Religion and revolution Presbyterians in Philadelphia.

Wayne Robert Jacoby

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RELIGION AND REVOLUTION
PRESBYTERIANS IN PHILADELPHIA

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Wayne Robert Jacoby
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Professor in Charge

Chairman of Department
### RELIGION AND REVOLUTION
### PRESBYTERIANS IN PHILADELPHIA

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RELIGION AND REVOLUTION

PRESBYTERIANS IN PHILADELPHIA

by
Wayne Robert Jacoby

Abstract

The Great Awakening of 1739-40 has had an effect on America that has not been completely understood by historians. This study has found that the revival had a profound effect on Philadelphia Presbyterians in all levels of society, Old Side as well as New. The Awakening's concerns with the churches' lack of piety, "presumptuous Security", excess use of formal church doctrine, lack of free religious consciousness, and irrelevant religious teachings of the homeland, ultimately brought about the new moral standards for the Presbyterian churches in Philadelphia.

William Tennent, Sr., and his Log College graduates had been preaching New Side revivalistic messages, with limited success, before the arrival of George Whitefield in Philadelphia, but it was Whitefield's involvement of the laity in large numbers that made the New Side religious principles dominant.

Old Side leaders were predominantly Old World trained with an average of one-quarter of a century more ministerial experience, making them unlikely to change their established teachings; whereas New Side leaders were younger and predominantly trained in the colonies. Most Presbyterian church leaders by the 1760s were trained in American institutions of learning that were New Side oriented. These schools were attended by numerous Philadelphia Presbyterians.
where the ideas of the Awakening helped to educate not only ministers, but laymen, to be active in improving society.

Philadelphia Presbyterians became known for their political activity in the Revolutionary period, but their political involvement did not begin until after the Great Awakening, even though their provincial representation problems with the General Assembly were present from the beginning. The revivalistic stress of the Christian's role in society with civil laws and duty, together with divine moral law and new found Christian equality, helped the common man contribute to the social redemption of mankind.

Twenty-five percent of the known male members of Philadelphia Presbyterian churches were active in political or military roles, many of leadership. Their goal was to bring about political independence with hopes of a better divine moral law for America. This was a result of the Great Awakening which gave strength in numbers to the Presbyterian voice.
"Call this war, dearest friend, by whatsoever name you may..., only call it not an American Rebellion. It is nothing more or less than an Irish-Scotch Presbyterian rebellion."\(^1\) This opinion, expressed by a contemporary, showed a deep seated belief in the late eighteenth-century that the Presbyterians led the American Revolution. This study will assess the extent to which the 1739-1740 religious revival known in American history as the Great Awakening, particularly in Philadelphia, led to the revolutionary strength, support and principles of the Presbyterians.

Presbyterian religious development during the early settlement of Pennsylvania followed preconceived concepts from the homeland; it developed as an outgrowth of what came before, showing little effect of the new American environment. Through immigration the Presbyterian Church would expand, but its growth in numbers was not indicative of a "living" church. In established eastern settlements like Philadelphia a few Presbyterian ministers would attempt in vain to replace European formalism with religious piety. Not until the Great Awakening, which reached its height in Philadelphia in 1741 after the visit of

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George Whitefield, did the struggle that had started more than ten years before by the Log College men culminate in a "living" church.

The early history of Presbyterians in Pennsylvania was somewhat obscure and their records are not as informative as those of their Congregational counterparts in New England. Presbyterians at first did not emigrate in large bodies, or occupy by themselves a specific settlement. Their migration began as individual movements or small groups which settled amongst other people. Gradually enough of them centered in one area to form a congregation.

There were three groups of American Presbyterians at the time of the Revolution. The first developed out of the beginnings of Puritanism in England and eventually found its way here in the form of Presbyterian-Congregationalism and settled primarily north of Pennsylvania; it is not the main emphasis of this paper. The second group had its rise in Scotland and Northern Ireland and developed out of the internal church problems in the homeland. This group's leaders in America tried to hold onto its old traditions and did not adapt well to meet its peoples' religious needs. Members of this group founded the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia and made up the nucleus of the Old Side anti-revivalist movement at the time of the Great Awakening. A third group included those of English Puritan and those of Scotch or Ulster-Scotch origins, who early saw a need for a better socio-religious approach that would have more meaning for the people. It took an active part in the Great Awakening,
in founding the famous Log College and Princeton University, and had a profound influence on American thought. The emphasis here is this group's effect on Philadelphia Presbyterians, but it made an impression throughout all the colonies.

Since the major influx of Presbyterians into Pennsylvania came from Northern Ireland, it is important to clarify the ethnic origins of these people. Many historians have given the name Scotch-Irish to these immigrants, inferring that many Scots who had settled in Northern Ireland for several generations had intermarried with the Irish to form a "new breed" of people. However, a more accurate term for them would be Ulster-Scots.

Dr. John Hall, a Presbyterian minister from New York, gave a good explanation of why these Irish immigrants to Pennsylvania should be called Ulster-Scots, not Scotch-Irish.

I have sometimes noticed a little confusion of mind in relation to the phrase "Scotch-Irish", as if it meant that the Scotch people had come over and intermarried with the Irish, and that thus a combination of two races, two places, two nationalities had taken place. This is by no means the state of the case. On the contrary, with kindly good feeling in various directions, the Scotch people kent to the Scotch people, and they are called Scotch-Irish from purely local, geographical reasons, and not from any union of the kind that I have alluded to.... They are Scotch through and through, they are Scotch out and out.²

These Ulster-Scots significantly influenced Pennsylvania's colonial history, and they ultimately played a major role in the

American Revolution. Religious men, some have argued, divided their support for the Revolution along revivalist and anti-revivalist lines. The conservative Old Side has been shown as traditionally supporting England and the New Side backing the Revolution, but the Old Side Presbyterians will be shown, after their reunion in 1758, as supporting ideas of the revival. Their accepted principles of Calvinism, reinforced by the Great Awakening, left them united.

At the time of the American Revolution three active Presbyterian churches existed in Philadelphia. Their beginnings went back to the early days of William Penn. As the eighteenth century unfolded, the increasing number of Presbyterian churches throughout the colonies organized themselves into presbyteries and synods. Although they would divide and argue over the Great Awakening, their inter-colonial church organization reunited afterward and provided the first tangible force towards national unity in the colonies. Their representative meetings, stimulated by an increasingly active laity, spread their influence from religious concerns to encompass eventually all general affairs, including politics.
The Ulster-Scots, who made up the largest segment of the Presbyterian churches in Pennsylvania, first migrated to Northern Ireland almost simultaneously with the English colonization of America. As the English began their colonization at Jamestown, Virginia, James I took steps to keep Northern Ireland under his dominance by transplanting some of his fellow Scotsmen to leased land in the six northern counties of Ulster which he had taken from the previous Catholic owners. By 1641 approximately 100,000 Scots had reached Northern Ireland, most of them Presbyterians.\(^3\)

The English used this Ulster-Scot "plantation" to subdue the Irish, and by 1700 the Lowland Scots who settled there had won material prosperity for themselves. The eighteenth century would show marked changes in England's dealing with Ulster. England would enslave these Ulster-Scots to its own political fortunes as its mercantilistic practices deprived these industrious people of a

decent livelihood. Moreover, Presbyterianism became a political
disability for the Ulster-Scots, as they faced the necessity of
conformity to the established church by Parliamentary laws which
fined and imprisoned them for non-conformist conduct. The Test Act
of 1704, prohibited the Presbyterian clergy from uniting couples in
marriage and prohibited church members from holding positions in
government unless they first conformed to the Anglican church.
For some the religious freedom of Pennsylvania would answer their
problems.

The Ulster-Scots early economic success in the manu-
ufacturing of wool and linen alarmed their competition in England,
who looked on Ulster as a colony. English manufacturers persuaded
Parliament to impose restrictive duties on all Irish linen and
woolen goods, which destroyed that trade and resulted in large
scale emigration to America. Twenty thousand left Ulster because
of the destruction of the woolen trade.

The native Irish also threatened the Ulster-Scots as
they struggled to reestablish their religious and national heritage,
especially during the Restoration and Civil War period in Ireland.

In the eighteenth century, the Ulster-Scot Presbyterians
were basically farmers, occupying their land through leases and
mainly raising sheep, hogs and cattle. They became very prosperous,

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4 Gaius Jackson Slosser, ed., They Seek A Country (New
and a lively colonial trade developed with England, but as a colony of England Ulster was subject to the same regulations as the American colonies and found the English placing restrictions whenever they infringed on the business of "real" Englishmen.

English landowners became alarmed and urged Parliament to stop the colonial export trade from Ulster since it cut deeply into their own business. Shortly after Pennsylvania was founded as a colony, these Ulster-Scots found they could not export their cattle, sheep, swine, butter and cheese to England, because they competed with "Englishmen". To complicate things further, various Navigation Acts restricted Ulster's trade by preventing it from using its own ships and by allowing only colonial trade into its harbors after it had first been to England. The excessively high rents of landlords and several famines added to the reasons why this group came to America. The various hardships faced by the Ulster-Scots did much to help them develop religiously strong, well-organized communities.

An often overlooked reason for Irish emigration was the stimulus given the harried Ulster-Scots by shipping agents, who actively went through the country trying to promote the indentured servant system to bring people to America. Many of the poor Ulster-Scots found their way to America by this means.

Early in 1718 a minister from Ulster wrote to a friend in Scotland about his concerns with the Ulster-Scot emigration to
There is like to be a desolation in the northern parts of this kingdom by the removal of several of our brethren to the American plantations. Not less than six ministers have demitted [resigned] their congregations, and great numbers of their people go with them; so that we are daily alarmed with both ministers and people going off.  

A few years later in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin began publication of his Pennsylvania Gazette which emphasized news of interest to his subscribers, especially the situation in Europe. In an issue dated November 20, 1729, Franklin printed news of the bad situation in Ulster. It gave accounts of the distresses of the emigrating Ulster-Scots and their reasons for leaving.

The English papers have of late been frequent in their accounts of the unhappy circumstances of the Common People of Ireland; That Poverty, Wretchedness, Misery and want are become almost universal among them; That their Lands being now turn'd to raising of Cattle, the Tilling of which formerly employ'd great Numbers of Poor, there is not Corn enough rais'd for their Subsistence one year with another; and at the same Time the Trade and Manufactures of the Nation being cramp'd and discourag'd, the labouring People have little to do, and consequently are not able to purchase Bread at its present dear Rate: That the Taxes are nevertheless exceeding heavy and Money very scarce; and add to all this, That their griping, avaricious Landlords exercise over them the most merciless Racking Tyranny and Oppression. Hence it is that such Swarms of them are driven over into America.

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6 Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), November 20, 1729.
Few journeys to America were pleasant.

We hear from Martha's Vineyard, that sometime last Month, Capt. Lothrop in his Passage from this Place to the Island, off of Monimoy, espi'd a Vessel which put out a Signal of Distress to them: He found her to be a Vessel from Ireland, which had been from thence Twenty Weeks, bound for Philadelphia, and brought out 190 Passengers, 30 of whom were Children; and being destitute of Provision, (having then but 25 Bisket on Board) 100 of them were starved to Death, among which were all the Children except one; and the Remainder of the Passengers look'd very ghastfully.⁷

Franklin's issue on the situation of Northern Ireland also contained part of a letter written by Robert Gambie, a merchant from Londonderry in Ireland, to two merchant friends in London. It showed how extensive the emigration had become.

