Manchester Wesley Research Centre at Nazarene
Theological College, Manchester

Catalogue of PhD, MPhil, and MA Theses

Catalogued by Geordan Hammond (April 2007)
PhD Theses


‘This thesis examines the attitudes of British Methodism to the poor from the 1780s and 1840, how Methodists received and developed the ‘evangelical economics’ of Wesley’s teaching and praxis.’ Special attention is given to the Strangers’ Friend Societies.


‘This thesis contends that the real strength of the movement lay in business, the professions and burgeoning officialdom, and traces the clerical and business networks and connected this metropolitan nexus with provincial Britain.’


‘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.’


This is a developmental study of John Wesley’s soteriology in light of the influence of the Caroline Divines on his developing understating of the doctrine of salvation. ‘The evidence presented reveals that John Wesley’s soteriology was influenced most significantly by the Caroline Divines and the study serves as a corrective to those who attribute primary influence to Eastern Orthodox writers, Continental Reformers or any other doctrinal source. While this study shows the eclectic nature of Wesley’s soteriological sources it clearly demonstrates that no other group of writers was read as often, commended as repeatedly, included in Wesley’s Christian Library as frequently or bears as much theological resemblance to the writings of John Wesley as the Caroline Divines. This study focuses on John Wesley’s ordo salutis, or ‘order of salvation,’ and traces its development in sermons and other key writings from 1725 to 1791’ (vi).


Basappa’s study applies Wesley’s theology to the issue of caste distinctions in India. He examines the social and historical background of slavery in eighteenth-century
England and Wesley’s attitude to slavery in the context of class distinctions. Indian caste distinctions and bonded labour are detailed in historical perspective followed by an argument for the relevance of Wesley’s response to the poor and oppressed to these issues. Bassapa sees Wesley’s doctrine of perfect loves as a doctrine that ‘detests all that demotes men and women’ (vi).


Blevins’s thesis began from a concern that ‘Educators within conservative Wesleyan denominations, including the church of the Nazarene, need a Wesleyan approach to Christian religious education to offset the influence of American evangelicalism’. He focuses on Wesley’s understanding of the means of grace as an educational ‘ways of knowing’. It is argued that Wesley’s sacramental practice is related to educational theory due to his belief that different ways of knowing God are mediated through the means of grace. Blevins contends that ‘The means of grace suggest three interactive approaches for organizing education: formation, discernment, and transformation. Formation socializes participants into Christian character, while discernment teaches participants to investigate and interpret God’s activity within life. Transformation empowers participants actually to become means of grace, to live lives of holiness in order to transform the world at large’.


‘All of the eighteenth century antislavery leaders were committed churchmen; most of them were staunch Evangelicals. It is the purpose of this study to examine selected attitudes and motives of the most significant antislavery leaders’. Three main issues are examined: ‘Their attitudes toward the institution of slavery; Their attitudes toward the idea of negro inferiority; The motives for engaging in the cause of antislavery’. ‘The above three issues are explored primarily by critical analysis and interpretation of the antislavery writings of the abolitionists’. ‘The second part of the thesis focuses on Wesley’s distinctive theology and its possible relationship to the growing antislavery thought of the late eighteenth century.’ ‘Wesley is seen as one of
those who contributed to the growth of the antislavery movement and to the receptivity of
the populace to the work of that movement’.

Gennifer Benjamin Brooks, ‘An Ecclesial Homiletic: The “Pure Word of God” on
Holy Living in the Sermons of John Wesley’, Drew University, 2005.

Barry Edward Bryant, ‘John Wesley’s Doctrine of Sin’, King’s College, University
[cf. ‘John Wesley on the origins of evil’, (Ilkeston: Wesley Fellowship, 1992);

Bryant analyses Wesley’s doctrine of sin within his understanding of its place in
the ‘Christian system’. He maintains that the basis of Wesley’s concept of sin was
derived from ‘eternal reason’, or the nature of God. According to Bryant, Wesley’s
doctrine of sin contains a ‘disjunction between the physical and metaphysical nature of
personhood’ due to his conception of soul/ body duality and distinction between sin in the
physical sense (sin improperly so called) and sin the metaphysical sense (sin properly so
called) (288). He proposes that Wesley studies might learn from recent discussions of
theological anthropology and discuss personhood in terms of relationality. It is suggested
that personhood should be defined ‘as one who exists in relation to God and neighbour’
(288). From this basis, a doctrine of sin can be formed that is both faithful to Wesley and
critiques Wesley’s ‘disjunction between the physical and metaphysical nature of
personhood’. [Missing]

Michael T. Burns, ‘John Wesley’s Doctrine of Perfect Love as a Theological
Mandate for Inclusion and Diversity’, University of Manchester (Nazarene
Theological College), 2009.

‘This thesis examines John Wesley’s theological doctrine of perfect love and the
inclusion and diversity of all human beings, and whether or not Wesley prescribed a
theology that was truly egalitarian and inclusive. From a historical perspective, as well as,
a theological perspective it seems incongruous to proclaim a doctrine of holiness and
perfect love and tacitly accept oppression, poverty, racism and sexism. The premise is
that perfect love provides renewal in the full image of God, an image of holy love, and
also provides the capacitiation to live out this love in an inclusive and diverse
community.’ (6)

Robert Michael Castro, ‘Exegetical Method in John Wesley’s Explanatory Notes
Upon the Old Testament: A Description of His Approach, Uses of Sources, and

Kiyeong Chang, ‘Sinai and Calvary: A Critical Appraisal of the Theologies of the
Law in Martin Luther and John Wesley’, University of Manchester (Nazarene
Theological College), 2012.

Ann Rorabaw Clark, ‘The Influence of Pietism on John Wesley as Revealed in His
‘This study has attempted to determine, largely from Wesley’s Journal, which doctrines and practices held by the early Methodist societies seem rooted in Wesley’s steady concern with Pietist doctrines and practices demonstrated by Pietists from Halle, Moravia, and Herrnhut’. The study also analyses how Pietist doctrines made their way into the practices of the early Methodist societies. ‘This study concentrates on seven major doctrines which Wesley developed and refined for introduction among the Methodist societies—assurance with its accompanying free grace and consequent rejection of predestination, perfection, apostolic succession, a theory and practice of hymnody, and a distinctive philosophy of education—and with the exception of his stand against apostolic succession, Wesley’s Journal evidences each doctrine to be heavily indebted to Pietism.’ This study also makes some attempt to examine the history of Wesley’s diaries and published Journal extracts.


