

Welcome to Week 2

- As you enter class this week please
 - Get yourself some snacks and coffee
 - Fill out a name tag and introduce yourself to others at the table
 - Read through the primary sources for this week.

Christian History in America

Visions, Realities, and Turning
Points

Class 2: The Surprising Work of
God:

The Great Awakening and the
Emergence of Evangelicalism

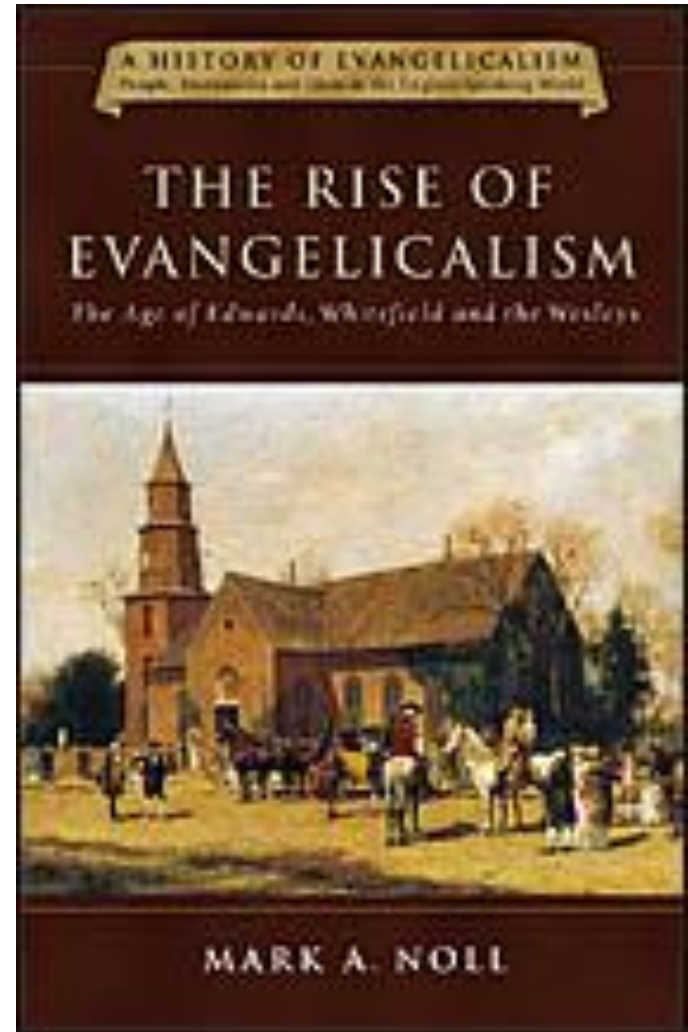
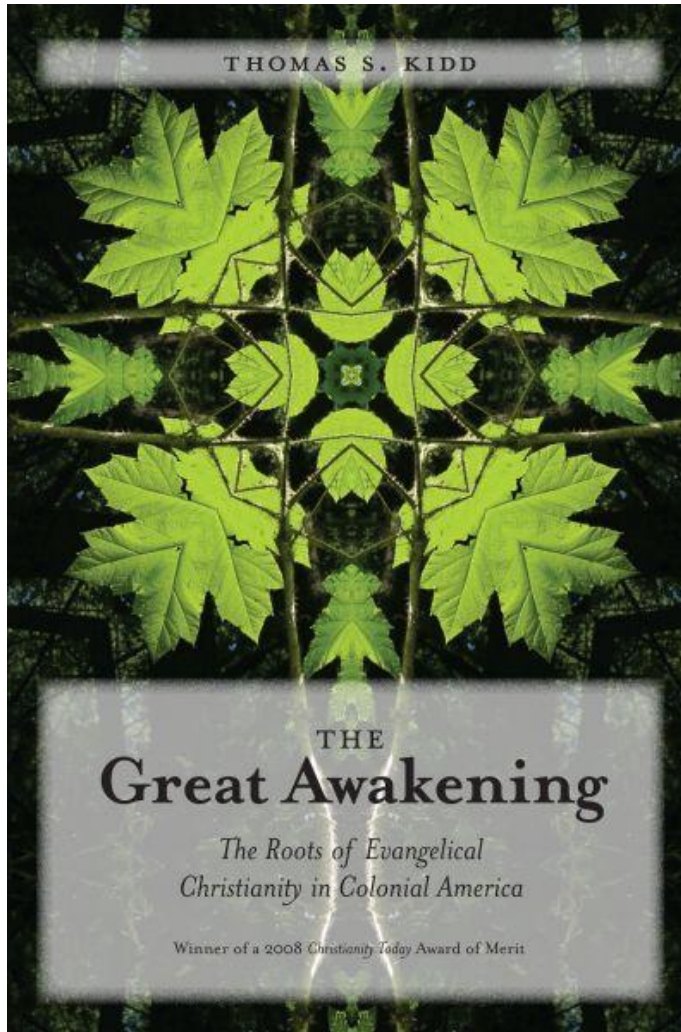
Organizational Information