There is gone and to go this Summer from this Port Twenty-five Sail of Ships, who carry each, from One Hundred and twenty, to One hundred and forty Passengers to America; there are many more going from Belfast, and the Ports near Colrain, besides great Numbers from Dublin, Newry, and round the Coast. Where this will end, God only knows.⁸

The emigrants to Pennsylvania usually landed at the ports of Lewes or Newcastle, Delaware (then under Pennsylvania's control), or Philadelphia. The early individual immigration would provide enough Presbyterians by 1698 for Philadelphia to have its first congregation. By 1701 the population of the colony of Pennsylvania was estimated at about 20,000. In 1750 the population approached

⁷Ibid.
⁸Ibid.
The large scale immigration from Ulster, which would begin in 1717, played a large part in this increase. Jonathan Dickinson, Presbyterian minister and future first president of the College of New Jersey, commented on its beginnings. In the fall of 1717 he wrote, "this summer we had 12 or 13 sail of ships from the North of Ireland with a swarm of people." One week later he wrote, "from the North of Ireland many hundreds arrived in about four months." In November of 1719 he wrote, "We have had about twelve saile of ships of Scotch Irish.... In all we're upon three thousand people."

The first mass immigration directly resulted from the hardships the Ulster-Scotch faced in Northern Ireland. It began in 1717 and was caused by the disabilities arising from the Test Act and the rack-renting of the landlords, the last of which was the major cause.

When the second wave of immigration occurred during the years 1725-1729, one of the main points of entry was Philadelphia.

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11 Ibid., 34.

On November 25, 1727, James Logan, secretary to the Penn family, wrote to John Penn, eldest son of William Penn by his second marriage, "We have from the North of Ireland great Numbers yearly, 8 or 9 Ships this last fall discharged at New Castle." The letter adds that the incoming Ulster-Scots expected twice that many to follow them next year. In September, 1728, Logan noted: "... no less than Six Ships are arrived at Newcastle and this place [Philadelphia], within these ten days and many more are daily expected." In 1729 he commented:

What I chiefly intended in this letter was to acquaint thee that it now looks as if Ireland and the Inhabitants of it were to be transplanted hither. Last week I think no less than 6 ships arrived at Newcastle and this place, [Philadelphia] and they are every 2 or 3 dayes... and therefore you may easily believe these are some grounds for the common Apprehensions of the People that if some speedy method be not taken, they will make themselves Proprietors of the Province.15

Records indicated that in 1729, 6,308 immigrants landed at Philadelphia, of whom no less than 5,655 were Irish, and almost all of these were Presbyterians. The effect of this on the church was readily seen in a letter written by Reverend Jedidiah Andrews in 1730:

14 Ibid., 197.
15 Ibid., III, 302.
Such a multitude of people coming in from Ireland of late years our congregations are multiplied in this province to the number of 15 or 16 which are all but two or three furnished with ministers. All are Scotch and Irish but three or four. Besides divers new congregations that are forming by these new comers, we all call ourselves Presbyterian, none pretending to be called Congregational in this province.17

In colonial Pennsylvania ninety percent of all Ulster-Scots were Presbyterians and there were about 130 Ulster-Scot communities in Pennsylvania and Delaware. In 1749 they totaled one-fourth of the entire population of the colony of Pennsylvania. In 1759 a Philadelphia Anglican estimated that Pennsylvania had 55,000 English, Scotch and Irish Presbyterians, and they outnumbered both the Quakers and the Anglicans. In 1764, according to one estimate of Benjamin Franklin, the proportion was one-third Scotch-Irish among the 350,000 inhabitants. Though not all Scotch-Irish were Presbyterians, most of them were. Throughout all

17 Gaius Jackson Slosser, ed., 44.
18 Wayland Dunaway, 202.
20 Gaius Jackson Slosser, ed., 43.
the colonies the Presbyterians numbered in excess of 200,000.

These migrating Ulster-Scots, who left Northern Ireland in the early waves of migration, would hold the most resentment against England. Through their representative church government and democratic principles of Calvinism, they found in their church a chance to lay a foundation of democratic-republicanism on which later waves of people would build.

The Presbyterians based their religious principles on Calvinism, as did the Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, and many others in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Calvin's Institutes contained the foundations of Presbyterianism, particularly in the sovereignty of God who wills whatever happens. He is the moving Spirit in nature and history. Central to this is the sinful nature of man which dims his understanding of God's will. To comprehend God's will man must return to the Scriptures and use them as the guiding influence for his actions. The humanistic concern for individual freedom that dominated Calvin was pursued by Presbyterians and would gain even more impetus from the time of the Great Awakening. The Presbyterians did not completely accept all of Calvinism; their modifications of the Confessions and Creeds would become their essential doctrine. However, the developing teachings of Calvinistic-Presbyterianism went beyond the strictly religious and dealt with social, economic,

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educational and political ideas. Some of these basic principles, which would eventually have wide influence in America, were:

1. Every child has the inherent right to the highest type of Christian cultural education, this being the responsibility of all adults as Christian stewards.

2. The moral welfare of the whole population is the joint responsibility of both Church and State working separately yet co-operatively.

3. The visible Church shall be so organized as to provide an ascending series of courts as, e.g., the session, presbytery, synod and general assembly. In this polity there shall be every provision made for ruling elders (laymen) to be joined with minister-elders in the membership of each of these courts.

4. The visible Church and State shall be separate but mutually co-operative. In all matters of conscience and religion, God, through His Church, is the supreme Administrator as well as Teacher....

5. God alone is Lord of the conscience. Freedom of conscience is an inalienable right under laws and constitutions democratically created and imposed.

6. God, by His Holy Spirit, working in and through the qualified leadership of His Church, makes known His Word as found in the Scriptures. His Word thus made known constitutes the supreme basis for authority in the visible Church.

7. God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the supreme Sovereign. As He is revealed in His Word, so every theory and practice that has to do with man or men is to be shaped or ordered accordingly.²⁴

Presbyterians used and valued, these principles, as did other Protestant sects. However, the Presbyterian impression had the most influence upon the revolutionary movement, and the Ulster-Scots, whose large numbers came to America, would cement that impression.

The first Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, officially

organized around 1698, had been started by Francis Makemie, an early Presbyterian leader for religious freedom in America, who visited the city in 1692.

Serious dissensions among the Friends had opened the way for the commencement of services by Baptists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians, and it seems more than probable that Mr. Mackemie, during his visit, gathered together the little band of Presbyterians and that their association for public worship may be dated from that time. It is certain that five years later, in 1697, a congregation of Presbyterians, in connection with the Baptists, were meeting in a frame building on the northwest corner of Second and Chestnut Streets.25

The frame building was the Barbadoes storehouse: the Baptist minister, Reverend Mr. Watts, had this to say about his mixed congregation: "... that divers of the persons who came to that assembly were Presbyterians in judgment; they having no minister of their own, and we having hitherto made no scruple of holding communion with them in the public worship of God."26

The Presbyterians desired to have their own minister and issued a call to Reverend Jedidiah Andrews of Boston, who accepted and came to the mixed community of Philadelphia. When he arrived, dissensions arose between the Baptists and Presbyterians over the Presbyterian interest to conduct their worship independently of the Baptists, resulting in the Baptists leaving the Barbadoes sanctuary to

25 William White, The Presbyterian Church In Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane and Scott, 1895), XIV.

the Presbyterians. They remained there until 1704, when they built their first official church. An original member of the church years later recalled its beginnings.

A number of English dissenters, Welsh people, and French Huguenots, that had been banished for their attachment to what were called puritanical principles, not being satisfied with the episcopal persuasion [the Episcopal Church was already established in Philadelphia] united in calling the Rev. Jedidiah Andrews from Boston or some part of New England. Accordingly, in 1701, the Rev. Mr. Andrews settled in Philadelphia. In 1704, a small presbyterian church was raised in Market street between Second and Third streets. Mr. John Snowden, Tanner and Mr. Wm. Gray, baker, were elders connected with Mr. Andrews. In the process of time the society was greatly augmented as to numbers by emigrants from Ireland.27

Old Side traditionalists dominated the history of this church's development. They were very formalistic in their approach to religion; their leaders opposed the Great Awakening.

In 1701 the Anglican church more actively pursued its goals in the colonies with the establishment of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G.), in order to establish the Anglican Church throughout all the colonies. Even more fearful to the Presbyterians, the S.P.G. wanted colonial dissenters to conform to its church. Anglican ministers actively petitioned colonial assemblies to legislate a requirement for membership in the Anglican Church as a requisite for public employment. This struck fear in the hearts of Presbyterian leaders, who reacted

27 Ibid.
by organizing into a collective body of churches that could have
more influence in stopping the S.P.G. They created the First
Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1706. In 1708 Jedidiah Andrews and
John Hampton presented a letter to the Philadelphia Presbytery
which explained the need for the presbytery:

Through the good providence of our Lord Jesus
Christ assisting us, we, the ministers of the gospel,
of the Presbyterian persuasion, in this province and
those adjacent, taking into our serious consideration
the case and circumstances of our holy religion in
these parts, have to our great toil and labour, and
great difficulty to divers of us, by reason of our
great distance from one another, formed ourselves
into a Presbytery, annually to be convened, for the
furthering and promoting the true interests of
religion and godliness.28

Andrews and John Wilson again stressed the reason for the
creation of the Presbytery in a letter to Sir Edmund Harrison in
England requesting help for their cause.

The distressed condition of these Provinces,
with respect to religion, in which the providence
of God has cast our lot, has moved us to apply to
the Reverend ministers of Boston, in New England,
to join with us in addressing yourself and other
charitable gentlemen in London, to consider the
state of these countries, and to implore your help
and assistance for promoting the interest of our
glorious Lord.... We are at present seven ministers,
most of whose outward affairs are so straitened as to
crave relief, unto which, if two or three more were
added, it would greatly strengthen our interest,
which does miserably suffer, as things at present
are among us.... That our evangelical affairs may

28Records of Presbyterian Church, "Minutes of the Presbytery
of Philadelphia, 1706-1717", (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of
Publication, 1904), 13.
be the better managed, we have formed ourselves into a Presbytery, annually to be convened at this city... we most earnestly beseech you, in the bowels of our Lord, to intercede with the ministers of London, and other well affected gentlemen, to extend their charity and pity to us, to carry on so necessary and glorious a work; otherwise many people will remain in a perishing condition as to spiritual things.  

The Philadelphia Presbytery organized itself in the same pattern as that used in Ireland. Its organization allowed laymen as well as ministers, to play an important role.

In December of the same year 1706 a meeting was held for the purpose of ordaining to the ministry Mr. John Boyd. From the appearance on the minutes of this meeting of the names of ruling elders, Joseph Yard, William Smith, John Gardner, James Stoddard, it is evident that the organization was ecclesiastical and not a mere association of ministers.  

The Presbytery was even more than that.

The minutes reveal that the familiar procedures of Scottish Presbyterianism were followed in respect to lay representation, excuses, absences, calls, and overtures, but beyond that, the Presbytery was an American creation, shaped by the needs of "the desolate places" of the New World.  

The Philadelphia Presbytery included, not only the Philadelphia church, but also Presbyterian churches from Chesapeake Bay to the Hudson River. The Presbytery controlled those churches under its jurisdiction which conformed to the Presbyterian way. During

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29 Ibid., 16.

