THE CONTRIBUTION OF METHODISM TO AMERICAN REVIVALISM

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In memory of my father,

HASCAL JAMES WELLS,

this thesis is affectionately dedicated.

"If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

II Chronicles 7:14.

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INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject Introduced

American Christianity, as it developed through the years, is like a flowing mountain stream. As Samuel Eliot says,

> "It is one and the same stream from its highland source to its expanded power in the sea, and yet it is different in every mile of its flow from what it is in every other mile. It turns sharp corners in unexpected ways. Now it is calm and sluggish, and again it is vexed with rapids. Now it gathers itself with a pool so still that all movement seems to have ceased, and then with a new cascade is recreated. It knows the exhilaration of mingled continuity and new beginning."[1]

Although many have considered revivalism as having no legitimate place in the stream of American Christianity, William Warren Sweet asserts that revivalism represents the rapids in the stream and is therefore not only legitimate, but essential. In addition Sweet says,

> " . . . American revivalism might well be compared to the new cascade which recreates, even though at times its waters may have been difficult to control."[2]

Revivalism has played a great role in American Christianity. Many volumes have been written on this subject and yet there are many phases of American

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1. Samuel A. Eliot, Heralds of a Liberal Faith, Introduction.
2. William Warren Sweet, Revivalism in America, Preface, p. xv.

Revivalism that yet remain to be considered.[1]

One of the most important tributaries to the stream of American Christianity is Methodism. There is also much written concerning the history of Methodism in America, but here again there are many phases that have not been noticed.[2] Many of the contributions of Methodism have never received adequate historical recognition.[3] One phase which has been neglected is its contribution to revivalism. In view of these neglected elements, this thesis proposes to study the relation between Methodism and revivalism. The purpose of this study is to see the contribution of Methodism, one of the main tributaries of the stream, to American Revivalism, the new cascade which has served to recreate the stream of American Christianity.

B. The Significance of the Subject

Evangelism and revivalism are receiving more consideration today than perhaps at any other time in the Twentieth Century. Humanism, whether manifested as rationalism in the universities or modernism in the seminaries, has been in retreat since World War II.[4] "In

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1. Ibid., p. xiv.
2. James R. Joy, an authority on the history of Methodism, made this statement.
3. Wade Crawford Barclay, Early American Methodism, Vol. I, Part I, p. xv.
4. J. Edwin Orr, "Is America Seeing A New Awakening," United Evangelical Action, October 15, 1949, Vol. VIII, p. 5.

America," says J. Edwin Orr, "theologians are abandoning the facile modernism for neo-orthodoxy and many are swinging over to evangelism."[1] Evangelism is attracting hungry hearts in both camps. "If and when the Revival comes," says Orr, "it will bring a baptism of faith to the hungry modernist and a baptism of love to the hungry fundamentalist."[2] Bishop Stamm, the President of the Federal Council of Churches,[3] says, "A great responsibility rests upon Protestants to release the spiritual redemptive power at home, in schools and in industry."[4]

Nineteen hundred fifty marks the closing year of the first half of the Twentieth Century. Concerning the significance of this year Dr. Bader, Executive Secretary of the United Evangelical Advance,[5] says, "This last year should see the greatest moral and spiritual progress in this country that has ever been made in any like period."[6] Plans have been made a year in advance for

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. All of the main Methodist bodies belong to the Federal Council of Churches.
4. Bishop John S. Stamm, Federal Council Bulletin, December, 1949, p. 11.
5. The United Evangelistic Advance was launched in October, 1949 and will continue through 1950. This great evangelistic movement is participated in by thirty-eight communions with a total membership of 35,000,000. Also included in this sponsorship are the following: 740 Councils of Churches; 2,000 Ministerial Associations, the United Council of Church Women, the Home Missions Council and the International Council of Religious Education.
6. Jesse M. Bader, Federal Council Bulletin, December, 1949, p. 11.

evangelistic campaigns for nineteen hundred fifty.[1] Dr. Bader encourages every pastor to open nineteen hundred fifty by preaching from the text,

> "If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."[2]

Concerning a means of achieving a larger evangelism the Federal Council of Churches says,

> "The larger evangelism should include the holding of preaching missions or evangelistic meetings. Special seasons of evangelism are still effective; they do much to revive nominal church members. They strengthen the congregation numerically and spiritually. They produce a quickening of the moral life within the community."[3]

The Right Reverend Stephen Neill, representing the newly formed World Council of Churches, says, "Evangelism is

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1. There is a present movement entitled "Christ for America" which has strong teams of about ten evangelists who go out to different states and areas. A present plan is the "Christ for West Virginia" which will be held during the month of April, 1950. The actual campaigns will get under way immediately following a five day Spiritual Awakening and Evangelistic Conference to be held in Charleston, the capitol city of the state. Approximately one hundred fifty evangelical pastors will be brought together in this movement and give it support. The campaign proper will begin after a series of spiritual awakening rallies in town, cities, and villages throughout West Virginia. United Evangelical Action, Vol. VIII, Number 17, October 15, 1949, p. 9.
2. II Chronicles 7:14. (The American Standard Version of The Bible)
3. "The Present Summons to a Larger Evangelism," (a pamphlet giving an official utterance of the Federal Council on Evangelism, March 16, 1943).

the primary responsibility of all the churches."[1] He further states that every minister and layman of Christendom is an evangelist.

> "If he is a Christian he must be a witness. If he is not willing to be a witness, it is time that he gave up calling himself a Christian."[2]

Thus it is clear that evangelism and revivalism are receiving great attention today not only in America, but also in World Christianity. Therefore, in the light of current Christian thought, the subject of revivalism has great significance. Since Methodism is one of the outstanding churches in the present United Evangelical Advance, it is therefore significant to consider the relation of Methodism to American Revivalism. The real significant value of this study will be the finding of certain principles of evangelism or revivalism, contributed by Methodism in its past history, which are applicable to present evangelistic efforts. These principles are included in the summary and conclusion.

C. The Subject Delimited

The problem of this study is to define, examine, illustrate and interpret the contribution of Methodism to

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1. The Right Reverend Stephen Neill, Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, "Evangelism; the Primary Responsibility of All the Churches," p. 6.
2. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

American Revivalism. The omission of other churches is not intended to suggest that their contribution to revivalism is negligible. On the other hand, many of their contributions will be considered as they compliment and contrast those of Methodism.

This study deals necessarily with the periods in American Christianity when the revivals occurred. The period after the Civil War, when revivalism was on the wane, is considered only in a very brief manner.

D. The Sources of Data

The data for this thesis is drawn from both primary and secondary sources which are relevant to the subject. Primary sources are autobiographies, conference minutes, periodicals and original historical works such as the one by Jesse Lee.[1] Sources which are secondary include biographies, digests of diaries and journals, periodicals and some historical works. The material to be considered includes not only data on the history of Methodism, but also on American Revivalism.

In addition to these written sources, Dr. James R. Joy, Librarian and Historian of the Methodist Historical Society in the City of New York, has contributed to this study by giving many helpful suggestions.

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1. Jesse Lee, A Short History of the Methodists.

E. The Method of Procedure

In order to understand American Methodism it is necessary to study its background and beginnings in England. The first chapter deals largely with the beginnings of the Methodist Movement in England. Also included in this chapter, as background material for this study, is a brief survey of the history and character of Methodism in America.

The second chapter is a survey of the revivals in America. The third chapter is a study of the contributions of Methodism to American Revivalism. These contributions will be considered with the purpose of finding principles that are applicable in aiding the contemporary efforts of evangelism and revivalism not only in America, but also throughout the world; these principles will be given in the final chapter, the summary and conclusion.

It was Farrar who said,

> "Any one who is familiar with the lives of the chief church leaders will scarcely be ignorant of any event of capital importance which occurred during the epoch in which they lived."[1]

Since one of the great factors of Methodism is its outstanding men, this study will emphasize the biographies of these important men of Methodism and hence their contribution to American Revivalism.

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1. Adapted from Frederick W. Farrar, Quoted by Dean G. McKee, "The Library of a Teacher-Preacher," pp. 3-4.

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

A. Introduction

The contribution of Methodism to American Revivalism, if it is fully comprehended, must begin with an understanding of its beginnings especially in England and also in America. Although the emphasis of this study is primarily upon the American phase of Methodism, it is essential to perceive the reasons for the genesis and the success of the Methodist Movement in the mother country. Because of the importance of understanding the beginnings of Methodism in England to this study, the first portion of this chapter is devoted to a study of the background and reasons for the beginning and success of English Methodism. Since both British and American Methodism are in such a real sense Wesleyan,[1] one must first appreciate the founder, John Wesley, as well as other leaders of the movement. The study of these personalities who founded Methodism will be included in the first part of this chapter. The last part will be a brief survey of the history and character of Methodism in America. This survey will be traced in broad outline, especially in the

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1. Barclay, op. cit., Vol. 1, Part 1, p. XV.

period following 1844. A full account of the history of Methodism in America is beyond the purpose of this study, but more details of its history will be included in the next chapters as we see the contribution of Methodism to American Revivalism.

The purpose of this chapter is to give a brief historical background and to see the character of Methodism from its very beginning both in England and America. The understanding of its original character is essential to the study of its contribution to American Revivalism.

B. A Brief Study of the Beginnings of Methodism in England

This survey of the beginnings of Methodism in England will be suggestive rather than exhaustive, suggestive in the sense of showing the background of American Methodism by apprehending the character and purpose of its beginnings in the home country.

1. The Background and Reasons for the Beginning of the Methodist Movement in England

a. The Conditions Existing in England during the Eighteenth Century

Most historians, secular or religious, will agree that politically, socially, morally and spiritually England was sick in the Eighteenth Century. Religious and political controversies had left running sores.[1]

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1. Merrill E. Graves, Opposition to American Methodism, p. 2.

(1) The Political and Social Conditions in England

Horace Walpole is a typical figure in politics and his success was measured by his power to keep things as they were.[1] Although there was a very high level of artistic achievement in architecture, decoration and craftmanship, there was a very low level of political and social morality. Court and aristocracy alike were corrupt. Highway robbery was a normal event; Picadilly was unsafe after dark without an armed guard. Politics and social life suffered from the poverty of spiritual vision.[2]

(2) The Moral and Spiritual Conditions in England

The cause for such terrible political and social conditions was the low ebb of morality and religion. As Sidney Dimond says, ". . . the dominant feature in the character of the home country in the early Eighteenth Century was that of Spiritual stagnancy."[3] George Frazer says, "While there were many fine examples of personal devotion to Christ, the life of the Church of England had fallen into a period of spiritual darkness and desolation."[4] Deism was the "fashionable creed of the early

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1. Sidney G. Dimond, The Psychology of Methodism, p. 25.
2. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
3. Ibid., p. 23.
4. George Stanley Frazer, Methodism, Its History, Teaching and Government, p. 16.

years of the Eighteenth Century." [1] Perhaps no one has summed up the status of Christianity in England as well as Bishop Butler, one of the great thinkers of his day, who said, "Christianity seems at length to have been found out to be fictitious."[2] The religion of Wesley's age was lacking in any sense of immediate contact with the divine. Concerning this Barclay says,

> "The clergy of the Church of England--with some notable exceptions--did not think of religion or try to realize it or preach it as consisting in or as having the power of bringing men into an experience of personal fellowship with God. Enthusiasm in its root meaning of possession by the indwelling of God was an idea not only scouted but derided by the immense majority of the formal, self-satisfied churchmen of the time."[3]

Montesquieu, returning from a visit to England, bluntly declared that there was no religion in the country.[4]

The extreme devotion of John Wesley and his followers must be understood in the light of these conditions in England during the Eighteenth Century. The lives of Wesley and others were a continual protest against the moral evils and religious laxity of the time.[5]

Indeed, England in the Eighteenth Century was sick politically, socially, morally and spiritually. But Dr. Joy says,

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1. W. J. Townsend; H. B. Workman; G. Eayrs, editors, A New History of Methodism, Vol. I, p. 12.
2. Frazer, op. cit., p. 16.
3. Barclay, op. cit., p. xvi.
4. Dimond, op. cit., p. 25.
5. J. M. Buckley, A History of Methodists in the United States, Vol. V, p. 61.

> "Wesley . . . was the medicine for that sick country. It not only warmed the hearts, it cleared minds, calmed fears, soothed nerves, rebuked specific sins and kindled a love for ones' fellow men, which did not end in fruitless sentiment, but found expression in substantial acts of benevolence. He taught men--men at the very foot of the social ladder and with small opportunity or ambition to climb it--that they were sons of God, and that, though sinful by nature and choice, they might find pardon and peace, and the joyous assurance of divine acceptance. Not content with securing such change of heart--'conversion'--he insisted that the saved man should demonstrate the genuiness of his faith by bringing forth 'works meet for repentance'."[1]

At the close of the Eighteenth Century, England was a changed nation, politically, socially, morally and spiritually. This reformation of a whole nation was made possible by the reformation and new birth of the individual.[2] Most historians agree that this change in England can be attributed to John Wesley and his followers.

b. The Reasons for the Beginning of the Methodist Movement in England

(1) England Yearned for a Change

The conditions existing in England give ample evidence that there was not only a need, but a great desire for a change, especially among the people of the lower class. This yearning was something that was felt inwardly, for outwardly there was opposition to a message that "disturbed the consciences alike of the churchmen

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1. James Richard Joy, John Wesley's Awakening, p. 9.
2. Dimond, op. cit., p. 76.

and the unchurched."[1] Woodrow Wilson asserts that it was the terrible earnestness and sincerity which carried overwhelming conviction that caused the doors of the churches to be shut against him--his preaching with "so disturbing a force and directness, as if he had come to take the peace of the church away and stir men to a great spiritual revolution."[2]

Although the Church of England shut its doors to Wesley and the mobs hurled stones until the "Apostle Paul of England" fell to the ground,[3] even yet there was a basic hunger among the English people for a change. This inner hunger becomes evident in the tremendous response that is given to the message of Wesley and his followers.

> ". . . the work of Wesley," Dimond says, "taking its place as a part of a comprehensive change of life and thought . . . marked the end of an old order and the creation of the modern world. Within the three kingdoms, Wesley's tours in town and village were welcomed by those who hungered for justice and spiritual freedom; they were hated and opposed by those who were vicious and depraved, or complacent and selfish, yet many of these were converted."[4]

(2) John Wesley Yearned to Change England

As Jesus, following His baptism and temptation,

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1. Barclay, op. cit., p. xvii.
2. Woodrow Wilson, John Wesley's Place in History, p. 27.
3. Wesley's Journal describes no less than sixty riots. At Walshall, in Saffordshire, for example, he found the street "full of fierce Ephesian beasts" who "roared and shouted and threw stones incessantly," beating him down three times.
4. Dimond, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

"came into Galilee, preaching,"[1] so Wesley, after his conversion experience, came preaching into every city, town, and village in England.[2] For more than fifty years he preached an average of eight hundred sermons annually. Habitually he preached at five o'clock in the morning. Even at the age of eighty-five in one period of eight weeks, he preached eighty times.[3] His preaching journeys involved from four to eight thousand miles in a year and most of this was done on horseback.[4] His energy and vigor of spirit seem never to have been flagged.[5]

John Wesley was exceedingly anxious to change his country. The success seems to indicate that in the providence of God this was "a man sent from God whose name was John"[6]--not only to rescue his church from dead formalism, but also to save his nation by making glad the hearts of men with the tidings of salvation.[7]

England was hungry for the message of Wesley and he and his followers in turn were hungry, even feeling compelled to preach the Gospel in order to bring God into the consciousness, the conduct and the character of

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1. Mark 1:14. (The Revised Standard Version of the New Testament)
2. Barclay, op. cit., p. xvi.
3. Ibid.
4. George Eayrs, Letters of John Wesley, p. 11.
5. Robert Southey says, ". . . his manners were almost irresistibly winning and his cheerfulness was like perpetual sunshine."
   Robert Southey, Life of Wesley and Rise and Progress of Methodism, Vol. I, p. 409.
6. John 1:6. (The Revised Standard Version of the New Testament)
7. Frazer, op. cit., p. 17.

individual men and women of all England.[1]

2. The Reasons for the Success of the Methodist Movement in England

Although the reasons for the success of the Methodist Movement are somewhat similar to the causes for its beginning, they go deeper and are more varied. What caused this movement to spread from the seemingly insignificant Holy Club at Oxford and its humble beginning in the Foundry at Moorefields,[2] to its revolutionizing force throughout England?[3] One of the main causes for its success is found in its early leadership.

a. The Evangelical and Consecrated Founders of the Methodist Movement

The story of Methodism is an excellent illustration of Carlyle's theory of progress, according to which "universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in their world, is at the bottom the history of the great men who worked here."[4] In the founding of Methodism the three great figures are: John Wesley, the genius of

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1. Barclay, op. cit., p. xvi.
2. The first Methodist Society was founded at Moorfields, England, November 11, 1739.
3. An underlying cause for its success that will not be considered here was the transitional time in which it came. Dimond says, "The Evangelical Revival and the development of Methodism coincided with the Industrial Revolution and creation of the British Empire overseas, and with the transition from old European feudalism to the new democracy."
   Dimond, op. cit., p. 21.
4. Dimond, op. cit., Quoting Carlyle, p. 28.

the movement; Charles Wesley, the poet; and George Whitefield, the impassioned orator.[1] Emphasis here is given to John Wesley, for Methodism reflects his genius.

(1) John Wesley, the Genius of Methodism

(a) Life and Conversion

(1) Childhood

John Wesley, "the frightened child who became a fearless man,"[2] was born on June 17, 1703, to Suzanna and Samuel Wesley. This delicate youngster, born at the Rectory of Epworth, Lincolnshire, England, was so frail that his father baptized him on the day of his birth. At the age of five, some of his father's enemies who differed in political views, set fire to the Rectory. At the last moment before the roof collapsed little John was miraculously snatched from the blazing bedroom. His mother regarded this rescue as a special providence and gave John the most devoted care and training with belief that he was to be used of God. It is clear that from this moment of the fire, when he was "a brand snatched from the burning," John Wesley grew with the deepening conviction that his life was in the immediate care of God.

> "Thus out of a terrifying experience in childhood came that courageous faith which carried him through the mob violence and other perils of later years."[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 28.
2. Ibid., p. 29.
3. Ibid., p. 30.

(2) Spiritual Quest

At the age of twenty-two, John Wesley fell in love with Betty Kirkham. This young lady, whom Wesley probably would have married had it not been for her father's disapproval, had a great influence on his spiritual life. Through her influence he studied Thomas a Kempis' Imitation of Christ in which he found that true religion was seated in the heart. She also encouraged him to study carefully William Law's Serious Call and Christian Perfection and Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Dying which convinced him more than ever of the exceeding height and depth and breadth of the law of God.[1] After studying the writings of these men he "set in earnest upon a new life."

This search, consisting of hard toil, discipline and asceticism, continued for twelve years. Much like Martin Luther, John Wesley trod the monk's road of rigid self-denial.

> "Regular fasts, austere and ascetic practices, systematic observance of Holy Communion, combined with unceasing 'good works'--the visiting of the poor, the sick and those in prison--earned for the Wesleys and their company in the University the nicknames of the the Holy Club, the Bible Moths and Methodists."[2]

John Wesley could find no satisfaction either among the activities of the Oxford Methodism or in the

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1. Ibid., p. 53, from a study of Wesley's Journal.
2. Ibid., p. 32.

Church of England. As an Oxford graduate and fellow of Lincoln College, he was Greek lecturer and moderator of classes.

(3) Conversion Experience

At the age of thirty-two Wesley accompanied General Oglethorpe to the province of Georgia in the New World. While on this voyage to America and in Georgia Wesley learned from his Moravian friends that he lacked the intimate, personal communion with God which they enjoyed. Wesley came to believe that this religious experience could be obtained instantly through conversion. Wesley then sought to become converted, but during this prolonged search he was beset by doubt and fear. On Wednesday, May 24, 1738, he attended a meeting of a Religious Society on Aldersgate Street in which a Moravian elder read Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. At about a quarter before nine o'clock, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, Wesley felt his "heart strangely warmed."[1] At this moment he felt a release from strain and there was an inner assurance that his sins were forgiven. In that climactic hour of his religious experience, God came alive in the totality of his being, and from that day onward the dynamic, burning passion of his heart was to bring God to his fellow countrymen in a real and vital experience.

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1. Frazer, op. cit., p. 20.

From this time onward all the forces of his character were dominated by a love which flowed forth in a tireless service for man because it was rooted and grounded in God.[1]

(4) Secret of His Life

What was the secret of this physical weakling who confounded the mighty? In his journal is recorded his early resolve "to dedicate an hour, morning and evening, no excuse, reason, or pretense, to private prayer and communion with God." This resolution was strictly carried out from the beginning to the end of his crowded life. From Wesley's secret diary it is also learned that he spent five minutes out of every hour, sometimes more or less, in private prayer. In weariness and in danger, in facing angry and violent crowds or in his life long task of spreading "Scriptural Holiness" throughout the land, Wesley was sustained by the reality of his personal communion and experience with God.[2]

(b) Method and Message

Preaching was Wesley's supreme instrument[3] and faith and salvation were his principle themes. Dimond says,

> "He preached the love of God to man, because his own heart was filled with a great love and pity for his sinning and suffering fellows."[4]

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1. Ante., p. 5.
2. Dimond, op. cit., p. 35.
3. The Methodist chapels were built for and called "Preaching Houses."
4. Barclay, op. cit., p. xvi.