‘The purpose of this study is to reinstate what I believe to be Arminius’s own thesis, the centrality of the doctrine of Christ in Christian theology’. Clarke contends ‘that elements of his theology which caused controversy in his lifetime and after, notably predestination, are to be seen in the context of his Christology, because Arminius himself places them there; and that his Christology is set in turn in the context of his (admittedly lopsided) Trinitarian theology’. In the epilogue, Clarke declares that ‘on the subject of predestination I consider his [Arminius’s] objections to the opposing doctrines almost entirely correct and his criticisms of them well-deserved’ (214).


‘This study identifies the key factors that made Methodism such an attractive religious alternative for English-speaking people in the years leading up to the Victorian period’ (1).


James Gregory Crofford, ‘Streams of Mercy: Prevenient Grace in the Theology of John and Charles Wesley’, University of Manchester (Nazarene Theological College), 2008. [Published as under the same title by Emeth Press (2010)]

“This definitive study of prevenient grace in the Wesleys by Greg Crofford opens new ground in understanding this seminal doctrine of Methodism by uncovering a diversity of sources [Anglican, Puritan, and Quaker] used by John Wesley in his exposition of this biblical concept. This study also includes an in-depth examination of the complementary role of Charles Wesley's poetical discourse on the theme, which results in a more comprehensive presentation of its form and function in early Methodism. Crofford further demonstrates major ways in which prevenient grace was deployed in the writings of selected Methodist theologians.” (J. Stephen O'Malley)

“Cofford ably demonstrates that the doctrine of prevenient grace not only helped the Wesley brothers to integrate diverse elements of their respective theologies but it also enabled them to avoid rigid determinism on the one hand and the 'despair of moralism' on the other. This is an important contribution to the field.” (Kenneth J. Collins)

Joanna Cruickshank, ‘Charles Wesley and the Construction of Suffering in Early English Methodism’, University of Melbourne, 2006. [Published as: Pain, Passion and Faith: Revisiting the Place of Charles Wesley in Early Methodism, Pietist and Wesleyan Studies 31 (Scarecrow Press, 2009).]

[A revision of his thesis has been published under the same title by Emeth Press (2010).]

Crutcher’s thesis is aimed to ‘navigate between the Scylla of lifeless doctrinal correctness and the Charybdis of amorphous doctrineless religiosity’ (2). This is primarily a study of Wesley’s theology of experience that is intended as a contribution to modern ecumenical theology (2-3, 269-71, 275-78). Crutcher contends that ‘Wesley’s epistemological orientation is better explained by his Aristotelian background’ than Lockean empiricism’ (13). In Wesley Crutcher sees Scripture and experience as a dynamic ‘hermeneutical circle ‘in which knowledge is advanced by both the “first-order move” of acquiring data from experience (which may be pre-informed by Scripture) and the “second-order move” of reapplying data back to experience” (274).


‘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 contends 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)


Ryan N. Danker, ‘Constrained to Deviate: John Wesley and the Evangelical Anglicans’, ThD, Boston University, 2012.


Davies’ study of over 700 pages opens with a 146 biography of Fletcher. The focus of the thesis is on Fletcher’s theology, with a chapter on his doctrine of the fall and original sin, salvation, election, perfection, the church, and a concluding chapter that sums up his work as a theologian. Davies argues that though regarded ‘as a saint amongst the early Methodists, [Fletcher] has never come into his rightful place as a theologian’ (vi). Davies attempts to rectify this by showing ‘that because Fletcher’s thinking was so consistent, a system of theology, if not an entirely complete one, can be deduced from his writings’ (vi).


This is a historical study of the rise and decline of the class system from 1740 to 1890. Dean notes that ‘It is the thesis of this study that the cell group system of early Methodism was an integral and essential component of the evangelistic mission of the movement’. The differences between cell groups in eighteenth and nineteenth century
British Methodism are highlighted in this study. In the eighteenth century multiple cell
groups functioned in a hierarchical fashion, but by the nineteenth century only the class
meeting remained.

**John Austin Dolan, ‘Methodist Lay Sectarianism: The Independent Methodists
1796-1927’, University of Manchester (Nazarene Theological College), 2004.**
[Revised and published as *The Independent Methodists: A History* (2005).]

This is a study of various Independent Methodist groups that over time formed
themselves into a ‘loose alliance…through common bonds of poverty, powerlessness and
simplicity’. According to Dolan, ‘This thesis aims to examine and analyse the processes
which shaped Independent Methodism on its journey from sect to denomination’. He
argues that by 1927 Independent Methodism was ‘an organised denomination which
differed from other Free Churches primarily by its unusual and distinctive views of
ministry’. His analysis is based on ‘examination of social and political factors which
influenced the process of transition’ from sect to denomination. Other areas of analysis
focus on ‘why Independent Methodism finally stood aside from the process of Methodist
reunion’ and an evaluation and critical analysis of their ‘view of ministry’.

**J. Cyril Downes, ‘Eschatological Doctrines in the Writings of John and Charles
Wesley’, University of Edinburgh, 1960.**

Downes notes that the writings of the Wesleys reflect the unresolved New
Testament tension between the present life and the life to come. They recognize the
finite nature of life and the inevitability of suffering. At the same time, they argue that
life is ‘good in itself’ and warn against focusing too much on the life to come. Wesley’s
thought stresses what modern theologians have labelled as ‘realized eschatology’ – that
‘the great moments and experiences of the Christian life are available here and now’
(248). Downes argues that one must consider Wesley’s eschatology in light of the whole
body of his theological thought.

**Elden Dale Dunlap, ‘Methodist Theology in Great Britain in the Nineteenth
Century: With Special Reference to the Theology of Adam Clarke, Richard Watson,
and William Burt Pope’, Yale University, 1956.**

Dunlap argues that Adam Clarke and Richard Watson ‘tended to think of the
Atonement in terms of the cross alone and less as the whole career of Jesus Christ as was
typical of Wesley’. In their theology, ‘The crucial Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace
tended to give way to a stress on co-operant grace and there was a subtle shift from
divine grace and initiative to human agency and role in the economy of salvation’.
However, William Burt Pope was faithful to ‘the key Wesleyan soteriological doctrines
of divine grace and the work of the Holy Spirit’. He ‘rediscovered’ prevenient grace, and
the atonement as underlying ‘both the mediatorial ministry and the Spirit’s administration
of redemption’.

**Patrick Alan Eby, ‘The One Thing Needful: The Development of Charles Wesley’s
Theology of the Restoration of the Image of God’, Drew University, 2010.**

‘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)


Jennifer Farooq, ‘London Sermon Culture, 1702-1763’, University of Reading, 2008. ‘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.’


