

Church History

MODERN PERIOD—AGE OF EVANGELISM

1689-1881AD

I. ROMAN CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENTS

A. Jansenism

1. Named for the Dutch theologian Cornelis Jansen (1585-1638) whose main work, Augustinus, taught a kind of Calvinistic Catholicism.
2. Pope Innocent X issued a bull in 1653 declaring Jansenist doctrines to be heresy
3. Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), a famous French scientist and religious philosopher, wrote letters defending Jansenism and attacking the Jesuits.
4. Despite much persecution, Jansenism was strong in France well into the 1700's and in the Netherlands even longer.

B. French Revolution of 1789

1. Causes

- a. The suppression of the Huguenots left France without many of its most skilled citizens and without an option for those who turned from Catholicism.
- b. Even the Jansenists were reduced to practically no influence by about 1730
- c. As a result, those who were repulsed by the immorality and greed of the Roman Church turned to skepticism and atheism
- d. French society of this time consisted of three classes: the clergy, the nobility, and the third estate (which included peasants, craftsmen, merchants, etc.). As the clergy and the nobility were continually taking the money of the others, they became increasingly unpopular until they lost their power in the French Revolution.

2. Results

- a. All church property was confiscated
- b. Religious orders were abolished
- c. Church of France established as national church
- d. Most French clergy lost their positions

- e. Napoleon restored Catholicism and returned some of their privileges in 1801

C. Pope Pius IX (1846-1878)

1. Declared the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary in 1854 (“was kept immune from any contamination of original sin”)
2. Declared the doctrine of Papal Infallibility in 1870
3. Lost political central of the Papal States in 1870

II. GERMAN MOVEMENTS

A. Pietism

1. Rose during a time of dead orthodoxy among the Lutherans
2. Emphasized personal salvation, holy living, and missionary work
3. Philipp Jacob Spener (1635-1705)
 - a. Founder of German Pietism
 - b. Emphasized Bible study, preaching, and personal devotion to God
 - c. Founded the University of Halle in 1694
 - d. Remained a Lutheran
4. August Hermann Franke (1663-1727)
 - a. A disciple of Spener
 - b. Had a great influence on the University of Halle
 - c. Established a great orphanage in Halle in which 2200 children were living at his death
5. Pietism led to the Moravian Church and had a strong influence on several evangelistic men and groups.

B. Moravians

1. Count von Zinzendorf (1700-1760)
 - a. A disciple of the Pietist Franke
 - b. Nobleman of Saxony, Germany
 - c. In 1727, he opened his estates to religious dissenters, many of which were Bohemian Brethren, the descendants of the Hussites
 - d. Settled in Pennsylvania from 1741 to 1743 and established several churches
2. The Moravians had already sent missionaries to Turkey, Africa, the West Indies, Greenland, Surinam, Georgia, and Pennsylvania by 1735
3. John Wesley, founder of the Methodists, came into contact with the Moravians in Georgia while on a missionary trip for the Anglican Church in 1735. He was saved in a Moravian meeting in London in 1738.
4. George Muller (1805-1898), who operated the famous orphanages in Bristol, England, was a German Moravian who received training at Halle University

5. There are presently about 60,000 Moravians in the United States, mostly concentrated in eastern Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and the Kuskokwim River Valley in Alaska.

C. Liberalism

1. Characteristics
 - a. Rejection of Verbal Inspiration: used the methods of criticism applied to secular works to remove the authority of scripture making it a book of myths and confused stories needing interpretation by the scholars
 - b. Rationalism: declared reason to be the supreme authority for truth
NOTE: At the same time, science was declaring sensory knowledge to be the supreme authority (called empiricism)
 - c. Relevancy: truth must be relevant to present times; outmoded doctrines and morals must be discarded
 - d. Reduction of Religion: religion must be reduced to its lowest common denominator in order to bring all men together: love of fellow man, care for the poor and needy, peace for mankind, etc.; in other words, the social gospel.
2. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
 - a. German philosopher
 - b. Gave reason the central position in his system
 - c. Wrote Critique of Pure Reason (1781) and Critique of Practical Reason (1788)
 - d. Tried to make religion reasonable by equating it with morality
 - e. Thought there must be a God since we have the idea of God in our mind; yet, we can have no real knowledge of God.
 - f. Denied the sin nature, the deity of Christ, the blood redemption, and much more
 - g. Paved the way for biblical criticism and liberal theology.
3. G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831)
 - a. German philosopher
 - b. Taught that God was the Absolute Mind which worked to reconcile mankind through history
 - c. Explained history through what he called the dialectical method. To him, all things started with a thesis. This automatically brought about its opposite: antithesis. These two eventually joined in synthesis and this synthesis continued the process by becoming a new thesis. To Hegel, history and truth are constantly changing and are progressive.
 - d. Hegel's philosophy became the basis for Marxism and Existentialism; it also influenced the theory of Evolution