30 Andrew Zenos, Presbyterianism in America (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1937), 53.

its first ten years the number of churches under the Presbytery increased dramatically, and it became advantageous for the Presbytery to subdivide itself for regional supervision, to meet annually in a Synod to review the situation of its churches throughout the colonies, and to make final decisions on matters related to the total church or any of its parts. In 1716, when the Synod of Philadelphia was formed, the total church body had about 40 churches, 19 ministers and 3,000 members. 32

The Presbyterian church had now completed its basic structure. The Presbytery was needed for regional supervision and control of the churches, and the Synod would give a national feeling to the Presbyterians, something that no other church had prior to the Revolution. The Presbyterians believed that no church should stand alone.

Three active subordinate presbyteries were created in Philadelphia, Long Island and New Castle. Initially Snow Hill became a fourth presbytery, but it never got underway and eventually was absorbed into New Castle. The Philadelphia Presbytery incorporated most of Pennsylvania and East and West New Jersey. The Synod would examine and receive new members, regulate affairs of congregations, and ordain or dismiss ministers. It did everything that a presbytery could do, but was meant to be the final ruling

32Zenos, 55.
body of a developing inter-colonial church. The Synod began on the eve of the first great Ulster-Scot migration.

Not unnoticed in 1718 was the arrival in Philadelphia of William Tennent, an Episcopalian minister from Northern Ireland, who wished admission as a minister into the Presbytery of Philadelphia, since he could not abide by the ceremonial worship, Arminian doctrine, and government of the established Church of England. It had "affected his conscience so that he could no longer abide therein." His conscience and that of his sons would also be greatly effected by what he would eventually find here.

The Tennents saw the church making substantial growth prior to the Great Awakening, but in growing in this virgin land the church lacked vital piety. It paid too much attention to strict church doctrine at the expense of getting the people to see the real meaning of Christianity. The people received religion with little of its meaning, and they did not always have a good ministerial example to follow. In 1723 Reverend George Gillespie wrote to a friend in Scotland about the developing problems in Pennsylvania.

Being well acquainted with your publick spirit, for the interest of Glorious Christ, I have embraced this opportunity, now presented, to send you this letter.

As to affairs of Christ in our parts of the world: There are a great many congregations erected, and now

erecting; for within the space of five years by gone, near to two hundred Families have come into our parts from Ireland, and more are following: They are generally Presbyterians. So it would appear, that Glorious Christ hath great designs in America; tho' I am afraid not to be effectuated in my days; for the mirs and congregations be multiplied with us; yet alas, there is little of the power and life of Religion with either: The Lord disappoint my fears. There are not above 30 ministers and probationer preachers in our Synod, and yet six of the said number have been grossly scandalous; Suspension for 4 Sabbaths hath been the greatest censure inflicted as yet.

... One Mr. Robert Laing... is to be censured at our Presbytery of New-Castle upon the first Wednesday of August ensuing for Washing himself upon the Lord's day: he is the first from Scotland grossly scandalous in our parts.

Rev'd Sr. be mindful in your prayers of the Infant church of Christ in America, and that the Lord would purifie the sons of Levi. May the faithful God hasten the time when he will fulfill his promise in Isa: 59. 19 That they shall fear his name from the West.34

From the beginnings of the Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania in the early eighteenth century, the Ulster-Scot traditionalists dominated it. Those who developed this early church dealt with traditions and customs which seemed irrelevant in the new land, whether on the Pennsylvania frontier or in the developing city and towns, and brought about indifference in religion and even in common morals. In Philadelphia a concern with opposing churches and sects took up much of the time in sermons. Benjamin Franklin said of Reverend Jedidiah Andrews of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia that he spent most of his time preaching against other churches

or defending his own sermons, rather than helping the society he represented. From 1698 until just prior to the Great Awakening, Jedidiah Andrews was the only Presbyterian minister in Philadelphia. And yet from the establishment of the First Presbytery in 1706 and continuing throughout the remaining colonial period, the regular meetings of Presbyterian leaders helped to create a mutual concern for each other and their people. In Presbytery and Synod they discussed religious, educational and political questions of the day. "United loyalties and unified plans were formulated which were to prepare the colonies for the struggle for freedom which began with the organization of the First Continental Congress in 1774."

When the immigrants came to Pennsylvania, American Society did not have established institutions as in Europe. Their old traditions and customs of the homeland, which aided the maintenance of religion and morality were weakened in the new environment. This instability in a community of many sects and churches could only be countered if the ministers became actively involved in the total development of the church society. Only a few ministers of this type existed in early Pennsylvania; thus there were no efforts to develop local schools or institutions as, for example, New England had done. Eventually the Presbyterians would develop an awareness

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35 Klett, 107.
36 Hanna, II, 2.
of America's difference, and a new order would follow. Some would realize it sooner than others.
Presbyterian church differences began shortly after the first major migration in 1717; when the schism finally came in 1741, it would split the Philadelphia church as well as the developing American order of Presbyterianism. To traditionalists like Rev. Robert Cross, future minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, the actions of the founders of the first Presbytery and Synod showed them more interested in the missionary aspect of uniting the various developing groups of Presbyterians into one Christian church, than in dealing with strict conformity to their religious doctrines. Shortly, a movement developed to encourage the churches to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith. Those who early fought this movement in the 1720s did so on the grounds that it violated their basic religious liberty of freedom of conscience. They based their stand on the Bible as the only rule of faith for the church, not a man-made interpretation like the Westminster Confession. This would be the New Side philosophy in its early stages. The Old Side saw strict conformity to their creeds as important to keep Presbyterianism uniform. Both developing groups, the Old Side and the New Side, struggled with this question throughout
the 1720s.

In 1729 Presbyterians reached a controversial compromise over subscription to the Westminster Confession and the Catechisms; it became known as the Adopting Act, which broadened the standards of conformity which each minister could follow as far as his conscience would allow. However, this would be changed in an unscrupulous fashion by Old Side members in 1736. The Adopting Act was the first important action for religious freedom by a church in America. It denied to the civil magistrate any power over the ministers, or the power to persecute them for their religion.

...after proposing all the scruples that any of them had to make against any articles and expressions in the Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, have unanimously agreed in the solution of those scruples, and in declaring the said Confession and Catechisms to be the confession of their faith, excepting only some clauses in the twentieth and twenty-third chapters, concerning which clauses the Synod do unanimously declare, that they do not receive those articles in any sense as to suppose the civil magistrate hath a controlling power over Synods with respect to the exercise of their ministerial authority; or power to persecute any for their religion, or in any sense contrary to the Protestant succession to the throne of Great Britain.

1With most New Side members absent, giving the Old Side full control, the Synod would eliminate the preliminary agreement whereby men could follow the Westminster Confession according to their conscience. Strict adherence to the Westminster Confession was needed, giving the Old Side a temporary victory that brought the church closer to a split.

2Records of Presbyterian Church, "Minutes of the Synod of Philadelphia, 1717 to 1758," (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1904), 94-95.
They disallowed two provisions from the Westminster Confession which had been their official doctrine for nearly 100 years. The first provision disallowed was Chapter XX, Section IV:

...such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church, they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against, by the censures of the Church, and by the power of the civil magistrate.3

The second was Chapter XXIII, Section III:

The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys to the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.4

This would not have occurred unless the New Side had argued for its religious liberties.

Some Presbyterians were slowly becoming aware of a certain incompatibility between man, his environment and his religion. The new Presbyterian society, in pre-revivalist America, was increasing in


4Ibid., 19.
numbers because of immigration, but it was not growing in spiritual piety.

...as to the vital power of godliness, there is reason to believe, that it was little known or spoken of. Revivals of religion were nowhere heard of, and an orthodox creed, and a decent external conduct were the only points on which inquiry was made, when persons were admitted to the communion of the church. ...And the habit of the preachers was, to address their people as though they were all pious, and only needing instruction and confirmation. It was not a common thing to denounce the terrors of a violated law, and to insist on the absolute necessity of regeneration. Under such a state of things, it is easy to conceive, that in a short time vital piety may have almost deserted the church, and that formality and "dead orthodoxy" be all that was left of religion. 5

The term "theocentric cosmology" has been used to label the colonists' view of God's role in the world. 6 They saw God controlling the destiny of men and rewarding or punishing him according to his relationship with God. Men would achieve this in the early 18th century through the true church and the moral code that it provided. The First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia under Reverend Jedidiah Andrews reinforced this system.

Samuel Blair, a Log College graduate, concerned himself with the situation of religion in Pennsylvania. Prior to the revival he


6 Edward Cody, "Church and State In the Middle Colonies" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Lehigh University, 1970), 128.
wrote that most seemed content with mere attendance and formalism. "Religion as it were, lay a-dying, and ready to expire its last breath of life in this part of the visible church."  

The event that would have the most profound influence on the Presbyterian Church was the Great Awakening, a movement that developed and expanded from the preaching of George Whitefield. William Tennent, Sr., and his sons, especially Gilbert, would prepare the way for him. Tennent personally educated his four sons and became known as a teacher of ministers. He was without equal in the Synod, and with this early eminent leader, the New Side philosophy would take root.

The Tennents concerned themselves with the "presumptuous Security" and complacency of the congregations, and preached that no one ever became a Christian without first passing through the fear of realizing that they were not Christians. As some members of the church responded to this challenge, the Awakening and its schism had begun. Those concerned with the "presumptuous Security" of the people were centered at William Tennent's Log College, where he trained men for the ministry. Before it closed, the Log College sent approximately twenty ministers into the field, a group that had far reaching effects on the people. William Tennent and his sons were not very popular with

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the Old Side dominated Synod. George Whitefield would comment, "... as far as I can learn, both he and his sons are secretly despised by the generality of the synod."\(^8\)

Whitefield's arrival stimulated the revivalists, for he had enormous influence. Without his help, the Tennent group would probably have lost its struggle, for Whitefield brought lay people into the movement in large numbers and changed the balance of power in favor of the Tennents. The people saw themselves in a "New Light" with purpose and power, effecting the happenings of their church and their society.

This "New Light" gave countless thousands a new religious meaning. Religion in many parts of the world often meant ritual observance and strict adherence to a creed, but to these new-revivalists, morality was an essential part of religion. With the pluralistic, religious society that quickly developed in America, the religious creed alone would not bring acceptance from the community, but a moral example of doing right and abolishing wrong, of being just men of principle concerned with the natural rights of man.

Charles Maxson, in his introduction to *The Great Awakening* In The Middle Colonies, expressed his feelings on the impact of the

\[^8\] Whitefield's Journals (Swengal, Pa.: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 344.
Great Awakening: "I find my purpose not in the advocacy of a program but in the attempt to demonstrate that the religious energies liberated by the Great Awakening were transformed into forces, social, humanitarian, educational and political which have been of almost incalculable importance in the making of the American people."  

George Whitefield's effect on the Great Awakening can be seen in a description in Benjamin Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*:

On Thursday last, the Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD began to preach from the Court-House-Gallery in this City, about six at Night, to near 6,000 People before him in the Street, who flood in an awful Silence to hear him; and this continued every Night, 'till Sunday. On Monday he left out for New-York, and was to preach at Burlington on his Way going, and in Bucks County coming back. Before he returns to England he designs (God willing) to preach the Gospel in every Province in America, belonging to the English. On Monday the 26th he intends to set out for Annapolis.  

Seeing the interest in Whitefield and being an astute businessman, Franklin also wrote in the same paper:

THE Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD having given me Copies of his Journals and Sermons, with Leave to print the same; I propose to publish them with all Expedition, if I find sufficient Encouragement.... Those therefore who are enclined to encourage this Work, are desired speedily to send their names to me, that I may take Measures accordingly.  

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10 *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), November 15, 1739.  

