

BOOK REVIEWS

Hammond, Geordan. *John Wesley in America: Restoring Primitive Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. pp. xv + 237.

This significant publication provides us with a detailed scholarly account of a period of John Wesley's life and ministry that has too often suffered from being seen as a mere precursor to his real work. Wesley's time in Georgia through the brief two years of 1736-37 has usually been described as marked by personal and professional failure and as something of a spiritual wasteland. This suits the evangelical narrative of the religious seeker who must first reach the bottom of the barrel before finding the 'glorious liberty' entailed in the new birth (in Wesley's case at Aldersgate Street, London on 24 May 1738). It is certainly not that the established narrative is without compelling historical evidence; the problem is that historians have sometimes found it difficult to see the Georgia sojourn on its own terms, divorced from later developments.

Geordan Hammond's landmark study prevents a convincing case that Wesley's time in Georgia was not a failure or a mere prelude to greater things; rather it provided an opportunity for Wesley to apply the disciplines and practices of primitive Christianity that had fascinated him since his days as a student at Oxford. There in the American wilderness he was given the opportunity to apply pastoral practices that would later be adapted and developed in the Methodist movement. It is not that this was not a personally turbulent time for Wesley (his failed romance with Sophia Hopkey and his unpopularity with some of his parishioners are well known) but the author chooses instead, while being fully aware of the personal dynamics, to focus primarily on the theological foundations of Wesley's work and on providing a detailed examination of his ministry praxis.

This is the first full length treatment of the influence of the so-called 'Usager' Non-Jurors on Wesley's liturgical and sacramental practice.¹ As such it will be of great interest not only to historians but

¹ The 'Non-Jurors' were those Anglican clergy who refused to sign the Oath of Allegiance to William (1689-1702) and Mary (1689-94) because of their support for the deposed Stuart monarchy. Non-Jurists had a fascination for the practices of the early church and sought to re-establish many of them in the Church of England. The 'Usagers' were a party of Non-Jurors who were committed to the 'use' of (1) Mixing water with the Eucharistic wine (2) a prayer of oblation over the elements understood as a representative sacrifice (3) a prayer of blessing over the Eucharistic elements and (4) prayer for the faithful dead during the Eucharist.

also to liturgists and sacramental theologians. One of the great strengths of the book is that it draws upon primary sources on the colony of Georgia that Wesley biographers have neglected and that are helpful in shedding new light on Wesley's time there. These include *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia* and the diaries and journals of trustees of the colony such as John Perceval, first Earl of Egmont and William Stephens, trustee of the colony during Wesley's last months there. The author is careful not to rely solely on Wesley's published journals recognising that these are constructed accounts designed for public consumption. Though Henry Rack described the Georgia journals as 'a selective and slanted account,'² Hammond nonetheless concludes after crosschecking Wesley's private diaries as well as the journals of Charles Wesley, Benjamin Ingham, Thomas Causton and many others, that they remain 'an accurate and reliable picture.'³

Over five chapters the author deals with Wesley's 'conception and practice of Primitive Christianity,' his religious practices on board the *Simmonds*, his relations with the Moravians and Lutheran Pietists in the colony, detailed description of his ministry practices in Georgia, and the opposition he faced in the colony including accusations that he was an 'enthusiast,' a Roman Catholic, and a divisive person. In a final concluding chapter the author argues that the ideal of 'Primitive Christianity' put into concrete practice in Georgia remained with Wesley throughout his life and had an important part in shaping the later development of Methodism. Georgia should not be seen as a lacuna in Wesley's spiritual journey but as a defining period. This is the kind of book that forces one back to one's lecture notes to revise and restate existing teaching material. It is highly commended to all students of Wesley for the fresh and original contribution it makes to our understanding of John Wesley's theological journey.

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² Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*. 3rd ed. (London: Epworth, 2002), 113.

³ Geordan Hammond, *John Wesley in America: Restoring Primitive Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 11.

Murdoch, Norman H. *Christian Warfare in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe: The Salvation Army and African Liberation, 1891-1991*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015. pp. xxxi + 215.

