

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

LECTURE 28 – PIETISM, THE MORAVIAN CHURCH, EARLY NORTH AMERICAN PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

We'll start with a prayer from just before the years we're going to study:

Enable us, O Lord God, to walk in your way with integrity and cheerfulness, faithfully believing your word and faithfully doing your commandments, faithfully worshipping you and faithfully serving our neighbour; in the Name of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)

The rest of this page is an outline of this lecture.

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In preparation, read Cairns, 383-4 (Pietists), 355-65 (Early America); Lion, 444-6 (Pietism), 436-8, 479 (Early America); Vos, 112-3 (Pietism), 115-6 (Moravians), 125-6, 129-32 (Early America); Olson, 473-92 (Pietism); Lane, 135-6 (Spener and Pietism); Hanks, *Great Events*, 235-8 (Spener), 238-40 (Francke), 240-1 (Moravians) and 243-52 (Penn and Pennsylvania)

As always, it is important to ask what relevance these subjects have for us today?

Pietism influenced evangelical Christianity in several ways, which we'll explore, Moravians were pioneers in Overseas Mission and Denominations, many of which are still with us today, proliferated through immigration and colonization in North America.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Responses to the C17 religious scene Vos, 111

In the last Lecture we saw that for a variety of reasons, including the Thirty Years War in Germany, better astronomy and rationalism expressed in the Enlightenment, Church life stagnated in the first half of the C17. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics concentrated on fine-tuning their theology. Reaction to the cold orthodoxy came through:

- (1) Quakers - the Topic in the last Lecture,
- (2) Deism - at the end of the last Lecture, and
- (3) Pietism and Moravians - the first part of this Lecture.

We have to spend some time on Pietism, because it made a huge contribution to evangelical Christianity worldwide, not least by pioneering the concepts of:

- (1) evangelicals forming cells within 'dead' congregations - not leaving in despair - and hoping that their heaven would permeate the whole church,
- (2) shifting the emphasis from theological controversy to the care of souls, and
- (3) the importance of laypeople as overseas missionaries.

2 PIETISM (Cairns, 383-4; Lion, 444-6; Olson; 473-92; Vos, 112-3; Lane 135-6,)

2.1 Definition of Pietism

In popular usage, a Pietist is a person with a 'holier than thou' attitude to others, but in its historic sense, Pietism was entirely positive - it was a renewal movement.

Pietists were genuinely worthy Christian people. We don't have the Pietism movement today, by that name, so you'll not meet people who say, 'I am a Pietist', but Pietist influence can still be seen in several areas of Church life, as we'll see.

2.2 Background to Pietism

It has been said that Deists (whom we looked at in the last Lecture) had head-knowledge but no heart experience, and that Quakers (whom we also looked at) had heart-experience but no head-knowledge. Pietists combined both head and heart to correct the cold orthodoxy of the Lutheran Church, where personal experiences like that of Luther had been replaced by doctrinal orthodoxy. Pastors were trained only for doctrinal correctness, not for a living faith,

Remember that the Lutheran Reformation was 'magisterial'; reformers worked with magistrates and princes - Church and State worked together for their common good. By the late C17, the German Lutheran churches were largely departments of government. Pastors were appointed and paid by the government, and they had civil service duties, like keeping records.

Church activity was limited to a Sunday service and to training children for church membership by baptism - that was the one thing, the only thing, that mattered, to be baptized; any other religious activity was regarded with suspicion. There were no theological colleges, as we understand them; pastors studied in the faculties of theology of government universities, where the teachers might or might not be believing-Christians.

So the late C17 scene in Northern Europe - Lutheran country - was of dead orthodoxy, with an emphasis on doctrine, no emotion, no conversion, no Christian service, not even Christian living. The Pietists had two aims in order to remedy this: (1) to stress the

importance of a personal, individual experience of God's grace and (2) to shift the centre of Christian life from the State churches to intimate fellowship groups of revitalized lay believers who had a living faith in God. The movement started with:

2.3 Philip Jacob Spener, (1635-1705)

Spener was born in Germany, into the Lutheran Church, and he became a Lutheran pastor, a cheerful looking man - see the engraving - a contemporary of John Bunyan in England. Reading the works of the English Puritans, Spener was impressed at the way they challenged the wishy-washy State religion in England. When Spener was appointed to a pastorate in Frankfurt - see the chart on the next page - he was shocked by the low spiritual state there, so he began (unlike most) to expound the Bible in his pulpit. When he came in 1669 to the Sermon on the Mount, people were suddenly converted and family life was changed. He gathered believers twice-weekly into small groups in homes, starting with his own, to read the Bible and to pray; these became known scornfully as *Collegia Pietatis* ('gatherings of the pious', groups for prayer and Bible study). From this came the term Pietism - originally derogatory. Spener edited devotional literature, including *Pia Desideria*, ('Heartfelt Desire for God-pleasing Reform'), a devotional work and also a textbook on Church renewal, under six headings.



Historical Pictures
Service—Chicago

Philipp Jacob Spener

1. Pastors should preach from the whole Bible - not just from isolated texts - and Christians should engage in private Bible reading, study groups and family devotions.
2. The Lutheran doctrine of the priesthood of all believers should receive a new emphasis, recognising the rights of the laity, and people's responsibility towards others.
3. More attention should be given to the cultivation of individual spiritual life, and love for God should take priority over all else.
4. Avoid controversies with unbelievers; truth is established through prayer and holy living.
5. Candidates for the ministry should be 'true Christians', and training should include small groups for devotional life and personal Bible study.
6. Preaching should edify believers, strengthen their faith and cultivate inner piety.