11 Ibid.
The fruitful results of Whitefield's visit seemed quite visible on the streets of Philadelphia late the following spring. The apt observer Benjamin Franklin reported what he saw in his popular newspaper:

The Alteration in the Face of Religion here is altogether surprising. Never did the People show so great a Willingness to attend Sermons, nor the Preachers greater Zeal and Diligence in performing the Duties of their Function. No Books are in Request, but those of Piety and Devotion; and instead... Religion is become the Subject of most Conversations... instead of idle Songs and Ballads, the People are everywhere entertaining themselves with Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs. All which, under God, is owing to the successful Labors of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield.12

Franklin would give a personal account of the effect of George Whitefield's oratory:

I happened soon after to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded, I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that, and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all.13

Whitefield's evangelism was catholic in nature. In 1740, while in Philadelphia, the English church denied him the right to

12 Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), June 12, 1740.
preach in its sanctuary, so his supporters from different churches in the city erected a building in his honor for the purpose of his and others' preaching. Whitefield noted the New Building in a published letter in the Pennsylvania Gazette: "None but orthodox experimental Ministers are to preach in it, and such are to have free Liberty, of whatever Denomination." In 1740 people of various backgrounds sat together in the New Building to experience Whitefield and his message.

Whitefield's teachings had a special importance in developing ideas that the people would later re-echo in the American Revolution. He believed that Christians must obey certain fundamental divine laws even if they conflicted with civil law. As an Episcopal minister, others of that faith accused him of breaking the church canons, and he replied to the Bishop of London:

Your Lordship knows full well that Canons and other Church laws are good and obligatory when conformable to the laws of Christ and agreeable to the liberties of a free people; but when invented and compiled by men of little hearts and bigotted principles... and when made use of only as cords to bind up the hands of a zealous few, that honestly appear for their King, their country, and their God, like the withes [flexible twigs] with which the Philistines bound Sampson, in my opinion, they may very legally be broken.

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14 Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), December 4, 1740.

Whitefield believed in the universal church and did not believe in using civil laws to restrict religious preaching. Opposition to preaching where it was needed without regard to civil or church restrictions during the Great Awakening became a major argument of the Old Side against the revival. This reaction was surprising, because Francis Makemie, father of the American presbytery, had been famous for taking his preaching into New York without a license and winning his case in a famous trial with the Governor, Lord Cornbury. It was a victory for religious toleration, but to Old Side members a generation later, the principle did not apply to churches in their presbytery unless approved by them.

Whitefield taught that all men shared equally in the gospel of Christ regardless of their station in life; all were equal in the fellowship of Christ. The common man came to see himself in a "new Light," with a contribution to make to society for the betterment of man.

The growth of Presbyterianism in Philadelphia before the Great Awakening was very slow, but the combination of increased Presbyterian immigration and the work of George Whitefield greatly expanded the church. The state of religion, which had been very low, was greatly improved before the arrival of Whitefield. But his labors gave it a new impulse. Not infrequently congregations numbering from 5,000 to 10,000 listened to the words of the great
Whitefield's influence on his listeners was undeniable. Critics and advocates alike could not dispute his effect. "One of the most eminent leaders of the Presbyterian church, Dr. Hodge, has remarked there must have been an extraordinary influence on the minds of the people to produce such vast assemblies and such striking effects from Whitefield's preaching." Gilbert Tennent commented on the work of George Whitefield in Philadelphia:

As to Philadelphia, where by the Providence of God, I now labour statedly, many have been hopefully converted here during the display of God's grace in this land. The Rev. Mr. Whitefield was the instrument God was pleased to improve, principally in the awakening and conversion of sinners here; yet the labours of others have been attended with some success. This town, by all that I can learn was in deep security, generally, before Mr. Whitefield came among them, but his preaching was so blessed, that a great number were brought under a religious concern about the salvation of their souls; multitudes were "inquiring the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, weeping as they went." Some years since, there were so many under soul-sickness in this place, that my feet were pained in walking from place to place to see them. And there was then such an eagerness to hear religious discourse, that when they saw me going to a house they would flock to it; and under what was spoken, they were sometimes generally, and to all appearance, deeply affected.

16 William White, The Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane and Scott, 1895), XV.


18 Alexander, 103-104.
Whitefield would comment in his journal on his successes in Philadelphia. Recording for Saturday, May 10, 1740, "Though God has shown me great things already in this place, yet to-day I have seen greater. I preached twice and to larger congregations than ever." On Sunday, May 11th, the last day of this visit to Philadelphia, he recorded his final impression of the revival there:

...At my return home, I supped with some Christian friends, and went to bed, astonished at, and desirous to be humbly thankful for the great things the Lord had done at Philadelphia. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath wonderfully visited this people, and raised up for them a means of salvation, from whence it was least expected. Oh grace, grace!  

He made note when leaving that the people of Philadelphia had given him in goods and money nearly £500 sterling. His effect on the people to whom he preached quickly spread throughout the colony. In 1747 Richard Locke, a missionary to Lancaster County, wrote to the Reverend George Craig that "the Country is very much over spread with New Lights, Whitefield's followers; Coventers who receive their Sacrament with a gun charg'd and sword drawn, profess they'd fight for Christ against civil magistrates. Mr. Whitefield has been there twice...."  

19 Whitefield's Journals, 420.  
20 Ibid., 423.  
21 Ibid., 427.  
Whitefield influenced and was influenced by the Presbyterian doctrine, officially remained a member of the Episcopal Church, but upon his death he was buried at his own request before the pulpit of a Presbyterian church in Newburyport, Massachusetts.

Before Whitefield arrived in Philadelphia for the first time in 1739, the colony had already experienced some signs of piety through William Tennent, Sr., and his Log College graduates. The anti-revivalists had had some success in quelling New Side actions until Whitefield came and stirred up the masses against Old Side formalism. The issue of examination of candidates for the ministry brought a clear division in the church. Before the Great Awakening, no "approved" college existed for the training of ministers in the middle colonies. Ministers received training in New England or Europe and then applied to begin their ministry. The shortage of ministers might suggest that the unlicensed Log College would help fill the need, but it did not meet acceptance at Synod. Some members of Synod were concerned with its lack of emphasis on literature and science, and strong concern with vital piety. The Philadelphia Synod in 1738 passed a regulation to stop individual presbyteries from accepting what they considered unqualified candidates for the ministry.

To prevent this evil, it is humbly proposed as a remedy, that every student who has not studied with appropration, passing the usual courses in some of the New England, or European colleges, approved by public

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authority, shall, before he be encouraged by any Presbytery for the sacred work of the ministry, apply himself to this Synod, to be well skilled in the several branches of philosophy, and divinity, and the languages, to examine such students in this place, and finding them well accomplished in those several parts of learning, shall allow them a public testimonial from the Synod, which, till better provision be made, will in some measure answer the design of taking a degree in college. 

By this decision the Synod attempted to usurp the presbytery's power of examining its own ministers and thus to control the developing revival.

William Tennent and leaders from the New Brunswick Presbytery (a New Side presbytery) protested this affront to the Log College which they felt met a critical need, and licensed John Rowland to preach, disregarding the rule of the Synod. The Synod refused him membership and denied him the charge given by the New Brunswick Presbytery. Rowland became an itinerant preacher and was joined by Gilbert Tennent. George Whitefield arrived in Philadelphia at this time.

Gilbert Tennent read a paper before the Philadelphia Synod in 1740, and said that a large portion of his brethren were unconverted men who had "more zeal for outward order than for the main points of practical religion." Tennent and New Side ministers found it necessary to preach to congregations whose ministers, they felt, were unconverted.

24 Records of Presbyterian Church, 141.
The presbytery forbade this, even in a vacant congregation, unless approved by the presbytery. The Old Side dominated church used formal proceedings to preserve what came before, feeling that no man should preach in any congregation without authority from the presbytery which had jurisdiction over the congregation. An individual congregation could not request a minister without approval of its presbytery. New Side ministers saw their right to "trespass" as an obligation superior to presbyterian ecclesiastical orders. They had a duty to disregard the rule of presbytery.

A Protestation was presented to the Philadelphia Synod in 1741 in response to these glaring New Side actions. Old Side leaders saw anarchy and ruination of their principles of church government in the actions of the New Side ministers. The Synod quickly found the New Siders unfit to sit in Synod.

The Truth is, the Reading and hasty Signing of the Protest, put the Assembly into Disorder; we were surprized with the extraordinary Method of Proceeding, and knew not well what to do; we were loath to be cast out so hastily, without speaking any Thing in our own Defence; but our Attempts to speak were repulsed, the House being confus'd, one spoke one Thing, and another another, and sometimes two or more at once; so that it's hard to tell what was said. Mr. Blair, I remember, offer'd more than once, to read a Paper, but the Motion was rejected, and Silence enjoined by the Moderator; and thus the Assembly, after Prayer, broke up.26

26Gilbert Tennent, Remarks Upon A Protestation Presented To The Synod of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1741), 35.
The action of the Philadelphia Synod was recorded in the local Pennsylvania Gazette:

On the 25th of the last Month, the Presbyterian Synod opened their Session in this City; and after several Days spent in Debates on the Rights of Presbyterians, etc., a Protestation was entered into, on the first Instant, and signed by 12 Ministers and 8 Members then present, by which the Rev. Messrs., the Tennents, and their Adherents, are excluded the Synod, and declared to have forfeited their Rights of sitting, and voting as Members, thereof: The excluded Brethren immediately withdrew, and met by themselves in another Place. 'Tis said, that the Number of the Excluded was nearly equal to that of the Synod remaining....

Despite this, the New Side advocates remained strict Presbyterians and declared themselves as such for all to notice:

In as much as the Ministers which have protested against our being of their Communion do at least insinuate false Reflections against us, endeavouring to make People suspect that we are receding from Presbyterian Principles, for the Satisfaction of such Christian people as may be stumbled by such false aspersions, we think it fit unanimously to declare, that we do adhere as closely and fully to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms, and Directory, as was the Synod of Philadelphia in any of their public acts and agreements about them.

A segment of this struggle between the Old and New Side ministers in 1740 involved a "generation gap." The twenty-six Old Side ministers in open opposition to the revival had an average age of fifty-nine; the twenty-six New Side leaders had an average age of 24.

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27 Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), June 11, 1741.
The difference in their average ages was over twenty-five years! With the exception of Gilbert and William Tennent, Jr., all the Log College graduates were under thirty. Other differences also came into play:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Side</th>
<th>New Side</th>
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<tr>
<td>22 of 26 were born in Europe</td>
<td>8 of 26 were born in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 of 26 were trained in Europe</td>
<td>2 of 25 were known to have been trained in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 of 26 were educated in the colonies</td>
<td>23 of 25 were known to have been educated in the colonies.</td>
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Because of their predominantly old-world training and advanced years, the Old Side ministers refused to change; the opposite would be true for the New Side. Those who opposed the revival rarely condemned it as all bad. They most commonly acknowledged the Awakening as a work of God, but one damaged by errors of excess. In his closing paragraph of a critical look at the Great Awakening, Lyman Atwater said:

> But what we wish to signalize now and here is the fact, susceptible of conclusive proof from a cloud of witnesses which we do not quote solely for want of room, ...that the revival of 1740, in this country, was carried forward under the emphatic preaching of the sternest Calvinism according to the "ipsissima verba" of our

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30 Ibid., 137-138.
Confession of Faith, without the slightest softening, dilution, or mitigation of what are esteemed its sterner features; and that its disorders and errors were mostly in the line, or consequence of, the exaggeration or distortion of those principles.\(^{31}\)

In 1745, when readmittance to the Philadelphia Synod seemed impossible, the New Side members organized themselves into the Synod of New York, which included the Presbytery of New York, New Brunswick and the Second Presbytery of New Castle. The Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia was included in the New Brunswick Presbytery.

