

Lecture 6 Protestant Denominations, Beliefs, and Rituals

Introduction: *How did we get so many Christian groups in the United States?*

Religions: *Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism*

1. *some* terms made up by 18th/ 19th century Christians)
2. difficulty with religions in local areas—Is there “Navahoism”?
3. Christian “denominations”

Denomination: **Denomination:** An association or fellowship of **congregations** with a religion that have the same beliefs or creed, engage in similar practices and cooperate with each other to develop and maintain shared enterprises. Denominations share a past history, common beliefs and rituals with institutions like schools and seminaries.

Congregation: small, individual community of believers who meet to worship. A ward is a congregation. A parish is a congregation

I. Medieval West

- A. Reform traditions
 1. Monastic orders
 2. Catholic humanism
 - a) Examination of scriptures in original languages, to the sources
 - b) Critical reflection on traditions, “abuses”

II. Reformation and Protestant Denominations

A. Lutherans (Lutheranism)

1. Key name: **Martin Luther** (1483-1546)
 - a) Reformer—German priest, Hebrew scholar
 - b) 1521 Excommunicated, breaking rather than reforming
2. takes root in Germany and Scandinavia, followers to US
 - a) “Evangelisch Kirche”
 - b) ethnic Lutheran divisions
 - c) unification in 1960s as ethnic differences disappear
3. **Primacy of Faith**
 - a) Even with sacraments and mortification still felt anxious
 - b) God gives people do not create
 - c) Faith produces ethics, belief then behavior
 - d) Faith not merely belief in supernatural but total orientation
 - e) Emphasis on what one thinks—belief, trust, faith
4. Salvation rests not on person’s deeds but on God’s action
 - a) faith produces ethics, rituals, religious feelings
5. Liturgical traditions of Lutherans

- a) closer to Catholic in style
 - (1) formal prayers, importance of music
 - (2) vestments, decorations

B. Church of England

1. English Reformation
2. Henry VIII (1491-1547) and the problem of a male heir
 - a) Protestants in England by 1540s
 - b) Separating from power of Rome
 - c) Confiscating monastic lands and money
3. King as head of church
 - a) Religion looks very “Catholic”
 - (1) leaders are called “priests”
 - (2) importance of ritual
 - (3) “real presence” in Eucharist, the mass
 - b) **Anglican Communion**—Church of England (Church of Scotland, Church of Ireland, Church of India)
 - (1) When colonies gaining independence
 - (2) **Episcopalian**, “bishop structure” (from the Greek word *episcopos*)
 - (3) high/low church Episcopalians
4. Reforming Church of England
 - a) Reformed influence (below) creating “Puritans”
 - b) **Methodist Church**
 - (1) **John** (1703-1791) and **Charles Wesley** (1707-1788)
 - (2) more **piety, enthusiasm less ritual**
 - c) **Baptists**
 - (1) **Roger Williams**
 - (2) autonomy: congregational polity, freedom of conscience
 - (3) sharp separation of church and state
 - (4) community of the saved
 - d) Religious Society of the Friends (Quakers)
 - (1) **George Fox**
 - (2) **Priesthood of All Believers**
 - (a) important to all Protestants
 - (b) no mediator between self and God including ministers
 - (3) severe changes over 200 years
 - (4) aggressive preachers in early America
 - (5) inner light—men and women preaching; no authority structure
5. American divisions
 - a) Splits over theology and society
 - b) splits because of segregation
 - c) northern and southern attitudes toward slavery

- d) Southern Baptists, American Baptists
- e) Methodists unification (1968)

C. Reformed Tradition

1. “Reformed tradition”—reforming reformers
2. **Ulrich Zwingli** (1484-1531 and **John Calvin** (1509-1564)
3. Switzerland and France
 - a) weak number of converts in France
4. Breaking even more radically from Luther
 - a) Striving for spiritual security by what we do would not help, but only can be certain of God’s acceptance of us in spite of what we do
 - b) Everything that does not conform to biblical teaching does not command obedience
 - (1) focus on bible rather than sacraments
 - c) Political sphere should support and maintain correct religions
 - d) Only select few are chose by God for salvation
 - (1) Between individual and God
 - (2) Larger gap between the two
 - (3) Independent but also alone, anxiety producing
5. “Reform” movement spreads to England, Scotland
 - a) names come from church **polity**
 - b) “**non-conformists**” not conforming to Church of England
 - c) **Presbyterian Church** (Presbyterians):
 - (1) John Knox (1505-1572) Scot who studied under Calvin
 - (2) leadership: presbyters “elders”
 - d) **Congregational Church** (Congregationalists):
 - (1) Separatists—“Pilgrims” of Plymouth Colony Puritans of Massachusetts Bay
 - (2) United Church of Christ (1957)

D. Radical Reformation, “Anabaptist”

1. Most radical of reformers, **Radical Reformation**
2. Church only consists of true believers, others expelled and banned
 - a) No state church
 - b) Refusal to bare arms and to pay tithes to state
 - (1) Amish pacifism cf. shooting
 - c) Sharing wealth and resources
 - d) Bible only, more literally
 - (1) adult baptism
 - (2) First **conversion**, then **baptism**
 - e) Viciously persecuted, withdrawal from society
3. Groups named after their founders
 - a) Simon Menno—**Mennonites, Amish**
 - b) Jacob Hutter—Hutterities
4. Immigration to US to preserve society

- a) Outside of their communities there is no salvation

III. Other Streams

- A. New Revelations--Religions founded in the United States not tracing themselves to European Protestantism
 - 1. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witness, Seventh-day Adventists, Christian Science
 - 2. Scriptures in addition to Bible
 - a) Book of Mormon
 - (1) Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
 - b) Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures
 - (1) Christian Science
 - 3. Continual Fragmentation
 - a) Community of Christ formerly Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS)
 - b) FLDS (Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints)
 - c) C

IV. Conclusion

- A. Continual fragmentation—creation of denominations
- B. Creative innovation
- C. Arrogance and violence
- D. Shaping religious identities until mid-20th century, still important for some