- e. One of Hegel's disciples, David Strauss (1808-1874) wrote Life of Jesus (1835), a book which denied all that was divine or miraculous about Christ and questioned the gospel accounts on many points.

III. ENGLISH MOVEMENTS

A. The Decline of Religion in England and America

1. In England the government had changed hands so many times that the act of toleration had been a pessimistic solution.
2. No one knew how long the toleration act would last.
3. The suffering of dissidents grew less and less frequent.
4. The Church of England had been practicing a form of the half-way covenant before the American colonies had ever put it into practice.
 - a. **Half-way Covenant:** – *“the doctrine which allowed unregenerate parents to bring their children to the standing order church for infant baptism.”*
5. Now with a slight bit of freedom the non-conforming Baptists settled into a happy mediocrity. This caused a decline in the religion of the heart.
6. New England as well as those in England spiraled into an apathetic and lifeless spirituality.
7. There was growth, however, with the slight growth in the Church of England and the Presbyterians there was entirely too much formalism and not enough heart-felt conviction.

B. The Salem Witch Trials

1. A sad chapter in American history occurred in 1692.
2. A certain blood fever was demonstrated in the confusion over witchcraft in Salem, Mass.
3. The Baptists of New England had no part in the destruction of those who in a matter of four months were executed.
4. In the wake of the deaths of the so-called witches, Michael Wigglesworth is noted to say the following:
 - a. *“I fear (among our many other provocations) that God hath a controversy with us about what was done in the time of the Witchcraft. I fear that **innocent blood hath been shed**; and that many have had their hands defiled therewith... (Bernard Rosenthal, Salem Story, Reading the Witch Trials of 1692, P. 183)*

C. Preachers and Teachers of this time

1. Valentine Wightman (1681-1747)
 - a. Born at North Kingston, Rhode Island
 - b. Was a direct descendant of Edward Wightman, the last *baptized believer* burned in England in 1612 for heresy.
 - c. He married Susannah Holmes, the granddaughter of Obadiah Holmes and the great-granddaughter of Roger Williams.
 - d. Founded the first Baptist church in Connecticut in Groton on June 1708.
 - e. He continued his ministry at Groton for more than forty years, and died June 9, 1747.
 - f. His son, Timothy Wightman, who filled the pulpit for a period of more than forty years, succeeded his as pastor.
 - g. Timothy's son, John Gano Wightman, would pastor the church for another forty years. The Wightmans pastored in Groton for over 125 years!

2. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)
 - a. Born at Windsor, CT
 - b. A revivalist preacher and Congregationalist Protestant
 - c. His later followers would distinguish themselves from other Congregationalist as "New Lights" (endorsing the Great Awakening), as opposed to "Old Lights" (non-revivalist).
 - d. Widely regarded as "one of America's most important and original philosophical theologians".
 - e. Played a critical role in shaping the Great Awakening of the 1700's.
 - f. He oversaw some of the first revivals in 1733-1735 at his church in Northampton.
 - g. Edwards would deliver his famous sermon "*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*", during another revival in 1741, following George Whitefield's tour of the Thirteen Colonies.

3. Shubal Stearns (1706-1771)
 - a. Born at Boston, Mass.
 - b. His family were members of the Congregational church in Tolland, CT.
 - c. In 1745 he heard the preaching of George Whitefield and was saved.
 - d. By 1751 Stearns became involved in the controversy over the subject of proper baptism. Soon Stearns rejected infant baptism and sought baptism at the hands of Wait Palmer, Baptist minister of Stonington, CT. By March of that same year Stearns was ordained a Baptist minister by Palmer and Joshua Morse, the pastor of New London, CT.

