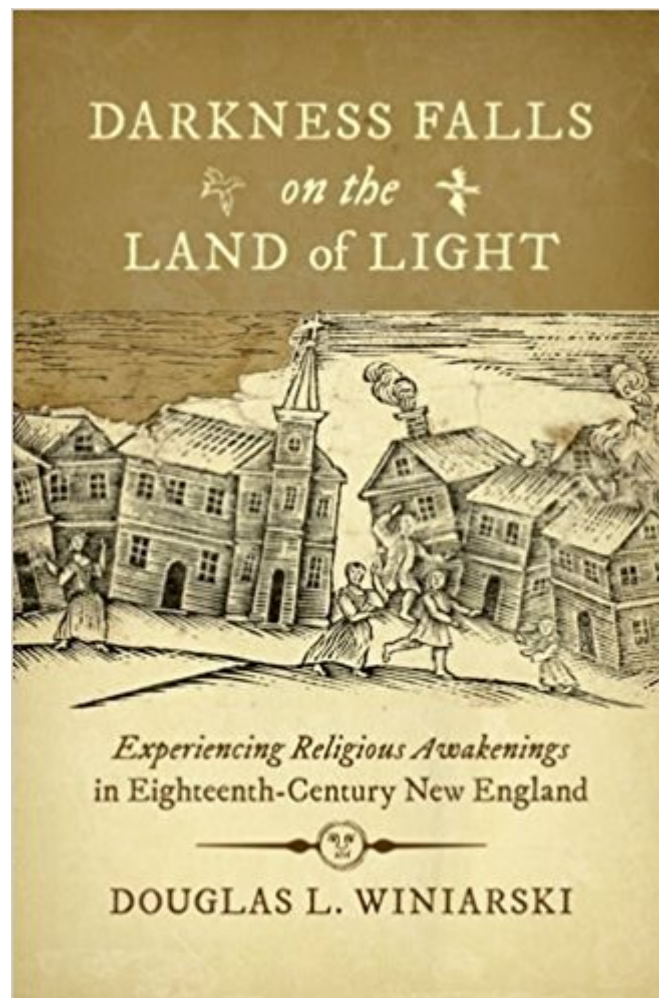


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# Darkness Falls On The Land Of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings In Eighteenth-Century New England (Published By The Omohundro Institute Of ... And The University Of North Carolina Press)





## Synopsis

This sweeping history of popular religion in eighteenth-century New England examines the experiences of ordinary people living through extraordinary times. Drawing on an unprecedented quantity of letters, diaries, and testimonies, Douglas Winiarski recovers the pervasive and vigorous lay piety of the early eighteenth century. George Whitefield's preaching tour of 1740 called into question the fundamental assumptions of this thriving religious culture. Incited by Whitefield and fascinated by miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit--visions, bodily fits, and sudden conversions--countless New Englanders broke ranks with family, neighbors, and ministers who dismissed their religious experiences as delusive enthusiasm. These new converts, the progenitors of today's evangelical movement, bitterly assaulted the Congregational establishment. The 1740s and 1750s were the dark night of the New England soul, as men and women groped toward a restructured religious order. Conflict transformed inclusive parishes into exclusive networks of combative spiritual seekers. Then as now, evangelicalism emboldened ordinary people to question traditional authorities. Their challenge shattered whole communities.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This finely researched project is a gold mine for students of New England church history. . . . One of the best compendia of New England social history to appear in many years. . . . Students of the

region will be building on its findings for decades to come.--Douglas Sweeney, Jonathan Edwards Center at Trinity Evangelical Divinity SchoolAn absolute must-read for students, scholars, pastors, and laypeople who care about the legacy of the Great Awakening.--The Gospel CoalitionEssential reading for students of early American 'evangelicalism.'--John Turner, PatheosDrawing on letters, diaries, and testimonies, Winiarski recovers the pervasive and vigorous lay piety of the early 18th century.--Cushwa Center[Winiarski] weaves together biographies of believers seeking spiritual refreshment and by turns finding in New England's established religion a font of joy or an empty, arid, and spiritless desert. Essential.--Choice

Filled with fresh discoveries and attuned to the experiences of a fascinating cast of characters, *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light* offers a compelling narrative of religious revival and social discord in early New England. Beautifully written, cogently argued, and astonishingly researched, this is the most riveting book on America's eighteenth-century revivals to appear in decades.--Mark Valeri, Washington University in St. LouisA richly textured account of the daily rhythms of religious life in colonial New England over a century of awakening and tumult. Winiarski's account of Congregational hegemony and collapse in the fabled New England town is a masterful synthesis by a scholar especially attentive to the cadences of pietistic language and ritual.--Susan Juster, University of MichiganFor those who thought that little more could be done with colonial New England religious life, here comes Doug Winiarski to prove them, oh, so wrong. With a nose for manuscripts like no other, he has scoured the repositories, churches, and historical societies of the region for sources that delight and amaze, offering us new voices, the voices of the awakened. The results of his searches, presented with sensitivity and expert analysis, give us a truly innovative and fresh view of the transition, not so much from puritan to Yankee, but from puritanism to evangelicalism.--Kenneth P. Minkema, Jonathan Edwards Center, Yale University

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