

# 1700s

“By 1700 the colonial commonwealths of North America were becoming a prosperous extension of British provincial society, in which the prevailing outlook on life was unmistakably conditioned by a Reformed and Puritan ethos.”  
—Ahlstrom, p. 263

## I. Religious Diversity in the Middle Colonies: The German Bodies

### A. Smaller German sects

#### 1. The Mennonites: Anabaptists holding to community of believers separate from the world

##### a. Settlement

- first German settlement in America = Germantown, settled by Mennonites in 1683; 13 families
- thrifty and industrious, weavers mostly
- 1708, first Mennonite church
- more immigrations during 1700's
  
- Amish in Lancaster County
  - ca. 2000 Mennonite families in America (PA) by the time of the Revolution

##### b. Beliefs

- descendants of Anabaptists of Reformation
  - Menno Simons (fl. 1540-1560), Dutch Catholic priest, converted to Anabaptists (not immersion though)
  
- distinctives:
  - Bible only rule of faith
  - reject infant baptism
  - not insist on immersion
  
- PACIFISTS**
  - cannot hold civil office
  - cannot take up sword
  - may not take oath
  - live secluded from world

#### 2. The Dunkers

- “Taufers” = “Dunkers” = German Baptists
  - received Penn’s advertisements; came in three main groups 1719-33
  
- pacifist; adopted plain dress (Quaker influence)

- 1742, “Great Meeting” formed, precursor to the Church of the Brethren
- schismatic Dunker minister, Conrad Beissel, founded Ephrata commune in Lancaster County: “The Cloister”
  - “brothers and sisters” lived in separate dorms
  - 7th Day Sabbath
- Christopher Saur: most important leader; printer who printed first German Bible in America; family leader of Germans in America

### 3. The Schwenkfelders

- mostly in Pennsylvania; simple and industrious, they were similar to English Quakers in practice and claimed to be “Confessors of the Glory of Christ”
- founder Kasper Von Schwenkfeld, contemporary of Luther
- anti-Catholic and anti-Lutheran; persecuted by both
- severe Catholic persecution started 1720; many migrate, some to America (1734)
- 2,500 remain in PA. Sen. Richard Schweiker in 1976 was one of the last notable ones.

### 4. The Moravians

#### a. Early European leaders

- followers of Nicholas Zinzendorf, Pietist disciple of Philip Jakob Spener, graduate of U. at Halle
- Zinzendorf’s estate (“Herrnhut”) an asylum for persecuted ones from Bohemia and Moravia

#### b. European history and background

- began with Hussite movement in Bohemia
- split from R.C. Church; formed “Unitas Fratrum” (episcopal Church, consecration from Austrian Waldenses, back to Council of Basel)
- decimated by Thirty Years’ War (1618-48)
- came to Zinzendorf in Germany, joined Lutheran church for a while; separated again, formed own church but kept Lutheran music! Zinzendorf was consecrated their bishop
- now persecuted in Lutheran Germany

c. The Moravians in Georgia

- Georgia under General Oglethorpe, a refuge
- 1735-36, Zinzendorf sends small group to Georgia, after getting land for them
- John Wesley on ship with them
- sickness and death, failed to prosper in Georgia

d. Move to Pennsylvania

- 1740, George Whitefield sympathizes, gives free passage on his ship to Philadelphia
- negotiations with Whitefield for Nazareth colony; doctrinal disputes; land sold to Moravians; became their chief center



e. Zinzendorf's visit to America

- a main Moravian desire was missions to Indians and to German settlers

(1) Arrival

- 1732, missions begin from Herrnhut to other countries
- concerned for plight of Germans in America
- 1741, Zinzendorf arrives
- Christmas Eve, names new settlement, Bethlehem, PA, “that here the Bread of Life might be broken for all who hunger”
- stayed in America 13 months

(2) Attempt at church union

- 7 synods in 6 months among German churches
- tried to unite Lutheran, Reformed, Moravian, but some churches would back out

(3) Indian mission tours

- three successful tours, established congregations

f. Bethlehem and Nazareth

- semi-communistic communities: gave percentage of labor to Indian missions

–“veritable hives of industry”

–by 1747, 32 industries support ca. 50 missionaries plus people themselves

g. The Moravians after Zinzendorf

–at his death in 1760, board of directors takes over, buys Herrnhut

–great Moravian mission to western Pennsylvania and even Ohio

–best-known mission leader, David Zeisberger into Ohio Valley

–Not trusted by English settlers during the French & Indian Wars

B. The German Reformed churches

1. Geographic Sources

- a. Southern German: the Palatinate
- b. Switzerland
- c. Aided by the Amsterdam Classis

2. Early settlements

- a. Germantown above Philadelphia; 1719 is the earliest
- b. Reading and Lancaster Counties, PA

3. Early ministers

- a. early German settlers without ministers

–Some are home bred: In Philadelphia, a school teacher is ultimately ordained by the Amsterdam classis

–A few ministers immigrate to PA from South Germany

- b. John Peter Miller from Classis of Heidelberg

- (1) ordained by Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia
- (2) moved to Reading; fell under influence of Conrad Beissel and became head of Ephrata community
- (3) Miller a linguist, translated Declaration of Independence into European languages for Congress

#### 4. Michael Schlatter

- a. most important German Reformed leader
- b. 1746, came from Switzerland under Synods of Holland
  - (1) Dutch church had agreed to take over poor German church in America
  - (2) Schlatter organized first synod or “Coetus” in Philadelphia, 1747
  - (3) brought money, Bibles, ministers from Europe
- c. became involved with unpopular English Society for the Promotion of the Knowledge of God among the Germans; led to his retirement

#### 5. German Lutherans and Reformed

- worked harmoniously together; Schlatter and Muhlenberg were good friends

### C. The German Lutherans

= Largest German group

#### 1. Non-German group

- earliest Lutheran congregations were in Dutch New Amsterdam and among Swedes along the Delaware

#### 2. German Lutheran Migration

- like the Reformed churches, had few pastors or teachers
- very poor; many indentured themselves to obtain passage

#### 3. Early German Lutheran pastors

- concentrated especially in Germantown outside of Philadelphia, some early pastors worked hard at recruiting other German Lutheran pastors and in getting funds
- American Lutheran appeals reached Francke at Halle and King George II’s German chaplain; took 10 years for response, since dispute over salary arrangements

#### 4. The Salzburgers

- 1731: 30,000 were driven out of their homes in Austria by R.C. Archbishop of Salzburg
- many thousands made way through Europe, stirred sympathy
- S.P.C.K. and S.P.G. raise money for settling some in Georgia

- came in 1730's; in 1736, 150 sail with John and Charles Wesley and Moravians
- Ebenezer settlement on Savannah River was prosperous
- pastors supplied from Halle
  
- eventually scattered and joined other Lutheran churches

## 5. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg

- beginning of new epoch in American Lutheranism

### a. Sent to America from Germany

- Germans scattered, not organized
- 1741, Zinzendorf trying to unite them, stirred Germans in Halle to more action; they sent Muhlenberg to further the work
  
- arrived 1742 in Charleston
- quickly moved to Philadelphia, became pastor of three churches