- Please fill out Course Registration forms.
- Information about Handouts and Videos
 - <http://www.grace.org/adulthooddiscipleship>
- Contact information for Questions –
thcastner@comcast.net
- Index Cards: There are index cards located on each table. If you have specific questions about American Christian History that you want to make sure are answered please be sure to write down your questions and then leave them on the table.

Class 2 Goals

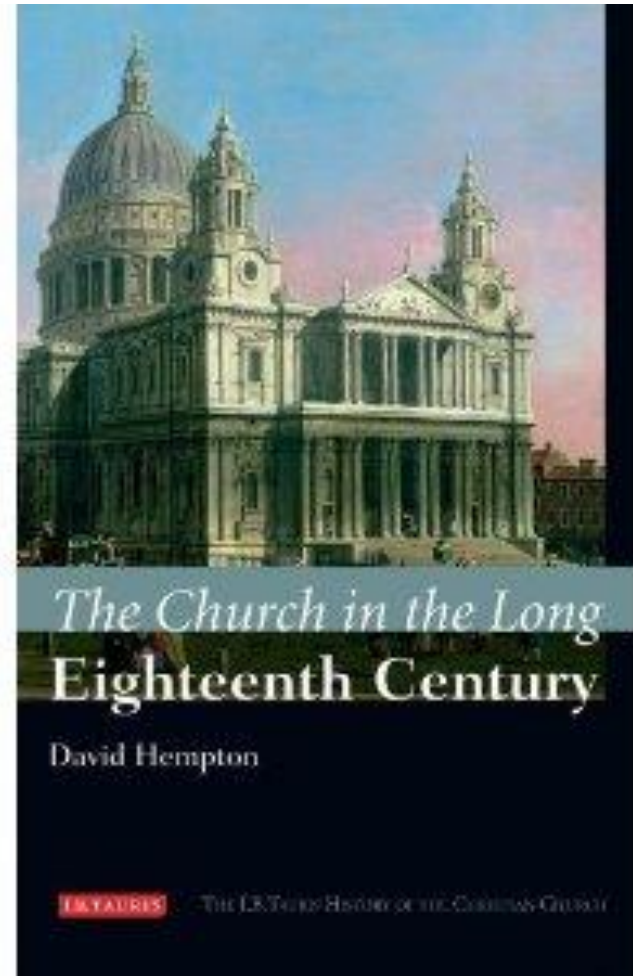
- Understand the origins, nature, and results of the Great Awakening.
- Examine the lives and influences of some of the major individuals associated with the Great Awakening.
- Explore the strengths and weaknesses of the particular form of Evangelicalism that emerged out of the Great Awakening.

Suggested Readings



And Coming Soon . . .

- David Hempton's forthcoming work on the Church in the 18th century.
- Contains significant information of the Great Awakening in a global context.
- To be released January 2012.



Opening Question:

- When thinking about religious revivals; what do you hope will emerge out of a revival? What do you fear might emerge out of a revival?

