

Membership Class:

Week 1 – Friends History

George Fox

Early Life

- Born 1624
- Presbyterian upbringing Father was known as a “righteous Christer”
- Melancholic in his youth
- Seeker
- Serious minded
- Not formally educated
- Shepherd and Cobbler
- Read a lot in the evenings to educate himself
- Much of his reading was in the Bible

Spiritual Crisis

- At 19 came to realize that many who professed Christian faith were not living as followers of Jesus
- This causes him to seek a new way and to find someone who can answer his questions
- Reformed theology (defeatist theology of sin) caused him to have stress about his own salvation

Spiritual Pilgrimage

- Left home and traveled around for around 4 years to ask and seek for answers to his questions and problems with the church and Christians
- Went to all sorts of different ministers and leaders in the church and theology to find his answer but none could speak to his need

“Aha” Moment

- 1647 – With no one able to give an answer he found himself without hope in men or any outward aide he heard God speak to him, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to thy condition.”

Initial Movement

Who Joined?

- Seekers
- Young people

What were they called?

- Children of Light
- Publishers of Truth

- Friends of Truth
- Religious Society of Friends

Where does “Quaker” come from?

- Fox before justice Bennet called the judge to “quake before the Lord” and the judge responded that he would not be part of the “quakers”

Pendle Hill (1652)

- George Fox had a vision of “a great host dressed in white raiment” and felt called to seek them out

What was their message?

- “Christ has come to teach his people himself”

Why were they persecuted?

- Went against the status quo
- Challenged the existing church
- Wouldn’t pay certain taxes
- Did not take oaths
- Would not honor those in higher status
- Would not stop meeting when it was outlawed

Key dates for persecution

- 1660 – Restoration of the Monarchy (Charles II)
- 1661 – Fifth Monarchy uprising (Quakers blamed for this)
- 1662 – Act against Quakers
- 1664 – Conventicle Act

Transition into Quietism

Leadership succession

- 1691 – George Fox dies
 - George Whitehead takes over with a different attitude and view of the church’s action or purpose in the world
- Toleration
 - 1689 – Toleration Act passed and allowed separatist movements and dissenters to meet without reparations
 - Still faced difficulties in being Quakers due to their beliefs
- Preservation
 - Education and indoctrination became the focus of the leadership in this time
 - Plain dress and speech were emphasized by leadership during this time
 - Elders begin to rise in status and authority within the meeting
 - Their role as the guardians of the teachings and actions of the church was important but also led to some dangerous things
- Prosperity
 - Integrity and simple living led to them towards a comfortable life in many cases
- Isolation
 - Limitations on the members and uniformity of lifestyle was detrimental to their expansion
 - Not many converts during this time

- Rules against marrying outside limited growth as well
- By 1750, perhaps 80% of Friends were “Birthright Quakers”
- The church had fewer convincements (incoming) than disownments (outgoing)

Discipline

- Elders and overseers became prominent in the disciplining of conduct of the Friends in their congregations
 - Williams lists some of the reasons for discipline (Williams, 125)
- Queries were developed in this era to help the Friends test their own conduct

Introspection

- Focus on silence and waiting before God was increased and emphasized as the practice rather than having silence as a practice intended to be a platform for God to act in the meeting
- Greater fear for misspeaking than not speaking at all
- Growing ambivalence of speaking
 - Seen as too much creaturely activity
- Distrust and disuse of the Bible grew in this period.

