

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE TOWN OF TONAWANDA, NY
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“THY KINGDOM COME: THE WITNESS OF CHURCH HISTORY”

THE MODERN AGE: “Revival, Revolution, and to the Ends of the Earth” (2)

C. The Great Awakening (cont. from last study)

1. the beginnings - by the 1700's with deism on the rise and the enlightenment taking hold, the established Anglican Church and even the nonconformist churches such as the Baptists and Congregationalists lost the fervor of the previous century. Moderation was the order of the day and the violent religious conflicts were gladly a thing of the past. The most popular expression of this new moderation could be in a group known as the *Latitudarians*. John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury (1691-1694) argued against what he called “*religious enthusiasts*.” Fiery preaching and emotional excitement in worship was frowned upon. Instead, proper behavior and formal worship was what was most important. Men and women should work to be generous, humane, and tolerant, avoiding bigotry and fanaticism. During this time a typical English sermon was like a dry dissertation. There was little mention of sin or the cross. Instead, the goodness of God and the need to be respectful people in society was emphasized.

And yet, God raised up a number of fiery preachers in the British Isles and in the American colonies. Men like **Jonathan Edwards** (*Puritan/Congregational*) in Massachusetts, **Ebenezer** and **Ralph Erskine** (*Presbyterian*) in Scotland, **Howell Harris** (*Calvinist Methodist*) in **Wales**, and **George Whitefield** (*Anglican*) in England. Much of this evangelistic fervor could be traced back to the rise of Puritanism in 17th century England and its emphasis on the sinfulness of the human heart, the atoning work of Christ on the cross, and the need for personal conversion to be expressed by faith in the grace of God through Christ. However, unlike the Puritans these others that followed them sought to go beyond Puritanism by not wishing to establish an official Christian government and society. And yet, they were neither totally detached from politics like the Pietists tended to be. Still, the primary emphasis was to win souls.

2. John Wesley (1703 – 91)

a. the early years - John Wesley was born to an Anglican clergyman and his mother's father was a nonconformist minister in London. He was one of nineteen children. He was saved from a fire at the age of six after a neighbor spotted him in the second-floor window of his house. His mother instructed the children in the faith. At seventeen he attended Oxford University. While there he was impressed with the writings of the Church Fathers. He came to believe that one cannot be a “half-Christian.” So concerned with his own shortcomings, he made it a habit to catalog his own weaknesses and looked to find ways to overcome them. In 1727 Wesley was elected fellow of Lincoln College. Two years later he was ordained an Anglican priest and served as his father's assistant. He returned to Oxford to find His brother Charles alarmed at the spread of deism among the students. In response, Charles began a student devotional group for those who wanted to take their faith seriously. When his brother John joined, he put together a

plan of study and rule of life that included daily prayers from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, readings of Scripture, and regular attendance at Holy Communion. Students who didn't appreciate their religious fervor called the Wesley's and their group, "*Enthusiasm*" at Oxford Holy Club, "*Bible moths*," "*Methodists*," and the "*Reforming Club*." However, it was the "Methodist" label that stuck. Not only were spiritual discipline and daily devotions important, but also reaching out to others - the poor, the lost, and the imprisoned. One of the many students that joined the club was a young man named George Whitefield who would one day become a great revivalist preacher.

b. Georgia stint - despite his religious enthusiasm, John Wesley still lacked inner peace. A new opportunity for ministry arose when a friend, Dr. John Burton invited John and his brother Charles to the new colony of Georgia led by General James Oglethorpe. Charles would be the general's secretary and John the colony's chaplain. John especially looked forward to being able to preach the gospel to the Native Americans. In the third month of their voyage enroute to America, late in January of 1736 on a voyage to Savannah Georgia, Wesley was moved by the faith of Moravians on board the ship *Simmonds*. During a storm they remained calm and said that they were not afraid to die because of their faith. This greatly impressed Wesley. His time in Georgia proved to be fruitless both personally and professionally, as a woman he wanted to marry turned him down and he found the Native Americans to be a hopeless cause. On his way back to England he wrote, "*I went to America to convert the Indians, but, oh, who shall convert me?*"

