



RELIGION IN AMERICA

Colonial Foundations

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Center for the Study of the American Constitution
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RELIGION MATTERS

But in profoundly different ways for different people



Historians matter

... and I'm not just being self-serving

“To the Pulpit, the *Puritan Pulpit*, we owe the moral force which won our independence.”

~John Wingate Thornton

“It has seldom been possible, much less wise, to assess American history before the Civil War without taking religion seriously.”

~Jon Butler

Religious Narrative

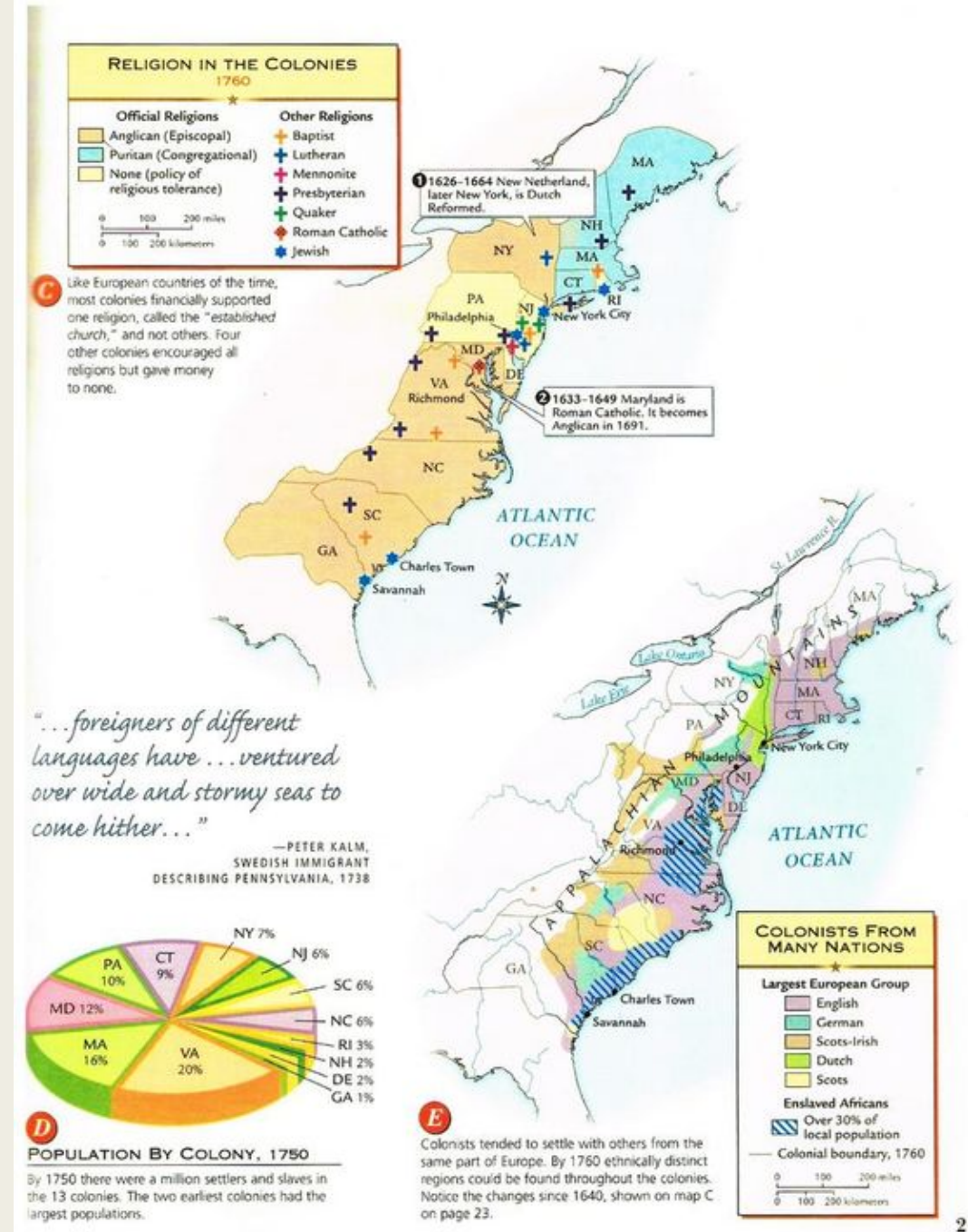
- *Rhetoric*
- *Public & Private*
- *Morality as mode of influence on public sphere*

Secular Narrative

- *Marketplace*
- *Political Change*
- *Religion as private and best on the sidelines*

Region matters

- Spokes rather than cluster
- Religious Variety
 - Chesapeake
 - New England
 - Maryland
 - Pennsylvania
 - Rhode Island
- Established churches



