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John Wesley in America: Restoring Primitive Christianity

Geordan Hammond

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John Wesley in America: Restoring Primitive Christianity Geordan Hammond
Why did John Wesley leave the halls of academia at Oxford to become a Church of England missionary in the newly established colony of Georgia? Was his ministry in America a success or failure? These questions--which have engaged numerous biographers of Wesley--have often been approached from the vantage point of later developments in Methodism. Geordan Hammond presents the first book-length study of Wesley's experience in America, providing an innovative contribution to debates about the significance of a formative period of Wesley's life.
John Wesley in America addresses Wesley's Georgia mission in fresh perspective by interpreting it in its immediate context. In order to re-evaluate this period of Wesley's life, Hammond carefully considers Wesley's writings and those of his contemporaries. A laboratory for implementing his views of primitive Christianity, the mission served to restore the doctrine, discipline, and practice of the early church in the pristine Georgia wilderness. Understanding the centrality of primitive Christianity to Wesley's thinking and pastoral methods is essential to comprehending his experience in America. Wesley's conception of primitive Christianity was rooted in his embrace of patristic scholarship at Oxford. The most direct influence, however, was the High Church ecclesiology of the Usager Nonjurors who inspired him with their commitment to the restoration of the primitive church.

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