

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

LECTURE 29 - EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EVANGELICAL REVIVALS; METHODISM

We'll start with two prayers from the years we're going to study:

Now, to God the Father, who first loved us, and made us accepted in the Beloved;
to God the Son, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood;
to God the Holy Ghost, who sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, be all love and
all glory in time and to all eternity. Amen. John Wesley

O Jesus, full of truth and grace, more full of grace than I of sin, yet once again I seek
your face, open your arms and take me in, and freely my backslidings heal, and love the
faithless sinner still. Amen. Charles Wesley

The rest of this page is an outline of this lecture.

1 INTRODUCTION TO EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EVANGELICAL REVIVALS

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In preparation, read Cairns, 384-8 (C18 Britain), 365-71 (C18 America);
Lion, 438-41 (C18 America), 442-3, 452 (Whitefield), 448-52 (C18 Britain),
453-6 (Wesley and Methodism); Vos, 116 (Methodism), 132-4 (C18 America);
Olson, 510-17 (Wesley), 504-9 (Edwards);
Lane, 169-179 (Wesley); *Great Events*, 253-261 (Wesley);
Great Christians, 165-170 (Whitefield), 171-5 (Wesley).

Note: these references will not be repeated at individual headings throughout this lecture
- refer back to here for them.

1 INTRODUCTION TO EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EVANGELICAL REVIVALS

1.1 The scope of this lecture

This Lecture and the next one are historical overviews of some of the Revivals in the Church of the C18 (this lecture) and C19 (Lecture 30). They do not attempt to cover the spiritual aspects of Revival.

Before we come to the C18 Revivals, we'll look back briefly to the:

1.2 Legacy of C17

We saw in Lecture 27 that for various reasons, including the ravages of the Thirty Years War, scientific discoveries which clashed with Church teaching and what philosophers called 'reason', Church life in Europe stagnated in the last half of the C17. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics concentrated on fine-tuning their theology, not their devotional life. We looked in Lecture 28 at three reactions to this cold orthodoxy:

(1) Deism, (2) Quakers and (3) Pietism.

For an overview, see the chart on the next page. This Lecture looks at the names in pink in the right-hand column, Wesley, Whitefield and Edwards.

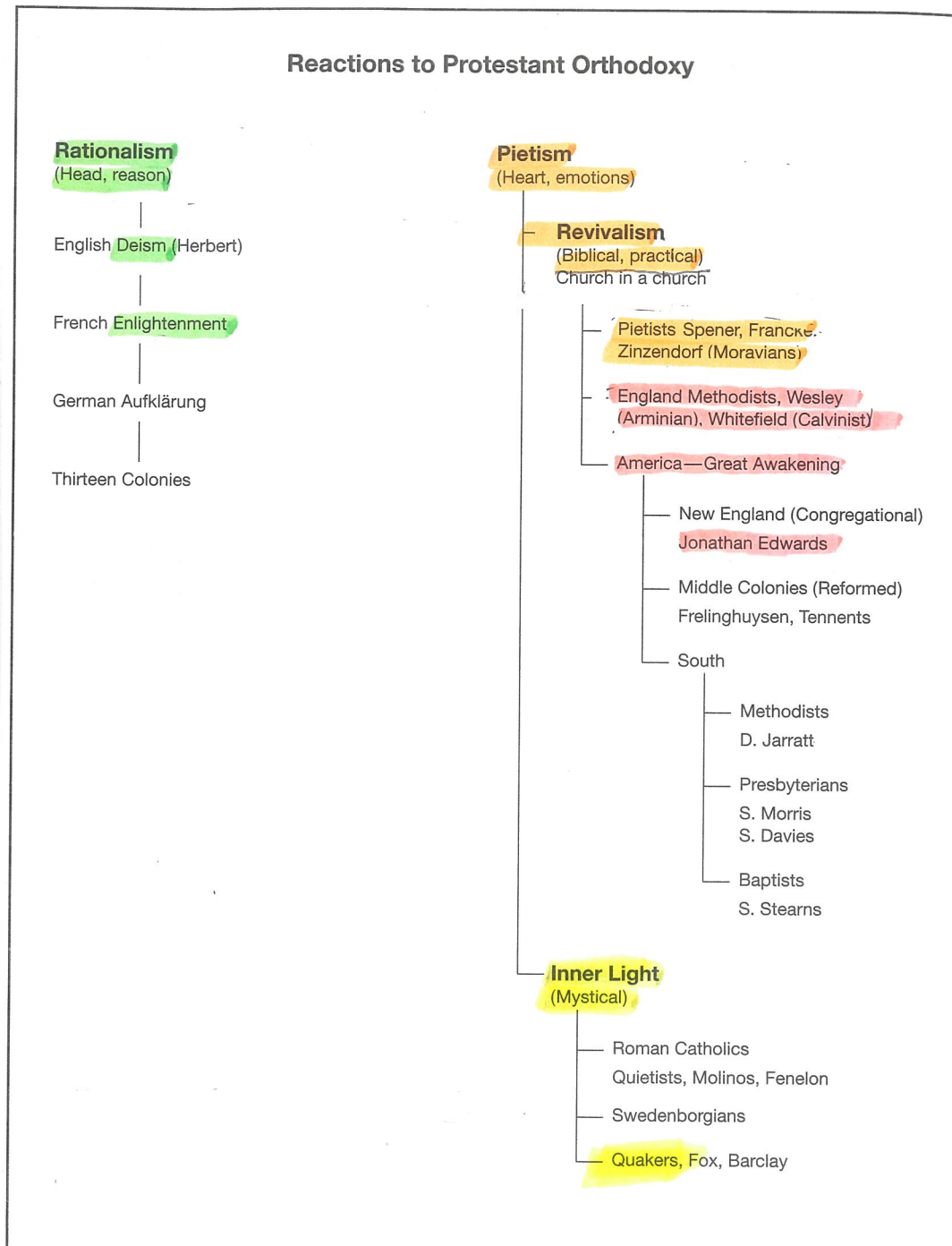
1.3 Definitions of 'Revival'

As far as one can 'define' the work of God, the word 'Revival' has three meanings in contemporary Church life.

(1) 'Revival' with a capital letter. A spontaneous, sometimes fairly brief, intense outpouring of God's Spirit, 'without organisation, and almost without expectation' bringing a personal response in conviction of sin (starting with Christians - Re-vival), repentance from sin, and a fresh understanding of sin and salvation. This is applicable to various C18 events, as we'll see.

(2) 'revival' with a lower-case letter, God's blessing over an extended period of time in vibrant church life; lasting longer in time and less intense than Revivals. This results in 'a godly walk, witness and work' and the priesthood of all believers - long-term blessing. One illustration of this is from Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh in the first decade of the last century. In 1906, there was Revival in the first sense of the word, intense and seven days a week, over a period of weeks; five years later, the Church Secretary said, in his annual report, that following the dramatic events of earlier years, the church was still enjoying a continuous reviving, God's blessing over an extended period of time in vibrant church life'.

