
Professor Collins introduces a number of epithets for John Wesley in this study of Wesley's homiletical theology. Among them are: Anglican cleric, English evangelist, Oxford don, and Methodist pastor. These epithets—scattered throughout the text without reference to any particular period of Wesley's life—point to the strength of Collins' work and raise a question about its atemporal quality.

Collins' strength resides in his largely successful effort to see Wesley's theology in systematic terms. Just as he uses "Oxford don" to refer to Wesley in 1780, so does Collins interpret Wesley's theology as having an underlying consistency that shaped his preaching from beginning to end.

Collins employs the Apostles' Creed as the framework to which he attaches the key strands of Wesley's theology. Under each of the creed's affirmations, Collins ranges quotations from Wesley's sermons, supplemented with references to his letters and other writings. He selects these quotations from various periods of the "Oxford leader's" life and organizes them in such a way as to reveal the outline of the systematic theology that Wesley would have written, if he had drafted a systematics.

Collins states his purpose on page 148: "The implication . . . of [the] dynamic nature of Wesley's theology is that it is not sufficient merely to explore his doctrinal statements or sermons within the context of their historical settings. Although this preliminary task is vital, one must think systematically as well, and determine the theological setting within the *ORDO SALUTIS* where each doctrine is found."

Collins' approach makes this book more valuable for the theologian than for the historian in the Wesleyan tradition. Although the author does refer to developments in Wesley's thinking, the fact that he can refer to Wesley in 1780 as an "Oxford don" points to a timeless atmosphere in the book.

Also, one may question the historical adequacy of Collins' excursus on the "conversionist paradigm" for Wesley's Aldersgate experience. Given Collins' decision to deal with Aldersgate, the historian laments his omission of key evidence—for example: John Wesley's letter to his brother Samuel, October 30, 1738; John's Journal entries for October 14, 1738, and January 4, 1739; and his letter to his brother Charles, June 27, 1766.

In addition, the historian insists that interpretations of the theological meaning of Aldersgate must not exclude consideration of Wesley's experiences in Bristol in the spring and early summer of 1739. It was not immediately after Aldersgate that Wesley exclaimed, "Give me where to
stand, and I will shake the earth;" it was on May 20, 1739, during the early days of his success as a field preacher.

JOHN G. McELLHENNEY
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I am happy to commend Dr. Paul Chilcote's book warmly to a wider reading public than might have perused his earlier publication *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1991, 389 pp.).

The present volume is eminently readable, but equally erudite and well-researched and offered at a realistic price. While written primarily for The United Methodist Church, the book will appeal to all Methodists and indeed to those who have a concern for women's ministry, especially with regard to preaching.

A survey of the preaching of women throughout English church history from the seventh century takes the reader via Margaret Fell (Quaker), towards women's liberation in the eighteenth century and so to the Wesley revival where Susannah, mother of the Wesleys, is credited with being the precursor of women's preaching.

Although in the beginning John Wesley was conservative and did not really approve of women preaching in public, they were allowed to play an important part in his societies as band and class leaders and accorded equality with men in pastoral care. In time it became inevitable that the question of women preaching had to be faced. Women, having prayed and testified with great effectiveness, moved on to exhortation. Although a text was not taken and they did not usually speak from the pulpit and therefore, technically, could be regarded as NOT preaching it seems a rather casuistic argument as to all intents and purposes the women were preachers.

Eventually Wesley gave tacit, if reluctant approval, to women preaching "in extra-ordinary circumstances", but the Wesleyan Methodist Church leaders, after his death, took a firm stance against this phenomenon and the 1803 Conference explicitly forbade women to preach or only in very exceptional "extra-ordinary" cases and then only to their "own sex". This remained the position for the next hundred years and the restriction was only slightly relaxed before Union in 1932.

One of the chief values of Dr. Chilcote's book is in the stories it tells, not only of well-known women "preachers", such as Mary Barritt, Mary Bosanquet, Sarah Crosby, Sarah Mallet, and Sarah Ryan, but also of many
lesser known ranging from Ann Gilbert and Elizabeth Tonkin in Cornwall, Mary Sewell in East Anglia to Elizabeth Hurrell in Yorkshire and Alice Cambridge and Margaret Davidson in Ireland, all of whom made an important contribution to the development of women’s ministry. Their endeavors provide inspiration and challenge for today’s women and the church.

