PhD Theses


‘This thesis explores the place of sanctifying experience of God in the work of two theologians, John Wesley and Gregory Palamas. The thought of both is shaped by a teleological drive towards the fullest possible experience of God. The thesis engages Wesley and Palamas over the character of the experience of God, the way in which it produces the sanctification of Christian people, and the theology which results from this sanctification.’


‘The purpose of this thesis is to develop a model for conceptualizing John Wesley’s theology of the Holy Spirit. Though it has been suggested that a nuanced understanding of the Spirit’s person and operation is conspicuously absent from his writings, the present work contend is otherwise. Indeed, it will show that Wesley’s notion of ‘perceptible inspiration’, which he articulated in correspondence with ‘John Smith’, provides a useful framework for exploring the question of pneumatology. It will prove that in Wesley’s theological thinking, the concept of ‘perceptible inspiration’ exposes a practical or economic pneumatology, and that his theological writings characterize the Holy Spirit as God’s gracious relationality, who imbued believers with the gift of faith to perceive the witness of the Spirit, and who empowered inspirants to lead the life of spiritual holiness. In developing this model, the author argues for a more robust conception and appreciation of John Wesley’s pneumatology, which heretofore has been neglected in contemporary scholarship.’ (4)


‘Charles Wesley used the language of being restored in the image of God to describe the goal of the Christian life. His definition stressed the importance of faith, purity, humility, love of God, and the love of neighbour; a definition similar to that of Henry Scougal. This thesis examines Charles Wesley’s poetry and other documents from four different time periods to reveal Charles’s perception of the situations he faced and how he used being restored in the image of God to respond to these situations.’ (iii)


‘This thesis contributes to the growing body of literature by focusing on London sermon culture from 1702 to 1763. ‘This study illuminates how this established genre adapted to the evolving world of print’ and how this analysis ‘further our understanding of the role of religion in society.’ ‘This thesis traces the evolution of sermon culture from a highly partisan culture in the early eighteenth century to a more ‘urbane’ one by the mid-eighteenth century, when preachers increasingly contributed to the expanding associational environment of London.’


‘This thesis aims to assess how religious expression within the parish of Halifax was affected by the changing economic and social environment, in particular the urban-industrial experience, and how religion helped shaped the new urban-industrial society during the period from the middle of the eighteenth century to the outbreak of the First World War.’


‘This dissertation is an exercise in practical theology which investigates and responds to the problem of changing holiness identity in the Church of the Nazarene’ and does this through ‘Nancy T. Ammerman’s theory of narrative religious identity—to understand the dynamics of lived religious life within these congregations and to identify the various holiness narratives at play’ (v). After reviewing the problems and holiness identities within the Church of the Nazarene LaFountain proposes a the formation of a holiness identity through ‘the theological resources of Mennonite scholar and historian John Howard Yoder’ (vi).

Deirdre Brower Latz, ‘A contextual reading of John Wesley’s theology and the emergent church movement in respect to aspects of Wesley’s theology, ecclesiology and urban poverty’, University of Manchester (Nazarene Theological College), 2009.

‘This thesis surveys facets of the eighteenth century English social content in order to offer a reading of Wesley as a contextual theologian.’ ‘This thesis focuses particularly on one response to cultural change experienced within the Christian church in the West, the emergent church movement, which is a relatively recent phenomenon. The movement is defined and then considered in its approach to ecclesiology and to the poor.’ ‘This thesis offers a critique of the emergent church movement in relation to key theological developments, and critically reflect on the movement in respects to particular theological elements that are crucial to Wesley.’ In conclusion, ‘the emergent church movement can learn from’ Wesley’s orthopraxis as related to his historical context and helping the poor.

John David Lee, Jr. ‘The Significance of the Conversion-Experience of May 24, 1738, in the Life of John Wesley’, Boston University, 1937.


Mark Thomas Mealey, ‘Taste and See that the Lord is Good: John Wesley in the Christian Tradition of Spiritual Sensation’, University of St. Michael’s College (Wycliffe College/Toronto School of Theology), 2006.


