

Dr. Roger Green, American Christianity, Session 3, Roger Williams and Religious Diversity in Rhode Island

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This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 3 on Roger Williams and Religious Diversity in Rhode Island.

In this lecture, on Fridays, I like to get just a little bit of a reading from something we're talking about and sometimes a little bit of a devotional kind of nature.

So today, on Friday, I want to read just an excerpt of a letter. This is a letter from a man to his wife. I'll let the circumstances of the letter go for just a minute, and then we'll talk about what caused him to write this letter.

It's by a man named William Ledra. That doesn't ring any bells to you. We don't talk about him in the course, but here he is writing to his wife.

The sweet influences of the morning star, like a flood distilling into my innocent habitation, hath filled me with the joy of God in the beauty of holiness, that my spirit is as if it did not inhabit a tabernacle of clay. Oh, my beloved, I have waited as a dove at the window of the ark, and I have stood still in that watch, wherein my heart did rejoice, that I might in the love and life speak a few words to you, sealed with the spirit of promise, that the taste thereof might be a savor of life to your life, and testimony in you of my innocent death. William Ledra was the last Quaker to be hanged on Boston Common, and this is the letter that he wrote to his wife on the morning that they took him out to hang him at Boston Common.

So, remember, there were four Quakers hanged on the Boston Common, but all were willing to go for the sake of their understanding of who Christ is and understanding of what God has done in their lives. So, this is a letter to his wife just before he was taken out to Boston Common. Okay, we're doing okay, I think.

We are lecture number two, Roger Williams and Religious Diversity in Rhode Island. So, we're kind of where we should be in terms of the lectures. The first thing we talked about was Roger Williams.

And I tried to mention the other day that if I were asked to choose one of the most important persons in this course, I'd have to put him on the list. He is really critical and established in Rhode Island and in Providence, a colony dedicated to total religious freedom and absolute religious liberty. And that will come into play in a broader American culture as well.

But he is really important. I think that's about where we go. We did talk about his own pilgrimage, didn't we? He went from Anglican to Puritan to Baptist to seeker, and he ended up as a seeker in his own life.

So that's Roger Williams' pilgrimage. I think we probably mentioned that. I don't think we actually got to Rhode Island.

So, I mean, I don't mean that literally, but just in terms of we didn't get to Rhode Island. So, let's go on to Rhode Island here and say a few things about Rhode Island. Oh, I don't need that yet.

Okay. Now, the first thing about Rhode Island is that he established this colony. The first thing we want to take notice of is that Roger Williams himself disliked the Quakers.

He did not like their theology. We'll talk a lot about the Quaker theology. He didn't like their theology.

He was really upset about their theological constructions, but he welcomed them into his colony because of absolute religious freedom. So, he was going to be faithful to his own principle of absolute freedom in his colony, even though he disliked the Quakers and he disliked what they taught. What he was not going to do was use the arm of the state to punish people for their religious beliefs.

He had seen too much of that in Europe. He had seen too much of that in Boston. So, he was not going to use the arm of the state to punish people for what they believed.

That was not going to happen. He believed in an absolute separation of church and state. And in terms of the church, he believed in absolute freedom for people to either be religious or not to be religious.

So, it wasn't just a matter of it wasn't just a matter of toleration here for Roger Williams. It was a matter of absolute freedom. Okay, now another thing I want to mention about Rhode Island is because we're using Rhode Island as kind of this model of religious freedom in the midst of a lot of religious intolerance, but because we're using Rhode Island as our model, let's move forward to the 18th century and to the 1700s, 1776, for example.

So, let's move forward to the founding fathers. And we'll talk about them in a separate lecture, but we don't have to worry about that right now. The only thing I want to do is make a little bit of a comparison and a contrast.

Roger Williams based his understanding of religious liberty, religious freedom, and separation of church and state solely on the Bible. He believed that this was the teachings of the scripture. When you move forward to the 1700s, 1776, and so forth, the principles often appealed to were the principles of the Enlightenment.

They were philosophical principles, not always and not necessarily biblical principles. So, we've got something happening with Roger Williams in Rhode Island in the 1630s from what will happen in the 750 years later. So what you want to do in your mind is compare and contrast that kind of understanding of religious liberty, what the foundations of religious freedom are, religious liberty, and the foundations for the separation of church and state.

So, you want to think about those things as you compare and contrast. And what we have established here in Rhode Island with Roger Williams is really unique. So far, it is unique, no doubt about that.

Okay, let's go to C. Let's go to George Fox. I want to say a few things about George Fox because he is important to what we're going to be talking about with the Quakers. So, let me just do a little bit of biographical stuff with George Fox.

