

# Lessons from the Central European Roots of Evangelicalism

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Thank you. Thank you. Let's just pray together as we begin. Father in heaven, we invite you to be with us this morning by your Holy Spirit, that your Holy Spirit might be our teacher, and that in the course of thinking together about the work of the Spirit in times past, we might be made more wise and we might be made more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

So we pray for the teaching Holy Spirit to be with us in Christ's name. Amen. Several years ago, I was a speaker for a winter retreat.

I think this was the winter of 1999 at a 12th century castle in Austria at Schloss Mitterstil. I don't know if any of you have been there. Okay. And a wonderful thing for a historian to speak in a 12th century castle.

I flew with Carolyn and the three children, our three children from Vancouver. And we had a great week celebrating Christmas with Christians from all over Europe. My sister, Brenda, and her family came down from Poland where they were working as missionaries and joined us for a Christmas retreat at the Schloss.

Afterwards, we all drove back to Poland to spend some time with them at their home at Wodz. Top right-hand corner, Google Maps, Wodz.

[ 1 : 2 7 ] L-O-D-Z, pronounced just like it's spelt, Wodz. And the Schloss is down near Salzburg in Austria. Some weeks before this, I was at work in my basement study here in Canada, reading a dense scholarly account of the evangelical awakening in the North Atlantic world in the 18th century.

Actually, the one I was reading is this next one here, the Protestant evangelical awakening. It's one of a trilogy of important books written by the English historian Reginald Ward.

This is the last one. Really astonishing scholarship that has all come out since his retirement. He taught himself German, I think, in his 50s. And these books, since his retirement, have come out and have changed the way we look at the origins of the evangelical movement.

The middle book, The Protestant Evangelical Awakening, is a book I've never read so slowly or so many times. He's a very erudite, a very bright scholar, suffers no fools in the way he writes.

And, in fact, Mark Noel once offered me several thousand dollars to translate Reg Ward from English into English. But prior to going out to the Schloss with Carolyn and the kids, I was reading this book and studying it really slowly.

[ 2 : 5 2 ] And I kept coming across towns with unpronounceable names in Central Europe. Towns I had never heard of, but which were key centers for the earliest evangelical revivals in the modern world.

I had maps spread out all over the floor of my study as I tried to figure out the German and Polish names of towns in Silesia. This area, Silesia, on the border of the Czech Republic and Poland, and that has just passed back and forth from Germany to Poland and so on.

Most of the towns have German names and Polish names. And sometimes it's in Czech territory, sometimes it's in Polish territory. Was Glogow pronounced Glogow or Glogow?

Was Breslau really the same place as Wroclaw? And how do you pronounce that on my Michelin map of Poland? These places were important for me to get straight because they seemed to be the hot spot.

Hot spots in a revival in 1708 that began with children, then spread to adults and soon extended all along the length of the Oder River Valley from Germany to Slovakia.

[ 4 : 08 ] Now I knew all about the revival at Northampton, Massachusetts that began among the young people, among children, in Jonathan Edwards' parish in 1734 and spread up and down the Connecticut River Valley in New England.

But I didn't know about this earlier young people's revival in a different river valley in Central Europe. I was particularly interested in a town deep in the south of Poland with the German name Teschen, T-E-S-C-H-E-N, that seemed to be the focus of this revival.

On my Michelin map, I found a town on the Polish-Czech border that was named Cieszyn, C-I-E-S-Z-Y-N, on the Polish side and Teschi-Cheschen on the Czech side.

I had no idea how to pronounce this, so I phoned my sister in Poland. Brenda, when I come to Austria and speak at the retreat this Christmas and then we drive back to Wrocław to be with you, It looks like we crossed the border into Poland at a place spelled C-I-E-S-Z-Y-N.

How do you pronounce that? I heard her say something like Czeschen into the phone and that was enough to confirm to me that I had the right place, that Reg Ward spelt this other way.

[ 5 : 34 ] So to my great delight, I was going to see the place itself that I had been studying in these books I was reading. I was going to see it after Christmas on the way to my sister's house. I told Brenda there was a church I especially wanted to see with her, if it was still there.

It was called the Jesus Church and it was where the uprising of the children in 1708 was baptized into the church and became a wider church movement.

This church, the Jesus Church, became a nerve center of revival for Germans, Poles, Czechs and Slovaks. It was one of a handful of churches that the ruling Catholic dynasty, the Habsburgs, allowed the Protestants in the region to have.

And they had to raise the money for it themselves, which would have been very unusual at this time when churches would have been built through state support and taxation. And so they were called grace churches that the Habsburgs allowed the Protestants to have.

A series of German pietist pastors parachuted in from Germany and elsewhere to oversee the church. But soon the services at the Jesus Church attracted thousands more than could be accommodated.

[ 6 : 49 ] Some would walk all night to get there, start out on Saturday night and walk all through the night in order to get to the church for the services. The church held 5,000, multiple balconies.

