional doubter who is rejecting many of the overt Scriptural solutions (i.e. prayer, gratitude, study, meditation, etc.) may welcome beauty, especially as it exists in the wilderness. Certainly, it is easy to imagine this type of doubter having heard the same suggestions for resolving his or her doubt finding the suggestion to take a wilderness excursion refreshing.

#### WILDERNESS BEAUTY AS AN ANSWER TO A CERTAIN TYPE OF DOUBTER

This theory is designed to help the volitional doubter, but due to its eliciting of emotion, it may also be applied to an emotional doubter. The application of this Aesthetic-Effective Theory is ideally used on a doubter who has a medium to intimate knowledge of Scripture: he or she has had a regular interaction with special revelation (Genesis-Revelation). Sending this type of Christian doubter into nature may appear dangerous.<sup>35</sup> It must be remembered that anything may be

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31. Os Guinness, *God in the Dark: The Assurance of Faith Beyond a Shadow of Doubt* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1996); J.P. Moreland and Klaus Issler, *In Search of a Confident Faith: Overcoming Barriers to Trusting in God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008); Alister McGrath, *Doubling: Growing Through the Uncertainties of Faith* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006); Gary Habermas, *Dealing with Doubt* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1990). Habermas has done some inspirational work by his use of the imagery of heaven. In this way he has contributed more than only cognitive methods.

32. Habermas, *Dealing With Doubt*, 98.

33. John Miles, "Wilderness as Healing Place," *Journal of Experiential Education* 10, no. 3 (Fall 1987), 4-7. Specifically, this journal argues that the wilds increase emotional, physical, and spiritual health.

34. Abraham Maslow, "Lessons from the Peak Experiences," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 2, no. 1 (1962). More explanation about this appears later in the essay.

35. The thought that this could be dangerous is due to the notions of new age spiritualism or the pagan idea of worshipping nature (Romans 1:23).

manipulated for evil—like when the Scriptures are manipulated by the evil one to try to tempt Jesus (Matt 4:1ff).

With this rationale given, the Aesthetic-Effective Theory will now be constructed. Some suggestions for applying the theory will be discussed at the end of the essay. The importance of the research in this essay informs other areas of Christian praxis and theology which will be addressed as such areas arise.

## WILDERNESS BEAUTY: CONSTRUCTING AN AESTHETIC-EFFECTIVE THEORY

### LAND AND LEISURE MANAGEMENT'S CONTRIBUTION

The term *recreation* has lost potency. The average usage is generally a reference to having fun at best, and wasting time at worst. Having its origin in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the word is more accurately understood with the addition of a hyphen: re-creation. It originally meant several things, all relating to restoration: “to receive refreshment via nourishment,” “to recover from sickness,” “to make anew,” and “to recover through enjoyment,” usually conceived as “play” through physical exercise or by participation in a natural environment.<sup>36</sup> Popularly, the complexity of this definition has fallen out of use, but it is nevertheless still preserved in the field of Land and Leisure Management and is quite clearly derived from the term *creation*.

This aligns significantly with Christian theology. God first declared the creation, in its rugged and abundantly wild form, to be “good.” If the wilds are satisfying to humans post fall, then how much more would the garden bring enjoyment to Adam and Eve? That first Sabbath certainly implies satisfaction, rest, and reflection, for God reviewed what He had made as being “very good” (Gen 1:31). In this way, there is a paradigmatic pattern of industry leading unto merriment. God worked; God rested and enjoyed. These two statements inform both a theology of industry—as the cliché goes, “the Protestant work ethic”—and a theology of merriment. Judging from the report of Land and Leisure Management agencies and this early Genesis narrative, the wilds ought to be considered a special object of Christian merriment. Moreover, that first cosmological Sabbath is foundational for any Christian understanding of enjoyment. The term “re-creation” hints at this cosmological event of creation and the ceasing (Hebrew: שבת, *šābbat*) from labor in order to rest and find the creation to be “very good.”

The National Park Service is one such organization which is involved in conserving land for the purpose of leisure services (“re-creating”).<sup>37</sup> It is by no coincidence that the provision of re-creation and wilderness is unified in the National Park Service’s dual function of managing land and providing recreation. As discussed in the introduction, psychology has equally recognized the re-creating

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36. Online Etymology Dictionary, “Recreation,” <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/recreation> (accessed April 20, 2010).

