

Dr. Roger Green, American Christianity, Session 8, Religion and the American Revolution

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We're going to get started. I'm just going to say a couple of things before we start, and then we're going to get to our outline here. We've been talking about the founding fathers and about their religious understandings.

I tried to make the case the other day that they were deists, I think, most of them, the movers and shapers anyways and shakers. They were deists. They weren't what we might call evangelical Christians, but you need to push back on that.

You don't see it that way. If you understand the founding fathers in a different way, you need to talk about that. That's really very important, and we should have a discussion.

I'll be right with you, Aaron. One thing from the other day that maybe we didn't make clear enough is that there's no question. However, you look at the founding fathers and however you look at the documents and what the documents have to say, there's no question that there was a moral, ethical, Judeo-Christian framework to all of this. Now, they didn't use the language that the Puritans would have used if they were founding a country, or they didn't use the language that the Pilgrims or Roger Williams would have used if they were founding a country, but there's no doubt that there's a moral, ethical, Judeo-Christian framework and kind of foundation to all of this.

No question about that. Now, there have been attempts to kind of erode that moral, ethical framework in American life and culture. There's no doubt about that.

A famous theologian and church historian at the University of Chicago, Martin Marty, was kind of challenging. This was a few years ago, but he was kind of challenging what people were saying: oh, we don't really have a Judeo-Christian framework, foundation, and so forth, and what he said is, you would have to lobotomize the American people to get rid of that kind of Judeo-Christian framework in which we are living in our common life together. You'd have to lobotomize, and you'd have to cut off half their brain or all their brain to persuade them that there is no Judeo-Christian kind of foundation or life together, in a sense. There is that.

It's part of our culture. It's part of our civil religion. No doubt about that, and maybe we didn't stress that, or maybe I didn't stress it at all the other day, but that's kind of where we left off.

We're in the middle of this discussion, but Aaron, you had a question. Yeah. Okay, right.

A lot of these Christians would talk about how we need to return to one, so I was just curious about your opinion on whether that is true or what they're saying. Are they kind of referencing, or are they not? I think they're right. I mean, I think there is a Judeo-Christian foundation there that we have, and I'm not sure we need to turn back to it, but we need to have a lot more discussion about it, and it's like Martin Marty said, if you're going to try to throw that out, if you're going to try to pretend that you can erect some kind of a common good in America without really taking that into serious consideration and still being effective, you would have to lobotomize the American people, no doubt about that. If, however, they're looking back to the Revolutionary War and to what came out of it, in terms of the founding of the country and everything, if they're looking back to that as a very evangelical religious time and event, then I'd have to challenge them on that.

In fact, we'll talk about church attendance during the time of the Revolution; in some places, it took quite a dip because people were more interested in political events than political life and religious life. So, if they're looking back to some kind of golden era, and we used to have that, we don't have that anymore, I think that's worth a challenge and a discussion. So that's, you know, there we are in the middle of the conversation, so bless your hearts.

Okay, we'll journey on here. I'm on page 13 of the syllabus, if it helps, and we are down to lecture five, Religion in the American Revolution. We talked about deism; we talked about the founding fathers, and now we need to talk about C, the reaction of the churches.

So, the reaction of the churches, and I'm going to give an introduction to this, and then we're going to look at various churches that were really important during the time of the Revolutionary War and how they kind of set themselves up during that time. I'll look at the most important ones. Okay, now, one word I'm going to use in terms of this, in terms of this number one introduction, is the word religious freedom.

Religious freedom becomes the hallmark of what we're concerned with, Christianity in American public life, but religious freedom becomes the hallmark of this. Now, how did we achieve religious freedom? How did we, how did this come about as kind of the hallmark of American Christianity? Well, I'd like to mention a few things about that. So, and this is all by way of the number one introduction here.

Okay, the first thing that helped to grant religious freedom was something we've already said so many times, but it was the many, many religious groups now here by the time of the Revolution. There's a multiplicity of religious churches and a

multiplicity of religious denominations. So that meant that the multiplicity of religious denominations was really a check on any one denomination becoming kind of the state denomination.

So, with all these different denominations around and flourishing, many of them flourishing, that's a check on one becoming the dominant one. So that just not, it wasn't going to happen in American public life, and it didn't happen. So that's the first.