To further this, Spener travelled around Europe, promoting these ideas. In his small groups for Bible study, prayer and discussing last Sunday's sermon, an experience of conversion was all-important; this is crucial to understand the movement - for the first time in Christian history, the conversion of baptized Christians (as well as pagans) was stressed.

When a Lutheran pastor called on a new parishioner, he asked, 'Have you been baptised?', but when a Pietist pastor called on a new parishioner, he asked, 'Have you been converted?' The C17 Lutheran Church preached baptismal regeneration - by baptism you join the State Church and you are a Christian. Spener believed the true church was a minority within the

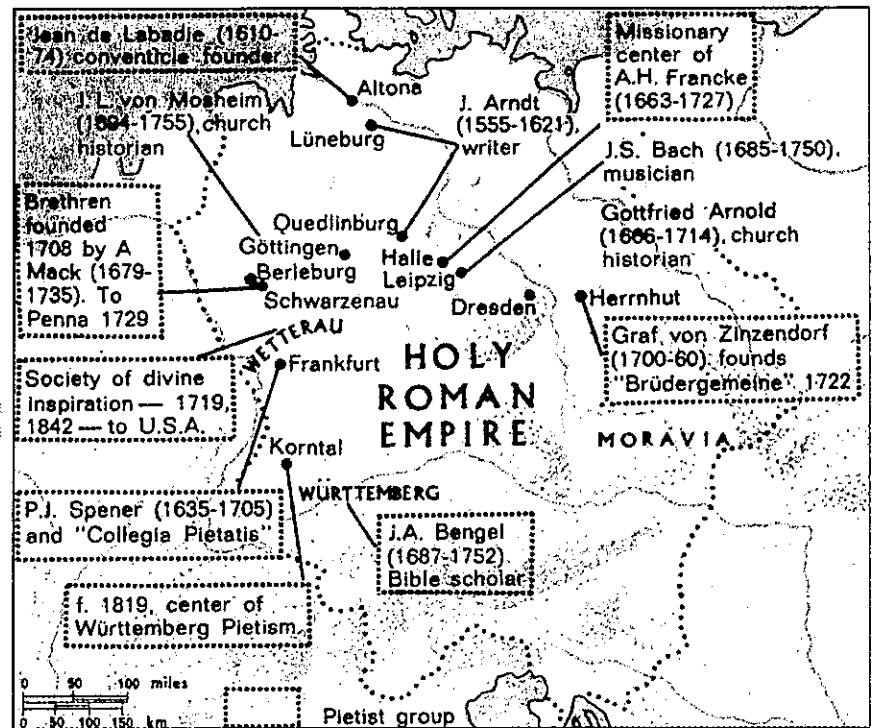
visible Church; he encouraged groups of Church people - he wanted them to stay in the Church - to form what we call cell-groups, or house groups, for study and prayer, to leaven the official Church from within, not to split from it. One of my sons lives in Norway, and a common feature of towns there is what Lutherans call the *Prayerhus*, for midweek meetings - some ministers attend the local *Prayerhus*, others don't.

Coming back to C17 Germany, the next name to note under Pietism is:

2.4 August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) (Hanks, *Great Events*, 238-40)

Francke was 28 years younger than Spener and it fell to him to lead the next generation of Pietists. While lecturing at the University of Leipzig (the arrow on the map points to Halle, but he started at Leipzig), he was converted at the age of 24 and spent some time with Spener. When he returned to his lecturing post in Leipzig he included *collegia pietatis* - study-groups - in the curriculum for his students - there is nothing like the zeal of a new convert; Spener had convinced him that all professors of theology should be converted people, but

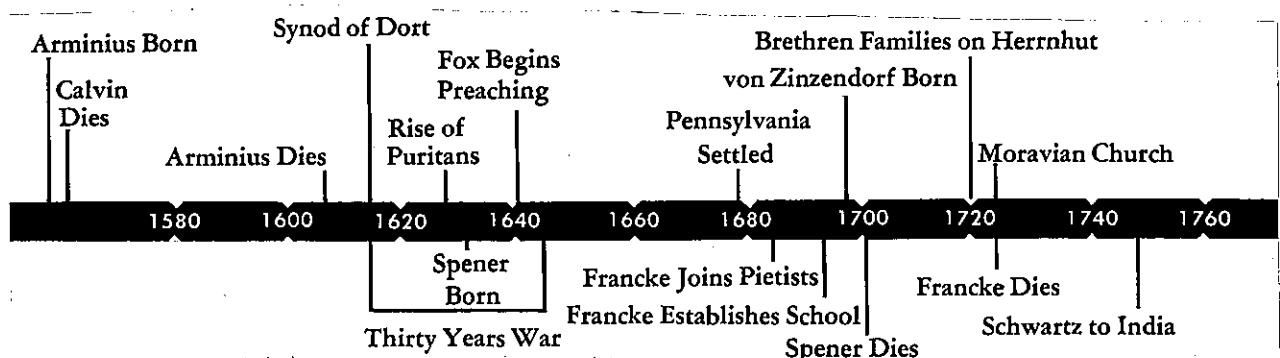
saying too publicly and too loudly that only true believers should be appointed to the Faculty led to Francke's expulsion from the University of Leipzig. Fortunately, the local Prince favoured Pietism, and Spener persuaded him to appoint Francke as a professor at the new University at nearby Halle (see the map).