Stephen Allen Flick, ‘John William Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley: A Pastoral Theology’, Drew University, 1994. Fletcher is often remembered as a Methodist saint or systematizer of John Wesley’s theology; however, Flick’s study seeks to appreciate Fletcher as a pastoral theologian. In Flick’s words, ‘The propose of this work is to provide insight into the pastoral thought and life of John William Fletcher while vicar of Madeley parish’ (10). A key aim of Flick study is to show the interrelationship between Fletcher’s theology and pastoral practice. The dissertation includes chapters on Fletcher’s ‘call to the ministry’, ‘proclamation of the gospel’, priestly role, pastoral example and practice, and attempts to guard his parishioners from various threats.

This study comprises of scholarly transcriptions of the correspondence between John Fletcher and Charles Wesley with an accompanying commentary. ‘The commentary focuses upon two areas. ‘The first deals with internal textual issues relating to the writing of the letters, their published history and biographical use’. ‘The second section comments upon external relational matters and questions of identity’. ‘Three major conclusions are formed. First (in chapter 3), that the relationship between John Fletcher and Charles Wesley was considerably more intimate than usually recognized, and by corollary that with John Wesley more formal. Second (in chapter 5), that Fletcher’s relationships with women were not straightforward and represent a developmental progression between his youth, maturity and eventual marriage. Lastly (chapter 7), that Fletcher had considerable interaction with French emigré communities and, by implication, the early Methodist movement owes a substantial and generally unacknowledged debt to the Huguenots’.


‘The purpose of this study is to attempt a demotic history of the idea of Christian perfection within early British Methodism [1733-1785], noting the variants and strains caused by differences of interpretation’ (18). The study shows ‘that differing understandings of Christian perfection were a leading cause in every major split within Methodism and in many of the tensions which did not result in schism’ (19). Fraser focuses not just on the Wesleys and Fletcher, but also examines the views of a number of other contemporary Methodists. According to Fraser, Wesley allowed ‘a degree of deviation’ in Methodist understandings of perfection and never excluded anyone from fellowship for minor deviation (402).


This study ‘seeks to examine one of the most acknowledged and yet least understood aspects of his thought—the doctrine of good works’ (3). The primary principle of Wesley’s soteriology is ‘Grace is the source; faith is the condition of salvation’. ‘But such a principle must be immediately followed by another primary principle: wherever grace and faith are, there are good works’. ‘Thus, this dissertation proposes to examine the nature, role, and significance of good works in Wesley’s conception of ordo salutis (order of salvation), from beginning to end in all its dimensions. By so doing, it attempts to demonstrate that Wesley’s understanding of good works is a central and decisive element in his theology. His deep concerns for good works on the one hand and his hatred for antinomianism on the other, virtually shaped the distinctive outlook of his theology from the beginning of his theological career until the end’ (4).

‘This study is an inquiry concerning the presence of Christ with the worshipping community, in light of the liturgical tradition received in the hymns of John and Charles Wesley’. Focusing on A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists (1780) and Hymns on the Lord’s Supper (1745), Gallway states ‘A basic insight of the hymns is that the presence of Christ can never be reduced merely to the temporal present (i.e., the present of immediate consciousness) because Jesus’ presence always entails the remembrance of his past, and hope for the future promised in him’. ‘In constructive terms, this proposal shifts the understanding of the Wesleys’ christology away from a one-sided emphasis upon justification (i.e., the past in relation to the present and eternal), and re-discovers some of the larger systematic connections between their christology, ecclesiology, and trinitarian doctrine, in particular the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In consequence, a perspective emerges from the hymns which is better able to give an account of the continuing and future activity of Christ in history, and the communities participation in his ministry to the world. From this angle, the critical perspective of liberation theology can be both appreciated and critiqued’.


Noting that little attention has been given to the role of the laity in early Methodism, Garlow attempts to rectify this by outlining Wesley’s understanding of the laity. The study ‘is an examination of John Wesley’s utilization of the laity in early Methodism for the purpose of “constructing” his “theology of the laity”’ (1). Garlow thesis consists of an historical study of Wesley’s use of the laity which sets the stage for “constructing” his “theology of the laity”. He maintains that Wesley use of the laity was revolutionary in his time and is relevant for current discussions of lay ministry.


In a quest to bring us ‘closer to the origins of the roots of pietism’, Greve examines three representative theologians with the aim of providing a definition of pietism (5). This task places Greve’s study within a long history of debate over the identity of pietism. Over half of Greve’s dissertation focuses on John Calvin’s life and theology of piety, with a chapter on William Perkins and John Wesley. Given the nature of his study, it is not surprising that Greve asserts that Wesley’s Puritan heritage was ‘perhaps the most significant’ factor in shaping his piety (5).


This ‘dissertation demonstrates that between 1736 and 1790 Wesley consistently criticized mystics as unscriptural, unreasonable, poor examples of Christian life who rely too much on the authority of their experiences for their religion’. On the other hand, Wesley recognized a few ‘exceptional mystics’ as an exception to this rule. Griswold argues that many interpreters of Wesley’s relation with mystics have anachronistically evaluated Wesley based on nineteenth and twentieth century developments of mysticism. ‘The dissertation…challenges recent renderings of the whole of Wesley’s theology insofar as they regard the authority of scripture as always superior to (Maddox, Collins) or never deeply challenged by (Cobb) the authority of experience. It mitigates against the view (Ruynon) that, for Wesley, experience is subject to a test from scripture within a Christian community’.


According to Randy Maddox, ‘Hammond offers the most extended analysis to date of how John Wesley’s ministry aboard the Simmonds during his trip to Georgia and in his parish ministry in Georgia were shaped by his interests in the ecclesial practices of primitive Christianity. The study opens with a very helpful survey of patristic study in the Church of England, and of the particular influence of the Nonjuror vision of the early church on Wesley’ [accessed at: http://divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/cswt/research-resources/wesley-studies-resources].

‘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 shape the new urban-industrial society during the period from the middle of the eighteenth century to the outbreak of the First World War.’


‘The purpose of this study is to examine the origin and development of Oxford Methodism during the period 1725-35, focusing on the life and thought of John Wesley as the leader of the movement’. This study was the first to rely ‘upon a close analysis of all of John Wesley’s extant diaries from the Oxford period as well as a previously unexamined diary of Benjamin Ingham and a little-known diary of George Whitefield, both Oxford Methodists’. One of the key contributions of this study is that Heitzenrater was the first scholar to fully decipher Wesley’s Oxford diaries. Heitzenrater gives ‘particular attention…to the intellectual and spiritual activities of John Wesley and his company of friends, and the practical implications of these developments upon the organizational patterns and social programs of the Oxford Methodists’. ‘The central portion of the study presents a detailed account of the stages of growth within the movement, pointing out those persons, ideas, and events which influenced particular developments’. Heitzenrater emphasizes Methodist groups met in several Oxford colleges ‘bound together by a common attempt to pursue a life of holiness and willing to follow the general methods of devotion and self-denial which had come to characterize John Wesley’s own search for salvation’.


