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IMAGE ALTERATION IN A MASS MOVEMENT: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF THE LOG COLLEGE IN THE GREAT AWAKENING

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Charles Robert Reed, B.A., M.Div., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. ii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

| Purpose and Scope |
| Justification for the Study |
| Hypothesis |
| Methodology |
| Plan of Study |

II. RELIGION MOVES THE MASSES: THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY REVIVALS ........................................... 17

| The Revival of Religion |
| The Rise of the Log College in the Presbyterian Church |
| Ideological Beginnings of the Presbyterian Revival in the Log College |

III. CONVERSION: THE CURE FOR SOCIAL UNREST .......... 69

| The Outlook of the Masses |
| The Failure of the Presbyterian Church |
| The Source of a New Image |

IV. THE REACTION AGAINST THE MOVEMENT: LET NO MAN DESPISE THY YOUTH ........................................ 110

| The Actions of the Movement |
| The Reactions of the Establishment |
| The Rhetorical Stance of the Movement |

V. THE RETALIATION OF THE MOVEMENT: A FORM OF GODLINESS ....................................................... 143

| The Presbytery of New Brunswick |
| The Defense of the Movement |
| The Expulsion of the Movement |
| The Aid of the Presbytery of New York |
VI. INSTITUTIONALIZATION: THAT THEY MAY BE ONE

   The Synod of New York
   The Union of the Two Synods

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

   The Major Image Changes
   An Assessment of the Movement's Rhetoric
   Implications of This Study

BIBLIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the most influential and extensive religious movements occurred in the eighteenth century. Now known as the Great Awakening, it began in a number of isolated localities and spread through every colony. The reforming zeal of its leaders often aroused the animosity of the denominational conservatives. As a result, the proponents and the opponents of the revivals engaged in a rhetorical battle which makes this movement a rich field of study for the rhetorical critic.

The Great Awakening altered the course of every major denomination in America; one in particular, the Presbyterian Church, divided over the revivals. As early as 1739, internal dissension plagued the Synod of Philadelphia, the organizational structure of American Presbyterianism. Tension had been mounting between the opposing factions in the denomination for over two years. Each side was firm in its convictions and a confrontation appeared inevitable. Compromise was unlikely.

As leader of the evangelical wing of the church, Gilbert Tennent came to the 1739 synod meeting internally as divided as was the ruling body. For the past ten years he and his followers had traveled throughout the Middle Colonies offering a personalized religion. Their efforts had resulted in hundreds of conversions to their cause.
However, the denominational hierarchy had frowned upon their emotional preaching and had passed several measures aimed at limiting their effectiveness. As a result, Tennent was forced to decide whether to remain loyal to Presbyterianism or loyal to revivalism. He chose the latter alternative and issued a sharp protest condemning the synod's actions against the movement. When this protest went unheeded, Tennent turned on his former colleagues and led his followers in a rhetorical assault on anyone hostile to the revivals. His verbal outbursts were instrumental in causing a schism in the denomination; however, ultimately they also fostered the reforms he desired.

**Purpose and Scope**

This dissertation studies the rhetoric of a movement in a movement; instead of dealing with the macroscopic whole termed the "Great Awakening," it is concerned only with a microscopic part of that whole, specifically the part that the graduates of the Log College, a small one-room school with a single instructor, played in the revivals. Therefore, its scope is limited to a single denomination in a particular area. The denomination is the Presbyterian Church, for all the Log College ministers were Presbyterians; the place is the Middle Colonies—Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New York, and New Jersey—for these were the colonies in which the Presbyterians had settled.

Approximately twenty men graduated from the Log College, all except one becoming ministers. Therefore, these twenty men are the chief participants in the movement and the subjects of this study,
along with several others who became early supporters of the revival by aligning themselves with the Log College party. The final limitation regards the period of time involved, 1725-1758, for the Synod of Philadelphia licensed reform leader Gilbert Tennent on the first date, and the movement formally ended on the second date when it reunited with the institutionalized church. Therefore, this dissertation is mainly concerned with what happened in the Presbyterian Church in the Middle Colonies during a period of thirty-three years as a result of the rhetoric of the Log College alumni. Although this study must of necessity treat a great deal of historical and sociological data, the primary emphasis is on the roles which messages played in winning and alienating the various receivers. This is a message-audience centered study.

**Justification for the Study**

An analysis of the rhetoric of the Log College graduates in the Great Awakening is relevant for several reasons. First, it is historically important, for it deals with a subject which scholars have overlooked; no scholarly writing has demonstrated the effect the Log College has had on the Great Awakening: Presbyterian church historians have been the only ones recognizing the importance of this institution, and none of them have written a detailed work. Therefore, the names of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield have become synonymous with the eighteenth century religious revivals, while the graduates of the Log College have been forgotten. Only Gilbert Tennent has received any extended considerations, and none of the
studies of him have been published.\(^1\) Thus this dissertation makes an historical contribution by reinterpreting what happened during the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies.

In addition, this study should be relevant to sociologists because of the approach it uses. By employing a sociological model, it tests the validity of sociological movement theory while also attempting to advance that theory by suggesting why a movement either succeeds or fails and speculating on what must occur before a movement can move from one stage to the next. The combination of a sociological model with a distinct approach to the concept of images has resulted in the emergence of a model which focuses on the rhetoric of a movement. Since the image changes that make or destroy movements have not been treated in sociology, this study should prove interesting to sociologists.

The third and primary justification for this dissertation is the rhetorical contributions it offers. Critics can analyze rhetorical discourses in several different ways—within their immediate contexts, within their religious contexts, and within their historical contexts.

\(^1\) Two dissertations in the religious field and three master's theses in the speech field have been written on Gilbert Tennent. In 1942 Frederick Brink considered Tennent as a preacher, churchman, educator, and patriot. In 1958 Miles Harper examined the theology of Tennent. Two of the master's theses were written in the 1950's and are neo-Aristotelian in methodology. The author of this dissertation wrote the third thesis in 1971, focusing on Gilbert Tennent as the leader of the reform movement. In addition to these five studies on Tennent, two dissertations on the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies appear in the history field. In 1947 David McCleave traced the history of the American Presbyterian Church from its origin to its reunion after the Great Awakening. In 1964 Martin Lodge described the impact of the revivals on all the denominations of the Middle Colonies. See the bibliography for references to all these works.
within the contexts of the rhetors lives, or within the context of a social movement. This author contends that if a discourse were delivered in the course of a movement, then the critic can best interpret it by viewing it within that context. Therefore, this study is designed to interpret and evaluate for the first time the rhetoric of a group of eminent leaders within their total speaking situation.

A second reason for a rhetorical analysis of this nature resides in what Lloyd Bitzer called a persistent situation.\(^2\) Because analogies to many situations in the past also exist in the present and will probably exist in the future, profitable analysis of the past is possible. An analysis of the role of the Log College in the Great Awakening provides insight into how rhetoric functions in a movement to win or alienate followers. The conclusions of this research should be helpful to other critics who study the rhetoric of social movements. In addition, as the dissertation examines the potential ability of messages to achieve their sources' purposes, it also tests and contributes to the existing body of rhetorical theory by applying that theory to a completed rhetorical transaction.

**Hypothesis**

This rhetorical analysis of the Great Awakening in the Presbyterian Church is an audience-image-centered movement study. It is especially concerned with the way in which messages operated during

that period to bring about image alteration. The author's hypothesis is that a movement can progress from one stage to the next only as it is able to modify the existing images of its receivers. Therefore, the major emphasis of the study is on the images which various groups held and the messages which the leaders of the movement generated to alter those images. My specific contention is that the main reason the revival succeeded in the Middle Colonies is that the Log College graduates changed people's images of themselves, of their world, and of their religious faith. In the process of making these changes, these same people were also modifying their images of the movement and the establishment. In order to test this hypothesis of the role of image alteration in a social movement, a distinctive methodology has been developed.

**Methodology**

Sociologists study movements as stages of process. C. Wendell King has developed the least complicated model in *Social Movements in the United States*. First, a movement has a beginning which King called the "incipient phase." Next, it has an "organizational phase," after which it enters the "stable phase." Depending on the nature of the movement and its goals, it may continue indefinitely in the last phase or it may disintegrate if it has accomplished its goals. However, when employing this or any other sociological model, the rhetorical critic must keep two factors in mind: (1) the movement may

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fail at some point along the way and never attain its goals, and (2) some characteristics of one phase may persist into the next one.

Dawson and Gettys proposed another model for analyzing the development of social movement which involves four phases. They called the first the "preliminary stage of social unrest." Restlessness, local disorders, and the articulation of discontent by aggressive and visionary leaders characterize this period. The "popular stage of collective excitement" follows. During this stage, prophets and reformers who coordinate the unrest with an objective lead the movement. Usually the gathering of the likeminded and the surfacing of the opposition also occur at this time. Next comes the "stage of formal organization," during which the movement centers upon a leader and program, while developing its role structure and a body of traditions. The final stage is the "stage of institutionalization." At this point the movement terminates in the form of a lasting organization. The administrator replaces the agitator, prophet, and reformer. The change is complete and relatively permanent until a new cycle begins.4

The basic difference between this approach and the approach of King is the addition of an extra stage at the beginning of the model. Both approaches have their place, depending on the nature of the movement which one is studying. For instance, some movements begin only after discontent is widespread. This being the case, the rhetorical

critic should use King's model. However, often a movement is responsible for creating much of the unrest. Under this condition, the approach of Dawson and Gettys is superior.

These two models establish guidelines for examining the overall historical and sociological elements of a movement. However, since they do not provide a sufficient basis for analyzing the rhetoric of that movement, the critic must integrate one of them with another theory. This study recommends that a satisfactory rhetorical model can be created around the concept of the image.

A model based on Kenneth Boulding's definition of the image has a great deal to offer the critic. According to Boulding, an image is "my subjective knowledge of the world."\(^5\) It is built up as a result of all the past experiences of the possessor of the image. When the critic applies this concept of the image to rhetoric, the speaker does not create an image of himself which is separate from reality; rather the audience perceives the speaker as having a certain image. Boulding classifies the aspects of an image in the following way: (1) spatial, (2) temporal, (3) relational, (4) personal, (5) value, (6) affectional, (7) conscious, unconscious, and sub-conscious, (8) certainty-uncertainty, (9) reality-unreality, and (10) public-private.\(^6\) Of these ten categories, the value aspect is the one which has the greatest influence on communication. Boulding writes: "The value scales


\(^6\)Ibid., pp. 47-48.
of any individual or organization are perhaps the most important single element determining the effect of the messages it receives on its image of the world.\(^7\)

The value image not only determines how messages will be perceived but also how these messages will affect the overall image. Some messages pass straight through the image without having any relevant effects. Other messages alter the image by the simple addition of new knowledge consistent with the image holder's value system. A third type threatens the internal stability of the image and is therefore resisted. However, if the image holder continues to receive messages which contradict the image, one day he may revise it completely. A fourth type of message either clarifies the image or introduces uncertainty about it, depending on whether that message supports or challenges the image. In all these instances, it is the receiver's value system which acts as a gatekeeper and either allows or prevents a message from entering the image.\(^8\)

Boulding's analysis of the image raises some interesting possibilities for the rhetorical critic who wants to study social movements. First, it suggests that a movement is going to be perceived in different ways by different groups. Second, it implies that the same message could be accepted by one group and rejected by another because of different value systems. Third, it forces the critic to

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 12.

\(^8\)Ibid., pp. 7-10.
focus not only on the advocates of the movement but also on the various messages which they generate and the various audiences who receive these messages. In short, it provides a sound basis on which to develop a rhetorical model for studying social movements.

What appears on the following page is a diagram of the model which the writer used to study the eighteenth century religious movement within the Presbyterian Church. The model is a combination of the four stages of Dawson and Gettys with Boulding's concept of the image. Dawson and Gettys' approach has been selected instead of King's approach because Gilbert Tennent and his followers were responsible for creating some of the social unrest which existed at that point in history. After the functions of the model are described, the author will briefly explain why it is relevant to this study.

As a movement passes through its various stages, different challenges face it. Usually it emerges because a socially outcast group has an unfavorable image of the establishment (see I on page eleven). Therefore, during phase one agitators arise and address the establishment from within its ranks. They voice the grievances of the masses and strive for reformation instead of renovation. In phase two the establishment rejects the reforms and attempts to destroy the movement (II). The leaders of the movement then turn on the establishment and begin to coordinate the unrest with an objective. Next, in the third phase, the movement becomes formally organized and in-group rhetoric plays an important function (IV). During this phase, the movement also presents its program of renovation to the masses (III). In the final stage, the movement becomes an institution and must contend
1. The broken line extending across the page represents the linear development of a movement as it passes through its various stages.

2. Any or all of the above image frames could occur in each of the stages.

3. The arrows represent the messages and channels operating cyclically, indicating that the rhetorical process is omni-directional.

4. My hypothesis: A movement progresses from one step to the next only as it alters one or more of its audiences' images.
with the ousted system (II), the masses (III), and its own members (IV).

This diagram is flexible and varies from movement to movement. For instance, in some movements there might be a need for a fifth image concentration, depending on the parties involved. However, the basic structure is sound. Every movement must react to the images which the establishment, the masses, and its own members have of it. These reactions come at various stages, or in all stages, since they are contingent on the nature of the situation.

Therefore, the rhetorical critic can perform his analysis by viewing the movement from these different perspectives. First he must determine what images the various audiences hold and why they hold them. This will lead him to a study of the value systems of these audiences, since values are the prime producers of images. Several approaches are available to the critic as he embarks on this task. He can infer what these values are by examining audience behavior—what those in the audience emphasize, what they say their values are, the referents of their social sanctions, the implicit premises they hold. Or he can take an indirect approach and gain insight into the mind of an audience by analyzing the values to which communicators who address that audience attach their proposals. Such an analysis will tell him what images these communicators perceive that audience of holding.

Since rhetoricians usually assume that speakers know their audiences

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and adapt their messages to them, the critic can expect to gain accurate data by using this technique. In addition to these two approaches, he can also recreate audience images by consulting such general works as Daniel Boorstin's *The Americans* and Vernon Parrington's *The Colonial Mind, 1620-1800.*

After the critic reconstructs the audience images, his main concern is with the messages which the leaders generate, the channels which carry these messages, and the feedback from the receivers. This approach enables him to examine the rhetorical requirements, problems, and strategies of the leaders as Herbert Simons recommends, while also devoting proper attention to the messages and audiences of the movement.

This methodology serves as the basis for determining why the religious movement in the Presbyterian Church succeeded. It was a movement based entirely on the use of rhetoric, and it passed through the four stages Dawson and Gettys described. Three distinct groups also developed once the movement was in progress—the church hierarchy, the members of the movement, and the mass of common people. By classifying individuals into categories in this manner, it should be clear that the writer is using the term "image" to refer to public images as opposed to cognitive (private) images and communicated images. However, as Boulding asserted, public images are nothing more than shared

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cognitive images. In reconstructing the public images held by the various audiences during the Great Awakening, this study makes use of all three of the approaches previously described.

Plan of Study

Because of the nature of the subject material and the nature of the model, the study divides into the following chapters.

Chapter II

The intent of the second chapter is to provide an historical background of the context in which the movement occurred. The chapter contains an overview of the religious revivals of the eighteenth century, placing the Great Awakening and, more specifically, the reformation of the Presbyterian Church in proper perspective to them. It also traces the rise of the Log College and analyzes the ideological beginnings of the movement in that institution.

Chapter III

Beginning with chapter three, the next four chapters follow the four stages of a movement as outlined by Dawson and Gettys. Chapter three describes the social unrest which preceded the movement and shows how Gilbert Tennent and his two brothers served as agitators of this unrest. It also includes an audience analysis of the people who were the prime targets of the movement. The chapter concludes with the masses' image change to interest in and optimism for their religious lives.

11 Boulding, The Image, p. 64.
Chapter IV

The following chapter traces the development of the movement during its stage of collective excitement. It investigates the opposition to the movement. It also analyzes the first two rhetorical strategies which the leaders of the reformation employed. The chapter closes with the image change of the establishment to fear of the movement.

Chapter V

Chapter five focuses on the in-group rhetoric of the movement during its organizational phase. The chapter emphasizes the development of the movement's ideology, role structure, and morale. It also analyzes the third and fourth strategies of the movement, which arose as a defense mechanism against the earlier attacks of the establishment. During this period the decisive rhetorical confrontations between the opposing factions took place. The major image change in this chapter was made by the leaders of the movement, for they came to despise the church hierarchy.

Chapter VI

Chapter six considers the history of the movement in its institutional phase. It begins with the movement's struggling for survival, demonstrates how it finally succeeded, and then concludes with the reunion of the movement and the establishment. The chapter displays the role that rhetoric played in the development of a lasting institution. The image change of the synod moderates enabled the movement to become an institution during this phase. Because the movement did
succeed, its leaders were then able to modify their own images of their former enemies. Their opponents likewise followed with a similar image change and the two factions united into one synod.

Chapter VII

The final chapter summarizes the major image changes which propelled the movement into each of its stages. It also assesses the rhetoric of the Log College graduates and describes the implications of the dissertation for rhetoric, sociology, and history.
CHAPTER II

RELIGION MOVES THE MASSES: THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY REVIVALS

In the first half of the eighteenth century, almost simultaneously, revivals spread through Germany, Great Britain, and the American colonies. This religious fervor and reforming zeal culminated in several movements—Pietism in Germany, Methodism in England, and the Great Awakening in America. Of primary concern to this dissertation is a small segment of the colonial movement, essentially the revival which the Log College students fostered in the Presbyterian Church. However, this revival cannot be properly understood apart from the entire religious context in which it arose. Therefore, this chapter will endeavor to place the Presbyterian movement in proper perspective to the larger religious revolution of that period.

The Revival of Religion

The eighteenth century revivals of religion were an outgrowth of earlier revivals during the Renaissance and Reformation. Edward M. Hulme described the Renaissance as the revival of learning, the revival of literature, the revival of art, the revival of trade, but above all, the revival of the individual.¹ The Medieval age had buried individual

identity in the feudal system. From birth to death the individual had no control over his destiny. Agencies in which he had no voice completely dominated his life. The Renaissance overthrew that system and resurrected the individual. The Reformation, with its emphasis on free inquiry and the priesthood of believers, clothed him with religious liberty and equality. However, as G. P. Gooch observed, both liberty and equality were a long time fully developing. They did not completely evolve until the eighteenth century.

Actually, two types of Protestantism emerged from the Reformation. The first led to state churches which were established by law as the only legal religion. Thus the Lutheran Church developed in Germany and the Scandanavian countries, the Anglican Church in England, and the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. In these countries, uniformity was demanded and the right of private judgment was denied. However, the second type of Protestantism rejected formal creeds and substituted personal faith for restrictive religion. Its emphasis was upon individual rights, freedom of conscience, and separation of church and state. This left-wing phase of the Reformation began with the peasants in Germany and eventually spread into all Protestant lands despite severe persecution. The Pietist movement was the final result.

The Pietist Movement

Philip Jacob Spener, of Frankfort, founded Pietism in 1670 when he

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began devotional societies within the Lutheran churches of Germany. These societies met to study the Bible, engage in prayer, and sing hymns. The main emphasis of the movement was on a personal religion of the heart as a reaction against the deadness and formalism of the German state church. Under Spener's influence the University of Halle became a pietistic stronghold and the center of evangelism in Germany. Before long Lutheranism became divided over the merits of Pietism. A minority held to its principles while the majority condemned the establishment of a church within a church. The latter group felt that Pietism opened the door to heresy, enthusiasm, and chiliastic tendencies.⁴

Upon Spener's death in 1705, Augustus Hermann Francke became the leader of the movement. Eventually Pietism swept through every part of Germany, into the Scandinavian countries, and finally came to England where it had a strong influence on Methodism. Through the influence of Count Zinzendorf, a pietistic Lutheran who became a Moravian bishop, Pietism became the dominant influence in Moravianism. It also permeated the German Reformed Church, the Mennonite Church, and the Dunkers. German immigrants brought it to the American colonies, where it became an important foundation for the colonial revivals. A source of dissension in America, it also contributed greatly to missionary activities, the establishment of orphanages, and the spreading of the Bible to the common people.⁵


German emigrants of Mennonite and Quaker beliefs first introduced Pietism in 1683 when they arrived in Philadelphia and soon after founded Germantown. In 1709 and again in 1717, Reformed and Lutheran Palatines who held pietistic views also settled in Pennsylvania after being driven from their homeland by religious persecution and economic hardship. In 1719 twenty families of Dunkers came and ten years later their founder, Alexander Mack, led a large migration to Germantown. The Schwenkfelders and Moravians followed in 1734. Thus Pietism, with its radical individualism, brought to the colonies immigrants who were diverse but sympathetic to all Christians who viewed the life of God in the soul of man as the distinguishing feature of true Christianity. The revival of Pietism among these Germans later became one of the streams which formed the Great Awakening. Under the leadership of the Moravian Count Zinzendorf, the Lutheran Henry Muhlenberg, and the Reformed Michael Schlatter, emotional religion thrived in eighteenth century America among these German settlers.\(^{6}\)

The Methodist Movement

Paralleling the Pietist movement in Germany was the Methodist movement in England. Actually, Pietism had a profound influence on Methodism: John Wesley was converted in 1738 through the ministry of Peter Boehler, a Moravian. The Methodist groups in the Church of England adopted many features of Moravianism.\(^{7}\) Even George Whitefield,

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\(^6\)Maxson, *Great Awakening*, pp. 6-10.

\(^7\)*Ibid.*, p. 5.
a prime mover in both the English and American revivals, owed his conversion experience to the influence of Pietism on his life. While he was a student at Pembroke College, Charles Wesley presented him with Francke's work, the Fear of Man; in 1735 he became the first Methodist to pass through what the Moravians called "holy mourning" to its happy conclusion of assurance. Whitefield later made frequent references in his journals to pietistic literature.

William Sweet noted in his book on Revivalism in America that many scholars commonly misconceive the colonial revival to be an extension of the evangelical revival in England. That such is not the case is evident from the fact that the pietistic revival among the Dutch Reformed population in New Jersey was well under way by 1726, twelve years before John Wesley had his conversion experience. Furthermore, the Log College graduates formed the Presbytery of New Brunswick in 1738, the same year of Wesley's conversion. Therefore, instead of being a forerunner of the Great Awakening, the Methodist movement in England actually began after the colonial revivals were already in

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8 George Whitefield, A Brief and General Account of the First Part of the Life of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, From His Birth, To His Entering Into Holy Orders (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1740), p. 19-41.


progress. Only during the last phase of the American movement did Methodism appear in the colonies. In 1769, John Wesley sent Joseph Pilmore and Richard Boardman to New York and Philadelphia as missionaries. However, of greater importance to American Methodism was the work of lay preachers such as Robert Strawbridge and Devereux Jarrett in Virginia, whose work did not begin until 1773.  

Several common characteristics of the Pietist and Methodist movements are worth noting. Sweet demonstrated that they shared the same purpose and used the same tactics.

Methodism and Pietism had many things in common. Both grew out of a desire to revive religion in the state church; both stressed religion as an inner personal experience; both carried on their work by forming small groups of earnest people, drawn out of the churches; both were led by men of education who were opposed to fanatical and overemotionalized manifestations.

One other shared feature could also be cited. In neither Germany nor England did either of these movements have a marked effect on the established churches of those countries. Instead, the hierarchy of the state churches was antagonistic to them. Therefore, these movements created sects which ultimately developed into new denominations.

The Great Awakening

Historians have used the term "Great Awakening" in both a


12 Sweet, Culture and Religion, p. 88.

13 Ibid.
restrictive and a broad sense. Heimert and Miller used it specifically to refer to the religious excitement in America between 1739 and 1750. Such a view limited the movement to the effects of the colonial ministry of George Whitefield. Maxson, on the other hand, used the phrase to designate the entire evangelical quickening in the colonies. He traced the beginnings of the Awakening to four separate sources—"the revival of Pietism among the Germans of Pennsylvania, the rise of a radical evangelicalism among the Dutch of New Jersey, a similar revival among the English-speaking Presbyterians of the Middle Colonies, and, following these, the remarkable outburst of old-time Puritan feeling among the Congregationalists of New England." Maxson went on to add that these revivals still powerfully manifested themselves in parts of the country up to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War.

Maxson's outlook causes the scholar to view the Great Awakening not as a single stream of revivalism but as a series of separate movements which finally flowed together with the coming of Whitefield. It is advantageous to the understanding of any single sub-movement to demonstrate briefly how each of the four sources began, related to the others, and eventually joined with them to create the total flow of the Great Awakening.


The Dutch Revival

The first stream of revivalism in America began in the Middle Colony of New Jersey among the Dutch Settlers. German Pietism with its emphasis upon a personal, emotional religion had already prepared the way. Theodore J. Frelinghuysen, a Pietist pastor of four Dutch Reformed churches in the Raritan Valley of New Jersey, was the first outstanding colonial evangelist and the leader of the movement. Maxson wrote of him: "So thoroughly was he the soul of the evangelical revival among the Dutch until the coming of Whitefield that the account of the movement up to that time is the story of his life."16

Frelinghuysen himself was not of Dutch descent but was a German who lived near the Dutch border, learned the Dutch language, and entered the Dutch Reformed Church. He received most of his education from his father, who had pietistic leanings. In 1720, after receiving a call from three congregations of Dutch immigrants in central New Jersey, he embarked for the New World. Sweet described the Dutch settlements to which Frelinghuysen went as being hostile to revivalism.

It was a rough and boorish community, and religiously the people had little desire beyond outward conformity to accepted religious rites. Their wish was to preserve the Dutch Church as a symbol of their Dutch nationality and of their former independence. The last thing they wanted was to have a religion that would stir the emotions and set up high standards of personal conduct.17

The kind of religion that the Dutch hoped to avoid was exactly

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16 Ibid., p. 11.
17 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 274.
the kind that Frelinghuysen began to preach. Welcoming the opportunity
to escape the restraints of Old World conservatism, he immediately be-
gan to proclaim his evangelical message with almost fanatical zeal.
He emphasized the Calvinistic doctrines of sin, regeneration, and sal-
vation by grace. In the course of preaching a gospel which required a
terrible conviction of sin, followed by a genuine conversion experience,
Frelinghuysen alienated a segment of his congregations. This alienated
group challenged his authority when he banned four of its members from
the communion table because he considered them to be unregenerate.
They were outraged at his description of them as unconverted and un-
worthy of communion and took their case to two Dutch ministers in New
York, Domines Dubois and Boel. A year later the Dutch Reformed Church
split between the followers of Frelinghuysen and the followers of
Dubois and Boel. 18 Others in Frelinghuysen's churches, mainly the
young and the poor, accepted his doctrines; and by 1726, a revival be-
gan to sweep through the Dutch churches. Soon, other pastors invited
Frelinghuysen to preach in their churches, and in several instances he
intruded into other minister's parishes uninvited. 19

Two of Frelinghuysen's significant innovations recurred in the
other sources of the Great Awakening. The first was the organization
of private devotional meetings after the pattern of the pietistic so-
cieties in Germany. These meetings were open only to Frelinghuysen's

18 Martin E. Lodge, "The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies,"
Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of California at Berkley,
1964, 110-12.
19 Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 50.
followers until 1745, when he made them public in an attempt to silence the sarcasm of his opponents. The other innovation was the transformation of some of his elders into lay preachers. He did this in order to keep his congregations intact while he was away for prolonged periods fanning the flames of evangelism. The rise of lay preaching in evangelical churches later became a center of controversy during the peak of the Great Awakening.

The divisions which Frelinghuysen's preaching caused in the Dutch Reformed Church were finally healed in 1733 when the opposing parties accepted the articles of peace penned by the Classis of Amsterdam. However, by this time the Dutch Reformed revival was affecting the Presbyterian churches in the Raritan Valley. The influence which the former movement had on the latter stemmed from the relationship which developed between the Dutch leader Frelinghuysen and the Presbyterian leader Gilbert Tennent, whose revival in the Presbyterian Church is the subject of this dissertation.

The Presbyterian Revival

In the fall of 1726, Gilbert Tennent became the pastor of the Presbyterian Church of New Brunswick, which was located in the heart of Frelinghuysen's territory. He was so impressed with the results of Frelinghuysen's ministry that he attempted to use the same techniques.


Although his first efforts ended in failure, Tennent finally achieved the same type of impact in his own church that Frelinghuysen was having in the Dutch churches. During Tennent's early years in New Brunswick, he and the Dutch divine worked closely together. Occasionally they even held joint communion services. Frelinghuysen did the preaching, Tennent the praying and baptizing, and together they administered the Lord's Supper. In the 1730's Frelinghuysen was called before the Classis to defend this practice. 22

Besides beginning the revival in his own church in New Brunswick, Tennent traveled to Staten Island in 1729 and had startling results from a sermon on Amos 6:1 ("Woe to them that are at ease in Zion . . ."). About that same time his brothers John and William finished their work at the Log College and came to study under Gilbert at New Brunswick. While they were there, Gilbert no doubt instructed them in the preaching techniques he had learned from Frelinghuysen. In the years that followed, Charles Tennent, Samuel Blair, John Rowland, and approximately ten other students graduated from the Log College and began to extend the revival throughout the Presbyterian churches of the Middle Colonies. However, like Frelinghuysen, they met with mixed reactions. During the 1730's the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia was divided over the issue of conversion; finally in 1741 Gilbert Tennent and his followers were expelled from the synod. Four years later the Presbytery of New York withdrew from the Synod of Philadelphia and united with Tennent's group to create a new synod. For seventeen years, until

22 Ibid., pp. 2426, 2466, 2553-57, 2585, 2587-89.
the rival factions came to terms in 1758, the Presbyterian Church in America remained divided. 23

The Congregational Revival

While the Dutch Reformed and Presbyterian churches of the Middle Colonies were experiencing revivals from the 1720's through the 1740's, the Congregational churches in New England were undergoing similar experiences. Jonathan Edwards has often been thought of as the father of revivalism in America. However, the revival which occurred in his church at Northampton in 1734 followed by eight years the revivals in the Middle Colonies. Sweet correctly observed that the success of the Middle Colony revivals was not dependent on Edwards.

Revivalism in America would have become triumphant if there had never been a Jonathan Edwards or a New England Awakening. It was not Jonathan Edwards nor New England that set the revivalistic pattern for American Protestantism. Rather it proceeded from a situation that was universal throughout the colonies and arose from the necessity of finding a new method of bringing religion to the great masses of the religiously indifferent. 24

Although the Great Awakening in New England began under the preaching of Edwards, he was not an evangelist in the usual sense of the word. Unlike Frelinghuysen and Tennent, Edwards was never an extemporaneous speaker. In fact, during most of his ministry he took his entire manuscript with him to the pulpit and read it verbatim. Furthermore, his sermons often resembled theological essays which called on his audience

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23 Archibald Alexander, Biographical Sketches of the Founder and Principal Alumni of the Log College (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1851), pp. 24-76.

24 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, pp. 281-82.
to follow closely their logical development.\textsuperscript{25} They were far different from the popular, emotion-packed messages of the itinerant preachers who traveled through the Middle and Southern colonies. Nevertheless, the revival began at Northampton with this type of preaching. For three months during 1734 and 1735 the meeting house could not contain the crowds who came to witness the outpouring of divine grace. The number of converts grew to more than three hundred; on one Sunday a hundred new people became members of the church. Edwards attempted to keep this unusual situation under control by requesting that those under conviction meet with him privately. However, when he was unable to control the outward manifestations on several occasions, extreme emotionalism resulted in undesirable consequences.\textsuperscript{26}

The congregation at Northampton grew so rapidly that a new building was begun in 1736 twice the size of the former structure. The new church was dedicated in 1737, the same year that Edwards published his \textit{Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God} \ldots This publication set the stage for the first of Whitefield's five tours through New England. Compared to the tidal wave which grew from Whitefield's impassioned preaching, the revival of 1735 was only a trickling stream. None the less, this isolated incident under Edwards' ministry was the forerunner of all that followed in New England.


\textsuperscript{26}For a complete account of the revival at Northampton see Ola Elizabeth Winslow, \textit{Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758} (New York: Collier Books, 1961), Chapters VIII and IX.
The German Revival

The fourth source of religious excitement which paved the way for the coming of Whitefield and the massive awakenings of the 1740's was the revival of Pietism among the German settlers. Unlike each of the other sources which were centered in one particular church, the Pietist movement affected a number of churches and sects. The radical Pietists, more specifically the Dunkers and the separatists, fostered the first revival among the Germans in Pennsylvania. It began in 1720 at Germantown under the leadership of Peter Becker, a Dunker who had arrived in America with the Dunker immigrants a year earlier. It was largely confined to the settlement at Germantown, but two years later Becker initiated a more important awakening while attempting to organize the Dunkers scattered throughout the Schuylkill Valley. Evangelistic services continued until 1724, often so well attended that the residences which served as meetinghouses could not hold the crowds. Conrad Beissel, a mystic who scorned the Bible as an instrument of immediate inspiration and who was later described by some as absurd and insane, was baptized by Becker in 1724. The following year Beissel and Michael Wohlfahrt began a series of revivals that lasted until 1740. In 1728 Beissel broke from the Germantown group and became an advocate of worshipping on the seventh day. Four years later he founded an Ephratac monastic order which accepted poverty, chastity, and rigorous asceticism as a way of life. On the eve of the Great Awakening, Beissel ceased his evangelistic work completely and retired to live as a hermit at Ephrata. At that point the leadership of revivalism
among the Germans passed to the Moravians. 27

Many of the converts of the radical Pietists eventually became Moravians, for Beissel's scruples against marriage and his monastic ideal demanded too much of most people. The Moravians, with their similar emotional religion and their well organized churches which were open to converts from all denominational and sect backgrounds, obtained hundreds of followers who stopped short of the radicals. The Moravian movement also made great inroads into the orthodox German churches. In 1741 Count Zinzendorf arrived in America and attempted to organize a universal church upon a purely spiritual basis. In the course of this attempt he became the opponent of most of the major denominations, for he stole many of their converts and split some of their churches. During the next six years following Zinzendorf's arrival, Moravian pastors slipped into vacant Lutheran and Reformed churches to propagate their own doctrines. By 1750 the Moravian revival among the Germans ended with the Lutheran and Reformed churches in confusion and turmoil. Many people who thought they had found an embodiment of the universal church in Moravianism were disenchanted when they could not relate the Moravian universal creed to their own church orthodoxy. For this reason, the Moravian revival was probably the least productive of the colonial movements. 28

Although both the Lutheran and Reformed churches criticized Zinzendorf's blurring of denominational lines, each had ministers within

27 Lodge, "Great Awakening," pp. 91-100.
28 Ibid., pp. 233-57.
their own ranks who had pietistic leanings. In 1747 a Reformed missionary named Michael Schlatter returned to America with a number of young ministers, one of whom, Philip Otterbein, became the leader of the evangelicals within the Reformed Church. This group met with strong resistance from the more numerous conservatives, especially when they waived the typical educational requirements for candidates who demonstrated personal piety and natural ability. One of Otterbein's most profitable strategies was the introduction into the German Reformed churches of classes resembling the Methodist societies. The conservatives strenuously opposed this move and finally expelled one of the class leaders. As a result, a new denomination known as the United Brethren was organized. Otterbein stayed in the Reformed Church, but he ordained preachers of the new church, as Wesley had done in England. As in other situations where the Great Awakening produced schism, the evangelistic church finally became dominant.29

Since the German Reformed and Lutheran Church were sister state churches in Germany, their early history in America was closely interwoven. Henry Muhlenberg, father of Lutheranism in America, came to Pennsylvania as a missionary in 1742. He had received pietistic training from the Orphan House at Halle and earnestly sought for the conversion of the German settlers. He often discovered more piety among the Lutherans who had come under Moravian influence than among those who had bitterly resisted the Moravians, but he still objected to Moravians

who intruded into Lutheran churches under the cloak of Lutheran ordination. In 1748, four missionaries from Halle, one other German, one Swede, and a number of lay delegates formed the ministerium of Pennsylvania. On several occasions Muhlenberg and Schlatter entered into co-operative efforts to evangelize the German settlers. Muhlenberg was also on favorable terms with the Tennents and the rest of the New Side Presbyterians. Thus the American Lutheran Church combined its liturgy and an evangelistic zeal inherited from Pietism.

A number of other evangelists arose among the German people during the first half of the eighteenth century, but most of them were founders of sects which died with them. Such names as Baumann, Bossert, Reignier, and Gemaehle appear in those works which describe the German awakening. These forgotten revivalists were usually both radical and eccentric; therefore, they met with opposition from the established churches. Nevertheless, the revival of Pietism among the German people started outside the bounds of the formal churches. The Lutheran Church and the Reformed Church did not display evangelistic zeal until after Whitefield had journeyed through the colonies.