PIETISM IN GERMANY

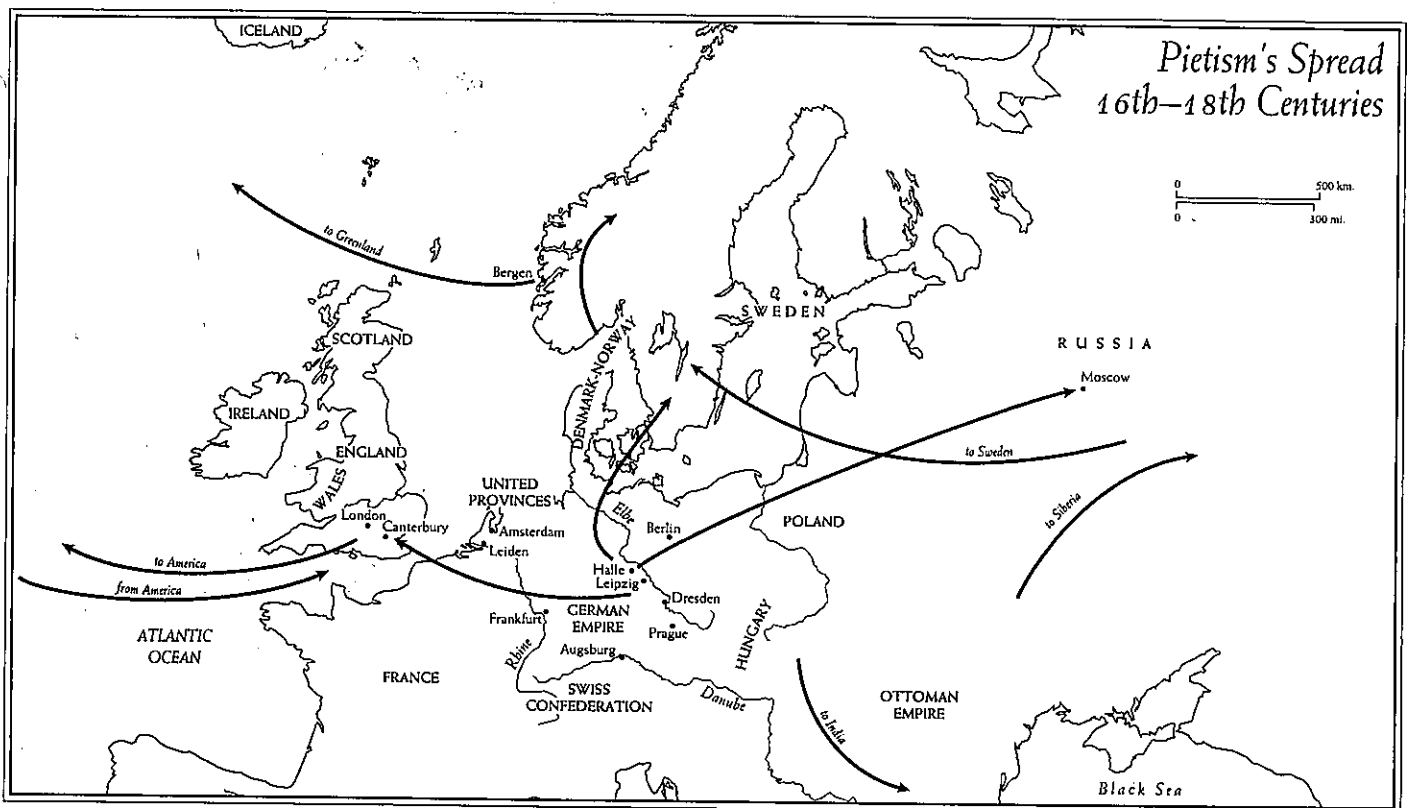
Fired with practical Pietism, based on Bible study, Francke began an array of spiritual and social ministries, initially a ragged school in his own home. He then acquired property for an orphanage, established schools for 3,000 poor children, a home for widows, a medical dispensary, a house for unmarried women, a printing and publishing house, a hospital, a library, a farm, a teacher training college, and a Bible Institute for training pastors and where missionary candidates received linguistic training.

Halle became the hub of a host of Pietist ministries, and when King Frederick of Denmark wanted to send Protestant missionaries to Danish colonies in India (next section), it was to Francke's workers in Halle that he looked for workers.



2.5 Frederick IV, King of Denmark

The King of Denmark admired the Pietists so greatly that in 1705 he sent two of them as missionaries to his Danish colonies in India (see the map below). Their reports awakened great interest among other Pietists, and soon the University of Halle became a missionary training centre as well as a theological training centre, and sixty more missionaries went abroad. With the King of Denmark's support, another centre was started in Denmark, training missionaries for Lapland and Greenland (see the map) then the West Indies. So, the first Protestant mission to non-Christian nations was not by the Church, but by lay people, Pietists, working within the Church and having a missionary vision lacking in the Church leadership. Pietism was never a church or a denomination; it had no headquarters other than the University of Halle - it was an ethos rather than a movement.



