

Church in Colonial America

Church History and Our Place in It

Timeline

- 512 Saint Brendan the Navigator of Clonfert
- 1000 Leif Erikson Commissioned to Convert Greenland
- 1453 Fall of Constantinople
- 1492 Christopher Columbus Makes Landfall on *San Salvador* Island
- 1599 Publication of the Geneva Bible
- 1620 Plimouth Colony
- 1727 Jonathan Edwards Ordained
- 1729 John & Charles Wesley found the "Holy Club" at Oxford
- 1739 George Whitfield Preaches for the first time in the open air
- 1776 American Declaration of Independence

Historical Survey of America

- + All History regards the progress of the Kingdom of God.

Christian Contact with America

- + Saint Brendan the Navigator of Clonfert (b. ~484 d. ~577)
- + Leif Erikson: Discoverer of Vinland + Missionary to Greenland (b. ~970 d. ~1019-1025)
- + Christopher Columbus: Christ-bearer to the New World (b. 1451 d. 1506)
- + Pilgrims: Plimouth Colony (1620)
- + Puritans: John Winthrop: Massachusetts Bay Colony, Founder (1630)

The Providential Protection of America

- + Two Cartographers: Christopher Columbus + John Smith
- + Two Maritime Expeditions: Spanish Armada + Mayflower

The Western Creeds Develop Liberty

- + Council of Constantinople (Christ is Truly God and Truly Man) — Edict of Milan (313)
- + Council of Ephesus (Worship of Man Condemned)
- + Council of Chalcedon (Lordship of Christ) — Justinian Law Code (534)
- + St. Patrick of Ireland (Mosaic *Leges, or recht Litre* (the law of the Letter) replaced *recht aicnid* (the law of nature) (438–441)
- + King Alfred the Great — Alfred's Law Code (880–890)
- + Magna Carta — 1215
- + The Puritans exalted three areas of life as paramount for continuance of liberty (Church, State, & Family Economics):
 - *Semper Reformanda*, Always Reforming.
 - *Lex Rex*, The Law is King. Rejection of the Divine Right of Kings
 - *Coram Deo*, In the Presence of God. All of life was to be holy unto the Lord. This resulted in the privatization of dominion and the exaltation of familial stewardship.

Puritanism Applied in America

- + America was founded as a Christian enterprise of Self-government.
- + New England Puritans viewed themselves as true Englishman

Reformation, Revival, and Revivalism

- + Iain Murray: *Revival and Revivalism*
 - 1620–1858 Revival was understood to refer to 'some special seasons wherein God doth in a remarkable manner revive religion amongst his people.' Words of Solomon Stoddard in 1712
 - 1860-1900 saw a shift of vocabulary from 'seasons of revival' to 'revival meetings'. Revivalists became popular as professional herolds who would announce the upcoming work of revival. This replaced the post recognition of God's work as a revival.

The First Great Awakening (1730–1755)

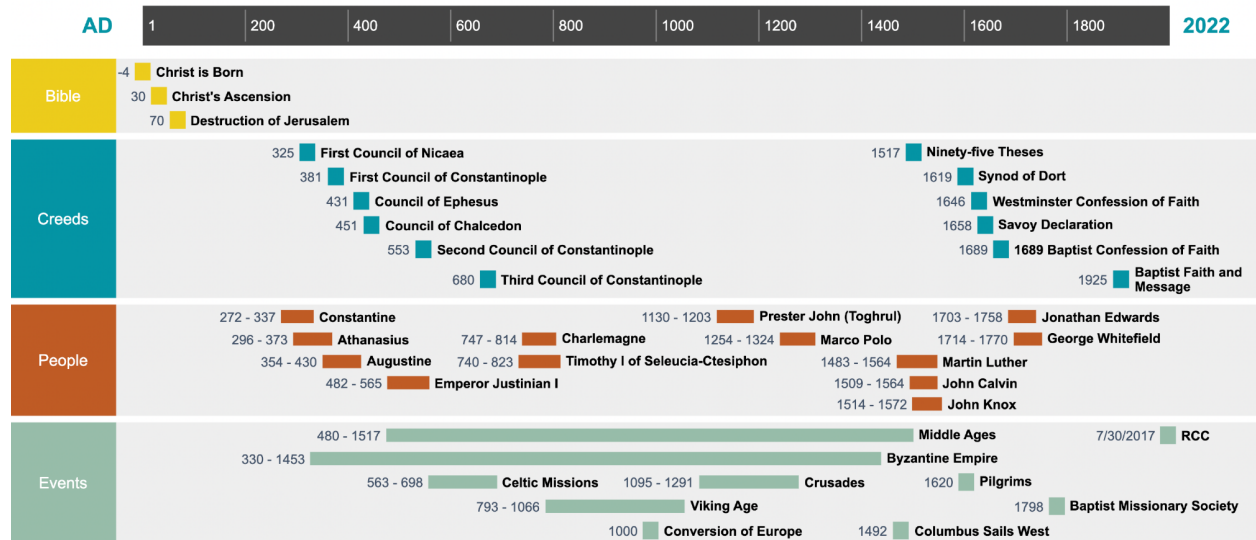
- + Jonathan Edwards (b. 1703 d. 1758)
- + George Whitefield (b. 1714 d. 1770)
- + John Wesley (b. 1703 d. 1791)

The Second Great Awakening (1790–1840)

- + Charles Finney, "Revivalist"
- + Ann Lee, Shakers

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Historical Survey of America

History has been secularized

- ✦ All History regards the progress of the Kingdom of God.
- ✦ Church history is the study and identification of God's Work in building the theological and structural framework of his Church
 - Historical Characters are often divested of their Christian or Profane perspectives.