The Arrival of George Whitefield

The four separate sources just described all fed into one massive


31 For additional information on the lesser known German evangelists see "Lamech and Agrippa," Chronicon Ephratense; a History of the Community of Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata, Lancaster County, Penn'a . . . , Translated by J. Max Hark (Lancaster, 1889).
movement which George Whitefield inaugurated when he landed at Lewes, Delaware, on October 30, 1739. Seven years prior to this date Whitefield had been a student at Pembroke College, Oxford. While a student, he became close friends with the Wesley brothers, read the works of William Law and Augustus Francke, and adopted the Methodist faith. He was converted in 1735 after undergoing severe convictions; a year later, he began to preach. During the next three years, his audiences continually grew larger. Then in 1738, Whitefield sailed to Georgia, where he resolved to establish an orphanage modeled after the one at Halle. In February of 1739 he was home in England, preaching in the open air to crowds that numbered ten, twenty, and thirty thousand at a time.  

Before Whitefield ever stepped ashore in Delaware, he was a celebrity in America. As early as 1737 the colonial newspapers began to carry accounts of his activities. The Virginia Gazette described the scene at the church of St. Mary Magdalene in London where people had filled the church hours before the scheduled service and hundreds of others had attempted to force their way into the building. By 1739 the papers were full of accounts describing his feats in England: They told how he began his field preaching in Bristol after being

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32 Whitefield, Brief Account, pp. 11-63.
George Whitefield, A Continuation of Mr. Whitefield's Journal from His Arrival at London, to His Departure from Thence, On His Way to Georgia (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1739), pp. 219-249.

33 Pennsylvania Gazette, June 30, December 29, 1737.

34 Virginia Gazette, January 6, 1738.
denied entrance into the churches,\textsuperscript{35} how he preached from a tombstone because of the above mentioned condition, how thousands flocked to hear him, how long silences fell over his audiences, and how people climbed trees to see him.\textsuperscript{36} Then in October the Pennsylvania Gazette reported that he would soon return to Georgia by way of Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{37}

Whitefield preached at Lewes the day after he arrived. Several days later he was in Philadelphia, where he preached daily for the next eleven days. By the evening of the eighth day, six thousand people stood before him as he spoke from the court house steps. The following night the crowd increased by another two thousand and remained that size on the last two days. His house was filled with people who came to worship with him or to seek spiritual guidance. On November 12, Whitefield left Philadelphia for New York. He stopped to preach on the way at New Brunswick and there met Gilbert Tennent. Together they traveled through New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania for the next ten days. What transpired on that trip will be described in detail later. Whitefield returned to Philadelphia on November 23, where he remained for six days. On the 29th he departed on horseback for Georgia.\textsuperscript{38}

In 1740 Whitefield reappeared in Philadelphia twice more. The first of these appearances was on April 15. Within five days, 15,000

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35} \textit{New York Gazette}, Feb. 27, 1739.
\item \textsuperscript{36} \textit{Pennsylvania Gazette}, June 7, 25, July 12, August 23, 1739.
\item \textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.}, October 11, 1739.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Whitefield, \textit{Journal From His Embarking . . . to His Arrival at Savannah}, pp. 114-157.
\end{itemize}
people were attending his services on Society Hill. When he returned from a two-week tour to New York, he found that a revival was sweeping through the whole city. On May 11 he ended this first stay. His second trip to Philadelphia began on November 9. During the six months that he was absent, his followers had built a large building for him. He preached sixteen times in eight days at the "New Building"; on November 17, he left Philadelphia never to return. Since Whitefield's activities on all three of his visits to the Middle Colonies were closely related to the work of the Presbyterian evangelists, these activities will be covered in more detail in a later chapter.

The year 1740 was the high tide of the Great Awakening. In addition to his two trips through the Middle Colonies, Whitefield journeyed through New England reaping the fruits which grew from Edwards' earlier preparatory work. Though he was only twenty-six years of age, the great divines of Yale and Harvard awaited his coming. His reputation had preceded him as it had in the Middle Colonies; when he arrived in Boston in September of 1740, the entire town was waiting to hear him. He had the support of all the leading ministers, except for Charles Chauncy of the First Church. Harvard College greeted him with some misgivings. Whitefield's first tour of New England lasted only a month, but in that time he set the pattern for the revival events of

39 George Whitefield, A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal from a Few Days After His Arrival at Georgia, To His Second Return Thither From Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1740), pp. 29-68.

the next four years. However, he also made many enemies by the way he passed judgment on other ministers. At the end of his first trip in New England, he wrote in his Journal: "Many, nay most that preach, do not experimentally know Christ." This was followed on the next page with an assessment of Harvard and Yale: "Their light has become darkness, darkness that may be felt." On Whitefield's next visit to New England, both colleges opposed his preaching.

Soon after Whitefield left New England, Gilbert Tennent, at the urging of Whitefield to carry on the work, embarked on a successful evangelistic crusade through New England. Upon arriving in Boston on December 13, he faced strong opposition from the established churches, for he inherited Whitefield's enemies in addition to those who disliked him because of his reputation in the Middle Colonies. Tennent also discovered that he was hampered by one of the worst winters in New England history. Despite these hindrances, Tennent's results were still overwhelming. Timothy Cutler, one of his severest critics, was aghast at what took place. He called Tennent, "A monster! impudent, and noisy who told all his hearers that they were damned! damned! damned! This charmed them; and, in the most dreadful winter I ever saw, people wallowed in snow, night and day, for the benefit of his beastly brayings; and many ended their days under these fatigues."  

40 George Whitefield, A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal From Savannah, June 25, 1740. To His Arrival at Rhode Island ... (Boston: Printed by D. Fowle, 1741), pp. 95-96.

The results of Tennent's crusade exceeded even those of Whitefield. Thomas Prince's *Christian History* contains numerous letters from ministers in Boston, New Haven, and surrounding towns describing hundreds of conversions. Three of these clergymen, John Webb, William Cooper, and Thomas Prince, reported over two thousand inquiries about spiritual matters as a result of Tennent's preaching. Cooper stated he counseled more people in one week than he had in the preceding twenty-four years of his ministry. Prince described the period following Tennent's departure as "such a time as we never knew." He related that people began reading the best evangelical scholars and organizing weekly religious societies.\(^{42}\) Tennent recounted his impressions of his trip in a letter to Whitefield:

> Very Dear Brother—In my return home, I have been preaching daily, ordinarily, three times a day, and sometimes oftener: and through pure grace, I have met with success much exceeding my expectations. In the town of Boston there were many hundreds, if not thousands, as some have judged, under soul-concern.\(^{43}\)

By the end of 1740 many excesses of emotionalism were taking place in New England. The greatest offender, however, was not Edwards, or Whitefield, or Tennent, but a graduate of Yale by the name of James Davenport. At the age of twenty-two he left his church at Southold, Long Island, to become an itinerant evangelist like Whitefield. In

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1742 he traveled through Connecticut preaching in churches without an invitation and challenging the congregations to leave those churches pastored by unconverted ministers. As a reaction to such extravagances, the General Assembly of Connecticut passed an "Act for regulating abuses and correcting disorders in Ecclesiastical Affairs." The authorities took Davenport into custody, judged him insane, and sent him back to Southold. Soon he left for Boston, where he preached in the streets and violently denounced the clergy. The authorities once again apprehended him and sent him home. Later, in New London he instructed his converts to burn their expensive clothes and ornaments as a cure for their idolatrous pride. He also had his followers burn books which did not meet with his approval.44

In May of 1743 a group of New England ministers met in Boston to draw a Testimony against the doctrines and disorders of the revival which thirty-eight different pastors signed. Chauncy led this group which opposed the revival. He wrote a pamphlet in 1743 entitled Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England in which he collected all the extreme instances of emotional excesses he could find. Another group of ministers who supported the revival met in Boston on July 7 of the same year to write a Testimony in the revival's favor. One hundred and thirteen ministers from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Connecticut eventually endorsed this document.

Such controversies between the foes and supporters of the Great Awakening broke out in all the colonies.\footnote{See Tracy, \textit{Great Awakening}, Chapters XVI, XVII, and XVIII for a complete description of these controversies.}

**The Southern Revival**

Jonathan Edwards prepared for the Great Awakening in New England and the Dutch, Presbyterians, and German Pietists readied the Middle Colonies for it. However, no one did the groundwork in the Southern Colonies and, as a result, the awakening in the South did not begin until 1742. The principal reason for this was the condition of the Episcopal Church. A state church socially and politically dominant, it nevertheless was plagued with a shortage of ministers; many which it did have were incompetent. It was controlled by an aristocracy with little desire to let religion interfere with daily living. The common people had no place at all in the church. They were usually ignorant of and completely indifferent to religion.\footnote{Sweet, \textit{Religion in Colonial America}, pp. 291-92.}

However, immigration was soon to change the social order of the South, for settlements of Scotch-Irish and Germans began to appear in Virginia in the eighteenth century. Thus, when the revival in the Middle Colonies was well under way, the Presbyterians sent William Robinson in 1742 to Virginia to visit the Scotch-Irish settlements. In Hanover County, Robinson found a lay movement in progress; his preaching aroused a wave of revivalism. Two other itinerant Presbyterian ministers, John Blair and John Roan, followed, and later Samuel Finley,
Samuel Blair, and Gilbert Tennent arrived. The revival met with severe opposition from the government, but it still continued to spread. In 1748 Samuel Davies settled in Hanover and kept the movement alive for the next eleven years.  

This revival among the Scotch-Irish was only one phase of the Great Awakening in the South. Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall, two Baptist ministers, began the Baptist phase in Guilford County, North Carolina, in 1755. The church which they founded grew from sixteen members to more than six hundred in a short period of time. Soon evangelists went out from it to start other churches in surrounding communities. Baptist churches developed rapidly in North Carolina and began to emerge in Virginia. However, they were slow taking root in the latter colony because of government persecution. Not until 1770 did the Baptists show growth in Virginia, but by 1790 they were a large and respectable group.  

The Methodists instituted the third phase of the Great Awakening in the South in 1773, when Devereux Jarratt, an evangelical Episcopal minister, helped the Methodists in their work. This was four years after John Wesley sent his first missionaries to America. The peak of the Methodist movement came in 1775-76, during which time it spread over a region between four and five hundred miles in circumference covering Virginia and North Carolina. The growth was so rapid that the


Methodist population in the South increased from 291 members in 1774 to 4,379 in 1774. 49

This brief overview suggests that the Great Awakening is best understood when it is viewed as a series of related movements instead of as one massive revival. In the Middle Colonies it was largely a Presbyterian endeavor among the Scotch-Irish, although the Dutch and Germans were also involved. In New England it was almost exclusively a Congregational movement, with the Baptists and Episcopalians profiting indirectly. However, in the Southern Colonies three different denominations were prominent—the Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church, and the Methodist Church. None of them were established institutions in the South and only one, the Presbyterian Church, was predominant anywhere else in the colonies. Therefore, two new religious bodies which one day became the most populous in America made their start during the Great Awakening in the Southern Colonies.

The Results of the Great Awakening

The fundamental principle of the Great Awakening was the necessity of conversion. Since this was the effect which the evangelists desired most, it would seem natural to assume that records were kept of how many people professed saving experiences. However, such was not the case. Instead of making reference to specific numbers, those who led the revivals only described their results in terms of hundreds or thousands of decisions. Therefore, later authors have attempted to

49 Ibid., pp. 306-11.
estimate how many conversions occurred. Some place the number at fifty thousand, others estimate it was between thirty and forty thousand. There is no way of determining which figure is the most accurate, for there is really no definite basis for an intelligent estimate.

The Great Awakening also produced some side benefits, not only a large increase in the number of church members, but also a great increase in the piety of already existing members. The number of candidates for the ministry showed a marked increase, and ministerial quality improved. Previous to 1740 only three colleges existed in the colonies--Harvard, William and Mary, and Yale. Emerging from the awakening were Princeton, Dartmouth, Hampden-Sydney College, Washington and Lee University, Queen's College, and the College of Rhode Island. Also coming out of the revivals was a renewed interest in missions, especially among the Indians. John Sargent and Jonathan Edwards revived the Congregational work among the Stockbridge Indians, David Brainerd began a Presbyterian work in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and Christian Henry Raush began a Moravian ministry. Added to this was a new social consciousness and humanitarian interest. The most visible

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50 Ibid., p. 291.

51 Benjamin Trumbull, A Complete History of Connecticut, Civil and Ecclesiastical, From the Emigration of Its First Planters, from England, in the Year 1630, to the Year 1764; and to the Close of the Indian Wars . . . (New Haven: Maltby, Goldsmith, and Co., 1818), pp. 201 ff.

52 Ibid.

53 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, pp. 311-18.
results were the building of orphanages and the founding of an anti-slavery union. 54

Perhaps the greatest long-range effect of the Great Awakening was the groundwork it laid for the American Revolution. The revivalists espoused the doctrine that all men were equal in the eyes of God. They cast off all social distinctions, seeking to reach rich and poor, master and slave, ignorant and educated. Because they placed all men on the same level, they were a leveling force in colonial society and sowers of the seeds of democracy. When the Revolutionary War came, denominations like the Presbyterians and Baptists were almost unanimously in support of independence. The British often burned their meetinghouses and imprisoned their pastors. 55

The valuable contributions the revivals made were dimmed somewhat by the ill feelings they created. While sowing the seeds of democracy, the evangelists also planted the seeds of dissension and controversy. Schisms arose in many of the participating denominations. Fortunately, most of these healed by the end of the century. The Regular and Separate Baptists overcame their differences, the Presbyterians united after a seventeen-year split with the revivalistic party triumphing, and the Dutch Reformed controversy ended on a similar note. However, the troubles in the Congregational Church were never resolved. Here a doctrinal issue was at stake. For fifty years following the

54 Maxson, Great Awakening, pp. 148-49.

revival in New England, Arminians and Calvinists clashed within the church. Ultimately the most liberal Arminians became Unitarians and developed a following in eastern Massachusetts. Calvinism, on the other hand, triumphed in western Massachusetts and Connecticut. 56

The Rise of the Log College in the Presbyterian Church

The first section of this chapter has demonstrated that the revival of religion which was colony-wide in the 1740's started as a series of independent movements as early as 1725. The writer will now trace the history of a one-room school which became the source of the movement in the Presbyterian Church. Such an endeavor must begin with the founding of that church in America.

The Formation of the American Presbyterian Church

Francis Makemie, the father of the Presbyterian Church in America, came to Maryland from Ireland in 1683. By 1698 he had started at least four churches in Maryland and Virginia. In 1704-1705, he traveled to England, returning with two other missionaries who were graduates of the University of Glasgow as he was. Makemie's greatest contribution, however, was the formation of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. This organization began independently in 1706 when Makemie met with six other ministers from Maryland, Delaware, and eastern Pennsylvania. All of these men except Jedediah Andrews, a New Englander from Philadelphia, were Scotch or Irish. The important characteristic of the presbytery was the fact that it had no direct connection with the Presbyterian

56 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, pp. 311-13.
churches in Europe or Great Britain. This enabled it to license and ordain its own ministers, two functions later crucial to its development. 57

The number of Presbyterian churches in the colonies increased from twelve in 1700 to thirty-seven by 1720. Seventeen of the twenty-five new congregations were in the Middle Colonies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland. This growth led to the development of three additional presbyteries—Snow Hill (Maryland), New Castle (Delaware), and Long Island (later called New York). These new presbyteries united with the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1716 to form the Synod of Philadelphia. It was an unusual union, for it brought native New Englanders into communion with recent immigrants with English, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh backgrounds. With the formation of the synod also came Jonathan Dickinson and John Pierson, ministers of the Puritan churches at Elizabethtown and Woodbridge, New Jersey. Both were graduates of Yale, Pierson being the son of its first president. Dickinson, however, proved to be the more valuable asset to the union. Because he was intellectually superior to any of his Presbyterian colleagues, he soon became one of the synod's leaders. In the formative years of the infant church when conflicts were numerous, Dickinson's moderation proved invaluable to the synod's survival. 58


The Adopting Act

The Synod of Philadelphia faced its first serious problem in 1720 when a fight erupted over adherence to the Westminster Confession. As a result of the rise of heretical teachings in Ireland, Scotland, and England, Presbyterians in Great Britain had passed subscription acts. By building such ecclesiastical fences, they had hoped to protect themselves from Deism, Socinianism, and Semi-Arianism. Their actions influenced their brethren in America to follow similar patterns.

Subscription first originated in Scotland, where the Scottish Parliament required all ministers to adhere to the Westminster Confession in 1693. It began in Northern Ireland in 1705 as a reaction against unorthodox doctrines about the Trinity. At that time, the Synod of Ulster passed an act requiring subscription to the Confession, the doctrines, and government of the church. This act divided the Irish ministers into three camps--those who supported subscription, those who were opposed to it, and those who were neutral. The opposition party, under the leadership of Professor Simpson of Glasgow, formed the Belfast Society as a protest against the Act of 1705. In 1720 the Ulster Synod passed a compromise measure known as the Pacific Act. It permitted ministers signing the Confession to express their beliefs in their own words. The synod then reviewed these statements and accepted them if they were consistent with the doctrines of the church. This attempt at compromise failed, for later the synod divided into two bodies over the issue of subscription. However, the Pacific Act ultimately served as the model for the Adopting Act.
in America. 59

The movement toward doctrinal solidarity began in America while the Synod of Philadelphia was dealing with a case of ministerial discipline. Robert Cross, later to become one of the leaders of the Presbyterian group opposed to the Great Awakening, was being tried for fornication. As a punishment, he was forbidden to preach for four Sundays. George Gillespie, another member of the synod, protested against such a light sentence. From the ensuing discussion, the whole subject of subscription arose. 60

The issue of conformity divided the members of the Philadelphia Synod in the same way it divided the Presbyterians in Ireland. In America, the ministers who supported adherence were those who had received their educations in Great Britain. The opposition party was composed of those who had studied in the New England colleges and now pastored Congregational churches which the synod had absorbed in New Jersey and New York. The debate between the two factions continued for nine years, with Dickinson leading the fight against subscription. The issue was finally resolved in 1729 when the synod compromised and passed the Adopting Act. This act required ministers to attest agreement with the essentials of the Westminster Confession and to submit an explanation if they questioned any part. The synod would then


60 Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: Embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod 1706-1788 (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1904), pp. 60-64, 68.
decide whether the disagreement was important "in all the essential and necessary articles." Later, when the revival was underway, the question of subscription again arose.

The Career of William Tennent, Sr.

The history of the Log College is closely intertwined with the life of William Tennent, Sr. In essence, William Tennent was the Log College. Born in Scotland in 1673, he graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 1695 and moved to northern Ireland where he joined the Presbytery of Ulster in 1701. However, on July 1, 1704, Tennent was ordained a deacon in the Episcopal Church of Ireland; and two years later he became a priest of that denomination. Little else is known about his early life in Ireland except for the fact that he married the daughter of a Presbyterian minister on May 15, 1702; nine years later they had four sons and a daughter. Gilbert, the eldest, was born in Vinnecash in the county of Ardnoh in 1703, William, Jr. in Connor in 1705, John also in Connor in 1706, and Charles in Agherton in the county of Derrie and Liberties of Cobrain in 1711. The lone girl was also born in Agherton in 1708. Apparently William Tennent, Sr. changed residences on several different occasions during his ministry in Ireland.

Tennent and his family sailed to the colonies in 1718, arriving

61 Ibid., p. 94.


63 Ibid., p. 20. Before Tennent's diary was discovered, Alexander and others argued that he came to America in 1716.
in Philadelphia where they were met by a relative named James Logan on September 6. Soon after his emigration, Tennent applied to the Synod of Philadelphia for membership. Before the synod accepted him it asked for a written statement of the reasons he was separating himself from the Episcopal Church. The first six reasons Tennent listed had to do with the hierarchical system of Episcopal Church government, which he considered to be unscriptural. His last reason was his dissatisfaction with the Arminian doctrines and the ceremonial worship of that denomination. 64

After considering Tennent's credentials, the testimonial in his behalf by some of the present members, and his written statements, the synod approved his membership on September 17, 1718. He became the pastor of the Presbyterian church in Eastchester, New York, on November 22, 1718. From there, he moved to Bedford on May 3, 1720, where he remained for only one year. His next church was located at Bensalem in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Tennent pastored that small congregation until 1726 when he moved to Neshaminy, the place where he spent the rest of his life. 65

Having become a member of the Synod of Philadelphia in 1718, William Tennent, Sr. was present for the subscription controversy; however, he seemed to take no active part. While the strict subscriptionists were arguing that an unworthy minister was one whose doctrines were out of harmony with the creed and while the moderates were arguing

64 Records, pp. 51-52.
65 Ibid. See also Alexander, Log College, p. 16.
that an unworthy minister was one who was unregenerate, unethical, and careless in his duties, a new party which sat out this controversy was beginning to emerge. Tennent was the forerunner of this group, which became almost entirely composed of his students. Over time this evangelical group destroyed the delicate balance between the first two parties and inaugurated a reform movement which affected both the doctrines and ethics of the denomination. But in 1729 the evangelical group was almost non-existent. Only Tennent and his eldest son Gilbert were members of the synod at the time and both of them signed the Adopting Act. 66

The Erection of the Log College

Upon moving to Neshaminy, eighteen miles north of Philadelphia, Tennent embarked on a threefold ministry—(1) he pastored the Neshaminy Church; (2) he preached at Deep Run, twelve miles away, and (3) he built and taught at the Log College. This last contribution was by far his most valuable and enduring. Although the elder Tennent never published a manuscript, never led a revival, or never became a church leader, he did as much for his denomination as any other man has. By founding the Log College, he addressed the greatest need of his denomination, the need for a qualified ministry. As the result of his school, men were made available to publish, to preach, and to lead.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the Presbyterian Church suffered from a lack of qualified ministers. Few were available, 66

Records, p. 94.
and many of those were of questionable quality. The reason behind this was the neglect of the synod to establish schools for the training of its candidates. Therefore, a student desiring to be a minister either had to go to the Congregational colleges of New England or to the Presbyterian schools in Scotland or Ireland. This usually ruled out candidates from the Middle Colonies who could afford to do neither. All the denominations in the colonies faced the same situation—too few ministers and no schools to train young men for this task. William Tennent, Sr. was the first man in America to attack this problem.

Historians disagree on the date the Log College was established. Some of them contend that it was in 1726, others that it was in 1728, and still others that it was not until 1736. Those who hold the first view claim that Tennent built the cabin just a few yards from his own dwelling immediately after he became the pastor at Neshaminy. Those who hold the second view argue that the college stood on part of the fifty acres of land which James Logan gave to Tennent in 1728. The advocates of the third view cite a deed which shows that Tennent purchased one hundred acres of land from John White on September 10, 1735; they contend the school was located on that land. Although

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68 Manuscript Deed in Princeton University Library.
recent scholars seem to favor this last explanation, the historical evidence is insufficient to prove it conclusively.

At first glance the issue of when Tennent built the school seems to be of paramount importance, especially to the hypothesis of this dissertation. If the Log College did not come into existence until 1736, then it could not have had a part in promoting the social unrest which existed prior to this date. However, the whole discussion in the above paragraph is misleading if it identifies the Log College with a log cabin. This is a misrepresentation of the facts. The Log College was not primarily a building; it was a teacher. The best proof of this is Gilbert Tennent. The historians are all willing to refer to young Tennent as the first graduate of the Log College, even though the Presbytery of Philadelphia licensed him to preach in May of 1726, a year before anyone asserts the Log College as a building existed. They do this because Gilbert received his entire education from his father. These same historians also refer to anyone as a graduate of the school who later received his education from William, Sr. Therefore, outside of historical interest, the date the log cabin was built is irrelevant since the teacher, not the building was the school.

As the above discussion implies, historical evidence is vague on the physical features of the Log College. We do know it was a one-room cabin built of logs, located on Neshaminy Creek in Bucks County, about

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twenty miles from Philadelphia. Apparently it received its name from its opponents, who sarcastically labeled it the "Log College" because of its meager facilities. George Whitefield provided the only contemporary description of the school:

The place wherein the young men study now, is in contempt called The College. It is a log house, about twenty feet long, and near as broad, and to me it seemed to resemble the school of the old prophets, for their habitations were mean; and that they sought not great things for themselves is plain from those passages of Scripture, wherein we are told that each of them took them a beam to build them a house: and that at the feast of the sons of the prophets, one of them put on the pot, whilst the others went to fetch some herbs out of the field. All that we can say of most of our universities is, they are glorious without. From this despised place, seven or eight worthy ministers of Jesus have lately been sent forth; more are almost ready to be sent, and the foundation is now laying for the instruction of many others.70

At the end of his description, Whitefield mentioned seven or eight graduates in addition to those then at the school. Once again the historical evidence is incomplete regarding what students completed their studies at this institution. Pears and Klett listed the following twenty-one alumni, their dates, and the dates they became Presbyterian ministers:

Alexander, David                         1715-1772  1737
Beatty, Charles                           1715-1772  1742
Bell, Hamilton                            1720-1771  1742
Blair, John                               1712-1751  1733
Blair, Samuel                             1718-1753  1747
Campbell, John                            1723-1761  1746

70 Whitefield, *Journal From His Embarking... to His Arrival at Savannah*, pp. 143-44.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean, William</td>
<td>1719-1748</td>
<td>1742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finley, Samuel</td>
<td>1715-1766</td>
<td>1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence, Daniel</td>
<td>1718-1766</td>
<td>1744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCrea, James</td>
<td>1711-1769</td>
<td>1739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKnight, Charles</td>
<td>1720-1778</td>
<td>1741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redman, Dr. John</td>
<td>1722-1807</td>
<td>(Physician)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roan, John</td>
<td>-1775</td>
<td>1744?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, William</td>
<td>1700-1746</td>
<td>1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodgers, John</td>
<td>1727-1811</td>
<td>1747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowland, John</td>
<td>-1747</td>
<td>1738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennent, Charles</td>
<td>1711-1771</td>
<td>1736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennent, Gilbert</td>
<td>1703-1764</td>
<td>1725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennent, John</td>
<td>1707-1732</td>
<td>1728</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennent, William, Jr.</td>
<td>1705-1771</td>
<td>173271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a footnote, Pears questioned the inclusion of Samuel Davies in this list. The inclusion of David Alexander, Hamilton Bell, and John Rodgers is also suspect. Some of these were probably graduates of other schools which were operated by the earlier graduates of the Log College.72

The Log College resembled a private or classical school or a Bible institute more than a college. By piecing together material from several sources, it is possible to determine the type of education it offered. Prince's description of Tennent when they first met provides some insight.

In private converse with him, I found him to be a man of considerable parts and learning; free, gentle, condescending: and from his own various experiences, reading the most noted writers on

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71 Guy S. Klett and Thomas C. Pears, Compilers. Documentary History of William Tennent and the Log College, Department of History, Presbyterian Church, mimeographed (Philadelphia: 1940), p. 174. This source can also be found in the 1950 edition of the Journal of Presbyterian Historical Society under the same title as the mimeographed edition.

experimental divinity, as well as the Scriptures, and conversing with many who had been awakened by his ministry in New Jersey, where he then lived; he seemed to have as deep an acquaintance with the experimental part of religion as any I have conversed with. . . .73

Prince's testimony indicates that Tennent was well read in theology, a requirement of the Presbyterian Church. Before it would license a minister, it inquired into the theological books he had read. In addition, it required skill in the Hebrew and Greek Testaments, Latin, Logic, Philosophy, Church History, Scriptural Chronology, and Rhetoric.74 The fact that the synod never questioned the competence of the Log College graduates in any of these areas indicates that they had studied these subjects. William Tennent, Sr. was known to be a theological and classical scholar, especially skilled in Latin. The Assembly Magazine said of him:

He was eminent as a classical scholar. His attainments in science are not so well known; but there is reason to believe they were not so great as his skill in language. His general character appears to have been that of a man of great integrity, simplicity, industry and piety.75

The above quotation implies that the lone professor of the Log College was weak in the sciences. This coincides with evidence from several other sources which indicate that the courses neglected at the


Log College were science, mathematics, modern literature, and philosophy. These courses were part of the curriculums at the universities in Great Britain and New England. As a result, the graduates of these institutions looked down upon the Log College men because they had not studied in these areas. Even the Log College graduates themselves admitted that they were not skilled in these subjects.76

This was the education that the students at the Log College received. While in school, some of them lived in the Tennent home, others slept in the attic above the fireplace, and still others commuted on horseback.77 Frequently these students spent five years studying under Tennent before they began their ministries; most of them remained even longer.78 At the end of their time of study, these graduates of the Log College applied to one of the existing presbyteries for licensing and ordination. It should be noted, however, that the term "graduate" is being loosely employed since the Log College was not a chartered institution and could not grant degrees.79

76Maxson, Great Awakening, pp. 29-30. See also Samuel Finley, Faithful Ministers The Fathers of the Church... (Philadelphia: Printed by W. Bradford, 1752); also see Gilbert Tennent, A Funeral Sermon Occasion'd by the Death of the Reverend Mr. John Rowland... (Philadelphia: Printed by William Bradford, 1745), p. 39.


Ideological Beginnings of the Presbyterian

Revival in the Log College

A combination of Calvinism and Pietism formed the basis of the Log College ideology. William Tennent, Sr. was a strict Calvinist like most of the other Presbyterian ministers of his day. He espoused all the major doctrines of the Calvinistic system and ingrained them in his students. However, he coupled this theological system with an emphasis on personal piety and evangelical zeal. As a result of this mixture, students emerged from the Log College with different perspectives than those of their contemporaries. Following is an identification of the ideological seeds which the Log College planted. A later chapter will demonstrate how these seeds grew into the doctrines of the movement.

The Theological Perspective of the Log College

Calvinism is a complex theological system which aims at internal consistency. A complete description of the ramifications and variations of this system is beyond the purpose and need of this dissertation. Therefore, the discussion will be limited to the Calvinistic interpretation of God, of man, and of redemption, since these were the important motivating factors of the Presbyterian evangelists. Because William Tennent, Sr. never published a manuscript and because his unpublished sermons are not doctrinal treatises, most of this information must come from the writings and preaching of his students. Surprisingly, many of their sermons are nothing more than theological
discussions with an application at the end. Yet it was this type of doctrinal preaching which produced the Great Awakening in the Presbyterian Church.

The view of God which they had formulated at the Log College greatly influenced the later actions of the leaders of the movement. They were firm believers in the sovereignty of God; this belief formed the basis for their entire theological outlook. All of the other doctrines they held grew out of their commitments to this doctrine. It can be found in most of their sermons. "The great God hath an absolute, eternal, and universal empire; and that by his sovereign and superintending providence, he conducts all the works of his hands, to the end designed for them at their formation, which without this never could attain." Belief in God's sovereignty led these ministers to assert that God has the freedom to decide the eternal state of each individual person. Samuel Blair, who was representative of the others, argued that God exercised this right by determining who would be saved even before he created the world:

And as God infallibly foreknew the fall and transgression of Adam, in what he had decreed to permit, and so the depravity and ruin of his posterity consequent thereupon, according to the covenant, with all the actual sins which every individual should ever be guilty of; so he was likewise pleased, of his own mere grace and free favor, to decree and determine, to recover and save a number, only known to himself of that fall wretched race, thro' the meditation of his own Son redeeming

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them, by answering the precept and penalty of the
broken law for them.81

Besides being sovereign, the Calvinistic God was also holy, just,
and wrathful. The holiness of God demanded holiness from others, for
a holy God could not bear to look upon anything which was unclean.
Since man could not meet God's standard of holiness, he had to be
punished; for if God overlooked human deficiencies, this would under-
mine his justice. Thus God's holiness and God's justice also made
him a God of wrath. This wrath was kindled against the entire human
race, for all men had transgressed God's law. 82

Modifying God's wrath, however, was his mercy. Because he was
merciful, "He long defers deserved wrath, and moderates the executions
of it in this world toward guilty creatures."83 But this mercy did
not undercut his justice, for even though "he bears with the rebellious
obstinacy of impenitent transgressors long, yet his abus'd patience
will have a period . . . ."84 The God of the Presbyterians, therefore,
was a God who acted--he acted by electing men to salvation, by express-
ing his wrath, and by displaying mercy.

81 Samuel Blair, The Doctrines of Predestination Truly and Fairly
also Gilbert Tennent, A Sermon Preach'd in Greenwich, September 4, 1746,
at the Ordination of Mr. Andrew Hunter (Philadelphia: Printed by Wil-

82 Samuel Blair, The Gospel Method of Salvation or the Condemned
State of Man and the Way Appointed by God for His Recovery Considered In

83 Gilbert Tennent, Twenty-Three Sermons upon the Chief End of

84 Gilbert Tennent, The Late Association for Defense, Further En-
courag'd, or the Consistency of Defensive War with True Christianity . . .
The view of man the Log College graduates held also influenced their subsequent actions. They downgraded man to the same extent that they elevated God. However, man had not always existed in a sinful state; originally he had been a rational and moral creature whom God had created in his own image. John Campbell described mankind in the image of God in one of his sermons:

Man was endowed with such strength and integrity in all parts, as did wholly dispose him to all operations conformable to God's will; his understanding so far as was needful before his translation, had a clear apprehension of the deity, in his nature, attributes and worship; as also of the creatures in their essence and qualities. His will embraced and clave fast to God, whom Adam knew to be the author of his keeping and happiness. His affections and all inferior faculties, obeyed without all resistance the rule of reason and notions of the fancied will.85

During the eighteenth century, faculty psychology exerted profound influence on theology.86 Thus Calvinism viewed man as the possessor of three faculties—understanding, will, and affections. All of these were perfectly in tune with the will of God until the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve. But once Adam opened the door to sin, man's entire nature became subject to corruption. Preaching on original sin, Gilbert Tennent told his listeners that Adam's sin "has stained the whole human nature, . . . and from this fatal fountain all actual evils

85 John Campbell, A Treatise of Conversion, Faith, and Justification . . . (Boston: Printed by Rogers and Fowle, 1743), pp. 22 ff.

86 William Tennent, Sr. did not teach faculty psychology at the Log College; however, he did teach theology which had been influenced by faculty psychology.
By Adam's one act, the image of God had been lost and man's original righteousness gave way to his total depravity. This depravity touched every faculty and left man in a state of guilt and condemnation:

You are under the power of sin. Your whole lives, all your actions are not only tainted with, and under the dominion of sin but your souls in all their faculties are corrupted and governed by it. . . . Your minds are darkened and alienated from the life of God through ignorance; your wills are possessed of obstinacy and frowardness in evil, and your affections are now wholly averse to the pursuit of God and divine things.

The Calvinistic view of God, coupled with its view of man, led to the Calvinistic concept of redemption. Since the sinner in his fallen state had no inclinations to return to God because everyone of his faculties was completely marred by sin, it was God who must pursue the sinner. This is why the doctrine of election was necessary. This is why God had to take the first step. John Blair, in picturing the Holy Spirit as the author of redemption, wrote: "None less than such a divine almighty agent, can bring a creature, so entirely revolved from God, to a right temper towards him. He is dead in trespasses and sins."

If God was absolutely holy and man was absolutely sinful, then one

of them must change if they were to be reconciled. God being immutable, man was the one who changed. Since Adam had caused the separation by sinning, a second Adam was needed to repair the damage. Man could not do it himself, for he was totally depraved. This meant that salvation was solely the work of God; only through his grace could the curse of sin be lifted. Thus God provided the basis of salvation by sending Christ to die. Gilbert Tennent described this act as "the astonishing condensation of God himself in assuming our nature, under the ruinous circumstances consequent to our apostasy, and therein enduring voluntarily and patiently in his name, body, and soul, all that contempt and misery which our sins merited, in order to reconcile us to God, and save us from ruin." 90

Through Christ, man and God could once again have fellowship. Man was not doomed. He could still obtain all that was lost when Adam sinned. Original sin could be cleansed and total depravity could be removed, but only through conversion. This meant a "new temper and disposition of the soul towards God and divine things, formed by the Holy Spirit's infusing a principle of spiritual life, whereby the heart of a sinner is turned from the love and service of sin to God and holiness; the necessary consequence of which, is a happy change in the prevailing course of his practice." 91 Just as the fall of man corrupted every faculty, so the act of conversion freed every faculty: "When the


91 Blair, New Creature, p. 7. See also Campbell, Treatise on Conversion, p. 5.
saving change takes place, the old darkness and blindness of the mind passes away, and the understanding is divinely enlightened. . . . But now, divine light having represented things in their true nature and importance to the understanding, rectified the judgment, and gained the will; the affections naturally follow and become subject." Conver-
sion, then, was man's only hope. By it, he could escape God's wrath and be holy in God's sight.

This brief overview does not adequately describe the Calvinist system, but it does provide much of the ideological foundation for the later actions of the Log College graduates. On all these theological issues, virtually every Presbyterian minister of the eighteenth century would agree. Therefore, the theology of the Log College was never questioned; however, its opponents did object to its pietistic tendencies.

The Pietistic Leanings of the Log College

Although William Tennent, Sr. apparently never had any contact with German Pietism, he shared the same emphasis with it—the importance of inner, personal religion. This was an emphasis missing from the Presbyterian churches in America and Great Britain. Most Presbyterian ministers were doctrinally sound and strongly committed to the Westminster Confession of faith. However, they knew little about the vital power of godliness in their own lives; revivals of religion were nonexistent. A conversion experience was not even a prerequisite for

the ministry or for church membership. In either case, all that was required was an orthodox creed and moral external conduct. Ministers addressed their people as if they were all pious and needed only instruction. The necessity of conversion was seldom mentioned.