New Side members did not emphasize the denominational question of church purity, but devoted more of their efforts to such secular areas as politics, business, and matters of more personal concerns. They more actively involved themselves in the affairs of city and state and remained godly people.

The New Side preachers flourished because their message had meaning for the people, much to the dismay of the Old Side leaders. The emotional appeal of being born again and the terrors that awaited the unconverted were well expressed by New Side preachers. The revivalists' message struck at the hearts of the people:

> On Sunday the 31st of last Month, the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent preached five Times, to crowded Audiences: And on the Wednesday following, he baptized, at the New-Building, Eight adult Persons, who had been of the People called Quakers, one, as

is said, a Preacher. Mr. Whitefield had baptized three at the same place, when he was last in this City.32

The church would flourish as a result of this awakening, and a need developed for a new converted congregation in Philadelphia. The first church of the Awakening would take root in the city in the New Building established for Whitefield. It became the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia and the immediate adversary of the Old Side church. "The formation of this church was the culmination of Whitefield's work in Philadelphia. He gathered the sheep into the fold, and then went on his way to search for the lost in regions beyond."33 The New Lights did not forget the shepherd; in 1743, when Whitefield paid his last visit to Philadelphia, the 140 members of the New Light congregation offered him £800 to preach for them six months.34

Most of these New Light Presbyterians did not transfer from the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. "The organization of this church was unique. It would seem that only a small portion of these charter members came out of the First Church." Although

32Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), June 11, 1741.


no church records remain for this period to identify all the original members of the Second Church, the original charter of the Second church listed the twenty-four original trustees, of whom none had belonged to the First Church.

A 1792 history of the Second Church stated the following:

These people did not exclusively belong to any single denomination of Christians. A plurality of them had indeed been educated in the Presbyterian principles and modes of worship. But there were also many from among the Episcopalians, Quakers, Roman Catholics and those who neither professed nor any religions. And of these materials was the congregation of Arch Street originally composed.

This membership would truly follow the catholic approach of Whitefield and, because of its mixture, would have a natural concern for the real world, rather than for denominational struggles.

Gilbert Tennent took personal charge of his developing New Light congregation. He interviewed over 300 potential communicants for the church and kept a record of their names. This communicant list has survived, and though some of the names are difficult to read, women made up two-thirds of the original membership of slightly more than 140.

36 Beadle, 132.
37 An Account of the Origin, Progress and Present State of the Second Presbyterian Church in the City of Philadelphia (May 2, 1792, Presbyterian Historical Society).
38 Gilbert Tennent, Communicant List of Potential Members of the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia (Presbyterian Historical Society, 1744).
The church spent its early years under the roof of the New Building. The First Academy of Philadelphia purchased the building in 1749 and the congregation had to find another place of worship. They were given three years to relocate. Members of the Second Church could not finance the building of their church themselves, so Gilbert Tennent, taking the advice of Ben Franklin, went to the people of Philadelphia for help. Perhaps the knowledge of Whitefield's role in this church influenced the Philadelphians, since 186 people subscribed a total of £635 11/11d. The congregation had its new sanctuary complete enough for worship by the following year.

This church would be a catalyst; its congregation would have a marked influence on the struggles to come. Its "strong men helped to lay the foundations and built on the walls of this republic. Presbyterian principles, like old Roman cement, went into the structure of the national government. They were sought in council, and followed as leaders in the times that tried men's souls."  

Gilbert Tennent had a wide influence as the first minister of the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. He preached the obligation of the Christian to society. "Christ is not exalted, but

39 Gilbert Tennent, Subscription List of the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia (Presbyterian Historical Society, 1750).

40 Beadle, 69.
dishonour'd and the Interests of His Kingdom betrayed, while any
that assume the Character of His Ambassadors neglect to inculcate
the Moral Law." 41 Tennent stirred his people to active public
service under the terms of the moral law. He preached a sermon on
Brotherly Love Recommended in 1748 in which he warned his listeners
gainst confining their love to men whose ideas matched theirs on
every minute point. "The experienced Christian", he said, "learns
to be merciful from his own mistakes. The liberty one takes for
himself he should accord his neighbor." 42 This sermon also contained
comments about being "born for society" and the "law of nature",
which promoted the social and political ideas of John Locke. Tennent
and other New Side preachers would often expound on the religious
obligations of Christians toward society.

The Christian was not to flee the sinful society
about him, but to lay hold of it and bring it into
at least some degree of conformity to the will of God.
In so doing he was to co-operate with whatever forces
would work with him. No area of life fell outside the
realms that God controlled and desired to use for his
own purposes. Consequently, wherever the Christian's
work found him in that vocation he was to serve God.
To be without "Publick Spirit" was to be without God.
"Unless you conscientiously observe the duties of social
life you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." Such
duties were those incident to the assumption of a
responsible part in the normal functions of society.
Out of this came interest of the New Side in education,

41 Gilbert Tennent, A Funeral Sermon Occasioned by the
Death of the Reverend John Rowland (Evans Microcard 5698), 7.
42 Gilbert Tennent, Brotherly Love Recommended (Evans
Microcard 6243), 8.
in civil government, and in all public affairs. "Brethren, we are born not merely for ourselves, but for the Publick Good, which as members of Society we are obliged pro virili to promote."^3

William Black, a representative of Governor Gooch of Virginia, was in Philadelphia in 1744 in regard to Indian matters west of the Allegheny Mountains. He visited Tennent's church and had this to say:

We Found him delivering his Doctrine with A Very Good Grace; Split his Text as Judiciously, turn'd up The Whites of his Eyes as Theologically, Coff'd his Cushion as Orthodoxly, and twist'd his Band as Primitively as his Master Whitefield cou'd have done, had he been there himself. ^4

Dr. Samuel Finley, in his funeral sermon on Gilbert Tennent, said: "He was a truly public spirit, and warmly interested himself in whatever seemed to contribute to the safety and advantage of the Province."^45

Tennent's influence and place in Philadelphia society was demonstrated by a eulogy of another:

He considered himself as the shepherd of his flock, and made it his practice to lead them to the green pastures and living fountains of salvation, with the care of one that knew he must render an account at the last day. Nay, he con-

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^45 Samuel Finley, The Successful Minister of Christ Distinguished in Glory (Evans Microcard 9657), 19.
sidered himself the father of his people, and as his beloved children he counselled, warned and reproved them, with all the tenderness and solicitude of a father's heart. He was indeed, a faithful watchman, that never failed to give warning of impending danger.\textsuperscript{46}

The Great Awakening showed that God's design for man was not individual salvation alone, but the social redemption of mankind. Thousands upon thousands took a new look at life's values and their own direction for the future. The laity of the New Side churches would "awake" to greater power in the church than ever before. They had more influence over the choice of ministers and the moral character of their fellow citizens. They had a duty to become involved with society, and the Presbyterian Church with its representative government was the ideal agency. Religion became a vital experience in all phases of life. By the end of the century the power of the clergy was well balanced by that of the laymen, and the church had developed into a democratic self-governing institution. Tennent and Whitefield set in motion a religious revolution that would fuse with political revolution once the voices of dissent became established.

\textsuperscript{46} Alexander, 89-90.
CHAPTER THREE

EDUCATION AND REUNION

As the eighteenth century began in Pennsylvania, there were few schools to help society adjust to the rapid population increase and to the perils of a changing environment. Children faced the future without the educational privileges their parents had had in the homeland. Education and religion failed to prepare the society for the present or future.

The institutions of learning essential for new generations to grow and take their place in society were, in the eighteenth century, "the child of religion." Of all the colonial churches, the Presbyterians placed a great emphasis on developing parish schools at the discretion of their ministers to help promote training of children. However, Presbyterians in the Middle Colonies had a serious problem because they had no school for the training of ministers in their immediate area. Those in the Middle Colonies who sought clerical training could either travel to Yale or Harvard in New England or to the University of Glasgow for their preparation.

William Tennent first saw the need to educate ministers at a school in the Middle Colonies. He began to educate his sons and others for the ministry, establishing himself outside of Philadelphia along the Neshaminy Creek in Bucks County. In this log house, and with William Tennent as teacher and his eldest son Gilbert as assistant, a school emerged that fostered an independent, educated ministry.

Here in the course of twenty years (1726-1746) some sixteen or eighteen young men were trained, a good proportion of whom entered the Presbyterian ministry. That their preparation was thorough is attested by the fact that a number of them achieved distinction for their scholarly attainments, but their principal distinction, however, was due to their flaming evangelical zeal.²

Four students of William Tennent, Sr. — his sons, Gilbert, John and William Tennent, Jr., and Samuel Blair — had joined the Philadelphia Synod by 1733 and would soon exert a new influence on the expanding church; the New Side ideology had found a place to develop its evangelical teachings. The ideas of this "college" expanded through its graduates into new schools.

The Tennent Log College emerged no more from idiosyncracy than from the wish to provide for a need. There was in the Scotch-Irish, inherited from their Scottish forebears, a hunger for education. Schooling was second nature to them. Tennent's devotion to teaching was matched at many other points within a few years at many Scotch-Irish communities between Delaware and Susquehanna.


Learning and doctrine had equal opportunity and fervor.4

Samuel Blair founded Faggs Manor Classical School in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1739. Among its graduates was Samuel Davies, one of the founders of the College of New Jersey and a leader for religious toleration in America. Samuel Finley, another Log College graduate, founded Nottingham Academy in Maryland in 1744, just south of the Pennsylvania border, and had among his pupils, Benjamin Rush, physician and patriot, his brother Judge Jacob Rush, John Bayard, future Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, Governor John Henry of Maryland, Governor Alexander Martin of North Carolina and Ebenezer Hazard, historical editor and future postmaster-general of the United States. Richard Stockton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence from New Jersey, also attended this school. Of these men, Benjamin Rush, John Bayard, and Ebenezer Hazard were members of the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. The role played by the Nottingham school extended beyond merely educating young men for the ministry; it trained them for public service as well. Other well known New Side schools included Pequa Academy founded in 1750 at Lancaster by Robert Smith, a graduate of Faggs Manor, and Jonathan Dickinson's Classical School at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, established in 1740. "From these schools, which were copied after the Log College, had come some of the strongest clerical and lay leaders

of the synod."

Tennent, having lived long enough to see the fruits of his work in the revivals proliferating to the north and to the south, had educated the corps of ministers whose pupils and converts would set the pattern of American Presbyterianism even into the nineteenth century.6

Today more than fifty colleges claim their origin from the Log College.

The various New Side schools were important, but they did not fill the need for an officially established institution of higher learning which could offer a college education. The New Side would fill this need with the College of New Jersey, today known as Princeton University.

The Log College probably closed in 1742, and the College of New Jersey soon became the best educational institution for developing the ideas and principles of the Great Awakening. "Princeton was the Child of the Awakening," and its birth was connected to the Log College. "The friends and patrons of the former, became the principal supporters and trustees of the latter. Thus it

5 Trinterud, 151.
may with truth be said, that the Log College was the germ from which proceeded the flourishing College of New Jersey.\textsuperscript{9} "Most of those who had actively engaged in founding this college, ... had been educated at the Log College or in schools taught by those who had been instructed there."

