

GREAT AWAKENING LECTURE NOTES

I. Great Awakening

- A. In the 1730s and 1740s, a religious movement swept the colonies.
- B. The message was that people should examine their lives; that God was beautiful and kind but, if people did not follow the Bible, they would be “sinners in the hands of an angry God”.
- C. *Jonathan Edwards* was a New England preacher and spoke mostly to the young.
- D. *George Whitfield* spread the movement, speaking to large crowds and called for people “to Repent.”
- E. *Great Awakening* movement caused bitter debate. Followers left their old churches and started new ones. Opponents said the movement was too emotional.
- F. Movement caused people to be more tolerant of different beliefs and new ministers said preaching from the heart was more important than book learning- if the heart was filled with Holy Spirit.

II. Education

- A. People thought the important reason to learn to read was to read the Bible.

- B. 1647, *Massachusetts* passed law requiring parent to teach children to “read and understand principles of religion”.
- C. Towns with 50 families had to hire a teacher. Towns with 100 had to open a grammar school
- D. Became the first public schools, paid for with taxes. Both rich and poor could be educated.
- E. In the Middle colonies, churches and families set up private schools.
- F. Southern colonies had only tutors or sent children to England.
- G. Slaves were allowed no education of any kind.

III. The Enlightenment

- A. “The light of human reason”- began in Europe and believed that reason and scientific methods could be applied to society.
- B. The better educated spread the ideas and thought reason could improve the world and lives.
- C. *Benjamin Franklin* was an early believer. He was a writer, inventor, scientist and community leader.
- D. Became the most famous American in the world.

IV. Communication, Transportation and Cities.

- A. New ideas spread through the colonies by better communication.
- B. By mid-1700s, news, mail, pamphlets and books were printed and sold throughout the colonies.
- C. In cities, books came from Europe and people began to meet, talk and exchange news and ideas in seaports like New York, Philadelphia and Charleston.
- D. These ideas helped shape the revolution that would soon come.