In Hoon’s words, ‘This thesis attempts to ascertain and record in a systematic form the theology of John Wesley as contained in his prose writings’ (i). This study was one of the first attempts to outline Wesley’s theology in a systematic matter. In the preface to his work, Hoon explains that his decision to frame his thesis around Wesley’s soteriology ‘was suggested by Wesley himself (ii).
Glenn Burt Hosman, Jr. ‘The Problem of Church and State in the Thought of John Wesley As Reflecting His Understanding of Providence and His View of History’, Drew University, 1970.

Hull portrays Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon as ‘two rugged individualists’. He re-examines the Countess’ underappreciated role in the Evangelical Revival. Hull maintains that the controversy between the two had ‘disastrous consequences for all parties concerned, and for the Church universal’.


Seung-An Im, ‘John Wesley’s Theological Anthropology: A Dialectic Tension Between the Latin Wesleyan Patristic Tradition (Augustine) and The Greek Eastern Patristic Tradition (Gregory of Nyssa)’, Drew University, 1994.


This is a comparative study of the origins of Methodism and Tractarianism and their two great leaders. The focus of the thesis is on comparing and contrasting Wesley’s and Newman’s ‘ideals of sanctity’. These movements were creatures of their time that demanded a high ethical standard of the individual and the church. While both men sought to reform the individual and church on the basis of early ‘Catholic’ Christianity, they developed different doctrines of sanctification.


Waldo Emerson Knickerbocker, Jr., ‘The Doctrine of Authority in the Theology of John Fletcher’, Emory University, 1972.


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.


Gareth Lloyd, ‘Charles Wesley: A New Evaluation of His Life and Ministry’, University of Liverpool, 2002. [A revision of this thesis was published as Charles Wesley and the Struggle for Methodist Identity (Oxford University Press, 2007)].

‘It is the aim of this study to access Charles’ place in Methodism’s early history and also his legacy, which was very different from that of John Wesley. It will discuss in detail the tension that was an important and ever-present aspect of the early evangelical movement, controversy that was inextricably intertwined with the character and opinions of Charles Wesley. Such conflict, as we shall see, has been acknowledged by historians but its depth and impact has been consistently understated. It will be argued that the nineteenth-century British Methodist Church represented in large measure a deviation from the original vision behind the Revival and that Charles Wesley’s damaged reputation was based on his championship and personification of the early ethos’ (5). Other aspects of early Methodism examined by Lloyd include: the tense relationship between Charles and John Wesley, and an evaluation of ‘early Methodist people’. Lloyd’s study is based on the manuscript sources from the Methodist Archives at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

Chris Lohrstorfer, ‘Know your Disease, Know your Cure: A Critical Analysis of John Wesley’s Sources for his Doctrine of Original Sin’, University of Manchester (Nazarene Theological College), 2006.

‘This thesis is a study in the sources of John Wesley’s doctrine of Original Sin’. Lohrstorfer sees four steps in the development of Wesley’s doctrine: first, in 1730, with his ‘use of biological or consequential language he gleaned from Peter Browne’; second, in 1733, ‘was the inclusion of Augustinian, and later, Macarian disease language used to describe sin’; third, in 1757, Wesley entered the long-standing debate on Original Sin with his The Doctrine of Original Sin According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience; fourth, his reading of Henry Woolnor ‘on the doctrine of traducianism’. In addition to the authors mentioned above, Lohrstorfer uncovers the ‘the influence of Richard Lucas on Wesley’s early doctrinal development, particularly his problematic issues such as, fear of death as a proof of lack of salvation, the necessity of ‘the witness of the Spirit’ for
salvation, and the difficulty with faith for immediate conversion’. Check to see if this is on the shelf.


This dissertation focuses on the change in the practice of non-Eucharistic worship in British Methodism by examining its form, content, style and ordering of worship and explores how the ethos of worship has altered. It also considers how the Liturgical Movement can aid the renewal of worship in the Methodist Church.


‘The purpose of the…study is to contribute to a more systematic understanding of this aspect of Wesley and hopefully encourage additional research in this neglected area. The major conclusions are: (1) Although never articulated as such, Wesley had a detailed and comprehensive system of general and personal eschatology. (2) That system was similar to many of his contemporaries. (3) His major innovations were in the areas of the philosophical underpinnings and theodicy. (4) His system was extremely well-integrated not only with the rest of theology as a necessary element but was also a fully functioning part of a coherent world view. (5) His search for assurance of salvation not only motivated his eschatological researches but may have been partially satisfied by them’ (1).

‘This study attempts to assess John Wesley’s claim that ‘to renounce reason is to renounce religion, that religion and reason go hand in hand, and that all irrational religion is false religion’. It focuses on Wesley’s understanding and use of a trio of closely related concepts—reason, faith, and experience—and tries to place them firmly into their 18th-century religious and intellectual context’. Matthews argues that ‘Reason, according to Wesley, is regrounded’ from an empiricism that must rely on the physical senses, to ‘the experience of faith, and so enabled to play its proper role in the guidance and governance of the religious life’. According to Matthews, Wesley believed reason ‘can
never of itself produce faith, yet [it] can serve to regulate the life of faith’ (375). In typical Anglican fashion, Wesley worked to balance ‘the Scylla of pure rationalism and the Charybdis of outright ‘enthusiasm’ by stressing both the objective ground and the subjective appropriation of the ‘witness of the Spirit’” (366).


This study seeks to show how Wesley was directly and indirectly influenced by Chrysostom. Once this is established ‘the primary purpose and task of this study will show how Wesley borrowed from Chrysostom, in constructing his own distinct assessment of the Christian life’ (8). It is argued that the key ‘affinities in Wesley’s teaching on the Christian life with Chrysostom’ can best analysed by ‘the dialectic of faith/good works or faith alone/holy living’ (10). McCormick contends that ‘faith filled with the energy of love’ as mediated by the Eastern patristic fathers is the ‘real legacy of the founder of Methodism’ (11).


[Published as Wesley as a Pastoral Theologian: Theological Methodology in John Wesley’s Doctrine of Christian Perfection (Paternoster, 2011)]

‘This thesis investigates the theological methodology of John Wesley as he used it in pastoral practice’. McEwan argues that the long-established view that Wesley’s was a ‘pastoral theologian is correct and this has implications for his approach to theologising’. This study implicitly challenges the feasibility of Wesleyan quadrilateral as a lens for understanding Wesley as a theologian. McEwan’s ‘analysis emphasises the fundamental nature of Christianity as a relationship of love, based on trust rather than an intellectual comprehension of doctrine; it is essentially a matter of the heart rather than the head’. The last part of the study turns ‘to an examination of Christian perfection as a doctrine and its application in pastoral practice’.