E. DOROTHY GRAHAM
Birmingham, England

Charlotte and John Hook, Editors, On Her Way Rejoicing: Keturah Belknap’s Chronicles: Girlhood Years in Ohio, 1818-1839; Iowa, 1839-1847; The Oregon Trail, 1848; Oregon, 1848-1852; Chronicle of a Pioneer Settlement, 1848-1869. Salem, OR; Commission on Archives & History, Oregon-Idaho Conference, United Methodist Church, 1993. 114 pp. $10.

It is difficult to review a book that is so full of such fascinating reading, because the temptation is to quote from all parts of it. Keturah Belknap was a Methodist historian’s treasure. Not only did she live through an important part of our nation’s history, and not only was she actively involved in much of early Methodism in Ohio, Iowa and Oregon, but she also kept journals describing her experiences and those of her family and the communities where they lived.

On October 3, 1839, George Belknap and Keturah Pelton were married and set off in a two-horse wagon “to find us a home in the far west... We traveled through part of Ohio, and across Indiana and Illinois, and crossed the Mississippi at Fort Madison into Iowa. Was four weeks on the way and saw prairie to our hearts content. Verily we thought the half had never been told.”

Years later, having traveled on to Oregon in 1848, via the Oregon trail, Keturah tells of going to Campmeeting:

“Thursday morning—all astir early as we expect to get to the Campground by noon. The wagon is loaded and two yoke of fine oxen hitched up. All aboard! We have a bolt of muslin to make our tent of and I have not had time to make it, so I will run it up in the wagon as we go along.”

Ah! They were made of great stuff in those days!

Charlotte and John Hook, archivists for the Oregon-Idaho Commission on Archives and History, with the archives at Willamette University, found Keturah’s accounts intriguing, and have done a superb job of extracting and editing fascinating portions of the journals for us to read and enjoy. They have provided welcome pictures, maps and explanatory editorial comments.
Some of Keturah’s most interesting comments are on the Belknaps’ active part in the development of the Methodist church in their area, and of the preachers that came their way as a part of their circuits:

“Brother Waller brought some wine for communion and they had not tested it til Sunday morning. Then when it was opened, Brother Waller detected the smell of brandy. So now what was to be done? I had some nice blackberry pies and we broke one and took out the inside and mixed it with some water and sweetened it and strained it and it was all right.”

“In two weeks Father McKinney will preach. He will give us one of his nice, gentle sermons on what great things can be accomplished when people all had a mind to work. Then we have J. O. Raynor. He will give us the Terrors of the law. He takes the Commandments, tells us if we keep the law the Lord will always be on our side, but woe to the man who breaks the law. Says there is no law broken without a penalty and he told us how the Israelites were slain for breaking his commands. Then winds up with a warning to us to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. Then Rev. John W. Starr will come in with his calm persuasive way and say ‘Choose this day whom you will serve. If God, then serve Him; if Baal, then serve him.’"

This book is an excellent example of desk top publishing. The printing and binding was done by the Willamette University Copy Center. The Center made good use of a scanner to reproduce the photographs, maps and line drawings. The entire production is attractive and easy to read.

Unfortunately, the paper and binding are not intended for permanency. It is my hope that a number of copies of the book have been given good library binding, as this is history that should be preserved.

Bea Shepard
Juneau, Alaska


An excellent research tool is now available in Arthur P. Young’s and E. Jens Holley’s Religion and the American Experience, 1620–1900: A Bibliography of Doctoral Dissertations. According to the authors the “compilation incorporates titles pertaining to the historical dimension of the nation’s religious experience.” The period 1620–1900 is the focus of the bibliography, although some listed dissertations go beyond 1900 as the ending date of a study. For example, Charles R. Hohenstein’s 1990 dissertation, The Revisions of the Rites of Baptism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1784–1939, contains part of the focus period, 1784–1900, within its boundaries. No study which begins after 1900 is included.

