
by

Kenneth Hylson-Smith

A thesis presented in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Leicester, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

1973
Studies in Revivalism as a Social
and Religious Phenomenon, with
special reference to the London
Revival of 1736-1750.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines revivalism\(^1\) sociologically and phenomenologically. We maintain that sociology and phenomenology of religion are not incompatible disciplines, but may and should be complementary. It is possible for both to be fruitfully applied to the study of religion and religious phenomena, and this has been attempted in the present work.

This Introduction is not intended in any way to be an exhaustive consideration of the sociological and phenomenological inheritance of theories, concepts and methodology upon which it is possible to draw in the examination of revivalism. It rather indicates the framework within which the study has largely been conducted. It is more of an acknowledgement of some of the main sources to which the writer is indebted, than a comprehensive elaboration and application of them to the subject concerned.

Comte distinguished two modes of thinking preparatory to the development of the scientific approach; the theological and metaphysical stages.\(^2\) In its sociological aspects this study of revivalism

\(^1\) Later in the Introduction we give a broad definition of revivalism.

attempts to avoid the postulation of 'unanswerable questions' explained in terms of supernatural agencies or abstract conceptions (although we consider the phenomena may quite legitimately be a matter of theological and philosophical discussion). We endeavour to minimise bias as a consequence of presuppositions. In this respect, it is hoped that revivalism has been examined objectively as a social and religious fact, broadly in the manner proposed by Durkheim\(^1\). However, it is appreciated that this is not completely possible (nor, some would say, desirable). In part, the motivation for this research into revivalism was an interest in, and a sympathy for certain of the core elements in the phenomenon; but this has helped to give a greater understanding and insight into the data, without introducing a degree of subjectivity which to any major extent interferes with the scientific study of the phenomenon as a 'social fact'.

The somewhat rigid positivism of Comte and Durkheim does however introduce the actual or potential inadequacy of reductionism in the sociological approach to the study of religion and religious phenomena.

The essence of reductionism is to consider religion as a product or aspect of the social structure in which it is found. The concern, supremely expressed by Durkheim, of explaining social facts, including religious phenomena, in terms of other social facts, contains an inherent danger of thereby considering that a total

explanation has been given; that the origin, contents and character of the religious phenomena being studied can be entirely comprehended by reference to the social dimension.

The sociology of religion need not be reductionist if social factors are recognised as exerting a profound influence upon religion rather than being determinant of it. There is not a simple one way process of cause and effect, neither should the total dynamic interrelationship of social factors be given too much significance in its influence upon the content and form of religion and religious phenomena. Likewise, the objective scientific approach neither assumes nor rejects belief in the transcendental origin of religion. There are different levels and categories of explanation, and although it is in order to study religious data as social phenomena, it is not within the province or competence of the sociologist to proceed from this and pronounce the phenomena as merely social; in doing this he goes beyond the limits of his science.

In examining revivalism sociologically, the writer has given close attention to the most significant aspects in the contemporary and preceding social structure of the society in which the revival occurred. This has been necessary in order to provide a background to an intensive appraisal of the socio-economic groups most involved in the revival concerned. It also facilitates an appreciation of the sociological characteristics of the individual and corporate experiences, life patterns, thought forms, teaching, leadership, worship, and social life of the participants. In this the work of Weber\(^1\) has been a

reference point, and especially those sociological insights concerning the emergence of religious movements. These were further investigated and refined by H.R. Niebuhr in his study of the social sources of denominationalism,\(^1\) and independently considered by E. Troeltsch in his work on the Christian ethic in its relationship to society, social structures, the functions and development of church, sect and mysticism.\(^2\) Weber's middle range theories include the systematization of different types of religion (other worldly and inner worldly), and the characteristics associated with each; the social structural features of sects and churches with the corollary differences in ethics and doctrine, and the social processes entailed in the transformation of the one into the other; the role and function of prophets and priests; the basis of authority, and especially the concept of charisma, and charismatic leadership; and the relationship between religious belief and 'secular' ethics.

Finally, in the sociological analysis of revivalism, some of the large number of empirical studies of related phenomena which have appeared throughout the last two decades, although not necessarily adding new major theoretical concepts, have been relevant to the sociological conclusions of the present study, and have helped to test, elucidate and expand previous theories. Prominent among these has been the work of Bryan R. Wilson on the sociological interpretation

\(^1\) See H. Richard Niebuhr, *Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929).  
of Christian sects, and the process of secularisation;\textsuperscript{1} Norman Cohn on medieval European millenarian movements;\textsuperscript{2} and Peter Worsley on the sociology of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia.\textsuperscript{3} In addition, such writers as J.M. Yinger,\textsuperscript{4} Peter Berger,\textsuperscript{5} and David Martin\textsuperscript{6} have written on the sociology of religion in complex, highly industrialised and urbanised societies.

In addition to examining revivalism sociologically, this thesis also undertakes a phenomenological investigation of the same data, with basically a dual purpose.

First, an attempt is made to study revivalism in its own terms, as a distinct religious phenomenon, presenting a body of data which may be treated as subject matter for academic investigation without necessary reference to the social structures in which it is found, or to any particular aspect of that society. This is in accordance with the theoretical orientation of the phenomenology of religion, which considers religion, and religious phenomena as a discrete area of human life and

\textsuperscript{1} Some of the issues are discussed by Bryan R. Wilson in \textit{Religion in Secular Society} (1969), and \textit{Sects and Society} (1961); and in Bryan R. Wilson (ed.), \textit{Patterns of Sectarianism} (1967).

\textsuperscript{2} Norman Cohn, \textit{The Pursuit of the Millenium} (1957).

\textsuperscript{3} Peter Worsley, \textit{The Trumpet Shall Sound} (1957).


\textsuperscript{5} P. Berger, \textit{The Sacred Canopy} (1967).

\textsuperscript{6} David Martin, \textit{A Sociology of English Religion} (1967).
behaviour, with its own characteristics. It is difficult to isolate such phenomena, especially when they are highly diffused in the society or culture in which they are found, but it is possible to do so. Having done so, phenomenology of religion does not attempt to compare one religion or religious tradition with another as independent units, but rather abstracts from the different religious traditions certain elements, and compares them in order to understand more fully religious thought and practice as such. In the present study, the abstracted element is revivalism, and the concern is to appreciate its significant form and characteristics as a religious phenomenon, in a similar way that M. Eliade, G. Van der Leeuw, Rudolf Otto, J. Wach and others have studied such matters as prayer, sacrifice, symbolism, the idea of the holy, or the concept of the sacred place.

Secondly, the individual and corporate experiences of the participants in the revival are examined in order to gain an increased knowledge of the meaning attached by believers to the religious practices in which they engage. If it is true, as J. Wach has written, that religious experience is 'a response to what is experienced as Ultimate Reality', then this study of revivalism is in large measure concerned, in its phenomenological aspect, with the understanding of the human

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1 See Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion (1963).
2 See Gerardus Van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation (1964).
response of those involved, its distinguishing features, and the form it takes during a time of revival. This covers not only the external form of the personal and group behaviour of the believers involved in the response, but their conceptualisation of the meaning and significance of this response, and of the 'ultimate reality' to which they are responding. In this the concern is with religious experience as such, rather than with the institutional structure or environment within which the experience takes place.

The work of Rudolf Otto on the idea of the holy\textsuperscript{1} has been of particular relevance in this phenomenological consideration of revivalism. At times of revival there is heightened awareness, among those involved, of the idea of the divine, and of the numinous, accompanied by intense non-rational experiences of the type described by Otto. An appreciation of the subjective feelings which accompany this awareness, and an identification and 'phenomenological profile' of the experiences entailed, help us to comprehend not only the nature and form of the human response, but also to apprehend something of its object.

In studying revivalism phenomenologically, the difficulty is encountered of isolating the phenomena from the multitude of other interconnected human activities, and then of ascertaining the essence of individual and corporate religious experience which lies behind the outward expressions and descriptions of individuals concerned. There is always a reticence to talk or write about such personal, holy matters; an inadequacy in conveying an accurate impression of them; an erroneous expression of what was experienced; a range of unexpressed experiences;

\textsuperscript{1} Rudolf Otto, \textit{op. cit.}
or a combination of more than one of these, which makes it difficult to determine the character, form and content of the inner reality which the outward expression conveys. Indeed, Otto and others maintain that fundamental religious experience is to a large extent inexpressible. The present study draws upon individual detailed descriptions of personal religious encounters, written by those concerned soon after the time of their occurrence. This helps to give a greater understanding of the religious experiences and behaviour of those influenced by revivalism. It will, we hope, result in further insight into the nature of intense human religious experience, and the characteristics of consequent religious behaviour.

It is our contention that in the same way that economics may be studied as a specialist subject by economists, law by jurists and politics by political theorists, and yet in each case the subject matter of the particular sphere of interest may quite justifiably provide data for the sociologist, so religion and religious phenomena may in a similar manner be studied by the phenomenologist and sociologist. Further, the two disciplines will be of mutual assistance the one to the other. It may be said in general that the phenomenologist will provide a detailed classification and grouping of religious data; a body of knowledge on the content of this data; and a corresponding appreciation of the value and meaning of religion to the believers, in order to gain a greater understanding of various religious dispositions. The sociologist will study religious phenomena within the complex interrelationship of social and cultural factors in which it is historically found, and seek to understand the relationship of religion in its particular manifestation to non-religious, social and cultural aspects. The focus of interest of the two
disciplines may be different, but should neither be mutually exclusive
nor incompatible; and in this study of revivalism both are used.

In examining the individual and corporate behaviour of those concerned
in revivals, we have given some attention to psychological and social
psychological factors. We would broadly accept the framework for the
discipline of social psychology outlined by Hollander and Hunt. They
write:

The emphasis of contemporary social psychology is upon the behaviour
of individuals, alone or in groups, deriving from social influence. Social
psychology studies influence relationships and their outcomes
with regard to person-to-person interaction, person-to-group relations,
or in terms of the effects of groups, institutions, and whole
societies upon individuals. Throughout, its direction is very much
person-centered in the sense of effects of these others on the
individual's perceptions, motivation, learning, and adjustment.¹

Our consideration of psychological and social psychological matters has,
however, been secondary to our main sociological and phenomenological
study of the phenomenon. Psychological and social psychological
aspects have been discussed where they appear to be of special
significance in appreciating revivalism as a social and religious
phenomenon. We have not adhered to any particular 'school', nor have
we examined in depth the relevance of any psychological or social
psychological theories, as we consider such a study would entail a
diversion from our primary focus of attention. Some writers on the
psychology of revivalism have been explicitly hostile in their

¹ Edwin Paul Hollander and Raymond George Hunt (eds.) Classic
Contributions to Social Psychology, p. 3.
evaluation of the phenomenon, but we have avoided any extended debate on the issues they raise, as again we would see this as a deviation from our declared major objective.

In our attempt to introduce certain considerations from these two disciplines, writers who have been most pertinent to the matters discussed include. Godwin, James, Le Bon, McDougall, Fryer, and Sargant.

As a part of this work involves an examination of historical situations, it is appropriate that some brief consideration should also be given at this stage to the question of historical methodology. Hans Meyerhoff has identified two main strands in the theoretical position confronting modern historicism, in which a meaning has been sought in history. First, the Hegelian tradition of a philosophical theory which sets out to discover some rational as well as teleological

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2 George Godwin, op. cit.
3 William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902).
5 W. McDougall, The Group Mind (1920).
7 William Sargant, op. cit.
meaning. Secondly, the Augustinian tradition of a religious theory
that discerned a meaning in history only through a faith beyond history.
He is of the opinion that the former has suffered a virtual eclipse,
and that the latter, although finding considerable support, is
incompatible with modern historicism because it is essentially anti-
historical, and a reversal of the emancipation of history from theology.
The present writer considers that broad patterns and configurations of
human behaviour may be recognised, which are repeated at different
times and places where the dominant circumstances are similar; but that
the details of such individual and corporate behaviour vary according
to the distinctive social and cultural factors entailed. It is thus
a valid procedure to compare revivalism in its varied historical
manifestations, provided that due allowance is made for the influence
of social circumstances peculiar to any particular example. History
does not provide us with exact repetitions, but this does not preclude
us from making legitimate comparisons. At the same time, the writer
does not make any claim to be able to comprehend an overall form or
scheme in history. As H.A.L. Fisher has remarked:

Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history a plot,
a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed
from me. 1

There has been a tendency for historians to document and describe
general movements, sequences of events, successions of influential and
leading personalities, and the interplay of these factors. The major
political, economic, constitutional, social and religious events have
traditionally been seen as providing the substantial material out of

which the historian is able to portray the main characteristics of any particular historical period. The history of the eighteenth century revival in Britain has largely been written in this way. The writer has, however, been more concerned with what the revival meant to the ordinary people participating in it. He has endeavoured to gain an understanding of the individual and corporate experiences at 'grass roots level'. This is made somewhat difficult because the people involved came mainly from socio-economic sectors of the population whose members were not very articulate. They were not particularly literate, and they were unaccustomed, and mostly reluctant to communicate their experiences in writing. They were also possessed of little opportunity of doing so. In this attempt to appreciate the significance and content of the eighteenth century revival to those most intimately and actively engaged in it, the writer has been fortunate in having access to a number of relevant primary sources which have helped to overcome these inherent social obstacles to communication.

In addition to contemporary and subsequent published works, such as journals, pamphlets, books, letters, and local histories of various description, we have made considerable use of unpublished manuscripts, and other primary sources not previously used in the same way as in this thesis.

First, lists of members of Religious Societies have given valuable information on the socio-economic status of groups prior to the revival, and in the revival itself. In this connection, we have made use of an unpublished manuscript list of 1694, giving the names, places of abode and occupations of sixteen Church of England Religious Societies in and
about the cities of London and Westminster;¹ and lists of the names, places of origin, religious affiliation, dates of birth, and dates of acceptance into the fellowship of members of the first Religious Society established by John Wesley in London, which, in 1742, became the London Moravian Congregation, meeting at Fetter Lane.²

Secondly, much use has been made of manuscript letters from the early members of the Foundry, who were converted in the first few years of the revival in London.³ These converts gave full descriptions of their religious experiences, and these letters were written largely with the object of explaining the intense and profound spiritual experiences undergone by the writers. They give vivid insight into the individual religious responses to the revival. They are supplemented by a large number of short original manuscript letters of application to join the London Moravian Congregation.⁴

¹ The Names, Places of Abode, Employments and Occupations of the several Societys in and about ye Cities of London and Westminster Belonging to the Church of England 1694.
² The London Brethren. MS list held at Moravian Archives, London
³ MS letters held at Methodist Archives, London, mainly addressed to Charles Wesley.
⁴ MS letters and notes of application to join the London Moravian Congregation, held at Moravian Archives, London.
Thirdly, a full unpublished, and largely unused manuscript account by William Holland entitled, 'Short account of some few matters relating to the work of the Lord in England', written in 1745, has been most helpful in throwing new light on the early days of the revival in London. The author was a prominent lay leader in the first decades of the revival in London. His significance is much enhanced by his close association with the events immediately leading up to the conversion of Charles and John Wesley, for it was William Holland who, on Wednesday, 17th May, 1738, gave Charles Wesley a copy of Luther's commentary on The Epistle to the Galatians, which was a potent influence in his conversion on the following Sunday; and it was possibly William Holland who was reading Luther's commentary at the Society Meeting in Aldersgate Street, on the Wednesday after this, when John Wesley felt his heart 'strangely warmed', and he, like his brother three days before, was converted. In addition, he ranked in the London Moravian Congregation as the first 'Congregation Elder'. He was thus intimately involved with the early events of the London revival, and his lengthy treatise has the value of giving additional information from the point of view of a participant observer.

Finally, certain primary and secondary sources contemporary to the events have been used in a new way, to assist in the sociological and phenomenological analysis which has been undertaken. These include diaries, newspaper comments and tracts.

In examining other revivals, an attempt has been made to use sources contemporary to the particular revival, or secondary sources written by

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1 MS held at Moravian Archives, London.
persons having a first hand knowledge of the events under consideration. Much has been written on various revivals, but most of the literature appears to be of a devotional or didactic nature. There seems to be a relative paucity of material which undertakes a critical and analytical discussion of revivalism or of specific revivals.

In order to avoid confusion in this study it is necessary to make a general distinction between revivalism and similar phenomena which differ from it in certain essential ways. The detailed examination of particular revivals will provide a clarification of this definition, and of the distinctions made.

Revivalism represents a sudden, largely spontaneous, marked and sustained increase in the extent and intensity of the commitment of a number of individuals within a religious tradition in a particular geographical area to the beliefs and practices of their faith; a sudden increase in the concern of such members of a religious tradition for the conversion to a similar faith of those at the time either outside it, or only nominal members of it; and an accompanying increase in the fervour and intensity of the corporate religious life of those concerned. This is accompanied by a sudden marked increase in the numbers of new commitments (conversions) to the same religious faith of those within the revival from among those previously outside it, or only nominal members of the religious tradition within which the revival occurs. It often entails certain features coming into prominence in the individual and corporate life of those involved, which are normally minimally present, or totally absent in the religious tradition concerned; features which are associated with the original emergence of the religious tradition, and with its nascent individual and corporate
life. In the Christian tradition these include glossolalia, and certain bodily manifestations of intense mental and spiritual experience. In many respects the phenomenon entails a discarding of much of the accumulated human tradition and formulations of the faith in which it takes place, and a return to the pristine character of the religious tradition.

Revivals occur within a religious tradition, and initially arise from among existing adherents of a particular section of that tradition (although it may result in a separatist movement, and the establishment of new structures). In this respect, there is a reviving of the spiritual life among a limited number of members of a religious tradition. As revival is to be distinguished from all forms of cults and sects which emerge in opposition to, or at least as separate from, the existing religious structures, and frequently take as their raison d'etre the reversal of one or more of the dominant beliefs or norms of the prevailing religious establishment. Norman Cohn emphasises that between the eleventh century and the first half of the sixteenth century in Europe, the various millenial sects which arose all offered a solace of a kind which the official teaching of the medieval Church withheld; indeed, many of them identified the Church of the day as Antichrist, and the Church attacked and suppressed such movements as heresies, subversive to its authority. ¹ The somewhat similar cults in Melanesia which have arisen in recent decades, and which were studied by Peter Worsley,² although they incorporate many elements from traditional Christianity, and from the teaching of the Bible, are

¹ Norman Cohn, op. cit.
² Peter Worsley, op. cit.
invariably outside the framework of the Church. They characteristically include Christian missionaries among those who will be driven into the sea at the imminent end of the world, when either the ancestors will return, or the reign of eternal bliss will be ushered in with the appearance of God, or some other liberating power, bringing all the goods the people desire. The studies of V. Lanternari, I.M. Lewis, and others in recent years have all given greater understanding of this opposition which such sects and cults have to the established order of the religious tradition from whose teaching they derive their basic tenets.

Revivalism must also be distinguished from other movements which arise from within a religious tradition, and more especially in the Christian tradition, from reform movements, 'enthusiasm', and evangelism. Again, the distinction will only be broadly outlined here.

Reform movements within a particular religious tradition tend to be consciously initiated by an individual or group for specific, usually clearly defined and delimited objectives, which do not normally include, and even less frequently are restricted to the features enumerated in the initial definition of revivalism given above. In the case of such a wide ranging and fundamental movement as the sixteenth-century Reformation in Europe, revivalism occurred in certain restricted areas, but the entire movement was too comprehensive to be defined as a revival.

'Enthusiasm' is a term which was derisively applied as a description of the eighteenth century revival by those at the time who were not in sympathy with it. They had especially in mind certain groups and movements which had come into prominence at various times throughout the previous two centuries, such as Anabaptists, Millenarians or Fifth Monarchy Men, Seekers, Ranters, Diggers, Levellers, and more recently, the French Prophets who appeared in London just prior to the beginning of the revival. The study of this particular phenomenon was undertaken by Ronald Knox, who began with the Montanists, and traced the history of Christian enthusiasm from a theological point of view. He also included within the scope of the term any movement in the history of Christianity which was characterised by a high degree of emphasis upon the disposition to religious emotionalism. The concept allows for the inclusion of the phenomena which have characteristics in common with revivalism, but it is far too wide to indicate the distinctive nature of revivalism as a separate phenomenon.

Revivalism must also not be confused in the Christian tradition with evangelism. The two have frequently been used synonomously, especially by American writers. Evangelism represents an organised attempt, through planned meetings, and other means, to present the claims and demands of the faith concerned to those who are not committed to it, in order to produce conversions to the faith. This, despite the fact that often most of those attending evangelistic meetings are committed to the faith, and many of the converts come from such people. Again, with evangelism, as with enthusiasm, there

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2 As, for example, in William C. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism* (1939).
are certain elements present which are to be found in revivalism, and revivals often include a considerable amount of evangelism, but there is a spontaneity, and self-generated momentum in revivals which distinguish them from evangelism. Revivals, typically, are not organised, and not absolutely dependent on a figure equivalent to the evangelist. There are, it is true, circumstances which help prepare the way for revivals, and there are features in them which are not entirely unarranged, but the distinctive aspects of revivalism which mark it off in the Christian tradition from evangelism will stand out more clearly when an intensive study of the phenomenon has been completed.

The distinctions so far considered are most relevant to revivalism occurring within a predominantly Christian culture and society. Where Christianity is a minority movement; where the society and culture of the country concerned is non-Christian; or where Christianity has perhaps only recently been introduced and has not become fully established, other distinctions may be made. In such circumstances, it is common for many types of religious movement to arise, and various attempts have been made to classify these. ¹ We do not intend to discuss such typologies, as they are beyond the scope of the present study. Our concern is simply to recognise the existence of such related phenomena, and particularly to distinguish revivalism from certain mass conversion movements.

It is acknowledged that no precise delineation and definition of revivalism is possible which will clearly isolate it from all these

other movements. There are many common characteristics, and
revivalism shades off and overlaps with many of them. Where there
are very close similarities, as between revivalism and certain
largely spontaneous mass conversion movements, revivalism appears
to be distinguished by the fact that it is fundamentally an
upsurge of spiritual energy, new life, vitality and renewal within
the Christian community in the area concerned. The effects of this
may well include mass conversions from among those outside the
Christian tradition, but this is most usually a secondary result of
what has formerly taken place within the body of Christian believers.
A revival may lead on to a mass conversion movement, and most
revivals include large numbers of conversions, but this distinction
may be made.
England in the second quarter of the eighteenth century was still largely a country of rural settlement in which towns were generally neither geographically extensive nor populous. The countryside was studded with nuclear villages, hamlets and homesteads; there were no industrial conurbations, and the industry of the land was to a great extent rural rather than urban. The lack of efficient transport, and the generally low standard of roads and highways, also helped to ensure that each community was in large measure isolated from its neighbours; villages had a high level of self-containment; and there was a separation of town and country sufficient to give each its own distinctive tastes and preoccupations.¹

London alone had grown into a great city by modern standards. On the basis of the parish registers for baptisms, it can be estimated that its population, including the five parishes of Marylebone, St. Pancras, Paddington, Kensington and Chelsea, was approximately 674,500 in 1700, and 676,750 in 1750, (although some scholars would consider the growth throughout this half century was somewhat greater). This total slight increase represents an actual decrease in the population of the City and Southwark, as the addition to the population took place in the newer areas of west London. There was a shift in population, rather than a significant total increase. Parts around Cavendish Square, Hanover Square, Grosvenor Square and New Bond Street were being built, and the higher socio-economic groups from the eastern parishes were moving into them. In association with this westward mobility of population, London east of the Fleet developed a higher degree of differentiation. By the middle of the century this process was well advanced, and a distinct social structure had been established. A succinct description of its main features is given by H.K. Spate:

The city sheltered a host of small tradesmen, and their wholesale establishments, banks, markets, and exchanges; the administrative offices of the City companies; and the buildings of the great joint stock monopolies - the East India, South Sea, Hudson Bay, and other companies. Around the city were grouped three industrial sectors, very different not only from this nucleus but from one another. Clerkenwell, with Shoreditch and Bishopsgate, a district of innumerable twisting lanes and alleys, the homes of artisans of many trades, but especially those employed - or employing themselves - in the making of clocks and jewellery. To the north-east Spitalfields extended its monotonous regular streets of mean cottages, inhabited a more homogeneous industrial population of rope-walks, breweries, small foundries, anchor forges, docks, sugar boilderies, oil, colour and soap works, coopers' and boat builders' yards. Here, too, were the irregularly built homes and taverns for artisans, sailors, coal heavers, and other waterside workers.

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The general demographic patterns consequent upon the population movements of the previous century, and especially the more recent developments outlined above, had resulted by the third decade of the eighteenth century in the metropolis being divided into a number of largely self-contained communities. Other influences, such as the localisation of trade and industry, difficulty of travel from one part of the town to another, the more rigid demarcation of classes, trades and occupations, the danger for the well-dressed to venture into certain districts, the tendency for the concentration of certain national and ethnic groups in particular areas, and the intense individualism of local government, had assisted in this process. Each district had its own identifiable and pronounced characteristics, demonstrated a large measure of community awareness, and fostered considerable social intercourse between its members. The London of 1736 was not an homogeneous mass of people; it was rather a community composed of sub-communities.

The high level of community cohesion, interaction and intercommunication throughout the country and in the sub areas of London were pertinent factors in the development of the revival.

On the eve of the revival the state of private and public morality, the general condition of the Church, and the main features of the religious life of England were the cause of much concern among national leaders. In 1736 Joseph Butler, then Prebendary of Rochester, wrote in the preface to his Analogy of Religion:

It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much a subject of inquiry; but that it is, now at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained, but to set it up as a principal subject.
of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.¹

In 1738, the year in which John and Charles Wesley were converted in London, George Berkley, Bishop of Cloyne, in his Discourses Addressed to Magistrates and Men in Authority, declared that morality and religion in Britain had collapsed 'to a degree that has never been known in any Christian country.' 'Our prospect', he wrote, 'is very terrible and the symptoms grow worse from day to day.'² In the same year, Thomas Secker, Bishop of Oxford, in an episcopal charge, added to the lamentation. He declared:

In this we cannot be mistaken, than an open and professed disregard of religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the age. Such are the dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the highest part of the world, and the profligacy, intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes in the lower part, as must, if the torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. Christianity is ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve; and the teachers of it without any at all.³

Alfred Plummer, referring to the year of the death of Queen Caroline in 1737, concludes:

It is from about this point, if one may venture to fix one, that the corruption, which is so frequently charged against both the Church and society in the eighteenth century, becomes rapid. There had been plenty of it before, and it had increased during the last twenty years; but now the descent from bad to worse takes place with augmented velocity.⁴

There is general agreement among historians that the overall situation and outlook at this time was somewhat bleak; that there had been a decline in morals, and that religion had for the most part manifestly ceased to be a vital force in the land.\(^1\) The undoubted merits of the Church in these years failed to make it or the faith it proclaimed, a living reality to be reckoned with by contemporaries. There was robustness in thought and vigorousness of expression; a solid, scholarly, reasoned defence of the Christian faith against the attacks of Deists and others; and a determined presentation of the standards and demands of Christian morality in the face of an undermining of values. But the very emphasis on reason, and the converse suspicion attached to emotion; the regard given to moderation, and the detestation of any evidence of 'enthusiasm', together with the concentration upon morality, and the putting at a discount of the more 'spiritual' elements in Christianity, all combined to produce a high level of formalism, rigidity and inflexibility among both the majority of the clergy and the bulk of the laity. The Christian religion for the most part had assumed a form which appealed far more to the head than it did to the heart.

In its ministry and leadership, the Established Church suffered from the cumulative effects of three particular events: a significant proportion of its most able and spiritual clergy had been lost as a consequence of the anti-Puritan Code of Persecution, 1661-1665; the

Church had been bequeathed of a further notable number of ministers as a result of the expulsion of the non-Jurors in 1689 and 1690; and it had been noticeably muzzled following the suppression of Convocation in 1717. The energies of the Church were much directed towards the combatting of Deism which had been prevalent since the end of the seventeenth century. Despite having called forth a number of able apologists, this also helped to produce a predominantly rationalistic, and even sceptical approach among Church leaders. The combined influence of all these circumstances brought a conspicuous emphasis in the Church upon a largely Latitudinarian philosophy and theology.

At the local parochial level, there was the prevalence of pluralism, and the accompanying problem of absentee incumbents, together with a widespread low level of ability, application, and spirituality among the clergy, despite a considerable number of noticeable exceptions. Attendance at church had commonly become a mere social convention, and the services were typically rather formal and uninspiring.

The Church in England in the third decade of the eighteenth century appears to have possessed very considerable qualities, but these were not such as to make it a potent spiritual power, either in the lives of individuals, or in the nation as a whole.

In some ways the religious life of London was quite healthy, and in certain respects more so than in other parts of the country. It appears that there was a fairly adequate provision of places of public worship for the upper and middle classes, with rather less for the lower socio-economic groups. A considerable effort had been made to supply places of worship for the expanding population, especially during the reign of Queen Anne. Likewise there was an increasing
number of church services which the citizens of London could attend, as De Beer demonstrates in his study of the places of worship in London about 1738.¹

As far as the opportunity for attendance at church was concerned, at the time of the beginning of the revival, he could rightly claim that 'public worship, and the endeavour that makes public worship possible, formed at this time, an important part of the life of London.'

The clergy in London also enjoyed certain advantages in comparison with their colleagues outside the metropolis. Their stipends were higher than those in the country districts, nearly all livings being of £100 or more per annum. There were no doubt many cases of nepotism, but in London the churches generally had not become the dumping ground for illiterate younger sons, and relatives who were too hopeless and ill-equipped to be planted out in any other profession, as was so frequently the state of affairs through the rest of the land. Advowsons were sold with less frequency than elsewhere, and the more educated and energetic clergy were often attracted to London.

However, despite the fuller provision of buildings, services and clergyman, there was fundamentally the same malaise as in the rest of the country.

Generally in London at this time, church attendance does not appear to have been at a high level either numerically, or in terms of the extent of the devotion and commitment of those attending. For example, a

Scottish visitor in 1744 commented:

I hope nobody will pretend that the Sabbath is kept in any measure holy here, by many people in London, or that that it is any way to be known from other days of the week, but by the following particulars; none of which, except the last, has the least relish of holiness or religion in it.¹

This may to some extent represent a biased view, as it is evident from his treatise that the writer was a strict Protestant, noticeably pro Church of Scotland, and somewhat anti Church of England. But the observations he makes, and the overall conclusions he reaches, are supported in very large measure by other contemporary observers.²

As in any age, but to a more marked degree than in most, church attendance was frequently either a mere social convention, a desire to hear the organ, or an opportunity to listen to an eloquent sermon, in an age when the Church represented one of the few means of participation in a public event, provided a channel for limited social intercourse, an overt demonstration of respectability and conformity, and even to some extent, and in some cases, a public entertainment. The style and content of the preaching in most of the London churches tended to encourage this. John Breuhowse said that a frequent practice of the clergy was to deliver intellectual orations. These consisted of

.... an eloquent harangue on Sunday, setting forth the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice, in flowers of rhetorick gathered from Plato, Seneca or Tully ... the whipt cream of pulpit eloquence ...

and he comments:

A flourish of oratory may indeed persuade an audience that Mr such an one the Curate, or Dr. such an one the Rector of the Parish is a very pretty gentleman, or a good scholar ...³

² See above, notes 2 and 8.
³ Breuhowse, op. cit., p. 30.
It is a frequent lament of the laymen of the time that most of the clergy did not teach, or demonstrate in their lives a quality of spiritual reality and power, and a consistency of conduct which were expected of them. In the oft repeated, but nevertheless descriptive contention of those influenced by the revival, the majority of the ordained men in the London of their day had 'the form of godliness, but not the power thereof.'

The emphasis of the teaching of many of the London churches appears to have been mostly on moral issues and conduct. There was apparently a widespread neglect of reference to any potential transforming spiritual experience in the lives of ordinary men and women. Religion was largely formal. An observer comments:

The general advice of the clergy concerning the way to attain salvation, is go to church, say prayers, make the responses regularly, say, as it is in the Prayer Book, "Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us, good Lord deliver us, good Lord deliver us, good Lord deliver us", etc., perhaps for forty times over in a day. Say the creeds, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, receive the sacrament, keep holidays, give alms, and do good deeds, and so you are as sure of heaven as if you was in it.¹

The situation was exacerbated by the low morale among many of the London clergy. This is reflected in the letter to 'a right reverend prelate' from the Rev. Thomas Stackhouse in 1737 entitled, 'the miseries and great hardships of the inferior clergy in and about London: and a modest plea for their rights and better usage.' The writer especially bemoans the blatant ambition and preferment seeking among a large proportion of the clergy, and the equally evident conferring of promotion and advancement within the Church, not in the main according to merit, but as a consequence of the influence exercised in the interest

¹ Breuhowse, op. cit., p. 67.
of the person concerned by some people in positions of authority.

It appears that this had produced very substantial discontent, and disillusionment among many of the clergy, and the author of the letter is constrained to exhort the clergy as a whole in London that they should:

... live well, and study hard, and stay at home, and wait the issues of providence, in an honest execution of their office, for advancement, and not let fly their ambition and avarice ...\(^1\)

An important feature in the religious life of London in the years prior to the dawning of the revival was the existence of Religious Societies. The relevance of these for the origins of the revival has generally been underestimated, and it is important to recognise their significance.\(^2\)

The Religious Societies concerned had been founded in 1678 by Dr. Hornbeck, Curate at the Savoy, and Canon of Westminster, Mr. Smithies, Curate of Cripplegate, and William Beveridge, an oriental scholar, who was Rector of St. Peter's, Cornhill, and afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph. In the words of Josiah Woodward:

... several young men of the Church of England in the Cities of London and Westminster were .... touched with a very affecting sense of their sins, and began to apply themselves, in a very serious manner to religious thoughts and purposes.\(^3\)

Their inclinations and resolutions were centred in the same objective

\(^1\) Stackhouse, op. cit., p. 176.