(3) A planned evangelistic event; it may be in a local church - where the church notice board may say: 'There will be a revival here, next Sunday at 11 a.m.', meaning a gospel meeting culminating in an appeal - or it may be an inter-church event, with a guest preacher and with an emphasis on sin, salvation, and conversion. Americans often use the word 'revival' in this sense - we usually call it a 'mission' or a Crusade. As we'll see in the next Lecture, revivals (in this sense), planned, organized, centralized events, began about 1865, with names we will look at, Charles Finney, Ira D. Moody, and others. Perhaps the best known of mid-to-late C20 revivals (in this sense of the word) were the Billy Graham's Crusades.



1.4 Background to C18 Revivals

In the early C18, the spiritual state of Christianity was still low in both Britain and America - the legacy of the cold orthodoxy of the second half of the C17. Puritans were now generally laughed at, many respectable people called themselves Deists, working people were neglected by the Church, drunkenness, gambling, rioting, etc were rife. It was a very sad picture. However, as the C18 progressed, there were remarkable and long-lasting Revivals on both sides of the Atlantic. These are usually called 'The Evangelical Revival' (in Britain) and 'The Great Awakening' (in America) - sometimes run together into one phrase, 'The Evangelical Awakenings'. The link between Britain and America was George Whitefield (1714-70); we'll come to him later in this Lecture at 2.5 and 3.2.

2 THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY 'EVANGELICAL REVIVAL' IN BRITAIN

2.1 Moravian influence

It's difficult to trace the beginning of the C18 Revivals in Britain, but Moravians, whom we looked at in the last Lecture (28), were active in Britain from the 1720s - spreading their concern for a personal experience of conversion. Most of the events on the map below were local, where Revival was 'spontaneous'. For example, in Cambuslang (see the map) the local Church of Scotland minister had preached the gospel and called for revival for twelve months. One Thursday evening in February 1742, fifty people were restored, so they began to meet daily and over the next three months, 200 were converted. They heard that George Whitefield was coming to the area, so they invited him to preach, and 20,000 people turned up for the first meeting and 30,000 for the second one. Nine years later, the minister recorded that he personally knew of more than 400 people who had experienced Revival and who, nine years later, were still living spiritual lives, and that there were many others not known to him personally.

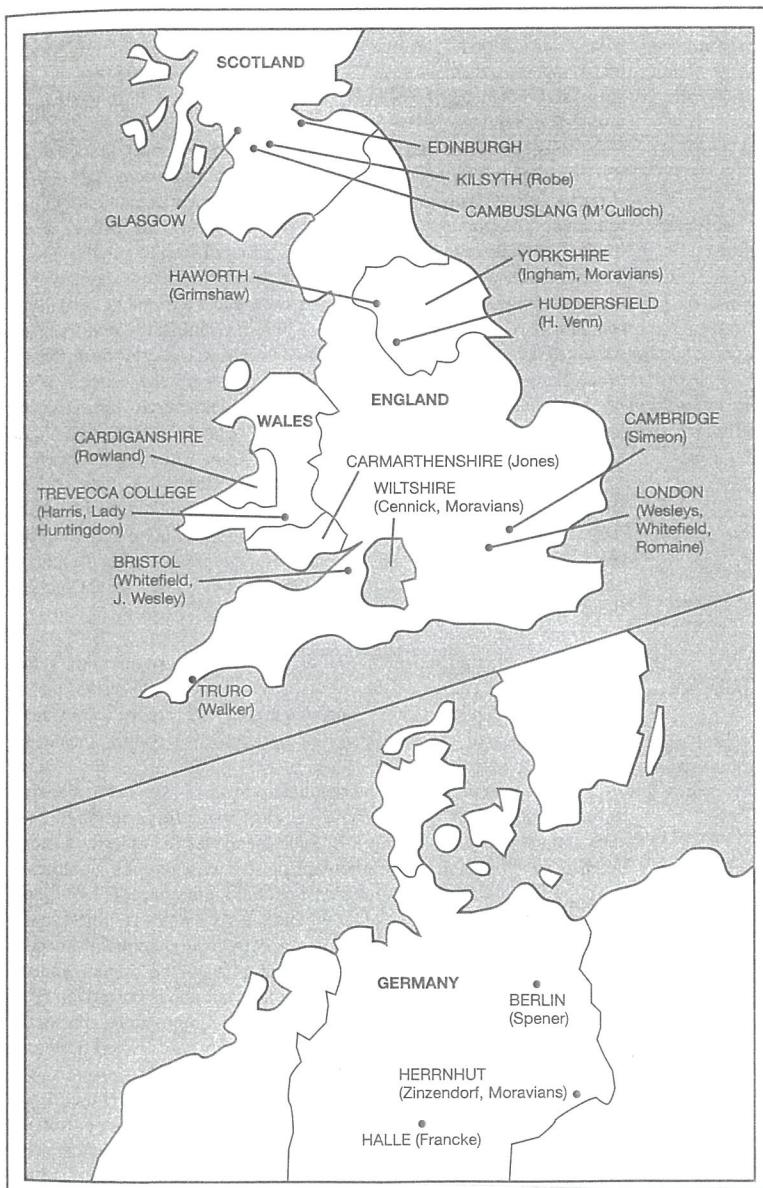
Moravians had a real concern to see souls saved. For example, a Moravian pastor challenged John Wesley, who was an ordained minister of the Church of England - we'll look at him in a moment; but imagine saying this to an ordained minister of the Church:

'My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. 'Have you a witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your Spirit, that you are a child of God?' I was surprised and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' I paused and said, 'I know he is the Saviour of the world.' 'True', replied he, 'but do you know that he has saved you?' I answered, 'I hope he has died to save me.' He only added, 'Do you know yourself?' 'I said, 'I do.' But I fear they were vain words.'

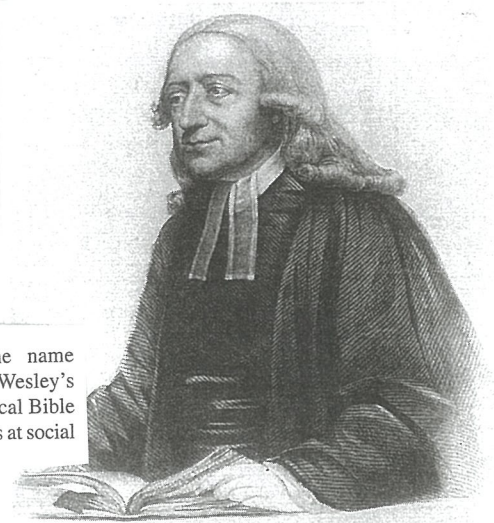
John Wesley's Journal,

7 February 1736

THE GREAT AWAKENING IN BRITAIN AND GERMANY, 1726-1756



John Wesley, founder of Methodism. The name "Methodists" was the nickname attached to Wesley's "Holy Club" because of the members' methodical Bible study and prayer habits and their regular attempts at social service in jails and homes of the poor.



