

A. Religious Development

1. Religious Revival

a) Second great awakening

- (i) Reverend Finney and other American evangelists began spreading the news of the second great awakening from new England to the west from approximately 1795 to 1835.
- (ii) This was a message of hope and opportunity. Religion was not only revived it was being transformed. Gone were the warnings that man was totally depraved; that he was "predestined" to salvation or damnation; that god was angry and full of vengeance.
- (iii) The amazing assurance that life on earth had its own rewards and was not just a way station on the road to heaven (or hell) touched people's hearts. And they rushed to hear it.
- (iv) Thus, the revolt against Jonathan Edwards' strict Calvinism produced many new sects.
- (v) The area around central New York and along the Erie Canal was a fertile ground for Pentecostal fervor and conversion so intense it was referred to as the "burned over district." William Miller founded the Adventist sect based on the notion that he could pinpoint the exact day when the messiah would return to earth.
- (vi) At the same time the second awakening was freeing men and women in the north and west, churches in the south began adopting a more authoritarian, paternalistic tone and did not encourage thinking about or questioning of social institutions, since such probing might have an undesired effect.
- (vii) The idea that all men have a spark of divinity and are therefore to be treated equally and benevolently did not mesh well with the existence of slavery.

(viii) But everywhere else in America, the church and the clergy became, at least in spirit, a champion for the common man, his individual dignity and salvation, and the betterment of his condition.

b) Revivalism

(i) Evangelical revivalism was the dominant form of religious expression in early 19th century America. The word evangelical refers to a belief that all people must recognize their depravity and worthlessness, repent their sins, and undergo a conversion experience and a rebirth of religious feelings.

(ii) In part, revivals were a response to the growing separation of church and state that followed the revolution. But revivals also reflected the hunger of tens of thousands of ordinary Americans for a more emotional religion.

(iii) Even in the late 18th century, Americans were not as indifferent to religion as church membership statistics might suggest. Many Americans were put off by genteel clergy with aristocratic pretensions.

(iv) They were also alienated by the older denominations' stress on decorum, formality, and unemotional sermons.

(v) Revivals also met a growing need for community and communal purpose. At a time when the country was becoming more mobile, commercial, and individualistic, revivals ensured that Americans would remain committed to higher values.

(vi) In the south, revivals largely attracted the dispossessed, including many slaves and free blacks. In the north, revivals appealed to upwardly mobile groups. Middle-class women were especially attracted to the revivals. The revivals provided many women with avenues of self-expression--through church societies and charitable and benevolent organizations.

- (vii) Revivals left a lasting imprint on pre-civil war America. The rituals of evangelical religion--the camp meeting, group prayer, and mass baptisms along rivers and creeks--were the truly distinctive American experience in the decades before the civil war.
 - (viii) Revivals contributed to a conception of the United States as a country with a special mission to lead the world to a golden age of freedom and equality.
 - (ix) When Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg address and second inaugural spoke about bloody sacrifice, rebirth, and national mission, his words echoed revivalist sermons.
 - (x) A key concept for the revivalists was that each person had a duty to combat sin. For the revivalists, sin was not an abstraction. It was concrete. Dueling, profanity, and drinking hard liquor were sins. In the future, many northern evangelicals regarded slavery as the sum of all sins.
- c) Growth of that Baptists and Methodists, Joseph Smith and Mormons
- (i) Ultimately, many of these groups as well as established Protestant churches like Baptists, Methodists, and Congregationalists moved to the west, carrying their message of revival and redemption with them.
 - (ii) Since danger and uncertainty abounded on the frontier, evangelists discovered that the promise of salvation could be delivered with even more zeal.
 - (iii) James McCready made his name preaching "hellfire and brimstone." Peter Cartwright traveled across the frontier and brought religious services to countless remote Americans as one of the premier Methodist circuit riders.

- (iv) Sin and repentance dominated the camp meeting, a gathering that often lasted for days and attracted thousands of shrieking, sobbing, fainting converts. The message was simple: repent your vices and God will forgive you!
- (v) With the exception of the society of friends (the Quakers), no church in the nation took a public stance against slavery. Northern churches, like the African Methodist Episcopal church in Philadelphia, were segregated.
- (vi) Methodists and Baptists made the greatest gains in numbers of members. With a less formal clergy and the notion that anyone could be saved, these groups meshed nicely with Jacksonian democracy.
- (vii) Women became more involved than men, and preachers soon used the revival to promote "women's sphere." soon reform movements designed to improve the worst evils of industrial emerged from the churches America.
- (viii) After having a series of religious visions, Joseph Smith, a young man from Palmyra, New York published the *Book of Mormon* and established the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1830.
- (ix) The church was plagued with persecution from the very beginning because of its evangelizing, its separation from surrounding communities, and its radical ideas, including polygamy.
- (x) Its members, commonly referred to as Mormons, were constantly on the move to avoid harassment. After Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were killed by an angry mob in Nauvoo, Illinois in 1844, the church members headed west under the leadership of Brigham Young.
- (xi) After a long, difficult trek, 140,000 Mormons settled in Salt Lake City, Utah.