So, the second thing we've also kind of mentioned is the tremendous distance between the European churches and the New World. So, that great ocean separating the European churches from the New World meant that those European churches couldn't retain their stranglehold on the denominations in this New World. They just didn't have the ability or the power to do that.

So that's number two, which helps this religious freedom to kind of go along. So a third thing is the immensity of the continent in which is only just being discovered how immense this continent is that we're living on here. So, and that immensity as you're pushing westward, pushing south, that immensity meant that one denomination is not going to control what's happening as you're moving west or as you're moving south.

That would be an impossibility. Okay, another thing that allowed for this religious freedom is the real desire for economic prosperity in this world, in this New World. These people weren't just setting up a whole new kind of political life and culture.

They were also obviously setting up a new economy as well. Now, with that desire for a new economic life and a prosperous economic life as well, then religious differences were overlooked in the workforce. Everybody could join the workforce, and whether you're a religious person or a Christian person or a Jewish person or a non-Christian or belong to this denomination or that denomination, it didn't matter because there's kind of a common economic good that we're trying to achieve here in the New World.

And so, they were happy to kind of overlook kind of religious differences there. Another thing that's happening in terms of this religious freedom is that there is more toleration in England, which controls some of these lands. There was more tolerance in England that was happening, which is helpful because the British had such control still.

Now, obviously, finally, some of you may be of British ancestry. I am, too, but we finally threw them out, of course. But because of that, so here's an example.

When we were hanging Puritans on the Boston Common, part of the reason that the Puritans stopped hanging Puritans in the Boston Common was because of King Charles II. Under King Charles II, there was inaugurated in England called an Act of Toleration. And basically, King Charles II said, we're not going to have this going on anymore in our colonies.

Now, of course, that predated this whole American Revolutionary War. But there is this growing kind of toleration that comes into American public life as well. Another thing that helped this religious freedom was groups from what we call the left wing of the Reformation and the left wing of the Puritans.

Okay. And so, they are flourishing here. Now, what do we mean when we talk about the left wing of the Reformation or the left wing of the Puritans, what do we mean when we say that? What we mean is the more radical side of the Reformation or the more radical side of the Puritan life and Puritan religion.

So, people on the left wing of the Reformation would have been people, maybe; we've already mentioned the German Dunkers. Remember the Dunkers? They were a denomination on the left wing of the Reformation or the Mennonites. We haven't really talked about the Mennonites yet, but they were on the left wing of the Reformation.

They were on the more radical wing of the Reformation. The more radical wing of the Puritans would have been people like the Quakers and the Baptists. They're taking some Puritan theology, but they're radicalizing it, aren't they? So this left wing of the Reformation and the left wing of Puritan life, that's having an effect on American religious freedom as well because these people are beginning to flourish.

Now, the Quakers never thought they'd flourish. The first two women were sent home. Then, four men and women were hanged on the Boston Common.

So, they probably had some doubts that they were ever going to flourish in this new world, but actually, they really did flourish in Rhode Island and then Pennsylvania, which became... What's the nickname for Pennsylvania? What do we call Pennsylvania? Anybody? Pennsylvania? We call it the Quaker state, Pennsylvania, the Quaker state. Did you ever hear that before? The Quaker State? Okay. So, it's the Quaker state.

So, there it is. So, anyway, there's a lot of flourishing going on here. So, okay.

Another thing is religious freedom; granting this religious freedom is a clear demonstration that the state can be orderly. The state can be compassionate. The state can be just and still allow religious freedom.

So, you don't need religious uniformity for the state to be the kind of state that these people are trying to create. You don't need that. You don't have to have that.

You can create an orderly state. You can create an orderly society. You can create a just society, a compassionate society without religious domination by one religious group.

Then, we've also mentioned the business of religious freedom. We've also mentioned the first great awakening. The first great awakening helped to kind of set the groundwork, a framework for this religious freedom because people in the first great awakening were people who believed in the separation of church and state, whether from an Anglican point of view or from a Dutch reform point of view or congregational point of view, but they did believe that in the separation of church and state.

So, the first great awakening held some real promise for the American Revolution. So, okay. And then, there is just one more thing by way of introduction: we are coming into the 18th century.

This is the age of reason, the age of rationality. Certainly, deism is constructed in that age of reason. So, we're coming into a very rational time here, a very reasonable time, the reasonableness of Christianity, that kind of thing.