c. return to London - already impressed by the Moravians, upon his return to London he met with Peter Bohler, a young Moravian preacher who convinced Wesley of his need for a new birth and a strong personal faith in Christ, both of which he said were essential for overcoming sin and attaining true holiness. Again, to be justified by faith meant also having an experience to know what it meant personally. Wesley wondered how this could happen. The answer came on March 24, 1738 when Wesley was walking down Aldersgate Street to visit a Bible society meeting when he heard a person reading Luther's preface to Romans. As he shared Luther's words on the change that comes in a person's heart when one comes to faith in Christ, Wesley said he felt a strange warming and at that moment he knew he had trusted in Christ alone for his salvation and that he had been set free from the law of sin and death (God's judgment). It was only a week earlier that John's brother Charles had come to renewed faith as he read Luther's commentary on Galatians with a friend. Charles said, "*I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ.*" Both men were now ready to be used by God in a mighty way. For at that point things changed for the Wesley brothers. Now they knew their purpose and had the motivation to fulfill it! Next study we will find out how they and others changed Britain and America in profound ways.

d. visit to Hernhutt - later in the summer of that year, John visited the Moravian community of *Hernhut* where he observed their spiritual life. He was impressed by their strong faith but also noted the spirit of self-righteousness among them. He also thought that a cult of personality had grown up around Count von Zinzendorf. For those reasons Wesley could not see himself as a Moravian. However, he did come to see from their example how important is the need to be "born again" experientially and how small groups should be central to any Christian ministry. He then returned to London where he resumed his preaching duties as an Anglican priest.

e. a tireless preacher with tremendous impact - things were status quo for Wesley, but upon reading preacher Jonathan Edwards accounts of the revival that was going on in Massachusetts, it struck Wesley that this could happen in England, too. Shortly afterwards he

received an invitation from George Whitefield, member of the *Holy Club* originally started by John's brother Charles. Whitefield was now ordained but not having much success in the traditional churches. So, he began to preach in the open fields of Bristol to coal miners who rarely had set foot in a church. His dramatic preaching style and riveting content moved the miners to tears and repentance. A great move of God had begun. Whitefield challenged Wesley to move to open air preaching. Wesley who was much more formal in style and approach could not imagine doing so. Even his brother Charles opposed him. But he stepped out in faith and began preaching, first to 3000 souls. As a result, many of those who heard came to place their faith in Christ. The Methodist revival had begun. Wesley's anxiety and insecurity left him. A firebrand for God was ignited! Edwards and Whitefield had shown Wesley that godly preaching produces godly fruit. He remembered the words of the Moravian preacher Bohler, "***preach faith till you have it and then because you have it, you will preach faith.***"

Wesley then took the gospel message to the poor. He then wrote, "***I look upon all the world as my parish; I judge it my bounden duty, to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation.***" He preached to those in jails, to those bound on vessels to Ireland, he preached everywhere. At one outdoor amphitheater he preached to 30,000. In his diary dated June 28, 1774, Wesley wrote that he had travelled on average 4500 miles per year – mostly on horseback! He faced rocks and stones, and hostile gangs in some quarters, but Wesley persisted, and the British Isles were changed forever. By the time of his death, statuettes and mementos of his likeness were produced in large numbers to meet public demand. God had used John Wesley mightily in changed English and American society for the better.

While John had been writing and preaching thousands of sermons, Charles focused on writing hymns. He is considered to be the most prolific and well-known writer of hymns in the English language, writing over 6500. Some of his most popular still sung today include, "*And Can It Be*", "*Christ the Lord Is Risen Today*", "*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*", "*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*", and "*Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending*".

f. the Arminian/Calvin debate – the Wesley's preferred the Arminian approach to understanding how the grace of God works in the life of a believer rather than John Calvin's approach (Reformed). Calvin held that God choose those who will be saved and those who will be damned. Those who believe do so because they are sovereignly touch by God's grace. Therefore, salvation was guaranteed but only truly knowable by God. A century earlier, the Dutch professor, Jacob Arminius (1560-1609), countered the extremes of Calvinist doctrine by arguing that human free will still plays a role in the outcome of one's salvation apart from God's choice. The Wesley's agreed. Their friend and fellow revivalist, George Whitefield, however, remained a Calvinist. This put pressure on their friendship with their friend and fellow revivalist, George Whitefield, but they agreed to disagree agreeably! Unfortunately, after their deaths, the Methodists divided into two camps – those who held to the Arminian position and those who believed in the Calvinist doctrine of unconditional election. While both brothers never left the Anglican Church, the movement they began could not be contained by it. Methodism would go on to become a major part of the Christian Church worldwide.

g. the Methodist legacy – Francis Asbury and others in the newly formed United States continued preaching the gospel and planting churches both in America and in the United Kingdom after the Wesley brothers passing. The Methodist movement grew and divided into a number of Methodist and Wesleyan denominations. These churches led to the "holiness movement" in the 19th century and in many ways were forerunners to the Pentecostal movement of

the 20th century. Wesley's vision and organizational plans for evangelism, church planting, and small group ministry leave not only a legacy but a template for further Kingdom minded ministry.