You've got his dates there, George Fox. All right, George Fox was born in England and reared in an Anglican tradition, but even early on in life, George Fox was very upset that the church was controlled by the state. He was very upset about the church-state relationship and about the state's control over the church because he didn't think that that was the New Testament church.

He didn't see this as the New Testament church in terms of what he was experiencing. And so that bothered him. So, George Fox then, therefore, was, in a sense, frustrated in two ways.

So let me mention the two ways of his own kind of, I don't know, frustration, beginning pilgrimage, and then to see how he breaks through that. So, number one, when he reads the Bible or when he reads about early church history, he reads about spirit-filled people, people filled with the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts is a good example, and so forth, but people are filled with the Holy Spirit.

But he didn't see that operative in church life in England in this 17th century, and he didn't see that operative in his own life. So, he starts to question, which is frustrating for him. If that's what the church is supposed to be all about, where is it where I lived, and where is it in my own life? So that was one thing.

Okay, the second thing is that he sought advice from a lot of people, a lot of counselors, a lot of counselors in terms of friends, advisors, and so forth. He sought advice from a lot of people and thought that maybe he could talk through his

frustrations with these people. But he found himself, and some of them might have been close friends, but he found himself, in talking with him, he found that he was theologically opposite from his friends.

They could not see what he was trying to think through theologically. And so there was a real frustration there as well. So, the number one frustration is that I'm reading about all these spirit-filled people. Why aren't I like that, and why isn't the church like that? And number two, I've got these ideas I want to talk through with friends, but there seems to be a chasm between me and them.

So, what happens with George Fox then is that he receives a conversion experience from God, and then he launches out on his own to preach the gospel. So, George Fox felt that God had moved his life in a unique way. And George Fox felt a very deep religious experience in his life.

And he tended to talk about it as the inner light of Christ. Christ is in my heart; I've got the light of Christ in my heart now, and what I want to do now is I want to go out, and I want to preach that inner light of Christ, very based on experience, obviously. So, George Fox decided to go out and do that, and he started his kind of pilgrimage in 1648.

So, there's his date, and I did give his date tonight, 1624. 1648 is when he begins his kind of spiritual pilgrimage, and he goes out and decides to be a preacher preaching about the inner light of Christ. There's no kind of denominational name for this.

He doesn't have a denomination yet. He doesn't have a movement yet. He doesn't have people around him yet.

But in 1648, he started preaching. His method of preaching is that he'll preach about the inner light of Christ any place he can, in the streets, in the towns, and in the villages. Sometimes, churches would allow him to speak in their churches after the morning worship service, and sometimes, they would allow him to speak to people who were interested in this inner light of Christ.

And so what happens, of course, is that he begins to get kind of a following of this inner light of Christ. Now, he meets a couple who are very important in Quaker history, and their names are Judge and Margaret Fell. This becomes important for forwarding what we'll know as the Quaker movement.

Judge Fell, that's his title. He was a barrister. I believe his name was Thomas, but he went by the title of his job as a counselor, a barrister, a lawyer.

So, he's referred to often in literature as Judge Fell and Margaret Fell. And he meets Judge and Margaret Fell. He meets them in a place called Swarthmore Hall, which is the way in which these people, Judge and Margaret Fell, are wealthy.

And so, they had this huge kind of mansion and lots of property, lots of servants, and so forth. Long story short, Judge and Margaret Fell is convinced by him of this inner light of Christ. So, he brought conviction to their hearts of the inner light of Christ.

And that really is the beginning of kind of the organizational organization of a movement called the Quakers. So, Swarthmore Hall becomes the headquarters of the Quakers. And from that kind of headquarters, a number of people who are convinced of this inner light of Christ go out throughout England, Scotland, and Wales and start to preach about this inner light of Christ.

Let me give you, well, I can give you one statistic, but let me finish off with Roger Williams, and then we'll move. Let me finish off with him, and then we'll move with George Fox, and we'll move on to D, the rise of the Quakers. But let me just finish his story quickly. The numbers increase rapidly, which we'll see in just a moment.

And then Judge Fell dies, and he marries Margaret Fell. So, Margaret Fell becomes his wife. And if any of you are interested in doing one of the papers, you know, we've got four papers you can do.

One of the paper topics is women in American Christianity. And Margaret Fell was a very important woman leader of the Quaker movement in American Christianity. Suffered at times a great deal.

She came from this very privileged background, but because she was a Quaker, she was often imprisoned and so forth, so she knew that part of life as well. So that is how important George Fox is. He's a pretty critical guy to know.