Precursors to the Awakening

- Trans-Atlantic Revival Tradition
- Covenant Renewals in New England
- Holy Fairs in Scotland
 - Open air celebrations of the Lord's Supper
- Pietism Associated with German Moravians
 - Heavy emphasis on emotion over reason in responding to God

Phase 1 1734-1735

- Jonathan Edwards – pastor of the Northampton Church
 - Grandson of Solomon Stoddard
- After the death of a young man – he encouraged people to clean up their lives – avoid idle talk and frolicking
- Soon the entire community experienced profound religious excitement and spread in the Connecticut River Valley.
- There were reports of uncontrolled laughing and weeping, as well as miraculous healings.
- Phase 1 ended when Joseph Hawley, Edward's uncle, committed suicide.

The Conversion Experience

- People become convinced of their complete sinfulness.
- Extended period of grief and despair.
- Awareness of God's grace, mercy, and peace marked the end of the conversion.

The Conversion of Hannah Heaton

. . . I remember in the lot as I went I saw strawberries and these thoughts passed through my mind. "I may as well go to picking strawberries now as not, it's no matter what I do, it's a gone case with me. I fear I have committed the unpardonable sin and now [am] hardened." But as I was going home I considered at last. I turned and went to the meeting. Soon after meeting began the power of God came down. Many were crying out [on] the other side of the room, "What shall I do to be saved?" I was immediately moved to press through the multitude and went to them. A great melting of soul came over me. I wept bitterly and pled hard for mercy, mercy. Now I was brought to view the justice of God due to me for my sin. It made me tremble, my knees smote together, then I thought of Belshazzar when he saw the hand writing against him. It seemed to me I was sinking down into hell. I thought the floor I stood on gave way, and I was just going, but then I began to resign, and as I resigned, my distress began to go off till I was perfectly easy, quiet and calm. I could say, "Lord, it is just if I sink into hell." I felt for a few moments like a creature dead. I was nothing, I could do nothing, nor I desired nothing.

Heaton Conversion 2

I had not so much room say “seek and you shall find, come to me all you that are weary and and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” I began to feel a thirsting after Christ, and began to beg for mercy, free mercy for Jesus’s sake. I thought I saw Jesus with the eyes of my soul stand up in heaven. A lovely god-man with his arms open, ready to receive me, his face was full of smiles, he looked white and ruddy and was just such a savior as my soul wanted, every way suitable for me. Oh how it melted my heart to think he had been willing all this while to save me, but I was not willing, which I never believed before now. I cried from the very heart to think what a tender-hearted savior I had been refusing. How often I turned a deaf ear to his gracious calls and invitations. All that had kept me from him was my will. Jesus appeared altogether lovely to me now. My heart went out with love and thankfulness and admiration. I cried “why me Lord? And leave so many?” Oh what a fullness was there in Christ for others if they would come and give up their all to him. I went about the room and invited people to come to him.

Questions Raised by the Awakening

- Emotion vs. Reason
- The interpretation of ecstatic religious emotions and behaviors
- Does religion support the established order, or challenge established hierarchies?
- What is the relative importance of formal education vs. anointing of the spirit for ministers?
- How do you distinguish between genuine and counterfeit works of the Spirit?

Responses to the Awakening

- The Traditional View
 - Old Lights – Rational opponents of the Great Awakening
 - New Lights – Emotional/enthusiastic supporters of the Awakening
- The More Recent View – Three Approaches
 - Anti-Revivalists like Charles Chauncy saw the awakening as overly emotional fits of madness that brought no permanent benefits.
 - Moderate Evangelicals like Jonathan Edwards supported the revival but opposed its “emotional excesses.”
 - Radical Evangelicals like Tennent and Davenport supported the revival, attacked traditional ministers as “unconverted” and supported female, and enslaved exhorters and preachers and the “spiritual” equality of all people.

