


# Feed my lambs : the spiritual direction ministry of Calvinistic British Baptist Anne Dutton during the early years of the evangelical revival.



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## Abstract

This dissertation contends that Anne Dutton (1692-1765) contributed a transatlantic ministry of spiritual direction to the Evangelical Revival in the early 1740s. The first chapter provides a historiographical review of Dutton's reception in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the state of contemporary scholarship of Dutton. The chapter concludes with a historical reflection on spiritual direction, situating Dutton in the tradition of Protestant epistolary spiritual counseling and the long history of women spiritual directors. Chapter two provides an analysis of Dutton's early life in light of the autobiographies of Anne and her husband, Benjamin Dutton. The third chapter demonstrates that Anne Dutton's early literary productions were grounded in the spiritual formation she received in High Calvinistic congregations that encouraged experiential biblicism and Puritan spirituality. Of particular influence upon Dutton was the Puritan Thomas Goodwin with his interpretations of the "ages of Christianity" and the "sealing of the Spirit." Chapter four reconstructs Dutton's early correspondence with Howell Harris, John Wesley, and George Whitefield. The chapter demonstrates that Dutton's Calvinistic spiritual writings were attractive to Harris and Whitefield (who in turn expanded her social-spiritual direction network) and suggests Dutton's direction to these men is best defined as spiritual confirmation. The fifth chapter examines Dutton's presence in the first evangelical magazine, the London Weekly Papers, as the anonymous "Friend in the Country." Published by Dutton's correspondent John Lewis, the magazine included several of Dutton's spiritual pieces and advertised a number of her published works. Dutton's contributions to this publication demonstrate her usefulness to Calvinistic Methodism and the extensiveness of her influence, albeit anonymous, on readers in England, Scotland, and America. Chapter six analyzes Dutton's Letter-Books published in the 1740s. These volumes exhibit her transatlantic influence and the defining elements of her personal spiritual direction. The Letter-Books reveal Dutton's correspondents relating to her as a spiritual director: one who was holy, knowledgeable, compassionate, wise, and discerning. The chapter concludes suggesting Dutton's Letter-Books reflect the expansion and contraction of Dutton's influence in the Evangelical Revival. A final chapter summarizes the contributions of this project to the study of Anne Dutton's life, spirituality, and ministry.

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