# From Pews to Protest

Trace how a religious revival influenced ideas about equality and self-rule.

**8.C.1.1.D** "Describe the influence of the First Great Awakening on concepts related to individual equality and self-rule, including its role in promoting a revolutionary fervor."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline a detail about spiritual equality and circle a detail about people choosing or questioning religious leaders. Then mark a sentence that connects those changes to political self-rule or resistance.

### A Revival and Its Reach

1. In the 1730s and 1740s, large crowds in Britain's North American colonies gathered to hear traveling preachers. This wave of religious revival became known as the First Great Awakening. Preachers such as George Whitefield said that a person could seek a new birth through faith, not simply rely on family background or a church position. A farmworker and a wealthy merchant could hear the same call to change their lives. The message suggested that spiritual standing did not depend on rank, even though colonial society still had deep inequalities.

2. Revival meetings also changed how some colonists viewed authority. Traveling preachers spoke outside established churches, and listeners sometimes chose a new congregation or questioned a minister whose sermons seemed lifeless to them. In some churches, ordinary members took a stronger role in deciding whom to follow. These choices did not create democracy, but they gave participants practice judging leaders rather than accepting a leader simply because of an official position. Such habits could make the idea that people should have a voice in governing themselves feel more familiar.

3. Years later, arguments with Britain over taxes and political power helped spark the American Revolution. Some colonists who had learned to question religious authorities could also question political rulers and support resistance to decisions made without their consent. Revival networks connected people across colonies and helped ideas spread. The Awakening was not the only cause of revolutionary fervor, and many revival supporters did not favor independence. Its promise of spiritual equality was limited in practice: slavery continued, and women and many free Black colonists were denied equal political rights.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the revival's message challenge the idea that a person's rank determined their worth?

2. How might choosing a congregation or questioning a minister prepare someone to support self-rule?

3. How could revival networks help turn disagreements with Britain into wider resistance?

4. Why would it be inaccurate to say the Awakening made everyone politically equal or caused independence by itself?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short speech by a fictional colonist in the 1760s or 1770s. Explain how a revival experience shapes your view of who should have a voice in political decisions, and include one limit to the revival's influence.

ANSWER KEY

# From Pews to Protest

GRADE 8 · 8.C.1.1.D

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a detail about spiritual equality and circle a detail about people choosing or questioning religious leaders. Then mark a sentence that connects those changes to political self-rule or resistance. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did the revival's message challenge the idea that a person's rank determined their worth? | **It suggested that a farmworker and a wealthy merchant had the same chance to seek a new birth through faith. Spiritual standing did not depend on rank.** |
| 2 | How might choosing a congregation or questioning a minister prepare someone to support self-rule? | **Those choices gave people practice judging leaders for themselves instead of accepting authority based only on an official position.** |
| 3 | How could revival networks help turn disagreements with Britain into wider resistance? | **The networks connected people across colonies and helped ideas about questioning authority spread.** |
| 4 | Why would it be inaccurate to say the Awakening made everyone politically equal or caused independence by itself? | **Slavery continued, and women and many free Black colonists lacked equal political rights. Other disputes helped cause the Revolution, and many revival supporters did not favor independence.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a revival meeting, I heard that a worker's faith mattered as much as a wealthy person's. I began to think ordinary people should have a say when rulers make decisions about our taxes. I will speak against a tax passed without our consent. Yet hearing a message of spiritual equality does not mean everyone has political rights; women and enslaved people are still excluded.

Accept historically plausible links between religious choice or spiritual equality and political self-rule or resistance. Responses should acknowledge that the connection was not universal or that political equality remained limited.