

Revivals And Church History :: Revival in North Carolina**Revival in North Carolina - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/7/23 20:21**

North Carolina, located in the Bible belt is full of religious convictions. I was pausing and thinking recently, does anybody know of any genuine revival that has occurred in the history of North Carolina? I can't say in my readings I've come across anything that talks of there having been a revival.

Re: Revival in North Carolina - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/7/23 21:45

I'm not well versed in revival history, but no, I know of no N.C. revival.

Once my pastor was talking about the "state church" phenomena (i.e. state church = dead church), and commented that, while we have no "official" state church in this country, a similar situation arose in some parts. He quoted a man who (I think) was from one of the Carolinas as saying something to the effect of "Everyone raised here is a Christian unless he's been tampered with."

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/7/23 21:52**The Sandy Creek Revival**

The first revival in America's South began in a small church in the North Carolina backwoods

"A surprising work of God," said Jonathan Edwards of the Great Awakening. In the early 1700s, thousands of Americans were touched, convicted, and converted by the moving of God's Spirit. The Reformed denominations (Presbyterian, Congregational, and Dutch Reformed) found themselves swept along in a mighty outpouring of God's saving grace. Probably most Christians are familiar with this "surprising work," but many are unaware of another phase of that same revival. This other phase occurred not in the North, but in the South; not among the Reformed, but among the Sandy Creek Baptists of North Carolina.

The man responsible for carrying the fervor of the Great Awakening to the South, Shubal Stearns, was among those influenced by George Whitefield, the powerful English evangelist of New England's Great Awakening. Stearns was born in Boston in 1706. After conversion to Christ around 1740, he became a minister, first with the Separates, then with the Baptists. In 1754, God called Stearns from his home in Connecticut to fields farther south. He labored for a short time in Virginia, then moved to Sandy Creek, North Carolina.

North Carolina's piedmont area in the middle of the eighteenth century was part of America's wild frontier. The people, though nominally Anglican, were irreligious and coarse. Marriages were often little more than informal agreements. Backwoods North Carolina was a spiritual as well as a physical wilderness, and into this religiously barren land came Stearns and his family.

The small church at Sandy Creek began with 16 members, half of whom were Stearns's own family. The New England minister began to preach, and God's Spirit began to move in North Carolina as He had in Massachusetts. Eighteenth-century Baptist historian Morgan Edwards describes Stearns as a man and a preacher:

Mr. Stearns was but a little man, but of good natural parts, and sound judgment. Of learning he had but a small share, yet was pretty well acquainted with books. His voice was musical and strong, which he managed in such a manner, as once while to make soft impressions on the heart . . . and anon to shake the nerves, and to throw the animal system into tumults and perturbations. His character was indisputably good, both as a man, a Christian, and a preacher.

A noted characteristic of Shubal Stearns was his penetrating gaze. One man, Tidance Lane, describes his salvation under Stearns. "He fixed his eyes upon me immediately, which made me feel in such a manner as I never felt before." Burdened with conviction, Lane sought relief in walking around, trying to leave, and even shaking hands with the preacher, but all was in vain. When Stearns finally began to preach, Lane's resistance collapsed.

Another story, that of Elnathan Davis, illustrates the convicting power of Stearns's preaching. Davis and some of his rou

gh friends attended a baptism conducted by Stearns. Their interest was hardly spiritual; the subject of baptism was a very large man, while the preacher was rather small, so the idlers half-expected and hoped to see one or the other drown. As Davis drew near, he heard the little minister preaching, and he fell under conviction. He fled back to his companions and said, "There is a trembling and crying spirit among them, but whether it be the spirit of God or the devil I don't know; if it be the devil, the devil go with them, for I will never more venture myself among them!" His resolve melted, however, as God worked in his heart. Davis returned to the preaching, eventually being converted and later replacing Stearns, after the latter's death, as the most influential minister in the Sandy Creek region.