Norman Murdoch, Emeritus Professor at the University of Cincinnati, has made a very valuable contribution to Salvation Army history bringing with him a unique insider/outsider perspective. As a son of Salvation Army parents, and a graduate of Asbury College and Asbury Seminary, who worked in Salvation Army urban youth work, he may be seen as an insider. However, instead of becoming an officer he chose instead a scholarly career and pursued the study of American intellectual history with a special focus on the Salvation Army in the nineteenth century. This provided him with an outsider's objectivity that has meant that he has avoided sanitised or triumphalist accounts of the Army's history. He has produced many important historical studies on the Army (including *The Origins of the Salvation Army*, 1994) and, given his Alzheimer's disease, *Christian Warfare in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe* is likely to be his last book.

This valuable study continues the methodological approach followed in Murdoch's earlier works of viewing the history of the Salvation Army not in a 'providentialist' way (history as 'His-story') but rather by applying the discipline of history to the Army in the same way as one might for any other organisation, even if the results may be at times embarrassing for the Army. As John Coutts describes Murdoch he 'has been a critical but never a cynical observer – an independent observer and a candid friend.'⁴

The book examines the history of the Salvation Army's involvement in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe with a particular focus on its relationships with the white minority colonial government, the First and Second *Chimurenga* (revolutionary struggles 1896-97, 1966-79) and the World Council of Churches. In the first chapter the central claims of the book are laid out – that the Salvation Army aided and abetted the colonial process in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe, that its claim to political neutrality is unsustainable in light of its support for colonial rule and white minority governments, and that it allowed Cold War politics to influence its resistance to national movements for independence. There is a bitter irony in the observation that African

⁴ John Coutts, 'Norman Murdoch, Historian of the Salvation Army,' in Norman H. Murdoch, *Christian Warfare in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe: The Salvation Army and African Liberation, 1891-1991* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015), xxix.

independence leaders gained their ideas of freedom from their mission-run schooling and then often found their church leaders opposing their freedom partly out of fear of Communism (pp. 5-7).

The earlier period is covered in the following four chapters with an examination of the arrival of the Army in Mashonaland (1891-95), the First Chimurenga including the 'martyrdom' of Edward T. Cass (1986-97), negotiations between William Booth and Cecil Rhodes which led to the appropriation of traditional homelands for the farm colonies that were part of Booth's *In Darkest England* scheme (1901-8), and correspondence about Rhodesia between William and Bramwell Booth (1908).

Chapter 6, 'The Salvation Army and the Rhodesian State, 1908-65,' has a focus on Salvationist schooling, with the claim that the Army's relationship with the white Rhodesian state and with other churches was 'that of a weak mission dependent on a strong colonial state's paternal largesse, and the generosity of business tycoons and philanthropic trusts' (p. 109). Chapter 7 deals with the clash between colonial, conciliar, and communist forces in the 1950s and 60s. Many churches objected to the legitimacy of Ian Smith's white minority rule in a country of 274,000 white and 6.1 million black Africans. Even though the Salvation Army's membership was 98% black (probably higher than any other denomination) its leadership hesitated to stand against Smith. Murdoch attributes this attitude to three contributing factors: 1) The Army's dependence on white government funding for its hospitals, schools, and corps 2) The politically conservative attitudes of the Army's international leaders, 'particularly Americans' and 3) the fact that the Army's Rhodesian leaders were all white (though only 2% of Army membership was white).