This was the state of the Presbyterian Church when William Tennent, Sr. began the Log College. At this institution, he infused in his students a warm, evangelical spirit in addition to doctrinal soundness. Nothing is known of his own religious experience, but the experiences of his sons are well-documented and will be recounted in another chapter. The piety and zeal of the instructor of the Log College is evident, however, from his manuscript sermons. These sermons reflect a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of his congregation. In one of them he said: "Unbelief then is the great sin of the unregenerate world; a gulf in which so many millions of souls are irrevocably lost . . ." In another sermon he bemoaned the fact that "many approach and feed upon the eternal elements of the Lord's supper without really eating of it because they go away unreformed, untouched, and unconcerned." He went on to add:

A minister or clergyman may come to the Lord's Supper and yet not eat the Lord's Supper. He may celebrate it as a minister, and yet not eat it as a sincere Christian. He may eat it because his office obliged him to minister it, and yet not eat it with that sense which becomes a sincere

93 Alexander, Log College, pp. 16-17.

believer. Custom may carry them a great way, and for some years they may never fail to come to this table, and yet may not eat as they ought; for they may do it upon the account of their office and because it is expected of them; but the sense of the end of the love of God may be wanting, which defect makes it a very lame offering.95

Such preaching became characteristic of all the graduates of the Log College, for they all drew the same distinction between an outward act and an inward faith. By drawing this distinction, they set themselves apart from their contemporaries. But the influence which their instructor had on their preaching went even further. Alan Heimert asserted that "the manner in which a preacher delivered his message was often more revealing of his persuasion than the particular doctrines he happened to espouse."96 The brief remains of William Tennent, Sr.'s manuscript sermons are in note form, indicating that he was an expository preacher. His students followed in his footsteps to such an extent that when the Great Awakening was at its peak, the rhetorical division was almost congruent with the ideological division.97 However, one essential difference exists between the preaching of the teacher and the preaching of his students. While their sermons were usually loaded with fear appeals, his avoided all such appeals. We will see in the next chapter that his son Gilbert was the one responsible for introducing this new element.


97Ibid.
The emphasis which the Log College placed on personal piety and evangelical zeal was to become the distinguishing mark of the school and its graduates. More important than the doctrines the students studied was the deep, inward faith that they obtained from their contact with William Tennent, Sr. When Whitefield met Tennent and his sons, he compared them to himself, Wesley, and his associates in England because of their similar outlook on piety.

At my return home was much comforted by the coming of one Mr. Tennent, an old gray-headed disciple and soldier of Jesus Christ. He keeps an academy about twenty miles from Philadelphia, and has been blessed with four gracious sons, three of which have been, and still continue to be eminently useful in the church of Christ. He brought three pious souls along with him, and rejoiced me by letting me know how they had been spoken evil of for their Master's sake. He is a great friend of Mr. Erskine, of Scotland; and as far as I can learn, both he and his sons, are secretly despised by the generality of the Synod, as Mr. Erskine and his friends are hated by the judicatories of Edinburgh, and as the Methodist preachers (as they are called) are by their brethren in England.98

This quotation from Whitefield indicates that experiential religion was the basis for both the American and English revivals. The same holds true for the other eighteenth century awakenings. Even though there was no organic connection among them, they all espoused similar tenets, moving the masses primarily through their emphasis on the doctrine of conversion. The revival in the Presbyterian Church, which was precipitated by the Log College evangelists, was one of the

98Whitefield, Journal From His Embarking . . . to His Arrival at Savannah, p. 124.
earliest movements to appear on the scene. It had a unique ideology because it combined the emotionalism of Pietism with the rationalism of Calvinism. Since the two did not harmonize, the leaders of the movement eventually modified their Calvinistic system to fit their pietistic framework. In order to understand these modifications, they must be viewed against the prevailing social conditions which made the movement possible. The purpose of the next chapter is to show how the movement played on these conditions, while also being shaped by them.
CHAPTER III

CONVERSION: THE CURE FOR SOCIAL UNREST

Two conditions must precede the rise of any mass movement. On the one hand, people must be dissatisfied with their present life style; on the other hand, they must believe in the possibility of a better system of living. If either condition is missing, then the soil is not ripe for change. Satisfaction breeds complacency and destitution breeds hopelessness. Discontent must be accompanied by a sense of power before a person becomes a potential convert to a movement, as Eric Hoffer wrote:

For men to plunge headlong into an undertaking of vast change, they must be intensely discontented yet not destitute, and they must have the feeling that by the possession of some potent doctrine, infallible leader or some new technique they have access to a source of irresistible power. They must also have an extravagant conception of the prospects and potentialities of the future. Finally, they must be wholly ignorant of the difficulties involved in their vast undertaking. Experience is a handicap.¹

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the prevalence of these prerequisites in the lives of the inhabitants of the Middle Colonies. It will involve an analysis of their unrest and its causes, an examination of the system with which they were displeased, and a consideration of their future outlook. Such a treatment will encompass the events

which transpired during the preliminary stage of social unrest, which Dawson and Gettys described as the first phase of a movement. It will also reflect the first image change which propelled the movement into its next stage. This chapter will contain three sections: (1) The Outlook of the Masses, (2) The Failure of the Presbyterian Church, and (3) The Source of a New Image.

The Outlook of the Masses

Restless behavior, local disorders, and wandering individuals are the first evidences of social unrest which precede a social movement. All of these existed in eighteenth century America prior to the Great Awakening. For the most part, they were the results of mass immigrations from Europe and Great Britain. The non-native population of the colonies stood at 250,000 in 1690; from that time forward it doubled every twenty-five years, until at the opening of the American Revolution it had swelled to 2,500,000. The more than two million people who came to America during these years were predominantly the poor, the persecuted, and the socially undesirable. They were the type of people who form the core of a movement. In fact, immigration offers change and a new beginning for the frustrated, just as a movement does. Therefore, in some cases migration can serve as a substitute for a mass movement. However, the type of individual who migrates also furnishes fertile ground for the rise of a movement. As Hoffer stated, "It is

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2 Dawson and Gettys, Introduction to Sociology, p. 693.

3 Sweet, Culture and Religion, p. 3.
sometimes difficult to tell where a mass migration ends and a mass movement begins--and which came first."4

Since the great bulk of the population in the Middle Colonies during the eighteenth century was the product of recent immigrations, it is necessary to study the self-images of these people both before and after they migrated. Because the Scotch-Irish were the ones directly affected by the movement under study in this dissertation, they will be the only immigrants examined. However, what can be said of them also applies in a general sense to the other groups which migrated to America at that time.

The Inheritance of Social Unrest

The American colonies inherited the disenfranchised of Europe and Great Britain. Speaking from his experiences as an explorer and a frontier farmer, Crèvecoeur described the people who came to the colonies in the following manner:

The rich stay in Europe, it is only the middling and the poor that emigrate. In this great American asylum, the poor of Europe have by some means met together, and in consequence of various causes; to what purpose should they ask one another what countrymen they are? Alas, two thirds of them had no country. Can a wretch who wanders about, who works and starves . . . can that man call England or any other kingdom his country? A country that has no bread for him, whose fields procured him no harvest, who met with nothing but the frowns of the rich, the severity of the laws, with jails and punishments; who owned not a single foot of

4Hoffer, True Believer, p. 20.
the extensive surface of this planet? No! Urged by a variety of motives here they came.⁵

The above description not only reveals what kind of people migrated to America; it also indicates why they came. Unlike the earliest settlers of the colonies who came for religious reasons, the eighteenth century immigrants were motivated by economic considerations. This was especially true in regard to the Scotch-Irish. They were truly a people without a country, as their name implies. In the early years of the seventeenth century King James I had instituted a program to displace the native Irish population of northern Ireland by bringing in colonists from England, especially from Scotland. His purpose was to bolster his political control of that area, which at the time was weak because the Irish clan chiefs refused to submit to his authority and were the cause of constant uprising and violence. The first step the king took was to confiscate 3,800,000 acres of land in six counties of northern Ireland. He then divided this great tract into estates of not more than two thousand acres, granting them to men of wealth and position who would live on them and bring over Scotch and English tenants. These new settlers were kept together to discourage intermarriage with the native population, who were the recipients of the less fertile lands.⁶

Most of the colonists came from the sections of Scotland which


were the closest to Ireland, while the nobles of that region received the largest number of grants. The proprietors were composed of three classes: (1) the great English and Scotch families, (2) the military undertakers who were allowed Irish tenants; and (3) the native Irish. The first class paid the smallest yearly rental while the third class paid the highest. As a result of this program, from thirty to forty thousand immigrants came to northern Ireland between 1610 and 1620. By 1641, 100,000 Scots and 20,000 English had moved to Ulster. Of the Scotch colonists, practically one hundred percent were Presbyterian. They brought their own ministers and the Presbyterian form of church government with them.  

The general conditions confronting the colonists in northern Ireland were similar to the ones their descendants were to face seventy years later in frontier America. They lived in crude dwellings while they cleared the land of forests. They were also in constant danger from the mistreated native Irish who despised their presence. Among their own numbers were the scum of Scotland and fugitives from the law. A majority of them cared little about God or religion. Atheism was prevalent; contention, fighting, murder, thieving, and adultery abounded. Nevertheless, the Presbyterian Church at first flourished in northern Ireland. It had eighty ministers, about one hundred congregations, and five presbyteries by 1688. In the Ulster area, Presbyterians outnumbered the Irish Episcopalians fifty to one. Immigrations from Scotland in the last decade of the seventeenth century continued

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7Ibid., pp. 500-05.
to swell the Presbyterian ranks. During this period, an additional fifty thousand Scots migrated to Ulster in an attempt to escape religious persecution which stemmed from the Act of Uniformity. In 1662, the English government evicted two thousand ministers from their pulpits because they would not submit to the state church. However, in Scotland two-thirds of the Presbyterian ministers yielded to the pressure and became Episcopalians. Many of the rest who rejected this course of action fled to Ireland with their congregations. This influx increased the Irish Presbyterian Church to 120 churches, nine presbyteries, three sub-synods, and a general synod by 1702. By 1717 there were 140 congregations with two hundred thousand members.

The account of the Scotch in Ireland to this point seems to reflect religious and economic stability. However, in the last years of the seventeenth century, conditions worsened. One of the principal attractions of the Scotch settlers had been long leases at low rentals; when they expired, though, they were renewed at double or even triple the original rates. Compounding the problem were English restrictions imposed on imports from Ireland on beef, mutton, pork, butter, and cheese. Ireland was also shut off from all colonial trade, as well as all direct trade with Europe. Climaxing this restrictive legislation was the Woolen Act of 1699, which destroyed the Irish woolen industry.

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Nor were the restrictions only economic. In 1704 the Irish Parliament, dominated by Episcopal bishops, passed an act which made receiving the Sacrament at an Episcopal Church a prerequisite for office holding. This act closed even the lowest offices to Presbyterians, even in areas where they made up an overwhelming majority of the population. Adding to the hardship was an additional law which made it illegal for Presbyterian ministers to perform marriages. Economically bankrupt almost to the point of famine and religiously impotent, the Presbyterians looked to America for a new start.

The great migration to the American colonies began in 1710 and slowly increased in intensity. Over 3,100 Scotch-Irish left Ireland during the summer of 1723. Between 1725-1727 another 5,000 set sail for America. The exodus continued to grow until 12,000 Scotch-Irish a year were arriving in America. Continued industrial distress and famines caused by the loss of potato crops gave a new impetus to these mass migrations. In 1744 Benjamin Franklin computed the total population of Pennsylvania at 350,000 and estimated that the Scotch-Irish made up one-third of that total.

The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians did not receive a warm reception from the New England Congregationalists. The Congregationalists in Boston would not allow the six-to-eight hundred Presbyterians who arrived in Boston in 1718 to remain in that area. Instead they

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10 Hanna, Scotch-Irish, pp. 614-618.

encouraged them to settle on the frontiers, where they would form buffer settlements against Indian attacks. As a result, the Scotch-Irish divided into several groups. About two hundred settled in the province of Maine, others went to southeastern New Hampshire, while a third group moved to Worcester, Massachusetts. The Maine and New Hampshire settlements found toleration, but the settlement at Worcester met with further opposition. Such treatment was typical of the receptions the Puritans gave the Scotch-Irish. In another instance Samuel Finley, a Log College graduate, attempted to found a Presbyterian church at Milford, Connecticut in 1741. As soon as he arrived he was arrested, fined as a vagrant, and expelled from the area as a disturber of the peace. Eventually most of the Presbyterian churches which arose in New England became Congregational, so that the Scotch-Irish immigrants who settled in New England swelled the ranks of Congregationalism instead of spreading Presbyterianism. 12

As a reaction to the cool reception they received in New England, the Scotch-Irish scattered themselves throughout the colonies. The majority of them turned southward, making the Delaware river towns of Lewes, Newcastle, and Philadelphia the landing points of the Ulster colonists. From these ports of entry, they spread out into the southwestern portion of Pennsylvania, on into Maryland, and even to Virginia and South Carolina. Thus the Scotch-Irish were the typical frontiersmen.

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Most of them became farmers, who supplemented their cultivating with hunting and fishing. They were independent, restless, and excitable. Their women were more strong than beautiful, many of them wielding axes to clear the land.  

The Scotch-Irish settlers disregarded the great land reservations which the Penns had sold to absentee landlords. Once they settled on a piece of land, they refused to move, and the authorities were forced to make terms with them. Because of their experiences in Ireland, they refused to pay rents, no matter how small. They brought with them strong national prejudices and yet were subject to divisions among themselves over infinitesimal questions of policy. The Scotch-Irish were far from congenial neighbors to the Quakers and Mennonites, and they despised the Indians even more. They were a narrow-minded people who were determined to have their own ways in their new home.

The Surfacing of New Problems

The Scotch-Irish who migrated to America viewed themselves as a religious people, but theirs was a static conception of Christianity. Doctrinal soundness evidenced by adherence to the Westminster Confession was the sum total of their religious interests. Unlike the Pietists, they were without a deep emotional experience. Their

14 Ford, Scotch-Irish in America, pp. 271-74.
15 Maxson, Great Awakening, p. 22.
consuming passion was not for God, but for material gain. Neither a conversion experience nor personal righteousness had any part in their religious philosophy. Samuel Blair, in describing the state of the Scotch-Irish churches in the colonies, wrote that religion "lay dying and ready to expire its last breath."16

The transplanting of this people first from Scotland to Ireland and then from Ireland to America contributed greatly to their religious and moral decline. No curbs were on their rampant appetites; they sank further into intellectual and moral degeneracy after settling in America. Sweet described the effects of immigration upon religion:

> History is replete with instances of corruption of religion among migrating people. In those instances where religion was the primary motive in causing migration—as was the case among the Puritans, the Quakers, and the German sectories—the slump in religion did not come until the second and third generations. But among those people whose motive in migration was primarily economic, the slump was immediate.17

Before the religious and material outlooks which the Scotch-Irish formulated in America are described, another strain of colonial Presbyterianism merits attention. Although the bulk of Presbyterians in the colonies were Scotch-Irish or Scotch (who migrated to America after 1745), English Puritanism also contributed a notable amount. Just as the Scotch-Irish who remained in New England became

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17 Sweet, *Revivalism in America*, p. 11.
Congregationalists, so also the Puritans who ventured into the Middle Colonies became Presbyterians. By 1700, from ten to fifteen germinal Presbyterian churches of New England origin were located in New York and New Jersey, and most of the Puritan churches on Long Island, in northern New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and South Carolina had become Presbyterian. However, the state of religion among these Puritan Presbyterians was similar to that of the Scotch-Irish. As early as 1670 ministers began to contend that the errand into the wilderness had been forgotten. After describing the spirituality of the early fathers, Rev. Samuel Danforth asked questions that revealed his perception of this decline:

But who is there left among you that saw these churches in their first glory? and how do you see them now? are they not in your eyes in comparison thereof as nothing? is not the temper, complexion and countenance of the churches strangely altered? Does not a careless, remiss, flat, dry, cold, dead frame of spirit grow upon us secretly, strongly, prodigiously? they that have ordinances are as though they had none; they that hear the word as though they heard it not; and they that pray as though they prayed not; and they that receive the sacraments as though they received them not; and they that are exercised in holy things, using them by and by, as matters of custom and ceremony . . . . Pride contention, worldliness, covetousness, luxury, drunkenness and uncleanness break in like a flood upon us; and good men grow cold in their love to God, and one another.18

Increase Mather in a treatise entitled "Pray for the Rising Generation" lamented the decline of conversions in New England:

Prayer is needful on this account, in that conversions are become rare in this age of the world. They that have their thoughts exercised in discerning things of this nature, have had sad apprehensions with reference unto this matter; that the work of conversion has been at a great stand in the world. In the last age, in the days of our fathers, in other parts of the world, scarce a sermon preached but some evidently converted, and sometimes hundreds in a sermon. Which of us can say we have seen the like? clear, sound conversions are not frequent in some congregations. The body of the rising generation is a poor, perishing, unconverted, and (except the Lord pour down his Spirit) an undone generation. Many that are profane, drunkards, swearers, lascivious, scoffers at the power of Godliness, despisers of those that are good, disobedient. Others that are only civil, and outwardly conformed to good order, by reason of their education, but never knew what the new birth means.  

The term indifference best sums up the religious attitude of a large segment of Puritanism during the seventeenth century. The second and third generations did not share the religious interests of their ancestors. However, such indifference was immediate among many of the Scotch-Irish settlers who migrated to the colonies in the eighteenth century. Muhlenberg cited numerous examples which reflect this outlook in his Journals. One of the more unusual ones is recorded below:

Another (scoffer) was admonished by his neighbor (a churchman) to give some thought to his death and not to behave so wickedly. He replied that he had long since thought of his death and decided, as far as his soul was concerned, to enter into a swine, since he was fond of pork.

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19 Increase Mather, Pray for the Rising Generation, or a Sermon Wherein Godly Parents are Encouraged, to Pray and Believe for their Children . . . . (Cambridge: Printed by Samuel Green, 1678), pp. 13-14.
anyhow. This man later hanged himself in his own house.20

Most people were not zealous about religion, but neither were they hostile to it. They were simply indifferent. Religion was on the decline; the clergy could do nothing to reverse the tide, even though they denounced their congregations for their apathy. After taking a random survey of the election sermons preached in the first half of the eighteenth century, Sweet noted that all of them were "uniformly denunciatory of the religious conditions of their times."21

Benjamin Franklin typified the religious attitude which prevailed:

I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian; and tho' some of the dogmas of that persuasion, such as the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation, etc., appeared to me unintelligible, others doubtful, and I early absented myself from the public assemblies of the sect, Sunday being my studying day, I never was without some religious principles. I never doubted, for instance, the existence of the Deity; that he made the world, and govern'd it by his providence; that the most acceptable service of God was the doing of good to man; that our souls are immortal; and that all crime will be punished, and virtue rewarded, either here or hereafter. These I esteem'd the essentials of every religion; and being to be found in all the religions we had in our country, I respected them all, tho' with different degrees of respect, as I found them more or less mix'd with other articles, which without any tendency to inspire, promote, or


confirm morality, serv'd principally to divide
us, and make us unfriendly to one another.²²

Several factors apparently fostered this uncommitted outlook.
One of the most influential was the prevailing social conditions.
People were on the move not only to America but also across America.
They continually pushed farther west to claim the uncultured wilderness because the best eastern land was already claimed. As soon as they moved out, new immigrants took their places. This constant flux kept the churches from decreasing in size but also prevented their developing loyal members.²³ In addition, most of the new immigrants came to America not for religious reasons as had the early colonists, but to seek adventure, find personal gain, or escape their pasts.
Just as Crévecoeur portrayed the poverty of the migrants, so Muhlenberg rendered his perception of their character:

It is almost impossible to describe how few good and how many exceptionally godless, wicked people have come into this country every year. The whole country is being flooded with ordinary, extraordinary, and unprecedented wickedness and crimes. Surely the rod of God cannot be spared much longer. Our old residents are mere stupid children in sin compared to our new arrivals! Oh what a fearful thing it is to have so many thousands of unruly and brazen sinners come into this free air and unfenced country!²⁴

Prosperity was another factor that contributed to religious indifference and moral degeneracy. This seems to be the case throughout

²³Muhlenberg, Journals, p. 142.
²⁴Ibid., p. 260.
church history. When people prosper in this life, they usually lose interest in spiritual matters and become interested in earthly affairs. In many cases, those who were religious minded when they came to the colonies substituted a present orientation for their previously held otherworld view after they became prosperous. Muhlenberg complained that prosperity robbed his congregation's interest in religion, and Franklin indicated that his prosperity left him little time to attend church. Crévecoeur asserted the frontier had an equally damaging effect on morality: "There, remote from the power of example, and check of shame, many families exhibit the most hideous parts of society." 

The final factor which led to spiritual indifference involved the many different denominations and sects existing so close together. Arthur Schlesinger wrote, "From an institutional view America presented the greatest diversity of beliefs of any land on earth. The reason is not far to seek. From the beginning of the sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth the Old World had been rent with theological dissension, and the vast transatlantic continent offered a natural refuge for the persecuted minorities." This diversity confused the masses and caused them to take religion lightly since they could not

26 Franklin, Autobiography, p. 91.
27 Crévecoeur, Letters, p. 60.
understand the issues involved. They were not prepared to analyze different theological positions, for in Europe they simply placed their faith in the state church and considered all others to be heretical, if they were even familiar with any others. But in America they shared Franklin's outlook and decided it did not matter what a man believed.\(^{29}\) This led to religious indifference because the people were uncommitted to any denomination. Muhlenberg recorded the account of a young man who did not know which denomination was best; his account serves as a good illustration of the confusion factor. The young man discovered that "when he made inquiries of the teachers of each part, every one of them would say, 'Here is Christ; we have the best medicine and the nearest road to heaven.'\(^{30}\)

Even though the actions of the masses reflected their indifference toward religion, they were still religiously oriented; demonstrated by their concern with the subjects of salvation and judgment. They believed that one day they would have to give an account to God for their actions, and they believed that God would find them to be unworthy of Heaven if they claimed their own righteousness. Therefore, they sincerely desired some sort of salvation that would allow God to grant forgiveness. Franklin had this theological perspective,\(^{31}\) and so did the numerous people who responded to the revivalists when they


\(^{30}\)Muhlenberg, *Journals*, p. 236.

reminded them that they were under the judgment of God and needed conversion.  

It might seem strange that people who were indifferent toward institutionalized religion would at the same time be concerned about judgment and salvation. The two appear to be contradictory, and are so if one expects people to act rationally. However, they did not do so in this situation: They believed one thing but then acted contrary to their beliefs. They believed in God, in Heaven and Hell, in salvation and judgment; but their social conditions and their own prosperity caused them to lose sight of the practical ramifications of these doctrines in their daily lives. As a result, they were caught between the demands of their consciences and their present orientations.

Those who were indifferent to religion made up only one large segment of the mass of people who rejected the church. A second group best described as the "dissatisfied" eventually took the same course of action. These were people with the same theological perspective as those in the first group; but unlike them, they still had a deep commitment to institutionalized religion. The people in this second group experienced inner conflict because they could not reconcile their religious beliefs with their secular orientation. From a materialistic standpoint, they were extremely successful people. They

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32 That the people still had this theological perspective is best illustrated by their reaction to the revivalists who reminded them they needed salvation. It is impossible to determine the exact number of people who professed conversion after hearing these doctrines proclaimed, but estimates run as high as 50,000. (See Maxson, Great Awakening, p. 139.)
were already challengers of the traditional social solidarity of English institutional life and had developed a revolutionary philos-

ogy of individual human rights. Vernon Parrington described this philosophy in two words—"democratic individualism." These were people who had made notable advancements in conquering the wilderness, and before them an entire frontier waited to be attacked. Because of their past achievements, they approached this endeavor full of optim-
mism and hope. Crevecoeur observed:

Every thing has tended to regenerate them; new laws, a new mode of living, a new social system; here they become men: in Europe they were as so many useless plants, wantititig vegetative mould, and refreshing showers; they withered, and were mowed down by want, hunger, and war; but now by the pow-
er of transplantation, like all other plants they have taken root and flourished! Formerly they were not numbered in any civil lists of their country, except in those of the poor; here they rank as citizens. By what invisible power has this sur-
prising metamorphosis been performed? By that of the laws and that of their industry . . . his
country is now that which gives him land, bread, protection, and consequence: Ubi panis ibi patria, is the motto of all emigrants . . . . Here the rewards of his industry follow with e-
qual steps the progress of his labour.

But while many people displayed such an outlook in secular matters, they approached religion in an entirely different spirit. They looked back instead of ahead; back to the days of their grandfathers who in


34 Ibid., p. 131.

35 Crevecoeur, Letters, pp. 52-53.
the name of God were building the heavenly city in the new world, who were ushering in the millenium. For their ancestors, religion was a living reality; for them it was a dead creed. In order to understand why they now had this pessimistic religious attitude it is necessary to examine the condition of the Presbyterian Church in America. However, before doing so, a summary of the value systems of the indifferent and the dissatisfied is in order.

From the evidence already presented, apparently the Scotch-Irish valued progress. Their whole lives lay before them. They had no past, at least not one worth recalling. But their secular futures appeared bright and they were optimistic and hopeful. Actually their commitment to progress stemmed from another value at the core of their value system—individualism. The Scotch-Irish were the first pioneers. They were the rugged frontiersman type so often since depicted in western movies and novels. These self-made men placed individualism far above group identity and group responsibility. This is probably why they so often fought among themselves. Closely associated with individualism is the value of freedom. That the Scotch-Irish held freedom as important is evident from their migration to America. While most of them came to escape the economic slavery of the tenant system, they simultaneously sought release from the religious restrictions which the Irish parliament had imposed on Presbyterians. An interesting sidelight is that despite the poverty felt by many groups in Ireland,

the Presbyterians were the only ones who departed the country in mass numbers. 37

The religiously indifferent and the religiously dissatisfied held the three values mentioned to approximately the same degree. Both groups placed progress, individualism, and freedom on a high plane. However, two additional values also motivated these groups, but not to the same extent. The first of these was material comfort; the second was religious security. Although the indifferent desired security in the life after death, they were more concerned with acquiring personal gain in this life. The dissatisfied, on the other hand, wanted material comfort but placed their soul's security above this world's luxuries. In all likelihood, the indifferent came to the colonies primarily for material gain, while most of the dissatisfied came for religious reasons. The values of the two groups are important, for the Log College evangelists later appealed to them in an attempt to win the masses to the side of their movement. The Presbyterian Church hierarchy, conversely, failed to adapt to these value systems, thus fostering much of the indifference and dissatisfaction which existed.

The Failure of the Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church, like all the other major denominations in America, was highly institutionalized. Instead of appealing to the values of the masses in order to bring them into the churches, the denominations lowered their standards in an attempt to gain adherents.

37 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 250.
Contrary to popular belief, church membership in the colonies always constituted only a small portion of the total population. One hundred and one colonists sailed to Massachusetts on the Mayflower; only twelve of this number composed the membership of the first church. Barely one-fifth of the immigrants who settled in Boston and the other settlements about the Massachusetts Bay were even professing Christians. The situation was similar in all the colonies: Church membership was an exclusive matter not easily secured. Since conversion was the essential requirement, only those who testified to a satisfactory religious experience could become a church member. Normally only a few could meet such a requirement, and as time passed, the number continually decreased.

The Halfway Covenant

As early as 1650 the colonial minister became alarmed over the dwindling number of people professing conversion experiences.

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38 These facts are difficult to reconcile with the religious reasons which motivated the early settlers to come to America and also with Danforth and Mather's descriptions of the decline of religion. Either religion never was the primary motive for immigration and Danforth and Mather longed for a golden past which never existed or many of the colonists failed to meet the conversion requirement for membership even though they were religious people. In light of the extensive amount of evidence which indicates the early immigrants did come to America for religious reasons, it is extremely difficult to accept the first alternative. Perhaps the Calvinistic theology of the first inhabitants allowed them to be religious yet not church members since they were unsure of their predestination. In either case, the past was probably glorified by such ministers as Danforth and Mather because it was an improvement at least over the present.

Therefore, they made an accommodation in 1662 which permitted those who had such an experience to make their children part owners of God's covenant of grace through baptism. The Halfway Covenant, as it became known, gave no right to membership or the Lord's Supper, but it treated those who were partakers as "presumptive saints and kept them under church government."40 The compromise, however, resulted in failure, for by 1700 the majority of churchgoers were but halfway part­icipants and desired to remain that way. Solomon Stoddard was the first to provide a remedy for this ill by broadening the scope of the Covenant. He made church membership and the sacraments, which he called "converting ordinances," available to all. As a result Stoddard reaped five "harvests" in 1679, 1683, 1696, 1712, and 1718. Other ministers adopted this pragmatic solution: By the time of the Great Awakening the churches were full of unconverted members.41

Although the Halfway Covenant brought numerous people into the colonial churches, it eventually produced widespread dissatisfaction by failing to provide the way of salvation that many of its new members sought. Instead of offering hope, the church now demanded allegiance. It stressed good behavior and moral living which, of course, included attending church. Franklin described the main points of a typical sermon as: (1) Keeping the Sabbath day, (2) Being diligent in reading the holy Scriptures, (3) Attending duly the public worship,


41 Ibid., pp. 136-38.
(4) Partaking the Sacrament, and (5) Paying due respect to God's ministers. He stated that it was sermons like this which drove him away from the church.\textsuperscript{42} This legalistic emphasis made the church irrelevant to the needs of the people, which further led to a general disinterest in religion. But to make matters worse the sermons were not only irrelevant; they were also boring and poorly delivered, as Webster later described them:

A vast change was visible in the churches of New England: The discipline was relaxed, the doctrine was diluted, and the preaching tame and spiritless. A written form of words superseded the notes which had served for a brief in the pulpit; the confinement of the eye and the finger to the line, and the absorption of the minister in the reading of the scroll, left the young unawed and the aged slumbering, while others glided in reverie to the farm or the traffic, the fireside or the forest.\textsuperscript{43}

Evidently, the churches and their ministers were a principal cause of the decay of religion. They sacrificed quality for quantity. By a series of compromises they were able to keep large memberships, but their membership ranks were made up of the indifferent and the unconverted. These conditions by themselves enhanced the possibilities of a religious revolt; but other problems also plagued the Presbyterian Church.

The Shortage of Ministers

As the first chapter indicated, the greatest need of the colonial churches was qualified ministers. This problem greatly limited the

\textsuperscript{42}Franklin, \textit{Autobiography}, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{43}Webster, \textit{History of Presbyterianism}, p. 133.
work of the Presbyterian Church, as well as that of the other denominations. The churches took two different steps, neither of which worked well, in combating this problem. The first was to ordain ministers to more than one church at a time, making it necessary for them to travel great distances and preach several times a day. 44 In the long run, this attempt resulted in more harm than good, as will be shortly seen. The second solution was to recruit ministers from Europe. This also often further complicated matters, for it was usually the undesirables who wanted to come to America to seek their fortunes or to rebuild reputations which they had destroyed by scandal. 45 Ministers were even known to forge their credentials before coming to the colonies. 46 In light of this fact, it is easy to see why the synod rejected Jonathan Dickinson's proposal to make conversion a requirement for the ministry during the subscription controversy. It was short of ministers already; such a move would have eliminated many of those it had.

The Lack of Authority

The colonial churches faced an additional problem in the area of church authority. They found themselves in a unique situation, for in Europe their authority grew out of the relationship between church and state. In America there was no state church; therefore, church authority had to be established on a different foundation. This job

44 Muhlenberg, Journals, p. 181.
45 Maxson, Great Awakening, p. 23.
46 Trinterud, American Tradition, p. 36.
fell upon the shoulders of the individual minister, who had to establish his own personal authority.

In religious and church matters, each has the right to do what he pleases. The government has nothing to do with it and will not concern itself with such matters. Everything depends on the vote of the majority. A preacher must fight his way through with the sword of the Spirit alone and depend upon faith in the living God and his promises, if he wants to be a preacher and proclaim the truth.47

When one considers the nature of the clergy, the authority of the colonial churches rested on shaky ground. Only to the extent that a minister could prove his effectiveness could he establish his own reputation and serve a successful church. But the minister found himself in a losing battle before he began, for even the prestige of his office rapidly disappeared when considered against the growth of congregational democracy. The clergy, like the church, found itself in a new situation and did not know how to react. Before it had always drawn its authority from strong ecclesiastical bodies that were well-supported financially. But now the chain of command was broken at the top; the strength of these bodies had depended on their ties with the state. Without the state's support, this chain of command had to be rebuilt beginning at the bottom with the local pastor.

It was extremely difficult for the clergy to re-establish even its own authority in this new situation. In the colonies the entire relationship between church and people was reversed from what it was in Europe. Instead of a pastor establishing a new church under the support

47Muhlenberg, Journals, p. 67.
of an ecclesiastical body, the laymen usually organized their own congregations when they founded a new town. After building their own homes, the next thing to be built was a meeting house. Since they built it, they also owned it; and only after it was already built and the congregation was already in existence was a minister called. Coming into such circumstances, the only authority which the new minister had was based upon what the congregation was willing to give him. This was true of money as well as of authority; and since most of the congregations were relatively new, and therefore small, it was often difficult for them to pay their pastors a decent salary. The only bargaining power the minister had in either circumstance rested in the shortage of his associates: He could threaten to leave the church and go elsewhere since many churches were pastorless.

Making the minister's role even more difficult were the demands the congregations placed upon their pastors. They expected the same services from these men that they had received in Europe, without realizing the task of a minister was far more difficult in America. Nevertheless, they still demanded this undermanned, underpaid, powerless profession to perform functions similar to the ones they had once performed under better conditions. Henry Muhlenberg, a pastor of that period, revealed in his Journals why it was impossible to do so, especially in the matter of visiting the sick and mourning. He described

Schlesinger stated that between 1700 and the Revolutionary War at least forty-eight preachers in New England sued their parishioners for unpaid salaries. (Schlesinger, Birth of the Nation, pp. 84-85).
his congregation as being scattered over a territory thirty miles long and twenty miles wide. He was seldom home and had little time for pastoral calls, but the members of his congregation expected him to make them anyway. As a result of such pressures, "the parson's voice--except in times of revivals of religion--became merely one among many in the hustling, bustling communities."

In summary, three main defects plagued the colonial churches. First, the church had no explicit authority over its members. Second, the church suffered from a shortage of ministers, ministers of inferior quality, and no schools to train future ministers. Soon the alumni of the Log College would take advantage of the first and third defects to discredit the establishment because of the second defect.

The Source of a New Image

For the reasons just stated, a vast number of colonists had an unfavorable image of the Presbyterian Church. While they looked to the future, the church reflected on the golden past. While they were progressing and experiencing success in their daily lives, the church was on the decline. While they were exercising their freedom and individualism in shaping their own futures, the church was demanding allegiance and adherence to its rules. While they were concerned about religious security, the church offered no concrete future hope. At every point it seemed to conflict with their value systems and to

49 Muhlenberg, Journals, p. 235.
50 Schlesinger, Birth of the Nation, p. 85.
be irrelevant to their needs. Trinterud traces all these shortcomings to the failure of the church leaders to grasp the meaning of the American situation. Instead of adapting to their new environment, "they continued to live, think, and act as though they were still a part of their homelands."\(^5\)

The incompetency of the Presbyterian Church bred the social unrest which is a necessary foundation for a mass undertaking aimed at change. Not only was the establishment corrupt; it was also weak, for it could not command the loyalty of its members. They were, instead, ready to accept a new doctrine and to follow a new leader. Conditions were ripe for the appearance of agitators. The men who were soon to perform this function were preparing for the ministry at the Log College as the unrest heightened.

The Role of Agitator

Agitation is of primary importance in the development of a social movement. It arouses people and makes them possible recruits for the movement. Blumer defined agitation as a "means of exciting people and of awakening within them new impulses and ideas which make them restless and dissatisfied. Consequently, it acts to loosen the hold on them of their previous attachments, and to break down their previous ways of thinking and acting."\(^5\) An agitator, following this definition,


must do three things if he is to be successful—(1) he must gain people's attention, (2) he must excite them by arousing their feelings and impulses, and (3) he must provide direction for their impulses and feelings through ideas, suggestions, criticisms, and promises.

Blumer went on to state that agitation operates in two types of situations. The first is marked by discrimination and injustice, but the people in this situation take such abuse for granted and do not challenge it. The function of agitation in this case is to lead such people to question their own modes of living. In other words, agitation must create social unrest where it did not exist before. In the second situation, people are already restless and discontented, but because of timidness or lack of knowledge they do not know what to do. Agitation under these circumstances does not seek to sow unrest but to direct, intensify, and release the tensions that people are already experiencing.  

The two different types of situations call for different types of agitators. An agitator who is "calm, quiet, and dignified" works best under the former conditions. According to Blumer, "He stirs people not by what he does, but what he says. He is to be a man sparing in his words, but capable of saying very caustic, incisive, and biting things—things which get 'under the skin' of people and force them to view things in a new light."  

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53 Ibid., p. 204.
54 Ibid., pp. 204-05.
aware of the inequities and deficiencies which surround them. He causes them to raise questions about subjects they previously took for granted and to form new wishes and hopes. If he is successful, people will be discontented with their present life and will be expectant of something better.

An agitator who is an "excitable, restless, and aggressive individual" operates better in the latter situation, as Blumer believed.