\(^3\) Woodward, op. cit., p. 20.
of a holy life, and they determined that:

... they should meet together once a week, and apply themselves to good discourse, and things wherein they might edifie one another. And for the better regulation of their meetings several Rules and Orders were prescrib'd them, being such as seem'd most proper to effect the end proposed.¹

In addition, they considered and made provision for the wants of the poor. The Religious Societies were each led at that time by a clergyman of the Church of England; and they chose from among their members stewards to manage their gifts to the poor. They had an order that every member should endeavour to bring at least one other into the Society. In their origin and development, however, they remained Church of England Societies, industriously guarding against any form of schism or faction by such practices as monthly communion, attendance at public prayers, and the attaining of the approbation of their superintendent minister for the introduction of any rule, prayer or practice. Essentially their purpose was to provide Christian fellowship, and the opportunity for those concerned to meet together to share their common concern for true godliness. In this sense they presented a continuing possibility within the Established Church for a more profound and intense religious awareness and personal religious experience than was to be attained through the regular ministry in most of the London churches.

It is noteworthy that these Religious Societies were maintained in London throughout the period until the time of the revival. At about the beginning of the century, Josiah Woodward knew of 'forty distinct bodies of them, within the compass of the Bills of Mortality', and this number appears to have remained fairly constant during the half

¹ Woodward, op. cit., p. 23.
century after their formation. Writing of the year 1732, William Holland states, 'There were thirty or forty of these Societys in the City and suburbs of London', and in the Journals of Charles and John Wesley, and George Whitefield, reference is made by name to a similar number of Religious Societies in various parts of London. Attendance at these appears to have varied from very few, to numbers perhaps in excess of two hundred. There was also a quarterly service in the capital for all the Religious Societies in the metropolis which attracted a congregation of many hundreds.

The purpose of these societies on the eve of the revival varied somewhat, but William Holland gives an illuminating personal testimony to their general objectives at that time. He writes:

I heard that some well disposed young men met together once or more times in a week to pray, read the Scripture and edifye (sic) one another, which meeting was called a Religious Society.... I .... found some persons who also had a concern after their salvation.... they had some Orders or Rules, but I cannot remember them all particularly. Some were to this effect, "That they should pray for, watch over and endeavour to build one another up in the knowledge and fear of God, to take heed that their conversation was such as became the Gospell (sic) of Jesus Christ ..."

The central concern thus appears to have been very similar to that of the founding societies sixty years before.

In general it also appears that the Religious Societies, although sometimes showing a measure of formality and spiritual deadness, were to a considerable extent prepared for the new life to be offered by the revival. An insight into this state of affairs in the Societies is given in a letter to Charles Wesley from Thomas Cowper, an early

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1 Short account of some few matters relating to the work of the Lord in England by William Holland, a MS document in the Moravian Archives, London.
2 William Holland, op. cit.
convert of the revival, written in 1741, in which he gives details of how he and a friend heard in August, 1738 of a Religious Society in Aldersgate Street, and he continues:

We went there and one night the Lord brought you and Mr. James Hutton. You began to speak on justification by faith alone and told them they must feel their sins forgiven them in this life or they never would in the life to come. I remember they abused you ill and some were for putting you out of the room but at last they suffered you to read a homily upon faith.¹

With the coming of Whitefield and the Wesleys, the Religious Societies became the main initial vehicle for the communication of the revival influence. In the words of D. Pike:

.... the religious societies became the channel through which the revival flowed until the stream became a torrent and burst the banks of the Establishment which had contained it for the first sixty formative years.²

To change the analogy, they represented old skins into which the new wine was to be poured, and they continued to have some significance in the development of the revival even after new skins had been created, more adequate for the task of containing the new wine.

¹ MS letter from Thomas Cowper to Charles Wesley, 1741, in Methodist Archives, London.
CHAPTER II

The Early Years of the Revival in London

The eighteenth century revival in London began suddenly and dramatically, and soon gained considerable momentum.

In August 1736, George Whitefield\(^1\) arrived in London at the invitation of the Rev. Thomas Broughton in order to supply his place at the Chapel of the Tower of London. In a style perhaps somewhat dictated by the exuberance of his youth, he writes in his Journal:

The effect was immediate and visible to all; for as I went up the stairs almost all seemed to sneer at me on account of my youth; but they soon grew serious and exceedingly attentive, and after I came down showed me great token of respect, blessed me as I passed along, and made great enquiry who I was. The question no one could answer, for I was quite a stranger. I speedily slipped through the crowd.\(^2\)

His ministry at the Tower lasted two months, and religious friends from divers parts of the town attended his preaching on the new birth, probably coming mainly from the Religious Societies. Some titled persons who were later numbered among his followers, first became aware of him at this time.

About six months later, in March 1737, Whitefield again visited London in order to meet James Oglethorpe and the other Trustees of the colonial territory of Georgia. On this occasion he preached more frequently than before, and his preaching was attended by a greater number of people.

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\(^2\) *Journals, op. cit.*, p. 77.
Leaving London, he preached at Bristol, Gloucester and Bath, frequently to large congregations. He returned to London in June 1737, and lodged with the Rev. John Hutton in College Street, Westminster. He accepted invitations to preach at Cripplegate, St. Ann's and Froster Lane Churches at 6 a.m. on Sundays, and to administer the Holy Communion. Of these services, Whitefield reports that:

... so many came, that sometimes we were obliged to consecrate fresh elements two or three times; and stewards found it somewhat difficult to carry the offerings to the communion table. ¹

He also preached at Wapping Chapel, the Tower, Ludgate, Newgate and many other churches where weekly lectures were held. The number of those present continued to increase and his fame spread. It is apparent that many of the services were sponsored by the Religious Societies, and not supported by the churches as such. On Sundays he would usually preach four times to considerable congregations, as well as reading prayers two or three times.

By the middle of September his activities had come to the attention of the newspapers. One of these reported:

that there was a young gentleman going volunteer to Georgia; that he had preached at St. Swithin's, and collected £8 instead of ten shillings, £3 of which were in half pence; and that he was to preach next Wednesday before the Societies at their general quarterly meeting. ²

Whitefield protested to a printer about this type of publicity, but he acknowledged that 'by this means people's curiosity was stirred up more and more.' ³

During the following three months or so he generally preached about nine times a week, and the crowds coming to hear him greatly increased, many

¹ Journals, p87.
² Journals, p88.
³ Journals, p88.
often having to be turned away even from the most spacious churches. Despite some possible exaggeration, the vivid descriptive phrases of Whitefield convey some idea of the extent of the work which was at this stage just beginning:

On Sunday mornings, long before day you might see streets filled with people going to church, with their lanterns in their hands, and hear them conversing about the things of God. People gave so liberally to the charity schools, that this season near £1,000 sterling was collected at the several churches besides many private contributions and subscriptions sent in afterwards.

With the departure of Whitefield, the revival he had initiated not only continued, but became even more widespread and established. This was partly effected by the publication of some of his sermons, and other works, which, in the early months of 1738 were produced in abundance. But the continuance of the influence and impact of the work begun by Whitefield was especially noteworthy in the Religious Societies. The sudden presence of so many people earnestly wanting spiritual help, gave new life to the older of these, and brought new energy to the several recently founded Societies. Moreover, whereas the Societies had previously been largely separate bodies with little awareness of any mutual relationship, their newly acquired zeal and common strong allegiance to the evangelical doctrine resulted in bonds of fellowship and their London quarterly meetings gave evidence of this spiritual vigour and sense of unity. Certain members of the Societies also now declared that they would only submit to clerical oversight if the clergyman in question was one of the few thoroughly evangelical men at that time ministering in London. Whitefield maintained his influence with the Societies by sending reports of his activities in Georgia to James Hutton, to be read at their meetings, and this influence was furthered by the publication of this material. The Society meeting at

\[1\] Journals, pp 88, 89.
the Bible and Sun, the home and bookseller's shop of James Hutton in Little Wild Street, greatly increased in numbers, and moved as a consequence to an unused chapel in Fetter Lane. John Wesley exercised considerable powers of leadership among its members, and the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon frequently attended its services, as did several moderately prosperous business families.

In May 1738, first Charles Wesley, and then his brother John, were converted in London, and immediately began to declare 'salvation by faith' to individuals and groups in homes, in the Religious Societies, and in the few churches which had not closed their doors to such preaching and preachers. Despite the absence of John Wesley in Germany from June to September, the work which Whitefield had begun was clearly carried on by this ministry. On his return to London in December 1738, Whitefield could write in response to what he saw:

Here seems a great pouring out of the Spirit, and many who were awakened by my preaching a year ago, are now grown strong men in Christ, by the ministrations of my dear friends and fellow-labourers, John and Charles Wesley.¹

Throughout the Christmas period of 1738, and the early days of 1739, the impact of the revival became more widespread and aroused opposition from many of the clergy. This is well illustrated, as is the central issue at stake as seen by the revival leaders, in an incident in which Whitefield and John Wesley discussed at length with two clergymen of the Church of England and some others who opposed the revival preaching, what was the core concern in the rift which was developing. After describing the main drift of the debate, Whitefield graphically continued:

¹ Journals, p193.
God enabled me, with great simplicity, to declare what He had done for my soul, which made them look upon me as a madman.... Now, therefore, I am fully convinced there is a fundamental difference between us and them. They believe only an outward Christ, we further believe that He must be inwardly formed in our hearts also. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.¹

At this stage, the revival received a new impulse and effectiveness; for it was now that Whitefield and the Wesleys began their open air preaching in London, at Upper Moorfields and Kennington Common with thousands attending. The actual size of the crowds was variously estimated by both the preachers and contemporary witnesses. Even allowing for considerable over estimation (and it has been suggested that a realistic figure would be obtained if the numbers given by Whitefield and the Wesleys were halved), there is little doubt that there were often a few thousand present, and not infrequently as many as ten to twenty thousand. The crowds also remained consistently large, after the novelty had gone, and open air preaching in the capital had become a regular affair, often beginning at five or seven in the morning. As a consequence of this new phase in the revival there was a much increased public awareness of what was happening; a noticeable intensification in the commitment of a large number of those most concerned, to the furtherance of the revival; and a marked addition to the number of conversions.

The Wesleys and Whitefield continued this essentially dual ministry in London of expounding to the Societies, and preaching in the open air. The field preaching was on the principle of preach and return, with a continuous return to the same location. Also, many of those who attended this preaching were from the Religious Societies, and there was

¹ Journals, pp 203, 204.
thus a close relationship between the development and effectiveness of both. There was no clear distinction between the open air meetings as being evangelistic, and the Society meetings as being gatherings of believers met for Christian edification. Indeed, many converts had their final, culminating experience of conversion in the smaller Society, Class or Band Meeting.

One of the great needs resulting from the revival, was for those whose interest and concern had been awakened in the issues proclaimed, to meet together in order to seek and find the salvation for which they longed, and then to be established in the faith once it had been received. John Wesley recognised this, and provided for it. In 'The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies, in London, Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, etc.', he relates:

In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when all might come together, which from thence forward they did every week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening.¹

On the first Thursday twelve were present, at the second meeting it rose to forty, and soon after to a hundred. The only requirement for those attending was that they should have a genuine desire to 'flee from the wrath to come'. The Society was defined as:

a company of men, having the form, and seeking the power of godliness; united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.²

² Idem.
It met at the Foundry in Moorfields, which rapidly became one of the main centres of the revival in the country.

In their endeavour to watch over each other, this small but rapidly expanding company of people found some among them who lost their initial resolve and desire to seek 'the power of godliness'. There were those who gave way to what was considered by the leaders as unworthy behaviour. John Wesley viewed this as a grave problem. He recalls his concern:

"We groaned under these inconveniences long, before a remedy could be found. The people were scattered so wide in all parts of the town, from Wapping to Westminster, that I could not easily see what the behaviour of each person in his own neighbourhood was: So that several disorderly walkers did much hurt before I was apprized of it."\(^1\)

The difficulty was to a substantial extent met by the system of Bands and Classes. The Society was divided into Bands, on the same lines as those established in the Fetter Lane Society (where they consisted of no. fewer than five members and no more than ten), and to be found throughout Moravianism at the time. They were arranged on a residential basis, so that all the members of a particular Band lived in the same area of London, and there was lay leadership which for each Band was determined by the Wesleys. In addition, there was the Class Meeting, which became an integral part of the organisational framework of the revival, not only for the Methodists, but in a number of cases for the Church of England in evangelical parishes.

Some indication of the intimacy and intensity of the corporate life engendered by these groups is obtained from the chief rules of the Bands

in their more developed form, as stated in John Wesley's Plain Account of the People called Methodists. He writes:

In order to 'confess our faults one to another', and pray one for another that we may be healed, we intend, (1) to meet once a week, at the least. (2) To come punctually at the hour appointed. (3) To begin with singing or prayer. (4) To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our soul, with the faults we have committed in thought, word or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting. (5) To desire some person among us (thence called a Leader) to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.

In surveying the system in 1748, he further comments:

Great and many are the advantages which have ever since flowed from this closer union of the believers with each other. They prayed for one another, that they might be healed of the faults they had confessed; and it was so. The chains were broken, the bands were burst in sunder, and sin had no more dominion over them. Many were delivered from the temptations out of which, till then, they found no way to escape. They were built up in our most holy faith. They rejoiced in the Lord more abundantly. They were strengthened in love, and more effectually provoked to abound in every good work.

From its early days, the revival movement depended very much upon lay leadership. The leaders of the Bands and Classes, most of the preachers, and the majority of those involved in the management and control of the Societies were laymen.

It was in 1739 that lay preachers were first employed. By then there was developing an urgent need for responsible lay leadership. The Wesleys and Whitefield were increasingly absent from London, because of the demands upon them to preach, and establish Societies in other parts of the British Isles, and in the case of Whitefield, in the American colonies also.

The evidence of those converted in the early years of the revival in London shows that the lay leaders, whether local preachers, or leaders of

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Bands or Classes, exercised very considerable influence. However, their authority was clearly defined and limited, and their appointment and dismissal was almost entirely dependent in these early years of the revival on the opinion and decision of the ordained leadership.

The dominance of the Wesleys and Whitefield in the revival, in the ordering of its affairs and the course it took, was a notable feature at this time, and especially the prominent part played by John Wesley. This influence extended to the individual members of the Bands and Classes. When in London, John Wesley fixed an hour every day for speaking with each of the Bands, in order to discover any 'disorderly walker', or 'any of a careless or contentious spirit'. He was available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on every day but Saturday, in order to speak with any who wanted to do so. On occasions he also read over the names of the Society members, noting those who were of a doubtful character, so that a full enquiry might be made concerning them, and subsequently spoke to those concerned, placing on trial any who did not show sufficient proof that they were 'seeking Christ in sincerity'. It not infrequently happened that when he returned from a period away from London, he found division, or contention, or spiritual decline had caused havoc in the Societies in London, and it was often then only by his personal intervention and counsel that order was restored, and the Societies regained a fuller measure of spiritual health and vitality.

Throughout the period under consideration, those involved in the revival in London showed concern for the material as well as the spiritual condition of men. John and Charles Wesley set the example by visits to inmates in Newgate and the Marshalsea prison, and ministrations to them. In particular they showed concern for those condemned to execution, whom they often accompanied in the death cart to the gallows at Tyburn.
Such demonstrations of compassion were also exemplified in similar acts of mercy by various ordinary members of the London Societies.

Silas Told was especially active in this work, and spent much of his time attempting to help and comfort prisoners, so that John Wesley could say of him:

For many years he attended the malefactors in Newgate, without fee or reward; and I suppose no man for this hundred years has been so successful in that melancholy office. God had given him peculiar talents for it; and he had amazing success therein. The greatest part of those whom he attended died in peace, and many of them in the triumph of faith.¹

Efforts were likewise made to provide assistance to the sick and the poor. Through the Class system, and the assigning of special responsibility to certain individuals, there was a regular and thorough visitation of the sick. As an extra provision, John Wesley decided in 1746 to administer physic to the poor, as a result of which about three hundred came for such help in the first three weeks, and the facility was continued for several years. Monetary provision was made for the poor both by the systematic giving of the Society members, and by a periodic collection organised by John Wesley which contributed to a lending-stock for the relief of the needy.

The revival developed rapidly in London in its first few years. In addition to Moorfields and Kennington Common, open air preaching was being conducted in other parts of London, including Charles Square, Hoxton, Long Lane, Marylebone Fields, the Minories and Shorts Gardens, and was regularly attended by vast concourses of people. The demand for

meeting places for the large number of converts persuaded John Wesley to obtain a chapel in West Street, near the Seven Dials in May 1743, which immediately became a strategic centre for outreach into the more recently built areas of west London; and three months later he acquired a third London chapel at Spitalfields, which served the Society formed in Long Lane, and provided a basis for evangelistic work in parts of the metropolis south of the river. Another measure of the effectiveness of the revival in London in these years, is the growth of the London 'Society of the People called Methodists'. From the original twelve at its initiation in the latter end of 1739, the numbers had increased to those shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Members in Society</th>
<th>On Trial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 17, 1742</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>201</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1742</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1743</td>
<td>Total Members</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1743</td>
<td>Total Members</td>
<td>2250(^1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the next few years the total number seems to have fluctuated around two thousand as new members were added, and some removed, at least temporarily, as a result of the strict standards required, or because they fell away.

This rapid expansion was accompanied by an elaboration and increased complexity in the organisational structure of the revival. There emerged a greater division of labour, and the Wesleys delegated more and

\(^1\) See G.J. Stevenson, *History of City Road Chapel* (1872), p. 28.
more work to lay leaders, while maintaining their own authority. This did not always necessarily entail a larger number of officials, as in 1747 when John Wesley reduced the number of stewards in London from sixteen to seven. It did, however, mean a high level of devotion and a very considerable devolvement of responsibility, as shown by the following instructions for the seven stewards concerned:

1. You are to be men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, that you may do all things in a manner acceptable to God.

2. You are to be present every Tuesday and Thursday morning, in order to transact the temporal affairs of the society.

3. You are to begin and end every meeting with earnest prayer unto God for a blessing on all your undertakings.

4. You are to produce your accounts the first Tuesday in every month, that they may be transcribed into the ledger.

5. You are to take it in turn, month by month, to be chairman. The chairman is to see that all the rules be punctually observed, and immediately to check him who breaks any of them.

6. You are to do nothing without the consent of the minister, either actually had or reasonably presumed.

7. You are to consider, whenever you meet, 'God is here'. Therefore be deeply serious; utter no trifling word; speak as in His presence, and to the glory of His great name.

8. When anything is debated, let one at once stand up and speak, the rest giving attention. And let him speak just loud enough to be heard, in love and in the spirit of meekness.

9. You are continually to pray and endeavour that a holy harmony of soul may in all things subsist among you; that in every step you may 'keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace'.

10. In all debates you are to watch over your spirits, avoiding, as fire, all clamour and contention, being 'swift to hear, slow to speak'; in honour every man preferring another before himself.

11. If you cannot relieve, do not grieve, the poor. Give them soft words, if nothing else; abstain from either sour looks or harsh words. Let them be glad to come, even though they go empty away. Put yourself in the place of every poor man, and deal with him as you would God should deal with you.

These instructions we whose names are under-written (being the present stewards of the society at London) do heartily receive, and earnestly desire to conform to. In witness whereof we have set our hands.
N.B. - If any Steward shall break any of the preceding rules, after having been thrice admonished by the chairman (whereof notice is to be immediately given the minister), he is no longer steward.¹

Such rigorous demands indicate the quality of person required for the post; and it is an eloquent testimony to the availability of lay leaders of high calibre that standards of this nature could be expected. It is also an indication of their human frailties that such regulations were so explicit.

With the increased numbers incorporated into the rapidly expanding Methodist Connexion, and the spiritual vigour which was maintained in the Societies throughout the country, there grew a sense of independence among the membership, and this was heightened by the opposition of the Church of England at the national and local level. It appears that by 1748, the only Church in London that would admit the Wesleys and Whitefield to preach was St. Bartholomew's, and this was as a result of the personal invitation of its Rector, the Rev. R.T. Bateman (although apparently a few other churches did subsequently grant permission). On such occasions as they did preach in that Church, large numbers of people flocked to hear them, but the Churchwardens objected, and carried their complaint to the Bishop of London. The registers of the Church show that they were still continuing their objections as late as 1750.

This type of opposition made the revival converts more aware of their corporate identity. It also encouraged a tendency for the revival to become a separatist movement.

¹ Journals, op. cit., pp. 300, 301.
CHAPTER III

The Revival as a Social Phenomenon

Revivals have largely occurred in small communities where there is a high degree of social interaction within a social unit which is meaningful for its members in a continuing way. The eighteenth century revival in London may appear to be a possible exception to this; and indeed it is one of the largest urban areas in which a revival has taken place. However, a closer examination of the social structure of the metropolis at the time reveals, as previously noted, that it consisted to a great extent of a number of fairly well defined sub-communities, which helped in the promotion and spread of the revival. The open air preaching was conducted regularly in these local areas; the meeting houses were situated strategically in conformity to broad social divisions; and the Class Meetings were organised on a geographical basis, benefitting in part from more circumscribed districts which possessed a measure of community awareness. Such a social structure also enabled the knowledge of activities like open air preaching to be widely communicated in a short space of time, and for the core content of the preaching to be made known to a large proportion of the population. This process was additionally enhanced by the quite recent advent of daily and weekly newspapers and magazines, and by the increasing use of pamphlets, which were readily produced and distributed by the revival leaders. London was a large city, but its social structure, and the conditions existing in the early years of the revival, provided that high level of social interaction which has always been so conducive to the effectiveness of revivalism.

The significance of rapid social change as a contributory factor in the
explanation of the origin and effectiveness of revivalism and other related phenomena, has received too much emphasis in some studies.\(^1\)

From the evidence available, the eighteenth century revival in London does not appear to depend much either in its initial appearance, or in its development, upon this particular feature. The population of London in the first half of the eighteenth century did not suffer unduly from the adverse effects of accelerated social and industrial change. The sense of sudden and unmanageable growth, and of an overwhelming influx of hordes of workers, creating new problems, was a situation experienced more in the seventeenth century, and again from the latter end of the eighteenth century onwards, rather than a position confronting the metropolis during the first half of the eighteenth century. M. Dorothy George comments:

In the eighteenth century London was growing more rapidly in bricks and mortar than in population as people left the crowded lanes of the City for the newer parts of the town. The organisation of London trades was moreover surprisingly stable, the small workshop and the domestic system which flourished at the beginning of the century, held their own to a remarkable extent.\(^2\)

The situation so described was especially to be found in the first half of the century. The main inflow of population consisted of those from other parts of the country and abroad who came to the capital city seeking opportunities of employment, and the learning of a trade, which

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\(^2\) M. Dorothy George, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 15.
were not so readily available elsewhere. There were some serious problems of alienation as a result of this, but the overall effect of the demographic, social and industrial developments during these years was not such as to create a large, unskilled, uprooted industrial proletariat, lacking in any sense of community or identity. Very acute social problems existed, but they were not fundamentally of the type or magnitude of those associated with the later intensive and extensive urbanisation and industrialisation, where there was a totally new situation of human disorientation resulting from the industrial revolution, and basic changes in the social structure stemming from this.

A study and comparison of the social origins, and socio-economic status of the members of the churches and religious groups in London prior to the revival, and of the social composition of the revival groups themselves, throws light on the extent to which the revival involved sections of the population previously beyond the influence of the Church, and organised religion in general.

In order to do this we will examine the mainly unpublished primary material referred to in the Introduction; and we will apply a technique and method for the analysis of this data which has not been used before to our knowledge. The methodology consists of deriving a graduated scale of socio-economic status from the survey of 'London Inhabitants Within the Walls, 1695', somewhat like a simplified version of the present Registrar General's Classification, and applying this to the occupational categories delineated in the extant lists of Society members.

The 1695 survey divided the population by occupation of the head of the household into five 'social status' groups. The list of occupations is not exhaustive, and there are certain difficulties of definition, but if
this categorisation is applied as far as possible to the membership of the sixteen Church of England Religious Societies in and about the cities of London and Westminster in 1694, the following breakdown is revealed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gentry, etc.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Occupations - paying surtax in 1692</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot; - majority paying surtax</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot; - less than half paying surtax</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot; - paying 1s. tax only</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These groups were largely in what may be designated the lower-middle and working classes. This indicates that the Church of England in London at this time had a considerable influence among the less prosperous strata of the population; it does not appear from this evidence to have been only the Church of the higher socio-economic groups.

It is legitimate to apply the same socio-economic scale to the lists of the Fetter Lane revival group which we have studied, which cover certain members between 1742 and 1750 (this was the first of the Societies established, at least in part by John Wesley, but which, by 1742, had become the London Moravian Congregation).\(^1\) Allowance must be made for a certain degree of change in the socio-economic status attached to particular occupations since 1695, but the occupational structure in London in this respect seems to have been fairly stable and static during the intervening years, and a valid analytical comparison can be made. The division into the six categories, of certain members on the lists for whom the appropriate information is available, provides

\(^1\) Other lists of revival members exist, but they do not contain the same comprehensive note of occupations, to our knowledge.
the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 22

(The total number included is restricted, partly as a result of the difficulty of occupational description).

This limited evidence for London indicates that the extent to which the revival made inroads into sections of the population previously outside the reach of the Church, has been exaggerated by some writers, and too readily assumed by others. There does not seem to have been a sudden, extensive turning to the Christian faith by masses of religiously alienated sections of the population. A significant number of those involved were in this category, but the revival in London cannot be adequately analysed sociologically if there is the basic assumption that the vast majority of the 'clientele' were from socio-economic groups completely disassociated from the Church. It rather appears in the case of London, that although there was a noticeable outreach to those previously unconnected with organised religion, the most prominent development in this respect was the impact of a religion which offered vital personal faith to nominal members of the existing Church.

This is further substantiated by other evidence. At the time of the settlement of the Moravian London Congregation in 1742, William Holland states that members of this group:

.... were almost all of the Church of England and about half of them had been members of Religious Societys.¹

¹ William Holland, op. cit.
Certainly many of the early converts of the revival had previously been members of Religious Societies, or had some tenuous connection with the Church of England, or some dissenting body. It is also relevant to notice in this consideration that the policy and practice adopted by the revival leaders of constantly returning to the same preaching locations, also helped to ensure that, despite the great crowds, there were a very large number among the audiences who were regular attenders at these open air services. Indeed, although confronted by vast numbers of people, John Wesley could claim to know most of those present at any one of these meetings. This again indicates that there were several thousand people in London who were intensely influenced by the revival, rather than a more extensive section of the population which was superficially influenced. Of these, in spite of a great number having had no previous serious involvement with organised religion, the greater proportion had been associated, at least nominally, with some form of corporate religious body.

Further knowledge of these members of society involved in the revival is gained by an analysis of unpublished manuscripts held at the Moravian Archives in London. These contain lists of members received into the London Moravian Congregation between 1742 and 1750. They give details of the names, trades, dates and places of birth, original denominational connections, and the dates when received into the Congregation, and when admitted to the sacrament in the Congregation, for all those concerned.

It is noticeable that a high proportion of the members were born outside London. Taking forty-five whose place of birth is given,
twenty-nine were born in other parts of the British Isles, and eight in
other countries. Being a Moravian group, there were inevitably a
considerable number of members from among the various continental
national communities in London, but, even allowing for this, the fact
that approximately 82% of those considered were not born in London,
suggests that the revival was more effective proportionately among those
sections of the population previously mentioned, who were seeking
employment or training in London. This is supported by an examination
of the letters and diaries of early members of the Methodist Societies
in London, where again, a distinct percentage were born in other areas
than London. This all indicates that although, as previously
mentioned, the revival did not originate in a socially anomic situation,
it did find a greater proportionate response among those recent
migrants to the capital. The explanation of this is somewhat
problematic. It may imply that these inhabitants were more disturbed
and unsettled than the indigenous population, or were experiencing more
personal insecurity; it may show that the very qualities of initiative
and independence which brought them to London to heighten personal
opportunities of advancement, reveals a basic personality structure
among them which was more open to new concepts and personal challenge
than was general among the more static, and perhaps conformist
population of the metropolis; or there may be other explanatory
considerations. The evidence of the personal written testimonies of
early converts of the revival in London would support a combination of
the two explanations outlined, for it appears that the felt need of such
members of migrant groups was above the average for the population as a
whole, and that there was a fundamental capacity for interest and
concern in the issues raised by the revival, which was more pronounced
in these sections of the population. These characteristics are
prominent in most of those responding to the revival in London in its
early years, and it appears that the higher proportionate response among members of migrant groups was in part a result of the social situation of these groups making such features more significant among them than in the rest of the population.

It is worthy of note that the average age of those involved in the revival was fairly low. In almost all the accounts of the Church of England Religious Societies prior to the revival, it is remarked that the membership consisted primarily of young men, although the definition of youth does not appear to be given in any of the descriptions. Taking certain members of the Moravian lists, for whom the information is available, the average age at the time of reception into the Congregation of the forty-eight people concerned was approximately 30.5 years. It is unusual to find an experience of conversion at this time in people under twenty, or over forty years of age. The explanation of this is not easily discernible, but, with the life expectancy age much lower on average than now, and taking account of the general life cycle, it appears that the conversions most frequently occurred at an age when those concerned were most receptive of new ideas, and yet able to make an appraisal of the issues with which they were confronted. As will be seen later, the response was often the result of the cumulative effect of many and divers influences, not infrequently spanning a number of years, which resulted in a final and culminating spiritual experience of a transforming nature. Generally those involved were in their own development neither too immature and inexperienced to make a premature and hasty response, nor too set in their ways to make no response at all.

The structures established by the revival leaders in London created a framework for close social interaction among the seekers after faith, and
the new converts. The Society meeting, and the breakdown of this into small Band and Class groups, was an ideal means of maintaining an intense level of spiritual awareness and concern among the members. John Wesley was conscious that the Established Church had failed to provide for such intimate social interaction and Christian fellowship, and that the Religious Societies, established for this purpose, had signally ceased in most cases to fulfil their original intentions. In organising the revival groups in London, he was attempting to remedy this deficiency.

The system was comprehensive and thorough. The Classes met regularly under a leader who was responsible for the spiritual and general welfare of the members of his Class, visiting them if they were absent from any meeting, and collecting from them a weekly contribution towards the funds which were used for expenses incurred, and for the relief of the poor. The Bands represented further sub-divisions according to sex, whether married or single, and the extent of spiritual development reached. They met at least once a week, and spoke openly and plainly to each other, sharing their personal experiences and confessing their individual sins of the past week. The intensity of social interaction, and individual involvement of the converts of the revival was encouraged by the institution of a monthly watch-night service, and love-feasts. In these, the time was mainly employed in relating personal and corporate Christian experiences.

The provisions made for the corporate life of the revival converts was such as to maximise the impact of the communication of religious belief and practice through the dynamics of small groups. The convictions of individuals were strengthened immeasurably, and their
commitment to their faith, and to the revival fellowship was
enormously encouraged and sustained by the mutual help and support
given to each other by those of like mind, and singleness of purpose
who came together so frequently, and so regularly. The ordinary
members were made aware of their value and significance as part of the
total body of believers; and they were able to make an acceptable
contribution to its life. The group dynamics were strengthened by the
participation of all the members, and yet the authority of the lay and
ordained leadership was exerted in a forceful way. The groups
provided a defined social context for men and women who may have
experienced some disorientation in their own social situation. They
also entailed a level of social acceptance, and an experience of mutual
understanding which was difficult to find elsewhere. In the groups
there was a strong awareness of cohesion, and of a common concern and
objective, whereby the members endorsed each other's resolve to pursue
their common goal. The united purpose and agreed orientation of the
groups gave added force to the beliefs and practices of individual
members, and assisted in maintaining their resolve to persist in their
commitment. The sharing of uncertainties and hindrances to faith helped
to point the way to a climacteric conversion experience; and the
articulation of doubts and perplexities was a potent factor in the
ability of the converts to cope with personal spiritual difficulties.
In summary, these groups were a vital feature in making the revival a
continuous living reality in the lives of those involved.

Within the revival fellowship, there was an emphasis upon the priesthood
of all believers which inculcated a more discernible and pronounced
egalitarian norm than was typical of other religious congregations in
England. John Wesley was especially concerned to promote this, and
took deliberate measures to ensure such a policy existed. In an
unpublished letter to Mrs. Hutton in 1744, he writes:

We have no 5s or 2s 6d places at the Foundery, nor never had, nor ever
will. If any one asks me for a place in the Gallery (we make no
distinction, but between men and women) he has it; I refuse none.
And some poor have places there, who pay nothing at all. First
come also is first served, at every time of preaching. And the
poorest have frequently the best places because they come first.¹

The only slight exception to this was Lady Huntingdon, to whom deference
was given by many. In this, the very marked sense of subservience to
the aristocracy which was prevalent at the time must be borne in mind.
However, despite this, there was an attempt towards equality of
treatment, and John Wesley shows some disapproval that it was not more
thorough. He remarks, in the same letter just quoted:

In our chapell, there is a place kept for Lady H(untingdon) till the
Creed; if she does not come before then, any one take it (who) is
next: as also when she is out of town. 1 doubt whether this
respect to her be not too great. But I yield in this point to my
brothers judgement.

The declared norm of equality was a source of comfort and encouragement
to the majority of the members of the revival groups, who were not from
the higher socio-economic strata. They appreciated this measure of
social acceptance which was greater than was accorded them either in
society as a whole, or in the church congregations known to them.

Associated with this was the ability, and opportunity afforded for
ordinary members of these groups to fulfil leadership roles, albeit of
a limited nature. Individuals, who in their secular employment and
social situation were in a subordinate position, lacking status and
authority, were given scope for exercising an authoritative function.
Tasks were assigned to them which were valued, appreciated and acknowledged

¹ MS letter from John Wesley to Mrs. Hutton, held at Moravian Archives, London
by others, in a context which gave meaning and purpose to such work. The range of possibilities was considerable, for there was need for various talents. Whether the person were a leader of a Class or Band, a local or itinerant preacher, a visitor of the sick, a steward, a schoolmaster or performing some other duty, he was consciously part of an integrated, co-ordinated fellowship. The work entailed, and the requirements of each office were clearly laid down, and they were exacting; but the challenge was part of the satisfaction which was found by those accepting the various posts. They were aware of making a distinctive contribution to the work, witness and worship of the new fellowship of which they found themselves a part. Their devotion to the tasks allotted to them was wholehearted in most cases. For example, George J. Stevenson says of one of them, George Clerk, who was typical of many, that after his conversion in London:

He was soon made a class-leader at the Foundery, and his success attracted so many members that he had to form a second, and then a third class, and conduct them all himself.\(^1\)

One of the chief characteristics of the revival in London, as a social phenomenon, was this capacity to enlist, mobilise and use a great amount of latent lay talent and potential for service and dedication to a cause of its members, and to unify them in a concerted and determined effort towards a common goal.