d) African American worship

- (i) In November 1787, white elders of Philadelphia's St. George's Methodist church ordered African American Methodists to sit in a newly built gallery.
- (ii) Several free African Americans refused, including Richard Allen (1760-1831), a former slave, who had supported himself as a brickyard laborer, shoemaker, wagon driver, and wood chopper.
- (iii) Shaken by this experience, Allen founded the free African Society of Philadelphia, which is usually considered the first autonomous African American organization in the United States. Seven years later, in 1794, Allen founded a separate African American Methodist Church.
- (iv) That same year, Absalom Jones (1746-1818), also a former slave and a former Methodist preacher, formed the African Church of Philadelphia as a racially separate non-denominational church.
- (v) Discriminatory treatment in white-controlled churches led free African American communities across the north to establish separate congregations.
- (vi) Between 1804 and 1815, separate black Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches were founded in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Wilmington, Delaware.
- (vii) In 1816, Richard Allen formed the first autonomous black denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal church. Five years later, a separate denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion church, was established in New York.
- (viii) By 1820, there may have been 700 African American congregations. Black churches served as centers of political life, communal self-help, and social reform, and black ministers were community leaders.

- (ix) African American ministers played a crucial role in shaping a distinctive, vernacular American preaching style. During the 1790s, an African American evangelist named Harry Hoosier drew thousands of converts across the south with his dramatic retellings of biblical stories.
- (x) A black Virginia Baptist preacher named John Jasper became legendary for his ability to string "together picture after picture." African American preachers' use of repetition, humor, striking metaphors, and a stress on the human Jesus transformed American preaching styles.

2. Religion and us society

- a) Social gospel movement of the 1880's and 1890's
 - (i) Although the population of America was growing by leaps and bounds, there were many empty seats in the pews of urban protestant churches.
 - (ii) Middle-class churchgoers were ever faithful, but large numbers of workers were starting to lose faith in the local church.
 - (iii) The old-style Heaven and Hell sermons just seemed irrelevant to those who toiled long, long hours for small, small wages.
 - (iv) Immigration swelled the ranks of Roman Catholic Churches. Eastern Orthodox Churches and Jewish synagogues were sprouting up everywhere. At the same time, many cities reported the loss of protestant congregations. They would have to face this challenge or perish.
 - (v) Out of this concern grew the Social Gospel Movement. Progressive-minded preachers began to tie the teachings of the church with contemporary problems.
 - (vi) Christian virtue, they declared, demanded a redress of poverty and despair on earth.

- (vii) Many ministers became politically active. Washington Gladden, the most prominent of the social gospel ministers, supported the workers' right to strike in the wake of the great upheaval of 1877.
- (viii) Furthermore, ministers called for an end to child labor, the enactment of temperance laws, and civil service reform.
- (ix) Liberal churches such as the Congregationalists and the Unitarians led the way, but the movement spread to many sects. Middle class women became particularly active in the arena of social reform.
- (x) At the same time, a wave of urban revivalist preachers swept the nation's cities. The most renowned, Dwight Lyman Moody, was a shoe salesman who took his fiery oratory on the road. As he traveled from city to city, he attracted numerous crowds, large enough to affect local traffic patterns.
- (xi) The Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association were formed to address the problems of urban youth. Two new sects formed. Mary Baker Eddy founded the Christian science denomination.
- (xii) She tried to reconcile religion and science by preaching that faith was a means to cure evils such as disease. The Salvation Army crossed the Atlantic from England and provided free soup for the hungry.
- (xiii) The temperance movement and the settlement house movement were both affected by church activism.
- (xiv) The chief difference between this movement and those of an earlier era was location.
- (xv) These changes in religion transpired because of urban realities, underscoring the social impact of the new American city.

3. Development of Religion

a) Religion after WWI

- (i) Following World War I, returning soldiers and continued stories of the horrors faced during the conflict led to a lost and bemused generation who lost faith in their government, but also religion itself.
- (ii) After millions lost their lives or were maimed in the conflict, optimism of faith lost its hold on the population, but the hold of religion for people began to lose its strength long before.
- (iii) Religion was a pivotal cultural battleground during the 1920s. The roots of this religious conflict were planted in the late 19th century.
- (iv) Before the Civil War, the Protestant denominations were united in a belief that the findings of science confirmed the teachings of religion. But during the 1870s, a lasting division had occurred in American Protestantism over Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.
- (v) Religious modernists argued that religion had to be accommodated to the teachings of science, while religious traditionalists sought to preserve the basic tenets of their religious faith.

b) Spread of fundamentalism

- (i) As an organized movement, Fundamentalism is said to have started with a set of twelve pamphlets, *The Fundamentals: A Testimony*, published between 1909 and 1912.
- (ii) Financed by two wealthy laymen, the pamphlets were to be sent free to "every pastor, evangelist, missionary, theological student, Sunday School superintendent, Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. secretary in the English-speaking world."