And so that reasonableness of Christianity, those people believe firmly in absolute religious freedom. They believed in religious liberty. And so they are real proponents of religious liberty, not necessarily from opening the Bible, but they're proponents of religious liberty from a reasonable point of view, a rational point of view.

That's how civilized people live together by allowing for this religious freedom rather than religious conformity. So that's the first thing in terms of the reaction of the churches, that way of introduction, religious freedom is really very important. What I'm going to do now is I'm going to look at some churches that really flourished, I guess you could say, a bit and had an interesting life during the time of the revolution.

So, let's choose Anglicanism first because Anglicanism was obviously pretty important. And so, what happens with Anglicanism? Okay. I choose Anglicanism because Anglicanism, while it was critical and important, and it helped to shape the thinking of so many of the people we've talked about, both political and religious, Anglicanism suffered the most as a result of the American Revolution.

And you're not surprised by that. So, okay. Let me give you a couple of statistics here.

By the end of the Revolutionary War, it's estimated that about 70,000 Anglicans went back home because they were British. They were loyal British subjects. So, it's estimated about 70,000 Anglicans left here and went back home.

It is estimated that at the end of the Revolutionary War, there were only about 10 Anglican priests left in all of the colonies. Now, I know churches just locally that have more than 10 Anglican priests in one church. So this was really, really devastating for the Anglican church, the Anglican community, the Anglican church, the Anglican leadership really was hurting.

It was hurting so much that it actually changed the name of the denomination. The name of the denomination, of course, was Anglican or Church of England because that's what came over here. They changed the name from Anglican or Church of England.

They changed it to the Protestant Episcopal Church. So, they're using the word Episcopal to kind of demonstrate church polity, kind of the hierarchy, the episcopacy of the Anglican church. But it became known as the Protestant Episcopal Church and, of course, was shortened for a lot of people who just called it the Episcopal Church.

So that shows you how a change had taken place in this Anglican community that they felt they would actually have to change the name because the word Anglican would be detrimental if they kept that term. Or if they kept the term Church of England right after we had won the Revolutionary War and thrown them out, that wouldn't be good either. So, they changed the name to that.

Do they still have ties with the Archbishop of Canterbury? They still have ties with the Archbishop of Canterbury. That's a good question, because we need to remember in Anglican church polity, the Archbishop of Canterbury is not like the Pope. The Pope actually, you know, kind of rules the Roman Catholic Church worldwide.

However, the Archbishop of Canterbury is more one among equals who doesn't rule the Anglican church but helps the Anglican church in the various Anglican communities and so forth, which are connected. So yes, the Anglican churches, the Episcopal churches that were left still have ties to the Archbishop of Canterbury. But there aren't many Anglicans left, and there aren't many priests left.

So, that becomes problematic. Episcopal comes from just the way of government, the episcopacy, the hierarchy. How they govern their church.

Church polity, they felt that that would be a good term to use that would kind of define what the church is all about. What they didn't want was Anglican or Church of England. Okay, so the Anglican church.

All right, now, the people who are left have to have a bishop. They've got to have someone to run the Episcopal church that's left. The person that they chose was Samuel Seabury.

So, Samuel Seabury is really the first bishop of the Episcopal Church in America. Now, he needs to go back to Europe to be ordained to receive his ordination, and he does that. But he is ordained, he is consecrated, and he comes here as the first Episcopal church, so as the first Episcopal church leader.

So now he decides, Samuel Seabury decides that they need to have a convention. They needed to bring together, after the Revolutionary War, the Episcopalians in a convention to try to sort out where they were going to go in the future. So that convention was held in 1785.

In 1785, the first convention of the Episcopal church in America. Samuel Seabury is the bishop, and he's the one in charge. Now, take a guess on where they held this.

I don't know where they held their first convention, and you might. Does anybody want to take a guess? Philadelphia. Philadelphia seemed to be the convention city of choice. I mean, remember the Baptists, the Association, and the Presbyterians? So it was with the Anglicans, or with the Episcopalians, they were there.

Now, they knew that in order to grow and develop, they would need more leadership. So, they chose two other people, and they were very important to the Episcopal church history. They chose two other people to help Samuel Seabury in leadership.

