

PROTESTANTISM MULTIPLIES

Puritans, Baptists, Quakers, Pietists, and Methodists

From Confessional Protestantism to Revival, AD 1600-1800

The Genealogy of Christian Division

A Historical and Biblical Study of Schism, Reformation, and the Making of Modern Christianity

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Abstract

Between AD 1600 and 1800, Protestant Christianity changed from a set of sixteenth-century confessional churches into a far more plural world of established churches, gathered congregations, dissenting communities, renewal networks, missionary societies, and revival movements. This chapter traces that multiplication from the post-Reformation settlement through English Puritanism, Separatism and Congregationalism, the emergence and diversification of Baptists, the Society of Friends, German Pietism, the Moravian renewal, the transatlantic awakenings, and Wesleyan Methodism. It argues that these developments cannot be reduced either to doctrinal fragmentation or to a simple story of spiritual progress. They arose through interacting disputes over Scripture, church government, baptism, predestination, conversion, assurance, sanctification, inward illumination, religious liberty, and the relationship of church and state, while war, migration, print, commerce, colonial expansion, voluntary association, and persecution shaped which movements survived. Particular attention is given to primary confessions and founders' writings, together with recent scholarship that clarifies contested genealogies, especially Baptist origins and the relation of Moravian, Pietist, and Methodist renewal. The chapter also integrates the global consequences of eighteenth-century missions, including South India, the Caribbean, and southern Africa. Genealogically, the period produced durable Congregational, Baptist, Quaker, Methodist, and Moravian families while transmitting Pietist and revivalist impulses across denominational boundaries. A *Sola Scriptura* assessment affirms recoveries of conversion, holiness, mission, congregational responsibility, and liberty of conscience while testing infant baptism, inward revelation, sacramental rejection, coercive godly commonwealths, predestinarian and perfectionist systems, and revival experience by the apostolic Word. The result was the voluntary, revivalist Protestant environment from which nineteenth-century restorationism and new Christian-derived movements would emerge.

Keywords: *Puritanism; Congregationalism; Baptists; Quakers; Pietism; Moravians; Great Awakening; Methodism*

1. Introduction: From Reformation Families to a Protestant World of Movements

By 1600 the Reformation had permanently broken the institutional unity of Latin Western Christianity. Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Anabaptist communities had acquired recognizable doctrines, institutions, worship patterns, and political locations, while Roman Catholicism had undergone extensive Tridentine reform (MacCulloch, 2004; Sangwa, 2026). Yet the confessional map that looked comparatively settled at the end of the sixteenth century concealed a new problem. Once Christians had rejected a single Western magisterium, they still had to decide how the Reformation principle of scriptural authority should order worship, church membership, ministry, discipline, civil power, and Christian experience. Those questions did not disappear when the first generation of Reformers died. They became the engines of further multiplication.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries therefore mark a second major phase in Protestant genealogy. The first phase had produced confessional families through rupture with Rome and through disagreements among Reformers. The second phase increasingly produced churches and movements inside, beside, and across those families. English Puritans sought to reform the Church of England without necessarily leaving it. Separatists concluded that a faithful church had to be gathered voluntarily rather than identified with an entire territorial population. Congregationalists developed covenanted local churches that rejected permanent higher ecclesiastical courts. Baptists radicalized the gathered-church principle by restricting baptism to professing believers. Quakers challenged the sufficiency of outward forms more dramatically by centering worship and guidance on the present illumination of Christ through the Spirit. Pietists called Lutheran and Reformed Christians from confessional correctness to regeneration, Bible reading, disciplined fellowship, and practical holiness. Moravians created a transnational missionary community whose devotional and organizational practices influenced the emerging evangelical revival. John Wesley then joined Anglican sacramentalism, Reformation justification, Arminian soteriology, Moravian and Pietist experiential emphases, disciplined societies, field preaching, and a demanding doctrine of holiness into the Methodist movement.

This multiplication should not be narrated as though every new group simply corrected the one before it. Each movement arose from real problems and also generated new questions. Puritan concern for biblical worship and disciplined holiness could coexist with coercive visions of a godly commonwealth. Congregational self-government could protect conscience while also increasing the possibility of local fragmentation. Baptists articulated a powerful case for believer's baptism and religious liberty, yet they divided rapidly over soteriology, communion, mission, and organization. Quakers confronted formalism and violence, but their account of inward revelation and their rejection of baptism and the Lord's Supper moved beyond what many Protestants regarded as the clear commands of the New Testament. Pietism recovered the importance of living faith, but could slide toward subjectivism or suspicion of doctrinal precision. Revivalists emphasized the new birth, while revival itself could become an experience to be manufactured or mistaken for saving grace. Wesleyan holiness called believers to serious sanctification, but later perfectionist formulations raised questions about whether Scripture promises complete freedom from indwelling sin before glorification.

The chapter therefore treats AD 1600–1800 as a coherent historical period without pretending that its boundaries are absolute. Puritan and Separatist origins reach back into the Elizabethan age. The Baptist story begins around the opening decade of the seventeenth century, but its streams mature later. Pietism has earlier devotional antecedents. Methodism becomes a distinct

denominational family only gradually, and British separation from Anglicanism was not complete at Wesley's death in 1791. The endpoint at 1800 is chosen because the institutional and spiritual patterns developed during these two centuries would become the immediate environment of the nineteenth-century Second Great Awakening, restorationism, Adventist expectation, new prophetic claims, missionary voluntarism, and the new Christian-derived religions examined in the next chapter.

The governing question is therefore genealogical as much as doctrinal: how did Protestant Christianity move from a relatively small number of confessional families to a culture in which voluntary congregations, dissenting denominations, revival networks, missionary societies, and transdenominational spiritual movements could coexist and compete? The answer requires attention not only to theology but also to law, monarchy, revolution, migration, literacy, print, colonialism, commerce, slavery, social discipline, and the changing meaning of religious toleration.

2. Sources, Chronology, and Method

The documentary evidence for AD 1600–1800 is unusually rich. Confessions, catechisms, parliamentary statutes, church covenants, diaries, sermons, correspondence, journals, disciplinary minutes, missionary reports, conversion narratives, and printed controversies allow the historian to reconstruct both official teaching and lived religious experience. That abundance requires source discipline. Puritan polemic against bishops cannot by itself describe ordinary parish religion. Anglican statutes do not establish that uniformity was fully achieved. Baptist confessions demonstrate public doctrinal identity but not the exact beliefs of every congregation. Quaker journals and sufferings literature preserve indispensable first-person testimony while also functioning as apologetic memory. Pietist and Methodist conversion narratives illuminate religious experience, but they must not be treated as transparent psychological transcripts detached from literary convention and theological purpose.

Primary texts are especially important because many labels became broader than the people who first bore them. Puritan was often an adversarial name before it became a useful historical category. Separatist identifies those who judged the national church so compromised that separation was required, whereas many Puritans continued to worship within the Church of England and hoped to reform it. Baptist did not originally denote one organization. General and Particular Baptists differed substantially over the extent of the atonement and election even while sharing believer's baptism and gathered-church ecclesiology. Quaker began as a nickname for a movement that more often called itself Friends or the people of God, and the later Religious Society of Friends developed institutional forms that cannot simply be projected onto the first explosive decade of the 1650s. Pietism likewise embraced related but diverse Lutheran, Reformed, radical, and Moravian forms rather than one centralized church (Coffey & Lim, 2008; Moore, 2020; Shantz, 2013; Smith, 2026).

Genealogy requires particular caution in the Baptist case. Older narratives sometimes proposed an unbroken succession from New Testament churches through medieval dissenters and continental Anabaptists to modern Baptists. Other accounts treated English Baptists as wholly independent of Anabaptism. The strongest recent historical synthesis is more discriminating. Seventeenth-century English Baptists emerged primarily from the English Puritan-Separatist environment, while the Amsterdam congregation associated with John Smyth encountered Waterlander Mennonites and received identifiable Anabaptist influence. Similarities in believer's baptism, voluntarist ecclesiology, and liberty of conscience therefore represent a mixture of shared biblical reasoning, historical contact, and parallel reform, not evidence for one simple institutional chain (Smith, 2026; Wright, 2006).

The same caution applies to the Great Awakening. Historians have debated whether the term describes one coherent event or retrospectively unifies numerous local revivals. Jon Butler (1982) famously challenged the idea of a single continental awakening, while Frank Lambert (1999) showed how eighteenth-century evangelicals themselves constructed a transatlantic sense of shared revival through print, correspondence, itinerancy, and reports of extraordinary conversions. Thomas Kidd (2007) has demonstrated that the revivals were both connected and internally contested. This chapter therefore uses Great Awakening as a conventional umbrella for interacting revival episodes of the 1730s and 1740s without implying one synchronized campaign or one theology.

Theological evaluation follows historical exposition. The chapter does not assume that dissent is faithful merely because an established church persecuted it, nor that an established church is false because it exercised political power. Claims about Scripture, baptism, assurance, inward revelation, predestination, holiness, and church government are first reconstructed from primary and scholarly evidence. They are then tested by the apostolic Scriptures. In keeping with the method of this book, institutional longevity, revival success, charismatic intensity, numerical growth, missionary sacrifice, or moral courage can commend a movement historically without making every one of its doctrines biblically authoritative.

Table 1. Selected chronology of Protestant multiplication and renewal, AD 1600–1800.

Date / period	Development	Genealogical significance
1603–1604	James I succeeds Elizabeth I; Hampton Court Conference	Puritan hopes for further reform are largely disappointed; new Bible translation commissioned.
1608–1609	Scrooby Separatists in Dutch exile; Smyth congregation adopts believer baptism	English Separatism produces one early Baptist stream amid Mennonite contact.
1611–1612	Helwys group returns to England; A Short Declaration	Early General Baptist church and unusually broad defense of liberty of conscience.
1618–1648	Thirty Years' War	Confessional, dynastic, and territorial conflict devastates central Europe; Westphalia broadens recognized confessions without creating universal liberty.
1620	Plymouth colony founded	Separatist gathered-church model takes root in New England.
1630s	Puritan Great Migration; Laudian reforms in England	New England Congregationalism expands as English church conflict intensifies.
1642–1651	English Civil Wars and revolutionary settlement	Collapse of old controls opens space for Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, Quaker, and other experiments.
1643–1649	Westminster Assembly	Produces enduring Reformed confession, catechisms, worship directory, and polity debates.
1644	First London Baptist Confession	Particular Baptists publicly distinguish themselves from radical Anabaptist stereotypes.
1648	Cambridge Platform	New England Congregational polity receives mature articulation.
1650s	Quaker movement expands	Friends stress inward illumination, charismatic ministry, peace, and non-sacramental worship.
1658	Savoy Declaration	English Congregationalists adapt Westminster theology to congregational polity.
1662	Act of Uniformity and Great Ejection	Nonconformity becomes institutionally durable outside the restored Church of England.
1675	Spener's Pia Desideria	Programmatic Lutheran Pietism calls for Bible study, spiritual priesthood, practical holiness, and reformed theological education.
1677 / 1689	Second London Baptist Confession published / publicly adopted	Particular Baptists display strong Reformed continuity while defining credobaptist ecclesiology.
1689	Toleration Act	Qualified legal worship space opens for many Protestant Dissenters, though civil disabilities remain.
1694	University of Halle founded	Pietism gains educational, publishing, charitable, and missionary infrastructure.
1706	Danish-Halle mission at Tranquebar	Durable Protestant mission links Halle, Denmark, London, and South India.
1722–1727	Herrnhut founded; Moravian renewal	Older Brethren identity is renewed and reorganized under Zinzendorf.
1732–1737	Moravian missions begin in St. Thomas (1732), Greenland (1733), and the Cape (1737)	Small European community becomes a transatlantic and global missionary movement.
1734–1740s	Northampton and wider transatlantic awakenings	Conversionist revival networks reshape Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, Anglican, and Methodist life.
1738–1739	Wesley at Aldersgate; field preaching expands	Assurance, new birth, itinerancy, societies, and lay organization become Methodist hallmarks.
1741 / 1758	Old Side–New Side Presbyterian split / reunion	Revival produces denominational division but not permanent separation.
1770	General Baptist New Connexion	Evangelical renewal revitalizes part of the General Baptist tradition.
1783–1792	George Liele in Jamaica; Carey's Enquiry and Baptist Missionary Society	Black Baptist mission predates Carey; voluntary missionary-society model accelerates.

Date / period	Development	Genealogical significance
1784 / 1795	Methodist Episcopal Church in America / British Plan of Pacification	Methodism moves from Anglican revival society toward independent denominational structures.

Note. Dates are exact where documentation permits; several movements emerged gradually across years or decades.

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Selected milestones, AD 1600–1800



Milestones mark turning points, not instantaneous transformations. Reception and institutional change often continued for decades.

Figure 1. Protestantism multiplies: selected milestones, AD 1600–1800.

Note. Milestones mark turning points rather than instantaneous transformations.

3. What Existed at AD 1600: Confessionalization, State Churches, and Unfinished Reform

At the opening of the seventeenth century, most European Christians still encountered Christianity through a territorial church (Benedict, 2002; MacCulloch, 2004). The Reformation had multiplied confessions, but it had not generally produced modern religious voluntarism. In much of the Holy Roman Empire, rulers and territorial settlements helped determine whether public Christianity was Roman Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed. In England, the monarch governed an episcopal national church whose doctrine was defined by the Thirty-Nine Articles and whose worship was ordered through the Book of Common Prayer. In Scotland, Reformed Presbyterian structures had gained strength. The Dutch Republic gave the Reformed Church privileged public status while tolerating a greater range of religious communities than many neighboring states. Anabaptists and other minorities had survived, often through marginality, migration, and disciplined communal networks. The principle that every adult should simply choose among competing denominations without civil consequence was not yet the normal political assumption.

Confessionalization had real constructive achievements. Churches educated clergy, produced catechisms, translated and printed Scripture, organized poor relief, disciplined communities, developed schools, and created durable forms of worship and theological instruction. The mature confessions of Lutheran and Reformed Christianity gave ordinary believers systematic accounts of the faith and helped stabilize movements that might otherwise have remained dependent on founding personalities. Yet confessionalization also joined religious identity to political belonging. Governments enforced attendance, regulated worship, restricted dissent, and sometimes treated unauthorized assemblies as threats to civil order. The sixteenth-century

question, Which confession is true? therefore persisted alongside a seventeenth-century question: Must the magistrate compel the population to conform to the confession judged true?

International conflict intensified that problem. The Thirty Years' War from 1618 to 1648 combined confessional, dynastic, territorial, and geopolitical struggles on a catastrophic scale. It cannot responsibly be described as a purely religious war, but confessional identity was inseparable from the alliances and fears that helped sustain it. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 widened the imperial legal settlement to include the Reformed alongside Catholics and Lutherans and strengthened protections for recognized confessions, but it did not create modern universal religious liberty. Europe remained a patchwork of privileged churches, restricted minorities, and negotiated toleration.

England generated a particularly consequential form of this crisis. Elizabeth I had left an established Protestant church that many Reformed clergy and laity regarded as incompletely reformed. They objected to vestments, ceremonies, episcopal power, insufficient discipline, and portions of the prayer book they believed retained unscriptural elements. Yet they disagreed sharply over strategy. Some remained conformists while pressing for further reform. Others advocated presbyterian restructuring. Still others concluded that the very idea of a parish church embracing an entire local population compromised the New Testament pattern of a gathered body of believers. That distinction between reform from within and separation would become one of the main genealogical forks of the seventeenth century.

The period also inherited a communications revolution. Cheap print, expanding literacy, commercial networks, postal systems, and migration enabled sermons, controversies, spiritual diaries, missionary reports, and denominational literature to circulate rapidly. A congregation expelled from England could reorganize in Amsterdam, debate Mennonites, publish a confession, and send books back across the North Sea. A revival in Northampton, Massachusetts, could be reported in London and read in Scotland. Moravian missionaries in the Caribbean could send narratives to German-speaking communities, while English evangelicals translated and republished continental Pietist texts. Protestant multiplication was therefore not simply fragmentation. It was also network formation.

Table 2. Before / change / result: from territorial confession to voluntary Protestantism.