Wesley showed "on unprecedented scale, and with unprecedented effects the office and work of a preacher."[1]

Wesley's doctrine, though secondary, was universal redemption, justification by faith, the witness of the spirit (assurance), and sanctification. What doctrine and theology that he gave was filled with a living content. His primary object in preaching was to change character and lead men to an experience of salvation.[2] Throughout life he "never ceased to be comparatively indifferent to orthodoxy, so long as a man had the witness of the Spirit, proving itself in works of faith."[3]

Wesley's manner in preaching was calm and marked by an appeal to the judgment as well as to the emotions.[4] He almost never appealed to fear. Wesley said himself, "I will never believe them to obey from fear who are dead to the motives of love."[5] His discourses were logical and yet were couched in simple, clear language that was easily understood by the plain people--farmers, miners, shopkeepers, clerks and housewives.[6]

Next to preaching, as the method of fulfilling his ministry, Wesley emphasized the use of the printed

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1. W. H. Fitchett, Wesley and His Century; A Study in Spiritual Forces, p. 179.
2. Dimond, op. cit., p. 83.
3. Barclay, op. cit., p. xxi.
4. Townsend and others, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 15.
5. Dimond, op. cit., Quoting from Wesley's Journal, p. 83.
6. Barclay, op. cit., p. xviii.

word.[1] He continuously urged his preachers to sell and to give away all kinds of literature that would help to convert and to educate those that were converted.

(2) Charles Wesley, the Poet

"The inner experience of the leaders of the Evangelical Revival found its fullest expression in the religious poetry of Charles Wesley."[2] Charles was with his brother John at Oxford and a member of the Holy Club. After his conversion, he shared his brother's labors and burdens, riding from one end to another of England, facing mobs and escaping from death in almost miraculous ways. John Wesley said, not in disparagement of his brother's poetic gifts, but to exhalt his great work as an evangelist, "His least praise was his talent of poetry."[3]

After his marriage Charles lived mainly in Bristol; however, he spent the last seventeen years of his life in London. Although he was not active in the ministry because of his poor health, he remained active with his pen. He has been called the greatest of all English hymn writers. It is an established fact that from 1739 to 1785 he produced no less than 4,644 hymns.[4] This contribution of hymns

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1. Richard Green, Works of John and Charles Wesley: A Bibliography. Green lists in this complete bibliography over four hundred pamphlets, abridgements, translations, volumes of sermons and other written works.
2. Dimond, op. cit., p. 44.
3. F. L. Wiseman, New History of Methodism, Vol. I, p. 242.
4. Francis H. Tees, The Beginnings of Methodism in England and America, p. 24.

to the Methodist Movement accounted in no small way for its success. In regard to this Dimond says, "One of the most potent forces displayed in the organization of the Methodist Revival is the power of rhythm and song."[1]

Before 1736 the Church of England had no hymn book. The people received the hymns of Charles Wesley with eagerness. From them they learned the Gospel, for the hymns were steeped in the Biblical language. The spirit of the Evangelical Revival breathes through them all.[2]

(3) George Whitefield, the Impassioned Orator

In the beginning of the Methodist Movement, Whitefield was the first to kindle the fire and to preach in the open air. Some feel that Whitefield excelled Wesley as a preacher.[3] All will agree that he was the favorite of the evangelicals in the Church of England, for the church tended to ignore John Wesley altogether.[4]

The life of Whitefield is a direct contrast to that of Wesley in background, personality, and later in theological position.[5] While Wesley grew up in a Rectory,

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1. Dimond, op. cit., p. 88.
2. Ibid.
3. Ryle says, "George Whitefield was the foremost evangelist of England a hundred years ago."
   J. C. Ryles, Christian Leaders of the Last Century (Eighteenth), p. 105.
4. Dimond, op. cit., p. 37.
5. The controversy in theological views was an "outgrowth of Whitefield's expousal of the doctrine of predestination and Wesley's insistence on free and universal grace."
   Barclay, op. cit., p. xxvi.

Whitefield spent his early life in a public house helping his mother by cleaning rooms and washing mops. He describes himself in his youth as

> "brutish enough to hate education; stealing from his mother's pocket and frequently appropriating to his own use the money that he took in the house . . . . If I trace myself from the cradle to my manhood, I can see nothing in me but fitness to be damned; and if the Almighty had not prevented me by His grace, I would now either be sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, or condemned, as the due reward of my crimes, to be forever lifting up my eyes in torment."[1]

His education was obtained the hard way. At the age of nineteen, by being a servitor and paying his own expenses, he had the opportunity of going to Oxford. Here he became acquainted with John and Charles Wesley and associated with them in the Holy Club. Charles loaned him among other books, Scougals' Life of God in the Soul of Man. Here Whitefield read that true religion was the union of the soul with God and Christ formed within us and he says, "A ray of Divine light instantaneously darted in my soul and from that moment, but not until then did I know that I must be a new creature." Whitefield set out to live the narrowest and hardest life of all those in the Holy Club, in prayer, fasting, good works and endured more than his share of persecution. As a result of such violent asceticism he became ill and with the cessation of his

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1. Dimond, op. cit., Quoting from Whitefield's Journal, pp. 38-39.

feverish endeavor there came a sudden access of spiritual light.

> "An abiding sense of the pardoning love of God and a full assurance of faith broke in upon my disconsolate soul! . . . At first my joys were like a spring tide and, as it were, overflowed the banks. Go where I would, I could not avoid singing the psalms almost aloud; afterwards it became more settled and blessed be God! saving for a few casual intervals, has abode and increased in my soul ever since."[1]

Whitefield was the first of the group to experience an evangelical conversion. After his conversion, he became a "voice crying in the wilderness" of the Eighteenth Century England and America. Whitefield initiated and used the method of field preaching. In a very real way, Whitefield kindled the flame of the Evangelical Revival in England.[2]

Whitefield was not only influential in the success of the Methodist Movement in England, but was in a sense the forerunner of Methodism in America.[3] F. W. Boreham says,

> "George Whitefield was the first man who treated Great Britain and America as if they belonged to him. He passed from one of them to the other as if they were a

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1. Dimond, op. cit., Quoting from Beldin, Whitefield's Journals, p. 23.
2. Tyreman says, "It may fairly be doubted whether Wesley's preaching in 1739 would have attracted the attention which it did if Whitefield had not preceded him in 1737." L. Tyreman, The Life of Reverend George Whitefield, Quoting Belden, Vol. I., p. 23.
3. Whitefield's contribution to Methodism in America will be considered later in the study. He made thirteen voyages to America.
   Dimond, op. cit., p. 43.

> pair of rural villages and he was the minister in charge of the parish. Whitefield took a couple of continents under his wing and his wing proved capacious enough for the task."[1]

The voice of George Whitefield was stormy and yet passionate in its eloquent demand for personal and social regeneration.

> "His love for humanity, born of his evangelical faith, carried him through thirty-one years of tireless and flaming evangelism and made him the unfailing friend of the poor and also the counselor and spiritual guide of the rich."[2]

The secret of Whitefield's life, and lives of other leaders of his time, was their utter consecration to God. As Dimond says,

> "Human nature, compound of flesh and spirit, body and mind rises to heights of such achievement only through constant and humble dependence upon God."[3]

It is unusual to find in history such a complete loyalty and love between brothers[4] in a life long task and "in that brotherhood Whitefield had a spiritual kinship which makes his name inseparable from them."[5] These three founders of Methodism: John Wesley, the supreme genius of the movement; Charles Wesley, the poet; and George Whitefield, the impassioned orator; all were unusually capable and evangelical men. In these three great figures, each of

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1. A. D. Belden, George Whitefield; The Awakener, Quoting F. W. Boreham, p. 9.
2. Dimond, op. cit., p. 43.
3. Ibid.
4. The brotherhood has reference to John and Charles Wesley.

which experienced a real evangelical conversion, is seen one of the greatest causes for the success of Methodism and the Evangelical Revival in England. While the renaissance was mainly political in France and philosophical in Germany, in England it was religious--the result of John Wesley, Charles Wesley, George Whitefield and others.[1]

b. The Unique Organization of the Methodist Movement

John Wesley never intended to organize a movement separate from the Church of England. However, the failure of the church to sanction Wesley's work and to incorporate it within itself, forced him to make plans against his own wishes. In order to keep the new converts of the movement and to give them religious education, Wesley was compelled to exercise his remarkable ability for organization. Few men in history have possessed a greater genius than John Wesley in developing effective forms of organization.[2] Woodrow Wilson, concerning this unusual ability, says,

> "It was a chief part of his 'singular power' that everything he touched took shape as if with a new sort of institutional life." [3]

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1. Dimond, op. cit., p. 43.
2. Wesley's peculiar skill was not so much in inventing new types of organization as in adapting previously existing forms to new uses.
3. Wilson, op. cit., p. 32.

It is very important to understand this organization in order to appreciate its value and contribution to both English and American Revivalism. The primary, organic unit of Methodism was the "Society," the first of which was formed in London--"the parent Society of Methodism."[1] Each society was divided into smaller companies called "Classes," according to their geographic place of abode. There were about twelve persons in each class and one of them was chosen to be the "Class Leader." It was the business of the class leader

> ". . . to see each person in his class once a week at least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort or exhort as occasion may require, and to receive what they were willing to give towards the relief of the poor."[2]

The class leaders were very spiritual men and were virtually lay pastors. The class, with its outstanding class leaders, was a very important factor in the success of Methodism first in England and later in America.

Within the classes a still smaller unit was formed called the "Band." This was an intimate group of members of the same sex who gathered for personal confession and counsel; it was probably patterned after the Holy Club at Oxford.[3]

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1. Joseph Benson, An Apology for the Methodists, p. 76.
2. John Wesley, Preamble to General Rules, Vol. VIII, p. 269.
3. The Band, however, did not prove itself too advantageous and gradually fell into disuse.
   Barclay, op. cit., p. xxxv.

The societies were grouped by Wesley into "Circuits."[1] In 1770 there were sixty circuits, America being included as one of them.[2] Another larger unit of organization was the "Conference" which was composed of both clergy and laymen. The conference met annually to transact business, to discuss doctrine, to station preachers and to draw closer to God.

Each unit in Wesley's unique organization made a contribution to the Revival and Methodis Movement in England. Although Wesley never intended to establish a separate church, Methodism was definitely set in a way of ecclesiastical independence.[3]

c. The Evangelical Preachers and Lay-leaders

(1) The Evangelical Itineracy

The Evangelical Revival in England could not have accomplished what it did without the consecrated, evangelical laity. Many laymen became consecrated "itinerant preachers." These spiritual itinerants

> ". . . shared the life and toil of those to whom they preached and by sheer human sympathy, backed by personal help and comradeship, transformed the neglected and burdened masses of the English people and led them to believe that they were the children of God."[4]

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1. Tees, op. cit., p. 55.
2. "The Annual Conference is the most original contribution made by Wesley to Church Polity," says Fitchett. W. H. Fitchet, Methodism, p. 354.
3. Ibid., p. 349.
4. Dimond, op. cit., p. 26.

Wesley's system of itineracy was made even more important as a cause for the success of Methodism because of the unusual physical and spiritual quality of the itinerants. Concerning these unordained itinerants, consecrated to the task of spreading the Gospel to all England, Jackson says, ". . . no movement has ever called forth a nobler band of men."[1] It is evident that these itinerants also played an important role in the success of Methodism in England and later in America.

(2) The Orders of Preachers

As the number of Wesley's lay preachers increased, three classes were differentiated. The first class was those who were engaged in local business, but who preached in their own neighborhood and took an occasional tour. The second composed the itinerants who gave themselves to the vigorous task for a certain length of time and who later settled. The third class gave themselves wholly to the ministry and who after serving a probationary period, were admitted into what was called "full connection."[2] Some in this group were called "Helpers" and a smaller number were given the title of "Assistants." The latter group was chosen from the more mature and experienced men who super-

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1. John Wesley hoped that a sufficient number of ordained clergy would come to his aid from the Church of England, but in this he was sadly disappointed.
   Barclay, op. cit., p. xxxvii.
2. Dimond, op. cit., p. 76.

vised the Helpers.

Fundamentally, this organization of preachers is still in existence today and has contributed much toward the success of Methodism in England and in America.

(3) The Evangelical Lay-leaders

In Early Methodism all were laymen outside of those few who had received ordination from the Church of England before they joined the Movement. The converts of Methodism were burning with zeal to share with others their new found blessings. They were supreme examples of the fact that conversion is coercive and the man in Christ is under the compassion of love.[1] In a way every convert of the Methodist Movement was a "preacher." They were preachers in the sense that they testified to others about their experience and made them hungry for the Gospel.

It was not difficult to find lay-leadership among the early Methodist, for they were anxious to be active in the work of the Kingdom. Some lay-leaders became Assistants and Helpers in "full connection," but most served as itinerants, local preachers, class leaders, and just plain members of societies and classes. The latter, although not leaders, still were active in spreading the Gospel. Townsend revealed their importance to the success of the Methodist Movement when he said,

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1. Ibid.

> "Unlike the Anglican Church, Methodism robbed of its Ministry could still survive; deprived of its lay-workers it would assuredly die."[1]

d. The Evangelical Character and Purpose of the Methodist Movement

Having already considered the evangelical quality of the preachers and laity of Methodism, it is not difficult to understand that at the heart the character of the Methodist Movement and Revival in England was evangelical. As Dimond says,

> "In its originating genius, Methodism is rooted in religious conversion. It echoes the great New Testament evangel;[2] 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.'"[3]

The basic secret for the success of the Methodist Movement lies in its emphasis upon a vital experience of a new life from above.

> "The people who knew most about it then and the people who know most about it now tell us that the life for which Methodism stands is a life from above; it is born of God."[4]

In its rediscovery of conversion and emphasis upon the new life, "Methodism is in line with all the great evangelical movements in Church History."[5]

Methodism from its beginning was not only evangelical, but also missionary in character. As Dr. Joy

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1. Townsend and others, op. cit., p. 72.
2. Dimond, op. cit., p. 47.
3. Acts 3:19. (The King James Version of The Bible)
4. Dimond, op. cit., pp. 21-22.
5. Ibid., p. 56.

says,

> "Even before organized missionary societies were known, the missionary spirit was in the Methodist body everywhere and accounted for its amazing spread."[1]
>
> "The form of organization of the Societies--their primary emphasis upon fellowship, the absence of rigid dogmatic requirements and their simplicity of organization admirably adapted the Movement to the work of missionary propogation. Because of its spirit and genius, the substance and power of its convictions, and the form and method of its organization, Methodism was early destined to become what is considered by many to be the mightiest missionary movement of modern times."[2]

Therefore it can be said that, because of the evangelical and missionary character of the Methodist Movement in England, its spread to America was a natural result of its inherent nature.

C. A Brief Survey of the History and Character of Methodism in America

The history of Methodism in America is extremely interesting, but it is long if given in detail. The next chapters will give more details of its history as it relates to revivalism. Only a brief sketch of some important men and incidents will be sufficient for this introductory survey.

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1. Taken from a statement of recommendation which Dr. James R. Joy made in regard to the recent book by W. C. Barclay, Early American Methodism.
2. Barclay, op. cit., p. xli.

1. A Survey of American Methodism up to 1784

a. The Colonial Planting of Methodism

The Methodist Movement was evangelical and missionary in character. George Whitefield, one of the three great men of Methodism and of the Evangelical Revival in England, was in a sense the first missionary or forerunner of Methodism in America. Whitefield arrived in America for his first visit in 1739, the natal year of Methodism in England. In 1769 he made his thirteenth[1] and last trip to America where he died.[2] During these thirty years he was a flaming evangel going back and forth from New England to Georgia. Immense crowds would gather and wait for him to preach and many thousands were spiritually awakened by his preaching. All churches benefited from his unusual ministry and Methodism profited in no small way in later years by this evangelical forerunner. Although Whitefield had no part in establishing or organizing Methodism in America,

> "To him," as Buckley says, "while time shall last must be given the credit of introducing the spirit of Methodism into the New World. Wondrously did he prepare the way for Wesley's Missionaries."[3]

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1. Abel Stevens, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. I, p. 101.
2. George Whitefield died on his knees at Newbury, Massachusetts on September 30, 1770.
3. Buckley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 151.

Methodism was late in coming to the American colonies.[1] The great needs in England together with the scarcity of preachers accounted for its long delay in coming to the New World. The first missionaries that were sent to America came not with the initiative of English Methodism, but from the earnest appeal of a Methodist Society organized by Methodist laymen who had immigrated to America. Their appeal for missionaries is given in a letter written by Thomas Taylor, an Irish layman, representing the New York Society. The letter is dated October 26, 1767, and is addressed to John Wesley. After telling about how they had purchased the ground for a preaching house he says,

> "We want an able and experienced preacher--one who has both gifts and graces necessary for the work. God has not despised the day of small things. . . . Dear Sir, I entreat you, for the good of thousands, to use your utmost endeavors to send one over. . . . With respect to the money for payment of a preacher's passage over, if they could not procure it, we would sell our coats and shirts, and pay it. I most earnestly beg an interest in your prayers, and trust you and many of our brethren will not forget the Church in this Wilderness."[2]

This Society, concerning which Taylor speaks, is the "Mother Society in America." It was organized by Philip

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1. More than a century and a half had passed between the coming of the earliest settlers to Jamestown (1607) and the coming of the first Methodist missionaries to Philadelphia in 1769.
   Barclay, op. cit., p. 1.
2. Thomas Taylor's letter to Wesley, October 26, 1767.
   William Brook, Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism, p. 103.

Embury and at the beginning met in his own house. Philip Embury came to New York in 1766 and soon afterwards was persuaded by Barbara Heck to begin preaching to the people.[1]

Almost simultaneously, Robert Strawbridge, another Irish convert of John Wesley, settled on Sam Creek in Maryland and opened his house for preaching. A few years later a log meeting house was built which is called by many "the cradle of American Methodism."[2]

In 1769, in answer to the many American requests for preachers,[3] John Wesley sent out Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, two preachers who had volunteered, for missionary service in America. Two years later (1771) Francis Asbury and Richard Wright also volunteered and were sent to America. The former became the leading spirit of Methodism in the New World while the latter, after a brief ministry, returned to England, never to be heard of

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1. Both Philip Embury and Barbara Heck were converted under Wesley's preaching in Ireland.
2. Because of the lack of sufficient data, there is a controversy over which was the first society in America. However, Pilmoor, Garrettson, Lee, Bochan, and Bourne, authorities who have studied this controversy, say that Embury and the New York Society were first.
   Barclay, op. cit., p. 142.
3. Among the many requests, Dr. Charles Van Wrangel, provost of Swedish Churches in America and living at Philadelphia, met with Wesley on October 1768 and "strongly pleaded for our sending some of our preachers to help them, multitudes of whom are 'as sheep without a shepherd.'"
   Wesley's Journal, p. 290.

again. In 1772, largely through the appeal of Captain Webb, Thomas Rankin and George Shadford were sent out by Wesley and Joseph Yearby came as a volunteer. Two years later (1774) James Demster and Martin Rodda were added to the number of Wesley's American missionaries and with them came William Gledenning. These eight missionaries spent most of their time in the Middle Colonies.[1]

> "The result of their work is seen in that some of their converts became the itinerants who carried on the work during the Revolutionary War when all of the missionaries except for Asbury went back to England."[2]

b. The Colonial Opposition to Methodism

Wesley could not have chosen a more inopportune time for the planting of Methodism in the New World if he had deliberately tried. Religion was at the bottom as a result of the wave of reaction to the Great Awakening. Because of the treatment of the colonists by Great Britain, they were at a boiling point and few would listen to preachers newly arrived from England.[3] To make matters even worse, the leaders of Methodism were not only British, but also, for the most part, were Tories in their political leanings. John Wesley was definitely a Tory and made the bad mistake of meddling in political affairs. John Wesley's pamphlet "A Calm Address to our American Colonies"

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1. William Warren Sweet, Methodism in American History, p. 65.
2. Graves, op. cit., p. 6.
3. Barclay, op. cit., p. 1.

did more harm to the American Methodist than anything else.[1] The English preachers in America were forced to flee for their lives and to return if they could to England. The colonists openly opposed, with physical force, anyone who had Tory leanings and who stood against the cause of American independence. During the Revolution Methodism came to a standstill except for the native itinerants, the preaching of Asbury, and the Methodists in British controlled sections.[2] However, with the close of the Revolution and with Jefferson's Bill of Religious Freedom becoming law (1785), the opposition encountered by the Methodists in the colonies ended and growth and expansion were the next steps.[3]

c. The Colonial Growth of Methodism

The first period of American Methodism in the colonies was not only a period of testing and hardship, but also one of growth. Although the efforts of Wesley's missionaries were concentrated in the Middle Colonies, the rapid growth of Methodism was in the South. At the opening of the Revolution (1775) two thirds of the numerical strength of Methodism was in the Southern Colonies, and in the midst of the war (1780) seven out of every

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1. Graves, op. cit., p. 6.
2. Ibid., p. 7.
3. Frazer, op. cit., p. 25.

eight Methodists were South of the Mason and Dixon's line.[1] Even though the Southern work was carried on largely by the irregulars, such as Strawbridge, Williams and some native preachers, it can be said that "American Methodism in its beginning was very largely a movement within the Southern Colonies."[2]

Three reasons are given for this unbalanced growth. First, the Middle and New England Colonies were better churched and in them the Calvinistic theology was dominant.[3] Secondly, the South, where the Established Church of England was the strongest, presented an inviting field for the spread of Methodism.[4] American Methodism had its first revival and extensive growth in the region of Virginia where the Established Church was the strongest. And thirdly, the cause for the southward expansion was the unusual co-operation of an Established Church evangelist, the Reverend Devereux Jarratt. His great work and influence will be considered in the next chapter.

