



## RESOURCES

One of the most defining moments in American history is the story of an unlikely friendship between the Reverend George Whitefield and Benjamin Franklin. The 2026 historical drama film *A Great Awakening*, it tells the true story of the unlikely friendship between English preacher George Whitefield and American founding father Benjamin Franklin during the 1700s revival. The movie, produced by Sight & Sound Films, explores how Whitefield's powerful voice and Franklin's printing press spread the message of the revival across the colonies.

The "Great Awakening" refers to several periods of intense religious revival in American history. The First Great Awakening swept through the British American colonies in the 1730s and 1740s, led by evangelists like George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. It popularized personal, emotional faith over formal church doctrine.

[American Battlefield Trust](#)



Historically, the First Great Awakening revolutionized the 13 colonies by promoting spiritual equality, which encouraged people to question traditional authority. It also indirectly helped set the stage for the American Revolution by fostering a sense of shared, cross-colony identity.

[Bill of Rights Institute](#)

Since the 1700s, theologians and historians have identified multiple waves of revival:

- **The First Great Awakening (1730s–1740s):** Characterized by emotional preaching, the rise of "New Light" congregations (like Baptists and Methodists), and the founding of colleges such as Princeton and Rutgers. [Bill of Rights Institute](#)
- **The Second Great Awakening (1790s–1840s):** Sparked an era of reform movements, including the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, and temperance. [University of Chicago Press](#)
- **The Third Great Awakening (Late 1850s–Early 20th Century):** Focused on social activism, missionary work, and the rise of the Social Gospel. [Wikipedia](#)