Stage	Historical configuration
Before c. 1600	Territorial confessional churches; episcopal, presbyterian, and magisterial Protestant orders; infant baptism normative; dissent often legally restricted.
Change, 1600–1800	Gathered-church ecclesiology, believer baptism, inward illumination, Pietist renewal, transatlantic revival, voluntary societies, wider toleration, and global mission.
Result by c. 1800	Durable Congregational, Baptist, Friend, Moravian, and Methodist families plus revivalist and Pietist networks capable of multiplying without territorial state control.

4. Puritanism Within and Beyond Anglicanism

4.1 What "Puritan" meant

Puritanism was not a denomination founded on one date by one person. It was a reforming current within English Protestantism whose roots lay in the Elizabethan settlement and in wider Reformed Christianity. The word *Puritan* was often used by opponents to mock Protestants judged excessively precise about worship, morality, Sabbath observance, preaching, or discipline. Historians therefore use the term cautiously. The people so labeled ranged from conforming ministers who remained in the Church of England to presbyterians who wanted to replace episcopacy, to Independents who eventually defended congregational government. What united them was not one polity but a conviction that the English Reformation remained incomplete and that church life should be more thoroughly ordered by Scripture, Reformed doctrine, disciplined holiness, and preaching (Coffey & Lim, 2008; Spurr, 1998; Winship, 2018).

Puritanism consequently differed from Separatism at the crucial point of ecclesial strategy. A Puritan could denounce ceremonies, criticize bishops, plead for presbyterian discipline, and still regard the Church of England as a true church from within which reform should be pursued. A Separatist concluded that communion with the established church was itself compromised and that faithful believers should gather into distinct congregations. The boundary was permeable. Some Puritans became Separatists after repeated conflict with ecclesiastical authorities, while others regarded separation as schismatic impatience. Their disagreements demonstrate that dissatisfaction with an institution does not by itself determine whether biblical faithfulness requires reform from within or departure.

Theologically, most Puritans stood within the Reformed tradition. They emphasized divine sovereignty, covenant theology, justification by faith, the moral law, catechesis, family worship, preaching, Sabbath observance, pastoral discipline, and

careful self-examination. Yet Puritan spirituality should not be caricatured as joyless legalism. Its literature contains intense treatments of assurance, communion with God, adoption, prayer, providence, suffering, conscience, and Christ-centered comfort. The same movement could be rigorously doctrinal and deeply experiential. That combination helps explain why Puritanism became a seedbed for later Congregational, Baptist, Presbyterian, evangelical, and revivalist traditions.

4.2 James I, the Hampton Court Conference, and the Authorized Version

When James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603, Puritans hoped that a monarch experienced with Scottish Protestantism might support further reform. Ministers presented the Millenary Petition, calling for changes in ceremonies, clerical abuses, and church discipline. The Hampton Court Conference of January 1604 gave Puritan representatives limited opportunity to present concerns before the king and bishops. James rejected a presbyterian reconstruction of the English church, famously associating presbyterian claims with danger to monarchy, but he accepted the proposal for a new English translation of Scripture.

The result was the Bible published in 1611 and later known as the King James Version or Authorized Version. It was not a distinctively Puritan Bible and was produced under royal and episcopal sponsorship, yet its creation illustrates the complex relationship between conformity and reform. A conference that failed to grant most Puritan demands helped produce one of the most influential English Bibles in history. The translation also became a common textual inheritance shared by Anglicans, Puritans, Separatists, Baptists, Quakers, and later Methodists even as they divided over church order.

James's reign nevertheless hardened conflict over conformity. The canons of 1604 reaffirmed requirements that dissenting ministers found objectionable. Some ministers were deprived; others conformed reluctantly; still others left England or worshiped clandestinely. The crucial development was not that the Church of England suddenly became intolerant in a way unknown before, but that the combination of episcopal discipline and Puritan conviction gradually made multiple ecclesial strategies visible: conform, resist, separate, migrate, or organize outside the parish system.

4.3 Charles I, Laud, and the road to civil war

Conflict intensified after Charles I came to the throne in 1625. William Laud, bishop of London and from 1633 archbishop of Canterbury, promoted ceremonial uniformity, episcopal authority, reverent worship, and theological positions that many Puritans associated with Arminianism and dangerous movement away from Reformed orthodoxy. Puritan critics interpreted altar placement, vestments, ceremonial practice, and restrictions on preaching as evidence that the English church was being pushed toward Romanizing religion. Laud and his allies, by contrast, regarded Puritan nonconformity as disorder that threatened the unity and beauty of the church.

These ecclesiastical disputes became entangled with constitutional conflict. Charles's Personal Rule, taxation controversies, political resistance, and attempts to impose a new prayer book in Scotland helped produce the Bishops' Wars and then the summoning of the Long Parliament in 1640. Parliament attacked Laudian policies and dismantled institutions such as the Court of High Commission. When civil war began in 1642, religious and political questions became inseparable. Parliamentary forces included presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and other radicals who agreed in opposing the royalist episcopal settlement but disagreed about what should replace it.

The English Civil Wars should therefore not be reduced to one theological disagreement. Constitutional sovereignty, finance, regional interests, military power, and competing visions of monarchy all mattered. Yet religion was not merely a cover for politics. Participants genuinely believed that worship, bishops, sacraments, discipline, covenant, and religious truth were matters of national consequence. The collapse of censorship and ordinary ecclesiastical enforcement during the 1640s created an unprecedented environment in which printers, preachers, soldiers, laypeople, and gathered churches could argue publicly about the nature of Christianity.

4.4 The Westminster Assembly and competing Puritan polities

Parliament convened the Westminster Assembly in 1643 to advise on reform of doctrine, worship, and government. The Assembly included mostly English Puritan divines alongside Scottish commissioners who strongly favored presbyterianism. Its work produced the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Directory for Public Worship, and documents on church government. The Confession, completed in 1646 and later supplied with proof texts for Parliament, became one of the most influential Reformed confessions in global Presbyterianism (Westminster Assembly, 1646).

The Assembly also exposed a fault line inside Puritanism. The presbyterian majority advocated a national church governed through sessions, presbyteries, synods, and assemblies. A small group of Independents, including Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, and others sometimes called the Dissenting Brethren, argued that gathered congregations possessed a greater degree of final ecclesiastical authority. Their disagreement was not over whether churches should cooperate. It concerned where Christ had located ordinary governing authority and whether higher assemblies possessed coercive jurisdiction over local congregations.

Parliament never implemented a fully uniform presbyterian system throughout England. The army became an increasingly important center of religious diversity, and Independents gained political influence during the revolutionary years. The execution of Charles I in 1649 and the Commonwealth and Protectorate that followed transformed the relation between church and state without creating unrestricted liberty. Some Protestant groups gained space to worship; Roman Catholics and others faced severe limits; blasphemy and heresy remained punishable in various forms. The Puritan revolution therefore expanded toleration for some while preserving assumptions that government should protect religious truth.

4.5 Puritan moral seriousness and the temptation of coercive holiness

Puritanism's constructive achievements were extensive. Ministers promoted catechesis, preaching, pastoral visitation, family devotion, literacy, university education, and a disciplined moral life. Puritan divines developed sophisticated theology of grace, assurance, conscience, spiritual depression, marriage, vocation, and providence. Their insistence that justification must issue in sanctification opposed both sacramental nominalism and antinomian misuse of grace. Their pastoral literature remains influential because it treated the Christian life as more than intellectual assent.

Yet the same desire for a holy society could become coercive. If a political community was conceived as covenantally obligated to suppress idolatry and false worship, religious dissent could be treated as both sin and public danger. New England Puritan colonies dramatized this tension. The Massachusetts Bay Colony, founded in 1630 by migrants seeking space to build a thoroughly Reformed society, created strong congregational institutions but did not initially embrace universal religious liberty. Roger Williams was banished in 1635–1636 after disputes involving church-state relations, indigenous land claims, and conscience; he founded Rhode Island as a more expansive experiment in religious liberty. Anne Hutchinson was banished after the Antinomian Controversy of 1636–1638. Four Quakers were executed in Massachusetts between 1659 and 1661 under laws intended to exclude persistent Quaker missionaries.

These cases should not be used to deny that Puritans themselves suffered persecution in England or that some Puritans became strong advocates of toleration. They show instead that being persecuted does not automatically produce a consistent theology of liberty. Christians can rightly protest coercion used against themselves while still believing that coercion is appropriate against teachings they consider dangerous. The biblical and historical question is therefore not which party possessed power at a given moment, but whether civil force is an apostolic instrument for producing church unity.

4.6 Restoration, the Great Ejection, and the emergence of Nonconformity

The restoration of Charles II in 1660 ended the republican experiment and re-established the episcopal Church of England. The Act of Uniformity of 1662 required ministers to conform to the revised Book of Common Prayer and meet legal conditions for ministry. Roughly two thousand ministers were ejected, resigned, or otherwise left established positions around this settlement, a major institutional break that helped consolidate English Protestant Nonconformity. Subsequent laws restricted unauthorized assemblies and imposed disabilities on Dissenters.

The result was paradoxical. Restoration policy restored an established church but also helped turn previously fluid Puritan networks into durable dissenting traditions. Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Quakers developed chapels, schools, ministerial networks, publication systems, and family cultures outside the establishment. Persecution could weaken congregations, but it also clarified identity. The 1689 Toleration Act, passed after the Glorious Revolution, gave qualified freedom of worship to many Protestant Dissenters who met statutory requirements, though the Test and Corporation Acts continued to exclude many from public office (Rose, 2020; Thompson, 2018).

By the end of the seventeenth century, Puritanism had therefore ceased to be only a reform movement within one national church. Its descendants occupied several ecclesial homes. Some remained within Anglican evangelical currents. Others formed Presbyterian and Congregational dissent. Baptists emerged from related gathered-church environments. Puritan devotional and doctrinal literature circulated across them all. This dispersal is one of the clearest examples of how a reforming movement can become a genealogical parent without ever having been one denomination.

5. Separatists and Congregationalism: The Gathered Church Becomes Durable

5.1 From further reform to separation

Separatism emerged when some English Protestants concluded that the established church's mixed membership, compulsory parish structure, bishops, liturgy, and discipline were not merely imperfections to be reformed gradually but violations requiring withdrawal. Earlier Elizabethan figures such as Robert Browne, Henry Barrow, John Greenwood, Francis Johnson, and their associates had already developed arguments for covenanted gathered congregations independent of episcopal

structures. Persecution, imprisonment, and exile scattered these communities but did not extinguish the model (Brachlow, 1988; Cooper, 2020).

The Separatist claim involved a significant redefinition of visible church membership. A parish contained everyone resident within a geographic boundary and baptized into the national church. A gathered congregation was constituted by people who voluntarily covenanted to walk together in obedience to Christ. Membership therefore required a credible profession and discipline rather than mere residence. The church was no longer primarily the Christian population of a territory. It was a local fellowship intentionally formed around the gospel.

This principle did not automatically imply believer's baptism. Most Separatists and later Congregationalists continued to baptize infants of covenant households. The decisive innovation was ecclesiological rather than baptistic: the local church existed through the covenant of a believing community under Christ. Baptists would later ask whether that logic was consistent with baptizing those unable to profess faith.

5.2 Scrooby, Amsterdam, Leiden, and Plymouth

The best-known Separatist migration grew from a congregation associated with Scrooby in Nottinghamshire and leaders including John Robinson and William Brewster. Facing pressure for unauthorized worship, members fled England for the Dutch Republic around 1608. After a period in Amsterdam, the congregation settled in Leiden. The Netherlands offered greater religious toleration and economic opportunity, but English identity, difficult labor conditions, concern for the next generation, and missionary hopes contributed to the decision of part of the congregation to migrate again.

In 1620 the group later remembered as the Pilgrims crossed the Atlantic on the *Mayflower* with other passengers and founded Plymouth Colony. Their migration should not be confused with the much larger Puritan Great Migration to Massachusetts Bay beginning in 1630. The Plymouth settlers were Separatists who had already left the Church of England. Many Massachusetts Puritans initially insisted that they had not separated from the true Church of England but sought to establish a more thoroughly reformed church in New England. In practice, however, the New England environment pushed both toward forms of gathered Congregationalism.

The distinction matters genealogically. Modern Congregational traditions have roots in both explicit Separatism and nonseparating Puritanism. The two streams converged around the conviction that local churches should be constituted by covenanted believers and governed without diocesan bishops. It would be false genealogy to make every Congregational church a direct institutional descendant of the *Mayflower* congregation, just as it would be false to deny the broader Separatist contribution.

5.3 Covenant membership and the authority of the congregation

Congregational polity placed substantial authority in the local church under Christ. Members participated in calling ministers, admitting members, exercising discipline, and maintaining the church covenant. Ministers remained important and educated leadership was highly valued, but office did not create a sacerdotal class standing over a passive membership. The gathered church itself bore responsibility for faithfulness.

Congregationalism did not mean isolation. Churches sought advice from councils, exchanged letters, recognized one another's ministers, and cooperated in education and mission. The point was that wider assemblies normally advised rather than exercised permanent juridical authority over a congregation. This distinguished Congregationalists from presbyterians, whose graded courts possessed real authority beyond the local session, and from episcopalians, whose bishops exercised diocesan oversight.

The polity had both strengths and vulnerabilities. It increased lay responsibility, protected local conscience from distant hierarchy, and could adapt quickly to new settings. It also meant that disputes could split congregations without an external court able to impose settlement. Congregational liberty therefore required strong habits of covenant, mutual counsel, and discipline if autonomy was not to become fragmentation.

5.4 The Cambridge Platform and Savoy Declaration

Two documents illustrate the maturation of Congregational identity. The Cambridge Platform of 1648 articulated the polity of New England churches while affirming substantially Reformed doctrine. It described local congregations as complete churches possessing officers and authority for worship and discipline, yet it also commended communion and synodical counsel among churches. It was not a manifesto for isolated individualism (Congregational churches of New England, 1648).

The Savoy Declaration of 1658 performed a related task in England. Congregational leaders including Thomas Goodwin and John Owen adapted the Westminster Confession while revising sections dealing especially with church polity and related matters. The document demonstrates how genealogical differentiation often occurs: a daughter tradition may retain most of a

parent's theology while altering the institutional doctrine that defines how churches are constituted and governed (Congregational churches of England, 1658).

The theological continuity is important. Congregationalism did not arise because its founders rejected the Reformed doctrine of God, Christ, justification, or Scripture. The principal differentiation concerned ecclesiology. This is why later Presbyterian and Congregational traditions could share confessional theology yet sustain separate denominational identities for centuries.

5.5 New England membership, the Half-Way Covenant, and the problem of inherited religion

The gathered-church ideal encountered a practical problem in the second generation. If full membership required evidence of conversion, what should happen when baptized children of church members grew into respectable adults who could not give the expected conversion testimony, yet wanted their own children baptized? New England churches developed different answers. The arrangement commonly called the Half-Way Covenant, associated with the synod of 1662, allowed certain baptized but non-communicant adults to present their children for baptism without being admitted to the Lord's Supper as full members.

The controversy reveals a recurring tension in voluntary Christianity. A first generation may gather around powerful conviction; a second inherits institutions and identity. If churches demand intense conversion narratives, they risk excluding morally serious people whose experience does not fit the expected pattern. If they broaden membership simply to preserve social continuity, they risk recreating the nominalism the gathered-church model was designed to correct. The challenge of transmitting faith without confusing inheritance with regeneration would recur in Baptists, Methodists, revival churches, and later restorationist movements.

5.6 Later Congregational trajectories

Congregationalism spread through New England, Britain, and missionary networks. It became intellectually and institutionally diverse. Some congregations remained strongly Calvinist; others moved toward Arminian, Unitarian, evangelical, or liberal theology in later centuries. Congregational institutions founded colleges, supported missions, participated in abolitionist movements, and helped shape civic life in New England. In Britain, Congregationalists became a major component of Protestant Dissent and later Nonconformity.

This diversity demonstrates again that polity does not guarantee doctrine. A congregation may be biblically governed and still teach error; a hierarchical church may preserve orthodox doctrine in a given period. Congregationalism's enduring contribution is the insistence that local believers bear real responsibility before Christ for membership, discipline, doctrine, and mission. Its enduring risk is that local autonomy may be treated as immunity from correction beyond the congregation.