### b. Expanding activities

- (1) Became responsible for many more churches
- (2)\* His reports to Halle published, inspired more missionaries and support
- (3) More churches established, and schools

### c. First Lutheran synod

Ministerium of Pennsylvania, 1748

### d. Growth of Lutheranism

- (1) 70 churches in America at first synod
- (2) 30 years later:
  - (a) 75,000 Lutherans in Pennsylvania
  - (b) 100+ congregations, with many Lutherans unchurched

## 6. Challenges for American Lutheranism

### a. Large numbers of unchurched German Lutherans

(Germans more than other nationalities)

### b. Ministerial supply and education

Muhlenberg and others from Pietistic background able to keep pietism alive in America

## II. The Colonial Presbyterians

### E. The origin of American Presbyterianism

#### Two main sources:

- from England during the Presbyterian phase of English Puritanism; to New England during the 1600's, especially after Restoration of 1660
- from North Ireland from Scottish Presbyterianism in Scotch-Irish migration of the 1700's

#### 1. The Scotch-Irish

- a. Scotch-Irish = only racial group in America to have a uniform religion
- b. Scotch-Irish distribution at Revolution:
  - (1) New England, 70 communities
  - (2) New York, ca. 35
  - (3) New Jersey, 55
  - (4) Delaware and Pennsylvania, 130
  - (5) Virginia and Maryland and west, 100+
  - (6) North Carolina, 50
  - (7) South Carolina and Georgia, 70

#### 2. Caused by political, economic and religious factors

- a. brought “strenuous Protestant spirit”
- b. Presbyterian government already well developed in North Ireland
- c. Able and aggressive ministry, well educated (mostly in Scottish universities)
- d. Early migration (1714-20) mostly to New England through Boston; common Calvinistic doctrine with Congregationalists

#### 3. Puritan Presbyterians in New England

- a. 4,000 by 1639 per *Magnalia Christi*, p. 73

“I came from England,’ said one inhabitant of Boston, ‘because I did not like the lord-bishops; but I cannot join you because I would not be under the lord-brethren.’”  
–*Magnalia Christi*, p. 31

- b. Salem Colony originally designed by Westminster member as a Presbyterian refuge

- c. Many Congregationalists in Conn. had Presbyterian sympathies: Consociations of Congregationalists
- d. Several Puritan leaders Presbyterian in ideas: John Eliot (“Apostle to the Indians”), Increase and Cotton Mather
- e. The Mathers’ Massachusetts Proposals of 1705 sought Presbyterian-type government of churches; rejected by Congregational churches in New England, but favored in Connecticut (Saybrook Platform, 1708)
- f. When New England Puritans moved into New York, often became Presbyterians
  - (1) After 1720 many moved to New York; vast majority then immigrated into middle colonies from Ireland; 10/15 congregations in NY and NJ transplanted from New England
  - (2) Oldest Presbyterian church (1644) built at Jamaica, Long Island; of its founder Cotton Mather wrote,
    - “Though he was a little man, yet he had a great soul. His well accomplished mind in his lesser body was an Iliad in a nut shell. I think he was blind in one eye—nevertheless, he was not the least among the seers of Israel.”

#### 4. Presbyterians direct from Scotland

–Latter 1600's, beginning of Scottish migration to East New Jersey during the “Killing Times” in Scotland

#### 5. Presbyterian transplants into VA were stymied by Anglicans

#### 6. Huguenots in Charleston, SC, by 1687

### F.\* Francis Makemie (1658-1708), “Father of the Presbyterian Church in America”

“A man of eminent piety and strong intellectual powers, adding to force of talents a fascinating address; and conspicuous for his dignity and faith as a minister of the gospel.” -- Hays, p. 75

#### 1. Beginning of his work in America

- a. Ulsterman, licentiate from Presbytery of Laggan; comes in response to appeal of the MD Council to the presbytery





- b. 1683, came to Barbados, then to Maryland
- c. Established preaching stations on eastern shore (Delmarva Peninsula); preached in settlements in Maryland, Virginia, Carolinas
- d. In 1704-05, returned to Britain to get help: money and men
- e. 1705, brought back John Hampton and George McNish whose support would be underwritten for two years by London Union of Presbyterian Ministers  
By then, established Church was in Maryland and South Carolina; hard times and persecution for Presbyterians
- f. By 1706, several Presbyterian churches organized

## 2. The first American presbytery

### a. December 1706, “The Presbytery”

- (1) established in order to License preaching candidates
- (2) would meet in central Philadelphia

### b. first members

Francis Makemie, moderator  
 Samuel Davis  
 Jedediah Andrews  
 John Watson

Nathaniel Taylor  
 George McNish  
 John Hampton

“It united in the persons of its seven ministers the two quite differing and often conflicting heritages of Puritan Presbyterianism and of Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterianism, anticipating the pluralism, even at times polarity, that was to characterize American Presbyterianism.” —Loetscher, p. 61

### c. Uniquely built from the ground up

“A second important feature of this first presbytery was that it was organized ‘from the ground up,’ not ‘from the top down,’ as was the Presbyterianism of Scotland which had been adopted by Parliament and implemented by the General Assembly. In America, on the contrary, the higher judicatories were created by the lower, establishing the more democratic nature of American Presbyterianism, and strengthening the concept that undelegated powers remain in the presbyteries, not in the higher judicatories.” —Loetscher, pp. 61,62

### d. Initial actions (1707)

“Our plan is to meet yearly and oftener, if necessary, to consult the most proper measure for advancing religion and propagating Christianity in our various stations and to maintain such a correspondence as may conduce to the improvement of our ministerial abilities.” —cited in Hutchinson, pp. 110,111

- (1) Exposition of Hebrews at regular meetings
- (2) Three overtures of preeminence

“First. That every minister in their respective congregations read and comment on a chapter of the Bible every Lord’s day, as discretion and circumstances of time and place will admit. Second. That it be recommended to every minister of the Presbytery to set on foot and encourage private Christian societies. Third. That every minister of the Presbytery supply neighboring desolate places where a minister is wanting and opportunity of doing good is offered.” —Hays, p. 70

(3) Within a couple years, early attention given relations of ministers to their elders and congregations; also the call for the keeping of session minutes to be reviewed at Presbytery

e. 3,000 communicants

f. Great diversity in nationalities of ministers and churches

g. More support from Boston and London than from Ireland or Scotland

### 3. Makemie’s experience in New York

a. 1707, visited New York, preached in a private home

b. Arrested by order of Governor Lord Cornbury for preaching without a license

Governor Cornbury’s impression of Makemie to the English gov’t:

“I entreat your protection against this malicious man. He is a Jack-of-all-trades. He is a preacher, a doctor of physic, a merchant, an attorney, a counselor-at-law, and, which is worse than all, a disturber of Governments.” —in Hays, p. 75

—Also, see Bancroft’s opinion of Cornbury, (Hays, pp. 101-02)

c. His defense

(1) Had complied with English Toleration Act: Makemie defended himself under the Parliamentary Act of Toleration, arguing that he and his creed were closer to the CoE than the Quakers who were protected under the act

