

An Exemplary Life: John Wesley (1703-1791) Early Life

Son of High Church Anglicans Samuel Wesley (1662-1735) Susannah Wesley (1669-1742)

Nurtured Piety & High Expectations

Education

1720: Entered Christ Church, Oxford

1726: Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford

1727: M.A.

Early Ministry

1725: Ordained deacon

1727-1729: Curate, St. Andrew's, Epworth

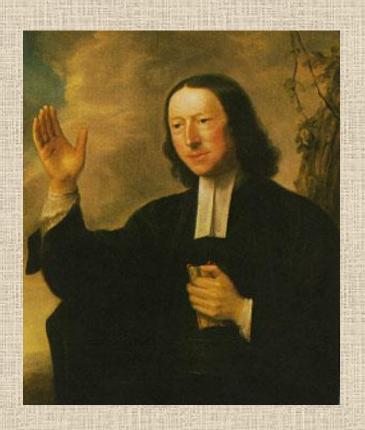
1728: Ordained priest

1729: Return to Oxford and the Holy Club

1735-1738:

SPG missionary to Georgia

Encounters with the Moravians



An Exemplary Life: John Wesley (1703-1791) Methodist Revival

Inception

May 1738: Aldersgate & Fetter Lane Society

Summer 1738: Herrnhut, Germany

September 1738:

Return to England

Poor reception in Anglican pulpits

May 1739:

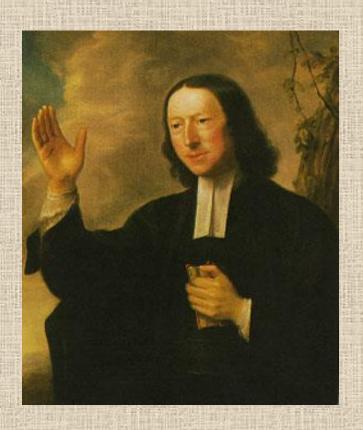
Whitefield: open-air preaching in Bristol

Wesley persuaded to assist; 'converted'

1740:

Break with Moravians

Stillness/quietism



An Exemplary Life: John Wesley (1703-1791) First Decade (1739-1749)

Most decisive period Formation of 'United Societies':

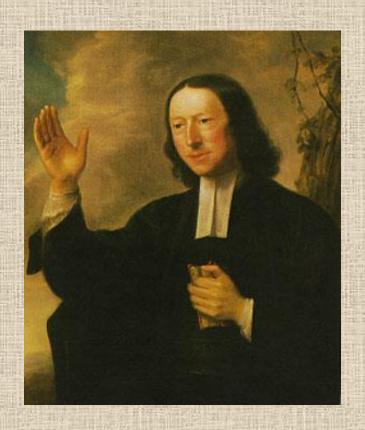
'rule of life'

Association, nurture, discipline, care, service Persistence: organization & (lay) preachers 'Sermonic theology': doctrine for Societies Tensions:

Moravians: faith & good works

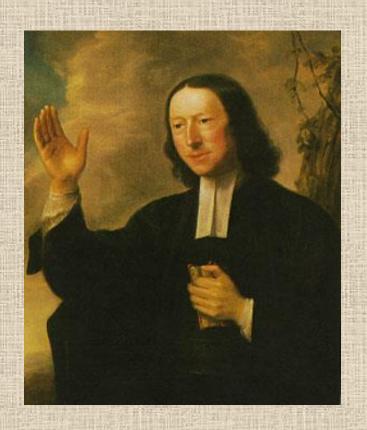
Calvinists: predestination

Church of England: irregularities; enthusiasm



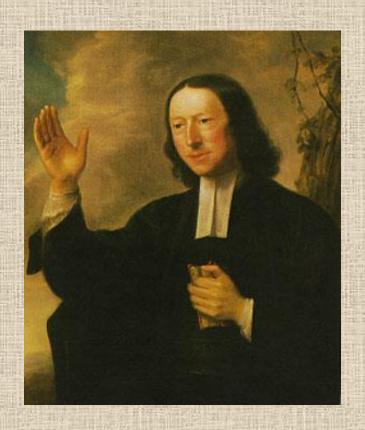
An Exemplary Life: John Wesley (1703-1791) Second Decade (1749-1759) 'Grounded' in the Church of England 'Special messenger' & 'special assistants' Resists calls for separation Preaching houses under Act of Toleration John stays the course Unique perspective? Idiosyncratic balance? John's vision Not shared by C of E Not shared by 'special assistants'