2.2 John Wesley (1703-91) ‘The man who changed the course of a nation.’

John was one of eleven children who survived infancy in a Church of England manse at Epworth, which was some miles to the north-west of Lincoln, England. His mother, Susannah, a very godly woman, taught them daily, collectively, and interviewed them weekly, individually, about their spiritual progress. When she wanted solitude, to ‘settle down in God’ as she put it, she pulled her apron over her head. That didn't block out the noise, but it was a sign to her children that she was not to be disturbed.

Susanna Wesley was a truly remarkable woman. In addition to giving her eleven children a careful Christian training, she found time to give instruction to her neighbors in the Epworth rectory.



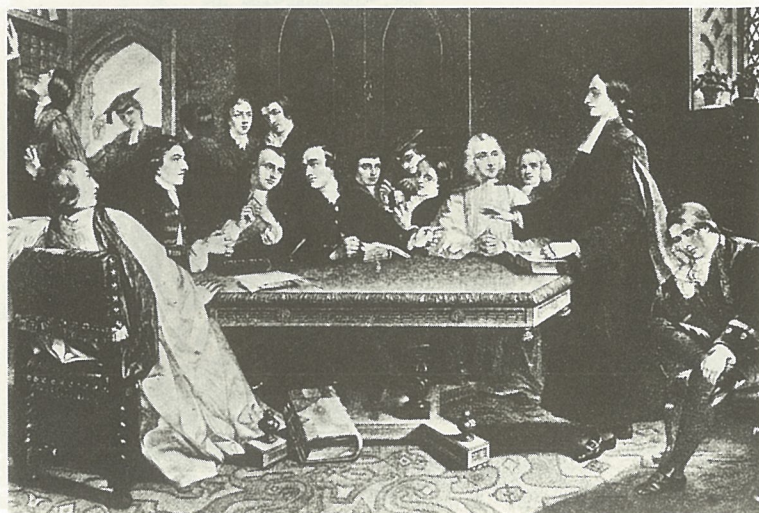
When John was 5, fire engulfed the rectory in the middle of the night. The parents shepherded their other children to safety but then realised that John was trapped on an upper floor. With the stairs aflame, one bystander stood on the shoulders of another and rescued John through a window. This made an indelible impression on John and he frequently quoted from Zechariah 3.2, that he was ‘a brand plucked out of the fire’.

He later studied at Oxford, and was such an outstanding student that he was invited to be a lecturer at one of the Colleges. This required him to be in ‘holy orders’, so he was ordained a deacon in 1725, and three years later he was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church of England.

His father, Samuel Wesley, was now getting on in years, and for a time John left Oxford to be his father's assistant in the parish of Epworth.

While John was absent from Oxford, his younger brother Charles, together with other students, formed a club for the promotion of their spiritual life. They met every Sunday evening, then two evenings a week and then every evening from six to nine. They began their meeting with prayer, studied the Greek New Testament, reviewed the work of the past day and talked over their plans for the next day, which included visiting prisons in Oxford jail, helping poor families and caring for the sick. Other students made fun of them and called them the ‘Holy Club’ - disparagingly, but the name stuck.

John Wesley and his university friends gather for a Sunday evening meeting of the “Holy Club” at Oxford.



Leader of the 'Holy Club'

When John Wesley returned to Oxford in 1729, as a tutor, he became the leader of the club, and other students joined. More and more they tried to live a consecrated Christian life. They did this so conscientiously - methodically - that other students started to call them *Methodists*; the nickname stuck and later became the name of the Denomination which broke away from the Church of England after the Wesleys' death.

When Samuel Wesley died in 1735, John might have succeeded his father in the parish, but instead both John and Charles responded to a call for missionaries to go to the newly established colony of Georgia. Their widowed mother said, 'Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more.'

America

On board the ship sailing to the New World was a contingent of 26 Moravian missionaries, going for pioneer missionary work to the non-Christian Indians of Georgia. John Wesley spoke enough German to enjoy their company; then there was a terrible storm and the crew would have collapsed in panic if it had not been for the calm assurance of the Moravians, who sang throughout the ordeal. John Wesley contrasted his fear of death, and the shallowness of his faith, with the bravery of the Moravians. They told them about assurance of salvation through faith. They knew they were forgiven and accepted by God, not through their own works, but by faith in Christ. On the day after the Wesleys arrived in America, a Moravian pastor challenged John in the words we looked at earlier on page 4.

Neither of the Wesleys' time in America was a success; Charles returned to England within months and John two years later. John lacked tact and tried to run the Church like the Holy Club, not appreciating the ethos of the New World. On his return, John said: 'I went to America to convert the Indians - but oh! who shall convert me!' He was trying to live the Christian life in his own strength, and not, as he later wrote, by faith and by the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Conversion

However, help was at hand for both Wesleys. Within a week after John's return, the brothers contacted the Moravians in London, who told them about self-surrender, instantaneous conversion, and the joy of believing. In May 1738, Charles experienced conversion and three days later the same experience came to John. The incident is well known, and in John's words in his Journal:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation. And an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

Journal, 24 May 1738

Traditionally, this is seen as John Wesley's conversion. He had been a committed Christian for some years, but the new element was assurance of salvation. If he had died at that point, aged 34, he would not have been remembered by history. It was only after his conversion, that, in the words of the heading to this section, 'he changed the course of a nation'.

John Wesley and Count von Zinzendorf

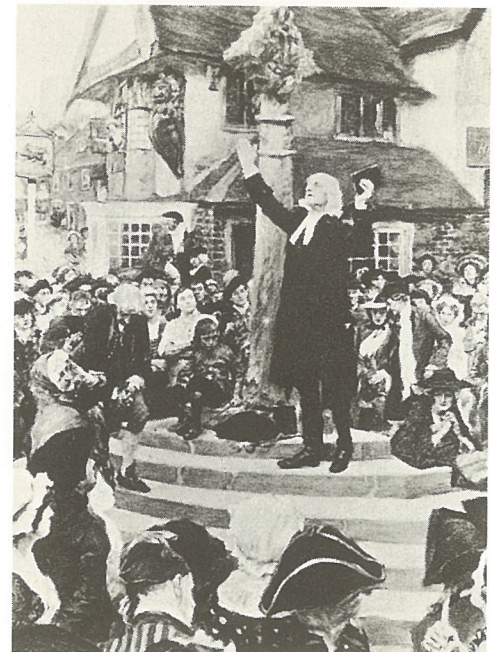
The Moravians had been a great aid to Wesley, and he wanted to know more about them. Less than three weeks after his conversion he went to Germany. He met Count von Zinzendorf and spent two weeks in Herrnhut. Wesley owed much to the Moravians, but he was not entirely satisfied with them. He was too active in his religion and not mystical enough to feel entirely at one with them. The Moravians were thoughtful and meditative, and stressed their dependence upon God.



John Wesley remained a priest of the Church of England, but when he began to preach salvation by faith in Christ he was told bluntly that he was not welcome in the pulpits of the Church of England. What was he to do? An evangelist, George Whitefield (whom we're coming to at 2.5 of this Lecture) had begun preaching, with great success, to unchurched folk in open air meetings in Bristol. He was about to leave for a visit to America, so he suggested that while he was away, John might take over this open-air evangelistic work. John did so most unwillingly - the idea of a minister preaching in the open-air was very strange to him, but he agreed and he was surprised at his own success; he decided to be a full-time evangelist; his real career had begun.