The church is huge. But services had to begin at 6 in the morning on Sunday and continue all day in different languages. Great crowds inside and outside the church passed their time in prayer, confession and hymn singing and revival soon spread to the surrounding towns and villages.

Well, I really wanted to see this church with Brenda when we crossed the border. And so I did in the last days of December. I found out that Teschen was divided down the middle in 1920 between Czechoslovakia and Poland.

And that is why it has two names today. The Jesus Church on the Polish side is still standing. There is my sister in her bright red winter coat. After all these years and all the tumult of war, I mean, this area is astonishing for what it's been through.

Auschwitz is just an hour and a half away by car. The church still stands with its soaring Baroque tower 72 meters high. I found a plaque on the church.

[ 8 : 11 ] And in addition to this plaque, there was another one that Brenda's Polish babysitter translated for me. It told the same story that I had been reading about earlier in my study in Canada of the uprising of the children in 1708 and the revival at Teschen that followed.

So I did more research to follow up on what I had learned. This is the door that just says, I think it says just the Jesus Church. Anybody here read Polish?

Okay. Then you just can believe me. It says the Jesus Church. This is an old map to give you kind of an old feeling, put you in the mood. This is Silesia.

So just to orient yourself, this would be the Czech Republic, Moravia, Bohemia here, and Prague here. This is the kind of corner of Germany, East Germany, kind of poking into Czechoslovakia and Poland.

And this is the region of Silesia that we're talking about. So I did more research to follow up on what I had learned. I had been reading these scholarly monographs in my study.

[ 9 : 24 ] I saw the church with Brenda. I wanted to know more about the children's revival, the uprising of the children. And I found this 41-page tract published in London in 1708 in the library at Oxford.

And it has a long title, typical of the period. They just don't make titles like this anymore. Praise out of the mouth of babes or a particular account of some extraordinary, pious motions and devout exercises observed of late in many children in Silesia.

Isn't that a great title? The form of the title right away alerted me to, reminded me of Jonathan Edwards' faithful narrative of a surprising work of God.

A particular account of extraordinary events. It's that strange but true formula, the special pleading of a particular account of extraordinary, that this is typical of revival narratives.

From the account of the children's revival in Europe, I learned a great deal. I learned that the revival began when children of Protestant parents were not willing, like their elders, to be silenced and marginalized by their Catholic rulers.

[ 10 : 37 ] The children at Sprotov, near Glogov, began to meet in the open fields outside the town at daybreak, and then again two or three times a day. They would form a circle and pray, sometimes laying prostrate, and then sing Lutheran hymns, often by Paul Gerhardt.

The Paul Gerhardt hymns we still sing are like, Oh Sacred Head, Now Wounded, right? They'd read devotional texts and so on and close with a blessing.

One Protestant father was so worried about the children doing this in defiance of the authorities, the Habsburg authorities, the Catholic magistrates, that he tried to lock his son and daughter in their bedrooms.

When he heard that they were going to climb out the window, he relented and let them go. Let me depart from my text a little bit to show this on the slides.

So this is the tract. These religious exercises so far as I've been able to learn began at Sprotov, a town in the principality of Blokov and spread in a very short time throughout all the principalities of Silesia.

[ 11 : 54 ] Do you see the town in the blue circle there on the map? That's Sprotov near the German border. In a week's time, this motion spread over all the five principalities of Silesia.

So it's like this movement that began with the praying children moved down, up and down the Oder river valley and it spread from one community. This is a beleaguered Protestant minority that have been deprived of their churches.

There's one or two grace churches that they will a due course be allowed but for the most part the pietist exercises of small group Bible studies that have been meant to supplement and to augment official church life were now all that they had because they're deprived of their churches and they have these effectively cottage prayer meetings.

It's one of the first uses of the German word for a field preacher for the pietist ministers that would go from cottage meeting to cottage meeting. And so they've been deprived of their churches but the children refused to keep this private and would worship outdoors.

What happened actually is they had watched the Swedish soldiers when the Swedish armies under Charles XII had come down and there had been various skirmishes with the Habsburgs.

[ 13 : 14 ] They'd watched the Swedish Protestant soldiers worshipping on parade outdoors and the children were copying the soldiers by worshipping outside and forming their own services. But this spreads very quickly among the young people the Protestant young people.

Though they were locked up they nevertheless used their utmost endeavours to meet the rest and therefore according to some letters they leaped out of the windows or crept through the holes of the stones these children were very determined to meet together for their prayer meetings.

The parents were afraid that this was going to lead to religious conflict this was going to lead that this was very volatile politically. and he said very significantly the one who writes this tract they do not pray on a bare formality but for a real reformation of their lives and they encourage one another thereunto.

So it's that movement that we'll see in the early evangelical movement that concern over against Christendom of just belonging to a church about real reformation about real faith.

They meet twice or thrice every day sometimes very early before it's light and sometimes they continue to have their devotions three hours and according to some informations five hours. And the kids would these are kids mostly about junior high age they're gathering sometimes outside of the village limits in prayer circles holding hands worshipping.