Herbert Boyd McGonigle, ‘John Wesley – Evangelical Arminian’, University of Keele, 1994. [A revision of this thesis was published under the title: Sufficient Saving Grace: John Wesley’s Evangelical Arminianism (2001)]

‘This thesis attempts to explore the development of John Wesley’s understanding of the biblical doctrines of election and predestination’. After looking at the beginnings of Arminianism in Holland and England, McGonigle examines John Wesley’s rejection of Calvinism as ‘highlighted in three significant theological conflicts’. First, ‘the Bristol Dispute of 1739-1741’; second, ‘the distinction between imputed and imparted righteousness that was thrashed out in the years 1758-1766’; third, ‘the Minutes Dispute of 1770-1775 when the tension between the Arminian Methodists and the Calvinistic
Methodists was at its height’. The study closes with an exploration of ‘John Wesley’s objections to what he believed to be the Antinomian tendencies of high Calvinism, and also summarises his doctrine of prevenient grace by which he sought to avoid both Pelagianism and Antinomianism’.


‘The founder of Methodism willingly admitted that he proclaimed no new doctrines. If we take him at his word, he is to be thought of as a member and theologian of the Anglican tradition, with a discerning knowledge of its Reformation heritage, and a vital concern for its message and mission in the eighteenth century. He would not allow his vacillations in regard to the “practice” of the Church to be interpreted as a depreciation of her fundamental doctrines. Doctrinally Methodism was to be Anglicanism in earnest’ (vi-vii).

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 is an examination and evaluation of evangelistic ministry at Cliff College and its major themes, or Charisms. It charts the rise of the College and its antecedents in section one, introducing main characters and events.’ Section two examines shaping themes of holiness, biblical and evangelical theology. Section three investigates the training in evangelism, and section four looks at the academic stance and validation of the College programmes. The conclusion identifies the relationship with Methodism to the College.


‘This dissertation follows the development through John Wesley’s long lifetime of his acquiring competence as a patristic scholar and ecclesiastical historian’. ‘This study was motivated’ by the desire ‘to examine the circumstances that caused Wesley, during his lifetime’ to comment on his high regard for the church fathers. Myers’ work is largely an attempt to catalogue Wesley’s use of the church fathers. Ted Campbell has noted that he seems to have been ‘inspired by the enterprise (mentioned in the text) of linking Methodism to its Catholic roots’ (John Wesley and Christian Antiquity, p. 136 n. 6).


Miller’s study asks ‘Was Wesley’s claim valid that he did not differ from the theological position of the Church of England’? He concludes ‘that although he differs at some points from the letter of Anglicanism, Wesley’s claim is legitimate regarding the spirit of Anglicanism’ (1). The main component of his study is an examination of the authority of Scripture justified by its implications for doctrinal development. Richard Hooker’s Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity is the primary source for evaluating the Anglican position on Scriptural authority; this is compared to Wesley’s methodology. The subordinate authorities of tradition, reason and experience are treated in relation to the doctrine of Scriptural authority. The latter portion of the study focuses on Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection in relation to his methodology – this shows how he applied his doctrine of Scriptural authority. Miller argues that Wesley’s basic methodology and teaching was in line with sixteenth century Anglicanism, but his most significant departure from the Anglican tradition was in his doctrine of Christian perfection which he maintained was in keeping with the spirit of early Anglicanism.


Morris asserts that ‘scholarship dealing with the poetical qualities of Charles Wesley’s hymns is meagre’ and that ‘Imagery studies, common enough on the seventeenth century religious poets, are rare in the field of hymnody’. Therefore, he offers the first study of imagery in the hymns of Wesley. He argues ‘that the hymns of Charles Wesley employ the same poetic techniques which he used in his secular poetry, and that these techniques are often highly complex’ (3-4). Morris points out that Wesley drew on the seventeenth century school of metaphysical poets (e.g. Donne and Herbert), but he was ‘not a metaphysical poet’ (383). In comparing the hymns of Wesley with Isaac Watts, Morris states that ‘The tone of Charles Wesley’s hymns was in contrast to that of Watts, for Wesley leaned toward a more subjective, more personal and intimate tone, while Watts usually set forth the glory and majesty of God’ (399). As one might expect, Biblical imagery is the primary source for the imagery found in his hymns. His brilliant use of Biblical imagery along with his ‘innovations with metre’ are Wesley’s greatest contributions to hymnody (405).

**Glen O’Brien, ‘North American Wesleyan-Holiness Churches in Australia’, La Trobe University, 2005.**

‘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 propose 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).

**Chang Hoon Park,** ‘The Theology of John Wesley as “Checks to Antinomianism”’, Drew University, 2002.


**David Petts,** ‘Healing and the Atonement’, University of Nottingham, 1993.

**Barbara Prosser,** ‘“An Arrow from a Quiver” Written Instruction for a Reading People John Wesley’s *Arminian Magazine* (January 1778 – February 1791)’, University of Manchester, 2008.


Quantrille’s study proceeds from the basis that ‘little effort has been made to explore seriously the content of the hymns as Christian theology’ although their comprehensive nature makes them a valuable ‘source for theological reflection’ (1). This is an examination of Charles Wesley’s doctrine of the Trinity through a study of his hymns. An effort is made to assess the importance of Wesley’s thought in relation to the history of Christian theology. Quantrille concludes that the doctrine of the Trinity is central to Wesley’s hymns which ‘are a call to faith and to participation in the very life of God’ (166).

David Rainey, ‘John Wesley’s Doctrine of Salvation in Relation to His Doctrine of God’, University of London (King’s College), 2006.

This thesis is an ‘investigation [of] the coherency and consistency’ of ‘John Wesley’s doctrine of God and doctrine of salvation’. ‘The plan of this thesis is to demonstrate that though his doctrine of God followed a scripturally based creedal foundation, his doctrine of salvation embroiled him, at times, in heated controversies’. His doctrine of God was formulated from a Trinitarian standpoint and formed the basis of his doctrine of salvation (292). His appropriation of these doctrines was from within the western Augustinian and Reformation tradition (286-96). An analysis is made Wesley’s doctrine of salvation as ‘established from the three offices of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King’.