They chose a man by the name of William White, and he became the Bishop of Pennsylvania. No small district, of course, but small in terms of numbers of Episcopalians, but large in terms of district, large in terms of, you know, land mass. And they chose a fellow by the name of Samuel Provoost as the Bishop of New York.

Now, obviously, this is a Dutch name. And I, to be honest with you, I've never looked at the background of Samuel Provoost, but it'd be interesting to do on your computers, but not right now. So, but he, you know, obviously he's a Dutch name.

So I wonder if he had had a Dutch Reformed background and so forth, but he became the Bishop of New York. So, okay. So there, what they have to do now, these bishops have to, they have to kind of bring together the Episcopal church in America.

They've got to kind of forge the Episcopal church. They've got to kind of shape it. Okay.

So, three things become important for them as they try to shape the American Episcopal church. There are three things that become pretty critical for them. Okay.

Number one, they said very much in keeping now with the American spirit, but they said at our general conventions, when we come together in a general convention of the church, we're going to have not only priests coming together, we're going to have lay people coming together for that as well. So that was first. In America, when we have our general conventions, it's going to be the priests and lay people coming together to make decisions for the future of the church.

Now that you, you're not surprised by that. This is a very, you know, we've just attained political freedom and, and religion. We have religious freedom.

And so, you certainly want that to be true in the life of the church as well. Okay. Number two, and I don't have examples of this, but number two, the prayer book has to be redone just a bit to meet the American needs.

So, American Episcopalians are not going to pray for the King of England or the Queen of England. They just aren't, you know, we're in a different world here and a different reality. So you've got to change the book of common prayer to meet the needs of the American, of this new America.

So they kind of work on that in terms of their worship. So, okay. And number three, they decided there were differences of opinion among Episcopalians about the war.

And there were still some Episcopalians who were anti-British. There were some Episcopalians who were pro-revolutionary war people around. Okay.

What the bishops decide is we can't have this anymore. What we have to do is the war's over. It's been decided.

This is a new nation. Whether you agree with the Revolutionary War or disagree with it, we've got to come together in unity here. We've got to find a common voice here for American Episcopalians.

So, there was a lot of healing that was done after the Revolutionary War among Episcopalians. So, the Anglican church suffered a great deal, but it came out of it. And people like Seabury and White and Provost are the ones who are helping to, I don't know, bring it together, you know, and identify it.

Are there any questions about the Anglicans? Any questions about the Anglican church, now the Protestant Episcopal church? Yeah, Porter? You said Seabury had to go back to Britain to be ordained. Yes. Is that still true for the Episcopal church? No,

because now, when he was ordained and became bishop, he could ordain White and Provost.

So, in America, in the Episcopal Church, a bishop ordains the priest. Now, the bishop is representing the Archbishop of Canterbury, but the bishop ordains the priest. So now that we've got bishops, we're okay, they would say.

Yeah. Yeah, Nikki? You said that the Pope is separate from the Anglican church. Right.

But are they also on the same page? No, the Pope is not a figure. The Anglican church is completely separate from the Roman Catholic church in terms of hierarchy. In terms of how to run the church, in a sense, in the Roman Catholic church, the Pope runs the Roman Catholic church.

I mean, obviously, he's got help, but that's not so in the Anglican church or the Episcopal church. The Archbishop of Canterbury does not run American Episcopalians or Americans now. Now, we have a slightly different reality here because some of you may belong to that.

I don't know what your backgrounds are, but in America, we now have a contingent of Episcopalians who have left the Episcopalian church, and in order to identify themselves, they are calling themselves the Anglican church. So, right now, we have Anglican churches again in America, but originally, because of the Revolutionary War, the name was changed to the Episcopal church. But within the last, what, 10, 15, maybe 20 years, we now have Anglican churches again in America.

But whether it's Anglican or Episcopal, they are not kind of ruled by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop of Canterbury can, the pastor is the head pastor in a sense, can help them, encourage them to do certain things and so forth, but there's no, the Archbishop of Canterbury doesn't have a political arm as the Pope does. Yeah.

Yeah, Matt. I'm sorry. Yes.

Right. There is the same thing in terms of trying to set up your church by identifying it, not by Church of England, which would be offensive to folks in Scotland, or there's, unless you call yourself the Church of Ireland, for example, people. So, for the same reason, I do not want to identify with the Anglican or English.