It must be remembered that Methodism was a movement within the Established Church and Wesley continually reminded his preachers of this fact and of their

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1. In 1775 American Methodists numbered 3,148 and 2,384 were from the South. In 1780 7,808 of the total 8,540 were from the Southern Colonies.
   Sweet, op. cit., p. 65.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 66.

dependence upon it for the sacraments.

Although the growth of Methodism in the Middle and New England Colonies was slow at the beginning, a sound foundation was made for later expansion. The problem of the early missionaries was not only with external opposition, but with the native, irregular preachers. The growing independence of these sincere, colonial leaders greatly disturbed Wesley's assistants in America. Francis Asbury greatly disapproved of the tendency among American preachers of permitting themselves to be localized. The "prophet of the long road" said, "My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities, but I think I will show them the way."[1] Asbury made good his word and soon had a large circuit around New York where he preached in log cabins, courthouses, prisons and at executions.

> "The importance of Asbury's influence in setting an example of tireless itineracy at the very beginning of his American ministry can hardly be overestimated. If Methodism had lost its itineracy feature at this early period, the whole movement could not have succeeded as it did in America."[2]

With the example of Asbury, the preachers became even more active itinerants in America than their predecessors in England. These uneducated men were sure of only one thing, that was God and that was enough for them. These itinerants wore out their horses and themselves

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1. Sweet, op. cit., p. 67.
2. Ezra Squire Tipple, Francis Asbury; The Prophet of the Long Road, Chapter VIII.

traveling over the Eastern Seaboard of the New World. They also went into the frontier with the settlers as they traveled West. This was the preparation for the next great period of growth when Methodism was carried by the circuit rider from coast to coast.

The Colonial planting of Methodism was a slow process and met with much opposition. However, it was only the beginning; nevertheless, it was a good beginning. At the time of the first American Methodist Conference, called by Rankin at Philadelphia in July of 1773, only ten preachers were present and the total membership was reported to be 1,160.[1] At the Christmas Conference held in 1784, there were over eighty preachers present and the total membership numbered 14,988. This growth is significant considering the fact that it was made during the Revolution when Methodism decreased greatly in some areas. This increase came, not from the mother Church of England, but was the result of the preaching here in Colonial America by men who heard and obeyed God's call. As Graves says, "Methodism had truly made a name for itself."[2]

2. Organized Methodism in America from 1784 to 1844

a. Methodism Organizes for a Great Task[3]

Often overlooked is the fact that until 1784

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1. Sweet, op. cit., p. 69.
2. Graves, op. cit., p. 8.
3. Sweet, op. cit., Chapter VI.

American Methodism was not a separate organization. Wesley's missionaries were all careful to attend the services of the Established Church whenever possible. Pilmoor was especially concerned that the people of that church should not misunderstand the coming of Methodism to America. Pilmoor assured them that the Methodist Society was never designed to make a separation from the Church of England or be looked upon as a church.[1] Jarratt, the outstanding evangelical leader of the Established Church in Virginia, expressed his belief in this movement by saying, "The Methodists are sincere in their professions of attachment to the church."[2] Up to this time many of them were members of other churches. Many who belonged to no church, when converted, joined a church. Methodism was not a church, but an evangelical movement the members of which belonged to the Established Church and other denominations.

The Revolution not only separated England and America politically, but it also caused a cleavage between American Methodism and its English brethren. Although Wesley was still considered the leader, he, himself, saw that it was advisable to make the American branch independent from English Methodism, although not an independent church. There was much pressure from the people in America for their leaders to administer the sacraments,

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1. Ibid., p. 73.
2. Ibid.

for until 1784 Methodists in America attended other churches where there were ordained clergy. So in 1784 John Wesley sent to America Dr. Thomas Coke whom he ordained as superintendent (bishop) by the laying on of hands. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury were to be joint superintendents (bishops) for America with the right to ordain ministers. Even with these plans, Wesley was not planning for a separate church, for Coke and Asbury were to be superintendents not over a church, but "over our brethren in America."[1] When the Christmas Conference convened on December 24, 1784, the preachers first agreed to form themselves into a separate Episcopal Church. For Asbury, mere appointment by Wesley was not enough and he only consented to be ordained when he and Coke were unanimously elected by the Conference. Thus the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized for a great task with its own superintendents (bishops) who had the power to ordain its own preachers. William Watters expressed the feeling of American Methodists when he wrote in his journal, ". . .we became, instead of a religious society, a separate church. This gave great satisfaction through all our societies."[2]

b. The Westward March of Methodism

From the Christmas Conference of 1784 the

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1. Ibid., p. 106.
2. Ibid., pp. 112-113.

Methodist itinerants, filled with renewed zeal as a result of their organization, went out on their horses to cover and conquer a nation for God. As Graves says,

> "Some were sent to establish circuits for a year. Their home was their saddle and all their belongings simply those which would fit into their saddle bags. They would be sent into the frontier where they were assigned not only to circuits covering a large county or whole state, but sometimes even to establish their own circuit. They had no churches, no regular appointments. They were sent wherever there were men in need of the Gospel of Salvation."[1]

By 1830 the frontier of the United States was west of the Mississippi. However, the circuit riders were west of the frontier--its advance agents.[2] The details of this great period of growth are of unusual interest and will be considered further in the next two chapters. The success that these itinerant preachers had varied. In some places large churches were started, but in other places only a handful were reached. Significant is the fact, however, that

> " . . . no matter what the hardship, opposition, or lack of success--they went and preached the Gospel wherever they could find one or two to listen."[3]

During this period of Westward expansion, Methodism was consolidated and organized into a real church. They had their own bishops and annual conferences, the latter to which all looked forward. Here they

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1. Graves, op. cit., p. 9.
2. Halford E. Luccock and Paul Hutchinson, The Story of Methodism, p. 293.
3. Graves, op. cit., p. 10.

met for spiritual refreshment, ordination, stationing of itinerants who had poor health or had married, and for the annual appointments.

> "Many of them had ridden their faithful horses to the conference and were free to go anywhere in the world. Within ten minutes after the conference was over they were on their way to new appointments, some of them never to return."[1]

During the period from 1784 to 1844 the Methodist Episcopal Church not only organized for a great task, but also performed a great task. By 1840 it was the largest denomination in America; its membership numbered 852,908 and traveling preachers numbered 3,587 with 6,393 local preachers.[2] During this period Methodism became aware of its responsibilities and launched its educational and foreign mission program. Significant also was the number of publications of the famous Methodist Book Concern. The Methodist Episcopal Church ministered to all people who had spiritual needs, to both the white and colored people. The latter at this time in the history of American Methodism created a difficult problem.

3. Methodism in America after 1844

a. The Slavery Controversy and Schism of 1844

No other church has been so greatly influenced by the presence of the Negro than the Methodist Church.

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1. Ibid., p. 11.
2. Minutes of the Annual Conferences, Vol. III: 1839-1845, p. 156. At this time there were thirty-two conferences in the entire country.

From the beginning, as has been emphasized, American Methodism was very largely a movement whose largest and most successful growth was confined to the Southern Colonies. From 1784 to 1824, with one exception, the general conferences[1] met in Baltimore, for it was then the center of American Methodism.[2]

For Methodism, as could be expected, the Slavery Controversy was very real. In 1784 at the Christmas Conference stringent rules were passed stating that within a year members must free their slaves or surrender their membership.[3] By 1830 the bitter Northern attacks upon slavery[4] brought forth pro-slavery defenders from the South and the verbal battle raged within the church. At this time the general officers of the church were increasingly concerned with the unity of the church. The General Conference of 1840 attempted " . . . to serve the best interest of the whole family of Methodism,"[5] but its task was an impossible one. The United States was composed of some states where slavery was prohibited and yet in others it was allowed. The Methodist Episcopal

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1. The General Conference is a body of clergy and laity representing equally all of the annual conferences. This body meets every four years.
2. Sweet, op. cit., p. 229.
3. This rule was not enforced too rigidly and especially in the South.
4. At this time 26,000 Methodists owned 222,000 slaves. Bishop Andrew also became a slave holder through inheritance by his wife.
5. From the General Conference Minutes of 1840.

Church extended through all of these states; therefore, ". . . it was impossible to frame a law which would be satisfactory to all."[1] The General Conference of 1844 had no alternative but to give full and exclusive authority to the "Annual Conference in the slave-holding states" to decide upon the necessity of organizing a separate ecclesiastical connection in the South.

> "A separation was duly and legally effected, and American Methodism was divided into two distinct ecclesiastical bodies--the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, both bodies remaining essentially one in doctrine and practice."[2]

Another split in Methodism occurred previously in 1830 when the Protestant Methodist Church was formed over a protest against the power of the clergy and episcopacy.

b. Methodism after 1844

It is beyond the scope of this study to trace the history of all the branches of the Methodist Movement. It must suffice to say that Methodism, even though divided, continued to grow in almost unbelievable proportions. In 1939, on its two hundredth anniversary, American Methodism united its three factions[3] to become the largest Protestant denomination in the United States.[4] This union

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1. Sweet, op. cit., p. 241.
2. Frazer, op. cit., p. 28.
3. The three factions were the Methodist Protestant Church (1830), the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (1844), and the Methodist Episcopal Church.
4. Ben Wickersham, "The Methodists," Look Magazine, December 20, 1949, p. 57.

became known simply as "The Methodist Church" and its present membership is nearly 10,000,000 with 45,000 ordained ministers. In varying degrees of intimacy, World Methodism now embraces some 50,000,000 souls.[1]

D. Summary: The Character of Methodism in America

Methodism faced much the same moral and spiritual conditions in America as in England. Many who came to the New World seeking freedom of worship became free of worship. Almost every colonist in America, when Methodism came (1769), was an agriculturist. Hence, it was extremely difficult for the church to reach the scattered population. Some estimate that for every one that was a church member at that time, twenty-five were not. Children grew up knowing nothing of religion at all. The churches that did exist had been weakened by formalism, religiously barren intellectualism and a legalistic moralism. Under such conditions was the Methodist Movement born in England and it was only natural that it should thrive upon similar conditions in America. Methodism was not a church, but a Movement that went among different churches seeking " . . . to gather together in one the people of God that are scattered abroad and revive

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1. W. E. Sangster, Methodism Can Be Born Again, p. 16.

spiritual religion."[1] While most denominations followed their own special groups in the Westward march, Methodism went forth to win people of all kinds to the Christian way of life. The circuit riders, though men of little education, were filled with evangelical zeal and neither hardship nor distance deterred them from carrying on the work to which they were assigned.

Methodism through the years, both in England and in America, had been uniquely an evangelical and spiritual Movement.[2] Concerning this quality Dimond says,

> "Methodism stands for a gospel of humanity, including not only types of marked religious sensitiveness, but commonplace people such as those who heard Jesus gladly. Through two hundred years, Methodism had witnessed to the reality of conversion . . . spiritually recognized as the gateway for all men into the larger freedom of spiritual sonship . . . . Methodism is at once in line with the finest tradition of moral and spiritual leadership in history . . . ."[3]

Methodism through the years, both in England and in America, has been uniquely an evangelical missionary Movement. For as Barclay says, "The Methodist Movement as a whole was missionary in conception, in motivation, and in method."[4]

This evangelical and missionary character of Methodism will be emphasized in the next two chapters as the contribution of Methodism to American Revivalism is considered.

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1. Sweet, op. cit., p. 68.
2. Frazer, op. cit., p. 29.
3. Dimond, op. cit., pp. 52-59.
4. Barclay, op. cit., Preface, p. vii.

CHAPTER II

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN REVIVALISM

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A. Introduction

The contribution of Methodism to American Revivalism, if it is fully understood, must also be preceded by a survey of American Revivalism. This survey is of necessity suggestive rather than exhaustive, for in order to give a complete history of revivalism it would be almost necessary to give a complete history of religion in America. "For in the last two hundred years," says Mode, "it is revivalism more than any other phenomenon that has supplied the landmarks in our religious history. . . ."[1] The first half of this two hundred year period is notable for its outstanding and unusual revivals. These are considered more in detail than those of the second half of the period. The latter half is considered with less of an emphasis upon detail and more upon prominent trends and men which characterize the period.

Colonial revivalism with its Great Awakenings is appropriately considered at the beginning of this chapter. This includes an introduction showing the stage for colonial revivalism as well as a separate consideration of

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1. Peter G. Mode, The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity, p. 41.

the Great Awakening in each of the colonies. The next phase considered is frontier revivalism which is referred to as the "Second Awakening" or "Great Revival." Revivalism during the Civil War concludes the first half of the two hundred year period. The last hundred years, when revivalism was on the wane, is briefly considered by noting outstanding trends and men of the period. The chapter concludes with a summary which briefly gives the genius of American Revivalism.

B. Colonial Revivalism: The Great Awakening

The one who designated the religious movement or revivalism among the colonies during the Eighteenth Century as "The Great Awakening" had a touch of genius.[1] Before the Great Awakening is considered in the separate colonies, it is well to get a picture of the conditions in the colonies as a whole, for many of them were the same.

1. The Stage for Colonial Revivalism

a. The Religious Conditions

In spite of the large influence exherted by religion in the early establishment of the colonies, religion on the whole for the first one hundred years of

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1. Benjamin Rice Lacy, Jr., Revivals in the Midst of the Years, p. 32.

American history was a matter of only a few.[1] One of the chief reasons for this is that in the New World church membership was not co-extensive with citizenship as it was in Europe. Church membership was an exceedingly selective matter and it was not easily achieved.[2] Another reason was that the Anglican Church had no American bishops, so they could not confirm anyone for membership. Although unconfirmed individuals under such conditions were admitted to communion, it meant that only the more earnest participated in the receiving of the sacrament.[3]

Morality and religion among the colonists was on the decline. One important cause for this decline was the fact that all of the colonists were migrants.

> "History is replete," says Sweet, "with instances of corruption of religion among migrating people. In those instances where religion was the primary motive in causing migration--as was the case among the Puritans, the Quakers and the German sectaries--the slump in religion did not come until the second and third generations. But among those people where the motive was economic, the slump was immediate."[4]

The insecurity of the colonists was still another cause for the slump in morality and religion. Indians were a constant threat at home and Great Britain was making unfair demands upon them from abroad. In all of this the emphasis upon high morality and good religion took a

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1. William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, pp. 271-272.
2. Ibid., p. 271.
3. Ibid.
4. William Warren Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 11.

secondary position and its slump was inevitable.

In the colonies morality and religion indeed were at a low ebb. Church membership was only for a few, and for these the motivation for membership was often social rather than religious.[1]

The emphasis, the method and the leadership from the Old World had not and could not answer the needs of the colonies in the New World which was under entirely new conditions. Religion in America for the first one hundred years was almost a failure.

> "Times were ripe," says Sweet, "for a new emphasis and a new method in religion, as well as for a new type of religious leadership to meet the peculiar needs presented by the American Colonial religious situation."[2]

b. The Answer

The Eighteenth Century was an epoch of vital importance in the history of religious movements. Concerning it Gewehr says, "It was the period of great evangelical revival which was international and interdenominational in its scope."[3] In Germany the evangelical movement, which reacted against the relatively dead and formal orthodoxy of state churches, was manifested in Pietism.[4]

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1. Ezra Stiles, Itineracies and Correspondence, pp. 92-94.
2. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 21.
3. Wesley M. Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790, p. 3.
4. In the Eighteenth Century Methodism was greatly influenced and imbued with pietism, stressing inner religion and emotional response, repudiating salvation through an institution and emphasizing the individual's responsibility.

German pietists, as they migrated to America, were in a very real sense the forerunners of colonial revivalism.

> "What we have come to call 'pietism'," writes Sweet, the outstanding authority in the field of American religions, "lies at the heart of the great colonial awakenings. By 'pietism' we mean a type of religion which places the principal emphasis upon what is often termed as the religion of the heart, rather than a religion of the head. Its theme is redemption for individuals. Its object is to awaken men and women to personal repentance."[1]

In England the evangelical movement became identified with the great Methodist Movement of the Wesleys and Whitefield.[2] The pietistic movement also had its effects in America, for it was George Whitefield, the impassioned orator from England, who rendered a restoring and unifying service to the work of the American evangelical pioneers.[3] This fact is revealed in the following paragraph:

> "Whitefield was the greatest single factor," says Gewehr, "in the Great Awakening of 1740. He zealously carried the work up and down the colonies from New England to Georgia. Among revivalists, his influence alone touched every section of the country and every denomination. Everywhere he supplemented and augmented the work with his wonderful eloquence. He literally preached to thousands and thousands as he passed from place to place. He was the one preacher to whom people every where listened--the great unifying agency in the Awakening, the great moulding

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1. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., pp. 24-25.
2. Gewehr, op. cit., p. 3.
3. "The religious pioneers were aware of the decline of morality and religion among the colonists. Conscious of the fact that no great improvement in religion ever came by chance they began to preach stirring sermons on the need for repentance and the coming judgment." Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 24.

force among the denominations."[1]

In America, this evangelical revival "swept as a tidal wave of religious fervor over the colonies from New England to Georgia."[2] This wave was felt in all the colonies and among all groups of Protestants. There was a great movement toward a more vital, conscious religious experience which was known collectively as the Great Awakening.[3] This was the answer to the religious need in the colonies.

The Great Awakening, which marked the beginning of revivalism in America, had certain uniq ue characteristics. Its uniqueness is substantiated in the following statement made by Mode:

> "In the lengthy career of European Christianity, nothing appears corresponding to the revivalistic emphasis of America . . . .[4] The reason for America's peculiar type of revivalism is easily traced to certain features peculiar to the environment in which the American church has been called upon to function."[5]

What was peculiar about the American church environment? The society of the New World was in motion and hence it was an individual society.

> "A religion therefore which was to make an appeal to an individualistic society . . ." says Sweet, "must emphasize the fact that salvation is to a large degree a personal matter; that is dependent upon individual decisions."[6]

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1. Gewehr, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
2. Ibid., p. 3.
3. Luther A. Weigle, American Idealism, Vol. X, Ralph Henry Gabriel, editor, The Pageant of America, p. 115.
4. Mode, op. cit., p. 45.
5. Ibid., p. 48.
6. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., Preface, p. xii.

Revivalism flourished because its appeal was personal. The emphasis that existed in America upon freedom of the individual conscience gave the personal emphasis in religion its great opportunity in this land. Salvation ceased to be an institutional matter as it was in the Old World and became a matter of personal responsibility.

The stage for colonial revivalism was a gross need which prepared the way negatively for the answer--revivalism. The story of colonial revivalism, with its gradual adoption of new and untried ways of meeting peculiar, religious needs of Americans, is the story of the beginning of the Americanization of organized Christianity in America.[1]

2. The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies

Although Jonathan Edwards is usually called the father of revivalism in America, the Great Awakening really began in the Middle Colonies.[2] Frelinghuysen's revival in central New Jersey was at its peak fully eight years before the beginning of the Edwardian revival at Northampton. One of the outstanding reasons for the beginning of the Great Awakening was the fact that it was rooted not in New England Calvinism, but in German pietism, followers

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1. Mode, op. cit., pp. 45-50.
2. H. Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies. This work is the outstanding authority and source book for the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies.

of which lived mainly in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.[1]

a. The Need

The great mass of people in the Middle Colonies were religiously indifferent and there was a great need. The great new German and Scotch-Irish migration to these colonies made the proportion of unchurched very large--about fifteen or eighteen to one.[2] However, even the few who were church members were not motivated by spiritual needs. The Dutch settlers in New Jersey wished to preserve their church as a symbol of their Dutch nationality and of their former independence. The last thing they wanted was to have a religion that would stir the emotions and set up high standards of personal conduct.[3] This is typical of all the other churches of the area at this time as is illustrated in the following paragraph:

> "Among the Presbyterians, too," says Gewehr, "little was known of vital experimental religion, and there was much complaint of lack of zeal and fidelity in the preaching of the gospel, to say nothing of the conviction that members of the Synod of Philadelphia were in an unconverted state. The Anglicans were no better off; indifference, coldness, formality and lack of spirituality characterized both clergy and laity. Religious destitution was also great among the Lutheran and Dutch Reformed Churches of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania."[4]

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1. William Warren Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, pp. 281-283.
2. Stiles, op. cit., p. 93.
3. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, op. cit., p. 274.
4. Gewehr, op. cit., p. 4.

In the Middle Colonies morality and religion were very low. The vast movement of immigrants into the Middle Colonies was, for the most part, too poor to bring their own ministers. These immigrants completely swamped the feeble religious organizations then in existence.[1] The great evangelical emphasis of the Gospel was obscured by the externals and religion was a matter of dead formality in all of the denominations.[2]

b. The Leaders

Although the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies was largely a movement among Presbyterians, the fact must never be overlooked that the movement began among German secterians and the Dutch Reformed churches of central New Jersey.[3] One of the great sources of the great revival movement in this area, as has been mentioned, was the pietistic or evangelical influence of the smaller German groups such as the Mennonites, the Dunkers and the Moravians.