This thesis deals with the problem of the Wesleys doctrine of the atonement grappling with the fact that ‘nowhere is his writings does [John] Wesley specifically single out this doctrine for detailed treatment’ (2). Renshaw focuses on four main areas: ‘(1) to determine what the Wesleys understood by the atonement; (2) to trace the influences which contributed to the formation of their viewpoint; (3) to discover the implications of their concept of atonement in several aspects of their theology, notably, in its Christological and soteriological perspectives, and in relation to their doctrine of the
church and sacraments; and (4) to inquire critically into the truth of their doctrine of atonement’ (2-3). Renshaw argues that the Wesleys doctrine of the atonement has much in common with the ‘Anselmian-Reformation tradition’, but they contributed to this tradition by teaching that ‘the objective ground of atonement is related to experiential reality and ethical response, with the total situation an expression of God’s redeeming love in Christ’ (297).

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.


‘The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of prevenient grace in relation to fallen man, its role in the process of salvation, and its significance in Wesley’s theology’. Rodgers notes that his is the first systematic study of Wesley’s doctrine of prevenient grace – a concept that has been ‘little understood’. His methodological approach to the study is based on a conviction that the doctrine ‘is best understood in the light of the background and sources which contributed to his own theological education, and in light of the issues which he faced in the course of his endeavours in the Revival’ (ix). Rodgers concludes that ‘This grace, for Wesley, is the foundation of a soteriology which avoids predestination, “stillness,” antinomianism, and human self-determination, while at the same time maintaining both the doctrine of sola gratia and a place for human participation’.


Calvin Timothy Samuel, ‘Holiness & Holy School: What is Wesleyan Holiness According to Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience and what might a Methodist Holy School Be?’ University of London (King’s College), 2008.

‘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).

This thesis shows that ‘Wesley is best understood as fundamentally a churchman, possessing a keen appreciation of the church as a means of grace, and emphasizing the Lord’s Supper both as a converting ordinance and an effectual means of continuous sustaining grace’. ‘Wesley’s view of Baptism’ was ‘never systematically set forth’ and was ‘ambiguous’. Its central theme in so far as it can be ascertained ‘was upon Baptism as incorporation into the covenant people of God’. ‘The Eucharist was seen as an effectual means of communion with and participation in the Real Presence of the Living Christ’. Sanders argues that ‘In Wesley there is found an effective synthesis of sacramentalism and evangelicalism’ which although ‘not overthrown completely’ by early American Methodism, the two tended to be separated to the effect that sacramentalism was thought to be ‘less important than evangelism’. According to Sanders, what is needed is for Methodists to develop ‘an adequate doctrine of the church’.


For Score ‘Wesley’s ministry is an expression of his sense of dedication to the discovery of God’s will, the following of that will, and the guiding of others into a like obedience’. That Wesley’s ministry was propelled by a ‘theological standpoint’ has not been sufficiently understood by his Methodist descendants. Score believes Wesley’s theology of ministry contrasts with the dominant motif of contemporary Anglican theology which stressed ‘the role of morality in religion’. The study stems from the conviction that ‘Wesley’s theology in its fullness…is embodied in his ministry’.


This thesis is a descriptive study of John Wesley’s use of the Book of Common Prayer in his theology. Selleck shows that Wesley was nurtured by prayer book devotion throughout his life. He never ceased to believe that the prayer book was a useful aid to public and private worship. Selleck emphasizes that the post-Aldersgate Wesley treated the BCP in a flexible manner; maintaining his belief in its efficacy for use in worship while being willing to adapt his use of it to fit different circumstances.


This is a study of Charles Wesley’s doctrine of the atonement based almost entirely on an analysis of the concept as found in his hymns. In Shepherd’s words, ‘This thesis sets out to examine, clarify, and subject to a critique Wesley’s doctrine of the
atonement by taking two different perspectives. Firstly, it attempts to place his thought within the context of his own age, and to see to what extent it was in line with the thought of his contemporaries, and how far it can be considered to be a creative expression of his own. Secondly, it explains the similarities and differences between Wesley’s thought and that of modern theologians, and asks more generally whether his theology has any permanent value for us in the present’ (1). He concludes ‘that Wesley covered virtually all theories of the atonement. Thus, for him, Jesus is our substitute, but he is also our representative; his death was a ransom for sinners, and also a victory over death and the powers over darkness; he is our great High Priest, who offered his life a sacrifice, who prays for us, and who cleanses us by his blood’. Shepherd notes five areas of Wesley’s doctrine ‘which make him distinctive in his own age, an inspiring for later generations’. ‘The importance he attaches to the Godhead acting in unity; The link he makes between incarnation and atonement; The link he makes between atonement and holiness; His mysticism, which arises out of a love shown by God in the cross; The ability to communicate all of these in verse’ (230).


This thesis consists of a survey of the ‘Life and Works of John Goodwin’, and ‘A Survey of Goodwin in relation to the doctrines of grace – predestination, free-will, prevenient grace, justification, perseverance and assurance, the means of grace’. In the latter section of the thesis, Stringer concludes that Goodwin’s Arminianism was ‘often confused with Pelagianism’. The third section of the study focuses on Goodwin’s ‘in relation to Methodism’. Stringer argues that while Goodwin is not a direct predecessor to the Methodist movement, ‘his doctrine of grace is strikingly similar to that of John Wesley’. Wesley’s views on the abovementioned doctrines of grace are compared with Goodwin.


Howe Octavius Thomas, Jr., ‘John Wesley’s and Rudolf Bultmann’s Understanding of Justification by Faith, Compared and Contrasted’, University of Bristol, 1989.

Traditionally Wesley has been appreciated more for his role as promoter of the Evangelical Revival than as a serious theologian, but Wesley did engage in eighteenth century theological debate and claimed to expose a consistent theology. This claim led Thorsen to an investigation of ‘the nature of his theological method’, which Wesley never explicitly outlined. Some clues to this problem are found in Wesley’s indebtedness to the thought milieu of his day. Through John Locke, ‘Wesley found an inductive method of investigation which could be applied to theology as well as to science’ (344). Wesley was also highly influenced by ‘the theological method which he inherited from the Anglican tradition’ (9). Thorsen concludes that Wesley ‘employed a distinctive theological method in his writings’. ‘He refined Anglican theological method by integrating experience along with reason and tradition as genuine sources of religious authority complimentary to the primary religious authority of Scripture’ (343). Thus, Thorsen essentially contends that Wesley added the authority of experience to the traditional Anglican trinity of Scripture, reason and tradition.