37. “National Park Service,” 12/8/2009, <http://Retrieved from http://www.nps.gov/index.htm> (accessed April 20, 2010).

affect which the wilds offer (e.g. Adventure Theory). It has been long recognized and is taken as a maxim—in land management agencies—that the wilds can powerfully inspire, rejuvenate motivation, modify behavior, and even lift one into a realm beyond the natural realm witnessed.<sup>38</sup>

With these types of benefits, the conservation of land is necessary. Humanity is to direct nature (Gen 1:28) and to do so with concern for both honoring God and the good of humanity. Allowing land to remain dormant and undeveloped—based on the recreating influences of this environment—benefits man as well. Humanity's role as sub-ruler of the earth rightfully affirms that they should use the earth for humanity's benefit. As people become increasingly informed that land left wild potently helps humanity, abuses of land for merely economic gain doubtlessly will be minimized. Indeed, this very theory assumes that such wild land is accessible.

Having conserved land for the benefit of humans, one of the roles of Land and Leisure Management is interpreting these cultural and natural resources. Specifically, the purpose of this is “to help people respond to the beauty of their environment, the significance of their history, and their cultural surroundings.”<sup>39</sup> To elicit response is to motivate. This sub-field also seeks to broaden the horizons of those interacting with nature: namely, to inspire through nature.<sup>40</sup> In sum, it is evident from the field of Land and Leisure Management that the beneficial effects of the wilds upon humans have been known, practically demonstrated, and successfully supported, even with an eye to beauty as the potential reason for this.

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38. Plontinus, *The Enneads*. Douglas Knudson, Ted Cable, and Larry Beck, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources* (State College, PA: Venture Inc., 2003), 17. The list of interpretive programs which, supportively, value the wilds and their importance for developing and deepening human motivation and inspiration is impressive: The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, The Park Authority of Australia, Aramark Denali Park Resorts, Martin Craig of New Zealand, The Minnesota Historical Society, Annette's Adventures of Hawaiian Islands, The Salvation Army, Parks Canada, the Kuring-gai Municipal Council, The U.S. Agency for International Development, Joyce Jefferson, The Bureau of Land Management, Cope Environmental Center, The County of San Diego, The East Bay Municipal Utility Authority, The St. Lawrence Parks Commission, and The Smithsonian Institution. Beyond this, The Forest Service and the National Park Service include in their mission an understanding that there is inherent value in the wilderness which is beneficially to humans. The first chief of The Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot, said that their mission was “to provide the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people in the long run,” which comes by preserving the wilds for future generations. n.a., “U.S. Forest Service,” April 28, 2010, U.S. Department of Agriculture, <http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/> (accessed June 28, 2010). n.a. “The National Park System Caring for the American Legacy.” n.d. Park Net. <http://www.nps.gov/legacy/mission.html> (accessed June 28, 2010). The National Park System “preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.” Also, the aesthetic of the Tabernacle as God gave to Moses presumably fulfilled these tasks as well. Exodus 25:40. Psalm 19:1-2.

39. Douglas Knudson, Ted Cable, and Larry Beck, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources* (State College, PA: Venture Inc., 2003), 8. It should not be surprising that Psalm 19 does these three things.

40. *Ibid.*

The Aesthetic-Effective Theory's contention that motivation and inspiration are engendered by the wilds is soundly accepted and demonstrated by this practical field. Rehabilitating the volition is very likely to occur in view of Land and Leisure Management's vast success. Next is Maslow's metamotivation theory. His contribution to the Aesthetic-Effective Theory will show that it is not only the wilds that effect behavioral change, but that it is also the *beauty* of the wilds.

#### ABRAHAM MASLOW'S CONTRIBUTION

Maslow observed that "psychologically healthy people indicate that they are, as a defining characteristic, attracted to the mysterious, to the unknown, to the chaotic, unorganized, and unexplained. This seems to be a per se attractiveness"<sup>41</sup> Maslow concluded that humans have a "truly basis aesthetic need. They get sick from ugliness, and are cured by beautiful surroundings; they crave actively, and their cravings can be satisfied *only* by beauty."<sup>42</sup> Maslow described aesthetics and self-actualization as metaneeds. Both are at the top of his motivation theory and when fulfilled, create moments of the deepest joy.<sup>43</sup> Motivation, not to mention holistic wellbeing, is encouraged by beauty, and certainly the overall health of someone is intimately connected with the use of his or her will. It is equally important to note that Maslow thought humans who did not fulfill their aesthetic needs would not be able to attain self-actualization. Although the terminology of self-actualization may be difficult to intertwine with Christianity—because denial of self for the sake of following Christ is a truism—the key is that humans who do not fulfill this need do not function as fully as they might. Maslow's theory does not conflict with Christianity, especially if Christianity is allowed to define what it means to become self-actualized.<sup>44</sup> Strikingly, Maslow delineates a most favorable list as he describes the gratifications of self-actualizing people:

[I]t quickly became apparent that the best and most "natural" categories of classification were mostly or entirely abstract "values" of an ultimate and irreducible kind, such values as truth, beauty, newness, uniqueness, justice, compactness, simplicity, goodness, neatness, efficiency, love, honesty, innocence, improvement, orderliness, elegance, growth, cleanliness, authenticity, serenity, peacefulness, and the like.<sup>45</sup>

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41. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 24.

42. *Ibid.*, 25.

43. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*.

44. This could be defined as an oneness with God so as to find satisfaction in what delights God or to lose oneself in communion with the God.

45. Maslow, "A Theory of Metamotivation: The Biological Rooting of the Value-life," 101. It must be recognized that Maslow was one of the main founders of humanistic psychology. Further, in this article he tries to biologically ground the existence of such values. Still, the values described were, for him, a widespread phenomenon which suggested that these "needs" were universal, or at least, he theorized that they were needed and universal.

Maslow concluded that these values (needs) were what most highly motivated humans once, and only once, lesser needs were met. In consideration of a volitional doubter, it might be severely advantageous to place him or her in an environment of the wilderness where numerous of the “abstract values of an ultimate and irreducible kind” can be witnessed and experienced contemporaneously: e.g. serenity, peacefulness, beauty, simplicity, and newness. Each of these needs is noted to motivate and gratify.

The list noted above by Maslow accords well with Christian theology’s understanding of anthropology. God created man for Himself (Isa 43:7), and central to man’s desire is God Himself (Gen 15:6, Ps 90:14). The founding of the moral universe is based on God’s character. By seeing these characteristics in and through other humans and phenomena of life, humans can indeed touch something of the divine (Rom 1:20, Matt 5:13-16). Hence man has a need for beauty, just as Maslow declares. Inasmuch as beauty is centered on God, man is made for beauty. The necessity of beauty, as having its locus in the Godhead, is a constituent of a Christian anthropology which is profoundly theocentric, even Christocentric—especially in view of verses like Philippians 4:19.

Maslow’s theory supplies three concepts for the constructing of the Aesthetic-Effective Theory: humans need beautiful surroundings, beauty and as it is found in the wilds motivates and gratifies, and the human need for beauty is a universal one which if not gratified, is detrimental to their overall health. Of these three things listed, it is the need for beauty which Maslow contributes most significantly. As noted, that humans have a need for beauty is no conundrum for Christian anthropology.

Transitioning now to Edwards’ contribution and the crux of the theory, it is notable that the union of the two behavior changers—namely, the wilds and beauty—results in substantiating the theory’s use of *wilderness beauty* as a potent means through which the desire to relearn choosing for faith may be facilitated. These two act as a two-edged sword with which to attack doubt. With this stated, experience in the wilds may be said to be an artistic moment(s) which makes life more meaningful.

## EDWARDS’ AESTHETIC THEOLOGY’S CONTRIBUTION

### THE GOAL OF WILDERNESS BEAUTY

Following the time of Jonathan Edwards yet carrying forth transcendental notions are both Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau. These men’s works, which supposed that through nature man could transcend himself, are fitting links between Edwards’ aesthetic theology and the former discussion regarding Land and Leisure Management. They noted that wilderness places provide a gateway by which man may go beyond his immediate surroundings. Emerson advocated for nature’s transcendentalizing capacity, just as both Psalm 19:1-2 and Romans 1:20 affirm. Nature supplied the beautiful images which man enjoys, but these images

also become the means to have vision beyond sight.<sup>46</sup> Elsewhere, Emerson joyfully explains how delight in nature gives man vision, renewed vigor, refreshment, and satisfaction.<sup>47</sup> Thoreau was equally influential regarding the positive effects which nature had upon man. He held that the wilderness was a place to seek spiritual clarity, find inspiration, and cultivate contemplation.<sup>48</sup>