(1) Dominie Theodore Jacob Frelinghuysen

The first revival of greater importance was the one among the Dutch Reformed churches under the influence of Dominie Jacob Frelinghuysen. He was a German Pietist who came to America in 1719 and served as pastor of the

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1. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 21.
2. Gewehr, op. cit., p. 4.
3. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 201.

Dutch Church at Raritan, New Jersey from 1719 to 1746.[1]

> "From the moment of his landing," says Sweet, Frelinghuysen began to fight against formality and dead orthodoxy which he found completely permeating the Dutch churches in America."[2]

He insisted upon the need of conscious conversion and the renewal of heart and life. Although he was greatly opposed by those who rejected his new doctrines, his evangelical preaching bore much fruit and many conversions took place. In 1726 the ingathering was particularly large. One of his greatest contributions to the Great Awakening in this area was the evangelical influence upon English speaking Presbyterians scattered throughout this region. Dominie Frelinghuysen profoundly influenced and particularly encouraged Gilbert Tennent, the young minister of the Presbyterian Church at New Brunswick. Gilbert Tennent became the heart and center of the revival movement among the Presbyterians which had greater significance than that among the Dutch Reformed.[3]

(2) The Tennents

William Tennent was an Irish minister who came to America in 1716 and became a Presbyterian. In 1726 he erected opposite the manse at Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, a building in which he undertook to train his three younger

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1. Weigle, op. cit., p. 115.
2. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 202.
3. Ibid., p. 203.

sons, William Jr., John and Charles, as well as other young men for an evangelical ministry. The oldest son, Gilbert, had already been trained by his father for this type of a ministry. This school was called in derision the "Log College." All four of the Tennent brothers became active in the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies. Gilbert Tennent became pastor of a newly organized Presbyterian Church in New Brunswick in 1725 and worked hand in hand with the neighboring Dominie Frelinghuysen. Both leaders became increasingly outspoken toward both the unconverted members and ministers within their respective churches. Finally in 1740 Tennent preached a fiery sermon on "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry" as a commencement address at Notingham Academy. This assault soon led to a split in the Presbyterian Church at the meeting of the Synod of 1741 between the "New Side" or "New Light" and the "Old Side" or "Old Light," as they were called. The former, which favored revival methods and insisted upon conscious conversion and evidences of regeneration in both ministers and people, made the Log College the center of their thriving party. These Log College evangelists, which included in addition to the Tennent brothers John Rowland, Samuel Blair and many others, became very active in the revival effort.

(3) George Whitefield

George Whitefield, the interdenominational evangelist, who co-operated with any church or minister

whose central interest was that of saving souls landed at Lewes, Delaware, in August, 1739. Whitefield immediately began his first American evangelistic tour in this very region where Frelinghuysen and the Log College evangelists had been preparing the soil for his seed. His great success was due not alone to his magnificent appeal, but to the fact that the way had been prepared. "There was no need for him to plant," says Sweet, "he merely put in his sickle and claimed the harvest."[1]

His greatest success in America was among the Presbyterians of the Middle Colonies. Whitefield was also largely responsible for the spread of revivalism to northern New Jersey and New York. He brought Jonathan Dickinson at Elizabethtown and Aaron Burr at Newark, both graduates of Yale, but revivalistically inclined, into the great revival movement.[2] The Great Awakening reached high tide in the Middle Colonies in 1740 and 1741 while George Whitefield was preaching in this area.

c. The Results

The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies revived the spiritual life in all classes and all churches. The revival put new life and energy into the Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches.[3] The revival was especially popular among the common people whose spiritual

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1. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, op. cit., p. 277.
2. Ibid., p. 278.
3. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 34.

needs had been largely neglected.[1]

Revivalism from its very beginning was a devisive force in American Christianity.[2] The Frelinghuysen revival caused a schism in the Dutch Reformed Church. The outspoken, censorious judgments of Gilbert Tennent and other Log College evangelicals caused a split in the Presbyterian Church. The Old Side or conservatives excluded the New Side party from membership in their synod. This division existed until 1858 and during this period of division the New Side body grew rapidly while the Old Side synod made no progress at all.[3]

> "The New Side churches," says Sweet, "were active, growing and full of young people . . . . The members of the conservative group, on the other hand, were old men; while their opposition to the popular revival movement rendered them and their churches unpopular with the young people. These years of separation marked the unmistakable triumph of the revival party within the Presbyterian Church."[4]

One result of the revival which had lasting effects was its influence upon education. William Tennent's Log College was the seed of a whole group of similar institutions, some of which are still in existence.[5] Many of the Log College graduates established similar log colleges or private schools. Some of the more permanent

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1. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 206.
2. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, op. cit., p. 278.
3. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., pp. 207-208.
4. Ibid., p. 208.
5. Ibid., pp. 209-210.

and important colleges resulting from the Great Awakening were Princeton, of which Tennent's Log College was the direct mother, the University of Pennsylvania, Dartmouth College and what is now Brown University, not to mention many academies of lesser importance.

An indirect result of the Great Awakening was the important principle of religious freedom which was later achieved and written in the national constitution.

One of the greatest results of the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies was its influence upon revivalism in the other colonies. Its influence was not as great in New England as it was among the Southern Colonies. However, New England Calvinism was impregnated with the pietism of the Middle Colonies. The South was invaded by the Scotch-Irish and Germans who settled in middle and western Virginia. These two groups, together with the missionaries of the New Side Presbyterians, played a leading role in the Great Awakening of the Southern Colonies.

3. The Great Awakening in the New England Colonies[1]

a. The Need

The whole atmosphere of the New England frontier

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1. Joseph Tracy, The Great Awakening: A History of the Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield. This is the source book and authoritative work on the Great Awakening in the New England Colonies.

life, filled with alarm and political unrest and uncertainty, was not conducive to moral and religious progress. The Congregationalists departed very rapidly from the standards of Puritanism. The Half-way Covenant adopted in 1662 permitted morally respectable persons to enter the church without the experience of conversion or public confession. This half-way membership, permitting baptism but not communion, served to open the doors to laxity and worldliness.[1]

In New England, the best churched section of the colonies, the church membership was about one in eight.[2] In the churches the ministers concentrated more upon defending the Calvinistic theology than upon meeting the needs of the people. Indeed the need was great and the time was ripe for something real and vital.

b. The Leaders

(1) Jonathan Edwards

At the very heart and center of the Great Awakening in New England[3] stands Jonathan Edwards, the minister of Northampton which at that time was the most important inland town in the colony. The spiritual conditions of the town were better than average, for the church had previously experienced periods of religious awakening

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1. Gewehr, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
2. Stiles, op. cit., p. 93.
3. Thomas Prince, The Christian History, containing accounts of the Revival and Propogation of Religion in Great Britain and America, Two Volumes. A most valuable source book.

under the sixty year ministry of Soloman Stoddard, the maternal grandfather of Jonathan Edwards. However, when young Edwards came to Northampton in 1727, the conditions in the town were bad enough. Licentiousness greatly prevailed among the youth of the town.[1]

Under the preaching of this tall, slender, grave young man, who spent much time preparing his fiery sermons which he read from the manuscript, there began to be a change in the general religious atmosphere. In December, 1734, the revival began while Edwards was preaching a series of sermons on Justification by Faith. Edwards also depicted with terrible vividness and earnestness the wrath of God from which he exhorted his hearers to flee.[2] People became deeply concerned about eternal things and came in huge throngs to hear him. Night and day the parsonage thronged with agonizing sinners seeking the pastor's help. Edwards managed the unusual situation with much common sense, encouraging private conferences and avoiding the outward manifestations.[3]

Later, even in his busier life, he took time to write a short volume with a long title, "A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton and Neighboring Villages." It was the writing of this narrative with its description

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1. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 187.
2. Ibid., p. 188.
3. Ibid., p. 283.

of remarkable conversions together with the coming of George Whitefield which accounted for the religious upheaval which swept like a tidal wave throughout New England.[1]

(2) George Whitefield

In New England, as in the Middle Colonies, the soil was prepared for George Whitefield. Jonathan Edwards and the Northampton revival had done the spade work for Whitefield's harvest of souls in New England.[2] During the tour of Whitefield, from December, 1740 to March, 1741, the Great Awakening reached its high tide in New England. Fifteen thousand are said to have "experienced religion" within a few weeks under his eloquent, extemporaneous preaching.[3]

> "Whitefield," says Sweet, "was the greatest human factor in the greatest religious overturning that New England has ever experienced."[4]

Although Whitefield's first tour was very brief, it was long enough to set the pattern of New England revivalism for the next four years. The revival spread from town to town throughout the whole New England area until hundreds of small communities were visited with scenes similar to those which took place in Northampton.[5]

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1. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, op. cit., p. 284.
2. Ibid.
3. Gewehr, op. cit., p. 8.
4. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 195.
5. J. E. McCullock, "The Place of Revivals in American History," Methodist Review, 1902, Vol. II, pp. 681-697.

(3) Other Leaders

There were several other successful revivalist preachers who aided the progress of the Great Awakening in New England. Eleazer Wheelock and Joseph Bellamy became itinerant evangelists who emphasized more of the physical demonstration. Strong men fell as though shot, and women became hysterical.

Gilbert Tennent came to New England to carry on the work after Whitefield's departure. Under his preaching of hell-fire and damnation, numerous excesses in revivalism took place which brought much criticism and opposition. In spite of this, he had great success not only in Boston and New Haven, but also in many other New England towns.[1]

The revivalist who was responsible for the worst extravagances was James Davenport. He claimed that his call was to "intrude" into the parishes of other ministers, though uninvited, and convert the people. He believed that most of the ministers of the town of Boston and of the country were unconverted and were leading their people blindfolded to hell.[2] His most notorious extravagance was at New London where he caused his converts to burn their fine clothes and ornaments to cure their idolatrous pride. Books which did not meet his approval were added to these flames.[3]

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1. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 288.
2. Weigle, op. cit., p. 117.
3. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 289.

c. The Results

The moral and religious life of all New England was raised to a higher plane. Approximately one out of five New Englanders experienced conversion during the years between 1740 and 1742.[1] Some twenty-five to fifty thousand members were added to the churches. Between 1740 and 1760 one hundred fifty new Congregational churches were formed.

There was an increase in the number of students preparing for the ministry, with an appreciable rise in the standard of duty and effort of the ministry.

The revival also caused a division of the New England ministers into two groups. Those favoring the revival were called "New Lights" and those opposing, "Old Lights." The leader of the New Lights was Jonathan Edwards while Mayhew and Chauncey led the Old Lights. This controversy resulted in a split in Congregationalism; the New Lights withdrew to form separate congregations which were called "Separatists." The Baptists reaped great indirect benefit from the New England revival through this controversy. Many of the Separate churches which were organized eventually became Baptist. In Massachusetts the number of Baptist churches grew from six to thirty. Many of these New England Baptists went to Virginia and North Carolina and became the leaders of the Baptist revival in

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1. F. H. Foster, "Revivals of Religion," New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia, Vol. X, pp. 11-12.

that area.

Although the Great Awakening in New England was the most glorious and extensive revival of religion and reformation of morals that the country has ever experienced, its lasting effects were short lived.[1] The fifty years following the Great Awakening became again a period of religious indifference and deadness. This was partly caused by the doctrinal controversy and partly because of the long period of political unrest.[2]

4. The Great Awakening in the Southern Colonies[3]

The Great Awakening was largely denominational thus far, but in the Southern Colonies it was more of an interdenominational movement with three stages. The revival manifested itself first among the Presbyterians, especially in Virginia, secondly among the Baptists and it continued in still a third stage as a Methodist movement.

a. The Need

On the whole religion and education in the South lagged behind the other sections of the country. There were two classes in the South--the planter aristocracy and the plain people--between which there was little in common

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1. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, op. cit., Quoting Trumbull, p. 291.
2. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., pp. 199-200.
3. Wesley M. Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790. This is the authoritative work on the Great Awakening.

in manner living, in political aspirations, or in spiritual desires. Among the aristocrats of the Tidewater Country of Virginia there was much wealth and the level of education was high. The Episcopal church was established by law, but its ministers were second-rate men and many lived scandalous lives. The clergy of the parish had no concern for the spiritual well being of the flock.[1] Church and religion as a vital concern of every day life were foreign to the thinking of both classes. The Church meant little enough religiously to the socially elite and it meant next to nothing at all to the plain people.[2] With such indifference, coldness, formality, lack of spirituality and non-attendance characterizing both clergy and laity in the Anglican church, it is easy to understand why the moral life of the people was exceedingly low.

b. The Leaders

(1) The Presbyterian Leaders[3]

There arose in the back country of Virginia a new social order which came partly from the older Tidewater sections and partly from Pennsylvania. The latter group was composed largely of Scotch-Irish and Germans who were small farmers. The Established Church was not carried back to the back country and these settlers with no

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1. The ratio of churched to unchurched was about one to twenty. Stiles, op. cit., p. 94.
2. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, op. cit., p. 293.
3. Leonard J. Trinterud, The Forming of an American Tradition. An excellent study of Presbyterianism.

religious background were plastic material for the revivalists. In Hanover County there began a spontaneous movement among the laymen under the leadership of Samuel Morris. He gathered people together in one another's houses and read from books of Whitefield, Bunyan, Luther and other evangelical authors.[1] Great religious concern spread throughout the region. In 1743 William Robinson, a graduate of the Log College, was sent by the New Brunswick Presbytery to visit Presbyterian settlements in western Virginia and North Carolina. Robinson's awakening type of preaching started a wave of revivalism in Hanover County among those whose religious concern already had been aroused. Robinson was followed by a succession of itinerant revivalists from the New Side Presbyterians of the Middle Colonies. Among these missionaries of the Great Awakening to go south where John Roan, John Blair, Samuel Finlay, Samuel Blair, Gilbert Tennent. These New Light Presbyterians, with their outspoken denunciations, met with much opposition.

To this situation came the outstanding Presbyterian leader of the Great Awakening in the South, Samuel Davies. In dealing with the delicate situation Davies displayed wisdom beyond his years. His emphasis was upon advancing the cause of Christianity and not to "Presbyterianize the colony."[2] He was very careful to keep within the

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1. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 215.
2. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, op. cit., p. 297.

law and even secured a license which permitted him to preach in the area. Under his supervision revivalistic Presbyterianism thrived throughout the whole area. He possessed an unusual gift of appealing to people of widely varied culture and intelligence, being accepted by both the polished gentlemen and the ignorant African slaves.[1] As a revivalist it is said that he preached as a dying man to dying men. While serving as pastor in Hanover County from 1747 to 1759 and moderator of the presbytery of that area, he did much also to promote the idea of religious freedom and toleration.

(2) The Baptist Leaders

As early as 1714 there were Baptist congregations in Virginia, but they had little to do with the Baptist expansions. The impetus for the Baptist revival in Virginia and North Carolina came from New England and were the products of the New England revival. The leaders were Separate Baptists, Shubal Sterns and his brother-in-law, David Marshall, both from Connecticut.[2] After unsuccessful attempts in Virginia they moved to North Carolina where they located in Guilford County, on Sandy Creek, in 1755. There they organized the Sandy Creek Church which grew from sixteen to 606 members in a very short time.[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 297.
2. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 219.
3. Ibid., p. 220.

Stearns and Marshall traveled throughout a wide territory and as a result other churches were formed and preachers were raised up. Among these preachers were James Reed, Dutton Lane, John Waller and Samuel Harriss.

> "Most important of all," says Sweet, "was Samuel Harriss, a man of influence and education who held several offices, among them burgess of the county and colonel of militia."[1]

In five years the Sandy Creek Church became the "mother, grandmother and great-grandmother of forty-two churches."[2]

During the next ten years the progress of the Separate Baptists is almost unparalleled in Baptist history. Strong Baptist churches were established in the communities that were stirred. It was not uncommon for them to baptize seventy-five people at one time.[3] Many of these evangelists encouraged extravagancies. They were also outspoken in their attacks upon the Established Church. Unlike the Presbyterian, they refused to conform with the law and all of this resulted in bitter persecution. However, even during the "Period of Great Persecution" (1768-1770), they still expanded and grew. Gradually the Baptist's position and views were recognized as being in harmony with the political philosophy of American Revolutionary leaders.[4]

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 220.
4. Ibid., p. 222.

(3) The Methodist Leaders

When the Baptists were becoming well established in Virginia and North Carolina there began the third and last phase of the Great Awakening in the Southern Colonies. This phase began, strange as it may seem, with Devereux Jarratt, an evangelical Anglican minister who was associated with the early Methodist preachers. Jarratt had been converted under the influence of the Presbyterians and was filled with evangelical ideas. However, until the Methodists came, Jarratt, the rector of Bath Parish in Dimwiddie County, Virginia, stood alone. He received very little sympathy in his attempt to evangelize the Established Church. In the following paragraph, taken from his autobiography, he says concerning his isolation:

> "At that time I stood alone not knowing of one clergyman in Virginia like minded with myself; yea I was opposed and reproached by the clargy--called an enthusiast, fanatic, visionary, dissenter, Presbyterian, madman, and what not; yet was so well convinced of the utility and importance of the truths I declared and the doctrines I preached that no clamor, opposition, or reproach could daunt my spirit, or move me from my purpose and manner of preaching. . . ."[1]

Jarratt's significance as a revivalistic leader was greatly enlarged by his willingness to cooperate with the Methodists when they appeared on the American scene soon after 1770.[2]

Robert Williams, a local preacher who came to America on his own accord but with the permission of

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1. Ibid., Quoting Jarratt, p. 222.
2. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 91.

Wesley, was the first Methodist preacher that Jarratt met. Williams was welcomed by Jarratt and preached several sermons in his church.[1] Williams assured Jarratt that the Methodists were true members of the Church of England and its preachers looked to the parish ministers to receive Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Williams said that the sole object of Methodism was to call sinners to repentance and form societies in which vital religion might be cultivated. After Jarratt received their assurance, he welcomed the Methodist itinerants, seeing in them a means of reviving his own Established Church in Virginia and the Carolinas.[2] From the time Williams and Jarratt met in 1773 the Methodist phase of the Great Awakening was underway. It soon spread throughout the surrounding counties in Virginia and across into North Carolina.[3]

In 1775 George Shadford, one of Wesley's early missionaries to America, was assigned to the area embracing Jarratt's parish. For the next two years, 1775 and 1776, the high-water mark of the revival was reached. Sweet says,

> "Of all Wesley's preachers in America, Shadford was probably the most effective and became the chief instrument in the revival which now swept the region."[4]

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1. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 223.
2. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 72.
3. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, op. cit., p. 309.
4. Ibid., p. 309.

People who opposed and were indifferent to religion flocked to hear Jarratt, Shadford, and other Methodist exhorters and leaders. The revival spread over an area which extended for four or five hundred miles in circumference.[1]

Another Methodist who preached in Virginia and North Carolina was Thomas Rankin. So overwhelming was the demand for preaching that Rankin almost preached himself to exhaustion. Concerning this revival Jesse Lee, the earliest historian of American Methodism wrote, ". . . I could not describe half of what I saw, heard or felt."[2]

c. The Results

The Great Awakening, in contrast to the other colonies, left the religious situation in Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas radically different than it had been previously.[3] The Presbyterian revival in Virginia not only established Presbyterianism in central Virginia, but also it was the ". . . first mass movement that was to bring about a social and political upheaval in Virginia—the first break in the ranks of privileged."[4] Accordingly, Sweet says,

> "In the Southern Colonies, new religious forces arose out of the revivals which not only were to change the religious complexion of Maryland and Virginia, the principal strongholds of colonial Anglicanism, but eventually the entire nation itself. Out of the

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1. Ibid., p. 309.
2. Sweet, History of Methodism in America, op. cit., p. 76.
3. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 35.
4. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 211.

> southern revivals came something new and aggressive and distinctly American. This new religious aggressiveness is best represented by the separate or revivalistic Baptists and the Methodists. It was out of this background that both started on their amazing growth and development."[1]

The increase in number of the Baptists was little short of phenomenal. In a period of seventeen years, instead of one Sandy Creek Church, there were forty-two and from these arose one hundred forty-two ministers. Most of these men were not highly educated, but they were meeting the needs of many people.

The Methodists, with Devereux Jarratt, likewise had unbelievable success in the Southern Colonies. In 1774 there were but two Methodist circuits in Virginia with a total membership of two hundred ninety-one; three years later there were six circuits in Virginia and North Carolina with a membership of 4,379. The entire membership of all Methodist circuits in America numbered only 6,968 at this time. American Methodism, though not formally organized, was established in America as a result of the Great Awakening in the Southern Colonies. The immediate region of Devereux Jarratt's parish became the cradle of American Methodism.[2]

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1. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 35.
2. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, op. cit., p. 310.