Despite the vital part played by laymen in the first decade and a half of the revival in London, the members of the revival groups were constantly exhorted and required to respect the authority of those ordained men set over them. Whitefield and the Wesleys, and especially John Wesley, were pre-eminent. Upon them devolved the central guidance,

\(^1\) George J. Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 506.
direction and control of the revival; and they exerted a paramount influence, both as its prime architects, and also in determining the subsequent course of events. They exemplified characteristics which were enumerated by Max Weber in his definition of charisma as:

... a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are ... not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader.¹

Their acceptance in the leadership role within the revival initially, and to an extent at all following stages, derived from this force and power of their personal qualities. In their preaching especially, but also in their daily encounters with people, they displayed a magnetism which was attested by many who came under its influence. John Nelson, who later contributed substantially to the progress of the revival, and himself exhibited remarkable powers of leadership, recalled how he had attended John Wesley's first open air sermon at Moorfields on Sunday, June 17, 1739. He graphically describes the occasion, showing the effect upon him:

Oh that was a blessed morning to my soul! As soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair, and turned his face towards where I stood, and I thought fixed his eyes upon me. His countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock; and, when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me. When he had done, I said, 'This man can tell the secrets of my heart....'²

Nathaniel Hurst, one of the early converts in London, writing to Charles Wesley in 1741, tells of a similar experience:

¹ See Reinhard Bendix, op. cit., p. 88.

... then the Lord was pleased to let me hear Mr John Wesley one night at Fetter Lane he expound on the eleventh Chapter of John of Lazarus come forth. I found myself that Lazarus whom he spake of. I was all of a tremble for my bones shook as if they would part from my flesh but before Mr Wesley had done his discourse the Lord spake peace to my soul ...¹

Another of the converts, Elizabeth Hinson, in a letter to Charles Wesley of May 25, 1740 recalls the effect of the preaching of John Wesley on her:

... it pleased God to send your dear brother ... I wondered at him he told me my heart. I thought he spak to me an when I look at him I thought he spak to me only ...²

Likewise, Samuel Webb speaks of the impression made upon him by the preaching of Charles Wesley. He writes:

... your zealous looks and forsoable (sic) words caused me to think you spake as never man spake ...³

This charismatic influence over those involved in the revival continued after the initial conversion experience, within the circle of the believers. The converts largely accepted the pastoral role of the ordained leaders, and looked to them as a source of inspiration.

Samuel Webb attests:

... I never had ye expectation of being blest so much under any ones ministry as your(s) and ungrateful as we are I believe many are like minded and pray God to make us all faithfull hearers as you are teachers that you that sow and we that reap may rejoyce together.⁴

For the members of the revival groups there was a uniqueness in the ministry of these ordained men, and to varying degrees a sense of dependence upon them. Many of the members looked to them as the human

¹ MS letter from Nathaniel Hurst to Charles Wesley, 1741, in Methodist Archives, London.
² MS letter from Elizabeth Hinson to Charles Wesley, May 25, 1740, in Methodist Archives, London.
³ MS letter from Samuel Webb to Charles Wesley.
⁴ Samuel Webb, op. cit.
agents of their conversion, and as the ones from whom they were chiefly to receive direction and advice in their spiritual lives. This is frequently expressed, and is clearly reflected in the words of one of the converts, Martha Sones, who, remembering an occasion when Charles and John Wesley had left London for an extended period, writes:

... you and your brother gone we were left as sheep without a shepherd ... I was brought into great confusion... I continued in great perplexities and had almost given up my hope when God sent you to us again and on Easter Sunday I heard you preach and the Lord strengthened and confirmed my faith my doubts and fears vanished and the Lord made his way plain before my face ...1

The origins and progress of the revival were thus clearly associated with the work of Whitefield and the Wesleys, and they exerted a most profound influence upon it. It could be maintained that without them, or their equivalents, there would not have been a revival at that particular time. This raises the question of the significance of dominant personalities in historical processes, and the extent to which any given movement would either not have arisen, or would not have taken the course it did if the leader concerned had not been forthcoming. It also entails a consideration of the extent to which the emergence of a leader is dependent upon the appropriate circumstances which give opportunity and scope for the exercise of leadership. This will be discussed and explored extensively in the final section of the thesis, and the issues involved will be considered sociologically. At this juncture it will merely be observed that there was in the London revival a subtle interplay and interdependence of the one upon the other.

The extension of the revival influence did not depend on the work of the limited circle of ordained leaders, nor on public events such as

1 MS letter from Martha Sones to Charles Wesley, June 1, 1740, in Methodist Archives, London.
open air preaching. It was communicated from one person to another continually, discreetly, and yet effectively by men and women in the course of their ordinary lives. In this is to be found one of the main sources of its powerful initial thrust, and its ensuing sustained outreach. It did not depend upon a few individuals who were especially endowed with eloquence, or evangelistic competence; nor was it restricted to those who by nature were particularly extrovert, or possessed of suitable gifts which enabled them to testify to others of the things which had become of such importance in their own experience. Every person who was converted was called upon to bear witness to their fellow men and women of those matters which were now so central in their lives. Charles Wesley himself was helped very considerably in the crucial few days before his conversion by a Mr. Bray, whom he succinctly describes as:

... a poor ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ; yet by knowing him, knows and discerns all things.¹

Examples may be multiplied, to illustrate this powerful and cumulative effect of the quiet but persistent spreading of the revival message, but one narrative account must suffice. A certain Jos Carton, who appears to have been a carpenter, describes, in a letter of November 1741, to Charles Wesley, the circumstances immediately preceding his conversion. This is especially relevant, as it involves the witness of an apprentice working under the same Mr. Bray just mentioned in connection with the conversion of Charles Wesley, and thus pertinently demonstrates the passing on of the message and experience from one to another. He writes:

¹ Journal of Charles Wesley, p. 86.
At last being at work a wainscoting of a house in Little Britain it being near ye white horse Ale house, there comes in a boy to beg some shavings, which I gave him leave to take. I took particular notice of him, that he took nothing else, such was uncommon for those that come for them, take as many chips as the(y) can which is much: so made me ask him who he belonged to. He told me Mr. Bray a Brasier hard by. I told him further, that I had heard he was a very good man ... I knew two young men that used a society at his house on Tuesday night. He further asked me if I had any notion of this new religion? What new religion replied I. Why salvation thro faith only. No, I told him; I had heard nothing of it. What did you never here Mr Wesleys said he? (no, I never heard them). Mr. Charles is in town, and hell preach on Sunday at this Church. Well I think I goe to hear him. Mr. John is a coming from abroad and he is a very fine man ... But I will tell you my belief said I ... He asked me if my belief influenced all my life and actions? I told him no. I did not find that it did. He told me then that my faith was yet of the head, and not of the heart. I answered I thought so too. Then he began to prove it by Scripture ... he struck me all of a heap I could not tell what to say. He advised me to buy a little book called a Choice Drop of honey from the Rock Christ, and bid me consider on it, and bid me goodbuy.

As a sequel to this incident, it seems that the apprentice had not himself entered fully into the experience of conversion, and was stuck by the testimony which Jos Carton gave to him of his finding of salvation through faith.

After experiences of conversion, a simple testimony to new found faith was often given to the members of the person's family. One of the London converts, Sarah Middleton, writing to Charles Wesley, states:

I find I gather strength daily for I usd to be afraid to speak to my carnal relations what God had done for my soul but now I find I am constrained to speak tho I know they will cast me out as a byword and a proverb of reproach when I was of the world the world loved its own but now Christ has choose me out of the world therefore the world hates me but this I rejoyce in for it only sets a mark upon me to show what master I belong to.

John Nelson responded in the same way. He relates how, immediately after his conversion:

1 MS letter from Jos Carton, November 1741, to Charles Wesley, in Methodist Archives, London.
2 MS letter from Sarah Middleton to Charles Wesley.
I therefore wrote to her (my wife) and all my relations, to seek the same mercy that I had found. However, all I said seemed as idle tales to most of them.

The message of the revival was talked about in the home. Mrs. Clagget, one of the earliest converts, tells how her children helped her in spiritual matters:

The two eldest daughters began to talk to me of free grace, of faith in Christ which alone could justify and deliver us from the power of sin and make us partakers of ye divine nature ... I gave some heed to what they said, and own'd it was agreeable to Scripture.

The place of employment was also a primary sphere of witness, as was evident in the case of Jos Carton. A further illustration of this is contained in the experience of William Barber. In a letter to Charles Wesley in 1741, he recounts his indebtedness to such a testimony:

The first instrument under God of bringing my soul out of darkness into the marvelous light was our Brother Cooper for he happily coming to work where I was and having opportunity he began and to tell me what the Lord had done for his soul ... he (invited ?) me to go along with him to Fetter Lane Society where you was expounding ...

Such daily attempts to communicate their faith were characteristic at this time among all the revival converts at all levels of society in London. The same concern to testify on the basis of personal spiritual experiences, was to be seen in those members of higher socio-economic groups who were involved in the revival. The most notable of these was Lady Huntingdon, whose house in Chelsea became a centre for such witness to some of the leading figures in the social, cultural and political life of London and the nation. The Journals

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2 MS letter from Mrs. Clagget to Charles Wesley, July 24, 1738, in Methodist Archives, London.
3 MS letter from William Barber, 1741, to Charles Wesley, in Methodist Archives, London.
of Whitefield and the Wesleys also reveal that other converts in higher social status groups were active in evangelistic endeavours among their peers.

For those coming under the sway of the revival in London, religion was not viewed as a matter of individual, private concern only. It was seen as involving issues, on the outcome of which, the eternal destiny of fellow men, women and children depended. The converts saw themselves as ambassadors for Christ, charged with a divine commission to make known the reconciliation to God which had been accomplished in Christ, and which had become a living reality to them. They were surrounded by fellow beings whom they saw, and whom they were encouraged to see, as lost, and in desperate need of this saving faith. In such a situation, the message of salvation burned within them; they could not remain silent. It was again this mobilisation of human resources which contributed so much to the permeating and dynamic influence of the revival throughout the various strata of the society in which it occurred.

The early converts attempted to relate their religious experiences to all aspects and activities of their lives. The divine presence and assistance was sought and recognised in the ordinary affairs of daily life, and there was a constant endeavour to interpret mundane experience in terms of the faith which so dominated their conduct and thoughts. A vivid, if somewhat lurid example of this is illuminating, and a worthy illustration, although it concerns an experience just outside the period under consideration. It is found in an unpublished, unsigned manuscript to Charles Wesley, dated 1758, giving 'An account of Mrs Davis's behaviour during operation to remove her breast'. The witness of this writes:
While the Surgeon went to put his dress on, I was left alone with her, she I wish he wou'd come and do it now, for I am quite ready, and am sure the Lord will be with me. she was perfectly resign'd and very compos'd ... her soul seem'd filled with prayer, when the surgeon came in ... She receiv'd the first cut without a groan: when her pain increas'd she groan'd, and pray'd to God, she once said its very sharp pains but did not complain; three or four times, she said aloud, Lord Jesus, be thou my help: when the inside of her breast was taken out she ask'd if they had done cutting; I answered yes, and some thread being call'd for, she immediately said their is some in my work basket on the table: while they sow'd up the blood vessel, she said the pain is very great, she call'd on the Lord to strengthen her ... I fainted away: the cause of my fainting is quite hit from me at present: for during the whole time I found my soul entirely stay'd on the Lord, I was assur'd if she dy'd death wou'd not separate us from Christ; and being confident that every pain she endur'd wou'd be sanctified to the good of her soul, I felt no degree of fear. I was entirely happy and the language of my soul was: Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. When I recover'd my fainting, I thought I was with r a y Redeemer, and his love constrain'd me to praise him aloud.1

Although this is an extreme case, the same bringing of personal faith into the varied circumstances of life is commonly to be found in the testimonies of these early converts. The events were clearly not often a similar dramatic quality as that described above, but the language employed in relating faith to experience is typical. The daily life of many of them was hard; in their estimation, what they had experienced intensely as ultimate reality had to be relevant to every situation confronting them.

The members of the revival groups were taught to apply the values and standards of their faith to the social situation in which they were involved. The social norms inculcated were essentially individualistic. The fundamental presupposition was that if social behaviour or social values were to be altered in any, the starting point was a change in the attitudes of individual men and women, and this could only arise out of a profound religious experience. In a sermon in 1744, John Wesley

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1 Unsigned MS to Charles Wesley, 1758, An account of Mrs. Davis's behaviour during operation to remove her breast. Methodist Archives, London.
envisages Christianity as 'beginning to exist in individuals', then, as 'spreading from one to another', and finally 'as covering the earth'.¹ The norm positively rejected the idea of a totally personal, exclusive, self-centred interpretation of religion, but it did conceive of ethical norms as beginning with the individual. In this it was basically at variance with the values and attitudes of the established and more institutionalised churches and religious bodies. For them, the emphasis was not upon the individual religious experience, and the resulting changed life with its new norms, but rather upon the corporate body of the Church. They stressed the need for social norms to be altered as a consequence of pronouncements, actions and pressures exerted by the institutional body concerned at a local or national level. The Church of England especially, as a more inclusive social group, closely allied with national, economic and cultural interests, was to an extent committed to a somewhat greater accommodation of its ethics to the prevailing norms of the society. Largely as a result of its established position, it adopted a less individualistic, more institutional, approach in attempting to change such norms.

¹ From a University sermon, preached in St. Mary's, Oxford, in 1744, quoted in J. Wesley Bready, op. cit., p. 203.
CHAPTER IV

The Revival as a Religious Phenomenon

In examining the individual and corporate religious experiences of those responding to the revival message in London, an attempt will be made to identify common characteristics and features, and to determine if any pattern and overall configuration is discernable in them. The concern is therefore not to concentrate attention on individual experiences merely in order to describe the subjective component in them, but rather to take the range of personal and group experiences so that an appreciation may be gained of any recognisable phenomenological profile which they present. The social situation, status and personalities of those involved varied enormously, and the religious experiences they underwent occurred in a variety of different external circumstances, but despite all this diversity, certain basic similarities are clearly to be seen. In order to study the experiences phenomenologically, most of the factors which were of primary importance in the sociological consideration of the data must be reckoned as of secondary importance, and the attention must be focused on the distinctively religious content of the experiences, in an endeavour to isolate those elements which are recurrent, and which together constitute the main characteristics of the revival as a religious phenomenon.

Without exception, the individual and group experiences of those involved in the revival were intense and personal. Those concerned were aware of what to them was a personal encounter; a confrontation situation which entailed a response of mind, will and emotions. The experiences were not derived at second hand, or the result of any
required, formal or stylised conformity to a religiously orientated situation; they were immediate, spontaneous and genuine; they were most vividly real and meaningful; and what was conceived as the divine was acknowledged as immanent. Examples which may be cited to illustrate this are legion; two must suffice. William Holland recounts how he obtained a copy of Luther's Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, and returned with it to the home of Mr. Bray, where Charles Wesley was ill in bed. The three of them considered it together. He continues:

... and Mr. Westly began reading Luther's preface to his Comment and at the reading of these words 'What have we then nothing to do? No, no nothing, but only to accept of him who is made unto us of God Wisdom Righteousness Holiness and Redemption' there came such a power over me I cannot well describe. My great burden fell off in an instant, my heart was so filled with peace and love that I burst into tears and thought I saw our Saviour at some distance. Mr. Westly and Bray perceiving me so affected fell on their knees and prayed. When I went afterwards into the street I scarce could feel the ground I trod upon, my body seeming so very light and I found that I was dead to ye noise of the world.

Mrs. Clagget recalls the climax to a protracted period of spiritual conflict in her life, when finally, as a result of many and varied influences, she entered into the revival experience. The impression left upon her was indelible:

My heart overfow'd with the love of God, the Spirit also bearing witness that I was a child of God, and (I) cou'd not help joining the immortal choir in their Halleluahs.

These experiences contrasted with the form of religion which was prevalent in many of the churches of London, and the contrast tended to add force to the effect upon the people concerned. Sarah Middleton is representative of many others. Writing to Charles Wesley, she indicates

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1 William Holland, op. cit.
2 MS letter from Mrs. Clagget, op. cit.
the kind of barrenness of vital, personal religion which preceded her conversion, and the consequent greater significance to her of the subsequent transforming spiritual experience which she underwent:

... indeed I went to church and said my prayers and (had ?) a form of profession but new nothing of the power I had no oyl in my lamp no inward principal of holiness in my heart ...

Then:

... I heard a voice say unto me daughter be of good cheer thy sins be forgiven thee at the same time I felt so much love in my heart that I could hardly contain myself for I wanted the whole world to feel what I did ...

Even more revealing, however, is the contrast repeatedly dwelt upon in the testimonies of the converts, between their own former state of alienation from God, and the new sense of spiritual status and liberty into which they had entered as a result of their climacteric encounter. They constantly attest to an awareness of a watershed in their lives; a deliverance had been effected; a transformation had been accomplished. In this, the first element of note is the conscious yearning for release and spiritual enlightenment, and the comment of John West, one of the early members of the Moravian Congregation in London, is typical. He writes:

... I had long been wishing to feel the reality of faith in the heart, and experimentally to be able to say what it means, longing to know Jesus, when He was pleased to reveal Himself to me ...

When this was followed by a conversion experience, those concerned found difficulty in expressing in words the change it wrought in their lives.

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1 MS letter from Sarah Middleton. *op. cit.*
2 MS letter from Sarah Middleton, *op. cit.*
A number of them attempted to convey its significance by means of analogy. The analogy, and ability to articulate what they had experienced, varied considerably, but the common feature in all was this awareness of having been translated from a condition of spiritual death to a new life. It appears that in almost all cases the contrast drawn is absolute; it is not a question of having made a measure of progress along a path of spiritual pilgrimage, or having in some way attained to a greater degree of moral perfection. It is mostly a shout of joy at having been set free, and praise at having received a much longed for gift of eternal life. Maria Price, writing to Charles Wesley on May 18, 1740, compares her spiritual experience, as many did, to the imparting of sight to a blind person, and a burden having been lifted. She recollects:

... Dear Sir i came to you as dark as a blind man from his birth that never had no thought of sight ... i was like a person that was born blind and that moment received light ... i received such light as i never had before i as plainly felt a burden taken of my heart as i could feel one took of my back it was done in a moment it was such a work so plainly felt and so wonderfully wrought that i almost lose my senses to explane it and can not do it ...

In their efforts to communicate something of the impact of this supreme spiritual encounter in their lives, and the total contrast between their previous and present spiritual standing as they saw it, those involved not infrequently used either direct references from the Bible, or analogous language derived from the Bible. In a letter to Charles Wesley of April 12, 1740, E. Bristow displays this tendency, in a characteristic manner, to indicate the meaning to him of his own conversion:

... the Lord ... hath taken the scales off my eyes: I was lame he hath made me walk: I was bound with chains of darkness: but he hath broken

1 MS letter from Maria Price to Charles Wesley, May 18, 1740, in Methodist Archives, London.
my bonds asunder. He hath pluckt me as a fire brand out of hell:
and shall I dare to hide this: shall I not declare what the Lord
hath done for me ... 0 behold a miracle indeed a greater one than if
a dead body had been raised: out of the earth: I was dead in
trespasses and sin: and Jesus raised me: he brought me from the
pitt of hell: into the Kingdom of light ... 1

The converts thus viewed their own conversion as a miracle which
had been accomplished by God. Whether they were nurtured on the more
deterministic doctrines of the so-called Calvinistic wing of the
revival, or adhered to the teaching designated as Arminian, all the
converts to varying degrees had this consciousness of a divine inter­
vention for good in their lives. It was not a matter which was normally
expounded at length by them, or on which they theorised. It was rather
something underlying, and running through all their narrated spiritual
histories. Direct reference, and acknowledgement of such divine
overruling is most characteristically made in the midst of such
descriptions, and as a comment on the circumstances being related. Thus,
one of them, after she has been advised by a friend not to respond to the
revival message, writes:

... not withstanding this, God saw me while I was yet a great way off,
wou'd not suffer me any longer to resist his mercy. Accordingly on
St. Peter's Day, He sent ye Reverend Mr Wesley to my relief ... 2

The converts were aware of a constraining influence which directed them
onwards to their culminating conversion experiences, which were
invariably to a great extent spontaneous. The measure of uniformity
which may be seen by comparing them was not something which was a
conscious conformity by those involved. The pattern common to them is
perceptible in retrospect; but for each person concemed, what they

1 MS letter from E. Bristow to Charles Wesley, April 12, 1740, in Methodist
Archives, London.
2 MS letter from Mrs. Clagget, op. cit.
underwent was for them unique. For some, the experience was a matter of responding at an open air meeting, although proportionately few seem to have been converted in this manner, despite the important part played in the revival by field preaching. For others, the spiritual climax was reached at a small home meeting, or in one of the other group meetings. In the case of a number, it was arrived at through their own private reading of the Bible, or some other book, or by means of a personal conversation. There was a noticeable absence of stereotype. However, whatever the actual situation, and the immediate events surrounding the experiences, this element of spontaneity was almost always present. A few examples will make this plain.

Maria Price recalls her response to the preaching of Charles Wesley in a letter to him:

... you expounded at fetter lane and then I was at that time and ever since filled with joy and peace in believing I received the forgiveness of sins and the witness of the Spirit and a dominion over sin at that very time ...\(^1\)

Thomas Cowper was converted at a small Society meeting, but again there was an immediacy of response. He writes:

... on Tuesday night I went to a Society in Bair Yard near Clare market. Mr John Wesley was there and expounded and after he had done we went to prayers and whilst I was at prayers I thought I should dissolve away in tears I thought I felt my heart hopen within me and lick a fountain of water run from it and in that moment I felt such love, peace and joy past all expresen ... now I knew my sins were forgiven me for I had received the witness of it from God ...\(^2\)

Likewise with J. Ibison, although with him there appears to have been no other person present. He testified that after having heard the

\(^1\) MS letter from Maria Price, op. cit.

\(^2\) MS letter from Thomas Cowper to Charles Wesley, 1741, in Methodist Archives, London.
Wesleys preach:

... I begine to loke in my Bible ... as I satt in Fetter Lane by my selfe (?) in great sorrow that my soul was in Hall: there came in such joy in to my soul that all my grife was gone I lay at my dear Savor feett and I prayed that he would bless me and I am suer that he did for I had no dondennacion in my soul O how did I love my dear loving Saviour and all people.¹

But this high degree of sponaneity does not mean a lack of previous spiritual experience. A biographical study of some of the individuals responding to the revival message reveals that many had long histories of religious concern, combined with what may be described as a receptiveness to spiritual stimuli. Few of them speak of their conversions as arising out of a very suddenly awakened interest in religious matters. Often there was protracted prelude of spiritual searching, grounded in a personal capacity for comprehending and responding to matters of the spirit.

Most of the converts attest to such prior numinous experiences, and a more than usual preoccupation with moral and religious questions; and some are able to trace this back to their childhood. In this, however, it is necessary to distinguish between a religious education, or family situation which promoted and encouraged religion, and a religious disposition which developed, and sometimes even in the face of opposition. There was often a religious background in early life, at least in terms of a nominal conformity by the parents to the outward form of religion; but, whether this was so or not, the feature we are drawing attention to here is this apparent capacity of those concerned to appreciate and

¹ MS letter from J. Ibison to Charles Wesley, in Methodist Archives, London.
react to moral and religious matters, whether the circumstances of their maturation and upbringing were conducive to it or not. It was a quality which they possessed, and which developed in them; it did not seem to owe its origin and growth to any formal religious instruction or teaching, although, for some individuals, such educational influences may have helped to encourage what was latent in them. It was fundamentally an ability to respond to the numinous, which was innate in them, and which distinguished them from many others of their fellow men and women who seem to have had no such potentiality. They were in the category of people capable, in the words of Rudolf Otto, of directing their minds 'to a moment of deeply-felt religious experience, as little as possible qualified by other forms of consciousness.'

John Nelson describes a specific example of such an experience in his boyhood. While recognising that the incident may have assumed, in his retrospective glance, a somewhat more dramatic aspect than the original event would warrant, it remains illustrative of the capacity for response to the numinous which is under discussion. He writes:

When I was between nine and ten years old, I was horribly terrified with thoughts of death and judgement, whenever I was alone. One Sunday night, as I sat on the ground by the side of my fathers chair, when he was reading the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, the word came with such light and power to my soul that it made me tremble, as if a dart were shot at my heart. I fell with my face on the floor, and wept till the place was as wet where I lay as if water had been poured theron. As my father proceeded, I thought I saw everything he read about, though my eyes were shut; and the sight was so terrible I was about to stop my ears that I might not hear, but I durst not; as soon as I put my fingers in my ears, I pulled them back again. When he came to the eleventh verse, the words made me cringe, and my flesh seemed to creep on my bones while he read ... Oh what scene was opened to my mind! 

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1 Rudolf Otto, op. cit., p. 8.
2 John Telford, op. cit., vol. III,
This sensitivity to numinous experiences typically continued throughout the lives of those concerned, and frequently resulted in spiritual torments before the climax of conversion was reached. Typical of many is this description given by one of them:

My sins which for some time lay concealed, attacked me again with greater force than ever, I pray'd, resolv'd, strove, but all in vain, the impetuous torrent soon prevailed notwithstanding my feeble resistance. I renew'd my endeavours, the enemy his assaults, till wary'd with constant defeats own'd my selfe vanquished and sin to be irresistible.¹

This also helps to show that the frequent spontaneity of the final response to the revival message, which has previously been noted, does not indicate or imply an impulse of the moment, but merely that the long and desperate quest had been brought to an end. In the estimation of those concerned, the pearl of great price for which they had sought for so long and so earnestly had been found.

In these moments of religious enlightenment, 'other forms of consciousness' were often minimal, and those involved were often caught up into a new, and previously unknown dimension of experience. At such times, to varying degrees, spatial considerations of time and place receded into the background, and the convert was transported to a hitherto unexplored or little known realm where unaccustomed spiritual and mental categories momentarily took control, or became of paramount importance. The extent and intensity of this varied greatly from one person to another, and for any particular person, from one occasion to another. For many, there was such a profound and transforming religious experience, without any marked diminution in their cognisance of the

¹ MS letter from Mrs. Clagget, op. cit.
temporal situation confronting them, or any lessening of their ordinary faculties of perception of consciousness. But, in most cases, testimony was given to a sense of exaltation in which bodily sensations, and the immediate physical circumstances assumed less significance than normal. Their minds were temporarily attuned to, and focussed upon issues and influences which, for them in those moments of time, transcended the immediate limitations of the situation confronting them. In all the experiences there was contained a core element of what may be regarded as ecstasy; what I.M. Lewis has defined as 'that most decisive and profound of all religious dramas, the seizure of man by divinity', which evokes 'transports of mystical exaltation in which man's whole being seems to fuse in a glorious communion with the divinity'.\(^1\) The nature of this is clarified to some extent by the comments of some of the converts. One writes:

... I thought my soul seemed as if it was ascending into heaven ... me thought I saw my Saviour in glory ... the soul seemed as if it was out of the body ...^2^

Another, when converted, says in retrospect:

... I went afterwards into the street I scarce could feel the ground I trod upon, my body seeming so very light and I found that I was dead to ye noise of the world.\(^3\)

Another writes:

... I thought I was out of the body with the angels in heaven ...\(^4\)

A concomitant of this overwhelming sense of the numinous is an awareness of human smallness and inadequacy. This is always associated

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\(^{1}\) I.M. Lewis, _op. cit._, p.18.

\(^{2}\) MS letter from Mary Jane Ramsey to Charles Wesley, June 4, 1740, in Methodist Archives, London.

\(^{3}\) William Holland, _op. cit._

\(^{4}\) MS letter from Thomas Cowper, _op. cit._
with the intense, overpowering impact on them of the new dimension of experience which has been discussed. It is the contrast between what is 'experienced as ultimate reality', and the frail, seeming insignificance of the finite human recipient of the encounter, which makes this so pertinent. What they felt was 'the consciousness of the littleness of every creature in face of that which is above all creatures.'

1 This is what largely accounts for the strands of exaltation, love and a sense of creaturehood which are characteristically interwoven in the descriptions of the converts. Typical is that given by one of them of his conversion:

... there came into my inmost soul a voice that thro the mercy of God in Christ Jesus my sins were forgiven me; I burst out a crying, and laughing, and dancing, and jumping about the room, that any one if they had seen me would have thought me craze. I then knew that God was my father and I could cry Dear Father, my Father abba Father. I then saw that he had mercy upon me purely and only for the sake of Jesus Christ my saviour. Then did I plainly see my own vileness, my own nothingness, and I saw nothing upon the face of the earth so vile as myself, and in particular I saw myself worse than the dirt I trod on, and for this reason Jesus Christ died. Then I cryd out ...  

This last narrative also introduces the matter of bodily reactions to highly charged mental and spiritual experiences. Attention was frequently drawn to this by contemporary writers and commentators, such as Bishop Lavington, and the Bishop of London, and it has continued to be a subject of scholarly investigation. Such manifestations of physical accompaniments to the revival experiences in London in these

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1 Rudolf Otto, op. cit., p. 22.
2 MS letter from Jos Carton, op. cit.
3 George Lavington, Bishop of Exeter. Especially in his Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared.
4 Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London. See his Directions to Clergy, 1724 and Charge to Clergy 1741-42.
5 See for example, George Godwin, op. cit., I.M. Lewis, op. cit., William Carpenter, op. cit.
years were certainly not confined to the great assemblies attending the open air preaching. Indeed, the person undergoing the conversion experience cited above was alone at work in a house at the time. Such behaviour did not therefore result entirely from, or depend upon the arousing of highly emotional states in individuals as the consequence of a 'crowd psychology', or the emotive devices of eloquent preachers. The incidence of such physical behaviourism at the moment of a vital spiritual experience was less frequent in London in this period than in certain other parts of the country. Where it did occur it was but one aspect in the total spiritual, mental and physical response to what was acknowledged as 'ultimate reality'.

Because these spiritual encounters were so traumatic, and so alien to the normal experiences of daily life, they were not always subject to comprehensive rational description by those concerned in attempting to convey to others what was entailed in them. The majority involved were not equipped intellectually to review such forceful events in their lives with sufficient detachment to enable them to analyse the components in the impact made upon them. Nor were they articulate enough to communicate an adequate impression of the meaningfulness of the experience to them. The very limitations in the common connotation, usage and association of words, and the fact that the attempted descriptions necessitated a conceptualisation appropriate to the uniqueness of the event, made the task even harder. In order to apprehend and express in words the exultation, joy, love, peace, and total sense of transformation entailed in their experiences required a more than ordinary ability and sensitivity. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that some of the converts, plumbing the depths of their restricted vocabulary, found they had exhausted the literary resources upon which they could draw to make known to others what was so
dramatic and precious to them. In itself, this is, however, very revealing, and such reduction to silence, or cessation of further elaboration, is an eloquent testimony to the numinous in their experiences. It adds to rather than detracts from the insight we gain into the experience of Jos Carton, that, in relating it to another, he did it 'in broken language thro extasie of love and joy'; and we are made more aware of something of the wholly otherness of the experience of Mary Jane Ramsey, when she confesses, 'I cannot utter the joy I felt: words cannot express it.'

This element in the experiences of the converts corresponds closely to what Rudolf Otto isolated as the 'mysterium' in man's idea of and response to the numinous. In assaying to convey its features, Otto accurately reflects that component in the religious experiences of the revival participants which we have been discussing. He writes:

... the mysterium is experienced in its essential, positive, and specific character, as something that bestows upon man a beatitude beyond compare, but one whose real nature he can neither proclaim in speech nor conceive in thought, but may know only by a direct and living experience. It is a bliss which embraces all those blessings that are indicated or suggested in positive fashion by any 'doctrine of salvation', and it quickens all of them through and through; but these do not exhaust it. Rather by its all-pervading, penetrating glow it makes of these very blessings more than the intellect can conceive in them or affirm of them. It gives the peace that passes understanding, and of which the tongue can only stammer brokenly. Only from afar, metaphors and analogies, do we come to apprehend what it is in itself, and even so our notion is but inadequate and confused.

Much as the conversion of those responding to the revival message represented a climax, and culminating experience, it was not a final spiritual event for them, after which all was calm, uneventful, and of

1 MS letter from Jos Carton, op. cit.
2 MS letter from Mary Jane Ramsey, op. cit.
3 Rudolf Otto, op. cit., p. 33.
little consequence. Repeatedly it is found that there ensued in their lives a continual series of spiritual fluctuations; it was far from being a period of uninterrupted peace, love and joy, such as they had known at the time of their conversion. There were very considerable variations in this, according to individual personality traits, and the prevailing personal circumstances, but the climacteric spiritual experience seldom resulted in prolonged and unalloyed tranquility. The converts frequently displayed a sense of being constantly assailed by evil forces, which sought to undermine their faith, deprive them of their salvation, and mar the fruits which they were convinced should be evident in their lives as a consequence of the transformation which had taken place. They frequently depicted this as a spiritual warfare, with the armies of God opposing the hosts of Satan, on the battlefield of their souls. These inner conflicts sometimes reduced them to a condition of spiritual desperation, but there was also almost always an expressed consciousness of being on the victorious side. There was commonly an underlying confidence that the powers of good would triumph in them, that their salvation would not be lost, and that God would defeat all the wiles of the devil, and conquer at the last. These various facets were variously intermingled in the testimonies of the converts of the revival. Representative of them is Martha Sones, who knew the reality and force of spiritual battles after her own conversion:

... I was distressed on every side. It would be endless to recount every temptation that beset me and conflict which I endured by which my soul was brought nigh unto hell and I almost despaired of seeing this great salvation. Yet I was enabled to say unto the Lord though thou slay me yet will I trust in thee. Though I much doubted of my justification because I did not always feel it so strongly as at the first ... I could not but believe ... I continued in great perplexities and had almost given up my hope when God ... ¹

¹ MS letter from Martha Sones, op. cit.
At and before the moment of conversion, many of those concerned had an acute awareness of their sinfulness, and this was always present to some extent. They then found release when they experienced forgiveness of sins. The subsequent spiritual trials, as outlined above, were viewed by them as part of the next phase, when they struggled, with the aid of God working in them, to be freed from the power of sin over them. Differences of doctrinal emphasis resulted in some adhering to a 'perfectionist' theology, while others laid greater stress on the ceaseless war to be waged against evil by individuals to the end of their lives. But, whatever the particular belief, they almost invariably encountered the kind of post-conversion experiences we have been considering.