But where does this transcendentalizing lead and how? Man exists to have a love affair with God, and all else is a means to this relationship. The old tendency to dichotomize the material life with the spiritual life must be resisted.<sup>49</sup> All of life is spiritual, and all of life (provided it is not sinful), including the material, can act as a means to commune with God. To transcend the beauty of nature is to rise to the beauty of God. Experientially, this might be described as that “awe” moment each person knows when he or she stands on the peak of a mountain or breathes in the cool air as he or she gazes on a mountain stream in mid-spring, then leading to a reflection on the Author, on the divine Artist. It is no small matter that Richard Foster, in his classic book, *Celebration of Discipline*, regularly discusses how being in natural surroundings is an advantageous means towards communing with God.<sup>50</sup> But again, why is this so?

Jonathan Edwards discusses primary beauty as being “the true beauty of moral agents, or spiritual beings,” which beauty is defined as “those qualities and acts of the mind [of spiritual beings] that are of a moral nature.”<sup>51</sup> In Edward’s dissertation, secondary beauty—music, nature, countenance—is a means to grasp the primary beauty: i.e. God and His moral acts, moral laws, and moral dispositions.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, God’s beauty is “benevolence to being in general,”<sup>53</sup> and hence His beauty resides in His moral excellence, both in grounding existence and in giving beauty to existence.<sup>54</sup> Communing with being—here “being” can be narrowly centered on the wilds—can lead to true Being, that is, to God. A man or woman with a foundation of special revelation (Genesis-Revelation) may draw near to God through a wilderness excursion. In summary, to transcend nature may lead unto primary beauty, to communion with God through the beauty (or aesthetics) therein. This is a recreating event in the truest sense of the word *recreate*. Thus, the beauty of the wilds leads to God. The goal of secondary beauty, for Edwards, is

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46. Ralph Emerson, *Transcendentalism: And Other Addresses* (New York: John Alden, 1886), 28.

47. Ralph Emerson, *Nature* (New York: Duffield and Company, 1909), 7-13.

48. Thoreau, *Walden* (1910); Henry Thoreau, *Walking* (New York: Cricket House Books, 2010); Max Oelschlaeger, *The idea of Wilderness: From prehistory to the age of Ecology* (New York: Yale University, 1991), 133-45.

49. This dictomizing is perhaps an unfortunate influence of Platonism upon Christianity in the early church which has carried-on to this day.

50. Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 3rd ed. (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 28, 73-74, 93, 105-107.

51. Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 127.

52. *Ibid.*, 128.

53 To say this less cryptically, “benevolence to being in general” is “to have goodwill towards everything.”

54. *Ibid.*, 123 and 128. Because God is spirit, meaning that He is not physical, only an immaterial means (like benevolence) from God’s nature is feasible as the ground of existence.

to bring someone to primary beauty which is centered upon God and His benevolence.

#### THE MANNER OF WILDERNESS BEAUTY

How does experiencing the beauty in nature lead to God? Humans can participate in God's benevolence to His creation. More technically, to commune with God by means of beauty through nature is a kataphatic means,<sup>55</sup> an indirect means, "in which [a] relationship with God is mediated."<sup>56</sup> But how precisely does this work?

First, a clear definition for secondary beauty is necessary: harmony or unity through diversity, and the greater diversity which contributes to the whole, the greater the beauty; or in Edwards words (describing secondary beauty), "the more there are of different mutually agreeing things, the greater is the beauty."<sup>57</sup> Edwards says that the reason man finds this beautiful is either because God established this as a law or because God placed this instinct in man. Either way, it is not necessarily the grasping of *why* certain natural things are found beautiful which man delights-in. Rather, man may find the proportions of someone's face pleasing or find the horizon magnificent without knowing *why* this is the case, nor does he necessarily care.<sup>58</sup> In the case of the horizon, it would be the union of diversity (colors), the proportions, the measures, and distances which are the *why* something is beautiful. Grasping *why* something is beautiful moves one nearer to crossing from secondary beauty to primary beauty, yet without a knowledge of special revelation (Scripture) the crossing cannot be made.<sup>59</sup> Still, if someone can enjoy the union, the consenting agreement itself, then he or she is near to this crossing. Most have experienced this, often subconsciously, when they realize that the natural beauty they are enjoying is great but an utterly basic impulse at these moments says to them, "wonderful, yes, yet this is but a taste of the grandeur for which you were made."

