

Restoring Primitive Christianity: John Wesley and Georgia, 1735-1737

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84,991 Words

ABBREVIATIONS

BCP	Book of Common Prayer (1662 version unless otherwise noted)
<i>BE</i>	The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley [primarily a reference to <i>The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design</i> , vol. 9, ed. Rupert E. Davies (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989)]
BID	<i>Diary of an Oxford Methodist Benjamin Ingham, 1733-1734</i> , ed. Richard P. Heitzenrater (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985)
BIJ	Benjamin Ingham's Journal in Luke Tyerman, <i>The Oxford Methodists</i> (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1873), pp. 63-80
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
Campbell	Ted A. Campbell, <i>John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change</i> (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991)
Causton	'Journal of Thomas Causton Esq. 1 st Bailif [<i>sic</i>] of Savannah', 24 June 1737 in <i>Our First Visit to America: Early Reports from the Colony of Georgia, 1732-1740</i> , ed. Trevor R. Reese (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1974)
<i>CRG</i>	<i>Colonial Records of the State of Georgia</i> , vols. 1-19, 21-26 ed. Allen D. Chandler and Lucian L. Knight (Atlanta, 1904-16); vols. 20, 27-29 ed. Kenneth Coleman and Milton Ready (UGP, 1982-85); vols. 30-32 ed. Kenneth Coleman (UGP, 1985-89) [see references to vols. 4 and 5 under WSJ and Egmont, <i>Journal</i> below]
	1 Georgia Charter, Laws, and Minutes of Trustees, 1732-52
	2 Minutes of the Common Council, 1732-52
	3 Accounts, Monies, and Effects, 1732-52
	20 Original Papers of the Trustees and Oglethorpe, 1732-35
	21 _____, 1735-37
	22.1 _____, 1737-39
	22.2 _____, 1737-40
	29 Trustees Letter Book, 1732-38
	32 Entry Books of Commissions, Powers, Instructions, Leases, etc. by the Trustees, 1732-38
CUP	Cambridge University Press
Curnock	<i>The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.</i> , ed. Nehemiah Curnock, 8 vols. (repr. London: Epworth Press, 1938)
CW	Charles Wesley
CWJ	<i>The Manuscript Journal of the Rev Charles Wesley, M.A.</i> , vol. 1, ed. S T Kimbrough, Jr. and Kenneth G. C. Newport (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2007)
<i>Detailed Reports</i>	<i>Detailed Reports of the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger</i> , ed. George Fenwick Jones, vols. 1-5 (UGP, 1968-80)
Egmont, <i>Diary</i>	<i>Diary of Viscount Percival Afterwards First Earl of Egmont</i> , 3 vols., Historical Manuscripts Commission (London, 1920-23)
Egmont, <i>Journal</i>	<i>The Journal of the Earl of Egmont... 1732-1738</i> , ed. Robert G. McPherson (UGP, 1962) and <i>CRG</i> vol. 5 from 14 June 1738 to 25 May 1744
<i>GHQ</i>	<i>Georgia Historical Quarterly</i>
Green, <i>YMW</i>	V. H. H. Green, <i>The Young Mr. Wesley</i> (London: Edward Arnold, 1961)
Heitzenrater, <i>EMW</i>	Richard P. Heitzenrater, <i>The Elusive Mr. Wesley</i> , 2 nd edn. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003)