Chapters 8-10 (and 13) deal with the troubled relationships between the Salvation Army, the Rhodesia Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches (WCC) over support for independence movements which led ultimately to the withdrawal of the Army from both organisations. At the centre of the dispute was the WCC's 'Program to Combat Racism' which involved financial grants to independence movements seen by most member churches as an issue of justice in solidarity with the oppressed but by more conservative members of the churches as support for Communist-backed violent armed rebellion. In 1971 the Army broke with the Rhodesian Council of Churches and in 1978, after the murder of two Salvationist women missionaries at the Usher Institute (detailed in chapters 11 and 12), suspended its membership in the WCC,

withdrawing altogether in 1981. Chapter 13 discusses the negative reaction of African Salvationists to the Army's withdrawal from the WCC. On 31 August, 1981, up to 200 marched through the streets of Harare under police protection to Army headquarters, led by the lay leader, Corps Sergeant Major Jonah Blessing Matsvetu, to protest the action and to demand a return to the WCC. One result of this was that Commissioner David Moyo broke ranks to petition General Arnold Brown on the Army's return to membership.

The 14th and final chapter sets out the conclusions of the research. The Salvation Army in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe tied itself closely with the white minority government and was slow to hand over leadership to its African constituency. During the movement for majority rule the Army's Anglo-American leaders, 'driven by Cold War anxiety,' placed their interest in defeating Communism ahead of the interests of African officers and soldiers. In spite of this, after Independence, African Salvationists were forgiving. 'As they claimed during their protests against actions taken in London, they love the international Salvation Army. This affection was grounded in appreciation for the sacrifice of talented missionary teachers, doctors and corps officers who served in Zimbabwe over many years. Many expatriates spoke for the human rights and political independence of their African brothers and sisters' (p. 187).

The documentary research of this work is exemplary and is enhanced by visits to Zimbabwe to interview surviving participants. The book is not without some problems, however. At times the author engages in rhetorical flourishes that make unsupported claims. For example on p. 45 we are told that 'For Cecil Rhodes and William Booth...a British-Christian world [would make] no distinction between what it meant to be British and what it meant to be Christian.' This may have been true for Rhodes but I doubt that it accurately represents Booth who would never have allowed that 'Britishness' could ever substitute for a sound conversion, and whose own 'empire' always took priority over the British one. Here and there are found long catenae of rhetorical questions that are somewhat leading, often go unanswered, and needed greater connection to the underlying claims from which they seemed to arise (eg pp. 171-72). Chapter 5, while an interesting description of letters between William and his son Bramwell, does little more than narrate the content of the letters making no attempt to contextualise or interpret the material (one quotation is three whole pages long, pp. 66-68). The photographs in the Australian edition are almost all of

very poor quality and could perhaps have been left out. The American edition is marginally better.

These are minor flaws and they certainly do not argue against the value and overall quality of this fine piece of historical writing. Dr. Harold Hill, adjunct lecturer in history at Booth College, edited the work, and was responsible for preparing the existing materials and presenting a final manuscript to the publisher. Without his involvement the book would not have seen the light of day. The book functions as a kind of valedictory tribute to the author with a biographical sketch from Andrew Villalon on Murdoch as ‘Colleague, Historian, and Teacher,’ a tribute to him as ‘Historian of the Salvation Army,’ by John Coutts, and a final biographical sketch from his wife Grace. The Salvation Army has been well served in this important history by one of its most candid friends.

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Wright, Stephen John. *Dogmatic Aesthetics: A Theology of Beauty in Dialogue with Robert W. Jenson*. Emerging Scholars Series. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014. pp. xviii + 263.

While we all have an instinctive appreciation for beauty, attempting to understand it theologically and philosophically (in ‘aesthetics’ - the science of beauty) is less often undertaken. In this engaging work, my former Booth College colleague, Dr. Steve Wright (who is now Lecturer in Theology at Nazarene Theological College, Manchester) dialogues with the Lutheran theologian Robert Jenson to construct a theological aesthetic. The book presents an alternative approach to that taken by Hans Urs von Balthasar who built his aesthetic theology on the rather abstract concept of the ‘analogy of being.’ Instead, Wright focuses on the great doctrines of the church - Trinity, Christ, Creation and The End as supplying ‘the architecture of a theology of beauty.’ He does this in dialogue with the Lutheran theologian Robert W. Jenson whose work is strewn with aesthetic reflections and who has insisted that the only analog between humanity and God is Jesus Christ.

