

The Age of Revival

Sources

Dale W. Brown, *Understanding Pietism* (1996)

J. C. Ryle, *Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century* (1978)

A. Skevington Wood, *The Inextinguishable Blaze* (2006)

Thomas S. Kidd, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (2014)

———, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (2007)

George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (2003)

I. Nature of Revival

A. Definition

1. The ordinary work of the Holy Spirit in extraordinary measure
2. Danger: Confusing human activity w/ divine revival (Iain Murray)

B. Context of 18th-Century Revivals

1. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Revival was God's answer to the Age of Reason
2. Differs from "Reformation revival" in less political significance
3. Shaped the contemporary understanding of "evangelical"

II. Pietism

A. Nature of Pietism

1. *Piety* is the way one lives the Christian life
2. Stressed the reality of Christian faith in the life, both in heart and actions
3. Provided the framework for revivals of this era

B. Rise

1. Originated in Germany in reaction to spiritually deficient state churches
2. Forerunners (1600s)
 - a. Puritanism: Conversion, vital piety
 - b. Dutch Second Reformation
 - 1) "Further Reformation" or "Dutch Puritanism"
 - 2) Example: Theodore Frelinghuysen in colonial America
3. Philip Spener
 - a. Father of Pietism
 - b. Used small groups: *Collegia pietatis* (gatherings to promote piety)
 - 1) Expression of the priesthood of all believers
 - 2) Often called *ecclesiola in ecclesia* ("little churches within the church")
 - c. *Pia Desideria* ("Pious Desires"): Most significant writing
4. August Francke
 - a. Organizer of Pietism
 - b. Taught at University of Halle, newly founded under Pietist influence, a center for Pietist teaching and missions
 - c. Regeneration "is the very ground upon which Christianity stands" (cf. to Luther's comment on justification)
5. Nicholas von Zinzendorf
 - a. "Rich young ruler who said yes"
 - b. Established Moravians at his estate ("Herrnhut") → Early leaders in missions

C. Emphasizing the Subjective Aspect of Christian Life

1. "Completing" the Reformation by developing subjective side of Christian life

2. Distinct conversion experience not related to baptism
 3. Stress on regeneration over justification
 - a. Not denying justification but rather a shifting of emphasis
 - b. Move from legal language (“forensic justification”) to biological language (“new birth,” “feeding on the Word,” “growth in grace”)
 4. Stress on priesthood of believers (e.g., stress on personal reading of Scripture)
 5. Vital Christianity
 - a. A visible Christianity (visible holiness)
 - b. An active Christianity (e.g., charitable work such as orphanages)
 - c. An evangelistic Christianity (missions, Great Commission)
- D. Criticisms
1. Elevating experience/emotion above doctrine or Scripture
 2. Legalism
 3. Inadequate view of the visible church
- III. Evangelical Awakening (England)
- A. Term *Evangelical*
1. From Greek word for “gospel” (*evangel*)
 2. Stress on ...
 - a. Authority of the Bible
 - b. Conversion as the central experience of the Christian life
- B. George Whitefield
1. Calvinist, great evangelist
 2. Evangelical Calvinism
 - a. Rejected hyper-Calvinism
 - b. Overtly evangelistic (developed office of an evangelist)
 - c. Stressed “experimental religion”: Centrality of regeneration
 - d. Interdenominational
 3. Profound effect on Evangelical Anglicanism (A. Toplady, John Newton, J. C. Ryle)
- C. John Wesley
1. Arminian, great organizer
 2. Path to Conversion
 - a. “Holy club” or “Methodists” at Oxford
 - b. Missionary to Georgia (met Moravians): “I went to convert the Indians, but O! who shall convert me?”
 - c. “Heart strangely warmed” after hearing preface to Luther’s commentary on Romans read at a Moravian meeting
 3. Ministry
 - a. Methodism the English version of Pietism
 - b. Began to preach outdoors: “I look upon *all the world* as my parish.”
 - c. Methodist movement began in the Church of England but became a separate body at Wesley’s death
 - d. Reason for no revolution in England? (Halévy thesis)
- IV. Great Awakening (North America)
- A. Early stirrings: Theodore Frelinghuysen
- B. Theologian: Jonathan Edwards
1. Theologian of Revival: Identifying marks of true revival

2. New England revival: “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”
 3. Mission to Indians
- C. Preacher: George Whitefield
1. Height of Great Awakening (1740-42)
 2. Touched all regions, all groups
 - a. Birth of African American church
 - b. United believers across denominational lines
 - c. First “American,” colonies-wide movement