See what I mean? So, there's a separation there. So yeah, in America, they did the same; they did that as well. Something else here? Okay.

So that's Anglicanism. That's how they reacted to the church. Now, we haven't talked a lot about the Roman Catholic Church, so this is a good place to begin talking about it.

So, okay. The first thing we want to say about the Roman Catholic Church is that at the time of the American Revolution, they are a very, very, very tiny minority. There are some Roman Catholics, but they're in a tiny minority.

However, their place in public life was improved for two reasons. So the place that Roman Catholics had in the public life, the civil life of American life, was improved for two reasons. Number one, it was improved because of this atmosphere of religious freedom or religious liberty.

So if we're going to be religious, if we're going to really believe in religious liberty, religious freedom in America, we've got to allow Roman Catholics to flourish. We can't suppress Roman Catholics. Number two, there were Roman Catholics who served in the Revolutionary War, who fought in the Revolution, and who helped to throw out England.

And they were very patriotic people. They were seen as very patriotic people, and so people accepted them for that reason and gladly accepted their help in fighting the Revolution. So, those two things caused Roman Catholics to find a tiny but important foothold in American public life.

So, that is kind of where it all starts. Okay. After the Revolutionary War, there's got to be someone who is going to lead the Catholics.

There's got to be someone who's going to kind of pull the Roman Catholics together here. Okay. So, the person who did that was a man by the name of John Carroll.

John Carroll becomes the Roman Catholic leader in America, the first Roman Catholic leader in America. All right. Now, he, John Carroll, is a bishop.

He eventually became a bishop in Baltimore, Maryland. Remember, Maryland wasn't founded by Roman Catholics, but remember, there were a lot of Roman Catholics who came over to Maryland because Maryland became a kind of refuge for Roman Catholics. So John Carroll becomes a leader there.

Okay. John Carroll, no, he's a priest, and then he is ordained as a bishop and then eventually becomes an archbishop. So he becomes the leader there.

Okay. Now, what we're going to do here, this is, I just like to do this for fun, but what we're going to do here is just, we're going to guess, we're going to take a guess, and then I got a little story to tell you, but we're going to take a guess. What do you think

were the most important Roman Catholic cities in America at this early stage, right after the Revolution in the 1780s and 1790s? What would be the most important Roman Catholic city where there would eventually be an archbishop? That is someone really running the show.

Well, what would that be? That would be, I'm going to, that would be Baltimore. That would be Baltimore. Here we go.

That would be Baltimore, Maryland, where there is an archbishop. Okay. So far, so good.

What about other cities? New York would be another one. And there would be a bishop in New York eventually. There were a lot of Catholics in New York, so that would be important.

Okay. Another city? Philadelphia and Boston. Boston and Philadelphia would also be very important cities where there would be bishops.

Now Boston has a very interesting history in Roman Catholicism, which we'll get into when we get into the 19th century. But there is one more place that was very important in this, you know, 1780s, 1790s, in terms of kind of the Roman Catholic Church and running the Roman Catholic Church. I wonder if any of you are going to guess this place, this final place.

Let's see if we can get a couple of guesses, Aaron. No, but that's a good guess. Somebody else? An actual town? Anybody? Yeah.

That's a good guess, but no, that's not quite right. So, anybody else? We'll take one more guess. Does anybody have a guess?

Wenham, Massachusetts? No, not Wenham, Massachusetts. Well, it happens to be, you're going to, you know, I've got a story actually about this I'm going to tell you so that you can take your little break while I'm talking. It happens to be Bardstown, Kentucky.

Bardstown, Kentucky. So close. There was a bishop in Bardstown, Kentucky.

That's the first diocese of the West. Now, notice the bishop was in control of the Roman Catholic Church from the Great Lakes to the Deep South. Just imagine this.

That's a lot of land to cover. And from the Allegheny Mountains to the Mississippi. Bardstown was chosen as the capital because it was in the middle of that, kind of in the center of that land mass.

So, this poor bishop in Bardstown, Kentucky, he's got to travel from the Great Lakes down south. He's got to travel from the Allegheny Mountains out to the Mississippi River. That's pretty much half the continent that comes under his jurisdiction.

So that's a lot of land. But I want to, but I'm going to. Actually, I'm going to tell you a story about this. So there it is.