The Introduction makes clear the distinction between a ‘theology of the arts’ and ‘dogmatic aesthetics.’ While there is much that is beautiful in the arts, aesthetics seeks to examine the very nature of beauty itself, not simply its various expressions. Chapter 1 shows that beauty is grounded in God’s Triune Being particularly in the way that

the unity of God and the relations between the Persons of the Godhead have a perfect proportionality. In the second chapter, God's revelation is found to be beautiful in the person of Jesus. Even the ugliness of his suffering and death carries a hidden beauty because it discloses salvation.

The focus of the third chapter is on creation, particularly the concept of creation *ex nihilo*. The church's confession that God created without the use of existing materials sets out the beauty of God's act of creation as sheer gift. God is the artist and creation is the art that God produces. This chapter's discussion of Japanese aesthetics is especially fascinating. In Japanese culture it is in the temporary nature of created things that their true beauty is to be found. The beauty of the cherry blossom, for example, lasts only in the time it takes to fall to the ground and die. This helps us to see that the decay of creation inherent in a fallen world need not argue against, but may enhance, the beauty of God's creation. The doctrine of last things is the focus of the fourth and final chapter. We often think of 'seeing God' at the consummation of all things. Here Jenson's concept of God as 'a great fugue...the rest is music' leads us to consider our future in God as something heard as well as seen. Wright's reflections on music sparkle with insights and build on his earlier interest in the sacramentality of music. God is a melody; three singers (Father, Son, and Spirit) perform the melody; all are invited to join in the song, and the multiple voices become, by grace, not a noisy din, but the sound of beauty.

This is a very impressive piece of work that provokes the reader's thinking on the beauty of God, of creation and of the end that is in store for all those captured by the beauty of Christ.

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Wesley and Methodist Studies, Volume 4. Toronto: Clements Academic, 2012.

This issue of *Wesley and Methodist Studies* provides a fascinating selection of essays and a kaleidoscope of snapshots from different times and places in the history of Methodism. The first essay by Joseph Wood; entitled 'William White, John Wesley and the 'Sheep without a Shepherd': Towards a New Understanding of Wesley's Ecclesiology,' situates Wesley's decision to ordain priests for the American Methodists in the contexts of related debates within Anglicanism. He argues that Wesley's decision was not as innovative

as is often claimed but rather is in continuity with debates within Anglicanism reaching back to Hooker. Wesley is best understood as a 'contemplative' pragmatist – that is, his decision was pragmatic but it was not innovative. Rather, it was informed by a tradition of discussion within Anglicanism. As such it was not a radical break with Anglicanism as is often proposed.

The second essay by Rachel Cope examines the historiography of the nineteenth century revivals with a particular focus on New York. She provides an incisive critique of the tendency to neglect the religious dimension in explanations of the causes and consequences of revivals and to instead focus on social dimension. She argues that there is a need to give greater attention to the way people – particularly women – who participated in the revivals described their own experiences.

The two next essays should be of particular interest to Australasian readers. Glen O'Brien discusses the role played by Samuel Leigh in the establishment of Methodism in New South Wales. This picks up the theme of the relationship between Methodism and Anglicanism not in terms of theology but rather the concrete realities of the relationship that emerged in the context of differing perspectives in colonial Australian Methodism. The paper also puts a spotlight on the relationship between the Wesleyan Missionary Committee and the newly established colonial churches. These relationships are also under the spotlight in Martin Daly's discussion of the involvement of John Thomas in the Tongan Civil War of 1837. This also explores the complex issues surrounding the political role of missionaries and how they should interpret the directive to submit to the king in contexts very different from Britain. It also raises question of the relationship between Christianity and culture and how this is expressed in a given socio-historical moment.

The issue of missions and politics is the focus of Norman Taggart's discussion of 'The World Council of Churches' Program to Combat Racism and the Irish Methodist Mission.' This paper discusses the challenge posed by the decision of the WCC to provide funding for humanitarian purposes to various Southern African liberation movements. The paper focuses on the context of Zimbabwe (then called Rhodesia) providing a description of the different responses by mission partners working in Zimbabwe at the time as well as debates within Ireland. The paper would have been further enriched if it had given more attention to the response of Zimbabweans to the issues.