So, we take a little bit of time to talk about him. But let's talk about D, the rise of the Quakers. Let's see how this movement progressed.

If you're following your outline on page 12, see the rise of the Quakers. Okay, if we use about the middle 1600s for the beginning of this movement, if we use that as a kind of a benchmark for the beginning of the movement, he actually brought conviction to the Fells in 1652, and because they were so important to kind of helping to set up Quakerism. If we use that as a benchmark, just go forward for just a minute to 1700.

So go about 50 years forward, 1700. By 1700, throughout England, Scotland, and Wales, it was very much focused in England, but by 1700, there were 100,000 Quakers. That is pretty phenomenal growth.

So, obviously, the Quaker's message is appealing. There's something about the Quaker message in life that is very appealing to people and something about people not being happy with their own kind of religious life, which is a more standard religious life in Anglicanism. So, about 100,000 Quakers by 1700.

This is pretty remarkable. Okay, another thing about this rise of the Quakers. It is very interesting that the Quakers appealed; the Quaker's message had an appeal to all kinds of people.

There are very wealthy people like the Fells, for example, and a guy by the name of William Penn that we'll talk about later on, but there were very wealthy people, wealthy, influential, upper-class people who became Quakers, but Quakerism also appealed to the lowest class, to the servant class as well, and also everything in the middle. Now, class distinctions we think of upper class, middle class, and lower class; there was some fluidity there in England in the 17th century and 18th century, but basically, it appealed to all classes. So, someone like William Penn could become a Quaker, and someone like a lowly servant in the home could become a Quaker as well.

Okay, now another thing we should take note of is the title of these people, who are called Quakers. Well, it's very interesting. The title was given to them because in their early services, you don't think of the Quakers this way.

I don't think so, but we'll find out when I ask you. However, in their early services, in the early movement of the Quakers, their religious services were pretty raucous. There was a lot of dancing, a lot of singing, and they were pretty raucous services. And so, when some Quakers were brought up before a judge, the judge said, you people are Quakers because you quake during your religious service, and everybody in England knows that you quake, and everybody thinks this is really scandalous.

So, they got the name Quaker attached to them, and it was given to them really as in a dishonorable way, but they took it as a badge of honor. So, they said, well, we don't mind calling ourselves Quakers. We don't mind that.

That wasn't originally why he called us Quakers, but we don't mind calling ourselves Quakers. But they preferred other terms, and the term they preferred the most, I mean, I've got lots of terms, children of the light, publishers of the truth, the people of God, and scorn called Quakers, and so forth. But there was one term that they preferred, and that was the term friends.

We are a society of friends, and that comes from the saying of Jesus, you are my friends if you do what I command you. So, they said, that's what we are. We are friends, and we are a society of friends.

Have any of you been to a Quaker meeting? By any chance, have you been to a Quaker meeting? Was it a pretty quiet meeting? What do you think of a Quaker meeting? That's what you think of. Okay. Let me put it another way.

When you think of Quaker worship, what do you think of today? Silence. You think of silence. I don't know about your experience, but still, in some Quaker churches, the men and the women will sit separately, but there's no ordained person in the Quaker religion, so every layperson is a minister in a sense.

So, anybody can stand up and give a word from God, who's illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Anybody can stand up and say a word, but the meeting will often be silent. I don't know if the meeting that you went to was a pretty silent meeting until someone stood up maybe and spoke.

An hour of silence, what they heard from the Lord. It was both men and women who spoke, so it was both men and women. So, an hour of silence, and then you stand up and speak.

I mean, so that's what you know of the Quaker meeting today. Some Quaker groups have taken on more of an evangelical role; they look like an evangelical church. If you walked in, there'd be singing, some hymns, some preaching, and so forth.

But that kind of silent worship, and then some people led by the Spirit to speak up, that's what you know of. Well, that wasn't originally true of the Quakers. That's the settling down part of the Quakers because they felt that those early meetings were a bit too raucous, and so forth.

And then they got this warning from the judge: you're called Quaker. So they didn't want to be known by that. So, there was this kind of settling down, and that's what you know of the Quakers today, no doubt about that.

Sometimes, there is a kind of fanaticism within the Quaker ranks, and that brings a bad light on the Quakers. So, I'm going to mention just one person, one Quaker person who was a bit fanatical, and his name was James Naylor. So here are James Naylor's dates.

Okay, so James Naylor. James Naylor had a bit of a tough life. James Naylor was preaching once in Bristol.