[ 14 : 55 ] I like this story in the one town the executioner being sent to disperse them finding them praying upon their faces went back with tears in his eyes and told his superiors he could do them no harm because they did nothing but pray.

Isn't that wonderful? Very raw people country fellows and soldiers looking on their devotion watching the children were powerfully affected and moved even to shed tears.

What happened is you'd have the circle of the praying children and the adults would come out and be forming a circle around the outside of the children and as the children were praying the adults would begin weeping. Many aged and grown people have been reclaimed so that they resort no more to places of drinking and vain diversion showing since that time several signs of sincere reformation attended with other good motions.

So the movement spreads from the children to the adults and the young people to the adults. You've got to love this old typography with the S's that look like F's.

Carolyn sometimes just reads them and pronounces them all as F's. It leads to kind of a funny reading. So it begins Spratow and Blagow moves to Bratwab or Breslau the German name I think is that right?

[ 16 : 17 ] I think it's the same same place. And this is the Oder River Valley and it centers here at Chesham where I crossed the border with Brenda and saw the church.

Right? And this is the Jesus Church where this whole movement the phrase that is used in the literature is that the children's revival was baptized into the church. So it became canalized into a church movement.

Right? And the pietist pastors come in and shepherd this thing and soon you've got Poles, Slovaks, Moravians, Germans, all sorts of people coming to this Jesus Church for these services and it becomes a kind of center for revival in 1708.

So the movement proceeds and spreads.

The story doesn't end here though. It moves down the Oder River Valley to Chesham. People come to Chesham and there's a kind of centripetal movement there but then it becomes a centrifugal movement and partly under the pressure of the kind of bureaucratic state and of the Habsburgs part of economic pressure and religious pressure you end up with refugees from this area and this movement Moravian, Bohemian, Polish refugees.

[ 17 : 52 ] They're religious refugees, they're economic refugees and they flee this area to look for somewhere where they can practice their religion freely, somewhere where they can employ their skills as workers.

And they head over toward Zittau and Gurlitz and that area of Upper Lusatia in East Germany. they hear that there's a kind of place where there's safe haven where there's a Protestant nobleman who will give them sanctuary and they head over there and find on Count Zinzendorf's estate they find protection and he ends up giving them a village basically.

He lives at Bertelsdorf and he gives them a village which becomes christened parenthood the Lord's Watch. from there again the intensity of the centripetal movement the intensity of their community experience the experience revival in 1727 I'll talk about a little bit more but from there Moravians end up going all over the world and have an influence out of all proportion to their numbers in terms of evangelical awakening elsewhere.

They're the first ones to be really engaged in serious Protestant missions. the mission to Greenland is one that is written up and attracts a lot of notice and people it does a lot for their own reputation people are very impressed by the mission to Greenland.

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and work among the Amerindians Wachovia or Winston-Salem in North Carolina there are Moravians who sell themselves into slavery in order to reach African Americans in the Caribbean and some that go to South Africa so a tremendous force of missionary enterprise.

[ 19 : 50 ] But part of what we see is the Moravians one of the places they go is to Georgia and in 1738 the other person on the boat is John Wesley and he's in his kind of high church mode of they call it Oxford Methodism because during his Oxford period he is intensely religious he is keeping track of his spiritual pulse every minute of the day every hour of the day he's recording his temper of devotion and he is a very very earnest person who comes to a kind of breaking point when he sees the tremendous love and peace and assurance and religion of the heart the Moravians have and he in fact there's a point in his diary on the boat when the waves are high and it's stormy and it says waves high afraid and then you read down a little bit further it says waves very high very afraid and he notices that the Moravians are singing hymns and he's just very impressed by their piety and August Gottlieb

Spangenberg when they arrive in Georgia in 1736 he has this conversation with John Wesley where he says do you know that Jesus loves you do you just know that you're loved he says do you have the witness of the spirit and John Wesley sort of hums and haws and says yes but then in his journal sort of comma I fear they were vain words right and this is what sets him on the path to his own conversion after a kind of failed missionary experience in Georgia and he returns kind of defeated to London where again among the Moravians in 1738 his brother Charles May 21st John May 24th goes through an empowering evangelical conversion experience where that's where he says famously my heart was strangely warmed so the new historiography that's come that Reg Ward has given us you actually see revival beginning deep in central Europe and then kind of moving west to the fringes of the empire if you like

I mean Georgia at this point there's only been about three boatloads I mean this is really early days don't picture Georgia kind of an American state this is like very early this is frontier and then back to London so the fringes acting upon the centre we can connect the dots one the children's uprising in Laura Silesia in 1708 two the revival at Chesham that followed three the renewed Moravian brethren at Harrenhood in 1727 four John Wesley's Aldersgate experience in 1738 see the way in which you can see how all of this is connected to the English speaking world so the story of evangelicalism as it's sometimes told simply begins with John Wesley in London and Jonathan Edwards in New England but now we see some deeper roots to the movement that go back to central Europe the story is more complex than this and there are other tap roots for the story of the rise of evangelical religion in the North Atlantic but this is one of the important stories this is from