From its beginnings the College of New Jersey moved away from narrow sectarianism. The Intentions of the college's founders went beyond the education of a ministry to the training of men for society. Presbyterians founded the school, but it was open to students of all religious backgrounds.

The role of Princeton University in the development of our country should not be underestimated. "This was a college which was honorably distinguished from the first by freedom from sectarianism. It became virtually a national institution, the new nation's chief school for the production of statesmen whose influence during the revolutionary period has been compared in its fertilizing effect to the rise of the Nile."

Princeton had existed as the College of New Jersey for almost thirty years before the Revolutionary War, during which


time young people showed a growing concern for their country and their place in the world. The college reacted to this concern. Samuel Davies, fourth President of the College of New Jersey, preached twelve patriotic sermons during the French and Indian War, urging the people to fight for their liberties. In his last sermon he concluded by praising the king for having:

...mediated no invasions upon the rights of the people; nor attempted to exalt itself above the law... and for claiming no powers but such as were granted to him by the Constitution... [and then Davies added Lockean words that would soon be heard again], And what is this Constitution but the voluntary Compact of Sovereign and Subject? and is not this the Foundation of their mutual Obligations?  

The first five presidents of Princeton were all revivalistic preachers and much advancement at the college was made under their leadership. The first three, Jonathan Dickinson, Aaron Burr, and Jonathan Edwards, gave the school its New England influence: the last two, Samuel Davies and Samuel Finley, were Log College graduates. Under the leadership of Finley, the students experienced a revival that religiously changed more than half of them. By the conclusion of Finley's presidency the school's religious mission was firmly established, with two-thirds of the ministerial candidates of the

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12 Samuel Davies, On The Death of His Late Majesty, King George II (New York: F. Parker and Company, 1761), 10.

Presbyterian Church having received their training there.

With the death of Finley the formative period of the college may be said to have ended. His successor, the Reverend John Witherspoon of Paisley, Scotland, found, in place of the little group of eight or ten students who had congregated around the scholarly Dickinson in May 1747, a full-fledged college of 120 undergraduates, housed in the spacious and beautiful Nassau Hall. Many graduates had gone out to fill important positions in civil life or to occupy the pulpits of New Light congregations from New England to North Carolina. Already the college had established the reputation which Princeton was to maintain for more than a century as the religious and educational capital of Presbyterian America.

The most influential person at pre-revolutionary Princeton was John Witherspoon, who became president of the college in 1769, who satisfied both the Old and New Side, and who secured their active support for the college. Many Pennsylvania Presbyterians went to Princeton and came under the tutelage of John Witherspoon.

Witherspoon's teachings are known through his published lectures and other works. In a lecture on Civil Society he said, "Though people have actually consented to any form of government, if they have been essentially deceived in the nature and operation of the laws, if they are found to be pernicious and destructive of the ends of the union, they may certainly break up the society,

14 Trinterud, 221.
recall their obligations, and resettle the whole upon a better footing."

He discussed the "state of nature" and the "perfect rights in a state of natural liberty", the right to employ one's faculties and industries for one's own use, the right to personal liberty, to private judgment in matters of opinion. Society he defined as an "association for compact of any number of persons, to deliver up or abridge some part of their natural rights, in order to have the strength of the united body, to protect the remaining, and bestow others". From such a view, he says, comes the principle that "men are originally and by nature equal, and consequently free. Speaking on another occasion he said, "Society always supposes an expressed or implied contract" which necessarily implies the consent of every individual to become a member of that society and which implies also "some particular plan of government, and a mutual agreement between the subjects and rulers". These ideas he elaborated at some length. The similarity of Witherspoon's views to the political doctrines of the revolution is obvious; and even a brief statement of his opinion makes clear the nature of his influence.

Although New Side educational enterprises proved successful, the Old Side had limited initial success and ultimate failure in its educational efforts. The Great Awakening led indirectly to the creation of the only Old Side academy for the training of their ministers. Circumstances of the Old Side grew desperate as a result of the revival and the schism in the church. A well known Presbyterian


preacher–educator, Francis Alison, announced the opening of a school in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*:

> We are informed that there is a Free-School opened at the House of Mr. Alison in Chester County, for the Promotion of Learning, where all Persons may be instructed in the Languages and some other Parts of Polite Literature without any Expenses for their Education.\(^{18}\)

It became the New London Academy. The Philadelphia Synod took control of it in 1744, explaining its reasons in a letter to Thomas Clap, President of Yale College:

> In this situation our affairs grew worse; for our vacancies were numerous, and we found it hard, in such trouble to engage such gentlemen either from New England or Europe to come among us, such as our best friends in those places could recommend as steadfast in the faith and men of parts and education. Upon this, the synod erected a school in 1744.\(^{19}\)

The New London Academy became noteworthy with Francis Alison as instructor.

Alison's life was closely connected with leading movements of his day in education and religion and also with social, economic, and political issues. He opposed the wild enthusiasm of the Great Awakening, but his sermons showed agreement with the social–political ideas of the New Side. He loved civil and religious liberties.

\(^{18}\) *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), November 14, 1743.  
"Liberty", wrote Alison, "is a most tender plant that thrives in a very few soils; neglected it soon withers and is lost; but is scarce recovered." He was as catholic in divinity as was Whitefield. Alison began his educational work as a tutor to John Dickinson, who became famous for his *Letters From A Farmer In Pennsylvania* during the Revolutionary period. His first small group at the New London Academy consisted of ten boys and two adults, and of these, three were later signers of the *Declaration of Independence*: George Read, James Smith, and Thomas McKean. A fourth, Charles Thomson, was later Secretary of the Continental Congress. The school would become more prominent in state and national politics than in the ministry, since eleven graduates held important positions in the governments of Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania and seven played roles in the new national government.

The Old Side leaders of the Philadelphia Synod attempted to secure the New London Academy's future by affiliating with Yale College, with the intention of sending their students there for one

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year to receive their diplomas, but they were unsuccessful. They had a continuing financial problem that they never solved, as synodical collections never secured enough money. "Alison left the synod's school because it was a failure," and went to accept a teaching position at the newly organized College of Philadelphia. The failure of the Old Side to start a successful school for the training of their ministers sealed their fate, reunion was their only salvation.

The schism lasted for seventeen years, from 1741 to 1758. The Old Side saw the membership of the New Side eventually increase fourfold, while the anti-revivalist group,

...which looked askance at any emphasis on the new birth, stagnated. Its churches did not strive. It failed in its attempt to start a college. The number of ministers on the roll of the Synod of Philadelphia was four less than before the separation. During that same period the Synod of New York [New Side] increased its roll from twenty-two to seventy-three ministers.24

A major difficulty hindering reconciliation was the Protestation of 1741 which led to the exclusion of the New Brunswick Presbytery (New Side), from the Philadelphia Synod. This, and the issue of the Old Side being asked to acknowledge the genuineness of the revival, impeded reunion.

23 Trinterud, 138.
The Old Side objected to the revival methods used by evangelists, and felt religion was becoming too emotional. Even New Side members saw dangers in this and by the end of 1741, the Tennent group had become disturbed by certain extremes in the revival. Gilbert Tennent, in a letter to Jonathan Dickinson, expressed concerns about his own "excessive heat of temper" in the past. The New Side leaders observed a trend toward emotion with no controls, no connection to law, with meaningless emotion. The work of the New Side began to change from promoting the revival to institutionalizing the good results of the Awakening. The concern with piety and its acquisition drove deep into the heart of the Presbyterian Church. The separation of the two groups had been based not on doctrines of church government, or educational standards, but on the question of essential piety.

When the Presbyterian church finally reunited in 1758, it was a new revitalized church influenced by ideas of the Great Awakening.

The Great Awakening altered the program and practices of the Presbyterian Church. The reunited church was lifted from a formalized emphasis on creed to a living and vital fellowship with Him "whom to know aright is life eternal." Every presbytery was soon ready to examine candidates for licensure and ordination in "experimental acquaintance with religion". Revivalism had demon-

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strated its power and was owned as a definite work of God.  

The Plan of Union of 1758 made no reference to the controversial Adopting Act of 1729, with its "qualified compliance" to the Westminster Confession which was essential to the New Side thinking. However, with the New Side in the majority, forty-nine ministers to fourteen, by 1762, the united church reinstated the Adopting Act of 1729. "The 'systematic' form of subscription embodied in the Act of 1729 was, therefore, restored in spite of avoidance of all reference to the past controversies." The church also settled the question of the Protestation of 1741.

As the protestation entered in the Synod of Philadelphia, Ann. Dom. 1741, has been apprehended to have been approved and received by an act of said Synod, and on that account was judged a sufficient obstacle to an union; the said Synod declare, that they never judicially adopted the said protestation, nor do account it a Synodical act, but that it is to be considered as the act of those only who subscribed it; and therefore cannot in its nature be a valid objection to the union of the two Synods, especially considering that a very great majority of both Synods have become members since the said protestation was entered.

Problems would continue to exist between the two groups,

26 Slosser, ed., 57.

27 Joseph Tracey, The Great Awakening (Boston: Tappan and Dennet, 1842), 397.

28 Trinterud, 149.

29 Records of Presbyterian Church, 286.
but they were sensitive to the fact that divisions "weakened their interests, to dishonour religion, and consequently its glorious Author; to render government and discipline ineffectual, and finally to dissolve its very frame..." 30 Approximately eighty-five percent of all Presbyterian ministers were born and educated in the colonies at the time of reunion, 31 thus cementing the Americanization of Presbyterianism. The Presbyterians were, from 1758 to the nineteenth century, "as harmonious and united a body of ministers and members as could be found in this or any other country." 32

The reunion in Philadelphia of the Presbyterians greatly increased their strength, and their various institutions flourished anew. The Presbyterians were one of the few groups in the period immediately before the war that spoke with one voice on the politics of the time. "The colonial clergy addressing large, regular audiences from positions of great prestige was a major force in arousing the spirit of independence after 1761." 33 The Great Awakening began for the laity, and it was for them that it continued in the Presbyterian Church after the schism ended. "Thereafter, even through the reunion of 1757, the evangelical element of Presbyterianism preserved the

30 Ibid., 285-286.
31Trinterud, 152.
vision of a church in which greater liberty was demanded in order to achieve the 'greater Good' of the laity." The New Side was victorious.

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Philadelphia Presbyterians did not become politically active until after the Great Awakening. In 1755 they moved to change the system of representation in the General Assembly of Pennsylvania which had remained unchanged since the colony's beginning, indicating that the revival's teachings were being put into effect. Philadelphia Presbyterians, like Francis Alison of the First Presbyterian Church, led the way to change the old system which allowed twenty-six of thirty-six members of the General Assembly to come from three Quaker-dominated counties, while the remaining five counties sent only ten representatives. The passive Quakers' dominance in the General Assembly prevented the use of force to protect frontier settlements from marauding Indians, creating frustrations for Presbyterians and others who felt these actions to be necessary to secure the frontier.

... the Scotch-Irish and their supporters repeatedly attributed all their woes to the lack of a fair representation in the assembly. Since they could get no satisfaction from the party in power, they were fast coming to the point where they were ready to join in a movement to overthrow the whole

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existing political order, peaceably if they could, forcibly if they must.\textsuperscript{2}

A person had to own fifty acres of land (twelve cleared) or be assessed, £50 or more to be eligible to vote in Pennsylvania in 1775. Most inhabitants of the city had no large land holdings and lacked monetary wealth; of the 3,452 male taxables in Philadelphia only 335 were assessed for £50 or more. It has been estimated that one in fifty could vote in Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{3} Many working class males were thereby eliminated, and the issue of taxation without representation applied locally as well as to England in the period before the American Revolution.