Now, he was the head of the Quakers in London, so this is an important name in Quaker history. But James Naylor was in Bristol, and he was in a Quaker community in Bristol. And he decided that he wanted to preach about Christ entering into the hearts of people because this inner light of Christ is very important.

So, what he did was, in Bristol, he reenacted the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. He thought it would be a good thing for Bristol to see this kind of reenactment. And so, he reenacted the whole triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on a donkey and so forth, and it brought scandal to the Quakers.

And he was arrested. Now poor James, I mean poor James Naylor, when he was arrested and put in prison, they did two things to him that kind of would discourage you from ever doing this again. They branded a bee on his forehead for a blasphemer.

Now that's not a good, you know, that can't be a good thing. So, he's got a bee on his forehead for being a blasphemer. And then what they did was they bored a hole in his tongue with a hot iron so that because the hole was bored in his tongue, he couldn't speak really clearly, speak this Quaker stuff.

And then they put him in prison. So, James Naylor really did suffer for the Quaker cause, no doubt about that. Now, there is kind of an ending to this story with James Naylor.

When James Naylor got out of prison, he did feel remorse for what he had done. He thought he had brought a bad reputation to the Quaker cause. So he was a bit remorseful for what he had done in his life.

What happens is because of events like this: Quakerism then settles down to this thing we talked about, and the settling down of Quakerism happens after some of these episodes. So, the Naylor episode caused Quakers really to become overcautious in the 18th century, no doubt about that. Okay, now, under the rise of the Quakers, I want to give some leading ideas of the Quakers, some ideas which coalesced and for which they became known.

So, we'll do it here. It's natural to do it here under the rise of the Quakers before we get Quakers coming to America. So here are some basic ideas. These are not in any order, from the most important idea to the least important idea.

These are just some thoughts about what the Quakers believed and taught and thought were important. Okay, the first one we've already talked about, and that is proclaiming the inner light of Christ. The central truth of the gospel is Christ, and the central experience of that is that every person can have the inner light of Christ.

Every single believer can have that inner light of Christ. And so that for them becomes a central truth, a central kind of message, a central kind of proclamation. So that's one idea of the Quakers.

The second idea of the Quakers is that they preferred the simplicity of the gospel message, the inner light of Christ, and the simplicity of the gospel message. They preferred the simplicity of the gospel message to a speculative message of judgment, the end of the world, or the second coming of Christ. They thought that side of the gospel was too much speculation.

Simplicity becomes the keyword for Quaker life and theology rather than speculation. And there were in the 17th century, there were a lot of interesting speculations about the second coming of Jesus, where this was going to happen, when it was going to happen, and so forth. So that's number two.

Okay, number three, that you're not going to be surprised by this, of course. They believed, like Roger Williams, in absolute religious freedom and religious liberty. Not just religious toleration but religious freedom.

People should be free to worship as they choose to worship. People should be free to be non-religious if they want to be. They should be free to be atheists if they want to be.

But there should be absolute religious freedom. There should never be an imposition of religion upon people by the state. So, total religious freedom, not just religious toleration.

It was important for the Quakers. Number four for the Quakers, of course, Quakers were pacifists. They rejected any participation in the military.

So, they were pacifists. And you might know that a bit about the Quakers even today. So, number five is the Quakers were one, and we have to give them credit for this.

But the Quakers were anti-slavery, both in England. When we come over to America, we'll have a long lecture on this later on in the course. But the Quakers were anti-slavery.

As a matter of fact, the first anti-slavery group in the world was founded by the Quakers. So the Quakers stood against slavery wherever it could be found. And I've got a good example of that.

This is another important Quaker name. His name is John Woolman. Long story short on John Woolman, John Woolman was a New Jersey Quaker.

And he preached the Quaker truths of the light of Christ and so forth. But he was also kind of the conscience of Quakers in New Jersey. And because some Quakers were starting to hold slaves, John Woolman was so totally against that.

And so Woolman was an anti-slavery crusader, first among his own people, among the Quakers, but then in America in general. He was seemingly, anyway, a very gentle person. So, he's got to figure out how he's going to express himself with this anti-slavery feeling and belief that he has.

How is he going to do that? So, the way he decided he would do it was, if I can't always preach it and teach it clearly, I'll do it by my actions. And so, when he was invited into people's homes for dinner, he went gladly and had dinner, and the slaves would serve dinner to everybody in these homes. And at the end of the meal, he'd call the slaves together, and he would pay them for their service.

A point to be made here is that these people should not be slaves. They have served us well, and they deserve to be paid for the labor they have given. So, he used those kinds of techniques to kind of get this kind of anti-slavery message that he held so strongly that many of the Quakers did as well.