Google Earth and this is sort of what I did for my summer holiday in 2007 is I had John Wesley's journal 1738 in one hand where after his conversion he wanted to go to Harrenhood on the far right there to see the Moravians for himself and you can trace in his journey over the summer of 1738 from London to Rotterdam to Amsterdam and so on all the way over to Harrenhood and I wanted to do this journey myself not on horseback but what's interesting about it is it's also like west to east it's John Wesley's journey his Moravian pilgrimage but east to west it's the continuing story of the children's revival because the children's revival that began in 1708 in central Europe and the refugees that ended up at Harrenhood progressively the Moravians are moved partly through persecution and through state pressure but they gradually move west and they move from

Harrenhood and then Zinzendorf is kicked out and he establishes a community you see right in the middle of the map there at Marionborn or Harrenhav north of Frankfurt that community collapses in 1753 they move north to Neuweid and up the Rhine and then eventually establish a community at Zeist which becomes their key missionary sending center and so there's a way you can see this whole movement under a certain kind of pressure moving west and becoming missionary this is so this is Harrenhood this is just from a different angle and this is just to show you what the place looks like today so this is Harrenhood from the Hootberg the kind of hill or mound behind their burial ground they call their burial grounds God's acre God's field because the people are buried they're planted like seeds for the resurrection and from this hill you can look down and that building with the little little tower on top is the prayer hall at the center of Harrenhood so this is the village that was given to the Moravians to establish their own community and the prayer hall is literally right in the center so this is the burial ground it was kind of fun some of the tombstones there

[ 25 : 39 ] I found the names of some of the individuals that had figured in a book I'd written some of the lay people whose testimonies I had read are buried there this is looking the other direction so if the first picture you're looking this way at Harrenhood and then on this little mound on the burial ground you turn around and look the other way this is Berthelsdorf where Zinzendorf lives separated by about one or two kilometers the row of trees that you see just sort of above the middle of the picture there's a row of trees there just before the houses that's where they would walk from Harrenhood to Berthelsdorf for church services because that's where the Lutheran church was 1727 this community is divided different language groups different people groups different needs and there's real tension in the community and a lot of them don't like each other walking to communion in 1727 different groups feel like we can't go to communion when we are divided from each and they begin to reconcile on the way to communion and that's when they had their Moravian

Pentecost they had this incredible communion service out of which came the new Moravian community the united renewed Moravian community what preceded that was again a movement of the children the children stayed up on this little mound this little hill would work praying all night and again it was the praying children that seemed to precede revival this just gives you a picture of literally the centrality of the prayer hall at Harrenhood like the different roads in the village all converge on this magnificent prayer hall at the center of Harrenhood by the 1740s what had begun with children in Silesia is general in the North Atlantic world and so when people talk about the evangelical revival is the word that's often used in England or the great awakening in America or the title of Reg's book the Protestant evangelical awakening there is a

North Atlantic phenomenon that stretches from Central Europe to the American I guess it would be the American frontier at this point and even some regions beyond and there's evidence that these clusters of renewal is not just here and there but it's general and there's all sorts of evidence that people are realizing that their own experience is somehow connected and interconnected with that elsewhere and they identify John Wesley reads about what happened in Jonathan Edwards parish in Northampton Massachusetts and he says yes evidently one work with what we have here and work singular was often the noun that was used even more than revival a work of God a work of God and so there is a sense I think this is significant in all sorts of ways but there is a sense that there is a concentration in time and extension in space of the work of God the work of conversion and renewal but what I wanted to emphasize this morning is what began with the children and the young people in Silesia is repeated in almost all these centers is revival seems to begin not universally but often there is a really significant movement of young people of teenagers of junior hires and others as I say there is other tap roots for this revival

I have emphasized Central Europe in Scotland and Ireland this awakening looks back to the long communion season in Scots Irish piety and that feeds into revival in Western Scotland and then eventually among Scots immigrants in the middle colonies in America there is also a New England Puritan tradition of community renewal that is the background for the revivals that Jonathan Edwards witnessed he talks about a series of harvests that have been witnessed there there is a mix of Anglican and dissenting devotional traditions in England that would contribute to revival there in the 1730s and 40s but in addition to these different roots tap roots of revival of evangelical renewal in the modern world we have to add Central Europe now even though we're just beginning to learn the story and to pronounce the names in May of 2005 just three years ago

I was back at Chesham this time I was lecturing to a group of Polish Czech and Slovakian youth workers this is me teaching in the church itself inside the church with a translator my sister and her husband work for a mission organization called Josiah Venture that partners with nationals in several Central and Eastern European countries there was a banner up in the room in which I was lecturing for the first two days at Malnava in Moravia it announced to these youth workers that it was their motto and it said they were united in praying for a movement of God among the youth of Eastern Europe that finds its home in the local church and transforms society that's their banner and I was asked to speak to them about renewal movements in Christian history the national leaders I was speaking to in 2005 many of them ran entire organizations in their own countries they were mostly in their 20s they were young people they were children during the Velvet Revolution in the Czech Republic they were children during the Solidarity Movement in Poland but now they were working with young people and seeing a significant spiritual awakening most of these people were working with young people often doing camp work