Here's my story about Bardstown, Kentucky. And you can rest while I'm telling my story. In Bardstown, I went to Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.

Right in the middle of Kentucky, near Lexington, Kentucky. And there is the largest Trappist monastery in the world, which happens to be in Bardstown, Kentucky. It was not far from where I went to the seminary.

It's the Abbey of Gethsemane. And so what happened was my church history professor used to take us on retreats. He'd take his class on a retreat to the Abbey of Gethsemane.

And you might know the Abbey of Gethsemane if you've heard of Thomas Merton. Because Thomas Merton, and if you haven't read anything by Thomas Merton, there's something for your reading list for the summer. The Seven-Story Mountain and other things.

But anyway, Thomas Merton was a monk at the Abbey of Gethsemane, right in the middle of Kentucky, not far. So, my quick story, while you're just kind of resting here, is that we went on a retreat on a Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday to the Abbey of Gethsemane. Now, only men can visit there, so only the males in the class are able to go with a professor.

The Trappists are sworn to poverty, and they're sworn to obedience of the Abbot, and they're sworn to chastity as well. And then they have a standard rule of absolute silence, which we found fascinating. Now, the Abbot obviously gave permission to some of the monks to speak with us because we were there to talk about theology, Protestant theology versus Catholic theology.

So, the Abbot was there, just told some of the monks, I'm assigning you to this group as they come and everything. But the first thing the monks did was show us around, and so poverty, you walked, each monk had a little cell, and there was one bed and one chair, and over the bed was a little shelf with just a few kinds of personal things on it. The chastity is that once they take their final vows, they never see another woman again in their lifetime, so they never see their mother, aunts, sisters, and everything else.

Once they take the final vows, poverty, and chastity, but then obedience to the Abbot, absolute obedience to the Abbot. They are a silent order, which is very interesting. So, they do not speak; they have seven watches a day where they sing the great Gregorian chants, but they do not carry on conversation in absolute silent order, except for the ones who are given permission to speak to us.

I'll never forget, long story short, but we arrived, it's a gorgeous built, gorgeous monastery, but I'll never forget when we arrived on a Friday night, we arrived, and it was pouring rain out, and dark and stormy and rain and thunderclouds and lightning and everything. So we arrived in this beautiful, gorgeous monastery, and the monk showed us each to our own room. We each had our own little separate single room.

And I remember I was in my room and I just started to unpack a few things, and I happened to look over at the door to the room, which was closed, of course, but the door between the floor and the beginning of the door, there was about maybe a couple inches space. So, I happened to look over, and I saw someone standing outside my room. And all I could think of was murder in the monastery.

Is it my time? My family won't even know I'm here, so they'll never find me here. So, wow, I thought, oh, this is interesting. So anyway, we got to sleep, and then the next morning, we didn't get up; they got up at two in the morning. We didn't quite get up at two o'clock, but we got up at five.

By the time we got up, they had already done a lot of chores, and they had already had a mass. They had already had their breakfast and everything by the time they got us up. So, I started to ask my fellow companions about this experience, and they said, oh, we had the same experience, too; we noticed someone was standing outside our door. And so, we asked the monk what that is all about. And I think, what a lovely lesson in hospitality because when they have visitors in the monastery, they put the name of the visitor on the door, and then all night long, a monk goes from door to door and prays for the person in that room by name, and then just keeps a vigil the whole night.

So, we were never alone, we were always kind of encircled by prayer all night long in that monastery as the monk kept coming back all night long to pray for me and for each of us. I thought that was a lovely thing. But so then we had a weekend, and it was a very, very fascinating weekend.

But who would ever guess that Bardstown, Kentucky would be your guess about one of the most important bishoprics of the Roman Catholic Church during this time? That's a name you probably never would come up with if we had kept asking you, where do you think it was? Nevertheless, that's my Bardstown, Kentucky story and my monastery story. Okay, so that's the Roman Catholic Church, and the Roman Catholic Church is getting kind of established here. Okay, are there any questions

about Anglicanism, now the Episcopal Church, or about the Roman Catholic Church? Any questions there? Okay, for the third on your list, I'll give you a break. Take a five-second break, and then we'll do the third on American Methodism and find out what's happening in American Methodism.