Another thing about the Quakers is that these are just some ideas about the Quakers, but the Quakers were involved in missionary work. Some of the Quakers who came to America came here as missionaries, but then Quakers in America were missionaries to the Native Americans, even beginning in Rhode Island, because there were various Native American Indian tribes in Rhode Island. The Quakers in America began to reach out to the Native Americans and the Indians, so they were that too.

And then, finally, we've already mentioned this, but the simplicity of their worship services is what they became known for. So, the simplicity of the worship services. So when you think of the Quakers in relationship to Anglicanism of the 17th and 18th century in England, with its liturgy and all the liturgy of those services, the Quakers are the exact opposite of that.

Their services are very, very simple services. Now, one of the things that bothered the Puritans and the Anglicans in England, the Puritans in America, one of the things that bothered them so much about Quaker worship was, well, maybe there were two things, maybe there are three, but there are a few things. However, one thing that comes to mind here is that the Quakers were not practicing in terms of the sacraments.

So, the Quakers did not and do not practice the sacraments. So, these things that were so important to the religious life of Protestants, baptism and the Lord's Supper, the Quakers felt that these were spiritual realities and they didn't need to be

practiced in worship services. The Puritans were especially offended by that, that they didn't practice baptism in the Lord's Supper.

So, there were some kinds of religious practices that were problematic, of course. But those kinds of things, those kinds of ideas, get you a sense of who the Quakers were, what they believed, the simplicity of their theology, and the simplicity of their lives, which gives you a sense of who they are. Let me stop here for just a couple of minutes.

We've been going on for a bit here. We talked about Rhode Island, then George Fox, then the rise of the Quakers before we got them coming to America. Do you have any questions about that? That's a good question.

No, there were many other reasons, and we'll get to those reasons when we get to some of them. I've got a little part of this lecture on the theological reasons why the Puritans were against the Quakers. So that was just one reason that kind of came to mind as I was lecturing, but there were theological reasons that caused real problems for the Puritans. And so, when we get the Puritans coming to America, we'll find out why the Puritans started to hang them for these theological reasons.

Yes. Yes, right. We're going to bring them over now to America and see what happened when they started to try to import this into America.

But so far, we're talking basically about England, Scotland, and Wales, but primarily England was where their strength was. Something else about the Quakers? Anything about Rhode Island? Because we didn't stop and ask about Rhode Island. Anything about Rhode Island? Is there anything about George Fox himself or anything about the Quakers? Yeah.

Right. Well, he had a couple of real problems. One problem that he had was kind of a personal problem as well, but he opened up the book of Acts.

He opens up the early church. He finds out these great stories about these spirit-filled people and how God worked through them. He didn't feel that he had that experience, but he also didn't see that in the worship experiences of Anglicanism, which he knew in England.

So, he just didn't see that. So, that is both a personal problem and a problem with the church. Another problem you mentioned was what, again, in terms of the... Right.

Right. Right. Another problem that he had was that, of course, he went to these counselors who were mostly Anglican people, and he found out there were theological differences, but he couldn't seem to work through these differences.

So, he comes to a place in his life. Once he himself has worked the Holy Spirit in his life and he believes in the inner light of Christ, he comes to a place in his life where he says, I can't work through this in the established church. The established church doesn't understand this.

Also, the established church is controlled by the state. It's the state that is controlling the church. I don't want that.

I want to be free. So that's how he kind of launches out in freedom and liberty to preach the gospel as he understands it. Yeah.

A very important person in terms of the history of Christianity. And then we'll bring the Quakers over here to America and see what the influence was here. Right.

Right. They did not develop a hierarchy, and there is still no technical hierarchy within Quakerism. Each Quaker church and each Quaker assembly place is autonomous in and of themselves.

They did not have ordained ministers of the gospel. They took that priesthood of all believers to an extent that I think is stretching it too much anyway, that included preaching the gospel, teaching the gospel, and so forth, having the enlightenment of Christ.

And therefore, I can stand up and say anything. So, it's very unstructured, nonhierarchical, and very different from the Anglican church in the area in which it grew up. Yeah.

And that would still be true of Quakerism today. Do you know what Quaker College would come to mind? Which one? George Fox. George Fox University.

Have you heard of George Fox? Yeah. I think there's a couple more. Maybe.

What's that? Guilford. I'm not familiar with that. That is Quaker background, is it? Okay.

All right. Very interesting. Others that I'm not familiar with.

I know George Fox, but I want to say Swarthmore, but I'm not sure about that. I want to say Swarthmore, but I'm not absolutely sure. So, we'll cut that out of the tape.