Heitzenrater, OM	Richard P. Heitzenrater, 'John Wesley and the Oxford Methodists', Ph.D. diss. (Duke University, 1972)
Heitzenrater, WPCM	Richard P. Heitzenrater, <i>Wesley and the People Called Methodists</i> (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995)
Salzburger Letterbooks	<i>Henry Newman's Salzburger Letterbooks</i> , ed. George Fenwick Jones (UGP, 1966)
Hunter	Frederick Hunter, <i>John Wesley and the Coming Comprehensive Church</i> (London: Epworth Press, 1968)
JW	John Wesley
JWD	John Wesley's Diary: <i>Journal and Diaries</i> , ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vols. 18-24 of <i>BE</i> (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988-2003) [all JWD, JWJ, and JWMSJ references are to vol. 18 <i>Journal and Diaries I (1735-38)</i> unless otherwise indicated]
JWJ	John Wesley's published <i>Journal</i>
JWMSJ	John Wesley's Manuscript Journal
LES	<i>A List of Early Settlers of Georgia</i> , ed. E. Merton Coulter and Albert B. Saye (UGP, 1949)
Letters	John Wesley, <i>Letters I-II</i> , ed. Frank Baker, vols. 25-26 of <i>BE</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, 1982)
LQHR	<i>London Quarterly and Holborn Review</i>
MARC	Methodist Archives and Research Centre, John Rylands University Library of Manchester
MH	<i>Methodist History</i>
Nelson	James Nelson, 'John Wesley and the Georgia Moravians', <i>Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society</i> 23 (1984), 17-46
NS	New Style (Gregorian Calendar)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (OUP, 2004)
OUP	Oxford University Press
PWHS	<i>Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society</i>
Rack	Henry D. Rack, <i>Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism</i> , 3 rd edn. (London: Epworth Press, 2002)
Schmidt	Martin Schmidt, <i>John Wesley: A Theological Biography</i> , vol. 1, trans. Norman P. Goldhawk (London: Epworth Press, 1962)
Sermons	John Wesley, <i>Sermons I-IV</i> , ed. Albert C. Outler, vols. 1-4 of <i>BE</i> (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-87).
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and SPG Archives, Rhodes House Library, Oxford
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and SPCK Archives, Cambridge University Library
Telford	<i>The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.</i> , ed. John Telford, 8 vols. (London: Epworth Press, 1931)
UGP	University of Georgia Press, Athens, Georgia
Works	<i>The Works of the Rev. John Wesley</i> , ed. Thomas Jackson, 3 rd edn., 14 vols. (London: Mason, 1829-31)
WSJ	William Stephens's Journal: <i>Stephens' Journal 1737-1740</i> , ed. Allen D. Chandler, vol. 4 of <i>CRG</i> (New York: AMS Press, 1970)

A NOTE ON DATES

Unless otherwise indicated, all dates are given in Old Style, the calendar in use before 1752 when the New Style or Gregorian calendar was adopted. Old Style was eleven days behind New Style and the year began on 25 March, however, in this thesis the year is taken to begin on 1 January.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of John Wesley and Georgia. While Wesley's biographers have all dealt with the Georgia sojourn, no one has yet produced a book-length investigation of his experience in the New World. The central argument of this study is that the Georgia mission, for Wesley, was a laboratory for implementing his views of primitive Christianity. The ideal of restoring the doctrine, discipline, and practice of the primitive church in the pristine Georgia wilderness was the prime motivating factor in Wesley's decision to embark for Georgia and in his clerical practice in the colony. Comprehending the centrality of primitive Christianity to Wesley's thinking and pastoral method is essential to understanding his experience in America.

The sources of Wesley's understanding of primitive Christianity were rooted in the revival of patristic studies in the Church of England in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Knowledge of the early church was conveyed to Wesley by his parents in the Epworth rectory and in the halls of academia at Oxford. However, his interest in the primitive church took a new and more intense direction following the beginning of his friendship with John Clayton and the Manchester Nonjurors in 1732. It was the pervasive influence of Clayton and his mentor Thomas Deacon that propelled Wesley to investigate the theology and social ethics of the early church. Wesley began a rigorous course of studying primarily the Apostolic Fathers including the *Apostolic Constitutions* and *Canons*, secondarily the Ante-Nicene Fathers, and thirdly select holy men of the fourth century such as Ephraem Syrus. This study was enabled by utilizing editions of the Fathers by the best Anglican scholars of his day and was supplemented by influential studies of the primitive church by Anthony Horneck, William Cave, and Claude Fleury amongst others.

The main body of the thesis critically analyses Wesley's application of his vision of primitive Christianity on the *Simmonds* and in his parish ministry in Georgia. It will emerge that Wesley's ecclesiology was that of the Usager Nonjurors which was in many aspects shared by other contemporary High Churchmen. In common with the Nonjuring/High Church movement, Wesley's ecclesial practice stressed the centrality of the sacraments in worship. In Georgia his endeavour to imitate the practices of the primitive church manifested itself variously through interest in precise sacramental observance, confession, penance, ascetical discipline, deaconesses, religious societies, and mission to the Indians. This theme dominated his interactions with the leaders of the Moravians and Salzburgers particularly on the subjects of episcopacy and communion. The final chapter of the thesis examines opposition to Wesley's ministry in Georgia. Colonists who did not embrace his views of primitive Christianity variously accused him of being an enthusiast, Roman Catholic, and divisive clergyman. Opposition also came in the form of male disgust with the manner of Wesley's ministry to women and the magistrates' reaction to his advocacy for poor colonists he believed were being oppressed. These sources of opposition combined with the Sophia Williamson controversy brought his Georgia sojourn to a swift conclusion. Through providing a critical evaluation of Wesley's conception and practice of primitive Christianity in Georgia, this thesis will contribute to the debates about the significance of a formative period of Wesley's life.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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