



Revival: Faith as Wesley Lived It

Adam Hamilton

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Wesley's message and his faith continue to speak to 21st-century Christians--calling for a revival of our hearts and souls so that our world might be changed.

Join Adam Hamilton for a six-week journey as he travels to England, following the life of John Wesley and exploring his defining characteristics of a Wesleyan Christian. Wesley's story is our story. It defines our faith and it challenges us to rediscover our spiritual passion.

This is a gracious gift that we will benefit from reading. The commentary is written by a superb preacher who has a pastor's heart and knows how to make the past come alive to strengthen our own experience. Prepare to be transformed. Richard P. Heitzenrater, William Kellon Quick Professor Emeritus of Church History and Wesley Studies at Duke Divinity School *Adam Hamilton connects John Wesley's contribution in 18th-century England with his legacy for 21st-century America, bringing lessons from Wesley's life and ministry to bear on discipleship today. This is an excellent resource for personal and denominational revival.* Scott Jones, Resident Bishop of the Great Plains area of The United Methodist Church and author of *The Wesleyan Way*

Revival: Faith as Wesley Lived It Details

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Marilyn says

Hamilton has done a wonderful job of combining history with spiritual principles with a travelogue with theology with biography. I am inspired, challenged, and proud to be a Methodist.

Bob Hayton says

John Wesley is a pivotal figure in the history of Evangelicalism. His ministry resulted in both the Methodist church and the Wesleyan church. Adam Hamilton, an influential United Methodist Church pastor in Kansas city, takes us on a tour of Wesley's life and ministry. This tour is replete with photos and recommended stops should the reader actually visit the places in question. The book is more than just a historical survey or tour guide for Wesley's life. Hamilton aims to go back to the roots as a way of encouraging personal and corporate "revival."

Hamilton makes clear this is not a biography as such, instead it is a spiritual overview of Wesley's life and a study of it that is intended to further the spiritual growth of those who read this. The book then functions as a text for small groups or Sunday Schools and is replete with Hamilton's own personal reflections and insights. That being said, it still gives a good overview of Wesley's life, and does an admirable job pointing to other resources for further study.

The book is also an advertisement, of sorts, for Methodism. Wesley's vision and his Church is held up as a standard. A perfect blend of head and heart, evangelism and social concern, conservatism and liberalism. Even those of other traditions can appreciate the desire to paint your own Church in the best light, but this feature of the book will diminish its usefulness in other church contexts. Truth be told, Wesley's ideas cannot always truly be a "via media" or middle way with the best of both worlds. He did plow his own path, and Methodism does have some deficiencies.

As someone blessed by the Reformed tradition, I found his explanation of Wesley's stance on prevenient grace and his opposition to Calvinism too simplistic an account of the debate. Intriguingly, while George Whitfield is mentioned as an evangelist who both spurred Wesley on (showing him the usefulness of open air preaching) and yet was influenced by Wesley (as one of the first Methodists), he is not mentioned as an antagonist to Wesley. Whitfield disagreed with Wesley's stance on grace, holding to a Reformed position. The interaction between Whitfield and Wesley is quite well-known and important historically, yet reading this book would not clue you in that Whitfield and Wesley split over this -- and importantly it wouldn't imply that other good evangelists might conclude differently than Wesley on this point.

All told, the book is a helpful look at Wesley's life and the inclusion of numerous historical pictures adds to the value of the work. Wesley's own writing concludes the book as an appendix. His work "The Character of a Methodist" is given and fleshes out the picture of Wesley we find in these pages. Conservative evangelicals and those of Reformed persuasion will perhaps chafe at the unabashed embrace of a social gospel. Hamilton's seeming desire to include everyone as a preChristian or a Christian diminishes the seriousness of Wesley's call that we beware lest we find ourselves "almost Christians." So I recommend the book with some cautions. Still, the book can encourage faith and promote the kind of balance that is helpful for Christians of

every persuasion today.

Disclaimer: this book was provided for review by the publisher, via Amazon's Vine program. I was under no obligation to offer a favorable review.

Laura Beasley says

I have been a Methodist all my life but knew very little about John Wesley. When the preacher at our church offered a Bible Study class on John and Charles Wesley I joined the class and this is the book we used. Each week we read a chapter and then discussed the chapter as well as saw a video that accompanied each lesson. I loved the way the author wrote and the pictures that went with each chapter. Really makes me want to hold the book and see all the places he talked about. The book begins with the early life of John Wesley and you learn about his parents as well and the affect they had on him-- especially his mother. There was a little about Charles Wesley and what he did and I hope to learn more about him. John Wesley spent his whole life serving God and his ministry changed over the years. He learned that just doing God's work did not earn God's love or grace. The book deals with the beginning of Methodism and how it is present day. Book was interesting and easy to understand.

Leah says

Gotta love the Brothers Wesley and Mom Susanna! I'd hazard to guess anyone who has read any of United Methodist Pastor Adam Hamilton's writing enjoys it, too.