The authors have searched the CD-ROM version of Dissertation Abstracts International through June 1991 to gather the 4,240 citations in their book. For those libraries that cannot search the database themselves the book provides invaluable subject access to “the large body of graduate-level research on the” history of “the American religious experience.” The
book is divided into two parts. Part one is arranged alphabetically by sixty-five denominations and movements. This includes sections called Methodist, Evangelical, and Brethren. If a denomination contains more than twenty-five titles, those titles are further subdivided by subject. Part two is divided into twenty topical headings which cover dissertations about more than one denomination and thematic studies about subjects such as women, music, and education.

Those libraries which have easy access to Dissertation Abstracts International on-line or on CD-ROM may not find the book as essential. Using a computer database directly, a specific search can be made by denomination and subject in a short period of time. An advantage in going directly to the computer is that a computer version is updated periodically to include all new publications, while books become outdated very fast. Also, the researcher’s own perspective on search strategies can be used.

A major drawback to using the computer directly is that in some cases, it can be quite costly to the institution or the patron. Individual institutions and researchers will have to assess their own needs and resources in deciding whether to go directly to a computer or use the book. Maybe a combination of the two would be helpful. Personally I found the book to be very useful. Having all the dissertations in front of you organized by denominations and subjects allows easy access to a variety of information and inspires ideas. While it is impossible to say whether every available dissertation that falls into the right category and time period appears in this volume, I was able to find the works I set out to locate. This included the Methodist dissertations I knew of personally and a cross checking of a list of United Brethren in Christ dissertations I produced directly from Dialog On-Line Catalog. By the way, my search cost Ohio Wesleyan University $15.00 because it was not curriculum related. A similar course related search on Classmate On-Line Catalog would have cost .50.

One thing I would have liked in the book would have been some additional cross referencing in the sections themselves. For example, Lewis Baldwin’s 1980 dissertation: “‘Invisible’ Strands in African Methodism: A History of the African Union Methodist Protestant and Union African Methodist Episcopal Churches, 1805–1980” is listed in the index under both African American and Methodism, but the citation only appears in the African American section. Perhaps cross referencing from one section to another would have been too complicated for the many dissertations that fall into more than one category.

SUSAN J. COHEN
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In the midst of the black power revolution of the 1960s, and in anticipation of the formation of The United Methodist Church, two hundred fifty-nine African-American Methodists met in Cincinnati in February 1968, for the National Conference of Negro Methodists. The purpose of the meeting was to think about the situation facing African-Americans, within and outside the church, as well as how they might respond as African-American Methodists. The result was the formation of Black Methodists for Church Renewal in order to develop “a life of power and unity in the new United Methodist Church” (p. 29). Bishop Woodie W. White has provided a great service to the reading public by editing this volume of essays on the origins, mission, and development of that organization.

The most valuable contribution of the book is to provide the accounts of figures who have been principals in the organization’s history. For example, James M. Lawson, Jr.’s essay, “The Early Days,” details the previously little-known private and small-group conversations and gatherings that led to the Cincinnati conference. In the first of his two articles, Gilbert H. Caldwell explores the reasons for the formation of BMCR. Contributions by Thelma Barnes, John Corry, Bishop Roy Nichols, George Daniels, and Douglass Fitch offer other historical perspectives on the group’s development. Zan Holmes’, “Black and United Methodist,” places BMCR’s accomplishments within a theological framework. More personal accounts are given by Betty Ann Henderson and in Caldwell’s second article. Winston Taylor adds his views of the organization as a white reporter. Articles by Jon Coleman, Barbara Thompson, and Joseph Robinson focus on BMCR’s contribution to The United Methodist Church, while Tallulah Williams and Ernest Swiggett attempt to map out the group’s direction for the future.

Readers will find the book’s twenty-eight photographs of interest. Taken at various BMCR meetings, these photographs offer a pictorial history of the organization.