[ 32 : 01 ] English camps and Bible studies it was my privilege to tell them talk about taking calls to Newcastle that in the very towns and cities that they were working today evangelical renewal had begun among young people 300 years earlier they are working with a beleaguered Protestant minority doing children's work just like was happening 300 years earlier I told them the story of the uprising of the children while standing in the Jesus Church itself in the group were even two youth workers who were running a weekly junior high Bible study right there in Chesham historians speak of upstate New York in the 19th century as a kind of burned over district where revival seemed to recur repeatedly I was beginning to wonder if Silesia and Moravia were not also burned over districts because this area today is certainly a scene where there is tremendous spiritual sensitivity and Malinova is basically an entire seminary just devoted to youth workers who come for one week at a time to do courses and so on and there is a significant movement going on there this next year 2009 is the 300 year anniversary of the founding of the Jesus Church at Chesham there will be an academic conference at the Silesian

University in Poland in honour of this so it is a good time I think for all of us to remember the important place of young people in the church past and present suffer the little children to come unto me said Jesus young people were of crucial importance in early America in Britain in Central Europe in evangelical renewal these early figures in the evangelical revival in England were converted George Whitefield 1735 Pembroke College in Oxford is converted he is about I think he would be 20 years old when he was converted he was called the boy preacher he is the age of our ecclesia students at St. John's when he is beginning to preach to 10,000 20,000 30,000

I call his numbers evangelistic they are kind of you are never quite sure exactly but they are large but large large crowds John Wesley is a little bit older but Charles Wesley in his 30s when he is converted and the relatively young people that become central in this revival this is Whitefield in his 20s this is a painting by Eric Crowe in the 19th century based upon two letters that Whitefield wrote in 1742 if you picture a field preaching and you are imagining a dewy eyed preacher in a kind of Wordsworthian romantic setting preaching to the masses it is not like that it was an absolute melee it was preaching in the field was competing with public entertainments with rudeness with people throwing dogs and cats with commercial vendors and so on and the crowd would sway back and forth in Whitefield's letters between the merchants and the jugglers and so on and his preaching and then people would come by recruiting sergeant with drums a fellow with a trumpet somebody with a whip the only thing the air crowd doesn't show you is Whitefield also talks about a streaker that came and when stuff just got too loud they had to stop and sing hymns until it died down and then he'd preach again but at the center of this movement what you see is gospel proclamation at the bottom of the picture a woman in travail with a child again praying and then notes in the center of the picture notes being passed to the woman within her petticoat is gathering up notes of people dear Mr. Whitfield



I'm under conviction pray for me dear Mr. Whitfield I feel like God's grace broke through to me today and he received he said that day 300 notes and that was the beginning of the Moorfields society but he's a young person he's the age of our ecclesia kids here at St. John's and he was called the boy preacher so throughout in a number of these communities you see a young people at the center of revival I'm sorry I don't have a watch how are we doing for time quarter two okay great awakening in New England and in America revival begins first among the young people in Elizabethtown Boston Bridgewater Lyme New Concord Philadelphia Ipswich Woodstock East Hampton and several other places before it spreads to the adults many of the preachers at the outset of the revival like Whitfield are in their 20s like the Czech leaders

I met in 2005 young people with tremendous responsibility on their shoulders small groups of praying children stimulated revival then not just in Silesia but in a number of these communities and let me just tell you about one and then I'll read you a little bit of an account from Jonathan Edwards I came across a manuscript at the Angus Library in Oxford by John Ryland Jr.

[ 37 : 42 ] who lived in Northampton in England in the Midlands and his father John Collett Ryland was a high Calvinist Baptist preacher and had seen many conversions in his church and his church grew I think from very few numbers to over kind of 300 conversions and so on in the English Midlands John Ryland Jr.

the manuscript that I found this was his own testimony as a young person when he was about 15 or 16 it was an account of his own conversion but also there were minutes to a young people's society and it was absolutely fascinating that it was an account of the religious society among teenagers in Northampton in the Midlands and part of it just looks like a boys club I mean they had a kind of membership for all those that were serious about conversion and it began when there was a death in the community a young person died and there was a boarding school and a couple of them thought that this provoked them to seriousness and that was the term that's often used in the 18th century becoming serious about your faith and they gathered together and began to pray together and soon there was a whole society and a group that joined and at one level you read this thing and it's just a boys secret club and in fact when people apostatize they write their names in Greek figures