Edwards notes that it pleased God to make the external world analogous to the spiritual world.<sup>60</sup> Edwards presumably is basing this statement on biblical reasons, especially in regard to beauty. In Exodus 25:40 and 26:30, God instructs Moses regarding the Tabernacle to make all things as seen on the mountain.<sup>61</sup> The discussion about the Tabernacle envisages amazing beauty, and several of them are forms from the wilds: pure gold, branches, flowers, almond blossoms, symmetry,

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55. This phrase should not be taken overly technically. It is given so as to differentiate that communing with God through the beauty in nature is a more indirect means than prayer, meditation, scripture reading, etc.

56. Westerhoff, *Spiritual Life*, 53. *The Foundation for Preaching and Teaching*, 1.

57. Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 127.

58. *Ibid.*, 128.

59. Unless, perhaps, someone has a simultaneous revelation, by the Spirit, like the Apostle Paul had at his conversion.

60. Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 128. This is a form of an analogical argument in the above/below form, not the historical/eschatological form.

61. *Ibid.*

and numerous items made of silver and gold. It is the semblance which natural beauty has of true spiritual beauty that provides steps towards God: “secondary beauty...[has] a tendency to assist those whose hearts are under the influence of a truly virtuous temper, to dispose them to the exercises of divine love, and enliven in them a sense of spiritual beauty.”<sup>62</sup> The *key* to understanding Edwards’ ability to connect secondary beauty with primary beauty is the following: “[God] makes agreement of different things, in their form, manner, measure, &c. to appear beautiful [secondary beauty], because here is some image of higher kind of agreement and consent to spiritual beings [primary beauty].”<sup>63</sup> As noted above, primary beauty is technically defined as “[benevolence to being, that is,] consent, propensity, and union of heart to being in general.”<sup>64</sup> And “benevolence to being in general” means to have benevolence towards all being as it is properly ordered in relation to the Supreme Being, that is, God.<sup>65</sup> Inasmuch as God created and sustains all being from His goodness, so also should humans reciprocate this by having consent, by having a propensity towards, and by unifying with this benevolence. This is most sharply perceived when humans have love (love is the highest form of benevolence) to God, love to other moral beings, and love to being in general.<sup>66</sup> So, just as God is the head and ground of “being in general,” so also is He

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62. Ibid., 128. Edwards says that here are numberless examples of this. Perhaps he had in mind the heavenly Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the Temple, etc.

63. Ibid., 128.

64. Ibid., 122. God gave and gives consent to all being by first creating and then by continuously sustaining it; God has propensity (here propensity has its older meaning of “favorable disposition”) towards being in as much as His goodness is communicated towards and contained within being; God has union of heart in as much as his goodness cultivates harmony and elicits a reciprocating harmony among all creation. These explanations are mine not Edwards’. What is also noteworthy is that Edwards understands true primary beauty as perfectly existing prior to the existence of creation, for this benevolence was communicated in, among, the through the Members of the Godhead, between the *logos* (*logos*), Yahweh, and Holy Spirit.

65. Edwards at one point considers using the terminology of “love to being in general” but decides not to use it because of the confusion that using the term “love” might create: “When I say, true virtue consists in love to being in general, I shall not likely to be understood, that no one act of the mind or exercise of love is of the nature of true virtue, but what has being in general, or the great system of universal existence, for its direct and immediate object: so that no exercise of love, or kind affection, to any one particular being, that is but a small part of this whole, has anything of the nature of true virtue. But, that the nature of true virtue consists in disposition to benevolence towards being in general; though from such a disposition may arise exercises of love to particular beings, as objects are presented, and occasions arise. No wonder he who is of a generally benevolent disposition, should be more disposed than another to have his heart moved with benevolent affection to particular persons, with whom he is acquainted and conversant, and from whom arise the greatest and most frequent occasions for exciting his benevolent temper.” Edwards, *A Dissertation Concerning the Nature of True Virtue*, 123.