While we still await a scholarly treatment of BMCR’s history, Our Time Under God Is Now offers valuable information from the viewpoint of the participants themselves. It should prove to be of interest for those interested in African-American caucuses within predominantly white churches, the way in which the black power movement affected religious bodies, as well as those interested in twentieth-century (African-American) Methodist history.

C. Jarrett Gray, Jr.

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Between 1881 and 1925, the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada sent more than three hundred single women as missionaries to Japan, China, and various stations in Canada. In a book based on her doctoral dissertation, Rosemary Gagan has explored this important part of the Canadian Methodist heritage. She paints a complex but vivid picture of the nineteenth and early twentieth century women who chose missionary work, and demonstrates how they were able to serve God and the WMS, and at the same time pursue their own ambitions in an era of limited opportunities for women.

Japan was the first foreign station to which the society sent a missionary, in 1882. She and her successors concentrated their energies on educational work. The missionaires developed a strong, supportive group, but in the 1890s they came in conflict with the men of the General Board of Missions, as both women and men proved too inexperienced to deal with tensions arising from the independent work of women. In 1891, the WMS initiated medical work as a way to reach Chinese women. These missionaries in Szechwan, deep within China, were much more isolated than those in the Japan mission. The missionary community of which they were part also faced more hostility, even violence, and the women’s work was less innovative than that in Japan.

Gagan has analyzed the family background and training of the women, and shows significant differences between the groups. The WMS Board of Managers recognized the qualifications required in foreign posts, but seemed less selective about home missionaries. Yet many of these positions were more arduous than those abroad. Gagan describes the work and workers among French-Canadians, Oriental immigrants, European immigrants, and native people. The latter missionaries were perhaps the least prepared, but went into the most debilitating of all the mission fields.

This is a history of the women missionaries. The author regrets that hers is a one-sided account, for she lacked sources for the story of their female constituents. That story can never be told in this detail, though perhaps in the future additional sources and a rereading of present ones can include more fully the agency of those among whom the missionaries worked. Gagan has, however, presented a fascinating picture and an insightful analysis of a group of Methodist women who simultaneously served God and developed careers which gave them a satisfying alternative to the Victorian ideal of domesticity.

*Marilyn Färdig Whiteley*  
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This is the fifth volume in the “Library of Religious Biography,” a series which seeks to provide “biographies on important religious figures throughout American and British history.” These volumes are “free of footnotes and academic jargon.” They are written by competent historians. Each is based on careful scholarship.

The subject of this biography, Aimee Semple McPherson (1890–1944), was one of the most well-known evangelists of this century. Although she may not have been quite as celebrated as Billy Sunday, she was a major character in evangelical/revivalist circles in North America and elsewhere.

From humble origins on her parents’ farm in Ontario, Canada, Aimee Semple McPherson became a famous and controversial itinerating preacher and founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, a denomination with a small membership in the United States and a much larger membership in other parts of the world. Her ministry was primarily shaped by her early relationships with the Salvation Army and Pentecostalism. According to Blumhofer, McPherson “never strayed far from the evangelical Methodism” which influenced her father and the revivalism of the Salvation Army which inspired her mother.

We are presented with a complex personality in this biography. McPherson was obviously a person of deep commitment and spirituality. But she was also enmeshed in serious difficulties. She was twice divorced. She was involved in well publicized conflicts with her mother, daughter, friends, and associates. Her mysterious disappearance in 1926, which she claimed had been a kidnapping, was the occasion for rumors by some who alleged that she had engaged in a tryst with a male friend. Nevertheless, McPherson was one of the important leaders on the American religious scene from the 1920s until the time of her death.

Blumhofer’s biography is a very readable presentation of McPherson’s life and labors. She is especially adept in helping us to understand the cultural and religious milieu in which McPherson’s life and ministry evolved. The author correctly claims that Sister Aimee’s life illuminates women’s roles in North American religion, revivalism, Pentecostal missions, popular Protestantism, social welfare work, religious publishing and broadcasting, and Bible school education. This biography, therefore, presents with clarity and imagination an important window into some facets of North American Protestantism in the first half of this century through the life of one of its most interesting characters.

Charles Yrigoyen, Jr.
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