For the converts, religion was not confined to specifically religious situations; all of life, and all the circumstances confronting them, were seen as coming under the sway of the God who had done such wonders for them. This did not imply a fatalistic attitude, for they generally also emphasised human responsibility, and guarded against too much emphasis on the sovereignty of God. The most notable result of this was a breakdown in their own conceptualisation, between identifiable and separate spheres of the sacred and the secular. To them, the whole of life had become sacred. They were encouraged in this by the teaching they received. In the Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists, published in 1743, this was made explicit. All who continued in the Society were 'to evidence their desire of salvation', first, 'by doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind'; secondly, 'by doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort,
and as far as possible, to all men'; thirdly, 'by attending on the ordinances of God.'\(^1\) This is consistent with one of the axioms of the main body of the revival, that conversion should produce new motives and motivation, and higher standards of conduct in their daily affairs, for all individuals involved. It is also in keeping with the mainstream of an 'inner-worldly ethic', which Max Weber postulated as a characteristic of Protestantism.

The revival in London in the eighteenth century, as in general with the movement throughout the country, especially in its early years, represented an attempt to return to the basic essentials in the faith and practice of the nascent, first-century Church. In accordance with the policy of the ordained leadership, it was not aggressive in its attacks on the Church of England, but there was much antagonism directed by many of the lay leaders at both individual clergymen, and the Church as an institution. There was an underlying awareness among the revival membership that there existed a tension between the relatively unstructured revival, and institutionalised Christianity, in the form of the Established Church.

Many factors contributed to this cleavage. The Church of England laid stress upon the authority of an hierarchical body of ordained clergy, whereas the revival increasingly emphasised the importance of charismatic gifts, and the priesthood of all believers, with the right and duty of all members of the body to fulfil their appointed roles and

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\(^1\) Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists, 1743, quoted in J. Wesley Bready, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 203.
functions in the life of the whole. The Church of England was concerned to inculcate in its members a loyalty and conformity to institutional practices, and for them to regard the way of salvation as being found, in part at least, within the means of grace which it provided; in contrast to the revival which rather proclaimed a way of salvation open to all by simple faith, obtainable anywhere, at any time, and without the aid of any human or institutional mediator. The Church of England, by virtue of its heritage, historical development, and unique position in relation to the whole establishment, consistently and constantly promoted order and regularity in its services and life in general, and required such behaviour of its members. The revival permitted a high degree and variability of individual non-conformity, together with a widespread acceptance of irregularity in both its public preaching, worship and other forms of corporate life. The concern was to allow a considerable measure of flexibility in order not to restrict in any way what the revival members viewed as the freedom of the Spirit. The Established Church gave primary importance to the institution of the Church as a divinely ordained structure, in and through which the individual members received the gifts of God; it was an inclusive, territorial body, with quite rigid rules, forms, offices, and procedures, which existed as the national provision for the meeting of the religious needs of all the people. The revival on the other hand, arose as a largely spontaneous, informal, unpremeditated movement, which, from its emergence, and for at least the initial decade and a half, partook of the nature of a 'gathered church'. Full involvement and commitment was common for those concerned, and was based on a personal, intense religious faith. In all these matters, the difference between the revival and the existing institutional religion was marked. It helped to highlight and make manifest a concern among the adherents of the
revival to dispense with any practices and beliefs which were considered merely the product of historical development, and to return to the fundamental pristine elements in the faith.

What has been said here mainly in reference to the relationship between the revival as a movement and the Church of England, may largely also be applied to the relation of the revival to the Non-Conformist Churches and leaders. In both cases, there were basically the same barriers, and a similar impasse.

This fundamental cleavage revealed itself in various ways. The very nomenclature and terminology employed, indicates the divergence which we have been discussing. The opponents of the revival designated its adherents 'enthusiasts', with all the derisive overtones associated in those days with that term. Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London, in various charges, warned the clergy and people against the enthusiastic conduct or tendencies of the revival. The doors of most London churches were firmly closed, and the pulpits barred to revival leaders, not because of any objections to a lack of scholarship or suspicions of the dubious moral standing in the men concerned, but because of the doctrines they propounded, and the type of religion and religious response they encouraged. In most examples of this, it was an intuitive reaction by the clergymen involved, against a religious phenomenon which was strange to them, and alien to the whole mode of conduct which they considered proper in religious affairs. To the majority of the clergy in London, the revival was incomprehensible; it was something outside all their preconceptions, training and expectations in religious matters, and this was at the heart of their opposition to it.
The revival participants, and especially the less educated and sophisticated among them, having on their part found a spiritual, emotional and intellectual fulfilment through response to the revival message, saw in retrospect a contrast between religion as they had experienced it, and what was to them the deadness and lack of spirituality in almost all the churches in the metropolis. The criterion for them was the extent to which they as individuals could find personal spiritual satisfaction in the ministry of these churches, and they repeatedly maintain that, given this standard of judgement, most of the churches were lamentably inadequate. Thus, Sarah Middleton, referring to the time prior to her conversion, comments:

... as for the articles of our church the doctrine of the Spirit of God of regeneration and of justification by faith I was a stranger to them all nor do I remember to have heard any of them preached or explained by our clergy ... ¹

And another could say that 'The preaching in the (London) churches afforded me no comfort.' ² These converts often sought earnestly for such spiritual assistance, but in vain. The evidence of this in personal testimonies is substantiated by Thomas Haweis. Writing in reference to about the year 1750, he states:

Mr. Romaine (who was appointed lecturer to St Dunstan's in the West in 1749, and morning preacher at St George's, Hanover Square in 1750) was at this time almost if not altogether singular in the testimony he bore for Christ in the Church of England at London. He was during the greatest part of the time, almost, if not altogether, the only preacher in the established church from Hyde park corner to Whitechapel, where those who were acquainted with the pure Gospel of the grace of God could then, I believe, hear to their satisfaction and edification. ³

¹ MS letter from Sarah Middleton, op. cit.
² MS letter from Martha Sones, op. cit.
It is, therefore, evident that this breach, and divide between the churches and the revival was considered a real and serious matter by both groups concerned. From our discussion, the revival may be seen as providing a source and means of expression for intense personal and corporate religion, which the more circumscribed, closely defined and delimited channels of the existing Church structures did not permit.

There was the ever present possibility of excesses, as witnessed later by the Bell-Maxfield episode, but even in its normal form, the revival did give scope for a far wider range of spiritual encounters, religious experience, expression and commitment than was available anywhere else.

At a later stage in the revival in London, as elsewhere, there developed more rigid structures, regulations and rules, and a greater measure of formalism, so that the divergence between the revival as a movement, and the established religious institutions lessened to some extent. This was, however, a protracted process of the beginnings of which there was little evidence in London before 1750. What we have been studying has been the emergent, embryonic stage in an historical process which has not yet been completed. Seen in this perspective, the revival, in the case of Methodism, was the birth and initiation of a process whereby a relatively spontaneous, unstructured movement, passed through the intermediate forms of sect and denomination, to emerge as a potential Church. Such a religious metamorphosis has been a matter of some scholarly investigation.\(^1\) Our focus of attention has been on the religious phenomenon presented in its origin and early growth, although this inevitably provides some insight into certain

\(^1\) See especially, R.H. Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, and Bryan R. Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society.*
aspects of the later developments.

Whether examined at the level of individual spiritual encounters, or corporate life, or studied as an historic movement, the revival in London in these years lays bare some of the more fundamental religious experiences of man, and consequently helps towards an appreciation of his characteristics as *homo religiosus*. Unfettered by many of the limitations and restrictions imposed upon him in conventional modes of religious conformity, he was allowed to seek and find a new dimension of religious awareness. What this represents as a religious phenomenon has been analysed to some extent in this chapter.
PART TWO

OTHER REVIVALS

CHAPTER V

Revivals in America in the Eighteenth Century

Various criteria have determined the selection of the revivals described and discussed in this chapter. First, the examples have been restricted to the post-Reformation era. Revivals occurred in the Christian tradition prior to this. They have, however, been far more frequent, and distinctive as phenomena in recent centuries, and especially subsequent to the seventeenth century, for reasons which will be fully considered in the final part of this thesis.

Secondly, attention has been focused on revivals which cover between them a wide chronological and geographical range. This helps to eliminate certain variables in the social circumstances in which they take place, in order that those persistently recurring social and religious factors and characteristics which constitute the essential nature of revivalism, may be identified more precisely.

Thirdly, those revivals have been included which have been of considerable significance in terms of their impact upon, and importance to the religious life of the community with which they are associated, or which have exerted a profound influence in helping to stimulate other such phenomena. Where this has not been of special relevance, the
revival has been chosen because it is well documented, often by a
contemporary involved in it, in such a manner as to give added
insight into either or both its social and religious aspects.

The first widespread revival in the eighteenth century in America was
the Great Awakening between about 1740 and 1743. This was preceded
by intermittent local revivals in the third decade, of which the most
influential, as in many ways the most interesting, occurred in 1734-5
in the New England town of Northampton. It was associated with the
work of Jonathan Edwards, who gives a full and graphic description of
its chief features in a long narrative account forming the substance
of a letter to the Rev. Dr. Colman of Boston in November 1736.¹

Northampton was a town established about 1654. It had a small
population, having only attained to a total of approximately two
hundred families by 1736. In many ways it was a typical pioneer
settlement, having originated as an attempt, in the process of
extending the frontier, to establish a small complex of people in a
largely self-contained social, political, economic, constitutional and
religious unit. During the first eighty years of its existence it had
only two ministers of religion, and the latter, the Rev. Solomon
Stoddard witnessed five occasions which he describes as 'harvests',
when there was a marked increase in concern for religious issues among
the population, accompanied by a more than usual number of conversions.

¹ Jonathan Edwards, A Narrative of the Revival in New England: with
Thoughts on that Revival (1829).
When Jonathan Edwards became its third minister, he thus entered into an evangelical inheritance, and served a people who basically accepted the tenets of the Christian faith. He was aware of the variable spiritual fortunes and responses of the inhabitants, and considered that the compactness of the community contributed greatly to this, it having encouraged a swift propagation of both corruptions and reformations from one to another through the town from time to time.¹

In the exercise of his duties, he first observed 'a time of extraordinary dulness in religion.'² After two or three years this began to be modified, and there appeared among the young people a greater receptivity to religious matters. A sudden increased religious concern was manifested among the inhabitants of a neighbouring village about three miles away, accompanied by some conversions. Subsequent to this, there was first the death of a young man, which, together with what was preached publicly at the time, much affected the young people; and then the death of a young married woman, who appears to have been converted just prior to her decease, and to have urged the young people of the town to take heed to their spiritual welfare. These events helped to focus attention upon religious issues. There were five or six persons converted in succession, in a very short space of time, including one woman who had a somewhat tarnished reputation. The rapid developments which then took place are best described by Jonathan Edwards as an eye witness, despite his possible over enthusiasm. He conveys an impression of the total effect and course of events, and captures the mood of the times, in a manner difficult to attain in any secondary relation or summary. He recalls

¹ Jonathan Edwards, op. cit., p. 58.
² Jonathan Edwards, op. cit., p. 60.
these momentous months in the life of the community:

... a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion, and the eternal world, became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees and ages; the noise amongst the dry bones waxed louder and louder; all other talk but about spiritual and eternal things was soon thrown by; all the conversation in all companies, and upon all occasions, was about these things only, unless what was necessary for carrying on their ordinary secular business. Other discourse than of the things of religion, would scarcely be tolerated in any company. The minds of people were wonderfully taken off from the world; it was treated amongst us as a thing of very little consequence...

But although people did not ordinarily neglect their worldly business, yet there was then the reverse of what commonly is: religion was with all the great concern, and the world was a thing only by the bye. The only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and every one appeared pressing in to it: the engagedness of their hearts in this great concern could not be hid, it appeared in their very countenances. It was then a dreadful thing amongst us to lie out of Christ, in danger every day of dropping into hell; and what persons' minds were intent upon was, to escape for their lives and to 'fly from the wrath to come'. All would eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their souls; and were wont very often to meet together in private houses for religious purposes; and such meetings, when appointed, were wont greatly to be thronged.

There was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those that were wont to be the vainest and loosest, and those that had been most disposed to think and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. The work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more; souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought 'out of darkness into marvellous light'.

This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town; so that in the spring and summer following, in the year 1755, the town seemed full of the presence of God ... It was a time of joy in families, on account of salvation being brought to them. Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time to time, in tears while the word was preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbours.

... Those amongst us that had been formerly converted, were greatly enlivened and renewed with fresh and extraordinary visitation of the Spirit of God; though some much more than others, according to the
measure of the gift of Christ: many that before had laboured under difficulties about their own state, had now their doubts removed by more satisfying experience, and more clear discoveries of God's love.\footnote{Jonathan Edwards, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 65-68.}

This extended description is of considerable value not only as a comment and insight into one particular revival from a participant who is able to enter into the essential features and nuances of it, but also because it represents an intelligent, analytical observation of some of the main elements in revivalism as a distinctive phenomenon; features which have been recognised in the tentative definition given in the Introduction.

The revival was confined to the town of Northampton, and the immediate district around, but within this limit seemingly attained a high level of universality in the type and condition of people influenced by it. They apparently came from all the socio-economic groups in the community, included a full range of ages from the very young to the old, and about an equal number of males and females. The actual number of those converted does not appear to have been very great, possibly something in excess of three hundred, but these represented a high proportion of the total population; they were all converted within the space of about half a year, and the revival transformed the religious life of the town. Jonathan Edwards estimated that by far the greater part of the persons in the town above sixteen years of age had a knowledge of salvation, and that this was applicable to other places affected by the revival; the short few months of the revival having contributed largely to this. He maintained that in this period, there was as much done in the matter of conversions in a day or two as would be normal, with all their endeavours, in a year.
The Northampton revival was of significance not only in its own impact upon a local community, but because the stimulating news of it reached the British Isles just at the time when a revival had began in Wales, and the first glow of the Evangelical Revival was discernible in Bristol and London which was soon to spread as a fire throughout the length and breadth of the land. It was also the immediate herald of the Great Awakening in New England.

George Whitefield landed at Newport, Rhode Island on September 14, 1740. On the two succeeding days he read prayers and preached in the morning and afternoon to very large congregations, more than a thousand people following him to his lodgings subsequent to the afternoon service on the second day, according to a contemporary account. On September 18 he arrived in Boston, where he proceeded to conduct a powerful preaching ministry. Typical of these days are the events recorded in his Journal for Saturday, September 20:

Preached in the morning, to about six thousand hearers, in the Rev. Dr. Sewall’s meeting-house; and afterwards, on the common, to about eight thousand; and again, at night, to a thronged company at my lodgings.1

Repeatedly during the succeeding few weeks, the preaching was attended by great crowds, and there was a fervent response from among the people present. The preacher himself was aware of the extraordinary impact, as his Journal entry for Saturday, September 27 indicates:

In the morning, preached at the Rev. Mr. Welstead’s meeting-house; in the afternoon, on the common, to about 15,000 people. Oh, how did the Word run! I could scarce abstain from crying out, 'This is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.'2

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Whitefield also spent a few weeks visiting and preaching in other nearby important towns, including Northampton, which had been the scene of the revival in 1734-5.

Throughout New England in this month or so, Whitefield was instrumental in inaugurating a widespread revival; but its continuance did not depend upon his presence. There was a certain momentum in it, which was assisted by the ministry of other evangelical leaders who remained after he had departed. In Boston, for example, Gilbert Tennent preached with immense effectiveness for about four months, commencing two months after Whitefield had left, and this helped to ensure that the impetus given by Whitefield was not diminished, but rather increased.

An observer wrote:

And now... was such a time as we never knew. The Rev. Mr. Cooper was wont to say, that more came to him, in one week, in deep concern about their souls, than had come in the whole twenty-four years of his preceding ministry. I can also say the same as to the numbers who repaired to me. Mr. Cooper had about six hundred persons on three months; and Mr. Webb had, in the same space, above a thousand. There repaired to us boys and girls, young men and women, Indians and negroes, heads of families and aged persons; some in great distress for fear of being unconverted; others lest they had all along been building on a righteousness of their own, and were still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; some fearing lest the Holy Spirit should withdraw Himself; others in great anxiety lest He should leave them for ever. Nor were the same persons satisfied with coming once or twice, as formerly; but they came again and again, I know not how often, complaining of their evil and accursed hearts; of their past and present unbelief; of their pride, hypocrisy, and perfidiousness; of their love and captivity to sin; and of their utter impotence to help themselves, or even to believe on Christ.1

The revival in the city continued for about a year and a half.

The same pattern was evident in other places, such as Northampton. Here,

the beginning of a revival was experienced with the short visit of Whitefield, and continued for the subsequent two years, largely under the guidance of Jonathan Edwards.

The Great Awakening lasted about three years, and was influential mainly in the Puritan, Southern and middle colonies. Outside New England, its main centres were New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. 'By what I can understand', wrote Edwards in January 1742, 'the work of God is greater at this day in the land than it has been at any time.' It represented a landmark in the spiritual history of the country.

CHAPTER VI

Eighteenth Century Revival in Wales and Scotland

The eighteenth century Welsh revival is interesting partly because it pre-dated, and was initially independent of the main thrust of the Evangelical Revival, for it was in Wales that the revival dawn first appeared; and partly because its origins and progress are connected with the concurrent but almost separate labours of three different men, Howell Harris, the Rev. Daniel Rowlands, and the Rev. Howell Davies. But mention must first be made of the work and ministry of the Rev. Griffith Jones.

Griffith Jones has been referred to by some as 'the Apostle of Wales', and by others as 'the Morning Star of the Revival'. In 1710, at the age of twenty-seven, he began his curacy in the Vale of Taf, where he was to remain for the rest of his ministry. By his powerful preaching, mainly in and around his parish of Llandowror, he attracted large congregations, both in churches and in the open air, for he was a pioneer of field preaching. He also initiated the Circulating Welsh Charity Schools as a supplement to the Charity School Movement, and this helped to further increase his influence. Finally, as a direct link with the Welsh Revival, he was instrumental in the conversion of Harris, Rowlands and Davies.

Howell Harris was born in 1714, and converted in 1735. He went to Oxford University, but being immediately disgusted with the prevailing immorality and ungodliness, he returned at the end of the first term. Soon afterwards he began to go from house to house throughout the area,
warning and exhorting his neighbours, and proclaiming to them the way of salvation which he had but recently experienced. He opened a day-school in the adjoining village of Trevecca. Crowds gathered at the houses he visited, and they soon became so great that there was not a place in the neighbourhood sufficiently large to contain them. Many underwent spiritual crises in their lives as a consequence of his preaching, and from 1736 onwards, he established religious societies in order that such seekers and converts might be assisted, and the spiritual effect of his ministry enhanced. Family worship was begun, or re-introduced into many homes, and the church services were generally crowded. In the words of the Rev. William Williams, 'Thus began the mighty preaching that raised Wales from the sleep of ages, and thus commenced the great Welsh Methodist revival.'

Simultaneously with this, but apparently independently of it, in the neighbouring county of Cardigan, another work of spiritual renewal took place. About forty miles from Talgarth, but separated from it by ranges of wild, trackless mountains, was the little village of Llangeitho, where the Rev. Daniel Rowlands was curate to his elder brother. About this time he experienced conversion, and went about preaching in his own and other parishes. His fame increased and spread, and he accepted invitations to preach in other counties. As he travelled through the country, large crowds flocked to hear him. The preaching had a powerful effect both upon the unbelievers and within the fellowship of believers. Numbers of people were converted, there was an increase in the spiritual vitality within the congregations, and at the parish church of Llangeitho there began those 'rejoicings' which have been characteristic of some subsequent Welsh revivals.

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1 William Williams, Welsh Calvinistic Methodism, (1872), p. 5.
A further strand in the revival was the response evoked by the Rev. Howell Davies. He was ordained to the curacy of Llisyfran in Pembrokeshire, where his ministry was so effective that many people came together to hear him. There were, however, influential parishioners who could not tolerate what he proclaimed, and as a result of their actions he was dismissed. He thereupon proceeded to travel throughout the country preaching in churches, and in the open air; and he witnessed a great number of conversions.

Thus it was in the case of this particular revival that the primary impetus was given by three different men in three different counties working simultaneously, but almost if not entirely independently of each other. In its later development others were involved, and it became a more unified and co-ordinated movement, but we have been concerned to confine our attention to its early days.

The revival at Cambuslang and Kilsyth in Scotland in 1742 has a dual claim for consideration; like the Welsh revival just described, it was apparently independent of the mainstream of the Evangelical Revival which swept through the land, and additionally, it has been well narrated and commented upon by participant observers.

The parish of Cambuslang was small at the time of the revival, most of the people living within one mile of the church. The revival arose out of the ordinary work and life of the parish. For nearly a year prior to its outbreak, the minister of the parish in the course of his sermons, had dwelt upon biblical subjects which taught about the
nature of regeneration, and the need for it. A more than ordinary concern about religion appeared among the people, and in January 1742 a number of them presented a petition to the minister requesting the establishment of a weekly lecture to help them in spiritual matters, and this was arranged for Thursday evenings. In February 1742, for the three days prior to the lecture, there were fervent meetings for prayer, and on the Thursday, after the sermon, about fifty people came together to the minister's house, greatly concerned about their spiritual welfare. The demand for spiritual instruction and counsel subsequently continued, and increased to such an extent compared with former days, that the minister initiated a daily sermon, a few days excepted, and usually spent some time afterwards with those gathered, in exhortation, prayers and singing of psalms. About three hundred people were awakened to keep concern about salvation at this time. There were also noticeable general effects, and the Rev. James Robe witnessed some of these in Cambuslang and elsewhere:

... a visible reformation of the lives of persons who were formerly notorious sinners; particularly, the laying aside of cursing and swearing and drinking to excess, among those who were addicted to these practices; remorse for acts of injustice, and for violation of relative duties, confessed to the persons wronged, joined with new endeavours after a conscientious discharge of such duties; restitution, which has more than once been distinctly and particularly inculcated in public since this work began; forgiving of injuries; all desirable evidences of fervent love to one another, to all men, and even to those who speak evil of them...

The nearby parish of Kilsyth had a population of about eleven hundred, most of whom were apparently under forty years of age, and the majority of whom were seemingly well instructed in the principles of the Christian faith. The minister was evangelical in doctrine, and

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1 James Robe, Narrative of the Revival of Religion (1840), pp. 217, 218. See also, A Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth, and other Congregations in the Neighbourhood, 1742, in the Glasgow University Murray Collection, Mu 40-F19.
laboured ardently among them. Several persons in surrounding parishes were influenced and awakened to vital spiritual experiences by the revival at Cambuslang, but initially this was not so at Kilsyth. Then gradually, under the preaching of the incumbent and visiting ministers, there developed a considerable concern among the people about their spiritual condition. Religion was increasingly becoming a topic of discussion and thought in the whole district. A widespread and marked impression was made throughout the countryside by the sustained meeting together in a barn for prayer, on their own initiative, of sixteen children in a local town. In Kilsyth, some societies for prayer were formed. The minister of the parish observed a 'more than ordinary seriousness among the people, and more than ordinary liberty, freedom and earnestness in my dealing with them.' The preaching began to be accompanied by evidences of great personal concern and anguish among the hearers, many crying out. After a service in May 1742, there were so many spiritually distressed persons seeking relief, that it was not possible to accommodate them in the minister's barn, and when he attempted to speak to them, he says that he could not be heard because of the bitter cries and groans, and the voice of weeping. This state of affairs continued, and during these days about two hundred of the parish members appear to have been 'awakened'.

This localised revival was not confined to Cambusland and Kilsyth. The minister of Kilsyth refers to other parishes experiencing its effects:

In the parish of Kirkintilloch there are known to the minister about a hundred and twenty under a more than ordinary concern about their salvation... In the parish of St. Ninians, the number of the

1 James Robe, op. cit., p. 35.
awakened must be considerable ...  
In the parish of Gargunnock, lying west from the parish of St. Ninians, 
there are, as I am well informed, nearly a hundred persons awakened ...  
In the parish of Calder, according to the information I have from their 
minister, there are above a hundred awakened.  
There are about the same number in the parish of Campsie.¹

He cites other examples and figures which indicate that among these 
small town and village communities the impact of the revival was 
considerable.

The work did not apparently depend upon the particular gifts of any 
person, or group of people. There was not even the same involvement 
of personalities such as was to be found in the Welsh revival with 
Farris, Rowlands and Davies. In the example of Cambuslang and Kilsyth, 
there was a largely spontaneous upsurge of spiritual energy, and 
religious enlightenment from within the small Christian fellowships in 
the area. Conversions came not only from the preaching of ordained 
men, but through the spoken word of teachers in the classroom, through 
the Christian instruction of parents, and through the witness of 
ordinary people. Men, women and children were awakened to spiritual 
reality in their homes, at their school or in the small society meeting, 
as well as in the churches. The ministers of the parishes helped to 
guide and control the activities to an extent, and the people looked to 
them as the leaders in spiritual matters, but the work did not depend 
on them. In this revival, as with others, there was an inner momentum, 
and generation of spiritual power and effectiveness, which may be seen 
as a distinctive characteristic, in varying degrees, of all revivals.

¹ James Robe, op. cit., pp. 41, 42.
CHAPTER VII

Nineteenth Century Revivals

Viewing the nineteenth century globally, the most prominent, significant, and well attested revivals again, as in the eighteenth century, occurred in North America and the British Isles. Likewise, as the Great Awakening in America, and the Evangelical Revival in Great Britain originated concurrently, so the most noteworthy revivals of the following century in those countries all began within the same two or three years between 1857 and 1860, and it is upon these that we will focus attention in this chapter.

The American revival of 1857-60 began suddenly. In October 1857, in Hamilton, Ontario, there was what a contemporary newspaper described as a 'Revival Extraordinary'.\(^1\) It was reported that on the first day of the movement about twenty people had professed conversion, and that as the work progressed, this increased to approximately forty-five such professions each day. Many people read the accounts of this, and it created an expectation of further such revivals, which was realised almost immediately in America.

In September 1857, a certain Jeremiah Lanphier decided to hold a meeting for prayer in the Consistory building at Fulton Street, in a downtown area of New York, which was, in his own words, 'intended to give merchants, mechanics, clerks, strangers and business men generally an opportunity to stop and call upon God...'.\(^2\) Six were present at

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\(^2\) J. Edwin Orr, op. cit., p. 103.
the first gathering, and forty the following week. In the first week of October, it was decided to hold such a meeting daily instead of weekly. Soon it attracted so many participants that three simultaneous meetings had to be held in the same building, the seats were all filled, and the passages were so crowded that it was difficult for people pass in and out. Within six months of the commencement of the Fulton Street meetings, about ten thousand business men were gathering daily in the city for prayer, in halls, churches, and even theatres. Conversions were very frequent, and the Presbyterian Magazine, June 1858, stated that there had been as many as fifty thousand in the city to that date.

The influence of this revival was felt throughout the nation, as its effects spread outwards from New York into the south as far as Texas, to the north into New England, and as far as the Western boundaries. From different parts of the country came news of other revivals, or of their impact, at first largely in the cities, then in more rural areas. Urban centres such as Boston, Providence, New Haven, New Jersey and Philadelphia witnessed a sudden and very marked increase in religious interest and concern among the inhabitants, rapid growth in the size of prayer meetings, and numerous conversions. Many of the settlements established by the pioneers experienced a time of revival, and within the space of two months, four hundred and eighty towns had given reports of fifteen thousand conversions. It was not long before the number of conversions reported throughout the land was to be measured in thousands each week, as was the increase in church membership. For many months the revival continued with unabated effectiveness, and it has been estimated that in about the two years of its duration, about a million converts were added to the American churches.\(^1\) It was a

\(^1\) J. Edwin Orr, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 104.
movement whose sustained dynamism did not seem to depend on any
special evangelistic effort or charismatic leader, or upon the
powerful preaching of any particular individual. It generally
appears to have begun, and to have continued to maintain its vigour
and vitality through no special agency or organisation. Its origins
and growth seem to have been associated with the ordinary ministry of
ordained men, and the daily witness to their faith of lay people who
had experienced a spiritual reality in their own lives which they
wanted to communicate to others. The total effect of it was so
considerable that it could not be hidden; and it proved to be the
prelude to revival in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England.

In Ulster, news of the revival in America stimulated a high degree of
interest and anticipation among the churches. There was much
discussion of the events and issues involved, many sermons on revival
were preached, prayer meetings multiplied, and the General Assembly of
the Presbyterian Church in Ireland sent an official deputation of two
of its most senior and respected members to observe and report on the
American scene.

The Rev. Samuel J. Moore, a participant observer of the Ulster revival
gives some notion of the state of expectation which existed. He says:

American newspapers, especially The New York Observer, were regularly
read by some of us; and thus the subject kept fresh and prominent
before the mind. From an early period in the history of the
movement in America and in Connor I know that the daily - I may say
hourly - prayer of some earnest spirits was - 'Come, Lord Jesus,
come!' - 'Spirit of God, O Holy Spirit, come!' ...

1 J. Samuel Moore, The Great Revival in Ireland, 1859, p. 11.
James McQuilkin and three of his friends in Connor, County Antrim arranged a meeting for prayer in September 1857. In the following weeks there were a number of conversions in the district. A gathering to pray especially for revival was organised in Ahoghill in March 1859, and such a great number attended that they had, for safety reasons, to be removed from the building in which they were assembled. A layman addressed three thousand of them in the open air, and the crowd responded with evident signs of spiritual concern. Three miles away, in Ballymena, there was widespread religious excitement among the population at this time, as prayer meetings were held, and families neglected nights of sleep in seeking spiritual comfort. In May of the same year, there was a sudden increased interest in spiritual matters among certain sections of the population, and apparently most of the evangelical churches in the town overflowed with enquirers. All these were evidences of the revival gaining momentum, and throughout the succeeding weeks and months there seem to have been thousands of conversions, together with manifestations of greater intensity of commitment and devotion among the churches. One feature of this, which was apparently not found to such an extent in America, Wales, Scotland or England at this time, was the physical prostration, and other bodily responses accompanying the profound spiritual experiences undergone by those coming under the direct influence of the revival message. The Rev. Samuel J. Moore witnessed these, and made the following comments:

The subjects of conviction are of all ages, from five to seventy years; but the great majority are young ... When the conviction as to its mental process reaches its crisis, the person, through weakness, is unable to sit or stand, and either kneels or lies down. A great number of convicted persons in this town and neighbourhood, and now I believe in all directions in the north where the revival prevails, are 'smitten down' as suddenly, and they fall as nerveless and paralysed, and powerless, as if killed instantly by a gun-shot.
They fall with a deep groan - some with a wild cry of horror - the greater number with the intensely earnest plea, 'Lord Jesus, have mercy on my soul!' The whole frame trembles like an aspen leaf, an intolerable weight is felt upon the chest, a choking sensation is experienced, and relief from this found only in the loud, urgent prayer for deliverance.

Usually the bodily distress and mental anguish continue till some degree of confidence in Christ is found. Then the look, the tone, the gestures instantly change. The aspect of anguish and despair is changed for that of gratitude, and triumph, and adoration.

The language and the looks, and the terrible struggles and loud desperate deprecations, tell convincingly, as the parties afterwards declare, that they are in deadly conflict with the old serpent. The perspiration rolls off the anguished victims; their very hair is moistened. Some pass through this exhausting conflict several times; others but once. There is no appetite for food; many will eat nothing for a number of days. They do not sleep, though they may lie down with their eyes shut.

The revival spread to Coleraine, then to the towns and villages of County Derry, and to Londonderry, to Armagh, and to other parts of the territory. Significantly, however, it was in the main confined to Ulster. J. Edwin Orr remarks:

Outside the six northern counties the Revival movement was felt, but in a degree inversely proportionate to the Roman Catholic majority in each county as well as directly proportionate to the presence of Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists and Quakers among Protestants. This was specially true of the remaining three of the nine counties of Ulster - Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan.

This characteristic has a wider relevance to the consideration of revivalism as a social and religious phenomenon, and aspects of it will be discussed in the final part of the work.

In Scotland in these years there was a revival which, in broad outline, displayed a similar pattern to that in Ulster. To the news of awakened

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1 J. Samuel Moore, op. cit., pp. 18, 19.
2 J. Edwin Orr, op. cit., p. 130.
spiritual interest, and the remarkable events associated with this in America, was added the tidings of the revival in Ireland. The British Messenger, a monthly periodical issued at Stirling, appears among other papers to have been a means of arousing the churches to an awareness of the startling spiritual events across the seas. Again, meetings for prayer were arranged, and likewise it was largely through these that the movement was effective. To them came crowds of people, and within these gatherings many were converted. Aberdeen and Glasgow were two of the first centres in which the phenomenon appeared suddenly in 1858, and it is worthy of note that Glasgow not only has close geographical proximity to Ulster, but that there is an ethnic and kinship association through the strong Scots-Irish population, both with the northern Irish states, and North America. The awakening was evident throughout south-western Scotland, and then via the highlands, as far as the western islands. In north-east Scotland, from the early days in 1859, the revival was intensive and extensive. In Edinburgh, an additional element was the effective work of evangelists such as Charles Finney, who visited the city at the time and evoked a great response from the people, with many conversions resulting.

For more than one hundred years before the 1858-60 revival, Wales had experienced a series of spiritual awakenings. There was the revival in 1735, described in the previous chapter; another at Llangeitho under Daniel Rowland in 1762; and between 1762 and 1862 at least fifteen, according to Eifion Evans, of which some were localised and geographically restricted, while others had more far reaching effects.  