3. Revival in America

a. a brief history of the religious experience in the 13 Colonies

1. Virginia and the South – named for the “Virgin” Queen Elizabeth, the first attempts by her favorite explorer Sir Walter Ralieggh failed in 1585 (settlers returned to England) and 1587 (lost colony that disappeared). It wasn't until 1607 that 101 settlers came and settled at a river in the Hampton Roads region of today's state of Virginia. They called the new settlement, Jamestown after James I. The chaplain sought to evangelize the Native Americans and since most were Puritans from the Church of England they adhered to strict religious principles with worship required twice a day, the Lord's Day a day of worship and rest, and punishments fro profanity and immodest dress. As time went on and tobacco grew into a cash crop, slaves were imported to work the land (1619). From there plantations developed along with a wealthy aristocracy. Many of the poor white laborers were indentured servants. The Anglican Church was the state church, and this put pressure on any other religious groups like Quakers and Baptists. No attempt was made convert or baptize the slaves at this time because the settlers understood that believers could not own slaves. But when many slaves did come to Christ and were baptized a law was enacted in 1667 that said a slave's position did not change once baptized. When Maryland was established in 1632 many fled Virginia because religious freedom was guaranteed there in order to protect the Roman Catholic aristocracy who were granted a colony of their own by Charles I as he attempted to gain favor from Roman Catholics in England in his struggle with the Puritans. He granted Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore the rights of property and colonization in the region north of Virginia. The Carolinas were established in 1663 but its slow developed led the aristocrats and stockholders to decree religious freedom to foster immigration to that colony. What developed was the aristocracy tending to be Anglican and the lower classes Baptist and Quaker.

2. New England – the Pilgrims were religious dissidents who had fled England to Holland. They were able to receive the right to come to the Virginia colony which at that time was in need of laborers. In 1621, their ship, *the Mayflower*, landed too far north and they decided to settle in what they called Plymouth Plantation. There they established the *Mayflower Compact* where they committed to govern themselves but still under the authority of the king. Soon afterwards English Puritans organized the Massachusetts Bay Company where they would establish their own religious community free from the pressures Puritans face at home. Their leader famously said, that they were establishing a “city on a hill” to be a light to the whole world. A thousand set sail for the New Word and in the next few years a total of 10,000 arrived. This gave birth to the colonies of Connecticut and New Haven. When Oliver Cromwell was victorious over Charles I this stopped the flow of new settlers but immigration continued with the restoration of the monarchy in the 1660s. The Puritans governed their colony according to strict Christian principles. There were those led by Roger Williams who rebelled against the role of Christian law in civil law. He had arrived in 1631 and eventually led a church that wanted to be separate from Puritan control he was expelled. He took some of his congregation to a new area south of the Massachusetts

colony, purchased the land from the Natives and founded the colony of Providence. In it, religious freedom would be guaranteed. Williams believed that such freedom was need to true worship. Forced worship only weakens sincere worship. Another leader, prophet Anne Hutchinson was also expelled from the Massachusetts colony. She and 18 followers settled on an island near Providence and named it Portsmouth. These developments along with the experience of many in the other colonies all led to the support of religious freedom for the new USA when its constitution was ratified following the Revolution.

3. Mid-Atlantic States – New York – Dutch to English/Anglican; New Jersey – Puritan and Quaker (slaveholders) and Pennsylvania – Quaker William Penn establishes religious freedom for Pennsylvania and Delaware (which came out of PA in 1701).

b. the First Great Awakening – as noted earlier this began with the preaching of Jonathan Edwards in Northhampton, Massachusetts. Edwards, a staunch Calvinist, believed in the need for a personal conversion experience if one was to be sure of his salvation. At first, there were no notable responses but then in 1734, many people began responding to the message of repentance and faith. While some did so with emotional outbursts such as crying and fainting, most demonstrated their new devotion to Christ by changed lives. The movement then spread to Connecticut but after three years things died down.