Christian Contact with America

- ✦ Saint Brendan the Navigator of Clonfert (b. ~484 d. ~577)
 - Voyage of Saint Brendan (AD 512–530)
- ✦ Leif Erikson: Discoverer of Vinland + Missionary to Greenland (b. ~970 d. ~1019-1025)
 - Commissioned by Olaf Tryggvason, king of Norway
 - Blown off course and Discovered Vinland
 - Converted Greenland to Christianity
 - Established the Settlement of *L'Anse aux Meadows* in Newfoundland
- ✦ Christopher Columbus: Christ-bearer to the New World (b. 1451 d. 1506)
 - Christian Cartographer
 - End of the Pax Mongolica and the fall of Constantinople led Columbus to seek out a western route to the Indies.
 - Motivated by a desire to unite military forces with the Church of the East and conquer the Holy Sepulcher (The Holy Church in Jerusalem).
- ✦ Pilgrims: Plimouth Colony (1620)
 - Fled the persecution in England and settled in Leiden, Netherlands (1607)
 - William Bradford lists some reasons for the Pilgrim's decision to go west:
 - Seeking "a better, and easier place of living" away from religious persecution.
 - Their children were being "drawn away by evil examples into extravagance and dangerous courses"
 - and the "great hope, for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world."
 - "Last and not least, they cherished a great hope and inward zeal they had of laying some good foundation, or at least to make some way thereunto, for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world; yea, though they

should be but even as stepping-stones unto others for the performing of so great a work.”

- + Puritans: John Winthrop: Massachusetts Bay Colony, Founder (1630)
 - Sermon *A Model of Christian Charity* preached before the colonists embarked: “We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when He shall make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, “may the Lord make it like that of New England.” For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world.”

The Providential Protection of America

- + Two Cartographers
 - Columbus’s failure to discover the American Continent because God directed a flock of birds to draw Columbus’ eye south.
 - John Smith’s Mapping of New England 6 years before the Pilgrims.
- + Two Maritime Expeditions
 - The Destruction of the Spanish Armada by a storm.
 - The Transatlantic Repair of the Mayflower by a giant screw.

The Western Creeds Develop Liberty

- + Council of Constantinople (Christ is Truly God and Truly Man)
 - Edict of Milan — 313
- + Council of Ephesus (Worship of Man Condemned)
- + Council of Chalcedon (Lordship of Christ)
 - Justinian Law Code 534 (The Christian Empress Theodora, previously a dancer and prostitute, was instrumental in reforming the Roman Law)
- + St. Patrick of Ireland
 - Mosaic *Leges, or recht Litre* (the law of the Letter) replaced *recht aicnid* (the law of nature)¹ — 438–441
- + King Alfred the Great
 - Alfred’s Law Code — 880–890
 - The Common Law of England is built on King Alfred’s Law Code
- + Magna Carta — 1215

¹ https://ebrary.net/141117/law/concept_natural_law_the_nature

- ✦ The Puritans exalted three areas of life as paramount for continuance of liberty (Church, State, & Family Economics):
 - *Semper Reformanda*, Always Reforming.
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Puritanism Applied in America

- ✦ America was founded as a Christian enterprise of Self-government.
 - Pilgrims, *Mayflower Compact*
 - John Eliot had success among the Massachusett Indians, publishing the first Native American Bible in 1663.
- ✦ New England Puritans viewed themselves as true Englishman
 - Presbyterian Rebellion
 - The Black Robed Regiment

Reformation, Revival, and Revivalism

- ✦ Iain Murray: *Revival and Revivalism*
 - 1620–1858 Revival was understood to refer to ‘some special seasons wherein God doth in a remarkable manner revive religion amongst his people.’ Words of Solomon Stoddard in 1712
 - 1860-1900 saw a shift of vocabulary from ‘seasons of revival’ to ‘revival meetings’. Revivalists became popular as professional herolds who would announce the upcoming work of revival. This replaced the post recognition of God’s work as a revival.

The First Great Awakening (1730–1755)

- ✦ Jonathan Edwards (b. 1703 d. 1758)
 - Ordained minister in 1727 as a scholar-pastor. His rule being 13 hours of study a day.
 - Godly and Virtuous Wife Sarah. 11 Children.
 - Edwards sermons highlighted the absolute sovereignty of God in the work of salvation. He stressed the importance of God granting man faith in order to live a life pleasing to God.
 - His preaching was delivered calmly, carefully, and clearly. Bringing his audience along from point to point. He believed that man, at every point of his life,

needed to see God as the truly sovereign God, and man as the errant child, totally dependant upon God's work of redemption to save him.

