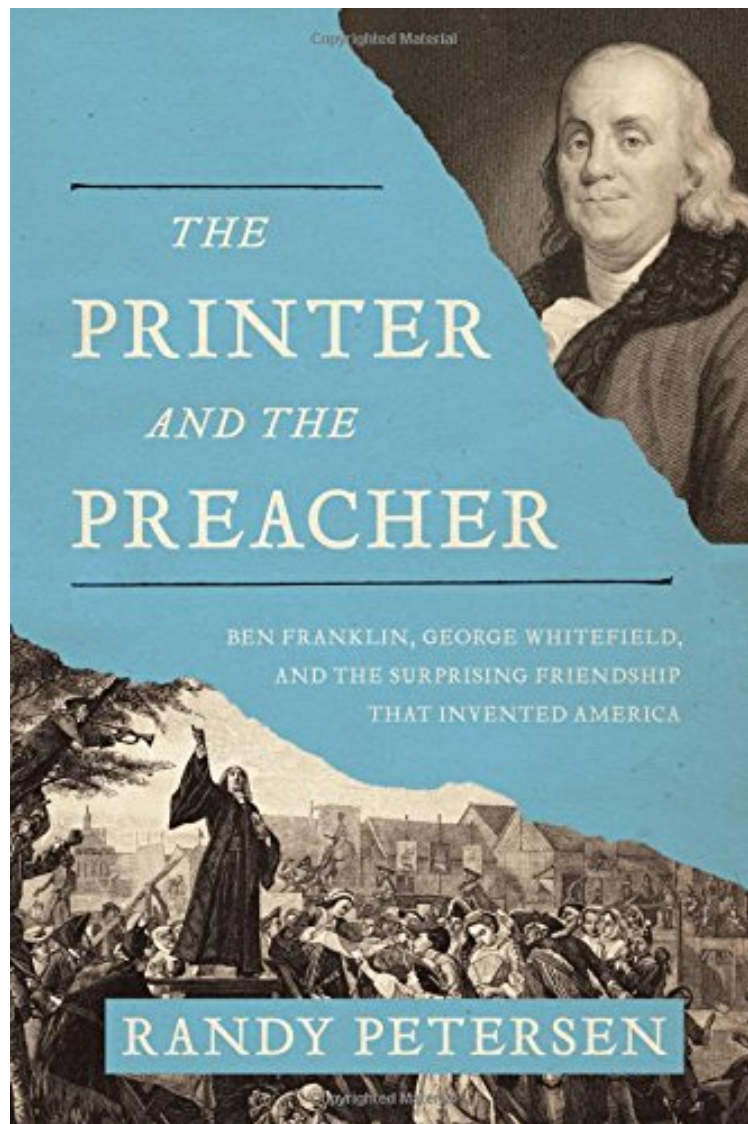


[Free read ebook] The Printer and the Preacher: Ben Franklin, George Whitefield, and the Surprising Friendship that Invented America

## The Printer and the Preacher: Ben Franklin, George Whitefield, and the Surprising Friendship that Invented America

Randy Petersen

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#99734 in Books HarperCollins Christian Pub. 2015-06-09 2015-06-09 Original language: English PDF # 1  
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**Randy Petersen : The Printer and the Preacher: Ben Franklin, George Whitefield, and the Surprising Friendship that Invented America** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Printer and the Preacher: Ben Franklin, George Whitefield, and the Surprising Friendship that Invented America:

22 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyable and Informative, but with a flawed premise "The Printer and the Preacher" By Bob Allen My review is fairly critical of Peterson's book. However, let me state at the beginning, that I enjoyed the book a lot, even with all the things that I find wrong with it. If I ignore the fact that I think Peterson failed to demonstrate his premise that a friendship between Franklin and Whitefield "invented America", he does a good job of showing how these two men exerted a powerful influence on the unique character of the emerging American nation. Many of these character traits have continued into the 21st century. They may well have been the most influential pre-Revolutionary War figures in this young, not-yet country. So, read the book for this perspective. The best part of the book is the final chapter, "Special Effects". With a little background information on both Franklin and Whitefield, this chapter could have been published as an article. In this chapter, Peterson talks about how each influenced and affected the other. He also summarizes the many ways that each man impacted the forming character of the new nation. As Peterson says in this chapter, "We are George and Ben." The timelines that Peterson included at the end of the book are also helpful. He includes 3 timelines: "Before They Met", "George Whitefield's Amazing American Tour" (1739-41), and "Encounters" listing the known and possible meetings and correspondence of George and Ben. Peterson's premise, that the friendship between Franklin and Whitefield invented America, is quite bold and, frankly, I think he failed to prove it. First, I wonder how much of a friendship there really was. It seems, from Peterson's book, that the two men were certainly acquaintances and business partners. This was, as Peterson points out in the final chapter, a long-lasting relationship. However, I don't think the book supports the kind of deep friendship that the subtitle postulates. For example, at one point, Peterson mentions that both Whitefield and Franklin were in England at the same time, but over a period of 6 years, they never once saw each other or talked to each other or wrote to each other or even acknowledged in their respective memoirs that the other was close. In other places, Peterson uses speculation to bolster his claim of an "inventing friendship" and even about other events or relationships. I'm not a fan of biographies that make excessive use of speculation and this is one (speculative biographies). Second, both men embodied the unique characteristics of this country-in-the-making independence, egalitarianism, a fervor for making the budding nation the best it could be, pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps. Each, on his own, was one of the most powerful of positive influences among the colonies as the colonies sometimes inched and sometimes hurtled toward independence. However, to say that their friendship invented America is, at best, speculation. Franklin and Whitefield were certainly good for each other they challenged, supported, and, in their own ways, promoted each other. They were good for the emerging country as they sought to make America a good nation. It's just that their friendship didn't do that. There are some odd mistakes in the book that an editor should have caught. These are two examples: "1962 saw the start of the Salem witch trials" (that should be 1692); "[Franklin] had established a newspaper as a 'fifth estate'" (the mainstream press is generally considered to be the 'fourth estate'). Finally, Peterson's writing style sometimes becomes extremely informal in ways that are normal for oral communication but feel out of place for a biography. For example, "This was not a marketing gimmick. Well, it was, but he was backing up the image" and "If you view advertising as proud and/or deceptive, you'll have a problem with this" "If you, like me, enjoy reading about the formation of the American republic, then this is a good book to read. (DISCLAIMER: I received a free copy of this book from the publisher as a review copy as a part of their BookLook Bloggers programme. As a participant in this programme, I am free to write the review I think the book deserves and receive no compensation other than continued participation in the programme I don't even get a kickback if you click on the book title, go to , and buy the book.)" 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Great research, detail, and writing, but a little slow moving By Nowhere Tribune In the Printer and the Preacher, Randy Petersen examines his subjects Ben Franklin and George Whitefield, from the beginning. He writes of their parents, their childhoods, and the cities they grew up in. He dwells on the details that he believes shaped them the most (along with a lot of other details), such as Franklin's apprenticeship at a print shop or Whitefield's days of studying and practicing theater. And he shows how, though they had many differences, the two benefited each other through their relationship. Petersen writes well, has done his research, and gives readers plenty of detail. Though I've generally enjoyed reading history and biography, including biographies of these very subjects, I found it hard to stay interested in this book. Other than the books not being able to hold my attention, I have no specific criticism, so maybe I chose the wrong subject. For anyone interested in these men in general, and their relationship in particular, this book should do just fine. I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good History By J. Smith Saw "The Printer and the Preacher," at a Sam's Club and thought I might give it a try. It's a fast read and that's to its strength. It would be good for a high school level, and I was impressed with the endnotes. A good contrast between the lives of Benjamin Franklin and George Whitefield; the printer and the preacher of the title, respectively. Both men were products of their times, yet not too many of today's generation had the ambition that these men did. Some things that stood out in my mind: Whitefield put together a "network" of letter writers who could quickly distribute the news of his church activities to his supporters and it worked very well. Perhaps, a precursor to the letter writing and media campaigns of today? Who knew? Second. That even great ministers such as Whitefield had their struggles, especially with the theater going community. Reading those sections might prove insightful. Lastly, Whitefield's relationship with Franklin was an enigma. Even though the text goes into detail on their friendship, one does wonder how the two got

along as well as they did, with such different beliefs. Really impressed with the list of Randy Petersen's works. He has legs. JThreeWilliston NDcarolyn3@midco.net

They were the most famous men in America. They came from separate countries, followed different philosophies, and led dissimilar lives. But they were fast friends. No two people did more to shape America in the mid-1700s. Benjamin Franklin was the American prototype: hard-working, inventive, practical, funny, with humble manners and lofty dreams. George Whitefield was the most popular preacher in an era of great piety, whose outdoor preaching across the colonies was heard by thousands, all of whom were told, You must be born again. People became excited about God. They began reading the Bible and supporting charities. When Whitefield died in 1770, on a preaching tour in New Hampshire, he had built a spiritual foundation for a new nation just as his surviving friend, Ben Franklin, had built its social foundation. Together these two men helped establish a new nation founded on liberty. This is the story of their amazing friendship.

About the Author Randy Petersen has written more than fifty books on subjects ranging from history to relationships, psychology, sports, and even word games. Formerly an editor and writer with Christian History magazine, he also prepares curriculum for small-group Bible studies. Apart from his writing, Randy teaches public speaking at a community college, preaches occasionally at his church, and directs in area theaters. He lives in the Philadelphia area.