Then George Whitefield, friend and colleague of the Wesley brothers visited New England and his preaching led to the same results. Edwards had invited Whitefield, an Anglican, to preach in his congregationalist church. This rekindled the revival fires as other pastors of various traditions – Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists all brought new zeal to their pulpits. As a result, thousands came to Christ in a personal way, some weeping in repentance for their sins, others shouting for joy, and still others were so overwhelmed they even fainted. Of course, there were those in the churches who opposed what was happening, mainly over the fact that they believed it was undermining the solemnity of worship as well as that it was too emotional. But the sermons preached by Edwards, Whitefield, and others were not simply emotional speeches, they were messages grounded in sound doctrine, not meant to replace serious worship and more subdued devotion.

While this revival movement greatly influenced American religious life, it also had a political impact in that it galvanized the American colonies' desire for independence. Since the revival eventually penetrated all thirteen of the colonies, it provided a unifying as well as a spiritual basis for the important ideas that human rights are derived from God and that all human government must be under God's authority first.

c. the Second Great Awakening – following the American Revolution (1776-1783) church attendance had dropped to around 5-10%. The challenged to reach the ever-growing new nation especially as more people moved west did not go unnoticed by many leaders and laity in the Protestant churches. In the 1790's a new awakening begin again in New England. While it did not have nearly the number of emotional expressions as its predecessor had fifty years earlier, many were moved to take seriously their commitment to Christ. This especially affected the educated and theologians of the day, including, Timothy Dwight, a grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and president of Yale University.

The result of the first phase of the awakening was the creation of several societies for the spread of the gospel. College students were the ones who formed the *American Board of the Commissioners for Foreign Missions* in 1810. Six years later the *American Bible Society* was founded. Many Baptist congregations, set aside their strident congregationalism to form a General Convention for the support of Baptist missionaries around the world, most famous at the time being Adoniram Judson. In addition, many other societies for evangelism and mission were formed especially as the awakening spread as well as those to address societal ills like slavery (*American Colonization Society*) and alcohol abuse (*American Society for the Promotion of Temperance* (1826)). In local churches, women's missionary societies appeared, some of which would later become leading feminist organizations by the end of the century.

However, as this revival spread to the south and west, it became less intellectual and more emotional. Preachers began to set up what were called "Camp meetings" where people could gather and hear the Word of God preached. These camp meetings became also known as revival meetings. The Cane Ridge Revival of 1801 in Kentucky was a notable example. The local Presbyterian pastor arranged for the event and invited people from all over the region. Thousands came. Several Baptist and Methodist pastors were also present to help preach. The event lasted one week and the response was overwhelming. Some wept, others laughed uncontrollably, still others trembled, some ran about, and some even barked! Not all were there for the right reasons. For there was also gambling, carousing, and drinking going on. One critic of event later declared that at Cane Ridge as many souls were conceived as were saved.

The Presbyterian Church began to frown on the idea of their clergy being a part, mainly due to the emotionalism involved but the Methodists and Baptists thought this approach was very effective in getting the gospel out to those on the frontier. So, would have camp meetings from time to time and revivals would often break out. They also kept the message of the gospel simple and straight forward. In addition, they often used preachers with little or no education. The Methodists used lay preachers, also called circuit riders as they rode on horseback from settlement to settlement. The Baptists made use of farmers and other tradesmen who could both pastor and work a trade for support. This helped them achieve rapid growth and was a key to the Second Great Awakening's success. It also lessened the divide between ethnic and religious groups as many of the newly saved Baptists and Methodists were German ex-Lutherans, Scottish ex-Presbyterians, and Irish ex-Catholics. By the middle of the 19th century (1850) Methodists and Baptists were the largest Protestant denominations in the country.

III. The Age of Revolution and Missions

A. A Tale of Two Revolutions

I. American Revolution (1776-1783) – grounded in the notion that all men are created to be free and given certain rights by their Creator (God), the American Revolution was unique in human history in that it set the foundation for a representative government by virtue of the rights God granted rather than the rights government granted. Therefore, all government is accountable to God and as such the rights of the governed are guaranteed by God not by man. This set the stage for the *Bill of Rights* which established the freedoms of speech, assembly, religion, and the right to bear arms. No denomination or religion would be favored by the state.