Presbyterians who supported the Revolution did so on religious grounds. In interpreting John Calvin, they believed there were times when God told men to beat their plough shares into swords, as well as times when it would be wrong not to take forcible action against evil. If obedience to king and magistrate meant disobedience to God, then the choice was predestined. The people and the magistrates had a responsibility to the fundamental law of God and an obligation to resist unconstitutional tyranny. The Stamp Act was one early example: British General Thomas Gage commented, "The

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., 131.


\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 33.
Presbyterians, who are the Proprietary Party in Pennsylvania, are as ripe for outrage as can be, but the contrary Party, composed of Quakers and their friends, tho' they complain of hardship in the Stamp Act, have been complying with the law.  

Anglican John Hughes, a political friend of Benjamin Franklin, received the appointment of distributor of stamps in Philadelphia and wrote to Franklin on September 25, 1765: "When it is known that I have received my commission, I fancy I shall not escape the storm of Presbyterian rage." Hughes regarded Presbyterians as rabble and never understood their republicanism. "He died before the Republic he dreaded became an actuality. Had he lived to see it, he would doubtless have said that the Presbyterians had finally got their way."

A letter from Benjamin Franklin, written in London in February of 1765 to John Ross, suggested the concerns that English Quakers had about Presbyterians, and indicated that the motive for changing Pennsylvania from a proprietary colony into a royal one was to stop Presbyterians from taking over the province. The Quakers in

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England, who had undertaken the task of persuading the proprietors of Pennsylvania to submit to the change, would bring pressure if needed "to procure a happy event to the petition, especially as they dread nothing more than what they see as their friends in Pennsylvania falling totally under the domination of the Presbyterians." The petition failed, but the attempt was another threat to the growing Presbyterian religious and political liberties which helped to unite them in political action.

More united Presbyterian political action was needed when, at the end of the French and Indian War, it seemed to the Church of England that the time was right in America to establish an episcopacy. Anglicans felt that the Presbyterians in Pennsylvania would not oppose this because it would help them in their struggle with the Quakers. But, in spite of the fact that they were in disfavor with the provincial authorities, Presbyterians refused to ally themselves with a group whose church polity seemed contrary to their views of religious liberty. Gubernatorial favoritism towards the Anglican Church was not as major an issue in Pennsylvania as it was in New York, but it merited Presbyterian concern because it countered an important principle of the Great Awakening -- the separation of church and state. Delegates from the Philadelphia Synod expressed their concern over the episcopacy in a letter in 1768, and, along with other

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delegates from New York and Connecticut, showed this concern was not strictly religious:

Our fears would not be so much alarmed could any rational method be devised for sending over Bishops among us stripped of every degree of civil power, and confined in the exercise of their ecclesiastical function to their own societies; and could we have sufficient security that the British Parliament, that could send them over to us thus limited, to gain a peaceable settlement here, would never be induced by their complaints for the want of power to enlarge it at any future period. But it is very evident it is not that harmless and inoffensive Bishop which is designed for us, or the missionaries among us request; and therefore we cannot but be apprehensive of danger from the proposed Episcopate, however plausible the scheme may be represented. We well know the jealousy of the Bishops in England concerning their own power and dignity, suffering by the example of such a limited Bishop in America, and we also know the force of a British act of Parliament; and have reason to dread the establishment of Bishop's courts among us. Should they claim the rights of holding these courts, and of exercising the power belonging to their office, by the common law of England, we could have no counterbalance to this enormous power in our Colonies where we have no nobility, or proper courts, to check the dangerous exertions of their authority; and where our governors and judges may be the needy dependents of a prime minister, and therefore afraid to disoblige a person who is sure of being supported by the whole Bench of Bishops in England; so that our civil liberties appear to us to be in imminent danger from such an establishment.... We have so long tasted the sweets of civil and religious liberty, that we cannot be easily prevailed upon to submit to a yoke of bondage which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.9

The widespread fear of an established church in America drew Presbyterians closer together to protect their system of church government, even at the expense of severing their relations with the mother country.

The political turbulence of the 1760s did not deter the growth of Presbyterianism in Philadelphia. A third Presbyterian church developed as an extension of the over-crowded First Church. At a congregational meeting "... two hundred and forty-five families and persons occupied one hundred and thirty-one pews." The First Presbyterian congregation wrote a letter to the Second Presbyterian Church in July of 1765 stating their situation.

We have long Labour'd under a Considerable difficulty to Accomodate the members of our Society with Pews in our Church, our House not being able to hold them all, altho it has been lately enlarged, yet as our Congregation is daily encreasing & persons continually applying to be enroll'd as Members & admitted to the priviledges of the Society, We are still greatly Strained for want of room, this having been our case for some years past, has engaged us to use our best endeavours to accomodate such persons with a new House for this purpose our Society applied to the Honble. Proprietaries for a Lott of Ground in the South part of the Town, on which we might build a new Church & they have generously granted our Request.

The Third Church became known as Old Pine Street Church

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and was completed in 1768, but members of the First Church took only twenty pews in the new church:

The Gentlemen appointed to take account of the Pews that would be wanted in the new Presbit: Meeting House in Pine Street reported that about 60 Pews had been bespoke by about 80 families or persons residing in the Southern Part of Town; and that about 20 were subscribed for by members of the Congregation residing in the body of the Town chiefly, provided a minister to their liking be settled.\(^\text{12}\)

The Third Church, directly associated with the First Church for its first three years, followed Presbyterian practices of independence and issued a call in 1771 to Reverend George Duffield, a strong New Light preacher, to be its independent minister. The Pine Street Committee expressed its reasons to the First Church, saying:

... that they always understood and still are of opinion that the Pine Street Church was built solely with a view to accommodate such as had no right in any other place of Worship or whose situation might render it more convenient to worship there, and that those who hold Pews or part of Pews and no others were to form the Congregation and have a Right to choose a Minister, and Church officers, and to be a distinct Congregation in these Respects to all Intent and purposes....\(^\text{13}\)

George Duffield, a graduate of Princeton and a "Child of

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\(^{13}\) Ibid., 130.
the Awakening", had married the daughter of one of the revival's leaders, Samuel Blair. He had been a New Side preacher in the Presbytery of Donegal in Pennsylvania, and when he arrived in Philadelphia he quickly became a leading patriot minister in the city.

To be among the first of patriots in the Presbyterian Church in the days of the Revolution when every Presbyterian gownsmen was a rebel, was no little distinction. But such was Duffield. He was no "sunshine patriot" and he was no "Johnny come lately" in his Americanism. He was for American independence when his nearby neighbors in the pulpit were tories. A price was on his head when others were currying favor with the British. In his church were quartered the Hessians, while other Philadelphians were hob-nobbing with British soldiers and looking longingly towards the favor of his gracious Majesty, George the Third.14

George Duffield boldly advocated an absolute declaration of independence in the early spring of 1776, while Congressmen still debated the issue. He said:

Can it be supposed that God who made man free, and engraved in indefaceable characters the love of liberty in his mind, should forbid freedom already exiled from Asia and Africa, and under sentence of banishment from Europe—that should forbid her to erect her banners here, and constrain her to abandon the earth? As soon shall He subvert creation, and forbid the sun to shine. He preserved to the Jews their cities of refuge, and whilst sun and moon shall endure America shall remain a city of refuge for the whole earth, until she herself shall

play the tyrant, forget her destiny, disgrace her freedom, and provoke her God.15

Duffield served in the war as a chaplain for the Pennsylvania militia and the Continental Congress. It should not be surprising that the work of the Third Church during the Revolutionary War was outstanding with a minister like Duffield as their leader.

One of the precious documents in possession of the church is the original call issued to George Duffield in 1771, containing the autograph signatures of one hundred and ten men. As far as we have been able to find out, sixty-seven of these men — considerably more than one-half — served in the War of the Revolution, and thirty-five of these were commissioned officers.16

Of the services performed by the men of the three Presbyterian churches in Philadelphia during the Revolution, that of the men of Old Pine Street Church stand out dramatically. Twenty-six transferred to the Third Church from the First Church, of whom twenty-one signed the call to Reverend Duffield, indicating support for his New Side teachings. Tax records provide date for seven of the transfereees, none of whom came from the upper class:


17 See Chapter V.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Assessed Value</th>
<th>Tax Paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>merchant</td>
<td>£8</td>
<td>£2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pilot</td>
<td>£16</td>
<td>£4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tavern</td>
<td>£6</td>
<td>£1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carter</td>
<td>£48</td>
<td>£12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>...</strong></td>
<td><strong>...</strong></td>
<td><strong>...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carter</td>
<td>£20</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mariner</td>
<td>£8</td>
<td>£2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These seven represented four different political wards in the city, indicating a willingness to travel to worship in this particular church. Twenty-two of the transferees subscribed money for the building of the Third Street Church, but only two subscribed over £30, a further indication of a lack of wealth. Eight who were known as laborers, contributed to the physical labor of building the church. One bricklayer donated 295,000 bricks. Most of the twenty-six came from the same economic background, but that did not seem to be a reason for changing churches. The only valid conclusion seems to be the desire of these men for a message which would "awaken" them to better Christian service.

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18 County Tax Duplicate for City Wards, 1773, copy in Philadelphia City Hall Annex.

19 Subscription List for Building the Third Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, 1794 copy in Presbyterian Historical Society.

20 Ibid.
THE AWAKENING'S EFFECT ON THE PRESBYTERIAN MIND

CHAPTER FIVE

The strongest impact of the Great Awakening took place in urban churches. Whitefield spent his time in America mostly in heterogeneous urban centers like Philadelphia and, with his strong concern for the religiousness of the people of the city, his work would eventually effect all three Presbyterian churches. The middle class and poor of the city would gather to hear Whitefield's word and its varied implications for society. These social groups searched for something that would give them a clearer picture of themselves in their new environment, one whose toleration ideas would reach beyond the realms of religion.

This "Great Awakening" in the middle colonies followed two decades of intellectual confusion in which changing social values and an unchanging theocentric cosmology created dissonant religious and ethical demands. For many people it served as a catharsis for accumulated guilt, arising out of a loss of zeal in the quest for the perfect church. It reinvoked in them the quest for religious perfection, yet it simultaneously altered that quest to the needs of an increasingly secular society. It aroused the hostility of those who emphasized reason, order, authority, and orthodoxy, forced them to define and defend their position, and thereby helped to clarify the nature of the colonial religious quest. It led to increased toleration through a proliferation of religious sects, through an emphasis on personal religion, and through the provision of common aims and

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objectives for supporters of denominationalism. Finally it laid the foundations for an adaptation of religious zeal to American secular objectives.¹

The Presbyterian church, as a result of the Great Awakening, severed its ties with the Old World and became American. The spreading of awareness of Americanism was helped by the developing Presbyterian system, especially through meetings of Synod where church representatives from varied walks of life met together to determine the destiny of the church and indirectly the nation.

As waves of enthusiasm rolled against the parish hierarchies of colonial America, the true quality of the revival's millenium aspirations was dramatically revealed. Not liberty or even equality, was as it turned out, the essence of the Awakening, but fraternity. In the course of the eighteenth century many Calvinists were to be shocked as they saw the single end towards which all the streams of Providence and grace tended. But the spirit aroused in 1740 proved to be that of American nationalism.²

Constitutional rights, civil and religious liberties, and resistance to unjust laws were issues defined and used by laymen and clergy. The Great Awakening's success in the beginning was in reaching the lower and middle classes, which were numerous in Pennsylvania, but it would eventually encompass actions from people on all steps of the social ladder. The growth of the Presbyterian


church in America from the beginning of the Great Awakening to the
American Revolution was a staggering 310 percent. Much of this
represented a New Side orientation, with its concern for individual
religious consciousness, and it expanded beyond the realm of religion
into civil action.

