

Christianity in the New World

Sources

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I. Introduction

A. Characteristics

1. Dichotomy: Established vs. Free church
2. English dominance but w/ important minorities (e.g., German groups—Lutheran, Reformed, Moravian)
3. Growth of Religious Liberty

B. Importance of Denominations

1. Meaning of “Denomination”
 - a. Naming other Christians
 - b. Recognizes others *as* Christians
2. Essentially those rooted in Protestant Reformation

II. Protestants

A. Congregationalists

1. Markers
 - a. Center: New England
 - b. Established
 - c. Tension: Visible saints vs. Halfway Covenant
2. Character
 - a. Descendants of Puritans
 - b. Reformed w/ congregational polity
 - c. Large influence on American cultural development
3. Major Leader: John Cotton

B. Presbyterians

1. Markers
 - a. Free church
 - b. Reformed w/ presbyterian polity
 - c. Theological Tension
 - 1) Confessional: *primary* emphasis on confessional statements & regular sacramental ministry of the church (Scottish influence)
 - 2) Evangelical: *primary* emphasis on conversion & importance of personal piety (Puritan influence)
2. Major Leader: Francis Makemie
 - a. “Father of American Presbyterianism”
 - b. Founding the first American presbytery (1706)

3. Impact of the Great Awakening
 - a. Strengthened Puritan/New England element in Presbyterianism
 - b. Leading pro-revival force: “Log College” of Tennents
- C. Baptists
 1. Markers
 - a. First center in Rhode Island
 - b. Free church
 - c. Evangelical
 - d. Most *American* of denominations
 2. Theological Emphases
 - a. Believer’s baptism by immersion
 - b. Atonement divide: Particular vs. General redemption
 - c. Local autonomy vs. “connectionalism”
 - d. Promoted separation of church and state
 3. Major Leader: Roger Williams
 - a. Helped found first Baptist church in North America
 - b. Did not remain a Baptist
 - c. Strong advocate of separation of church & state
 4. Key Events
 - a. Founding of Philadelphia Association (1707)
 - b. Impact of Great Awakening
 - 1) Significant growth
 - 2) Tension: Regular vs. Separate Baptists
 - a) Regular: Particular Baptists directed by Philadelphia Association
 - b) Separate: Loose independents resulting from the Great Awakening
- D. Anglicans
 1. Markers
 - a. Established
 - b. Mixture of formalistic & evangelical
 2. Character
 - a. Largest church in colonies
 - b. Relied on subsidy/support from England & taxation
 - c. Reorganized as Protestant Episcopal Church after the Revolution
 3. Major Leader: George Whitefield? James Blair?
- E. Friends (Quakers)
 1. Markers
 - a. Free church
 - b. Evangelical—but seen as doctrinally “loose”
 2. History
 - a. Founder: George Fox
 - b. Persecuted in England & New England
 - c. Centered in Pennsylvania → Religious liberty
 3. Major Leader: William Penn
 4. Character
 - a. Extremely low church, informal
 - b. “Inner Light”

- c. Egalitarian
 - d. Pacifist
 - e. Socially activist (e.g., anti-slavery)
- F. Methodists
1. Markers
 - a. Free church
 - b. Evangelical
 - c. Arminian
 2. History
 - a. Came very late in colonial era
 - b. Grew (1800s) on frontier (camp meetings, circuit riders)
 3. Major Leaders: John Wesley (England), Francis Asbury (America)

G. Contributions of Denominations?

1. Lutherans → Vital importance of justification by faith
2. Baptists → Nature of the church (including relation of church and state)
3. Presbyterians → Supremacy of God's grace in salvation
4. Methodists → Safeguarding the free will of man
5. Holiness Churches → Importance of "experimental" holiness
6. Mennonites → Peace emphasis
7. Plymouth Brethren → Importance of the prophetic Scriptures

III. Catholics

A. North America

1. Centered in Maryland
2. Major Leader: John Carroll, first bishop & archbishop
3. Real Catholic growth 19th cent. w/ Irish immigration

B. Latin America

1. Catholics overwhelmingly dominant
 - a. Liberal governments often anti-clerical
 - b. Less emphasis on sacraments & more on observances & celebrations
 - c. Division Among Clergy
 - 1) Upper clergy (archbishops, etc.) → favored wealthy ruling class
 - 2) Lower clergy (local priests, monks) → more sympathetic to people's needs
2. Protestant Growth in Latin America (19th Cent.): Three Means
 - a. Immigration of Protestant groups (e.g., Waldensians in Uruguay)
 - b. Bible societies: "First a Bible, then a convert, then a church."
 - c. Direct mission work