

Harris. But there was not the organizational effort that would mark Wesley or, as in modern times. Graham.

#### The Ministry of Wesley

#### IV.1.b.2

John Wesley (1703-1791) was the great organizer of the age and second only to Whitefield as a preacher. Born in an Anglican parsonage, he was trained in Bible instruction from his youth and naturally moved towards the service of the church. At Oxford he became involved with the Holy Club and eventually developed practices of regularity and personal discipline that would give birth to the name "Methodist." Much is made of his family and we will probably touch on it in passing.

Wesley's spiritual struggle was somewhat different from that of Whitefield. He was one of those who thought of himself as a Christian from the situational post of knowing nothing else. Throughout the Oxford days and his ordination in the church of England, he gave no indication of thinking of himself otherwise. Hence he gave himself for service in the colonies and came to Georgia for the purpose of Indian evangelization. His sea voyage to the colonies put him through a severe storm in which he was awed at the calm in which a group of travelling Moravians could face the possibility of death. Their bold faith "shook" him, but he nevertheless emerged in Georgia and began to preach with considerable energy. His ministry was not successful...personal problems and a deep seated spiritual anxiety rendered his efforts almost meaningless. He returned to England feeling a deep disappointment with the ineptness he had shown in spiritual pursuits.

But in England in 1738 the disillusioned Wesley came into contact with the Moravian leader, Peter Boehler, and following a period of soul searching, etc., experienced a conversion and infusion of faith during an open meditation of Luther's introduction to Romans. Drawn to the Moravians, Wesley spent a short time at Herrnhut (Saxony) with Zinzendorf but came back to England after becoming disenchanted with the Moravian culture image and mysticism. His actual conversion was traceable to that root and he never forgot it.

Wesley saw himself as an apostle to the masses and began preaching in churches and, following the example of Whitefield, in the fields and open places. Perhaps his work was consolidated mostly through the organization for which he is justly famed. He