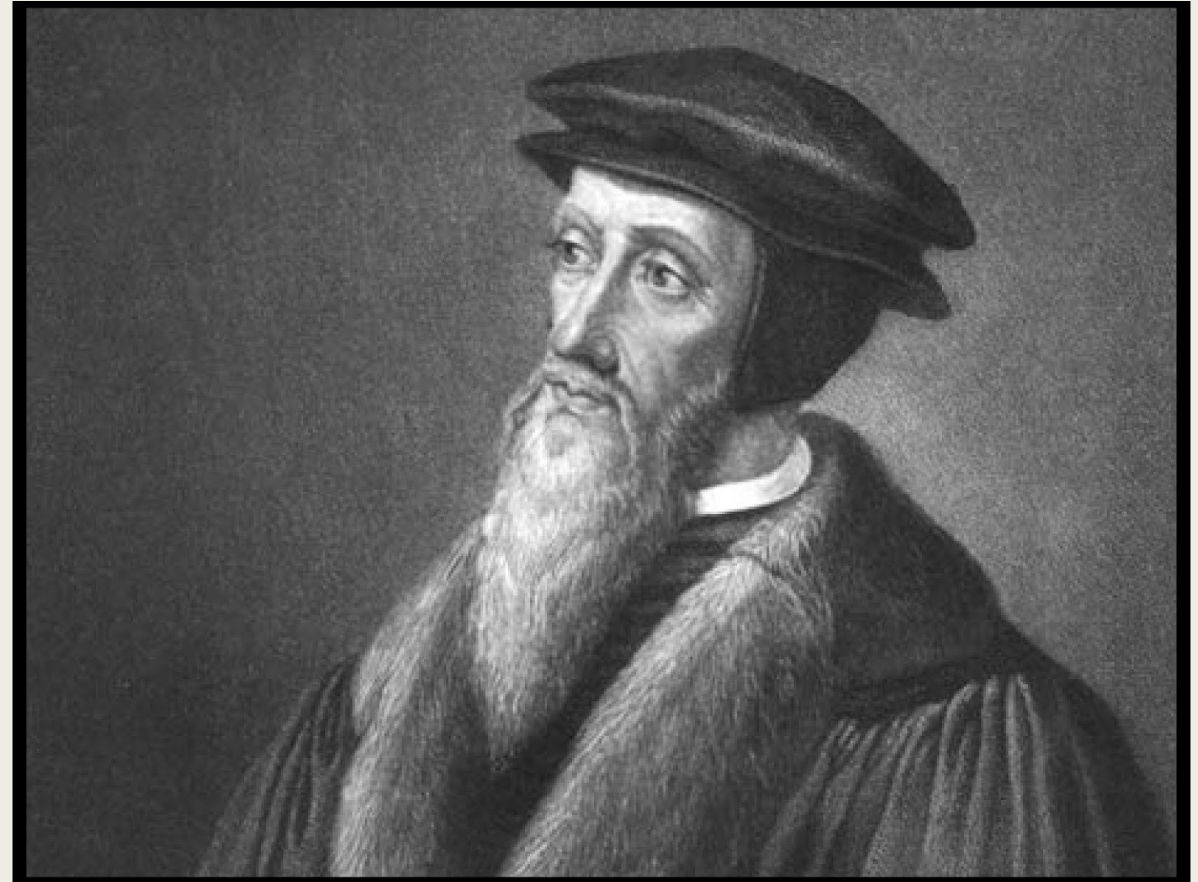


A Caveat:

- Kateri Tekakwitha
- 1656-1680
- Lily of the Mohawks
- Canonized in 2011

Theology matters

- "City on a Hill" and the notion of the covenant
- Religion as a means of morality
 - *Fast Days and Public repentance*
 - *Key to revolutionary understanding*
- Calvinism's influence
- Populist impulse
- The "reasonableness" of Christianity in colonial times



FOUNDATIONAL THEMES



Religious Toleration (&/or the lack thereof)

- Significant Figures
 - *Roger Williams*
 - *Anne Hutchinson*
 - *Mary Dyer & the Quaker Martyrs*
- Salem Witch Trials
- Maryland Toleration Act of 1649
 - *Christian toleration*
- Rhode (Rogue) Island (1663)
- Pennsylvania (1681)
- Influence of Dissenters, 1750s-

The Enlightenment

- Reason v. Revelation
- Nature v. Scripture
- Holy Trinity: Bacon, Newton, Locke
- “The New Learning”
 - *Frank Lambert*
- Commonalities with Evangelicals

“[Deists] wholly cast off the Christian religion, and are professed infidels. They are not like the Heretics, Arians, Socinians, and others, who own the Scriptures to be the word of God, and hold the Christian religion to be the true religion, but only deny these and these fundamental doctrines...They deny Christ was the son of God and say he was a mere cheat...”