66. This is a fitting place to note that Edwards demonstrates that God has self-love as evidenced in the Scriptures. Thus, humans, by consenting, agreeing, uniting with, and having propensity towards God by loving God is to do nothing more than what God does Himself. God loves Himself, moral beings (man and angels), and being in general, from the higher forms of being to lower forms of being, and He loves them according to the “general highest good...whose welfare is consistent with the highest good, in proportion to the degree of existence” which whatever being might have. Likewise humans should love God, moral beings, and being in general, in an orderly and



the head and ground of “benevolent being in general”—that is, beings capable of moral exercise who constitute the moral universe.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, there is a beauty belonging to the amoral universe and to the moral universe: in those beings belonging to the amoral universe,<sup>68</sup> and thus the wilds, there is *secondary* beauty in the union, propensity, and consent of those factors contributing to the beauty of the horizon;<sup>69</sup> in those beings capable of moral acts, there *can be primary* beauty in the union, propensity, and consent of those factors (moral agents, i.e. humans, angels, God) contributing to the beauty of the moral universe. Thus, just as<sup>70</sup> the consent (amoral) which humans witness when they are in the wilderness (secondary beauty), so also can they consent benevolently (and thus morally) to being in general (primary beauty). Just as humans witness the propensity of diverse objects to collectively contribute to natural beauty (secondary beauty), so also can they have propensity towards, through their participating benevolence and agreement, being in general. And finally, just as union is witnessed in the beauty of the wilderness (secondary beauty), so also can humans have benevolent union through love to God, to moral beings, and to being in general.

Edwards’ answer is that humans must “imply consent and union with being in general,” which occurs by recognizing that secondary beauty has some resemblance of the higher, primary beauty and that the union, propensities, and consents inherent in secondary (natural) beauty is a form of the union, propensities, and consents inherent in primary, that is, moral beauty.<sup>71</sup> Weddle, commenting on the Edwards’ conception of the beauty of faith, notes that the “beauty of the created

proportional manner. Thus union or agreeableness (true beauty) with God is nothing more than mimicking exactly how God expresses His benevolence or love. What is love except to work consistently with enjoyment for another’s highest good, or in view of love to God, for His purposes.

67. As suggested in this sentence, the moral universe is defined as the actions, attitudes, intentions, and dispositions of any beings who have moral faculty by which to make moral decisions which are either worthy of praise or blame.

68. It should be noted that moral agents can belong to both the beauty of the moral universe and the non-moral or a-moral universe. Secondly, a moral being may, without a proper orientation to God, only ever contribute to the beauty of the non-moral or a-moral universe since Edwards says that without a proper relationship to God no particular act of love may be considered true primary beauty, what he calls, “True Virtue.”

69. There can only be a secondary beauty because non-moral agents (worm, bacteria, etc) or inanimate objects (bushes, trees, etc.) are not capable of making moral decisions, that is, decisions that are either worthy of praise or blame.

70 Although “just as” is used here to compare the consent witnessable in secondary between to the moral and benevolent consent humans may do, it should be clear to the reader that the two actions are not completely identical evidenced by the consent of secondary between being amoral and the consent of primary beauty being moral. As Edwards notes and as formerly noted in this paper, “there is some image of a higher kind of agreement...” They are comparable in the “consent, propensity, and union,” which are each immaterial things, but dissimilar because secondary beauty is achievable by amoral instrumentality, whereas primary beauty is achievable only by moral agency. The choice to retain “just as” is a stylistic one and the usage here should not convey that the two actions are 100% similar.

71. Westerhoff, *The Foundation for Preaching and Teaching*, 1, 124.

order elicits from the beholder admiration and trust inasmuch as that natural beauty bears witness to the moral beauty of its Maker.”<sup>72</sup>

#### WILDERNESS BEAUTY: INTEGRATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS

Three main sources were used to demonstrate the feasibility of this theory: Land and Leisure Management, Maslow’s metamotivation theory, and Edwards’ aesthetic theology. Each had something significant to contribute.

The practical field of Land and Leisure Management shows that re-creating can occur through playing or experiencing a natural environment. They hold as maxims, even a rule for many of their interpretive programs, that wilderness can inspire, motivate, and offer some form of transcendence. This field demonstrates that the preservation of the wilds for its beneficial—re-creating—effects upon humans is valued and is widely supported. In order for wilderness to be appreciated land must be conserved or set aside. A degree of land conservation and perhaps even preservation is needed for the good of man, even as Adam first enjoyed the environment of the garden. Theologically and in view of the sanctification process, wilderness places are favorable conditions for the activation of faith. The notion that some conditions are more advantageous for advancing faith than others is convincingly argued in Bonhoeffer’s famous book, *The Cost of Discipleship*. No conditions are ever replacements for the work of the Spirit, but discipleship methods and ecclesiastical institutions should constructively integrate time for wilderness experience.