2.6 'The first Protestant mission to non-Christian nations'

Let me digress to make three comments on that phrase. (1) There had been Catholic missions for 200 years before the Pietist movement began - remember the Spanish and Portuguese explorers, who were obliged to take priests with them, (2) The British had been sending what they called 'missionaries' to their overseas colonies in America from 1649, before Franke was born, but they mostly looked after the spiritual welfare of Christians in the British colonies in the New World, they were not missionaries to unevangelised areas. In fairness, I should say that the 'Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts' was founded in 1701, to evangelise the Indians inside the British colonies, but the Pietist missions were first to go to areas where there were no existing Christians.

You may ask why the Protestant Churches - all of them - had no missionary vision in the C17 and C18. One of the reasons was the attitude embodied in the Peace Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which, you remember, laid down that religion in signatory nations was to be determined by its ruler, and rulers were not to interfere with the religion of other states. This led to the attitude that rulers had no responsibility for the spiritual good of regions beyond their own, and they just didn't think about mission.

That was a digression - back to the Pietists. The next phase of Pietism was dominated by Count Zinzendorf, the subject of our topic.

TOPIC - COUNT NIKOLAUS LUDWIG GRAF VON ZINZENDORF (1700-60) - was taken at this point in the Lecture; here, it is printed at the end of the Notes for this Lecture.

3 MORAVIAN CHURCH (Vos, 115-6; Hanks, *Great Events*, 240-1)

3.1 Background

While working at the palace in Dresden, Zinzendorf met a group of Hussites, who had fled persecution in their own country, Moravia - remember Jan Hus, a pre-Reformation reformer in Prague (not far from Dresden - see the map on the previous page), who was martyred in 1415 (Lecture 18); his followers were still being persecuted 300 years later. Zinzendorf gave the pilgrims refuge on his land in 1722, where there was already a fellowship of Pietist believers. They founded a new community called Herrnhut, meaning 'The Lord's Protection/Watch'. In 1727, the community experienced a Pentecostal movement of the Holy Spirit, during a communion service, which 'set their hearts on fire with a new love and faith toward the Saviour and with burning love toward each other'.



Count Nicolas von Zinzendorf, founder of the Moravian church. He emphasized a life of vital personal devotedness to Christ.

3.2 Where the name 'Moravian Church' came from

Following their heart-changing experience at that communion service, the believers who had fled from Moravia decided to reform the Church; until that day, they had been content to be known as refugees, living on borrowed land near Dresden, influenced by Pietism, but in 1727 they decided formally to reconstitute themselves as the Moravian Church. So the words Pietist and Moravian are not interchangeable. This group of people, influenced by Pietism, became known as Moravians, while many other Pietists continued their own work in other places, concentrating on their study-groups.

Zinzendorf was so impressed that he resigned his post in the palace in Dresden and joined them, and became their leader. He stressed religion was of the heart and that ethics should be based on the Sermon on the Mount - it was a very personal religion. He made Herrnhut not only a centre of piety, to revitalize the Lutheran church, but also a centre for overseas missions, to the West Indies, Greenland, Russia and (not shown on the map on the previous page) a leprosy hospital outside Jerusalem.

Four years later, Zinzendorf met two Eskimos, who had been converted through this missionary work in Greenland, and another from the West Indies, and they asked him to send more missionaries to their countries. The whole community of Herrnhut was enthused, and a movement that had begun with 200 refugees soon had 100 missionaries overseas. Zinzendorf himself went to America in 1741, where he founded the Bethlehem Community and the Nazareth Community in Pennsylvania, as Moravian settlements - they are still there.

Zinzendorf had wanted the new Church of the Moravians to stay within the Lutheran fold, as a Pietist cell, but the Lutheran church didn't want them and expelled them, so there are now Moravian churches throughout the world, with their own bishops, elders, deacons, etc.

Before we leave the Moravians, one illustration of their influence. We'll come in Lecture 31 to the story of William Carey, who, just before 1800, founded the first overseas mission from English-speaking churches - it became the Baptist Missionary Society. Carey went to a meeting in a house in Kettering, Northamptonshire, hoping to persuade his fellow ministers to send someone to India. He showed them some Reports from the Moravian missionaries. 'See what these Moravians have done! Cannot we follow their example and in obedience to our divine Master go into the world and preach the gospel to the heathen?' It was a characteristic of the Moravian Church that every member was expected to do his or her share in such a work, at home or abroad.

3.3 Importance of Pietists and Moravians

Why are Pietists and Moravians so important in Church History?

- (1) They revitalized Christianity in Germany, England, America, and other places. We saw in the last Lecture (27) that 'the Enlightenment', 'the Age of Reason', claimed that religious belief must be capable of proof by human reason. Pietists showed that Christianity did not need mathematical, scientific proof to be real Christianity, it could be an experience, God speaking to people through the heart, not people trying to work their way from human reason to God.
- (2) They were the beginning of house-groups meeting inside the traditional Church, keeping their membership within the State Church, but having ginger groups
- (3) They were a prototype of 'revival', which we'll come to in the next Lecture (29). Their influence is neatly summed up in phrase: 'before Pietism, Protestant theology focused on what God has done for people; Pietism focused on what God has done within people.'
- (4) The first Protestant missions to non-colonial areas. As mentioned earlier, the British had been sending missionary-teachers to their overseas colonies for many years, and started an outreach mission to the North American Indians just before the first Pietist mission, but this was all within their own colonies, the Pietists were the first to send missionaries to new, to non-colonial, lands.