His dynamic and energetic behavior attracts the attention of people to him; and the excitement and restlessness of his behavior tends to infect them. He is likely to act with dramatic gesture and to talk in terms of spectacular imagery. His appearance and behavior foster the contagion of unrest and excitement.55

This type of agitator succeeds best when people are already disturbed and unsettled. His own excitement and energetic activity arouses other people who are already disposed to such behavior. The Log College agitators fell into this category, for the Scotch-Irish were restless but they lacked knowledge.

Gilbert Tennent became part of the decaying Presbyterian Church when it licensed him as a minister in May, 1725. Although reforms were long overdue, no reformers had arisen to make the necessary changes. Speaking generally of such conditions, Hoffer revealed why: "Whenever we find a dispensation enduring beyond its span of competence, there is either an entire absence of an educated class or an intimate alliance between those in power and the men of words."56

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55 Ibid., p. 204.
56 Hoffer, True Believer, p. 133.
situation, the latter reason explains why there were no reforms. Even though ministers lamented over the low state of religion, they were opposed to any radical changes in the present system.

Tennent would soon attempt to break this alliance by discrediting the establishment through the use of agitation. His background destined him to do so, for four factors set him apart from his contemporaries. One of these, his educational training at the Log College, has already been mentioned. The second was his own conversion experience. This event occurred in 1717, the year after his family moved from Ireland to America. His father being an evangelical minister, Tennent was familiar with the teachings of the Scripture on this subject at an early age. When he was fourteen years old, he became concerned about his own spiritual state. Prior to this, young Tennent prohibited himself from following his father's profession because he reckoned himself unconverted. Therefore, he began studying medicine as a substitute for what he really desired. This study ended rapidly when he underwent agony of spirit for several days and, in his own words, received from God "the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." After having this conversion experience, Tennent's one goal was to enter the ministry. This was what he had wanted all along; now nothing stood in his way.

The third factor which separated Tennent from his contemporaries

was his living in New York during his formative years. This brought him into contact with New England Puritanism and Congregationalism instead of Scotch-Irish Presbyterianism. As a result, he developed a detached attitude toward the Scotch-Irish and viewed religion in more universal terms than they did. This led him later to place a greater emphasis on conversion than on denominational ties. More specifically, it opened the way for an alliance with Jonathan Dickinson and the evangelical wing of Presbyterianism.  

The final factor which distinguished Tennent from the other Presbyterian ministers of his day was his style of preaching. He developed this distinctiveness as a direct result of his contact with Theodore Frelinghuysen, the leading Dutch revivalist. However, Tennent had his first encounter with those in authority before even meeting Frelinghuysen. Apparently he had received a call to be the pastor of the Presbyterian Church at New Castle and had indicated that he would accept the position. But at the last moment Tennent changed his mind and went to New Brunswick instead. Because of the shortage of ministers, the Presbytery of New Castle brought the affair before the synod, desiring it to order Tennent back to New Castle. Tennent being conspicuously absent from the meeting, the synod instructed the moderator to reprove him for his actions and to exhort him to exercise more caution in making future decisions.  

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59 Records, p. 83.
confrontation, the ministers of the Presbytery of New Castle later became some of Tennent's bitterest opponents.

Tennent must have humbly accepted this reprimand, for he functioned without incident in the establishment for the next eight years as the pastor of the New Brunswick Presbyterian Church. The church prospered under his preaching. Samuel Finley reported that Tennent's fellow ministers held him in high esteem during this time, although he thought less of his own success. He especially became dissatisfied with his preaching when he compared his results with those of Frelinghuysen. This dissatisfaction reached its height when he became physically ill, and only a letter of encouragement from Frelinghuysen shook him from his despondency. Tennent described his experience in a letter to Prince:

I was then exceedingly grieved that I had done so little for God. . . . I had spent much time in conversing about trifles, which might have been spent in examining people's states towards God, and persuading them to turn unto him; I therefore prayed to God that he would be pleased to give me one half year more, and I was determined to endeavor to promote his Kingdom with all my might at all adventures.61

After recovering, Tennent examined the experiences of professing Christians and became firmly convinced that many of them were unconverted. With renewed vigor, he preached on sin, judgment, and repentance. People in New Brunswick were moved by Tennent's new style of extemporaneous preaching and his appealing mysticism for he broke

60 Finley, Appendix to Successful Minister, p. ii.

61 Prince, Christian History, p. 293.
the pattern of cold, traditional, intellectual conformity and made Christianity a religion of the heart. Encouraged by the response in his own church, Tennent traveled to Staten Island in 1729 and preached a terrifying message from Amos 6:1: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." According to Tennent, the listeners were greatly influenced.

The Spirit of God was suddenly poured down upon the assembly; the people were generally affected about the state of their souls; and some to that degree, that they fell upon their knees in the time of the sermon, in order to pray to God for pardoning mercy. Many went weeping home from that sermon, and then the general inquiry was, What shall I do to be saved?62

Finley cited this event as the turning point for the way the establishment viewed Tennent. From then on the clergy saw him as a "blasphemer and searcher of hearts."63 But Gilbert Tennent was only the first of the agitators to emerge from the Log College, and Staten Island was only one of many trouble spots for the institutionalized church. About the same time Gilbert was changing his methods, his younger brother John completed his education at the Log College. On September 18, 1729, the Presbytery of New Castle licensed him and assigned him to supply the churches at Brandywine, Middletown, and New Castle. John had the same evangelical fervor as his brother, for he had undergone a terrifying conversion experience. Gilbert, who was present, provided the following description:

His conviction of his sin, danger and misery was the most violent in degree of any I ever saw.

62 Ibid.
63 Finley, Appendix to Successful Minister, p. 11.
For several days and nights together he was made to cry out in the most dolorous and affecting manner, almost every moment. The words which he used in his soul-agony were these: "O my bloody, lost soul! What shall I do? Have mercy on me, O God, for Christ's sake . . . ."

But it pleased God, after an agony almost uninterrupted for four days and four nights, during which he cried out incessantly as described above, he would make his consolations as eminent and conspicuous as his convictions had been severe . . . . One morning when I went to see him, I perceived a great alteration in his countenance; for he, who an hour before had looked like a condemned man going to be put to some cruel death, now appeared with a creeful gladsome countenance and spoke to me in these words: "O brother, the Lord Jesus has come in mercy to my soul . . . ."

He gave the best evidence of a change of heart in the conscientious and diligent performance of all Christian duties, even of those most opposite to our corrupt nature, such as secret prayer and fasting . . . .

During the winter of 1729, John began to preach at Freehold in addition to his other supplies. This church invited him to be pastor but he refused to accept. In fact, he later told his brother William that he regretted making the promise to supply it, for the congregation seemed to be a "people who God had given up for their abuse of the gospel." The church was rent by divisions and in a deplorable condition. John complained that ignorance overshadowed the congregation's mind, that the people made light of the new birth, and that their

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practices were as bad as their principles. 66

Nevertheless, after John preached at Freehold four or five times and found his labors greatly rewarded, he said he would be the pastor if called, even if he had to beg for bread. On April 18, 1730, he received a second call and was ordained November 19, 1730. During the next eighteen months the church was full and decisions were numerous. On several occasions both the minister and his congregation wept; his people were extremely devoted to him. They described him as the "most laborious, successful, well qualified, pious pastor the age has afforded." His preaching was characterized by zeal, fluency of style, and aptness of illustration. 67 Unlike Gilbert, he stressed God's love instead of His wrath. 68

John's brief ministry ended when he died of a lingering illness on April 23, 1732. For the six months prior to this date, his brother William had filled his pulpit for him. After John's death, William became the regular supply minister there; on October 25, 1733, he was ordained as the new pastor. His conversion experience was far more dramatic than that of any of his other brothers. At the same time that John was under conviction, William was so severely ill that he went into a deep coma. Gilbert, thinking that he was dead after the

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66 Excerpts from a manuscript dated Oct. 9, 1744 regarding the historical developments in Freehold, Presbyterian Historical Society, pp. 4-5.

67 Ibid.

68 See John Tennent, The Nature of Adoption, with its Consequent Privileges Explained . . ., published with Gilbert Tennent, A Solemn Warning to a Secure World . . . See footnote 64.
third day, arranged for a funeral. In the course of the service
William opened his eyes and gave a dreadful groan. After his recovery,
all his previous doubts about his final happiness vanished. Under
William's leadership the revival at Freehold continued for another ten
years. The number of conversions was even far more numerous than be­
fore John Tennent's death.

The Emergence of Hope

The people who inhabited the Middle Colonies during the Tennents' ministry came from two different sources. Many of them were recent immigrants from Ireland, while most of the rest were second-or-third-generation colonists from New England. In either case, religion did not occupy a central position in their lives. Made enthusiastic by the vast opportunities before them, they largely forgot their other-world interests in their search for material prosperity. This naturally led to a decline in church membership. As a result, the Presbyterian Church eased its membership requirements in an attempt to stem this tide. However, this led only to further disinterest and dissatisfaction because now the church had few spiritual benefits to offer. Compounding the problem even further was the failure of the church to establish its own authority or to provide an adequate ministry. All of these factors together formed the basis for general religious unrest. The people in the Middle Colonies had changed, but the church

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69 For a complete account of William Tennent, Jr.'s conversion experience, as well as later extraordinary events in his life, see Alexander, Log College, pp. 109-146.
had not. It was little more than a European transplant.

Until 1729, Presbyterians had no other alternative to the existing situation. Although people were restless and discontented, they did not know how to act. The three Tennent brothers provided a way for them to release their tensions. Instead of creating additional unrest, they directed and intensified the unrest which these people were already experiencing. They did this by reaffirming the Calvinistic doctrines of depravity and regeneration, constantly reminding their audiences that they had to prepare for their souls' future. A typical example of such a reminder comes from one of John Tennent's sermons:

Well, sinners, are ye become gospel-proof, got beyond bow-shot, past all feeling? that when we represent God's majesty armed with vengeance, seated on his dreadful throne of justice, wreathed with flames and lightnings, circled with clouds of gloomy horrors, encompassed with miriads of holy angels, casting with his unbeared and unbroken arm thunderbolts of death or shooting the barbed pointed terrible arrows of his inflamed indignation, and with the other holding a two-edged bright burnished glittering sword, ready to be thrust into your hearts, into the innermost recesses of your unarmed souls, and yet ye are not moved.70

Such challenges as this one were effective because the masses still had otherworld interests, as Schlesinger wrote, describing the scriptural basis.

In spite of the bewildering array of religious organizations the members, for the most part, derived their idea of God from the infallibility of the Bible. About six thousand years before, in the nearly universal view, the Lord had created

Adam and Eve, the first mortals, with the world in which they and their posterity were to dwell; in punishment for disobeying His commands he had expelled them from the Garden of Eden and cursed all their descendants with original sin, but through the crucifixion and mediation of Jesus, the Son of God, they might escape damnation and attain salvation in an afterlife by becoming members of the true church. The Almighty, moreover, was an intimate personal deity, not an aloof observer. He judged the daily actions of men and sought ceaselessly to save their souls from the blandishments of Satan.71

These people did not deny the existence of a Heaven or a Hell; they simply tended to forget about them. The indifferent experienced dissonance when the Tennents forced them to realize they had neglected their souls in favor of present accomplishment. The dissatisfied, on the other hand, were already frustrated because they had decided the church was irrelevant to their needs. This conclusion created great dissonance in them, for they were a religious people who could not live without faith but who now had no object in which to place that faith.

The message of conversion which the Tennents preached served as a dissonance-reducing device for both of these groups. The indifferent assimilated it because it provided them with a means of escaping the wrath of God that the Tennents had made them consider. The dissatisfied were vulnerable to it because it provided them with an object for their faith—a personal relationship with Christ which would guarantee the attainment of salvation. Furthermore, the Tennents tied their message of conversion to the values of their audiences. It was an

71 Schlesinger, Birth of the Nation, p. 81.
instrument of spiritual progress which pointed toward the future instead of bemoaning the lost past. It made religion a purely individual matter between a person and his God; no institution was involved. It also provided the kind of security that a segment of the audience wanted but could not find in the institutionalized church. For these reasons, the Tennents experienced great successes at New Brunswick, Staten Island, and Freehold. They provided the door of hope that people were seeking.

Usually agitation plays only a significant role in the early stages of a movement. However, it continued to persist and even to increase in this case. The excitement which the Tennents stirred between 1729-32 was only the forerunner of what was to come. At this point in the history of the movement, the orthodox ministers chose to overlook the activity of the Tennents, feeling that they were not a serious threat to the conservatism of the church. Soon this would be impossible to do, for as the Log College produced more graduates, the level of agitation became more intense. As the movement passed through its second stage, the institutionalized church was forced to react. But before considering this second stage, it is interesting to note that the Halfway Covenant had prepared the way for the success of the Tennents. Had it not filled the churches with the unconverted, they would not have had such immediate results. As it was, the Tennents had a ready-made audience.

This chapter has revealed that the masses were the first ones to change their images. As the eighteenth century opened, a majority of
them were either indifferent toward religion or dissatisfied with the current state of the Presbyterian Church. Under the preaching of the three Tennent brothers, these negative images began to change to an outlook characterized by concern and hope. Instead of viewing religion as an outward conformity to a set of rules, these two classes of people began to see Christianity as an inward relationship with God. This image change was only beginning as the movement entered into its second stage. It would become more prevalent in both the second and third phases. However, the fact that the Tennents were able to alter images successfully on a small scale provided the impetus for the later alterations and propelled the movement into the stage of popular excitement.
CHAPTER IV

THE REACTION AGAINST THE MOVEMENT:

LET NO MAN DESPISE THY YOUTH

Three features indicate that a movement is evolving from its first to its second phase; (1) attention becomes narrowly focused on some object or aim, (2) the state of expectancy becomes heightened, and (3) activity increases. All of these characteristics were present in 1733. Gilbert Tennent, inspired by his success at New Brunswick and Staten Island and further encouraged by the results of his brothers at Freehold, developed a plan of reform. The emergence of this plan indicated that the movement was entering its second stage, for the social unrest was becoming coordinated with a tentative objective. This objective was nebulous and temporary, but it did serve to focus attention and to represent an object of action. It was also sufficiently remote that it had wide appeal. Everyone in the Presbyterian Church was willing to admit that reforms were needed.

Dawson and Gettys described the leaders of the second phase as prophet and reformer. Gilbert Tennent functioned in both of these roles, the first in conjunction with others but the second solely on

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1 Dawson and Gettys, Introduction to Sociology, p. 695.
2 Dawson and Gettys described the goal of a movement in this manner when the movement is in its second stage. (Ibid., pp. 701-02.)
3 Ibid., p. 702.

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his own. Of the members of the movement, only he was a prominent figure in the synod. He was the one who always took the initiative in making proposals or challenging the moves of the establishment, while his father and brothers provided support for his actions. Actually the three Tennents were the only proponents of revivalism in the Presbyterian Church at this time. Upon the death of John Tennent in 1732, only William, Sr. at Neshaminy, Gilbert at New Brunswick, and William, Jr. at Freehold remained to promote the movement. It was solely a family endeavor.

This stage of the movement was characterized by action and reaction. The movement employed two strategies to reach its objective, and the establishment countered with synod actions to limit the movement's success. Therefore, during this stage the establishment was forced to address the movement. This chapter will examine the feasibility of the strategies of the movement and the responses to them by the establishment.

The Actions of the Movement

In every instance, the strategies which the movement employed were rhetorical. The leaders never used force, coercion, or aggression.

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4 Golden and Rieke defined a rhetorical strategy as "one in which messages are the major determinant of instrumental effects." By messages, they meant far more than spoken words, for event-messages, or non-verbal communication can also be persuasive messages. Fotheringham had earlier described an event-message as "the intentional contrivance of an event to arouse a particular meaning beyond itself in observers or in those to whom it is reported." (See James L. Golden and Richard D. Rieke, The Rhetoric of Black America (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1971), p. 25; also Wallace Fotheringham, Perspectives on Persuasion (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1966), p. 70.)
Persuasion was their only weapon. When a strategy failed to produce the instrumental effects they desired, a new one would evolve and the campaign would continue. Therefore, it is essential to study the movement's rhetoric as a process to bring about reform, for an analysis of isolated speeches results in distortion when they are pulled from their context. In the campaign to reform the Presbyterian Church, the leaders of the movement developed four different rhetorical strategies.

The Failure of a Strategy

Gilbert Tennent developed the first of the strategies which the movement eventually used after he became aware that the Presbyterian churches were full of unconverted people. Before, he had thought that conversions were a common occurrence; now he knew differently. As he reflected on the ignorance of the masses on this subject, he came to the conclusion that the ministry was to blame. Therefore, he decided to instill a revivalistic spirit in the denomination by proposing

5 Fotheringham made a distinction between instrumental and consummatory effects. Responses are consummatory when they reduce or eliminate the source's motivated state; they are instrumental when they lead receivers to the source's goal. Thus, persuaders are communicators who are interested in effects for the further behavior they produce in receivers. (See Fotheringham, Perspectives on Persuasion, pp. 21-23.)

6 "The concept of instrumentality encourages seeing persuasion as a campaign--a structural sequence of efforts to achieve adoption, continuance, deterrence, or discontinuance--rather than a one-shot effort. Effects established in an earlier phase of a campaign are instrumental to the development of subsequent effects. The first effort to persuade others commonly accomplishes only part of the job; that part, however, is necessary for the success of the next phase and for the ultimate goal." (Fotheringham, Perspectives on Persuasion, p. 34.)
that the standards he adhered to be made normative for all ministers.

Tennent made his first attempt to put this strategy into operation at the synod meeting of 1733. This was shortly after his brother John's death; Webster believed that this influenced his actions by making him feel that he was one of the faithful few who remained.

The short ministry of his brother John, his faithfulness and large success, had impressed him deeply; and he was ready to say with Elijah, "I only am left, and they seek my life; I am very jealous for the Lord of hosts."

How many of the errors of his life had never been committed, could the still small voice have been heard by him, declaring that God had reserved seven thousand undefiled souls for himself.7

The following year Tennent renewed his proposal by offering a five-point plan aimed at improving the quality of ministers, for he felt that this was where the revival had to begin. He proposed that the synod take the following steps: (1) examine the piety of all future candidates; (2) license only ministers who had conversion experiences; (3) require ministers to examine the spiritual condition of their congregations before serving the Lord's Supper; (4) take care that every minister faithfully performs his duties, especially in the areas of instructing the young and doing personal visitation; and (5) examine yearly the preaching of all ministers to insure that they are endeavoring to convince their hearers of their lost condition, and the way they may obtain salvation.8

7 Webster, History of Presbyterianism, pp. 421-23.

8 Records, pp. 110-11.
The synod looked favorably on these proposals and instructed each presbytery to read them at the beginning of every meeting. The records of the Presbytery of Philadelphia show that it complied with the ruling, but the East Jersey Presbytery was divided over the enforcement of the proposals.\(^9\) This seems to be the extent to which the synod implemented them. Candidates were still judged on doctrinal soundness and educational background, not on conversion or piety. Neither were they ever required to make conversion the main goal of their preaching. The synod had lamented the declining power of godliness in 1733 and had wanted to revive it but now it made no attempt to promote the type of revival Tennent wanted. In fact, the synod later opposed it when it finally came. It advocated his proposals and satisfied him for the moment, but his first strategy was doomed to failure. The establishment did not really want a revival based on conversion.

The Enlistment of New Members

Three distinct parties existed in the Synod of Philadelphia when Gilbert Tennent issued his reform program. The Scotch-Irish group tended to dominate the organization because it had the most members. Since it placed great importance on adherence to the Westminster Confession and had opposed prying into a person's religious experiences, it was responsible for the ultimate failure of Tennent's first strategy.\(^{10}\) The New England party had several fewer members than the

\(^9\)Ibid., p. 115.
\(^{10}\)Trinterud, American Tradition, pp. 61-62.
Scotch-Irish. This was the group which had opposed subscription and had stressed the importance of personal piety; regarding revivalism it was the middle-of-the-road group at this point. The newly formed Log College party was insignificant in numbers compared to the other two. It composed less than one-seventh of the synod's membership; therefore, it had to enlist additional adherents before it could exert much of an influence.

While the two Tennent brothers were leading revivals in their own churches, Samuel Blair was completing his education at the Log College. Upon graduating, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Philadelphia on November 9, 1733 at Abingdon. The next year, at the age of twenty-two, Blair was ordained the pastor of the congregations of Shrewsbury and Middletown in the Presbytery of East Jersey. His allegiance with the Tennents provided the Log College party with a formidable ally, for he proved to be one of the most forceful and eloquent preachers of his day.

Charles, the youngest son of William, Sr., became the fifth member of the group. Little is known of his life, for he was far less influential than either of his brothers. After leaving the Log College, he became the pastor of Whiteclay Creek, in the state of Delaware. In

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12 Samuel Davies, upon returning from England, reported that he heard no preacher there who was superior to Samuel Blair. (Cited in Alexander, Log College, p. 61.)
that locality, he was separated from direct contact with other evangelical ministers, for those in his area were opposed to revivalism. Nevertheless, Charles was successful in promoting a revival in his own church, but his sphere of influence never extended beyond that congregation. One of its members described him as a "plain, good preacher, but not distinguished for great abilities."\(^{13}\)

The final member to become a part of the movement during its second stage was David Alexander. He was also probably a Log College graduate, although there is no concrete evidence to prove this. Even though the Presbytery of New Castle licensed him, his first charge was to supply the congregation at Pequa in Donegal Presbytery, being ordained the pastor of that church on October 18, 1738. Like Charles Tennent, he found himself to be an evangelical located in a conservative stronghold. However, Alexander Craighead, who had evangelical leanings, was also a member of the Donegal Presbytery. Together they challenged the subscription policy of that group and angered their colleagues by preaching in pastorless churches.\(^{14}\)

Although the Log College party doubled in size between 1733 and 1738, it still comprised only a small segment of the synod's membership. Nevertheless, during these five years the small group exerted an influence far exceeding its seemingly limited potential. In fact, almost

\(^{13}\) Related by Alexander, *Log College*, p. 61.

all the affairs of the synod revolved around the activities of these six men during the period. Their profound influence was due almost entirely to their innovative strategy enabling them to light the fires of evangelism in numerous churches.

The Innovation of Itinerant Preaching

The synod's indirect rejection of Gilbert Tennent's reform platform forced the movement to rethink its strategies. Although reformation of the church hierarchy still remained the central objective, the leaders of the movement came to view this as their long-range goal. As an intermediate step they decided to initiate the revival on a grass-roots level. Therefore, instead of aiming their messages at the organizational structure, they addressed them to the unconverted church members.

The Role of Prophet

While the first strategy called for a reformer, the second strategy called for a prophet. Gilbert Tennent shared this role with his brother William, Samuel Blair, and David Alexander. According to Dawson and Gettys:

As leader, the prophet feels a sense of possession. He has a feeling that he has special and separate knowledge concerning the causes of unrest and of what is necessary to remedy the situation. He speaks with confidence, an air of authority. He is a revealer of a message, of a new philosophy of life. He uses the sense of authority to make articulate the hopes and wishes of the people and to add weight and prestige to their direction.
There is a feeling that he is not himself; someone else speaks through him.\(^\text{15}\)

Actually the four men just mentioned operated as prophets and agitators at the same time. As prophets, they traveled to churches without ministers claiming to be God's messengers of salvation; many doors were open to them. However, their travels often led them to churches located in conservative presbyteries. The ministers of these presbyteries did not appreciate these intrusions and accused them of fostering divisions. This was exactly what they were doing, for their preaching was producing a church within a church. While being prophets of hope to the unconverted masses, they were also thorns in the flesh to the church hierarchy; thus they indirectly performed the function of agitation.

The itinerant preaching of these four evangelists produced the same results that the Tennents had received at New Brunswick and Freehold. Wherever they went they found social unrest. In such a context, their message of conversion was appealing, especially since these men spoke from the depths of their own experiences. Gilbert Tennent was especially well received because he had the reputation of fostering the first revivals. Although these pastors must have neglected the welfare of their own churches through their absences, they were able to disseminate their message to people they would have otherwise been unable to reach. Therefore, by the initiation of this new strategy the Log

\(^{15}\)Dawson and Gettys, *Introduction to Sociology*, p. 702.
College party was able to make itself felt far beyond what its limited resources appeared to allow.

**The Development of Esprit de Corps**

Agitation is the means by which interest is aroused and recruits are enlisted. While it provides initial impetus and some direction, it is not enough to organize or sustain a movement. Other mechanisms such as *esprit de corps* must enter in to give solidarity and persistence to the movement. Blumer defined *esprit de corps* as the "organizing of feelings on behalf of the movement. In itself, it is the sense which people have of belonging together and of being identified with one another in a common undertaking."\(^{16}\) The unifying factor which promoted a feeling of intimacy and closeness among the leaders of the movement, as well as among their followers, was the common conversion experience that they all claimed. This experience was always preceded by a dreadful conviction of sin. If the conviction was missing, then the genuineness of the experience was doubted. John Blair, in one of his sermons, described the accepted pattern:

> The first work of the Holy Spirit, in order to bring about this change, is to arouse the sinner out of this deep security. This he does, by the application of the divine law to the conscience. . . . Hence, the conscience is impressed with a sense of divine wrath. The poor sinner becomes deeply sensible of his misery, and exceedingly anxious about a way of escape. All his attempts to relieve himself, and mend his own heart, only discover more and more, his exceeding sinfulness and wretchedness. He now sees his absolute necessity of mercy, and

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the grace of God to change his heart; without which, he must be undone forever. This conviction of sin and misery is not, indeed, an ingredient in the change itself, of which my text speaks, but only discovers the necessity of it, and awakens the sinner to seek after it. Many are deeply convicted, who never become new creatures. But, such as the Holy Spirit has never awakened out of a deep sleep of carnal security, have, certainly never been the subjects of his gracious operations.

Strong emotional responses such as Gilbert Tennent witnessed at Staten Island usually accompanied convictions of this nature. This emotionalism served to verify that the experiences were valid, for people do not ordinarily doubt their own feelings; they cannot deny what they have felt themselves. As a result, those who had experienced the workings of God in their lives were assured that they were part of God's elect. They were now a distinct people, members of an elite group. They belonged together, for they were one in Jesus Christ. This sense of esprit de corps became so strong among the "born again" that it often shattered denominational barriers, especially after the arrival of Whitefield.

The Message of the Itinerant Preacher

The type of preaching which characterized the second stage of the
movement was similar to that of the first stage. The itinerant preachers adopted the expository method and the probing style of Gilbert Tennent. They sought to perform three functions through their sermons—(1) to shake church members from their indifference by warning them of their unconverted state, (2) to show them how they could inherit eternal life, and (3) to assure them that their salvation was now secure. By far the greatest emphasis was on the first function, for the most difficult obstacle these ministers had to overcome was the prevailing belief that church membership made a person a Christian, an attitude resulting from the Halfway Covenant. Through this device, the church had convinced the masses that their future destiny depended solely on their relationship to the institutionalized church. As long as the masses accepted this proposition, they were not open to the preaching of the evangelicals. Therefore, most of the movement's sermons sought to undermine the church members' basis of security, a not-too-difficult task since many of them were already dissatisfied with the church.

A brief survey of the titles of some of the sermons which the itinerants preached during this period reflects their approach. In 1735 Gilbert Tennent preached "The Danger of Forgetting God" at New York, and "The Necessity of Religious Violence" at Perth-Amboy; he also published an essay entitled "A Solemn Warning to a Secure World." In 1737 Samuel Blair preached "The Gospel Method of Salvation" in

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20 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, pp: 106-08.
three sermons at Middletown; William Tennent, Jr. preached "Exhortations to Walk in Christ" at New Brunswick. David Alexander never published any of his sermons so they, like most of the sermons which the Tennents and Blair preached during these years, were lost. However, Alexander's background at the Log College and his stand with the Tennents in the synod indicate he shared their outlook.

Especially strong in the published sermons were appeals to fear, progress, success, and freedom. Each message began with the exposition of a scriptural text, followed by an application to present conditions, and then concluded with a challenge to respond. Usually the way of salvation was presented in the middle of the sermon, and the fear appeals came at the end. The foundations for these appeals were almost always the great judgment day or eternal damnation in Hell. The organizational structure of the messages reveals that the evangelists were influenced by faculty psychology. First they addressed the understanding, then they appealed to the imagination, and finally they attempted to move the will. An example of a fear appeal aimed at moving the will is found in a sermon Gilbert Tennent preached while on one of his journeys in 1735. He used the New England revival under Edwards as a basis for this appeal: "Others are battering the heavens night and day, with tears, sighs, and groans, as I am informed, they are coming to Christ in flocks in New-England at this time; and will you forever lie still in your beds, of carnal security, over the dreadful steeps of damnation; like a sleepy man, on the top of a wall?"21

Another common thread which ran through most of these sermons was the motif of a pilgrimage. The traveller begins his journey when he is set free from the powers of sin. From then on he must walk through a world in which enemies such as "the world, the devil, and the flesh liey continually in ambush to destroy us." In one of his sermons William Tennent, Jr. combined this motif with an appeal to progress: "They that walk in Christ, are progressive in their religion; they go forward in their journey to Zion-ward . . . . But if by your religion you don't grow wiser and better, but are like the door on the hinges (which though it opens and shuts, but never moves out of the spot) going to duty and returning from it, without getting more conformity to God, you have great reason to believe you never knew Christ, and so never did walk."  

To help the believer in his pilgrimage, Christ had instituted a number of ordinances such as prayer, praise, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. The itinerant preachers made great use of the sacrament of communion to convince people they were not pilgrims. Preaching to his own congregation, Gilbert Tennent proclaimed: "O poor sinners! When you see others admitted to the Table of the Lord, and yourselves shut out, it may justly make you think with bleeding hearts, upon the great decision day, when the sheep shall be separated from the goats, and

\[22\text{Ibid., p. 42.}\]

\[23\text{William Tennent, Jr., Exhortations to Walk in Christ, . . . (Boston: Printed by J. Draper, 1739), pp. 114-15.}\]
blessed by Christ, while the rest are sent away with a curse."\textsuperscript{24}

Also recognizable in these sermons was a tendency for the evangelists to de-emphasize the Calvinistic doctrine of election. They did this in order to reconcile this doctrine with the value of success. As Schlesinger observed, "the original doctrine could hardly have withstood the stubborn optimism and self-reliance of the Americans."\textsuperscript{25}

One of the earliest appearances of this modification came in Gilbert Tennent's sermon on "The Necessity of Religious Violence." He said: "Again, the word seems to signify, that the kingdom of heaven is not confin'd to one people as of old, but lies open and exposed, without any national enclosure, that whoever will take persevering pains for it may possess it."\textsuperscript{26} Explicit in this statement is the ability of any person to accept the offer of salvation and to gain access to a kingdom which abounds with "all things, that are necessary, for honor, support, wealth, pleasure." The one who succeeds in his journey receives "thrones of righteousness, ensigns of majesty, palms of victory, mansions of beauty, diadems of glory."\textsuperscript{27}

Since the proponents of the movement never published any accounts which described the revivals at this point in time, the only way to measure the success of their itinerant preaching is by examining the responses of their opponents. While the evangelicals were winning

\textsuperscript{24}Gilbert Tennent, \textit{The Unsearchable Riches of Christ Considered} . . . (Boston: Printed by J. Draper, 1739), p. 59.

\textsuperscript{25}Schlesinger, \textit{Birth of the Nation}, p. 82.

\textsuperscript{26}Gilbert Tennent, \textit{Necessity of Religious Violence}, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 5.
converts through their emotional preaching, the conservatives were plotting counter measures which would limit the effectiveness of such endeavors. These measures resulted in several synod debates from 1733 to 1738. Therefore, the rhetorical scene changed from the local churches to the hierarchical structure of Presbyterianism.

The Reactions of the Establishment

While Gilbert Tennent was attempting to improve the quality of the Presbyterian ministry through his reform program, the conservative element of the synod was formulating its own improvement platform. As in 1720, the only issue which this element considered important was doctrinal soundness. Therefore, in 1734 the synod decided that an annual check should be made of each presbytery's records to guarantee that the Adopting Act was being properly enforced. This action was a violation of synod legality, for it was an infringement on the authority of the presbyteries. In light of all the synod policies which the conservatives later accused the revivalists of violating, it is worth noting that they were the first to disregard the proper channels.

As each year passed, the emphasis on subscription became stronger until 1736, when eleven members of the New England party and Samuel Blair and Gilbert Tennent were absent from the annual synod meeting. In all, twenty-one ministers with evangelical leanings missed the

29 Trinterud, American Tradition, p. 61.
session; the Scotch-Irish took advantage of their overwhelming majority to strengthen the Adopting Act. By alleviating some of the compromise articles of this act, they made themselves vulnerable in the future, for such a move pushed the New England and the Log College groups closer together.

Despite the stronger policy on subscription which resulted, the quality of ministers continued to decline, most acutely in those presbyteries where the subscription party was in control. Their discipline was more lax and their moral conditions were worse than in the presbyteries under the influence of the other two parties. In turn, this made the churches in these conservative presbyteries especially vulnerable to the preaching of the itinerants: Apparently Tennent and his associates were so effective with their new strategy by 1737 that an immediate reaction was necessary. Up to this time the synod had chosen simply to ignore the movement; it did not feel threatened by a few scattered revivals. Neither did it take the movement's reform program seriously. This inactivity would have been extremely effective in curbing the movement had it not been for the persistence of the senior Tennent's Log College and Gilbert Tennent. The Log College kept the movement from dying out by training additional ministers to infiltrate the synod with their evangelicalism. Upon entering the synod, these new recruits aligned themselves with Gilbert Tennent and supported his

30 Records, pp. 126 ff.
actions. The sheer forcefulness of Tennent's personality made this a group to be reckoned with; he was beginning to emerge as the strong man of the synod.

When Tennent and his colleagues began to travel throughout the Middle Colonies proclaiming their evangelistic message, the synod could no longer afford to disregard them. Many of the Scotch-Irish ministers were disturbed by their intense revivalistic spirit so unlike the Presbyterian ways of the Old World. Others were upset by the intrusions of these men into the bounds of their parishes. All were irritated by the ministerial standards of this group, which made conservative ministers look inferior. Therefore, no longer able to sit idly by and not willing to challenge the Tennents openly, the opponents of the movement sought to destroy it by undercover synod rulings. The first of these was aimed at itinerant preaching.

The Ban on Itinerant Preaching

At the 1737 annual synod meeting, the majority of the New England group was again absent. A definite pattern was developing in the attitude of this party: Since the New England ministers were the synod moderates, they apparently had resolved not to be caught in a conservative-evangelical crossfire. Therefore, whenever a confrontation between the two radical parties was likely, they were noticeably

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33 Ingram, "Erection of Presbytery of New Brunswick," 224.
34 Ibid., p. 226.
missing from those sessions. Had they been present perhaps they could have instituted compromise measures.

The absence of the New England group once more left the subscription party in complete control. The conservatives again took advantage of their superior numbers and passed a resolution dealing with itinerant preaching. It contained five requirements that had to be met before a minister could preach in a church outside the bounds of his own presbytery: (1) He had to obtain the permission of his own presbytery to preach to a congregation without a pastor. (2) He had to obtain the permission of the presbytery in which the church was located. (3) No presbytery could give such permission unless the minister under consideration had credentials or recommendations from his own parish. (4) Pastorless churches should not invite a minister to speak to them until they had received permission from their presbytery to do so. (5) No minister should invite other ministers to supply vacancies without the advice and agreement of his brethren.35

These requirements, if properly enforced, would control itinerant preaching by abolishing it. The transportation and communicative problems of that age made it virtually impossible for a traveling preacher to meet all of them. Since presbytery meetings were held only on an annual basis, plans would have been required for a minister to preach in a church not in his own presbytery at least a year in advance. At first glance it might appear that the only real purpose of itinerant preaching was to create dissension by promoting revivals in conservative

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areas. However, it must be remembered that many churches were pastorless and unable to obtain supply ministers from their own presbyteries. If a traveling preacher did not occasionally visit their locality, they had no services whatsoever. Furthermore, itinerant preaching was also necessary because church parishes often extended twenty miles in any direction.

However, the question of whether itinerant preaching should be banned was academic, for the Log College party had no intention of meeting the synod's regulations. Tennent and his associates continued to accept any invitations they received to preach in vacant churches; many churches depended on traveling preachers, and these men were becoming controversial and popular figures. Therefore, in 1738 the synod passed an additional rule stating that no minister could preach to a congregation of another presbytery after he was advised by any minister of such presbytery that his preaching might cause divisions and disorders, unless he first obtained liberty from the presbytery or synod to do so.36

Nevertheless, in spite of these limitations, the itinerants continued successfully to use this strategy throughout the Great Awakening. Their opponents constantly criticized them for neglecting their own churches and causing divisions. An anonymous letter appearing in the Boston Weekly Post-Boy addressed the following comments to Gilbert Tennent: "It seems to me, Sir a little unnatural, that you should leave the flock, to which you are more immediately related, from time

36 Ibid., p. 138.
to time destitute and unprovided for; while you are travelling from
place to place to preach the gospel to others, who are not so much
entitled to your care, and who are at the same time provided with min-
isters of their own, and as we trust true faithful gospel ministers." 37
Another anonymous publication was much harsher: "Mr. T. and his ad-
herents gallop up and down thro' the country to make general outcries
against their brethren, intrusions into, and rents and divisions in
their bounds, breaking down the hedge of discipline, and spreading
of errors under the fair but feigned name of reformation." 38 Tennent
never denied that he violated the synod's rules but argued that as an
itinerant preacher he was justified in preaching wherever he received
an invitation. He responded to those who accused him of sowing seeds
of divisions by contending that the only seed he sowed was the Word of
God. 39

The Requirement of an Educational Examination

The steps which the establishment took to prevent the Log College
alumni from preaching outside their own presbyteries proved ineffective;

37 The Boston Weekly Post-Boy, June 12, 1741. This criticism was
unfounded for all the evidence indicates that Tennent and his followers
never went uninvited to a church having a pastor. (See Trinterud,
American Tradition, p. 73.)