2 Eifion Evans, When He is Come (1959), pp. 11, 12.
The Welsh Revival of 1858-60 was, to a greater extent than the others at the time, associated with the ministry of one particular man. David Morgan fulfilled a role similar to that of Evan Roberts in the revival of 1904-5. He was a Calvinistic Methodist minister, and for years he had prayed for a spiritual awakening. In his village in which the population did not exceed one thousand, there were two hundred adult converts before the end of 1858, and early in 1859 he began itinerant preaching, which aroused widespread religious fervour throughout the county of Cardigan, and resulted in nearly nine thousand conversions within less than six months. Rapidly the revival extended to every county of the Principality. Despite the work of David Morgan, who, for all his influence, was only a local pastor, the impact and continued outreach of the revival was largely the consequence of ordinary people communicating their new found faith either individually or corporately as the opportunity was given them. Thus, to take one example, Prebendary Venn, going on board a vessel manned by Welshmen, found that almost the entire crew were Christians:

... He entered into conversation with one of the men, and it was his delight to find that, to what he said, he responded with his whole soul. He spoke to another sailor, to a third and a fourth, and found it was just the same. On asking one of the men how the work had commenced amongst them, he said it had begun by a pious sailor who joined them about two years before (in 1858); and the whole of the crew, who were then utterly careless and ungodly, either were, or shortly would be, added to the number 'of such as shall be saved.'

Contemporary commentators considered that the principle characteristics of this revival included an extraordinary spirit of prayer among the committed Christians, a spirit of unity among the denominations, and a powerful effort in outreach for the conversion of others.\(^1\)

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1 Henry Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 255, 256.
2 Eifion Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-91.
It also produced those spontaneous rejoicings among groups of converts, which was observed in the Welsh revival in the eighteenth century. Its overall effect in the country was considerable. It appears that, in proportion to the population, the results exceeded those in America. The population of Wales in 1861 was about 1,111,000, yet in 1860, the Rev. John Venn, Prebendary of Hereford, presented the Evangelical Alliance with carefully prepared statistics up to that date, which showed an increase in two years in the full membership of the various churches amounting to about 90,000; and the revival had not ceased by then.\(^1\) There was also the intangible increase in the measure of devotion and commitment of those entailed in, or influenced by this movement.

Revival was not absent from England during these years, but it occurred only in certain localities, and an examination of it will not add substantially to our knowledge of the phenomenon. Organized evangelism was also liberally intermingled with what has been recognised distinctively as revivalism, and personalities such as Charles Finney and William and Catherine Booth were prominent.

\(^1\) Henry Johnson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 241.
CHAPTER VIII

Twentieth Century Revivals

René Monod has rightly drawn attention to the fact that twentieth century revivalism has been a phenomenon occurring mostly in non-Western countries.¹ Those revivals which have arisen in the highly industrialised and urbanised nations of the Occident have been geographically somewhat circumscribed, and confined mainly to semi-rural areas of comparatively low population density. The last major revival in the West was in Wales in 1904-5; the one in the Hebrides in 1949 being restricted to a few islands, with little or no effect upon the mainland. A possible notable exception to this, and, as such, of great interest in the study of revivalism, is the whole recent manifestation of new spiritual vitality in the U.S.A., embraced within what has been designated as the Jesus movement; although the validity of considering this as a revival may well be questioned. In this chapter, we will first examine the Welsh and Hebridean revivals, then some of the most significant of those which have taken place outside the western world, and finally the Jesus movement.

Evan Roberts played a major part in the initiation and continuance of the Welsh revival of 1904-5. In the village of Loughor he lived and worked, and employed his leisure in studying for the ministry. After a short time at college he went back to his village in order to proclaim the Christian message to the young people, and almost immediately twelve of them were converted. The news of this attracted

others; and they continued to come in such numbers, and made such demands upon him that he never had the time or inclination to return to the college. The small gathering which had heard his first address, rapidly grew into a crowd which met in the Methodist church day after day. Meetings continued on many occasions all night, and even into the morning, and at six the colliers assembled before proceeding to their work. Within a few weeks, the name of Evan Roberts had been made known throughout the United Kingdom, as reports of the events in South Wales were made public through the papers. Before the end of 1904 he had extended his ministry to many of the villages, and some of the towns of both South and North Wales.

In the meetings he conducted, he most characteristically did not deliver a sermon or address. There was singing, communal prayer, a few words addressed to those attending, and a general unstructured, informal and largely unpremeditated approach adopted. A vivid account of one such assembly at Amlwch in Anglesey is contained in the South Wales Daily News:

... It is 7.10. Evan Roberts came in fifteen minutes ago. Looked at from the pulpit end the congregation is one seething mass - weeping, smiling, singing, praying, all at one and the same time. It is as if endowed with gifts of tongues, for, however conflicting the emotions may be, each man seems understood of his neighbour, and there is some indefinable charm and harmony in this ecstatic outburst of a thousand hearts. Horn-handed farm labourers, who have long been strangers to places of worship, pray with the eloquence of a Demosthenes. Strong men are literally convulsed with weeping for joy. I try, but fail to detect a single dry eye. There are bashful maidens, scores of them, standing reciting verses or offering prayers - all smiling through their tears.

A rough looking fellow in the aisle, who is described to me as one of the most notorious characters of Anglesey, is giving praise to God - 'Diolch am Diwn Newydd ar y Delyn' ('We thank Thee for the new tune played on our harp') ...

... half a dozen converts are found, but there are many refusals again tonight, and this brings Mr. Roberts at last to his feet with a solemn appeal to the stubborn ones ...
This second test produces another batch of converts, and among them one of the ten who had refused to yield the previous evening. 'In all the annals of the revival,' exclaims the Rev. John Williams, 'there is no record of a more glorious meeting than this. Will you promise to praise God for it when you return to your homes to-night?'

Every hand is raised to signify assent, but, too impatient to wait until they get home, hundreds in the building proceed at once to offer their praise in prayers and hymns. And another hour is thus spent ere, with the Lord's Prayer recited in Welsh and in English, the meeting is brought to a close. Subsequently another meeting was held, and this was continued until close upon midnight.¹

The total number of converts during this revival appears to have been in excess of 80,000.² These seem to have come mainly from among persons who had at least a tenuous connection a church or chapel. The great mass of non-churchgoing people were apparently not greatly affected.³

In 1949, at the time of the revival, Lewis and Harris, which together form an island westward off the mainland of Scotland, had a population of about 25,000. Of these, approximately 3,700 lived in the capital of Stornoway, the only large town, and the remainder mainly in compact villages which in several cases were close enough to each other to constitute together a larger community. The village populations were mostly engaged in crofting and weaving in their own homes, producing Harris tweed.

As with the Welsh revival at the beginning of the century, the Lewis awakening owed much to one particular individual; in this instance, Duncan Campbell. He was an evangelist with the Faith Mission, and after a series of missions on the Isle of Skye, in which a measure of

¹ Henry Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-357.
spiritual awakening was experienced, he submitted to urgent requests, and went to Lewis and Harris. Here he found an ardent spirit of expectation among church members who had been praying for a revival in their midst. There were organised services and meetings, but within a matter of days, the bounds of formal arrangements were breached as crowded church services continued for many hours, and there were spontaneous unorganised gatherings. Duncan Campbell gives an example:

Here is a scene witnessed during the first days of the movement: a crowded church, the service is over: the congregation, reluctant to disperse, stand outside the church in a silence that is tense. Suddenly a cry is heard within: a young man, burdened for the souls of his fellow men, is pouring out his soul in intercession. He prays until he falls into a trance and lies prostrate on the floor of the church ... and the congregation, moved by a power that they could not resist, come back into the church, and a wave of conviction of sin swept over the gathering, moving strong men to cry to God for mercy. This service continued until the small hours of the morning, but so great was the distress and so deep the hunger which gripped men and women, that they refused to go home, and already were assembling in another part of the parish. An interesting and amazing feature of this early morning visitation, was the number who made their way to the church, moved by a power they had not experienced before: others were deeply convicted of their sin and crying for mercy, in their own homes, before ever coming near the church.1

The movement spread through the island, as people came in buses, vans, cars and lorries to the parish where it had begun, and those converted returned to declare among their neighbours the revival message. Not only did church attendance vastly increase, but the norms of the society, and the practices of its members were, in many instances, much altered. Typical of this, is the change indicated by an anecdote of Duncan Campbell:

Some time ago, while passing through this village (Arnol), I was met by an old man whose salutation (sic) was in the following words, 'I am glad to be alive to witness this day.' Then, pointing to a particular house, he said, 'Do you see that house? That was the "drinking house"

of this village, where our young men met in utter disregard of God, His Word, or His day. Today it is closed and the men who frequented it are praying in our prayer meetings.¹

Reviewing the revival in retrospect, Duncan Campbell distinguished three outstanding features in the movement.² First, a remarkable awareness of God, which, in order to be fully realized, had to be felt. He quotes examples in support of this of people, who during the years of its duration, had a very vivid sense of the presence of the numen. Secondly, a deep conviction of sin, which was so evident in congregations at certain times that it became necessary to stop preaching. Finally, there were physical manifestations and prostrations as a consequence of intense personal spiritual experiences.

Of the three twentieth century revivals occurring outside the western hemisphere, which we will now consider, the one in Korea appeared first.

In a state of national political and social turmoil in Korea in 1906, a number of missionaries began to hold prayer meetings, and continued them for over a year.³ In the winter of the same year, a Bible class met in the central Presbyterian church in Pyengyang, recruiting a number of Christians from other towns and districts. The attendance grew, until it reached about one thousand or more. In the prayer meetings there was an increasing desire for the confession of sins, and a seeking after purity. Then, at one particular service

¹ Duncan Campbell, op. cit., p. 19.
² Duncan Campbell, op. cit., pp. 29, 30.
the congregation prayer together. René Monod describes the occasion:

At this great prayer meeting one worshipper after another rose, confessed his sins, and then fell to his knees again, weeping and begging God for forgiveness. Employees confessed their sins to their employers and vice versa. Elders of the Church asked their ministers for forgiveness. The ministers made their peace with one another, repenting of their petty jealousies. All sins were confessed, not only sins of commission, but the sins of the tongue and the mind as well.¹

Some of the meetings for penitents went on all night. Certain of the Koreans who had been affected by the revival applied themselves to the task of proclaiming the Christian faith to the whole of the country within a year. In support of this, they raised large amounts of money to facilitate the work of entering areas previously untouched by missionaries. They had a million copies of the Gospel of St. Mark printed, and sold 700,000 in a single year. They also sent missionaries abroad. Essentially the revival was a penitential and confessional movement, in which there were numbers of converts. The adherents of the faith demonstrated a marked increase in their devotion and commitment to the beliefs and practices of their religion.

The Korean revival has continued from its inception to the present time, although there have been troughs and peaks. With the Communist occupation of the land there was considerable persecution of Christians, but despite this prayer meetings flourished, with gatherings estimated at ten thousand, or even in excess of that. René Monod recounts his experiences during his first visit to the country after the Korean War, when, on his arrival in Seoul, he was invited to address a prayer meeting at 5 a.m. It was raining and snowing as he made his way to the church, and he was convinced the meeting would be cancelled, or very few

¹ René Monod, op. cit., p. 16.
would be present. As an additional discouragement, the taxi driver charged him double fare, which was considered appropriate for a night journey. Somewhat pessimistically he entered the church, to find the whole place was crammed with people. He was informed that it was a regular prayer meeting, that there were almost three thousand people present, representing nearly the entire congregation, and that the gathering assembled daily in that way. He reports how those attending prayed, many together, but in harmony without any fanatical zeal, for just under an hour. Then one of the elders asked him to give his address, adding, a 'A short one, please, not longer than an hour. These people have to go to work at seven o'clock.' He discovered three such groups, and was told at the third that such meetings had been held every day for five years. They were supplemented by smaller gatherings of about one hundred members of the congregation, with different people involved on each occasion, which had been held in the evenings, with the prayer continuing until dawn. And once a week, from Saturday to Sunday, about a thousand assembled, and prayed all night.\(^1\)

As René Monod points out, almost every revival of the present century has been accompanied by some form of healing ministry.\(^2\) The Korean awakening is no exception. A special meeting for the sick is held once a month at which healings have been observed, resulting from the prayers offered. It is not suitable at this juncture to discuss either the evidence for the authenticity of this, or the validity of the claim made that the cures are a consequence of prayer and faith. It is sufficient for our purpose to note this feature of the revival.

\(^1\) René Monod, *op. cit.*, p. 32ff.

\(^2\) René Monod, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
Another aspect to which attention should be drawn is the extent of personal sacrifice which is demonstrated by those responding to the revival message. A common practice appears to be the giving by the converts of half of what they earn to enable the work to continue in their country, and in order to support missionaries they send to neighbouring countries.

The Korean revival has lasted, with variations in intensity, for over sixty years. The one in Indonesia is of much more recent origin, but it also is still effective and evident in the land, and is thus likewise a contemporary phenomenon.

Rather than trace its development, we will give special consideration to some of those elements in it which have been distinctive, and which help to further our knowledge of revivalism. As a background, suffice it to say that a series of evangelistic campaigns on the island of Timor, in the summer of 1965 were immediately followed by manifestations of spiritual concern and awakening which by now we have come to associate with the outbreak of a revival; and that this rapidly spread to other islands of Indonesia. Although, in some respects it had the characteristics of a mass conversion movement, it also displayed certain of the distinctive features of revivalism, as discussed in our Introduction.

One characteristic of this particular revival has been the burning of images and emblems of traditional cults by members of the native population converted as a result of the revival. In many cases, the people involved were members of churches; but whether nominal Christians,
non-Christsians, or indeed committed members of a Christian group, this act had very considerable symbolic as well as actual significance, for it represented a personal casting away of any allegiance to another religious faith, or to any norm in the society which was alien to the Christian faith and practice. The act was frequently performed in public, so that this constituted an open proclamation of dedication to the Christian religion, and the rejection of any other religious tradition. The destruction of such images and emblems gave tangible form to an inner act of commital, and by so doing helped both to make the commitment more real and meaningful, and also to give to it a greater measure and sense of finality.

From its beginning, a prominent feature of the revival has been the concern for spreading the revival message, demonstrated by the emergence of evangelistic teams, mostly of young people. These have resulted from a spontaneous response among different congregations to the challenge of making known the revival message in other areas, either of the island in which the assembly is situated, or further afield. During the first year seventy two such groups had been formed. They travelled about, mainly with the intention of preaching, both publicly and conversationally, but also, in some instances, with the secondary task of healing. Great numbers of people were converted by this strategy, and, as with all such widespread lay participation, it was a means towards maximising the effective use of the available human resources, and of ensuring a high level of membership commitment.

This revival is furthermore of special interest as occurring in a missionary situation; in a society and culture which, on many of the islands, was fundamentally non-Christian. In this context it appears
that the proportion of converts from outside the Christian tradition was high. Thus, Kurt Koch cites an example of one island where he maintains that before the revival there were hardly any Christian believers; the number not even reaching treble figures. Whereas, in 1970, he states that there were about 20,000.\footnote{Kurt Koch, *The Revival in Indonesia*, p. 159.} He considers that between 1964 and 1970 three distinct groups were especially influenced by the revival; the Muslims, the nominal Christians and the traditional religionists. Numerically the greatest impact of the revival has been among the nominal Christians in the traditional orthodox churches. The outreach to traditional religionists is difficult to describe, or its extent to be calculated, but Dr. Koch considers it of great enough significance to mention specifically, though this category, which he terms 'animist', appears to be somewhat comprehensive. In this overall consideration of the influence of the awakening in such a milieu, however, it is of importance to observe that the effect was widespread as well as profound.

In and around the area of Rwanda and Burundi in Central Africa we are presented with another example of a revival which has been sustained for many years, and is still not a spent force, but rather a most potent spiritual influence.

A foretaste of the coming awakening was experienced in 1927-8.\footnote{For the narrative of this revival see especially A.C. Stanley Smith *Road to Revival* (1946).} After some years of missionary work in the region during which there had been a number of conversions, there was concern among the missionaries at the abundant evidence of spiritual superficiality, the
falling away from the faith of some African Christian leaders, and a
drifting back into traditional religion among the various
congregations. At this stage prayer meetings were arranged, and
concern expressed by leaders at the situation confronting them. The
first sign of a change was a rapid increase in church attendance, with
one thousand or more at some services, and great crowds gathering for
open air assemblies. But the movement was not sustained and continuous;
there was a lull. Then, in 1931, began the revival which was to be
substantially maintained almost unbroken until the present time. It
was essentially a movement within the body of believers, which was
to have major repercussions without. It began in a small way, as with
many revivals, at Gahini Hospital. There was much division, jealousy
and hatred among the African staff, and reputedly the worst offender
was the senior assistant Yoseya Kinuka.¹ But he was suddenly struck
with a deep concern about his behaviour, and a desire to make amends.
In his own words:

At Gahini I began at once to witness to the others, and to show them
that they were on the road to destruction, and I parted from their
company. I repented openly of stealing and began to make
restitution for my past failure. But the others said that I was
doing this in order to get favour with the Europeans, and that I was
not really repentant or humble. They also often brought words up
against me, but I never bothered to answer them back but rather it
made me more and more burdened in prayer for them. One even
threatened to burn down my house. But a wonderful thing happened
with him; he was truly converted, too, and is now one of my
greatest friends.²

This attitude soon spread throughout the staff, and outside the bounds
of the Hospital, where, among the adherents of the faith, there was
evident a longing for deliverance from formality, spiritual inertness,
and what was deemed as sin within the Church, and in individual lives.

¹ A.C. Stanley Smith, op. cit., p. 55. For a discussion of certain
messianic, and revival-type movements in Africa (and other areas), see
V. Lanternari, op. cit.
² A.C. Stanley Smith, op. cit., p. 55.
It was these convictions which were to become characteristic features in the subsequent years of revival; they were soon prominent, and had become intense and personal, resulting in open confessions, repentance and restitution. In 1953, a convention was called for the sole purpose of instilling in the Christians a new and greater conception of God, and of their own spiritual need. At this there occurred an incident which was to become common throughout the Christian communities in the country during the succeeding years of the revival. In the words of A.C. Stanley Smith:

A Christian got up and began confessing some sin he had committed, and it seemed as though a barrier of reserve had been rolled away. A wave of conviction swept through them all and for two-and-a-half hours it continued. Sometimes as many as three were on their feet at once, trying to speak. The immediate result of this was a new evangelistic zeal. 'We got more offers of service than we needed', wrote the missionary-in-charge.¹

As with the Korean revival, that in Rwanda and Central Africa has fundamentally been a penitential and confessional movement among the adherents to the faith. From this inner purging and new spiritual vitality has been generated a powerful evangelistic thrust, and an ability not only to survive such onslaughts as the Mau Mau disturbances, and the current inter-tribal fighting, with the associated very intensive and extensive persecution of the Church, but to emerge triumphant from such times having demonstrated a remarkable resilience, strength and ability to overcome. There have been manifold conversions throughout the forty years of the revival, there has been this sense of perennial spiritual renewal, and the movement continues unabated. It is thus again a contemporary religious phenomenon

¹ A.C. Stanley Smith, op. cit., pp. 56, 57.
which is worthy of the attention of phenomenologists and sociologists, as well as theologians, and those with a more personal, and less scientific interest in it.

The Jesus movement originated in North America, but has recently appeared in various parts of the world. It has assumed extensive proportions, been extremely influential, and has attracted very considerable publicity. We will examine it as a phenomenon which is relevant to the present study. Our primary purpose will be to determine its basic characteristics as a social and religious movement.

The Jesus movement is one of a number of groups of young people within the Christian tradition which have arisen in the last few years. It is particularly effective in that youth sub-culture which embraces hippies, drug takers, exponents of free love, and a wide range of individuals and groups who have overtly rejected many of the dominant middle class norms of the society in which most of them have been nurtured. As Michael Green has written:

Many, though by no means all, of them have been on drugs, and have tried everything from the Maharishi to free love, from crime to twenty-four hour television viewing in a restless search for reality.¹

He adds that in their search they are now convinced that they have discovered this reality in a personal Christian faith.

As a religious group they lay considerable emphasis upon the pristine teaching, experiences and behaviour of the founder of the faith, and of the Early Church. They are concerned with the immediacy of intense

personal spiritual experiences; the direct, uncomplicated presentation of a simple message of salvation; and the literal application of the basic tenets of the faith and practice of the Christian tradition to the lives of adherents to the faith in the contemporary situation. They have little interest in the forms, procedures and traditions of established churches, and it is a movement occurring outside the historic structures of these ecclesiastical institutions. It is involved in face-to-face relationships, and personal confrontations; and it is not dependent to any marked extent on any formal organisation. It is characterised by openness, spontaneity, and freedom, yet discipline, frankness, conviction, sincerity, joy, love, enthusiasm and devotion. It has a somewhat narrow theological outlook, and is often theologically unsophisticated, with scant regard for academic or intellectual niceties. It is a movement which gains dynamic from its directness, and reduction of issues to their basic essentials, and from its genuine attempt to translate the demands of faith into reality by obedience to what is seen as the truth.

In many respects the Jesus movement defies close definition and accurate description, for it is not stereotyped, but flexible and varied. The account of some of its aspects, given by Everett Hullum, Jr., and Dallas Lee, does give us some insight into its nature and its language. They write:

It is the Jesus Movement and it is steamrolling across the United States. It grooves and sways to the sound of gospel rock music and the fresh, honest voices of youth. It is a peer-group movement, fed by the hunger of the age. Pulse: feverish. Depth: uncertain. Outlook: today it's alive and swinging. And it's going to shake some people before it's through - maybe you.

The movement - for lack of a better word - is raging across the nation like a wind-driven bush fire, jumping any obstacle to break out -
almost by a spontaneous combustion - in dozens of places, in dozens of
forms: a Jesus Festival featuring Christian rock music draws
thousands in Evansville, Ind.; young people pour into revival meetings
in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Ohio, Kentucky, Florida; high school
youth march for Jesus in Georgia; and others picket a pornography
book store in Alabama. Crowds of teen-agers pack denominational
evangelistic meetings across the South.

The spirit of it rolls beyond age limits, beyond denominational lines;
street people, straight collegians, and middle class adults jam the
Notre Dame campus for a charismatic conference, puncture the Roman
Catholic meeting with spontaneous choruses of 'Jesus is Lord', fill the
air with jabbing index fingers signifying the 'one Way' ....

Mainline denominations are watching, so far untouched corporately.
This is revival spirit unprogrammed, with no mission board strategies,
no super-evangelists at the head. The dynamic is in the movement, in
the soft-smiling, 'Oh, wow, Jesus loves you' exclamations that come
pulsing out of the young people.

... what is fueling the blazing revival spirit in the public eye is the
'Jesus Generation' - these glowing, hip kids with their testimonies
of sudden cures from drugs and flesh-trips and aimlessness, their
irresistible (sic) smiles and simple 'Praise Gods', and the easy,
compelling way they seek to share the joy of their experience.
Spontaneously it appeared, this bulging movement toward Jesus of
Nazareth, where only a churning mob, an omni-directed sub-culture, a
boiling pot of doubt and disappointment, discouragement, and indecision
had existed.

It has grabbed individuals: ragged, transient, mecca-seeking street
people; alienated, lonely runaways; middle-class, complacent high
school types; sunburned surfboarders and beach-bums; poverty kids with
leftover life-styles.

But the surging power of the movement has been that it left them
individuals; and in the sudden blinding freedom of their own personhood
they have emerged from their separate worlds into a bright, dramatic,
exhilarating, throbbing universe of earnest Jesus-worship.1

In its form, rather than its essence, the Jesus movement does not display
some of the characteristics of revivalism, as seen in the previous
manifestations of the phenomenon we have considered. For example, it
embraces a range of beliefs and practices, assumes a number of forms,
and is not coherent and unified as a phenomenon. It is dispersed and
diffused, and not geographically localised. It is also largely
restricted to one sector, or even sub-sector of the population. It has

1 Walker L. Knight (Compiler), Jesus People Come Alive (1971), pp. 8-13.
been included in our study because of its affinity in essence with revivalism. In this respect it contains features which we have defined as typical of revivals. Its relevance to our present examination of revivalism lies to a great extent in the possibility that it represents the general form revivalism assumes, when it occurs in a highly industrialised and urbanised community. Caution needs to be exercised in attempting any phenomenological or sociological classification of the movement. As Enroth, Ericson and Peters have written:

A number of observers have compared the Jesus Revolution with the Great Awakening of mid-eighteenth-century America ... though this revival has been similarities in common with earlier religious awakenings in America, the distinguishing features of our times cause close analogies between this and the previous revivals to be inadequate because oversimplification is inevitable.¹

It is difficult to make a valid analytical study of a movement which is of such recent origin. A later, retrospective examination would allow a more satisfactory sociological and phenomenological assessment to be made.

PART THREE

REVIVALISM AS A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PHENOMENON

CHAPTER IX

Revivalism as a Social Phenomenon

The preceding examination of one revival in depth, and others occurring in a variety of different geographical and historical settings, has provided a basis for certain generalisations to be made on revivalism as a social and religious phenomenon. In doing this our concern is to consider this particular manifestation of religious behaviour in the broad context of world religions, and of those sociological and phenomenological theories which seem most relevant.

It appears that the communities in which revivals have arisen, have largely been of small geographical area, and low population. They have occurred predominantly in small towns, or rural districts with scattered villages and clusters of population. It is unusual to discover this religious phenomenon in communities with a population in excess of half a million. In the notable exceptions to this, it appears that the influence of the revival has largely been restricted either to a certain sector of the urban area concerned, to a fairly clearly defined part of the population, or, if the impact is more general and widespread, to have been the result of a social structure and means of communication which permitted and encouraged such a development. Thus, the eighteenth century revivals in America were most frequently of major
influence in communities like Northampton, with a population of little over one thousand, in the western frontier areas which were non-urban, and among the recently established towns of the colony, which, without exception, did not have a large number of inhabitants. The revivals in the American states, in Ulster, Wales and Scotland in the mid-nineteenth century were to a greater extent centered on urban areas, but again these were mostly small communities, and where the population was considerable, as with the initial revival in New York, with over eight hundred thousand inhabitants, the movement was to an extent confined, in this case largely to business men, and those associated with them. The same pattern is discernible in many of the twentieth century revivals. Those in Wales, Lewis and Harris, Central Africa and Indonesia occurred mainly in rural districts, villages or small towns.

The evangelical revival of the eighteenth century in Great Britain was to a degree concentrated on the cities, and country towns, and from them radiated into the surrounding countryside. But the cities of the eighteenth century were, with the exception of London, very small by modern standards. This is indicated by the following population tables, (considerable allowance for growth must be made in view of the intervening six decades or so of expansion during the Industrial Revolution, from the period when the revival began).

| Size of certain towns greatly influenced by the eighteenth century revival (to nearest thousand) as shown by the first Census, 1801. |
|---|---|---|
| Bath | 32,000 | Manchester-Salford | 84,000 |
| Birmingham | 74,000 | Newcastle | 28,000 |
| Bristol | 64,000 | Norwich | 37,000 |
| Hull | 30,000 | Oxford | 12,000 |
| Leeds | 53,000 | Sheffield | 31,000 |
| Liverpool | 78,000 | York | 16,000 |
Population of certain counties as estimated in the 1811 Census Report, pp. xxviii-xxx.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1700</th>
<th>1750</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cornwall</td>
<td>105,800</td>
<td>135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>95,500</td>
<td>135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>155,200</td>
<td>207,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>92,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>195,900</td>
<td>224,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>96,600</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population of England, Wales and Scotland as estimated in the 1811 Census Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1700</th>
<th>1750</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole of England</td>
<td>5,108,500</td>
<td>6,017,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole of Wales</td>
<td>366,500</td>
<td>449,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole of Scotland</td>
<td>1,048,000</td>
<td>1,403,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In chapter I we considered London as an exception to this eighteenth century demographic picture. Thus, small urban communities, or rural areas have provided the social environment for most revivals, rather than large towns, cities or conurbations.

The significant factor, however, is the degree of social interaction among the members of the community, and it is only as the size of the population allows this that the purely numerical factor is relevant. It is possible to have an urban area with a very small population, where there is a low level of social intercourse among the members, and conversely, a more populous urban centre may have a greater degree of social interaction. In a similar way, and related to this, one community may be a more meaningful social unit to its members than another, despite having more inhabitants, as the members are more involved in its affairs, identified with its values, and committed to
its corporate life. Revivals appear to have taken place largely in areas, or sub-areas within an urban complex, where there has been a fairly high level of social interaction in the context of a social unit having a high measure of meaningfulness to the life situation of the members composing it. This has provided a social framework which has permitted a maximum influence to be exerted upon the community by the leaders of the revival, and by those involved in the revival upon their fellow citizens and neighbours. This is illustrated in the revivals studied. For example, in the eighteenth century revival, the communities concerned had these social characteristics, as with the Kingswood district of Bristol, Moorfields and other parts of London, and the socially cohesive villages, small towns and cities of the provinces, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The spontaneous assembling of vast crowds to hear the revival message preached, and the witness to their new found faith by the converts, was facilitated in each of these places by the social structure of the community in which the revival occurred.

In addition, the degree of social interaction among those involved in the revival was maintained and intensified by means of the Society, Class and Band meetings organised by the Methodists, and similarly arranged by many of the evangelical clergy of the Church of England, such as Samuel Walker of Truro.\(^1\) These ensured that there was a comprehensive, concentrated and continuous opportunity for fellowship, teaching and service for every person entailed in the revival. New converts straightway found themselves integrated into a *κοινωνία* of like-minded believers, which was a primary influence in building them

up in their faith, and in giving them scope for using what talents
they possessed in the furtherance of the aims and objects of the
revival. Such structures provided a milieu which encouraged the
maximisation of the influence of the corporate body upon the
individual, and of the individual upon the corporate body, and
enhanced the impact which the revival had upon the members of the
community in which it arose.

It has been suggested by various sociologists that, in the words of
I.M. Lewis, 'enthusiasm thrives on instability'. It is contended
that the emergence of millenial and other sects in the Christian
tradition, the appearance of revivals and similar phenomena, and the
manifestation of ecstatic type religion owe much to such a social
condition. The source of this instability may vary considerably, and
the particular circumstances producing it may differ according to the
historical situation. In the case of the millenarium cults of
medieval Europe, Norman Cohn maintains that the social dynamics were
ripe:

... when population was increasing, industrialisation was getting under
way, traditional social bonds were being weakened or shattered and the
gap between rich and poor was becoming a chasm ... a collective sense
of impotence and anxiety and envy suddenly discharged itself in a
frantic urge to smite the ungodly ...

With the eighteenth century evangelical revival attention is most
frequently drawn to the effects, especially upon certain alienated
groups of unskilled manual workers, and artisans, of the rapid social
change experienced as a consequence of accelerated urbanisation and

1 I.M. Lewis, op. cit., p. 175.

2 Norman Cohn, op. cit., pp. 31, 32.
industrialisation, and the breakdown of established social structures
and norms which such social change entailed. In the example of the
cargo cults of Melanesia, Peter Worsley considers the main pertinent
circumstance was the cultural impact resulting from the intrusion of an
alien, advanced technological culture into a simpler, less developed
society. ¹ But whatever the particular determinant antecedent
conditions, the common primary causal social factor is seen to be
social instability.

The present study suggests that, at least with revivalism, this
hypothesis needs to be modified in certain respects. That social
instability, from whatever cause, produces alienation of both social
groups and individuals, is an evident fact. Additionally, it is
apparent that this has provided fruitful soil for the growth of various
types of radical movement, and that among these some have had a
religious orientation. In the eighteenth century, the evangelical
revival emerged out of a preceding and contemporary social situation
in which there were many indications of instability. Some are
described by J.H. Plumb, in his outline of the English social scene
between 1714 and 1742:

... Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Leeds, Halifax, Birmingham, and
Coventry all ceased to be the sprawling villages they had been half a
century earlier ... small as they were, they ate up men, women, and
children and their population was only maintained, let alone increased
by a steady immigration from the country and in the north-west from
Ireland.

The first noticeable thing about these towns would have been the stench ...
All houses and cellars were desperately overcrowded - ten to a room was
common in Manchester ...

In the early part of the century, only about one child in four, born in
London, survived; and probably the infant mortality was higher in the
mushroom towns of the north. In the midst of death, the people sought
palliatives and found them in drink, gambling and violence ...

¹ Peter Worsley, op. cit., p. 225ff.
The big provincial towns were like London but with less wealth and more poverty, more despair, less social order, less charity, more disease, ...

There were a few winners and a multitude of losers lower in the social scale of rural society, although both were fewer than later in the century ...¹

These, and many more, were the evidences of rapid change and considerable malaise among certain sections of the population, and the revival made a powerful impact upon such social groups, with large responses to the revival message from among them. Likewise, the importance of the social disturbance, and disorientation produced by cultural contact, may be seen in the historical conditions surrounding the revivals in Central Africa and Indonesia, and in a modified form with the frontier revivals in eighteenth and nineteenth century America. The effects of colonisation, especially upon certain sub-groups within the population, may be seen as related both to the initial emergence of the revivals, and as a factor contributing to the effectiveness of the revival message.

Social instability must, however, be recognised as only one factor in facilitating the appearance of certain types of religious movements of a more radical nature. It must not be seen either as an indispensable condition for the occurrence of such phenomena, or even necessarily as a partial contributory cause or influence in any one particular example. Thus it does not appear to have been a feature in the antecedent social situation of the nineteenth century revivals in Ulster, Wales and Scotland, or of the twentieth century revivals in Wales, Lewis and Harris, and Korea. Furthermore, as demonstrated in chapter III, the degree of social instability prevalent in the first half of the eighteenth century in England was not as excessive and

extreme as has often been contended. Rather than social instability being the necessary social condition for the emergence of revival type phenomena, it seems that the important social situation encouraging such manifestations of religious behaviour, is one which predisposes a given population, or sub-section of population, to give consideration to the personal relevance and application of religious issues which previously were only recognised as of secondary or nominal concern. This entails such a change in the social circumstances of the individuals composing the population or group concerned, that they are, in large measure as a consequence of such changes, more inclined to be open, amenable and responsive when confronted with a new perspective on norms, values and beliefs which previously had been accepted as of little personal and vital importance. If these social conditions coincide with a simple, powerful presentation of a message which claims to be able to transform human lives, and focuses attention upon transcendental matters, then the combination is conducive to a revival.