C. Western Frontier Revivalism: The Second Awakening

1. The Revivals around 1800

Before considering the Second Awakening in its particulars it is well to get a picture of revivalism at this period. From the close of the Great Awakening there was no general revival in America until around the year 1800. This intervening period was one of war with its consequent demoralization. However, as the new century drew near, isolated revivals occurred in a number of places, particularly in and around college areas. In 1781 there was a revival at Dartmouth College which extended for miles around. Two years later a similar revival broke out on the campus of Yale and the surrounding area. From 1778 to 1787 there was a revival in western Pennsylvania. Western Connecticut had a revival from 1796 to 1798 which extended into western Massachusetts. During the winter of 1798 an unusually great revival broke out in western New York.[1]

The Second Awakening that began around the turn of the century had two phases--the eastern and the western. The eastern revivals, some of which have been mentioned, centered around the revivals at Yale College. This college

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1. O. Kirn, "Revivals of Religion," Samuel E. Jackson, Editor-in-chief, The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol. X, pp. 12-13.

had seventeen distinct revivals from 1783 to 1837.[1] The western phase of the Second Awakening, also called the Great Revival, began in the Kentucky region, but extended into Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and other frontier areas.[2] Lacy says, "Indeed the revival spread until in a general way, it covered the entire United States."[3]

The emphasis of this study is upon the western phase of the Second Awakening, because of the important role that Methodism had to play in it. However, before a study is made of the Second Awakening, a picture should be given of the religious conditions in America at this period.

2. The Religious Conditions around 1800

a. The Eastern Seaboard

The decade and a half that followed the close of the American Revolution was one of spiritual deadness among all the American churches. Sweet says, "It was, indeed, the period of the lowest ebb-tide of vitality in the history of American Christianity."[4] Bishop Madison of Virginia shared the conviction of Chief Justice Marshall, himself a devout churchman, that the Protestant Episcopal church at

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Benjamin Rice Lacy, Jr., Revival in the Midst of the Years, p. 75.
4. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit. p. 322.

this period was "too far gone ever to be revived."[1]

The church colleges were in deplorable spiritual state. The students were skeptical and rowdies. Wine and liquor were as plentiful in the rooms of the students as books, and intemperance, profanity, gambling and licentiousness abounded.[2]

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church which met in 1798 thus describes the religious conditions in the country:

> "We perceive with pain and fearful apprehension a general dereliction of religious principles and practices among our fellow-citizens, a visible and prevailing impiety and contempt for the laws and institutions of religion, and an abounding infidelity, which in many instances tends to atheism itself. The profligacy and corruption of the public morals have advanced with a progress proportionate to our declension in religion. Profaneness, pride, luxury, injustice, intemperance, lewdness, and every species of debauchery and loose indulgence greatly abounded."[3]

If this is a picture of the church people at the turn of the century, it is depressing to think of the religious and moral level of those outside of the church.

What was the cause of this great spiritual bankruptcy which existed along the eastern seaboard? The first cause was the fact that this was a period reaping the aftermath of the Revolutionary War which lasted from 1775 to

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 323. The essence of the description of Yale as given by Lyman Beecher, a student of Yale in 1795.
3. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 324.

1783. There was naturally much hardness and indifference toward religion. The second cause was the great indifference on the part of the preachers toward an evangelical ministry. The third cause was the great influence of infidelity which was especially outstanding in college circles.[1] Dr. Timothy Dwight, President of Yale, wrote, "From France, Germany and Great Britain, the dregs of infidelity were vomited upon us."[2]

It was at this period of history when religious and moral conditions of the East had reached the lowest ebb in the entire history of America that the western migration began.[3]

b. The Western Frontier

The general economic distress along the eastern seaboard following the war set in motion the westward movement.[4] Because of the return of better times in the New England and Middle Colonies, their emigration was not as great as in the South. Great emigration from Virginia, Maryland and the Carolinas passing over the Blue Ridge soon furnished Kentucky and Tennessee with a population sufficient for their admission into the Union before the turn of the century.[5] At the time of the second census in

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1. Lacy, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
2. Ibid., Quoting Timothy Dwight, p. 65.
3. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 117.
4. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 299.
5. Ibid.

1800 there were about 5,300,000 people in the whole United States and of this number, 2,500,000 were in the South. Kentucky and Tennessee had a combined population of about 325,000, two-thirds of whom were in Kentucky.

Since this great westward migration began in the very midst of the religious and moral depression in the East, one could not expect the low levels of religion and morality to improve on the frontier. In the West they were cut off from the restraints and the refining influence of the old home community with its church and school and its strict observance of the Sabbath.[1] One missionary said that the people who came from regions of church discipline now acted like "freed prisoners."[2] People from the East who visited the West were even shocked by the unusual amount of swearing, fighting, robbing, gambling and general lawlessness. Dr. Sweet says,

> "The greatest single curse of the whole country at this period, and especially of the raw frontier, was home-made whiskey. It was considered on the frontier almost as much of a necessity as bread and meat. Everybody indulged--men, women, children, preachers and church members, as well as the ungodly. Stores had open kegs of whiskey with cups attached for all to help themselves."[3]

The cause for such religious and moral conditions on the frontier are quite understandable. First, the frontier people were still recovering from the aftermath

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1. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., pp. 117-118.
2. Ibid., p. 118.
3. Ibid.

of the Revolutionary War. Secondly, the great migrations broke up family ties. The Scotch-Irish who spear-headed the trek to the Southwest reached lower levels of spiritual depression in each of their several migrations. The third cause was the great spirit of avarice which led to bloodshed and which made frontier life hazardous. The fourth cause was the scarcity of missionaries and evangelists in the new settlements. And the fifth cause was the great influence of French infidelity which also existed even in the frontier areas.[1]

Sweet summarized succinctly the religious conditions in the United States at the turn of the century when he said, "Times were, indeed, ripe for a renewed emphasis upon vital religion throughout the nation."[2]

3. The Development and Leadership of the Second Awakening

The period before the dawn is the period of greatest darkness; this was true for the state of religion in the United States as has been seen. The way was paved for the Second Awakening in America which occurred at the turn of the century!

a. The Eastern Phase

The first movement toward the emphasis upon vital religion came from New England. This revival spirit was

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1. Lacy, op. cit., pp. 64-66.
2. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 325.

partly due to the introduction of Methodism to that area.[1] In 1789 Bishop Asbury appointed Jesse Lee, a tall Virginian, to the first circuit in New England.[2] The revival atmosphere spread to western Massachusetts into western Connecticut and then to western New York in 1798.

One of the most important parts of the eastern phase of the Second Awakening was the revivals among the colleges. The most outstanding revival was at Yale. In 1795 Timothy Dwight, grandson of Jonathan Edwards, became president. He met the principles of deism, materialism and infidelity with good humor, sound judgment, human sympathy, and intellectual resources of a rare teacher.[3] With his frank discussions with the students, he soon won their admiration, and a revival began. In this revival there was a third of the students who professed to be converted and half of these became ministers.[4] Similar spiritual awakenings followed at Dartmouth, Williams, Princeton, Amherst and other colleges, and the movement spread into the Middle States and into the South.[5]

One of the outstanding evangelists who preceded the Civil War and yet followed the Great Awakening was Charles Grandison Finney. Finney studied law as a boy and

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1. Methodism at this period had a strong evangelical emphasis.
   Ibid., p. 326.
2. Ibid.
3. Weigle, op. cit., p. 141.
4. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 326.
5. Ibid., p. 327.

entered upon its practice with no contact with the Gospel. Through the reading of the Bible, to which his law books referred, he was marvelously converted. His idea of faith gained through this experience was very important in his later preaching. His informal, logical and convincing presentation of the Gospel was readily received. Finney's revivals covered a wide and interesting field which included England and Scotland in addition to certain key cities in the East such as Philadelphia and New York. The revival at Rochester was among his greatest and had many lasting effects.[1] His work started among the Presbyterians, but branched out into other denominations.

b. The Western Phase

While the revival at Yale was proceeding quietly, avoiding excesses of every kind, in Kentucky there began in 1799 the remarkable awakening which is also known as the Great Revival of 1800 and 1801.[2]

On the frontier there were not even enough ministers to administer the ordinances of the church regularly. Therefore, the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists all went together for a "sacramental

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1. F. H. Foster, "Revivals of Religion," Samuel E. Jackson, Editon-in-chief, The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol. X, p. 15.
2. In this study the Great Revival and the western phase of the Second Awakening refer to the same thing and will be used interchangeably.

meeting" to which the frontier people would travel many miles to attend. Most of these people were of low intellectual life and had degenerated in the seclusion of these remote regions. Religion for these people had little or no meaning. The "inhibitions" of both the intellectual and moral natures were largely removed and their nervous systems at the same time were far from being stable. They lived in constant fear, ever in the alert of savages; therefore, their "latent fear" was very great.[1]

To these people came men like James McGready,[2] whose preaching was attended by great power. He could so picture Hell before the wicked that, as it was said,

> "They would tremble and quake imagining a lake of fire and brimstone yawning to overwhelm them and the hand of the Almighty thrusting them down into the horrible abyss."[3]

In addition to McGready there were William McGee[4] and John McGee,[5] who were the main leaders of the Kentucky revivals. Under their leadership the revival was carried to its climax with notable meetings at Red River, Gasper River, Muddy River, Concord and Cane Ridge. A description of the Cane Ridge Revival in 1801 is given by Weigle in the following paragraph:

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1. Foster, "Revivals of Religion," op. cit., p. 13.
2. James McGready was a Presbyterian who came to Kentucky in 1796.
3. Ibid., p. 13.
4. William McGee was a Presbyterian.
5. John McGee was a Methodist.

> "The climax of the revival, was reached in the sacramental meeting at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in August, 1801. It was estimated that 25,000 people were in attendance. Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist preachers joined in the work and the Governor of the State was present. Stands were erected in different sections of the woods so that seven preachers could speak at the same time. 'They were of one mind and soul,' wrote Barton W. Stone, Presbyterian minister at Cane Ridge; 'the salvation of sinners was the one object. We all engaged in singing the same songs, all united in prayer, all preached the same things. . . . The numbers converted will be only known in eternity. . . . This meeting continued six or seven days and nights and would have continued longer, but food for the sustenance of such a multitude failed.'"[1]

In these meetings the dangers of appealing to fear in a population of low intellectual and religious life are well illustrated. It was a revivalistic period, outstanding for its great nervous excitement and bodily exercise. Such activity as weeping, falling to the ground, loss of consciousness, muscular jerking, shouting, barking, singing, leaping, and dancing were not uncommon among these revivals. It was not until the summer of 1803 that a general end came to this violent type of revival.

The Great Revival did not cease with the Cane Ridge meeting, but from here it was spread out. The revival spread throughout Kentucky and Tennessee, into North and South Carolina and as far south as Georgia, western Virginia and Pennsylvania and into the settled regions north of the Ohio River. "The revivals," says Weigle, "were experienced in all parts of the country in the first

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1. Weigle, op. cit., p. 152.

decade of the Nineteenth Century."[1] The practice of camping from Thursday to Tuesday with preaching every day and the administration of the Sacrament on Sunday met the problem of scarcity of evangelists and satisfied the spiritual need of the people. Mode says,

> "However defective the camp meeting may appear to the scientific religious thinking of the Twentieth Century, it probably offered the most practical solution of the urgent religious needs of the undeveloped frontier. . . ."[2]

It is beyond the scope of this study to trace in detail the development of the Great Revival. The contribution that each denomination made is considered in the next chapter. However, as Sweet says,

> "It was fortunate for the future of the West and for the future of the country as a whole that there were fully organized religious bodies such as the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, and the Methodists who were already waiting and equipped to carry the battle of decency and religion in the great new West."[3]

The Presbyterians and the Congregationalists sought out their own on the frontier and around this nucleus would establish their churches.

> "This fact," says Sweet, "greatly limited the effectiveness of both of these bodies in the West, and helps to account for the relatively small numbers as compared to the Baptists and Methodists."[4]

These two bodies together with the Disciples and Cumberland

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1. Ibid., p. 153.
2. Mode, op. cit., p. 54.
3. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 117.
4. Ibid., pp. 120-121.

Presbyterians met the needs of the great mass of people who were pioneering in the Southwest. They had not had and could not have had careful instruction or catechetical training in the great truths of the Bible.

The evangelists who met the needs of the masses and led the Great Revival were not outstanding pulpiteers. They were common men who preached under the Power of the Spirit with evangelical flavor and fervor. In Virginia John Blair Smith, Matthew Lyle, Drury Lacy and William Graham were not remarkable men, but their preaching brought conviction and conversion. The same can be said of those mentioned before who carried the revival to its climax in Kentucky.

In this period the revival effort of Thomas Campbell and his more brilliant son, Alexander, should not be over-looked. They were especially outstanding in Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Virginia. Thomas Campbell believed in inviting all Presbyterian parties to partake of the sacrament, but for this action he was rebuked.[1] Because of the hostility and criticism that he received for this view he decided that he would become a "free lance" in frontier revivalism. Thomas Campbell began to hold meetings in barns, groves, houses and wherever the opportunity afforded. He received a great following. Eventually Thomas Campbell,

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1. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., pp. 340-341.

with the aid of his son, Alexander, organized the Christian Church which later united with the Disciples.[1] The Campbells were also common men, but they had a message for the people and they responded to it.

The Baptist work on the frontier was carried on almost entirely by farmer-preachers. This was largely an unsalaried and an uneducated ministry that met the needs of the common people. Similarly the work of Methodism was carried on by a group of hardy men known as "circuit riders." These, too, were men of little education, but self-less and hardy Christian men who knew the Lord and knew how to reach the outposts of American life with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.[2]

4. The Message and Method of the Second Awakening

The great use of the institution of the camp meeting has been mentioned. It was indeed an important method of the Second Awakening not only around 1800, but for years to come. Concerning this Mode says,

> "The first four decades of the Nineteenth Century was an era of almost continued turmoil of local revivals because it was dominated by the institution of the camp meeting."[3]

Throughout the Great Revival the important

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1. Ibid., p. 344.
2. Floyd Mason, The Contribution of the Circuit Rider to American Methodism, p. 22.
3. Mode, op. cit., p. 54.

method was the preaching. The message and method were almost always the same. First there was the emphasis upon the spiritual needs of the people and locality. There was the pointing out of their spiritual destitution and their godless state. This led to the second phase, the searching of their hearts and their need to pray for repentance. This was followed by the urging of those who found peace to pray for a personal salvation of their loved ones.[1] Their message consisted mainly of the great doctrines of the Reformed faith; the sovereignty of God, the spirituality of His law, original sin, man's impotency and aversion to turn to God, the display of God's grace in redemption through Atonement, and the necessity of regeneration through the operation of the Spirit. "Those doctrines which the world calls 'hard sayings' were the ones used in the changing of lives."[2]

Singing was another method of the revival, one upon which there was violent controversy. Singing had its lasting effects, for during the week while riding through the woods, cavalcades of young converts would break out into song.

Conversation was also effective in producing a state of mind favorable to religion. The light and frivolous social intercourse of the frontier gave way to

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1. Lacy, op. cit., p. 83.
2. Ibid., pp. 84-85.

earnest discussions of spiritual affairs. There are many accounts that tell of conversations that were carried on into the night, which resulted in changed lives.[1]

Lacy gives a good summary of the message and method of the Great Revival in the following paragraph:

> "Thus we see the ordinary pattern of spiritual life worked out again: great concern, urgent prayer, searching preaching, heart warming singing, and earnest conversation--all used of the Holy Spirit to redeem a people from their iniquity and make of them children of the living God."[2]

5. The Results of the Second Awakening

The results of the Second Awakening were both good and bad, with the good predominating. The schools and colleges especially in the eastern phase felt the effects of the revival in a real way. In the colleges men were turning to Christ and a great many of them decided to go into the ministry.[3] Because of the many who made this decision, there had to be established an increased number of theological seminaries. This need gave rise to the founding of Andover, Princeton, Union in Virginia, Yale Divinity school and other seminaries.[4]

Many new colleges and universities were also established as a result of the revival. Between 1780 and

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1. Ibid., pp. 85-86.
2. Ibid., p. 87.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 82.

1830, in all sections of the country, forty colleges and universities were established in the United States.[1] French deistic infidelity, which had so influenced the thinking of the intellectual leaders, was not refuted in argument, but was simply swept out of existence by the Second Awakening.[2] Needless to say there was a great moral, social and spiritual change. The existing churches were strengthened and many new ones were organized during this period.

Although it is easy for a more sophisticated age to criticize the many extravagances of the Great Revival, it met in a peculiar way the special needs of the time. Concerning this Weigle says,

> "The Great Revival began in America a more or less conscious policy of revivalism--an expectation of the recurrence of seasons of especial awakening."[3]

The revivals did continue especially in the first half of the Nineteenth Century. Instances of revivals even today reveal its lasting effects.

The revival had a tremendous effect upon religious literature. Pamphlets, tracts, devotional books and volumes of sermons appeared in a surprisingly large number. Many of the religious periodicals date from this period in history and played a large part in the life of

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1. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 149.
2. Lacy, op. cit., p. 81.
3. Weigle, op. cit., p. 153.

the church throughout the century. The crowning effort was the organization of many Bible Societies. The American Bible Society was created on May 8, 1816, by men whose religious zeal was kindled during the revival.[1] Another result was the unusual importance that was given to humanitarian effort. Along with this there was created a strong anti-slavery sentiment.[2]

Not all of the results of the Second Awakening were good, for this revival also caused many divisions. In New England the Unitarians made their final break from the Congregationalists. The United Brethren and the Evangelical Association were organized from German Lutherans and Mennonites influenced by Wesleyan preaching. The general upheavals of the revival period tended to increase denominational rivalry and misunderstanding within groups. Within the Presbyterian Church there were three divisions which took place, all as a consequence of revivalism. There were the Cumberland Presbyterians, the New Light Schism and the Shaker Schism.[3]

Even worse than denominational division was the founding of many new super-belief, religious cults. The new religion of Mormonism, founded by Joseph Smith, was one example among many cults that arose out of the early

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1. Lacy, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
2. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 155.
3. Ibid., p. 142.

years of the Nineteenth Century as a result of the revival.

On the whole the good of the Great Revival overshadowed its evils.

> "It saved the new nation," says Lacy in summary, "from French infidelity, crass materialism, rapacious greed, godlessness, and outbreaking violence on the frontiers."[1]

D. Revivalism in the Civil War

1. The Development of the Revivals in the Confederate Army[2]

This survey of revivals which swept the armies must be brief, but because of their importance, they cannot be overlooked. Lacy says,

> "The revivals that took place in the Armies of the Confederate States of America were among the most unusual recorded in history."[3]

It is even more remarkable that the revivals occurred among soldiers who were removed from their associations of home, from association of older men and from the contacts with pure women and children. In addition they were engaged in the business of destruction, and under such circumstances the mere maintenance of a moral standard is difficult, to say nothing of becoming actively engaged in revival movements.[4]

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1. Lacy, op. cit., p. 87.
2. There were some conversions in the Federal Army, but because those in the Confederate Army so far overshadow the former, the emphasis here is given to the latter.
3. Lacy, op. cit., p. 115.
4. Ibid.

The movement gained momentum and importance after the battle of Sharpsburg, where Jackson's Corps was encamped. Trimble's Brigade was the first to be affected by the revival movement; however, Pickett's Division and Lawton's Brigade reported revivals and General Early modified his rules to assist the revival movement in the fall of 1862. More notable revivals were in northern Virginia, South Carolina and the armies of the West.[1]

The defeats of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, with its disastrous results for the South, did not dampen the ardor for revivals. In fact the revival in the Confederate Army reached its greatest heights during the fall of 1863 and the spring of 1864, just preceding General Grant's attack. Lacy says,

> " . . . the revival spread from company to regiment, from regiment to brigade, from brigade to division, from division to army corps, until all the army was affected."[2]

Jordon B. Gordon, who actively participated in the revivals, tells us that in every camp religious altars were erected and ragged soldiers knelt and worshipped. Says Gordon,

> "The religious revivals which ensued formed a most remarkable and important chapter in war history. Rocks and woods rang with appeals to holiness."[3]

Even the flanking movements of Grant against Lee and Sherman and Johnston in 1864 did not stop the revival

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1. Ibid., p. 116.
2. Ibid., p. 118.
3. Ibid., p. 120.

movement. Although the Confederate Armies were being depleted, their religious interest persisted to the very end.[1] Even in the early months of 1865 as the struggle at Petersburg became desperate, Pickett's Division experienced a great blessing. Even in the prison camp at Fort Delaware there was a revival and an active Bible Class.[2]

These accounts of such great revivals over such a long period and among a body of troops scattered over so wide a territory cannot help but reveal how unusual were the Confederate Army revivals.

2. The Instrumentalities of the Revivals in the Confederate Army

The people of the South were conscious that they were a weaker force facing a mighty enemy. The source of strength in such circumstances among people who were rather religious could come only from God. Hence prayer was an important instrument of the revivals. Public fasts and prayers ordered by the government were a common practice at home and were not uncommon in the camps.[3]

The Southern Army was recruited by localities which created certain friendly ties. The soldiers shared home news which helped both their morale and religious life. The letters that the soldiers received were also instruments

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 122-123.

for revivals, for they were filled with the news of religious happenings at home.

Another cause for the revival was the publication of thousands of tracts by the newly formed Tract Societies. The distribution of Bibles and Testaments was also a valuable aid. Even more important than the literature was the quality of godly leaders and officers. General Lee was one among many who facilitated religious effort in his army.[1] Many of the leaders were trained ministers who took up the cause, raised an army in their locality and sometimes became its captain. As these godly officers and men were killed in battle, there was a tremendous impact upon the spiritual life of the soldiers who themselves faced momentary death.[2]

Chaplains and missionaries were also instruments of the Confederate revivals. Their work cannot here be described, but its effect was great, as they worked with commanding officers who were usually anxious to have them working in their midst. In summary Lacy says,

> "One makes a grievous mistake if he imagines that the revivals were the effects of emotional preaching and the psychological enthusiasm of high-strung soldiers around the campfires. They were the results of patient Bible study, prayer meeting, the diligent personal reading of the Bible and tracts, and the continued personal work of fellow soldiers and officers, of missionaries, pastors, and chaplains."[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 127.
2. Ibid., p. 135.
3. Ibid.

