



Background and Context of the Methodist or Wesley Revival from 18th Century

Description

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The Methodist or Wesley Revival was a significant movement in the 18th century, rooted in the passionate preaching and organizational skills of John Wesley and his brother Charles Wesley. This revival not only transformed the religious landscape of Britain but also had a profound impact on social justice, education, and the spread of evangelical Christianity.

Historical Context

The 18th century in England was a period marked by social upheaval, the rise of industrialization, and widespread spiritual lethargy. The Anglican Church, which was the established church, often seemed disconnected from the needs of the common people. In this environment, the Wesley brothers, influenced by their pietistic upbringing and their time at Oxford University, sought to rekindle a vibrant and practical Christianity.

John and Charles Wesley

John Wesley, an Anglican clergyman, and his brother Charles, a prolific hymn writer, were the central figures of this revival. Their “Holy Club” at Oxford was the

seedbed of the movement, emphasizing disciplined spiritual practice, charitable works, and the pursuit of personal holiness. John Wesley's extensive itinerant preaching took him to the fields, marketplaces, and industrial towns where traditional church settings were absent.

Key Features of the Revival

1. Field Preaching and Evangelism

John Wesley's method of open-air preaching was revolutionary. Inspired by Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Wesley took the gospel to the people, saying, "The world is my parish." This approach drew large crowds and made the gospel accessible to those who might never enter a church.

2. Class Meetings and Societies

Wesley established small groups called "class meetings" where individuals could gather for mutual support, accountability, and spiritual growth. These meetings reflected the early Christian practice of communal life, as seen in Acts 2:42-47.

3. Social Reform and Charity

The revival was not limited to spiritual renewal but extended to social action. Influenced by passages like James 1:27, which emphasizes caring for orphans and widows, Methodists were active in addressing social injustices such as poverty, slavery, and lack of education.

Theology and Emphasis

The Wesleyan revival emphasized the doctrine of "Christian perfection" or "holiness," which encouraged believers to strive for a state of perfect love and purity of heart, as outlined in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. This focus on sanctification was coupled with an Arminian theological framework, which contrasted with the prevailing Calvinist doctrines of the time, particularly regarding predestination and free will.

Impact and Legacy

The impact of the Wesleyan revival was far-reaching. It sparked the creation of the Methodist Church, which became a global movement with millions of adherents. The revival also contributed to the broader evangelical movement, inspiring figures like George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. Moreover, the social reforms initiated by the Methodists laid the groundwork for future movements such as the abolition of slavery and the establishment of educational institutions.

Conclusion

The Methodist or Wesley Revival of the 18th century was a dynamic force for spiritual renewal and social change. Grounded in biblical principles and driven by the tireless efforts of John and Charles Wesley, this movement left an indelible mark on Christian history and continues to inspire believers today.

Salvation Prayers : Dear Lord Jesus, I come to you today acknowledging my need for salvation. I confess that I have sinned and fallen short of your glory. But I believe that you died for my sins and rose again. I ask that you come into my heart and be my Lord. I commit to following you and living for you every day. Thank you for your love and for the gift of eternal life. In your name I pray, Amen. **Amen** [If you prayed the above prayers kindly click here to get more information](https://www.xgospel.net/harvest_form/form/?page=0&salvation=true)
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Example: Joy, Love, 1 John 1:3

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Multiple Choice Questions

1. What was the primary method of preaching used by John Wesley during the revival?
 - a. Church sermons
 - b. Field preaching
 - c. Radio broadcasts

d. Online sermons

2. What was the name of the small groups established by Wesley for spiritual growth?

- a. Congregations
- b. Assemblies
- c. Class meetings
- d. Councils

3. Which biblical passage inspired Methodists to engage in social reform?

- a. John 3:16
- b. James 1:27
- c. Genesis 1:1
- d. Psalm 23

4. What doctrine emphasized by Wesley encouraged believers to strive for perfect love and purity of heart?

- a. Justification
- b. Baptism
- c. Christian perfection
- d. Communion

5. What theological framework did Wesleyan revival contrast with?

- a. Atheism
- b. Calvinism
- c. Catholicism
- d. Gnosticism

Discussion Questions

1. How did the social and economic context of 18th century England contribute to the success of the Wesleyan revival?

2. In what ways did John Wesley's itinerant preaching model reflect the ministry of Jesus and the apostles?

3. How do the principles of the Wesleyan revival apply to modern-day Christianity and social justice movements?

4. What challenges did the early Methodists face, and how did they overcome them?

5. How does the doctrine of Christian perfection influence personal and communal spiritual practices today?

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Who were the main leaders of the Methodist Revival?

A: The main leaders were John Wesley and his brother Charles Wesley.

Q: What is the significance of the term “Holy Club”?

A: The “Holy Club” was a group formed at Oxford University by the Wesleys, focusing on disciplined Christian living and charitable works, which laid the groundwork for the Methodist movement.

Q: How did the Wesleyan revival contribute to social reform?

A: The revival led to significant social reforms, including efforts to abolish slavery, alleviate poverty, and provide education, inspired by biblical teachings on justice and charity.

Q: What is the doctrine of Christian perfection?

A: The doctrine of Christian perfection, emphasized by John Wesley, teaches that believers can attain a state of perfect love and holiness in this life through sanctification.

Q: How did the Wesleyan revival impact the global Christian movement?

A: The revival resulted in the establishment of the Methodist Church, which grew into a global movement with millions of adherents and significantly influenced the broader evangelical movement.

Multiple Choice Answers

1. b. Field preaching
2. c. Class meetings
3. b. James 1:27
4. c. Christian perfection
5. b. Calvinism

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