(2) Had secured license when in Barbados

(3) Eventually won his case, but compelled to pay cost of prosecution, 83 pounds; travesty of justice

d. Reverberations resulted in recall of Lord Cornbury

“In the long run this event solidified the image of Presbyterians as defenders of freedom and won new respect for the denomination in America.” —*Eerdmans HTCIA*, p. 56

e. Long imprisonment hastened Makemie's death, 1708

## G. Developments after Makemie

### 1. Presbytery in Philadelphia, est. 1706

- a. Ministers to minister to several congregations (Swete, p. 121)
- b. Maintained educational standard for ministers; case of self-appointed preacher, David Evan (1710-15)
- c. Corresponded with other presbyteries and individuals (letters reveal historical details)
- d. Dealt with quarrels and moral offenses in the churches and among the ministers (see Swete, p. 122)
- e. Gradual growth to 1716

### 2. More Presbyterians

- a. 1716, increase in Scotch-Irish immigration, along with natural increase of churches
- b. First Synod: 1716, Presbytery of Philadelphia divided into four presbyteries in a synod:
  - Long Island (New York and eastern New Jersey)
  - Philadelphia (eastern Pennsylvania and western New Jersey)
  - New Castle (Delaware)
  - Snow Hill (Maryland and Virginia)

–At that time, 19 ministers; 13 ministers and six elders attend the first meeting in Sept. 1717

### 3. Early Synod Actions

- a. "A Fund for Pious Uses" established, subsidized by contributions from Glasgow, Scotland
- b. By 1724, distance dictated that annual representation could be by delegates proportioned from the Presbyteries
- c. Ministerial supply, 1735
  - (1) Condemnation of wholesale ordinations system in Ireland to supply America
  - (2) Dissatisfaction with local tutorial method of ordinands

### 4. 30 ministers by 1730

- a. Many from NE
- b. Continued migration from Ireland; e.g. Wm. Tennent of the “Log College” whose Church of Ireland ordination was recognized in 1718
- c. Many ministers coming from New England: e.g., Jonathan Dickinson, Thomas Craighead

#### 5. Presbyterians in New England

- a. Some Scotch-Irish remained in New England, formed Presbytery of Londonderry, N.H., “the Irish Presbytery”
- b. Compelled to support Congregational minister
- c. Often persecuted, esp. in Massachusetts (building torn down by mob of Congregationalists)

#### B. The Adopting Act of American Presbyterians in 1729 (subscription to Westminster Confession)

##### 1. Background to Subscription Controversy: loose or strict application of the confessional requirements for ordaining officers?

- a. Some presbyteries unwilling to discipline immoralities of ministers; also heretical dangers of “Arminianism, Socinianism, Deism, Freethinking, etc.”
- b. Presbytery of New Castle pushed for strict subscription to the Confession; implication: doctrinal orthodoxy would automatically correct moral laxity (Sweet: “a dubious inference to say the least,” but note I Tim. 4:16)
- c. This proposal had already split Presbyterian Church in Ireland

##### 2. Two Sides

###### a. STRICT SUBSCRIPTION = Supported by Scotch-Irish majority

- (1) Need of doctrinal unanimity in the face of dangerous heresies and subtle aberrations
- (2) Why have such a “clinically precise” creed if its details may be thrown to the wind?
- (3) Is the church a confessional church if it gives only lipservice to the standards?

###### b. LOOSE SUBSCRIPTION favored by New England and Welsh ministers

- (1) The church’s purity may be safeguarded by strict discipline of scandalous ministers and examination of candidates’ religious experiences

- (2) Subscription does not exclude the objects of its design, “hypocrites nor concealed heretics”
- (3) Whatever happened to Sola Scriptura as opposed to the opinions of men
  - (a) Not even all of the Westminster divines favored strict subscription
  - (b) There is a “glorious contradiction” between strict subscriptionism and chapter 20 of the confession which asserts “God alone is Lord of the conscience”
- (4) Another glorious irony: Adoption of the Standards came only after scruples forced the unanimous exclusion of the magistrate references: (no state control of synods or state prosecution of heretics)

### 3. Solution: The Adopting Act of 1729

Require subscription of churches and leaders; allow scruples to be stated; presbytery to decide “essential and necessary articles of faith”

- a. = a compromise offered by Jonathan Dickinson; called for all ministers and ordinands to subscribe to the “essential and necessary articles” of the Confession as containing the “*system of doctrine*” taught in the Scriptures
  - (1) prefaced the Act with a qualifying statement on the Synod’s abhorrence of any imposition upon other men’s consciences
  - (2) “essentials” to be interpreted by each presbytery or synod in case any man had scruples about particulars in the standards
    - (a) 1736, 1741: attempts to tighten up the adopting act
    - (b) 1927: General Assembly of the PCUSA eviscerates Westminster standards and the Adopting Act when it adopts a 1925 commission report that requirement of the “Five Fundamentals” from 1910, 1916, and 1923 was illegal!
- b. A probable split between the two parties was thus averted, but was the compromise a Pandora’s Box of latitudinarianism? No, not necessarily.
- c. Ratified by 1st General Assembly, 1789 (trashed by Presb. Confession of ‘67)
- d. For the full text of the Act, see James Payton, “The Background and Significance of the Adopting Act” in *Pressing Toward the Mark*, pp. 136-37

### 4. Scotch-Irish continued to increase; enforced strict subscription

5. \*Adoption of the revised Westminster Standards in the New World marks the beginning of separation of church and state

1722 - Jonathan Dickinson's synod sermon

“Tho' we ought to reject both the Heresy, and the Communion of those, who deny what we esteem the Fundamental Truths of our holy Religion; yet even these essential Articles of Christianity, may not be imposed by Civil Coercions, temporal Penalties, or any other way whatsoever.” —in Hutchinson, p. 112

1729 Adoption – Westminster Confession adopted unanimously with the exclusion of key clauses in chpts. 20 and 23 dealing with the church's relation to the state

- no state control of church synods
- no state prosecution of heretics

### C. The Presbyterian church in Virginia

#### 1. Before 1738

- a. Makemie started a feeble work; ceased by time of his death
- b. Scotch-Irish move into area west of the Blue Ridge
- c. 1727, sympathetic Governor Gooch (Scotsman) begins his administration; encourages Presbyterian migration; ministers from Phila. Presbytery visit the area (1719 on)

#### 2. After 1738

- a. 1738, Augusta and Frederick counties formed in western Virginia; Established Church organized there, but looked more Presbyterian in Augusta county
- b. 1738, Synod of Philadelphia sent John Craig to minister in W. VA; sent request to Gov. Gooch for liberty; his reply (Swete, pp. 125-26)
- c. Rapid progress in W. VA
- d. Greatest impetus to southern Presbyterianism to come from Hanover County in central VA after Great Awakening

### III. The Great Awakening in New England (ca. 1734-1741ff)

#### A. Conditions prior to the renewal

1. Spiritual condition at low ebb; reasons:

- a. Almost continuous warfare (European wars affect the colonies); Danger of Indian forays
- b. Political unrest: uncertainty of colonies' future charter rights
- c. Puritan leaders occupied with matters of state at expense of moral and religious affairs
- d. A cold church
  - (1) Half-Way Covenant brought merely formal members into church
  - (2) Emphasis on mechanical means toward conversion led to cold religion

