

HST 201: ONLINE History of U.S. F18 (Escobar Meta 20748 22964)

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Week 4 Forum The Great Awakening

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The Great Awakening

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 7:23 PM

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The Great Awakening and a Call to Action

by [Kathleen Gilbert](#) - Tuesday, October 16, 2018, 4:32 PM

After reading "The Great Awakening Yes No Debate" both arguments by Patricia J. Bonomi and Jon Butler on whether the Great Awakening was a key to the American Revolution were interesting. Taking into consideration both perspectives, I would have to say that I agree with Patricia U. Bonomi; that the Great Awakening was key to the American Revolution. Although I can understand the other position, (that there were other factors at that time) Bonomi's argument is stronger in that she relies on the religious views of the people at this time and the tension between the people. Religion has a strong influence on individuals and the people became more independent and relied on a personal relationship with God, rather than a unified relationship (as in a church). With this breakdown, came new religious views that strongly swayed an individual. Add a growing population, lack of land, increase in small pox disease as well as extravagant ministers, this is all cause for some upheaval on a mass level. For example, Bonomi states that "The Great Awakening created conditions uniquely favorable to social and political, as well as religious, reform by piercing the facade of civility and deference that governed provincial life to usher in a new age of contentiousness." (Bonomi, p.3).

This argument is more persuasive in that religion was the "juice" that powered the people to change and challenge the ordinary ways. More importantly, Religion is what motivated the people to fight, and to change course. Without the Great Awakening many of the people would not have conceived independence or to challenge the current system which, by the way, was the primary reason for the American Revolution. To support this statement even further, Bonomi states that "Religion has always been considered a likely agent of radicalism." (Bonomi, p.3). I agree, especially taking into consideration the powerful sermons and the influence these ministers had on the public at this time. The primary argument is that the religious independence that the people gained in the Great Awakening allowed them to sort of "practice" or have a trial run of the events to come. Bonomi states that "The institutional disruptions and church separations of the Great Awakening thus provided a kind of "practice model" which enabled the provincials to "rehearse"—though unwittingly—a number of the situations, and the arguments appropriate to them, that would reappear with the political crisis of the 1760s and 1770s." (Bonomi, p.3). It makes sense that the Great Awakening was key to the American Revolution, the people had already had a successful run at challenging their independence.

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Re: The Great Awakening and a Call to Action

by [Christine Macfarlane](#) - Thursday, October 18, 2018, 10:13 AM

The influence these evangelical ministers had over colonists can not be understated. Some of them were drawing crowds by the tens of thousands. On his second trip to America in 1739 George Whitefield, an Anglican minister and charismatic "new birth" preacher, drew crowds as large as 30,000 people when he visited well populated cities. (Liberty, Equality, Power, page 133) 30,000 people was larger than the population of Boston at that time. It's clear that these preachers were filling some kind of void that existed in the lives of settlers. Even though his evangelical successors Gilbert Tennent and James Davenport lacked Whitefield's evangelical prowess and eventually gave way to the end of this Great Awakening, the legacy of the revivals endured. Specifically, thousands of men became Freemasons, joining complex fraternal associations rather than churches. (Liberty, Equality, Power, page 134) Many of the leaders of the American Revolution and founding fathers of the United States became Freemasons. Freemasons came about, at least in part, as a result of the revivals of the Great Awakening and subsequent collapse of the Shepherd's Tent. (Liberty, Equality, Power, page 134) Exalting virtues such as independence, honesty, brotherhood, citizenship, as well as a focus on higher education, Freemasons were able to concentrate power and purpose in ways that had previously been monopolized by churches and religious movements, giving way to the radical forethought of American independence.

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Was there a Ripple Effect from the Revival?

by [Ian Epperson](#) - Tuesday, October 16, 2018, 11:49 PM

After consideration from both sides of the articles points of view I would have to side with Jon Butler, from his article "Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretative Fiction," Journal of American History (September 1982). One thing that stuck out to me was when he said, "Their [regional protestant denominations] social and political effects were minimal and usually local, although they could traumatize communities in which they upset, if only temporarily, familiar patterns of worship and social behavior. But the congregations they occasionally produced usually blended into the traditional social system and the revivals abated without shattering its structure." In my opinion with any ideology, new members have a tendency to steer the movement in multiple directions as they see fit whether good or bad (as with new revival ministers). This especially goes for movements based on individual freedoms. I have seen this in the 99% movement, which was a movement in August 2011 where large groups of people acted against the redistribution of wealth in America to a minority group of individuals. On the side of the occupants in New York's Wall Street district, protesters in favor of the majority seemed devoid of leadership, demanded individual rights, and carried too vague of an opinion. I am not arguing against the idea behind the 99% movement. It fostered a lasting effect on the back of the mind to the population in certain strata. The movement's delivery however, was diluted by too many different viewpoints and motives. It made the overall execution difficult to have a significant impact on the status quo. That is the connection that I see to Butler's opinion in a more modern example.

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Re: Was there a Ripple Effect from the Revival?

by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:12 PM

I think something that is maybe being forgotten here is that Wall Street and religion are two completely different entities. In most ways, religion is a far more powerful and influential tool than money. People who are homeless often believe in God, and people who are a part of the 1% often believe in God. Religion is something that is transcendent above material things. I do maybe see some similarities to the movements in execution, however the differing time periods and subject matters lead me to believe that they are very different, and that in fact, The Great Awakening WAS key.

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Re: Was there a Ripple Effect from the Revival?

by [Jared Moore](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 10:03 PM

Something that you said that I really caught and that stood out was the mention of religion being more powerful and influential than money. This is something that can be seen in the Great Awakening. In the video "The First Great Awakening" they talk about how the Awakening actually brought people together. Race, age, social status, that didn't matter. The people were coming together like they hadn't before, and in a way that hasn't been recreated by money. Belief can be spread throughout all people no matter who they are or what standing in life they have. This connection of the people and the power that religion had to bring the people together, and showing them they can have common goals. It is just another reason that I believe the Great Awakening was a key to the American Revolution.

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Re: The Great Awakening

by [Jessica Bene](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 7:58 PM

The Great Awakening

I don't know if 100% 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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Jon Butler

by [Emily Barber](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 8:29 PM

After reading both articles more than once, I agree the most with Jon Butler's article. His argument made the most sense to me and made a couple good points that stood out to me. At the beginning of his article in the first paragraph, he states that there are three common points that historians make when talking about "the Great Awakening". The second and third point that was made is what I agree with the most. The way Jon worded the second point, made me believe that historians were overly dramatic with the meaning of "the Great Awakening" (he even mentioned historian exaggeration on pg7 paragraph 6). I agree with Jon that most historians have used hurricane metaphors to describe the awakening. I came across some of the metaphors in the textbook and wondered why they were using those words to describe it. I thought maybe they wanted us to think it was a quick few years? Was it not that big of a deal that this had happened? Was this awakening as spontaneous as they are making it sound?