Although "Revival: Faith as [John] Wesley Lived It" covers some basic doctrinal points, more than anything it provides a biographical and geographical overview of the spirits of the more famous Bros Wesley, John and Charles, and of the places they lived in and served in. I love the clear prose with its easygoing conversational style; largish print and relevant section headings help, as well.

I frequently remember John Wesley never renounced his Anglican orders, and it's interesting that Anglicanism has a popular image of being a bit uppity and formal, while Wesleyan churches (Nazarene, Salvation Army, Pentecostal, Holiness) that actually are Anglican offshoots are known for serving among society's neediest. With that history along with the Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua movement, and assorted revival movements with their reputation for taking the gospel to ordinary everyday people, it surprised me to learn that at first John Wesley thought it was almost wrong for an individual to come to saving faith in a place other than the interior of a church building.

You also get maps, black and white photographs, and resourceful end notes. This book about John Wesley is another essential for any church library, and since it's quick and enjoyable reading, it would be a good choice to lend to one of those people you know who has too many misconceptions about church and Christianity. Final note: I love the bright, sculpted cover design, too!

Melissa says

I really liked this. The mix of the history of the creation of the Methodist church along with the revival of the

Christian heart. I learned a lot as well as feeling the revival at the same time.

It took a while to read, not because I didn't like it, but I wanted to soak it all in. I read non-fiction slowly because I want to learn.

David says

Used for semi-monthly meetings of church men's group. Typical good Adam Hamilton work -- not too deep and not too shallow. Also not too memorable, but perhaps that's because of lengthy pauses between readings. Some good info on Wesley for those who might not be very familiar with him. Closes with a very challenging excerpt from a Wesley sermon.

Kelly Logan says

This book was pleasantly surprising. I did not know much about John and Charles Wesley. Seeing how he grew from a "brand plucked" from the fire when he was just a child to the man who led a movement that changed lives was awe inspiring. It makes me proud to call myself a Methodist. There is much we can learn from his sermons still today. Controversial for his time but filled with the Spirit, he challenged everyone to deepen their walk and be the hands and feet of God to the world.

Dee Martin says

Very good explanation of the beginnings of the Methodist church. It solidified some of my beliefs and also brought about questions about what John Wesley intended and what we have become. This book would be a great stepping stone into deeper faith waters, so much is touched upon and could and should lead to further study.

Tracy says

This was a great study. It was fascinating to learn about the life and times of John Wesley and how that impacted the revival of his own faith - the revival that sparked the beginning of Methodism. Hamilton also challenges readers to think about how they can apply the principles and beliefs of Wesley to spark a modern-day revival in their own faith lives and churches. Adam Hamilton writes such wonderful studies. They are easy-to-read but "meaty" enough to challenge and educate the participant and to spark valuable discussion amongst study groups.

Mark Schlatter says

I read this as an initial exploration into Methodism. It's a short history of John Wesley, where each chapter includes a short digression on how the historical events can inform your faith and a one- to two-page

photoessay of the sites discussed. As an introduction to John Wesley, this does a decent job. As an introduction to the tenets of Methodism, I was less sure. And given that the photoessays were connected to a tour agency, the whole thing felt a little commercial.

Mike Thompson says

Adam Hamilton explains the origins of the Methodist Church by leading you on a tour of John Wesley's life. As has often happened, key events in one man's life caused a branch in the Christian church's family tree. This book shows you where it all started.

The reading is easy. There is little to no theology. I read it as part of a six week small group study and it provided excellent prompts for discussion. I didn't think the companion videos were as good as the ones I've seen for other Adam Hamilton books.

Patty Corwin says

Since I am a member of St. Andrew's UMC, I wanted to know more about what Methodist Protestantism stood for. I enjoyed this book and the accompanying DVD tracing the roots of this denomination and the life of John Wesley. I am pleased to learn that the Methodist church is one of faith and action. The historical pieces were very interesting, and the faith explanation was even more so.

Laura Martinsen says

Part guidebook, part biography, part religious commentary. It did make me want to check out the Wesleyan sites if ever in England again, did help me learn more about one of the major founders of my church, did make me want to be a more devout Christian. So I guess by those standards it is a successful read.

Steve says

As usual Hamilton has written a readable yet very informative book. A must read for all Methodists and anyone else interested in Wesley's life and faith.

Roy says

I enjoyed this short work on the life of John Wesley with pictures! The book is not overtly deep nor as theological as I would have liked. I would have preferred Hamilton taking the life of Wesley and showing modern Methodists how far they have fallen. The modern Methodist movement needs a revival as this title suggests but the revival is simply a return to true biblical Christianity as Wesley preached it. Away with modern Methodists denying inerrancy or even not preaching that Jesus alone saves!

Overall I do recommend this short book. While most disciples of Christ will not find anything earth shattering in terms of teaching, the story of Wesley is one that captures the attention every time. May God gives us all hearts that are on fire like Wesley's heart was.
