

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH: LESSON 4

RELIGIOUS CLIMATE IN AMERICA BEFORE A.D. 1800

I. RELIGIOUS GROUPS EMIGRATE TO AMERICA

A. PURITANS

1. Name from desire to "Purify" the Church of England.
2. In 1552 had sought to change the form of church government of church of England which was at that time patterned after the Papacy.
3. Wanted national church but presbyterian in form.
4. Believed that bishops, presbyters and elders are used synonymously in the New Testament.
 - a) Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603) in arguing for the eldership was opposed by John Whitgift (1530-1604).
 - (1) Whitgift said that the eldership was the best form of congregational organization, but he denied that there was ANY EXACT PATTERN LAID DOWN IN SCRIPTURE.
5. The more radical ("Separatists") called for congregational autonomy.
 - a) Exiled to America on Mayflower in 1620 - Plymouth.
 - b) Led by William Brewster.
6. More moderate (loyal to the church of England)
 - a) settled in Salem in 1628.
7. Both groups were Congregationalists.
 - a) Believed in absolute individual church independence
 - b) Believed it a duty and privilege for cooperative fellowship between the churches.
 - c) Plymouth Separatists were anti-Church of England.
 - d) Salem Puritans loyal to Church of England.
 - (1) In 1629, chose its own pastor and teacher, indicating their congregational belief.
 - e) In 1631, Congregationalism became the state church (Massachusetts Colony) and its government was theocratic. Suffrage was limited to church members.
 - (1) No religious toleration.
 - (a) John and Samuel Browne were expelled from Salem when they used the Prayer Book of the Established church in 1629.
 - f) The Cambridge Synod met Sept. 1, 1646.

- (1) Composed of representatives from Congregational churches in Massachusetts, Plymouth, New Haven and Connecticut.

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- (2) Drew up "Cambridge Platform" - recognized congregational independence.
- g) In 1684, the Massachusetts Bay Co. lost its charter, and Puritan theocracy came to an end.
 - (1) Suffrage was now determined by ownership of property, not church membership.

B. SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

1. Called "Quakers" because it was reported in Court by a local judge in Derby(1650) that their enemies would "quake."
2. George Fox, founder, (was jailed 8 times in England)
 - a) Believed that every man had a "inner light" from God, thus revelation is not confined to the Bible.
 - b) God can use any man or woman, so professional ministry was rejected.
 - c) No sacraments- all are inward.
 - d) By 1659, there were probably 30,000 in England.
3. Massachusetts passed laws forbidding Quakers to enter in 1656.
 - a) By 1661, four Quakers had been hanged.
4. William Penn joined with Quakers in 1666. Received a large land grant in America, which he opened to the Quakers.
 - a) Granted Pennsylvania in 1681 as payment owed him by the Crown.
 - b) Given Delaware in 1682.
 - c) "Quaker Colonies" in New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania.
 - (1) By 1750, there were more Quakers in America than in England.

C. MENNONITES

1. Arrive as early as 1683 from Germany.
2. Marks the beginning of the German migration.
 - a) Some of these were Amish Mennonites - the most conservative.
3. Swiss Mennonites settled in what is now Lancaster County in 1710.

D. DUNKERS

1. Arrive in 1719.
2. German baptists known as the Church of the Brethren.

3. Name is derived from their practice of three-fold immersion.

E. SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIANS

1. Many had immigrated from Scotland to Belfast, Ireland and were prosperous

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2. Left in great numbers when English passed Navigation Act which limited export of live stock and woolen goods.
3. Another reason for leaving: forced to pay tithes for the Church of Scotland.
4. Settled mainly in New England because of their common Calvinism with the New England Puritans.
5. First synod was formed in 1716: 17 ministers.
6. by 1750, 100,000 had come to America.

F. MORAVIANS

1. Traced roots to Bohemia and John Huss.
2. Originally settled in Georgia.
3. Refusal to bear arms eventually caused them to settle in Pennsylvania.

