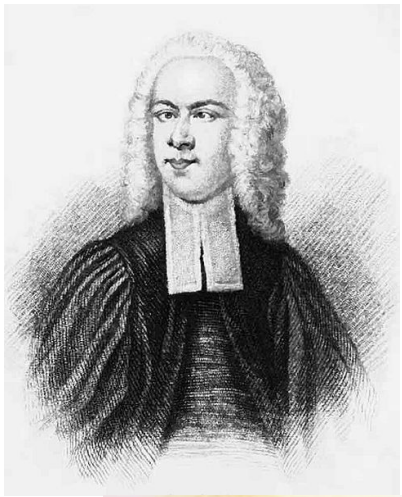

The great 18th century English evangelist and open-air preacher George Whitefield made a tremendous impact on the American colonies before the Revolutionary War and in a way united the colonies for the first time. He overcame traditional parochial boundaries (the very reason the English clergy in Britain shunned him), by his extensive itinerant preaching style and his convicting and booming voice which (to Benjamin Franklin's amazement) could carry clearly to the ears of up to 30,000 people in open-air. This man performed the charitable work of starting an orphanage in Bethesda, Georgia and would customarily end his sermons with a call for a collection to be made for the orphanage. Though they eventually took different paths Whitefield was close friends with the Wesley brothers and he was part of their 'Holy Club' at Oxford. He was deeply impressed by their ministry and in turn later prepared the way for John Wesley to preach in England during his absence while he was in America.

This man touched the hearts of many on both sides of the Atlantic and preached from England, to Wales, to Ireland, to America. On one occasion he even convicted the oft hard-hearted Benjamin Franklin, by his own admission no less(!), to give an offering to the Georgia Orphanage after he had resolutely sworn he would not (read here). The Spirit of God rested on this amazing man and his ministry touched many lives and has left a heart-touching and amazing legacy for those who came after, and for those contemporary, to emulate. This man assuredly deserves the designation "Father of the Great Awakening". Read about his life further here in a paper I wrote exploring this amazing man's life and ministry:

The Life of George Whitefield .