The work in North Carolina prospered. In a short time, the Sandy Creek church swelled from 16 members to over 600. Our day of "super-churches" diminishes for us the impact of this growth, but consider that in the 1700s there were no modern means of transportation or good roads. The people were not concentrated in large cities, but were scattered over the countryside, having to travel difficult miles to attend services. Even so, the Sandy Creek church's impact was not limited to its own members. Regarding its influence, Morgan Edwards writes: "From this Zion went forth the word, and great was the company of them that published it; it . . . had spread branches westward as far as the great river Mississippi; southward as far as Georgia; eastward to the sea and Chesapeake Bay; and northward to the waters of the Potomac; it . . . is become the mother, grandmother, and great grandmother to 42 churches from which sprang 125 ministers."

The churches that grew out of Stearns's ministry banded together in 1758 as the Sandy Creek Baptist Association. This group, under Stearns's benevolent but firm leadership, sought to advance God's work throughout the southern colonies. Association meetings were marked by prayer, fasting, and exhortation. Aflame with revival, the churches in the association continued to increase in number and influence.

Unfortunately, by 1770, the association had grown too large and spread over too great an area to maintain a united, concerted effort. In that year the group divided into three separate associations, one each for North and South Carolina and Virginia. The following year Shubal Stearns, the great patriarch of the movement died and was buried near the meeting house in which he preached. Within a few years, Stearns's church dropped in attendance to a level below that with which it had started. The Awakening ended, but the story did not.

History justifies Morgan Edwards's appraisal of the importance of the Sandy Creek Baptist Church. The Sandy Creek Awakening was the first revival in America's South. During the revival, souls were saved, lives changed, and perhaps even history shaped at that time. A rich and godly heritage belongs to a small church in the Carolina backwoods.

taken from <http://www.bju.edu/resources/faith/1984/issue6/revival.html>

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/7/23 21:53

Quote:

He quoted a man who (I think) was from one of the Carolinas as saying something to the effect of "Everyone raised here is a Christian unless he's been tampered with."

Yeah, pretty much. There are not too many people who would deny they are a Christian in this state. Granted, most of them, even ones who have been confirmed in a church, have any idea what that means.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/7/23 22:01

Horribly interesting. Too bad though it's not happened since before America was a country.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/7/23 22:10

Quote:
-----A noted characteristic of Shubal Stearns was his penetrating gaze. One man, Tidance Lane, describes his salvation under Stearns. "He fixed his eyes upon me immediately, which made me feel in such a manner as I never felt before." Burdened with conviction, Lane sought relief in walking around, trying to leave, and even shaking hands with the preacher, but all was in vain. When Stearns finally began to preach, Lane's resistance collapsed.

That is very interesting that the countenance of the believer comes into play here again. In the Finney lectures he speaks of this as something that the preacher should have somewhat of a holy countenance that would even itself bring conviction. It's a holy glory on the face after being shut-in with God.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/7/23 22:15

Quote:

That is very interesting that the countenance of the believer comes into play here again. In the Finney lectures he speaks of this as something that the preacher should have somewhat of a holy countenance that would even itself bring conviction. It's a holy glory on the face after being shut-in with God.

It's one thing if one's presence is aglow with the glory of God. But as far as things go about facial features such as eyes, as some have made a big deal about, I think while that might be fine and good, there are no physical features that are "holily looking." Tradition says that the apostle Paul was a very short man with some very odd features. So.....

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/7/23 22:26

Quote:
-----So.....

So God can also use the normal features he has given us to convict people. I remember accounts in Charles Finney's revival where he would look at a crowd and notice the conviction on people's faces and see it, seeing that they could not look him in the face being ashamed. George Fox had eyes like a frog it was said but God used his countenance to bring conviction to poor souls who would see him, they would shake and even fall to the ground under conviction from God. That is the reason they ended up calling the people that followed George Fox "Quakers" because it would be hard for people not to quake under the conviction from seeing this man of God.

Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2004/7/24 2:28

J Edwin Orr talked about that guy (can't remember his name:-)) who was the catalyst for revival early in America's history, who was famous for being ugly. People rationalised that if people are going to hear someone so ugly, he must have something good to say.