- His preaching was uncomfortable for his wealthy New England congregation and they eventually dismissed him with a council vote of 10 to 9 with a congregation vote of 200 to 23.
- In 1751 he began work as a missionary to the Native Americans (Housatonics and Mohawks). He would preach 4 sermons every Sunday.
- Legacy through his children. His descendants have had a disproportionate effect upon American culture: his biographer George Marsden notes that "the Edwards family produced scores of clergymen, thirteen presidents of higher learning, sixty-five professors, and many other persons of notable achievements."
- And however small the propagation of the gospel among the heathen here in America has been hitherto, yet I think we may well look upon the discovery of so great a part of the world as America, and bringing the gospel into it, as one thing by which divine Providence is preparing the way for the future glorious times of the church; when Satan's kingdom shall be overthrown, not only throughout the Roman empire, but throughout the whole habitable globe, on every side, and on all its continents. When those times come, then doubtless the gospel, which is already brought over into America, shall have glorious success, and all the inhabitants of this new discovered world shall become subjects of the kingdom of Christ, as well as all the other ends of the earth: and in all probability Providence has so ordered it, that the mariner's compass, which is an invention of later times, whereby men are enabled to sail over the widest ocean, when before they durst not venture far from land, should prove a preparation for what God intends to bring to pass in the glorious times of the church, viz. the sending forth the gospel wherever any of the children of men dwell, how far soever off, and however separated by wide oceans from those parts of the world which are already Christianized." (p. 284 – The History of Redemption)
- He also wrote especially concerning the Indian population of America as he saw them at that time and what they could be in the future. He said, "Then shall the vast continent of America, which now in so great a part of it is covered with barbarous ignorance and cruelty, be every where covered with glorious gospel light and Christian love; and instead of worshipping the devil, as now

they do, they shall serve God, and praises shall be sung every where to the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Savior of the world." (p. 314 – The History of Redemption)

✦ George Whitefield (b. 1714 d. 1770)

- Preached over 18,000 sermons to over 10 Million people in Britain and the American Colonies.
- Not part of the Church of England. Largely preached outdoors.
- Benjamin Franklin gives us the technical abilities of Whitefield's preaching. He could be heard at a distance of 500 feet in the open air, and could be heard by approx. 30,000 people arranged in a semicircle.
- Whitefield's preaching drew the ire of other clergy because they did not hold to the necessity of a new birth and Whitefield would make this point often in his preaching.
- Anglicanism at the time of Whitefield was largely comprised of dead orthodoxy.
- Whitefield was convinced that genuine religion "engages the heart, not just the head."
- "Among the many reasons assignable for the sad decay of true Christianity, perhaps the neglecting to assemble ourselves together, in religious societies, may not be one of the least."

✦ John Wesley (b. 1703 d. 1791)

- John and his brother Charles founded the "Holy Club" at the University of Oxford. They wanted to actually practice the Christian life as a rule or method to their life. They were surrounded by so many who identified as Christian but had no regeneration of soul nor character of holiness.
- Three foundational elements of Methodism
 - All mankind is, by nature, dead in sin.
 - Justification is by faith alone.
 - Faith produces both inward and outward holiness.
- The established Church of England (Anglicanism) warned that insistence on a new birth for salvation, justification by faith alone, and the constant action of the Holy Spirit upon the believers soul would produce ill effects upon their weak minds.

- Anglicanism had accepted the false notion that pedobaptism conferred saving faith. Wesley fought against this doctrine by his insistence on regeneration by being born again.
 - Traveling preacher who contributed largely to the reinvigoration of American Christianity.
 - Strongly differed from Whitefield's Calvinism, instead supporting a form of Arminianism.
- ✦ This period of Wesleyan preaching and revival is termed the First Great Awakening (1730–1755).
- It was not a doctrinal movement like the reformation.
 - It was largely a work called for individual repentance, revitalized church attendance, and a continual pursuit of holiness.
 - One of the results of the First Great Awakening was the further divide of American Christianity from the Church of England.
 - The Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches split during this time, and both the Methodist and Baptist churches were strengthened.

The Second Great Awakening (1790–1840)

- ✦ The Distinct Manner of Preaching During this Period.
- Largely carried out by circuit riding preachers at tent meetings.
 - Consisted primarily of experimental or experiential Christianity.
 - It was recorded by some newspapers that the only lasting effect of the tent meetings was that an abundance of babies were born 9 months later.
 - Alter calls were introduced for the first time in Christian history. This was stoked and promoted by planting people in the crowd to wail and cry out so as to motivate people to go forward.
- ✦ Charles Finney, the most prominent “revivalist”
- ✦ Ann Lee, Shakers a socialistic sect of essentric and erotic christianity. Ann Lee was believed to be the second incarnation of Christ and they were living in the last days.
- ✦ John Nelson Darby, Innovator of Dispensationalism.