John Wesley is shown preaching to the poverty-stricken Bristol miners who had been forgotten by the Church. This scene is from the film "John Wesley" produced by the Methodist Church.



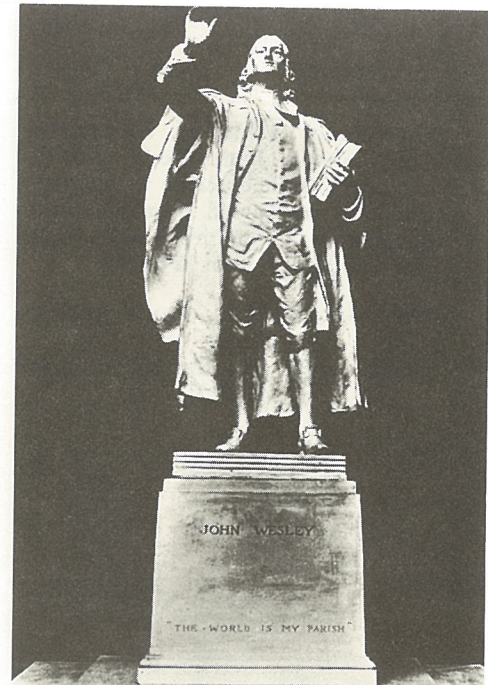
Methodist Prints

John Wesley Preaching from a Market Cross

He continued to preach in the open-air almost daily until his death more than fifty years later, travelling 5,000 miles a year every year, on horseback. He stopped several times a day and preached to whoever would listen, and there were many conversions.

John used to say, 'I look upon all the world as my parish' - see the text under the picture. This didn't please parish ministers, who thought they alone had the right to preach in their parish, but Wesley justified preaching everywhere because his ordination had not been to a parish, but to a College, so he was a minister-at-large, but sometimes he had a hostile reception,

He persevered and was still preaching in the open air at the age of 87, shortly before his death. There are few areas in England where John Wesley did not preach. The free churches (Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists), which had been declining in numbers and vitality, were revived and grew rapidly.



Methodist Prints

Statue of John Wesley Bearing His Well-known Words, "The World Is My Parish"

2.3 Methodist 'Societies'

The Wesleys were particularly effective at reaching workers who had migrated as part of the Industrial Revolution; we're coming to that in Lecture 32 but England had until the C18 been primarily an agricultural country, and then, during the C18, with the invention of new machines and the emphasis on manufacturing, thousands of people moved from their farming communities into cities, to find work in the new factories, and they ended up in slum housing. Large cities sprang up in many places and the Established Church couldn't cope. The minister of a village parish might suddenly find himself responsible for a whole city. The Church of England was organized into parishes, and it took time - including an Act of Parliament - to create a new parish, so most of the workers who had moved to find work in the new cities found themselves outside the traditional Church.

So, how could the Wesleys conserve and nurture the religious life of those who had responded to the Gospel? John Wesley had no desire for them to leave the Established Church in England, but not only were the parish priests overwhelmed, most of them had no sympathy with what he was doing. Wesley believed that the Christian life was not just being converted, but that Christians needed to 'grow towards perfection', to a mature life of faith, which would take the rest of their lives.

In May 1739, Wesley found the answer. He gathered his converts into what he called Societies, sub-divided into Classes, which existed alongside the local parish churches - he didn't want to form a new denomination. He modelled them on the Pietist *collegia pietatis* in Germany - remember the 'gatherings for piety' we looked at in the last Lecture. Like the Pietists, he urged his converts to attend their parish churches for worship and Communion, but also to attend Classes during the week for testimonies, prayer, and spiritual encouragement - what we now call 'home groups'. We take them for granted - but the Wesleys introduced them into this country. They became the building blocks for the evangelical revival and one of the features of Methodist organization.

Classes

A Class consisted of about twelve people under a trained lay leader, with separate Classes for men, women, different ages, etc. They met for an hour or two every week. Leaders encouraged their Classes to live a godly life, holding family and private prayer, searching the Scriptures, observing Sunday (no trade on Sunday), no drunkenness, fighting, brawling, and (to quote their charter) 'doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all people': feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting or helping the sick and prisoners, etc. Methodist Societies provided medical dispensaries, orphanages, food, and spiritual nurture.

People didn't have to be wealthy or educated to serve as leaders, if they had a conversion experience. Lay people developed leadership in a way that never existed in the formal structure of the Church of England.

Wesley was to England what Pietism was to Germany - see the chart - but there was another dimension that had no parallel elsewhere in the world - the social consequences of the Wesleys' revival.

John Wesley preached his first revival sermon to miners, and he aimed his message especially at the working classes. As mentioned, we're coming in Lecture 32 to the Industrial Revolution, but briefly, after Belgium, England was the first country in Europe to become industrialized. The new labouring class in England worked without the right to vote, without labour unions, without factory laws, without the minimum standards of housing, health, and education required for human existence. Industrial-ization meant a working day of twelve hours or more, child labour, a painful and empty life, and an early death.

This was the social background to John Wesley's revival. He taught the new working classes how to live and what to live for. The immediate aim of the revival was to bring an active Christian experience to the estranged labouring

German Pietism and English Methodism— A Comparison

	PIETISM	METHODISM
FOUNDER	Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705)	John Wesley (1703–1791)
RELIGIOUS SITUATION	Stagnant Orthodoxy of Post-Reformation Scholastic Lutheranism	Rationalistic Deism of Post-Puritan Anglicanism
FOUNDATIONAL BOOK	Spener, <i>Pia Desideria</i>	William Law, <i>A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life</i>
EDUCATIONAL CENTER	University of Halle	Oxford University
ORGANIZATION	Conventicles	Methodist societies
OTHER KEY FIGURES	Auguste H. Francke (1663–1727) J. A. Bengel (1687–1752) Nikolaus Ludwig Von Zinzendorf (1700–1760) Peter Boehler (1712–1775) Alexander Mack (1679–1735)	Charles Wesley (1707–1788) George Whitefield (1714–1770) Thomas Coke (1747–1814) Francis Asbury (1745–1816) Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707–1791)
RESULTING CHURCHES	Church of the Brethren Moravian Church	Methodist Church Calvinistic Methodists (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion)
COMMON EMPHASES	Practical holiness Personal Bible study Need for conscious conversion Evangelistic preaching Devotional exercises Relief of poor and needy Experience more than doctrine	
PIETIST INFLUENCES ON METHODISM	Wesleys met Moravians on ship to Georgia, were impressed with their quiet confidence (1735). Moravian Spangenberg questioned John Wesley in Georgia. John Wesley sought out Moravians in London; Boehler was instrumental in his conversion (1738). John Wesley visited Zinzendorf at Herrnhut (1738). Methodist societies were established, based on model of Pietist conventicles (1738).	

classes, but the effects were wider than that. It has been said, looking at what happened in France at the end of the C18, the bloody French Revolution and the storming of the Bastille, that the social structures of the Wesleyan Societies avoided a similar revolution by the working classes in Britain.