We'll find out. We'll Google it. Other questions here.

Okay. Let's bring them over to America before I do. 10 10-second break because it's Friday.

You deserve 10 seconds on a Friday, and then we'll bring them to America. We will later. Not quite yet, but we will later.

Hey, Ted, I forgot to ask. Do you cut this off during these breaks? You don't. Okay.

You can edit my breaks. We'll find out. Okay.

Bless your hearts. 10 seconds. That's enough.

You're well-rested on a Friday. I hope you have a great weekend. Just be grateful you don't live in Washington, DC, because they're going to have about two feet of snow this weekend.

Two, two and a half feet of snow for Washington. Not so for us. Okay.

Let's bring the Quakers to America. Let's get the Quakers over here. Okay.

First of all, 1656. That is the first two women Quakers landed on the ship in Boston in 1656. The ship doesn't matter.

It happened to be called the Swallow. They land in Boston on the ship. They're here, I think, probably as missionaries.

I think they came to spread the Quaker cause. 1656. Now there was a bit of a problem when they came, however, and that is that the Puritan leaders in Boston didn't let them off the ship.

When the ship went back to England, the two women were on that ship heading back home again. They were not allowed to come to Boston. We'll see some of these theological reasons in just a minute.

So, they were kept on the ship, and off they went. So, okay. Now, eventually, Quakers are able to land in Boston, and maybe I suspect that some of them came into Boston just with other groups and a little bit under the radar screen.

But they were able to land in Boston. So, eventually, you start to have a little Quaker community in Boston. Now, the problem is that the Quakers are a real challenge to the Puritan exclusivity in Boston.

The Puritans had a hold on Boston, and they were a real challenge to Puritan exclusivity in Boston. Therefore, the only thing that they figured to do was the

Boston Puritans, and they decided to begin to hang Quakers on the Boston Common. So, we've already mentioned that.

We read that little devotional today of a Quaker, the last Quaker who was hanged on the Boston Common. All right. Now, what is going on? What are they thinking? I think we've already mentioned this in the course, but we really need to probably deal with it here.

What are the Puritans thinking when they hang people on the Boston Common? Well, what they're thinking, they're thinking in 17th-century terms. In 17th-century terms, nothing disrupted the social order like heresy. Heresy is a disruption of the social order.

And we are responsible for maintaining the cohesiveness of the social order. So, if we have to hang people on the Boston Common in order to do that, so be it because it's the social order.

Today, we call it the common good. That's a phrase we're familiar with, isn't it? The social order, the common good, we're responsible for maintaining that. And so, they are hanged, not just because they happen to believe certain things, but they're hanged to maintain the social order.

So, I know it's hard for us, you know, in the 21st century, to think in those terms and to think back to them. And we don't even talk about heresy anyway. So, we live with it every day.

We don't identify it. So I know that in the 21st century, it's hard to think in those terms, but you've got to put your mind back to the 17th century and understand what the Puritans are thinking in terms of social order and the common good. Now, they were hoping, of course, that this would curtail Quakers.

Once people saw Quakers being hanged on the Boston Common, they were hoping people would say, oh, that's not for me. I'm sorry. That never did happen.

A friend of mine used to tell the story about the 17th century in England; they used to hang pickpockets. That's pretty tough. I think that it's so tough hanging people's pickpockets, but they used to hang pickpockets.

But the joke was that, and all these crowds used to assemble, by the way, that was true in the Boston Common as well. I'm sorry to say this was a public event. So, when someone was being hanged, the public all came out, kind of like the first night.

The public all comes out to see the hanging. The joke was with the hanging of the pickpockets is while the pickpockets were being hanged, there were pickpockets in

the crowd picking the pockets of the people who were walking, the pickpockets being hanged. So, did it work? Did this hanging of the Quakers work in terms of maintaining the social order? And the answer to that is no, because Quakerism grew even in Boston, even after four people were hanged on the Boston Common.

So, things are happening there in the Boston Common with these Quakers. But okay, now we want to give now some theological reasons why the Puritans were so unhappy with the Quakers. We've given some general things about the Quakers, but now we want to give some theological reasons why the Puritans hung the Quakers to maintain the social order.

So okay, again, not in any necessary, most important, least important, but okay, here are some. Okay, number one, the Quakers tended to view the Bible as kind of an open book. You're learning more and more things about God and Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Bible, and especially, you're learning that Christ is the inner light.

And the Puritans saw the Bible in a more restricted way than that. They were nervous about this Quaker kind of experiential hermeneutics at work. They had seen that with Anne Hutchinson.