3. The Results of the Revival in the Confederate Army

Many soldiers who were nominal church members before the Civil War became active church members after their conversion experience in the army. Some men became ministers after the war as did Lieutenant Colonel L. M. Coleman. He was formerly a professor of Latin at the University of Virginia, but after the war he became a Baptist minister. Generally there was a deepening of faith among those who professed religion as a result of the revivals.[1]

In addition to these, there were also many who made confession of their faith for the first time while in the camps. Some estimate that the number of those who gave their hearts to Christ were about 150,000.[2]

The greatest result of the revivals in the Confederate Army was the strength that it gave for reconstruction. The profound convictions of the soldiers was a potent influence upon their conduct in the trying days of rebuilding the South after the Civil War.

E. Revivalism on the Wane

1. The Revival Effort and Leadership

The revivalistic effort of the last fifty years of

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1. Ibid., pp. 138-140.
2. Ibid., p. 141.

the Nineteenth Century does not begin to compare proportionally with that of the earlier half of the century. There was a distinct change which appeared about the middle of the century.[1] The period that followed was not one of many local revivals, but rather a few city revivals which were largely interdenominational and led by such professionals as Dwight L. Moody, Benjamin F. Mills, Sam Jones, Billy Sunday, Rueben A. Torrey, J. Wilbur Chapman and others. Most of these revivals were strictly limited to smaller areas and especially to the cities.

Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) believed in large assemblies of people and thus his efforts were largely confined to the cities. His methods consisted of preaching the Gospel as wisely and simply as possible, of gathering together in the "Inquiry Room" those interested in conversion, instruction and encouragement, of relying greatly upon prayer and of putting young converts to work and keeping them busy. Among other orthodox doctrines he preached the eternal future and punishment of the wicked. His greatest appeal was to sinners who felt that God's grace was not for them.[2] The Moody and Sankey evangelistic campaigns were quite successful. Moody was interested in saving individuals; his was a man to man evangelism.[3]

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1. Mode, op. cit., p. 56.
2. Ibid., pp. 15-16.
3. Weigle, op. cit., p. 198.

As the Nineteenth Century came to a close, the difference between the several types of revivalism became less and less distinct. The educational, cultural and doctrinal differences between the leading churches, so conspicuous at the beginning of the century, had largely disappeared. By the time Moody and the succession of professional revivalists came on to the scene, most of the revivalistic churches were ready to unite in the support of the great interdenominational evangelistic campaigns which so characterized the period.[1]

Benjamin F. Mills, Rueben Archer Torrey, J. Wilbur Chapman, Sam Jones, George Stuart, W. E. Biederwolf and Billy Sunday all owe their stimulus to the work of D. L. Moody. They borrowed his message and to a large extent his method, but never achieved his success.[2] He was very systematic in his procedure and introduced the card signing device which he thought brought an immediate decision. Torrey was closely associated with Moody; the Moody Bible Institute is distinguished for its use of the Bible in the vernacular in revival work. The foremost of the three was Chapman. His work was not only limited to revivals here in America, but also around the world. In 1910 he visited

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1. William Warren Sweet, "Rapprochment in American Protestantism," Religion in Life, XI, No. 1, Winter Number, 1941-1942, pp. 74-83.
2. Foster, op. cit., p. 16.

eleven foreign countries.[1]

The period of Mills, Torrey and Chapman was a fruitful period in revival effort. Men like A. C. Dixon, H. M. Wharton, Major Whittle, J. Arthur Smith and others carried on the work of Mills, Torrey and Chapman into the early part of the Twentieth Century with lesser success.

It is difficult to evaluate present day revival efforts and trends. Some people feel that the United States is on the verge of another great revival, while others feel that the day of revivals has almost past. Concerning this Mode says,

> ". . . one acquainted with the course of the church through the twenty centuries must conclude that present day American Revivalism is a tenacious carry-over from a phase of social development now almost past."[2]

The final test as to the truth of this statement will come from history itself.

2. The Reasons for the Decline of Revivalism

In the last one hundred years of American history there has been more of a change in living than in all the rest of history combined. In such a period of transition there was great cultural, economic, social and religious change. This change influenced American Revivalism in no small way.[3]

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1. Lacy, op. cit., pp. 16-18.
2. Mode, op. cit., p. 57.
3. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 163.

After the Civil War there were rapid cultural changes in the two principal revivalistic churches, the Baptists and Methodists. By the end of the Nineteenth Century the clergy of these churches also possessed education and refinement. There was also dignity in their worship services. There was a corresponding change among the laity, for many of them had been graduated from the denominational colleges. This culture and education eliminated the extravagant aspects which characterized early frontier revivalism. The days of extreme emotionalism in evangelism had past.[1]

The conditions giving rise to the camp meeting had passed. Sweet says,

> "The great number of old Methodist camp meeting grounds to be found all over the United States, . . . now turned into middle-class summer resorts or meeting places for summer conferences, are mute witnesses to the social, religious and cultural change which has taken place in American Methodism."[2]

From 1880 on there was an astonishing growth of American cities. The urbanization of America met new problems and religion was meeting new competition. The spectacular city revivalism with the professional revivalist arose to meet the religious needs of the city. The greatest of all professional evangelists was Dwight L. Moody.[3]

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1. Ibid., pp. 163-165.
2. Ibid., p. 165.
3. Ibid., pp. 167-168.

The city revivals on the whole lifted moral standards, reached thousands who had lost contact with religion, opposed gross sins common to city life, and helped to build large churches. Some feel that the lasting effects of these revivals were limited, but they accomplished a great deal of good. Although they seemed to last only as long as there was leadership, the effects were far reaching. Many churches still are active that were established during this period.

The churches which have the largest membership today are those bodies which profited greatly from revivalism.[1] Sweet says,

> "Revivalism tends to disappear when the impersonal becomes dominant over the personal. . . . In the last fifty years the American churches and their leaders have grown less and less interested in individuals and more and more conscious with the advancement of causes."[2]

This trend is a by-product of the Social Gospel which has undermined the personal touch in religion. In their effort to save society, they have tended to overlook the sinners in society.[3]

Another reason for the decline in revivalism is the emphasis of religious education which stressed Bushnell's theory of Christian Nurture. As a result of this, Sweet says, "Religion has become more and more a matter of

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1. Ibid., p. 177.
2. Ibid., pp. 177-178.
3. Ibid., p. 179.

learning and less and less a matter of feeling."[1]

Still another cause for this was the decline in evangelical preaching. Emotion, in present day religion, has a very small place. Jonathan Edwards said, "True religion is a powerful thing . . . a fervant, a vigorous engagedness of the heart."[2]

In summary Sweet says,

> "Revivalism, as it has run its course in America, has been primarily the individualizing of religion. It has often been blind to the sins of society, sins which cannot be reached by merely converting individuals. But if religion is to continue as a vital force in America, it must not lose the personal and individual emphasis. At the same time it must concern itself about the sins of society."[3]

F. Summary: The Genius of American Revivalism

It has been the purpose of this chapter to review the American revivals. However, it is essential to understand the inherent nature of American Revivalism. It must be remembered that American Revivalism began as a way of meeting a specific situation in Colonial America and it continued as long as that need existed.

> "It has persisted," says Sweet, "because, until recent times, conditions similar to those which produced it have continued to exist, at least, in certain sections of the country."[4]

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1. Ibid., p. 180.
2. Jonathan Edwards, Treatise on Religious Affections.
3. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 182.
4. Ibid., Preface, p. xi.

The genius of revivalism has been most aptly described and summarized by Peter G. Mode in the following paragraph:

> "It is the weapon that evangelism always retains for dealing with critical, abnormal, moral and social conditions that threaten its existence. It is the need, moreover, for faith and steadfastness and heroism in days of obscured vision and complacency."[1]

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1. Mode, op. cit., p. 58.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTRIBUTION OF METHODISM TO AMERICAN REVIVALISM

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A. Introduction

The contributions of Methodism to American Revivalism have been abundant.

> "In many respects," says Beardsley, "the Methodists have contributed more to the revival history of our country than any other religious denomination."[1]

What were these contributions of the Methodists? The purpose of this chapter is to reveal these contributions which Methodism gave to American Revivalism. It is not the intent of this study to minimize the contributions of other denominations, but rather to indicate the distinctive contributions of the Methodists. These contributions are here considered as they relate to the following four phases of American Revivalism: colonial revivalism, frontier revivalism, revivalism during the Civil War and revivalism during the years of its decline.[2] A detailed study of each contribution is beyond the scope of this study. Each contribution is briefly given and described. This chapter concludes with a summary giving the prominent contribution

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1. Frank G. Beardsley, A History of American Revivals, p. 181.
2. Many of these contributions apply to more than one phase of revivalism, but they are considered in the period where they are the most prominent.

of Methodism to American Revivalism.

B. The Methodist Contribution to Colonial Revivalism

Since organized Methodism did not appear in the American Colonies until 1766, when Philip Embury began to hold meetings in his house in New York,[1] it is understandable that Methodism had played only an indirect role in the Great Awakening in New England and the Middle Colonies. The Methodist contribution to colonial revivalism came mostly in the Southern Colonies.

1. John Wesley in Georgia

At the very time that Edward's revival was in progress at Northampton, the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, was laboring in Georgia. In 1737 the young missionary left Georgia and returned to England feeling depressed and discouraged with his apparent failure in the colony. However, in the light of later events, the efforts of Wesley can be seen to have contributed to the Great Awakening.[2] Whitefield himself found that Wesley had accomplished much good during his short stay in Georgia and had laid

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1. William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, p. 222.
2. Wesley M. Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790, p. 6.

foundations which could not be destroyed.[1] Later in his more mature judgment Wesley saw in his Georgia sojourn a period full of fruit both for himself and the people.[2]

2. George Whitefield and the Great Awakening

The contribution that Methodism made in the New England and Middle Colonies was indirect, through George Whitefield, the "great awakener." Whitefield was a member of the "Holy Club" at Oxford, England, with the Wesleys and was a great force in the Methodist Movement. George Whitefield was both the restoring and unifying force of colonial revivalism,[3] and the connecting link between the revival movement in England and America.[4] The contribution of Whitefield to colonial revivalism has already been considered.[5] His work can be here summarized in the following paragraph:

> "Whitefield was the greatest single factor in the Awakening of 1740. He zealously carried the work up and down the colonies from New England to Georgia. Among the revivalists, his influence alone touched every section of the country and every denomination. Everywhere he supplemented and augmented the work with his wonderful eloquence. He literally preached to thousands and thousands as he passed from place to place. He was the one preacher to whom people everywhere listened--the great unifying agency in the Awakening,

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1. G. Alexander, "Two Chapters from Early History of Methodism in the South," Methodist Review (South) Vol. XLVI, pp. 8-9.
2. Gewehr, op. cit., p. 6.
3. Ibid., p. 7.
4. William Warren Sweet, Methodism in American History, p. 13.
5. Ante., pp. 48-49, 54-55, 60-61.

> the great moulding force among the denominations . . . ."[1]

The contribution of Methodism to the Great Awakening in the New England and Middle Colonies was made through their evangelist, George Whitefield, who has been called the spiritual father of a great Christian nation.[2]

3. The Contribution of Other Denominations

The Methodist phase of the Great Awakening in the Southern Colonies came last. Meanwhile the other denominations pioneered and carried the Great Awakening on for several years.[3] The emphasis here is one of contrast between Methodism and the other churches which had preceded it in that area.

a. The Presbyterians

The Presbyterians, especially under the leadership of Samuel Davies, were well received and were a great pioneer force in the Great Awakening in the Southern Colonies. The Presbyterians did much not only in pioneering evangelism, but also religious liberty as well in the area controlled by the Established Church.

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1. Gewehr, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
2. L. T. Townsend, The Supernatural Factor in Revivals, p. 46.
3. The development of the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists phase was considered in Chapter II, Ante., pp. 64-66.

> "The crust of the privileged was broken," says Eckenrode, "and democratic ideas in religion and politics spread and strengthened. At the same time moral and spiritual life of the colony was deeply influenced, and the foundation was laid for the conquest of Virginia to evangelical Christianity."[1]

However, the primary purpose of the Presbyterians was to minister to the Scotch-Irish farmers who had moved down into the back country of Virginia.[2] This localization of interest tended to limit the appeal of the Presbyterians.

b. The Baptists[3]

As some of the Presbyterians from the Middle Colonies moved South, so also some of the Baptists from New England moved to the Southern Colonies. Each group took with them the evangelical zeal that they had received from the Great Awakening in their respective colonies. The Baptists were not as cautious in their methods and became quite outspoken in their attacks upon the Established Church. They refused to conform to the law and all of this resulted in bitter persecution. In spite of this they continued to make great progress. They had much in common with the Methodists, for both appealed to the common man.[4] Although they were the same in many respects, the contrast between them is seen in the following paragraph:

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1. H. J. Eckenrode, The Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 34.
2. Ante., pp. 66-67.
3. The Baptists as well as the Presbyterians contributed greatly towards religious freedom.
4. William Warren Sweet, Revivalism in America, Chapter V.

"The Baptist Church while it spread rapidly among the lower classes, was loose and inadequate in both organization and doctrine; it followed the Congregational system of New England without the same rationalized creed as a unifying basis. Its ministers were too often ignorant and frothy in an age of unschooled and emotionalizing preachers. In numbers it soon fell definitely behind its rival."[1]

c. The Anglicans

The Anglican Church in the South was known as the Established Church, for it was the only official church in the Southern Colonies. The church and the government were both controlled by the planter politicians. As has been indicated, the spiritual level of the church was at a very low ebb.[2] Into this situation came Devereux Jarratt,[3] a loyal Anglican who was converted under the New Light Presbyterians and hence a product of the Great Awakening. Except for Archibald McRoberts, Jarratt stood practically alone among the Anglican clergy in his evangelical views.[4] Jarratt welcomed the Methodists who came to work with him. He saw in them a means of reviving the Established Church. But the Anglicans, on the whole, refused to respond to the evangelical counter-awakening of Jarratt and the Methodists. Because of its failure to accept the revival, Gewehr says,

". . . it was unable to resist successfully the rising

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1. Charles Coleman Sellers, Lorenzo Dow, the Bearer of the Word, p. 12.
2. Ante., pp. 63-64.
3. Ante., pp. 68-70.
4. Gewehr, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

> tide of evangelicalism that was sweeping the colony, and when the Methodists drew apart into an independent organization the Anglican Church was hopelessly weakened."[1]

4. The Special Contributions of the Methodists

Methodism was so closely identified with the Established Church that it escaped the opposition that was given to the other denominations. By 1775 and 1776, the years of the great Methodist revival in Virginia, the Baptist Movement was largely checked and its rival, the Methodists, began to take the lead continuing the Great Awakening in the Southern Colonies.[2] The reasons for this change of leadership in the revival can only be understood in the light of the special contributions that Methodism had to offer.

a. The Unique Organization and Itinerant System

The unique organization and itinerant system of Methodism was remarkably adapted to the conditions then prevailing.[3]

> "The highly centralized organization under the bishop," says Gewehr, "combined with the adoption of the itinerant system of spreading the gospel, made for both strength and flexibility in the Methodist system."[4]

The splendid government of Methodism, with its unique

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1. Ibid., p. 139.
2. Gewehr, op. cit., p. 137.
3. Beardsley, op. cit., p. 186.
4. Ibid., p. 162.

itinerant system

> ". . . was mobilized and launched on its notable career by the brilliant leadership of its first American Bishop, Francis Asbury. Beneath the bishops, there were the elders, the deacons and, finally, the preachers, all serving for the same meager salary. Correspondingly, there were geographic divisions of conference, district and circuits and the entire active ministry, within the bonds assigned to its members, was itinerant. To retain better conquest of the invading preachers, the laity were organized into classes of a dozen or so members, each electing its class leader, who kept watch of their spiritual condition. . . . Everything was orderly and carefully supervised to guard against the perils of loose doctrines and schism. This unified itinerant system is responsible for the Methodist successes. By it they were able to follow the ever fluctuating advance of the frontier, and to arouse most thoroughly the enthusiasms of the struggling farmer folk throughout the land."[1]

Beardsley says,

> "It was this distinctly articulated system of church government, with its sharply defined functions from class leader to bishop, that enabled the apostles and evangelists of Methodism to push its conquests and gather their harvest in such a way as to make permanent and lasting results of their work."[2]

The itinerant system[3] was the strength of early

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1. Sellers, op. cit., pp. 12-13.
2. Beardsley, op. cit., p. 190.
3. Wesley believed that the itinerant ministry was not only the best system for providing spiritual guidance to converts, but that this system was supported by apostolic example. Did not Paul follow the itinerant principle in his efforts to Christianize the Roman World. "Be their talents ever so great," says Wesley, "they will ere grow dead themselves and so will most of those that hear them. I know, were I myself to preach one whole year in one place, I should preach both myself and most of my congregation to sleep. Now can I believe it was ever the will of our Lord that any one congregation should have one teacher only."
   N. Curnock, Journal of John Wesley, Vol. VI, pp. 19-20.

Methodism. It enabled the gospel to be taken to the people and thus its contribution to revivalism was unusually valuable. The unique organization consolidated the gains of the itinerants and through the local organization, saved the people from losing the religion which they had found in revivals.[1] Thus we see that both the organization and itinerant system was a contribution to the immediate and ultimate effects of revivalism.

b. The Evangelistic Emphasis and Missionary Vision

The unique organization and itinerant system alone could not have produced the tremendous results, but Methodism, from its very beginning in England, always has been an evangelical and missionary movement.[2] Beardsley says,

> "This system alone would have been a vain thing. But it was the system combined with religious fervor and evangelistic zeal, such as no age since the apostolic witnessed, that made possible the marvelous triumphs, the rapid growth and the wonderful progress of the Methodist Church."[3]

Because of this evangelical emphasis and missionary vision it was not handicapped by geographic boundaries, nationalities, or social classes as were many of the other denominations.[4]

> "The early Methodists," writes Beardsley, "devoted their attention chiefly to the neglected classes, and

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1. W. E. Arnold, A History of Methodism in Kentucky, Vol. II, p. 14.
2. Beardsley, op. cit., p. 186.
   ". . . Methodism was itself a missionary movement."
3. Ibid., p. 192.
4. William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, Vol. IV, The Methodists, p. 51.

> to those sections of the country which were destitute of religious privilege. They followed in the wake of pioneer settlers to the frontier regions and to the very outskirts of civilization. Wherever men and women were to be found who needed the gospel, thither these earnest preachers went to inaugurate the work of evangelization."[1]

The organization of Methodism was essential, but even more important was the evangelical and missionary spirit which permeated the Methodist Movement in America--this was the dynamic that enabled it to take the lead in the Great Awakening in the Southern Colonies.

c. The Itinerant Pioneer Preachers

Although there were no professional evangelists among the pioneer Methodist preachers, they were emphatically enthusiastic and evangelistic in their spirit and aims. According to Beardsley,

> "Every Methodist minister was a flaming evangel to bear the gospel message, and the system under which he labored afforded the widest opportunity for the development of evangelistic gifts."[2]

These enthusiastic pioneer preachers had a consuming passion for souls.

> "It was this passion for souls, which influenced them to withstand peril and suffer hardships, from which most men would have shrunk. Wherever they went they considered it a priceless privilege to proclaim the gospel of Christ."[3]

There was an abundance of these pioneer preachers

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1. Beardsley, op. cit., pp. 181-182.
2. Ibid., p. 181.
3. Beardsley, op. cit., p. 198.

who, like Francis Asbury, counted ". . . everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus. . . ."[1] Bishop Asbury was not only the founder of American Methodism, but he set the glorious example of what a pioneer preacher should be like. The temper of this man is seen in John Masefield's poem:

> "We travel from dawn to dusk, till the day is past and by Seeking the Holy City beyond the ring of the sky."[2]

Bishop Asbury has been rightly called "The Prophet of the Long Road."[3] Brash says,

> ". . . he trod it with a great courage and with a deep sense of the presence of the Great Companion. He was in his prayer life, in his missionary passion, and in his holiness, of the same pattern as John Wesley. He loved his mother and father with great tenderness, but never returned to England. He writes to his mother: 'If you have given me to the Lord, let it be a free-will offering, and don't grieve for me. As for me, I know what I am called to--it is to give up all.' Those last words are the key to Asbury's life--he gave up all to Christ, and counted that sacrifice a joy. This greatest religious pioneer of America fashioned the early Methodism in America, and we rejoice it was moulded in so great a manner."[4]

Among the numerous enthusiastic itinerant pioneer preachers of the rough-rider type, many were native Americans. Some of the outstanding missionary pioneers, in addition to Asbury, were Robert Williams, George Shadford, and Thomas Rankin. Freeborn Garrettson, Jesse Lee, Peter Cartwright

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1. Philippians 3:8. (The Revised Standard Version of the New Testament.)
2. John Masefield, "The Seekers."
3. W. Bardsley Brash, The Faiths: Methodism, p. 13.
4. Ibid.

and William McKendree were a few of the outstanding native pioneer preachers. An account of each of these men cannot be given in this study, but the experience of Garrettson serves to illustrate suffering that they were willing to endure for the sake of their work. Garrettson ministered with great devotion through the years of the Revolutionary War and in those days, when suspicion of disloyalty fell upon the Methodists, he endured fierce opposition. In the following excerpt of a letter that Garrettson wrote Wesley we have a description of what he endured:

> "My lot has mostly been cast in new places forming circuits, which much exposed me to persecution. Once I was imprisoned; twice beaten, left on the highway senseless. (I must have gone into the world of spirits had not God in mercy sent a good Samaritan that bled and took me to a friend's house); once shot at; guns and pistols presented at my breast; once delivered from an armed mob in the dead of night, on the highway, by a flash of lightning; surrounded frequently by mobs; stoned frequently; I have had to escape for my life at dead of night."[1]

These early itinerants, who became known as circuit riders, pioneered Methodism in America and they made no small contribution to American Revivalism. The Methodist itinerant system was effective, not so much because of its mechanical perfection, but rather because of the self-sacrificing devotion of the circuit riders who, like Paul, counted not their lives dear unto themselves.[2]

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1. Nathan Bangs, Life of Freeborn Garrettson, pp. 146-147.
2. Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, op. cit., p. 50.

d. The Lay Ministry

The lay ministry or system of local preachers was a great contribution to the Greak Awakening and later to frontier revivalism, for it helped to meet the shortage of ministers. The local preachers were those who followed a vocation during the week, but devoted some of their time, especially the Sabbaths, to preaching and organizing classes in their own neighborhoods.[1] The lay ministry wonderfully helped to make Methodism personal, for often the itinerant ministers were too busy to deal with the minute problems of each society.