‘This thesis examines the emergence of a number of North American Wesleyan-Holiness denominations in Australia’ including ‘Church of God (Anderson, the Church of God (Cleveland), the Church of the Nazarene, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church.’ O’Brien examines their marginalisation to established denominations, themes of ‘Americanisation and anti-Americanism’, transfer growth from liberal Protestant denominations in the 1970s. He concludes the emergence of these denominations was ‘a creative partnership
between like-minded evangelical Christians from two modern nations sharing a general cultural and social similarity and a common set of religious convictions’ (vi) and emerged out of a ‘the post-war context of greater engagement between Australians and Americans and at the same time a continuation of the long-standing “holiness” and “revivalist” strain within Australian evangelicalism’ (vii).


This thesis reevaluates the doctrine of entire sanctification along Christological lines. Oglevie proposes that the doctrine of atonement gains ‘value and richness when it is interpreted as the story of the sanctification of Christ’s own humanity.’ This is a new reading through a ‘model of entire sanctification’ for Christ himself became entirely sanctified and believers are to follow. This thesis sketches ‘early holiness theology from John Wesley and his close associates to Methodism and the Holiness movement’ and notes a shift towards pneumatological expressions such as ‘the baptism of the Holy Ghost.’ ‘The study concludes that the doctrine of entire (iii) sanctification appears to be in decline.’ Oglevie, then critiques three proposals for the recovery of Wesleyan theology made by William J. Abraham, Elaine A. Heath, and D. Lyle Dabney, and defends her thesis and counter-proposal. The thesis concludes with three chapters examination models of the atonement by Athanasius of Alexandria, Martin Luther, and R. C. Moberly and applies the thesis to these (iv).


Stanley J. Rodes, “From Faith to Faith”: An Examination of the Servant-Son Metaphor in John Wesley’s Theological Thought’, University of Manchester (Nazarene Theological College), 2011.


‘This interdisciplinary thesis explores the question of holiness from the perspectives of Scripture [Section A], Tradition [Section B], Reason and Experience [Section C] and proceeds to utilize that understanding of holiness which emerge to ask what a Methodist holy school might be. This four-strand theological method, known as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, both underpins the methodology of the thesis and locates it within Wesleyan tradition.’ Section D outlines what a holy school might be with particular reference to the Methodist schools in England and Wales. This outline is contextualised by recent developments in education and draws upon the insights of education research. From the four strands the Quadrilateral an understanding of holiness emerges; it is to share in the life of the divine by the gracious act of the Father, in his Son, through the sanctifying power of the Spirit’ (1).

David Thomas Stark, ‘“The Peculiar Doctrine Committed to Our Trust”: Ideal and Identity in the First Wesleyan Holiness Revival, 1758-1763’, University of Manchester (Nazarene Theological College), 2011.


This thesis explores the question: ‘To what extent did Lutheran literature influence John Wesley’s theology of mission?’ (x) Vermilya surveys Lutheran literature Wesley experience and assesses Anton Wilhelm Böhm’s Sermons. Vermilya examines Wesley’s theology of mission ‘by considering literary influence.’ ‘Because a theology of mission involves not only the integration of theory (i.e., what we know) and praxis (i.e., how we act), but also experience (i.e., who we are), such an approach contributes to the ongoing search for John Wesley’s theology of mission; and it provides further historical insight into the Luther-Wesley story.’ (xi)

Pauline Elizabeth Watson, ‘“A Local Habitation and a Name”: A Kristevan Reading of Human Growth in Religion, with reference to John and Charles Wesley’, Durham University, 2008.

Harold Vau Whited, ‘A Rhetorical Analysis of the Published Sermons Preached by John Wesley at Oxford University’, University of Michigan, 1958.


David Robert Wilson, ‘Church and Chapel: Parish Ministry and Methodism in Madeley, c. 1760-1785, with Special Reference to the Ministry of John Fletcher’, University of Manchester, 2010.


Master of Philosophy Theses


Master of Theology Thesis


Master of Arts Theses