George Whitefield

- The most important revivalist of the Great Awakening
- Known for his dramatic, emotional style, piercing (crossed) eyes, stage actor's voice and extemporaneous preaching.
- Gave seven preaching tours of the colonies accompanied by advanced press coverage
- Preached to over 20,000 in Boston (more than the population of the city)

Spiritual Travels of Nathan Cole

And when we came within about half a mile or a mile of the Road that comes down from Hartford Weathersfield and Stepney to Middletown; on high land I saw before me a Cloud or fogg rising; I first thought it came from the great River, but as I came nearer the Road, I heard a noise something like a low rumbling thunder and presently found it was the noise of Horses feet coming down the Road and this Cloud was a Cloud of dust made by the Horses feet; it arose some Rods into the air over the tops of Hills and trees and when I came within about 20 rods of the Road, I could see men and horses Sliping along in the Cloud like shadows and as I drew nearer it seemed like a steady Stream of horses and their riders, scarcely a horse more than his length behind another, all of a Lather and foam with sweat, their breath rolling out of their nostrils every Jump; every horse seemed to go with all his might to carry his rider to hear news from heaven for the saving of Souls, it made me tremble to see the Sight, how the world was in a Struggle; I found a Vacance between two horses to Slip in mine and my Wife said law our Cloaths will be all spoiled see how they look, for they were so Covered with dust, that they looked almost all of a Colour Coats, hats, Shirts, and horses.

We went down in the Stream but heard no man speak a word all the way for 3 miles but every one pressing forward in great haste and when we got to Middletown old meeting house there was a great Multitude it was said to be 3 or 4000 of people Assembled together; we dismounted and shook off our Dust; and the ministers were then Coming to the meeting house; I turned and looked towards the Great River and saw the ferry boats Running swift backward and forward bringing over loads of people and the Oars Rowed nimble and quick; every thing men horses and boats seemed to be Struggling for life; The land and banks over the river looked black with people and horses all along the 12 miles I saw no man at work in his field, but all seemed to be gone.

When I saw Mr Whitfield come upon the Scaffold he Lookt almost angelical; a young, Slim, slender, youth before some thousands of people with a bold undaunted Countenance, and my hearing how God was with him every where as he came along it Solemnized my mind; and put me into a trembling fear before he began to preach; for he looked as if he was Cloathed with authority from the Great God; [6] and a sweet sollome solemnity sat upon his brow And my hearing him preach, gave me a heart wound; By Gods blessing: my old Foundation was broken up, and I saw that my righteousness would not save me; then I was convinced of the doctrine of Election: and went right to quarrelling with God about it; because that all I could do would not save me; and he had decreed from Eternity who should be saved and who not

The Strange Story of James Davenport

- Yale trained minister in Long Island
- Influenced by the preaching of George Whitefield
- Went on emotional preaching tours through New England accusing local ministers of being unsaved.
- Arrested and expelled from Connecticut for violating a ban on itinerant ministers and libeling ministers.
- Returned to Connecticut for a burning of books by unconverted ministers and overly ornamental clothing.
- Stopped when he threw his own trousers on the fire.
- Later claimed he confessed of excessive emotionalism and ended his career as a moderate Evangelical in New Jersey.

For Table Discussion

- Do you believe there was a danger of excessive enthusiasm and emotionalism in the Great Awakening?
- Consider the conversion of Hannah Heaton.
- Read through the other documents.
- Is Edwards provoking too much fear in “*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*”?
- What do you think about the reactions of Edwards and the Harvard Professors to some of the “excesses” of the Awakening?
- Are they in danger of quenching the work of the spirit?