The third point made, "Most historians argue that this spiritual hurricane affected all facets of prerevolutionary society". I read this and wasn't sure what to think of it. I could understand why historians would think that, but I don't believe that this spiritual hurricane affected all sides of the prerevolutionary society. I think if it affected the prerevolutionary society, it would have changed the Revolution as a whole. Religion and Christianity was an important part during the American Revolution but I don't believe people knew as much as they thought they knew about the religion and how it works.

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Re: Jon Butler

by [Colleen Young](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 2:07 PM

I agree with the use of hurricane metaphors. After reading Jon Butler's article and then reading our textbook, I notice them a lot more. Butler makes note that the Great Awakening occurred for most of the 18th century, but only a few mainland colonies were "swept" up by revivalism. Maryland, Georgia, and New Hampshire experienced the revivals around the same time (p 7). He makes a point that revivalism was not the key to colonial church expansion. "Revivalism scarcely produced the remarkable growth that the Church of England experienced in the eighteenth century" (p 8).

In terms of spirituality affecting every aspect of pre-revolutionary society, Butler mentions that the expansion of Baptists and Presbyterians stems from more than the Great Awakening or revivalism. The growth of moderately active denominations was very likely; "many new colonists did not settle in established communities but in new communities that lacked religious institutions" (p 8).

I agree with you that religion was an important aspect of the American Revolution but it wasn't the sole focus.

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Re: Jon Butler

by [Emily Barber](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 3:11 PM

I appreciate the comment back on my post and the agreement of Jon Butlers article and the hurricane references. The hurricane references that were both in the text and the article made it seem like the Great Awakening was something that just came and went and had no specific impact on the Revolution. This is what persuaded my decision on whos article to post about and agree the most with. Also, Jon's article didn't feel like he was trying to persuade me into believing something, when that's all I felt when reading Patricia's. Jon's felt more like facts and was easier to understand overall on the concept of the Great Awakening.

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Re: Jon Butler

by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:23 PM

I think overall that the biggest reason I disagree with you is because of the notion of the individual. This transition was made to center faith more about yourself than about fitting in with a group. I think this made the people of this time feel overall much more powerful and in control of their own destiny. Another reason is simply because of how important religion was to the people of this time. If a revival of sorts was to happen today, I don't think the impact would be nearly as big as it was back then.

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Re: The Great Awakening

by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 8:51 PM

Overall, I would say that I agree with Bonomi more, and that yes, the Great Awakening was a key to the American Revolution. The one point I wanted to touch on that was the most swaying for me comes from pages 4 and 5 of the reading: "No longer were consensual values to prevail over individual ones, at least in matters concerning the soul. Now private judgement and intuitive understanding had equal if not superior claim on the conscience. In a word, decision making had been internalized" (reading 4-5). I think when individuals find power within themselves and have the ability to discern from right and wrong without fear of being persecuted, things can get a little more messy. From this standpoint I think while maybe the exact "event" of the Great Awakening was a key that the messages that came out of it and how mindsets changed were very key.

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Re: The Great Awakening

by [Carmen DeLaCruz](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 10:34 PM

I appreciate and agree with your comments on individuals finding power within themselves to be able to discern right and wrong. No one should fear being persecuted for their beliefs. Something i take away is that viewpoints can indeed change and it can be powerful.

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Re: The Great Awakening

by [Kathleen Gilbert](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 1:51 PM

After reading the webpage on the Great Awakening there was a great quote i found that i think applies to your argument. "The social effect of multitudes of new denominations was not, however, a fracturing of communities, but a unifying drive which helped to create a "national consciousness"." The people, although they had some disagreement on religious views, were not separated by this religious movement but rather unified together more than ever before. (The Great Awakening). "The effect of Great Awakening unity was an attitude that went against the deferential thinking that consumed English politics and religion. Rather than believing that God's will was necessarily interpreted by the monarch or his bishops, the colonists viewed themselves as more capable of performing the task." (The Great Awakening). The people finally realized

that instead of focusing their energy on fighting one another about religious views they can come together. If you can change the way a person views something, you can change their mindset, and when people realize that they have the power, that is something that can lead to revolution.

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Re: The Great Awakening

by [Michelle White](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 4:00 PM

According to Bonomi, This last notion captures vividly the new spirit of defiant individualism that was one of the most radical manifestations of the Awakening.(reading 4) Preachers reached out to individuals building their self esteem. This gave the revivalists the confidence and strength to separate from orthodoxy. Others observed and fell in tow thus creating a great revival. I think this goes along with your thought "when individuals find power within themselves and have the ability to discern from right and wrong without fear of getting persecuted, things can get a little messy."

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Yes, The Great Awakening was a key to the American Revolution

by [Michelle White](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 9:06 PM

I agree with Patricia J Bonomi, I think the Great Awakening was a key to the American Revolution. The Awakeners revolted, created their own church by converting individuals to increase their following and strengthen their congregation to withdraw from the institutional structures that sheltered orthodoxy. They separated from old traditional beliefs and control of religion to gain freedom of religion. This practice brought forth courage to others to do the same. "Religion has always been considered a likely agent of radicalism." Patricia J Bonomi,from Linder the Cope of Heaven:Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America(Oxford University Press,1986)(pg3,1st paragraph)

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Re: Yes, The Great Awakening was a key to the American Revolution

by [Carmen DeLaCruz](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 10:30 PM

I appreciate your comments on bringing forth courage. I agree that religion will continue to be an agent of radicalism.

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The great radical awakening

by [Carmen DeLaCruz](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 9:25 PM

I agree with Patricia J. Bonomi that the Great awakening was key to the American revolution. While the expression of religion seemed radical, the Great awakening provided essential change for the future. People's attitude changed about religion and the government. The Great Awakening serves as an American revolution in its own right as it allowed people to renew their religious devotion and individual piety.

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Re: The great radical awakening

by [Ian Epperson](#) - Thursday, October 18, 2018, 8:40 PM

I can agree that the great awakening enriched some of the settlers with a sense of personal and religious freedom that had not been experienced as of yet in their lives. In the spirit of discussion however, I humbly disagree that it was the sole cause of the revolutionary war. On the last page of the article, Butler explains something important, "The relationship between prerevolutionary political change and the revivals is weak everywhere except in Virginia, where the Baptist revivals indeed shattered the exclusive, century-old Anglican hold on organized religious activity and politics in the colony. But, their importance to the Revolution is weakened by the fact that so many members of Virginia's Anglican aristocracy also led the Revolution." What I get from that is in regards to the revolutionary war, even at the great awakening's most influential location in Virginia, the old institutions united against monarchy rule when the time came for revolution. Both ideologies seemed to be in agreement about the revolution despite their differences, rendering the correlation of great awakenings in America's soul obsolete.