Table 3. Puritan, Separatist, Congregational, and Baptist trajectories compared.

Stream	Parent setting	Relation to establishment	Theology	Baptism	Polity / trajectory
Puritan conformists	Church of England	Remain while pressing further reform	Usually Reformed / Calvinist	Infant baptism	Reform from within; often stricter worship and discipline
Presbyterian Puritans	English Reformed / Puritan	National church governed by graded elder assemblies	Reformed	Infant baptism	Reject diocesan episcopacy; wider courts possess authority
Separatists	English Puritan radicalization	Withdraw from established church	Usually Reformed	Infant baptism initially	Gathered, covenanted church outside parish establishment
Congregationalists / Independents	Separatist + nonseparating Puritan streams	Autonomous gathered congregations in communion with others	Reformed in classic forms	Infant baptism	Local church final ordinary governing authority
Baptists	English Separatist / Congregational settings; Mennonite influence in one early stream	Gathered church of professing believers	General and Particular streams	Believer baptism	Congregational polity; strong liberty-of-conscience trajectory

Note. The categories overlap historically; the table isolates dominant ecclesial trajectories rather than mutually exclusive parties.

6. Baptist Origins and Diversification: Believer's Baptism, Liberty, and Mission

6.1 Why Baptist origins require genealogical precision

The Baptist family is one of the clearest cases in which doctrinal similarity must not be confused with uninterrupted institutional succession. Baptists share important convictions with sixteenth-century Anabaptists, especially believer's baptism, voluntary church membership, and in some streams religious liberty. Yet seventeenth-century English Baptist churches emerged principally from English Puritan and Separatist settings, and their relationship with continental Anabaptism varied. John Smyth's congregation had direct contact with Waterlander Mennonites in Amsterdam, but Particular Baptists arose through a different English congregational trajectory. Modern scholarship therefore rejects both a simplistic "Baptists are merely English Anabaptists" genealogy and claims of a demonstrable unbroken Baptist succession from the apostles through every medieval dissenting group (Smith, 2026; Wright, 2006).

This does not reduce Baptist identity to novelty. Baptists themselves understood believer's baptism as recovery of apostolic practice rather than invention. The historical question and theological question are distinct. Historically, identifiable Baptist churches arose in the early seventeenth century. Theologically, their baptismal claim must be tested from the New Testament, not validated or invalidated merely by the movement's late institutional emergence.

6.2 John Smyth, Thomas Helwys, and the first General Baptists

John Smyth had been ordained within the Church of England and moved through Puritan and Separatist stages before leading a congregation associated with Gainsborough. Persecution drove the group to Amsterdam, where English Separatists encountered a dense environment of Dutch Reformed, Mennonite, and other religious communities. Around 1609 Smyth came to reject infant baptism. Because he did not regard his earlier baptism as valid Christian baptism, he baptized himself and then others, an action later remembered polemically as *se-baptism*. He soon became dissatisfied with that irregular procedure and sought communion with the Waterlander Mennonites, whose theology and ecclesial practice influenced his developing views (Wright, 2006).

Thomas Helwys and others did not follow Smyth into attempted union with the Mennonites. They returned to England around 1611–1612 and established a Baptist congregation despite the danger of unauthorized worship. Their stream became known as General Baptist because it affirmed a general or universal saving provision in Christ rather than the Calvinist particularism that later characterized Particular Baptists. The label should not be retrojected too neatly onto the first moment, because early Baptist alignments developed over time, but it became a durable distinction.

Helwys also made one of the early modern Baptist tradition's most important contributions to religious liberty. In *A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity* (1612), he argued that the king was a mortal ruler rather than lord over the consciences of his subjects and extended liberty beyond fellow Protestants. His argument included those whose religion he regarded as false. This was a profound step beyond a toleration limited to approved Christian options (Helwys, 1612/1998).

Helwys's position did not arise from modern religious indifference. He believed truth mattered intensely. Precisely because faith concerns the soul's accountability to God, he denied that the magistrate could produce genuine belief by force. This distinction between theological exclusivity and civil liberty became one of the most enduring Baptist principles, though Baptists themselves have not practiced it perfectly in every context.

6.3 Particular Baptists and the London confessional tradition

A second Baptist stream emerged in London during the 1630s and 1640s from Separatist and Congregational circles associated with the congregation historically linked with Henry Jacob, John Lathrop, and Henry Jessey. Members who became convinced that baptism belonged to professing believers formed distinct congregations. The restoration of immersion among these communities occurred in the early 1640s and helped establish a practice that would become strongly associated with Baptist identity.

The First London Baptist Confession of 1644, issued by seven Particular Baptist congregations, is important because it publicly distinguished them from both the Church of England and radical stereotypes attached to the word Anabaptist. Its title itself protested that they were "commonly, though falsely" called Anabaptists. Doctrinally, these Baptists stood much closer to Reformed Protestantism than to the revolutionary apocalypticism of Münster. They affirmed orthodox Trinitarian and Christological doctrine, justification by faith, election, holiness, and a gathered church of baptized believers (Particular Baptists, 1644).

The Second London Baptist Confession, first published anonymously in 1677 and publicly adopted by representatives in 1689 after toleration widened, made that continuity even clearer. It adapted extensively from the Westminster Confession and the

Savoy Declaration while revising ecclesiology and baptism. Its chapter on baptism limits the ordinance to those who profess repentance, faith, and obedience to Christ and identifies immersion as the proper mode (Particular Baptists, 1677/1689). The confession demonstrates that early Particular Baptists did not intend to abandon the Reformed theological world. They reconfigured its doctrine of the visible church and sacraments around credobaptist convictions.

6.4 General and Particular Baptists: real distinction, porous history

The familiar division between General Baptists and Particular Baptists is historically useful but should not be treated as though two perfectly organized denominations appeared fully formed in 1609 and 1644. Early congregations differed over atonement, election, ministry, laying on of hands, communion, relations with other dissenters, and political questions. Networks and associations developed gradually. Specialist scholarship has therefore emphasized both the usefulness and the limits of the General-Particular binary when reconstructing the first two centuries of Baptist development (Haykin, 2026; Wright, 2006).

Nevertheless, the soteriological distinction became durable. General Baptists generally emphasized Christ's death for all and the possibility of falling from grace; Particular Baptists adopted Reformed doctrines of election and particular redemption in varying formulations. Both practiced believer's baptism and congregational church life. Both suffered legal disabilities. Both produced defenses of religious liberty. Their shared ecclesiology allowed cooperation in some settings even as soteriology separated their confessional traditions.

By the eighteenth century, portions of the older General Baptist movement experienced theological decline and, in some places, movement toward heterodox or Unitarian positions. The General Baptist New Connexion founded under Dan Taylor in 1770 represented an evangelical renewal that reaffirmed conversion, biblical authority, mission, and Baptist identity. The episode is a reminder that denominational names can survive substantial doctrinal change and that later renewal may occur inside a tradition rather than by founding an entirely new one.

Table 4. Major early Baptist streams and their genealogical relationships.

Stream	Origin	Soteriology	Ecclesiology	Key trajectory	Genealogical note
General Baptists	Smyth–Helwys circle, c. 1609–1612	General / universal atonement; later Arminian trajectories	Believer baptism; congregational church	Helwys and successors; later New Connexion (1770)	Direct early Mennonite influence especially around Smyth, but English institutional development
Particular Baptists	London Separatist / Congregational circles, 1630s–1640s	Reformed / Calvinistic soteriology	Believer baptism, increasingly immersion; congregational church	1644 and 1677/1689 London confessions; later missionary movement	Distinct English emergence; confessional borrowing from Westminster/Savoy
Separate / revival Baptists	18th-century transatlantic awakening	Conversionist evangelical Calvinism in many settings	Believer baptism; local church planting	Sandy Creek and related southern networks	Revivalist expansion, later cooperation with Regular Baptists

Note. Direct institutional descent is distinguished from contact, influence, and later cooperation.

BAPTIST ORIGINS: DESCENT AND INFLUENCE

Solid arrows = principal historical development; dotted arrows = significant influence

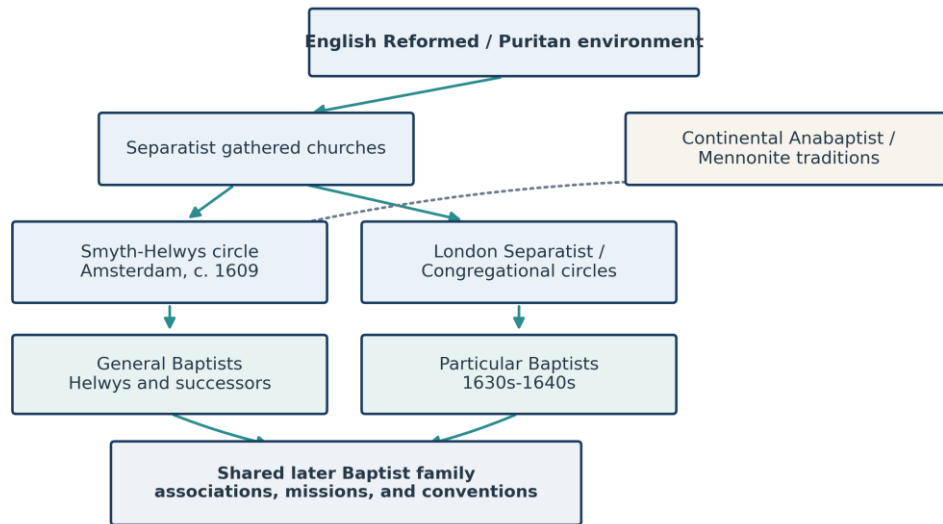


Figure 2. Baptist origins: principal descent and Anabaptist influence.

Note. Solid arrows denote principal institutional development; dotted arrows denote influence. The diagram does not posit an uninterrupted Baptist succession.

6.5 Believer's baptism and the reconstruction of membership

The Baptist innovation was not merely a preference for immersion. Believer's baptism reorganized the visible church. If baptism follows a credible profession of repentance and faith, then church membership cannot be assumed from birth, citizenship, or infant initiation. The congregation becomes a voluntary body whose members claim personal allegiance to Christ. This fit naturally with church covenants, congregational discipline, and a refusal to identify church boundaries with political territory.

Baptists therefore sharpened one of the central questions left unresolved by the Reformation: what makes a person visibly part of the church? Magisterial Protestants had rejected many Roman sacramental claims while retaining infant baptism and territorial church structures. Baptists argued that this retained too much of the old Christendom model. The theological assessment below concludes that the clearest New Testament pattern supports baptism upon profession of faith, but the historical narrative must recognize that paedobaptists offered serious covenantal arguments and did not simply ignore Scripture.

Baptist churches also developed practices of discipline intended to protect the credibility of profession. Membership could require testimony, baptism, covenant commitment, and submission to congregational correction. At its best, this preserved the distinction between nominal Christianity and discipleship. At its worst, intensive membership scrutiny could become legalistic or elevate one culturally expected conversion story into a universal norm.

6.6 Religious liberty: from persecuted dissent to a theological principle

Baptist advocacy of religious liberty became one of the movement's most historically significant contributions. Helwys's 1612 argument preceded later Anglo-American developments, while Roger Williams established Rhode Island on principles that separated civil belonging from compulsory religious conformity. Williams's own relationship to Baptist identity was brief and complex, and Rhode Island should not be described as the product of one stable Baptist denomination. Nevertheless, the colony became an important laboratory of wider toleration.

The principle developed from several sources: biblical conviction about voluntary faith, the gathered-church model, experience of persecution, and practical life amid pluralism. It was not equivalent to theological relativism. Early Baptists commonly believed that other religious systems were gravely wrong. Their claim was that civil punishment is not Christ's appointed means of producing faith. This distinction later shaped arguments for disestablishment and freedom of conscience in the Atlantic world.

Baptist history also cautions against triumphalism. Religious liberty became more consistent over time, and individual Baptists sometimes supported political arrangements that privileged their own communities. The tradition's strongest principle should therefore be measured by Scripture rather than romanticized through denominational memory.

6.7 Baptists in North America: associations, awakening, and frontier expansion

Baptist congregations appeared early in colonial North America in places such as Providence and Newport. Their institutional growth accelerated in the eighteenth century. The Philadelphia Baptist Association, organized in 1707, provided a model of cooperation among autonomous churches. Associations advised congregations, supported ministers, encouraged doctrinal agreement, and later promoted education and mission without functioning as episcopal hierarchies.

The Great Awakening transformed Baptist expansion. Revival preaching disrupted older parish structures and encouraged converts to question whether inherited membership was sufficient. "Separate" congregations emerging from revival sometimes moved toward Baptist convictions. The Sandy Creek tradition in the southern colonies, associated with Shubal Stearns from the 1750s, became especially influential in the growth of revivalist Baptists. Over time, Regular and Separate Baptists often learned to cooperate and merge, combining confessional Calvinist inheritance with revivalist evangelism.

This fusion proved extraordinarily portable. Congregational government required relatively little centralized infrastructure; lay and locally trained preachers could establish churches rapidly; believer's baptism marked a clear conversion boundary; and revival preaching appealed beyond established elites. These features would make Baptists a major force in nineteenth-century North America and later global Christianity.

6.8 Black Baptist agency before Carey: Silver Bluff, George Liele, and David George

The standard story of eighteenth-century Baptist mission becomes seriously distorted if it jumps directly from English Baptists to William Carey. In the American South, enslaved and free Black Christians were already creating Baptist communities under conditions of slavery. The Silver Bluff congregation in South Carolina was organized in the 1770s among enslaved people and is often identified as one of the earliest continuing Black Baptist congregations in North America. David George became a leading elder in this community. During the American Revolution, Black Baptists moved through British-controlled Savannah and other locations as enslaved people sought freedom amid the upheaval of war.

George Liele, born into slavery around 1750, was converted in Georgia and licensed or ordained for Baptist ministry in the 1770s. After securing freedom and leaving with the British evacuation, he arrived in Jamaica in 1783 and developed Baptist work there among people that included enslaved Africans. His mission predates Carey's voyage to India by a decade. David George, meanwhile, was evacuated as a Black Loyalist to Nova Scotia and later moved to Sierra Leone, where he continued Baptist ministry. These trajectories link the earliest Black Baptist church formation in the American South to the Caribbean, Canada, and West Africa before the famous English missionary society of 1792 (Baptist World Alliance, 2013; Boston University School of Theology, n.d.).

This history matters for genealogy because mission cannot be represented as a one-way movement from white Europe to passive non-European recipients. Enslaved and formerly enslaved Christians became pastors, church founders, migrants, and missionaries. Their movements were shaped by the violence of slavery and empire, yet they exercised genuine religious agency. The global Baptist story began to become polycentric before the modern missionary movement is conventionally dated.

6.9 Carey, Fuller, and the missionary society of 1792

In Britain, the late eighteenth-century Particular Baptist revival generated another decisive missionary development. William Carey, a Baptist pastor and shoemaker by trade, argued in his 1792 *Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* that Christ's Great Commission remained binding and that Christians should employ organized means for world evangelization. Later that year, ministers and lay supporters meeting at Kettering formed the Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, later known as the Baptist Missionary Society. Andrew Fuller became a central organizer and theological supporter while Carey sailed for India in 1793 (Bebbington, 2010; Carey, 1792; Haykin, 2026).

Carey's significance should be stated carefully. He was neither the first Protestant missionary nor the first Baptist missionary across cultures. Pietist and Moravian missions had already established durable precedents, and George Liele's work in Jamaica preceded him. Carey's importance lies in the scale of the voluntary missionary-society model he helped catalyze among English-speaking evangelicals. The society separated missionary coordination from direct state control and from the ordinary government of any single local church. That organizational form became one of the defining mechanisms of nineteenth-century evangelical expansion.

By 1800, Baptists had therefore developed from a persecuted English gathered-church movement into a transatlantic family marked by believer's baptism, congregational governance, confessional diversity, advocacy of liberty, revivalist expansion, Black Christian agency, and organized mission. The same flexibility that enabled expansion also made later fragmentation easy. Baptist unity depended less on one hierarchy than on shared doctrine, associations, confessions, and voluntary cooperation.

