Compass Life Adult Sunday School

Pastor Pete

May 17, 2020

**“The Men Who Brought Christ to America”**

**George Whitefield**

**I. George Whitefield in England (1714-1770)**

George Whitefield was born on December 16, 1714in the city of Gloucester at the Bell Inn, the youngest of 7 children. He was baptized in the font of nearby St. Mary de Crypt. His parents owned and ran the Inn that he was born in. His father died when Whitefield was \_\_ years old. At school he developed a passion for acting and loved nothing more than reading and performing plays. At 15 he persuaded his mother to allow him to start working at the inn, washing floors and serving customers. He especially enjoyed meeting the traveling players and discussing acting with them. He was a good Anglican, attending church regularly, but knowing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the teaching of the Bible. In the Fall of 1732 he went to Pembroke College, Oxford, his tuition being funded by acting as a servitor for other students. He started attending church regularly, singing psalms and praying daily. It was after about a year that he met \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Holy Club). He began to live by the rigid rules of the Holy Club, accounting for every moment of the day. It did him no good. He felt a load of sin pressing upon him, and nothing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He went to extremes, not eating, not speaking. He would go outside and pray, in the cold, even lying on the ground, for hours. His health began to deteriorate and one of his hands was turning black. After seven weeks of sickness, for the first time he had looked outside of himself for help. Here is the moment that George Whitefield placed his trust in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. After graduating from Oxford many thought he should be a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. A visit with the Bishop of Gloucester finally persuaded him. This bishop said that normally he would not ordain anyone under the age of 23, but he had been so impressed with Whitefield’s character that he would ordain him whenever he asked. He returned to Oxford but was soon asked by a friend to fill in for him as curate at the chapel of the Tower of London, Whitefield did not consider he was ready to take on a full-time ministry—he wanted to have a stock of a hundred sermons first—but was happy to help his friend. Whitefield started preaching in the London area and developing a huge following. Then he received letters from the Wesley brothers, now missionaries in the new colony of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He had received accounts of their activities before, and felt a yearning to join them, but this time the letter made a specific appeal to Whitefield to join them. He believed this to be the call of God and resolved he would be a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the New World. He met with General Oglethorpe, the founder and first governor of Georgia, who said that Whitefield was to travel with him. But Oglethorpe was not ready to travel yet. So, Whitefield had to fill his time, which he readily did, with preaching. Large numbers began attending his preaching and he continued his popularity. It was both his manner of preaching (lively, not \_\_\_\_\_\_) and his “new” message (“You must be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”) that attracted people.

**II. First Great Awakening (1730-1750)**

George Whitefield first came to America in 1738 to preach in Georgia and found \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Orphanage. Whitefield returned to the Colonies in November 1739. His first stop was in Philadelphia where he initially preached at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Philadelphia's Anglican church, and then preached to a large outdoor crowd from the courthouse steps. He then preached in many Presbyterian churches. From Philadelphia, Whitefield traveled to New York and then to the South. In the Middle Colonies, he was popular in the Dutch and German communities as well as among the British. Lutheran pastor Henry Muhlenberg told of a German woman who heard Whitefield preach and, though she spoke no \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, later said she had never before been so edified. In 1740, Whitefield began touring New England. He landed in Newport, Rhode Island, on September 14, 1740, and preached several times in the Anglican church. He then moved on to Boston, Massachusetts, where he spent a week. There were prayers at the King’s Chapel and preaching at Brattle Street Church and South Church. On September 20, Whitefield preached in the First Church and then outside of it to about 8,000 people who could not gain entrance. On Tuesday, he preached at Second Church and on Wednesday at Harvard University. After traveling as far as Portsmouth, New Hampshire, he returned to Boston on October 12 to preach to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people before continuing

his tour. Whitefield then traveled to Northampton at the invitation of Jonathan Edwards. He preached twice in the parish church while Edwards was so moved that he wept. He then spent time in New Haven, Connecticut, where he preached at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. From there he traveled down the coast, reaching New York on October 29. Whitefield's assessment of New England's churches and clergy prior to his intervention was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "I am verily persuaded," he wrote, "the Generality of Preachers talk of an unknown, unfelt Christ. And the Reason why Congregations have been so dead, is because dead Men preach to them." He preached nearly every day for months to large crowds of sometimes several thousand people as he traveled throughout the colonies, especially New England. His trip on horseback from New York City to Charleston, SC, was the \_\_\_\_\_\_ in North America by a white man.

**III. The Odd Couple**

The man who grew up a Puritan and became a Deist, and the ruffian who became a staunch Calvinist were both interested in putting the written sermons of Whitefield down on paper. Whitefield saw in publishing another avenue by which he might continue to promote the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and Franklin saw an opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_\_ more subscriptions and so he was only too happy to oblige. As one historian put it, the net result of the joint publishing venture was that, “Franklin made money, Whitefield gained souls, and the two men became friends.” Whitefield sought to reach Franklin for Christ! His last sermon lasted two hours. When Benjamin Franklin heard the reports from England of Whitefield’s preaching, he at first refused to believe that it was possible for such crowds to hear the unaided human voice. When Whitefield arrived in Philadelphia, Franklin was among his auditors. As Whitefield preached from the balcony of the old courthouse, Franklin conducted an experiment. He walked away from Whitefield towards his print shop in Market Street until the noise of the traffic and general bustle drowned out Whitefield’s voice. He then estimated the area of a semi-circle with Whitefield at its center. Allowing two square feet per person he realized that the numbers quoted concerning Whitefield’s English congregations were possible. “It was wonderful to see the Change soon made in the Manners [behavior] of our Inhabitants; from being thoughtless or indifferent about Religion, it seem’d as if all the World were growing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ so that one could not walk thro’ the Town in an Evening without Hearing Psalms sung in different Families of every Street.”

**IV. The Whitefield Legacy**

He was a workaholic. He often said “I had rather wear out, than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” By the time he was fifty-four he looked an old man. Whitefield left England for the last time in September, 1769.
In the last weeks of his life, Whitefield, who had never been a well man, found his bodily weakness an increasing problem. His solution to any health problem was most usually to travel and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He preached almost every day, except for a few days when he was too ill, roaming through north-east Massachusetts before arriving at Exeter, New Hampshire. Here he preached from a plank between two barrels on 2 Corinthians 13:5, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.” Some hearers reckoned his best ever sermon. As he stood to preach someone said to him, “Sir, you are more fit to go to \_\_\_\_\_ than to preach.” To which answered, “True, Sir:” but turning aside, he clasped his hands together, and, looking up, spoke, “Lord Jesus, I am weary in thy work, but not of thy work. If I have not yet finished my course, let me go and speak for thee once more in the fields, seal thy truth, and come \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” He rode thirty miles to Newburyport, arriving at the parsonage of First Presbyterian Church. Exhausted, he went up to bed, but the press of people at the door still wished to hear him. So he preached from top of the staircase with candle in hand until the candle went out. He went to bed, but woke in the night struggling for breath, and died. The funeral was attended by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. His body was buried in the crypt under the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of First Presbyterian Church, Newburyport, from which he had been due to preach the day he died. In recent years a plaque has been added with Whitefield’s chosen epitaph: “I am content to wait for the day of judgement for the clearing up of my character: and after I am dead I desire no other epitaph than this, “here lies G. W. what sort of a man he was the great day will discover.”

**5/24 “The Men Behind Luther and the Reformation (Philip Melanchthon)”**