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**Religious Freedom in Virginia & the Roots of a National Identity**by [Christine Macfarlane](#) - Thursday, October 18, 2018, 11:57 PM

Respectfully, I disagree with this analysis of Virginia's revival and the perceived lack of causal effect it had on the American Revolution. Virginia was at the heart of the Revolution with key figures such as Thomas Jefferson and George Washington both from the state. In the referenced article Butler states that the relationship between the baptist revival and the Revolution is "weak everywhere except in Virginia," attesting to the argument that one did precipitate the other. (Was the Great Awakening a Key to the American Revolution?)

One result of this so-called Great Awakening was greater political interest in religious freedoms in Virginia and beyond. Galvanized by decades of religious persecution in the colony, James Madison and Patrick Henry wrote into Virginia law the right to freedom of religion. Subsequently, Thomas Jefferson drafted the Virginia Statute for Establishing Religious Freedom, ensuring "full religious freedom and no state support for religion" for the people of Virginia. (https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Great_Awakening_in_Virginia_The#start_entry) Jefferson's push for religious freedom was opposed by powerful members of the Church of England but it was too late. The early seeds of American identity had already taken root, spurred by the growing desire to pull away from the Anglican trappings elucidated during the Great Awakening.

The endurance of Jefferson's and Madison's revolutionary philosophy of American freedom from religious tyranny in the sociopolitical identities of Americans for many generations to come speaks for itself. It absolutely inspired the passion of American revolutionaries and today, well over 200 years later, it remains an institution not only of American democracy, but also our national identity.

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In some ways I believe you are correct, but using an example from our book, events during the French and Indian War could have just as much spurred on a revolt against Britain as religious free thought in mainly Virginia. Butler did say these words, (to reiterate) that even in Virginia places Anglican churches also joined the revolution. There are plenty examples as well of protest and revolt against the harsh British forces during the French and Indian war. One of these examples was the Knowles riots of 1765 (pg.144), where British sailors seized unwilling recruits in Boston and were met with protest and rioting due to unfair liberties taken by English sailors in Boston, where hostages were even taken. Another example of a need for autonomy comes with America's infantry troops (including Washington). During the war "Loudoun ordered New England troops to serve directly under British officers and to accept the harsh discipline of the British army, an arrangement that, New Englanders insisted, violated their enlistment terms. They refused to cooperate." (pg.154). The British ended up having to bend to their American counterparts and institute fair treatment and almost equal rank. It's true that American citizens, on a whole, were not prepared to completely sever ties to England like what happened with Benjamin's Albany act to institute an early form of presidency, but to say religious freedom is the main cause for independence would negate earlier examples of when abuse. In my opinion this was the prevailing sentiment leading up to the revolutionary war.

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On the contrary, I don't see "religious free thought" as the focal legacy of the Great Awakening. The legacy of the revivals was the new sense of unity it created amongst what had once been extremely segregated religious communities. The Great Awakening was a time when these diverse communities (as diverse ethnically, culturally, geographically, and socioeconomically as they were spiritually) converged to hear revival sermons (Liberty, Equality, Power, p. 134), and ultimately began to acknowledge that some of their beliefs and goals were not entirely dissimilar. I don't think the renewed focus on individual religious experience during the Great Awakening was what led to the American Revolution; rather the unification of different ethnicities, genders, and classes for the first time in colonial history (Liberty, Equality, Power, p. 133), was the main precipitous factor. The Great Awakening brought these diverse populations together for the purpose of worship, but ultimately what it did was allow these groups to realize a shared cause of another nature-- independence from colonial oppression-- as well as a newly forming cultural identity as American citizens, rather than European colonials.

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**Re: The great radical awakening**by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:31 PM

I'd like to counter just one specific thing in your post. The question isn't "was the Great Awakening the SOLE cause of the revolutionary war?" it asked if it was KEY. While I agree that surely it was not the only cause, I think it's pretty hard to disagree with the notion that this was a very large movement that empowered individuals through religion, leading to a more powerful individual spirit. This seems blatantly key to me.

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Yes! While certainly not the only cause of the American Revolution, it is clearly a key factor in the years and decades leading up to the Revolution. The Great Awakening itself fizzled out but the effects it had on American ideals of independent thought as well as the unification of a multitude of diverse groups. Without the combined dissidence of these different religions, races, genders, socioeconomic classes, the Revolution wouldn't have been so widespread and effective.

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I don't believe that the great awakening was the sole cause of the revolutionary war either, but it was a major part. "Customs of civility and courtesy, the governing norms of life in the colonies, were set aside in favor of a more quarrelsome age. Practices and mind-sets were changed by the Awakening like never before." (Significance of the Great Awakening: Roots of Revolution, pg 1) This tells me that there was great upheaval due to the revivalism. "John Adams gave credit to the Great Awakening as the source of motivation behind the war, and in certain parts of England the revolution was even called the "Presbyterian Rebellion"" (Significance of the Great Awakening: Roots of Revolution, pg6)

Sum of ratings: - [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Key link or enlightenment?**by [Colleen Young](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 9:30 PM

I agree with Jon Butler that the Great Awakening was not a key factor leading up to the American Revolution. In the reading, Butler talks about the relationship between the revivals and the American Revolution, explaining how they appeared too sporadically throughout colonies with various auspices to be consistent. Because people had different views and didn't agree solely with one ideal or religion, people broke off into different groups, or the revivals. Each assembly had their own issues. Take George Whitefield for example. He joins John Wesley's Holy Club, and from there he becomes an Anglican minister who went around preaching about the "new birth". Being a young actor, many Anglican ministers distrusted him, denouncing and banning him from pulpits thinking he caused more harm than good (p 132-133). Butler also makes a point that "Andrew Crosswell's revivalist congregation in Boston had all but collapsed by 1770, and no historian ever has demonstrated that similar congregations elsewhere served as isolated cells of anti-British protest. The connection is equally difficult to make with denominations" (p 9).

In 1800, women outnumbered men in church 4 to 1, due to the fact that many men decided to become Freemasons. The revivals convinced the middle colonies to become New Side evangelical or Old Side anti-revival. Links were created between them, Britain, and the colonies. These were just some of the long-term effects the revivals had on colonies (p 134). The Great Awakening certainly had an effect on religion and the organization of religious groups, but it didn't contribute to the American Revolution. If anything, people became enlightened.