38 An Examination and Refutation of Mr. Gilbert Tennent's Remarks
upon the Protestation Presented to the Synod of Philadelphia, June 1,
1741: and the Said Protest Set in Its True Light, and Justified (Phil-
delphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1742), p. 5.

39 Gilbert Tennent, Remarks upon a Protestation Presented to the
Synod of Philadelphia, June 1, 1741 (Philadelphia: Printed by Benjamin
Franklin, 1741), pp. 21-25.
they continued to accept invitations from pastorless churches. This posed a serious problem for the church hierarchy: It could not allow the evangelists to disregard its rules; neither could it take severe action against them, for they had massed strong support both at the ground level and within the establishment itself. Their support within the synod came from two sources. The first was the Presbytery of New York, composed of Jonathan Dickinson and his followers, who were Puritan in background and evangelical in outlook. Being more conservative than the Log College party, they chose to work within the system, but they did side with Gilbert Tennent when he proposed reforms.\(^{40}\) The second source of their support came from their own close-knit group—the four Tennents, Samuel Blair, and David Alexander from the Log College, plus John Cross and Eleazar Wales, who often sided with them in synod voting. The combination of this group with the New England party prevented the conservatives of the synod from taking drastic measures to stop the itinerants.

Because of the strength of the itinerants within the synod, the action which the establishment took to limit their influence was more preventative than curative. It decided it would stop them from gaining additional support by instituting an entrance examination to make it difficult for future graduates of the Log College to become synod members. This action forced the Tennent group to react with a third strategy. Eventually this new strategy forced the conservatives to react, and this process of action-reaction continued until their

relationship with each other was completely severed.

The synod's attempt to prevent the Log College group from gaining additional followers grew out of a proposal presented by the Presbytery of Lewes in 1738. Because of poverty, many students were unable to go to Great Britain or New England for a university education; therefore, the presbytery suggested that the synod should appoint a committee to examine all students, with or without diplomas, to determine if they qualified for the ministry. If they passed this examination, they received a synodical testimonial which granted them the same privileges as a degree in the arts. The plan was adopted by a great majority and two committees were established. Gilbert Tennent was appointed to the committee for the area north of Philadelphia. 41

The original purpose of the proposal was to provide more ministers by licensing students without a formal degree. However, in 1739, Gilbert Tennent accused the synod of using this measure to prevent his father's school from training men for the ministry. No doubt he was correct: Just prior to this ruling, the Tennents had succeeded in obtaining a presbytery of their own so they could license those whom they viewed as educationally and piously qualified. 42 The new ruling robbed them of the authority to do this. Since the Log College was the only school in the Middle Colonies, it was the only one which the synod discriminated against with the proposal. Its graduates were still required to take the examination, while those from New England and Great

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41 *Records*, pp. 141-42.

Britain's schools were exempt.

The discriminatory nature of this educational examination becomes clear in light of the conditions of the Scotch universities and the Irish colleges. Because of the persecution of Presbyterians in both of these countries, the Presbyterian schools in them were weak. Trinterud, in describing the quality of education at the University of Edinburgh, wrote: "The six year theological course then worked out in actual practice for most students to six years of lectures in Latin by one professor on a single Latin textbook of secondary importance, Picket's Compend, during which total time the professor would cover only one half of the text."43 In 1745 Edinburgh graduated only three students and in the following year, none. The situation was no better in Ireland, where the government prevented the Presbyterians from having licensed universities. Therefore, the education of ministers in Ireland was through small private schools, just as in England where one or two professors conducted dissenter schools. Eventually ten of the bitterest opponents of the Presbyterian reform movement came from one of the private Irish colleges.44

William Tennent, Sr. was doing as thorough a job of training ministers at the Log College as was being done at any of the Old World schools. As a scholar and educator, he was without an equal in the synod.45 It is little wonder that his students surpassed their

43 Trinterud, American Tradition, pp. 64-65.
44 Ibid.
opponents religiously, morally, and even intellectually. Yet the synod insisted that the graduates of the Log College take the examination, while those of the other schools were excused. This policy was nothing more than an undercover attempt to close the Log College.

The Rhetorical Stance of the Movement

The leaders of the movement were pragmatic in their approach. If a strategy failed to work, they discarded or modified it. When they found one which did produce results, they stayed with it, even in the face of severe criticism. Because they had adopted such a philosophy, they placed themselves in a position in which it was difficult for them to maintain a favorable rhetorical stance with the synod conservatives.46 By their actions, especially itinerant preaching, they polarized an important segment of their audience. On the other hand, these same actions were instrumental in their success with a different portion of their receivers. Thus in winning the masses to their side, the leaders of the movement had alienated the church hierarchy. This alienation proved to be the central image change in the second stage

46 Wayne Booth, professor of English at the University of Chicago, first coined the term "rhetorical stance" to describe the proper balancing of the three elements of a rhetorical event--the speaker, the message, and the audience. James Golden listed three requirements for the creation of such a position: (1) the speaker adjusting himself to the audience and the audience to himself, (2) the speaker adjusting the message to the audience and occasion, and (3) the speaker adjusting the people to the ideas. (See Wayne Booth, "The Rhetorical Stance," College Composition and Communication, XIV (October, 1963), 134-45; also James Golden, "The Nature and Impact of Rhetorical Stance," Manuscript address presented at Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana, October 22, 1969.)
of development. Instead of viewing the movement as a harmless faction, the establishment members of the synod came to view it as a dangerous and threatening conspiracy which had to be stopped. Therefore, the establishment could no longer ignore the movement but was forced to oppose it.

The leaders of the movement took the revival to the masses because they could not create the proper rhetorical stance with the established church. Because of their unique backgrounds, they brought a new emphasis to the Synod of Philadelphia. This new emphasis immediately cast them into the role of reformers. Under Gilbert Tennent's guidance, they eagerly undertook this function with the goal of changing the system from within. Never did they intend to undermine its authority or bring about its ruin. They were pleased with many of its policies but felt it was neglecting some important matters. Therefore, their reforms were of a positive nature. To doctrinal soundness, they sought to add piety. To education, they sought to add a conversion experience. To intellectual assent, they sought to add an emotional response.

However, the Presbyterian Church was not ready for such reforms. Ministers who were intellectually and doctrinally qualified but who lacked conversion experiences and piety did not look favorably on this new emphasis. To do so would have meant to admit personal incompetence.

47 This is evident from the later attitude of the evangelicals. After they split the denomination, they realized the damage their rhetoric had done. From that point onward, they worked for reconciliation. Chapter six examines their attempts at reunion in detail.
This placed the movement in an awkward position. There was no way it could adjust them to its message, for they were completely hostile to it. Yet, these ministers found the members of the movement acceptable as people when they went along with the system.

This dilemma forced the leaders of the movement to make a choice. They found themselves trapped between two loyalties--their loyalty to Presbyterianism and their loyalty to revivalism. No longer could they walk on middle ground, for Presbyterianism and revivalism were rapidly becoming incompatible. Their decision to emphasize revivalism accelerated this incompatibility, altered the directions of their own lives, and ultimately influenced the direction the Presbyterian Church would take for the next two centuries.

Actually, the decision was a simple one for them to make. Their entire background--their conversions, their educations, and their theology told them that revivalism was more important than Presbyterianism. To decide otherwise would have meant to deny their own experiences.

Therefore, they found themselves no longer reformers working within the establishment, but rather prophets attempting to work around it. This came about because they could not create the proper rhetorical stance with their associates. It is necessary to stress again, however, that the Log College graduates had two groups of associates in the synod--the Scotch-Irish party and the New England party. The first of these contained the ministers who were constantly polarized against them, viewing them as young radicals. The second group of ministers had grounds for identifying with the movement but at this point in the evolutionary process, it chose to stand aloof from the whole conflict.
The reasons the leaders of the movement failed to create a favorable rhetorical stance with their fellow synod members are also the reasons they succeeded in their second endeavor. This time they were dealing directly with the masses instead of with the church hierarchy. Their ideas did not seem so radical to laymen, for they were desirous of change. Like the leaders of the movement, the masses were discontented with the present state of the church. Like them, they were individualistic in outlook and not completely committed to a specific church or a specific creed. Like them, they valued salvation and sought to obtain it.

No compromise was necessary in this relationship. The masses were searching, and the itinerants had an answer embodied in their own persons. The masses were rebels and the movement asked them to rebel. They were individualistic and the movement asked them to act as individuals. They were achievers and the movement asked them to achieve. And when the masses listened to a leader of the movement, they realized they were listening to a rebel, an individual, an achiever who was asking them to do only what he had already done with great success. Therefore, the leaders of the movement adjusted themselves to the masses by personifying the values of their audience, as Hoffer would later describe:

The leader personifies the certitude of the creed and the defiance and grandeur of power. He

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48 See pages 85-88 of this dissertation for documentation of the individualistic, rebellious and optimistic nature of the masses.
articulates and justifies the resentment damned up in the souls of the frustrated. He kindles the vision of a breathtaking future so as to justify the sacrifice of a transitory present. He stages the world of make-believe so indispensable for the realization of self-sacrifice and united action. He evokes the enthusiasm of communion—the sense of liberation from a petty and meaningless individual existence.49

Besides adjusting themselves, the itinerants also adjusted their message. They still preached Calvinistic doctrine, but they reinterpreted it in terms of their conception of their audience, two prominent characteristics of whom contributed to the alteration of their preaching approaches. One of these was religious indifference. The revivalists realized that before they could win a large segment of the masses to their cause, they first had to arouse them from their apathy. They attempted to do this by terrifyng them with the anger of a holy God ready to damn them to Hell. The Rev. William Shurtleff, a supporter of the revival, saw such practice in Gilbert Tennent:

As to Mr. Tennent's preaching--It was frequently both terrible and searching. It was often for matter justly terrible, as he according to the inspired oracles exhibited the dreadful holiness, justice, law, threatenings, truth, powers, majesty of God; and his anger with rebellious, impenitent, unbelieving, and christless sinners; the awful danger they were every moment in of being struck down to Hell, and being damned for ever; with the amazing miseries of that place of torment.50

Shurtleff went on to say, however, that this type of preaching had little effect on Tennent's hearers, for they projected this fate to

49Hoffer, True Believer, p. 111.
others rather than viewing it as belonging to themselves. But what they could not escape, according to Shurtleff, was his way of "laying open their many vain and secret shifts and refuges, counterfeit resemblances of grace, delusive and damning hopes, their utter impotence, and impending danger of destruction: whereby they found all their hopes and refuges of lies to fail them, and themselves exposed to eternal ruin, unable to help themselves, and in a lost condition." The leaders of the movement exposed their hearers to the hypocrisy which the establishment had constructed for church members. They voiced the frustrations and dissonance which the masses felt but would not admit. They forced them to see their own insincerity and lack of conviction. When they finished, their listeners stood spiritually naked, no longer possessing any false coverings. The leaders did not create the frustration or the dissonance. They were already there. Forced to view themselves as they believed they now appeared in the sight of a holy God, they were ready for a change, indifference gone. They earnestly sought deliverance from their own sinfulness. Thomas Prince wrote: "And though some could not bear the representation, and avoided his [Tennent's] preaching, yet the arrows of conviction, by his ministry, seemed so deeply to pierce the hearts of others, and even some of the most stubborn sinners, as to make them fall down at the feet of Christ, and yield a lowly submission to him."

51 Ibid., p. 390.
52 Ibid.
53 Prince, Christian History, p. 386.
After shaking the indifferent from their apathy, the evangelists addressed this group in the same way they addressed the dissatisfied—they concentrated on their individualism. Recognizing that both groups had this outlook in secular matters, they adjusted their message to appeal to it. By emphasizing the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, they gave the masses an expanded role in religious affairs. This doctrine allowed the common man direct access to God, with no need of a clergyman to serve as an intercessor. On the basis of the priesthood of believers, they challenged their listeners to assert their individualism by establishing a personal relationship with God. They asked them to rebel against a worthless system that offered cheap entrance and no hope and to seek instead a direct encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. They continually pleaded with them and endeavored to persuade them that this was what they needed. Instead of commanding them to act, they requested only that they do what their minds and their hearts told them was right: "Do not your own consciences... call you and urge you to turn, and tell you that it is now high time.... Does not your reason call you to turn from sin to Jehovah, by shewing you the necessity and equity of the change."  

In making pleas of this nature, the leaders were also adjusting

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54 Campbell, Treatise on Conversion, pp. 202-205.
55 Samuel Finley, Christ Triumphing and Satan Raging... (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1741), pp. 34-43.
56 Gilbert Tennent, "An Expostulatory Mournful Address to the Unconverted, with Some Directions to the Regenerate," Added as an Appendix to John Tennent's The Nature of Regeneration Opened..., pp. 70-71.
their audience to their message. They addressed their hearers not only as the sinners they then were, but also as the saints they were capable of becoming. They offered them the attractive alternative of conversion as the means of personally experiencing the presence of God.  

This provided them with a link between their religious faith and their daily lives. It enabled them to shed their fear of judgment and to replace this fear with an optimism and hope which paralleled their secular outlook. It gave them the opportunity to rebel without guilt since they were part of a holy cause. The leaders left the choice in their receivers' hands, for they trusted them to make the proper response. They showed them why they needed conversion and they showed them what conversion could make them; then they called for individual decision. In the final analysis, it became a personal matter between them and God.

By adjusting themselves, their message, and their audience in these ways, the itinerants were able to create the proper rhetorical stance with the masses. They identified with their listeners and voiced their discontent. They aroused them from their religious indifference and challenged them to exercise their individualism. They offered them what they thought was lost forever, the personal faith of their grandfathers, the opportunity to return to the golden age of religion. What they failed to do within the establishment, they

succeeded in doing without it. Thus, by 1738, the movement had made notable advances in winning support from the ranks of the frustrated. It would continue to do so for years to come. However, by this time it had also made strong enemies in high places. The conservatives in the synod had become alarmed over the rapid spread of revivalism. In their haste to limit the effectiveness of the evangelicals through a ban on itinerant preaching and the establishment of an educational restriction, they probably overreacted to the situation and thereby inadvertently aided the evangelicals.

Thus, the orthodox Presbyterian ministers made the major image change during the second phase of the movement. As that period opened, the conservatives had viewed their colleagues as non-threatening, over-zealous novices. However, by 1738, they had come to perceive the evangelicals as dangerous young reactionaries who had to be stopped. This image change ushered the movement into its third phase, for the steps which the conservatives took to curb the revivals resulted in the evangelicals' soon after banning together for self-protection. As the third phase opened, the revivalists formally organized into a rival group as a reaction against their critics. This polarization of outlooks meant that troublesome days lay ahead for the Presbyterian Church.
CHAPTER V

THE RETALIATION OF THE MOVEMENT:

A FORM OF GODLINESS

The proposals which the Synod of Philadelphia passed in 1737 and 1738 to curb the activities of the Log College party revealed that the movement was passing into its third phase. Characteristic of this period is a clash between the leaders of the movement and those who hold the power positions in the establishment. When this crisis occurs, it is a sign that the movement has decided upon a definite program of action. It has developed its role structure and a body of traditions. It has also developed a set of norms which are formally stated in a creed and formally expressed in ritual. The leaders during this stage are statesmen who voice the convictions of the movement, state its ideology, and propose measures which will result in the achievement of its goal.

This chapter will analyze the historical development of the movement during its stage of formal organization, focusing especially on the rhetorical transactions of this phase. These transactions were numerous, for both the movement and the establishment were attempting to win the general public to the competing causes.

1 Dawson and Gettys, Introduction to Sociology, p. 706.
The Presbytery of New Brunswick

The multiplication of Presbyterian churches between 1717 and 1738 made it necessary for the Synod of Philadelphia to erect new presbyteries. The synod began in 1717 with four—Philadelphia, New Castle, Long Island, and Snow Hill. The last of these started with a bare quorum and shortly disbanded. However, in 1732 Donegal Presbytery emerged from New Castle, in 1733 East Jersey emerged from Philadelphia, and in 1735 Lewes emerged from New Castle. These additions gave the synod six presbyteries in 1738.  

At the synod meeting in 1738 both the conservatives and evangelicals were active. While the conservatives were bolstering their defenses against itinerant preaching and were passing an educational restriction, the evangelicals were seeking a realignment of the existing presbyteries. Since the Presbytery of Long Island was small, the synod voted on May 25 to combine it with the Presbytery of East Jersey under the name of the Presbytery of New York. However, the merger of these two presbyteries left the Presbytery of New York scattered over a vast area. The Presbytery of Philadelphia faced the same problem, for most of the Scotch-Irish immigrants settled in Pennsylvania and greatly enhanced the size of this presbytery. Therefore, on the following day the synod decided to create a new presbytery from the northeastern part of the Presbytery of Philadelphia and the southwestern part of the Presbytery of New York. The synod called this new presbytery New

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2Ingram, "Erection of the Presbytery of New Brunswick," 218.
Brunswick. It became a haven for the evangelicals, perhaps because the conservatives hoped to isolate their opponents in this manner.

The realignment of the presbyteries left each of the three factions in the synod with their own strongholds. The conservatives controlled the presbyteries of Donegal, New Castle, Lewes, and Philadelphia; the moderate evangelicals of New England controlled the Presbytery of New York; and the radical evangelicals controlled the Presbytery of New Brunswick. From 1738 to the time the denomination split, the four conservative presbyteries stood on one extreme, the Presbytery of New Brunswick on the other extreme, and the Presbytery of New York in the middle. The synod meetings during this period were filled with constant conflicts. The Presbytery of New Brunswick, which now served as the focal point of the movement, precipitated the first conflict when it licensed John Rowland as a reaction against the synod's requirement of an educational examination.

Challenging the Authority of the Establishment

The Presbytery of New Brunswick met for the first time at that location on August 5, 1738. It was composed of five ministers and five elders. The ministers were John Cross from Basking-Ridge, Samuel Blair from Shewsbury, William Tennent, Jr. from Freehold, Eleazer Wales from Kingston, and Gilbert Tennent from New Brunswick. Blair and the two Tennents were graduates of the Log College, while Cross and Wales were in sympathy with the evangelical fervor of the school. After the

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3Records, pp. 136-38.
group chose Cross as moderator and Blair as clerk, it considered the case of John Rowland, a recent graduate of the Log College who applied to the presbytery for a license to preach. This led to a discussion of the synod's right to examine a candidate. The group decided that the synod had transcended its authority by infringing on the duties of the presbyteries. Gilbert Tennent was especially bitter, for he could brook no attacks on his father or the Log College. Therefore, instead of seeking a compromise with the synod, the presbytery licensed Rowland on September 7, 1738, without an educational examination. This decision marked the beginning of the movement's third strategy. It was now openly challenging the authority of the establishment.

Although Gilbert Tennent and his colleagues did not argue over the legality of the educational restriction in 1738, they did so the following year. At the synod meeting of 1739, the Presbytery of New Brunswick presented a list of objections against the synod's policy. As a result of this complaint, the synod modified its previous position to say that any candidate for the ministry who did not have a diploma from a European or New England university would be examined by the entire synod. This action had the appearance of removing discrimination against the Log College graduates. However, the synod's modification did not appease Gilbert Tennent. Two days later he issued a protest in behalf of himself, his father, his two brothers, and


5 Records, p. 146.
Eleazer Wales (John Cross was absent from the meeting). Tennent argued that the synod had no power to infringe upon the rights of the presbyteries, thereby reopening an old Presbyterian controversy over where the actual power in the denomination lay. 6 The synod simply ignored his protest, even though he was correct in his criticism. 7 What they could not ignore, however, was the licensing of Rowland. While Tennent failed in his attempt to register a verbal protest, he and his followers succeeded in issuing that protest through an event-message, for they purposely licensed Rowland to communicate to the synod their defiance of its authority.

The day following Tennent's verbal protest, the synod reviewed the records of the Presbytery of New Brunswick and discovered that it had licensed Rowland without the educational examination. It retaliated against this action by refusing to recognize Rowland as a member, forbidding any church to accept him as its pastor, and censuring the presbytery for its defiance of a synod rule. 8 The Presbytery of Philadelphia then called to the synod's attention the fact that Rowland had been preaching in its boundaries at Hopewell and Maidenhead. The synod severely rebuked these congregations for allowing Rowland to preach there without the synod's consent. 9

6 Ibid., pp. 146-47.

7 Presbyterian historians such as Briggs, Webster, Trinterud, and Gillet all agreed that the licensing and ordination of ministers were the rights of the presbyteries instead of the synod.

8 Records, pp. 147-48.

9 Ibid.
The synod revealed by its response that it would tolerate no defiance of its assumed authority. It was forcing Tennent and his colleagues out of their roles as reformers by making them powerless to change the system from within. The church hierarchy was little different than it was before they had begun their work. Their only success had come by working around the establishment, taking their case directly to the people. They would soon return to that audience, this time in greater numbers. Since the synod did not punish them for defying it, perhaps out of fear of further reprimands from Gilbert Tennent, they continued to license ministers without the consent of the synod. They had numerous applicants, for the Log College was functioning at full capacity and the movement was becoming popular.

The Gathering of the Likeminded

By 1739 the Presbytery of New Brunswick was fully organized. It was unique among the other presbyteries in several ways—(1) it earnestly supported the revivals; (2) students of the Log College made up most of its membership, and it looked to the college as the solution to the problem of a lack of ministers; (3) it believed that itinerant preachers should be free to travel anywhere preaching the gospel. The synod, conversely, disagreed with this presbytery on each of these points. It opposed the revivals, looked down on the Log College as having inadequate facilities, and opposed preaching in vacant churches. In fact, at its 1739 meeting the synod threatened to take action against itinerant preachers if the presbyteries did not discipline their
own ministers for violating this rule. Nevertheless, the Presbytery of New Brunswick reaffirmed its position by continuing to license its ministers without submitting them for synod approval and by then sending them out as itinerants.

The second candidate whom the new presbytery licensed was James McCrea. After completing his training at the Log College, McCrea applied for membership in the Presbytery of New Brunswick on April 4, 1739. The presbytery accepted him and assigned him to supply five churches—Allentown, Cranbury, Pepack, Lebanon, and Muskinicunk. In order to fulfill this assignment, McCrea traveled two hundred miles a week on horseback. Two years later the presbytery ordained him to the ministry in general because there were so many vacant churches. He served in the capacity of an itinerant for three more years until his health failed. Finally, in 1745, the presbytery relieved him of his traveling duties and made him pastor of the church at Bedminster. He served in this capacity until 1766 when his ill health forced him to retire. He died three years later.

Hamilton Bell, another possible graduate of the Log College, applied to the Presbytery of Philadelphia, where he was licensed on September 30, 1740. He supplied the Nottingham church in Donegal Presbytery until November 11, 1742, when he was ordained the pastor of


the Donegal church. He served in that capacity for only one year, for the presbytery suspended him the following fall for immorality. Bell responded by publishing a renunciation of the Presbytery of Donegal in the newspapers and appealing to the synod to intervene. In 1745 the synod approved his suspension; Bell apparently moved to Somerset County, Maryland and became an Episcopalian. As far as is known, he never made any positive contributions to the Presbyterian movement.

The third candidate licensed by the Presbytery of New Brunswick was William Robinson, another graduate of the Log College. After licensing him on May 27, 1740, the presbytery assigned him to supply six churches. He never ministered to a church of his own, like McCrea being ordained to the ministry in general. He traveled in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina preaching the evangelical message. His most notable accomplishment was the starting of Presbyterian work in Hanover County, Virginia. Robinson's ministry ended in 1746, only six years after it had begun. The toils of itinerant preaching and exposure to the weather robbed him of a long life. Nevertheless, he made a lasting contribution to the

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12 Trinterud claimed that Bell's allegiance with the conservatives of Donegal indicates that he either never attended the Log College or that he turned against the Tennents. Either of these explanations would also reveal why Bell never had any trouble passing the educational examination. (See Trinterud, American Tradition, p. 333.)

movement during his brief time of service.  

One week after the presbytery licensed Robinson, Samuel Finley applied for candidacy, to receive his license on August 5, 1740 and to be sent to the western part of New Jersey to supply Deerfield, Greenwich, and Cape May. Finley also preached for six months to the congregation at Philadelphia that later called Gilbert Tennent to be its pastor. On October 13, 1742, the presbytery ordained Finley as an evangelist; he continued to function as an itinerant. Shortly after his ordination he traveled to Connecticut, was arrested as a vagrant, and was expelled from that colony. After visiting pastorless churches for two more years, Finley became the minister at Nottingham, Maryland, in June, 1744. He remained in this place for seventeen years and built a school after the pattern of the Log College. In 1761 he was elected president of the College of New Jersey. Finley's contributions to the movement were numerous, and his name will appear repeatedly in later pages of this dissertation.

In addition to the licensing of four graduates of the Log College, the Presbytery of New Brunswick also received James Campbell from the Presbytery of Philadelphia on June 3, 1740. It assigned him to continue to supply Newtown as he had done before and also to begin to


\footnote{Alexander and Carnahan, "Notes of Distinguished Graduates," p. 7.}
supply Forks of Delaware. Thus, during the first three years of its existence the Presbytery of New Brunswick gained five new members; however, it also lost one, Samuel Blair, who moved from Shewsbury to Faggs Manor in the Presbytery of New Castle. He remained, however, an active supporter of the movement after his change in pastorates.

This historical résumé includes the important developments in the Presbytery of New Brunswick up to the time of its expulsion by the synod in 1741. When this event occurred, the presbytery had eight ministers active in fifty different locations and contained most of the prominent leaders of the movement. However, Samuel Blair and Charles Tennent were also in the Presbytery of New Castle, David Alexander and Alexander Craighead were in the Presbytery of Donegal, and William Tennent, Sr. was in the Presbytery of Philadelphia. These thirteen men gave the movement a much broader base of support than it had enjoyed when it entered its third phase. However, the eviction of the movement from the synod marks only the halfway point of the stage of formal organization; other likeminded also would join during this period.

After its expulsion, the Presbytery of New Brunswick met immediately to map out the future. Because those members of the synod who were sympathetic with the movement withdrew from the establishment and wanted to join the New Brunswick group, the presbytery divided into two parts. The new presbytery was called Londonderry, and it was

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composed of six ministers who had left the synod—Samuel Blair, Alexander Craighead, David Alexander, Charles Tennent, George Gillespie, and Alexander Hutchinson. Gillespie and Hutchinson had been members of the Presbytery of New Castle, along with Blair and Charles Tennent. William Tennent, Sr. and Richard Treat also left the Presbytery of Philadelphia and joined the Presbytery of New Brunswick, bringing the membership of that presbytery to ten.\footnote{Minutes of Presbytery of New Brunswick," pp. 21-25.}

The movement also gained new adherents from outside the synod. During 1741 and 1742 five new candidates applied for licenses—Charles McKnight, Samuel Sackett, William Dean, Charles Beatty and David Young. Three of these, McKnight, Dean, and Beatty, were Log College graduates. The presbytery licensed McKnight in 1741 and sent him to supply Staten Island, Basking-Ridge, and sometimes Amboy. In 1744 he was ordained as pastor at Cranbury and Allentown, but he also supplied Middletown Point and Shrewsbury.\footnote{George H. Ingram, "Biographies of the Alumni of the Log College: Charles McKnight," \textit{Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society}, XIII (December, 1928), 175-84.} Sackett, Dean, Beatty, and Young were sent out as supplies to different localities each week. The presbytery had so many applications for ministers after the split that it could not provide even regular supplies.\footnote{Minutes of the Presbytery of New Brunswick," pp. 25-44.} Dean served as an itinerant for three years until he was ordained the pastor at Forks of Brandywine in May of 1745.\footnote{Ingram, "Biographies: Roan-Lawrence," 308-12.} Beatty traveled for only one year, for
in 1743 the presbytery ordained him as an assistant to the aging William Tennent, Sr. at Neshaminy.\textsuperscript{21}

In 1744 John Roan graduated from the Log College and was licensed by the evangelical Presbytery of New Castle, the new name of London-derry. The presbytery assigned him to follow up Robinson's work in Virginia but Roan lacked his predecessor's tact and met with opposition from the Church of England clergy. After leaving Virginia, Roan became active within the boundaries of the Presbytery of Donegal, serving evangelical churches at Paxton, Derry, and Mount Joy which had separated from the conservative churches in the presbytery.\textsuperscript{22}

The final member of the clergy to become a part of the movement during its organizational stage was Daniel Lawrence. The Presbytery of New Brunswick licensed him on May 28, 1745, and assigned him to supply Hopewell and Maidenhead, Pennington, Lawrenceville, Forks of Delaware, Greenwich, and Bethlehem. On May 19, 1747, Lawrence was ordained pastor at Forks of Delaware, where he ministered to two congregations. Like many of the other itinerants, Lawrence's health was affected by his travels. On several occasions the presbytery sent him to Cape May to recuperate. In 1754 he became the pastor of the Cape May church and remained there until his death in 1766.\textsuperscript{23}

During the years 1738 to 1745 the movement enlisted twenty new members. With these additions, it was able to disseminate its message

\textsuperscript{22}Ingram, "Biographies: Roan-Lawrence," 297-305.
\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}, 315-19.
to localities previously unreached. The Presbytery of New Brunswick, alone, encompassed an area from Crosswicks on the South, Staten Island on the North, the Atlantic Ocean on the East, and the Pocono Mountains on the West. Today this same area consists of eight different presbyteries. However, during this period the movement also lost one of its most capable preachers. In 1741 the Presbytery of New Brunswick suspended John Cross for an act of fornication he had committed six years earlier. He was never reinstated.

### The Development of Group Solidarity

The movement altered its appearance during its stage of formal organization. Instead of being a loosely knit group of individuals who shared common beliefs, it became an organization with a definite structure, purpose, and program. The change began when the movement was able to gain control of its own presbytery. That development provided it with a base of operations. As the presbytery recruited new members, it began to develop all the characteristics of an in-group. Roles, goals, and norms emerged, group morale came into existence, and the movement's ideology completed its evolution. By the end of its third stage, the movement reflected all the characteristics of a formal organization.

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The Emergence of Roles, Goals, and Norms

All the ministers associated with the movement served as leaders when they addressed the masses, performing the functions of agitators and prophets. However, when they met among themselves one man stood out above the rest. In addition to serving as an agitator and prophet, he also operated in the roles first of reformer and then later of statesman. That man, Gilbert Tennent, was the leader of the leaders. He was the policy maker of the movement and its chief advocate and defender. Charles Hodge wrote of him: "Mr. Tennent was so completely the soul of the party to which he belonged, that without him it never would have existed. He is often therefore, addressed as the party itself, and his writings and declarations are referred to as speaking the language of his associates."\(^{26}\)

Next in importance to Gilbert Tennent were Samuel Blair and Samuel Finley, both of whom served as promoters. They supported Tennent's policies and stood with him in the heat of synod conflicts. Like him, they defended the movement and leveled attacks of their own against its enemies. The three of them together were a formidable team.

The third role in the movement was that of disseminator. All of the ministers performed in this capacity at one time or another, but five of them especially excelled in this endeavor. These men were John Rowland, James McCrea, William Robinson, Charles McKnight, and Charles Beatty. Each of them spent a part of his ministry without any

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pastorate of his own. Instead each made a name for himself by traveling hundreds of miles weekly, making converts to the movement in numerous localities. Without them the movement would not have been the threat to the establishment that it was.

The other ministerial members of the movement functioned as adherents, making their most valuable contributions by fostering revivals in their own areas and by voting with Tennent, Blair and Finley in synod confrontations. The most prominent of these were Gilbert's father and two brothers, Eleazer Wales, John Blair, David Alexander, William Dean, John Roan, and Richard Treat. They added the numbers that the movement needed in order to make the synod pay attention to its demands.

Four of the ministers already mentioned played an additional role, for they also functioned as educators. Foremost of these was William Tennent, Sr., whose service in training students at the Log College cannot be over-emphasized. Without him there would have been no movement. No doubt this role took most of his time and prevented him from being more active in other segments of the movement. Samuel Blair and Samuel Finley also served as educators on a more limited level. Blair founded an academy at Faggs Manor in 1739, and Finley established one at Nottingham in 1744. While Finley's graduates were late on the scene, Blair did educate three important contributors--Samuel Davies, Robert Smith, and John Rodgers. When Blair died, his brother John continued the operation of his school.27

Although the leaders of the movement performed different roles, they all worked to achieve the same goals. Beginning with Gilbert Tennent's ministry at New Brunswick, the primary goal of the movement was always the conversion of the masses. At first Tennent thought he could achieve this goal by reforming the Presbyterian Church. When he failed in this endeavor, the movement made reformation outside the establishment its super-ordinate goal and focused on reaching as many people as possible with its limited resources. As the movement progressed, it developed intermediate goals such as recruiting additional ministers, obtaining its own presbytery, and winning the support of the New England party. On one occasion the Presbytery of New Brunswick even vainly attempted to recruit Congregational ministers by writing to Jonathan Edwards for aid. However, because the New England churches were experiencing the same lack of candidates as were the Presbyterian churches, Edwards could provide no help. 28

The criterial norm of the movement has already been mentioned—the necessity of a conversion experience. Every minister and every one of his followers testified to the fact that God had performed a special work of grace in his heart. Each of them experienced the same terrible convictions, the same surrender of his life, and the same assurance of salvation. Resulting from this norm was the myth that they were a peculiar people set apart by God and chosen to win others to a saving faith. In addition, such norms evolved as itinerant

preaching, evangelism in the home, emotional preaching, an expository style, the defying of synod orders, and the justification of irregularities by appealing to the right of conscience. Each of these norms served to set the members of the movement apart from outsiders and to give them a common identity among themselves.

The Development of Morale

As a movement passes through its third phase, its members have to develop a sense of group morale if it is to survive. The esprit de corps which gave life, enthusiasm, and vigor to the movement in earlier days is not enough to sustain it in the face of adversity. When the opponents of the movement begin their attacks, a "group will" or an "enduring collective purpose" is necessary to keep the movement from collapsing. This purpose gives persistence and determination to the movement and enables it to unite its members against its foes. It stems from a commitment to a set of convictions which are of three kinds: (1) a conviction that the purpose of the movement will improve the quality of life, (2) a conviction that the movement must ultimately succeed, and (3) a conviction that the movement possesses a sacred mission.  

These convictions belonged both to the ministers who led the movement and also to the common people who joined it. When it came under attack, the leaders spoke of it as a necessary agent for the regeneration of America; they placed it on a level above temporal values.

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Blumer, "Collective Behavior," 208-09.
and contended that it was divinely favored. Thus since God was on the side of the movement, failure was impossible. The "gates of Hell could not even prevail against it." Instead, the success of the movement would bring an eradication of evil and injustice and would revitalize the errand into the wilderness. 30

As stories spread about the successes of the itinerant preachers, they began to emerge as heroes in the eyes of the masses. When they were expelled from a colony for preaching the gospel, they became martyrs for the cause. And when the whole clerical movement left the Synod of Philadelphia, the masses rallied to its side, eager to support the underdog in its battle against oppression. The literature of the movement was extremely effective in creating the myth that its opponents were at fault. Gilbert Tennent's *Danger of An Unconverted Ministry* and Samuel Finley's *Christ Triumphant and Satan Raging* served as vilifying agents. They characterized the leaders of the movement as God's representatives and its opponents as the enemies of God. Through such devices the movement was able to justify its actions to itself and to the masses.

The Development of an Ideology

As the revivalistic movement in the Presbyterian Church was passing through its first two stages, it was developing an ideology

30 The documentation for this point and for the rest of the material appearing in this section of the dissertation will come later in this chapter when the historical and rhetorical aspects of the period are specifically analyzed.
different from that of the mainstream of the denomination. Fully developed when the movement was in its third stage, the ideology served as a rallying point when the movement faced opposition from outside groups. It consisted of five features: (1) a statement of the purpose and premises of the movement, (2) a body of criticism of the existing structure, (3) a body of defense doctrine, (4) a body of belief dealing with policies and tactics, and (5) the myths of the movement. This ideology also had a twofold character. It had a scholarly side of elaborate treatises of an abstract and highly logical character which the intellectuals of the movement composed as a response to the criticism of outside intellectuals. However, it also had a popular side which sought to appeal to the uneducated and to the masses. Emotional symbols, "god" and "devil" terms, stereotyping, and folk arguments characterized this popular side. 31

The purpose of the movement clearly emerged during its third stage. With the arising of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, everyone knew, even the enemies of the movement, that its aim was to create a church within a church. The movement was experiencing great success in this endeavor, for each new year brought additional evangelical ministers into the movement, who in turn instigated revivals in new localities. However, the leaders of the movement still intended reformation of the entire denomination: This was their long-range goal.