7. Quakers and the Society of Friends: Inward Illumination, Peace, and Radical Discipleship

7.1 A movement born in revolutionary England

Quakerism arose from the same mid-seventeenth-century crisis that produced Congregational, Baptist, republican, millenarian, and other radical religious experiments, but it cannot be reduced to any one of them. The collapse of effective censorship and episcopal control during the Civil War opened an unprecedented public market of preaching and print. Seekers, Baptists, Fifth Monarchists, Ranters, Independents, and other groups debated what constituted a true church and whether the apostolic gifts and immediacy of the Spirit had been lost in institutional Christianity. George Fox, born in 1624, emerged from this environment after an intense personal search in which conventional clergy and religious advisers failed to resolve his spiritual distress. By the late 1640s and early 1650s he had begun preaching that Christ could teach people directly by his Spirit and that genuine Christianity required inward transformation rather than dependence on ordained clergy, buildings, ceremonies, or merely verbal profession (Fox, 1694/1952; Moore, 2020).

The movement expanded rapidly after 1652, especially in northern England. Fox's preaching, the hospitality and leadership of Margaret Fell at Swarthmoor Hall, the travels of the so-called Valiant Sixty, and an extraordinary flood of pamphlets turned a regional revival into a national movement. Opponents called the adherents Quakers, probably associating the name with trembling under divine power, while the movement used names such as Friends, Children of the Light, or Friends of Truth. Its early missionary energy was remarkable. Men and women traveled through Britain, Ireland, continental Europe, the Caribbean, and the English colonies, frequently enduring imprisonment, beatings, fines, and expulsion.

The first generation was also more radical and less institutionally settled than later Quakerism. James Nayler's symbolic entry into Bristol in 1656, reenacting elements associated with Christ's entry into Jerusalem, provoked a national scandal and a savage parliamentary punishment. The episode damaged the movement's public reputation and intensified internal efforts to distinguish genuine leadings of the Spirit from individual extravagance. Quaker history therefore contains its own movement from charismatic spontaneity toward ordered communal discernment. By the later 1660s, Fox and other leaders were establishing monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, disciplinary procedures, and networks of oversight that enabled the Society of Friends to survive persecution and outlive the revolutionary setting that had produced it (Moore, 2020).

7.2 The Inner Light: what early Friends meant

The Quaker language of the Light is often misunderstood. It did not originally mean that every private feeling is divine or that unaided human reason contains sufficient truth. Early Friends spoke of the Light of Christ, the inward work of the living Word and Spirit who exposes sin, calls to repentance, leads into truth, and makes obedience possible. Fox could affirm the importance of Scripture while insisting that the Spirit who inspired the biblical writers must also open the believer to understand and obey their testimony. In later Quaker theological systematization, Robert Barclay argued that the same Spirit who gave Scripture provides the primary saving knowledge of God and that Scripture, though true and authoritative as a faithful declaration, is not the fountain from which the Spirit derives authority (Barclay, 1678; Britain Yearly Meeting, 2013).

This distinction placed Quakers outside the ordinary Protestant formulation of *Sola Scriptura*. Lutherans, Reformed Christians, Anglicans, Baptists, and most Congregationalists disagreed about interpretation and church authority, but they generally identified the canonical Scriptures as the final public norm by which spirits, doctrines, and practices must be tested. Quakers insisted that living divine revelation cannot be reduced to a written text, even while maintaining that genuine revelation will not contradict the truth of Scripture. The controversy was therefore not simply Bible versus no Bible. It concerned the location of final functional authority when an individual's claimed inward leading and the received interpretation of Scripture appear to diverge.

Quaker worship embodied this conviction. Meetings could gather in expectant silence without a prearranged sermon, waiting until a participant believed the Spirit gave a message. Anyone so moved could speak, including women. Ministry was not conceived as the monopoly of a clerical office supported by tithes. Friends also refused honorific customs they associated with social hierarchy, commonly used plain speech, declined to swear oaths, and rejected compulsory tithes. These practices turned theology into public social behavior and repeatedly brought Friends into conflict with courts, parish authorities, and employers.

7.3 Baptism and the Lord's Supper: from spiritual reality to rejection of outward rites

Quaker sacramental practice marked an even sharper departure from most Protestant traditions. Early Friends argued that Christians had mistaken outward signs for inward realities. Water baptism pointed to the baptism of the Spirit; the Lord's Supper pointed to spiritual communion with the living Christ. Because the substance had come, Friends generally ceased observing water baptism and a ceremonial Eucharist as required Christian rites. Later Quaker self-understanding often

described all faithful life as sacramental rather than locating divine presence uniquely in designated ceremonies (Britain Yearly Meeting, 2013).

The argument had an intelligible reforming logic. Quakers correctly perceived that external rites can be performed without repentance, faith, or spiritual life. They also resisted the use of sacraments as boundary mechanisms administered by a privileged clerical caste. Yet their solution created a new biblical question. The New Testament does not present inward grace and outward obedience as mutually exclusive. The risen Christ commands baptism, apostolic churches baptize converts, and Paul transmits the Lord's Supper as a practice to be continued in remembrance and proclamation. Quaker rejection of both ordinances therefore became one of the clearest points at which the movement departed from the apostolic pattern maintained by almost every other major Christian family.

7.4 Women, equality, and prophetic ministry

Women were unusually prominent in early Quaker preaching, organization, travel, controversy, and discipline. Margaret Fell's *Women's Speaking Justified* of 1666 argued from the women who testified to Christ's resurrection, from Pentecost's promise that sons and daughters would prophesy, and from the spiritual equality of men and women in Christ that female public ministry could not simply be prohibited (Fell, 1666). Quaker women crossed social and geographic boundaries as traveling ministers and eventually participated in separate women's meetings that exercised significant pastoral and disciplinary responsibilities.

This practice did not eliminate all gender hierarchy, and later Quaker communities developed their own patterns of institutional control. It nevertheless forced a practical reconsideration of how texts concerning women, prophecy, order, and teaching should be interpreted together. The wider Protestant world usually restricted ordained pastoral office to men, but revival movements repeatedly depended on women's testimony, patronage, prayer networks, teaching, publishing, and informal evangelism even when official structures remained male. Quakerism made that tension unusually visible.

7.5 Peace, oaths, persecution, and institutional survival

Friends became known for a principled rejection of warfare and violent retaliation. Their 1660 declaration to Charles II, written amid fears that Quakers might be linked to revolutionary violence, denied participation in armed plots and grounded peace in the kingdom and example of Christ. Quaker refusal to swear oaths drew on Jesus' teaching about truthful speech, while refusal of military service followed their reading of enemy love, non-retaliation, and the incompatibility of killing with faithful discipleship. These convictions later became central elements of the Quaker peace testimony (Brock, 1990).

The Restoration government did not respond gently. Friends were targeted by the Quaker Act of 1662 and suffered under legislation against unauthorized religious assemblies. Thousands were fined or imprisoned, and meetinghouses were closed. Persecution, however, strengthened their organizational discipline. The development of regular meetings, records, marriage procedures, poor relief, traveling-minister certificates, and corporate decision-making transformed a prophetic movement into a durable religious society.

William Penn provided the most famous political experiment associated with this tradition. A convert to Quakerism and a man with elite connections, Penn received the Pennsylvania charter in 1681 and promoted a colony designed to provide broad religious liberty within the limits of the age. Quaker political power in Pennsylvania did not produce a perfect egalitarian society, and tensions between pacifist principle, colonial government, Indigenous relations, land acquisition, and imperial warfare would become increasingly difficult. Yet Pennsylvania demonstrated that a Protestant polity could tolerate substantial confessional diversity without requiring one established church to control every inhabitant.

7.6 Slavery and the slow development of Quaker abolitionism

Quaker equality should not be romanticized by reading later abolitionism backward into the movement's beginnings. Quakers participated in Atlantic commerce and some owned enslaved people. In 1688 four German Quakers at Germantown, Pennsylvania, presented a protest against slavery that appealed to the Golden Rule and condemned the buying and selling of human beings. The document was historically pioneering, but the higher Quaker meetings to which it was referred did not adopt its position at the time (National Park Service, n.d.). The episode is important precisely because it exposes both moral insight and institutional hesitation.

During the eighteenth century, figures such as John Woolman and Anthony Benezet pressed the Society of Friends toward much stronger corporate opposition to slavery and the slave trade. Quaker meetings increasingly disciplined slaveholding and became influential in Atlantic abolitionism. That development illustrates a recurring pattern in this chapter. A movement's founding principles can contain implications that its first generation does not consistently apply. Historical praise is therefore most responsible when it recognizes both the principle and the delayed repentance required to embody it.

Table 5. Major early Quaker distinctives and their historical-theological significance.

Issue	Early Friends emphasis	Historical / theological significance
Authority	Present Light of Christ / Spirit; Scripture honored but not treated as source of the Spirit's authority	Creates strong doctrine of immediate guidance; raises the question of how inward claims are tested.
Worship	Waiting, silence, spontaneous vocal ministry according to perceived leading	Rejects fixed clerical liturgy; later programmed forms emerge in some branches.
Baptism / Supper	Outward rites not required as continuing ordinances	Emphasizes inward reality but departs from explicit apostolic practice of water baptism and the Supper.
Ministry	Gift-based; no separate sacramental priesthood; women exercised public ministry	Broadens recognized ministry while developing communal structures to test leadings.
Peace / oaths	Nonviolence, refusal of oaths, truth-speaking	Produces costly public witness and later humanitarian influence.
Polity	Monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings; corporate discernment	Charismatic movement becomes a durable institution without clergy in the ordinary sacramental sense.

8. Pietism: Renewal Within Confessional Protestantism

8.1 The problem Pietists were trying to solve

German Pietism arose within a Protestant world that already possessed doctrinal precision, catechetical systems, university theology, and territorial churches. Its leading figures did not begin by denying the Lutheran Reformation. They feared that orthodox confession could be possessed without regenerated life. The devastation of the Thirty Years' War, pastoral concern over nominal Christianity, the influence of devotional writers, and frustration with theological polemics formed the background. Johann Arndt's *True Christianity*, published in four books between 1605 and 1610, became an important bridge. Arndt retained Lutheran doctrine while stressing repentance, union with Christ, practical holiness, and the renewal of the image of God.

This context requires fairness toward the Lutheran orthodoxy Pietists criticized. Seventeenth-century confessional theologians were not simply spiritually dead scholastics. They preached, prayed, catechized, and wrote devotional literature. Nor did Pietists reject doctrine as such. Their complaint was functional: true doctrine had to become lived Christianity. Douglas Shantz (2013) therefore describes Pietism as a broad renewal movement whose diversity resists reduction to anti-intellectual emotionalism. Its most influential programmatic text was Philipp Jakob Spener's *Pia Desideria* of 1675.

8.2 Spener's *Pia Desideria* and the collegia pietatis

Philipp Jakob Spener, a Lutheran pastor in Frankfurt, began small devotional gatherings often called *collegia pietatis*, meetings for Scripture, prayer, spiritual conversation, and mutual edification. In *Pia Desideria*, originally written as a preface to a collection of Arndt's sermons, Spener diagnosed widespread failures among rulers, clergy, and laity and offered a constructive reform program. He called for wider and more serious use of Scripture, fuller activation of the spiritual priesthood of believers, emphasis on practicing Christianity rather than merely knowing it, restraint and love in theological controversy, reform of theological education so that ministers were formed in piety as well as learning, and preaching aimed at faith and transformation rather than rhetorical display (Spener, 1675/1964).

Spener's proposals were conservative and disruptive at the same time. He did not initially call believers to abandon the Lutheran territorial church. He sought renewal within it. Yet small-group Bible study gave laypeople a new religious agency, and the distinction between living and nominal Christianity could destabilize a church that baptized and catechized an entire population. Once the reality of faith is measured by conversion and fruit rather than parish membership alone, the gathered fellowship of the regenerate begins to appear inside the territorial church. Pietism therefore created a bridge between magisterial Protestantism and the voluntary evangelical movements of the eighteenth century.

The *collegia* also raised questions about ecclesiastical order. Supporters saw them as instruments of renewal. Critics feared conventicles that could produce separatism, doctrinal novelty, charismatic excess, or contempt for ordained ministry. Both concerns had historical basis. Some Pietists remained loyal church reformers. Radical Pietists rejected state churches, embraced visionary or apocalyptic ideas, or organized separatist communities. Pietism was therefore a family of renewals, not one uniform body.

8.3 Francke and Halle: piety becomes institution

August Hermann Francke gave Pietism a durable educational and missionary infrastructure. After a conversion experience that he interpreted as a decisive breakthrough into living faith, Francke became associated with the University of Halle, founded in 1694. Around his ministry grew schools, an orphan house, teacher training, printing operations, charitable institutions, and networks of donors and correspondents. Halle demonstrated that experiential Christianity need not be anti-institutional. Pietists created new institutions precisely because they believed regenerated faith should transform education, poverty relief, scholarship, and mission (Shantz, 2013).

Francke's program joined rigorous Bible study to practical service. His institutions trained clergy and teachers who carried Pietist emphases far beyond Saxony. Cheap publications and missionary reports created a reading public that learned to interpret conversion stories and reports of mission as signs of God's continuing work. This devotional print culture would strongly influence later evangelical awakenings.

8.4 The Danish-Halle mission and the widening Protestant horizon

Pietism also helped move Protestantism from confessional consolidation toward organized cross-cultural mission. In 1706 Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plütschau arrived at Tranquebar in southern India as missionaries under the Danish crown with strong connections to Francke's Halle network. The mission learned Tamil, translated Christian texts, established schools, corresponded extensively with Europe, and generated a major documentary archive. It was not the first time a Protestant had crossed cultures with religious intent, but it became one of the first durable, institutionally organized Protestant overseas mission enterprises and a significant model for later missionary societies (Francke Foundations, n.d.; Shantz, 2013).

The mission also exposes the ambiguities of early Protestant globalization. It operated within the infrastructure of European colonial power even when missionaries criticized local abuses or sought serious linguistic and cultural engagement. Mission and empire could intersect without being identical. Theologically, the Pietist insistence that individuals personally encounter the gospel encouraged translation and education. Historically, the movement participated in expanding European networks whose political and economic inequalities cannot be ignored.

Pietism's most durable contribution was therefore not one new denomination. It was a spiritual grammar that crossed denominations: regeneration, disciplined Bible reading, small-group fellowship, practical holiness, missionary obligation, and testimony to experienced grace. That grammar would profoundly shape Moravians, Methodists, later evangelicals, and eventually portions of the Holiness and Pentecostal traditions.

9. The Moravian Renewal: Ancient Roots, Herrnhut, and a Missionary Community

9.1 Why Moravian genealogy cannot begin in 1722

The renewed Moravian Church is a particularly important case for disciplined genealogy. It did not originate from nowhere on Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf's estate in 1722. Its chosen historical identity reached back to the *Unitas Fratrum*, the Unity of the Brethren, formed in fifteenth-century Bohemia and Moravia from currents related to the Hussite reform. The old Unity had developed its own episcopal structures, hymnody, discipline, and educational traditions and had suffered severe disruption under Counter-Reformation pressures. John Amos Comenius became one of its most famous exiled bishops and helped preserve its memory.

When Moravian and Bohemian Protestant refugees began settling on Zinzendorf's estate at Berthelsdorf in Saxony in 1722, they therefore carried memories of an older church. At the same time, the community that became Herrnhut gathered people from several religious backgrounds, and its institutional identity developed under the strong influence of Zinzendorf, contemporary Pietism, and the religious politics of Saxony. Paul Peucker's archival study shows that Herrnhut is best understood neither as a simple uninterrupted continuation of the medieval Brethren nor as a completely new Pietist sect. It was a renewal that appropriated an older identity while forming a new transconfessional community under eighteenth-century conditions (Peucker, 2022).

9.2 Herrnhut, 1727, and Zinzendorf's Christ-centered spirituality

Herrnhut grew quickly and also experienced internal conflict. Zinzendorf, a Lutheran nobleman shaped by Pietist influences, worked to reconcile factions and order the community through a covenant of discipline. The year 1727 became a remembered turning point, especially the communion service of 13 August, which later Moravian tradition described as an extraordinary renewal of unity and spiritual power. A sustained prayer watch began soon afterward and became a powerful symbol of Moravian devotional identity.