Sum of ratings: **2 (1)**[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Key link or enlightenment?**by [Christine Macfarlane](#) - Friday, October 19, 2018, 11:27 AM

The argument that many Anglican ministers distrusted George Whitefield pales in comparison to the undisputed fact that he drew crowds as large as the city of Boston, upwards of 30,000 people at times. These crowds were not only large, but they were diverse. Whitefield, with his charisma, was "the first American star" (video, 3:37) and drew crowds of followers from all walks of colonial life; they were ethnically and racially diverse, consisted of as many if not more women than men

(Liberty, Equality, Power) and included people from all socioeconomic classes. According to Barry Hankins, Associate Professor of History and ChurchState Studies at Baylor University, "the first Great Awakening was that event that began many people on the path to thinking of themselves as a separate people-- as a people-- for the first time, because this was the first national event in American history." (video, 5:57) Furthermore, this "idea of individual experience of Grace began to feed into emerging ideals of American independence and American individualism" according to Stephen Spookey, Associate Professor of Church History at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. (video, 6:11)

The Great Awakening stimulated religious fervor in the colonies and authenticated the "religious practices of the working class or the lower classes" (video, 3:01). Previously, these disenfranchised groups had all seen themselves as more different than similar. While the plight of these disenfranchised groups still plays out socially, economically, and politically in modern day America, the unity found by these groups through religious revivalism (Liberty, Equality, Power, page 133) during the Great Awakening had a lasting impact. Civic participation became more widespread throughout diverse colonial communities, paving the way for the American Revolution. The legacy of questioning authority and civil disobedience persisted long after the Great Awakening had come to its end.

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Re: Key link or enlightenment?

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 2:36 PM

I like the last point you made in your post, "The legacy of questioning authority and civil disobedience persisted long after the Great Awakening had come to its end." In America, we celebrate those who question authority for authority's sake. We think of ourselves not as a people who just fall in line and blindly submit to the will of the leadership, but as a people who think for themselves and make educated decisions about what is right and wrong. When we don't agree with what our leadership is doing, we tell them. In fact, we tell anyone who will listen. I think that a lot of these attitudes really had their genesis with the Great Awakening. It was the first time in our history when people began to step out of the religious traditions that had always been, and decide what type of religion made sense to them. "And the idea of individual experience of grace began to feed into emerging ideals of American independence and American individualism," (*The First Great Awakening* video 6:09). When I first started reading about the Great Awakening, I admit that my "eyes glazed over" and I braced for another series of pages on various religious bodies and their geographic positions. The more I studied the issue (thanks to this forum), the more I began to realize that this movement was much more, and I firmly believe that it had major implications for the future United States of America.

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Re: Key link or enlightenment?

by [Christine Macfarlane](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:50 PM

Thank you! I agree. Modern day American identity is still inextricably linked to the these same ideals, which took root during the Great Awakening.

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Re: Key link or enlightenment?

by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:34 PM

If people are sprouting off different ideas and starting to believe in a lot of vastly different things, you don't think that maybe that could lead to tension/conflict? It also wasn't necessarily all about religion, the part where you believe in something, it was about religion, what YOU believe vs. what the GROUP believes.

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Key to the American Revolution

by [Marisa Owsley](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 9:32 PM

The Great Awakening was a series of religious revivals in the North American British colonies during the 17th and 18th Centuries. The American Revolution arose from these growing tensions between residents of Great Britain's 13 colonies and the colonial government. Just those two little facts right there make me almost immediately side with Patricia J. Bonomi over Jon Butler. I say this because if the religious rivalries between the residents and the government had anything to do with starting the American Revolution, then the Great Awakening was a key to the revolution. Even if it wasn't the main reason, it was still a part of it. "By promoting church separations and urging their follower's to make choices that had political as well as religious implications, the Awakeners wrought permanent changes in public practices and attitudes. Before it subsided, the

revival had unsettled the lives of more Americans and disrupted more institutions than any other single event in colonial experience to that time" (Reading Pg.2). This quote also goes to show that religion was something that the people wanted to change, and that they would do just about anything to make that happen. Eventually, the religious passion turned to revolution and attitudes of self-governance. The religious spirit of the colonists was a necessary component to the drive for independence as confirmed in the sentiments of those who lived during the period of fighting. John Adams gave credit to the Great Awakening as the source of motivation behind the war, and in certain parts of England the revolution was even called the "Presbyterian Rebellion" (<http://www.great-awakening.com/roots-of-revolution/>).

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Re: Key to the American Revolution

by [Ian Epperson](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 1:32 PM

I certainly agree with you when you say the Great awakening had some part in the revolutionary war. I am slightly confused by when you state that, it was not the main part of the rising sentiment towards revolution, and then you state that it was the key to revolution. This is an interesting topic because there seems to be two different discussions happening in our reading. The first is somewhat of a chicken before the egg concept. Were there examples of independent religious and political thought happening before the revolution? The second, if so which carried more weight the hypothetical chicken or the egg?

On page 9 of the debate article, Butler states, "it not possible to demonstrate that specific congregations and denominations associated with the revivals originated anti-British protest that became uniquely important to the Revolution." He also mentions, "They appeared too erratically in too few colonies under too many different auspices to make such generalizations appropriate." In my opinion, this obscures any idea that this particular moment in time carried the key to revolution. One could argue if evidence of revolutionary predetermination were presented (such as a political/belief survey gaging where the colonies were at on their need for more independence) would yield results to support their belief that this moment in time was of most important for radical change. However, any results would be inconclusive to a pro-Great Awakening ethos, as you cannot prove without a doubt the hearts and minds of individuals conclusively. I believe any sociologist would agree.

Sum of ratings: -

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Re: Key to the American Revolution

by [Jared Moore](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 10:20 PM

I enjoyed reading your post and seeing what you had to say. Because maybe the Awakening wasn't the main reason for revolution there is no denying it was a reason for it. The Awakening awoke the idea in people of wanting to think for themselves and the ideas of being free to change things. The passion for change and idea that the individual can think for and reason for themselves led to wanting to protect individual freedoms given to us by God. It, as the name suggests, awoke a passion and ideas that weren't seen before and played a role in the revolution that came in later years.

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Lack of ties between the American Revolution and the Great Awakening

by [Kathy Holmes](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 9:50 PM

I agree most with Professor Jon Butler's position that the Great Awakening has little to do with the American Revolution. Although Professor Bonomi made some great points I felt more of an emotionally driven stance in Prof. Butlers work which sucked me in. The reason his response was more intriguing to me was that he addressed arguments from the other side and refuted all of those points that he brought up which made me feel as though his work was well researched. His work felt like less of a document telling me why I should believe him and more of a document giving me all the facts and letting me make my own informed opinion although he was biased.

One point that solidified my understanding of his stance was "... it is obvious that revivals "swept" only some of the mainland colonies..." (pg 7 par 2) then he goes on to explain what this means for the colonies. This really stood out to me, breaking it down by state helped sway my opinion.

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Re: Lack of ties between the American Revolution and the Great Awakening

by [Geoffrey Cannon](#) - Friday, October 19, 2018, 11:51 PM

Addressing the arguments from the other side is important in a debate. Butler captured that when he made it clear at the start that "Three points seem especially common" (Yes, No Debate Pg. 6) and then proceeded to not attack but rather challenge the points given. He doesn't deny that there was an impact, but that the impact is simply over-exaggerated. A later quote of this that reaffirms what he said on pg 7 is, "They appeared too erratically in too few colonies..." reinstating that it was not as large as some historians may claim. Overall I agree with your post, especially on the fact of the opposing arguments were referenced and contrasted to his own views and research.