However, this did not mean that God and belief in God should be removed from state sanctioned functions and deliberations. It was “*separation of Church from State*” (even though those words are not in the Constitution), *not* God from state. It is *freedom of religion*, NOT *freedom from religion*.

Such a foundation provided the framework for future acknowledgment that the definition of all men includes women and slaves, thereby setting the stage for the eventually abolition of slavery. The American Revolution was a revolution of colonies that already enjoyed certain freedoms by virtue of their creation and their distance from Great Britain. This coupled with a strong sense of destiny and a biblical worldview that developed from the Great Awakening enabled the American Revolution to be successful. Another revolution would take place less than a decade following the end of the American Revolution in France. Unfortunately, it would neither be as successful or effective as its predecessor.

2. French Revolution (1789-1799) over the centuries the French citizenry came to be divided between three primary classes of people (called “estates”). These were the nobles, the clergy, and the common people – the *Estates-General*. Louis XVI had bankrupted the country in part due to supporting the Americans during their Revolution. He also falsified the books hiding the true extent of the damage. At the same time while the clergy class were living in luxury, there had been a number of bad harvests. Many of the common people were going hungry. In addition, the more radical (free-thinking) intellectuals were buoyed by the success of the American Revolution. Across French society calls came for reform and new rights.

In 1789 the king tried to address the issue by convening the Estates-General, a national assembly representing the three estates. Immediately conflict arose over representation. The commoners, even though more numerous, were only given one vote – the same as the nobles and clergy. So, they would be out vote two to one. The king would not give in and so the commoners broke away from *the Estates-General* to form their own National Assembly. Things went from bad to worse and on July 14, 1789 and enraged Parisian mob stormed the Bastille (a prison) setting free the few political prisoners that were there. But the spark had been lit. The king, nobility and clergy were now all in the cross hairs of the National Assembly. The king and his queen eventually lost their heads. Many nobles and clergy were guillotined or killed by other ways.

The Assembly then passed the “*Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*” which guaranteed the natural rights of man – liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression – were sacred and inalienable. It established men’s right to express their opinions freely, protected the rights of the accused, and declared France was not the private property of its monarchs, but a sovereign nation owned by its people. But these enlightened and freedom loving laws were quickly eclipsed by elements of the revolution that had another agenda. They wanted to establish a secular, anti-religious regime. This partly was precipitated by the fact that the Assembly eliminated all control of the Catholic Church in France by the Pope. This action split the country in two.

The secularists pursued a bloody purge that resulted in tens of thousands of deaths.. Eventually they were overthrown. This led to the takeover of France by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1801 who was able to restore order and work out an agreement with the pope – the Concordant of 1801 which restored the Roman Catholic Church to special status but it would no longer be officially sanctioned by the government. This was the final nail in the coffin for the Pope never to be able to exert political power over a nation again. Sadly, Napoleon then went on to make war

with the rest of Europe. What followed were the Napoleonic Wars that would take Europe into a long and bloody conflict that would not end until Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, Belgium in 1815.

B. The Industrial Revolution (1760-1840) – was a revolution of technology creating the ability to mass produce virtually every item needed to live. It led to the creation of factories and a mass movement from the country to the cities. Buildings, ships, trains, tractors, military hardware all became larger and more powerful. Originally, water and wind were the primary sources of energy. That changed first with the modern steam piston engine developed in the late 16th and early 17th century which led to the steam boat and then later to the internal combustion engine led to further growth and development into the 20th century and the use of fossil fuels. This in turn fueled further colonization and seeking of control of lands in Africa and Asia (China, Japan, Korea, etc.) as European powers (principally Great Britain, France, and Germany) competed for resources.

However, the cradle of the Industrial Revolution was England. It enabled the British Empire to become the most populous and largest empire in human history. By the end of the 19th century, the saying "*the sun never sets on the British Empire*" was literally true!" Like any revolution, the rapid and industrial growth of the industrial Revolution led to many changes in society, which in turn, caused cracks in the fabric of traditional English society and led to the working class to call for reforms due to unsafe, unsanitary, and underpaid working conditions. As cities grew both in the UK and USA the problems of housing and crime also reared their ugly head. Faced with these new challenges, the churches in Great Britain set out to tackle these societal ills in two main ways. We will see how in our next study as well as look at how the Church handled the mission of evangelizing the lost in the oversea territories and colonies of the British Empire.