Zinzendorf's theology centered intensely on personal attachment to Christ, the atoning wounds of Jesus, congregational fellowship, hymnody, prayer, and mission. At its best, this spirituality refused to reduce Christianity to abstract propositions. At times, especially in the 1740s, Moravian devotional language became highly emotional and used vivid imagery of Christ's wounds that some contemporaries considered excessive. The movement later moderated aspects of this language. Here again renewal and correction occurred within the same tradition.

Zinzendorf also experimented with an ecumenical idea often called the *tropus* system, allowing believers of different Protestant confessional backgrounds to belong to the wider Brethren's fellowship without pretending that Lutheran, Reformed, and Moravian identities had simply disappeared. The goal was unity in living faith without requiring immediate confessional homogenization. This ecumenical impulse distinguished Moravianism from many state-church models while also creating tensions over how much doctrinal difference a single communion could contain.

9.3 Missions to the Caribbean, Greenland, and southern Africa

Moravian missionary expansion was extraordinary relative to the movement's size. In 1732 the first missionaries from Herrnhut went to St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies, where mission among enslaved Africans forced the movement into the brutal realities of the plantation Atlantic. Moravians also established work in Greenland and among Indigenous peoples in North America. In 1737 Georg Schmidt began mission among Khoekhoe communities at the Cape, creating one of the earliest Protestant mission initiatives in southern Africa before opposition over his authority to baptize contributed to the interruption of the work. The mission was renewed later in the century (Sensbach, 2005; Witmer, 2022).

The Caribbean mission also demonstrates that Christian expansion was not simply a European story. Rebecca Protten, born enslaved on St. Thomas, became a free Moravian evangelist who preached among enslaved Africans, participated in the formation of an early Black Protestant congregation, traveled in Europe and West Africa, and embodied an Afro-Atlantic Christian agency that missionary narratives centered on European men can easily obscure. Jon Sensbach's reconstruction of her life shows that enslaved and formerly enslaved Christians were not merely recipients of missionary religion. They became interpreters, leaders, and transmitters of the faith under conditions of severe oppression (Sensbach, 2005).

Schmidt's Cape episode deserves closer attention because it shows how missionary zeal, colonial government, and competing Protestant jurisdictions could collide. After reaching the Cape in 1737, Schmidt worked among Khoekhoe communities and eventually established himself at Baviaanskloof, later Genadendal. In 1742 he baptized five Khoekhoe converts after receiving documentary confirmation of ministerial authorization from Zinzendorf. Dutch Reformed objections focused especially on whether a Moravian missionary outside the colony's established Reformed structures possessed lawful authority to administer baptism. Colonial authorities then prohibited further baptisms while the matter was referred to Europe. Schmidt left the Cape in 1744 and never returned. The episode demonstrates that early Protestant mission did not enter an ecclesiastically empty colonial field: ordained authority, sacramental jurisdiction, state permission, and the spiritual agency of Indigenous converts all shaped what missionary work could become (Witmer, 2022).

Moravian missions nevertheless operated within imperial worlds and did not uniformly challenge slavery or colonial structures. Some missionaries accommodated plantation systems to secure access to enslaved populations. The movement's history therefore combines sacrificial cross-cultural mission, genuine recognition of African Christian agency, and compromises that require moral scrutiny. It is historically irresponsible either to erase the missions because of colonial context or to celebrate them without attending to the systems of domination within which they worked.

9.4 Moravians and John Wesley

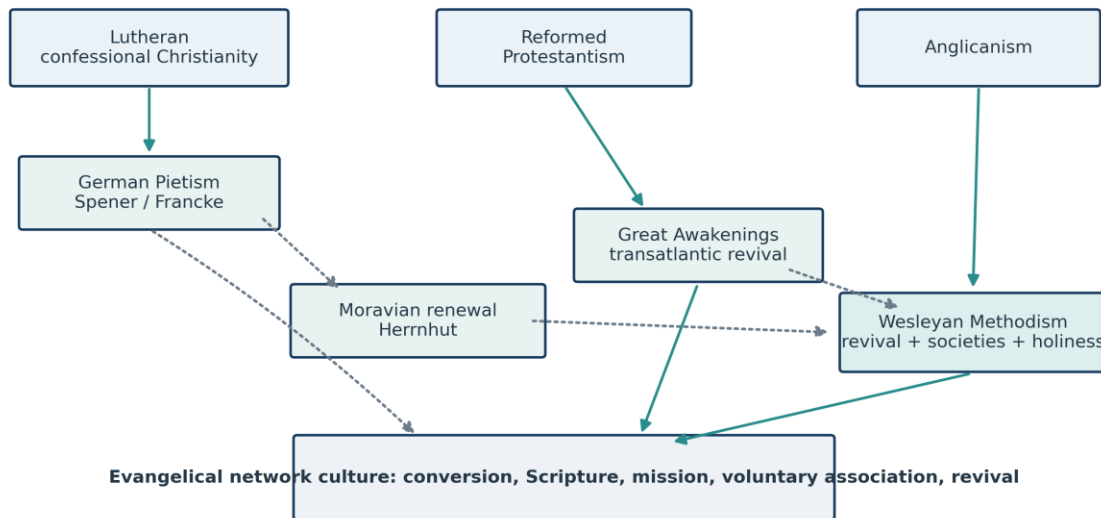
Moravian influence on John Wesley created one of the most consequential connections in eighteenth-century Protestant genealogy. On the voyage to Georgia in 1735–1736, Wesley was impressed by Moravians whose calmness during a storm contrasted with his own fear. Back in England, he conversed with the Moravian Peter Böhler, who pressed him on justification by faith and assurance. Wesley's famous Aldersgate experience on 24 May 1738 occurred at a society where Luther's preface to Romans was being read in a Moravian setting. Soon afterward Wesley visited continental Moravian communities, including Herrnhut.

The relationship did not remain harmonious. Wesley eventually criticized forms of Moravian quietism that he believed discouraged active use of the means of grace while a person waited for faith. He separated organizationally from the Fetter Lane Society in 1740. The genealogy is therefore one of powerful influence followed by differentiation, not direct Moravian parentage of Methodism. Wesley learned from Moravian assurance, fellowship, and testimony, then integrated those emphases into an Anglican and Arminian framework of his own.

The Fetter Lane break clarifies what Wesley retained and what he rejected. He continued to value the Moravian insistence on direct trust in Christ, assurance, disciplined fellowship, hymnody, and missionary seriousness. What he opposed was a form of stillness that, in his judgment, encouraged spiritually troubled people to refrain from the ordinary means by which God

nourishes faith while they waited passively for a decisive gift of believing. Wesley instead insisted on prayer, Scripture, the Lord's Supper, fasting, works of mercy, and active obedience as means of grace. These practices did not merit salvation, but he regarded them as ordinary instruments through which God awakens and strengthens faith. Methodism thus appropriated Moravian experiential Christianity without adopting Moravian quietism as Wesley understood it (Heitzenrater, 2013; Rack, 2002).

RENEWAL CURRENTS INTO EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EVANGELICALISM



These are relationships of influence and renewal, not a claim that one movement is simply the institutional child of another.

Figure 3. Renewal currents into eighteenth-century evangelicalism.

Note. The relationships are historical influences and reform currents rather than a claim of simple denominational descent.

10. The Great Awakenings: Conversion, Itinerancy, and a New Evangelical Public

10.1 One awakening or many connected revivals?

During the 1730s and 1740s, revivals appeared across regions already connected by Reformed, Pietist, Moravian, and dissenting networks. Welsh Methodists experienced awakening under figures such as Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland. Scottish communion seasons became centers of evangelical renewal. English field preaching reached populations poorly served by parish structures. In the British North American colonies, revival episodes occurred in the Middle Colonies and New England. News traveled across the Atlantic through letters, journals, newspapers, pamphlets, and personal itinerancy. George Whitefield became the most visible human connector because his preaching tours made revival a public transatlantic event.

The term First Great Awakening is therefore useful if treated carefully. Butler's critique rightly warns against imagining that all colonies experienced one simultaneous event or that every local revival shared the same causes. Lambert's work shows, however, that evangelicals themselves actively created a common revival consciousness by publicizing reports and presenting dispersed events as one work of God. The Awakening was partly an event and partly a networked interpretation of events (Butler, 1982; Lambert, 1999; Noll, 2003; Ward, 1992).

10.2 Jonathan Edwards and the Northampton revivals

Jonathan Edwards, a Congregational minister in Northampton, Massachusetts, became one of the most important theologians of revival. The local awakening of 1734–1735 and later participation in the wider revivals convinced him that powerful religious experience could accompany genuine conversion. Yet Edwards did not regard intensity as self-authenticating. In works culminating in *Religious Affections* in 1746, he argued that tears, bodily effects, vivid impressions, confident speech, or unusual experiences do not by themselves prove that grace is genuine. The decisive evidence lies in a transformed orientation toward God and enduring Christian fruit (Edwards, 1737/1972; Edwards, 1746/1959).

Edwards thus represents an internal evangelical critique of revivalism. He defended the reality of divine awakening while opposing both rationalistic dismissal and credulous enthusiasm. His method is genealogically important because later revival traditions repeatedly faced the same problem: how can churches welcome conviction, assurance, and spiritual gifts without making psychological intensity a substitute for truth and holiness?

10.3 George Whitefield: itinerancy, mass preaching, and controversy

George Whitefield, an Anglican clergyman associated in his youth with the Oxford Holy Club, became the preeminent itinerant preacher of the transatlantic awakening. Beginning in 1739, he preached outdoors to large crowds in Britain and made repeated tours of the American colonies. His dramatic delivery, use of print, ability to cross denominational boundaries, and insistence on the necessity of the new birth created a new kind of evangelical public figure. Parish boundaries became less decisive when thousands gathered in fields or traveled to hear a preacher who claimed that nominal church membership without regeneration could not save.

Whitefield's theology was Calvinistic, which eventually placed him in conflict with John Wesley's rejection of unconditional reprobation and defense of universal grace. Yet their relationship was more complex than permanent hostility. After sharp controversy, they resumed personal cooperation even while leading distinct Calvinistic and Arminian Methodist streams. This is another important reminder that denominational genealogy often includes overlapping networks rather than clean institutional boundaries.

Whitefield's legacy also contains a grave contradiction. He ministered to enslaved people and spoke of their need for Christian instruction, but he also owned enslaved people and advocated the legalization of slavery in Georgia in connection with the economic survival of the Bethesda orphanage. The fact that an evangelist could preach the new birth with extraordinary power while participating in and defending a system that denied freedom to others demonstrates why revival success cannot serve as an infallible measure of moral or doctrinal faithfulness. Eighteenth-century evangelical history must include both spiritual awakening and complicity with Atlantic slavery (Kidd, 2007; Noll, 2003).

10.4 New Lights, Old Lights, and denominational consequences

Revival divided existing churches as well as renewing them. Supporters often became known as New Lights, while critics were labeled Old Lights, although the terminology varied by region. The Presbyterian Church in the American colonies split between Old Side and New Side bodies in 1741 and reunited in 1758. Congregational churches in New England fractured over itinerancy, admission standards, emotional manifestations, and ministerial authority. Radical revival supporters sometimes formed Separate congregations outside established parish systems.

Baptists benefited substantially from this instability. Separate Congregationalists who became convinced of believer's baptism helped create the Separate Baptist movement, especially in the southern colonies. Shubal Stearns and the Sandy Creek network in North Carolina after 1755 became influential in the explosive later growth of Baptists in the American South. Revival thus altered denominational demography. Movements organized around conversion could outgrow older establishments because they mobilized lay testimony, itinerant preaching, local church planting, and emotionally compelling narratives of transformed life.

The awakenings also expanded religious agency among groups excluded from formal clerical structures. Women testified, hosted meetings, corresponded, and interpreted religious experience. Enslaved and free Black hearers entered evangelical networks and increasingly became preachers and community leaders, although white churches often maintained racial hierarchy. Indigenous peoples encountered revival Christianity through missions and colonial conflict. The resulting evangelicalism could announce spiritual equality in Christ while remaining entangled with slavery, dispossession, and empire. The contradiction would become one of the central moral crises of later Protestant history.

Table 6. Renewal streams from Pietism to Methodism.

Movement	Parent setting	Core renewal emphasis	Institutional mechanism	Longer influence
Pietism	Lutheran / Reformed confessional churches	Regeneration, Bible study, practical holiness, small groups	Collegia pietatis, schools, printing, Halle institutions	Moravian, evangelical, missionary, Methodist influence
Moravian renewal	Older Unitas Fratrum + Pietist-era Herrnhut	Christ-centered assurance, communal discipline, prayer, mission	Settlement community, choirs, missions, transnational Unity	Major missionary expansion; direct influence on Wesley
Great Awakenings	Reformed, Anglican, dissenting, Pietist, Moravian networks	New birth, conversion, assurance, revival preaching	Itinerancy, print, intercolonial networks, voluntary cooperation	New/Old Light splits; Baptist growth; evangelical identity

Movement	Parent setting	Core renewal emphasis	Institutional mechanism	Longer influence
Methodism	Anglicanism with Moravian/Pietist and revival influences	Justification, new birth, assurance, Arminian grace, holiness	Societies, classes, bands, circuits, conferences	Methodist / Wesleyan churches; later Holiness movement

Note. These are renewal relationships and historical influences, not one continuous institutional succession.

11. John Wesley and the Formation of Methodism

11.1 Anglican roots and the Oxford Holy Club

John Wesley cannot be understood apart from Anglicanism. Born in 1703 into a clerical family, educated at Oxford, ordained in the Church of England, and formed by Anglican liturgy, patristic reading, devotional discipline, and the sacramental life, he never set out to found a denomination (Heitzenrater, 2013; Hempton, 2005). At Oxford, John and Charles Wesley joined a disciplined fellowship that prayed, fasted, studied Scripture, received communion frequently, visited prisoners, and organized time methodically. Their habits attracted the nickname Methodists. The name later attached to a movement whose theology became far more evangelical than this early program of disciplined religious practice alone.

Wesley's mission to Georgia from 1735 to 1737 exposed the limits of his spiritual confidence. His pastoral difficulties there and his encounter with Moravians sharpened his questions about saving faith and assurance. Peter Böhler persuaded him that justification is received through faith in Christ and that assurance could be a present work of the Spirit. These claims did not cause Wesley to abandon the sacramental and ethical dimensions of Anglicanism. They re-centered them around an evangelical doctrine of grace.

11.2 Aldersgate and the meaning of assurance

On 24 May 1738 Wesley attended a society meeting in Aldersgate Street where someone read from Luther's preface to Romans. Wesley recorded that while the reader described the change God works through faith in Christ, he experienced a new trust in Christ for salvation and an assurance of forgiveness. Later Methodist memory often treated Aldersgate as Wesley's conversion. Historians have rightly noted that Wesley's own later interpretation was more complex and that he had displayed substantial Christian belief and discipline before 1738. The safest historical conclusion is that Aldersgate marked a decisive experiential appropriation of justification by faith and assurance that transformed the orientation of his ministry (Heitzenrater, 2013; Rack, 2002).

Wesley's emphasis on assurance did not mean that every believer must reproduce one dramatic emotional experience. He distinguished the direct witness of the Spirit from the indirect witness of a life bearing the Spirit's fruit, and his own language developed over time. The broader Methodist effect, however, was unmistakable. Christianity was preached not merely as inherited baptismal status or external conformity but as present reconciliation with God, experienced trust in Christ, new birth, and transformed life.

11.3 Field preaching and the crossing of parish boundaries

In 1739 Whitefield invited Wesley to preach outdoors near Bristol. Wesley initially found the practice irregular because Anglican ministry was organized territorially around parishes and authorized pulpits. Yet the crowds among miners and other working people persuaded him that the evangelistic opportunity justified the departure from convention. Field preaching became one of Methodism's defining strategies.

The theological significance was larger than venue. Parish boundaries assumed that the baptized population belonged under local clergy. Methodist itinerancy operated on the assumption that nominal Christian populations needed evangelization. Preachers moved through circuits, revisited societies, recruited local leaders, and connected dispersed communities. The movement therefore existed inside the Church of England while functioning through a parallel missionary structure. It was an internal revival with increasingly denominational characteristics.

