

Re: The Great Awakening

Sally

- Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 7:58 PM

The Great Awakening

I don't know if 100 percent agree or disagree with either argument, though this may be due to the fact that I am still trying to come up with my thoughts on it. While I believe that there was a 'Great Awakening' of religion in the 1740's because people were being taught or finally understanding that religion isn't something you follow blindly, religion is a personal journey that you discover on your own. While most religions have a blanket, for a lack of better term, rules, that you follow each person is to go on an individual journey. Based on that it would be totally understandable that the colonist would find a parallel in their churches running their towns to the reason they fled to the colonies in the first place, religious freedom. While I believe and understand all of this, I have always felt that The Great Awakening was something that was blown out of proportion and was overhyped in the textbooks I read in school. For something that seemed so grand and so revolutionary for the colonist, it occupied a very small and brief section in our history books. You'd think that if something had been so, as they put it, great, it would be spoken about extensively. I hope to gain a better understanding of The Great Awakening and learn something new throughout this week.

Thank you.

I don't have answers for any other questions presented because honestly, I do not understand it completely yet. I am still working on it and formulating a complete idea.

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The Great Catalyst

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 8:13 PM

Overall, I am inclined to agree with the position of Patricia U. Bonomi. The point that she raised about the awakening elevating the individual resonated with me. She explains "During the more communal seventeenth century, colonists had rarely conceived of themselves apart from a larger collectivity—the family, the congregation, or the town. But the eighteenth-century revival penetrated and shattered that unitary cosmos by directing its message to the individual. In exhorting their followers to make personal decisions for God, and then to act on those decisions regardless of their effect on the larger society, the revivalists gave sanction to a new dynamic in human relationships," (Bonomi Page 4).

We know from the course textbook that other long-term consequences of the revivals included increased church membership, especially by women, (Murrin text page 134). We are also told in the textbook that before the Great Awakening there were only three colleges in North America. Because of the revivals, at least six new colleges were formed on this continent, (Murrin text page 135-137). With such major changes coming on the heels of the revivals, I do not see how the colonies of 1775 would have existed as they did without those revivals. I see the Great Awakening as a catalyst for the nation that the colonies would become after the American Revolution.

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Re: The Great Awakening

by [Christine Macfarlane](#) - Friday, October 19, 2018, 12:43 AM

I completely agree that the cultural changes in the colonies brought on during the Great Awakening were significant and had a lasting impact on the shaping of American identity in the years leading up to the American Revolution. There is no way the influence of this newfound prioritization of the individual coupled with the increase in educational opportunities in the colonies was anything less than revolutionary. American settlers were seeing themselves in a whole new light, causing them to question, re-evaluate, and challenge their relationship with Britain.

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Re: The Great Catalyst

by [Kathleen Gilbert](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 1:41 PM

Your comment about the church attendance and membership made me think about the video on the First Great Awakening. You're correct in that we must understand that the people had previously practiced religion in the way that leaders at that time approved of, not in a personal way. However, with the help of a very prominent minister, George Whitfield in 1739 and his enlightening sermons, the people began to question religious authority and began to revolt

against it. "There would be fervent preaching, maybe two or three preachers, and sometime preaching services would last an entire day." (The First Great Awakening, 2:40). "People were crying out during worship, sometimes people were fainting." (The First Great Awakening, 2:50). This supports the idea that the people were heavily influenced by these new religious views.

With the help of these sermons, people began to disassociate themselves with common practices. They began to revolt against religious leaders at this time and challenge religious authority. These sermons can easily be compared to political speeches and "call to action" speeches that instigate a response in the crowd and challenge authority. They must have concluded that religion now vested in their own control and realized they had the power within themselves, not England, or any other religious authority

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Re: The Great Catalyst

by [Christine Macfarlane](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 9:43 PM

That's true, and it's important to note that the people attending these massive revivals were from all walks of life-- racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, and by gender. (Liberty, Equality, Power, p. 134) So these cultural shifts that you speak of were not only happening among one group of people. It wasn't just white Anglicans who were beginning to question authority. In order for the Revolution to take root in American society, it was crucial that the discontent and the willingness to revolt against the established order was felt by people across the divisive lines of ethnicity, gender, and especially socioeconomic class. The Great Awakening united diverse groups of colonists for the first time in colonial American history. (Liberty, Equality, Power, p. 133)

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