‘The purpose of this study is to prove that from 1738, in Wesley’s preaching and teaching, both law and grace are proclaimed and function together in strict interdependence’. ‘Wesley’s doctrine of the moral law is dependent upon grace in that the desire and ability to fulfil the law comes only by the grace of faith. Wesley’s doctrine of grace is dependent upon the law in that faith can be maintained and strengthened only through obedience, and in that without obedience to the moral law the fruits and purpose of grace are made void. Without the doctrine of grace, his doctrine of law is mere legalism. Yet without the law, his doctrine of grace is utterly frustrated, since the ultimate purpose of grace in Wesley’s thinking is to make possible that sanctification which is the fulfilling of the law.’ ‘The key points of interdependence are these:

1. That there are degrees of faith ranging from a low species of faith to Christian perfection and beyond (Christian perfection is not static).
2. This faith must be strengthened and maintained through obedience.
3. Faith alone is absolutely necessary to justification and sanctification.
4. Justifying faith necessarily issues in dominion over all outward sin and in increasing dominion over inward sin.
5. Justification must precede sanctification’.


This thesis argues ‘that there was a considerable commonality to Christian ideals of manliness during the period of the Evangelical Revival: ideals of manliness cut across Church-party and denominational divisions. At the heart of this thesis is the theme of the ideal of the imitation of Christ. The imitation of Christ itself was an ideal of personhood, and the thesis examines the huge variety of ways in which this was interpreted and understood’ (ii). The thesis contains chapters on ‘The Imitation of Christ’, ‘The Single Life, Marriage and Domesticity’, ‘Education’, ‘Society: Duty, Charity and the Calling’, ‘Occasional’ Solitude, Recreations and the Sabbath’, and ‘Self-Denial, Suffering and Death’. John Wesley is discussed in each chapter of this thesis.

**James R. Vermilya, ‘Lutheran Literary Influences on John Wesley’s Theology of Mission’, Concordia Theological Seminary, 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)

**G. Clinton Walker, III, ‘John Wesley’s Doctrine of Justification in Relation to Two Classical Anglican Theologians: Richard Hooker and Lancelot Andrewes’, Baylor University, 1993.**


**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.**


**Mark L. Weeter, ‘John Wesley’s View of Scripture’, University of Wales, Lampeter, 1997. [Published as John Wesley’s View and Use of Scripture (Wipf and Stock, 2007]**

**Barbara Ann Welch, ‘Charles Wesley and the Celebrations of Evangelical Experience’, University of Michigan, 1971.**

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


Wiggins asks whether historians have been justified in largely ignoring Fletcher and concludes that his thought is relevant for today. The purpose of his thesis is to analyse and ‘the theological thought of Fletcher’. Wiggins’ aim in this task ‘is to permit Fletcher to speak for himself’. According to Wiggins, Fletcher’s thought was generally directed towards issues of his day. This study ‘explicates the spectrum of interests out of which Fletcher’s thought emerged’, interpreting his thought in its own right ‘rather than placing it within the framework of Methodist theology or within Wesleyan thought’.


Wilson’s study begins from the basis that Wesley’s theology of love and law have often been ‘presupposed’, but rarely examined ‘systematically and analytically’ (8). His study is an attempt ‘to explicate the place and function which these two ideas have in Wesley’s thought, not only in their independence but also in their interaction’ (9). Wilson argues that Wesley’s theology is distinctive based on his joining together love and law. This distinctive conjunction is realised the Wesley’s doctrine of holiness as perfect love (194-200).

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.

[cf. ‘Church and Chapel: Methodism as Church Extension’, in Geordan Hammond and Peter S. Forsaith, eds. Religion, Gender, and Industry: Exploring Church and Methodism in a Local Setting (Pickwick Publications, 2011)]


Wilson’s study fills a gap in existing Wesley scholarship by treating the subjects of Wesley’s spirituality, the Methodist Societies and the Book of Common Prayer together. In his conclusion, Wilson argues that Wesley sought to balance individual and communal spirituality; the three main strands that nurtured his personal piety were the Prayer Book, Mysticism and Moravianism; his ‘doctrines of assurance and holiness are a good indication of the general tone of his spirituality’; ‘Wesley achieved a unique union
between free and fixed forms of worship’; the Methodist ‘Societies provide us with a mirror of Wesley’s own spirituality’; the Societies ceased to reflect Wesley’s spirituality by separating from the Church after his death; the Methodists split from the Church due to ‘Wesley’s complex personality’, ‘lack of adequate structures within Anglicanism’, and ‘Wesley’s spirituality itself’.


This thesis holistically examines John Wesley’s relationship with America as ‘Methodism grew, America changed, and Wesley’s political and theological views evolved’ (iv).
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   Griggs’s study asserts that Charles Wesley has been neglected by Methodist historians probably due in part to the desire to downplay the gradually ‘growing divergence of opinion’ with his elder brother John (10). His research illustrates Charles’s instrumental role as an evangelist and especially his work as a pastoral overseer of numerous Methodist societies. Charles’s pastoral work enabled John to spend additional time evangelising new areas. In summary, Griggs’s ‘thesis finds that Charles Wesley, despite his occasional doubts and concerns as to his own spiritual state, made a substantial contribution to the rise of the Wesleyan Methodists particularly in the early years and that in many respects he was very much the equal of his elder brother John. Effectively through the hymns are Charles Wesley’s lasting legacy to the Church today’ (4).


   Isherwood contends that ‘Seward played the leading role in establishing Whitefield as the first inter-continental preacher of the new brand of evangelicalism which created and sustained revivals of Evangelical religion on both sides of the Atlantic’ (i). ‘The thesis shows how Seward’s influence was one of the factors in furthering the deterioration of the harmonious relationship which existed among the “Methodists” in the early years of the Revival. Paradoxically, it also shows that Seward’s ministry helped to lay the foundations of an ecumenism, inspired by a common love for Calvinist doctrines, which crossed the Dissenting/Anglican divide’ (ii). His primary contribution to Whitefield’s ministry was ‘the publicity he gave to it’ through newspapers, magazines, and financial support for the publication of Whitefield’s Journals – a legacy that long outlived his short life (105).


   ‘An examination of the “Derbey Faith” revivalists, the Arminian Methodists, generally regarded as the only division from Wesleyanism on the grounds of doctrine. The thesis surveys the origins of the secession in Derby and the complex influences which led to a short-lived new Methodist sect. The case of the Wesleyan authorities is explored and that of the dissenters. Arminian structures and polity are set in the context of their worship with particular note of their position on female preachers and their emphasis on instantaneous entire sanctification. Their view of the nature of faith and its relationship to prayer is placed within the context of its antecedents, with special attention to John Fletcher. An assessment is made of the degree and manner of Arminian deviation from the received Wesleyan positions, and their partially successful
amalgamation with the Wesleyan Methodist Association in 1837. All known Arminian societies are surveyed” (iii).