11.4 Societies, classes, bands, and disciplined discipleship

Methodist success depended not only on charismatic preaching but on organization. Wesley gathered converts and seekers into societies that met for exhortation, prayer, and accountability. Smaller bands provided more intensive spiritual examination. The class meeting, developed in the early 1740s, grouped members under lay leaders who collected contributions, visited members, monitored participation, and encouraged growth. The 1743 *General Rules* summarized Methodist discipline under three broad expectations: avoiding evil, doing good, and attending the ordinances of God, including public worship, the ministry of the Word, the Lord's Supper, prayer, Scripture, and fasting (Wesley & Wesley, 1743).

This structure combined revival with catechesis and pastoral oversight. Many revival movements dissipated after the itinerant preacher departed. Wesley created an apparatus for follow-up. Classes also mobilized lay leadership on a large scale. Methodism thereby demonstrated how a movement could be highly centralized in doctrinal and itinerant direction while highly decentralized in everyday pastoral care.

The system was not egalitarian in every respect. Wesley exercised extraordinary personal authority over preachers and societies, and disputes over appointments or discipline could be sharp. Yet Methodist organization enabled people without university education or clerical ordination to exercise substantial ministry. Lay preachers became indispensable. Women led classes and bands and, under pressure from successful female evangelists such as Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, Wesley gradually allowed some women to preach in exceptional circumstances. Methodism therefore widened functional ministry while remaining connected to inherited assumptions about ordination.

11.5 Wesleyan Arminianism and the Calvinistic controversy

Wesley rejected the claim that God eternally decreed a fixed portion of humanity to damnation without a genuinely available saving provision for them. His sermon *Free Grace* of 1740 argued that God's grace is freely offered to all (Wesley, 1740). Wesleyan theology consequently came to affirm universal atonement, grace enabling fallen people to respond to the gospel, the genuine possibility of resisting grace, and the necessity of persevering faith. Later Wesleyans used the term *prevenient grace* for divine grace that goes before conscious conversion and restores a measure of moral responsiveness damaged by sin.

This Arminianism was not a doctrine of autonomous human self-salvation. Wesley insisted that every movement toward God depends on prior grace. The disagreement with Calvinistic Methodists concerned how divine sovereignty and human response should be related. George Whitefield and Welsh Calvinistic Methodists affirmed Reformed predestination while sharing the same urgency about conversion, new birth, and evangelism. The Methodist revival therefore divided internally over a question already present in the Reformation, producing Arminian Wesleyan Methodism and Calvinistic Methodist trajectories.

The controversy is a useful warning against treating evangelicalism as one soteriological system. The eighteenth-century evangelical movement was united more by Christ-centered preaching, conversionism, biblical devotion, activism, and transdenominational networks than by agreement on every doctrine of grace. Reformed, Moravian, Lutheran Pietist, Anglican, Baptist, and Methodist evangelicals could cooperate in mission while disagreeing sharply about election, perseverance, sacraments, and church polity.

11.6 Justification, new birth, and the order of salvation

Wesley retained the Reformation distinction between justification and sanctification while giving new birth and assurance a central experiential role. Justification is God's gracious pardon and acceptance of sinners through Christ, received by faith. New birth is the Spirit's inward renewal that begins a life of holiness. Sanctification is the continuing work by which believers are conformed to love God and neighbor. Wesley rejected both works-righteousness and antinomianism. Grace saves from guilt and also from the dominion of sin.

This synthesis explains Methodism's ethical intensity. The movement did not regard conversion as the conclusion of Christian life. Converts entered disciplined communities because salvation had a moral trajectory. The same logic drove works of mercy, prison visitation, education, relief of the poor, and later social campaigns. Wesley's phrase *scriptural holiness* captured the claim that holiness must be defined by the Bible rather than by monastic withdrawal or private mystical achievement.

11.7 Christian perfection and entire sanctification

Wesley's most distinctive doctrine concerned Christian perfection, also called perfect love or entire sanctification. He did not ordinarily mean absolute intellectual, physical, or Adamic perfection, nor freedom from mistakes, ignorance, temptation, or the continuing need for grace. He argued that God could so fill the believer with love that conscious rebellion and governing sinful intention were overcome. In *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, a work revised over decades, he described the doctrine as the maturation of a conviction present in his ministry long before the organized Methodist revival (Wesley, 1777).

Wesley could speak of sanctification as both gradual growth and a decisive work of grace. He urged believers to expect God to cleanse the heart deeply while warning against claims to perfection that produced pride, spiritual superiority, or denial of evident sin. Nevertheless, the logic of a distinct post-conversion experience became increasingly important in later Wesleyan traditions. John Fletcher developed some related pneumatological language, and nineteenth-century Holiness teachers would systematize entire sanctification more sharply as a second work of grace. That trajectory later became one important theological root of some forms of Pentecostalism (Dayton, 1987; Dieter, 1996).

11.8 Hymnody, doctrine, and the emotional formation of a movement

Charles Wesley's hymns were as significant for Methodist formation as many formal doctrinal texts. They taught justification, new birth, assurance, the universal offer of salvation, the witness of the Spirit, holiness, suffering, mission, and hope in

memorable poetic form. Singing enabled theology to move beyond literate elites and helped create a shared emotional vocabulary across scattered societies. Methodist hymnody also demonstrates that eighteenth-century experiential religion was not necessarily doctrinally thin. Believers learned doctrine by singing it.

The movement's emotional intensity nevertheless attracted the charge of enthusiasm, a term often used for claims of irrational inspiration or ungoverned religious excitement. Wesley responded by combining testimony to spiritual experience with constant appeal to Scripture, reason, Christian antiquity, and observable fruit. The Methodist quadrilateral is a later label and should not be projected back as a formal Wesleyan formula, but Wesley's actual method did draw on Scripture as primary norm while using tradition, reason, and experience as subordinate witnesses.

11.9 Methodism, slavery, and social holiness

Wesley's moral theology eventually produced a forceful rejection of Atlantic slavery. His 1774 *Thoughts Upon Slavery* denounced the institution and participated in the emerging abolitionist campaign (Wesley, 1774). Near the end of his life he encouraged William Wilberforce in the struggle against the slave trade. Methodism's subsequent record was not uniform, especially in the United States, where white Methodists were deeply divided by slavery and later segregated Black Methodist denominations emerged from racism within white-controlled churches. Still, Wesley's late antislavery position shows how evangelical conversion and holiness could generate a public moral critique rather than remaining private spirituality.

The contrast with Whitefield is especially instructive. Two central revivalists could proclaim the same necessity of new birth yet reach sharply different moral positions concerning slavery. The difference confirms a central principle of this book: spiritual influence and doctrinal eloquence do not exempt any teacher from biblical moral evaluation.

11.10 Separation from Anglicanism: gradual in Britain, institutional in America

Wesley remained an Anglican priest until his death and repeatedly denied that he wished to create a separate church in Britain. Yet his own structures made long-term separation increasingly likely. Methodists had their own societies, circuits, conferences, lay preachers, publishing networks, disciplinary rules, and preaching houses. The question became acute when members wanted sacraments from leaders outside regular Anglican parish structures.

The American Revolution forced a more immediate solution because many Anglican clergy left the former colonies and the Church of England had no bishop there. In 1784 Wesley authorized Thomas Coke for ministry in America and provided a revised liturgy and articles. At the Christmas Conference in Baltimore, American Methodists organized the Methodist Episcopal Church under Coke and Francis Asbury. This was a clear institutional separation even though Wesley understood his action in continuity with the primitive church and did not regard himself as abandoning Anglican faith.

In Britain, the process remained more gradual. Wesley's death in 1791 removed the movement's strongest personal link to the Church of England. The Plan of Pacification in 1795 permitted broader sacramental administration under Methodist authority and accelerated denominational independence. It is therefore inaccurate to date British Methodism's separation entirely to Aldersgate, to the beginning of field preaching, or even to Wesley's lifetime. Methodism became a church through a process, not one schismatic day.

THE WESLEYAN-HOLINESS TRAJECTORY



Key continuity: expectation of experienced sanctifying grace

Key discontinuity: Wesley did not teach the later classical Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism evidenced by tongues.

Figure 4. From Wesleyan sanctification to the later Holiness trajectory.

Note. The line indicates theological influence. Wesleyan Methodism and later Pentecostalism are not identical traditions.

12. Toward the Holiness Movement: The Eighteenth-Century Seed of a Nineteenth-Century Branch

By 1800 the Holiness movement did not yet exist as the nineteenth-century transdenominational phenomenon that would later produce Wesleyan-Holiness denominations and influence early Pentecostalism. The theological materials, however, were already present. Wesley had taught a post-conversion fullness of holy love that could be experienced decisively as well as pursued progressively. Methodist societies had created testimony practices in which believers narrated experiences of grace. Revival preaching had normalized expectation of identifiable spiritual crisis. Small groups had provided structures for accountability and the pursuit of sanctification. Fletcher and other Methodist theologians supplied pneumatological language that later writers could develop in new directions.

The nineteenth century would intensify and modify these themes. Phoebe Palmer and other Holiness leaders would emphasize a more definite crisis of entire sanctification. Camp meetings and transdenominational associations would spread the doctrine beyond Methodism. Some teachers would connect sanctification more explicitly with Pentecostal language about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. By the late nineteenth century, holiness, divine healing, missionary expectation, and restorationist readings of Acts would converge in the environment from which modern Pentecostalism emerged (Dayton, 1987; Dieter, 1996). That later development must not be read backward into Wesley as though he had already taught the twentieth-century Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism evidenced by tongues. He did not. The genealogy is one of influence and reinterpretation, not identity.

This distinction illustrates the larger method of the book. Historical descendants often preserve selected features of an ancestor while reorganizing them within a new system. Wesleyan holiness influenced Pentecostalism, but Pentecostalism did not simply reproduce eighteenth-century Methodism. Moravian assurance influenced Wesley, but Methodism did not become Moravianism. Mennonite contact influenced Smyth, but Baptists did not become a continuation of Mennonite institutions. Genealogy becomes accurate only when descent, influence, adaptation, and innovation are kept distinct.

13. Why Protestantism Multiplied: Deeper Causes Across Two Centuries

The movements narrated above were not isolated inventions. Their multiplication resulted from the interaction of theological convictions with political, social, technological, and institutional changes that made new forms of Christian association possible. The most important causal factor remained the Reformation question of authority. Once Scripture was treated as the supreme doctrinal norm and inherited ecclesiastical arrangements were no longer presumed infallible, Christians repeatedly asked whether the existing church had reformed far enough. Puritans judged the Elizabethan and Jacobean settlements insufficiently biblical in worship and discipline. Separatists judged continued participation in the national church itself inconsistent with a gathered church of visible believers. Baptists concluded that a gathered church required baptism after profession of faith. Friends questioned whether fixed liturgies, ordained sacramental ministry, or outward rites could substitute for the present work of the Spirit. Pietists and Methodists asked whether confessional membership without regeneration and holy living could be called adequate Christianity. The same appeal to reform by Scripture therefore produced both retrieval and further contestation.

13.1 Church establishment, coercion, and the growth of voluntary religion

A second cause was the long crisis of the territorial church. Sixteenth-century Protestant reformers had normally assumed that civil rulers possessed major responsibilities for public religion. That arrangement survived into the seventeenth century, but it was repeatedly destabilized by the existence of minorities who could not conscientiously conform. English Puritans, Catholics, Separatists, Baptists, Quakers, and later Methodists encountered different forms of surveillance, fines, imprisonment, exclusion, or legal disability. The English Civil Wars showed that attempts to define one godly national settlement could intensify rather than eliminate religious conflict. Restoration uniformity after 1660 did not remove dissent. The Toleration Act of 1689 gave qualified liberty of worship to many Protestant Dissenters, while leaving important civil disabilities in place. The practical result was not full modern religious equality, but a durable legal space in which congregations could exist outside the established church (Rose, 2020; Thompson, 2018; Trevor-Roper, 1990).

Religious liberty was therefore learned partly through failure. Groups that had suffered coercion did not always extend liberty consistently to others, and established churches often feared that pluralism would dissolve Christian society. Yet the survival of dissent proved that civil peace did not require complete ecclesiastical uniformity. Baptist advocacy, Quaker endurance, the Rhode Island experiment associated with Roger Williams, and the uneven toleration settlements of Britain and the colonies helped normalize the possibility that a person could be a loyal political subject without belonging to the state church. That

institutional change profoundly altered the genealogy of Christianity. A church could increasingly reproduce through persuasion, covenant, association, and mission rather than through birth into a territorial population.

13.2 Print, literacy, migration, and religious networks

Printing had accelerated the sixteenth-century Reformation; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it sustained denominational subcultures. Cheap sermons, catechisms, confessions, conversion narratives, controversial pamphlets, hymnals, missionary reports, and spiritual journals allowed movements to connect congregations that lacked common episcopal structures. Quaker printers circulated accounts of persecution. Pietist presses at Halle linked devotional renewal to education and mission. Whitefield's journals and newspaper publicity created transatlantic anticipation before the itinerant preacher arrived. Methodist magazines and hymnbooks later gave scattered societies a common voice. Print did not remove oral culture. It multiplied the reach of preaching, testimony, song, and controversy.

Migration likewise carried ecclesiology across oceans. Separatists moved from England to the Netherlands and then to New England. Puritan migration created colonies in which reform ideals could be institutionalized on a new scale. Baptists crossed the Atlantic and adapted to settings where disestablishment developed earlier than in Britain. Moravian networks linked central Europe to the Caribbean, Greenland, North America, and southern Africa. The Atlantic world was therefore not simply a stage on which European denominations reproduced themselves unchanged. Migration forced traditions to renegotiate authority, race, language, indigenous encounter, economic systems, and relations with governments. In that process, imported churches became new regional traditions.

13.3 The rise of disciplined voluntary association

The period also witnessed an organizational innovation with long-term consequences: the disciplined religious society that did not initially claim to be a complete church. Pietist conventicles, Moravian communities, Methodist societies, Bible-reading circles, missionary associations, and intercolonial revival networks could renew people inside existing communions while creating loyalties that crossed parish and denominational boundaries. This form made later evangelicalism possible. It allowed people to cooperate for preaching, publication, education, abolition, Bible distribution, and missions without first agreeing on one episcopacy or sacramental theology.

The voluntary society could complement the church, compete with it, or eventually become one. Methodism demonstrates all three possibilities. Wesleyan societies began as an Anglican renewal structure, developed increasingly church-like functions, and in America became a denomination during Wesley's lifetime. The Baptist Missionary Society of 1792, by contrast, did not become a church. It coordinated mission among churches that retained congregational government. This distinction between church and voluntary agency would become even more important in the nineteenth century.

13.4 Conversion, assurance, and the authority of experience

A fourth cause was the growing Protestant emphasis on personally appropriated faith. Reformation confessions had always taught faith, repentance, and regeneration, but Pietists, Moravians, revivalists, and Methodists made the experiential recognition of these realities central to pastoral practice. The crucial question became not merely, "To which church do you belong?" but, "Have you been converted? Do you trust Christ? Is there evidence of the new birth?" This emphasis helped expose the inadequacy of nominal Christianity and energized evangelism. It also created the danger that a culturally expected conversion narrative could become a new external form. Once a recognizable sequence of conviction, crisis, assurance, and testimony became normative, people could mistake the form of revival experience for the substance of regeneration.

Theologically, experience was therefore both a catalyst and a fault line. Friends appealed to inward illumination; Pietists to regeneration and the lived practice of faith; Moravians to assurance and devotion to Christ; revivalists to conviction and new birth; Methodists to the witness of the Spirit and sanctifying grace. None of these emphases was necessarily opposed to Scripture in intention. The question was whether experience remained judged by the apostolic Word or became an independent source of binding truth. That question would intensify dramatically in later restorationist, Adventist, prophetic, Holiness, and Pentecostal movements.

13.5 Empire, mission, race, and the moral contradictions of expansion

Missionary expansion supplied another engine of multiplication. Christian communities crossed linguistic and political boundaries, translated Scripture, founded schools, cultivated local leaders, and created transnational networks. Halle's connection with Tranquebar, Moravian work among enslaved Africans and Indigenous peoples, Baptist mission through Carey and his collaborators, and Methodist expansion in Britain and North America all anticipated the extraordinary missionary century after 1800.