Okay, when we talk about American Methodism, we need to begin with a kind of, I don't want to say, the founder of Methodism because he wasn't, but we do need to begin with John Wesley. So here is John Wesley, and that's a picture of Wesley down there in case you didn't know, but there he is, 1703 to 1791. So, long story short, I'm not going to give you any kind of biography of Wesley because he visited America only once.

We're going to focus on what happened in America, but long story short, John Wesley was an Anglican priest from Oxford. He did have one missionary journey to America and Georgia, but he wasn't there very long. So, his whole ministry, lifelong ministry, really was in England, back in England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, places like that.

Long story short, what John Wesley discovered is that he's an Anglican priest, so he's ordained. He's ordained in the Anglican ministry. What he discovered in the Anglican church was very appalling to him when he became a priest.

He found that Anglicans, once they were baptized or came into the church, he found that 30 years later, 40 years later, 50 years later, these people knew nothing more about the Bible, nothing more about Jesus, nothing more about religion than the day they were converted or confirmed or came into the Anglican church. He was really appalled by this, that it seemed to him that religion, Christianity, should be a growth in God's grace. It should be a wonderful kind of exercise in growing in the grace of God, and Matthew 22 became one of his favorite texts.

You should love God and love your neighbor. And that expression, that very rich expression of loving God and loving your neighbor should help you with your tremendous growth in holiness. And so, Wesley began to preach this message.

He began to preach the message, and then, for 53 years, there was the Wesleyan revival that took place in England, 53 years. So, it was going on at the same time as our first great awakening. There was some parallel there.

And part of the thing that helped the revival so much were the hymns of his brother Charles, Charles Wesley. Charles Wesley wrote 6,000 hymns in his lifetime. There were years when he was writing a hymn every day of his life.

And you would know some of the that helped to kind of sustain the movement in a sense. Love divine all loves excelling, or can it be that I should gain an interest in the savior's love and so forth? So, hark the herald angels sing.

So, we're not going to sing, but that's okay. But so the revival was very successful. Now, Methodism was a movement to bring reform to the Anglican Church.

So, Methodism was not a separate denomination. It was a movement to reform the Anglican Church and bring new life to the Anglican Church. In that way, you can say that John Wesley was the founder of Methodism.

He was, in that sense, the founder of Methodism. But he wasn't the founder of a new denomination. That will come later.

Now, the term Methodism came when John Charles Wesley and George Whitfield remembered Whitfield was from Oxford as well. But when they were in Oxford, the term came because they were students there, and they used to get together not only to study, although that's the original reason why they came together. They came together to study first, but then it evolved into a study of the scriptures and prayer and ministering to poor people in Oxford.

It evolved into that. And so it got a name of derision by the other students. The other students called these people Methodists.

They're living methodically. They're praying methodically. They're studying the Bible methodically.

So they're Methodists. So they took it as a badge of honor. And they said, yes, we are Methodists.

And so that's the term they took for their renewal movements. Remember the term Quaker. The term Quaker was originally a derisive term, which they said, well, we'll take that term Quaker for ourselves as well as other terms.

So that's how Methodism got going. Now, before the Revolutionary War began, John Wesley sent eight Methodist missionaries over to the colonies before the beginning of the Revolutionary War. So, eight of them came over to the colonies, and they were to bring renewal to the Anglican churches.

But if it so happened that they also had the opportunity to preach to other people and win people for Jesus and so forth, that would also be what they would do as well. They were largely itinerant people who came over, like John Wesley. Now, you don't know the name of all eight who came over, but the most important name of the person, the most important missionary to come over was Francis Asbury.

So, here's the name Francis Asbury. And if any of you know anything about Asbury College or my alma mater, Asbury Theological Seminary, named after Francis Asbury. So why is he the most important to come over before the war? What is going on here with Francis Asbury? He's the most important because he's the only one who stayed here.

All seven other missionaries returned home because they disagreed with the revolution that was going on here, as by the way, as did John Wesley. John Wesley thought it was appalling that we were trying to overthrow England by force. He found that to be rather appalling.

So, one person stays, and that person is Francis Asbury. So Francis Asbury is true to his Methodist roots, and after the Revolutionary War, he still tries to help the Anglicans who were left. There weren't many, of course, but he still found himself preaching the gospel to whosoever as well.

