

The great awakening



The Great Awakening, occurring in the late 17th early 18th century, had a profound impact on the course of the United States. It was the largest cultural, social, and religious movement of the colonial era.

It took off in New England but became more popular in the middle colonies of New York and Pennsylvania. One of the main causes of this movement was the loss of spiritual devotion in the colonies. In the 17th century England, the Church of England was established as the church of the entire country.

There was a huge decline in church membership and a spiritual ??? dryness??? among believers. While "boredom" isn't exactly a sufficient cause, it certainly must be taken into consideration. The teaching methods of which occurred in the Church was monotone and quite boring to the colonist.

Religion became something of a pastime in which people would simply go to church without deeply felt motives. This soon changed when a George Whitefield's powerful preaching gave listeners a sense of personal guilt and of their need of salvation by Christ. Whitefield wanted to replace the cold and unfeeling ideas in Puritanism. He thought the American congregations lacked passion. Economic problems had also been a troubling source of tensions. The first recession has occurred around this time and it causes a series of economic instability. Another serious cause was the massive epidemic of Cholera.

This led to thousands of death which included many children. Many believed that this disease was God punishing them, therefore Deism and Agnosticism spread intensely. This also draws into the Enlightenment, which was a

cultural movement in Europe. This movement made this biggest impact particularly to the middle class. People soon came to a realization of logic and reason and soon created a new theology of deism.

Deism is the belief based solely on reason, in a God who created the universe and then abandoned it, assuming no control over life, exerting no influence on natural phenomena, and giving no supernatural revelation. The results of this movement were phenomenal. Religion reached a more personal level—God was not merely an authoritative voice in the scripture, but an extremely personal experience. The movement also caused a rise in church membership, particularly in new denominations such as the Baptists, Methodist, and Presbyterian which replaces the older Anglican, Puritans, and Quakers. Several colleges were founded to train new ministers for churches and new faiths, including the University of Pennsylvania, UNC, Princeton, Dartmouth, and Rutgers. Some churches even began to welcome women, Native Americans, and African Americans as members.

It is commonly thought that the Great Awakening trigger the coming Revolution. The Great Awakening and Enlightenment had sort of a unifying effect on the colonies. It was the first spontaneous mass movement of the American people, which gave the colonists a sense of being united by a common history and shared experiences. The Great Awakening provided the radical American nationalism that prompted the Revolution.

Once people saw how it is possible for change, revival, and reformation due to the Great Awakening, they began use this as an example for problems

and events that ignited the Revolution. In short, the Great Awakening foreshadowed the Revolution.