3.3 Caveat regarding Pietism

One historian is concerned about uncritical enthusiasm for the influence of Pietism on the Church. It may or not be fair comment, but we should be aware of it:

Although Pietism in many ways was a blessing to the Church in Germany, it had certain serious defects. Before the appearance of Pietism, Lutheranism suffered from a one-sided intellectualism (emphasis on knowledge). Pietism was a reaction against this cold and inactive religion. But Pietism too was one-sided. It was ascetic, and emphasized severe self-denial. Francke allowed the children in his institutions very little opportunity for play. Pietism was critical and uncharitable; it condemned as irreligious everyone who was not a Pietist. It denied the name of Christian to all those who could not tell a story of conscious conversion through an intense struggle. Pietism had but little regard for doctrine. The Lutheran Church of the seventeenth century laid one-sided emphasis on doctrine; Pietism laid one-sided emphasis on life. By underestimating the value of sound doctrine, it helped to ease the way for Liberalism and Modernism.¹

¹ B.K. Kuiper, *The Church in History*, 1964, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, p. 274.

4. EARLY NORTH AMERICAN PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

(Cairns, 355-65; Lion, 436-8, 479, Vos, 125-6, 129-132.)

4.1 Introduction

When looking at 'Voyages of Discovery' in lecture 17, we saw how the Spanish colonised both the South-East and the South-West of North America, and how visionary freelance friars, Jesuits, the Society of Jesus, carried out vigorous missionary work, so these areas became Catholic. Later on, French explorers colonised Eastern Canada, followed by French Jesuit missionaries. Apart from the Pietists and the Moravians, whom we've just looked at, Protestants had no similar vision at that time.

So why are the United States and most of Canada, apart from Quebec, now predominantly Protestant, and why does the United States now have more brands and shades and denominations of Christianity than anywhere else? For the last part of this Lecture we'll see how this multiplicity came about and two charts at the end of these Notes give some further detail - pages 11 and 12.

4.2 Emigration from Europe

In C17 Europe, Lutherans were found mostly in North Germany and Scandinavia, Anglicans were found exclusively in England, Calvinists were found mostly in Switzerland and Holland, Presbyterians were mainly in Scotland, and so on - it was territorial. Magisterial Reformers insisted on a close Church / State relationship, each helping the other and trying to make their country worship exclusively in their particular way. Others were often persecuted.

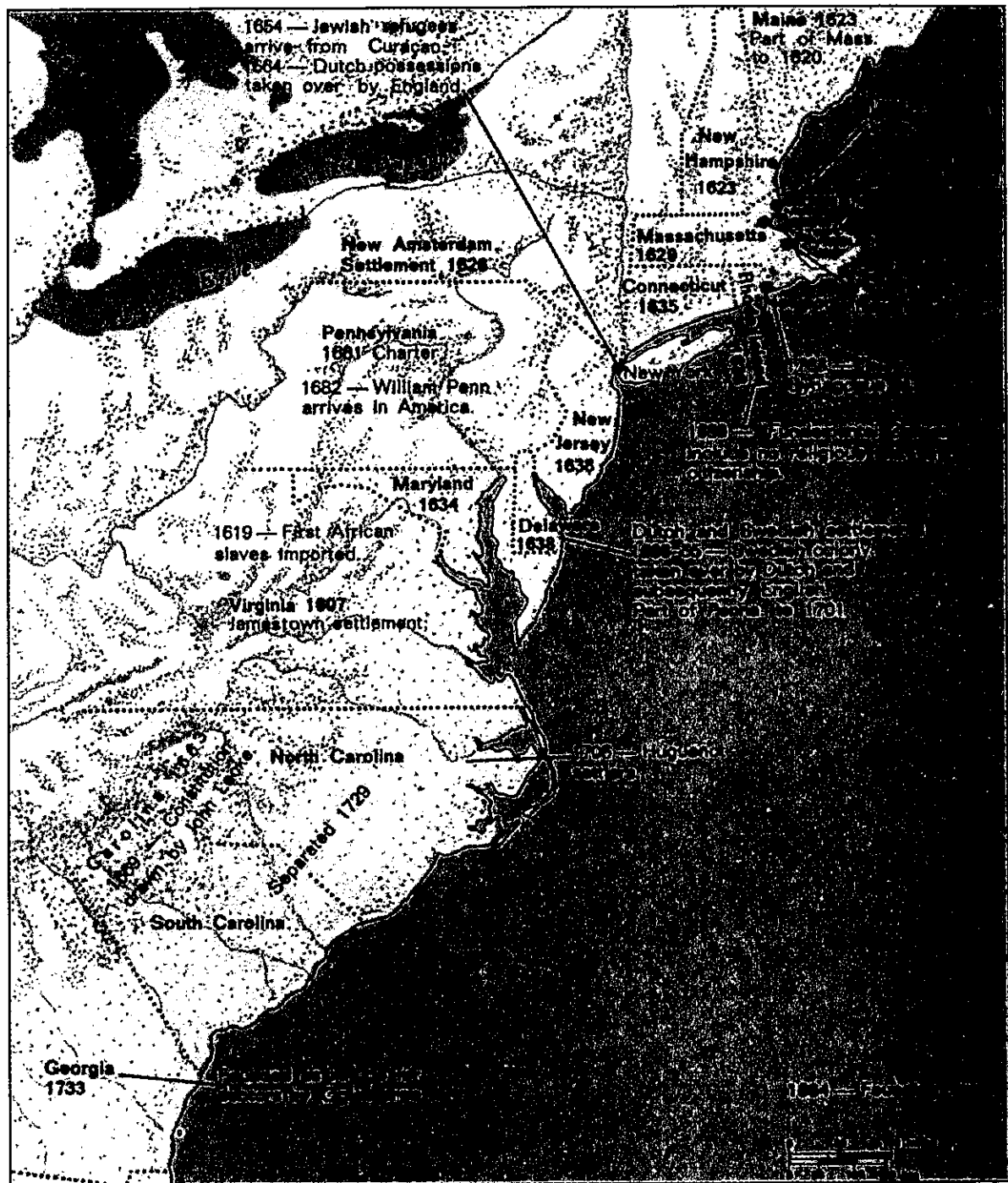
So when the opportunity came, from 1600 onward, to emigrate and make a new life in America, persecuted minorities were among the first to charter ships - to get religious freedom. They, and also those who went to trade and open up the new lands, all they took their own understanding of the Protestant faith with them; by 1646, eighteen different European languages were spoken along the banks of the Hudson River, where New York now stands.