2. Two factors prepared for revival:

- a. Latent fear of God's judgment
- b. More emphasis on human responsibility

B. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

"The Elijah of the Awakening" (per G. Tennent)

"The greatest philosopher-theologian yet to grace the American scene." (Perry Miller as cited in the *Dictionary of the Christian Church*)



"...The outstanding intellectual figure of colonial America and ...one of the greatest minds America has produced. 'In Edwards there was a rare combination of fervor of feeling, of almost oriental fertility of imagination, and intellectual acumen.'" (Sweet, p. 128)

1. Early life

- a. Born in Conn., son of a minister
- b. At age 13 knew Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and philosophy; graduated from Yale at age 17 where he taught; yet he wanted to be a preacher
- c. Called to Northampton where his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, had served for 60 years

2. Northampton, MA

- a. married young Sarah Pierpont who would make a strong contribution to his life and ministry. For her biography, see *Marriage to a Difficult Man*

- b. about 200 families in church, generally intelligent and religious
- c. Stoddard's common sense position: allowed birthright members to partake of communion to lead them to conversion
- d. five religious awakenings under Stoddard, yet when Edwards arrived, there was an "extraordinary dullness in religion"

"Licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town; there were many of them very much addicted to night walking and frequenting the tavern, and lewd practices wherein some by their example exceedingly corrupted others. It was their manner to get together in assemblies of both sexes, for mirth and jollity, which they called frolics; and they would often spend the greater part of the night in them, without regard to order in the families they belonged to: indeed family government did too much fail in the town."

--Edwards cited in Swete, p. 129

### 3. Revival at Northampton

#### a. Preaching style

- (1) 13 hrs/day of study
- (2) Emphasis on content over form; sermons were read from a manuscript

#### b. Revival comes December 1734

- (1) out of sermon series on justification by faith alone
- (2) vividness & earnestness; congregation feels "singled out"

#### c. Through 1735 there was a "glorious alteration" in Northampton as "the noise among the dry bones waxed louder and louder;" religion was the chief topic of conversation

### 4. Spreading revival

#### a. 300 professed conversions (out of 200 families) in Northampton

#### b. Other revivals in New England over the next 5 years

- (1) especially in Conn.
- (2) general throughout New England by 1740

#### c. Revival in New Jersey through Presbyterian connection (Gilbert Tennent)

#### d. Revivals fanned and united by Whitefield's tours (1740)

### C. George Whitefield (1714-1770)



## The greatest preacher of the 1700s



### 1. Early years

- a. Son of taverner works way through Oxford as a servitor
  - (1) Excels in drama
  - (2) joins Wesleys in their Oxford “Holy Club”
  - (3) converted Easter week of 1735 after illness
- b. Ordained a priest in the Church of England, 1736
- c. Does pulpit supply
  - (1) Huge crowds begin to throng in to hear his preaching
  - (2) Invitations from churches in Gloucester, Bristol, Bath, London
- d. Begins open air preaching to accommodate the crowds

### 2. New World connection

- a. Edwards’ *Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* published in 1737; read in England, too
- b. 1738, visit to Georgia to explore possibility of orphanage work
- c. New World Circuit: Trip up the coast to Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, Philadelphia, Maryland, Virginia, Carolinas, Georgia again, and return ship to Phila and Jersey
- d. Ship to Rhode Island in 1740 to tour N.England
  - (1) tremendous reception from Newport, to Boston and Harvard; hundreds of conversions
  - (2) preached four times for Edwards in Northampton; impressed with Sarah Edwards
- e. Instrumental in New England Revival, 1740-1741
  - (1) local pastors become itinerant evangelists also, including Edwards, Eleazer Wheelock, Joseph Bellamy
  - (2) Controversies
    - (a) “Enthusiasm” and physical demonstrations
    - (b) intemperate remarks of itinerants: “most ministers in Boston are the blind leading the blind to hell”
  - (3) Great results from 1740-42
    - (a) 25,000-50,000 added to the church from a total population of 300,000 in NE
    - (b) Moral changes in the towns and countryside of NE: Edwards felt that NE could become “heaven on earth”

### 3. Effectiveness of Whitefield

#### a. Rhetorical flare

- (1) appealed to the individual and to the crowd
- (2) laid democratic groundwork for sovereignty of the people as opposed to superiority of established hierarchy

#### b. His youth appealed to young Americans

- (1) Harvest of impressionable un-marrieds
- (2) Prior to this, most new church members were young parents seeking baptism for their newborns

### D. Other results of the Great Awakening

Congregationalist Rift: New Lights vs. Old Lights: a dichotomy of emphasis between the individual in the covenant of grace or in the Puritan social covenant

1. Precipitated by spontaneous revival outside of the church hierarchy and by the revolutionary influx of new converts

#### 2. Two wings of Old Lights

##### a. Old Congregational Calvinists

- (1) suspicion growing out of hyper-Calvinism with a distrust for the new emphasis of man's responsibility in conversion
- (2) Consociation of Ministers in CT and Ministerial Convention of Ministers in MA condemn revival practices and ban itinerant preachers

##### b. New liberals (the Boston establishment)

- (1) universalists and Unitarians centered largely around Boston who, although holding a Pelagian view of man's capabilities, recoiled against the enthusiasm of the revival and the resulting disruption of NE social structures
- (2) Universalist Charles Chauncey of Boston First Church; wrote "Salvation for All Men Illustrated and Vindicated from the Scripture," 1782  
Chauncey said that the revivals were antinomian, and psychological/human phenomena rather than divine manifestations

### 3. Two wings of the New Lights

#### a. Mainstream Edwardians

- (1) neo-Puritan urge to purify the N.E. churches
- (2) a strong minority around Boston favored revival

#### b. Separating Congregationalists → most become Baptists (6 churches to 30 in this era)

### 4. Later NE opposition to Whitefield after 1744

#### a. NE tours in 1744, 1754, 1764, and 1770. He died on the last and was buried under the pulpit of Old South Presbyterian Church in Newburyport, RI.