Yet the missionary story was entangled with European commercial and imperial expansion. The same Atlantic networks that transported preachers, books, and missionaries transported enslaved Africans and enriched colonial economies. Whitefield's

defense of slavery, the accommodations of some Moravian missions to plantation society, and the later racial divisions within American Methodism demonstrate that evangelical activism did not automatically overcome entrenched injustice. Conversely, figures such as Rebecca Protten and later Black Methodist leaders show that colonized and enslaved peoples appropriated, interpreted, and transmitted Christianity as agents rather than passive objects. Christian genealogy in the modern world must therefore trace not only denominations but also power: who carried the faith, under what conditions, who controlled institutions, and how oppressed Christians transformed inherited traditions.

13.6 The unresolved tension between unity and reform

Finally, multiplication arose from a tension built into Protestant reform itself. A church that believes doctrine can be corrupted must retain some capacity for correction. A church that treats every disagreement as grounds for separation will fragment indefinitely. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contain examples of both dangers. Conformity could suppress conscience and protect error. Separation could preserve conviction and also make reconciliation difficult. Confessions could clarify doctrine and become instruments of exclusion. Revivals could cross denominational boundaries and also split congregations. The period therefore bequeathed modern Christianity not one solution to the problem of unity, but competing models of how truth, liberty, discipline, and fellowship should relate.

14. The Principal Doctrinal Fault Lines

The movements of AD 1600–1800 shared broad Nicene and Protestant commitments in many cases, but they differed over the practical architecture of Christian life. The most consequential disagreements concerned baptism and church membership, polity, grace and election, the nature of conversion and assurance, sanctification, the relation of inward guidance to Scripture, the status of outward ordinances, and the use of civil power. These were not abstract disagreements. Each generated institutions.

Table 7. Principal doctrinal fault lines, AD 1600–1800.

Issue	Principal positions	Historical consequence	Key biblical texts
Baptism	Paedobaptist covenant inclusion vs believer baptism after profession	Creates Baptist boundary and redefines visible church membership	Gen 17:7–14 ; Acts 2:38–41 ; 8:12 ; 10:43–48 ; Rom 6:3–4
Church polity	Episcopal vs presbyterian vs congregational	Produces enduring denominational families	Acts 14:23 ; Phil 1:1 ; Titus 1:5–9 ; 1 Pet 5:1–4 ; Matt 18:17
Grace / election	Reformed predestination vs General Baptist / Wesleyan Arminianism	Divides Baptists and Methodists while preserving shared evangelical proclamation	Eph 1:3–6 ; Rom 8–9 ; John 6:37–44 ; John 3:16–18 ; 1 Tim 2:3–6
Conversion / assurance	Covenant nurture, preparatory Puritanism, Pietist / Moravian / revival crisis experience	Makes regeneration a pastoral test; creates revivalist culture	John 3:3–8 ; Rom 8:15–16 ; 1 John 5:11–13
Sanctification	Progressive holiness vs Wesleyan entire sanctification / perfect love	Feeds later Holiness trajectory	1 Thess 4:3 ; 2 Cor 3:18 ; Phil 3:12–14 ; 1 John 1:8–2:2
Inward illumination	Spirit's illumination subordinate to Scripture vs stronger immediate-guidance claims	Especially defines Quaker distinctiveness	1 Thess 5:19–21 ; 1 John 4:1 ; 2 Tim 3:16–17 ; Gal 1:8–9
Ordinances	Baptism and Supper retained vs Quaker spiritualization of both	Creates sharp ecclesial boundary	Matt 28:18–20 ; Acts 10:47–48 ; 1 Cor 11:23–26
Church and state	Established coercive religion vs widening liberty of conscience	Enables durable dissent and later voluntarism	John 18:36 ; 2 Cor 10:3–5 ; Rom 13:1–7 ; 1 Cor 5:9–13

Note. Biblical references are representative rather than exhaustive and are evaluated in the developed assessment below.

14.1 Baptism and the meaning of a visible church

For Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and most continental Protestants, infant baptism remained a normal mark of the covenant community. Reformed defenders appealed to the continuity of God's covenant promises, the inclusion of believers' children, household baptisms, and the analogy between circumcision and baptism. Baptists agreed that children should be instructed within Christian households but denied that the New Testament commands or clearly exemplifies infant baptism. For them, baptism followed repentance and personal faith and therefore marked entrance into a gathered church of confessing believers. The dispute was inseparable from ecclesiology: Is the visible church composed of believers and their covenant children, or of those who credibly profess regeneration?

The controversy also illustrates the difference between reform and restoration. Early Baptists did not merely alter the amount of water used in a ceremony. They reconstructed the social boundary of the church. Once baptism was restricted to believers, the assumption that an entire parish or political population constituted the church became difficult to sustain. Believer's baptism and religious voluntarism therefore reinforced each other historically even though individual Baptists differed over how sharply church and state should be separated.

14.2 Episcopacy, presbyterianism, and congregationalism

The same period made Protestant polity permanently plural. Anglicans retained bishops within a national church. Presbyterians argued that the New Testament pattern is government by elders in graded assemblies rather than diocesan bishops. Congregationalists placed final ordinary authority in the covenanted local congregation while maintaining councils and fellowship among churches. Baptists adopted congregational forms with varying degrees of associational cooperation. Quakers rejected a separate sacramental priesthood but developed meetings for business and recognized ministers and elders according to gift and communal discernment. Methodism emerged within episcopal Anglicanism but created conferences, itinerant circuits, societies, classes, and eventually a new episcopal structure in America.

These forms show that rejecting papal jurisdiction did not settle the question of church government. Protestant appeals to Scripture produced several readings of apostolic order. Later denominational genealogy would often follow polity as much as doctrine: Presbyterian churches, Congregational churches, episcopal Methodist churches, and Baptist associations could share evangelical theology while remaining institutionally distinct.

14.3 Calvinism, Arminianism, and the doctrine of grace

The predestination controversy divided Puritans, Baptists, revivalists, and Methodists. Reformed confessions taught God's sovereign election and, in their mature forms, a definite relation between Christ's atoning work and the elect. General Baptists and Wesleyan Methodists rejected unconditional election and limited atonement, affirming that Christ died for all and that grace genuinely enables a response that may be resisted. The debate was not simply sovereignty versus free will. Both sides confessed human sinfulness and the necessity of grace. They disagreed about the intention of the atonement, the nature of election, the efficacy of grace, perseverance, and the meaning of biblical invitations addressed to all.

The division became institutionally durable because soteriology affected preaching and assurance. Calvinists could emphasize God's preserving purpose and the objective sufficiency of Christ's work for the elect; Arminians emphasized the universal sincerity of the gospel offer and the necessity of continuing faith. Excesses were possible on both sides: fatalism that weakened the universality of proclamation, or a view of human freedom that obscured the priority of grace. The biblical assessment below therefore tests both systems against the full scriptural witness rather than assuming that a confessional pedigree decides the question.

14.4 Regeneration, conversion, and assurance

Pietists, Moravians, evangelicals, Baptists, and Methodists increasingly insisted that inherited Christian identity was insufficient without regeneration. This was a major reforming insight. The New Testament itself distinguishes outward profession from inward life and repeatedly calls hearers to repentance and faith. Yet the movements differed over the signs and timing of conversion. Some Puritans developed elaborate accounts of preparatory conviction. Moravians stressed trust in Christ and assurance. Methodists spoke of the witness of the Spirit and new birth. Revivalists sometimes expected dramatic narratives of crisis.

These emphases changed pastoral expectations. Ministers examined candidates, testimonies became important, and revival preaching addressed nominal Christians as people who might still need conversion. The danger was to standardize God's work into one psychological script. Scripture describes sudden conversions, gradual discipleship, covenant upbringing, intense conviction, quiet faith, and varying emotional responses. A historically faithful account must therefore distinguish the theological necessity of regeneration from later cultural expectations about what a conversion must feel like.

14.5 Sanctification and Christian perfection

Puritans, Pietists, Quakers, Moravians, and Methodists all protested against a Christianity that could profess doctrine without holiness. The differences concerned how holiness is produced and how complete it may become before death. Puritan and Reformed traditions normally emphasized progressive sanctification flowing from union with Christ. Pietists stressed practical renewal and disciplined discipleship. Quakers expected obedience to the inward work of Christ and sometimes used strong language about victory over sin. Wesley taught both gradual sanctification and the possibility of entire sanctification or perfect love as a decisive work of grace.

This was one of the most fruitful and contested developments of the period. It restored sanctification to the center of ordinary Christian expectation. It also generated later perfectionist systems that could confuse mature love with sinlessness or divide

Christians into fixed spiritual classes. The nineteenth-century Holiness movement would intensify the debate and transmit it into early Pentecostal theology.

14.6 Inward illumination, prophecy, and the sufficiency of Scripture

Friends made the most radical Protestant appeal to immediate divine guidance in this period, but they did not have a monopoly on experiential language. Puritans spoke of illumination, Pietists of the Spirit's application of Scripture, Moravians of inward assurance, and Methodists of the witness of the Spirit. The crucial distinction is between illumination, by which the Spirit enables believers to understand and obey God's Word, and new revelation that binds conscience with authority parallel to or above Scripture.

Early Quaker language could blur this distinction for opponents because the inward Light was sometimes invoked in immediate speech and prophetic action. Friends themselves insisted that the Light was Christ's present work and that true inward guidance could not contradict the Spirit who inspired Scripture. Nevertheless, because the movement also relativized outward ordinances and formal theological structures, the relationship between inward authority and the written Word remained a genuine doctrinal fault line.

14.7 Ordinances and the sacramental question after the Reformation

Most Protestants reduced the medieval sacramental system while retaining baptism and the Lord's Supper as instituted by Christ. They then differed sharply over mode, recipients, presence, efficacy, and admission to the table. Friends went further by declining outward water baptism and the Eucharistic rite as obligatory Christian ordinances, interpreting the deeper reality as inward participation in Christ. This position protected the principle that outward forms cannot save. It also raised a basic hermeneutical question: can inward fulfillment render unnecessary practices that Christ and the apostles explicitly command and perform?

The issue shows how a reform movement can identify a genuine danger and still overcorrect. Sacramental formalism can displace living faith; yet rejection of formalism does not itself establish that the ordinances may be set aside. The biblical assessment therefore distinguishes the insufficiency of rites for salvation from the continuing authority of Christ's commands.

15. Institutional Formation, Branches, and Later Descendants

By 1800 the Protestant landscape contained several kinds of ecclesial entities that should not be collapsed into one category. Some were denominations or denominational families. Congregationalists and Baptists had churches, confessions, associations, colleges, transatlantic networks, and identifiable succession. Friends had yearly meetings and a distinctive communal discipline. Moravians possessed a renewed transnational church, the *Unitas Fratrum*. Methodism had become a church in the United States and was becoming one in Britain. Pietism, by contrast, was primarily a renewal current within Lutheran and Reformed Christianity, though it generated institutions and influenced later churches. The Great Awakening was a revival network rather than a denomination, but it reshaped existing denominations and contributed to new ones.

The immediate genealogical lines are therefore best described with different verbs. Puritanism reformed and differentiated within Reformed Anglicanism. Separatism withdrew from the established church. Congregationalism institutionalized the gathered autonomous church. Baptists emerged from English Puritan-Separatist and Congregational settings, with identifiable Mennonite influence on the Smyth-Helwys stream. Quakerism formed as a distinct radical Protestant movement amid the English revolutionary crisis. Pietism renewed Lutheran and Reformed churches. The Moravian Church renewed and reorganized an older Brethren identity through Herrnhut under Pietist-era conditions. The Great Awakening crossed and sometimes divided several denominations. Methodism began as an Anglican revival society and became a denominational family. Holiness Christianity later developed from, and also modified, Wesleyan sanctification teaching.

These distinctions matter because similar doctrines do not prove direct descent. Modern Baptists and Mennonites both practice believer's baptism, but Baptist institutions did not simply descend from continental Anabaptist churches. Methodists learned from Moravians, but Methodism is not a Moravian branch. Pentecostals would later inherit Holiness categories, but classical Pentecostalism cannot be identified with Wesleyan Methodism. Genealogy records historical relationships, not merely theological resemblance.

PROTESTANT GENEALOGY, c. 1600-1800

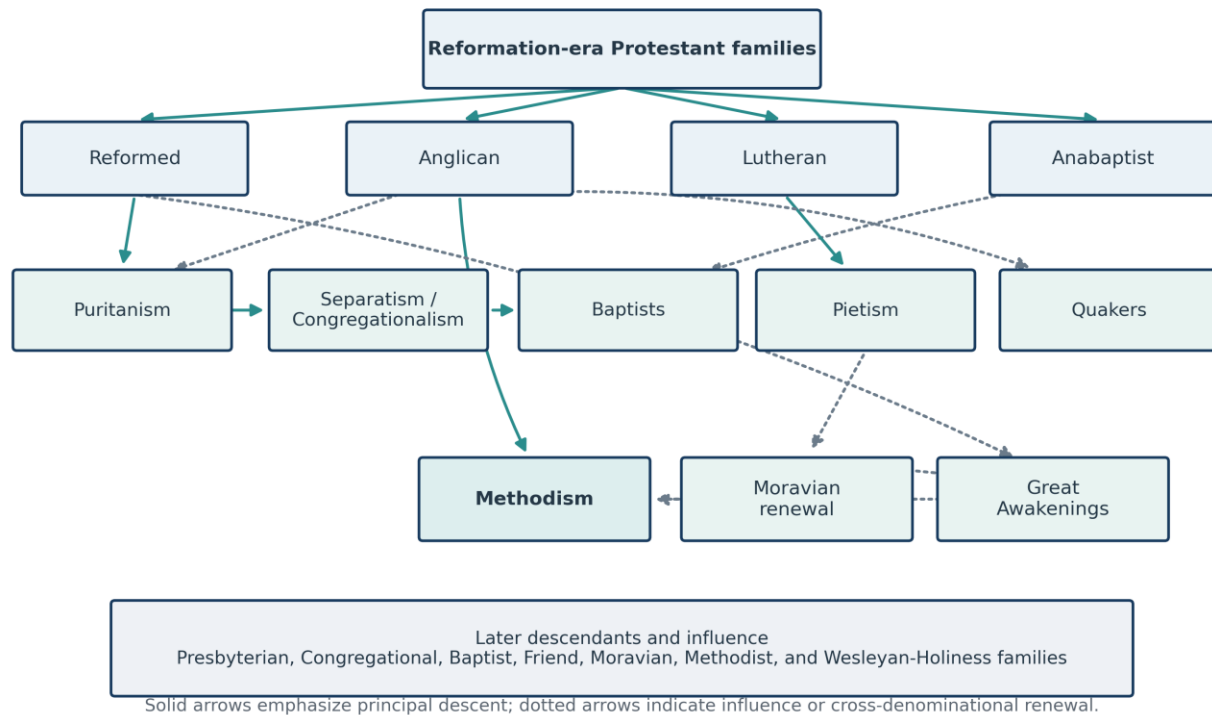


Figure 5. Protestant genealogy, c. 1600–1800.

Note. Solid arrows emphasize principal descent; dotted arrows indicate influence or cross-denominational renewal.

The longer descendants of this period include modern Congregational and United/Uniting church traditions, a vast and internally diverse global Baptist family, evangelical and liberal branches of the Religious Society of Friends, the worldwide Moravian Unity, Methodist and Wesleyan denominations, African Methodist churches formed in response to racism, and nineteenth-century Holiness denominations. Revivalism also became a transdenominational evangelical style that influenced Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Anglicans, Methodists, frontier movements, voluntary societies, and later Pentecostalism.

The multiplication was not one-directional. Churches also merged, federated, or entered united communions. Some Congregational traditions later joined Presbyterian, Reformed, Methodist, or other churches in national unions. Methodism itself divided repeatedly over governance, slavery, holiness, race, and theology and later reunited in several countries. Friends developed evangelical, conservative, and liberal trajectories. Baptists multiplied through associations and conventions without surrendering local-church autonomy. The genealogy therefore resembles a braided river more than a simple binary tree.

16. Biblical-Theological Assessment: Reformation Beyond the Reformation

The historical narrative establishes that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced both genuine reform and new doctrinal problems. A *Sola Scriptura* assessment cannot simply ask which movement was oldest, largest, most persecuted, most missionary, or most spiritually impressive. Nor can suffering, revival, conversions, social reform, or remarkable providences prove every doctrine taught by a movement. The proper question is whether its claims accord with the apostolic Word read in context and in the total witness of Scripture.