Start of the Methodist Church

During the Wesleys' lifetime, Methodists were part of the Established Church of England, from which the Wesleys never wanted to separate. They resisted all pressures from their own followers to leave the Church of England: 'I live and die', John said, 'a member of the Church of England'. Until his death in 1791, John Wesley maintained autocratic control over the 'Connexion' and was able to prevent formal separation.

However, after their death, hostility of the Church of England toward converts led Wesley's followers to separate from the Established Church in 1795 and to form a (separate) Methodist Church. Some of George Whitefield's followers (section 2.6) formed a different type of Methodist Church.

2.4 Significance of John Wesley (in no particular order)

(a) He reaffirmed justification by faith, and a personal relationship with God. Based on his own experience, he rejoiced in the joyful assurance of the forgiveness of sin. He breathed new life into many of the existing churches, and encouraged them to engage in evangelism, so that they themselves enjoyed new growth and prosperity, but chiefly he built up the Church with people who before had not belonged to any church.

(b) Trained and trusted lay people with responsibility in leadership and preaching.

As the revival continued to grow and spread, the Wesleys encouraged lay people to be involved in positions of leadership, for example as stewards to care for property, as teachers for schools, and as visitors of the sick. However, until 1742, John Wesley insisted that only ordained men might preach. A dramatic incident that year changed his attitude. He was due to speak at a meeting in London, but he was delayed. A layman, Thomas Maxfield, stood in for him, preached a sermon and, since Wesley had still not appeared, closed the meeting and everyone went home. Then Wesley arrived, and he was furious that a lay person had had the temerity to preach. His mother said to him. 'John, take care what you say to that young man, for he is as truly called of God to preach as you are.' Wesley followed her advice, and began to use lay preachers - he desperately needed help in the expanding the work, but he introduced a sensible safeguard. Because his lay preachers had had little training, they should preach for no more than six or eight weeks in one place, and then move on. Although Wesley urged his lay preachers to apply themselves to serious study, he did not establish seminaries, but he wrote and published material for these men to study at home.

(c) Preached at every opportunity and wherever he could – 'the world is my parish'.

When churches were closed to the Wesleys, they turned to the unchurched, and preaching in the open air was the only way to reach them. John Wesley preached anywhere that he saw an opportunity, all over England, Scotland, and Ireland. When criticized by parish ministers for 'invading' their parishes, he answered, 'The world is my parish' – see the top of page 8 for his justification for saying this.

(d) Taught 'Christian perfection', in the sense of dedication of all of our life to God.

As this is a history class, it is not the place to explore 'Christian perfection', but be aware that it was one of the Wesleys' legacies to the Church.

(e) Popularised Arminianism in place of the prevailing Calvinism.

Wesley felt that Calvin's doctrine of predestination and election stifled the call to repentance and conversion, so he rejected Calvinism and embraced Arminianism, with its doctrine of the freedom of the will – explored in Lecture 23. He preached that people accepted Christ through their own will or choice.

(f) Gave the nation a social conscience on education, medical clinics, famine relief, etc.

Wesleyan Societies, all over the country, divided into Classes, made better citizens and raised the standard of morality of the whole nation. There were about 25,000 Classes throughout the country, so with a dozen in a class, that is over a quarter of a million converted people throughout the country.

TOPIC - CHARLES WESLEY (1707-88) - was taken at this point in the Lecture; here, it is printed at the end of the Notes for this Lecture.

2.5 George Whitefield (1714-70)

Whitefield (picture of him on the next page), the other well-known preacher of Revival in Britain, started Revival preaching a few years before John Wesley and, as mentioned at page 7 of this Lecture, it was Whitefield who introduced Wesley to the idea of open-air preaching. We'll look at him now because, unlike Wesley, he straddled the British and American scenes. This section outlines his preaching in Britain, and section 3.2 takes up his preaching in America.

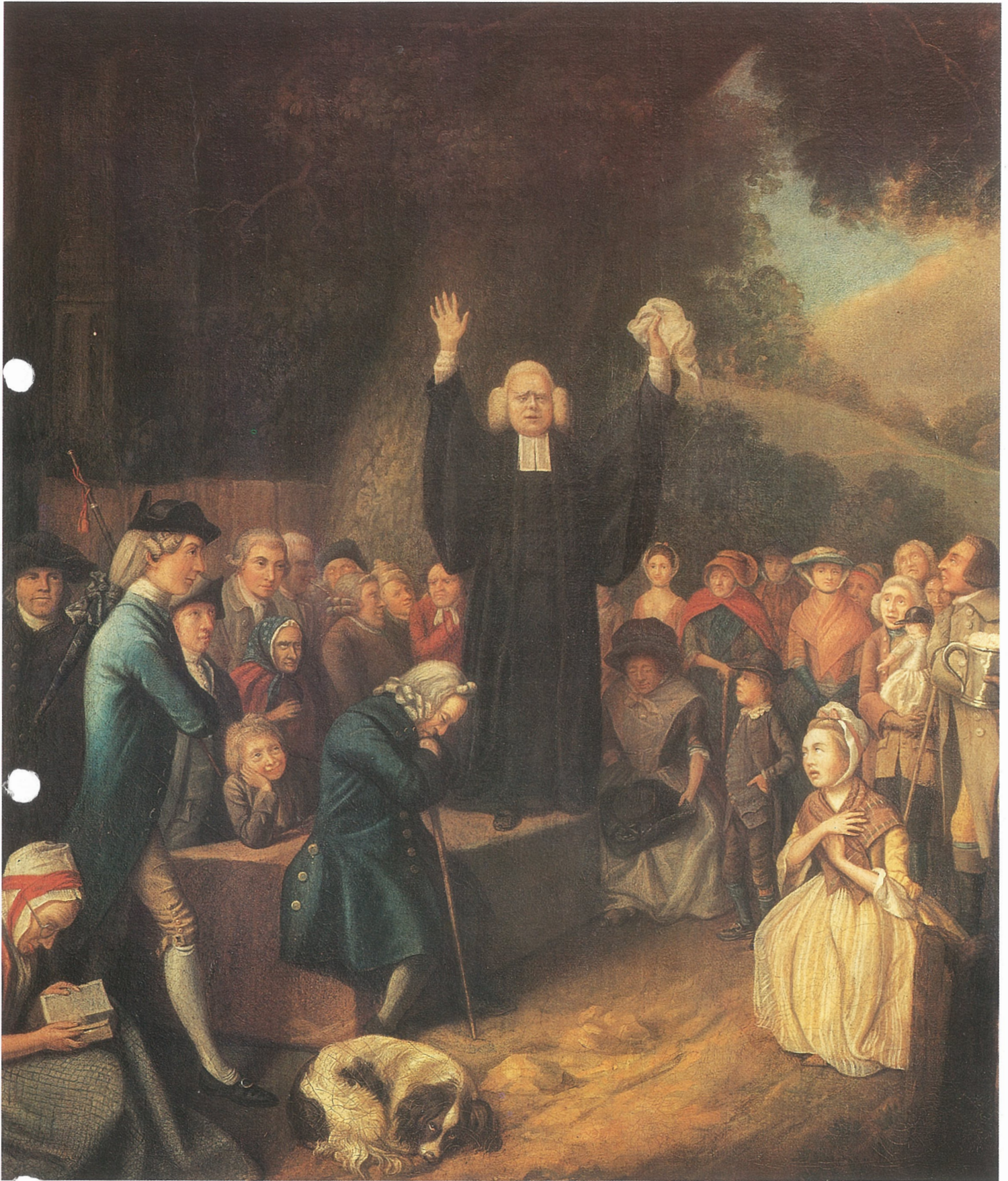
Whitefield was born in Gloucester in 1714 of humble parents - pub landlords. His favourite subject at school was drama - he was a born actor. He went to Oxford University, where he experienced 'new birth' in 1735, age 21. He was ordained a priest of the Church of England in 1739, but his dramatic preaching, with his call for conversion, was too fiery for the churches; they didn't want him, so he preached in the open air at racecourses, marketplaces, coal mines and public parks. Whitefield remained an itinerant preacher for 35 years, preaching 20 times a week, including seven trips to America and 14 to Scotland; he could be heard by 20,000. On his second visit to Scotland, he participated in Cambuslang Revival of 1742 (as mentioned on page 4).