#### b. Many NE pulpits closed to him; Harvard and Yale issue anti-revival declarations

#### c. Still, many flock to hear Whitefield after the initial times of refreshing

### 5. Doctrinal controversy: the Great Awakening precipitated a fracture in the NE Congregational churches

#### a. Liberal wing

- (1) especially around Boston
- (2) growing Arminian influence; emphasized “means” in salvation

##### (a) influence of English writers who attacked TULIP

##### (b) Experience Mayhew, Indian missionary who tended toward universalism: “Grace Defended,” 1744

#### b. Edwardian School: “New England Theology”

##### (1) Starts as Calvinism with a larger emphasis on man’s responsibility as opposed to mechanical or presumptive regeneration

##### (2) Edwards attempts to draw the line against man-centered religion

##### (a) in opposition to the half way covenant he refused to follow his grandfather in baptizing the children of non-communicant members

(b) No new members in Northampton, 1744-48

(c) Dismissed in 1750, his farewell message says, “We shall meet again at the judgment!”; takes pastorate in Stockbridge in western Mass.; does Indian missions

(3) Productive writing period

(a) “The Freedom of the Will” = 1754 response to satisfy Old Calvinists after the Awakening. This treatise of critical importance addresses the balance between God’s absolute sovereignty on the one hand and the freedom/responsibility of humankind on the other

–The will is free, but human nature controls the will, and the natural man is not inclined toward goodness (Rom. 6:16-20)

–Man is free to act according to his natural inclination, but he has no power over that inclination

(b) “Original Sin” - 1758 rebuttal to Chauncey’s perfectibility

(4) President of the College of New Jersey, 1758; dies of small pox inoculation

c. Edwards’ disciples: opposed by liberals and Old Light Calvinists

(1) Supportive Peers: Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins

(2) Next generation disciples: Jonathan Edwards the Younger, Timothy Dwight of Yale

(3) Samuel Hopkins and the “New Divinity”

(a) As an apology for revivalism, Hopkins went beyond Edwards’ emphasis on human responsibility and promoted a general atonement approach

(b) He defined sin as “self-love” and rejected the doctrine of original sin and guilt in opposition to God’s definition of sin in I John 3:4

d. Net results

(1) pamphlet war among liberals (unitarians & universalists), Hopkinsians, Edwardians, and Old Calvinists

(2) liberals take control of eastern Mass., Edwardians influence western Mass., Conn., and NJ, while old Calvinists die out

## E. Spiritual decline after the Awakening

1. Churches split over the pain of a new idea: 321 in NE
2. Doctrinal pamphleteer war
3. French and Indian War

## IV. The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies

A. Pietism of the revivals left fairly untouched the anabaptists and Lutherans in PA and NJ; already on a higher plain of personal piety

### B. Theodore Frelinghuysen (1691-1747)

1. German ministering in 4 Dutch Reformed Churches in N. Jersey (1720ff.)
  - a. Preached on necessity of personal conversion
  - b. All 4 churches split after 4 years
2. Began cooperation with Presbyterians – viz. Gilbert Tennent, 1726

### C. Presbyterian Revival

1. Log College men
  - a. Log College developed by William Tennent, 1726
    - (1) Home seminary for his three younger sons and other candidates; 18 graduates



“To me it seemed to resemble the school of the old prophets” –Whitefield

- (2) Spawned other Log Colleges as graduates went out
  - (a) Samuel Blair at Faggs Manor, PA

(b) College of NJ, 1746; 4 of 12 trustees were Log College grads

b. Many graduates congregate in North Jersey, later forming New Brunswick Presbytery, 1738

c. Marked by evangelical zeal, which infected many N.E. trained Presbyterians there

## 2. Initial, formal opposition

a. Scotch Irish concern over ill-educated clergy = partly a smoke screen for real concern for shift of leadership to enthusiasts and English Presbyterians

(1) Emotional “falling exercises”

(2) Itinerant preaching without local invitation

b. 1741 – Synod resolves that Presbyteries could examine for ordination only men of NE or European training

## 3. Old Side-New Side Division (1741-58)

a. 1740 – Gilbert Tennent’s famous sermon, “The Dangers of an Unconverted Ministry”

(1) Lambasts cautious old side preachers: “... they are as blind as moles and dead as stones, without any spiritual taste and relish.”

(2) Printed throughout America and England, a fact that hurt his fund-raising in England

b. 1741 – Synod excludes the New Brunswick Presbytery by a narrow vote

(1) The absent Presbytery of NY quickly attempted to mediate a reconciliation

(2) 1745 – Presbyteries of New Brunswick, New Castle, and NY merge to form New York Synod as now opposed to Philadelphia Synod

c. New Side Progress

(1) In minority at split: 25 ministers on old side, 22 on new side

(2) Zeal of NS was self-propagating so that at reunion, 22 o.s. and 72 n.s.

d. Reunion of the two Sides, 1758

- (1) After several initial N.S. overtures for peace
- (2) Gilbert Tennent
  - (a) 1749 – “Irenicum” = “peace” among the brethren
  - (b) led N.S. peace committee in dialogue
  - (c) First moderator of reunited synod
- (3) Final compromise (Hays, p. 111)
  - (a) New Brunswick recognized
  - (b) No more uninvited itinerants
  - (c) Presbyteries would set their own academic standards for admission

#### D. Whitefield in the middle colonies

1. Preached for Frelinghuysen and Tennents
2. 1740-41 = high tide of Awakening

#### E. Fruits of the Great Awakening

1. Church growth
  - a. Converts (Noll textbook, p. 97): # of new members high in revival, but low before/after
  - b. Divide and multiply axiom
2. Social benefits from widespread morality
  - a. Lower crime
  - b. Humanitarian relief for poor and suffering
  - c. New emphasis on children: toys, portraits

d. Beginning of anti-slavery movement

- (1) Samuel Hopkins, the Father of the Anti-slavery movement. Supported by other New Englanders like Jonathan Edwards the Younger
- (2) Various Quakers had reservations against slavery while still many Quakers held slaves
- (3) Whitefield's glaring blemish: had slaves on his SC plantation to subsidize his Georgia orphanage. He said, "No prosperity without African slaves..."

3. Educational institutions to train leaders

a. Log Colleges teaching classical and theological studies

b. College of NJ, 1746

- (1) Moved from Elizabethtown to Newark to Princeton, 1755
- (2) Early presidents: Dickinson, Aaron Burr, Edwards, Samuel Davies (d. 1761)

c. University of PA

- (1) Grew out of Franklin's 100' X 70' New Side Auditorium that was a preaching post for George Whitefield
- (2) G. Tennent's church met there for 9 years
- (3) 1751 – used for an academy
- (4) 1791 – University of PA

d. Queen's College of Dutch Reformed; Freulingheysen desire for American training school

- (1) 1747 – had divided: Old Side under Amsterdam, New Side in American Coetus
- (2) Reunion in 1772 recognized ministers training at Queens

e. Dartmouth, 1769



- (1) to train white missionaries to the Indians
- (2) Whitefield introduced Indian Samson Occom to Lord Dartmouth in England; Dartmouth will administer the funds raised by Occom
- (3) School Seal: “Vox Clemantis in Deserto”



#### 4. Indian missions

##### a. Missions in the 1600s

- (1) Most converts from the weaker tribes between the powerful Narragansetts and Mohicans
- (2) John Elliot in Mass.
  - (a) Cambridge graduate
  - (b) Translated Bible by 1663 and tracts into Indian dialects in Mass.
  - (c) Established Indian “Praying Towns” for converts to find refuge
    - no polygamy, fornication, medicine men, or Sabbath breaking
- (3) Mayhew family in Martha’s Vineyard
  - (a) by 1684, there were 1800 converts and 4 Indian congregations
  - (b) won the medicine men first; translated John and Psalms
- (4) Massachusetts’ Interest: designated two ministers every year for missions