31 Richard Weaver, not Blumer, used the words "god" and "devil" terms. Later in this chapter the nature of these terms will be described in detail. The rest of the terms are Blumer's. (See Blumer, "Collective Behavior," 210.)
and they never departed from it, not even after they split the denomination. The achievement of this goal hinged on whether the denomination would ever accept the premises of the movement.

The second chapter of this dissertation revealed that the ideological beginnings of the movement were in harmony with the doctrines of the established church. The time has now come to demonstrate how the movement developed unique premises as it passed through its various stages. These premises set the movement apart from the institutionalized church and formed the basis of controversy between the two parties; each of the premises stemmed from and centered upon the movement's emphasis on the doctrine of conversion. After Gilbert Tennent met Frelinghuysen and recovered from his illness, he came to the conclusion that a majority of Presbyterian church members were unconverted. This became the first premise of the movement, which then set out to change this condition. However, when it attempted to work through denominational channels it met with failure, for the establishment was not willing to surrender to a small faction of dissidents. Therefore, the movement went directly to the people through the use of itinerant preaching, bringing many of them to a conversion experience. This alarmed the denomination and it made regulations to prevent itinerant preaching. As a result, the movement developed its second premise—not only that a majority of church members but also a great number of Presbyterian ministers were unconverted. Therefore, the movement endeavored to make conversion a prerequisite for the ministry; the established church wanted nothing to do with such a restriction, and much controversy arose over the movement's insistence on it.
The third premise of the movement, which greatly troubled the denomination, involved the definition of what constituted a conversion experience. The movement contended there were three major steps—conviction of sin, surrender to Christ, and assurance of salvation. The denomination rejected both conviction and assurance. It argued that the emphasis of the movement on the terrors of the law and the wrath of God only frightened people instead of producing real conviction. It also insisted that it was impossible for every Christian to be sure he was saved. These differences led the leaders of the denomination and the leaders of the movement to varying outlooks on the nature of man. The conservatives held that all men fell into two groups, either the godly and moral or the unchurched and degenerate. If a man lived a good life and held to the doctrines of the church, he was considered a Christian. If he failed to attend church and lived in immorality then he was not a child of God. The evangelicals, on the other hand, viewed men as falling into four groups: (1) those who were genuinely converted and had assurance, (2) those who were earnestly seeking conversion, (3) a great group of spiritually apathetic who were not awakened to their need, and (4) rebellious, headstrong sinners who were opposed to godliness. These groupings give evidence that the evangelicals were willing to call far fewer people Christians than were the conservatives.

33 Trinterud, American Tradition, p. 60.
These three premises resulted in the movement's altering the Calvinistic system, or at least what the Presbyterian denomination had thought to be pure Calvinism. Presbyterianism, until the Great Awakening, had taught that if ministers preached sound doctrine and the moral law, then God himself would handle regeneration. All that church members had to do was to be faithful, live good lives, and wait for God to give them a new principle. If they were one of the elect, there was no need for them to worry. If they were not, there was nothing they could do about it anyway. This rationalistic emphasis led the orthodox Presbyterians to elevate theology above life and to give precedence to logic over experience. In the long run it produced decadence, for while legalism prevailed, the laws of the denomination were not strictly enforced.\(^34\)

The Log College party modified this approach by elevating experience above theology. The Tennents and their associates asserted that a man could know correct theology without becoming a Christian. Unless he had undergone conviction and now had assurance, he was not born again. Therefore, neither ministers nor church members could sit back and leave regeneration in the hands of God, for God had not only ordained the end but also the means of attaining that end. Through such means as preaching, the sacraments, Bible-reading, prayer, and church discipline, the Holy Spirit led a man on a pilgrimage through the terrors of the law to the foot of the cross. At the cross the pilgrim laid down his burden of guilt and proceeded to make his way

\(^{34}\)Ibid., p. 174-76.
through life to the gates of Heaven.\textsuperscript{35} Such a modification did not deny God's sovereignty in the act of salvation but it did de-emphasize it. The subject of election seldom appeared in the preaching of the evangelicals. When it did, it was in the context of teaching the saints rather than in the popular messages addressed to the masses.

Both the tactics and the myths of the movement were fully developed by the time the movement was in its third stage. Through the tactics of training its own recruits at the Log College and then of making the best possible use of them by ordaining them as itinerant preachers, the movement was able to disseminate its message. When the revival was at its peak, the movement also employed the tactic of home evangelism. Evangelists encouraged those under conviction to seek spiritual comfort in private by coming for counseling. After these people were converted, follow-up programs were begun, consisting of reading the best evangelical scholars and organizing weekly religious societies for the purpose of Bible study.\textsuperscript{36} Through the use of such tactics, the leaders of the movement were able to indoctrinate the masses in its ideology. Missing, however, were the mourners' bench, the inquirers' room, and the anxious seat of later revivals.\textsuperscript{37}

While employing the above tactics, the movement was also generating a series of myths. Its adherents felt they were a chosen people; its leaders saw themselves as divinely appointed; its mission was

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Prince, Christian History}, pp. 391-95.

\textsuperscript{37}\textit{Trinterud, American Tradition}, p. 76.
thought to be divinely sanctioned; and its opponents were charac-
terized as the enemies of God. These myths grew from the hopes and
desires of the people; therefore, they were readily accepted.

The only elements of the ideology which failed to emerge before
the third stage were its criticism of the existing church structure and
its body of defense doctrine. The leaders of the movement never at-
tacked their opponents until Whitefield had arrived and the revivals
were at their peak. However, when these attacks did come, they were
both vicious and devastating. Not until after the denomination ex-
pelled the Presbytery of New Brunswick, did the movement begin to de-
fend its actions. To that point its leaders were so concerned with
advancing their cause that they did not take the time to defend what
they were doing. Since neither of these elements appeared until the
third stage, this chapter will treat them in more detail before it
closes.

The Defense of the Movement

The time has come to return to the history of the movement and to
show what role rhetoric played in shaping that history. By 1739 the
evangelicals had employed three different strategies to reform the
Presbyterian Church. In 1733 and 1734 it had attempted to instill a
revivalistic spirit in the ministers of the denomination but with no
success. In 1735 it had initiated the revival with the masses through
the use of itinerant preaching. This strategy had brought immediate
results: It had been so effective that the establishment had taken
steps to counteract it in 1737 and 1738. As a result of these synod
restrictions, the reformers had challenged the authority of the est-
ablishment by continuing to send out itinerant preachers and by li-
censing John Rowland in 1739 without the synod's approval. The synod,
in turn, had responded by censuring the New Brunswick Presbytery and
by refusing to recognize Rowland. Thus, after six years of attempting
to reform the denomination, the movement had met with rebuke and scorn.
While it had won a substantial number of laymen to its side, it had
made no positive changes in the church hierarchy. Therefore, in 1740
the leaders of the movement viciously turned against the establishment
and sought to undermine its authority by degrading it in the sight of
the masses. However, before they resorted to this fourth strategy, a
major religious occurrence completely altered the balance of power—
George Whitefield arrived in the Middle Colonies.

The Coming of Whitefield

When George Whitefield landed in Lewes, Delaware, on October 30,
1739, he planned to make a short stop at Philadelphia to gather sup-
plies for his journey to the orphanage in Georgia he had founded ear-
lier. He had no plans of carrying on an evangelistic crusade in the
Middle Colonies. However, upon reaching Philadelphia, he met William
Tennent, Sr., who probably persuaded him to preach in that area.38
Encouraged by the thousands of people who flocked to hear him during
his eleven-day stay in Philadelphia, Whitefield decided to travel to

New York. In the course of his journey he stopped to preach at New Brunswick on November 12, and there he met Gilbert Tennent. The two of them struck up an immediate friendship which lasted the rest of their lives. Together they set out for New York, where upon their arrival on the evening of November 14 Whitefield heard Tennent preach for the first time. He later wrote in his Journal: "Hypocrites must either soon be converted or enraged at his preaching. He is a son of thunder and does not fear the faces of men." 39

Whitefield and Tennent made a significant move on November 19, the day after they left New York. At the invitation of Jonathan Dickinson, they dined with him at Elizabethtown, where Whitefield preached from Dickinson's pulpit. 40 This friendly reception, combined with the one Tennent and Whitefield had received from Pemberton in New York, served to draw the New England party closer to the position of the Log College party. Aaron Burr, who had led a revival at his church in Newark earlier in 1739, was also moving toward the revivalistic party. 41 The leaning of these men toward the evangelical camp eventually rent control of the synod from the conservatives.

However, Whitefield's travels through the Middle Colonies also had an immediate effect on the balance of power. As a result of his


40 Ibid., pp. 133, 137.

41 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, p. 278.
preaching in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey, numerous lay people enlisted in the movement. With these new members, the movement now had the majority of the common people on its side. In addition, Whitefield had also provided legitimation for the movement by winning the support of educated and sober-minded men such as Benjamin Franklin. Even though these men never became members, they did advance the cause of the movement by praising its accomplishments. Franklin wrote of the revivals: "It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless and indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world was growing religious." Whitefield not only aided the movement by influencing the New England party, enlisting new members, and silencing the "better people," but he also spread the revival by gaining coverage for it from the colonial press. In reporting accounts of Whitefield's preaching and its results, the press served as an interested third party. It also became a channel by which the leaders of the movement could spread their message. By the end of 1739, the Log College men had sixteen different publications for sale from Boston to Philadelphia.

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42 Benjamin Franklin The Works of Benjamin Franklin, ed. by Jared Sparks, I (Boston: Tappan Whitemore and Mason, 1840), p. 136.

43 Hoffer used this phrase to describe the process of legitimation. He stated that a movement must sidestep resistance by undermining the convictions of the "better people who can live without faith." (Hoffer, True Believer, p. 139.)

44 Wallace Fotheringham used this phrase to describe those receivers whom the communicator does not seek to persuade but to further diffuse his message. Wallace Fotheringham, Perspectives on Persuasion (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1966), p. 16.)
Because of Whitefield's accomplishment in the Middle Colonies, the tide turned in favor of the Presbytery of New Brunswick. When Whitefield had begun his tour, the movement was in danger of being contained. When he left one month later, the die was cast, for the conservatives were now destined to fight a losing battle. His role in saving the movement was considerable; however, while he was doing this, the movement was also helping him. After leaving the Middle Colonies, Whitefield found himself preaching to small crowds in a spiritual desert. Much of his immediate success had depended upon the previous labors of the Tennents and their associates. They had done the planting; all Whitefield had to do was wield the sickle and claim the harvest.

Undermining the Authority of the Establishment

Whitefield received criticism from the synod conservatives during his travels in the Middle Colonies. Since he ranged throughout the area preaching wherever an opportunity appeared, opponents of the revival condemned him for itinerating; however, his critics directed their severest attacks at his catholic spirit. Whitefield was sympathetic to Quakers, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, and Moravians. The conservative Presbyterians were unable to comprehend how a professing Calvinist could join with such Arminian groups in religious services. For the most part, Whitefield merely ignored his critics; when he did reply, he did so in a conciliatory manner, even to the

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extent of acknowledging his faults.\textsuperscript{46} However, by this time Gilbert Tennent and the other fiery Scotch-Irish evangelists had grown weary of criticism. Never had the synod praised them for their part in fostering a renewed interest in religion. Instead this body had only reprimanded them for the tactics they had used. Therefore, in 1740 the movement launched its fourth strategy. No longer would it only be positive in its approach; it would now turn upon its enemies and attempt to undercut their authority. A small, pastorless church in Nottingham, Pennsylvania, provided the setting for the commencement of this strategy.

Nottingham was located about twenty miles from Samuel Blair's church at Faggs Manor. In the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Donegal, the leading conservative stronghold, the church had been without a pastor for a long period and Donegal had sent few supply ministers; the congregation invited Blair to preach to them, and he accepted. This placed both the church and Blair in violation of the synod's rules on itinerant preaching. To complicate matters, the church experienced a great revival in the spring of 1740 under Blair's ministry. The Presbytery of Donegal was extremely upset with Blair and demanded that the Presbytery of New Castle (Blair's presbytery) discipline him. Such discipline was inevitable at the next meeting, for New Castle was also opposed to the revival. However, in the meantime Gilbert Tennent preached at Nottingham, and the whole climate changed.

\textsuperscript{46}Sweet, \textit{Religion in Colonial America}, p. 278.
When Tennent arrived at Nottingham on March 8, 1740, local opposition to the movement had already resulted in the closing of the other meeting houses in that region to the evangelicals. As a result, his congregation was composed largely of people who were members of churches which opposed the revival. This was the only opportunity most of these people had to hear Tennent, and this situation aroused his combative tendencies; what he said that day shook the foundations of the Presbyterian Church. The "Nottingham Sermon" became so famous that the name of Gilbert Tennent became synonymous with that message. Benjamin Franklin printed two editions of it; Tennent's opponents printed an edition, and someone translated it into German.47 John Hancock, a critic of Tennent, anonymously wrote: "Many felt this single sermon has sown the seeds of all the discord, intrusion, confusion, separation, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, and C. that have been springing up in so many of the towns and churches through the province."

Tennent entitled the message he preached on that occasion "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry." Through it, he unleashed in one hour all the contempt and scorn which he had stored for ten years. He justified his action by comparing it to that of Christ, who also attempted to arouse a slumbering religion from its carnal security. He


likened his opposers to those who opposed Christ—they were seekers after wealth and personal status, while being indifferent to the welfare of those they were supposed to lead. No doubt Tennent acted out of a deep concern for the masses of unconverted who were being deceived by "wolves in sheep's clothing"; but he also acted out of personal concerns. The synod had downgraded his education, denounced his attempts at reform, and damned his own ministry. When he retaliated, he spoke out not only for the suffering masses but also for personal revenge.

Tennent's whole career revolved around the message that grew out of the movement's fourth strategy. His background, his theology, and his failures all pointed toward "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry;" it later altered his life, goals, and reputation. Had he made no other contribution besides that sermon, his influence on the Presbyterian Church and the Great Awakening would still have been significant. More than any other factor, that one message discredited the opponents of the movement, split the Presbyterian Church for seventeen years, and broke the conservative hold on the synod eighteen years later. Ultimately, the proposals Tennent presented in it became the policy of the Presbyterian Church.

"The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry"49

Tennent traveled to Nottingham only a few months after he had

49 This section of the dissertation is based upon a chapter of my Master's thesis. I am including it because of the importance of "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry" to the movement.
made his trip to New York with Whitefield. Having witnessed first-hand the opposition to Whitefield’s ministry, Tennent sought to counteract this negative reaction. Therefore, he had a twofold purpose when he preached "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry"—(1) he wanted to discredit the opposition to the revival and (2) he wanted to break the conservative hold on the synod. He eventually achieved both of these purposes, the first one immediately and the second eighteen years later.

Although Tennent's immediate audience was the congregation at Nottingham, he really addressed his message to the members of churches all across the colonies. The sermon was no mere tirade but a carefully developed polemic aimed at the synod's weakest link—the nature of the ministry. The conditions prevalent both in the synod and at Nottingham called for such a message, the definitive statement of the Log College group. However, it was also so devastatingly efficient that it accomplished too much; the Presbyterian Church was a long time recovering from the ramifications of this sermon.

The purpose of this section is to determine why Tennent's larger audience responded so favorably to the "Nottingham Sermon." Archibald Alexander referred to it as "one of most severely abusive sermons ever penned," but its abusiveness alone does not account for its success. Of course, the audience was ready and the occasion was right for such a message, but neither do these entirely explain its effectiveness, for other ministers preached similar sermons during the same period to

50 Alexander, Log College, p. 38.
the same people without obtaining similar results. Granting that the above conditions have a bearing, but already having dealt with them previously, the concern here is with what factors unique to the speaker and the speech contributed to its success. Tennent's ethos, his delivery, the structure of his arguments, and his choice of words will be studied.

Tennent's Ethos

The ethos of Gilbert Tennent was one of the primary reasons for the success of "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry." Had a lesser man spoken these words, they would have gone unheeded. Not the words of a fanatic or a man lacking education and experience, they were the words of Gilbert Tennent—one who was a leader in the Presbyterian Church, one who knew first-hand its weaknesses, one who had tried to reform it. The masses were willing to believe his statements for they respected him as a person and recognized him as the

51 Rhetoricians from the classisists to the contemporaries agree that the speaker with high ethos has a marked advantage over the speaker with low ethos. Aristotle believed that ethical appeal was a powerful force in persuasion: "The character of the speaker is a cause of persuasion when the speech is so uttered as to make him worthy of belief; for as a rule we trust men of probity more, and more quickly about things in general, while on points outside the realm of exact knowledge, where opinion is divided, we trust them absolutely." Wayne Minnick, after discussing the different factors which rhetoricians think determine ethos, listed the following three: "(1) the tangible attainments or known reputation of the speaker which the audience acquires before the delivery of the speech, (2) the character and personality revealed by the speaker as he utters the speech, and (3) the coincidence of the speaker's proposals with the rigid beliefs and attitudes of the audience." (See The Rhetoric of Aristotle, Trans. by Lane Cooper (New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, Inc., 1932), pp. 8-9; also Wayne Minnick, The Art of Persuasion (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), pp. 112-13.)
spokesman of their discontent.

Gilbert Tennent had been a Presbyterian minister for fourteen years when he delivered his controversial sermon. During those years he had established the reputation with the masses as being an eloquent preacher, a godly man, and a capable leader. Thomas Prince testified that he heard so many complimentary remarks about Tennent that upon first meeting him, Tennent did not come up to his expectations. However, Prince went on to say that after becoming further acquainted with Tennent, he discovered him to be greater than his reputation.  

As was noted earlier in this chapter, Hodge referred to Tennent as the "party itself" and to his writings as "speaking the language of his associates."  

This type of a reputation guaranteed Tennent an audience when he spoke or wrote, but what he was able to accomplish after he had their attention depended largely on the other two factors which affect ethos, in both of which Tennent was strong. The character and personality he revealed in the actual speaking situation contributed greatly to his success. A student at Yale, after hearing Tennent preach, commented: "I thought he was the greatest and best man, and the best preacher that I had ever seen or heard." A young man in Philadelphia wrote: "The manner in which he preached and the indifference with which he treated

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53 Hodge, Constitutional History of Presbyterian Church, p. 161. See page 156 of this dissertation.

54 Ibid., p. 53.
all secular advantage clearly showed that he preached not for love of applause or desire for promoting his own ease but out of love for God."  

Finley, in evaluating Tennent's character, said: "And what greatly endeared his conversation was an openness, and undisguised honesty, at the greatest remove from artifice and dissimulation, which were the abhorrence of his soul while he lived."  

But what impressed Tennent's audience most of all was the way he personified his message. What he proclaimed had affected his own life, and his hearers were aware of this when they heard him. They saw him as a man who earnestly believed and practiced what he advocated. This was what most impressed Whitefield with Tennent's preaching.

He convinced me more and more, that we can preach the gospel of Christ no further than we have experienced the power of it in our own hearts. Being deeply convicted of sin, and being from time to time driven from his false bottom and dependencies by God's Holy Spirit, at his first conversion, he has learned experimentally to dissect the heart of the natural man.

Prince was also aware of Tennent's unique ability.

From the terrible and deep convictions he has passed through in his own soul, he seemed to have such a lively view of the divine majesty, the spirituality, purity, extensiveness, and strictness of his law; with his glorious holiness, and displeasure at sin, his justice, truth and power in punishing the damned; that the very terrors of God seemed to rise

55"Eulogy Written by a Young Man in Philadelphia," in Finley, Appendix to Successful Minister, p. vi.

56Finley, Successful Minister, p. 19.

57Whitefield, Journal from His Embarking . . . to His Arrival in Savannah, p. 130.
to his mind afresh, when he displayed and brou -
dished them in the eyes of unreconciled sinners. 58

That Tennent believed he had such a personal relationship with God
is evident from his personal letters. In a letter to Whitefield, he
said:

Sometimes when travelling on the road, while I be-
held the canopy of Heaven, my heart has been sudden-
ly ravished with love to God as my Father, that I
could not forbear crying out in the pleasing trans-
port of a childlike affection, Father! Father! with
a full and sweet assurance that he was my Father,
and my God. In the night season when I awoke my
soul was still with God: The passion of my soul
for Christ was so vehement, that my dreams were
full of him. 59

This leads to the third element of ethos—the relationship between
the speaker's proposals and the beliefs and attitudes of the audience.
This has already been discussed in the section dealing with the move-
ment's rhetorical stance; therefore, only the major conclusions will be
summarized here. Tennent's hearers were indifferent toward formal re-
ligion yet still concerned about their own personal relationship with
God. They were individualistic, anti-authoritarian, and rebellious.
Tennent addressed his proposals to these attitudes. He made religion
relevant by showing how God's presence could be personally experienced.
He appealed to them to rebel against incapable leaders and to assert
their individualism by worshipping wherever they pleased. This enhanced
their perceptions of his good will, for he only asked them to do what


59 Three Letters to the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, (Philadel-
they were already willing to do.

Because Tennent had this strong ethical appeal which stemmed from his reputation, his personality and character, and the acceptableness of his proposals, his persuasive task was much easier. People were likely to accept what he said because they respected him as a person and were friendly toward his message. In speaking of the influence of Tennent's ethos, Hodge saw it as important to the gravity of the challenges to the establishment.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that Mr. Tennent's unhappy violence was one of the principal causes of that entire alienation of feeling, which soon resulted in an open rupture. When such denunciations come from men of doubtful character or feeble intellect, they are commonly and safely disregarded. But when they are hurled by such men as Tennent, men of acknowledged piety and commanding power, they can hardly fail to shatter the society among which they fall.60

Tennent's Delivery

As has already been demonstrated, the Great Awakening brought a rhetorical division which paralleled the theological division between evangelical and conservative. It was often easier to tell whether a minister was pro- or anti-Awakening by his mode of delivery than by the particular doctrines he espoused. Those who were conservative wrote their entire sermons out word for word, took their manuscripts to the pulpit, and read their messages without ever lifting their eyes from the paper or making a gesture. Tennent accused them of reflecting

60 Hodge, *Constitutional History of Presbyterian Church*, p. 162.
their indifference to the welfare of their audiences by this method of presentation.  

Evangelical ministers, on the contrary, preached extemporaneously, using no notes and a great amount of gestures. Tennent was an initiator of this type of delivery in the Great Awakening. He had a "thundering voice, and delivered himself with a great deal of earnestness and impetuosity." His manner of speaking was one of the primary ways by which he communicated his individualism and rebellion: He opposed the establishment as much by how he spoke as he did by what he spoke. Tennent's friend Finley described his preaching as "warm and pathetic, such as must convince his audience that he was in earnest;" but Charles Chauncy, an opponent of the revivals, had a different view: "His preaching was in the extemporaneous way, with much noise and little connection. If he had taken suitable care to prepare his sermons, and followed nature in the delivery of them, he might have acquitted himself as a middling preacher."

Of course, Tennent's delivery in this instance would only directly affect those who were present at Nottingham when he preached the sermon. Nevertheless, it is still possible that it indirectly affected those who read one of the published editions. Because of Tennent's

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62 *American Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, September, 1743, p. 3.

63 *Finley, Successful Minister*, p. 72.

extensive travels throughout the Middle Colonies, many people were able to hear him preach; and even those who were not, undoubtedly had heard about his reputation as an eloquent speaker. It is not unlikely to assume that they could visualize in their minds Tennent's delivering his sarcastic remarks in a persuasive manner. His opponents were able to so imagine, for an article highly critical of the sermon constantly referred to his skill in oratory. Also, Tennent prepared this sermon for the pulpit, not for the press; therefore, even his style would reflect his extemporaneous delivery to those who read it.

The Structure of Tennent's Argument

Whitefield is reported to have said that "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry" was "unanswerable." If he meant that the logical proofs of the message were beyond refutation, then his praise was ill-founded, for Tennent's opponents did refute some of his arguments. However, if he meant that the synod would be unable to convince the masses that Tennent's attacks were unjustified, then he spoke correctly. While the logic of the sermon was not profound in itself, it did appear to be so because of the way in which Tennent psychologically arranged his arguments.

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65 The Querists, Part III, ... (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1741), pp. 26, 77.

66 Tennent preached his sermons to a live audience before he had them published. He probably made some alterations for his reading audience but the style of his publications was always that of a speaker rather than a writer.

67 Querists, p. 5.
Tennent used Mark 6:34 as the text for his sermon: "And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." From this verse he constructed the following proposition: "That the case of such is much to be pitied, who have no other, but Pharisee-Shepherds, or unconverted teachers."\(^68\) Tennent's intermediate goal was not merely to discredit his opponents. He also wanted to rob the conservative churches of their congregations by placing their ministers in a bad light and pitying those who had to sit under their ministry. He used a three-point argument to accomplish these purposes, first showing the vileness of first century Pharisees, then pitying those exposed to their teachings, and finally identifying conservative ministers with the Pharisees.

In the first division of the discourse, Tennent discussed the Pharisees of Jesus' time, portraying them as full of pride, malice, ignorance, covetousness, and bigotry. They were "as crafty as foxes" and "as cruel as wolves \(\text{sic}\);" always trying to trap Christ with trick questions, while violently opposing the truth and power of his religion.\(^69\) Like Judas, they always had their eyes "fixed upon the bag."\(^70\) They were learned and moral, yet they were completely ignorant of the new birth; for they emphasized the insignificant matters of religion and neglected the most important part. Therefore, when they made a

\(^{68}\) Tennent, \textit{Danger}, p. 4.

\(^{69}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 5.

\(^{70}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 6.
proselyte, "they made him twofold more the Child of Hell than themselves." 71 Tennent closed the first section by citing Christ's denunciation of the Pharisees:

Woe unto Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous; and say, If we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell? 72

In the second division, Tennent described the ministry of such teachers as being unprofitable because they lacked authority; he pitied those who had to be under them. He accused the Pharisees of having no call of God into the ministry: "It's true, men may put them into the ministry, through unfaithfulness, or mistake; or credit and money may draw them, and the Devil may drive them into it, knowing by long experience, of what special service they may be to his kingdom in that office: But God sends not such hypocritical varlets." 73 Since these men lacked the call of God, Tennent reasoned that their ministries were uncomfortable, unprofitable, and dangerous. He pitied the masses because these "false guides" led them astray, leaving them unconvicted, unconverted, and unconcerned. Once again he closed with a threat from Christ: "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves,

71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., p. 7.
73 Ibid., p. 8.
nor suffer those that are entering to go in."  

Tennent devastatingly applied the first two points in the third division of the sermon by showing how Pharisees had crept into his generation. He portrayed the clergy as resembling the Pharisees of the first century "as one crow's egg does another." He said of them: "It is true some of the modern Pharisees have learned to prate a little more orthodoxy about the new birth, than their predecessor Nicodemus, who are, in the mean time, as great strangers to the feeling experience of it, as he."  

Tennent then went on to assert that conservative ministers had no call of God because they were unconverted. This contention, more than any other, embittered his opponents, while also severely damaging their cause. Because Tennent lumped all conservative ministers into one category and labeled them Pharisees, without proving that they were deserving of the title, he committed a great injustice. However, he also placed the enemies of the Great Awakening in an awkward position when he did this. From this point onward, whenever a minister criticized the revivals or condemned the Log College graduates, he was placing himself in the category which Tennent had constructed. Therefore, by this device, unethical as it was, Tennent was able to silence his opponents. They were now either afraid to speak or were immediately

74 Ibid., p. 14.  
75 Ibid., p. 17.  
76 Ibid.  
77 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
tagged as Pharisees by the masses, their words dismissed. This probably explains why it was over a year before the synod reacted to this sermon.

After identifying his contemporaries with the first-century Pharisees, Tennent switched from a negative to a positive approach. He asked his audience to "mourn for those, that are destitute of faithful ministers, and sympathize with them . . .; most earnestly pray for them, that the compassionate Saviour may preserve them . . .; and pray to the Lord of harvest to send forth faithful labourers into his harvest." But in addition to sympathizing and praying, Tennent called on his hearers to act. He outlined a three-step program for them to follow: (1) leave such ministers and worship elsewhere, for even "birds fly to warmer climates, beasts of the field seek the best pastures, and fish of the sea seek the food they like best;" (2) judge candidates on piety as well as doctrine when choosing a pastor; and (3) work for private schools and seminaries to train evangelical ministers.

By this psychological progression, Tennent was able to lead his audience to the conclusion he wanted them to reach. They were in agreement with him when he pitied the Pharisees' followers, and they accepted without challenge his identification of conservative ministers and first century Pharisees. Having done this, they were ready to initiate the program he set before them.

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78 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid., pp. 16-19.
Tennent's Choice of Words

The arrangement of Tennent's arguments was partly instrumental in bringing about the acceptance of his conclusion. But why was his audience willing to grant him the suppositions on which his arguments depended? He did not attempt to provide logical reasons for them to do so. The answer to this question rests with what I. A. Richards called "interinanimation," or how words work together in discourse. 81 The contextual meaning of Tennent's words worked to cause his audience to accept his view of the situation.

In analyzing "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry," the author has made several references to the concept of identification, especially in the sense of identifying first-century Pharisees and eighteenth-century conservative ministers. By getting his audience to recognize the similarities between these two parties, Tennent was able to discredit the conservative ministers and rob them of the allegiance of the masses. That the establishment of such a relationship could accomplish so much stems from the nature of "devil terms." 82


82 Richard Weaver defined a "devil term" as a term of repulsion, the opposite of a "god term." His definition of a "god term" was "that expression about which all other expressions are ranked as subordinate and serving dominations and power. Its force imparts to the others their lesser degree of force, and fixes the scale by which degrees of comparison are understood." In discussing the function of devil terms, Weaver wrote: "A singular truth about these terms is that . . . they defy any real analysis. That is to say, one cannot explain how they generate their peculiar-force of repudiation. One only recognizes them as publicly-agreed-upon devil terms." (See Richard M. Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric (Chicago: Henry Regney Company, 1953), pp. 212, 222-23.)
Gilbert Tennent chose the two most despised figures in the New Testament--Judas and the Pharisees--to use as devil terms. Focusing mainly on the Pharisees, he drew parallels between them and his contemporaries. To Christians of all eras, the very mention of Judas and the Pharisees is repulsive. Judas, the betrayer of Christ, was also the treasurer of the disciples. The Apostle John accused him of being a thief, and it is this context that Tennent compared Judas to the conservative ministers. The Pharisees were the chief opponents of Christ. They denounced His ministry and were ultimately instrumental in his death. Tennent accused the conservative clergy of opposing the Great Awakening in similar fashion.

By using this device of "naming," Tennent caused his audience to identify its own ministers with the Pharisees, whom they despised. To be sure his listeners had the proper referent for this devil term, Tennent spent the first one-third of his sermon describing the despicableness of a biblical Pharisee. Then he asked his hearers to use the same context which resulted in this referent to create a new one. Tennent's new referent for the term "Pharisee" was the eighteenth century conservative minister. To insure that his audience equated these two parties (the first century Pharisees and their own ministers), Tennent invented three compound words which he used interchangeably--"Pharisee-Teachers," "Pharisee-Shepherds," and "Pharisee-Ministers." He used the

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83 See pages 182-185 of this dissertation for actual quotations.
84 John 12:6
85 Luke 11:53, 54; John 18:3
term Pharisee-Teachers nine times, the term Pharisee-Shepherds twice, and the term Pharisee-Minister once. With each usage of one of these three words (and he used them in every section of the message) he was reminding his audience that their pastors were consubstantial with the Pharisees. 86

By speaking of Pharisee-Teachers, Pharisee-Shepherds, and Pharisee-Ministers, Tennent was saying simply and concisely: "Your ministers possess the same characteristics as the Pharisees. They are proud, bitter, ignorant, covetous, and bigoted. They are opposing the work of God and leading you to Hell. They are the enemies of Christ and his Church." Thus, by the use of the devil term "Pharisee" Tennent convinced his hearers without logical proof that their pastors were enemies of Christ. Had they been more devoted to their ministers, such an approach would have failed. But they themselves had already questioned the competence of their leaders and were displeased with their performance. Therefore, Tennent did not change their attitudes: he simply provided a justification for how they already felt and then asked them to act on the basis of their beliefs.

Besides identifying his colleagues with the Pharisees, Tennent also identified them with Judas. He accused them of being descendants of Judas, for like him they were thieves and murderers.

86Tennent, Danger, pp. 3-31.
of a halter in this world, and an aggravated damnation in the next.\textsuperscript{87}

Throughout the sermon, Tennent used metaphors, similes, and epithets to create repulsive images in the minds of his audience. He referred to the clergy as "caterpillars," "blind moles," "natural men" (implying they lacked spirituality), "dry nurses," "dead dogs that can't bark," "stone-blind and stone-dead," "moral negroes," "blind men," "swarm of locusts," "blind as moles," "dead as stones," and "hypocritical varlets."\textsuperscript{88} His name-calling exhausted, Tennent closed the sermon by quoting the Apostle Paul: "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light: Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."\textsuperscript{89}

"Christ Triumphant and Satan Raging"

A year after Gilbert Tennent preached "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry" at Nottingham, Samuel Finley preached a similar message at the same location. His sermon, entitled "Christ Triumphant and Satan Raging," endeavored to show that the revival was of God and that anyone who opposed it was the tool of Satan. Finley argued that the Devil possesses in some measure every unregenerate soul; however, when the sinner becomes a Christian then Satan is cast out. These premises led

\textsuperscript{87}Ibid., pp. 14-15.

\textsuperscript{88}Ibid., pp. 14-30.

\textsuperscript{89}Ibid., p. 31.
him to the conclusion that the present work was of Christ because the Devil would not cast out himself.\footnote{Finley, \textit{Christ Triumphant and Satan Raging}, pp. 12-23.}

Upon this basis, Finley then contended that anyone who opposed the Great Awakening was an enemy of Christ. Resorting to the same tactic as Tennent, he compared the ministers of his own day to the Pharisees who had challenged Christ. He even used one of the terms which Tennent had coined—Pharisee-Teacher. After demonstrating from Scripture that the rulers and Pharisees had disowned Christ, while only the profane mobs, publicans, and prostitutes had followed him, Finley drew the following parallel:

Just so is he treated by the same rank of persons at this day. May I not ask, have any of the rulers, have any of the ministers embraced the present work? Do they not rather prepossess and imbitter the carnal people against it? And many who seemed first in religion, are they not become the very last, and the last, first? For our opposers confess of their own accord, that it is only the ignorant rabble that embrace it, many of which never minded any religion, and so do not know the law.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 26.}

Finley not only attacked the conservative wing of the synod; he also endeavored to defend the tactics of the movement by showing that they were the same ones used by Christ. In the process, he drew four additional parallels: (1) As Christ was accused of departing from traditions, so our opponents say we do not display the correct order; (2) as Christ was called an enemy of Moses and the law, so our enemies term us Antinomians; (3) as Christ was accused of holding communion with
people of different societies, so our antagonists accuse us of associating with people of different religious persuasions; and (4) as Christ was called devisive, so also our fellow ministers contend that we are causing divisions.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 26.}

Although Finley's sermon was as critical and logical as Tennent's it did not create the same excitement. Probably the major reason why this was the case was that Finley did not possess the same degree of ethos that Tennent did. In fact, Finley stated in the preface to his message that many readers would cast aspersion on it because they would only consider him to be a "youth and a novice."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. iii.} In addition, Finley had only rephrased Tennent's outlook instead of providing a new approach. Therefore, Tennent's sermon had a greater effect because it was the first of its kind and, as a result of its novelty, it received a much wider distribution.

The preceding paragraph does not mean to minimize the importance of Finley's sermon. No other message during the Great Awakening, except perhaps Edwards "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,"" created as much of a stir as did Tennent's "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry." Therefore, it is in a sense misleading to compare the effects of that sermon with those of any other. However, since this section has made such a comparison, it can most properly be stated by saying that Finley accomplished on a small scale what Tennent succeeded in doing on a much larger scale. Both of these men, through their most famous
publications, defended the movement by casting its challengers in the role of villains.

A confrontation between the evangelicals and conservatives in the synod was inevitable before Tennent and Finley delivered their abusive sermons. What these two messages did was to hasten the coming of that confrontation. By characterizing their synod colleagues as unconverted Pharisees, Tennent and Finley polarized the pro- and anti-revival groups to the ultimate extremes: The former party contained the ambassadors of God, while the latter party was composed of the emissaries of Satan. For the next several years, the evangelicals viewed the conservatives in this manner. This type of character assassination resulted in orthodox ministers further opposing the revival and developing a more unfavorable image of the revivalists. Instead of seeing them only as enthusiastic radicals bent on change, they came to look upon them as revolutionaries set on destroying the denomination. The synod could not remain united much longer when it contained two factions which viewed each other in such a manner. Neither could the synod moderates or any of the masses remain neutral. Everyone was forced to choose a side. The group which could win the clerical moderates and the majority of the masses to its cause would eventually triumph.

