

“A River Created by Many Streams” – Puritans (Presbyterians), Baptists, Quakers, Plymouth Brethren

**Washington Community Fellowship
October 31, 2010**

1. Puritans (Presbyterians):

Foster Theme: Evangelical – Word Centered Life

Sola Scriptura, Sola Fides

Early names: John Owen, Richard Baxter, Oliver Cromwell

Called Puritans by those who saw them as seeking a “pure” Church – Strict Morality, emphasizing Regeneration and Sanctification, Household Prayers,

Elizabethan Period – Seeking full Calvinistic Reform (1559-1593): Elizabeth rejected Presbyterianism

Long Parliament Period – accommodation and separation movements – Pilgrims (1593-1640)

After 1640: Restoration of Charles II – Baptists, Quakers, Congregationalists, Presbyterians , etc.

2. Baptists (World Baptist Alliance now has 37 million members):

Foster Theme: Evangelical – Word Centered Life

Continues themes of Authority of Scriptures, Salvation by Faith alone, Baptism by Immersion

Non-liturgical, Reading and Preaching of the Word, Evangelism, led by Deacons and Ministers, Congregational in polity.

Picking up on Anabaptist influence – 1609 English Separatists in Amsterdam – John Smyth

1615 – First Baptist Church in England, Calvinist by 1630s hundreds by 1660s

Moving to U.S. – 1639 – Roger Williams – first church in Rhode Island, steady spread, fueled by First Great Awakening (1730-1755) – Wesleys and Whitfield. Second Great Awakening (1790-1840) – Charles Finney, Third Great Awakening (1850-1900) – D.L.Moody, Billy Sunday (YMCA), Fourth (1960-1980) – Billy Graham (various forms of Baptist churches, such as Evangelical Free Churches)

700 churches by 1850, 4 million by 1900

Southern Baptist Convention – Conservative takeover and the new Calvinism

3. Society of Friends (Quakers):

Foster Themes: Charismatic and Social Justice

Emerged with George Fox as leader in 1650s in England, called for a “New Age of the Spirit”, known as the “Inner Light” of the Living Christ. Fox was a “seeker,” shoemaker by trade, little education, but inspired leader, emphasizing simplicity and truth being found by God’s voice speaking to the soul.

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Persecuted and jailed by Puritan and Anglican alike, jailed and persecuted in the American colonies as well. A judge nicknamed them “Quakers” because they talked about quaking at the hearing of the Word of God.

Lived by Foxes “Rule for the Management of Meetings” and Robert Barclay’s theology: “Apology for the True Christian Divinity.” Emphasis on “Walking in the Light,” Speaking the Truth, Doing Good, Taking no Oaths, listening to the Spirit.

High View of women in leadership, opposition to war, ministry in prisons, being “Friends of Truth.”

Worship and beliefs takes varied forms today: some Evangelical streams (Oregon and Ohio)

See the movie: “Friendly Persuasion”

4. Plymouth Brethren (not to be confused with Church of the Brethren or Brethren in Christ)

Foster Theme: Evangelical- Word-Centered Life

Often called “Brethren” or “Christian Brethren” - Two groups “Open Brethren” and “Closed Brethren”

Congregational in polity, no formal ministers, led by Elders, churches typically called “Chapels”

1831 – First Church in Plymouth England, after first gathering at Trinity College, Dublin

Sought Acts 2 life, prayer and breaking of bread together, simplicity of Apostles teaching in worship, evangelism, deep devotion, prophecy, embracing dispensationalism

Names: J.N. Darby, George Muller (Cyrus Schofield develops Schofield Bible in 1909, revised 1917)

Usually embrace “Dispensationalism:” I Cor. 9:17, Eph. 1:10, 3:2, Col. 1:25 – Seven Dispensations

- Innocence (before the Fall)
- Conscience (after Fall)
- Human government (Noah to Abraham)
- Promise (Abraham to Moses)
- Law (Moses to Christ)
- Grace (Church Age) – Strong Pre-millennial vision of Christ’s return
- Kingdom (Millennium) - until the Eternal State

Note: Moody Bible Institute, Dallas Theological Seminary, Biola University are Dispensational.