So, Francis Asbury really became the itinerant minister of Methodism in America, just like John Wesley had become the itinerant minister in England. Okay. Now, one thing happened during the Methodist revival in England, and you tell me why this shouldn't be happening.

One thing that happened in the Methodist revival in England is that John Wesley started to use lay preachers in his Methodist movement. All right. That's a little iffy using lay preachers, but also John Wesley begins to ordain priests to minister in England to the Methodists who were trying to bring revival to the Anglican church, began to ordain priests.

Okay. Now, what's wrong with that picture? Who's, what's wrong with that picture? John Wesley's a priest himself. He's a presbyter.

He's a priest. What's wrong with that picture? Right. He takes upon himself the office, in a sense, the work of a bishop because only the bishop can ordain priests to the ministry.

John Wesley's rebuttal to that was, well, when I opened my Bible, I didn't see any difference between a bishop and a presbyter. A bishop is a priest. A priest is a bishop.

He didn't see any difference, so he thought he was right to do that, so he didn't have any problem doing that. That becomes a point of contention, although they never actually threw him out from the Anglican, from the Church of England. They never actually did.

He died an Anglican priest, so they never threw him out. Okay. Now, John Wesley knows what he has to do with these American Methodists; however, he's got to give; he's got to have someone over there who's also ordained.

He's got to have someone over there that the Methodists will look up to as an ordained leader of the gospel. Francis Asbury was a layperson, so what John Wesley did was send over a very important Methodist from England, Thomas Coke. Now, Thomas Coke was already ordained.

He's a priest in the Anglican Church in England, and Thomas Coke is sent over to America with the express purpose of ordaining Francis Asbury to the Christian ministry. So that's his job. Now, remember, Thomas Coke isn't a bishop either, but Wesley's having this kind of very contentious argument with the Anglican Church about who gets a right to ordain, who's a bishop, and so forth.

So Thomas Coke came over at the behest of Wesley, and long story short, he ordained Francis Asbury to the ministry on December 24, 1784. This is called the Christmas Conference because it was Christmas Eve when Francis Asbury was ordained. The Christmas Conference was held in Baltimore, Maryland because Baltimore had become the headquarters of the Methodist movement in the colonies. Okay, so now, if you are ever on the campus of Asbury College or Asbury Theological Seminary, this is a picture. It didn't turn out very well, but I just got this off Google. This is a picture of that Christmas Conference, and this is a picture of Thomas Coke in his white Anglican robes and laying hands, as well as other ministers laying hands on Francis Asbury in Baltimore, Maryland in 1784.

So, this was the beginning of Methodism really officially in America. Okay, now, long story short, Methodism will not break off from Anglicanism, the Church of England, or the Episcopal Church. It will not make the break until after John Wesley's death.

When John Wesley died in 1791, then you started to get a lot of Methodist denominations. Some of you may be Methodists here, but when John Wesley died in 1791, you started to get the Methodist denominations, and you started to get Methodist denominations, even in America. Now, part of that long story is Coke and Bishop in America Coke and Bishop; because of the independence of the American spirit, it seemed to John Wesley like they were starting a church over here.

He was a little nervous after Francis Asbury was ordained. John Wesley was a bit nervous about what these people were doing, and lo and behold, to give John Wesley kind of a heart attack, they even started to call themselves bishops. Coke and Asbury started to call themselves bishops.

If you call yourself bishop, it sounds like you've got a different church in your hands. I don't know what's happening over there in America. So, he called them home, told

them to come home, and of course, they said, no thanks, we'll stay here, thank you very much.

So, Methodism, but technically, Methodist denominations don't begin until after 1791. So that's how Methodism kind of got through the Revolutionary War period, with Francis Asbury, Thomas Coke, and others. But now, when you push Methodism, Methodism is still pretty small in the colonies, but Methodism will grow strongly in the next century.

So that's the story of Methodism. So that's very, very important. Okay, so now we've got three.

We've got the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and we've got American Methodism. So, do you have any questions about those three denominations, how they fared, how they made it through, how they maneuvered things and worked through things to get themselves through the Revolutionary War period? Okay, Wednesday, books, notes, but mainly, I mean, Friday, books, notes. We'll mainly dwell on our books, concentrate on our books, and we'll do some learning together.

There'll be no lecturing on Friday. It's all just inductive. Have a good day. See you on Friday.