G. METHODISTS

1. George Whitefield, after joining Wesleys' "club" in 1735, came to America to preach in 1738, 1739, and 1740.
2. Wesleys did not consider themselves a Methodist church, but members of the English Episcopal Church.
 - a) But after John Wesley ordained Thomas Coke a Bishop, they organized a separate and independent church: the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.
3. First Methodist service in America was held about 1766 in New York City.
4. 2/3's of Methodists were in Virginia and North Carolina.
5. Francis Asbury (1714-1816) sent by Wesley as missionary to America in 1771.
 - a) First Methodist bishop ordained in America - by Coke in 1784.
6. Methodists and Anglicans separate in 1784.
 - a) Methodist Episcopal Church
 - b) Protestant Episcopal Church

H. GERMAN LUTHERAN AND GERMAN REFORMED

1. First German Lutheran Church - New Haven, PA. - 1703.
 - a) By 1751, there were 4 ordained clergymen to care for an estimated German Reformed population of 15,000.

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2. Little difference between two denominations - Sometimes used the same building for worship.

I. DUTCH REFORMED

1. Dutch Reformed was the state-sponsored religion.
2. Received the first church charter in New York - 1696.

J. FRENCH HUGUENOTS

1. Around 1560 name applied to them by opponents meaning "confederates" or "conspirators".
2. Represented the Protestant revolt in France.
3. Strongly Calvinistic.
4. Because of severe persecution many fled France and some came to America.
 - a) By end of 17th. century, thousands had settled in America.
 - b) Largest number settled in South Carolina - Charleston.

II. FIRST EXPERIMENTS IN RELIGIOUS LIBERTY: RHODE ISLAND, MARYLAND.

A. Roger Williams and Rhode Island.

1. Exiled by Massachusetts for separatist views in 1635.
2. Founded Providence in 1636 and established church in 1638.
 - a) Comprised of rebaptized members - Thus the first Baptist Church in America.
 - (1) By 1740, there were 8 Baptist churches in Massachusetts, 4 in Connecticut, and 11 in Rhode Island.
3. Contributed to the separation of the church and state.
4. Puritans in other colonies began to withhold their infants from baptism - Henry Dunster, President of Harvard, among those who refused in 1664.

- a) The General Court in Massachusetts enacted ordinance in 1644 making it illegal to preach against infant baptism.

B. Maryland - First colony embracing religious toleration.

1. Due to the first Lord of Baltimore, George Calvert - English Catholic.
2. Act of Toleration passed in 1649.
3. A Jesuit school began by end of 17th. century.

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III. THE GREAT AWAKENING

A. A period of intense religious feeling - with an emphasis upon the doctrine of "conversion."

B. Leaders in New England

1. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) - Congregationalist.
 - a) In 1734 preached 5 sermons on justification by faith alone.
 - (1) Believed that the doctrine of human accountability destroyed the foundation of faith.
 - (2) Series produced a revived interest in the church and community.
2. George Whitefield (1714-1770) - Ordained minister of Church of England.
 - a) Preaching produced a great revival in New England.
 - b) In response to open air preaching, men and women shouted, fainted, and went into convulsions.
 - (1) To them evidence of the Holy Spirit, or the opposition to Satan.

C. Opposition to the Awakening

1. From Congregationalists:
 - a) Charles Chauncy - First Church of Boston.
 - b) Harvard College - at first favorable to Whitefield, but later closed the doors to him.
2. Division among Presbyterians over revival.
 - a) "Old Lights"
 - (1) The Unitarians ultimately came from them.
 - b) "New Lights" favored the revival, but not the emotional response in the revivals.

IV. OTHER RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

A. Deism

1. Traced to England, deism was an attempt to overcome religious division by affirming what reasonable men may agree upon as essential articles of faith.
 - a) God exists.
 - b) He is to be worshipped.
 - c) Virtue practiced is true worship.
 - d) Men must repent of wrong-doing.
 - e) There are future rewards and punishments.

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- (1) Nothing "Christian" about these tenets, thus viewed as "natural religion."
- (2) It attacked the concept of revealed religion.
2. It is the result of the Enlightenment, or the "age of reason."
 - a) Isaac Newton (1642-1727)
 - b) John Locke (1632-1704)

V. RELIGIOUS CONDITION AFTER THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

A. Religious indifference.

1. years of indifference to beginning of 19th. century - active hostility to religion.

B. Religious organizations at close of colonial period - 3,105.

1. Congregationalists -658 (mostly in New England).
2. Presbyterians- 643
3. Baptists- 489
4. Anglican- 480
5. Quakers- 295
6. German and Dutch Reformed- 251
7. Lutherans- 151
8. Catholics- 50
9. Methodist circuits- 37