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Re: Lack of ties between the American Revolution and the Great Awakening

by [Kathy Holmes](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 2:44 PM

After reading "The Great Awakening As Interpretive Fiction" I believed that The Great Awakening was not a key factor in the American Revolution. After viewing the other resources, I have the same view point. As John Butler states "...they were political leaders who happened to be New Lights and Presbyterians rather than Presbyterians and New Lights who happened to be politicians" (pg 9 paragraph 2) this reminds us that the anger that caused the Revolution was more connected to the political aspect not the religious one. So although it may seem that religion played a part in the cause of the American Revolution, I don't think it was a key contributor because I think it would have caused a more focused idea about religion during the Revolution among Americans.

On the Great Awakening website, (<http://www.great-awakening.com/roots-of-revolution/>) they seem to be taking the view point that the Great Awakening was a key factor in the American Revolution, which has me conflicted in my stance. The article states "Eventually, this religious zeal turned to revolution and sentiments of self-governance." (Religious Uniformity, Paragraph 2) they then follow it up with talking about John Adams giving credit to the Great Awakening, and people in England calling the revolution the "Presbyterian Rebellion" (Religious Uniformity, Paragraph 3)

For me I feel like the connection between the Great Awakening and The American Revolution is pretty stringy, it doesn't seem like a sturdy argument and I am not completely on board with it but I can't put my finger on why. There is plenty of information supporting the claim but I am still not convinced.

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Re: Lack of ties between the American Revolution and the Great Awakening

by [Emily Barber](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 2:44 PM

Kathy, I couldn't agree more with your post. We are on the same page with agreeing with Jon Bulter over Patricia Bonomi. I also agree that Patricia made some good points, however when I read Jon's article, it made more sense to me than Patricia's did. Not only did Jon focus on the hurricane phrases (like swept) like you briefly mentioned, he also talked about how historians didn't explain it right, at least that is what I'm understanding from this sentence, "No one would seriously question the existence of the Great Awakening if historians only describe it as a short-lived Calvinist revival in New England during the early 1740's" (pg6 par 2). I feel as though Jon was saying we didn't get the full story of the Great Awakening because historians knew the readers wouldn't question the awakening if they described it as something else like the "short-lived Calvinists". I realized this after I re-read Jon's article and wasn't quite sure how I skipped over it the first time, I'm curious as to what you think of this sentence and if you perceive it the same way I did.

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Re: Lack of ties between the American Revolution and the Great Awakening

by [Ian Epperson](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:32 PM

I agree with your point about a shaky impact left behind on the part of the revival's leadership. Butler says about one of the leaders (touted as being a key factor in the revival's sweeping popularity) George Whitefield as, "never organized and coordinated revivals throughout the colonies or even throughout New England. Since most of his major works were not printed in his lifetime, even his intellectual leadership in American theology occurred in the century after his

death."(pg.7) The timeline of impact and who's who starts to become muddy and hard to corroborate. I noticed there were multiple times that people talk about a lasting effect, but I feel like it could be contributed to impressions left by their leaders not taking hold amongst their potential congregation until later in the century.

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Re: Lack of ties between the American Revolution and the Great Awakening

by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:37 PM

I think sometimes when we read the thing challenging our viewpoint last, that it tends to stick with us. I had to think very long and hard about what I truly thought regarding this topic, and I came to the conclusion that I disagree with you. Even if it swept "some" of the colonies, THERE WASN'T THAT MANY colonies. It's not like if we said "a few states" when discussing our nation as it is today. I think by using this wording we undermine the percentage of space over which this movement occurred.

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The Side I Choose

by [Jared Moore](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 11:40 PM

After reading both sides of the argument "Was the Great Awakening a Key to the American Revolution?" I wasn't sure what side to stand on. Both sides made good points and presented good reasons for why they believe what they believed on the question at hand. The most difficult part about choosing was what the experts were presenting. On the side of "Yes" (Patricia Bonomi) what I saw being presented most was a focus on what was actually believed or results from the beliefs of The Great Awakening. While on the side of "No" (Jon Butler) I saw more presentation on the areas the Great Awakening happened and whether the Great Awakening was even that great.

Patricia Bonomi talked quite a bit about the overall message of the Great Awakening. In the fourth paragraph of the third page of the reading Bonomi goes into detail about how the different sides were set up, and what they each believed. One side liked the idea of religion being carried out like government where a group decides rules and all have to follow regardless if they believed or not. While the other side believed more in the right to question and refuse the rules of the authority. Yet the revivalists claimed the liberty "to question and judge all, and refuse[d] Subjection to every proper Judicature." (Page 3) The belief of the individual to decide for themselves and think for themselves was something that many had never even considered as a possibility before.

"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."

This exert from page 4 paragraph 3 really stood out to me. For the first time the people were thinking about how they could rule and choose their own path to live by and thinking of how their actions effected them more then how it effected the whole. This kind of thinking hadn't been seen before and was partly the basis of the American Revolution. The Revolution was built on the idea that people would be able to set their own rules and govern themselves. They would be able to think for themselves and be individuals when it came to deciding rules. These beliefs are still found today. We as a people have a say in rules that are allowed or who is chosen to male the rules. We can question the authority and work to change it if we do not agree with it. The fore fathers of America wanted the ability to do this and they weren't allowed these freedoms that we take for granted. We can't fully imagine not being able to think and decide things for ourselves. There was a time where that wasn't the case. The Great Awakening and the ideas that were taught and brought about from the Awakening were, in my opinion, a strong basis for the American Revolution. So I would say I agree with Bonomi that yes it did have an effect. While I do see Butler's point that it might not have been as large or collective as some historians say it was. It wasn't the size of it, it was the effects that it had on people. They ability and effect of getting people to think that made the most impact. A lasting impact that helped start the Revolution that led to the great country that we have now and the truths, freedoms, and rights we have now.

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A great educational awakening

by [Christine Macfarlane](#) - Thursday, October 18, 2018, 12:19 AM

I agree with Patricia Bonomi's assertion that the Great Awakening seen in North America around the mid-18th century was a precipitous event for the American Revolution.