Fauntleroy and they kind of write them out of the book you know and stuff but another level it is again a nucleus of young people that become intensely serious about their faith on their own they gather they organize and they share testimonies with each other and out of that group came up at least a half a dozen really significant Baptist ministers in the late 18th century that were involved in the missionary movement and the movement that would support William Carey and the beginning is a Baptist mission so great things that begin with a group of young people that are deadly serious about their faith and often because of a death in the community provokes seriousness something similar happens in Northampton Massachusetts and in many ways this becomes the sort of paradigmatic case for a revival beginning among young people let me read just a little bit of this Jonathan Edwards has four major works that come out of his reflections on revival and the first one is his faithful narrative and he says at the latter end of the year 1733 there appeared a very unusual flexibleness and yielding to advice in our young people and those of you that are parents might go that is certainly a work of the spirit it had been too long their manner to make the evening after the Sabbath and after our public lecture to be especially at the times of their mirth and company keeping they were partying but a sermon was now preached on the Sabbath before the lecture to show the evil tendency of the practice and to persuade them to reform it and it was urged on heads of families that it should be a thing agreed upon among them to govern their families and keep their children at home at these times and so on parents found little or no occasion for the exercise of government in the case the young people declared themselves convinced in other words the parents didn't need to exercise a heavy hand because the young people came under conviction directly because of what they were hearing in church and they themselves began to comply with the counsel that had been given there was a reformation as they say among the young people presently after this there began to appear a remarkable religious concern at a little village belonging to the congregation where a few families were settled about three miles distant from the main town at this place a number of persons seemed to be savingly wrought upon again there was a sudden and awful death of a young man in the bloom of his youth had pleurisy died within two days and this much affected many young people this was followed with another death of a young married woman and he says soon this led to a solemnizing of the spirits of many young persons and there began evidently to appear a more religious concern on people's minds in the fall of that year

I proposed to the young people that they should agree among themselves to spend the evenings after lectures in social religion to that end to divide themselves into several companies to meet in various parts of the town which was accordingly done and those meetings have been since continued and the example imitated by elder people this was followed by the death of an elderly person which again moved people and they were much affected I don't have time to read through the account but the story he tells is again of cells little cells or small groups of praying young people and that's where renewal begins and it spreads to the adults and in his major work *Some Thoughts Concerning Revival* he talks about these meetings and about people objecting to them I think I need to read just a bit of this he said people object sometimes to the religious meetings of children to read and pray together and perform religious exercises on their own what is objected is children's want of knowledge their lack of knowledge and discretion but it appears to me that the objection is not sufficient children as they have the nature of people are inclined to society they want to be with each other and those of them that are capable of society with one another are capable of the influences of the spirit of God and if they are inclined to a religious disposition that they have from the spirit of God they'll want to improve their society their fellowship with one another in a religious manner and to religious purposes and who should forbid them if they haven't the discretion to observe method in their religious performances or to speak sense in all that they do and pray they may notwithstanding have a good meaning and God understands them and it doesn't spoil or interrupt their devotion with one another so even though they may make mistakes or they may sound childish

God understands them we that are grown in person have defects in our prayers that are a thousand times worse in the sight of God and are a greater confusion and more absurd nonsense in his eyes than their childish indiscretions there is not so much difference before God between children and grown persons as we are ready to imagine and on he goes and he concludes with the verse about out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained praise to talk about the renewal among the children so just to wrap up Roman Catholic theologians speak of religious orders as forming around a central charism that the Holy Spirit raised up the Jesuits raised up the Dominicans raised up the Franciscans for a unique purpose or charism within the church that they have a particular calling for which God called them into existence was there a founding charism in the evangelical renewal movement as evangelicalism appears in this particular form in the 18th century

[ 44 : 53 ] I think there are many features that we could point to many things we could explore about what God is doing in this movement of evangelicalism but what I want to just emphasize here for us today is the importance that this movement speaks to of young people in the life of the church evangelicalism has always been a dynamic movement it's had an energy a restlessness and an idealism that the word movement suggests and it's in large part because it has been a movement of and for and very attentive to the rising generation a friend of mine who speaks regularly to youth pastors and to young people all across North America will sometimes tell a group of young people you are not the church of tomorrow he tells them you're the church of today the neo-evangelical movement especially in America since at least the 1930s the sort of era of Billy Graham has been characterized by a tremendous energy for youth work and student organizations youth for Christ young life inner varsity this kind of youth work and this shows no sign of changing anytime soon around the world today where the church is growing most rapidly it appears that evangelical forms of Christianity are taking root among the rising generation

Philip Jenkins who writes about some of these demographic changes in the world reminds us that half the world's population is under 24 years of age 90% of of these young people are in Africa Asia and Latin America in the global south it's a young people's church if the church will thrive in the 21st century it will have to be a young people's movement as Archbishop Henry Orambi of Uganda Anglican Archbishop said at at All Souls in the post-Gafcon conference where Jim was Archbishop Henry Orambi of Uganda where most of the population is under 16 he said I am a youth pastor that's what the Archbishop says in Mark 10 Matthew 19 it's in the the Gospel of Luke as well the pericope this passage is in all three synoptics Jesus rebuked the disciples for hindering children saying let the children come to me whether in