Maslow’s metamotivation theory supplied that humans must experience beauty to be fully functional. This beauty may certainly be found in beautiful surroundings. Beauty was recognized by Maslow to be one of the ultimate abstract values which motivates and gratifies. The wilds alone motivate as shown by Land and Leisure Management, but the implicit beauty contained in the wilds also actively and profoundly motivates humans.

By the support of the data investigated from Land and Leisure Management and Maslow’s motivation theory, that behavioral change will occur is highly probable: both wilderness and wilderness beauty inspire, motivate, and foster behavioral change. If Land and Leisure Management demonstrated practically that humans are drawn to the wilds and benefitted by them, then the metamotivation theory provided a reason why humans appreciate the wilds—because of the beauty contained in it. Maslow observed that humans have an aesthetic need which can be fulfilled by wilderness beauty. The theology of anthropology, as discussed, also contends that man was made for God, and that beauty is centered on God; man was made for beauty.

That the type of beauty contained in the wilds is preferable to encourage behavioral change over and against beautiful music, painting, architecture, and the like, is made more certain by the contribution of Land and Leisure Management.

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72. David Weddle, “The Beauty of Faith in Jonathan Edwards,” *Ohio Journal of Religious Studies* 4 (October 1976), 42.

Because the wilds *alone* support behavior change, the combination of the wilds with the beauty of the wilds provides a doubly effective avenue to resolve doubt and to reinvigorate volition. If it is later proved that it is really *only* the beauty of the wilds which helps behavioral change then the conclusion here will be different. As it stands now, the wilds, by means other than the beauty they provide, offer benefits; still, the Aesthetic-Effective Theory contends that wilderness beauty is the main contributor towards behavioral change.

Edwards noted that God created secondary beauty to be attractive either as a law or as an instinct in man; based on Maslow's 20<sup>th</sup> century research and that man was made for God, the latter is affirmed. Many of the values which Maslow said gratified and motivated humans are experienceable in the wilderness and may be experienced simultaneously, thus saturating man in a rapid manner: i.e. serenity, peacefulness, beauty, simplicity, newness, etc. Edwards offers how wilderness beauty does this and how this wilderness beauty can serve the kingdom of God. Edwards said that natural beauty, provided that a former knowledge of Scripture is known, can or should lead to God. Edwards differentiated beauty into two types: secondary beauty and primary beauty. The former can lead to the later because of the synonymous nature between "union," "propensities," and "consents" belonging to each. All this is based on the fact that Edwards says that it pleased God to create the natural world analogous to the spiritual world. The *union*, *propensity*, and *consent*, that is, the unity through mutually agreeing diverse things, which are of an amoral quality is termed secondary beauty. The benevolent *union*, *propensity*, and *consent* of spiritual beings, that is, moral agents, to being in general are primary beauty. Precisely, God makes secondary beauty appear beautiful because there is an image of a higher kind of consent, union, and propensity: e.g. there is an *agreeable consent* between two colors (secondary beauty), yet there is an *agreeable consent* to being in general by loving God (primary beauty). The deposit of "agreeable consent" placed in secondary beauty by God is the transcendental stairway to the "agreeable consent" of primary beauty, which beauty is expressed in a moral act by a spiritual/moral being.

## CONCLUSION

### SUMMARIZING THE AESTHETIC-EFFECTIVE THEORY

The same God who constituted the spiritual/moral universe also constituted the physical universe. Beings and/or objects belonging to both or one in particular stand in relationship to God. The old dichotomizing of the material from the spiritual should be shunned in Christian practice. Both realms (spiritual and physical) may be used, indeed, should be used to serve the kingdom.

