Evangelical revival in England John Wesley - posted by EAGLEFLYING (), on: 2017/2/8 20:49

Evangelical Revival in England
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Church History Timeline
6000-1 BC AD 1-300 301-600 601-900 901-1200 1201-1500 1501-1600 1601-1700 1701-1800 1801-1900 1901-2000 2
001-Now

Evangelical Revival in England

England, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, was in a moral quagmire and a spiritual cesspool. Thomas Carlyle d
escribed the country's condition as "Stomach well alive, soul extinct." Deism was rampant, and a bland, philosophical m
orality was standard fare in the churches. Sir William Blackstone visited the church of every major clergyman in London,
but "did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero." In most sermons he he
ard, it would have been impossible to tell just from listening whether the preacher was a follower of Confucius, Mohamm
ed, or Christ!

Morally, the country was becoming increasingly decadent. Drunkenness was rampant; gambling was so extensive that o
ne historian described England as "one vast casino." Newborns were exposed in the streets; 97% of the infant poor in th
e workhouses died as children. Bear baiting and cock fighting were accepted sports, and tickets were sold to public exec
utions as to a theater. The slave trade brought material gain to many while further degrading their souls. Bishop Berkele
y wrote that morality and religion in Britain had collapsed "to a degree that was never known in any Christian country."

To the highways and byways
About the same time, George Whitefield, an ordained Anglican clergyman, was converted and in 1737 began preaching
in London and Bristol. In order to reach the many non-church-goers, Whitefield spoke in the open fields, and large crowd
s began gathering to hear the message of salvation. Whitefield became an itinerant preacher, or "one of God's runabout
s," as he called himself, traveling extensively in his wide-ranging ministry. In his day, itinerant preachers were often critici
zed as interfering with or undermining the role of the parish priest. Whitefield countered that many of the established cl
ergy could not bring life to their people since they themselves were spiritually dead.

One such spiritually dead clergyman was John Wesley, who later became the founder of Methodism (although he never
intended to form a separate church). Wesley had gone to Georgia with James Oglethorpe to work as a missionary to the
Indians. He soon returned to England in despair and wrote, "I went to America to convert the Indians; but O who will con
vert me!" On the ship going to Georgia, Wesley had met some Moravian immigrants and was impressed by their spiritual s
rength and joy in the Lord. Back in England, as Wesley struggled with his own sinfulness and need of salvation, he rec
eived spiritual counsel from the Moravian Peter Boehler. On May 24, 1738, during a meeting at Aldersgate, Wesley expe
rienced God's saving grace and wrote, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvati
on; and an assurance was given to me that he had taken away my sins."

From George Whitefield, Wesley learned the importance of preaching in the open air to reach the masses. At first he co
uld not imagine souls being saved unless they were in Church, but Jesus' "open-air preaching" of the Sermon on the Mo
unt convinced him it was okay.

To the poor and discouraged
Wesley was not welcomed in many of the Church of England churches. He was looked down upon as one of the contem
ptible religious "enthusiasts." Maybe this was a blessing in disguise, as it permitted him to minister to the poor in prisons,
hospitals, workhouses, and at the mine pit heads. Excessive taunts, verbal abuse, and even occasional physical violenc
e could not deter Wesley.
Wesley traveled over 250,000 miles in the cause of the gospel. In his preaching he talked continually of Christ and emphasized repentance, faith, and holiness. He said that repentance was like the porch of religion; conviction of sin always came before faith. Faith was the door of religion. Faith was "not only to believe that the Holy Scriptures and the articles of our faith are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation through Christ." Holiness was religion itself, "the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbors as ourselves, and in that love abstaining from all evil, and doing all possible good to all men." As Wesley preached, multitudes responded. He noted in his journal that "the Word of God ran as fire among the stubble; it was glorified more and more; multitudes crying out, 'What must I do to be saved?' and afterwards witnessing, 'By grace we are saved through faith.'"

Wesley supervised the education of lay preachers to educate the people in small cell groups where discipline and faithfulness were learned. These preachers also distributed and sold Christian books to the people, helping provide them with spiritual food. Wesley pioneered the monthly magazine and edited Christian Living, a selection of theological and devotional literature for the lay person. He also was the first to print and use religious tracts extensively.

The effects spread
Wesley used all the profits from his literary works for charitable purposes, and he encouraged Christians to become active in social reform. He himself spoke out strongly against the slave trade and encouraged William Wilberforce in his anti-slavery crusade. Numerous agencies promoting Christian work arose as a result of the eighteenth century revival in England. Abolitionist societies, prison reform groups, and relief agencies for the poor were started. Numerous missionary societies were formed; the Religious Tract Society was organized; and the British Foreign Bible Society was established. Hospitals and schools multiplied.

The revival cut across denominational lines and touched every class of society. England itself was transformed by the revival. In 1928 Archbishop Davidson wrote that "Wesley practically changed the outlook and even the character of the English nation."

Re: Evangelical revival in England John Wesley - posted by davym (), on: 2017/2/9 5:09
It's wonderful how God works in seemingly impossible circumstances. His mercy knows no bounds.

Oh for a similar revival in the UK in these days in which we live.

Re: - posted by EAGLEFLYING (), on: 2017/2/10 18:43
Amen
I believe God wants another great awakening more than His sons and daughters.
May Man get out of the way and we see His Mercy poured out and HIS GLORY COME DOWN. in Jesus' name
Frannie