- e. In 1754, Stearns and some of his followers moved south to Opequon, VA, at that time on the western frontier. Here he joined Daniel Marshall, who was already active in a Baptist church there. During this brief stay, Stearns and Marshall preached the gospel with great zeal, accused of being “disorderly ministers” by some. Those that complained appealed to the Philadelphia Association, but these charges were dropped.
 - f. On November 22, 1755, Stearns and his party moved further south to Sandy Creek, in Guilford County, NC, to build a new church. This party consisted of eight men and their wives. Stearns pastored this church until his death. From there, Separate Baptists spread throughout the South.
4. George Whitefield (1714-1770)
- a. Born at Gloucester, England
 - b. Was an English Anglican minister
 - c. Was introduced to the Wesley brothers, John and Charles Wesley, who he would work closely with in his later ministry.
 - d. Became an itinerant preacher and evangelist.
 - e. In 1740, Whitefield traveled to America, where he preached a series of revivals that came to be known as the Great Awakening.
 - f. By 1770, the 55 year old Whitefield continued preaching in spite of poor health. He said, “I would rather wear out than rust out.”
 - g. His last sermon was preached in a field “atop a large barrel.”
 - h. The next morning Whitefield died in the parsonage of Old South Presbyterian Church, Newburyport, Mass., on September 30, 1770.
 - i. He was buried, according to his wishes, in a crypt under the pulpit of this church.
 - j. John Wesley preached his funeral sermon in London, England, at Whitefield’s request.
5. John Gano (1727-1804)
- a. Born at Hopewell Township, Mercer County, New Jersey
 - b. Was a Baptist minister and Revolutionary War chaplain
 - c. Gano was raised as a Presbyterian
 - d. After being saved, Gano eventually became a Baptist after a period of intense study.
 - e. Gano left the family farm to study at Princeton, but left before graduating.
 - f. Gano was ordained as pastor of the Scotch Plains, New Jersey, Baptist Church on May 29, 1754.
 - g. In 1760, he became the founding pastor of what would become two years later the First Baptist Church in the City of New York.
 - h. At the start of the Revolution Gano became a chaplain for the Continental Army.

- i. Gano was chosen to be Washington's personal chaplain under his direct command. At the close of the war, Washington asked Gano to baptize him by immersion. Although this event in history is doubted by some historians, the evidence shows that it is a fact of history, Washington was an Episcopalian. His pastor at Williamsburg, VA was a Loyalist in sympathy with the British Crown. It is no wonder that General Washington would sit outside the window of the Baptist Church in New York City and listen to preaching of his friend John Gano.
 - j. At the close of the war, Washington would ask John Gano to give the final prayer of thanksgiving.
6. John Leland (1754-1841)
- a. Born into a family of Congregationalists, in Grafton, Mass.
 - b. After being saved at around the age of 18 he was baptized by Elder Noah Alden. Leland joined the Baptist church in Bellingham, Mass. in 1775.
 - c. In 1776 he left for Virginia and ministered there until 1791, when he returned to Mass.
 - d. In Virginia he joined himself with the church in Mount Poney, Culpeper County, VA. He was ordained by choice of the church and began preaching from place to place.
 - e. While Congress worked to ratify the Constitution John Leland told James Madison that the Virginians would not approve it without a guarantee of religious liberty.
 - f. After Madison's guarantee to Leland that he would lobby for a favourable amendment as a forthcoming member of the Virginian House of Representatives, Leland threw his personal support behind him.
 - g. In July of 1788, Virginia ratified the Constitution. Within a year Madison went to congress and helped draw up the Bill of Rights, fulfilling his promise made to Leland.

IV. THE GREAT AWAKENING

- A. The Beginning of the Great Awakening
 1. Began in 1734.
 2. The early defining moments of this tremendous event were recorded in Jonathan Edwards' *Narrative of Surprising Conversions*.
 3. The roots of the Great Awakening were in Edwards and his church, the Congregational Church of Northampton, Mass.
 4. According to Edwards the awakening started among a specific group in his church: "*There began a better attitude and a disposition to yield to advice in the young*".