Fear of:

- Creaturely activity
- Overstepping the spirit
- Cultural activity
- Interaction with non-Quakers
- Self
- Moving beyond the spirit’s guidance
 - Led to paralyzed congregations

19th Century Friends

After a relatively dormant 18th century, the story of Friends in the 19th century is the story of:

- Schisms
- Transformation in response to:
 - Classic, liberal Modernity
 - Developing Christian Evangelicalism.
- For evangelical Friends (esp. in America), the 19th century is the story of the transformation of a movement from an exclusivist, peculiar sect to a Christian, evangelical denomination

Friends in America (19th Century)

Start of 19th century

- Philadelphia and Baltimore as the centers
- Westward migration
- Increased disownments
- Emphasis on Light
- Biblical literacy plummeted
- Worship was mostly silent

- Growing discontentment
- Frustration with isolationism
- Disillusion of many over quietism
 - Inability to confront rationalism
 - “Evangelicalism flourished when there was an enemy to identify, and the danger in the 1820’s came from free thinkers, rationalists, and Unitarians.” (Barbour, 172)

Hicksite/Orthodox Schism (1827-1828)

- Before the Schism
 - 1801 – Hannah Barnard refused by London Yearly Meeting and disowned by New York Yearly Meeting for unsound doctrine
 - 1806 – Philadelphia Yearly Meeting warned of disownment for denying Christ’s deity, the authority of scripture, or the immediate revelation of the Spirit
 - Friends began work to align early Friends convictions with evangelical doctrines

Elias Hicks (1748-1830)

- Focus on Spirit as paramount in his ministry
- Charismatic and dynamic leader amongst friends
- Farmer and minister in New York
- Bright mind
- Friends emphasis on doctrine and actions caused him to react against them
- Often seen as outside the boundaries of orthodox evangelical Christian faith,
 - Could be due to his emphasis on the Spirit’s leadership over and against what he saw as earthly doctrine or leadership
- Deity of Christ, Atonement, Virgin Birth were seen as external truth and thus counter to the firsthand experience of the Inward Light
- Faith through internal experience with the “Inner Light”

Other factors at work in division (not only theology and church government)

- Geography
- Economic status
- Kinship influenced patterns of division

Result?

- Hicksites eventually dwindled
- Orthodox were fairly evangelical in doctrine but still fairly traditional in practice and lifestyle
 - Developed statements of orthodox belief and faith
 - Vested more authority in yearly meetings
 - Began a Bible Society to distribute Bibles

Beaconite Secession (1835)

Isaac Crewdson

- In response to Hicks, Crewdson published A Beacon to the Society of Friends and:
 - Condemned the doctrine of the Light
 - Emphasized the outward authority of scripture

- Called for the use of physical sacraments
- Set up “evangelical friends”
- Eventually disbursed into other churches

Shift in numbers from England to America

- England went from 60,000 in 1680 to 16,000 in 1840
- America had 80,000 in 1845

Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847)

- Highly educated
- Wealthy background
- Brilliant linguist and biblical scholar
- Family was part of the “gay” Quaker’s who engaged more with other churches and with culture
- Traveling minister and writer of pamphlets or treatises
- Able to interact with higher class
 - Met with many prominent people
- New methods intended to enliven the society of Friends
- Outwardly practiced and believed very traditionally in:
 - Spirituality of Sacraments
 - Importance of Silence
 - Traditional view of ministry
 - Plain life
- Revolutionized Quaker doctrine
 - Role of Bible
 - Spirit was to guide us as we read scripture
 - It was an error to devalue scripture in following the Holy Spirit
 - Guidance of Inward Light (devalued)
 - Works to clarify what the Inward Light is
 - The Holy Spirit in us as a method of God’s prevenient grace
 - Nature of Justification and Sanctification
 - Process of Justification and Sanctification tied together for the early Friends
 - Gurney comes along and gives an evangelical theology to Friends concerning Justification and Sanctification
 - Relationship with other Denominations
 - Worked to build on the similarities between the other denominations and Friends in order to connect with them
 - See Punshon 198 for more

John Wilbur (1774-1856)

- A New England Friend from Rhode Island
- Emphasized the Inward Light
- Visited England in 1831-1833 to encourage the conservative wing of Friends
- Followed Gurney to counteract his teaching
- Sought to maintain the old ways of the Friends in contrast to the “new methods” of Gurney

Wilburite/ Gurneyite Schism (1845-1854)