- (iii) Eventually, some three million copies were distributed. The five fundamentals in these volumes testified to the infallibility of the literal interpretation of the Bible and the actuality of the virgin birth, the atonement, the resurrection, and the second coming of Christ.
- (iv) Pentecostalism, another current in Protestant revivalism, began on New Year's Day in 1901. A female student at Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas, began speaking in tongues, unintelligible speech that accompanies religious excitation.
- (v) To many evangelicals, speaking in tongues was evidence of the descent of the Holy Spirit into a believer.
- (vi) Pentecostals rejected the idea that the age of miracles had ended. During the 1920s, many Americans became aware of Pentecostalism as charismatic faith healers claimed to be able to cure the sick and to allow the crippled to throw away their crutches.
- (vii) Pentecostalism spread particularly rapidly among lower middle-class and poorer Protestants who sought a more spontaneous and emotional religious experience than that offered by the mainstream religious denominations. The most prominent of the early Pentecostal revivalists was Aimee Semple McPherson.
- (viii) The Fundamentalist and Pentecostal movements arose in the early 20th century as a backlash against modernism, secularism, and scientific teachings that contradicted their religious beliefs.
- (ix) Early fundamentalist doctrine attacked competing religions--especially Catholicism--and insisted on the literal truth of the Bible, a strict return to fundamental principles, and a thoroughgoing rejection of modernity.

(x) Between 1921 and 1929, Fundamentalists introduced 37 anti-evolution bills into 20 state legislatures. The first law to pass was in Tennessee.

c) Evolution debate and the Scopes Trial

(i) The statute forbade the teaching in public schools of any scientific theory that denied the literalness of the Biblical account of creation. The Scopes case raised the legal issue of the validity of a law that seemed to violate the constitutional separation of church and state.

(ii) The Scopes Trial is one of the best known in American history because it symbolizes the conflict between science and theology, faith and reason, individual liberty and majority rule.

(iii) The object of intense publicity, the trial was seen as a clash between urban sophistication and rural fundamentalism.

(iv) In the summer of 1925, a young schoolteacher named John Scopes stood trial in Dayton, Tennessee, for violating the state law against the teaching of evolution.

(v) Two of the country's most famous attorneys faced off in the trial. William Jennings Bryan, 65 years old and a three-time Democratic presidential nominee, prosecuted; 67-year-old Clarence Darrow, who was a staunch agnostic and who had defended Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb the year before, represented the defense.

(vi) Bryan declared that "the contest between evolution and Christianity is a duel to the death."

(vii) The five-year-old American Civil Liberties Union had taken out newspaper advertisements offering to defend anyone who flouted the Tennessee law.

- (viii) George Rappelyea, a Dayton, Tenn., booster, realized that the town would get enormous attention if a local teacher was arrested for teaching evolution.
- (ix) He enlisted John Scopes, a science teacher and football coach, who arranged to teach from George Hunter's *Civic Biology*, a high school textbook promoting Charles Darwin's arguments in *The Descent of Man*.
- (x) The trial was marked by hoopla and a carnival-like atmosphere. Thousands of people swelled the town of a thousand. For 12 days in July, 1925, 100 reporters sent dispatches.
- (xi) The trial judge had prohibited the defense from using scientists as witnesses. So, on the trial's seventh day, the defense team called Bryan to testify as an expert on the Bible.
- (xii) Darrow subjected Bryan to a withering cross-examination. He got Bryan to say that Creation was not completed in a week, but over a period of time that "might have continued for millions of years."
- (xiii) Bryan's position was more based on the fact that he opposed the mandated teaching of evolution in public schools because he thought the people should exercise local control over school curricula. This was more so than the fact he was a reverend.
- (xiv) He also opposed Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection because these ideas had been used to defend laissez-faire capitalism on the grounds that a perfectly free market promotes the "survival of the fittest."
- (xv) As early as 1904, Bryan had denounced social Darwinism as "the merciless law by which the strong crowd out and kill off the weak."
- (xvi) In addition, Bryan opposed Darwinism as justification for war and imperialism.

- (xvii) Bryan was also unhappy with Darwin's assumption that the entire evolutionary process was purposeless and not the product of a larger design.
- (xviii) Not a Biblical literalist, Bryan was aware of serious scientific difficulties with Darwinism, such as Darwin's theory that slight, random variations were enough to generate life from non-life to produce a vast array of biological species.
- (xix) But Bryan mistook the lack of consensus about the mechanisms that Darwin advanced to explain the evolutionary process for a lack of scientific support for the concept of evolution itself.
- (xx) The day after this exchange, Darrow changed his client's plea to guilty. Scopes was convicted and fined \$100. However, the conviction was thrown out on a technicality by the Tennessee Supreme Court: that the judge, and not the jury, had determined the \$100 fine.
- (xxi) In 1967, the Supreme Court struck down Tennessee's anti-evolution law for violating the Constitution's prohibition against the establishment of religion.
- (xxii) Five days after the trial's conclusion, Bryan died of apoplexy.
- (xxiii) The Scopes trial resulted in two enduring conclusions: that legislatures should not restrain the freedom of scientific inquiry, and that society should respect academic freedom.