The map on the next page shows the original settlements, and as you see on that map, they mostly wanted to be near the coast, so Dutch Calvinists and Dutch Lutherans and Dutch Arminians, Swedish Lutherans and German Lutherans, German Baptists and German Mennonites, English Anglicans and English Baptists and English Congregationalists, Scottish Presbyterians, Pietists and Moravians, Quakers and later, after Charles Wesley, Methodists were all thrown into the melting pot - against the background that the English Government was busy pushing the Spanish, who were Catholics, out of the South of the country and pushing the French, who were Catholics, out of the North; Catholics who wanted to emigrate from Europe made their homes in Maryland.

So Protestantism, in all its European varieties, was transplanted to America by emigrants, not by missionaries but by farmers and traders moving to the New World and determined to keep the pattern of worship in which they had been brought up. As Protestant Europe subdued the original inhabitants of North America (still called Indians), North America became a predominantly Protestant Christian civilization.

The map on the next page shows the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620 (Lecture 24) and the original Thirteen American Colonies, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts Bay, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina and Rhode Island.

ENGLISH COLONIES IN AMERICA 17TH-18TH CENTURIES



4.3 Pennsylvania - a successful 'holy experiment' (Hanks, *Great Events*, 243-52)

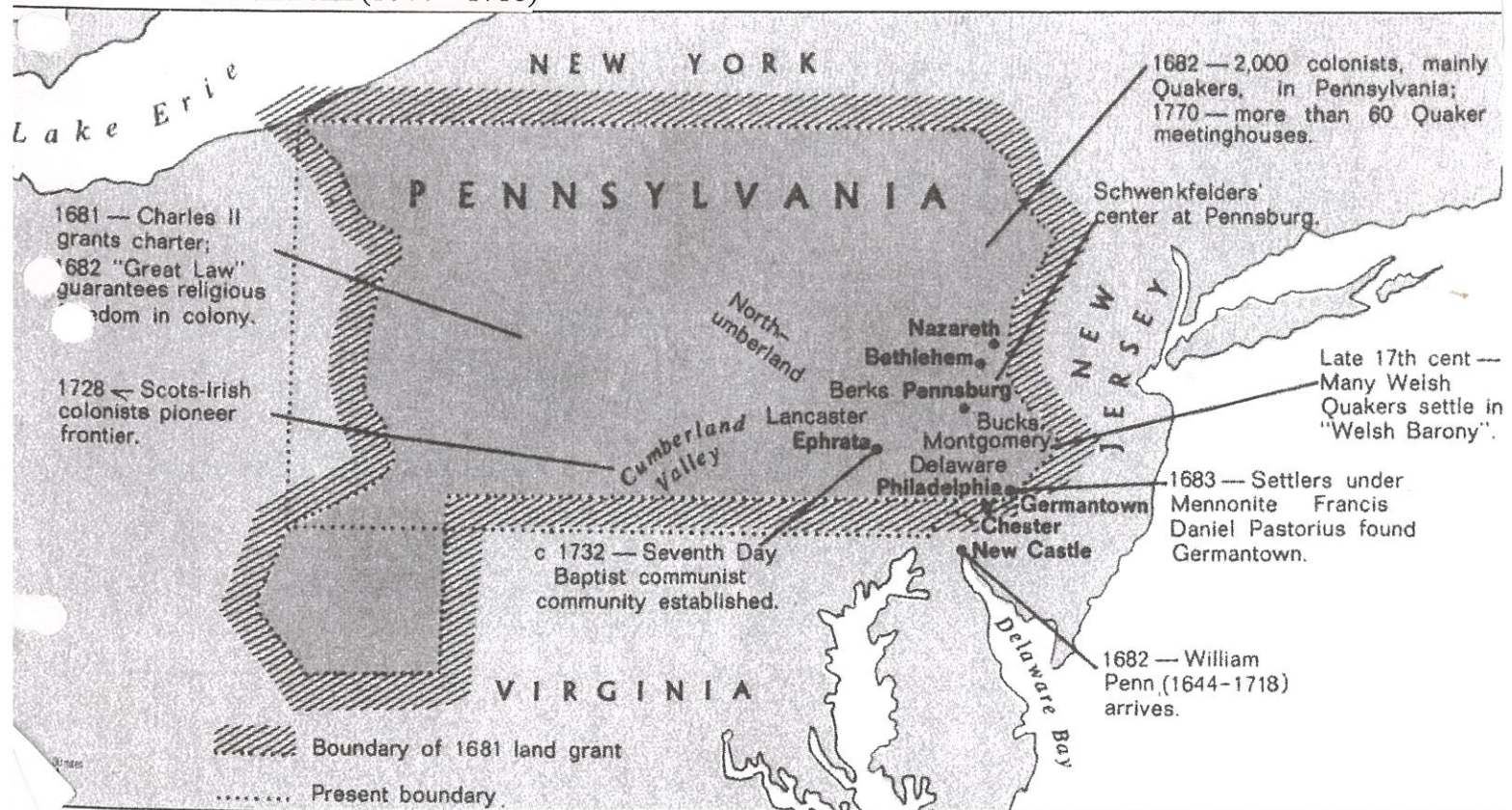
William Penn was the foremost Quaker in England after George Fox and, like Fox, he was persecuted for his beliefs. The Reformation had emphasised that God spoke primarily through Scripture, and here were people who looked for Inner Light to determine their relationship with God -- they sat in silence, you remember, until it came. Penn became increasingly concerned about the way his fellow-Quakers were being treated, not only in Britain but in all the American colonies as well. Quakers were not welcome in the New World. Any who emigrated to the American colonies were held in prison until they could be deported, back to where they had come from, and if they returned they were hanged.