##### b. Missions independent of the great awakening movement

- (1) Anglican: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts sent 300 missionaries to the new world between 1700 and 1785, especially in VA and MD
- (2) Moravians: missions was their primary calling
  - (a) Centered around Bethlehem, PA; worked with Mohicans of NY and eastern PA
  - (b) Distrusted by English because the Moravians worked as closely with the tribes as did the enemy French; 11/15 missionaries killed by Indians allied with French in French and Indian War
  - (c) English persecutions pushed them to the Susquehanna Valley and further to Ohio

##### c. Awakening Indian convert: Samson Occom

- (1) Conn. Indian converted in the Awakening and trained at an Indian Charity School
- (2) Sent to England to raise funds for missions

- (a) 300 sermons
- (b) 10,000 pounds raised for missions

d. \*David Brainerd (1718-47)

- (1) Converted in NE Awakening
- (2) Expelled from Yale for his zeal
- (3) 1742 – licensed by New Light Congreg. Church and sponsored by Scottish S.P.C.K.
- (4) 1744 – ordained by New Side Presbytery
- (5) Labored among Indians in NJ and up the Susquehanna Valley
- (6) Died at age 29 of tuberculosis in J. Edwards' home
  - (a) Engaged to his daughter, Jerusha
  - (b) Aroused Edward's Indian involvement at Stockbridge
  - (c) Life and Diary of David Brainerd greatly helped the cause of missions in America

“The Great Awakening decided that America should be a predominantly Christian land. It stimulated moral earnestness, missionary zeal, philanthropy, cooperation across denominational lines, and the founding of educational institutions. It gave new value and confidence to the average man and so contributed to the development of democracy in America. It strengthened the non-established churches more than the established, and so helped to prepare for religious freedom.” —Loetscher, pp. 68,69

#### IV. The Revolutionary Era

##### A. Demographics

- 1. Approximately 3105 churches for a population of 3 million
  - a. Spread evenly over the 3 regions of NE, Middle, and Southern colonies
  - b. Two thirds of population was Calvinistic

## 2. Denominational proportions by congregation

658 Congregational  
543 Presbyterian  
498 Baptist  
480 Anglicans  
295 Quaker  
251 German and Dutch Reformed  
151 Lutheran  
50 Roman Catholic  
37 Methodist Circuits

### B. Backdrop of the Great Awakening

1. The spiritual turning was only one generation removed from the political upheaval. Whitefield and the Awakening were the one universal dynamic in the colonies before the Revolution.

2. The Awakening's influences on Revolutionary thought and action

a. A common intellectual and emotional interest

(1) Aspiration for a [post-millennial] Messianic kingdom

“Many thought it likely that the gospel would now advance by the preaching of the Word and work of the Holy Spirit until the whole world was Christianized. . . . The conviction that America might be the fountainhead of this last push to the millennium increased as the revival flourished; it did not diminish even when the startling successes had become things of the past.” —(Noll, *Christians in the American Revolution*, p. 41)

To many Americans, the War was a religious crusade. Note Presbyterian Robert Smith's 1781 sermon title: “The Cause of America is the Cause of Christ”

The war was

“...the cause of truth against error and falsehood, . . . the cause of pure and undefiled religion, against bigotry, superstition, and human inventions.... In short, it is the cause of heaven against hell—of the kind Parent of the universe against the prince of darkness, and the destroyer of the human race.” —Noll, *Christians...* pp. 60,61

“Now, however, with the thrilling prospect of realized liberty [in Christ] and the unique opportunity for virtuous citizens to create their own institutions, it seemed increasingly likely that the millennial age would arise from this struggle for liberty and [for] Christianity in which the colonists were engaged.” —Noll, *Christians...* p. 58

(2) Kindling of democratic ideals

- (a) Reassertion of Reformation principle of the individual priesthood of believers directly responsible to God
- (b) The Awakening set the tone for anti-establishmentarianism
  - i) Anglicanism was weakened
  - ii) Alternatives to dead orthodoxy promoted
  - iii) Presbyterian evangelist, Samuel Davies, teaches Patrick Henry to break the conventions of oratory

(3) Real Whig Party anthropology

“Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.” –Lord Acton

b. Common inter-colonial leaders recognized

c. Interdenominational cooperation

- (1) History of cooperation among Reformed branches: Saybrook Platform, Whitefield, etc.
- (2) Transcendence above sectarian and political lines

F. The threat of implanting Anglican Bishops on American soil (see Walton’s Chart #57)

1. Appeared as a specter of religious imperialism to America’s free churches in 1760 and ‘70's

a. Opposed most strongly in N.E.

“People have no security against being unmercifully priest-ridden but by keeping all imperious bishops, and other clergymen who loved to lord it over God’s heritage, from getting their feet into the stirrup at all.”  
-Jonathan Mayhew, Boston minister, cited in Sweet, p. 174

b. Quebec Act of 1774 – RCism given freedom in Quebec

2. Indigent Anglican leaders calling for it

a. Bishop of London too remote

b. Size: the Anglican church in America now large enough for its own regional bishop

c. Yet the dissident churches were overshadowing the mother church in size and influence

### 3. The threat of American Bishops drew together Congregationalists and Presbyterians

a. Annual meetings of Cong. & Presbyts. from 1766-1776

b. Proto-type of 1801 Plan of Union

“The grand points to be kept in view, are the promoting religion and the good of the Societies [i.e., Congregationalists and Presbyterians], and a firm union against Episcopal Encroachments. . . . What we dread is their political power, and their courts, of which Americans can have no notion adequate to the mischiefs that they introduce.” —Eerdmans, p. 133

### G. “The Presbyterian Revolution”

“Cousin America has run off with a Presbyterian parson!” —Horace Walpole, M.P., referring to John Witherspoon of Princeton

“Where were Presbyterians to be found in those days of trials, who were willing to hazard their all for the cause of civil and religious liberty? It was for these blessings they sought these shores. First to resist oppression of the king, first to counsel separation from the mother country, first to draft declarations of independence, Presbyterians were not found wanting when the day of trial and conflict came.” —Noble, as cited in McClellan, *A History of Faggs Manor United Presbyterian Church: 1730-1980*, p. 22

### 1. Official pronouncements

a. Political

“If Protestantism is a revolt vs. ecclesiastical sovereignties, Presbyterianism is a revolt vs. political sovereignties” —Thomas Carlyle

(1) 1775 Mecklenburg Resolves, sever ties of Scotch Irish in western N.C. to King George

“All former laws are now suspended in this province and whatever person shall hereafter attempt to exercise any commission from the Crown shall be deemed an enemy of his country.” —Hays, pp. 114-15

(2) May 1776 – Westmoreland County, PA, Scotch Irish determine to defend their property vs. king’s officers

b. Ecclesiastical – Synods of NY and Philadelphia

(1) 1775

(a) Call for a boycott of British goods with support of Congress

(b) Appeal to show respect to King George in any overtures to him while maintaining

colonial solidarity

- (2) Oct. 1776 – Hanover, VA, Presbytery endorses Declaration of Independence as its “Magna Carta”

#### Post-war

- (3) 1783 Synodical letter exhorting the churches to “... render thanks unto Almighty God for all his mercies, spiritual and temporal, and in particular manner for establishing the Independence of the United States of America.”