~Jonathan Edwards, 1773

The Great Awakening

Debate over importance of the Great Awakening

George Whitefield
American Tour, 1739

John Wesley, Methodism
~Francis Asbury (1745-1816)

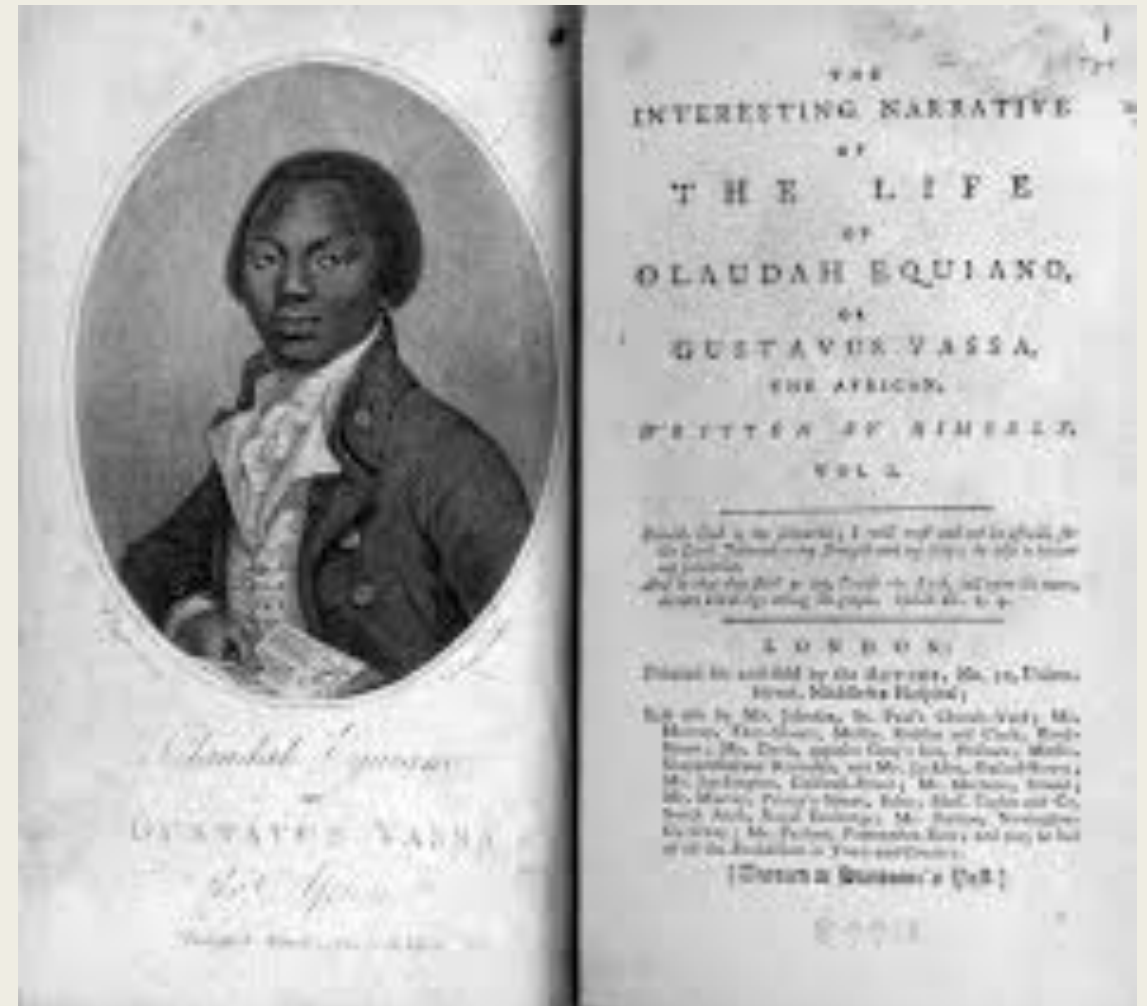
Jonathan Edwards, The Theologian

Focus:
Conversion
Living a holy life

Evangelicals and the "New" Evangelicalism



The Great Awakening and Slavery



Whitefield as "Savior" and Relic

The fruit thereof was charity and love.

Towards America – couldst thou do more

Than leave thy native home, the British shore,

To cross the great Atlantic's wat'ry road,

To see America's distress'd abode?

~1770, Phillis Wheatley