When Penn inherited a fortune on his father's death in 1670, it included £16,000 owed to the estate by the British Crown for loans made. The King didn't have £16,000 to spare, so instead of pressing for the cash, Penn agreed to take 'all the land north of Maryland (see map below) to extend as far as plantable'. The King insisted that he call it Pennsylvania (Penn's Woods).



William Penn (1644 – 1718)

Penn drew up a Constitution, which was a model for compassion and fair treatment of everyone concerned; it was the basis of the Constitution of the United States of America when they became independent in 1776. Penn's Constituting provided for religious liberty, although immigrants had to profess monotheism that is, some form of the Christian religion. Sunday was a day of rest and government was through a democratic assembly. He worked for the abolition of slavery.



Penn paid the Indians a fair price for their land, and then offered it to immigrants for five pence an acre to buy or one penny a year to lease 200 acres. Everyone treated the Indians fairly and no Quaker was ever murdered by an Indian.

He laid out the capital, Philadelphia (the city of brotherly love) with houses to have space for gardens and orchards and, novel at that time, 'parallel streets intersected at right angles'. Pennsylvania became one of the leading colonies. Immigrants poured in from all over Europe, initially the majority being Quakers, but Pennsylvania offered freedom of religion to anyone calling themselves a Christian of whatever description - see the list on the next page - and they established vigorous churches of their particular persuasion.

4.4 What happened next?

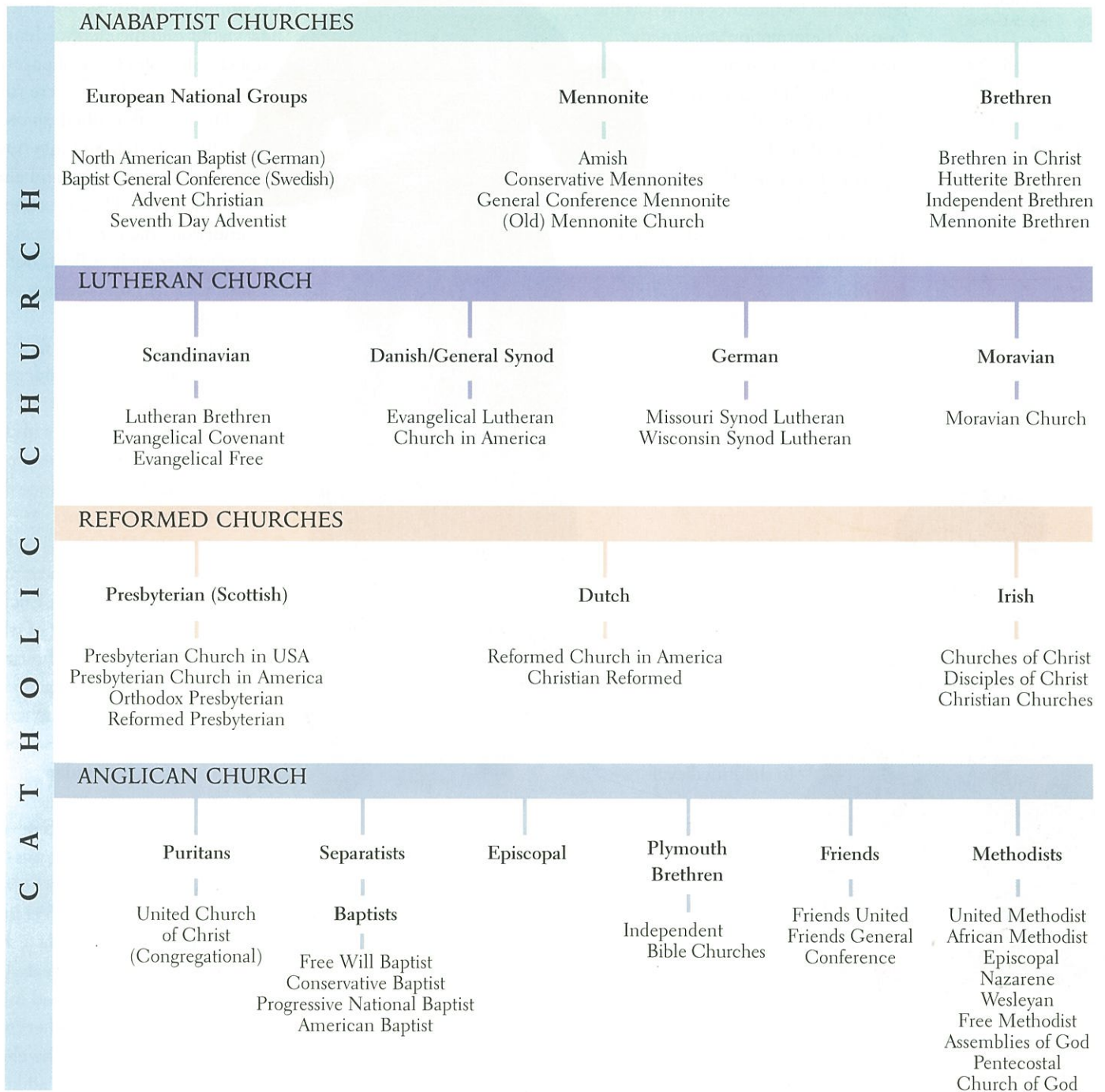
Sadly, and long before independence was even thought of, the religious zeal of the first settlers throughout the colonies diminished, but in the early part of the C18, a new and powerful work of God appeared, Revivalism, which not only profoundly affected American religious life but which spread back across to Europe; we'll take that up the next Lecture.