Around the end of the Great Awakening, it was apparent that although “the floodtide of evangelical fervor soon subsided,” according to Bonomi, “nothing could quite restore the old cultural landscape.” (Was the Great Awakening a Key to the American Revolution?, page 5) The historical consequences of the Great Awakening encompassed religious life, trade between colonies, political culture, and perhaps most of all higher education and the establishment of world-class colleges and universities along the north Atlantic Coast. (Liberty, Equality, Power, pages 135-137) Prior to this time in American history, North American universities included only Harvard University, Williams & Mary College, and Yale University. During the Great Awakening, the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), the College of Rhode Island (now Brown University), Queens College (now Rutgers University), Dartmouth College, the College of Philadelphia (now UPENN), and King’s College (now Columbia University) were all established and created by faith leaders of the Great Awakening. (Liberty, Equality, Power, pages 135-136)

These institutions were not only educating ministers, they were educating the citizens and founding fathers of the early United States. According to our textbook, few of these university’s students actually chose careers as ministers. (Liberty, Equality, Power, page 137) So while that may have been the original intention, it resulted in an increase in elite educational opportunities for men such as Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin to receive formal educations which then paved the way for the roles they played in shaping the country during the American Revolution.

As Bonomi writes: “This last notion captures vividly the new spirit of defiant individualism that was one of the most radical manifestations of the Awakening... In a word, decision making had been internalized.” (Was the Great Awakening a Key to the American Revolution?, pages 4-5) This “spirit of defiant individualism” was at the heart of the American Revolution, and was bolstered by the country’s founding fathers’ access to the very institutes of higher education established as byproduct of the Great Awakening.

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Re: A great educational awakening

by [Christine Macfarlane](#) - Friday, October 19, 2018, 12:16 AM

It also occurs to me that the proliferation of institutions of higher education during the Great Awakening had an ancillary effect on American political culture: the fraternization of revolutionary leaders and this country’s founding fathers during their time at university must have been profoundly formative. It’s hard to imagine that early signs of dissent weren’t taking root at these universities in the years leading up to the Revolution.

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Religious Turmoil in the Colonies and it's small impact on the American Revolution

by [Geoffrey Cannon](#) - Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 11:55 PM

The 1700s can be viewed as a revolutionary time in the New World. One of the events, the Great Awakening, certainly had its effect on the road of progress in the colonies. It is a matter of how much of an impact did the Great Awakening have on colonial life. As by Professor Bonomi’s words, “The separating brethren grew in number until thousands of Congregationalists throughout the North...” (The Great Awakening Yes, No Debate, Pg.4) makes this whole matter seem large in scale during the 1740s, and it may have been. However, as Professor Butler explains, “Yet even if one were to argue that ‘the Great Awakening’ persisted... it is obvious that revivals ‘swept’ only some of the mainland colonies” (Yes, no debate, Pg.7) stating that the matter was not as large as some historians claim it to be. Butler doesn’t deny that there were revivals in certain colonies, but he does try and make it clear that some aspects of the Great Awakening are exaggerated.

While Professor Patricia Bonomi makes some great points in her argument of “the Great Awakening’s” impact on religious sectors, I do not necessarily agree that this was a rehearsal against English rule. I align more with Professor Jon Butler’s take on the matter than Bonomi’s take. Butler makes a point of stating that while Virginia was affected by political change brought on by the Baptist revivals, their connection to the Revolution is weakened by the Anglican aristocracy in Virginia who led the

Revolution. (yes, no debate, pg. 10) As John Murrin states, "This Great Awakening shattered some denominational loyalties in the colonies...." (Liberty, Equality, Power, pg.131) The Great Awakening did leave a mark on American History, though I do wonder, and I am still not certain on what the total effect was on the American Revolution.

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Re: Religious Turmoil in the Colonies and it's small impact on the American Revolution

by [Geoffrey Cannon](#) - Friday, October 19, 2018, 11:26 PM

After accessing the new material to review, I feel more confident in the idea that the Great Awakening may have had some influences on the American Revolution. The Great awakening website phrases it as, "a rebellion against authoritarian religious rule which spilled over into other areas of colonial life" (greatawakening.com) and I agree with that statement. From what has been stated in practically all the readings and video is this rising of religious views that may have sparked a new mindset in the Colonists daily lives. Though I still wonder how much of an effect it had. One thing that truly caught my eye in the Great Awakening's website was the comparison between Roman Catholicism and King George the III. (greatawakening.com) While I can see the colonists aligning against George the III, I feel that there are more important sparks behind the fire of revolution than the new ideas on religion.

Most historians and authors that have been presented believe that the Great Awakening was the vital spark of the American Revolution. As Barry Hankins of Baylor University states, "It was that event that began many people on the path to thinking of themselves as a separate people, as a people" (First Great Awakening Video, 5:55). It was that statement that caught my attention and made me wonder if it may have been a more serious part of the Revolution than I had thought before. In the end however, I am still divided on my approach to this matter. I believe that the Great Awakening had a part in the American Revolution; However, I question how big of a role it truly played.

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Re: Religious Turmoil in the Colonies and it's small impact on the American Revolution

by [Kathy Holmes](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 3:00 PM

I am in the same boat, I feel the Great Awakening had a role in the American Revolution but I don't think it was a key factor. I think the more people became aware of the differences in religion the more they most likely became more aware of other things which led to the Revolution. "Some of the religious associations that came out of the great awakening was the first time that people had been on the same page" (5:40) Which makes me feel as though this may have overall torn people apart it also brought them together in a larger sense. "The first Great Awakening was that event that for many people on the path thinking about 'a people' for the first time because this was the first national event in America" (5:56) which would make them feel more unified. I think after hearing this I have a more steady view point on the idea that the Great Awakening was not a key factor but like stated at the end of the video more of a backdrop to the American Revolution (6:37)

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Re: Religious Turmoil in the Colonies and it's small impact on the American Revolution

by [Marisa Owsley](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:28 PM

I also think that the Great Awakening was part of the revolution, but that there were also other factors. The reason I agreed with it being a key in the beginning was because of all the emphasis put on the religious aspects of the time. Once the other factors were pointed out, I realized that the Great Awakening was only one factor in sparking the American Revolution.

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Re: Religious Turmoil in the Colonies and it's small impact on the American Revolution

by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:41 PM

I think one important thing to note in why it was a factor is that there was other effects as well. One example of these other residual effects was the fact that more universities were founded/opened. Knowledge in my opinion leads to power, and when "individuals" have power, you can rest assured that things might get messy.

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by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Thursday, October 18, 2018, 8:21 PM

The website www.great-awakening.com/roots-of-revolution seems to support the position that the Great Awakening was a key to the American Revolution. In the opening paragraph, the website states that "The major effect of the awakening was a rebellion against the authoritarian religious rule which spilled over into other areas of colonial life," I think this is an appropriate summary. I believe that once the colonists realized that they had the power within them to choose their own religious sects, and to break from the traditional churches that they had always attended, this then led to an overall change in attitude regarding their status as a people. In the video "The First Great Awakening," Barry Hankins, Associate Professor of History and Church/State Studies at Baylor University explains, "The first Great Awakening was that event that began many people on the path to thinking of themselves as a separate people, as a people for the first time, because this was the first national event in American history," (Video 5:55).