When Tennent launched the fourth strategy of the movement in 1740 and Finley continued it in 1741, the movement was passing through one of its most critical stages. The leaders of the movement made an important image change at this time which greatly affected the future of the movement. Discovering that they could no longer effectively operate in the midst of all the synod restrictions, the leaders came to realize
that they had to respond to the attacks of their colleagues. In the
course of doing this, they came to view their fellow ministers not as
brothers in Christ but as the enemies of God. Thus they defended the
movement through the tactic of vilification by analogy. By comparing
themselves with Christ and his disciples and their opponents with Judas
and the Pharisees, the leaders of the movement undermined the authori-
ty of the synod and once again forced the conservatives' hand. The
confrontation within the synod was about to begin.

The Expulsion of the Movement

When the synod met for its annual meeting in May, 1740, the move-
ment was once again on the offensive. Running simultaneously with the
synodical meetings was a campaign of evangelistic preaching at White-
field's tabernacle. The Tennents, Samuel Blair, John Rowland, and James
Davenport preached to capacity crowds from Philadelphia and the sur-
rounding towns. All the other members of the synod, even Jonathan
Dickinson, were denied access to this pulpit. Many of the people who
were highly aroused at the tabernacle attended the synod's meetings
as visitors. The evangelicals' plan of pitting an awakened laity
against the ruling clique of the church had now brought the two groups
face to face.94

Early in the synod meetings, the subject of the source of authority
in the Presbyterian Church arose again. The challengers once more con-
tended that the synod had no right to impose an educational examination.

94Trinterud, American Tradition, p. 96.
The Tennents and their associates issued a new protest which led to the repeal of the restriction of itinerant preaching. This was a hollow victory, for the itinerancy law had proved useless. The synod went a step further and consented to recognize those men ordained by a presbytery as gospel ministers. However, the synod refused to recognize ministers as members of the synod who had not submitted to the educational examination. This made any man ordained by the Presbytery of New Brunswick a second-class Presbyterian minister. It also prevented that presbytery from ever challenging the conservative majority in the synod.95

Following this debate, Samuel Blair arose to present a formal paper. Because of the nature of his material, he asked permission to have the balcony cleared of all laymen. The synod refused and Blair then proceeded to read a paper denouncing the enemies of the revival. When he finished, Gilbert Tennent gained the floor and presented a similar paper. In the insuing discussion, the synod challenged Blair and Tennent to bring specific charges against specific people. However, when they asked for a closed session in which to do this, the synod would not grant them one.96 The moderator closed the meeting with an exhortation to the synod's ministers to be more faithful.97

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95 Records, pp. 152-54.

96 Tenant and Blair would have had little trouble naming specific ministers. The Records of the synod contained the names of numerous ministers who had been censured or suspended for immorality. (See Records, pp. 26-124.)

97 Records, p. 154.
The Synod Meeting of 1741

Events between 1740 and 1741 finally forced the synod to take action, for during that time the revival spread rapidly. By 1741, George Whitefield had already made a second whirlwind tour which was even more effective than his first visit to the Middle Colonies: This time he had ignited the churches of the New England party. Because of Whitefield's urging, Gilbert Tennent had also embarked on a successful evangelistic crusade through New England. Therefore, by the 1741 synod meeting the conservatives realized that the movement was a serious threat to their churches and that some form of severe action was necessary to stop it. The Presbytery of Donegal had prepared specific charges at its annual meeting against Samuel Blair, Alexander Craighead, and David Alexander for causing divisions in its churches. Therefore, the tension that had been mounting for four years was finally coming to a head. The synod was determined to stop the prevailing disorders and to defend the reputations of its members.100

The conservatives first attempted to try the case of Craighead, who had refused to submit to a trial before the presbytery. However, the Presbytery of New Brunswick rose to his defense and after three days of debate the synod adjourned on May 30 in disorder. On Monday, June 1, when the synod reconvened, Robert Cross delivered a protest

98Trinterud, American Tradition, pp. 93-95.
99Tennent, Letter to Whitefield, Quoted in Gillies, Historical Collections, pp. 133 ff.
100Hodge, Constitutional History of Presbyterian Church, pp. 170-75.
against the entire Log College group. He condemned them for their harsh attacks on other synod members, for their itinerant preaching, and for their defiance of synod authority. Then he moved that the entire Presbytery of New Brunswick be denied the right to sit and vote as members of the synod. As soon as Cross finished reading his paper, he laid it on the table for the members to sign. The New Brunswick group attempted to respond, but the synod refused to hear them. When the roll was taken, the evangelicals were found to be outnumbered twelve to eleven, the Presbytery of New York again being absent. The eleven members whom Cross named in the protest then withdrew from the meeting and a large number of laymen in the balcony followed them. 101 Therefore, the Presbyterian Church split without a motion, a vote, or a presiding officer in the chair. This action by the conservatives transcended any of the violations of policy of the evangelicals. 102

Regrouping and Reorganization

Following the expulsion of the Log College party from the synod, the Presbytery of New Brunswick met on July 2, 1741, in Philadelphia


102 Briggs, American Presbyterianism, p. 63.
with corresponding members present from the other presbyteries. The group decided to reorganize itself and to extend its boundaries to include Philadelphia and the territory of West Jersey. Two pastors from this new territory applied for membership, William Tennent, Sr. from Neshaminy and Richard Treat from Abington. Both of these men had previously been members of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. The six other ministers not of New Brunswick whom Cross had named in his protest also expressed a desire to leave the synod. They were made members of the newly created Presbytery of Londonderry which included all the territory outside of the Presbytery of New Brunswick. 103

After reorganizing itself, the movement turned its attention to the numerous calls for supply ministers it was receiving from churches sympathetic with its cause. The presbytery assigned Treat, Finley, and Rowland to fill as many of these pulpits as possible. It then reaffirmed its allegiance to the Westminster Confession and to its Presbyterian stand. The meeting closed with the appointment of Samuel Blair to write an account of the differences in the synod and Gilbert Tennent to write an answer to the protest. 104

In subsequent meetings, the two New Side105 presbyteries made plans to organize themselves into a rival synod, but they did not do this

103 "Minutes of Presbytery of New Brunswick," pp. 21-25.
104 Ibid., pp. 26-29.
105 After the synod split, the evangelicals were called the New Sides and the conservatives the Old Sides. These groups corresponded to the New Lights and the Old Lights of the Congregational churches in New England.
until the Presbytery of New York joined with them in 1745. Instead, they devoted the four intervening years to arranging for ministerial supplies, installing pastors, recruiting new members, and settling difficulties in churches which had split over the expulsion of their party from the synod. \(^{106}\) While the New Side was making such advancements, the original synod was in a state of decline. It still suffered from the same weakness--its inability to enlist a sufficient number of qualified ministers. As early as 1739 the synod had made plans for a school of its own but it did not come into existence until 1743, functioning only for three years. \(^{107}\) Therefore, the Synod of Philadelphia had designed its own downfall by its continuous opposition to the Log College, for that institution held the key to the future of the Presbyterian Church.

**Rhetoric of Justification**

During the years 1741-1744, the leaders of both the movement and the synod made extensive use of the press to justify their own actions and to condemn the actions of their opponents. Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Blair were the spokesmen for the movement, while George Gillespie, Robert Cross, and John Thomson represented the synod. Tennent produced the first publication entitled *The Apology of the Presbytery of New Brunswick* in 1741, just prior to the split in the synod. The main

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\(^{106}\) Ingram, "Erection of Presbytery of New Brunswick," 115.

\(^{107}\) The school, known as New London, had only one instructor, as did the Log College. When that instructor, Francis Alison, left to take a position at an academy in Philadelphia, the school ceased to operate. (Alexander, *Log College*, pp. 86-97.)
purpose of the Apology was to reply to the synod's positions on itinerant preaching and the licensing of ministers. Tennent condemned the first position because it granted the liberty of censure upon mere conjecture. He claimed that the synod's restrictions on this point only bred suspicion. He then went on to condemn the act of the synod requiring an educational examination as being unscriptural, uncharitable, unnecessary, anti-presbyterian, and inconsistent.  

The Apology was actually the movement's formal challenge of the institutionalized church. It began with a call for peace but not at the "expense of truth or justice." To demonstrate that the presbytery would not submit to the synod, Tennent quoted Martin Luther when he said: "An honorable and necessary war was preferable to a mean and ignoble peace." The Apology closed with a defense of the movement's violations of the synod's positions on the basis of the higher law of private judgment. From this point on, the right of conscience was the means by which the movement sought to justify its actions.

Immediately after the division of the synod in 1741, Robert Cross published the protest which he had read at the annual meeting. In it he accused the Log College party of heterodox and anarchical principles, contempt of the examination rule, itinerant preaching, rash judgments, questioning the calls of fellow ministers, overemphasis on the terrors.

108 The Apology of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, . . ., pp. 42-60. Bound with Remarks Upon a Protestation . . . . See footnote 112 of this chapter.

109 Ibid., p. 40.

110 Ibid., p. 60.
of the law, and teaching that all true converts were assured of their salvation. For these reasons he demanded that the Tennents and their associates be refused a seat in the synod. At the end of his Protestation, Cross attached a brief appendix which denied that the conservatives had expelled the New Brunswick Presbytery. He argued instead that this group had withdrawn of its own accord and in the process had left the synod in great confusion. 111

Tennent replied to Cross's Protestation in the same year with Remarks Upon a Protestation. He began by once again appealing to the higher law of conscience as grounds for disobedience to the synod's measures. He also endeavored to defend the tactics of the movement by contending that Heaven itself had justified such actions by "smiling upon our practices." In addition, Tennent appealed to precedents to show that individual presbyteries, not the synod, possessed the power of licensing and ordination. He justified itinerant preaching with an argument from circumstance, contending that it was necessary because a "sound, faithful, and lively ministry does not now exist." He then closed the Remarks with his own account of the division of the synod, in which he accused the conservatives of a premeditated plot to cast out the evangelicals. He argued that he and his associates were rightfully the synod since there were more members who did not sign the protest than there were members who did. 112

111 Cross, Protestation, pp. 7-15.

112 Gilbert Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation Presented to the Synod of Philadelphia, June 1, 1741 (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1741), pp. 4-35.
Thomson's two works also went to press in 1741. One of them, Doctrine of Convictions, questioned whether the people the evangelicals claimed as being under conviction were of necessity converted. Thomson drew a distinction between conviction and terror and fear, asserting that the New Side was promoting the latter means of winning converts. 113 Thomson's other publication, The Government of the Church of Christ, was a reply to Tennent's Apology and to the papers which Blair and Tennent had read before the synod in 1740. He blamed the New Brunswick Presbytery for all the present divisions and misunderstandings and traced their origins to two sources. The first of these was the rash judging of brothers in Christ as being unconverted enemies of religion, as Blair and Tennent had done in their papers. The second was the different attitude that the movement had toward church government. Thomson cited the Apology to show that the Log College party had digressed from the Presbyterian form of government. He argued that the ruling body of this form was the synod, not the individual presbyteries. Therefore, the movement had placed itself in opposition to Presbyterianism when it had defied the synod's authority. 114

Two anonymous publications also appeared from the Old Side in 1741 and 1742. Several Presbyterian Church members wrote The Querists as a reply to "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry." They extracted numerous passages from Tennent's sermon and attempted to refute them

113 Thomson, Doctrine of Convictions, pp. 12-32.

with ridicule and sarcasm. They focused the brunt of their attack on
the constituents of a call to the ministry. The other article was
An Examination and Refutation of Gilbert Tennent's Remarks upon a Pro-
testation. The writer of this piece defended the right of the synod
to judge the qualifications of its ministers. He also condemned Tennent
for leaving his own parish to infringe into the territory of other
pastors.

In 1741 Blair replied to another publication of the Querists which
attacked Whitefield instead of the Log College men. In the course of
defending Whitefield from the attacks on his doctrines, Blair also de-
fended the movement, for it was virtually impossible to separate the
two by 1741. Thus, counting Blair's publication and the one against
Whitefield, the New Side published three works and the Old Side six in
the year following the split. The conservatives attempted to justify
their actions by laying the blame for the division on the movement,
while the evangelicals endeavored to justify themselves by condemning
the synod for infringing on the right of conscience.

The year 1742 was quiet, at least in regard to the press, for only
the one anonymous publication went to press during that year. However,
in 1743 and 1744 the war of words once again raged. John Hancock, a

115 Querists, pp. 26-60.
116 An Examination and Refutation of Mr. Gilbert Tennent's Remarks
upon a Protestation . . . (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1742),
pp. 20-30.
117 Samuel Blair, A Particular Consideration of a Piece, Entitled,
The Querists . . . (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1741).
member of the Old Side, began the second battle by anonymously publish-
ing a criticism of Gilbert Tennent's new attitude. After the synod had
split, Tennent had come to realize that in the eyes of many he was an
extreme radical and a member of the revival's left wing. Therefore
through a series of steps which will be considered later, Tennent had
attempted to alter this image. However, Hancock in The Examiner, or
Gilbert Against Tennent pointed out the inconsistencies between Tennent's
former attitude and his present one. He called on Tennent to confess
his previous errors and to repudiate "The Danger of an Unconverted Min-
istry." 118

Later in the same year Tennent published a response entitled The
Examiner, Examined, or Gilbert Tennent Harmonious. He refused to with-
draw the "Nottingham Sermon" because it was but "the naked truth, and
such as, if fairly represented, all its adversaries will never be able
to confute." However, he tried to side-step the other arguments of
Hancock, for there was no way he could deny that he had softened his
approach. Therefore, his only reply was that his opponents had taken
his remarks out of context. 119

In 1744, George Gillespie, who had first sided with the movement
after the split, went back to the synod. He made his return known by
writing Remarks Upon Mr. George Whitefield, Proving Him a Man Under
Delusion. In this work, Gillespie termed the revival a "spirit of

118Philalethes, The Examiner, pp. 1-38.

119Gilbert Tennent, The Examiner, Examined, or Gilbert Tennent
Harmonious . . . (Philadelphia: Printed by William Bradford, 1743),
pp. 9-40.
delusion" and condemned Whitefield for identifying with the Tennents. He also criticized Whitefield for not separating himself from the Wesley brothers who were Arminians, for praising the Quakers and commending the Moravians, and for keeping Lent while a student. 120

The final important work published during the third stage of the movement was Blair's Vindication of the Brethren, written in 1744 in response to Thomson's Government of the Church of Christ. In it Blair defended Tennent's Apology by arguing that the only laws the movement violated were laws that the synod had no right to make. Once again Blair resorted to the evangelicals basis of justification by asking whether "church judicatures have a lawful power of oppressing the consciences of their members by imposing anything upon them on pain of censure and non-communion, which they judge sinful, and cannot in conscience comply with . . . ." 121

The Aid of the Presbytery of New York

While both the conservatives and the evangelicals were attempting to justify themselves in their own eyes and in the eyes of the masses, the Presbytery of New York was endeavoring to bring the two factions back together. At the 1742 synod meeting Jonathan Dickinson served as moderator, and his party protested the manner in which the conservatives

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120 George Gillespie, Remarks Upon Mr. George Whitefield, Proving Him a Man Under Delusion . . . . (Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 1744), pp. 3-11.

had forced the Presbytery of New Brunswick from the synod. However, Francis Alison was the only Old Side member willing to consider the legality of the actions of the preceding year. The synod did appoint a committee to meet with the evangelicals, who were also willing to reconsider the past, but plans for a reunion fell through when the conservatives refused to withdraw their protest.\textsuperscript{122}

In 1742 Dickinson also anonymously published a tract entitled \textit{A Display of God's Special Grace}. Using the format of a dialogue between a minister and a member of his congregation, Dickinson defended the revival as a work of God. He responded to the charges of overemotion- alism and condemned both the New Side and the Old Side for their judging and censuring spirits. This publication revealed how closely the Presbytery of New York was moving toward the Log College party, and it paved the way for their union. After the synod met in 1743, Dickinson allowed Tennent to republish the tract, this time bearing his name and with a preface signed by Tennent and five other New Sides.\textsuperscript{123}

When the synod did meet in 1743, the Presbytery of New York again presented an overture calling for an accommodation of differences, which the Old Side immediately rejected. Jonathan Dickinson, Ebenezer Pemberton, John Pierson, and Aaron Burr then issued a paper saying that they would no longer sit in the synod as long as the Presbytery of New Brunswick was not a part of it. In addition, the paper contained a

\textsuperscript{122} Records, pp. 162-63.

\textsuperscript{123} Jonathan Dickinson, \textit{A Display of God's Special Grace} \ldots \ldots (Philadelphia: Printed by William Bradford, 1742), pp. 4-63.
plan of agreement between them and the Tennent group. The conservative element replied to this paper at the meeting of 1744 in a manner which left little hope for a reunion. Therefore, the synod split further in 1745 when the Presbytery of New York rejected a compromise measure and withdrew completely.  

Thus, the Presbytery of New York finally chose a side. After riding the fence for over ten years, the fence disappeared, leaving them either in the synod with the Old Side or forcing them to withdraw and to join the New Side. Because they looked favorably on the revival and because they disapproved of the expulsion of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, they chose to become a part of the movement. Therefore, three similar image changes occurred during the third stage, for the Log College party, the New England party, and the masses all turned against the synod. In attempting to defend the movement, the radical evangelicals, led by Gilbert Tennent, came to view the conservatives as unconverted hypocrites. The voicing of this harsh outlook destroyed any hope of peaceful change within the system. Instead, it resulted in the expulsion of the movement.

Had this been the only image change of the third phase, the movement would have likely expired. However, fortunately for Tennent and his associates, the majority of the common people in the Presbyterian Church sided with their group. This enabled the movement to survive its expulsion, but it resulted only in a struggling existence. What

124 Records, pp. 166-81.
really saved the movement and allowed it to enter its fourth stage was the image change of the moderate evangelicals. When they openly supported the revival and identified with the Log College party, the balance of power in the Presbyterian denomination passed from the traditionalists to the reformers. A bright future now appeared to exist for the movement.
CHAPTER VI

INSTITUTIONALIZATION: THAT THEY MAY BE ONE

When Whitefield legitimized the revival and the synod moderates identified with the Log College party, public opinion shifted to the side of the movement. This shift propelled the movement into its fourth phase and placed it on the verge of becoming an institution. What once started as a reform effort was about to organize into a separate body. When a movement reaches this stage, its leadership need is for an administrator to translate its policy into action. The agitator, prophet, and reformer of earlier stages are now expendable, for they are usually incapable of promoting a new order. Having aroused the masses and discredited the existing institution, they are now more of a threat than an asset to the movement.

The danger of the fanatic to the development of a movement is that he cannot settle down. Once victory has been won and the new order begins to crystallize, the fanatic becomes an element of strain and disruption . . . If allowed to have their way, the fanatics may split a movement into schism and heresies which threaten its existence.¹

Until the time the movement entered its institutional stage, Gilbert Tennent had been its leader. He had possessed qualities which had enabled him to change from an agitator to a prophet and reformer, and

¹Hoffer, True Believer, pp. 145-56.
even to become a statesman. However, Tennent was incapable of becoming an administrator, for he had developed the image of a fanatic during these years. An anonymous letter appearing in the *Boston Weekly News-Letter* accused him of being more unscrupulous than James Davenport, archfanatic of the Great Awakening.

Never had Davenport in any discourse of his, more warmly and strenuously inculcated the necessity of ministers being converted in order to their being useful; has never in stronger terms, bewail'd the state of churches in the land, on account of the want of unconverted ministers; nor talk'd in a strain that has a greater tendency to make people discard ministers sound in principle and regular in life, than Mr. T___t does in his above-mentioned sermon.2

Only two possibilities appeared to be open to Tennent after the movement was expelled from the synod. He could withdraw from the active scene, or he could function in a new capacity as a fanatic. Yet, Tennent chose neither alternative. He was too interested in changing his church to retire but too sensible to become a fanatic. He despised his new image. When he had an opportunity to stand back and view what he had done, he was far from pleased. He had never intended to split the Presbyterian Church but had only desired to reform it.3 Noffer stated that this is the case with most "men of words":


3That Tennent never intended to split the denomination is evident from all his later efforts aimed at reunion. When he had first proposed reforms, his hope was that the rest of the synod would adopt his measures. By the time he realized this would never be possible, he was so emotionally involved in the revival that it was too late to turn back. Only after the schism did he become aware of the damage he had done.
The creative man of words, no matter how bitterly he may criticize and deride the existing order, is actually attached to the present. His passion is to reform and not to destroy. When the mass movement remains wholly in his keeping, he turns it into a mild affair.4

Tennent immediately set out to rebuild what he had torn down. In 1742 he wrote a letter to Jonathan Dickinson confessing:

I have had many afflicting thoughts about the debates that have subsisted for some time in our Synod: I would to God, the breach were healed, if it was the will of the Almighty. As for my own part, wherein I have mismanag'd in doing what I did;--I do look upon it to be my duty, and should be willing to acknowledge it in the openest manner. I cannot justify the excessive heat of temper which has sometimes appear'd in my conduct--I have been of late (since I returned from New England) visited with much spiritual desertions, temptations, and distresses of various kinds, coming in a thick, and almost continual succession; which have given me a greater discovery of myself, than I think I ever had before: these things, with the trials I have had of the Moravians, have given me a clear view of every thing which tends to enthusiasm and division in the visible church.5

The following year Tennent received a call to serve a Presbyterian church in Philadelphia. He decided to accept because this city was one of the centers of the revivals, and this provided him with a wider field of influence. Tennent took advantage of his new surroundings to try to change his image. He put aside his fiery zeal and preached from manuscripts rather than extemporaneously. A man who had been exposed to both deliveries told Alexander: "Mr. Tennent was never worth

4Hoffer, True Believer, p. 143.

5Boston Evening Post, July 26, 1742.
anything after he came to Philadelphia; for he took to reading his sermons, and lost all his animation."6

To escape the designation of a fanatic, Tennent turned on the Moravians and Davenport, attacking them for errors similar to his. He accused the Moravians of causing schisms7 and wrote of Davenport:

The practice of openly exposing ministers who are supposed to be unconverted in public discourse, by particular application of such times and places, serves only to provoke them (instead of doing them any good) and to declare our arrogance. It is an unprecedented, divisional, and pernicious practice.8

By attacking those who were more fanatical than himself, by refraining from further abusive remarks against the synod conservatives, and by constantly advocating reunion, Tennent was eventually able to escape the label of fanatic. As he once had used the pulpit and the press to tear apart the Presbyterian Church, so he now used them to rebuild it. The latter took much longer than the former; another man, Jonathan Dickinson, began leading the way back while Tennent was rebuilding his reputation. Thus, Dickinson became the administrator which the movement then needed to continue its development. Under his leadership the presbyteries of New York and New Brunswick united to


7Gilbert Tennent, Some Account of the Principles of the Moravians: Chiefly Collected from Several Sermons Preached by Him at Berlin, and Published in London. (London: Printed for S. Mason, 1743).


8Boston Evening Post, July 26, 1742.
form a new synod and opened communication channels with the Synod of Philadelphia.

The Synod of New York

Perhaps the lack of an administrator prevented the movement from carrying out its plans to erect a synod during the years 1741-1745. However, as soon as the Presbytery of New York withdrew from the Synod of Philadelphia, it met with the Log College group for the purpose of creating a second synod. Nine ministers from New York, nine from New Brunswick, and four from New Castle (the new name of Londonderry) composed this new body when it held its first meeting on September 19, 1745. The following articles were adopted at this meeting: (1) adherence to the Westminster Confession as agreed to by the Synod of Philadelphia in 1729 and approbation to the Directory of the Assembly of Divines as the general plan of worship and discipline, (2) the right of members to withdraw without raising disputes or contentions, (3) agreement not to attack a fellow minister for doctrine, immorality, or negligence of ministry until the synod had dealt with him, and (4) ministers must have knowledge, orthodox doctrine, and be regular in their lives. In addition, the twenty-two members agreed not to meddle in the business of other Presbyterian or Congregational bodies, to work for reunion with the Synod of Philadelphia, and to support the revival as a work of God.9

The nature of these articles revealed the desire of the Synod of

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9Records, pp. 233-34.
New York to avoid the problems encountered in the other organization. Although earlier the evangelicals had instigated most of the disputes and had begun the attacks on fellow ministers, they sought now to elude such practices in their own body. Furthermore, their adherence to orthodox doctrine and their commitment to an educated ministry served to modify their supposed radicalism. However, their support of the Adopting Act of 1729 and their dedication to the revival indicated that reunion with the Synod of Philadelphia would be difficult to obtain.

The union of the New England party and the Log College party brought together second- and third-generation Puritans and a group of younger Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who had learned the views of English Puritanism from William Tennent, Sr. The New England party dominated during the early days of the synod, for two of its members--Jonathan Dickinson and Ebenezer Pemberton--were chosen moderator and clerk, respectively, at the first meeting. A new brand of missionary-minded Presbyterianism emerged from this assembly, for its ministers were close to the people both in thought and work. Unlike their counterparts in the Synod of Philadelphia, they were colonists by birth, were from lower-class families, and were educated under humble circumstances in America. For these reasons they did not view the church as an aristocratic calling. Furthermore, they were not satisfied with doctrinal correctness alone; doctrine had to be attached to personal piety.

The Synod of New York grew rapidly during its early years. By

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10 Ibid.
1747, it had recruited twelve additional ministers. Eight of these, Samuel Buell, David Young, David Bostwick, Thomas Arthur, John Grant, John Prudder, Thomas Lewis, and Caleb Smith were graduates of Yale. The other four, Eliab Byran, Jacob Green, Nathaniel Tucker, and Timothy Symmes were Harvard graduates. However, these twelve were not enough to supply the needs of the new synod, for many new churches had arisen by this time. To complicate matters, the Log College had ceased to operate about 1746, when the elder Tennent's health prevented him from keeping it open. This left the new synod without a school of its own; therefore, one of its foremost endeavors was the establishment of a Presbyterian college in the Middle Colonies.

The College of New Jersey

When the Synod of New York met for the first time in 1745, not only was the Log College fading from existence, but Yale and Harvard were also in the hands of enemies. James Davenport had aroused opposition to the movement at Yale by creating backlash at revivalism in general. In 1740, while preaching from the pulpit of Joseph Noyes in New Haven—the church which most of the Yale faculty and students attended—Davenport had denounced Noyes as an unconverted hypocrite and a wolf in sheep's clothing who thousands in Hell were cursing as the cause of their damnation. Davenport's action so angered President

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12 Ibid., p. 124.
13 Actually the Log College was probably operating on a very limited basis by 1745. (Alexander, Log College, pp. 21-22.)
Clap and the entire college that Yale sent a letter to Whitefield blaming him for what took place. From that point on, Yale was hostile to the Great Awakening and to New Side students.  

Besides opposition to the movement, other reasons existed for Presbyterian students not attending the New England universities. Jonathan Dickinson and Aaron Burr argued that another school was needed because of distance, finances, and the incapacity of Yale to handle more students. They also asserted, "We have received many excellent men from the colleges of New England, but candidates among them are become so scarce and our vacancies are so numerous, that we find by experience that it is in vain for us to expect an adequate supply from them." However, while a great deal of truth resided in what Dickinson and Burr said, behind their explanations was the fact that the New England schools were no place for young men with New Side leanings. This was especially evident after David Brainard was expelled from Yale for privately criticizing one of the faculty members. Burr later admitted that "had it not been for the treatment received by Mr. Brainard at Yale College, New Jersey College never would have been erected."  

For the reasons just listed, four ministers from the Presbytery of
New York and three New York City laymen conceived the idea of a college for the Middle Colonies. The ministers initiating this program were Jonathan Dickinson, Ebenezer Pemberton, John Pierson, and Aaron Burr. However, when this group applied for a charter in the winter of 1745-46, Governor Lewis Morris, a zealous Anglican who resented the growth of non-conformists, rejected their application. Therefore, not until Morris died in the spring of 1746 did the way open for approval of the charter. Upon Morris' death, John Hamilton, who served as temporary governor, signed the charter on October 22, 1746.  

The Anglicans of the colony immediately attacked the charter, insisting that the governor was losing his mind from old age. They did have some basis for their complaint, for Hamilton was sick with palsy and so old that he had to depend on his advisors to handle such matters. The chief of these advisors were James Alexander, Robert Hunter Morris, John Coxe, and Charles Reade, all friends of the proposed college and liberal subscribers to its endowment.  

Once the charter was received, the seven original founders—the four ministers plus William Smith, William Peartree Smith, and Peter Van Brugh Livingston—selected five other men to serve as trustees with them. All five of these were New Side ministers; further, four of them, Gilbert Tennent, William Tennent, Jr., Samuel Blair, and Samuel Finley were Log College graduates. The other man was Richard Treat, a graduate of Yale. Because the Log College supplied one-third of the original

19 Wertenbaker, Princeton, pp. 21-22.
20 Ibid.
twelve trustees of the College of New Jersey, plus one permanent and two acting presidents later in the school's history, some historians have claimed the Log College as the mother of the New Jersey institution. Varnum Collins even thought that the Log College party probably had a secret agreement with the seven founders to keep the names of the five later trustees off the charter because these men were too controversial. 21 However, John Maclean was no doubt correct when he said: "With no more propriety, therefore, can we look to the Log College to discover the origin of the College of New Jersey than we can to the headwaters of the Neshaminy to ascertain the fountainhead of the Delaware, of which the Neshaminy is but a branch and tributary." 22

The College of New Jersey, the official title of Princeton University until 1896, opened its doors in Elizabethtown during the last week of May, 1746, with Jonathan Dickinson serving as its first president and sole instructor. The goal of the school was not only to provide a seminary for the education of ministers but also to "raise up men that will be useful in other learned professions--ornaments of the state as well as the church." 23 Therefore, the college welcomed students from all Protestant denominations in the colonies.

The new school suffered from two serious problems during its early years. The first of these, which was financial, was largely solved in

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23 "Account of the College of New Jersey."
1753 when the college sent Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Davies to England to raise money for the school. Despite severe opposition from the Old Side which sent copies of Tennent's "Nottingham Sermon" to London, the two trustees did succeed in raising a substantial sum of money for the college. The second problem was more serious, for the first four presidents of the school died in office. Jonathan Dickinson expired in the first year of the school's existence; during the next thirteen years three other presidents—Aaron Burr, Jonathan Edwards, and Samuel Davies—also vacated the office because of death. Between their terms of office several temporary presidents also briefly served. Thus the school did not have a strong, lasting leader until Samuel Finley accepted the position in 1761. Nevertheless, the school was able to supply the new synod with the ministers which it needed during these early years.

The Growth of the New Synod

The future of the Synod of New York depended greatly upon the future of the College of New Jersey. Since this school was the only place the synod had to train its ministerial students, it could not grow unless the college also prospered. The Synod of Philadelphia, on

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24 Alexander, Log College, pp. 54-57.


the other hand, faced a bleak future from the time of the split, for it had no school to supply the ministers it needed. While Harvard and Yale were receptive to Old Side students, distance and expenses still made it impossible for the old synod to educate its pastors in this manner. Therefore, just as the Log College had earlier enabled the movement to infiltrate the synod by providing outstanding leaders, so now it also appeared that the College of New Jersey would enable the new synod to outdistance the old one. Soon, because of superior numbers, character, and influence, the new synod would prosper while the old synod would decline.

The increase in the number of ministers during the time of separation provides the strongest evidence of the triumph of the evangelical party over the conservative party. In 1741, at the time of the schism, the Synod of Philadelphia had forty-three ministers, including those who were absent from that meeting. Of this number, only eleven were loyal to the movement. In 1745, when the Synod of New York was organized, the Synod of Philadelphia numbered twenty-five ministers and the new synod twenty-two. In 1758, when the two synods united, the Old Side synod numbered twenty-two and the New Side synod seventy-two. Thus in the united synod the evangelical party was three times more numerous than the conservative party.

Because many of the ministers of the Synod of Philadelphia were old men by 1745 and because many of their new recruits were morally

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27 *Records*, pp. 147, 153, 159.
unfit or discouraged by the hard conditions of colonial life, the old
synod actually had a net loss of three ministers during the schism.
The Synod of New York also lost some of its ministers, but for a much
different reason. Worn out by their constant travels, John Rowland,
William Robinson, Samuel Blair, and Samuel Davies all died young.
However, since the Great Awakening had provided the New Side churches
with numerous young people and the College of New Jersey was available
to train them, the synod grew in spite of its losses. Between 1745
and 1748 it showed a net gain of fifty. 29

The Synod of New York not only increased its numbers with young
people from its own churches but also with those from the Congregational
churches of New England: These students would attend the College of
New Jersey instead of Yale or Harvard because of the opposition of the
latter schools to revivals. By 1755 Yale had lost so many students that
it hired a New Side Presbyterian minister named Naphthali Dagget to be
its college pastor and professor of divinity. A revival shortly fol-
lowed in the school, and after that there was a great interchange of
students between the New England Congregational churches and the chur-
ches of the Synod of New York. 30

In the same way that the new synod's growth followed the success
of its school, the old synod's decline came after failure of its educa-
tional endeavors. The Old Side college at New London closed in the

29 Webster, History of Presbyterian Church, p. 251; Hodge, Constitu-
30 Trinterud, American Tradition, p. 127.
same year that the College of New Jersey began. It had tied its future to the hope of making an agreement with Yale to send its students there for one additional year of training and a degree. When Yale rejected this proposal, the school had no more to offer than the Log College; Francis Alison, the sole instructor, became discouraged and left for the College of Philadelphia. The Old Side then hoped to train its students by having them attend the College of Philadelphia while studying theology under Robert Cross, but the College of Philadelphia never approved this arrangement. The Synod of Philadelphia was left to gather the few recruits it could from Great Britain and New England. Therefore, once again while a school was the key to the evangelicals' success, the lack of a school was the key to the conservatives' failure.

The Union of the Two Synods

Although the Synod of New York progressed and the Synod of Philadelphia declined during the schism, it was the evangelicals who worked hardest for reunion. Even before the Presbytery of New York withdrew in 1745, it sent three representatives to the old synod to request permission for the organizing of a new synod which would act in harmony with the old one. The conservatives replied that the New York group did not have just grounds for withdrawing but that they would maintain a charitable attitude toward them. When the Synod of New York organized itself in that year, its members mutually agreed to promote

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32 Records, pp. 175-79.
common religious interests with the Old Side synod.\textsuperscript{33}

While the two synods were separated, the New Side, led by Jonathan Dickinson, took the initiative for reunion. At the forming of the Synod of New York, Dickinson insisted that the two synods send correspondents to each other's meetings. He also proposed that the two synods meet together once every three years.\textsuperscript{34} The Old Side, however, refused to consider union until the New Side confessed its divisive actions, showed how it was going to educate youth for the ministry, and stopped bringing good learning into contempt.\textsuperscript{35} This Old Side attitude and Dickinson's untimely death in 1747 ended all attempts at reunion until 1749.

Devising a Plan of Union

In 1749 the Synod of New York, now under the leadership of Gilbert Tennent,\textsuperscript{36} sent a generous set of proposals to the old synod. This led to the formation of a committee from the two bodies to attempt to resolve their differences. However, the committee discovered that four issues were insoluble—(1) the protest of 1741, (2) the Adopting Act of 1729, (3) the revival as a work of God, and (4) the manner in which presbyteries and congregations would be merged. The New Side had

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 234.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., pp. 233-34.

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 189.

\textsuperscript{36}After the death of Dickinson, Gilbert Tennent published two pleas for peace which returned him to the role of leader. These two publications will be considered later in this chapter.
demanded that the Old Side withdraw its protest, return to the Adopting
Act of 1729, and recognize the revival as being of God. The Synod of
Philadelphia rejected all these points, asserting that the protest was
justified and that the revival was as much of Satan as of God. On
the other hand, the Old Side had demanded that the presbyteries and
congregations be merged and reconstituted as before the schism. Since
this would have left the Old Side ministers in control of most of the
congregations in existence before 1741 and would have ousted many New
Side men, the Synod of New York rejected this proposal.