Philadelphia Presbyterian laymen took part in the struggle
for American freedom, largely as an outward expression of the views
of their ministers and their church. The question of moral declension,
which brought on the Great Awakening, still brought fear into the
hearts of Americans. They saw their difficulties with England as a
punishment from God for their back-sliding and, to reform themselves
again, they needed to fight off British immorality. "There remained
no way of preserving American virtue unless the connection with Britain
was severed." 4

Elders and trustees in the three Philadelphia Presbyterian
churches, often important people of the community, would lead a move-
ment of their total congregations that would cut across all class
lines.

Only fragmentary records of the total membership of the
Presbyterian churches of Philadelphia exist from before the

3Richard Hofstadter, America at 1750 (New York: Alfred A.

4Edmund Morgan, "The Puritan Ethic and the American
Revolution, but one can make conclusive comments about their trustees and elders. The following chart lists trustees and elders of the three Philadelphia churches from the Great Awakening to the American Revolution and indicates their military and civil role in the events after 1776.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trustees &amp; Elders</th>
<th>Military Role</th>
<th>Political Role</th>
<th>Percent Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRST CHURCH</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND CHURCH</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIRD CHURCH</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The list of trustees and elders is relatively accurate, but a few may have been missed as not all the records of each church are complete from the Great Awakening to the Revolution. Complete death records are unavailable for the years prior to the Revolution to determine if inactive trustees/elders were deceased.

Several outstanding leaders of the Philadelphia Presbyterian churches took active roles in the Revolutionary period, and they were usually those influenced by the effects of the Great

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5 Nineteen trustees/elders transferred to different Philadelphia Presbyterian churches during the period from the Great Awakening to the Revolution. They are listed here in their new church. Most left the First Church for the church of Tennent, or later, Duffield.
Awakening. One was Benjamin Rush. His uncle was Samuel Finley, founder of Nottingham Academy, who became responsible for Rush's education. Finley was a New Side preacher and graduate of the Log College, as was Dr. John Redman who gave Rush his training as a physician. Rush for several years had followed closely the struggle of the colonists for constitutional rights. He was convinced by the mid 1760s that the imposition of taxes by England without representation was wrong and, under several pseudonyms, he had published a number of newspaper articles defending the rights of the colonists. His theme was the moral and religious duty of patriotism, a philosophy he learned early in life. He was one of three active Philadelphia Presbyterians who signed the Declaration of Independence.

Dr. John Redman, teacher of Benjamin Rush, was an active patriot. As a member of a church corporation known as The Presbyterian Ministers' Fund, he helped apply its funds for the support of Washington's army. "On March 17, 1777, the corporation agreed 'to loan to the Continental Congress five thousand pounds, as soon as it can be done conveniently.' Later a statement was made that more than half of the company's assets were helping to save Washington's

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6 After the death of my father I went with my mother to the Rev'd Mr. Tennent's meeting, .... My mother was a constant attendant upon his Presbyterian place of worship, and educated all her children in the principles taught by him, which were highly calvinistical. Benjamin Rush, Autobiography of Benjamin Rush (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 163.
army, and to provide for the driving of General Howe from the capital in due season." John Redman had joined Gilbert Tennent's New Light church in 1744.

William Bradford, an original trustee of the Second Presbyterian Church, published the *Pennsylvania Journal*, and actively supported the Revolution. He gained prominence for his opposition to the Stamp Act and for stopping taxed East India tea from landing in Philadelphia in 1773. Bradford, drawn to the Second Church through the work of Whitefield and Tennent, always remained a New Side Presbyterian. Gunning Bedford, another original trustee of the Second Church, raised his son in the tradition of this church.

Gunning Bedford, Jr., became a graduate of the College of New Jersey and active in national affairs as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, helping to draft the United States Constitution, and later becoming Governor of Delaware.

Many other trustees and elders, some previously mentioned as students of early Presbyterian academies, were prominent Philadelphia patriots, including John Bayard, former intimate of Whitefield, whose career extended into politics and the military during the war. Among others were Ebenezer Hazard, the patriot-historian, Charles Thomson, recorder of the Continental Congress, Thomas McKean, signer of the Declaration of Independence and future Governor and

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Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. Often overlooked, Daniel Roberdeau, an elder in the Second Presbyterian Church, became an ardent revolutionary as a brigadier general in the Pennsylvania militia and as a member of the Continental Congress.

One of the wealthiest and most influential men in the city of Philadelphia was Dr. William Shippen, The Elder. A friend of Whitefield, he was an original trustee of the Second Church and remained a member for seventy years, a founder of the College of New Jersey, and a member of the Continental Congress. His son, William Shippen, The Younger, graduated from the College of New Jersey and during the Revolution he became Director General of all military hospitals. He joined Duffield's Old Pine Street Church and became a trustee. Wealthy and influential Philadelphia businessmen who supported the Revolution would include James Craig, John Mease and John Wallace, all trustees in the First Church. 8

The only prominent Philadelphia Presbyterian who became a Loyalist was Pennsylvania Chief Justice William Allen, a member of the First Church. James Wilson, delegate to the Continental Congress in 1776, was not persuaded until the last minute to vote for independence and later was an Episcopalian when he worked on the United States Constitution.

Elias Boudinot, another important Philadelphia Presby-

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terian revolutionary, was neither a trustee nor an elder of any of the churches, but he was a member of the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. He became president of the newly formed American government in 1782. The Boudinot family Bible stated that he was baptized Elias in 1740 by George Whitefield, and Gilbert Tennent instilled "Publick spirit" in Boudinot as he grew up. He became active in the Committee of Correspondence before the war, and he handled the responsibility of Commissary of Prisoners during the war. He firmly believed in the ultimate success of the Revolution on religious grounds, and he transferred his feelings to his daughter, Susan, who at the early age of nine in 1773 showed her patriotic fervor. She was among mixed company of Tories and Whigs at the home of Governor William Franklin of New Jersey when "Susan saw that the forbidden tea was about to be poured. Taking the proffered cup, she raised it to her lips, curtsied, and threw it out the window."  

The Philadelphia Presbyterians' efforts in behalf of the war were undeniable. There were 497 male adult members on the pew roles of the three Presbyterian churches in Philadelphia on the eve of the Revolution and, though records available are incomplete, they demonstrate a strong case for their contribution:

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10 Ibid., 22.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Membership</th>
<th>Military Role</th>
<th>Political Role</th>
<th>Percent Involved</th>
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<td>FIRST CHURCH</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<td>SECOND CHURCH</td>
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<tr>
<td>THIRD CHURCH</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Presbyterian clergy influenced their parishioners to military and political action. "The Presbyterian clerics were so effective in turning 'their pulpits into Ecclesiastical drums for politics and telling their people to vote according as they directed them at the peril of their damnation' that they won admiration from reluctant Anglicans."¹² The clergy did much to transmit the idea that political concepts should be based on the Bible. The idea that a constitution should be based on the inalienable rights of man was a God-given principle and, therefore, rulers would be held accountable for their oppressions.

Presbyterian leaders took an early stand against unjust representation in government, especially when it concerned taxation, and applied against England the same principles they used in opposing the Quakers. Philadelphia Presbyterian ministers demonstrated their commitment in 1775 with a letter written by Francis Alison, James

¹¹Membership totals include trustees and elders.

Sproat, George Duffield, and Robert Davidson entitled *An Address To* 
The Presbyterian Ministers and Congregations in North Carolina. They 
justified colonial resistance to Great Britain, emphasizing taxation 
as their main argument. If they allowed taxation of their tea, they 
announced, it may end up with the taxing of "our hearttes as in 
Ireland." They did not yet promote independence, still retaining 
their allegiance to the King, but they made it clear that they no 
more expected future redress of heavy taxes from the King or from 
Parliament. They appealed to fundamental laws, with the argument 
that Parliament had no supreme power, but was limited "by laws of 
God and of Reason...by the fundamental laws of the Constitution, and 
by the Great Charter of England." When fundamental law was abridged, 
it was correct to resist. The Presbyterian clergy agreed that the 
time for laying grievances before King and Parliament had passed, and 
that Presbyterians from North Carolina should unite together in 
support of the non-importation and non-exportation resolution, back 
the Continental Congress and, if driven to it, fight. If the North 
Carolinians could not do these things, then: "We can have no fellow-
ship with you; our soul shall weep for you in secret, but will not be 
able any longer to number you among our friends, not the friends of 
liberty, and of the house of Hanover, nor among the friends of the

13 An Address of the Presbyterian Ministers, of the City of Philadelphia, to the Ministers and Presbyterian Congregations in North Carolina (Evans Microcard 14411), 8. 
14 Ibid. 
84
This letter, written by Old and New Side ministers of Philadelphia, demonstrated their continued commitment to the cause of liberty based on their strengthened religious heritage which, "... was born of the 'New Light' imparted to the American mind by the Awakening and the evangelical clergy of colonial America." The ecclesiastical order of the eighteenth century would be shattered. Whitefield's journeys throughout the colonies promoted a common bond among the colonists on religious and other principles, furthering a feeling of unity, which "led to an attitude of difference and independence on the part of the colonial churches. The resulting break away from churches in the mother country was an early step on the road to political independence." 

The Great Awakening eventually made Old Side ministers aware of their people and, along with New Side preachers, helped raise the moral standards of the community by making religion a vital experience in all phases of life, not just a formal doctrine. Presbyterian strength undeniably came from the Great Awakening as it brought converts of every background into congregations. Many ministers and their families traced their connection

15 Ibid.
16 Heimert, 15.
with the church directly to the Awakening, and education helped prepare them for the national struggles ahead. Their growing socio-religious maturity helped them make it a better place for man.

When the Revolutionary War ended, the Philadelphia Synod sent a letter to its churches giving thanks for what they had done:

We cannot help congratulating you on the general and almost universal attachment of the Presbyterian body to the cause of liberty and the rights of mankind. This has been visible in their conduct and has been confessed by the complaints and resentment of the common enemy.... Our burnt and wasted churches [which numbered no fewer than fifty] and our plundered dwellings, in such places as fell under the power of our adversaries, are but an earnest of what we must have suffered had they finally prevailed. The Synod, therefore, requests you to render thanks to Almighty God, for all this mercy, spiritual and temporal, and in particular manner for establishing the Independence of the United States of America.18

The religious duty to oppose governmental tyranny had led Presbyterians to participate in establishing a government that would meet the common needs of society. The voice of the "awakened" people of 1739-40 helped spread the principles of the revival and helped secure American independence.

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UNPUBLISHED WORKS


NEWSPAPERS

APPENDIX

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wayne Jacoby was born on September 24, 1940, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jacoby of Philadelphia. Mr. Jacoby graduated from Germantown High School, Philadelphia, in 1960 and attended Plymouth State College in New Hampshire, graduating in 1964 with a B. Ed.

Mr. Jacoby became a teacher in the Somers Point, New Jersey School District for two years and then entered the Springfield Township School District of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, where he has remained for the last eleven years. He pursued his graduate studies at Temple University earning an M. Ed. in 1969 and has now completed his M.A. program in history at Lehigh University. He is married and resides with his wife in Lansdale, Pennsylvania.