To think of the Great Awakening as the first *national event* put things into perspective for me. Although the United States of America had yet to be formally created, this was one of the first examples of the colonies coming together for a common cause. "Ethnic barriers, racial barriers, gender barriers were cut across the line in the Awakening," (Stephen Stookey, Associate Professor of Church History, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Video 5:38). This movement clearly brought people together in the colonies, if not to the same religious sect, then to the idea that they did not have to continue doing things the way that they had always been done. It was a powerful time in our Nation's history and I believe it was absolutely essential in molding the people of the Revolution.

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Roots of religious diversity in America

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Friday, October 19, 2018, 1:50 PM

One of the most interesting aspects of the Great Awakening to me is the religious diversity that it started in America. Today it is common to hear the term "melting pot" in reference to this country, and I believe that the Great Awakening is where a lot of the religious melting began. Karen Bullock, Associate Professor of Church History at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary reminds us, "The first Great Awakening, it's important to remember, was an across-denominational event for Americans," (Video 5:00). This was a movement that touched a wide range of people in the colonies and it helped to create a number of religious sects. The effect that these sects had on the future United States of America was profound. People in the colonies did not want a national church or a nation run by the clergy. "Above all the effect of revivalism was a change in power from the hands of the clergy into the hands of the congregation," (www.great-awakenings.com). This new attitude toward religion then transferred naturally to a new attitude toward government. William Knox is quoted on www.great-awakenings.com as saying "Every man being thus allowed to be his own pope, he becomes disposed to wish to become his own King."

The religious diversity in the colonies that resulted from the Great Awakening are explained well in this passage from www.great-awakenings.com, "The splits in churches that revivalism had caused prevented uniformity in religion from becoming a reality. While groups such as Quakers and Anglicans still existed in areas, none could rise to dominate the religious scene and become the primary American religion." When the American Revolution finally began, the founding fathers saw the diversity of religion in this country as a strength. They did not wish to build a nation on the foundation of a national church, but rather to build one where religious diversity was key. "It was not to any church that the signers of the Declaration of Independence appealed to, but directly to the 'Supreme Judge of the World,'" (www.great-awakenings.com). Today we celebrate diversity in America. While there are plenty of subjects within our history that can be used to point out where we as a nation got it wrong, I believe that this is one area where we certainly got it right. There was still room for improvement, but the Great Awakening put forth a period of religious diversity that helped shape the country that we live in today.

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Re: Roots of religious diversity in America

by [Kathy Holmes](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 3:22 PM

The reference to the melting pot is a great one! "The revivals created new cosmopolitan links with Britain and between colonies" (Liberty, Equality, Power Pg. 135) I think this backs that up. As the denominations of religious beliefs began to spread and mix throughout the country it became more of an accepted ideology. :in 1700 the three strongest denominations had been the Congregationalists in New England, the Quakers in the Delaware Valley, and the Anglicans in the south. By 1800, all three had lost ground to newcomers: the Methodists... the Baptists... and the Presbyterians" (pg 137) This gives us an idea of the ebb and flow that religion had during this time period and how just like in today's world things are constantly changing and we are I think all trying to find some sort of common ground even if we aren't in agreement.

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Re: Roots of religious diversity in America

by [Christine Macfarlane](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:54 PM

I really enjoyed reading this. You make some great points. Not sure how I missed this post earlier in the week. These points you make really strongly support the fact that Great Awakening was a major factor in the years leading up to the American Revolution.

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Religious Influence

by [Kathleen Gilbert](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 1:37 PM

After reading more about the Great Awakening and all that this historical event entailed, I am still convinced that the values and practices during this time in history were stepping stones for the American Revolution. I found an article from National Endowment of Humanities titled "Religion and Revolution" by Aia Hussein. The article has plenty of relevant information about the Great Awakening and the religious impacts on that led to the American Revolution that was helpful to me in better understanding this event.

Hussein talks about the religious factors that are overlooked by some historians in interpreting this event. "The colonials' religious situation is what led Edmund Burke, an eighteenth-century pro-American member of the English Parliament, to say that the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement of the principle of resistance: it is the dissidence of dissent, and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion." Hussein mentions that this supported the theory that many historians have come to as well, that "the American independence movement was in accordance with the colonists' religious beliefs." (Hussein). While the American Revolution may have had some political influences, the Great Awakening was such a significant religious movement that it was basically the first call to action and challenge against leaders and religion leading up to the American Revolution. I may have to do more reading, but I don't recall a more significant event that influences the people so greatly as the Great Awakening did.

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The Great Earthquake

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 4:04 PM

After reading the text "Was the Great Awakening a key to the American Revolution?" and viewing this debate from a number of different sources, I became curious about the reference to "...Smallpox and earthquake alarms that filled meetinghouses to overflowing..." (*Was the Great Awakening a key to the American Revolution?* Page 2). I did some research on the earthquake reference and came up with an article on the New England Historical Society's website title "The Great 1727 Earthquake and the Wrath of God," which can be found here: <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/great-1727-earthquake-wrath-god/>

The article explains that there was a great earthquake on the night of November 10, 1727 (Gregorian calendar), with the epicenter located somewhere off the coast of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The quake was felt from Maine to Connecticut, and as far north as Canada. This earthquake was unlike any that New Englanders had ever experienced before, and it led many to take it as a sign of God's anger. Cotton Mather is quoted in the article reporting that "A horrid rumbling noise of many coaches together driving on paved stones with the utmost rapidity," came and rocked the night. Mather continued, "What added unto the terrors of it, were the terrible flames of light in the atmosphere, which accompanied it. The vessels on the coast were also made sensible of it by shivering that seized them." The article goes on to relate that "After the 1727 earthquake subsided, Newcastle, N.H., residents gathered outside and observed an eerie occurrence. In the church tower, the bell rang out. While some believed it was simply the result of the tower having been

shaken, others insisted it was a supernatural act." It's easy for me to imagine the fear that these people felt by this unexplained occurrence. It seemed natural to some colonists to point to an angry God as having caused the quake. I think this is only a small factor in the overall discussion of the Great Awakening, but I don't think it should be overlooked.

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Re: The Great Earthquake

by [Christine Macfarlane](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:55 PM

Interesting, thanks for sharing.

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Key factor for today.

by [Carmen DeLaCruz](#) - Saturday, October 20, 2018, 9:23 PM

The Great Awakening profoundly enriched the lives of the settlers. They were able to find a newfound spiritual and personal liberation. Although I believe that this was a key factor leading up to the American Revolution, I can understand both sides of this argument. I appreciate the religious diversity we freely have in our country today. The Great Awakening began that process of religious diversity. Although some religions still may suffer persecution, the settlers paved the way for us today. The practices and values of the early settlers was a key factor for the American revolution and for today.