Not shared by Charles



An Exemplary Life: John Wesley (1703-1791) Third Decade (1759-1769) Growing, Consolidating, Winning Respect Strained relationship with C of E Tensions within Methodism **Professing Christian Perfection** Guarding against 'enthusiasm' Last 'Twenty' Years (1770-1791) **Doctrinal Controversies** American Independence American Methodism American nation

Ministerially active until death



An Exemplary Life: John Wesley (1703-1791)
Relationship to Anglicanism
Development of Movement

Not 'programmatic'

'Responsive'

Eclectic, nimble, provisional, reasoned Pragmatic:

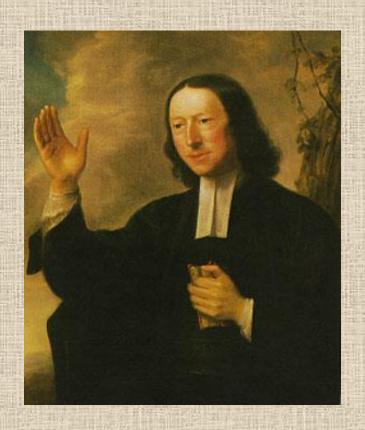
Unable to recruit many Anglican clergy Lay preachers

Male

Female (eventually)

Trustees & preaching houses

Liturgical alternatives



An Exemplary Life: John Wesley (1703-1791)
Consequences, Intended & Otherwise
('Ecumenical') Admission:

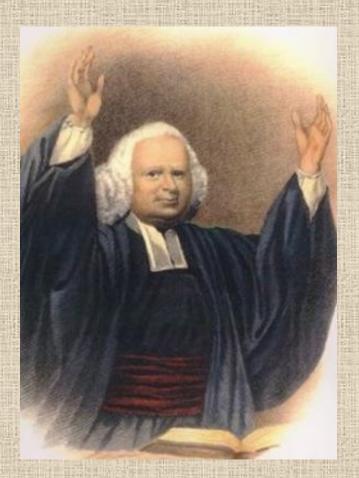
"a desire to flee from the wrath to come ..."
"... and to be saved from their sins"

Doctrinal focus:

Not justification by faith alone
Sanctified holiness: 'Christian Perfection'
Non-Separation Strained
Anglican reluctance/hostility

'Ecumenical' Pragmatism
Mixing Conformists & Nonconformists
Legal organization v. Sacraments
Ordinations, real & imagined
'Experience'

18th Century Anglicanism and the **Great Awakening**



18th Century America: The Great Awakening Anglicans Abroad: Continuing Struggles An episcopal Church without Bishops No confirmations No ordinations Limited governance Limited discipline Challenges & Successes of Experimentalism Organization of vestries (esp. Virginia) Growth without Establishment (esp. NE) George Whitefield in America (1740-1741) Second visit to Colonies (Savannah) Goes north to New England; works south 45 days in New England 2 months in Mid-Atlantic (Philly & NYC)

South through MD, VA, NC, SC, to GA Large crowds (up to 15,000)

18th Century Anglicanism and the **Great Awakening**



18th Century America: The Great Awakening George Whitefield in America (1740-1741) 'Ecumenical':

Congregationalist: Jonathan Edwards

Presbyterian: Gilbert Tennant

Reformed: Theodore Frelinghuysen

Whitefield initially celebrated by Anglicans

Welcomed into pulpits

Upon hearing him, parishes had misgivings!