Social instability is one category of social situation within the broader delineation just outlined. It does often so disturb the social and personal equilibrium of those affected most by it, that their whole frame of reference is undermined, and they seek for assurance and stability in a faith which transcends, and is not dependent upon, the vagaries of economic and other external circumstances. Thus, the beginning of the American revival in the mid-nineteenth century corresponded in time with the dire financial crisis of the same year, and the revival was most effective among the business men who had been the most affected by the devastating monetary upheaval. This is an illustration of a social factor which predisposed this particular socio-economic group to consider fundamental religious issues, and to respond
to them. But there have frequently been periods of social instability without the appearance of any revival type phenomena, and the social situation and factors which may produce the same predisposition referred to in the previous paragraph are more varied than those embraced within the concept of social instability. In the case of many of the American frontier revivals of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it was the readjustment entailed in the establishment of new communities which was the dominant social consideration, rather than social instability. With the commencement of the Korean revival in 1906, it appears that the most relevant factor was the Japanese occupation of the country, and the results of this, such as the conflict of loyalties aroused between the allegiance of Christians in their faith or to their nation.\(^1\) It seems that any such radical re-ordering of the social situation as represented by these examples, which results in a basic reorientation of the life situation of any population or group, when accompanied by a forceful proclamation of a message of hope and salvation, provides a context favourable to the appearance of a revival.

Almost all sociological studies of revivals, and related phenomena, have not only drawn attention to the social conditions in which they have arisen, but have concluded that distinct socio-economic groups are invariably involved. In each historical situation examined, it has been found that the members of the lower strata of the society, or those most vulnerable to the adverse social effects discussed above, have been the persons most responsive and active in the movements concerned.

Ernst Troeltsch wrote:

The really creative, church-forming, religious movements are the work of the lower strata. Here only can one find that union of unimpaired imagination, simplicity in emotional life, unreflective character of thought, spontaneity of energy and vehement force of need, out of which

an unconditioned faith in a divine revelation, the naivety of complete surrender and the intransigence of certitude rise. Need upon the one hand and the absence of an all-relativizing culture of reflection on the other hand are at home only in these strata.¹

In his study of medieval European Christian millenarian sects, Norman Cohn states that:

... the desire of the poor to improve the material conditions of their lives became transfused with phantasies of a new Paradise on earth, a world purged of suffering and sin, a Kingdom of the Saints.²

He emphasises that while millenarianism in the Middle Ages in Europe appeared at various levels of society, it was from the lowest strata, and particularly amongst the uprooted and disorientated peasants who had been turned into unskilled urban workers or into beggars and unemployed, that it was most prominent. He maintains that:

... apocalyptic lore became charged with social aspirations, animosities and anxieties to which in turn it gave a new and peculiar dynamism.³

Peter Worsley comes to a very similar conclusion in his examination of 'Cargo' cults in Melanesia, where he discovered that activist millenarian movements, although finding support to an extent throughout the society at one time or another, were especially welcomed 'amongst people who feel themselves to be oppressed and who are longing for deliverance', and also 'especially by the populations of colonial countries, by discontented peasants and by the jetsam of the towns and cities of feudal civilizations.'⁴

¹ E. Troeltsch, Sozialehren der Christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen, p. 27
² Norman Cohn, op. cit., p. xiii.
³ Norman Cohn, op. cit., p. xv.
⁴ Peter Worsley, op. cit., p. 225.
I.M. Lewis, in his comparative work on ecstatic religion, argues that what he describes as peripheral cults largely involve women, and represent 'thinly disguised protest movements directed against the dominant sex', or 'commonly embrace downtrodden categories of men who are subject to strong discrimination in rigidly stratified societies.' In the latter case, 'where men of low social position are involved, although ostensibly existing only to cure spirit-caused illness, such cults again express protest by the politically impotent.' He amplifies this by the more general hypothesis that 'if enthusiasm is a retort to oppression and repression, what it seeks to proclaim is man's triumphant mastery of an intolerable environment.'

In conformity with this consensus of sociological opinion, Bryan Wilson considers that the eighteenth century evangelical revival in Britain represented 'the attempt to re-establish agrarian values, to restore the advantages of stable community life to people who had lost all community sense.' He identifies himself with the conclusions of Cohn, Worsley, Lewis and other contemporary sociologists when he further asserts:

It is not surprising that such revivals had their impact in new urban areas, full of recently transplanted rural populations. Their demand was often for the persistence of relationships and community structure which were often no longer possible in the rapidly changing conditions of industrial society. The success of revivals among rural migrants to the town, even at times among former Catholics, illustrates the strength of the emotional response and the demand for the security of life under a pervasive ethic in which stable expectations and responses have in the past provided the framework of the social order.

1 I.M. Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 32.
2 I.M. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
3 I.M. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
5 Bryan R. Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society*, p. 49.
In his estimation, the revival presented an opportunity for adjustment to individuals within groups which were not as yet advantaged by the course of the nation's development, and were often temporarily dislocated within it.

Other sociologists have reached similar conclusions to those outlined above. H. Richard Niebuhr, in his incisive analysis of the social sources of denominationalism, identifies what he considers to be the distinctive social group at the core of many radical religious movements, and he additionally discerns a fundamental change in the social characteristics of this nucleus as the movement develops into a denomination:

... one phase of the history of denominationalism reveals itself as the story of the religiously neglected poor, who fashion a new type of Christianity which corresponds to their distinctive needs, who rise in the economic scale under the influence of religious discipline, and who, in the midst of a freshly acquired cultural respectability, neglect the new poor succeeding them on the lower plane. This pattern recurs with remarkable regularity in the history of Christianity. Anabaptists, Quakers, Methodists, Salvation Army, and more recent sects of like type illustrate this raise and progress of the churches of the disinherited.\(^1\)

As a final example, Vittorio Lantemari, also concentrating his attention upon the social aspects in the origin of religious movements, maintains that 'the striving for religious renewal and liberation arises from the rebellion of the masses against existing official cults imposed by a ruling caste', when 'the voice of the people demanding change is gradually rising above the din of conservative tradition.'\(^2\)

\(^1\) H. Richard Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

\(^2\) Vittorio Lantemari, *The Religions of the Oppressed*, pp. viii, ix.
It is significant that these various studies have resulted in such a oneness of mind, with but slight divergences of emphasis. There is a broad concurrence concerning the social category of those most fully involved in the religious movements examined, and this agreement is made more impressive in view of the range of the subject matter which has been considered, for this has historically spanned the centuries from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, and geographically has stretched almost from one pole to the other. Sociologically, the studies have embraced such diverse situations as feudal Europe, eighteenth century Britain with its rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, and the simpler societies of the south Pacific. The conclusions indicate a regularity which may be anticipated in the various and diverse manifestations of revivalism at any one particular time or place. We will proceed to consider whether the present study lends support to these conclusions, or whether it in any way suggests a change or modification to them.

It has been found that in most revivals, various strata of society are represented. The eighteenth century revival numbered amongst its most ardent supporters the Countess of Huntingdom, the Hon. Walter Shirley, the Countess of Chesterfield, Lady Anne Erskine, and others of high social status. It also claimed the whole-hearted allegiance of numberless members of the prosperous middle classes, and John Wesley makes mention of active participants in the revival who are best assigned to the social category of professional and executive. But it is undoubtedly true that the generality of those most involved in the revival were not from these more elevated social groups. The typical Society, Class or Band meeting was composed of members whose social origins, and present social standing were of a more humble nature. The revival exercised its most powerful thrust and influence among those
members of the population who were not outstanding either in terms of academic ability, affluence or social prestige.

However, at this stage a cautionary note needs to be introduced, and an amendment suggested to the sometimes somewhat sweeping assertion that such religious movements are substantially composed of the lowest strata of society, and are most successful among the most socially discontented, and disorientated members of the population. This is not endorsed on the evidence of the present examination of revivalism. In the eighteenth century revival in London, although those most actively involved were largely from what, in modern sociological parlance, would be classified as the lower middle or working classes, it does not appear that the conditions which reduced them to a state of social alienation. The lists of the Fetter Lane membership, referred to in chapter III, indicate that a large proportion of those engaged in the promotion of the revival were tradesmen, craftsmen, artisans, and others in this broad category, rather than the unskilled, often unemployed poor. Among the Society members we are confronted with tailors, butchers, engravers, merchants and others in similar employment, or self-employed. George J. Stevenson gives details of the money contributed in 1745 and 1746 by members of the Methodist London Society at the visitation of the Class, and as ticket-money. From this he concludes:

... it is abundantly manifest that the great increase in the United Societies was not confined to the lower classes, though it is acknowledged that the majority of the members belonged to the poor and industrious portion of the people. This list proves that Mr. Wesley drew many of his converts from the respectable and even the opulent classes.¹

¹ George J. Stevenson, op. cit., p. 31.
The revival was not predominantly a matter of the most deprived, underprivileged, and socially dispossessed members of the society finding solace, and a means of escape in the consolations of religion. With the revivals which were more geographically circumscribed, such as those in Wales, Ulster and Scotland in the nineteenth century, and Wales and Lewis in the twentieth century, there does not seem to have existed a socially alienated population of any magnitude upon which the revival could have exercised an influence; and in other examples, such as the Northampton revival in eighteenth century America, the participant observers are concerned to show the wide social range of the revivals influence. It would thus appear to be an oversimplification to analyse such religious phenomena as the response of the socially alienated to a message which provided them with a religious compensation for their temporal shortcomings. This study has indicated that there is some substance in this, for some of those involved in some revivals; but it is inadequate as a total explanation of the social origins of such religious movements, or even as identifying the most significant causal factor in any particular revival.

As the participants in revivals and similar religious movements have been a focus of sociological study, so also has the relationship between them and their leaders attracted similar attention. Here, the matters of special interest have included the extent to which the origins of a movement are spontaneous or dependent upon the presence of a focal personality, and where such a key figure is prominent, the extent to which the movement's continuance relies upon such a person; the interrelationship between the leader and his followers, and the measure to which the leader determines the characteristics and
direction taken by the movement; and the changes in leadership roles which are to be seen as the movement develops and expands. In this whole academic discussion, the concept of charisma, especially as elaborated by Max Weber, has been of central importance.

Weber analysed three principles forming the basis for the acceptance of any system of domination, and the exercise of authority. Legal domination, in the summary of Reinhard Bendix, 'exists where a system of rules that is applied judicially and administratively in accordance with ascertainable principles is valid for all members of the corporate group.'¹ Traditional domination rests on the 'belief in the legitimacy of an authority that "has always existed"'.² Charismatic domination is dependent upon the qualities of character, personality and leadership of an individual endued with exceptional ability to exert a powerful influence upon others, and through this, to claim a high measure of devotion to himself and his cause from his followers. Weber viewed these three categories as 'pure types', which always, in any given historical situation, were seen in subtle combination. He presented them as a model for the understanding and interpretation of particular systems, and claimed that as such, it was possible to analyse the structure of authority and domination concerned into its component elements. We will first consider how far the emergence of a revival is conditional upon an appropriate charismatic leader, or is independent of this factor; and we will then proceed to examine both the function and changing roles of revival leaders within the movements in which they are involved.

¹ Reinhard Bendix, op. cit., p. 294.
Many of the revivals considered in this study are associated so intimately with the inspiration, vision, labours and leadership of one or more dominant personalities, that it is a matter of debate if they would have arisen at the time they did, or followed the course they underwent, if this special personal impetus had not been present. The revival in London was initiated largely as a direct sequence of the preaching of Whitefield, and its continued drive and effectiveness was sustained to a great extent by the charismatic influence of Whitefield and the Wesleys. The Northampton revival owed much to Jonathan Edwards, and other revival leaders such as Howell Harris, Daniel Rowlands, Howell Davies, David Morgan and Evan Roberts played a vital, if not indispensable part in the revivals with which they were variously associated. In each of these examples it is difficult to conceive that the revival concerned would either have occurred at all, or if so, that it would have assumed the proportions it did, except for the powerful presence of the particular leader or leaders involved. Conversely, it appears that there was in each case an incipient stirring of spiritual interest and response on which the revival leader drew, which provided scope for the exercise of charismatic qualities. It is also of note that in many manifestations of this religious phenomena, such as the frontier revivals of eighteenth century America, the revivals at Cambuslang and Kilsyth in the same century, those in America, Ulster and Scotland in the following century, and those in Wales, Korea, Indonesia and Central Africa in the twentieth century, no central revival leader or leaders were dominant.

It may be concluded that a revival originates with a sudden, greatly increased concern for religious matters among a given population or
group, which may, as suggested earlier, be caused by a change in the social frame of reference of the people involved, and that this may grow and expand in a remarkable way either with or without the aid of a charismatic leader. The situation has to be ripe for such a leader to exercise his powers to the full; a revival leader cannot operate in unprepared and unsuitable conditions. It is when the social, and religious conditions are appropriate, and the leader with the requisite spiritual and charismatic attributes is available, that the combination is provided which may well result in a revival.

It is apparent that initially in a revival the authority of the leaders is dependent upon their charismatic influence, and the acceptance of this by the generality of those entailed in the revival. The power they exert is derived from qualities which they are able to demonstrate. They are recognised by their followers as being possessed of spiritual inspiration to a peculiar degree. They are considered to be endued with a divine blessing, and special commission, and not merely with extraordinary human ability. As long as this belief is maintained, so long is the authority accepted. A revival is essentially an inspirational movement, in which the structure of leadership is fundamentally related to the distribution of spiritual and charismatic qualities among the participant members. If it develops out of this initial phase, as the eighteenth century revival did in Britain, then a more formal structure supersedes, in which specific roles are assigned, with an expectation of role fulfilment according to particular duties attached to special offices. Authority and leadership are gradually accepted, not solely or even mainly on account of the charisma attaching to certain individuals, but as a consequence of the faithful and efficient role fulfilment of people elected to posts of
responsibility. In the first stage of the movement, when it may with propriety be recognised as a revival, no formal training or special qualifications and evidence of suitability for leadership are required; but at a later stage, these become important, and even essential. The changes, as seen, for example, in the eighteenth century revival in Britain, are gradual and subtle, and it is not a matter of a metamorphosis from one pure type to another. It is rather a change of emphasis, bound up with the whole development of a relatively spontaneous movement into a more formal organisation, in which ritual, dogma, rules and procedures assume more importance.

The spontaneous character of revivals also helps to engender an intense awareness of corporate identity among those entailed. There is a deep consciousness among the participants of having responded to a divine call. They are united by a sense that each of them has entered into a new and vital transcendental experience. They are acutely sensible of the gulf which separates them from the multitude of their fellow beings who have not witnessed this spiritual transformation in their own lives, and who, as a consequence, do not generally sympathise with the new outlook, norms and aspirations which flow from such a climacteric experience. The revival members both individually and as a body consider themselves as aliens in a world which is fundamentally hostile to the things which are most dear to them. This all assists in uniting those concerned into a cohesive fellowship based on profound beliefs, experiences and ideals held in common. It is a feature to be found in all revivals. In the eighteenth century revival in Britain it may be demonstrated that the recently transplanted rural populations who had migrated to the urban areas, discovered in such revival fellowship the 'persistence of
relationships and community structure which were often no longer possible in the rapidly changing conditions of industrial society. But this is only an illustration of one particular social group responding in a given historical situation to what is typical of revivals, whatever the social circumstances in which they occur. The extent of the felt need among the members of a given population or group for the type of intense corporate identity which revivals provide, may vary considerably, but it is always present in some measure, for it is a universal, conscious need of individuals and groups. Revivals merely provide a context in and through which this need is expressed and enjoyed. In other circumstances a similar provision may be made by some form of secular movement. In the case of revivals the response is basically religious, with social implications, rather than a social response sanctioned or rationalised by reference to religious beliefs.

The spontaneous fellowship among the adherents of a revival has a number of corollary consequences. As shown in chapter III, it provides for the participation and involvement of those concerned. In accord with the charismatic basis of authority and leadership outlined above, there is at all levels ample scope for ordinary members of the movement to make their own valid and valuable contributions to the consolidation and furtherance of the revival. Revivals are essentially grass roots movements in which the life, thrust and momentum is largely generated among the membership as a whole, rather than imposed or injected by a leadership or organisation. Evangelism, teaching and the execution of the manifold forms of service and work which accompany most revivals, is not the prerogative of a select few, but a requirement of all according to the different gifts assigned to each. In this is to be found the source of satisfaction and

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1 Bryan R. Wilson, op. cit., p. 49.
fulfilment given to the members, as they are both encouraged to use their talents to the utmost in what is seen by them as a concerted, divine task, and as they are given every opportunity to do so. It is also a most pertinent factor in the widespread, pervasive influence of most revivals, for it makes every believer a potential evangelist and pastor, effective in varying degrees according to their ability and devotion.

One subsidiary consequence of this emphasis upon the vital role of the ordinary members, and the requirement laid upon them to exert themselves to the utmost for the glory of God, was the encouragement of an intense inner worldly ethic. The eighteenth century revival in Britain helped to make more explicit the fundamental Protestant ethic with its stress upon the importance of the individual, the need to exhibit in daily life and endeavour the virtue of using personal talents to the fullest, and the merit of active involvement in worldly affairs as the arena in which is made manifest the blessing of God upon His people. Social striving, social mobility, and a strenuous effort to attain prosperity, were ideas which were not inculcated in a direct way by the teaching of the revival. However, they tended to some extent to emerge as a secondary result of the more basic revival principle which required that the converts should use to capacity the individual attributes which God had given them. In certain respects this was an unintended consequence. When it was incorporated as a more overt article of revival ethics, as in Wesley's famous dictum, 'Gain all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can', it was hedged about by very strict limitations.\(^1\) But, seen as a social ethic, and especially in this particular historical

\(^1\) J. Wesley Bready, *op. cit.*, p. 236f.
example, with an expanding economy, it did contribute to a contemporary progressive philosophy. In as far as all revivals tend to encourage the converts to maximise the use of their own innate potential, both within the context of their corporate religious life, and in the wider secular sphere, so this may be seen as a characteristic ethical aspect of revivalism.

The revival ethic also inclined to be radical. Based as it is upon a radical individual reformation of life arising out of a climacteric conversion experience, it views questions of personal and social morality from the standpoint of religious, and more specifically, biblical principles. The primary importance is attached to what is seen to be right in the sight of God, rather than what is expedient in any given temporal situation. The focus of attention is upon such individualistic matters as drunkenness, immorality, and other forms of what is seen as personal vice, which is in keeping with the central religious concern for individual conversion and consecration. The reformation of society is considered to be possible only through the cumulative effect of individual lives being totally re-orientated as a consequence of profound religious experiences of conversion. Other influences may help, and revivals frequently result in pressure being brought to bear on different social institutions, but the main thrust seems to be at the personal level. The principle of the leaven appears to be considered of paramount importance.

Seen in the wider context of world religions, this ethic apparently encouraged by revivals, contrasts with that which tends to emanate from other religious traditions. Thus the cosmic view dominating Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism is essentially 'world renouncing'. The philosophical and religious orientation of these religions
discourages intense involvement with temporal affairs. With Buddhism and Hinduism, the world is seen as a transient abode, and there is a constant striving towards final release from the encumbrance of those earthly constraints which prevent, or hinder the attainment of ultimate spiritual fulfillment. In the case of Confucianism, the ideal of the cultivation of grace and dignity by means of literary learning and correct conduct, entails the allocation of political and other mundane matters to subordinates. For each of these religious traditions, there is a common element which is in essence other-worldly. From such opposing world views, Weber considered that encouragement was either given or not given to the development of what he designated 'the spirit of capitalism'.\(^1\) Undoubtedly, there are frequently unintended consequences of intended human action, and one such is the support given to the growth of capitalism by the revival ethic in some historic examples, such as eighteenth century Britain.

When revivalism is considered in such a broad historical and global manner, it is also significant to what extent it has been historically and geographically confined. It is restricted largely to the post-Reformation era in the Occident, or, outside the western world, to emerging societies, with a not very high level of technological development. Sociologically, this is indicative of those features in the social structure and social dynamics which favour the appearance of this phenomenon.

The generally rigid, formal, persistent, hierarchical social structure of feudal society, and of pre-Reformation Europe as a whole did not encourage it. Such revivals and similar phenomena as did arise in these centuries, were born largely in the small urban areas, where the social structure was somewhat more open than in the rural districts. Thus, Norman Cohn, in studying revolutionary Christian 'movements of more or less eschatological inspiration' in the Europe of the Middle Ages, observes:

The areas in which the age-old prophecies about the Last Days took on a new, revolutionary meaning and a new, explosive force were the areas of rapid social change - and not simply change by expansion: areas where trade and industry were developing and where the population was rapidly increasing. Life in such areas differed vastly from the agricultural life which was the norm throughout the thousand-year span of the Middle Ages ... ¹

In the rural areas, where the status quo had remained substantially unaltered, and the social order had assumed an aspect of permanency, such movements were unusual, and revivals, as defined in this thesis, were a rarity. It appears that the social environment in which revival type phenomena emerged in pre-Reformation Europe, contained many of those social and sociological features discussed above. For such phenomena most characteristically occurred where there were small communities, with a high level of meaningful social interaction between the members, in circumstances in which, for different reasons, the social framework of all or part of the population was fundamentally re-ordered. In many of the examples, there was a charismatic leader who could focus and direct the spontaneous upsurge of spiritual energy, although such a person was by no means essential for the effectiveness of the movement concerned. The persons centrally entailed in these religious movements, were frequently from those socio-economic groups

¹ Norman Cohn, op. cit., p. 22.
experiencing the fullest effects of the social re-orientation, although others were also often deeply involved. The dominant social ethic associated with this phenomena in these centuries was essentially individualistic, and reflected in some measure the aspirations of the social status groups most committed to the movements. Thus, although revival-like movements were of infrequent occurrence in the life of pre-sixteenth century Europe, when they did appear, those elements were often present in the social structure which both favoured such phenomena, and helped to determine its distinctive form.

But, although revivalism is a predominantly post-Reformation phenomena, it is significantly not common in the highly urbanised and industrialised societies of the Western world. As previously remarked in chapter VIII, twentieth century revivals have almost entirely arisen outside these areas, and generally those which have occurred in such societies have been located in the lesser developed districts, and have been somewhat limited in scope and influence, as with the Welsh revival of 1904, and that in the isle of Lewis and Harris. Sociologically, the most relevant consideration in this respect appears again to be the rigidity of the social structure, although we are here confronted with institutional rigidity, rather than that resulting from a long established, traditional, hierarchical order of socio-economic groups, as exemplified in feudal Europe. In the twentieth century Western world, vast social institutions, such as industrial organisations, central and local government, mass communication media, and other such giants, provide a complex and over-powering structure in which it is difficult for spontaneous face-to-face movements such as
revivals to flourish; the social context does not favour such phenomena. This is especially true in the more depersonalised environment of the large contemporary cities and conurbations, but it is also a discouragement of such phenomena within the society as a whole. It is noteworthy that the Jesus movement has been most effective within a particular sub-culture, where some of those community features are present which have previously been shown to provide a social framework conducive to revivalism. Great caution must be exercised in attributing a causal connection between any particular social feature or combination of features, and the emergence of a revival, in view of the intricate pattern of various interrelated and interacting social factors involved. Such social constituents do not determine when or where a revival will appear. In all this discussion of revivalism as a social phenomenon we have avoided such determinism. The emphasis has been upon elements in the social structure, and in the social dynamics of the society concerned which encourage the appearance of a revival, and which subsequently colour its character and development to some extent.
CHAPTER X

Revivalism as a Religious Phenomenon

G. Van der Leeuw considers a revival as one of three types of reformation. In his opinion it is: 'A reformation springing from mass experience:- from the revitalized collective experience of God.'

He further amplifies this:

By the term revival I mean that a wave of religious feeling and desire flows over a community, and draws everything along with it in the broad stream of sentiment and resolution. It may be linked with ecstatic experiences, but at all events it consists of some relaxation of life's potencies, all of which are then precipitated on the religious purpose without hindrance and freed from all compulsion of regulated celebration. It may be sustained by some single personality, but it may also operate en masse in every respect, though it certainly always requires leaders; and while it may reform a religious society, it may also establish itself as a sect quite apart from the existing community.

He proceeds to cite what he considers to be an example:

Such a revival was the great Dionysiac wave which, in the early history of Greece, penetrated Hellas from the North with elemental power and carried everything along with it. Like all revivals this too was contagious, as may be clearly perceived from legendary narratives of the immigration of Dionysus; some few isolated individuals offer resistance, but the majority are swept away in the whirlpool of divine insanity. Thus in Orchomenos the daughters of Minyas withstood the frenzy until vine-runners suddenly twined themselves around their looms, while milk and honey dropped from the ceiling; then they too seized one of their sons, tore him in pieces and sought their salvation in the mountains with the maenads. Marvellously clear in this legend is the foil of the historical event itself: the epidemic seizes all the more fiercely those who at first resisted it, and the Dionysiac revival became a popular under-current of Greek religion that maintained itself not only in various sects such as Orphism and Pythagoreanism, but had also very lasting influence on the thought and aspiration of the entire Greek people; it may therefore be asserted that though it was not a reformation in the strict sense, still it thoroughly reformed Greek religion; and without this revival neither tragedy nor Platonism would ever have arisen.¹

¹ Gerardus Van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation, pp. 614, 615.
This definition and description of revival given by Van der Leeuw is valuable in drawing attention to some of the salient features in movements of religious enthusiasm. It also provides insight into certain of the characteristics revivalism shares with such movements. But it seems to us to be too broad and general. It is not specific enough. Revivalism, as we conceive it, is a more limited and restricted religious phenomenon than his delineation includes. There have been many examples in various religious traditions of 'a wave of religious feeling and desire' flowing over a community, but we would maintain that many of these may not aptly be designated revivals. We consider that a justifiable distinction may be made between enthusiastic movements, sectarian movements, cults, independent movements, and revivals, as discussed in our Introduction. The definition and description given by Van der Leeuw would appear to blur this differentiation, and to allow all such movements to be embraced within the same category. We see a revival as essentially a movement of spiritual renewal within a religious tradition, which to an extent reasserts the dynamic meaning and significance of rituals, symbols, practices and beliefs which have to varying degrees lost their vitality. We consider that the Dionysiac 'wave' quoted by Van der Leeuw is an example of an enthusiastic movement, rather than a revival. It did not originate from within a religious tradition, and revive that tradition, or one part of it, but 'penetrated Hellas from the North'. It partook more of the nature of a religious invasion, than the spiritual renewal of an existing religious structure and community. Also, it involved a 'whirlpool of divine insanity', rather than a marked increase in the commitment of a number of individuals within a religious tradition to the beliefs and practices of their faith, or a marked and sustained increase in
the number of new commitments (conversions) to the same religious faith. It was a new religious movement, which caused such a wave of religious feeling and desire in a community that certain women killed one of their sons, and sought their salvation in the mountains with the maenads; but it was not, in our opinion, a revival.

Despite the boldness of the claim, it appears to us that revivalism, as defined in our Introduction, is largely confined to the Christian tradition. It does not seem to be found in Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, or the traditional African religions, although phenomena containing characteristics in common with revivalism, such as spirit possession and shamanism are to be found, especially in the indigenous African religions, and the religions of certain other communities with a relatively simple social structure. Likewise, periodically, in certain festivals and initiation ceremonies, individual and corporate religious behaviour is manifested which contains features in common with revivalism, and the particular festivals or ceremonies may be similar in some respects to some revival meetings. But we consider this does not represent the spontaneity and sustained characteristics of revivalism, which have been discussed in our Introduction.

There are various factors which may well help to account for this restriction of revivalism mainly to the Christian tradition, and which assist in identifying those religious elements in that tradition which favour revivals. It is first worthy of note that the fundamental philosophies and theological or metaphysical orientation of the major world religions outside Christianity, are essentially not conducive to the appearance of revival-type phenomena. It seems that, on the whole, the other world religions have not, to the same degree as Christianity,
given prominence to the indispensable need for an individual experience of conversion. They have not, for the main, been fired by a concern to confront individuals with the imperative demand upon them to accept a particular way of salvation on which their eternal destiny depends. It appears to us that they have, therefore, not generally, to the same extent as Christianity, focused the attention of individuals upon the possibility of a single traumatic experience in a moment of time, which will determine that destiny. Exceptions to this, such as the recent considerable, and vigorous proselytising efforts ofZen Buddhism in the western world, do not invalidate this generalisation. The degree of emphasis upon a determinative personal climacteric religious experience varies within the Christian tradition, according to particular nuances of theological commitment, but it remains a distinctive feature of the Christian faith as a whole, that it, above all religious traditions, gives this emphasis, and it is a component in the doctrinal and experiental dimensions of the tradition which encourages the occurrence of revivals. Other religious traditions are permeated by a different emphasis.

For example, in Buddhism there is a central and dominant contemplative element, especially in the Hinayana tradition, with the stress upon an inward directed discipline, and a slow process of advancement through the Noble Eightfold Path towards the ultimate goal of nirvana. Spiritual progress is seen as being protracted and most usually steady. Any form of sudden conversion experience in response to some external circumstance such as preaching is generally eschewed. The individual pilgrimage with its consummation in spiritual enlightenment is essentially undramatic. Even with the emergence of a greater devotional emphasis in the form of bhakti, and the more theistical Mahayana Buddhism, the underlying
orientation remained the same. The whole ethos of such a religion tends to discourage any phenomena arising within it which may remotely be considered as a revival.

The same is true of Hinduism. Despite an important devotional component, especially as developed in the Bhagavadgita, and the worship of Shiva and Vishnu, there is a basic philosophical and religious conservatism, with the emphasis again on contemplation. At the centre of the Hindu system of belief, and diffused throughout the whole religious outlook, is the concept of a cosmic process of immense dimensions, involving birth and re-birth, in which change takes place in the lives of individuals in a gradual and unsensational manner. In the words of Ninian Smart:

The picture of the world as a place where the immortal spirit within man is virtually endlessly implicated in the round of reincarnation has dominated the Indian imagination for about three millennia.¹

With such an ideological framework of thought, there has been inculcated a religious view which does not seek any form of final spiritual experience, on the grounds of which the course of a future life beyond death is decided. The concern of individuals is to so adhere to an accepted pattern of religious and temporal conduct in their daily lives, that they will attain a measure of progress in the eternal spiritual process in which they are implicated. This is not the type of religious orientation favouring revivals.

Confucianism encourages an acceptance of existing norms and institutions, and a devotion to the duties of the station in life in which one is placed, which are carefully prescribed; and this results in a high level

¹ Ninian Smart, op. cit., p. 185.
of conformity. It is a philosophy of life dominated by a concern for correct behaviour and ordered relationships; it does not give any prominence, or indeed any place at all to spontaneous, conversion-like experiences. Of paramount importance is steady and consistent behaviour in accordance with specified rules and modes of conduct. It is of little surprise that the long history of Confucianism does not appear to present us with any form of revival, as we have defined such a phenomenon. This is likewise with the related Taoist system, which, in the words of A.C. Bouquet, inculcates

... a kind of quietist mysticism, a sort of tranquil spontaneity in all one's life, in which considered action and independent thought are eschewed, since Nature is so beneficent that it is better not to interfere with her machinery.1

In Islam, there is the governing tenet of submission to the will of Allah, which also tends to produce among the faithful of that religious tradition a widespread attitude of conformity. It is required of the adherents to the faith that they should perform those religious and moral duties prescribed for them, and commit their way to the almighty and sovereign God who orders all things. They are not encouraged or expected to seek for any transforming spiritual encounter, or conversion experience. There have been movements of renewal throughout Islamic history, but these generally appear to have been either predominantly philosophical or mystical, as with Sufism, or to a considerable extent politically orientated, as, for example, with the Sanusiyah movement in Cyrenaica.2

In general, the organisations and religious structures associated with the


world religions we have just considered, reflect their characteristic, and fundamental religious orientations. For the most part there is a large measure of formality and rigidity, in which the roles not only of the religious leaders, but also of the religious adherents are well defined, fixed and circumscribed, and the status quo is accepted. This does not readily allow for the emergence of any movement characterised by a high degree of activism, individualism, personal commitment and involvement, and the centrality of the concept of the priesthood of all believers. This is supremely demonstrated in the Hindu caste system, but it is also a most pertinent consideration in the other world religions. In Buddhism, the prominence given to the monastic order of the Sangha, and to the priesthood, has produced an emphasis upon institutional religion, and the ideal of a separated life of holiness, which, despite trends to the contrary, especially in the Mahayana form of the faith, has been of paramount importance. With Confucianism, the stress laid upon literary accomplishment, and correct etiquette, has resulted in a hierarchical structure of almost caste-like quality, with the literati at the summit. Finally, in the case of Islam, the faith of the individual is often to a considerable degree intertwined with the structures of the society in which he lives. However, the extent of this varies greatly, and under certain circumstances (as, for example, in some pluralistic societies such as twentieth century Indonesia) there is a relaxation of these social restraints, and the situation allows for the emergence of movements of renewal as mentioned on page 159.

Thus, in both their doctrinal and experiential dimensions, and in the religious structures associated with these, none of the world religions other than Christianity provides a fruitful ground for the growth, or
sudden appearance of a phenomenon such as revivalism. At the core of each is a religious norm which enjoins upon the faithful a protracted spiritual pilgrimage. Any form of climacteric experience, which is a central feature of revivalism, is usually absent. Even when moments of enlightenment are involved, they are not most commonly responses in a moment of time, or sudden spiritual transformations. Typically what is required is a gradual, progressive attainment of greater spiritual maturity on the basis of a quietistic, meditative approach, in which no sudden or dramatic change is sought or expected. Any such 'conversion' experience is seldom encountered, and is usually restricted to isolated individuals, in a somewhat rarefied spiritual situation, as with Buddhist monks. It is rare in the major world religions outside Christianity, to encounter either a sudden increased commitment of those within the faith, involving their intellects, emotions and wills, or of a marked acceleration in the extent of the turning to the faith as a consequence of conversion, by those outside, or only nominal members. But both of these are fundamental characteristics of revivals in general. Among the world religions so far considered, Christianity provides the most favourable doctrinal and experiential context for a phenomenon such as revivalism.

