

Why religious tolerance increased in the american colonies essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

To what extent and why did religious toleration increase in the American colonies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Answer with reference to three individuals, events, or movements in American religion during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

People went to America to search for religious freedom and to escape religious persecution. They came from all of the world and so with it came religious diversity. As a result, religious freedom began to replace religious persecution. Religious tolerance increased because some people still believed in the original hopes for America, which were freedom. Even when some people still kept to the original ways from England, a few great people still fought, which led to great key events that increased religious toleration.

One man established complete freedom of religion. An extreme Separatist, Roger Williams separated from the corrupt Church of England as a young man. He then challenged the legality of the Bay Colony's charter, for taking the land away from the Indians without fair payment. On top of that, he denied the authority of the civil government to control religious behavior. Their patience gone, the Bay Colony authorities found him guilty of spreading "newe & dangerous opinions" and banished him. But while he stayed from illness, he continued his criticisms. While they made plans to exile him back to England, he fled to Rhode Island in 1636. There he built a Baptist church, where he established complete freedom, even to Jews and Catholics. He demanded nothing, unlike the churches he had fled. His support of religious toleration made Rhode Island more liberal than any other English settlements.

In 1649, a law was passed mandating religious tolerance for trinitarian Christians, the Maryland Toleration Act, or also known as the Act Concerning Religion. It had the first legal limitations on hate speech in the world. It allowed freedom of worship for all trinitarian Christians in Maryland. But it also sentenced to death anyone who denied the divinity of Jesus.

The people who founded Maryland mainly for a refuge for English Catholics, the Calvert family, wanted enactment of the law to protect the Catholic settlers and others whose religions did not comply with the Anglicanism of Britain and her colonies. The act was revoked in 1654 by William Claiborne, an advocate for the Anglican Church. When the Calvert family regained Maryland, it was reinstated. Until 1692 when it was repealed permanently. The Toleration Act was the first law on religious tolerance. It later influenced related laws in other colonies and portions were echoed in the writing of the first amendment.

The great awakening was a christian revitalization movement that left a permanent impact on American religion. Pulling away from ritual and ceremony, it gave the person great emotion and spiritual conviction as a result from powerful preaching. It was a major event in New England that challenged authority and established resentment between old traditionalists who insisted upon ritual and doctrine, and the new revivalists, who encouraged emotional involvement and commitment.

It reshaped the Congregational church, the dutch reformed church, and the German reformed denomination. It strengthened the small baptist and Methodist Anglican denominations. But it didn't have any impact on most

Anglicans or on Quakers. It even brought Christianity to slaves. The revival began with a man named Jonathan Edwards, who came from Puritan, Calvinist roots. He emphasized the importance and power of immediate, personal experience in religion. His sermons were powerful and attracted a large following. The Great Awakening changed their rituals and their self awareness. It led to changes in America's understanding of god, themselves, the world around them, and religion.

People came to America for religious freedom. Tolerance didn't come easy and it took a few hundred years to accomplish it, but in the end through the help of many determined people, such as Roger Williams and Jonathan Edwards, they succeeded and helped increase it. Some movements even helped pave the way, such as the Toleration Act and the Great Awakening. Even when some people still kept to the original ways from England, a few great people still fought, which led to great key events that increased religious toleration.