Silesia in 1709 or Uganda in 2009 or St. John's in 2009 Jesus continues I think to say the same thing to the church and it's been one of the enduring strengths of the evangelical movement that it has taken this quite so seriously I was reading over that passage in the Mark 10 context and where the children come to Jesus and they're prohibited and Jesus says let them come don't hinder them and to such as these belongs the kingdom of God and that he embraced them and he touched them and he blessed them and I just I have three teenagers right now 13 15 and 18 and I can tell you that in my father's heart nothing is more important to me and probably sometimes other things maybe should be more important but nothing is more important to me than that these children and their friends are embraced by Jesus are touched by Jesus and are blessed by Jesus and I want to encourage you all to pray for an uprising of the children if you're ever here on Friday night at St. John's you'd be very moved just to see this place is buzzing with Bible studies with activities with young people on Tuesdays at Regent College it warms my heart

I look down in the atrium and there's always a clutch of at least 10 or 12 of the Ecclesia kids you know and there's there's there's really significant work being done here among our young people and let's pray together for an uprising of the children in global Anglicanism an uprising of the children at St. John's and you know that often affects the adults metaphorically we may find ourselves to be those who gather in the circle around these kids and who are moved to tears and who see that it's to such as these belongs the kingdom and that we find ourselves laying down some of the obstacles in our own lives to become like children again open to the work of the spirit so thank you I think I'll stop there is there do we have time for questions what are we I think I forgot to show you this is Edwards and this is

Massachusetts and this is where when he was writing about the Connecticut Valley revival that was the area there oh sorry no that's in that's in Georgia here it is questions or comments yeah yeah the children in 79 are mostly what we would call junior high age they a lot of them were 10 to 14 years of age but it included kids up to 18 years of age and it included a few of the younger children as well and Edwards talks about the youth and there's also children and he takes the experience religious experience of the very young children very seriously as well and some of the conversion there he reports in fact some of them when he tries to copy the children's language it sounds like baby talking sounds sentimental and it's a little bit painful to read but it definitely included very young children but for the most part it was

[ 51 : 15 ] I'd say junior high early high school age in our terms and I'm sorry the Moravians it's Moravian could refer sort of an ethnic group in the Bohemians and Moravians and the Czech Republic or the Czechos back here that part of the world then it was the name given to this evangelical movement within Germany that had some pious roots to it but that developed on Sinsendorf's state in that particular group they saw themselves as a renewal movement within the church Catholic and that they were kind of tropas they said within the church among Anglicans when they were in England among Lutherans when they were there among the foreign they didn't initially want to be a denomination they wanted to be a kind of renewal movement and they picked up the name Unitas Raptrum and the renewed Bravian brethren looking back to the Hussite church because some of them had those roots so it's a bit of a kind of complex origins but that's yeah you've assumed that we all know about the pietist background out of which this movement came but I'm not sure we all do would you tell us a little bit about the second half of the 17th century pietism so that we know what the seed thing was okay in the

Anglo-American world when we speak about the evangelical movement it's often periodized at the beginning in around the 1720s and 30s with some of these revivals some of the outdoor meetings some of the conversions of ministers and so on and though we recognize that it was renewing 17th century movements such as puritanism it's often when people talk about modern evangelical in the English speaking world that's often what they mean they mean Edwards and West made that movement one of the exciting things about Reg's scholarship work is his interest is in the Anglo-German phenomenon and when you look at Anglo-German rather than Anglo-American what you see is you just can't say that this starts in the 1730s and so he's interested in pietism in the last half of the 17th century in Germany which was a renewal movement that wanted to repristinate Luther for a whole new generation of German movements and its major tract the major literary work was

Philip Gaffer Spanier's Kitt Esgeria Pious Longings Longing for Reform of the Church in 1678 a Frankfurt pastor and it became a kind of symbol of the movement for pietism and it really was an effort within as you can imagine like the Tenanglitanism within a large kind of inclusive church like Lutheranism that had become very preoccupied with doctrinal rectitude with formal correctness that there was a desire to see the reform address people's hearts and lives and so Spanier's big agenda was he said a more effective use of the word of God among us that it's not just going to be a matter of doctrinal rectitude and using the word of God in order to get your creeds straight but it needs to be small group bible studies something like bible schools he was advocating something like mentorship and there's very very contemporary kinds of things he was promoting and so that whole movement became centered at a number of institutions in Hala which was in the DDR in eastern

Germany right on the border just into eastern Germany before the wall came down and those institutions are still there today they're pretty impressive to see there's an orphanage there's a printing press there's a university and it became centered in Hala it became a movement that spread throughout Germany and that ended up having a kind of pastoral oversight for this movement in Silesia where they didn't have many churches so that it was initially a renewal movement within Lutheranism but what happens once you get into Silesia is the things that they had devised to kind of support church life all of a sudden had to bear the whole way to church when the churches were denied to the Protestants so it would be like instead of you being able to worship regularly at St. John's all of a sudden all you have is your small group Bible study you know and and that all of a sudden is bearing the whole way to church until they finally get a few churches back