Wherever Whitefield went, he fanned the flames of Revival with his dynamic preaching. He wore himself out and died in America in 1770, aged 56.

2.6 Calvinistic Methodists and Wesleyan Methodists

We saw in Lecture 21 how some in the Reformed Church, starting in Holland, preferred to follow the teaching of Jacob Arminius, and became known as Arminians. The Calvinists held a Council at Dort and set out the 5 points of Calvinism..

Whitefield was a Calvinist, so he was more at home in Calvinist territory, Scotland, Wales and New England, while the Wesleys, who were Arminians, focused on England. (continued on page 13)



"GEORGE WHITEFIELD PREACHING" BY JOHN COLLETT

In 1740 George Whitefield preached to packed American congregations in New England, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Savannah. A Calvinist Anglican, he preached with enormous passion and based his theological message on

original sin, justification by faith, and regeneration. One local farmer compared Whitefield's preaching to that of "one of the old Apostles", with "many thousands flocking after him to hear ye gospel and great numbers were converted to Christ".

Wesley opposed the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. He insisted that all had freedom to choose or refuse divine grace. Whitefield defended the doctrine of predestination, because it underscored God's sovereignty, so they agreed to differ in mutual respect. However, their different views led to two different groupings among the Methodist Societies - some following Wesley's Arminianism and others following Whitefield's Calvinism.

The followers of the Wesleys became known as Wesleyan Methodists, and the followers of Whitefield as Calvinistic Methodists. The Calvinistic Methodists are often known as 'The Countess of Huntington's Connexion' – glance back at the chart on page 9, middle right. There were various groups within the groups - the Methodist New Connexion in 1797, the Primitive Methodists in 1810 and there were further secessions and unions. Eventually there were three principal Methodist denominations: Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodists, and Calvinistic Methodists. In 1932 they all joined to constitute the Methodist Church of Great Britain and Ireland.

But, and this is a very important point, Whitefield was not an organizer like John Wesley, and he didn't form Societies in the way that Wesley did, so many of the converts of Whitefield's ministry either stayed in the Church of England or, if they had no previous church connection, joined the Church of England - but as evangelicals. This became known as the 'Low Church' in the Church of England, the evangelical wing of the Church. We'll explore that in the next Lecture, but essentially the Low Church was user-friendly, while the non-evangelicals became known as the High Church, because they placed a 'high' emphasis on complete adherence to the traditional Church of England. The High Church were sticklers for formality, using only the liturgy as printed in the Book of Common Prayer, and resisting to any 'modernization'. See the last note on the chart beside this note.

John Wesley and George Whitefield—A Contrast

	WESLEY	WHITEFIELD
PARENTAGE	Son of Anglican rector in Epworth	Son of tavern keeper in Gloucester
EARLY LIFE	Strict religious upbringing supervised by mother, Susanna	Raised surrounded by worldly influences by mother, Elizabeth, who was widowed when George was 2
CONVERSION	Aldersgate Street, London, at age 35	Oxford University, at age 21
ORDINATION	Church of England, 1728, at age 25	Church of England 1736, at age 22
PREACHING STYLE	Intellectual, doctrinal	Dramatic, emotional
DOCTRINE	Arminian (though closer to Pietist semi-Augustinianism than to Dutch Arminianism)	Calvinistic
ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY	Was exceptional organizer; maintained personal control over total organization of Methodist societies.	Was able organizer, but preferred to preach and leave organizing to others.
MINISTRY OUTSIDE ENGLAND	Did early unsuccessful missionary work in Georgia. Later preached in Scotland and Ireland. Appointed bishops to supervise work in America.	Visited Scotland 14 times, participating in Cambuslang revival. Visited America 7 times, becoming catalyst of First Great Awakening.
LEGACY	Methodist Church	Calvinistic Methodists; influence on Evangelical Party in Church of England

To sum up - 'As Pietism breathed new life into the Lutheran Church, so Methodism breathed new life into the Anglican Church.' That is, both by John Wesley's converts, whom he kept in the Church of England until they were driven out after his death, and by Whitfield's converts, many of whom stayed in the Church of England and breathed new life into it. 'Under the fervour of the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitefield, the ice of deism melted and the frozen waters of English religious life began to flow again.' For more about Eighteenth Century 'Evangelical Revival' in Britain, see A. Skevington Wood, *The Inextinguishable Blaze*, 1967, Exeter, Paternoster.