They were nervous about that and her antinomianism. So, they were nervous about the way the Quakers treated the Bible. And so that caused them problems.

And, of course, that would be theological for the Puritans. The second thing is, of course, we mentioned the other day that the Puritans believed in predestination. They believed in election.

Some people were elected to be saved. Some people were elected to be damned. And of course, to the Quakers, that's an anathema, the doctrine of predestination, because the Quakers felt that the light of Christ could come into the heart of any person.

Anybody could experience the inner light of Christ, not just anyone who's predestined. They didn't believe in predestination. A third thing that we mentioned has to do with church worship.

Quaker worship was extremely simple. There was no liturgy to Quaker worship, of course, and no ordained ministry and no practicing of the sacraments. Well, that bothered the Puritans.

Now, the Puritans didn't have a liturgy, so they got away from the liturgy from the Anglican worship. But they did have an ordained ministry. Remember, that's connected with vocation, the notion of vocation.

And of course, they practiced the sacraments because the sacraments are biblical. So the Puritans are really upset by this kind of simplicity to its extreme. And this is, of course, theological for them.

Another thing in terms of theology is that they felt that the Quakers placed much too much emphasis on experience. The Puritans were nervous about that. If you place all this emphasis upon experience, where is that going to lead you? Experiences come and go.

You need to trust in the sure word of God, which we can understand through the use of our mind. So, they were very nervous about this kind of experiential aspect of the Quakers. Finally, this became a theological tension between the Puritans and the Quakers.

The Quakers felt of themselves as missionaries. We've already mentioned that. The reason people started coming to America was that Quakers were out of missionary zeal, in a sense.

And for the Puritans who didn't like the Quakers, they really didn't like that. They didn't like the zeal of the Quakers, but they also didn't like the theology that prompted that zeal. Theology states that every person can have the inner light of Christ, so we need to reach every person with this message of the inner light.

So, they didn't; they disliked the missionary zeal, but they disliked the reason for the missionary zeal probably even more. So, the Quakers, that's why they hang four Quakers in the Boston Common, and that's why they kept suppressing the Quakers, and why Quakers finally headed down to Rhode Island. So that leads us to F, I'm sorry, that leads us to, oh no, we're still in E, we're still in E, the Quakers come to America.

So before we get talking about the Baptists, okay, Quakers come to America, but let's get them down to Rhode Island. Rhode Island became the refuge for the Quakers.

Rhode Island became the bastion for the Quakers. Were the Quakers understood? Yes. That they were pretty much, let's say, really, really free people of the eyes of the Spirit coming in? Yes, right, right.

And because they were so free, they were in this order of ministering. Right, right, right, right. And they didn't see this as biblical at all.

The Bible was the foundation for their authority. They didn't see this as biblical at all. They saw it only as experiential.

And then they were offended that if you're going to set yourself up as a religious denomination, where are your ministers? Why aren't you practicing baptism? Why aren't you giving the Lord's supper on Sunday? They were offended by the way the Quakers did things. And above all things, heresy is a challenge to the social order. So, heresy has to be dealt with very strongly.

So that's why you had the hanging of the Quakers. Yes, they use various phrases for it. But when Jesus said, I am the light of the world, they took that to mean that he also must be the light of the believers in the world, and so forth.

But for the Quakers, who ministers that knowledge that the light of Christ is in you? It's the Holy Spirit that does that. The Quakers were Trinitarian, so they weren't like the deists who were Unitarians. They were Trinitarian people.

But they emphasize this light of Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. That's the life of the believer. That's the transforming life of the believer for the Quakers.

That would be more true today than in this time. They are measured by the simplicity of their message, this inner light of Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. That's the simplicity of the message is what's important to them.

So, it would be truer today that Quakers might have a more defined theological position. Certainly, George Fox College probably reflects that kind of theology within their community. But in the time we're talking about, we're still talking about a very simple, and then you form a society in the town.

For instance, the Quakers come to Rhode Island. They form a society. They built a little building for themselves, and they came together to worship in Rhode Island.

But it's very simple. They come to Rhode Island, and they feel very free in Rhode Island. It's not like the Puritans in Boston came to Rhode Island.

Let me just give a couple of things here. 1672, a very important date in Quaker history in America 1672. 1672, George Fox comes to Rhode Island.

Pretty long trip for George. However, George Fox came to Rhode Island because Rhode Island is the concentration of Quakers in America. So, he came to Rhode Island to meet with the Quakers, and one author said he gave a new lease on life to Quakers all over New England when he came to Rhode Island.