“We cannot help congratulating you on the general and almost universal attachment of the Presbyterian body to the cause of liberty and the rights of mankind. This has been visible in their conduct, and has been confessed by the complaints of the common enemy. Such a circumstance ought not only afford us satisfaction on the review as bring credit to the body in general, but to increase our gratitude to God for the happy issue of the war.” –in Breed, *Presbyterians and the Revolution*, p. 127

## 2. Direct involvement

- a. Two thirds of Continental Army is Scotch-Irish

- b. Preaching in behalf of the sacred cause

“So universal was the patriotic ardor of the Presbyterian ministers that Dr. Inglis, Tory rector of Trinity Church, New York, wrote in 1776, ‘I do not know one Presbyterian minister, nor have I been able, after strict inquiry, to hear of any who did not by preaching and every effort in their power promote all the measures of the Continental Congress, however extravagant.’” –Loetscher, p. 75

- c. Promoting the war cause

- (1) Chaplains

- (2) Recruiting

Rev. George Duffield of Philadelphia: There are too many men in this church and “there will be one less tomorrow, and no lecture on Wednesday evening.”

- (3) Sacrificing

–Chaplain James Caldwell of Elizabethtown, NJ: “Put Watts into ‘em, boys.”

\* –See Bret Harte’s poem in Hays, pp. 118-19

## 3. John Witherspoon (1723-94)

a. Evangelical leader in the Kirk of Scotland and descendent of Knox

b. Finally accepted Presidency of College of NJ, 1768

c. Political activism (the “Presbyterian Parson”)

(1) 1776 – delegate to NJ provincial congress

(a) Applied Presbyterian theories of Genevan Republicanism to the fledgling governments

(b) Was sent as a NJ representative to the Continental Congress (1776-83)

(2) Only educator and/or cleric to sign Declaration of Independence

“There is a tide in the affairs of men, a nick of time. We perceive it now before us. To hesitate is to consent to our own slavery. That noble instrument upon your table, which ensures immortality to its author, should be subscribed this very morning by every pen in this house. He that will not respond to its accents and strain every nerve to carry into effect its provisions is unworthy the name of freeman. For my own part, of property I have some, of reputation more. That reputation is staked, that property is pledged, on the issue of this contest; and although these gray hairs must soon descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather that they descend thither by the hand of the executioner than desert at this crisis the sacred cause of my country.” —Witherspoon cited in Breed, p. 166

For an Anglican parson’s derogatory ditty against Witherspoon, see Sweet, p. 179

(3) Continental Congress

(a) Witherspoon a confidant of Washington

(b) A tireless patriot, Witherspoon served on 100 Congressional committees, including the critical War and Finance Committees

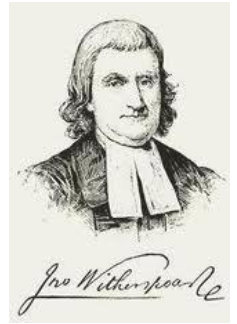
(4) Constitutional Convention

–“Calvinism was the driving force in the pursuit of independence, but Presbyterianism was the guiding light in the shaping of the American experiment” –CKL

d. Sought union with Congregationalists and Dutch Reformed

e. Influenced key patriots at Princeton

(1) According to James Kelly, *The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World* (p. 32), Witherspoon trained one president, (James Madison, the Father of the Constitution), one



vice-president, 10 cabinet officers, 21 senators, 39 congressmen, 12 governors, and three justices of the supreme court.

(2) Alexander Hamilton, an erstwhile Princeton student, who kept the Presbyterian Form of Government on his bed stand during the Constitutional convention

f. Leader of the Presbyterian National Assembly in 1789

## H. Congregationalists

1. Christian and ministerial involvement in the affairs of state presupposed in Puritan N.E.

2. Influence of Locke through Harvard and Yale

a. Compact theory of government = mutual consent of the governed

b. Rulers have power from God through the people

c. Common man has natural rights from nature's God, and rulers have obligations and restrictions under law

3. Preaching

a. A 100 year history of "Election Sermons" (see Noll, pp. 60,61, *Christians in the Am.Rev.*)

–The Revolution was the ripe fruitage of these sermons – J. Q. Adams cited in Hays, p. 107

b. Biblical themes and catchwords

– "Let my people go..."

– "Innocent blood crying to God from the streets of Boston"

– "Brethren, ye are called unto liberty"

## I. Other Groups

1. Dutch Reformed in NY and NJ

a. Near unanimous support of the war effort

b. Suffered greatly from British occupation



## 2. German Reformed

- a. General support of the cause
- b. Patriotic Sermons

“Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king who is above admonishment”

## 3. French Huguenot – a foregone conclusion

## 4. Baptists

- a. Held to compact theory of government
- b. Political liberty paralleled need for religious liberty
- c. Appreciated in Mass. and Virginia for contribution to war effort

## 5. Lutherans

- a. Henry Muhlenburg stays neutral
  - (1) Bound by pietistic oath
  - (2) King George III was the Elector of Hanover
- b. Muhlenberg’s sons were active
  - (1) John was a Continental Brig. General: “There is a time to preach and a time to fight”
  - (2) Frederick was later a congressman and the first Speaker of the House

## 6. Methodists

- a. John Wesley

At first Wesley was sympathetic to the grievances of the Americans till he read Sam Johnson’s, “Taxation no Tyranny,” a tract that entrenched Wesley in the loyalist camp. Wesley then wrote “A Calm Address to the American Colonies,” imploring their loyalty to the crown and advising preachers not to speak against the king.

- b. Francis Asbury stayed in Delaware while many Methodist preachers returned to England. Asbury considered himself British but would not take an oath of loyalty; he identified with the Americans
- c. Most native American Methodist preachers were patriotic to their land. Still, many Methodists in MD were considered Tories and suffered for it.

## V. Post-war disestablishment of churches

“The shock of revolution necessarily loosened the bonds of the unwilling multitudes to any church establishment for which they had no sympathy.”

A. Despite 1st Amendment guaranteeing no federally recognized state church, there still were nine colonies that had their own established churches: 3 in N.England, the environs of NYCity, and 5 southern colonies holding a form of Anglicanism

B. Disestablishment movement largely through efforts of Baptists, with support of Presbyterians

1. Isaac Backus (1724-1806) in Mass. led efforts for separation of church and state there

- a. Representative of NE Baptist Warren Association
- b. Opposed “Local taxation to support unrepresentative churches”
- c. Resistance to arbitrary religious oppression



“A very great grievance which our country has justly complained of is that . . . a man’s house or locks cannot secure either his person or his property from oppressive officers. Pray then consider what our [Baptist] brethren have suffered.” —Backus, cited in Eerdmans, p. 145

2. Presbyterians originally had sought only tolerance; now sought plurality

“We ask no ecclesiastical establishment for ourselves; neither can we approve of them when granted to others.” —Hanover Presbytery, cited in Loetscher, p. 75

“The Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1781 declared: ‘The Synod does solemnly and publicly declare that they ever have and still do, renounce and abhor the principles of intolerance, and we do believe that every peaceable member of civil society ought to be protected in the full and free exercise of their religion.’ This splendid declaration voices the best of Presbyterian and American conviction on the subject of religious freedom.” —Loetscher, p. 76

### C. Virginia takes the lead

1. Against established Anglicanism
2. Pushed by Jefferson, Henry, and Madison
3. Evolution of religious freedom
  - a. 1776 – religious freedom for all sects
  - b. 1779 – state funding of Anglican church stopped
  - c. 1785 – complete disestablishment
4. Paved way for First Amendment to U.S. Constitution

The contemporary correspondence regarding the state laws on freedom of religion as well as discussions behind the first amendment show that the framers' intent was to avoid a state church and avoid the promotion of one type of church. Most of the framers were in favor of the propagation of the knowledge of God; some framers favored the funding of state religious training.