3 EIGHTEENTH CENTURY 'GREAT AWAKENING' IN AMERICA

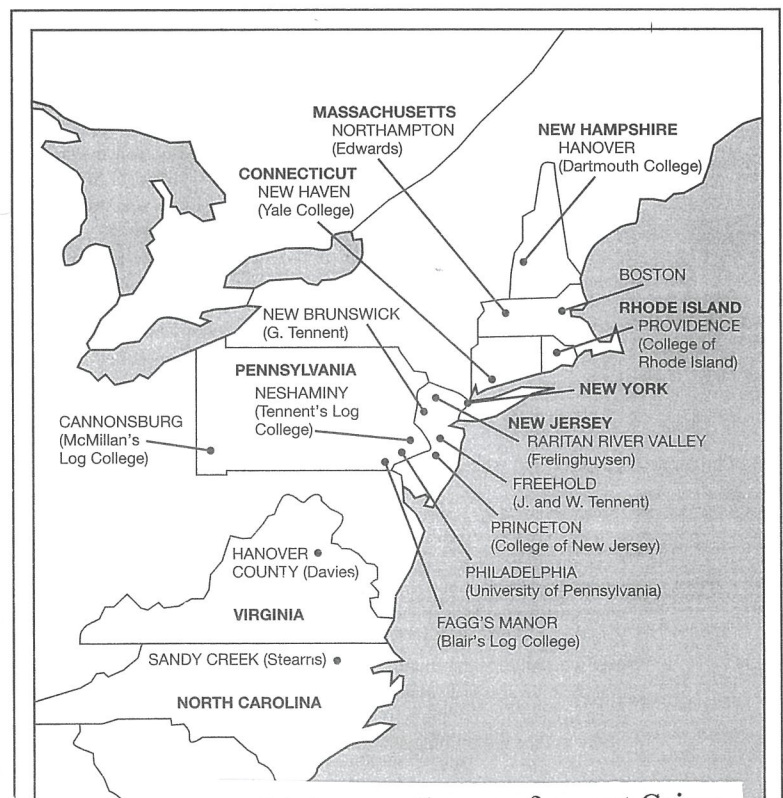
3.1 Origins

Sadly, the faith and fervour that had led Pilgrims and Puritans to leave Europe in order to practice true religion in the New World diminished as the second and third generations came along. There were various reasons for this - some were in remote places, away from a church, some worked so hard that they had no time for anything else, some prospered and made money their god. Paradoxically, the Church's attempt to encourage devotional life backfired for two reasons and drove many away from Christianity. One was that in an attempt to maintain the purity of the Church, they accepted into membership only those who could testify to a personal experience of conversion and who were living a godly life, so many stayed away. Secondly, only members could have their children baptized, so more and more grew up outside the Church and in unbelief.

In this unhappy situation, Revival came, 'The Great Awakening'.

The Great Awakening began in New Jersey in 1726 among Dutch Reformed Churches. One of their pastors, Theodore Freylinghausen, influenced by Pietists, experienced heart-revival and began to preach the need for conversion. This was followed by others shown on this map - no dates given. It was not initially a concerted movement, but a series of spontaneous, uncoordinated awakenings in congregations with godly pastors. They were drawn together when George Whitefield visited America in 1739, bringing the spirit of the Revival from England.

THE GREAT AWAKENING IN THE THIRTEEN COLONIES, 1726-1756



This is a small copy of map at Cairns page 370 - see it for reading details.

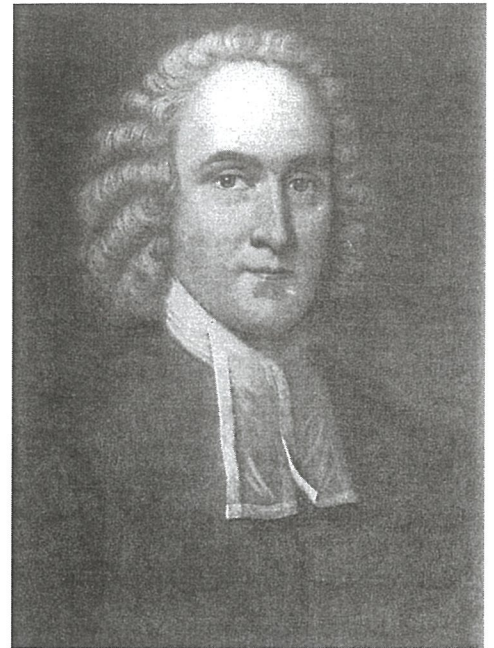
3.2 George Whitfield (again)

Although Whitefield was an Anglican, he co-operated with all groups and as a visitor from abroad, he was welcomed in all the colonies. He made seven visits to America. Wherever he went, preaching with great power, people were convicted of sin and turned to new life. His visits unified previously scattered movements, and transcended colonial

frontiers and denominational barriers - Presbyterians and Baptists expanded rapidly; Methodists, new to America, began outreach which made them one of largest Churches in America. Lutherans consolidated their forces, and moved forward. Reformed Churches were galvanised into life. In all directions, churches reached out to others, challenging the uncommitted, giving impetus to missions. Inevitably some Churches were split between those who favoured revivals and those who did not.

3.3 Jonathan Edwards (1703-58)

Jonathan Edwards was not the first to experience Revival, but he is the best-known American involved. The massive turning to Christianity by ordinary Americans in 1740s was brought about (humanly speaking) by the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. It was reckoned that 10% of the population was converted.



Jonathan Edwards, a Congregational pastor, preacher of revival, missionary to the Indians, author, and president of Princeton. He is considered by some to be the greatest North American philosopher-theologian.

"There was scarcely a single person in the town, old or young, left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those who were wont to be the vainest, and loosest; and those who had been most disposed to think, and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more; souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and delivered out of a horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set upon a rock with a new song of praise to God in their mouths.

This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town; so that in the spring and summer following, anno 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God: it never was so full of love, nor of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families on account of salvation being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands."

JONATHAN EDWARDS,
A Faithful Narrative of the
Surprising Work of God

Jonathan Edwards was born in Connecticut into a Puritan family. Remember how Puritans, starting with Pilgrim Fathers in 1620, left England for the New World, to practice their faith in freedom. His grandfather was pastor of a Congregational church in Massachusetts (see the map on the previous page). He was a precocious child, and when he went to (now) Yale University at age 12, (in 1715), he was already fluent in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Although his parents were godly, it was at Yale that had a conversion experience.

He became a Congregationalist minister and was a passionate preacher, calling for disciplined Christian living. In 1734, he preached a series of sermons on justification by faith; in December of that year, the Spirit of God came in Revival and 'souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ.' (see quotation on left.) 300 of the town's 1,100 inhabitants were converted in the first six months of 1735. His most widely-quoted sermon today is 'Sinners in the hands of an angry God' (1741), but that usually quoted by critics of Puritanism to claim it was frighteningly judgmental. We have over 600 of his sermons, and they are powerful, revivalist, but not fire-and-brimstone. Revival in his church lasted for a couple of years, but he was also a leader in Revivals elsewhere.

However, like Calvin at Geneva 100 years before, he wouldn't give communion to patently unconverted people; powerful families in his church were offended, and by vote 200/23, he was dismissed as pastor in 1750 - although they asked him to continue preaching until a replacement could be found. Age 47, with 12 children, he was out of a job, so he went to the Indian frontier. Seven years later he was asked to become president of what is now Princeton University. He was the greatest

theologian America had produced, joining head and heart, intellectual and emotional. Many evangelists were one or the other, but Edwards was both together.

There were tensions about Revival, but spiritual awakening continued until the nation was distracted by the War of Independence from Britain in the 1770s.

Sadly, the benefits of the C18 Great Awakening were largely lost over the last decades of the C18.