So, George Fox is coming to, I don't know, to what? Strengthening the Quakers here in America and strengthening their understanding of who they are and what they're all about becomes very important. Okay, now, we can imagine Roger Williams is still alive. He and George Fox try to set up a meeting with each other.

Now, that would have been a very interesting meeting because Roger Williams despised the Quakers. He did not like these people at all. He thought they were really unsound people and certainly unsound theologically.

And so, I think maybe, I don't know, but maybe he really wanted to meet with George Fox, kind of straighten George out, bless his heart. So maybe this meeting, however, for reasons which I have no idea, the meeting never took place. So, George Fox and Roger Williams were there at the same time, but they never actually met each other, although it would have been interesting to know what they would have said to each other if they had met each other.

So, okay. Now, the Quaker, Rhode Island, becomes known as a very strong Quaker bastion. So let me fast forward about five generations from the time we're talking about, for George Fox, Roger Williams' time.

Let me fast forward to a name I don't have on my list. His name is Stephen Hopkins. I don't have that up on the list.

I should put him there. Stephen Hopkins. He's probably not on your syllabus list either.

So, let's fast forward to Stephen Hopkins. Just to show you how important the Quakers were in Rhode Island, Stephen Hopkins was the governor of Rhode Island during the Revolutionary War and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. So Stephen Hopkins, S-T-E-P-H-E-N-H-O-P-K-I-N-S.

So governor during the Revolutionary War and signer of the Declaration of Independence. You know what my next line is going to be, don't you? Stephen Hopkins was a very proud Quaker. So, it shows you how, in a few generations, the Quakers had been very dominant in life in Rhode Island.

So, he's a demonstration of how powerful the Quakers had become when you allowed this religious freedom when you allowed these people to be free in Rhode Island to worship as they pleased, to teach what they pleased. They become pretty strong with Stephen Hopkins. Actually, he was elected governor five times in Rhode Island.

So this is a pretty important Quaker person in Rhode Island and shows you how important the Quakers had become. Okay. So that's the decline.

That's when the Quakers came to America. Any questions about the Quakers coming to America? You wouldn't have wanted to be one of those two women on the first boat because they never got to go off the boat, never got to walk down the

gangplank and go to Faneuil Hall and have lunch. I mean, they just weren't allowed to do that.

So, I've got a couple of questions here. Go ahead. And what was the name of the ship? The Swallow.

Yeah. So, you don't have to remember any of that. Just a reminder that the Quakers tried to find a place in Boston, and the first two weren't allowed.

But then others began to come in. Quakers were pacifists. So, the Quakers were pacifists, and their service during the Revolutionary War was because they would not serve in the military; their service was a service of compassionate minding of the wounds of soldiers who were wounded and so forth.

So that was a service that they provided, but they wouldn't serve in, they wouldn't bear arms. So, yeah. Yeah.

Towards, right. That's a good point because I mentioned that when you go to a Quaker meeting, and someone stands up to speak a word from the Lord, for the Quakers, that could be a man or a woman because everyone has this inner light of Christ, both men and women, the Holy Spirit ministers to that.

And so, everyone has this opportunity to speak for the Lord, speak a word for the Lord in the Quaker meetings. They were egalitarian, the Quakers were, in terms of women and in a religious life. So, that bothered the Puritans because they were really bothered by Anne Hutchinson, who was not a Quaker, who was one of them in a sense.

But it really bothered them that they knew that women were actually speaking up in these Quaker meetings. Could this be possible? He had been the head of the Quakers in London, but then he went up to Bristol. But that sounds a little bit hierarchical, doesn't it? For me to say it that way.

He's the person who, you need somebody to build little meeting houses. Do you need somebody to say when the meetings are going to take place? And so, head in that way, in that very minimalistic way, he kind of took care of the Quakers in London in that way. But you're right.

Maybe that's not a good word to use because head sounds so kind of hierarchical, and that would not be true of the Quakers at all. But I always say, however, I put 10 people in a room for very long and you're going to, I'll show you eventually, I'll show you a hierarchy. I'll show you some leaders, and I'll show you some followers, and so forth.

So, I don't think you can ever get away from that. The next thing we want to do is talk about the Baptists in Rhode Island and then just a word about the continued history of the Baptists because it wasn't only the Quakers who came to Rhode Island, it was the Baptists as well. So now the question is, should we start talking about the Baptists now, or should we wait until Monday to talk about the Baptists? We'll wait until Monday to talk about the Baptists.

Bless your hearts. Have a good day. We'll see you. Have a good weekend.

This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 3 on Roger Williams and Religious Diversity in Rhode Island.