In Judaism, as a distinct part of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, we encounter movements with certain features characteristic of revivalism. As an example, we will consider eighteenth century Hasidism, as it has some affinities with revivalism as we have defined it. The movement appears to have been a reaction to the stresses and impoverishment experienced by Polish Jewry; and a counter influence to the dominant scholarly approach within the Jewish tradition at the time. In the words of
Margolis and Marx, this 'left the yearning of the soul for simple and direct communion with God unsatisfied.'\(^1\) It arose after a preceding period of Messianic expectancy among certain sectors of the Jewish people.\(^2\) In the movement, emphasis was laid upon a new method of serving God, and this method addressed itself to the individual concerned with his own personal salvation.'\(^3\) Some of its revival-like characteristics are conveyed in the description given by James Parkes. He writes:

Around 1740 he (Israel, son of Eliezer) began to preach that it was not through the intellect that men would find God, but by seeking Him directly, and by making their worship of Him a source of ecstasy and joy. Israel travelled all over Poland, and everywhere aroused great enthusiasm. He became known as the Baal Shem Tov (the master of the good Name of God, abbreviated to Besht), and his followers took up again the ancient title of the Hasidim, the men of piety. The revivalism of the Baal Shem Tov became impregnated with the mysticism which had been preached in Safed two hundred years before; and a new type of Judaism brought an undoubted relief to the poverty-stricken ghettos deep in the mud, gloom, and isolation of the Polish market town and countryside.\(^4\)

The movement appears to have given prominence to matters which are more characteristic of evangelical Christianity and revivalism than orthodox Judaism. These included stress upon finding God through 'seeking Him directly'; focus upon 'the individual concerned with his own salvation'; an apparent spontaneous response to the message, with 'great enthusiasm'; and an emphasis on 'making their worship of Him a source of ecstasy and joy.'

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\(^3\) Margolis and Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 582.

The limitations of the present study do not permit us to examine this, or any other movement within the Judaic tradition in depth. It is acknowledged that Hasidism (which arose in an historical setting which had similarities with the London revival, and included the influence of Pietism) has much in common with revivalism, and may possibly be considered an example of such a phenomenon. This, and similar movements within the Judaic tradition, are worthy of further study in the light of the characteristics which we have associated with revivalism.

In considering revivalism within the Christian tradition, we are again confronted with the problem of definition. It was only during and subsequent to the eighteenth century that revivalism was recognised, defined and described as a distinct religious phenomenon. It is difficult to discern in the pre-Reformation history of the universal Christian Church what may, or may not have been genuine revivalism. Revivals may have taken place which were not overtly categorised as such at the time of their occurrence because of the absence of any suitable accepted categorisation. It cannot be assumed that revivals did not occur, merely because they were not described as such, or because contemporary and later commentators and historians did not apply the term revival to the appropriate religious phenomenon.

A number of pre-Reformation movements may rightly be considered as manifestations of what R.A. Knox has designated 'enthusiasm'. They were not examples of revivalism. An illustration of such a distinction is the Montanist movement of the second century A.D., and this will serve as a means of somewhat further clarifying the distinctive characteristics of revivalism. It represented to an extent 'a clique, an elite of Christian men and (more importantly) women, ... trying to live a less worldly life than their neighbours; to

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be more attentive to the guidance (directly felt, they would tell you) of the Holy Spirit.\(^1\) Knox viewed it as an early example of enthusiasm. We will consider in what ways it differed from a revival, as this will assist in identifying the essential features of revivalism, and help in isolating revivalism as a distinct phenomenon within the Christian tradition.

First, it did not arise as a movement of spiritual renewal, and an upsurge of spiritual energy from within the mainstream of the Christian tradition. It was not fundamentally a reassertion of the meaning and vitality of symbols, doctrines and practices which had become dead and formal. Montanism was born on the periphery of both the Greco-Roman civilisation, and of the established Christian faith. As Knox has commented:

Those who are anxious to persuade us that the Montanists were simply a set of primitive Christians, trying to save a legitimate tradition of prophecy from falling into decay, would do well to observe that the movement had a barbaric cradling.\(^2\)

Indeed, according to one tradition, Montanus may have been a priest of Cybele. The movement certainly appears to have arisen and spread mainly in the area associated with the ecstatic cult of Cybele.\(^3\) The extent to which it owed its origin to non-Christian influences is a matter of debate. It does, however, appear that it did not essentially represent an imparting of new life from within, to a Christian tradition which had to a degree become moribund.

\(^3\) See article Montanism, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. XV, 1970, pp. 775, 776.
Secondly, and related to this, Montanism was largely an innovation. The major figures were Montanus, Prisca or Priscilla and Maximilla. It seems to have been claimed that the Paraclete, the spirit of truth, whom Jesus had promised, was manifesting himself through them. Montanus apparently maintained that the words they spoke were the voice of the Spirit, and that to him had been given the final revelation of the Holy Spirit. It also seems that the Montanists required their fellow Christians to acknowledge the supernatural nature of the utterances of these three 'prophets', and asserted that failure to do so was blasphemy. All these claims represented ideas and doctrines which were at variance with orthodox Christian teaching and tradition. It was this aspect which was at the core of the movement, and which made it distinctive. In this respect it represented an independent religious movement arising out of Christianity, and had characteristics of a sect or cult, as defined in our Introduction, rather than a revival.

Finally, this element of innovation extended to the manner and form of the behaviour which was central to the movement. Prophecy had been part of the Christian tradition from its early days, but Montanism appears to have involved a deliberate inducement of ecstatic states, which was alien to the accepted orthodox Christian behaviour. Referring to Montanus, Eusebius comments:

He allowed the Enemy of souls to enter into him, and so began to be carried away by inspiration; there would be a sudden seizure, he would fall into a trance, and start raving in his speech. He would speak with strange tongues, too, and prophecy (or so it was called) in a manner quite contrary to that which has come down to us, by continuous tradition, from earlier times.

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2 For example, see *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, chapter 14.
The emphasis seems to have been placed repeatedly by Montanists on this one particular feature of prophecy. This was the supreme concern, and other aspects of the movement, such as the widely held conviction of the imminent return of Christ, flowed from an acceptance of the supposedly inspired utterances. Indeed, Montanism to an extent appears to have set itself up as a new Christian orthodoxy, not only in the content of what it proclaimed, but in the manner and form through which the ideas and doctrines were made known.

The movement has been harshly condemned by many, and perhaps greatly misunderstood, but in its origins, content and form it does not seem to be rightly considered as a revival.

We have devoted some time to an examination of Montanism, as we are concerned to demonstrate that certain movements within the Christian tradition, although possessing a prima facie resemblance to revivalism, differ from it in certain ways. There have been other phenomena which also bore this superficial similarity to revivalism, such as the Flagellant movement of the fifteenth century, and Jansenism, Quietism and the French Prophets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is not the intention of the present study to examine these, or other movements to determine in each case wherein the difference between them and revivalism lies. It appears that there are few movements in the pre-Reformation history of either the Western or the Eastern Church, which comply with the definition and delineation of revivalism which has been suggested in our Introduction. This may to a large degree be the result of the greater hierarchical rigidity and formalised structure in these churches, compared with Protestantism, and the emphasis upon the corporate body, rather than upon the individual, and his responsibility
alone before God. Although it is appreciated that it is a bold statement to make, we would maintain that within the Christian tradition revivals have been largely restricted to Protestantism.

Even with Protestantism, it appears that revivals have never been entirely contained within any rigid ecclesiastical framework. The importance attached in them to the direct intervention and influence of God in the lives of individuals, and the lack of significance given to a formal institutional church structure has frequently resulted in tension between the movement as such and the institutionally established church in the area in which it occurs. This was clearly evident in the eighteenth century evangelical revival in Great Britain, where it was only due to the constant and strenuous efforts of John and Charles Wesley that Methodism remained for so long at least theoretically within the Church of England. At their deaths it rapidly became an independent, separatist movement, and soon assumed all the characteristics of a denomination. Revivals seldom actually lead to schism, but they most often entail a temporary, informal structure which enables those involved to meet outside the established Church and denominational structures. They require a measure of flexibility and adaptability to accommodate new spiritual experiences and new patterns of individual and corporate religious life, which the organised Church in many cases is unable to provide, as it is not accustomed to such a surge of spiritual energy. The established ecclesiastical organisations typically do not allow for a wide spectrum of religious experience or behaviour; they are essentially conformist bodies. Although this varies greatly, there is this underlying difference of emphasis and norms. Revivals tend to infuse new vitality into the
existing religious bodies, but they are also liable to locate their primary activity outside such bodies, and even to result in the establishment of new structures.

Thus, the basic theological tenets, moral, ethical, and spiritual orientation, and the associated structures of a religion, and of particular traditions within a religion, are important in facilitating or hindering the emergence of revival-type phenomena. They are additionally relevant in helping to determine the distinctive type of personal and corporate experiences which are manifested in revivals. In this respect, an element common to all revivals, which is made more explicit in some rather than others, is the attempt to return to the pristine essentials, experiences and life patterns of the individuals and groups in the Early Church of the first century, as it is depicted in the New Testament. To varying degrees according to the particular revival, there is a reaction against the accumulated mass of traditions, procedures, organisations, formulations and rituals which the historical development of the Church has entailed. The description Mary Douglas has applied to the alienation from current social values, expresses this attitude. She writes of

...a denunciation not only of irrelevant rituals, but of ritualism as such; exaltation of the inner experience and denigration of its standardised expressions; preference for intuitive and instant forms of knowledge; rejection of mediating institutions, rejection of any tendency to allow habit to provide the basis of a new symbolic system. In its extreme forms anti-ritualism is an attempt to abolish communication by means of complex symbolic systems.

This aspect of revivalism is associated with a turning to what is variously viewed as the original, unadulterated, unencumbered and

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1 Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (1970), p. 19. The formula for classifying human relations in terms of what Mary Douglas calls grid and group, and some of her insights into symbolic behaviour and rituals, are relevant to the analysis and understanding of revivalism. We consider that issues are raised by her diagnosis which could justifiably be discussed in a separate paper, but which are too extensive to be embraced within the present study.
fundamental faith of the first Christians. The New Testament, as interpreted by the adherents of revivals, is generally taken as the ideal. In most revivals, recognition is given to the need to take account of the special social, economic, political and other circumstances in which the revival appears, but there is characteristically this stress upon the nascent faith, and the desirability of following the main features in it. This may variously contain some of the characteristics depicted by Mary Douglas. She writes:

The new sect goes back as far as the primitive church, as far as the first Pentecost, or as far as the Flood, but the historic continuity is traced by a thin line. Only a narrow range of historical experience is recognised as antecedent to the present state. Along with celebrating the Last Supper with the breaking of bread, or the simplicity of fishermen-apostles, there is a squeamish selection of ancestors; just as revolutionaries may evict kings and queens from the pages of history, the anti-ritualists have rejected the list of saints and popes and tried to start again without any load of history. ¹

In isolating, and giving emphasis to certain aspects of the New Testament, and Early Church life, revivals tend to maintain the centrality of personal experience. The supreme concern is with the immediacy of the conversion experience as an indispensable requirement, and then the need to know the reality of personal faith in daily life. There is usually in revivals an awareness among the participants of the transcendent majesty, holiness and supremacy of God, but there is also an equally strong consciousness of the immanence of the divine. There is an expectation that God will intervene in the lives of ordinary people, and the converts in revivals rejoice in their personal testimony to such spiritual encounters. This is likewise applied to their relationship to fellow believers, where the need for frank and open confession of sins.

and sharing of spiritual triumphs and defeats, is seen to be an essential outcome of the climacteric divine encounter. In this, every one of the faithful is fully involved, and has a valid contribution to make. There is no rigid demarcation line between the order of bishops, priests and deacons, and the laity, for all are considered as 'one in Christ Jesus'. There is little stress laid upon formal qualifications or training, with entitle a person to exercise spiritual oversight, but rather an emphasis upon the spiritual gifts variously distributed to all believers. Academic attainment is valued, but not as a necessary prerequisite for a spiritual ministry. In the same way, ecclesiastical structures are not viewed as essential channels for the receiving of divine blessing; the divine grace may be bestowed upon individuals within the framework of such structures, but it may just as certainly bypass them, and be experienced in a direct manner without the mediation or assistance of any ordained person or established religious body. In all this, it is the personal relationship of the believer with a personal God, which is seen by the revival adherents as of primary importance, with the secondary but vital consequence of a new and meaningful fellowship between those of 'like precious faith'.

As a corollary of the supreme importance attached to personal experience, there is the emphasis upon the need for each and every believer to proclaim to others the faith which has transformed their lives, and which they view as essential for eternal salvation. Participants in revivals generally see this depicted in the New Testament as a key to the effective and rapid dissemination of the faith in the

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1 *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, chapter 3, verse 28.
2 *The Second Epistle General of Peter*, chapter 1, verse 1.
first century or so after the death of Christ; there were those who were 'set apart' as evangelists, but this did not exempt any of the faithful from the obligation laid upon them to be 'ambassadors for Christ'. The close study of the eighteenth century revival in London in its early years, show how earnestly and assiduously many of the converts attempted to explain the faith to their contemporaries both by word and by the conduct of their daily lives. The house meetings, and the openness in speaking about religious matters in their homes, places of work, and in their leisure time, indicates how little they considered a church building as the only, or necessarily the main, venue for proclaiming the gospel.

This entails another distinction which appears to be brought into sharp relief in the New Testament and in the revivals, namely that between the domus dei and the domus ecclesiae. The temple in Jerusalem, and the whole Jewish structure of synagogues in the first century of our era, rested on the concept of a building being a sacred place, in which God dwelt, and in which God was to be found in a special way. It was associated with a priesthood whose function was to represent the people before God, and to mediate between God and men. In the Early Church this underlying assumption was radically challenged, and there emerged the countervailing notion of the Church as a people, and the building as merely a convenient place in which they might gather. Thus they met chiefly in 'secular' centres, such as homes, while not neglecting the ecclesiastical buildings. The essential content and tenor of this corporate life is conveyed in the words of the Acts of

1 The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 20.

2 We owe our appreciation of this distinction to H.W. Turner. See his (unpublished) work, 'From Temple to Meeting House. The Sacred Place and its Judaean-Christian Versions.'
the Apostles:

... And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.1

In most revivals there is this same emphasis upon the Church as being the people of God, rather than a building or an institution. Although church buildings continue in some cases to be used for worship, there is always a tendency to meet for other purposes, such as prayer and fellowship in the homes of some of the believers, or in some place other than the established and accepted churches or chapels. This may in different examples either be a result of hostility and opposition from the existing religious order, or simply the desire of the converts, or a combination of both. Whatever the actual cause, it represents an emphasis upon the meeting place, the domus ecclesiae, rather than the domus dei.

Associated with this emphasis, revivals are also to an extent an attempt to return to the pristine essentials of the nascent faith, in the religious forms and symbolism they employ in their worship. Revival adherents generally see the New Testament as presenting a picture of assemblies where it was the usual practice for a number of the congregation to contribute to the worship, by prayer, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, exhortation, or in some other way. In revivals this is taken as the pattern, and appropriate symbolism is

employed. This does not consist of furnishings, and rituals which are designed to emphasise the importance of the place of worship as a sanctuary, but rather does it consist of spontaneous words, and mannerisms which are seen as substantiating the claim that God is present in the midst of a group of his gathered people. Thus, the whole-hearted 'amen' response to prayers, the use of occasional or frequent interjections by members of the congregation expressive of earnest accord with what is being said, and the use of spontaneous utterance, are features commonly encountered in the worship of revivals.

In this connection, the importance attached to physical images is minimal. As a corollary the the emphasis upon direct access to God through Christ, worship is generally viewed in revivals as increasingly real and vital the greater the personal and corporate experience of the numinous. Such a numinous awareness is evoked especially by the reading of the Bible and by preaching, but not by the use of images. This may be considered as part of a wider religious tendency outlined by Van der Leeuw. He writes:

The ancient prohibition of images in Jewish law presupposed the concept of the real essence subsisting within the image; later, this was 'transposed' into the realization of the insufficiency of every image. Jahveh speaks 'out of the midst of the fire' on Sinai: 'ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude'; here the decisiveness of the word is placed above assumption of form. In the latter there is a suspicion of command over Power, whereby it may be deprived of its sacredness; awe of the numinous element in the image has been transformed into awe of the numinous in general.1

The sacred word, both as a verbal proclamation through preaching, and as the written word in the Bible, always assumes a particularly prominent part in the worship. As the hieros logos, the sacred story is set forth as the essential mythical history of the Christian tradition. It

1 Gerardus Van der Leeuw, op. cit., p. 452.
proclaims definite historical occurrences, which also determine the 
hearer's salvation.\(^1\) As such, in an especially potent manner in 
revivals

... it is, as it were, the focus of all powerfulness, nourishing the 
community's life from its glow: and thus by the dramatic 
representation of the 'sacred story', the powerfulness that has 
appeared in history is transferred to the life of the community and 
likewise of the individual.\(^2\)

The sacred word is, in this respect, more significant in revival worship 
than silence, which plays such a major part in the worship of certain 
religious traditions. Congregational singing is significant in many 
revivals. It seems to be relevant as a means whereby the whole body 
of believers is enabled to express its faith and convictions, and also 
as a channel for the conveying of religious meaning to the converts. 
The singing of hymns has, in these revivals, as to an extent in general, 
given to all the faithful an opportunity to unite in demonstrating and 
proclaiming their oneness of belief. In such a context, hymns assume 
the character of a religious drama, in which every one concerned 
participates. They assist in establishing the conscious awareness of a 
community of interest, and solidarity of conviction, which cements the 
revival adherents into a close fellowship.

Hymns and hymn singing are also a meaningful form in which religious 
matters may be expressed, taught, and communicated. This is 
especially relevant where those involved in revivals are not capable of 
comprehending abstract issues when they are presented in other forms, 
such as by the written word, or by a closely reasoned address. In a 
number of revivals, hymns have been the means of inculcating spiritual

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\(^1\) Gerardus Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 418.
\(^2\) Gerardus Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 419.
concepts, and of heightening the awareness to religious ideas, for a wide range of people, but more particularly for those who are less articulate, and less accustomed in their lives to the demands for such conceptualisation. As one writer has commented, music, and we should add hymn singing, 'is capable of actualizing even the most inadequate aspects of the experience.'¹ The significance of hymns and congregational singing is enhanced by the constant reiteration of certain teaching, and by the repeated use of the most popular works. As a consequence of this, those involved become increasingly familiar with certain fundamental tenets of revival teaching. They are able to grasp the essential religious and metaphysical issues entailed, and to comprehend them in a manner which would most probably not be possible without the aid of hymns. It is notable that a large proportion of the hymns of John and Charles Wesley were written in the early years of the revival, and that collections of them were among the first of the eighteenth century revival publications. Hymns have shown a power to move the emotions which has frequently been a useful supplement to preaching, and by appealing to both the emotions, will and intellect, they have proved a forceful means of implanting abstract teaching. It is for all these reasons that congregational singing has played such a major role in many revivals.

Preaching is another effective vehicle in revivals for the conveying of the message and teaching concerned, as well as encouraging an awareness of the numinous. In revivals there is frequently one or more charismatic leader, who both epitomises to the revival adherents the essentials of the revival, and provides a focus for the corporate life of the believers. Such figures are the holy men of the revivals.

¹ Gerardus Van der Leeuw, op. cit., 453.
with which they are associated. They function within the revival as one channel for the mediation of the divine message and the divine presence. They demonstrate in word and action to the revival adherents, the actuality of the divine, and they make the message and presence of the divine articulate. Preaching is only one, although perhaps the major aspect of their role within revivals, but it illustrates the interconnection between the numinous, the power of the spoken word, the human mediator of the numinous, and the generality of believers. As Van der Leeuw has observed:

The preaching of the message, (then), is always at the same time a priestly act, and conversely. The very utterance is powerful: 'to a certain extent a preacher must be one of those men of whom his hearers are compelled to say: "Whither shall I flee from this man? his speech pursues me to every hiding-place; how shall I get free from him? for he is upon me at every moment."' Such an utterance, however, is power actually present, the direct antithesis of any mere contemplation or explanation. 

In most revivals, it appears that the initial experience of conversion, and the subsequent development of a numinous awareness among those concerned, is much fostered by this corporate spiritual life we have been discussing. Revivals tend to stress the importance of a personal experience of conversion as evidence both to the individual involved, and other converts, of initiation into the revival fellowship. The revival leaders do not usually emphasise, or even require any form of ceremonial initiation rite, such as baptism or confirmation. It is rather considered that personal testimony should be given to a spiritual encounter and transformation which conforms to a pattern widely recognised and accepted within the revival fellowship. To a great extent this entails an individual spiritual self-awareness, and an assumption that each person will be largely conscious of their own spiritual condition. Thus, in the eighteenth century revival in London,

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in a more explicit manner than in most revivals, this basis of spiritual
birth and growth was catered for in Bands and Classes which embraced a
range from penitents to spiritually mature converts. Initiation into
the faith was seemingly considered to have been achieved when a person
could testify to an experience and knowledge of new life in Christ,
although there was much debate as to how far assurance was part of such
a conversion, or frequently something received at a later stage. In
most revivals, in a similar way, conversion is the hallmark and
indispensable requirement for initiation, both into the faith, and into
the revival fellowship.

Once initiated, the persons concerned most typically become
thoroughly integrated into the revival fellowship, and to a measure
re-orientate their lives around it. They are made aware of the
significance of what Eliade has described as 'the unity and contiguity
of hierophanic time'.\(^1\) The corporate life and worship of the revival
converts much effects the time consciousness of most of the members
in this respect. What Eliade has written in general in reference to
sacred time, seems to be particularly pertinent to the experience of
many revival adherents. He comments:

The heterogeneousness of time, its division into 'sacred' and 'profane',
does not merely mean periodic 'incisions' made in the profane duration
to allow of the insertion of sacred time; it implies, further, that
these insertions of sacred time are linked together so that one might
almost see them as constituting another duration with its own continuity.
The Christian liturgy for a given Sunday is one with the liturgy for the
previous Sunday and the Sunday following... The profane succession,
on the other hand, which flows between (two Masses,) not being
transformed into sacred time, cannot have any connection with the
hierophanic time of the rite: it runs parallel, so to speak, to sacred
time which is thus revealed to us as a continuum which is interrupted
by profane intervals in appearance only.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Mircea Eliade, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 391.
\(^2\) Mircea Eliade, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 391.
All these aspects of the corporate life and worship which we have been considering, together constitute a distinctive pattern. Wach has written:

In a wider sense, all actions which flow from and are determined by religious experience are to be regarded as practical expression or cultus. In a narrower sense, however, we call cultus the act or acts of the homo religiosus: worship.1

In the more restricted use of the term, revivals present a characteristic cultus. The whole configuration manifested in the corporate life and worship of those involved in revivals, reflects in some measure certain essential features reminiscent of the pristine faith in its early years. This may arise in part out of a conscious effort to do so by those leaders who most determine the course of the revival concerned, but it is chiefly a consequence of characteristics inherent in the phenomena. For one of the central features of a revival is this laying aside of the accumulated traditions and practices, which enmeshed the experiential dimension of the faith in an institutionally somewhat restrictive framework; and the converse endeavour to recapture the freshness, dynamism, immediacy, impact and effectiveness which is evident in the church of the New Testament. Considered in this way, revivalism is a re-focussing of attention upon the non-institutional facts of the faith, and upon those 'non-rational' aspects discussed by Otto.

So far, in examining revivalism as a religious phenomenon, we have considered it in relation to the most significant and relevant features and experiences exhibited by the major world religions, and as an integral part of one particular religious tradition. This has assisted

us in determining its main characteristics; but a change of perspective will give us added insight. In order to achieve this, we will now compare revivalism with certain 'secular' movements which are similar in form to it, and thereby attempt to discover wherein lies the essential difference between the 'sacred' and the 'secular' phenomena.

Throughout history there have been numerous examples of a sudden upsurge of enthusiasm, and commitment to a cause, which superficially appears to resemble revivalism. Typical of these was the Nazi movement of the present century, especially at its zenith during the second, third and fourth decades; and this will serve to illustrate the dominant features in all such movements. In the first place, it was reckoned by its leaders as having affinities with religion. Hitler considered that 'what dogmas represent for religious faith, party principles are for a political party in the making.'\(^1\) He conceived of the ideals and objectives to which he was committed as being in certain respects akin to a religious crusade. He wrote:

... I saw my own task especially in extracting those nuclear ideas from the extensive and unshaped substance of a general world view and remoulding them into more or less dogmatic forms which in their clear delimitation are adapted for holding solidly together those men who swear allegiance to them. In other words: From the basic ideas of a general folkish world conception the National Socialist German Workers' Party takes over the essential fundamental traits, and from them, with due consideration of practical reality, the times, and the available human material as well as its weaknesses, forms a political creed which, in turn, by the strict organisational integration of large human masses thus made possible, creates the precondition for the victorious struggle of this world view.\(^2\)

In the ensuing movement, there was a charismatic leader, Adolf Hitler; a spontaneity in response by thousands of individuals, who were

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'converted' to the new ideals and objectives laid before them; and a very profound measure of subsequent dedication to the cause concerned. To adapt the previously quoted phrase of Van der Leeuw, a wave of ideological feeling and desire flowed over the community, and, to an extent, drew everything along with it in the broad stream of sentiment and resolution.\(^1\) There was, amongst those involved and committed, a unifying sense of oneness, which was enhanced by effective symbolism such as flags, uniforms and songs. In addition, there were such factors as the full involvement of all or most of the participants, and an intense desire among them that others should be likewise committed to the same goals, and experience the same inner motivations. In these ways it resembled a religious revival. But we are concerned to consider in what respects it differed from a religious revival, for in so doing we will both understand revivalism more fully, and be better able to appreciate what distinguishes religious from other types of phenomena.

First, there is the crucial difference in the total orientation both of the movement as a whole, and of the individuals within it. In revivalism, as indeed in all genuine religious phenomena and experiences, the main concern is with what is ardently considered to be ultimate reality. By this, we mean that the primary reference is to the transcendental, non-temporal dimension, and beyond the finite sphere of sense experience. The response of individuals initially is to what they comprehend as a confrontation with such ultimate reality. The subsequent life of discipleship is likewise fundamentally focused outside the temporal plane. The values, norms and purposes of individuals involved in a revival are determined by this basic frame of reference. Other objectives, such as social reform, may

\(^1\) Gerarud Van der Leeuw, op. cit., p. 615.
emerge, and play a prominent part, but they are essentially only of secondary importance. In contrast, with similar non-religious movements, there is generally not this orientation. Thus, although Hitler considered his ideology as 'a new faith, in our case a political one ... a new philosophy of life ...', he saw this philosophy as one which imperiously demanded, not only its exclusive and unlimited recognition, but the complete transformation of all public life in accordance with its views. Even when such a movement demonstrates an outward similarity in certain characteristics to a religious revival, there is at the core of it this difference in the primary focus of concern and attention. As Wach has stated:

Pseudo religion may exhibit features of genuine religion, but in it man relates himself not to ultimate but to some finite reality.

This divergence in orientation is reflected in the attitude towards temporal matters. For most secular movements, and for those entailed in them, the first priority, and in many cases the only one, is a change in the temporal order of affairs. The concern is to promote some particular cause, whose object is the achievement of a definable human goal. This most frequently means that the foremost objective is social, political or economic, with a desire to effect an alteration in the structure and institutions of the society or of the world, rather than in the lives of individuals. This is evident in the claim and appeal made by Hitler in 1926, as he contemplated the resurgence of the National Socialist German Workers' Party:

All the persecutions of the movement and its individual leaders, all vilifications and slanders, were powerless to harm it. The correctness of its ideas, the purity of its will, its supporters' spirit of self-sacrifice, have caused it to issue from all repressions stronger than ever.

1 Adolf Hitler, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
If, in the world of our present parliamentary corruption, it becomes more aware of the profoundest essence of its struggle, feels itself to be the purest embodiment of the value of race and personality and conducts itself accordingly, it will with almost mathematical certainty some day emerge victorious from its struggle. Just as Germany must inevitably win her rightful position on this earth if she is led and organised according to the same principles.

A state which in this age of racial poisoning dedicates itself to the care of its best racial elements must some day become lord of the earth.

May the adherents of our movement never forget this if ever the magnitude of the sacrifices should beguile them to an anxious comparison with the possible results.¹

Such philosophies almost always imply a minimal concern with transcendental issues, or at least a relegating of such considerations to a secondary level of importance. With revivalism, and religion in general, the reverse is evident. As William James has remarked in his broad summary, in the concluding part of his study of religious experiences, the characteristic beliefs of the religious life include:

1. That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance;
2. That union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end; ...²

From this overall difference in orientation and focus of concern, various contrasts become apparent at the level of personal experience and commitment.

The conversion experience is uniquely religious. There are other experiences which resemble it, but they do not contain a combination of those constituents which we have variously found in some of the climacteric personal transformations which we have considered.

¹ Adolf Hitler, op. cit., p. 629.
² William James, op. cit., p. 485.
Included in the range of such spiritual experiences, which are central to revivalism, there is first the sense of dependence and 'creature-feeling', which itself depends upon a *numen praesens*. In the words of Otto:

There must be felt a something 'numinous', something bearing the character of a 'numen', to which the mind turns spontaneously; or (which is the same thing in other words) these feelings can only arise in the mind as accompanying emotions when the category of 'the numinous' is called into play.¹

As this is 'the consciousness of the littleness of every creature in the face of that which is above all creatures',² so it cannot be found except where there is this essentially religious awareness. There is secondly, in these revival experiences of conversion, a confrontation with the 'wholly other', and with the elements of *mysterium tremendum* and fascination which Otto demonstrates to be distinctly religious. The experience of the numinous is vividly displayed in the climacteric spiritual encounters of the revival converts, and there is no parallel to them in this respect, outside the religious experiences of mankind. Other experiences of an essentially non-religious type may produce similar psychological results, but they do not contain the distinctive features outlined above. The personal spiritual experiences of those responding to the revival message demonstrate the effect of accepting certain basic elements in the Christian *δίκαιος χειρ*. At the core of such experiences is a consciousness of spiritual need, and what is recognised as the provision to meet such need. This involves the Christian doctrines of sin, and justification by faith; and the personal acceptance of them, not merely as a cognative exercise, but as a transforming spiritual reality. There is no equivalent to this outside the sphere of religion, and more particularly of the Christian tradition.

¹ Rudolf Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
In the continuing life of the believer after his conversion, there remains this distinctiveness. The individual adherent of a secular movement, such as Nazism, is passionately concerned with external achievements, such as the re-modelling of his society in conformity with the ideals to which he is committed, or the territorial extension of the authority and power of the movement. The individual convert of a revival has a different motivation and mission. He is fervently interested in personal sanctity, and he seeks to proclaim a message of individual reconciliation with God. To him, and to the movement as a whole, material matters must yield in priority to spiritual issues, and social concern must take second place before the pressing requirement of personal salvation.

Revivalism thus has characteristics which distinguish it both from other religious phenomena, and from certain secular movements with similar features. In considering it as a religious phenomenon we have seen that it is essentially an upsurge of creative spiritual energy. By its very nature it tends to be of short duration when it does appear. It is most typical for revivals to last only a few years, and frequently for lesser periods. They then most commonly lose their impetus and decline; or they become formalised, and institutionalised. Even the extended revival of the eighteenth century in Britain contained this inherent propensity, which was discerned by John Wesley. He wrote:

Wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion, the mind that was in Christ, has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore do I not see how it is possible in the nature of things for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality: and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all
its branches. How then, is it possible that Methodism, that is, the religion of the heart, though it flourish now as a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionally increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away.\textsuperscript{1}

This is applicable to any revival which is maintained for a considerable time, and indicates the fate to which all such revivals have to varying degrees been subject. For revivalism, as viewed from within the Christian tradition in which it occurs, is fundamentally a matter of religious renewal. It is a re-assertion of those non-rational elements associated with the foundation and early life of the faith, when it was a new and vital force, and it is a re-emphasis upon the experiential dimension in religion. It brings into sharper relief the contrast between the 'form of religion' and the 'spirit', and under the pressures for religious and social conformity, there is an innate tendency for the latter to succumb to the former, and for the revival concerned to swiftly vanish away.

If it is objected that revivalism is therefore a rarity, that it does not tend to endure long when it does arise, and that it represents an extreme manifestation of the faith, the words of William James may with propriety be quoted. Anticipating such a reaction to the subject matter of his particular study, he wrote:

\begin{quote}
I took these extremer examples as yielding the profounder information. To learn the secrets of any science, we go to expert specialists, even though they may be eccentric persons, and not to commonplace pupils. We combine what they tell us with the rest of our wisdom, and form our final judgement independently. Even so with religion. We who have pursued such radical expressions of it may now be sure that we know its secrets as authentically as any one can know them who learns them from another.\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{2} William James, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 486.
In revivalism we see the Christian faith largely reduced to its basic numinous elements. The essence of personal religion, and of man's experience of the raw numinous, is brought to the fore. We are confronted with dynamic individual and corporate spiritual encounters of a transforming character. The basic experiential content of the Christian religious tradition is made evident, and we are thereby enabled more readily to appreciate its phenomenological significance.
APPENDIX I

Extracts from manuscript letters of early converts of the revival in London in the eighteenth century, addressed to Charles Wesley, and to be found in the Methodist Archives in London.

The converts of the revival in London were encouraged to share their experiences with their fellow believers. The letters from which these extracts are taken contain open and frank testimonies to personal religious encounters. They were written soon after the events and spiritual experiences related in them. The particular passages have been chosen in order to present a range of such experiences, and to illustrate some of the matters discussed in the thesis.

Those writing the following letters were largely of limited literary ability. The wording and grammar have to a considerable extent been retained as in the original documents. The use of 'sic' has been restricted mainly to words and phrases, etc., which may otherwise be misconstrued as typing errors.

From Mary Jane Ramsey, June 4, 1740.