Coming back to the original intent of this essay, it may now be shown how the above theorizing may practically serve to resolve volitional doubt. Given that the volitional doubter has a medium to intimate knowledge of special revelation, the appreciation of secondary beauty (i.e. unity, agreement) in the wilds may serve to

reinvigorate, or remind, the doubter of his or her former benevolent union and agreement towards God, or said differently, help him or her to grasp true primary beauty. The field of Land and Leisure Management thoroughly supports the wilds' re-creating effect, motivating capacity, and inspiring facilitation. Maslow follows this, showing that humans have an aesthetic need which, if not met, will result in a less than fully functioning individual. This unmet need affects behavior and thus volition. Meeting this need brings renewed motivation. The old suspicion that the natural world is contrary to God is false; it ought to serve the purposes of the Creator. All three areas of this study affirm the positive effects wilderness beauty can have upon a stagnant volition, with Edwards demonstrating that this secondary beauty indeed exists to image the very fabric of the theological-moral universe (primary beauty) by communicating union, agreeableness, consent, propensity, and proportionality in and through the physical world. Natural beauty, far from only being useful to the idolatry of new age spiritualism and old paganism, can and should be employed for the Kingdom by helping volitional doubters pursue God. As can be seen, the research contributing to this theory has informed Christian discipleship, aesthetics, recreation, anthropology, and, of course, the resolution of doubt. Countering doubt belongs to the category of discipleship, for doubt directly impedes discipleship if it grows. In this final section, suggestions for how the Aesthetic-Effective Theory can be applied practically are given.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

Ideally, a retreat, excursion into the wilds, or regular time in a natural place provides the situation most helpful for the application of this theory. After the doubter takes an excursion, a time should be scheduled for debriefing to discuss the doubter's experience. Certain cognitive and behavioral practices complement this theory exceptionally. For instance, meditation as a potential practice for a second trip can be suggested if the doubter found his experience as something worth repeating. It should be wielded most carefully since the content of the meditation would be Scripture or God Himself, and the doubter is already known to have a hesitation towards one or both. Nevertheless, the sooner that more traditional means (prayer, meditation, study, etc.) can be mixed with this Aesthetic-Effective Theory the better.

The Scriptures and their interaction with the topic of nature should try to be discussed during this process. The advisor will be able to get a feel if the doubter has come back with a new perception or motivation. The Psalms provide ample potentials for this dialogue. The following list is a selection of potential topics which can be offered by the advisor: nature as a mirror of man's importance to God (8:3), man's sub-ruler role over nature (8:8), nature's didactic ministry to teach about God's glory (19:1), or the sounds within creation and their collective joy at the presence of God (96:11). Many others could be offered but this suffices to demonstrate the meditational and discussion topics.<sup>73</sup> The advisor does not have to

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73. Also see Psalm 33:6, 69:34, 102:25, 135:6, 146:6, 148:9.

push the conversation, but he or she should suggest that the doubter return to the wilds with meditational topics such as the ones just suggested.<sup>74</sup> The application of this theory need not be rushed. If the doubter is willing to take to the wilds and then come back to discuss the theological and aesthetic ramifications of his or her time, progress is being made. Given enough time, it is likely that Maslow's "peak experience," probably what Edwards called being "enliven[ed to] a sense of spiritual beauty," will occur, at which point volitional doubt will melt.<sup>75</sup> Or the relief cultivated from natural beauty and the ability to gain a new perspective will soothe the doubter's stern aversion, reopening him to the task of being a disciple.<sup>76</sup>

The goal is to get the doubter into an atmosphere of the wilds, through which fresh contact with the natural world (secondary beauty) can reorient his desires, remind him of primary beauty, motivate, and help to expand or clear his mind.<sup>77</sup>

The usefulness of the above theory is broad. Although this paper has been developed to resolve personal volitional doubt existing in someone's life, the findings of this essay can also be used to prevent doubt. Wilderness excursions can stop doubt from developing. The beauty in the wilds helps to create a regular appreciation for the artistry of the grand Artist. This is necessary for spiritual health. Humans need beauty and wild surroundings in order to function most fully; the saints will grow as they grasp the divine power and invisible attributions of God which are found in what has been made (Rom 1:20ff).

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74. This point could be appended to the early sending of the doubter into the wilds. It was not done so here because of the advanced case of volitional doubt which the advisor was addressing.

75. Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*.

76. Several movements by Christians into wilderness places have occurred in Christian history, the most well known being the monastic movement. It is telling that the Lord Jesus spent much time in "lonely places" or in the "wilderness." The most striking comment regarding this phenomenon in Jesus' life is the fact that at those times where redemptive history rose to a climax Jesus was in an wilderness place: at the beginning of his public ministry, He was in the desert or wilds; at the transfiguration, He was atop a mountain; and the night before his crucifixion, He was in a garden.

77. Knudson, Cable, and Beck, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources*, 12.

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