> "Without bearing the responsibilities of the regular ministry, and receiving no remuneration, the local preachers served the Church with diligence and supplemented the work of the itinerants in a most able manner. They were frequently the pioneers of the Church in new regions, organizing classes even before the arrival of the circuit rider."[2]

e. The Local Organization

The local organization of Methodism contributed to revivalism, for it helped to keep the people spiritual and militant.[3] Each society of the circuit was divided into classes of about twelve, according to geographical areas. In these classes the members were held to strict accountability. Members were admitted to the classes by tickets which were issued quarterly by the preacher so that

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1. Gewehr, op. cit., p. 163.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

delinquent members could be easily dropped.[1] The band was still a smaller group consisting of all married men, or all married women, or all single men or women. This smaller unit was designed for more intensive spiritual cultivation. This local organization of classes and bands

> ". . . supplemented the Methodists with a system of personal oversight over the members which the nature of the itineracy prevented. The organization in small units emphasized the importance of every believer and made Methodism social as well as active. It was a unifying agency and developed in the denomination, and 'esprit de corps' which could not easily be broken."[2]

f. The Theology

The doctrines of Methodism appealed to the common sense of the people.[3] The Methodist theology had a broader appeal than did the doctrines of predestination and the final perseverance of all the saints as held by the Presbyterians and many Baptists. Beardsley says,

> "Methodism . . . preached the cardinal doctrine of Christianity emphasizing repentance, regeneration, justification by faith, and 'holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.' The prevailing type of their theology was Arminian, but it was Arminianism on fire. Through it all burned this unquenchable zeal for salvation of men."[4]

Methodism emphasized one main thing and that was a right heart, a Christian experience. Sellers says,

> ". . . the Methodists emphasized the experience which was the divine release of the penitent seeker from the

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1. Ibid., pp. 163-164.
2. Ibid., p. 164.
3. Arnold, op. cit., p. 6.
4. Beardsley, op. cit., p. 199.

> taint of Adam's fall. The experience carried one from uncertainty and despair to a life unified in joy, courage, and pious zeal. Conversion was everything; by it one was saved, without it one was damned."[1]

If a person was converted and observed certain rules of conduct, he was welcomed to the society regardless of doctrinal beliefs.

> "On the contrary," says Gewehr, "Presbyterians and Baptists held to a closed communion, excluding from their sacraments all who did not adhere to certain doctrinal demands. Whereas the doctrinal matters become a devisive force among both these sects, such was never the case with the Methodists."[2]

Methodist theology emphasized the evangelical truths of Gospel. This was its contribution to revivalism.

> "Where these truths," says Sweet, "are believed, taught, and to any extent experienced, there may be a revival of religion."[3]

Methodism preached the simple evangelical truths in its phase of the Great Awakening, and as a result, there was one continuous revival.

g. The Hymnody

One of the most potent and influential forces of the Methodist revivals was the power of rythmn and song.[4] Porter says,

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1. Sellers, op. cit., p. 12.
2. Gewehr, op. cit., p. 165.
3. George Smith, History of Wesleyan Methodism, Vol. II, p. 618.
4. S. G. Dimond, The Psychology of the Methodist Revival, p. 88.

> "Singing of a certain kind is a power for good in promoting revivals, particularly the singing of true and appropriate sentiments in the right spirit and manner."[1]

American Methodism was peculiarly fortunate in having a hymnody that was born in a revival and designed to express the religious beliefs and experiences of that denomination.[2]

> "Methodism had no fixed creed or set of doctrines, but rather regarded Christian experience and conduct as the main tests of membership. The hymns of the Wesleys supplied the denomination with something like a platform and were a great factor in indoctrinating the masses in the evangelical principles for which it stood. The hymnal has, in fact, been called 'a poetic confession of faith.'"[3]

In many cases nothing could be said that would be more awakening to the sinner, more instructive to the penitent, and more comforting to the believer than the singing of these spiritual hymns. Methodist hymnody was used by other denominations and was a distinct contribution to American Revivalism.[4]

h. The Literature

Methodism from its very beginning, has been outstanding in the printing and distribution of literature. Its importance and contribution to American Revivalism is seen in the following paragraph:

> "The press became a factor of ever increasing importance in the spread of the revival. . . . Five years after

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1. James Porter, Revivals of Religion, p. 274.
2. Gewehr, op. cit., p. 164.
3. Ibid.
4. Dimond, op. cit., p. 274.

> the organization of the church in the New World the Book Concern was instituted. The Methodists were not only their own publishers but also their own book agents. It was a duty incumbent upon every circuit rider to distribute books, tracts and sermons. In this way Methodism became a permanent influence in thousands of homes. The social and religious value of a common literature in countless scattered societies is easily seen, for it served to bind the members in harmony of spirit, aided in their educational uplift and in the fixation of the Methodist principles."[1]

The Methodists brought the Great Awakening in the Southern Colonies to its climax. Methodism represented a strong popular movement especially among the common men. This was because of the very nature of its message and method. Thus it may be said that Methodism made a special contribution to the Great Awakening in the Southern Colonies and hence to American Revivalism.

C. The Methodist Contribution to Frontier Revivalism

1. The Problems of Frontier Evangelism

The problems that faced frontier evangelism have been partially considered.[2] However, in order to see the problems of the frontier, it is well to review them briefly at this point.

a. Geographical Barriers

The population of the frontier was always in

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1. Gewehr, op. cit., pp. 156-166.
2. Ante., pp. 73-75.

transition. The second generation would press on toward the ever-receding frontier. On the frontier, with its battles against forest and Indians, the value of human life was cheapened and religion became wholly a secondary matter.[1]

The frontier was strictly rural and the population was thinly scattered. The rural life met the economic needs of the people, but did little to aid their religious needs. Communication among the frontier people was next to impossible; the only means was by foot or on horseback.[2]

b. Ministerial Shortage

There was always a great lack of ministers, for in the minds of the frontiersman, they were a luxury and not a necessity. The preachers that were available were in such demand that regardless of their conduct, they knew that they would always be needed. This was especially true in the Established Church in the Southern Colonies.

c. Religious Indifference

In addition to the geographical barriers and ministerial shortage, there was still another problem of frontier evangelism, namely, religious indifference. In this period of American Christianity, religion reached its lowest ebb-tide.[3] Even worse was the lack of concern and

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1. Floyd Mason, The Contribution of the Circuit Rider to American Methodism, p. 3.
2. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
3. Sweet, The Story of Religions in America, op. cit., p. 322.

indifference. French infidelity had spread even to the outposts of the frontier and the people had little concern for religion.

2. The Contributions of Other Denominations

a. The Presbyterians and Congregationalists

The Second Awakening, which occurred at the turn of the century, began as a Presbyterian effort. Although they met with much success and were of greater influence than the Congregationalists, both were limited in their evangelistic appeal.

> "The Presbyterian frontier preacher," says Sweet, "tended to limit his activities to people of Presbyterian background and to Scotch-Irish communities. . . . The Congregational missionaries in the West sought out New England settlements, and thus western Congregationalism was largely a transplanted New England."[1]

The Presbyterians were also handicapped by the rigidity of their creed and polity. There was much doctrinal controversy within Presbyterianism on the frontier. These factors greatly limited the effectiveness of both the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists in the West. They also help to account for the relatively small numbers as compared to the Baptists and Methodists.[2]

b. The Disciples, Cumberland Presbyterians and Baptists

While the Presbyterians and Congregationalists

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1. Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, op. cit., p. 51.
2. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., pp. 120-121.

restricted their revival efforts, the Disciples, Cumberland Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists made their appeal to everyone. Presbyterian and Congregational men like Archibald Alexander believed that a true revival could take place only

> ". . . among people who had been carefully taught by catechizing, and who have been instructed in the truths of the Bible."[1]

On the other hand, Alexander does not indicate what was to be done with the great masses on the frontier who had not received careful teachings in the great truths of the Bible. This is precisely where the Disciples, the Cumberland Presbyterians, the Baptists and the Methodists came into the picture. These denominations, especially the Baptists and Methodists,

> ". . . went forth into the western wilderness to win people of all kinds to the Christian way of life. Neither felt any special commitment to any one class or group but thought in terms of western society as a whole. This one fact helps to account for the wide distribution of these two bodies throughout the nation today."[2]

3. The Special Contributions of the Methodists

a. The National View

The Methodists went forth on the frontier ". . . to win people of all kinds to the Christian way of life."[3]

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1. Ibid., pp. 125-126.
2. Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, op. cit., p. 51.
3. Ibid.

This was especially true on the frontier as seen in the following paragraph:

> "American Methodism began its independent existence with a national view of its task and with an organization suited to an indefinite geographic expansion. It was not handicapped, as were the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Lutherans, each of whom were primarily concerned not with frontier society as a whole, but with particular groups."[1]

Early Methodism had the conviction of Wesley who said, "The World is my parish."

> "The Methodists," says Bancroft, "came into an age of tranquility when the feeling for that which is higher than man had grown dull; and they claimed it as their mission to awaken conscience, to revive religion, to substitute glowing affections for the calm of indifference. They stood in the mountain forests of the Alleghenies and in the plains beyond them, ready to kindle in the emigrants, who might come without . . . their their own vivid sense of religion."[2]

b. The Circuit Rider[3]

The Methodist itinerant system and the circuit rider[4] were the Methodist answer to the problem of frontier revivalism. This system, conceived by John Wesley himself, was put into practice in America by Francis Asbury. His answer

> ". . . was a circuit riding, itinerant missionary ministry of self-less, Christian, hardy men, who knew the Lord and knew how to reach the outposts of American life with the Gospel of Christ."[5]

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1. Ibid.
2. Bancroft, History of the Constitution, p. 169.
3. For an excellent study of the circuit rider and its role in American Methodism, see Floyd Mason's thesis, The Contribution of the Circuit Rider to American Methodism, a thesis at the Biblical Seminary in New York.
4. Ante., pp. 108-109.
5. Mason, op. cit., p. 22.

Undoubtedly the circuit rider, with his evangelical and missionary passion, was the outstanding contribution of Methodism to especially the frontier phase of American Revivalism. Sellers says,

> "The missionary spirit was at its height in the Methodist itinerants. Most of them were young men, well able to meet the hardships and perils of their calling, full of fresh, jubilant religion and the spirit of self-sacrifice. They shouted and sang despite themselves, and the impenitent soul was stricken when it heard them. Each knew his people and made his appeal directly to their hearts, with none of the theological finesse and intricacies of an educated clergy. Simply clad in ministerial black, and with his long hair hanging from under his broad-brimmed umbrella rolled in a blanket behind him, and his saddle bags, weighted with Bible and Hymn book, the Discipline, and Fletcher's 'Appeal' and Baxter's 'Call' and other necessities, before."[1]

The extent of the contribution made by the circuit riders such as Francis Asbury, Freeborn Garrettson, Peter Cartwright, Jesse Lee, William McKendree, Nathan Bangs and many others, will never be known. Concerning the contribution of one of these men, Peter Cartwright, it is said that during his more than sixty years of experience as a circuit rider and presiding elder, ten thousand souls were converted under his ministry and more than twenty-eight thousand were received into the church.[2]

> "With a spirit of self-sacrifice," says Beardsley, "which rivaled that of the apostolic age, the early advocates of Methodism resolutely set their faces to the task and plunged into the wilderness to carry the gospel light to these distant and scattered settlements."[3]

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1. Sellers, op. cit., pp. 17-18.
2. Beardsley, op. cit., p. 203.
3. Ibid.

c. The Camp Meeting

Although the camp meeting is often attributed to the Methodists, such was not the case. Notwithstanding, however, when the Presbyterians threw the camp meeting overboard, the Methodists appropriated it and made it to a large degree a Methodist institution.[1] The follow-up organization consisting of both ministerial and lay workers enabled the Methodists to excel all others in concrete gains through the camp meetings.[2] Bishop Francis Asbury once said, "We must attend to camp-meetings, they make our harvest time."[3] The evidence furnished by Bishop Asbury's Journal indicates the great importance of the camp meeting in frontier Methodism and hence frontier revivalism. Officially, however, the camp meeting was never recognized as an institution of the church; although used widely, it was always an extra occasion in the economy of Methodism.[4]

There was much of the spectacular and the unusual in especially the earlier camp meetings, but these aspects have been overemphasized. However, for some it was this physical phenomenon which made its appeal.

> "Many of the early circuit riders," says Mason, "were converted amid an atmosphere steeped with the presence and power of God, while the shrieks of the unsaved and the shouts of the saints were as the 'voice of many

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1. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 129.
2. Mason, op. cit., p. 76.
3. Sweet, Quoting Asbury, op. cit., p. 131.
4. Ibid.

waters.'"[1]

Many of the ministers preached against the excessive demonstration, but it still persisted.

> "In this great revival," says Cartwright, "the Methodists kept moderately balanced; for we had excellent preachers to steer the ship or guide the flock. But some of our members ran wild, and indulged in some extravagances that were hard to control."[2]

The following is a description of a typical camp meeting as one circuit rider saw it:

> ". . . the mighty power of God was displayed in a very extraordinary manner; many were moved to tears, and bitter and loud crying for mercy. The meeting was protracted for weeks. Ministers of almost all denominations flocked in from far and near. The meeting was kept up by night and day. Thousands heard of the mighty work, and came on foot, on horseback, in carriages and wagons. It was supposed that there were in attendance at times during the meeting from twelve to twenty-five thousand people. Hundreds fell prostrate under the mighty power of God, as men slain in battle. Stands were erected in the woods, from which preachers of different churches proclaimed repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and it was supposed, by eye and ear witnesses, that between one and two thousand souls were happily and powerfully converted to God during the meeting. It was not unusual for one, two, three and four to seven preachers to address the listening thousands at the same time from the different stands erected for the purpose. The heavenly fire spread in almost every direction. It was said, by truthful witnesses, that at times more than one thousand persons broke out into loud shouting all at once, and that the shouts could be heard for miles around."[3]

The camp meeting was very important in meeting the problems of frontier revivalism and it was used in every

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1. Mason, op. cit., p. 77.
2. Peter Cartwright, Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher, edited by W. P. Strickland, p. 46.
3. Ibid., pp. 513-514.

section of the West.[1]

d. The District Quarterly Meeting

No time, with the possible exception of the camp meeting, was more highly cherished by the Methodists than the district quarterly meeting. These meetings, which were held every three months at some designated place in the district,[2] were greatly anticipated by the people. They would come from long distances to attend the services. Concerning these meetings, which contributed to frontier revivalism, one has written:

> ". . . the great meeting for the members of the church was not the camp meeting nor the class meeting, but the quarterly meeting. Then it was that the sacraments were administered and the love feasts held. To these meetings came both the senior and junior preachers . . . and church members from all points of that circuit. Preaching began on Friday evening or Saturday morning and lasted until Monday morning. On Sunday the presiding elder did the preaching. There was no call for converts until Sunday night. Sometimes the converts were gathered here by the hundreds, and always these meetings were regarded as an evangelistic opportunity. But fundamentally they were the meetings at which church membership, as such, was most magnified."[3]

e. The Class Meeting

The class meeting was a great contribution to frontier revivalism, for it emphasized the personal element so essential in religion. Normally the Methodist class

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1. William Warren Sweet, The Religions of America, op. cit., p. 331.
2. Mason, op. cit., pp. 79-80.
3. Halford E. Luccock and Paul Hutchinson, The Story of Methodism, p. 272.

meeting followed either the Sunday morning service or the altar service. Such a meeting enabled all the new converts to express their new found joy and they in turn benefited from the testimony of the older Christians.[1]

> "The organization of the membership," says Arnold, "into classes and the class meeting were distinctive features of Methodism. . . . The coming together of small groups for the purpose of talking over their religious experiences, of praying for and exhorting one another, and of receiving instruction in the way of godliness from their more experienced leaders, was indeed a school of religious education that has never been surpassed among any people."[2]

There were about twelve people in each class and one was styled as the class leader. It was his duty, as described by Wesley,

> "To see each person in his class, once a week, at least in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; . . . to meet the minister and the stewards of the society once a week, in order to inform the ministry of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reproved. . . ."[3]

The class meeting, with its intimate, personal contact with the people, contributed greatly to frontier revivalism.

f. The Prayer Meeting

Prayer was by no means limited to the Methodists, but it was used by this denomination immensely in frontier

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1. Mason, op. cit., p. 72.
2. W. E. Arnold, History of Methodism in Kentucky, p. 7.
3. I. Daniel Rupp, Quoting Wesley, An Original History of the Religious Denomination at Present Existing in the United States, pp. 426-427.

revivalism.

> "In Kentucky and the West," says Beardsley, "this Awakening was preceded by seasons of prayer. Christians entered into a solemn covenant to spend a definite portion of their time in prayer for an outpouring of the Spirit of God for the salvation of men. A half-hour at sunset Saturday and a half-hour at sunrise on Sunday was the time generally agreed upon."[1]

The Methodists also met during the week or whenever convenient. They would often meet in a home and it was not unusual for someone to be saved in these meetings. In one of Edward Dromgoole's letters, written by Mr. Pelham, we have the following account:

> ". . . we have had very many happy times of late waiting on God at the Meeting House, and our prayer meetings, which we keep up regularly twice a week; every Sunday Evening at my House and Wednesday Evenings at Br(other) Sales'. Two souls have professed to find the Lord a t one of our me(e)tings at my House not long since."[2]

g. The Anxious Seat

The Methodists were the first to make use of what was called the "anxious seat." According to Beardsley the anxious seat was

> ". . . a means of bringing out inquirers. During the winter of 1806-1807 there was a remarkable revival in New York City. . . . So large were the congregations and so difficult did it become to pray and converse with seekers, that it became necessary to invite them forward to the front seats, which were vacated for the purpose."[3]

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1. Beardsley, op. cit., p. 99.
2. Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, op. cit., p. 183.
3. Beardsley, op. cit., p. 194.

This practice came into general usage among Methodists and was widely employed by other evangelical denominations.[1]

h. The Altar Service

The Methodists put great stress on the alter service. It furnished a test for the sincerity of the seekers. The altar was a convenient place, for it brought all the seekers together where they could all hear what was said. Sometimes Methodism has been criticized for its disorderly conduct around the altar, but its wonderful benefits far surpass any such reasons for ridicule. Coming to the altar was a public confession of sin and of Christ that helped him who made it. A sinner who was not humble enough to take the step was often not humble enough to be saved.[2]

> "It was generally at the altar," says Mason, "that people wept and prayed for the forgiveness of their sins, until they arose to their feet with their faces all aglow with the glory of God. In the case of others, an air of agony and anguish prevailed, which indicated that they were not reborn. At such times, the Methodists strongly pressed for a certainty, which they called the 'witness of the Spirit.' Often these services continued throughout the night; workers at the altar interspersed their praying with songs, exhortations, and testimonies. No would-be convert could expect to leave the altar without either testifying to his new-found relationship with God, or without stating his purpose to seek God until he found Him."[3]

The Methodist method of the altar service, which came to be used by other denominations, was a real contribution to American Revivalism.

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1. Ibid., p. 195.
2. James Porter, Revivals of Religion, pp. 278-279.
3. Mason, op. cit., pp. 71-72.

i. The Missionary Enterprise

In some respects American Methodism lagged behind the other major American churches in the formation of missionary societies. However, it must be remembered that Methodism was not only very new and poor, but the whole organization of Methodism was missionary in purpose with no line of demarcation between missions and evangelism.[1]

> "From the beginning," says Sweet, "the Methodist itinerants gave attention to the evangelization of Negroes, and in 1810, the year of the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a Negro Methodist membership of 34,724 was reported. The Methodists, it is true, did not undertake Indian work until 1819, but it was because they were not concerned with their evangelization."[2]

The first real missionary work undertaken by American Methodism began in 1819 among the Wyandot Indians, at that time living on a reservation in central Ohio. This beginning of Methodist missions was through the humble efforts of John Stewart. The Methodist Missionary Society, which was sponsored by the book agents and resident preachers in New York, was officially endorsed by the General Conference of 1820.[3] Other missionary organizations arose and Methodism became active in the missionary enterprize. Methodist missionaries like Jason Lee made a great contribution toward the spread of Christianity in the West. On

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1. Sweet, Methodism in American History, op. cit., p. 187.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 192-193.