Religion in the Thirteen Colonies

COLONY	CHARTER DATE	CHARTER RECIPIENT	FIRST SETTLED	SETTLERS	MAIN REASON FOR COMING	RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION	ESTABLISHED CHURCH
VIRGINIA	1606	Virginia Company	1607	English	Economic gain	Anglican	Church of England
	1624	Royal Colony					
MASSACHUSETTS	1619	Pilgrims	1620	Pilgrims	Religious freedom	Separatists	Congregational
	1629	Mass. Bay Co.		Puritans	Establish theocracy	Congregationalist	
	1684	Royal Colony					
NEW HAMPSHIRE	1679	Royal Colony	1623	Puritans	Expansion from Massachusetts Bay	Congregationalist	Congregational
NEW YORK	1664	Royal Colony	1624	Dutch	Economic gain	Dutch Reformed	Church of England (1692)
MARYLAND	1632	Lord Baltimore	1634	English	Refuge for Roman Catholics	Roman Catholic and other	Church of England (1691)
	1691	Royal Colony					
CONNECTICUT	1662	John Winthrop, Jr. (Royal Colony)	1634	Puritans	Expansion from Massachusetts Bay	Congregationalist	Congregational
RHODE ISLAND	1644	Roger Williams	1636	English	Radicals fleeing Massachusetts Bay	Congregationalist	None
	1663	Renewed					
NEW JERSEY	1664	John Berkeley George Carteret	1638	Swedish	Economic gain	Lutheran	None
	1702	Royal Colony		Dutch	Expansion from N.Y.	Dutch Reformed	
				English	Religious freedom	Quaker	
DELAWARE	1683	Duke of York	1638	Swedish	Economic gain	Lutheran	None
	1693	Part of Pa.		Dutch		Dutch Reformed	
	1704	Separate gov't		English		Anglican	
NORTH CAROLINA	1712	Separate gov't from S.C.	1653	English	Economic gain	Anglican	Church of England
	1729	Royal Colony					
SOUTH CAROLINA	1663	Carolina Company	1670	English	Economic gain	Anglican	Church of England (1704)
				French	Religious freedom	Huguenots	
PENNSYLVANIA	1681	William Penn	1681	English	Religious freedom	Quaker	None
				German	Fleeing Thirty Years' War	Lutheran	
						Religious freedom	
GEORGIA	1732	James Oglethorpe	1733	English	Relief for those in debtors' prisons	Anglican	Church of England (1758)
	1752	Royal Colony		German	Religious freedom	Moravian	

THE GROWTH OF PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS IN THE US

THIS simplified diagram charts the development of some of the main Protestant Churches that broke with Catholicism in the Reformation, many of which divided into splinter denominations and separate Churches when immigrants arrived in the United States.



OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

TOPIC FOR LECTURE 28 – COUNT NIKOLAS LUDWIG VON ZINZENDORF (1700-60)

Zinzendorf was a nobleman, as his full name implies, and a Lutheran. His father died when he was six weeks old; his mother remarried, so he was brought up by his grandmother, who was a friend of Philip Spener (Lecture, Notes page 3). She sent him, at the age of 10, to Halle, where he studied under Francke (Notes, page 4). He then studied law, married, and was appointed to the Royal Court in Dresden.

Please tell us about this remarkable man, some more of his biography, his links with the Moravians and his missionary travels, and anything else that you wish to mention about him.

There is some material in Cairns, at pages 383-4, and quite a bit in Lion Handbook, 483 and several other places – see the index.



Zinzendorf preaching to people from many nations

Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravian church laid great stress on the importance of the emotions in religious expression, and wrote many hymns, some of which have been translated into English.