### D. NE slow to disestablish

1. Mass Constitution (1779) calls for state funding of promotion of public worship of God
2. State-funded congregationalism phased out in next era
  - a. 1817 – NH
  - b. 1818 – Conn
  - c. 1833 – Mass

### E. Organization of the Presbyterian General Assembly

1. Four years of study and planning

1785 General Committee headed by Witherspoon to formulate general rules for government of

## Synods, presbyteries, and churches

1786 Presbytery and Synod boundaries redrawn

Witherspoon committee begins drafting a proposal form of Government and Book of Discipline to be distributed before the next convocation

1787 Draft amended, adopted, and sent to presbyteries for ratification

1788 Call for General Assembly to meet the next year

Adoption of Westminster Standards as amended in areas re: civil magistrate (1. no state oversight of church councils, and 2. no state prosecution of heretics)

## 2. Simultaneous drafting of U.S. Constitution

### a. Parallels

(1) Anthropology of the framers: Real Whigism

(2) Division of labors

(3) Tiered levels of authority

(4) Republican rule by representatives of the people

(5) Conservative in self-amendment vs. shifting majorities

### b. Circumstantial evidence

(1) Parallel dates of meeting, and only 4 blocks apart in Philadelphia

(2) Common denominator in Witherspoon, the confidant of Washington, president of the Convention

(3) James Madison, the father of the U.S. Constitution, and 8 other U.S. delegates (out of 55) were steeped in Presbyterian philosophy at Princeton

c. For the influence of Calvinism on western democracies/republics, see Kelly, *The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World*

3. Composition: “The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.”

- a. Five Synods: NY and NJ, Philadelphia, VA, and the Carolinas
- b. 16 Presbyteries; included 3 new Western presbyteries on the frontier: Redstone (PA), Transylvania, and Lexington (KY)
- c. 177 ministers (+ 111 probationers)
- d. 419 churches

4. First Assembly – 1789

- a. Convocation address by Witherspoon: I Cor. 3:7 “...God gives the increase”
- b. Significant actions

(1) Call for a new “faithful” edition of the Scriptures

–a committee was established to cooperate with other denominations to “revise and correct the proof sheets of Mr. Collins’s edition of the Bible, and to fix upon the most correct edition to be recommended to the printer from which to copy.” –cited in Hays, p. 138

(2) Measures of “sending missionaries to the frontier settlements to form congregations, ordain elders, and administer the sacraments.”

(3) Rules of parliamentary order established

F. Methodist Organization of the “Methodist Episcopal Church”

1. The first nationally organized American religious body - 1784

2. During the war

- a. the Methodists were disrupted since they had close ties to the Anglican church, e.g., Anglican sacraments and apostolic investiture
- b. Francis Asbury in Delaware appoints himself in 1779 as Wesley’s American Assistant, poising himself for national leadership after the war



### 3. After the War

#### a. Wesley reorganized the Methodists from England

(1) Decided presbyters (called priests) could ordain higher bishops

(a) Two deacons ordained in one day and made priests the next

(b) Elected Thomas Coke a new bishop

(2) Revised 39 Articles of CoEngland down to 24 Articles, excising all of the Calvinistic doctrines

(3) Scrapped Prayer Book for a Sunday liturgy and a new hymn book, largely supplied by brother Charles

#### b. Christmas Convention of 1784

(1) Methodist preachers meet in Baltimore

(2) Coke and Asbury elected as American Superintendents

(3) Elected 12 new priests

(4) Approved 25 Articles

### G. Episcopalian Church = “Protestant Episcopal Church”

#### 1. During the war

a. S.P.G. missionaries left and the Anglicans suffered more than any other religious group

b. Strongest leadership for reorganization of Episcopalians was from states like MD and PA where the CoE was not established

#### 2. Leaders

a. Dr. William White of Philadelphia anonymously penned “The Case of the Episcopal Church Considered” in 1782

(1) Suggested organization without American bishop till later

(2) In the American spirit, he called for lay representation in annual assemblies

b. Samuel Seabury of CT goes to England for ordination as bishop

- (1) when rejected by CoE, he gets ordained by non-juring bishops in Church of Scotland
- (2) Still, not recognized by most Americans on his return since he had not supported the revolution
- c. 1786 Convention in Wilmington, DE
  - (1) A Bishop elected for every state
  - (2) Several, including White, are ordained in England as bishops
  - (3) Seabury in CT is recognized

## H. Other national organizations

### 1. German Lutherans

- a. Church constitution adopted in 1781; no lay representation till 1790s
- b. 1820, first General Synod unites four state synods

### 2. Dutch Reformed

- a. Crystallized from 1784-92
- b. Translated Dutch Standards into English; adapted them to separation of church and state at same time

### 3. German Reformed → “Synod of the Reformed Church in the U.S.”

- a. 1787 – Franklin College in Lancaster County = joint effort with Lutherans to train leaders
- b. 1789 – Attempt to cut umbilical cord to Amsterdam classis was consummated after three years of silence from Holland

### 4. NE Congregationalism: trend away from Federalism to pure democratic rule despite contemporary public sentiment

- a. State associations repealed even in CT (1784)
- b. Lack of regional organization hurt Congregational expansion into the frontier, whereas Methodists and Presbyterians were better organized

## 5. [Reformed] Baptists

a. Philadelphia Confession based on London Confession of 1689

b. ca. 20 Associations organize in the 15 years before 1800

## 6. Moravians failed to grow

a. Close ties to control from Germany

- (1) Foreign authority
- (2) No English language
- (3) No lay authority

b. Resisted growing spirit of American nationalism

## I. An age of increasing moral decadence

### 1. Brutalizing effect of war

“It is impossible to serve Mars and Christ at the same time” –Marquis of Pescara

“I have attended church these fifty years; I have fought the British seven years; I have slept in a tent on the frozen ground with nothing but a blanket to cover me; and I have trod the snow path with bleeding feet nearly naked . . . and if Mr. Merrill [the clergyman] needs a fire, let him go to the place where they keep one year round.” —a NH veteran refusing to pay his state ministerial tax.” —cited in Eerdmans, p. 164

### 2. Skepticism in vogue

a. Deism of Tom Paine: Age of Reason

b. Sympathy for the French Revolution

“If French infidelity had been able to maintain a stable and quiet government in Europe, it would have well-nigh obliterated Christianity in this country.” —Hays, p. 139

See Hays, pp. 140,41, for General Assembly assessment with other views.

See Sweet, pp. 223,23, for Lyman Beecher’s perspective of student days at Yale.