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Re: Key factor for today.

by [Jared Moore](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 10:48 PM

The Great Awakening did have effects on the American Revolution and did set a basis for the religious liberties we enjoy today. A big reason for the liberties we have were because of the rights given to us by God and the belief in these rights. The rights that were also alive during the Awakening and led to the beliefs for the Revolution. These beliefs were what led to the Revolution and that gave us the freedoms we have today and the protected rights to religious freedom and to believe what we choose to.

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Re: The Great Awakening

by [Jessica Bene](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 2:29 AM

In my first post, I said that I wasn't which side I agreed with and that was mainly due to the fact that I hate making decisions based on one or two sources. I wanted to read about the Great Awakening in more depth than was discussed in the textbook and the article [Was the Great Awakening a Key to the American Revolution](#). After now reading all sources I have made my decision.

I had been caught off guard by my final thoughts in this subject matter because while reading Bonomi's side of the argument it was very much cemented in the religious aspects of the revival, and while the Great Awakening is considered a religious revival of the colonial people I think it is important to recognize and consider that perhaps the awakening that was the most important was that of the freedom of thought.

While I've learned about the Great Awakening many times before it wasn't until this week that I feel I have truly understood its importance in the grand scheme of the American people and their rise to a country. While awakening their spirits to a new way of religion and viewing God, they were also obtaining an awakening of the mind to think for themselves and make decisions for the good of themselves and not just the good of the community. This idea of making their own decisions for just themselves was something that I don't think anyone in the great awakening was prepared for.

With the effects of fleeing religious persecution still in their mind, it makes sense that a movement based on a personal journey through religion would be enticing. *"By promoting church separations and urging their follower's to make choices that had political as well as religious implications, the Awakeners wrought permanent changes in public practices and attitudes."* (Patrica U. Bonomi) This idea stuck with the people not only because of those who wanted religious freedom but because the revivalists stood for and defended the rights of minors and *"characterized the authority against which they were rebelling as illegitimate, even tyrannical"*(Patrica U. Bonomi)

The Great Awakening was key to the American Revolution because it set up the colonies to be the America it needed to be when the Revolution began. It helped to set up key principals that the united states are built on religious freedom, and the ability to think and make decisions for one's self, without having to rely on anyone else. These things would help to unify the colonies and bring them together as a whole people group rather than just separate colonies who happen to be in the same place.

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Re: The Great Awakening

by [Marisa Owsley](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:32 PM

I also have a hard time with only two reference to go off of. Before I made my first post, I tried doing a little more research on my own and came across the website that we were given. That website influenced my decision quiet a bit. I do agree with the fact that that the Great Awakening was a big part of the American Revolution, however, after doing more reading and research, I also think that there were more factors to it than just the religious aspects of the time.

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Re: The Great Awakening

by [Geoffrey Cannon](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:35 PM

When you are handed two differing sources, it can be difficult to ascertain which is the correct side. Sometimes it can even be a mixture between the two views. One key resource to determine which side has more of a basis, is using the first and second person accounts from the colonists and "outsiders." British Statesman William Knox makes a great point by stating "Every man being thus allowed to be his own pope, he becomes disposed to wish to become his own king"(great-awakening.com). This was one of the more convincing quotes to me from the articles. John Adams also showed his belief in favor of the great awakening according to the website. When a well known figure shows their support or belief in a matter, it is easier to see which side of the road they stand on; It may even change how a person views a particular matter. The video "First Great Awakening" also made a few great statement towards the end of the video from 5:50 to 6:20 that really point out the unity felt by the colonists of the time.

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Historians FOR the Great Awakening being influential

by [Colleen Young](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 7:30 PM

After watching The First Great Awakening video, I am convinced that the historians are on the side of the Great Awakening being a key factor leading up to and foreshadowing the American Revolution. Many of the conversions by Jonathan Edwards had a ripple effect on society. It is mentioned that the Great Awakening "stimulates religious fervor" and "authenticates religious practices of working or lower class" (2:58). Historian Karen Bullock mentions that it was a cross-denominational event for Americans (4:56) They go on to explain that the first Great Awakening lead to people dividing themselves and thinking of themselves as a separate people, which led to the expansion of independence as well as individualism (and therefore overthrowing governments). This is considered the first national event in American history. These historians think of the first Great Awakening as a precursor to the American Revolution.

In our textbooks, the historians appear to be taking the side of the Great Awakening contributing greatly to the American Revolution. They talk about the revivals and the lasting consequences of them. They introduce it as "an immense religious revival (that) swept across the Protestant world" (p 131). They speak of disruptions in the revivals, and radical preachers striking up controversy. For example, Hugh Bryan, a planter from South Carolina, preached evangelical messages to his slaves. In 1742 he condemned slavery as a sin and warned of God's wrath, claiming himself as an "American Moses." He continued to convert his slaves but it was decided that he was delusional.

By almost the 1780s, there were more Methodists than Baptists, and the revivals, Britain, and the colonies created ties. The historians of our textbook continue to go back to religion and the underlying effects of the revivals.

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Great Awakening website, for or against?

by [Colleen Young](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 8:03 PM

As soon as I read the first paragraph on the Great Awakening website, I could instantly tell that the historians behind this believe that the Great Awakening was, as they label it, "the roots of revolution." It is mentioned that pluralism within the colonies sparked revolution: "the colonists adhered to no single denomination. The splits in churches that revivalism had caused prevented uniformity in religion from becoming a reality."

One point that helped influence my decision was that children were swayed by revivalism and carried it on later in life in the American Revolution, mimicking the self-righteousness and radicalism of their parents and grandparents.

After gathering information from these different sources and reading the posts of others in the forum, my opinion is semi-deterred. I don't think that the revivals and religion were the only influences and sparks of the American Revolution, but they are certainly important in the history of our country and people on the road to self-discovery and radicalism.

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key factors

by [Marisa Owsley](#) - Sunday, October 21, 2018, 9:16 PM

After looking at the rest of the material on the Great Awakening, I still believe that it was a factor in starting the American Revolution. Throughout the readings and video more information was presented for both sides. I do think that there were more factors that helped spark the American Revolution, but the fact remains that the Great Awakening was one big factor. The website we were given to look at seemed to also think that the Great Awakening was a key to starting the revolution. In the first paragraph it comes out and says: "The major effect of the Awakening was a rebellion against authoritarian religious rule which spilled over into other areas of colonial life." "Though a religious movement, the Awakening had repercussions in cultural and political spheres as well. Customs of civility and courtesy, the governing norms of life in the colonies, were set aside in favor of a more quarrelsome age. Practices and mind-sets were changed by the Awakening like never before". The fact that civility and courtesy were set aside shows that the people fighting for a change would do anything for that to happen.

I think if the question was "Do you think the Great Awakening was a FACTOR in starting the American Revolution?", then almost everyone would agree that it was at least one of the factors that started it. However the question was if it was a KEY to the American Revolution, and that is where the debate starts.

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