

The First Great Awakening

- 1730-1755, both in Protestant Europe and the American colonies
- Powerful, dynamic preachers
- Focuses on personal, spiritual conviction and redemption, and a commitment to a new standard of morality.
- Downplayed ritual, ceremony, doctrine, sacraments, and church hierarchy.
- Reshaped denominations: Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, Baptist, Methodist.
- Spawned a movement known as “revivalism.”

Revivalism

- 18th and 19th Century American Protestant movement
- Charles Finney
- In short, Christian life begins with the personal decision to accept Jesus
- We can increase the number of conversions to Christ if we learn how to intentionally manipulate unsuspecting religious consumers.
- Harness human motivations to drive individuals to commit themselves to Jesus
 - Once they do, the process of discipleship will fix these false motivations. We just have to get them there.
- This led to the “new measures:”
 - catchier music,
 - more entertaining, practical, and dynamic preaching
 - Emphasis on the blessings received from the Christian life.

Revivalism, cont.

- “The object is to get up an excitement, and bring the people out...I do not mean to say that [these] measures are pious, or right, but only that they are wise, in the sense that they are the...means to the end...The object of our measures is to gain attention, and you must have something new [to do that].”
- “Religion is the work of man. It is something for man to do. [But] there are so many things to lead their minds off from religion...that it is necessary to raise an excitement among them.”
- Charles Grandison Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 1835

Revivalism, cont.

- “I could not but regard and treat this whole question of imputation as a theological fiction, somewhat related to our legal fiction of John Doe and Richard Roe.”
- Charles Grandison Finney, *Memoirs of Charles Grandison Finney*, published post-humously 1876

Revivalism, cont.

- “But according to the actual history books, the Second Great Awakening was no real awakening at all. American religious life was not particularly weak or failing before the revivals, nor was it particularly strong or successful after them. Nor was the Awakening known for being expressly pious or sanctified. One historian friendly to the movement noted that if you took away the worship, there would still be enough excitement to attract plenty of young people. Meanwhile it was commonly quipped that as many souls were conceived as saved at camp meetings. Several states banned the sale of liquor within five miles of such meetings due to perpetual rises in drunkenness during the events.
- “What the Awakening did achieve was the transfer of large numbers of Christians from more traditional denominations to newer, revival-oriented bodies that sprang in the bull market for new measures.”
- Rev. Jonathan Fisk, *Broken*, 2012.

Revivalism and Worship

- Contemporary worship
 - Singing catchy songs designed to spur the emotions
 - “Contemporary” – up-to-date, “new,” positive
 - What could be more practical than something contemporary?
 - What could be more beneficial than praise?
 - The debate is not, and never has been, about using forms and traditions in the present time to worship God.
 - The terms are predefined to sell one form over another.
 - The debate is whether this is an intentional manipulation of emotions.
 - “If all we have is praise, then what happens when it is no longer a time to live but a time to die?” (Fisk)
 - “Changing the church to find proof of God by pointing to positive experiences we are having right now. Jesus and His cross are not enough. Promises made about the Last Day don’t draw crowds the way promises about the present do.” (Fisk)
 - Is there anything wrong with a guitar? Not at all!
 - But there are dangers that a congregation must be aware of:
 - The history behind the music (emotional manipulation from Evangelicalism and Revivalism)
 - The poor theology in most of the songs. The staff must work diligently to find solid music to use in worship (as there is no time-tested selection from our church’s history)

The Second Great Awakening

- 1790-1840
- Focused on reaching the unchurched (not what happened), enthusiasm, emotion, and the supernatural
- Most converts were young, most were women
 - In reality, it was mostly “sheep-stealing,” not new converts.
- Spawned American Evangelicalism and the Restoration Movement
- The Third Great Awakening (1850-1900) gave growth to the Social Gospel and, eventually, liberation theology.

American Evangelicalism

- Grows out of the Awakenings
- John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Billy Graham, etc.
- Focus on:
 - Revivalism instead of Worship
 - Relevancy instead of Doctrine
 - Emotions instead of Scripture
 - Culture instead of Steadfastness
- Sola Scriptura – but differ when it comes to practice
- Lots in the abstract – salvation by grace and faith. But, what do you mean?
- Reinventing/remaking the church (agile and nimble) based on the cultural expectations of the day. Constantly changing

Am. Ev. Cont.