5. Edwards preached his famous sermon, “*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*” in the parish church of Enfield, CT on July 8, 1741. The Great Awakening was underway.
6. At the same time the American colonies were experiencing first stages of the Great Awakening, God was raising up a group of men in England to bring revival to a needy empire and a waiting world.
7. George Whitefield would come in contact with John and Charles Wesley.
8. Whitefield had a great passion to know God and be used of him.
 - a. He began preaching at the age of 19.
 - b. He soon became a hated and beloved man.
 - c. Whitefield immediately began to declare “*ye must be born again*”.
 - d. He was soon driven from the Anglican churches by the pastors, because he preached such extreme religion, and at times exposed them as unsaved men posing as ministers of Christ.
9. In 1737 Whitefield sailed to America and continued about a year.
10. In 1738 Whitefield returned from Georgia to England. When he returned to England he found himself in a storm of controversy. The majority of the leadership of the Church of England were now opposed to his ways, means and doctrine. The number of pulpits in which he had access rapidly diminished.
 - a. The establishment were filled with indignation at him
 - b. For declaring fully the atonement of Christ and the work of the Holy Ghost.
 - c. Whitefield began to preach in open fields.
 - d. Whitefield stated that the main problem in the established churches was the lack of regenerate or saved men in the pulpits.
11. On his second tour of America in 1739, he preached throughout the colonies and extensively in New England.
12. Jonathan Edwards came out publicly in support for Whitefield even when the vast majority of the *standing order* of church ministers were against him.
13. On the second tour, Whitefield landed in Delaware with the express purpose of going to Philadelphia. In nine days the town was turned upside down and the wrath of the established churches came wildly upon him.
14. The established churches would not open their doors to him so Whitefield began preaching in the fields.
15. The large number of converts began to search the scriptures for the will of God. Many of his converts saw *believer’s baptism* as being the scriptural way.
16. Many of his converts became Baptist, so many in fact, that he said, “*All my chickens have turned to ducks!*”

V. BAPTISTS IN AMERICA

A. Three Different Groups of Baptist to Identify

1. Regular Baptist – Particular Baptist in America holding to particular atonement.
2. General Baptist (America) – Same as the churches of England, holding to the doctrine of general atonement.
3. Separate Baptist – Baptists who came out of the Great Awakening and led in the great revival of the South. Held a milder *Particular* view of the atonement. Many considered themselves neither *Particular* nor *General* in their view of the atonement, neither *Calvinist* nor *Arminian*.

B. The Separate Congregationalist Become Regular Baptists

1. Many of the converts from the Great Awakening separated from the Congregational Church. Many of these Separates became Baptist.
2. The Separate Congregationalist, who were New Lights; when coming to Baptist principles, became *Regular Baptists*.
3. The term *Separate Baptist* came to be used in the South in the wake of the revival under Shubal Stearns.

C. The Separate Baptists

1. One Congregational preacher that was converted under Whitefield came to understand Baptist convictions and was baptized by Wait Palmer in CT.
2. Shubal Stearns migrated south and began the greatest revival in the history of the United States.
3. The Separate Baptists' beliefs were identical to the Regular Baptists, but were more "general" in their belief about the atonement. However they were not General Baptists, either.
4. Sandy Creek Baptist (the church that Shubal Stearns planted in NC) had within a few years after being organized a body of believers totaling 606 members, and in seventeen years of its establishment had branches southward as far as Georgia, eastward to the sea and the Chesapeake Bay, and northward to the waters of the Potomac. It had become the mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother of forty-two churches, from which 125 ministers were sent out.
5. In November 1771 Stearns died, this was just six months after the Battle of Alamance in which Baptists were involved in. Some have noted that the Battle of Alamance to be the first battle of the American Revolution. The Battle of Alamance involved the *Regulators* (Patriots) who believed the British government of North Carolina was abusing its citizens through fees and duties. Unfortunately for the Regulators they lost at the Battle of Alamance, this coupled with the death of Shubal Stearns just six months later moved many of the families of the Sandy Creek church and those associated with them to fan out over the south. However, as the spiritual children of Stearns scattered over the mountains into Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia, they spread the gospel and birthed churches at a rate much like their departed leader.

