

George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the 18th Century Revivals Volume 1 by Arnold Dallimore

Relevant English history (from another source):

1509 – 1547 Henry VIII Revolted from Roman authority over the church.

1545 – 1563 Council of Trent Roman Catholics against Protestantism.

1548-1553 Edward VI Lutheran and Calvinist doctrine introduced

Thomas Cranmer the chief architect – Book of Common Prayer; 42 Articles, etc.

1553-1558 “Bloody” Mary Tudor – Reinstated Roman Catholicism - 270 Protestant martyrs including Cranmer.

1558 – 1603 Elizabeth - Enforced Anglicanism but didn't reform the church.

Perkins 1558-1602, Chaderton,

1603 – 1625 James (King James) Enforced Anglicanism but allowed more freedom for Puritans.

Bradford (Plymouth Colony), Ames 1576-1633

Chaderton, Sibbes 1577-1635,

Synod of Dort (1618-19) against Arminians (Remonstrance)

1625 – 1642 Charles I Harsh Anglicanism under Bishop William Laud – persecuted Puritans Winthrop (Massachusetts) with Cotton, Hooker, Shepard.

Goodwin, 1600-1679 Charles and Parliament conflicted over “divine right” – Charles lost.

1642 - 49 Two Civil Wars with Cromwell's Puritans victorious

1647 Westminster Assembly adopted by Scottish Presbyterians, New England congregationalists, and eventually the English Congregationalists.

1649 - 1660 Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth

Cromwell dissolved Parliament and ruled as Lord Protector.

1658 – 1660 Richard Cromwell (son of Oliver) failed and the monarchy was restored by Parliament.

John Owen 1616-1683

1660 - 1685 Charles II Harsh reestablishment of Anglicanism.

Charles II had been crowned King of Scotland at his father's death but lived on the continent until the monarchy in England was restored in 1660. Clarendon Code tried to force conformity – Puritans persecuted. 2000 ministers ejected from churches 1662

Richard Baxter 1615-1691, John Bunyan 1628-1688 imprisoned

1685 – 1688 James II Roman Catholic wanted religious liberty but Parliament opposed it in favor of centralized Anglicanism.

Matthew Henry 1662-1714

James II was overthrown in the “Glorious Revolution” of 1688 ending Roman Catholic influence, Anglican dominance and Absolute Monarchy.

1688 – 1702 William and Mary (Mary II -Protestant daughter of James II and William III of the Netherlands). Toleration Act of 1689 of religious freedom.

Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758 (born in Connecticut)

John Wesley 1703-1791

George Whitefield 1714-1770

Richard Mather 1596-1669 Liverpool to Massachusetts in 1635

Increase Mather 1639-1723 Massachusetts “Old North” Church in Boston

Cotton Mather 1663-1728 “Old North” in Boston after his father.

John Eliot 1604-1690 Hertfordshire to Massachusetts in 1631

Deism had flourished in England in the late 1600s, being the dominant philosophical perspective by the early 1700s.

The Christianity remaining was hollow dogmat and empty formality.

Gin, blood sports, lawlessness, violence, and other immoralities were rampant. Prisons were full, poverty was rife, charity largely absent.

Whitefield: Born 1714 to Thomas Whitefield and Elizabeth Edwards in Gloucester, England where Thomas and Elizabeth operated the Bell Inn. Thomas died at 35 when George was 2. Mother remarried when George was 8 but it was not a happy marriage ending in financial loss and separation.

George testifies to a profligate youth but well educated excelling in reading plays and engaged in acting.

Entered Pembroke College of Oxford at age 15/16. Paid for it by serving as a “servitor” (slave) to upper classmen.

Joined the “holy club” led by the Wesleys – a program of strict discipline, study and charity. Complete legalism, knowing nothing of grace as taught in the Bible. “Not famous, not evangelical, and not the beginning of the revival” p71

Whitefield introduced to the book The Life of God in the Soul of Man by Henry Scougal: “God showed me I must be born again...” 73

“God was pleased to remove the heavy load, to enable me to lay hold of his dear son by a living faith, and by giving me the Spirit of adoption, to seal me even to the day of everlasting redemption. O! with what joy – joy unspeakable – even joy that was full of and big with glory, was my soul filled when the weight of sin went off and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God and a full assurance of faith, broke in upon my disconsolate soul. Surely it was the day of my espousals...” 77

Whitefield now engaged in spiritual disciplines out of a love for God rather than an attempt to earn his salvation.

He disciplined himself, he delighted in the Word, he prayed, etc.

His English Bible, his Greek NT and **Matthew Henry's commentary** were his constant companions.

So transformed was Whitefield that many encourage him to enter the ministry. **Chapter 4 of Dallimore is worth reading regarding call and preparation for Ordination.**

Ordination: June 20, 1736 (22 years of age)

He returned to Oxford to study (immediately completing his B.A) and led the "Holy Club" (the Wesleys were in Georgia).

By 1738 Whitefield was preaching often in churches throughout the region and seeing much response.

Wesley asked him to come to Georgia and Whitefield consented making plans to go.

It took a year to leave and his ministry expanded greatly during that time.

He read his sermons from a manuscript at this time in his life; moving to more extemporaneous sermons later.

The content of his sermons (even at 22 years of age) emphasize the doctrines of grace:

Salvation is the work of God

An unbreakable link between justification and glorification

The nature of the atonement - Christ died for the sins of his people

Eternal glory will be conferred on all true believers.

Extant sermons number only 63 of which 46 were preached before he was 25 years of age.