

Revivals, *Erweckungsbewegung*

The term *Erweckungsbewegung* (religious awakening) is often used to describe the emergence of renewed Christian life in nineteenth-century Germany in reaction to both widespread religious indifference and the theological rationalism of the Enlightenment. As part of an international Protestant renewal movement, it ran parallel to and was interconnected with the Swiss, French, and Dutch *Réveil*, British evangelicalism, the Scandinavian revivals, and the Second Great Awakening in the United States. Although several German revivals took place earlier, and while some of its leaders exerted their greatest influence only later, its

height is usually associated with the *Vormärz* era between Napoleon's final defeat in 1815, which convinced many of God's providential role in history, and the revolutions of 1848. Some scholars prefer to use the plural *Erweckungsbewegungen* to indicate the diversity of the movement.

The Moravian diaspora and the missionary-minded Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft in Basel prepared the way for the *Erweckungsbewegung*. There were often powerful preachers or pastors (like L. Hofacker in Stuttgart, G. D. Krummacher in Elberfeld, and J. C. Blumhardt in Möttlingen) at the center of local revivals, or university professors (including C. Krafft in Erlangen and A. Tholuck in Halle) whose teaching and pastoral care had a lasting impact on their students; occasionally also pious nobility (e.g., A. von Thadden in Trieglaff, Baron H. E. von Kottwitz in Berlin, Countess F. von Reden in Buchwald). The centers of the *Erweckungsbewegung* included Württemberg, Pomerania, Berlin, Siegerland, the Wuppertal region, Bremen, Hamburg, Minden-Ravensberg, Saxony, and Franconia, whereas other areas such as the Palatinate, Thuringia, Braunschweig, Oldenburg, and Mecklenburg were left relatively untouched. Although the revivals had a significant impact on the church and sometimes even the social life of a particular region, its adherents remained a small percentage of the total population.

While some free churches did spring from the revivals, the German *Erweckungsbewegung* of the first half of the nineteenth century took place primarily inside the established (often Lutheran) territorial churches. Revivalist preachers emphasized the Bible as God's Word and the need for a personal experience of the Christian life, insisting on such Reformation tenets as human depravity, the divinity of Christ, and reconciliation through his substitutionary death. Politically, the German *Erweckungsbewegung* condemned the French Revolution as ungodly and supported the late-Romantic ideal of a godly Christian prince who lovingly ruled his people as the head of

a family. After 1830, the year of the tricentennial celebration of the Augsburg Confession, part of the *Erweckungsbewegung* took on a decidedly confessional, mostly neo-Lutheran, stance (e.g., L. Harms, E. W. Hengstenberg, W. Löhe). In Silesia, "Old Lutherans" led by J. G. Scheibel split from the state church in protest against the imposition of the Prussian Union, and some emigrated to the United States or Australia. Other revivals, like those in Württemberg and the Lower Rhine region, were marked by significant continuity with earlier Pietism.

An essential characteristic of the *Erweckungsbewegung* was its Christian activism expressed both by private charitable work, leading to the *Innere Mission*, and world missions. Inspired by the British example, various revivalist groups (led, for example, by Friedrich Bodelschwingh, Theodore Fliedner, Amalie Sieveking, or Johann Hinrich Wichern) established orphanages, deaconess motherhouses, temperance societies, prison ministries, Sunday schools, mission societies, mission seminaries, Bible societies, tract societies, youth clubs, and other initiatives. In such networks, Christians from all layers of society met and worked together. They also produced widely circulated periodicals and other Christian literature. In so doing, they believed they were serving and building the kingdom of God—a concept central to their acute sense of history and eschatology.

See also Bodelschwingh, Friedrich (the Elder) and Friedrich (the Younger) von; Erlangen; Fliedner, Theodore; Grundtvig, Nikolai Frederik Severin; Harms, Claus; Hauge, Hans Nielson; Hengstenberg, Ernst Wilhelm; Inner Mission; Laestadius, Lars Levi; Loehle, Wilhelm Konrad; Mission Societies and Academies; Moravian Church (Unitas Fratrum); Pietism; Prussian Union; Rosenius, Carl Olof; Sieveking, Amalie Wilhelmina; Spitta, Karl Johann Philipp; Wichern, Johann Hinrich

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