VI. MISSIONS IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

A. Prominent Missionaries of England

1. William Carey (1761-1834)

- a. Born in Purey, Northampton, England
- b. In his boyhood he was an extreme Episcopalian, regarding dissenters with contempt.
- c. However as a young man he was saved, and after study in the Bible became a Baptist.
- d. He was ordained a pastor of the church of Moulton, August 1, 1787.
- e. In seven years he learned Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and Dutch.
- f. He issued a pamphlet entitled “*An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*”.
- g. In 1789 Carey became pastor of the church in Leicester, and there he labored with untiring faithfulness among his flock. From this church he went to India to give God’s word to its vast population.
- h. On May 30, 1792, the meeting of his association was held at Nottingham, at that meeting he was asked to preach. Announcing the two memorable divisions of his disclosure: “***Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God***”.
- i. The sermon stirred the hearts of his hearers like never before.
- j. At Kettering, the church of Andrew Fuller, the Baptist Missionary Society was organized on October 2, 1792.
- k. On June 13, 1793, Carey sailed for India. At Seramore the missionaries set up a print shop and a large boarding school, and in process of time founded a college. They preached continually, and Carey particularly studied the languages of the country.
- l. The first Hindoo convert baptized by Carey in India was the celebrated Krishna Pal,
- m. Called the father of modern missions

2. Andrew Fuller (1754-1815)

- a. Born in Wicken, Cambridgeshire.
- b. During his life Fuller pastored two congregations – Soham (1775-1782) and Kettering (1782-1815), which is now Fuller Baptist Church.
- c. Best known for his connection with the foundation of the Baptist Missionary Society, to which he devoted the vast part of his energy.
- d. Fuller was appointed the Society’s first secretary.
- e. Carey is stated to have said to Fuller, “*Well, I will go down if you will hold the rope.*” Fuller held it fast until his hand fell powerless in death.
- f. He traveled all over England very many times, pleading for foreign missions.

B. Prominent Missionaries in America

1. Adonriam Judson (1788-1850)

- a. Born in Maldan, Middlesex County, Mass.
- b. Born into a family of Congregationalist (his father a Congregational minister)
- c. At the age of 16 he entered Brown University. He graduated with highest honours in 1807.
- d. In February 1810, he made a decision to follow the Lord in foreign missions.
- e. Soon after his graduation Judson was sent to England by the American Board to confer with the London Missionary Society on the matter of combining the efforts of the American Board with the London Society. These boards were both “Congregational” as Judson had not yet come to his conviction of baptism.
- f. Judson and his wife, Ann; Nott, Newell, Hall, and Rice, sailed February 19, 1812, from Salem, Mass. It was on this voyage and through the study of scripture that Judson came to the knowledge that he needed scriptural baptism. Upon reaching India William Carey baptized him and his wife. This of course displeased the American Board, and they immediately withdrew their support.
- g. Luther Rice had also been converted on this journey, and it was decided that he would return to America where his work and William Carey’s urging resulted in the 1814 formation of the Baptist Triennial Convention. This organization was simply formed to meet the need of sponsoring and encouraging missionaries at home and around the world.
- h. Both the local and British authorities did not want Americans evangelizing Hindus in the area, so the group of missionaries separated and sought other mission fields. Judson offered to the Baptists in the US to serve as their missionary to Burma.

2. Luther Rice (1783-1836)

- a. Born in Northborough, Mass.
- b. Sailed to Calcutta, India along with Judson as a Congregationalist missionary and met with English Baptist missionary William Carey. Both Rice and Judson converted to the Baptist faith and was baptized.
- c. Rice returned to America to break ties with the Congregationalist and raise support for the work of Judson among the Baptists.
- d. He spent the rest of his life garnering support for missions, traveling on horseback to raise funds and awareness for Baptist missions.
- e. Rice also founded Columbia College in 1821, the original unit of the George Washington University in Washington D.C.