Davenport's Converts

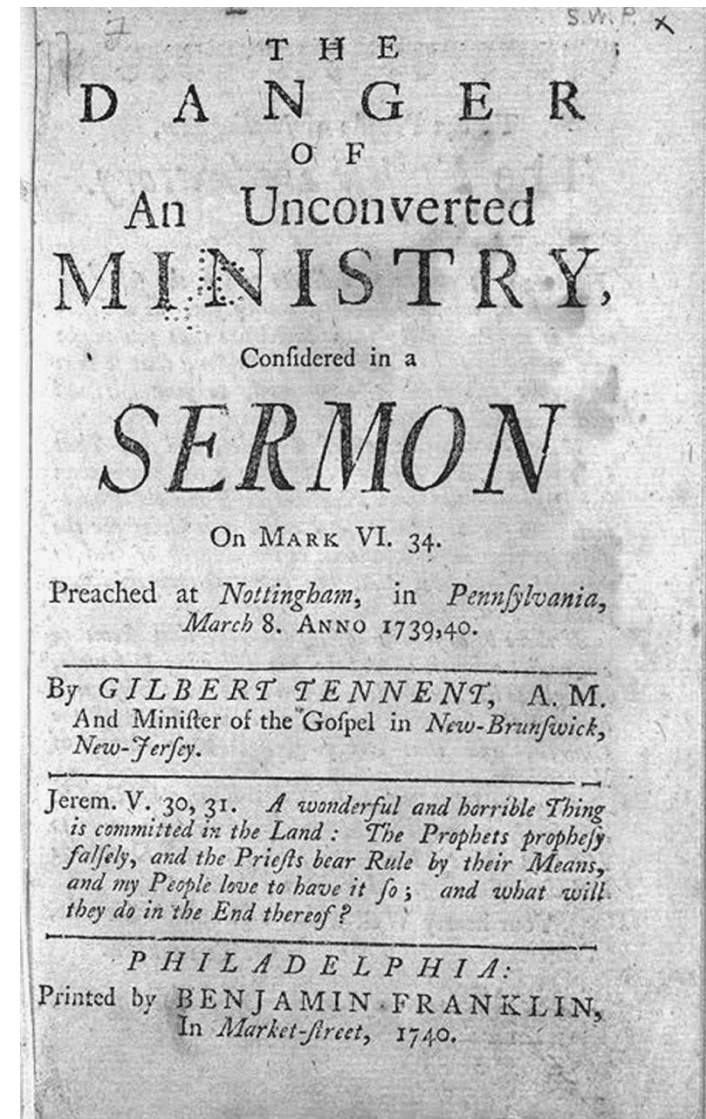
- Samson Occom – Most famous Native American convert of the Awakening.
 - Served as a minister and teacher to the Montauks on Long Island.
 - Went on missionary tours to the Oneidas in New York.
 - Helped Eleazar Wheelock raise money for Native Missions and Dartmouth College
- Isaac Backus
 - Became a Congregational and then Baptist Minister
 - Leader of the Warren Baptist Association and tireless crusader for greater freedom for Baptists in New England and the disestablishment of Congregational Churches.

Jonathan Edwards

- Pastor in Northampton
- Most important defender of the Great Awakening and American Theologian.
- Presided over two waves of revivals in Northampton.
- Fired for trying to abandon the “half-way covenant”
- Ministered to Native Americans in Stockbridge and then died as President of Princeton.

Gilbert Tennent

- Exponent of the more radical aspects of the Awakening.
- Published a sermon *The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry*.
- Eventually repented of his more radical views and turned moderate.



Charles Chauncy

- Prominent minister at Boston's Old Brick Church.
- Encouraged them to adopt the halfway covenant and other liberalizing trends.
- Opposed the Awakening for excessive emotionalism and anti-intellectualism.
- Prominent supporter of the patriot cause in the Revolution.
- Seen as a forerunner of the Unitarian movement.

Waves of Revival

- 1740-1743 – The major phase of the revival in New England accompanied by significant itinerant preaching and new converts and founding new churches.
- 1739-1745 – Significant revivalism took place in the Middle Colonies around the preaching of Whitefield and the Tennent family. Led to a split in the Presbyterian churches.
- 1748-1780s – Waves of revivals hit the Southern colonies associated with the ministry of Samuel Davies. Included dramatic growth of Baptist and then Methodist churches and would eventually spill over into the Second Great Awakening.

Results of the Awakening

- A Proliferation of Colleges
 - Dartmouth, Princeton, Rutgers, Brown
- Planting of new churches and splits within new churches.
 - Particular growth of Baptist and later Methodist churches
- Transfer of Spiritual Authority from Ministers to Congregations
- Greater Questions of Established authority
 - Perhaps Contributing to the American Revolution
- The Establishment of an Evangelical Revivalist Tradition that continues to the present day.