October 6, 1834, Lee and his missionary pastor arrived in the valley of the Williamette River in Oregon and built a large log mission building among the Indians.[1]

> "Lee soon saw that successful missionary work among the Indians must consist largely of applied Christianity, and in carrying out this policy he had purchased cattle for the mission and had introduced his teaching of practical arts to the Indian children. Lee had gained the statesman's outlook soon after reaching Oregon, and he became active in encouraging white settlement, and had an important part in setting up a provisional government."[2]

Thus we see that Methodist missionaries even preceded the settlement of the white man in the West. They made a great contribution to real and vital religion in the frontier outposts.

American Methodism also shared in the task of world evangelism, but the consideration of this phase of missions is beyond the scope of this study. If Bishop Francis Asbury was the father of American Methodism, then Bishop Coke,[3] who was thoroughly imbued with missionary spirit, may truthfully be called the father of American Methodist foreign missions. The American Methodists released Bishop Coke so that he could carry on his foreign missionary work.[4]

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1. Sweet, Methodism in American History, pp. 197-198.
2. Ibid., pp. 198-199.
3. For an excellent appraisal of the missionary influence of Thomas Coke and the missionary spirit of Methodism, see Luccock and Hutchinson, The Story of Methodism, Chapter XVII.
4. Sweet, op. cit., p. 189.

> "He was the first world traveler of Methodism and brought into its consciousness its first vivid sense of world missions and responsibility. . . . He crossed the Atlantic eighteen times, defraying his own expenses, for he was a man of large fortune and lavished on Methodist missions during his life time practically all of it. A strong claim could be made for Coke as the first of that modern company of large givers to Christian enterprises, for he gave more money to religion than any other Methodist and perhaps more than any Protestant of his time."[1]

Bishop Coke was on his way to India with a company of missionaries when he died at sea on May 3, 1814.

The greatest contribution of Methodism to American Revivalism through the missionary enterprise was the evangelical spirit of Methodism. In a sense, every good Methodist on the frontier was a missionary.

j. The Educational Program

The small church college was an institution of the frontier. Frontier settlers were too poor to send their sons to the older established institutions in the East; therefore, it was necessary to bring education to the frontier.[2]

The early attempts of Methodism to found colleges in the East met with bitter disappointments. In 1787 Bishop Asbury dedicated Cokesbury College in Baltimore, but six years later the entire building was destroyed by fire. A second attempt was made to establish another Cokesbury College

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1. Luccock and Hutchinson, op. cit., p. 303.
2. Sweet, Methodism in American History, op. cit., p. 207.

in the same city, but this enterprise met a similar fate in 1796. In 1816 a group of Baltimore Methodists built Asbury College, but it was short lived and died for want of money.[1] These failures caused Asbury to write, "The Lord called not Mr. Whitefield or the Methodists to build colleges."[2] Frontier institutions were then emphasized and they met the need of the frontier and a more wholesome revival of religion.

The great frontier college-building era of the Methodist Episcopal Church was the twenty years between 1820-1840.

> "Most of the present-day Methodist colleges in the Middle West," says Sweet, "were frontier colleges in their origin. . . ; Indiana Asbury, now De Pauw, began its long history in 1837; Baker University was founded while Kansas was still a territory, and these are but typical of many others."[3]

From 1830 to the Civil War, the Methodists established thirty permanent colleges. In these frontier colleges, contrary to common thought, revivalism was kept continuously alive. In fact these colleges became the centers for revivalism because it was in these institutions that the ministry became educated.[4]

The contribution of Methodism to revivalism through education was not only through educational

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1. Ibid., pp. 208-210.
2. Sweet, Methodism in American History, op. cit., Quoting Asbury, p. 208.
3. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 207-208.
4. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

institutions but in its abundance of good literature.[1]

> "Among the Methodists . . . the printing and distribution of books, tracts, sermons and other literature . . . surpassed all other denominations. . . .[2]

D. The Methodist Contribution to Revivalism in the Civil War

Although the Great Revival of 1857 has not been considered specifically in this study, it should be noted here that it was perhaps the greatest contribution to the revivals which occurred in the Civil War. As Beardsley says,

> ". . . the revival was a providential preparation for the Civil War . . . . The revival nerved and fortified the church for this fearful struggle."[3]

The battlefield and army camp seem to be a strange place for a revival of religion. However, by means of much religious literature, missionaries, chaplains, together with the cooperation of praying officers, a revival occurred in the Civil War which is the most unusual of its kind in the history of religion.[4] The denominations cooperated wonderfully, both in the North and South, toward these revivals. The Methodists made their contribution both to the Union and to the Confederate armies.

> "The Bishops," says Sweet, "uniformly agreed to relieve ministers from their churches and to appoint them regularly as chaplains. Altogether the Methodist Episcopal

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1. Ante., pp. 117-118.
2. Gewehr, op. cit., p. 234.
3. Beardsley, op. cit., pp. 238-239.
4. Ibid., p. 239.

> Church furnished at least five hundred chaplains to the Union armies."[1]

> "The bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South," says Beardsley, "issued an appeal to their churches for men and means to carry forward this work. The response to this and similar appeals was prompt and hearty. The missionary boards of the various churches were enabled to employ missionaries and colporters to assist the regimental chaplains in the work of evangelization. Sermons were preached, tracts were distributed, inquiry meetings were held, and the soldiers were dealt with personally in regard to their spiritual welfare."[2]

The revivals eventually spread to the remote sections, such as the armies in Arkansas. Here in this section of the field Reverend Enoch Marvin, who later became a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, established the Army Church. These churches were quite successful and spread to other sections of the country. The Army Church had its own articles of faith and constitution. Ten officers from each regiment were chosen to be the spiritual leaders of the regiment church. A Methodist presiding elder, who was an associate chaplain, in writing of the value of the Army Church, said,

> "Soon after the organization of these army churches in various regiments, we were visited by a gracious revival in which hundreds were converted and gathered into these army churches. . . . My conviction is that a much larger percentage of the converts in these army churches have remained faithful than is usual in ordinary revival meetings."[3]

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1. Ibid., pp. 242-244.
2. Sweet, Methodism in American History, op. cit., p. 287.
3. Bennet, Great Revival in the Southern Armies, p. 378.

Through the organization of the Army Church and by other means, the Methodists made their contribution to revivalism in the Civil War.

E. The Methodist Contribution to Revivalism in the Years of Its Decline

1. Modified Methodism

The years of the reconstruction have been described as a period of moral collapse in both government and business.

> "The country's wealth," says Sweet, "was increasing with almost incredulous rapidity, while the men in public office were too often not only incapable, but woefully lacking in moral and ethical perceptions."[1]

This general scramble for wealth, with its dishonest business practices on everyhand, had its effects upon the church.

The main contribution that Methodism made to revivalism, during the years of its decline, when Methodism was being modified, was in its missionary enterprise in foreign countries.[2] During this period the American Church at home was greatly changed. It had been a living organism aflame with revival spirit but it became more and more a mere cold mechanism. Concerning this spiritually decadent period of Methodism, Sweet writes the following:

> "If Francis Asbury could have returned to life in 1880, he would have contemplated American Methodism with

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1. Sweet, Methodism in American History, op. cit., p. 319.
2. Ibid., p. 320.

mixed emotions. He would have witnessed in Methodism the most evenly distributed church in the land and would have recognized in that fact the triumph of the circuit system for which he in so large a measure was responsible. From Ohio westward to the Pacific Coast, and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico he would have found a Methodist church established in almost every county seat town, as well as in every considerable village and at innumerable country crossroads. He would have seen preachers in the newer sections of the land still riding large circuits, much as they had done in his day, but, on the other hand, he would have found in the cities and larger towns an increasing number of stationed preachers. There were now many 'splendid' churches, in which, according to Alfred Brunson, 'the people praised God by proxy, having quartets, choirs, and musical machines to do it for them, instead of doing it directly themselves.' In such churches the class meeting was rapidly dying out, for with the coming of the stationed preacher and weekly services such an official as the class leader was soon found to be in a large degree superflous. Many of the older members, however, still clung to the time-honored institution and held class meetings after the morning preaching, though with a declining attendance. The gradual dying out of the class meeting was naturally attended by the sorrowful complaints of the older generation, who saw in its disappearance not only an indication of a decline in vital religion but also a sure sign that Methodism itself was rapidly approaching the 'rocks'."

Many of the old camp-meeting grounds, with which the pioneer bishop was so familiar, were still in use, but the rows of tents were rapidly giving place to streets of frame cottages, and instead of the old-time camp-meeting revival, the religious services were now interspersed with lectures on semi-religious and even secular subjects. . . . In fact, many of the old-time camp-meeting grounds were rapidly being transformed into respectable middle-class summer resorts with only a tinge of religion."[1]

A modified Methodist Church was inevitable in view of the tremendous economic, political, social and religious changes that were taking place in the nation.

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1. Sweet, Methodism in American History, op. cit., pp. 332-330.

In this gilded age, Methodists became prosperous and instead of being the lower and humble, they became the great middle class. Prosperous Methodists forgot Wesley's formula for wealth:

> "In rare instances," says Sweet, "Mr. Wesley's formula of gaining all you can, saving all you can, and giving all you can, doubtless worked, but many Methodists with newly gained riches forgot to apply the third part of the formula and failed, therefore, to lay up treasures in heaven."[1]

Methodism, which had profited so greatly from revivalism, with its personal emphasis, now became largely impersonal. Methodism became engrossed in the advancement of causes at the expense of an interest in individuals. The Social Gospel became more important than personal religion.[2]

> "Revivalism," says Sweet, "they held was ineffective, out of date, and must therefore be discarded. It may have served a good purpose in the past, but its usefulness was gone."[3]

With such changes having taken place, the modified Methodist Church at the turn of the Twentieth Century, on the whole, ceased to be one of the outstanding contributors to American Revivalism.

2. Methodist Protest Groups

Many Methodists did not agree with this modified Methodism. In some areas Methodism has continued with its

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1. Sweet, Methodism in American History, op. cit., p. 337.
2. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., p. 178.
3. Ibid., p. 179.

original emphasis and still encourages revivals even today. The following account of the revival at Asbury College[1] in February and March, 1950, illustrates the emphasis that is still given to revivals in some parts of the country.

> "'With God all things are possible!' Forcefully and convincingly this tremendous truth has impressed itself upon hundreds of Asbury students, faculty members, and visitors who have witnessed the soul-stirring events of the past nine days. The 'flood-gates' of heaven have literally opened wide and showered our thirsty hearts with reviving refreshment.
>
> Little did the Asbury men and women dream, as they slipped into their seats on Thursday morning, February 23, 1950, that before the passing of the chapel hour Hughes Auditorium would be the scene of one of the greatest 'movings of God' in our present day. An ordinary song service was followed by a beautiful duet, 'Let Me Lose Myself and Find It Lord In Thee.' Then before the chapel speaker could step to his feet, the voice of a Senior rang out across the audience, praising God for unusual presence of His spirit in an all night prayer meeting held in the gym. Other boys from various parts of the auditorium shot up from their seats. They related with sincerity and joyfulness the way in which they had found new victory in the same prayer meeting! The speaker brought his message in the remainder of the chapel period. But no sooner had he finished, than Dean Kenyon, sensing the opportunity of the moment, opened the service again for testimonies. The response was electric--praise mingled with tears and confession and soon the altar was filled with earnest seekers! Classes were forgotten.
>
> And so through the day it continued. . . . The organ played for quiet meditation while hungry hearts made their way to the place of prayer. The altar filled and refilled and as the students arose with their needs satisfied, they waited in line for an opportunity to give their testimony over the loudspeaker system. Dean Kenyon, Dr. Anderson, or Dr. Holland presided on the platform, but the continuous vigil, lasting far into the night, was completely spontaneous and unplanned, guided by the Holy Spirit." 2

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1. Asbury College is a Methodist college located at Wilmore, Kentucky.
2. Ruby Vahey, "Spontaneous Revival Sweeps Asbury, Classes Suspended Following Thursday Chapel Outbreak," The Asbury Collegian, Revival Edition, Vol. 33, No. 18, March 4, 1950.

The Methodists that encourage revivals today are few and the incident recorded above, to say the least, is rather unusual. During the years when Methodism was being modified, many Methodists were protesting the changes that were taking place.

> "An important feature," says Sweet, "of the history of American Methodism in the eighties and nineties was the rise of protest groups, especially in the South and Middle West, against the tendencies we have noted. As the church became more and more dominated by men of wealth and controlled by business methods, and as the services became formal, and the preaching less fervid, complaints were raised that 'heart religion' was disappearing."[1]

From the two decades preceding the Civil War to the close of the century, Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection was largely neglected and among the main Methodist bodies it was a mere credal matter.[2] Around this question and the general change of Methodism protest groups began to organize. In 1860 the Free Methodist Church was organized in western New York by a group of Methodists led by Benjamin T. Roberts.

> "This new church," says Sweet, "attempted to revive all the old Methodist forms and techniques, such as class meetings, and believer meetings. . . ."[3]

> "The Free Methodists are a body of Christians who profess to be in earnest to get to heaven, by conforming to all the will of God, as made known in His Word. They do not believe that either God or the Bible has changed to accommodate the fashionable tendencies of the age. They solemnly protest against the union of the church and the

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1. Sweet, Methodism in American History, op. cit., p. 341.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 342.

> world. The conditions of salvation, as they teach, are the same now that they were in the days of the apostles. He who would be a Christian in reality, as well as in name, must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Jesus. . . . In doctrine they are Methodists. . . ."[1]

The Wesleyan Methodists and Primitive Methodists also protested against the modified Methodism and emphasized the doctrine of Christian Perfection.[2]

Between the years of 1880 and 1894 there arose many holiness revivals. For the most part the holiness movement was interdenominational, but under Methodist leadership.[3] This movement did much good and contributed to revivalism, but it resulted in many separations. Sweet says,

> ". . . many small holiness and pentecostal bodies came into existence, most numerously in the Central West and in the South, where their chief feeders, the Methodist churches, were the most numerous."[4]

The most important of the twenty-five or more holiness bodies which came into existence following 1894 was the Church of the Nazarene.

> "Both in doctrine and polity it is patterned after the Methodist Episcopal Church, with certain modifications, emphasizing its holiness character and insuring wider democracy."[5]

The contribution of Methodism to American Revivalism, during and since its modification, has been greatly

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1. Doctrines and Discipline of the Free Methodist Church of North America, p. 2.
2. Sweet, op. cit., p. 342.
3. Ibid., p. 343.
4. Ibid., p. 343.
5. Ibid., p. 344.

limited in comparison to the early years of its existence in America. Perhaps its most important contribution to American Revivalism is indirect, that is, through the many protest groups which sprang from Methodism and emphasize much of its earlier message and method.

F. Summary: The Prominent Contributions of Methodism to American Revivalism

The contributions of Methodism to American Revivalism have been so numerous and varied that it is difficult to judge which was the most prominent. However, one contribution that towers above the others is the unique organization and itinerant system of Methodism. The itinerant system of circuit riders took religion and revivalism to the very outposts of frontier civilization. It was the strongest evangelistic method known to American history.[1] The unique organization, from the bishop to the local preacher and the class leader, enabled the converts of the revivals to receive spiritual nourishment on a very intimate and personal manner. This gave stability to religion which was so badly needed on the frontier. Towering along side of this contribution is another which supplemented it and largely accounted for its great success. This is the enthusiastic, evangelical and missionary spirit which was seen in almost every early

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1. Mason, op. cit., p. 114.

Methodist, from Bishop Asbury to the most humble church member. Early Methodists had the same dynamic which characterized the early Christians, for they were all missionaries. This spirit permeated the whole organization and itinerant system of Methodism and accounted for its unusual success.

In the pattern of Paul's language it can be said that Methodism contributed hymnody, a simple theology, literature, camp meeting, quarterly meeting, class meeting, prayer meeting, missionary program, educational institutions, a unique organization and itinerant system, and an enthusiastic, evangelistic missionary spirit; but the greatest of these contributions of Methodism to American Revivalism was the unique organization and itinerant system permeated with an enthusiastic, evangelistic and missionary zeal.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Summary

This study has attempted to set forth the contributions of Methodism, the most important tributary of the stream of American Christianity, to American Revivalism, ". . . the new cascade which recreates, even though at times its waters may be difficult to control."[1] However, before these contributions could be considered, it was necessary to understand the background of Methodism in England and America and to make a survey of American Revivalism.

The first chapter revealed the beginnings of Methodism in England and in America. John Wesley never intended to organize a separate movement, but the failure of the Church of England to sanction Wesley's evangelistic work and to incorporate it within itself, forced him to take steps beyond his wish in order to keep his new converts. Early Methodism was not a church, but a movement that went among different churches seeking ". . . to gather together in one the people of God that are scattered abroad and revive spiritual religion."[2] In England and in America Methodism

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1. William Warren Sweet, Revivalism in America, Preface, p. xv.
2. William Warren Sweet, Methodism in American History, p. 68.

was uniquely an evangelistic and missionary movement.

> "The Methodist Movement," says Barclay, "as a whole was missionary in conception, in motivation, and in method."[1]

The second chapter surveyed the different revivals in the history of American Christianity. Special attention was given to the Great Awakening in the colonies and the Second Awakening in the East and on the frontier. The revivals in the Civil War and revivalism during the years of its decline were also briefly considered. American Revivalism began as a way of meeting a specific situation in Colonial America

> ". . . because, until recent times, conditions similar to those that produced it have continued to exist, at least, in certain sections of the country."[2]

The inherent nature of revivalism is summarized succinctly by Mode when he said,

> "It is the weapon that evangelism always retains for dealing with critical abnormal, moral, and social conditions that threaten its existence."[3]

The third chapter revealed the contribution of Methodism to American Revivalism. Of the numerous and varied contributions, the most prominent was the unique organization and itinerant system together with the enthusiastic, evangelistic and missionary zeal which permeated early Methodism.

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1. Wade Crawford Barclay, Early American Methodism, Preface, p. vii.
2. Sweet, Revivalism in America, op. cit., Preface, p. xi.
3. Peter G. Mode, The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity, p. 58.

B. Conclusion

Evangelism and revivalism are receiving great emphasis today. Nineteen hundred fifty marks the closing year of the first half of the Twentieth Century.

> "This last year," says Dr. Baker, "should see the greatest moral and spiritual progress in this country that has ever been made in any like period."[1]

While this study was being made, there were two outstanding college revivals in America that received national publicity.[2] Other revivals of lesser importance are occurring throughout the United States. This indicates that there is a growing emphasis upon evangelism in America. It has been clearly shown how Methodism contributed greatly to American Revivalism, but among the contributions, are there any principles or methods that would be applicable in contemporary evangelistic endeavor?

Yes, there are certain principles and contributions that are applicable today. The following recommendations, which conclude this study, incorporate these contributions of Methodism to American Revivalism which may be used in present evangelistic effort:

1. The Gospel in its simplicity should be preached so that people will know what it means to be converted.

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1. Jesse M. Baker, Federal Council Bulletin, December, 1949, p. 11.
2. The two colleges that had outstanding revivals are:
   Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois,
   Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky,
   Ante., p. 139.

The Methodists emphasized the simple evangelical truths of the Bible and stressed the need of a changed life.

2. This Gospel should be preached by spiritual ministers who are enthusiastic and filled with evangelistic and missionary zeal. The early Methodist circuit rider type of ministers are needed today. Ministers who are eager to preach Christ and who live according to Christ in their everyday life are imperative if evangelism is to be successful.
3. This Gospel, as it is preached, should be accompanied by much prayer. Every great revival or evangelistic movement was born through prayer. The early Methodists greatly emphasized the need of prayer, on behalf of sinners and revivals.
4. This Gospel should be preached to the people on their level. The early Methodist circuit riders went out and met the people and preached to them in an understanding language. It is not enough to preach in church, for the ones that need the Gospel do not come to church. It is necessary to go out among the people and to preach the Gospel in an understandable manner.
5. This Gospel should be preached and accompanied with much personal work. The Methodist class meeting met this need of personal contact with the people. A more personal emphasis is needed today if there is

to be a real evangelism in the churches of America.

6. This Gospel should be preached and the converts should be encouraged to go out and preach to others. In early Methodism, every member was a missionary. This was the apostolic conception of Christianity. The evangelistic and missionary work must be carried on by the laity as well as the clergy. In this way the laity is able to share its Christian joy and this will help to eliminate spiritual stagnation.
7. This Gospel should be preached and the converts should be religiously educated. More stress should be given to Bible study, so that the converts may become grounded in the Word. The early Methodists put great stress on the distribution of literature and the reading of the Bible. In this way the laity is better qualified to win others to Christ.

These recommendations, based on the Methodist contribution to American Revivalism, are applicable in present evangelistic effort. If these recommendations were carried out, under the guidance and blessing of the Holy Spirit, it is believed that such evangelistic effort would bear much fruit for the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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