Master of Divinity Thesis

Master of Theology Thesis

Master of Arts Theses

Allen contends that Edwards’ concern for ‘the life of holiness’ has been neglected in recent discussions of his work and theology. His work is divided into three sections in which Edwards’ ministry is examined, ‘his understanding of the life of holiness is evaluated’, and contemporary applications are made (7).


This is a systematic analysis of the Pauline texts John Wesley used in developing his doctrine of Christian perfection. Arthur compares Wesley’s exegesis what that of contemporary scholars.


‘The purpose of this study is to examine…alleged developments in Wesley’s doctrine of Christian Perfection in order to ascertain if, in fact, theological development occurs, the nature of that development, and specifically to analyse the maturation of Wesley’s thought in the light of the three-stage model proposed by Maddox’ (3). Balzer argued that there was development, but not ‘major doctrinal shifts’; therefore, we should interpret Wesley’s theology through a developmental methodology (69).
Barber contends that the Moravians played a key role in the development of Wesley’s theology, the development of Wesleyan worship (particularly hymnody), and Methodist organisation.

Clayton describes ‘John Wesley’s ministry’ as ‘quite unique and holistic, involving care for the body, mind and soul of the people he came into contact with’ (1, 51). Wesley’s ministry was motivated by the concept of ‘pure love’, which is nothing more or less than: the love of God and neighbour (1). This study is centred around rise of Methodism at Oxford, Georgia and London and the instrumental role of the religious societies as a means of promoting social holiness.

‘The pursuit, development and promotion of the inner life of holiness is a hallmark of that branch of Christendom known as Methodism. It was the pursuit of inner holiness which characterized the life of John Wesley from childhood onwards and Scriptural holiness was the centre from which Wesley lived and ministered’ (1). The essay concludes with a study of contemporary spirituality in the Church of the Nazarene in the light of the Wesleyan heritage.

Crofford’s study asks whether Wesley’s statement that he did ‘not differ from him [Calvin] a hair’s breadth’ on the doctrine of justification is a true representation of the facts. Crofford concludes, ‘the differences are not a “hair’s breadth,” but considerable, and remain a tension in the dialogue between Christians of Calvinistic and Wesleyan persuasion’ (62).

This thesis examines ‘chronologically some of the developments of his [Wesley’s] perfectionist teaching during the 1760s, and the controversies which accompanied them’ (5). Several issues fuelled the perfectionist controversies including: ‘the term ‘perfection’ itself [which] inevitably led many people to think that he [Wesley] meant a permanent state which could be measured by objective moral standards, rather than something which was to be understood in relational terms and which had to be sustained moment by moment. Equally, the measurement of perfection against sin rather than love caused confusion, as Wesley was demonstrably inconsistent in his use of terminology, particularly when he spoke of the destruction of sin’ (90). Nonetheless, Wesley’s perfectionist teaching has continued to inspire Methodists.


Kudo deals with three major themes of John Fletcher’s theology in his thesis: “the promise of the Father” in connection with his [Fletcher’s] doctrine of dispensations and “the subsequent blessing to the new birth” in connection with the assimilation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with entire sanctification, and “the baptism of fire” in connection with the agency of heart holiness” (81). According to Kudo, Fletcher’s doctrine of baptism in the Spirit is complimentary to and an essential aspect of John Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection.


In his thesis, Longworth argues that ‘excepting the Moravian concepts of “faith alone” and “assurance”’ the basic elements to Wesley’s soteriology were already in place years before May 24th, 1738’ (3). He points out that ‘From his earliest days Wesley understood this holiness in terms of “entire love,” which involves freedom from sin, “real” happiness, and love of neighbour, and ultimately issues in the complete reversal of the Fall. The full restoration of the Imago Dei. All of which indicates the relevance of Wesley’s pre-Aldersgate soteriology to on-going Wesley studies’ (70).


The subject of this thesis is the transformation of the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification into the Pentecostal doctrine of Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the relation between these doctrines. McCormack makes the point that substantial difference of emphasis has resulted from the Wesleyan stress on holiness in the Pauline corpus coupled with the Pentecostal stress on baptism in the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts (69).


Ness’s thesis examines ‘the religious and cultural climate of America’ in the nineteenth century ‘and how that culture shaped this daughter of Methodism and Methodism itself’ as well as how Palmer’s ‘gender shaped her experience and her teaching’ (2). She contends ‘any alterations that Phoebe Palmer is credited with making to John Wesley are culturally determined by the nineteenth century American revivalistic milieu’ (2). Palmer’s teaching of the ‘shorter way’ in the context of nineteenth century America tended to promote the experience of Christian perfection diminishing ‘the role
of Christian nurture and growth in grace’ (43). Palmer’s faithfulness to the call of God in her life helped pave the way for subsequent female holiness preachers (44).


Smith critically addresses several issues in relation to the Welsh Revival including: evaluating what is a ‘real’ movement of God’s Spirit; what the leaders of the revival believed about guidance by the Holy Spirit; the relation between experience and knowledge; baptism in the holy spirit; the nature of sin; and Pentecostalism as the Revival’s lasting legacy. Smith sees the Revival as a demonstration of God’s providential power, yet he also believes ‘human pride and party spirit’ were present ‘as evidence of the depth of human sin’ (77).


‘The aim of this dissertation is to examine John Wesley’s Concept of Religious Education, demonstrate that his educational programmes enhanced spiritual growth, and that it provided an ideal opportunity for the formation and expansion of his ministry’ (12). Taylor argues four main points: ‘First, children, and adults of all ages and social strata can be taught true religion, holiness and love of God. Second, that John Wesley emphasised the doctrine of Christian holiness, which transformed the lives of his converts, and helped them experience God in dynamic ways, and that they consequently impacted their communities. Third, that instruction in God’s word is essential for spiritual growth, formation and expansion of Christianity. Fourth, that most of John Wesley’s concepts of religious education are relevant today’ (12).


Woithe argues ‘that mysticism had a great influence on John Wesley – at all stages of his life. His experience at Aldersgate Street did not compel Wesley to reject mysticism, he continued to ‘use mysticism to address specific needs as to the spiritual development of the people called Methodists’ (2). The eastern mysticism of Macarius played a significant role in the development of Wesley’s concept of Christian perfection (59).


This thesis examines the International Holiness Mission (1906-1952) and the Calvary Holiness Movement (1934-1955) two churches which merged with the Church of the Nazarene. Wood concludes that ‘The schism of 1934 in the IHM is to be regretted and should have been avoided’ (90). He also believes that the 1976 decision ‘by the General Superintendents of the Church of the Nazarene in connection with the ‘Gifts of the Spirit’, was an unnecessarily negative and hard-line approach’ (90).
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