Bruce I have a two part question my work used to take me to Greenland on a number of occasions they speak very fondly of the Meridian which was was the Meridians to go to Greenland and was it the young people that went on this mission there was just about the Greenland mission of the Moravians and was it young people that went and what persuaded them to go and I don't know David Krantz's book tells the story of the Greenland mission but I haven't read it so I'm not sure I was really impressed with the amount of trust that people seemed to give these teenagers I mean they took them seriously once they let them out of the lockdown bedroom or wherever and they didn't try to suppress it they stood by and watched to see what they were doing and I kind of wonder how seriously we take our young people we do pat them on the back and think this is great they're the leaders of tomorrow but you said they're the leaders of today and I think we need to take them seriously in that context too was there a reason why the older people would have given this kind of cachet to young people in this setting it seems not congruent with other things that were happening in society at that time excellent

[ 57 : 38 ] I mean that really is what if there is sort of something that's on my heart that's what it is how can we release our young people more pray for them to rise up and take leadership open spaces for them to do so I think sometimes there are people like Jonathan Edwards who has a kind of patriarchal authority and for him to stand in the gap and say when there's criticism and say no take them seriously your prayers might sound pretty stupid to God too sometimes like give them space to make mistakes give them you know and so sometimes I think it maybe takes a strong leader to speak on behalf of the children I think the other thing that happens is I think what I think parents I think some of the parents especially in Silesia were just afraid because of the political consequences of this right this was a powder keg this was the area of the 30 years war this is the area of huge confessional conflict which was like almost Armageddon it seemed like and they're afraid of violence that little episode about the town executioner coming out to break up so they're afraid and kids often they don't have a sense of their own mortality they're not afraid but what parent or adult who is at all sensitive spiritually wouldn't be moved to tears to see the young people just so on fire for the

Lord so I think part of it was something like Jonathan Edwards standing in the gap but part of it was also the children took risks that the parents were afraid to take and the parents were just moved by it I think to see because I think often it's interesting the passage in Matthew Mark and Luke where you have the story about the children and Jesus says such as these belongs the kingdom of God the next one is the rich young ruler and I think the thing about children is they have no status and then Jesus says about wealth and status it's like camel through the eye of a needle it's hard to come into the kingdom and so there's a particular witness I think sometimes when we can see children young people with idealism they're not worried so much about their careers they don't have the same worries but they take those risks I think that speaks to us about the gospel I think there can be a particular witness that comes is it likely that it was the observers that took this message from one village to another or did the kids take to the road that's a really interesting question

I don't know because this little track doesn't say but whether how it spread from one village to the next whether it's just word of mouth whether it's the children whether it's the observers I mean the distances aren't great from village to village because something similar happens in the Connecticut River Valley as things move up and down in Edwards in the Connecticut Valley Revival in 1734 35 just stop me whenever we need to stop one of the great powers in the church it seems to me that opportunity is given to people mostly younger people to witness confess publicly unashamed there's a great power in that do you see the church in any way at all not particularly desirous of opening the door to that or has a process where well in the

Baptist church you have the immersion baptism along with it is usually a declaration which is a good sign that Jesus has begun to work because people are unashamed and they have to speak about it we don't seem to open that door very wide in the institutional church I see anyway yeah and I don't know how much that happens in other settings but I think all of us have probably been moved sometimes when there are some of the moments in narrative at a baptism in the church or other sometimes after churches people come up in different contexts there's something about first person narrative and testimony what God has done in my life that is a powerful witness to the gospel and moves people powerfully and so whether in a public worship context like in a church service or after church service or in a baptism or I think a lot of this happened very powerfully within these small groups

I read hundreds of narratives of lay people's testimonies and they'd often talk about hearing a testimony not necessarily just publicly but just it strengthened me much to hear Sister Robinson talk of her conversion you know like within a small group or informally and I think the to find voice of what God has done for me and to narrate that was definitely a powerful part of what was going on here yeah yeah for the Protestants it would be in the vernacular and the Catholics I don't know no it would still be yeah yeah yeah what's interesting is there are signs in a few of these communities the parents who are coming out and that are weeping in response to this include

[ 63 : 28 ] Catholics and Protestants so at a lay level there's a little kind of Catholics and Evangelicals together thing going on that there's there's a way in which they are some of the Catholic parents and Catholic children get caught up into this movement but at this point I know to my knowledge that it was in the Catholic Church it would still be that Catholic Mass Latin Mass Latin Bible and that would be a key difference yeah Harvey the Germans well just don't correct if I'm wrong had an Asian concern did the Arabians think about going in the other direction more the world the other way not to my knowledge I think the farthest they get is South Africa and that might have to do with the simply with following the path of the kind of North European Protestant empires you know in terms of the kind of pathways that were open to them but I don't think I think that that'll be later in the 19th century if they finally get to Asia but I don't think the

Moravians get that far yeah