The issues of culture, race and justice are the focus of a shorter paper by Sharon Grant on the involvement of the Methodist missionary Thomas Pennock in Jamaica in struggles and debates over slavery. The article highlights both the tensions between the missionaries as they strove to respond to the broader struggles within Jamaican society between people who were or had been enslaved and the plantation owners, that is between people of African descent and British settlers.

Cultural transformation plays a different role in Mark R. Teasdale's discussion of the ministry of William Wesley Van Orsdel in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Montana. He describes a mission that was not only focused on evangelism but also on the transformation of culture arguing that an important component of Methodist mission in the western USA involved the development of patterns of life that characterised the culture of the US East Coast.

The final paper deals with the doctrinal preaching of W.E. Sangster arguing that a greater portion of his sermons should be understood as doctrinal than is normally the case. This must be seen in relation to the practical focus of his doctrinal sermons and the doctrinal content of his practical sermons.

In summary this edition of *Wesley and Methodist Studies* provides a diverse but stimulating collection of papers that are well worth reading.

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We have not been able to review all subsequent volumes of *Wesley and Methodist Studies* but provide here an author and title list of the main articles in each volume of this excellent journal. Jointly published by the Manchester Wesley Research Centre and the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, and edited by William Gibson and Geordan Hammond, *Wesley and Methodist Studies* has established itself as the leading journal in its field.

Wesley and Methodist Studies, Volume 5. Toronto: Clements Academic, 2013. pp. 189.

'So much idolized by some, and railed at by others': Towards Understanding George Whitefield – David Ceri Jones

John Wesley and Overseas Missions: Principles and Practice – Henry D. Rack

On Knowing Christ in the Flesh: Towards a Bodily Reading of the Methodist Revival – Charles Wallace

Dilemmas of the Nonconformist Conscience: Attitudes Towards War and Peace within Primitive Methodism – Michael Hughes

Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Methodist Spirituality – Ian Randall

Notes and Documents

Beyond Perfection: A Redemptive Reading of Retracted Holiness Testimony in John Walsh's Letter to Charles Wesley, 5 August 1762 – Introduced, Transcribed, and Annotated by David Stark

Wesley and Methodist Studies, Volume 6. Nottingham: Paternoster, 2014. pp. 229.

Articles

'Use' and 'Enjoy' in John Wesley: John Wesley's Participation within the Augustinian Tradition – John W. Wright

'Grace to All did Freely Move': Thoughts on Charles Wesley's 1741/1742 Hymns on God's Everlasting Love – J. Gregory Crofford

Thomas Jackson (1783-1873), Book Collector, Editor, and Tutor – Isabel Rivers

Charles Garrett and the Birth of the Wesleyan Central Mission Movement – Roger Standing

Notes and Documents

John Wesley's Earliest Published Defence of the Emerging Revival in Bristol – Introduced, Transcribed, and Annotated by Randy L. Maddox

Anti-Methodist Publications of the Eighteenth Century: A

Supplemental Bibliography – Clive D. Field

Wesley and Methodist Studies, Volume 7. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015. pp. 186.

Articles

Authority and Liberty: John Wesley's View of Medieval England – Thomas W. Smith

John Byrom and the Context of Charles Wesley's Shorthand – Timothy Underhill

Secession and Revival: Louth Free Methodist Church in the 1850s – D.W. Bebbington

The Design of Nineteenth Century Wesleyan Space: Re-reading F. J. Jobson's *Chapel and School Architecture* – Ruth Mason

Evangelical Dissentients and the Defeat of the Anglican-Methodist Unity Scheme – Andrew Atherstone

Notes and Documents

A Note on John Wesley's Visit to Herrnhut in 1738 – Kai Dose

A Zealous (but Respected) Adversary: John Lewis's Correspondence with John Wesley – Introduced, Transcribed, and Annotated by Randy L. Maddox