In 1750 the New Side again offered a plan of reunion. This time
the evangelicals had rewritten the measure on creedal subscription to
make it more acceptable to the Old Side. They had also agreed to for­
bid intrusions into the congregations of conservative ministers. How­
ever, the new plan still called for no remodeling of presbyteries,
sought a declaration that the conservative protest was void, and asked
for a favorable statement concerning the revival. The Synod of Phil­
adelp hia responded to this plan with one of its own, calling for sub­
scription along the lines of the 1736 Act, a synodical examination of
ministers, the merger of all presbyteries and divided congregations
where the Old Side had been hurt, and the acceptance of all Old Side
rules and acts since 1741. The old synod made no mention of either the

protest or the revival in this reply. 40

The Synod of New York rejected all of these proposals in 1751 and also refused to allow a united synod to examine its ministers. 41 As a result of this cool response, the Old Side sent an angry letter to the New Side in 1752. The conservatives charged the New Side with hypocrisy, charging that if the evangelicals really wanted to bury differences they would not always emphasize the protest of 1741. In this letter, the Synod of Philadelphia expressed a willingness to act as if the protest had never been made and a willingness to do away with synodical examinations if the candidates had a college degree. However, the Old Side also reaffirmed its desire for a strong synod and again refused to praise the revival. 42

This letter revealed that the Synod of Philadelphia was softening on both the protest and the examination of candidates. Although the Old Side would not withdraw its protest (for to do so would have meant to admit that it had been in error) it was willing to disregard it. In addition, its concession on the examination of candidates made it possible for the graduates of the College of New Jersey to be licensed without undergoing questioning from the synod. However, the Old Side was still saying in effect that the evangelicals had to ask for readmission to its synod. Therefore, the New Side did not respond to this letter until 1753, when it once again called for an action making the

40 Ibid., pp. 203 ff.
41 Ibid., pp. 246 ff.
42 Ibid., pp. 207 ff.
protest void, requiring no forceful merging of presbyteries or congregations, and establishing no all-powerful synod. 43

Both synods realized by this time that they were approaching agreement on several important issues. Therefore, in 1754 a joint committee was composed at the request of the Old Side. By 1756 this committee had solved all the differences except the protest. This led the Synod of New York to suggest in that year that the union be formed on the other points and that the united synod be allowed to decide the differences between the protestors and those whom the protest named. 44 The Synod of Philadelphia evaded this proposal by arguing that the basis of reunion should be the status quo before June 1, 1741, meaning that all presbyteries should be united and that the protest should be allowed as the private judgment of those who made it but not as the action of the Synod of Philadelphia. 45 Both sides adopted this approach with a few amendments and on May 29, 1758 the reunited denomination met in Gilbert Tennent's church with Tennent as moderator. 46

The Rhetoric of Reconciliation

While the two synods were working toward a mutual understanding, Gilbert Tennent was also preparing the masses for the coming merger. In 1748 he preached a sermon on brotherly love at his church in

Philadelphia, and later in the same year he had it published. The thesis of the message was that one must grant the same liberty to his neighbor that he takes for himself. Tennent warned his audience that there was danger in loving those men who agreed with them on every minute point and holding in contempt those who were without fervor in their Christian profession. He went on to maintain that the experienced Christian learns to be forgiving because of his own blunders and faults. Thus instead of judging the weaknesses and defects of those with whom one differs, Tennent asked his hearers to stress their offending brethren's good points and in this way to strive for agreement.

This sermon prepared the way for Tennent's famous essay on unity, which he published the following year. Just as "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry" had been instrumental in splitting the Presbyterian Church, so "Irenicum Ecclesiasticum" was instrumental in bringing about its reunion. However, in the same way that Tennent overstated his case in attacking his opponents, he now went to the opposite extreme and minimized the differences between the two parties. The purpose of his conciliatory message was to demonstrate that the disagreements between the two sides were only over mere circumstances of discipline and over divergent estimates of how many people were converted during the Great Awakening. As evidenced from the issues which arose as the two

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synods attempted to reconcile their differences, Tennent had grossly understated these differences.

Nevertheless, Tennent's essay, which was a compilation of sermons he had earlier preached to his own congregation, was assimilated by the conservatives because of its many rejections and conciliatory gestures. Even though the essay understated the differences between the two groups, many clergymen chose to believe these understatements because of their overriding desire for unity. In the case of the masses, the Tennent ethos was also a motivating factor which caused them to accept his explanations. As they had followed his leading in the past, so now they were also willing to heed his advice. Besides, when the leaders of the movement ceased their attacks on the conservatives, the masses began to overlook the differences. Like their opponents, they were also willing to try working together, for Presbyterianism had always been a unified denomination: Both groups still adhered to the same essential doctrines. However, some of the converts to Presbyterianism during the revival were not willing to forget the past. When the movement rejoined the synod, and thereby also introduced form and order, these people identified with less-structured groups such as the Baptists.49

The most important concession Tennent made in "Irenicum Ecclesiasticum" was his disavowal of the authority of the church to judge the inward experiences of those who sought church membership or came to the

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49 Trinterud, American Tradition, p. 207.
If Tennent had proceeded in a logical manner, he would have also denied the authority of the church to judge the experiences of candidates for the ministry. However, to do so would have meant the surrender of one of the main evangelical contentions. Therefore, he chose rather to avoid completely the issue of the qualifications for the ministry. In a similar manner, not only Tennent and the evangelicals but also the conservatives avoided the whole subject of proper ministerial discipline. The emphasis from 1749 to 1758 was on points of agreement instead of points of contention.

When the two synods finally agreed on their plan of unity, two other leaders preached messages of reconciliation. Francis Alison, speaking for the Old Side, delivered a sermon entitled "Peace and Union Recommended" to the two groups on May 24, 1758. On the following day, David Bostwick, who was then serving as the moderator of the Synod of New York, delivered a message called "Self Disclaimed and Christ Exalted." These two leaders had their sermons published independently, and then later in 1758 the united synod had them published together. Alison, formerly one of the bitterest critics of Gilbert Tennent and his associates, established the basis for unity when he stressed the need for charity and forbearance, since those with such wide diversities of background could not agree on all points. He then closed his sermon with a compliment to his once dangerous enemy: "Gilbert

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50 _Irenicum_, pp. 26-27.


Tennent... has written more and suffered more for his writings, to promote peace and union, than any member of this divided church."

Dealing With Differences

Although Alison and Bostwick sounded notes of harmony in 1758, the varying backgrounds of the ministers who composed the united synod made agreement difficult. One of the largest barriers was the unbalanced number of conservative and evangelical members of the synod. The Old Side had few distinguished pastors in its group. Since these ministers had been unable to efficiently compete with the evangelicals, their congregations were in small, obscure places and were not noted for size, liberality, or zeal. This party found itself outnumbered three to one in the united body, with its former opponents also in control of the more influential churches. Of the approximately one hundred ministers who were now members of the combined synod, only fifteen had studied in Ulster or Scotland. The rest were products of the New World, ten of them from the Log College, five from Harvard, a few from the small private schools, and the vast majority from either Yale or the College of New Jersey. Therefore, by the time of union, the Presbyterian Church had become Americanized, making it difficult for Old World ministers to adjust.  

Because of the large difference in the number of Old Side and New Side members, the most difficult task which faced the new assembly at

53 Ibid., p. 51.
54 Trinterud, American Tradition, pp. 150-52.
its first meeting was the reorganization of presbyteries. Since New York and Suffolk were composed entirely of evangelicals and Donegal entirely of conservatives, they were left unchanged. The two New Castle presbyteries also remained intact until the following year, even though the New Side prebytery overlapped the same area covered by Donegal. The synod adjusted the other presbyteries in the following manner: New Brunswick added two Old Side men; Lewestown was composed of two Old Side and three New Side members; Hanover consisted of seven New Side ministers and three Old Side; and Philadelphia and Abington were combined to include three Old Side and nine New Side pastors.55

**Disagreement Over the Arrangement of Presbyteries**

The first strife in the synod arose in 1759 over the way in which the presbyteries were reorganized the previous year. The three Old Side members of Hanover wanted to become a separate presbytery because they contended Hanover was too far to travel. The synod refused to make the change because Hanover was small; it did, however, order the presbytery to alternate its places of meeting. It also promised a division of the presbytery after it grew. However, this did not settle the problem, for the New Side members of Hanover took offense at the three members' request. Other men in the synod also reacted negatively to the decision, citing Lewestown as precedent for even smaller presbyteries, being originally composed of only five members. The trouble was compounded when the three Old Side ministers, who had

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been members of Donegal before the union, refused to become a part of Hanover. They finally changed their minds; nine years later Hanover was forced to suspend two of them for immorality. 56

The Presbytery of Philadelphia also experienced trouble after reorganization. It had only three Old Side men at the time of the union, and Robert Cross, one of the original three, retired the following year. A second member, Francis Alison, devoted most of his time to the College of Philadelphia, leaving only one man in the active ministry. The weakness of the Old Side in its capital later led to serious trouble because Alison and Cross wanted the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia pastored by a man favorable to their viewpoint. 57

The severest problem of all in 1759 grew out of the merger of the two New Castle presbyteries and Donegal. This brought together strong New Side and Old Side factions in an area which had a large number of Scotch-Irish congregations. The difficulties here centered upon the uniting of New Side and Old Side churches. One of the most delicate cases involved George Duffield, a rising leader among the evangelicals. When John Steel, an Old Side minister, accepted a call to pastor a rural church in Duffield's locality, Duffield wrote a letter to a friend criticizing Steel. However, Steel intercepted the letter and accused Duffield of attacking his character. Several months passed

56 "Minutes of the Presbytery of Hanover," Manuscript in the Presbyterian Historical Society, March 18, 1755, September 28, 1758, April 25, 1759, July 18, 1759, June 5, 1766.

before the Presbytery of Donegal was able to appease both men by making Steel return the letter but allowing him to pastor the church.  

At the 1762 synod meeting, the problem of reorganization again arose. This time the conservatives in the Presbytery of Philadelphia demanded and received a second presbytery in the Philadelphia area. Alison and Cross, even though the one was concerned with a college and the other was retired, were members of this group, along with three other men: They sought to obtain political power in the church, power denied them because New Side ministers had outnumbered them under the original arrangement. Later this presbytery became a haven for the discontented Old Side sympathizers.

In 1765 the synod attempted to resolve the difficulties which stemmed from the way it had originally reorganized the presbyteries by making still another rearrangement. Donegal and New Castle were aligned with two new presbyteries, Lancaster and Carlisle, in a move to break up the cliques. However, a year later the situation was worse than before, so the synod restored the two old presbyteries. This only further complicated the problem, for then seven Old Side men from Donegal renounced the reunion of 1758 and withdrew from the synod. Included in this group were the most morally and personally corrupt members of the synod, but this body was so dedicated to holding the church together that in 1768 it allowed these men to state their own terms of

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58 "Minutes of the Presbytery of Donegal," Manuscript in the Presbyterian Historical Society, October 23, 1760, January 1, 1761.

59 Trinterud, American Tradition, p. 158.
reunion. Four of them chose to join the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, while the other three returned to Donegal. Although a minority of New Side members protested that such action fostered party-controlled presbyteries, the majority valued nominal unity above all else and accepted the terms of the seven dissenters. The future course of the church substantiated the warnings of the minority, for each side then engaged in a race for political power by licensing men according to its own qualifications.

Disagreement over Examining Candidates

The second problem area for the united synod involved the ability of a presbytery to judge the work of grace in a candidate's life. Since several of the presbyteries contained both Old Side and New Side men, different criteria existed for determining whether a candidate was qualified for the ministry. In 1760 the evangelicals expressed dissatisfaction with three men admitted to the Presbytery of Philadelphia. They questioned the conversion experiences of Samuel Magaw and John Beard and strongly disapproved of the way Hugh Williamson became a member of the presbytery. Williamson, who had previously been a member of New Castle, went to New England for licensing to escape the rigorous examination he knew he would receive from the New Side members of Philadelphia. The evangelicals of both New Castle and Philadelphia argued that this was illegal, and the synod was forced to deal

60 "Minutes of the Presbytery of Donegal," June 22, 1764, June 24, 1767.

61 Trinterud, American Tradition, p. 164.
with the problem. It received Williamson as a member but refused to rule on the principle involved in the case. 62

Two years later, in 1762, the synod conducted a detailed discussion on whether a candidate's description of his conversion was a proper part of his examination. Because trouble was expected, the mediating group from New York once again did not attend the meeting in numbers. 63 The synod spent three full days listening to speeches on the subject allowing every member to state his views as his name appeared on the roll. A roll call vote was then taken which revealed that the majority favored the use of an examination of experience. Before the subject was closed, two members from New York whom that presbytery had sent, presented a set of proposals to maintain peace and harmony. 64 However, a satisfactory solution was never found, and the disagreements between the conservatives and the evangelicals on this issue continued.

In 1763 a publishing war began over this problem. James Finley of the New Side initiated the battle by asserting in an essay that bringing unqualified men into the ministry would only result in disgrace for the profession. 65 Patrick Allison, a student of Francis Alison, presented the Old Side point of view in 1766. In an

62 Records, p. 305.
63 Trinterud, American Tradition, p. 167.
64 Records, pp. 317-19.
anonymously published pamphlet, he listed three qualifications of the ministry—gifts, learning, and holiness. Allison then argued that the first two were essential and could be tested, while the third could not. 66 John Blair, a Log College graduate, attacked Allison's position in the same year. He replied that the real question was whether doctrinal ideas and external life were related. He argued that since they were, a man's conversion experience could be judged on the basis of his conduct. 67

**Disagreement Over Ministerial Discipline**

The third major problem which impeded the synod after its reunion arose from the issue of ministerial discipline. The evangelicals were dedicated to the establishment of a godly ministry; therefore, they went to great measures to discipline those of their ranks guilty of misconduct or immorality. By 1767 four presbyteries under the control of New Side ministers—New Brunswick, New Castle, Philadelphia, and Lewes—had taken disciplinary action against their members. The New Side expelled Samuel Harker for doctrinal reasons; disciplined Andrew Bay, Daniel Thane, Andrew Sterling, and Charles Tennent for drunkenness; and censured Charles McKnight for suspending a church deacon without a trial. 68


The conservatives in the synod, probably out of fear of losing members, were often unwilling to discipline those of their ranks. Sampson Smith, moderator of Donegal, was accused of drunkenness in 1761. However, he called in three relatives to be his judges, and they acquitted him the following year. Also in 1761 the Old Side ordained William Hannah through trickery in Albany, New York. The Presbytery of New Castle had previously expelled Hannah for misconduct. Because the presbyteries were often controlled by New Side men, the conservatives could not prevent the discipline of some of their members. Therefore, before the union was fifteen years old the conservatives had lost at least five members to New Side discipline.

Since so much disagreement did exist in the basic philosophies of the Old Side and New Side parties, the institutional stage of the movement was one of constant problems. During these years the denomination did grow and prosper, but too many divergent views existed for there to be real harmony. The conservatives and the evangelicals both modified their images of each other to the extent that they could meet together. The name calling and the use of invectives disappeared, but the deep feelings of hostility still lay buried beneath the surface and on occasion reappeared. In the same way, the masses who had sided with the movement and the common people who had remained loyal to the institutional church never forgot their disputes. Although some of the churches which divided during the Great Awakening were able to join together, the majority of them remained separate after the reunion. On

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69 Ibid., pp. 153-164.
both a denominational and a congregational level, "the union begun without love and maintained without harmony was bringing forth seeds of strife for generations yet unborn."\(^{70}\)

However, without the image changes which both the evangelicals and the conservatives made during the final phase, any type of merger would have been impossible. When the period opened, each group despised the other and blamed it for the split in the denomination. The evangelicals were the first to adopt a new outlook, for the success of their synod placed them in a position where they could afford to make concessions. Therefore, they began once again to view the orthodox ministers as colleagues instead of enemies. Through their rhetoric of reconciliation, the evangelicals attempted to repair the damage caused by their earlier verbal outbursts. The conservatives, on the other hand, modified their image of the reformers out of necessity. Shortly after the Presbytery of New York withdrew from the original synod, the remaining faction came to realize that it could not survive alone. Thus, when the New Side proposed reunion, the Old Side began to alter its outlook of its former associates. Eventually it came to look upon them as disagreeing brethren who were entitled to their own viewpoint. As a result of these two image modifications, the synods were able to join together in the creation of the unified denomination which both desired. Therefore, as image changes had once led to a schism in the Presbyterian Church, further image changes now led to its reunion.

\(^{70}\text{Ibid., p. 165.}\)
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Religious revivals swept through America and Europe during the eighteenth century in response to the prevailing social conditions. Over two million people migrated to America between 1690 and the Revolutionary War in order to escape religious persecution and poverty. In the colonies a large portion of these settlers became indifferent toward religion, seeking in its place prosperity, adventure, and escape from the past. Another portion of these immigrants still had a deep commitment to religious faith; however, they were dissatisfied with institutionalized churches because their emphasis conflicted with their own value systems and because the churches failed to meet their spiritual needs. Nevertheless, most of the people in both of these groups were still religiously oriented and prime targets for a religious movement.

Not only were the masses frustrated and desirous of change, but the churches in the colonies were unable to cope with this situation; every major denomination in America suffered from a shortage of ministers and a lack of authority. The prevailing social unrest of the masses, coupled with the weak religious institutions, provided rich soil for the rise of a movement. The only other necessary ingredient was leaders who would voice the discontent of the people and provide direction for their feelings. When these leaders arose, microscopic
movements appeared in every segment of the colonies and every denomination in America. Eventually all of these movements united in one vast undertaking known as the Great Awakening.

The subject of this dissertation has been the revival which erupted in the Presbyterian Church in the Middle Colonies. While one of the purposes of the study has been to trace the history of that microscopic movement, the overriding purpose has been to show what role rhetoric played in the shaping of that history. The hypothesis of the author was that images must be changed if movements are to progress and ultimately succeed. In all movements rhetoric is an important tool of image change; in some movements it is the only tool. The latter was the case in the revival of the Presbyterian Church. This revival went through four different phases; in each phase at least one important image change, brought about by the use of rhetoric, propelled the movement into its next stage.

The Major Image Changes

The movement began when Gilbert Tennent, the first graduate of the Log College, became a Presbyterian minister. Tennent, because of his emotional conversion experience and his unique educational training, brought a new emphasis to the denomination. He precipitated a revival in his own church and in a church on Staten Island. In the course of the phase of social unrest, Tennent was joined by his two brothers, John and William. Together they served as agitators, directing and intensifying the unrest and providing the masses with a means of releasing their tensions. Through their rhetoric, these three brothers convinced their audiences that religion was not an outward conformity.
to a set of rules, but an inward relationship to God. Their preaching about conviction, conversion, and assurance brought about an image change among the masses from indifference and discontent to concern and hope. By giving the masses a strong basis for religious faith apart from the organized church, the Tennents were weakening the people's ties to the existing institution. The image change which resulted from the agitation brought the movement into its second phase, where the masses continued in increasing numbers to adopt this outlook.

During the stage of collective excitement, the movement gained the support of three additional graduates of the Log College. Because this influx was not enough to offset the conservative hold on the synod when Gilbert Tennent presented a plan of reform, the orthodox ministers ignored it. As a result of the failure of its first strategy, the outnumbered group resorted to the tactic of itinerant preaching. Through this diffusion method, it was able to disseminate its message far beyond what its limited resources appeared to allow. As the spirit of revival began to spread, the conservatives became overly alarmed and passed a ban on itinerant preaching which proved ineffective, for the evangelicals disregarded it. Therefore, the synod next passed an educational restriction in an effort to keep the movement from recruiting new members. These two actions indicated that the leaders of the institutionalized church made the second major image change. They now viewed the Log College graduates not as a harmless faction, but as a serious threat to the denomination's orthodoxy. In the eyes of the conservatives, these young radicals were unqualified and their preaching was divisive. As a result of this image change, coupled with increasing
support from the masses, the movement formally organized to defend itself, thereby entering its third stage.

Because of the unfavorable view which their rivals had of them, the members of the Log College party drew closer together. Once they had succeeded in their first endeavor to obtain their own presbytery for a base of operations, they began to increase their numbers by defying the synod's authority regarding the educational examination. This action, plus continued itinerant preaching, brought reprisals and censuring from the synod. At this point the movement made an important image change: Realizing that to work within the system was becoming increasingly difficult, the leaders escalated the battle with their orthodox colleagues by bitter rhetorical assaults. Instead of viewing their associates as God's servants, they came to look upon them as the instruments of Satan, an image change which led to the expulsion of the evangelicals from the synod.

Since a large number of laymen sided with the movement because of the work of its leaders and because of the preaching of Whitefield, it was able to survive the split. For the next four years it struggled alone, spreading the fires of revival but unable to solidify its gains. However, during these four years the synod moderates from New York were also undergoing a change of image. Visited by Whitefield on his second tour, their churches experienced sweeping revivals. This led the ministers from New York to support the Great Awakening as a work of God, thereby identifying with the Log College party. No longer able to hold a mediate position in a divided synod, the moderates withdrew and joined the movement. Therefore, as a result of their image change, due
first to the work of Whitefield and secondly to the illegality of the 
conservatives' actions in expelling the evangelicals, the pastors from 
the Presbytery of New York enabled the movement to advance into its 
last stage by providing it with the manpower and the leadership it 
needed.

After the moderates withdrew from the Synod of Philadelphia, they 
united with the more radical evangelicals in the creation of a rival 
synod. This union marked the beginning of the institutional phase. 
The superior numbers and superior quality of members in this group made 
it possible for the new synod to prosper, while the old synod declined. 
At this point, both the New Side and the Old Side ministers began to 
undergo image changes. Those in the successful synod could now afford 
to bury their animosities because of their strength. Therefore, they 
made conciliatory gestures and offers of reunion to the conservatives, 
whom they were coming to view not as unconverted hypocrites but as 
fellow ministers of God with a different outlook. Those in the disinte­
grating synod, on the other hand, were forced by their own weakness 
to capitulate. Thus they began to look upon their former opponents as 
disagreeing co-laborers instead of as uneducated revolutionaries. On 
the basis of these new images, the two synods eventually compromised 
their differences and reunited. However, because some hostilities still 
existed beneath the surface harmony, the union was plagued with con­
stant conflicts. Less than fifty years after the synods of New York 
and Philadelphia came together, the cycle completed itself, and a new 
revival and a new schism occurred.
An Assessment of the Movement's Rhetoric

The preceding section indicates that the movement to reform the Presbyterian Church succeeded, for the reformers gained control of the denomination. However, success is not a reliable standard for evaluating the quality of the discourses which the reform leaders delivered. While rhetorical critics must assume that rhetoric produces effects, it is usually impossible for them to determine what part rhetoric played in light of the other forces which were also operating. Since such is the case in this study, this section will appraise the movement's rhetoric in relation to its potential ability to achieve its sources' purpose. In addition to assessing the potential capability of the various discourses to produce the desired image changes, this section will also consider the moral aspects of the situation.

The messages the leaders of the Log College party addressed to the masses possessed great persuasiveness, for their premises coincided with the value system of that audience. In addition, these messages offered that group the hope and faith for which it searched. Under such circumstances, one may assume that the rhetoric which the movement generated to the masses was capable of achieving the rhetors' purpose.

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1This is essentially the approach advocated by Wayland Parrish. Edwin Black argued that it was a return to the effects standard, but since rhetoric is an art aimed at instrumental effects, I do not believe the artistic qualities of a speech can be judged apart from its source's intended purpose. Therefore, I view this approach as primarily an application of the artistic standard. William R. Brown suggested that Parrish should have used the term "efficaciousness" instead of "efficaciveness" to describe his position since the former term connotes potential effectiveness. (See Edwin Black, Rhetorical Criticism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), pp. 61-66.)
The fact that the common people rushed to the support of the evangelicals seems to indicate that these messages were persuasive. However, other variables besides the discourses no doubt also contributed to this effect.

The in-group reform rhetoric that Gilbert Tennent presented to the Synod of Philadelphia during the second phase did not possess the same capability. This time the proposals of the movement conflicted with the outlook of its intended audience; in this case the rhetorical critic should expect such rhetoric to fail. The historical events that transpired imply that this is what happened: Even though the members of the synod agreed that some form of change was necessary, they reacted against change which would force them to admit their own incompetence.

The messages the movement produced in its third phase were well-designed to bring about another image change in the masses. Since the Log College party had already formulated a favorable stance with this group, which was also displeased with the institutionalized church, it had a receptive audience when it attacked the denominational leaders. Tennent's ethos and the vivid imagery which he used in "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry" made this discourse potentially overly effective; the reactions of the common people during this period indicate that they were influenced by the inflammatory rhetoric.

During the final phase of the movement, Tennent and his associates found themselves in the power positions. Since the masses, the conservatives, and the leaders of the movement all desired unity by this time, the evangelicals were able to generate messages with the potential
of being accepted by everyone. The union which later occurred testifies to the influence of these discourses. Thus, only the movement's rhetoric to the orthodox clergy during the second phase lacked potential persuasability. All the other Log College messages contained features which should have led to favorable effects in the intended receivers.

When assessing the rhetoric of social movements, the critic must not only be aware of the intended audience, but he must also realize that other audiences may receive and respond to messages even though the rhetors never intended for them to do so. On two occasions, the Log College graduates faced difficult situations because the conservatives reacted to messages designed for the masses. The first unintended response came as a result of the masses' acceptance of the offer of conversion, when the growing number of adherents to the movement alarmed its opponents and brought reprisals in the form of synod restrictions. The second occurrence of undesired results came when the conservatives realized the bitter assaults against them were influencing the masses. This eventually led them to expel the evangelicals from the synod.

In the course of their campaign for reform, the leaders of the movement were never guilty of issuing conflicting messages to their various audiences. However, they did encounter ethical difficulties when they verbally assaulted their enemies during the third phase. To this point they had focused entirely on positive proposals, but when the synod discriminated against them, they cast aside all restraint in their retaliation. Gilbert Tennent distorted known reality by
classifying conservative ministers as unconverted, thereby condemning all of them for the shortcomings of only some. In doing so, Tennent debased himself and gained the reputation of a fanatic—a reputation he attempted to live down for the rest of his life. He also debased members of his audience by playing on their emotions apart from reality, and this probably contributed greatly to their harsh treatment of orthodox pastors. By his actions, Tennent set the example which his associates followed. Later such men as Samuel Finley also leveled unethical attacks.

However several considerations have a bearing on such behavior of the Log College alumni. First, the synod had illegally attempted to restrict them with an educational examination; this forced them to turn on their critics. Secondly, they delivered their attacks while under great emotional stress: Gilbert Tennent was especially ego-involved because the synod's action was against his father's school. Thirdly, later he and his former colleagues repented of their errors, even though they would never formally retract their statements. Finally, their messages were not harmful to their immediate cause but were effective responses to the opponents of the movement. Without addresses of this type, the movement would not have experienced such rapid success; however, neither would it have split the denomination. Thus, the evangelicals chose the most expedient path, even though it was not the most ethical, and in the end, probably not even the most productive. Therefore, although the above reasons do not justify what Tennent and his followers did, they do explain how it was possible for them to lose control of themselves and, momentarily, of the situation.
Implications of This Study

This analysis of the rhetoric of a reform movement underscores the importance of the audience in the rhetorical process. It implies that a critic cannot accurately judge the quality of a discourse apart from audience-held images. As the movement encountered a series of rhetorical crises in its evolution, the images of its receivers determined its destiny. When a particular audience had a favorable image of the movement and its program, then its rhetoric was instrumental in producing change. However, when an audience held an unfavorable image of the stance of the reform group, then its rhetoric was impotent. Therefore, the outlook of an audience is often the most influential element of a rhetorical transaction.

This study also suggests that rhetoric which appears in the context of a social movement should be assessed within that context. Critics too often divorce a message from the total situation, appraising it from the vantage point of the rhetor's career or the immediate context of the speech. Such criticism introduces error, for it usually overestimates the effect of an address since it fails to take into account other forces which were operating. This error is reduced when the critic considers a message in relationship to all the other events of a movement. By analyzing the rhetoric of the Log College graduates within the context of the movement to reform the Presbyterian Church, this study has discovered that the rhetoric of Gilbert Tennent was complemented by that of Samuel Blair and Samuel Finley; in addition to them, over a dozen other Log College alumni performed the important task of disseminating the doctrines of the movement. This discovery
indicates that the rhetoric of Tennent alone did not foster the revival; rather the Great Awakening in the Presbyterian Church occurred because a number of different men worked closely together for a common cause.

A third implication of this dissertation points to the necessity of analyzing discourses in relation to unintended receivers. Other audiences not addressed by the rhetor may receive and respond to his message. When this occurs, usually the results are undesirable and dangerous to the rhetor's cause. Speakers often try to avoid such situations by addressing conflicting messages to various audiences in hopes of deceiving their opponents. The graduates of the Log College avoided this unethical practice; yet, as a result their enemies reacted unfavorably to messages designed for the masses, leading almost to the downfall of the movement. Therefore, the unintended receiver is an additional element in a rhetorical situation and both the rhetor and the critic must be cognizant of him.

A fourth rhetorical discovery of this study testifies to the power of rhetoric to produce change. From the movement's preliminary stage of social unrest to its final stage of institutionalization, rhetoric served as the only tool of the revivalists. Through this device they gained control of the denomination and brought about its reformation. Such a finding challenges Eric Hoffer's contention that mass movements must resort to coercion since persuasion is insufficient to bring about change.¹ Unfortunately many of the social movements of the twentieth century distort the meaning of rhetoric and turn to the use of violence.

¹Hoffer, True Believer, pp. 202-07.
This dissertation questions whether such action is necessary, for it has illustrated not only the power of rhetoric, but also its destructive ability. Such a finding implies that not only coercion but also persuasion can be damaging and ultimately dangerous. Therefore, rhetorical violence, as well as non-rhetorical violence, raises ethical issues which the critic must face.

The final rhetorical implication of this study pertains to the use of contemporary sociological and rhetorical theory for the analysis of historical movements. Leland Griffin, who first recommended that the rhetorical critic conduct movement studies, advanced the critical practice of historical relativism: He argued that the critic should assess speeches in relation to the "theories of rhetoric and public opinion indigenous to the times." This study has violated Griffin's relativistic principle by using modern theories to interpret the past. If contemporary constructs from the social sciences describe behavior of human beings, they would appear to be useful in studying the past; further, contemporary rhetorical theory may incorporate the theories of persuasion held by partisans in the historical past. Finally, as Black observed, "If one appraises a historical movement in terms 'indigenous to the times,' one would be voluntarily sacrificing one of the distinct advantages of historical perspective, and without a compensatory gain."

This study also has several historical and sociological outcomes,

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4 Black, Rhetorical Criticism, pp. 21-22.
one being an historical reinterpretation of the Great Awakening. It was not a massive colony-wide revival which commenced with the arrival of George Whitefield in 1739. Neither did it begin under the preaching of Jonathan Edwards in 1734. Instead, it erupted from separate sources, the first being the Dutch Reformed and Presbyterian Churches of the Middle Colonies. In this section of America Gilbert Tennent became the principal leader. His influence and his reputation in his own day were as great as those of Edwards and Whitefield. However, modern scholarship has largely overlooked him.

Tennent was important historically because of his rhetorical greatness; his tongue and his pen were the prime weapons by which he crippled the establishment. He received recognition in his own day as an outstanding orator, both for his effects and the artistic qualities of his preaching. Friends and enemies alike attested to his greatness: Not only did they constantly praise his talents, but many also attempted to imitate him. Apparently even Whitefield copied his style, for the Boston Weekly News-Letter printed a letter indicating that when Whitefield revisited New York, his hearers acquainted with him in other appearances noted a new directness in his preaching similar to Tennent's. Webster's belief in the strength of Tennent's influence prompted him to write, "Gilbert Tennent came to him [Whitefield]; his preaching powerfully influenced Whitefield, so that he came under Tennent's

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5 *Examination and Refutation*, p. 97.

control, drank of his spirit, and spoke his words." Therefore, because of Tennent's influence on the Great Awakening, because of the effects of his rhetoric on society, and because of the influence of his oratory on the speaking of others, he should be esteemed as a major historical and rhetorical figure. To the Presbyterian Church, he was the promised Messiah who came to institute a new order; to the Great Awakening as a whole, he was the John the Baptist who prepared the way for the coming of another.

Although the Great Awakening touched the churches of New England, the Middle Colonies, and the South, only in the Middle Colonies did it reform an existing institution. The Congregational churches of New England divided over the revivals and the conservatives maintained control of that denomination. In the South, the Methodists and the Baptists emerged from the revivals, while the institutionalized Anglican Church remained untouched. However, in the Middle Colonies the Presbyterian denomination was shaken from its former ways and totally renovated. Therefore, it serves as a model of what happens when a social movement succeeds within the confines of an established institution. Another interesting study would be to trace the completion of the cycle and the similarities between this movement and the one which occurred in the same denomination in the following century. The issues appear to be largely the same when another schism resulted. Perhaps the same methodology could be used.

Besides this historical reinterpretation, this dissertation also

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7Webster, History of the Presbyterian Church, p. 142.
urges that image change is a prerequisite to the success of a mass movement. Unless the leaders of a movement can alter images, their undertaking will never succeed. Therefore, the sociologist should incorporate into his theory the ingredient of image change as the device which propels a movement into its next stage. This will help him to explain not only what happened but also why it happened.

A second sociological implication of this study pertains to the way in which a movement and the establishment reunite when a reformation succeeds. Because the leaders of a movement gain control, they can afford to be generous and make concessions. On the other hand, the destructive force of a successful movement is usually so great that it leaves the former institution too weak to survive on its own. As a result, it must in the end capitulate and accept the gracious offer of its former enemy if he is of a mind to capture the machinery of the original institution.

Third, the reformation of the Presbyterian Church reveals how audiences can be further subdivided regarding their images. Composing the masses were two main groups—the indifferent and the dissatisfied. Composing the evangelical wing of the synod were the moderates and the radicals. Composing the conservative party were the strict subscriptionists and those who believed some type of reforms were necessary. This indicates that it is not enough to know a person's general position, for different sub-groups within a category assimilate or contrast messages according to the degree they are committed to that position. In every effort aimed at mass change, radicals and moderates will exist at each extreme and the masses in the middle will hold the balance of power.
Likewise, there will be those who attempt to stay out of the struggle altogether. Therefore, since the mechanisms of change and the type of people who participate in movements are similar, this dissertation provides a pattern and a model for studying all varieties of movements.

This dissertation suggests that the pattern of a successful reformation will be: (1) the agitation of the frustration and discontent of the masses, (2) the refusal of the establishment to accept the movement's plan of reform, (3) an attempt by the movement to bypass the establishment, (4) the establishment's attack on the movement for circumventing its authority, (5) the movement's retaliation against the institution, (6) the struggle by both factions to win the support of the masses, (7) the allegiance of the masses and the institutional moderates with the movement, (8) the emergence of a new institution, and (9) conciliatory gestures of the movement and capitulation of the old order. This pattern is similar to the one outlined by Bowers and Ochs in The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control. They listed nine different strategies of a movement—petition, pomulgation, solidification, polarization, non-violent resistance, escalation/confrontation, Gandhi and guerilla, guerilla, and revolution. In addition, they also described four counter-strategies of the establishment—avoidance, suppression, adjustment, and capitulation.\(^8\)

The main difference between the two patterns is that mine stops short of theirs, for it includes only those strategies which are rhetorical. On the other hand, they admitted that the three strategies of Gandhi

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and guerilla, guerilla and revolution were non-rhetorical in nature. 9

In addition, the main focus of my pattern is on image change. A movement passes through the nine steps previously mentioned because of the emergence of new images among the chief participants. In a successful movement, five major image alterations should occur: (1) beginning in the first stage and culminating in the third stage, a change by the masses from frustration and discontent to hope for a better future; (2) in the second stage, a change by the establishment from indifference toward the movement to fear of its gains; (3) in the third stage, a change by the movement from respect for the institution to hatred of its policies and leaders; (4) also in the third stage, a change by the institutional moderates from a mediating position between the rival factions to identification with the movement; and (5) in the fourth stage, a change by the movement, establishment, and the masses from hostility toward one another to the necessity of peace and reunion.

These five generic image changes are specifically what sociologists should attempt to integrate into their movement theory. Unless these alterations occur in the above order, a movement will not progress through its various stages; in fact, it will culminate (usually in defeat) at whatever point the appropriate receivers do not make the necessary image change. For instance, a reform attempt will never advance beyond the stage of social unrest if the masses do not look upon it as the source of a brighter future. On the other hand, a movement

9Ibid., pp. 37-38.
will not pass from the stage of collective excitement to formal organization unless the establishment forces it to do so by rejecting its reforms and treating it as a threat to the prevailing institution. Until an image alteration in the institutional hierarchy produces such actions, the movement will continue to strive for reform through existing channels. Only after the leaders of the movement perceive these channels to be closed will they band together to work around the system.

Explicit throughout this dissertation has been the premise that values are the main determiners of images. This being the case, a confrontation between the leaders of a movement and the leaders of an establishment is inevitable, for their value systems constantly clash. This makes it virtually impossible for either group to maintain a favorable image of the other one. As a result, the crucial battle in any reformation will be fought by these two opposing parties for the minds of the masses. Whichever faction ties its proposals most closely to the values of the common people will eventually win the majority of them to its side, thereby also securing ultimate victory; for the institutional moderates will usually side with the winning party.

Since identification with the values of the masses is the main criterion of success, this study has endeavored to recreate the value systems of that group. Because of the scantiness of available historical material and the subjective methodology which was used, the most difficult facet of this dissertation has been the recreation of those values. Future movement studies should attempt to develop a better approach for ascertaining values and should also focus more
closely on clusters of values than this study has done. As improvements are made in these areas, it will become easier to describe why certain images were held and also to predict in a contemporary movement whether the movement or the establishment will succeed.

In conclusion, the writer feels that one of the major contributions of this dissertation is the model which has emerged for studying the rhetoric of social movements. The combination of contemporary sociological and rhetorical theory in a unique fashion has provided a new approach for the rhetorical critic interested in movement studies. The model is applicable to any type of social movement, not only to those which are religious in nature. In addition, it is as relevant for the study of contemporary movements as it is for historical movements. In fact, it might be even more appropriate for contemporary studies since it should be less difficult in this area to recreate the value systems on which audience images are built. Thus this dissertation supplies the rhetorical critic with an additional tool; however, it is a newly designed tool and, therefore, subject to further development. Perhaps other critics will modify and perfect it by using it to analyze the rhetoric of historical and contemporary social movements.

10 The rhetorician studying a contemporary movement should have an easier time identifying values, for he can resort to field study techniques.
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