- Evangelicals as Rome without the candles, vestments, and sacraments
- A return to Rome and its errors:
 - works, and the confusion of just./sanct.,
 - confusion of law and gospel
- Different justification – there's some cooperation between man and God (process whereby we follow the example of Christ, He is the model, so we adapt Godly actions, thoughts, and words)
 - We are by Christ alone
 - Rome is Christ+work
 - Ev. is Christ+Decision
- Problem is becoming like Rome – how-to sermons leave people not actually knowing the Word, (law and gospel)

Am. Ev. Cont.

- 17-19th centuries. Revivalism and Charles Finney: “You cannot distinguish a difference between our preaching and teaching/practice.”
 - Willful, voluntary transition from sinner to saint: decision to follow Jesus
 - Excited there by preaching (which must be optimistic and lead people to the decision)
- No original sin.
 - High view of human capacity, optimism in regard to human nature.
 - Actual sin is the only meaningful category.
- Growth in good works is the mark of the Christian life.
- Credit on their desire to uphold Scripture.
- But, keeping the Word is obeying the Law
 - pride and despair are the only options.

Am. Ev. Cont.

- Mysticism – teaches adherents they can attain an immediate, direct, internal experience with God. It is a worship of our own emotions.
 - Church moves you towards this experience toward unity with God.
 - Only leaves you with pride or despair
 - Pride: “I was moved by the Spirit/Lord took it to the next level”
 - Despair: “I wasn’t moved, but I better raise my hand any way. Has God abandoned me? Is He punishing me? Is He leaving me alone?”
 - Nothing is objectively true, nothing external.
- No gospel promise is the deadly path of evangelicalism. If it swings long enough, they fling off into new atheism or into Rome.

American Evangelicalism Debunked

- Decision Theology
 - 1 John 3:20 “for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.”
 - Romans 7:18 “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.”
 - “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith.” – Luther’s Small Catechism
- You’re a sinner, but you’re saved in spite of it!!! It’s His promise!

Restorationism

- Movement in the mid-1800's coming out of the 2nd Great Awakening
- Leaders were men like Bart Stone and Alexander Campbell
- Desired unifying the church around a sole teaching
 - Restore, not separate
- God's Word was that sole teaching, the core
- No creed but the Bible
- Disciples of Christ, Campbellites, Church of Christ, Acapella Church of Christ

Church Growth Movement

- CGM began in the 1960's under the lead of Donald McGavran at Fuller Seminary in California
- The idea was to use research, marketing, and other business practices to increase church membership.
- In order to approach non-believers, the church needed to change.
- Churches began developing strategies and tactics to meet the “felt” needs of their consumers.

CGM cont.

- Rick Warren's Attractive Church model
 - Programs attract the community to the church (daycare, sports, classes, contemporary music, etc.)
- Michael Slaughter's Missional Church model
 - Activities are developed outside the church. As people participate in them, they begin to assimilate into the life of the congregation.
- In order to be a successful church, you must be growing.
 - What does this say of Jesus?

Is any of this new?

Is not one just the next
attempt at the same line of
thinking?

Fundamentalism

- Early 20th century movement
- Not to be confused with a fundamentalist today who is often called such because they read the Bible literally (though, there is a connection)
- Identified five specific, fundamental beliefs of a Christian:
 - Biblical inspiration and the infallibility of scripture as a result of this
 - Virgin birth of Jesus
 - Belief that Christ's death was the atonement for sin
 - Bodily resurrection of Jesus
 - Historical reality of the miracles of Jesus
- A reaction against liberal theology and higher criticism.

Ecumenism

- the principle or aim of promoting unity among the world's Christian churches
- Rises quickly on the heels of fundamentalism
- Basically, if you hold to those five tenets, we can be one united church.

- Quickly abandoned even having any tenets as the basis for unity. This is seeable today across the board.

Social Gospel

- Christian faith practiced as a call not just to personal conversion but to social reform
- A deep confusion of the doctrine of the two realms

Liberation Theology

- a movement in Christian theology, developed mainly by Latin American Roman Catholics, that emphasizes liberation from social, political, and economic oppression as an anticipation of ultimate salvation.
- What does this say of Christ's promise that Christians will always suffer persecution?