Extemporaneous prayer

Denied necessity of apostolic succession

Strife: Whitefield & American Anglicans

Closing of doors

Commissary Alexander Garden

Refused Whitefield communion

Attempted to suspend him

Relatively good terms in Virginia

Whitefield capitalizes on the controversy

If given access to a pulpit

Attacked Anglican doctrine

Denounced bishops

If denied, complained of persecution



18th Century America: The Great Awakening
George Whitefield in America (1740-1741)
Religious Affections v. Reason
Religious Affections ('Authenticity')
Sentiment
Extemporaneity in prayer, preaching
Understanding/Reason ('Artifice')
Intellectual conviction
Studious cultivation



18th Century America: The Great Awakening
Taking Sides in the Great Awakening
New Side/New Light v. Old Side/Old Light
Divided loyalties

Congregationalists Presbyterians

Resolutely "Old Side": Anglicans
Book of Common Prayer
Anglican style of Covenant Theology
Apostolic succession
Baptismal regeneration

Unintended Outcomes in New England
Anglican alternative to prolonged revivalism
Timothy Cutler: "Enthusiasm has had a long
run ... so that many are tired of it, and if the
Door were open would take refuge in our
church from Error and Disorder."

Anglican Education: Anti-Awakening
Not explicitly Anglican colleges
Strong influence on new foundations
King's College (Columbia University)
College of Philadelphia (Penn)



18th Century America: The Great Awakening Later Developments

Whitefield's Subsequent Tours Fifth (1754-1755); Sixth (1763-1765)

New openness among younger Anglicans

Clergy

Laity

Whitefield's diminished anti-Anglicanism

"New birth" doctrines

No longer shockingly new

More routinized; increasingly rationalized

Changes

Not to liturgy or doctrine

Absorption of sentimentality, experience

Aesthetics:

Church architecture: Pulpits

Church music: New hymnodies



18th Century America: The Great Awakening Taking Stock of 18th Century Revivalism Itinerancy and the Parish System

A Response

'Solutions'

Addressed needs

A Nuisance

'Interference'

Irregularities

Parish priest could easily feel "undermined"

Itinerants sometimes contributed to this

Divide: alive/dead; awakened/asleep

'Special' ministry of itinerants

Open-Air Preaching

Not unprecedented, but out of use & fashion Wesley

Initial discomfort

'Pragmatic' change of heart

Theological justification: Jesus' own ministry

Inadvertent message:

Revivalists are like Jesus

Churchmen are like...



18th Century America: The Great Awakening Taking Stock of 18th Century Revivalism

Ministry to the Marginalized

In truth, *not* exclusive province of revivalists Maybe *especially* their venue

Even before Aldersgate, Wesley committed

Theological Content

Repentance:

Emphasis on subjective conviction Feelings of one's sinfulness & need Faith:

Turning to God in need

No self-justification, excuses, delay, sloth

Justification

Objective theological counterpart

To subjective experience of spiritual rebirth

Sanctification

The Christian's continued growth in grace

Received, not achieved

Christian Perfection = Perfection in Love



18th Century America: The Great Awakening Taking Stock of 18th Century Revivalism Great Contributions

Personal Faith:

Conversion

Assurance of salvation

Holiness of life

Improvement of life

Social Religion:

Responsibility not only for self

But for neighbor, for society

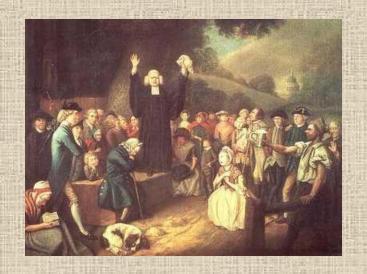
Addressed many needs of the era

Energized laity; expanded Christian ministry

Hymnody!

Criticized shallow C of E practice

Conscience, Tolerance, & Ecumenism



18th Century America: The Great Awakening Taking Stock of 18th Century Revivalism

Liabilities

Subjectivism

Voluntarism

Criticism, Cynicism, Separatism,

Sectarianism

Persuasion & Its Limits

Autocracy, 'Cults of Personality'

Optimism, Confidence

Experience

Begins to trump doctrine

Practice tended to superficiality