... in all I heard him (Whitefield) thirteen times but all that while I did not apply any thing to my self but was very glad and thought ah now he gives it home to you all, especially to his adversaries but thought it did not belong so much to his followers ... thought I did not want so much conversion as those outward notorious sinners but the Lord has shown me since that I was worse than any one of them all for indeed I do perceive that no one had such a stony hard heart as I ... I was half a beast and half a devil: well but thought I how can I help
it if I am so by nature: but after he was gone: I set about to help it and would not read nothing but good books and would pray more, and instead of going to the sacrament once a month I went every Lords Day and was very desirous to be taken notice of: and also I entered into a Society, but alas I was just were (sic) I was before or rather worse. So I went on until Mr John Wesley came up: which was the 4th September: att Dowgate hill he expounded the 16 chap of the Gospel of St John beginning att the 16 verse: and there indeed I was shown my state and my want both ... 1

... I went on: as often as possible I would come and hear the word. The second time I heard Mr John ... the Lord that time plainly showd me I was the person guilty of all those crimes that I had disdainfully lookt on others for ...

... I continued to go to the foundry Sundays and Thursdays and to the Society in Brick Lane ... and att last the Lord sent you Reverend Sir. I can but admire the wisdom of God in seeing how he sends out the labourer one after another that what one has planted the other waters and the almighty gives the increase ...

1 John Wesley records in his Journal a visit to Dowgate Hill on September 4, 1739 (probably to a Society meeting at the house of Mr. Crouch), and states, 'Several persons who were then convinced of sin came to me the next morning.' (See The Journal of John Wesley, pp. 268-271)
... I had so much joy when you was preaching that I thought my soul seemed as if it was ascending into heaven indeed the joy began in the morning when Mr Harris was preaching: on the words thy Kingdom come and it was so increased in the evening while you was preaching that methought I saw my saviour in glory and so continued or rather increased for in the Society the soul seemed as if it was out of the body. I cannot utter the joy I felt: words cannot express it: indeed after I was first justified I several times had joy and manifestations...

... I also found much comfort in the meetings att Sister Robinsons ...

From Jos Carton, November 1741.

... About 4 years agoe I was induced very much to pray to God for his grace and holy spirit ... I went to prayer ... and I found a deale of satisfaction in it ... One Satturday night being in a Barbers Shop, ye Barber said he had been to hear a sermon preached before all the religious societies in London. He surprised me. I asked him if there was ever a one there. I told him, by ye behaviour of ye people there was little sign of it, he mentioned several. He belonged to one; that in miles lane. I was glad to hear it and desired to be introduced into it, and see there orders. Accordingly by him I was. I found some comfort ye 1st two or three times of meeting: but at length I began to see things in them such I did not like ... I went to hear Dr Heylin¹ ... and I was still more and more convinced of the spirituality of religion but could not find it in myself. At last being at work a wainscoting

¹ Dr. Heylyn was the popular Hector of St. Mary-le-Strand. William Law was for a time his Curate, and both he and John Wesley were influenced by him. (See The Journal of John Wesley, pp. 463, 464).
of a house in Little Britain it being near ye white horse ale house, 
there comes in a boy to beg some shavings, which I gave him leave to 
take I took particular notice of him, that he took nothing else, such 
was uncommon for those that came for them, take as many chips as the (sic) 
can which is much: so made me ask him who he belonged to. He told me 
Mr Bray a Brasier\(^1\) hard by. I told him further, that I had heard he 
was a very good man, and he was welcome to some at any time. He asked 
me if I knew him. I told him no, I never saw him in my life to know 
him; but I knew two young men that used a society at his home on Tuesday 
night. He further asked me if I had any notion of this new religion? 
What new religion replyed I Why salvation thro faith only.\(^2\) No, I told 
him; I had heard nothing of it. What did you never here (sic) Mr 
Wesleys said he? (no, I never heard them). Mr Charles is in town, and 
hell (sic) preach on Sunday at this Church. Well I think I goe to hear 
him. Mr John is acoming from abroad and he is very fine man Likewise

\(^1\) Charles Wesley was taken ill in May 1738, at the house of James Hutton 
He received a visit from Mr. Bray, and after prayer with him, was 
convinced it was the will of God that he should go to Bray's house in 
Little Britain. He was taken there, and it was at that house, on Whit 
Sunday, May 21, 1738, that Charles Wesley 'found himself at peace with 
God' (see his Journal for that day). One week later, John Wesley was 
brought by a group of friends to the same house, having just undergone 
his conversion experience. Bray's house was visited by the Wesleys, and 
services were held there until 1740. At an early date Bray came under 
the Moravian influence known as 'stillness'. (See Edward H. Sugden, 

\(^2\) This reference to a 'new religion' indicates that 'salvation through faith 
alone' was commonly seen as one of the main novel elements in the preaching 
of the revival leaders, compared with the preaching of many churches.
said he 'But I will tell you my belief said I, Pharise like, with my arms folded together, swaggering as it were. I believe in all ye Articles of ye Religion (and I believe at that time I never had read them all over nor hardly knew what was in them) likewise I believe in ye scriptures of ye old and new testament in allye creeds etc. He asked me if my belief influenced all my life and actions? I told him no. I did not find that it did. He told me then that my faith was yet of the head, and not of the heart. I answered I thought so too. Then he began to prove it by scripture He said if Christ hath made you free then are you free indeed; and we have not received the spirit of bondage unto fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father: he struck me all of a heap I could not tell what to say. He advised me to buy a little book called a Choice Drop of honey from the Rock Christ, and bid me consider on it, and bid me goodbuy (sic). As soon as he was gone I began to consider of the texts of scripture ... I assented to them, well knowing that I was not in that state of freedom there spoken of. Then immediately came into my mind all my notorious sins that I had committed, and especially my reigning sin that of adultry (sic) ... I must be damnd (sic) at last ... it was a question to me whether I had his grace or not. Then I was at as great a loss about that, that I could find no comfort, for about an hour and a half. At last there came into my inmost soul a voice that thro the mercy of God in Christ Jesus my sins were forgiven me; I burst out a crying, and laughing, and dancing, and jumping about the room, that any one if they had seen me would have thought me craze. I then knew that God was my father and I could cry Dear Father, my Father abba Father. I then saw that he had mercy upon me purely and only for the sake of Jesus Christ my saviour. Then did I plainly see my own vileness,
my own nothingness, and I saw nothing upon the face of the earth so vile as my self, and in particular I saw my self worse than the dirt I trod on, and for this reason Jesus Christ died. Then I cryd out, 0 my dear saviour, have I all my life time been rumiging over so many books to find salvation, and at last have found it in the blessed Jesus, glory be to thy holy name for it, then did I see the insignificancy of all things else, but Jesus Christ only. In him I had all things ... by and by came in William, Mr Brays prentice ... he was very earnest and particular in enquiring of me the account I had to give of it, which I did in broken language thro the extasie of love and joy ... he mourned much because he had not received it. The 1st person I saw that I thought had any notion of religion I communicated to them my experience, which was my master, and he rejected it all as folly and predestination, and hated me for it, and at a convenient opportunity turned me from my business. But the Lord immediately took me up and brought me unto one where I had the full liberty to speak all my mind and they could reoyce (sic) with me ...

From Mrs. Clagget, July 24, 1738.

In my infancy from the time of my having leam't to read, which I believe was very early, the scriptures was so much my delight, that I was seldom prevailed upon to leave that pleasure, to play with my sisters, or take any other diversion ...

... I knew not what to do having none to guide me till God sent Mr Whitefield amongst us. He told me of original sin and mans fallen
estate. This by sorrowful experience I had proved to be true. He talk'd of a new birth, and change of nature, which I tho't I had understood, but since finde I did not. I was pleas'd with his conversation, and was delighted with singing hymns when I was sure no one heard me, and persuaded my selfe that I was becoming a new creature. I had a sort of peace, and some joy, and began to think I was alive indeed, but quickly found myself sadly mistaken. My sins which for some time lay concealed, attacked me again with greater force than ever, I pray'd, resolv'd, strove, but all in vain, the impetuous torrent soon prevail'd notwithstanding my feeble resistance I renew'd my indeavours, the enemy his assaults, till weary'd with constant defeats own'd my selfe vanguishd and sin to be irresistable. These conflicts greatly impaired my health. My two eldest daughters began to talk to me of free grace, of faith in Christ which alone cou'd justifie and deliver us from the power of sin and make us partakers of ye divine nature ... The devil greatly alarm'd at these proceedings, employed a friend of mine to disuade me from such dangerous doctrine. He told me ... that my daughters were entangled with a set of enthusiasts which if not speedily prevented wou'd put them out of that good way which he knew they had so long been in, and greatly hazard their salvation. I took his advice ... notwithstanding this, God who saw me while I was yet a great way off, wou'd not suffer me any longer to resist his mercy. Accordingly on St Peter's Day, He sent ye Reverend Mr Wesley to my relief ... I heard him with great attention ... We spent great part of the afternoon in prayer and singing ... In a few days Mr Wesley made me another visit ... The next morning between the hours of 3 and 4 in such joy as I never felt before. My heart overflow'd with the love of God, the Spirit also bearing witness that I was a child of God, and cou'd not help joining the immortal Choir in their Halleluahs (sic).
From E. Bristow, April 12, 1740.

... the Lord ... hath taken the scales off my eyes: I was lame he hath made me walk: I was bound with chains of darkness: but He hath broken my bonds asunder. He hath pluckt me as a fire brand out of hell: and shall I dare to hide this: shall I not declare what the Lord hath done for me ... O behold a miracle indeed a greater one than if a dead body had been raised: out of the earth: I was dead in trespasses and sin: and Jesus raised me: he brought me from the pitt of hell: into the Kingdom of light ...

From Martha Sones, June 1, 1740.

... I was brought up in all the outward duties of religion ... At last I heard of Mr Whitfield a little before he went to Georgia Heard him preach four times but the account I had of his life had much more effect upon me than his sermons. The piety of the young preacher made a deep impression and I had a glimpse how far I was from being a Christian. I now grew very unease. The preaching in the churches afforded me no comfort ... I heard your dear brother ... I prayd day and night for faith to believe in those precious promises ... I went on my way sorrowing waiting till Jesus should reveal himself unto me ... It pleased him as I was siting at home one night to give me to believe my sins were forgiven that Christ died for me and his righteousness was imputed to me. This came with such power into my soul as I cannot express. I was fild with joy ... When your brother had done expounding at Mr Syms they said I must stay for Mr Wesley was coming to me. When I heard this I was so terified by Satan that I trembled exceedingly and began to doubt. I thought I heard the devil say do not dare to tell this he you were not justified. Mr Wesley was now come. I told him as well as I could what God had done for my soul and was much streng hend by what he said ...
... you and your brother gone we were left as sheep without a shepard ...

... Satan vexed me with all his storms and said where is now thy God. Thus I was distresed on every side. It would be endless to recount every temptation that beset me and conflict which I endured by which my soul was brought nigh unto hell and I almost despaired of seeing this great salvation. Yet I was enabled to say unto the Lord though thou slay me yet will I trust in thee. Though I much doubted of my justification because I did not always feel it so strongly as at the first ... I could not but believe I was ... I continued in great perplexities and had almost given up my hope when God sent you to us again and on Easter Sunday I heard you preach and the Lord strengend and confirmed my faith my doubts and fears vanished and the Lord made his way plain before my face and now I believe I shall see his full salvation ...

From J. Butts, April 14, 1743.

On Tuesday ten prisoners were executed: I got with some difficulty to go with 3 in ye first cart; two of these seemed truly penitent, (one unknown to you, ye other ye person that laid with Mr Robinson, who gladly heard you from ye beginning) deeply sensible of their lost condition and strongly imploring ye mercy of God, for ye alone sake of Jesus Christ; I read your letter to them in our passage to Tyburn,¹ which seemed much to affect and comfort them. I examined these two,

¹ The Tyburn gallows was a permanent structure, standing near the present junction of Oxford Street and Edgware Road, on which condemned criminals from Newgate prison were hanged. Great crowds watched the executions. Some of the Methodists in London ministered to the inmates of Newgate, and especially to those who were appointed for death. They also accompanied them on occasions in the cart to the gallows. (See Edward H. Sugden, op. cit. pp. 233-235, and The Journal of Charles Wesley, July 19, 1738).
whether they would choose to die or live; they declared they chose to
die, strongly believing ye Lord would have upon their souls; and that,
tho they were sensible there must be a great change wrought in them,
yet they also knew ye Lord was able to effect it in a short time. I
had not much opportunity of speaking to any of ye rest, but by what I
could observe, they were all very penitent (especially ye two Papists)
except two, who I greatly fear were hardened to ye last: (O may I err
in my judgement herein). One of these persons was a sprightly young
gentleman, whom I believe you never spoke with; ye other was the man
that kept company with ye woman in Newgate; she is reprieved ...

From Martha Sones, 1742.

... O dear sir do not cast us of though we be a backsliding people. I
know God hath brought you unto us now for good... sir do not condemn all
for a few for the greater part of us desire to be obedient to you in
all things knowing that you are set over us in and by the Lord and our
love is not waxed cold but you are dear unto us as our own lives for
your works sake. But the people fear you donot love us dear sir you
never loved us for our own sake but for the Lords sake then love us
still though we be unworthy and do not think of leaving us till our
Lord calls you and then though you be dear unto us we shall freely
resign Our blessed Lord hath always aforetime sent you to us in blessing
of the gospel of peace now he hath brought you to search our wounds and
under him to bind them up for this end hath your master made you a son
of thunder and consolation. Stay then to be as he hath made you ...

From Sarah Barber

Att your request: I here as far as the Lord gives me knowledge to see
and know my conversion: which before I heard the Reverend Mr Whitefield
I was a Publican living in the world as if there was no god: but that I
did not know it because I was not a notorious ofen offender. I therefore thought myself a very good person: but the Lord was pleased to call me first by the ministry of Mr Whitefield. I went the first time that he preached in moorefields but could not hear him: wherefore my curiosity was the stronger to return. So I went the next Sunday and the subject he was upon: was Sauls persecution of the saints: and therein the Lord was pleased to shew me I was that very Saul and from that time I was under conviction for some time that I saw nothing but hell and damnation before me and that humbled me att that time: ... but the Lord saw me in my sins though I did not: and by the ministry of Mr John on a time when the Lord saw fit ... the Lord shewed me I had not faith ... afterward I was admitted upon tryall ... then when the Lord sent you to town I thought the Lord had something in store for me which should be revealed unto me by your ministry: and sister Robinson told me you gave her leave to bring us to hear your Journals for which I have reason to praise God: for in your prayers I saw my Saviour bleeding on the cross and the Lord shewed me my unworthiness ... but att night when we met again in your prayers the Lord was pleased to give me the second gift of faith to believe that Jesus was my Lord: ... so I went on till the tuesday following in great calness and in such pleace that I never felt before: but then I went to sister Robinson and told her I was affraid

1 Upper Moorfields remained an open space well into the eighteenth century. At the north end of it was the Pfoundry, acquired by John Wesley in November 1739, and turned into a meeting house, and near to this was Whitefield's first tabernacle, dating from 1741. Whitefield began open-air preaching in Upper Moorfields on April 29, 1739, when he addressed, what he described in his Journal for that day as 'an exceeding great multitude'. (See Edward H. Sugden, op. cit., pp. 177-179).
that I was going into that stillness\(^1\) that was talkd of: but she told me it was the peace of god that my sins were pardoned and (?) I had peace: and was in very safe state; and on the wensday I found it true for I found the pardon written on my heart: blessed be the allmighty for what he hath done ...

... Reverend father in the Lord I beg that you would remember me among the rest of your spiritual children in your prayers: I beg leave to subscribe myself your young babe in Christ

Sarah Barber

From Saml Webb, November 1741.

... by ye good providence of God I had a desire to hear ye Methodist So I went to Islington Church\(^2\) about 2 years \(\frac{1}{2}\) since. It pleased God that your self preacht from our Lords discourse with ye woman of Samaria at Jacobs well but indeed your zealous looks and forsale words caused me to think you spake as never man spake when our Lord had

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\(^1\) This is apparently a reference to the Moravian teaching, especially as propounded by Philip Henry Molther, who arrived in London in October 1739. He proclaimed a type of Quietism called 'stillness'. He succeeded in persuading many of the Fetter Lane Society members that the faith they professed to have in Christ was not the true faith. He said that they must remain 'still', without using the so-called means of grace, until they received faith. (See The Journal of John Wesley, vol. II, p. 312.m.)

\(^2\) The Rev. George Stonehouse became Vicar of St. Mary's Church, Islington in 1738. He opened his house and pulpit to the Wesleys. It appears that Stonehouse considered making Charles Wesley his curate, but largely as a result of resistance from the Vestry, he agreed to disallow the Wesleys and Whitefield to preach in the Church. In 1740 he resigned his living. (See Edward H. Sugden, op. cit., pp. 126-128).
convinced her of adultery I then and not till then felt that He knows ye secrets of all hearts for I thought mine would a burst as well as I was able I kept myself from making a disturbance till your sermon was over when I went out toward Canbury House where I plentifully pourd out my soul it being filled with joy unspeakable I had such a sense of my own vileness and ye love of Christ towards me that I was confounded and had no inclination to go home any more this being ye first I ever heard ye pure gospell preacht Nevertheless I date my justification from this time ...

Last Wensday night you spake as if you thought your labours would not be blest but in America Now I do declare that I never had ye expectation of being blest so much under any ones ministry as your and ungratefull as we are I believe many are like minded and I pray God to make us all faithfull hearers as you are teachers that you that sow and we that reap may rejoice together. Grant this O father for ye honour of Jesus Christ our Lord.

from your unworthy hearer Saml Webb

From Taverner Wallis, November 24, 1741.

Having had from my youth up great drawings of the Father; and flights of religion at sometimes, and at others, chaseing the pleasures of sin for a season; but at last being convinced that there was no peace to the wicket, I said I will return to my Father; and this was about August 1738, when I began to read Josephus which gave me great encouragement and I worried (?) between whiles, ready to do anything to be saved; ... I now received the blessed sacrament for the first time with shame and confusion of face and sometimes resolving for the future to amend my life and to this end set about going to church and sacrament and giving to the poor... I had got so far as to watch over sin and had
dominion, and likewise by being grave, my former acquaintance soon avoided me, as I did them; all this time I had no one, to speak my mind to, and having strove to repent but in vain finding my heart not contrite as it ought, and being recommended to get acquainted with good men ... and having heard talk of the Methodists at Oxford some years ago how religious they were I made it my business to renew my acquaintance with one so called, but to my great disappointment found him of another opinion; but it was by him I was first informed of the Society in Fetter Lane ... about April 1740 ... determined now

1 In their University days at Oxford, Charles and John Wesley, and George Whitefield had been members of a group which had been conducted largely on the lines of a Religious Society. Various titles had been given by others to this body of men, including 'The Holy Club', and 'The Methodists'. They were to a considerable extent motivated by a concern for discipline in their own lives, based on a somewhat rigid religious and moral code. They did not apparently have the evangelical emphasis of the later Methodists.

2 On May 1, 1738, a Religious Society was formed at James Hutton's house and bookshop, The Bible and Sun, in Little Wild Street. The founding members seem to have included Charles and John Wesley, and Peers, Vicar of Bexley. Later in the same year the meeting place was changed, apparently to a room in Fetter Lane. In July 1740, John Wesley withdrew from the Society, to a great extent on account of what he considered erroneous teaching. He took about eighteen or nineteen of the members with him. They met at The Foundry, instead of Fetter Lane.
to set my hand indeed to the plow, I went to the Foundery\(^1\) and having heard an excellent sermon by Mr. Jo it made me say to myself what must I do to be saved; I went very much moved with the Commendatory Letter and he recommended me to the acquaintance of Bro Thornton which was of much service in building me up and now by attending constantly on the Word I was soon convinced of the doctrine, and that it was different from that preachd in the Churches I was in some months time convinced of unbelief and in Feb last I found I had forgiveness threw the blood of Christ ...

From J. Ibison, May 23, 1740

I went some time since to Kennington Common\(^2\) to hear Mr Charles Wesley preach ... now did my grife return and my soul was in hell I could not rest day nor night I was worse than ever. I prayd for a nue hart day and night ... well I was resolved to go again to hear them preach so I hard Mr John and he in his sermon told me that I wanted a nue hart for I though that it was all spake to me ... so I begine to loke in my Bible ... as I satt in Fetter Lane by my selfe(?) in great

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\(^1\) The King's Foundry for canon, was wrecked by an explosion in 1716. It was not repaired, but removed to Woolwich. John Wesley acquired the building, possibly late in 1738. It was roughly repaired, and became the first meeting place for the London Methodists. It seems that about fifteen hundred people could sit on the plain benches of the main hall, and there were other rooms for the Band meetings, a sêhool, and a book room. John Wesley had an apartment in the building which he frequently used during his times in London, and in which his mother died in 1742. (See The Journal of John Wesley, vol. II, p. 316.m., and Edward H. Sugden, op. cit., pp. 94-98.

\(^2\) Kennington Common was one of the main sites for the open-air preaching of the revival in London. Whitefield preached there as early as April 1739, and John Wesley soon after, in June of the same year.
sorrow that my soul was in Hell: there came in such joy in to my soul that all my grife was gone I lay at my dear Savor feett and I prayed that he did for I had no condemnacion in my soul 0 how did I love my dear loving Saviour and all people now could I pray inded to my dear Saviour that he had caled me that was such a worthlas worme now did I weep inded with joy now I began to pray for the 2 Mr Wesleys but more for your dear soul Mr Charles for he had plocked my soul out of hell and I am suer I can not forgett him so long as I live I can as soon forgett my self Can any be so vile and ungreatfull as forgett that parson (?) that leds the way to so good a Saviour
APPENDIX II

It has been suggested that William Holland was the person who was reading Luther's Preface on May 24, 1738, at the Society meeting in Aldersgate Street, when John Wesley was converted. In the Moravian Church he ranked as the first 'Congregation Elder'. His active involvement in the London revival in its early years gives added value to his account of the events chronicled.

Extract from Short account of some few matters relating to the work of the Lord in England by Wm Holland 1745.
In the year 1732 I heard that some well disposed young men met together once or more times in a week to pray, read ye scripture and edifye one another, which meeting was called a Religious Society. This rejoiced me very much because (it was just that which I wanted) I had used to spend many hours for some years past quite alone in reading Bishop Beveridge, Thomas a Kempis etc even from my childhood had a concern for my salvation, but had no person to whom I could freely open my heart and converse with about such matters. The young man who told me of this Society gave me also an invitation to go with him to that which he was a member of, which I very gladly accepted of and found some persons who also had a concern after their salvation. After having visited it several times I desired to be received a member which was granted.

There were thirty or forty of these Societys in the city and suburbs of London, the members were all of the Episcopal Church, they had some orders or rules, but I cannot remember them all particularly. Some were to this effect, 'That they should pray for, watch over and endeavour to
build one another up in the knowledge and fear of God, to take heed that their conversation was such as became the gospel (sic) of Jesus Christ (that each member should receive the sacrament at least once a month unless hindered by some impediment, and also in that space of time keep a day of fasting and prayer when it best suited his circumstances etc.)

At the expense (sic) of these Societys the sacrament was administered every Sunday morning at 6 a clock in one or two Churches where many members of the Societys used to receive it. But when it was administered in their own Parish Churches. They generally received it there.¹

1733 I went into Wales to visit my relations and was acquainted with some few persons who made an outward profession of religion (but did not observe any awakening). I heard that there was a Religious Society about 30 English miles from the place I lived, but that they met very seldom.

¹ This is an indication of the close association of the Religious Societies with the Church of England. This had generally been fostered and encouraged by the leaders since the establishment of the Societies in the days of Dr. Horneck. The Religious Societies represented a desire for religious and moral renewal within the Established Church, rather than a separatist tendency.
As it was the practice of the members of the Societys to frequent the publick prayers daily in the Church (if they were masters of their own time or could get leave of those they served) so they also used to take notice of each person whom they observed there to be religiously disposed and afterwards endeavoured to get acquainted with them and as they found their inclinations to invite them to visit their Society, this was agreeable to one of their rules which was 'That each member should be assisting according to his ability in the increasing of their Society with suitable members.' Some having observed the Rev. Mr. Broughtons' constant attendance at the public prayers and also a particular seriousness in him soon acquainted with him (he was one of those called Methodists) and brought him to the Societys which he afterwards visited and also recommended some young men to them to be received. He afterwards read prayers and preached at a lecture which was maintained by one of these Societys.

1736 Although most of the members of the societies used to go to their own parish church in the morning on Sundays, yet in the afternoon they went to hear such ministers whom they thought preached most spiritual and lived also according to their doctrine ...

Mr Broughton having occasion to go to Oxford got Mr Whitefield (who just before had been ordained deacon) to come to London to officiate for him

1 It is probable that this was the Rev. Thomas Broughton. While Whitefield was still at University, he knew Broughton as one of his religious friends. Later in his life, and for many years, Thomas Broughton was apparently Secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

2 From their early days in the seventeenth century it was a common practice for the Religious Societies to arrange special lectures.
in those Churches where he preached, and some of the Societys became soon intimately acquainted with him and he came to our meetings and expounded the scripture in a sweet manner and we could plainly see that the Lord had bestowed grace and gifts upon him, and we got him leave to preach in many of our parish churches, he returned again to Oxford, and I believe afterwards began a Religious Society in Gloucester his native place.

I think it was this year that Mr Howell Harris began preaching in Wales and there appeared a great stirring and some awakening in the souls.

1737 Mr Whitefield returned to London preached in many churches, great numbers flocked to hear him, (some I believe on account of his youth, he being ordained a deacon before the usual time of age, others when they heard that he was going to Georgia to preach to the Indians and others because they loved to hear him.) He had leave to preach two quarterly sermons before all the Religious Societys in and about London. One can see the doctrine he then preached by those sermons he at that time published, but there was one which he preached at that time on justification by Jesus Christ wherein was very much of the gospell. This was a very blessed period, for the Holy Ghost worked powerfully on many hearts and a great stirring and awakening appeared.
This year Mr Ingham\(^1\) preached in Yorkshire and a great stirring and awakening appeared there also.

The latter end of December Mr Whitefield sat (sic) out from London to take ship for Georgia.

1738 Mr Broughton preached in many of the Churches which Mr Whitefield had visited also the societies. Mr John Westley (sic) arrived from Georgia. We got him also his Br Charles to preach in some of the Churches, their sermons were then on the 'One thing needful, self denial' and much according to Mr Laws\(^2\) plan, some few members of the Societys who were particularly intimate together used to meet at Br Huttons\(^3\) of an evening...

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\(^1\) The Rev. Benjamin Ingham joined the Oxford Methodists in 1732. In 1741 he married Lady Margaret Hastings, who was instrumental in the conversion of her sister-in-law, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. He exercised an effective open-air ministry in Yorkshire, and many Societies were formed. He joined the Moravians, and the Societies became a Moravian connection. He ultimately separated from the Moravians, and formed a Society known as the Inghamite Connexion. (See The Journal of John Wesley, p. 106.\(m\), and Richard Green, John Wesley Evangelist, p. 307.\(m\)).

\(^2\) William Law had a considerable influence upon many of the revival leaders, especially through his Treatise on Christian Perfection and A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life. This influence seems to have diminished with the evangelical emphasis of the Wesleys after their conversion experience.

\(^3\) This appears to refer to James Hutton who was converted largely as a consequence of a sermon preached by John Wesley. Between about 1735 and 1740, his house seems to have been a London rendezvous for John Wesley and his friends. (See Edward H. Sugden, op. cit., pp. 39, 40.)
It was now Br Boehler\(^1\) Br Neisser and some more German Brn came to England
Mr John Westly (sic) providentially met them ... Br Beohler (sic) spake as
well he could in English but explained himself when asked particularly
about any matter in lattin (sic). He spoke 'Of justification by faith
alone, the forgiveness of sins being born again, having the witness of the
spirit, that one might soon experience it and that it was instantaneous
instantaneous (sic), likewise that it was so many years since he had
experienced it.' He spoke of the same matters also in some of the Societys
and with very great blessing. Many souls were convinced that they had sought
to be justified either wholly by their works or also partly by those and
partly by Jesus Christ so that by Br Beohler (sic) preaching many get a
clear insight into the gospell and found there was a very short way to
salvation. Before Br Beohler sat out from London to Georgia he and Mr
Westly began a band. I was gone at that time for a few days into the
country, but soon after my return in speaking with a member of a society
concerning what Br Beohler had preached and by reading also at the same time
the eighth chapter of St Pauls Epistle to the Romans I was convinced that I
was not in the state therin described and I became very uneasy and searched
for all books that treated of faith. Br Beohler was now sat out for his
voyage and in my search I providentially found Martin Luthers Comment on the
Epistle to the Galatians I carryed it immediately to C Westly who was then
sick at Mr Brays as a very precious treasure that I had found and we three
sat down together and Mr Westly began reading Luthers preface to his
Comment and at the reading of these words 'What have we then nothing to do?
No, no nothing, but only to accept of him who is made unto us of God

\(^1\) Peter Boehler was a Moravian. He greatly influenced John and Charles
Wesley. After a conversation with him on Sunday, March 5, 1738, John Wesley
wrote that he was 'clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith
whereby alone we are saved.' Charles Wesley learnt much from him of
evangelical faith in the crucial days before his conversion.
wisdom righteousness holiness and redemption' there came such a power over me I cannot well describe. My great burden fell off in an instant, my heart was so filled with peace and love that I burst into tears and thought I saw our saviour at some distance. Mr Westly and Bray perceiving me so affected fell on their knees and prayed. When I went afterwards into the street I scarce (sic) could feel the ground I trod upon, my body seeming so very light and I found that I was dead to ye noise of the world. About this time Br West Br Browne and I were chosen by lot into band which was then a confession of what had happened since our last having been together. Mr Charles Westly afterwards read Luthers Comment with blessings to several persons.

This was an extraordinary bless'd period to many. Our saviour having been manifestd (sic) to some at the sacrament and to others elswhere (sic).

Both Mr Westlys preached up faith and also did Br Oxlee. The Religious Societys were divided in their opinions. Some with Mr Broughton asserted that forgiveness of sins and being born again was in baptism and that if souls who had been baptised fell into sin afterwards that then they were to be renewed again by repentance.

... Mr Cs Westly preached in many churches. Br Wm Delamotte¹ was now

¹ Certain members of the Delamotte family were supporters of the revival. Mr. DeLaMotte, J.P., lived at Blendon Hall, near Bexley. Charles Wesley was a frequent visitor at Blendon, as also were Ingham and Whitefield. Whitefield seriously considered the possibility of proposing marriage to Miss Elizabeth Delamotte. William Delamotte became a Moravian. (See The Journal of John Wesley, p. 106.m., and p. 432.m.)
awakened. Mr J Westly and Browne returned to England. We hired a room for our Society to meet in in Fetter Lane. Mr Ingham soon came back to England. Mr Whitefield being arrived in the West of Ireland from America preached in many places in his way to Dublin ... Mr Whitefield began soon to preach again in the churches and his doctrine was now something more evangelical. The latter end of this year or the beginning of the next the Fetter Lane Society having a Watch Night (Mr Whitefield Westly Ingham and I think Hall being present) a sudden effusion of the Holy Ghost was said to be experienced by many.¹

1739 ..... This summer some of the Fetter Lane Society thinking they had a call from the Lord went to Moorfields it being holiday time to preach when all the ridiculous sports and pastimes were exhibiting but the mob gathered about them and soon put them to silence.

1742 ..... In the month of Oct the London Congregation was settled. The Br were almost all of the Church of England and about half of them had been members of Religious Societys.

1745 ..... I have heard that the few Dissenters who have been awakened (there) have left their meetings and now go with the others to the Church and one can observe that the generality of the awakening in England is among the members of the Episcopal Church.

¹ This appears to refer to the gathering described by John Wesley as follows:

Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles were present at our lovefeast in Fetter Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His majesty we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, 0 God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.' (See The Journal of John Wesley, pp. 121-125).
Note: To our knowledge, in describing, analyzing and evaluating the eighteenth century revival, extensive use has not generally been made either of the letters quoted in Appendix I, or of the account by William Holland quoted in Appendix II. We consider this material is of value in casting light upon the early years of the revival. It is especially significant in representing the views, attitudes, and responses of certain of the lay participant observers.
### APPENDIX III

List at Moravian Archives, London - The London Brethren (undated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names &amp; Trade</th>
<th>Birthdays</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>When rec’d into Cong.</th>
<th>When admitted to sacrament.</th>
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<td>1728</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>Jan. 22, 1748</td>
<td>May 20, 1748</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1718</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>C of E</td>
<td>1749</td>
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<td>1749</td>
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<td>1717</td>
<td>Ayth Herts</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1713</td>
<td>Hanchurch ?</td>
<td>C of E</td>
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<td>1716</td>
<td>Armly, Yorkshire</td>
<td>C of E</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1717</td>
<td>Almondery ?</td>
<td>C of E</td>
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<td>Erichsen Merchant</td>
<td>1726</td>
<td>Norway</td>
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<td>1750</td>
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<td>1721</td>
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The following are included in an additional, unheaded list, held at the Moravian Archives, London:

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<th>Year of Arrival</th>
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STUDIES IN REVIVALISM AS A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PHENOMENON, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE LONDON REVIVAL OF 1736-1750.

by

Kenneth Hylson-Smith

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines revivalism sociologically and phenomenologically. It is contended that sociology and phenomenology of religion are not incompatible disciplines, but may and should be complementary. It is possible for both to be fruitfully applied to the study of religion and religious phenomena, and this has been attempted in the present work.

The eighteenth-century revival in London in its formative years, 1736 to 1750, is studied in depth. In addition to the contemporary and subsequent published works, such as journals, pamphlets, books, letters and local histories of various description, considerable use has been made of unpublished manuscripts, and other primary sources not previously used in the same way as in this thesis.

An examination is then made of a wide chronological and geographical range of other post-Reformation revivals in the Christian tradition. In doing so, those revivals are included which have been of considerable significance in terms of their impact upon, and importance to the religious life of the community with which they are associated, or which have exerted a profound influence in helping to stimulate other such phenomena. Where this has not been of special relevance, the revival has been chosen because it is well documented, often by a contemporary person involved in it, in such a manner as to give added insight into either or both its social and religious aspects.
On the basis of these studies, revivalism is considered as a social and religious phenomenon. This is undertaken in the broad context of major world religions, and by reference to those sociological and phenomenological theories and concepts which appear most pertinent to this particular manifestation of religious behaviour.