- Power play in the New England Yearly Meeting (1843)
 - New England Yearly Meeting moved to silence Wilbur
 - His meeting refused to discipline him
 - New England Yearly Meeting dissolved his meeting, transferring all members to another meeting which disowned Wilbur
- Wilbur left New England Yearly Meeting (1845) to establish an alternate
 - This forced other Yearly Meetings to choose sides
 - Split Ohio and Philadelphia (1854)
- Wilbur's 3 main objections to Gurney:
 - Wilbur said that the Gospel of Christ is not in itself the power to save
 - Gurney said that Men are justified by faith without regard to obedience
 - Jesus was only an "enlightener" and not as important as the Inward Light
- Wilburite/Gurneyite Schism Results
 - Ohio having lost the Hicksites and now the Wilburites experienced "...the absence of counterbalancing views that prevented what became a vigorous and experimental evangelical Quakerism from recognizing the virtue of certain traditional positions, and in due course, brought some Friends to question both the testimony against the sacraments and the principles of the Quaker business method." (Punshon 198-199)
- Other issues
 - Abolition
 - Agreed on by both sides but methods differed
- Authority of early Quaker writings
 - Both held these as authoritative texts

End of 19th Century

- Crisis and Conference
- Sacraments Crisis
 - Prior to 1879
 - Essentially 2 views within Friends
 - Impediment view
 - Sacramental elements work against understanding the spiritual reality at work
 - Non-necessity view
 - Not needed for the celebration of communion or baptism
 - David Updegraff in Ohio
 - Asked for "freedom of conscience"
 - Campaigned for adoption/toleration of baptism and communion into Friends' practices
 - Ohio was divided
 - Other Yearly Meetings remained traditional
 - Richmond Conference (1887)
 - Brought together Gurneyite Yearly Meetings to discuss:
 - Mission and Message
 - United efforts in Foreign Missions
 - Meetings for Worship
 - Declaration of Faith:
 - Evangelical
 - Mostly avoided the sacraments issue
 - Little attention to the Light

Week 2 – Friends Theology

Four Openings from George Fox

- What is a Christian?
 - One who believes in God and Follows Jesus.
- What is a Minister?
 - One in whom the Spirit dwells.
- What is the Church?
 - Body of believers.
- How can we know Jesus?
 - Personally, and Experientially.

Evangelicalism

- What is it?
 - Great Commission
 - Protestantism
 - Belief in Jesus Christ and the Biblical narrative
 - Christians who share that salvation is through Jesus
- Definition of David Bebbington/ Mark Noll
 - Biblicism
 - Scriptural Authority
 - Crucicentrism
 - Atonement through the crucifixion
 - Conversionism
 - People need a personal decision to give their life to Christ
 - Activism
 - Social Justice
 - Action is important

Rise of Evangelicalism

- 18th Century western Christianity strongly influenced by Rationalism
 - Intellectualized, argumentative nature of Christian faith
 - Faith replaced by Theology
 - Faith became formalized and aloof
 - Secularized clergy
 - Even in America, Puritanism was losing its experiential dimension and resembled theological, intellectual trends in Europe
- Result
 - Need for revival
- Who? Where? Ideas/Emphases? Methods/Practices?
 - Pietism (European Continent) 18th century
- Methodism (England) 18th century
 - Renewal movement of the Anglican Church
 - Started by John and Charles Wesley at Oxford with the Holy Club (this was an early form of the “bands” that would later be a hallmark of Methodism)
 - Key teachings:

- People are all, by nature, “dead in sin,” and, consequently, “children of wrath”
- They are “justified by faith alone”
- Faith produces inward and outward holiness
- Wesley was a preacher and evangelist
- During the American Revolutionary war Wesley noted the lack of ordained priests able to administer the sacraments in the Colonies
- First Great Awakening (America) 18th century
- Second Great Awakening (America) latter 18th century and early 19th century
 - Some lasting outcomes of the Evangelical emergence
 - Focus on preacher
 - Revivalist/Evangelist focus
- Holiness Movement (mid to later 19th century)
 - Focused on regeneration through faith and the Holy Spirit as well as a second work of grace
 - Christian perfectionist teaching
 - Flows out of Wesley’s A Plain Account of Christian Perfection being published and shared in more areas
 - Moralistic teachings on Christian living
 - Often isolationist in its outcome
 - Importance placed on interior change and personal transformation
 - First distinctly Holiness camp meeting was in Vineland in 1867

The Revival (1867-1880)

- Holiness revival
 - A “revival” included:
 - Worship services focused on a small number of preachers
 - Emphasis on instantaneous experiences: conversion and sanctification
 - Altar calls and mourners’ benches
 - Hymns and congregational singing
 - Encouragement of extreme emotionalism
 - Holiness critique of Quakerism
 - “Plain life” was dead works, pride, and false security
 - Silent waiting was unnecessary now that you had the Spirit
 - Traditional methods were not leading to conversions
 - Music aided in producing conversions
 - Peculiarity and isolation from other believers is useless
 - Spiritual experience doesn’t need to be grim
- Openness to Holiness
 - Some factor in Quakerism opened the way for the Holiness Movement
 - Possibility/expectation of Holiness (perfection)
 - Spiritual baptism opened the way for baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - Traveling ministers opened the way for traveling evangelists
 - Holiness met the need for “seekers”
 - Within Gurneyites, some tension arose between Holiness Friends (revivalists) and moderates (Renewalists; loyal Friends; sound Quakers)
 - Contrast between “fast” and “slow” Friends
 - Mostly untied against modernity

Contrasting Christian Experience

- Quietist Quaker
 - Listen to the Inward Light or Jesus, the Inward Teacher
 - Surrender to holiness
 - Un-programmed worship
 - Silence
 - Elders, overseers, ministers
 - Peculiar and separate
- Evangelical Quaker
 - Listen to Scripture and preacher
 - Experience conversion
 - Programmed worship
 - Singing
 - Pastors
 - Common and Involved

Growth of Fundamentalism

- Response to Liberal Protestantism
- 5 “Fundamentals” (Information in brackets is stricter view)
 - Inspiration (and Inerrancy) of Scripture
 - Virgin Birth
 - Literal interpretation of miracles (and Young earth account of creation)
 - Christ’s (substitutionary) atonement for sin
 - Bodily resurrection (and premillennial return) of Jesus

Rise of (Neo-)Evangelicalism

- Some have defined it as the “space between Fundamentalism and Liberalism”
- More “centered-set” (focused on core issues staying the same with peripheral issues being flexible or fluid) than “bounded-set” (lines of orthodox belief bound firmly)
- More Focused on what unifies than on what divides
 - What we are for, rather than what we are against
- More committed to engaging the world than withdrawing from it
- Social action alongside Evangelism
- More committed to intellectual pursuits
- Leaders
 - Harold Ockenga
 - Billy Graham
 - Carl F.H. Henry
 - John Stott
 - Martin Lloyd-Jones
- Ministries:
 - InterVarsity CF (1941)
 - National Association of Evangelicals (1942)
 - Youth for Christ (1944)
 - Urbana (1946)
 - Fuller Seminary (1947)
 - Evangelical Theological Society (1949)

- World Vision (1950)
- Christianity Today (1956)
- Current iterations of Evangelicalism
 - Neo-Reformed (The Gospel Coalition)
 - Wesleyan Holiness Consortium
 - Christian Right
 - Evangelical Left (Red-Letter Christians)
 - Emergent/Convergent

Week 3 – Friends Practices and Testimonies Read and discuss “Faith and Practice”

Week 4 – Covenant and Church Life

Discuss what Medford Friends Church is like and what membership here entails

- The Membership Application is on Page 53 of “Faith and Practice”