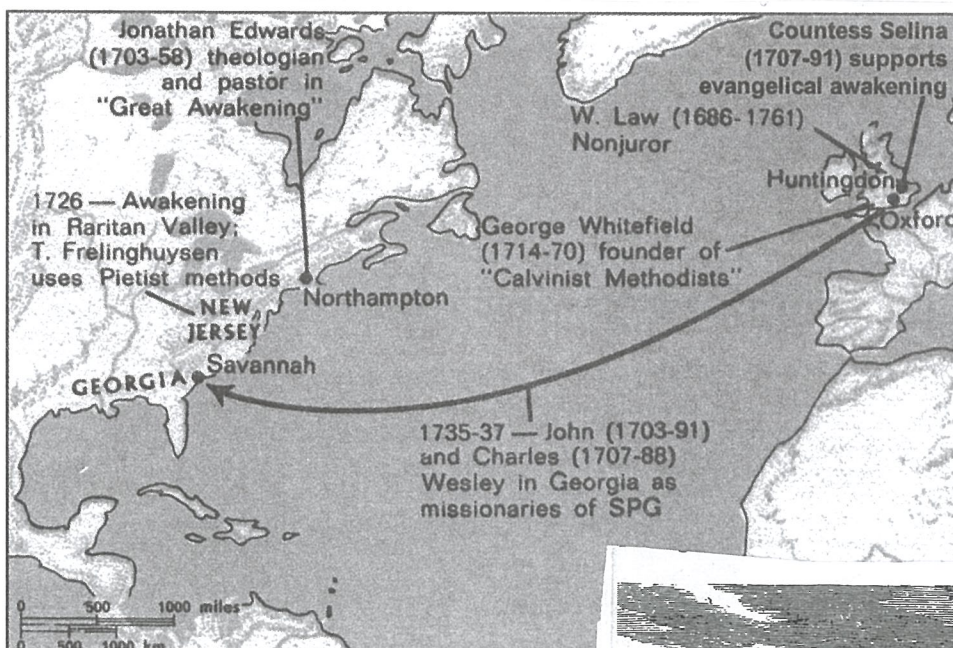
(a) From the later 1760s, the British Parliament tried, for the first time, to raise money by taxing British American colonies, and the Americans became increasingly preoccupied with their political struggle, leading to the Declaration of independence from Britain in 1776, achieved in 1783, and religion suffered.

(b) they were diverted by the rise of Deism (belief in a remote, absentee God), and

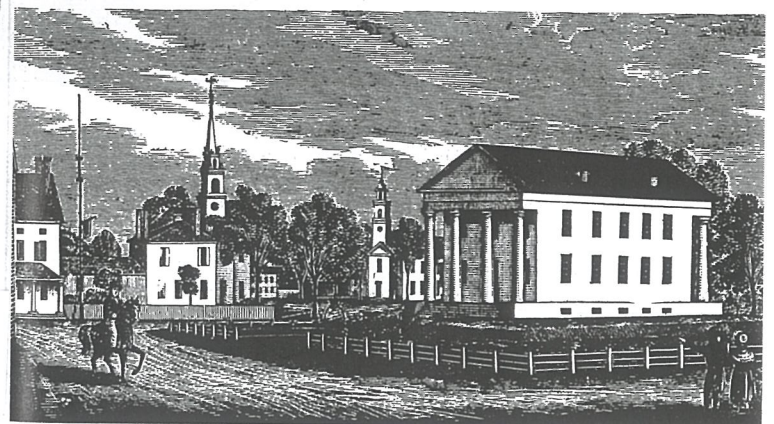
(c) they admired their fellow-revolutionaries in France, 1789 who were largely infidels.

Religion dropped to a low ebb. At the end of the C18, less than 10% of the North American population were church members.

Then, during the C19, North America was swept by several new waves of revivalist enthusiasm - they began with what is called the Second Awakening, (over the first decades of the C19). This differed in several respects from the (First) Great Awakening, We'll see in our next Lecture what the differences were, because they all had an impact on British life, and on Christianity worldwide.



EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION
IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA



A typical New England church
of the eighteenth century.

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTUR

TOPIC FOR LECTURE 29 - CHARLES WESLEY (1707-88)

Please tell us about Charles Wesley, his biography, his conversion, his prolific hymn writing, and his being one of the founders of the Methodist denomination, and anything else that you feel we should know about him.

Most of the references to him in:

Cairns, 385

Olson, 511,

Lion Handbook, 454-5 and

Lane, 168

are overshadowed by descriptions of his better-known brother, John,

His hymns include:

- "And Can It Be That I Should Gain?"
- "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"
- "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies"
- "Come, O Thou Traveler unknown"
- "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"
- "Father, I Stretch My Hands to Thee"
- "Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise"
- "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"
- "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"
- "Jesus, The Name High Over All"
- "Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending"
- "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"
- "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"
- "Rejoice, the Lord is King"
- "Soldiers of Christ, Arise"
- "Ye Servants of God"



Charles Wesley



Preaching

Overleaf is a helpful summary of Charles life and contribution to Christian living.

Contribution

The name Wesley is for most synonymous with Methodism, yet John Wesley is often considered better known than his younger brother Charles. Arguably, though, without the crucial role Charles played in teaching ordinary people the Christian message through his hymns, the Methodist movement may have never really taken off.

Charles Wesley was born in 1707, the eighteenth child of an Anglican vicar. His father spent a short time in prison for unpaid debts, and this may have had a profound effect on Charles' later ministry to prisoners.

Sources differ in their estimate of exactly how many hymns Charles wrote over the course of his life, but it seems that it was more than 6,000, spread over a 53-year period, averaging 10 poetic lines a day for over 50 years. He thus wrote over ten times more than any other hymn writer, making him by far the greatest hymn writer of all times. Yet, any concerns about quantity over quality would appear to be rebuffed in the face of the lasting legacy of his hymns, which continue to be sung around the world today. Some of the most famous include 'Love Divine', 'And Can It Be', 'Christ the Lord is Risen Today', 'O for a Heart to Love my God' and the Christmas carol, 'Hark the Herald'.

At Oxford University, Charles was instrumental in the forming of a group of students meeting for study and worship and to carry out charitable acts. Fellow students, because of the group's methodical ways, coined the term 'Methodists'.

In 1735 Charles joined his older brother in becoming ordained and began travelling with him, preaching in the open air. The pair felt a calling to go as missionaries to the US colony of Georgia, and their time there was to prove pivotal in their spiritual life for two reasons. One was that while on board the ship to America they met a group of German Moravian Christians and through this encounter both brothers began to realise afresh the significance and importance that hymns and singing could play in the spiritual life. Second, the experience in Georgia was to prove a dry and disillusioning time, with much rejection of their message.

The brothers returned spiritually depressed and disheartened. Charles suffered from bouts of depression throughout his life and it is reassuring for us to know that even the world's greatest hymn writer, composing some of the most profound words of praise ever written, suffered himself from dark nights of the soul.

Charles and John covered thousands of miles on horseback, taking their message to all corners of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales but in 1756 Charles made the decision to give up his travelling ministry, partly because of poor health. By this point he had spent nearly 20 years travelling and preaching the gospel. From then on, he continued to have a local ministry, while focusing on his hymn writing. Charles enabled ordinary people to learn through his hymns, leading them into praise, prayer and profound theological truths that could be easily remembered and were made accessible. 'O for a Heart to Love my God' is perhaps a good example of a hymn of prayer; 'O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing', a hymn of praise; and 'And Can It Be' expressing profound and deep theological truths - to name just a few examples.