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John Wesley - I

Lead: In 1738 a little known and skeptical Anglican clergyman, freshly returned from a failed mission to America, encountered what he later described as divine assurance of salvation. From that point, John Wesley's life was changed.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: John Wesley's father was a pastor, rector of the small congregation at Epworth not far from the town of Doncaster in east central England. He was the ninth of thirteen

children. Educated at the Charterhouse School in London and Christ Church College, Oxford he assisted his father for several years and entered the Anglican priesthood in 1728. The following year he returned to Oxford to teach and there with his brother Charles and two companions formed a religious study group, which came to be known as the Holy Club. Their methodical approach to study and piety also earned them the uncomplimentary name, “methodists.” The group studied the Bible, visited and counseled prisoners in the castle jail, and distributed food and clothing to the poor. For this activity their fellow students hounded them, but under John Wesley’s leadership the group

had modest growth.

After his father's death in 1735 and at the urging of friends Wesley took ship and sailed to the Colony of Georgia in North America to minister to the colonists and evangelize Native Americans. The mission to the Indians was a failure and through a series of misjudgments and youthful indiscretion, he fell out with his parishioners and had to return to England in December 1737.

While in Georgia he had a chance encounter with members of the Moravian sect, followers of the pious Count Nikolaus Ludwig, Graf von Zinzendorf. Wesley later noted there was something different and very

appealing about the Moravians and when he returned from America, beaten and ashamed, he began to spend time with them. Next time: Revival.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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Tomkins, Stephen. *John Wesley: A Biography*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003.

<http://wesley.nnu.edu/JohnWesley.htm>

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