16.1 Scripture, illumination, and inward authority

The positive achievement shared by many of these movements was the conviction that Christianity must be personally received rather than merely inherited. The Spirit truly illumines believers, convicts of sin, assures, distributes gifts, guides obedience, and applies the Word. The New Testament commands Christians not to suppress the Spirit and at the same time to test what is claimed in His name ([1 Thessalonians 5:19–21](#)). Believers are likewise told to test the spirits ([1 John 4:1](#)). The Bereans are commended for examining even apostolic preaching by the Scriptures they possessed ([Acts 17:11](#)).

This means that inward illumination is biblical, but inward authority is not self-authenticating. Scripture is God-breathed and equips the servant of God for every good work ([2 Timothy 3:16–17](#)). The apostolic gospel is fixed strongly enough that even a claimed angelic message contradicting it must be rejected ([Galatians 1:8–9](#)). No later light, impression, prophecy, tradition, or revival experience may therefore bind the conscience against the written apostolic Word. Where Quaker language means the Spirit of Christ inwardly applying the truth He has revealed, it expresses a biblical reality. Where any inward claim functions as a second rule capable of setting aside biblical commands, *Sola Scriptura* requires its rejection.

16.2 The church, civil government, and liberty of conscience

Puritans and other Protestants rightly insisted that public life is subject to God's moral authority. Scripture does not teach a secular realm in which rulers are morally autonomous. Civil government is God's servant for public order and justice ([Romans 13:1–7](#)). Yet the New Testament does not authorize the church to advance the gospel by imprisonment, fines, execution, or coerced sacramental conformity. Jesus distinguishes His kingdom from kingdoms defended by worldly force ([John 18:36](#)). The weapons of apostolic ministry are not worldly ([2 Corinthians 10:3–5](#)). Church discipline addresses professing believers through correction and, in grave cases, exclusion from fellowship rather than civil punishment ([Matthew 18:15–17](#); [1 Corinthians 5:9–13](#)).

The Baptist and Quaker resistance to coerced religion therefore recovered an important apostolic distinction. Their own histories were not perfectly consistent, and later Baptist political thought became diverse, but the principle that faith cannot be produced by force accords with the nature of repentance and confession in the New Testament. The civil magistrate may restrain violence and protect liberty; it cannot regenerate a person or create the church by legal decree. The failures of coercive Puritan settlements and persecution of dissenters are therefore not merely unfortunate modern embarrassments. They reveal a theological confusion between covenant community, civil society, and the church gathered through the gospel.

16.3 Infant baptism and believer's baptism

Paedobaptists present serious biblical arguments. God's covenant dealings include households and children ([Genesis 17:7–14](#)); Peter declares that the promise is for his hearers and their children, as well as all whom God calls ([Acts 2:39](#)); several households are baptized in Acts and the Pauline letters; and [Colossians 2:11–12](#) places circumcision and baptism within a shared Christological context. The argument is strongest when presented as covenantal inference, not as though a New Testament text explicitly narrates the baptism of an infant.

The explicit narrative pattern, however, repeatedly joins baptism to reception of the Word, repentance, faith, or discipleship. At Pentecost, those who accepted the message were baptized ([Acts 2:38–41](#)). In Samaria, men and women who believed were baptized ([Acts 8:12](#)). The Ethiopian official receives instruction before baptism ([Acts 8:35–38](#)). Cornelius's household receives the Spirit in connection with hearing and believing the gospel before baptism ([Acts 10:43–48](#)). At Corinth, many hear, believe, and are baptized ([Acts 18:8](#)). Paul's theological account associates baptism with participation in Christ's death and resurrection ([Romans 6:3–4](#)).

On a *Sola Scriptura* assessment, the clearest apostolic evidence therefore favors baptism of those who personally confess faith. Household texts do not establish that infants were present, and covenantal continuity alone cannot supply an apostolic example that the New Testament does not provide. This conclusion should nevertheless be stated without caricaturing paedobaptists as indifferent to faith; historic Reformed and Anglican traditions explicitly call baptized children to personal faith and repentance. The dispute concerns the warranted subjects and covenantal meaning of baptism, not whether adult unbelief can save.

16.4 Church polity: plurality, congregational responsibility, and translocal fellowship

The New Testament clearly contains local elders or overseers, frequently in the plural ([Acts 14:23](#); [Philippians 1:1](#); [Titus 1:5–9](#)). Elders are commanded to shepherd without domination ([1 Peter 5:1–4](#)). Congregations bear real responsibility in discipline and discernment ([Matthew 18:17](#); [1 Corinthians 5:4–5](#)), and Acts depicts community participation in identifying servants ([Acts 6:1–6](#)). At the same time, apostolic churches were not isolated. They received translocal teaching, shared workers, collected relief, and resolved a major controversy through consultation among apostles and elders at Jerusalem ([Acts 15](#)).

No seventeenth-century polity can therefore claim that every detail of its developed constitution is simply transcribed from one apostolic blueprint. Congregationalists rightly emphasized local responsibility; Presbyterians rightly emphasized plurality of elders and wider accountability; episcopal traditions rightly perceived the need for ordered oversight and continuity. The New Testament does not, however, present a diocesan bishop as a civil magistrate over a territorial Christian population, nor does it authorize local autonomy as freedom from all translocal accountability. A biblically disciplined polity should combine qualified pastoral oversight, meaningful congregational responsibility, servant leadership, and fellowship among churches without treating one later constitutional form as the gospel itself.

16.5 Election, universal proclamation, and responsible faith

Reformed and Wesleyan traditions both appeal to substantial biblical evidence. Scripture teaches God's sovereign choosing purpose and the priority of grace ([Ephesians 1:3–6](#); [Romans 8:29–30](#); [Romans 9:14–24](#); [John 6:37–44](#)). Scripture also announces the gospel universally, commands all people to repent, speaks of God's saving desire, and presents unbelief as culpable ([John 3:16–18](#); [Acts 17:30](#); [1 Timothy 2:3–6](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#)). Salvation is wholly by grace through faith and produces a life of good works rather than boasting ([Ephesians 2:8–10](#)).

A responsible biblical synthesis must preserve all these affirmations even where systematic traditions differ in how they relate them. The church must proclaim Christ sincerely to every person, call everyone to repent and believe, deny every ground of human merit, and confess that salvation originates in God's grace. No doctrine of election may be used to weaken universal evangelism or to invite complacency about unbelief. No doctrine of free response may turn grace into divine assistance added to autonomous human virtue. Because faithful Christians have historically differed over the precise harmonization of these texts, the dispute should be treated as serious but not automatically as a denial of the gospel where both sides confess salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.

16.6 New birth, assurance, and the testing of revival

The revivalist recovery of the new birth was deeply biblical. Jesus tells Nicodemus that one must be born again or born from above to see the kingdom of God ([John 3:3–8](#)). The Spirit bears witness with believers that they are God's children ([Romans 8:15–16](#)), and 1 John is explicitly written so believers may know that they have eternal life ([1 John 5:11–13](#)). Nominal affiliation to a church cannot replace reconciliation with God.

At the same time, Scripture does not make physical sensations, tears, visions, trembling, or a dramatic date of conversion the universal evidence of salvation. Jesus warns that spectacular religious works can coexist with lawlessness ([Matthew 7:21–23](#)). The Spirit's fruit includes durable moral transformation ([Galatians 5:22–23](#)). Assurance rests finally on Christ and God's promise, confirmed by the Spirit and evidenced in persevering faith and obedience, not on the intensity of a past experience. Edwards's insistence that affections must be tested by their spiritual fruit therefore corresponds closely to the apostolic demand for discernment.

Revival should consequently be judged neither by hostility to emotion nor by fascination with it. Conviction, joy, grief, trembling, and powerful communal response may accompany God's work. They may also arise through social suggestion, fear, personality, or manipulation. The apostolic tests remain doctrinal fidelity, confession of the biblical Christ, holiness, love, truth, and enduring fruit.

16.7 Sanctification and the limits of perfectionist claims

Wesley and the Pietists were right to resist a version of justification that leaves holiness optional. God's will is the believer's sanctification ([1 Thessalonians 4:3](#)). Christians are freed from slavery to sin and called to present themselves to God in righteousness ([Romans 6:11–14](#)). They are transformed progressively into Christ's image ([2 Corinthians 3:18](#)), and holiness is not an optional accessory to Christian life ([Hebrews 12:14](#)).

Yet the same New Testament resists claims of complete sinless attainment before glorification. Paul can describe himself as pressing forward precisely because he has not already reached perfection ([Philippians 3:12–14](#)). John warns believers that claiming to be without sin is self-deception while simultaneously calling them away from sin ([1 John 1:8–2:2](#)). The biblical goal is therefore radical, Spirit-empowered holiness with continual dependence on grace, confession, and growth.

Wesley's careful language of perfect love can be understood as an aspiration toward wholehearted love rather than metaphysical or sinless perfection. Later formulations that require every mature Christian to testify to a distinct, instantaneous eradication of the sinful nature go beyond what the apostolic texts clearly promise. The strongest Wesleyan contribution is the refusal to separate salvation from holiness; the weakness appears when one particular chronology of sanctification is made a universal test of spiritual standing.

16.8 Quaker rejection of outward ordinances

Friends correctly protested any view that treats baptismal water or Eucharistic participation as mechanically saving. Salvation is in Christ, not in ritual performance. Yet the New Testament also records the risen Christ commanding disciples to baptize ([Matthew 28:18–20](#)), apostolic evangelism administering water baptism to believers ([Acts 10:47–48](#)), and Paul transmitting the Lord's Supper as a practice received from the Lord and to be continued as proclamation until Christ comes ([1 Corinthians 11:23–26](#)).

The inward reality does not cancel the outward command. Baptism without faith is empty, and the Supper without discernment can be abused; but misuse does not repeal institution. On *Sola Scriptura* grounds, the Quaker refusal to treat water baptism and the Lord's Supper as continuing ordinances is therefore difficult to reconcile with the apostolic pattern. The critique should

nevertheless preserve the truth Friends sought to defend: outward religion without the inward work of Christ is spiritually insufficient.

16.9 Mission, race, slavery, and the moral credibility of revival

The missionary impulse of Pietists, Moravians, Baptists, and Methodists accords with Christ's commission to make disciples among all nations ([Matthew 28:18–20](#)) and the Spirit-empowered movement of the gospel outward from Jerusalem ([Acts 1:8](#)). The multinational people redeemed by Christ is explicitly drawn from every tribe, language, people, and nation ([Revelation 5:9–10](#)). Mission is therefore not a European possession. It belongs to the church as a whole, including converts who become teachers, translators, evangelists, pastors, and missionaries in their own right.

The Atlantic slave system stands in radical tension with this gospel. Scripture affirms the common creation dignity of humanity, condemns kidnapping and slave trading ([Exodus 21:16](#); [1 Timothy 1:9–10](#)), commands love of neighbor, and relativizes ethnic and status hierarchies within union with Christ ([Galatians 3:28](#)). The New Testament addresses believers living within Roman slavery without organizing an immediate political abolition campaign, but its moral logic cannot justify racialized hereditary chattel slavery, kidnapping, family separation, commodification, and violent domination.

Whitefield's participation in slavery and the compromises of churches that tolerated it must therefore be named as serious failures, not excused by revival success. Wesley's antislavery witness should be acknowledged without implying that later Methodist institutions uniformly embodied it. The same standard applies to every tradition: gifts, conversions, growth, and missionary expansion do not suspend the command to love one's neighbor in truth and justice.

16.10 What was genuinely recovered, what remained unresolved

The strongest recoveries of AD 1600–1800 were substantial. The period reasserted the necessity of personal conversion, serious holiness, disciplined Christian fellowship, active lay participation, Bible reading, missionary responsibility, congregational accountability, and freedom of conscience. It showed that churches can survive without coercive establishment and that the gospel can cross national, racial, and denominational boundaries through voluntary mission. It also exposed how confessional Christianity can become nominal and how institutional stability can conceal spiritual decline.

The unresolved errors were equally consequential. State-church coercion survived among Protestants who had themselves protested Roman coercion. Infant baptism remained largely unquestioned outside Baptist and related circles despite the lack of an explicit New Testament infant-baptism narrative. Quaker rejection of ordinances set inward spirituality against apostolic practice. Revival could elevate experience above careful testing. Predestinarian and Arminian systems could each become more rigid than the biblical texts they sought to harmonize. Wesleyan perfection could be sharpened into later claims that Scripture does not clearly require. Most gravely, churches preaching conversion often accommodated slavery, racial hierarchy, colonial power, and violence.

The biblical lesson is not that reform should cease because reformers are fallible. It is that every reform must itself remain reformable under Scripture. The movement that corrects one error may preserve another. The church that recovers one neglected truth may overstate it. Revival cannot replace doctrine, doctrine cannot replace regeneration, liberty cannot replace holiness, and holiness cannot be separated from love. The apostolic standard demands all of them under the lordship of Christ.

17. Contemporary Significance

The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century movements remain structurally present in global Christianity. Baptist life is now extraordinarily diverse, including national conventions, independent unions, missionary networks, evangelical and ecumenical bodies, and churches ranging from strongly confessional Calvinism to Arminian and charismatic forms. The Baptist World Alliance currently describes itself as a fellowship of 283 conventions and unions in 138 countries and territories, representing approximately 53 million baptized believers in about 180,000 churches. Because Baptist statistical conventions often count baptized members rather than all adherents and because many Baptist bodies are not BWA members, these figures should be read as the Alliance's own membership scope rather than a census of every Baptist in the world (Baptist World Alliance, n.d.).

Methodism and the wider Wesleyan family likewise became global. The World Methodist Council states that its 80 member Methodist, Wesleyan, United, and Uniting churches represent more than 80 million members in 138 countries. This family includes traditions that preserve explicit Wesleyan-Arminian and Holiness theology as well as united churches whose identity combines Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Reformed, or other inheritances. The Methodist genealogy also includes African Methodist Episcopal traditions formed in the United States in response to racism and exclusion, illustrating that ecclesial division can arise not only from formal doctrine but from failures of Christian fellowship and justice (World Methodist Council, n.d.).

The Religious Society of Friends is numerically smaller but historically influential in peace witness, conscientious objection, prison reform, humanitarian work, and movements for social reform. In its 2024 annual review, the Friends World Committee

for Consultation reported around 400,000 Quakers in more than 100 countries. Those communities include evangelical, programmed, conservative, and liberal forms of Quaker life. Contemporary Friends therefore display far greater theological diversity than the first generation around George Fox, and official Quaker bodies themselves acknowledge multiple traditions and worship styles (Friends World Committee for Consultation, 2024).

The Moravian Church remains a worldwide communion. The Board of World Mission describes the Worldwide Unity as more than one million people in more than forty countries. The geographical center of Moravian Christianity has shifted dramatically from the small Saxon community that became famous in the eighteenth century. Large African provinces and other global churches now constitute major parts of the Unity, an outcome that illustrates how missionary descendants can become demographically and institutionally more significant than the European centers that once sent missionaries (Board of World Mission, n.d.).

Puritanism and Pietism survive differently. Neither exists chiefly as one worldwide denomination. Puritan theological and devotional traditions continue through Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist, Reformed, and evangelical publishing and ministry. Pietist influence remains embedded in Lutheran renewal traditions, evangelicalism, Moravianism, Methodism, mission organizations, small-group discipleship, and the expectation that orthodox doctrine must issue in regenerated and holy life. The Great Awakening likewise persists less as an institution than as a revivalist grammar: itinerant evangelism, conversion testimony, transdenominational cooperation, mass preaching, and concern for observable spiritual transformation.

The contemporary significance is therefore larger than denominational statistics. These centuries normalized assumptions now common across much Protestantism: that a congregation may be joined by voluntary profession rather than inherited citizenship; that denominational affiliation need not correspond to political territory; that laypeople may organize societies for mission and reform; that churches can cooperate across confessional boundaries; that personal conversion should be distinguishable from nominal membership; and that revival may renew or divide existing institutions. Modern evangelicalism, global missions, Holiness Christianity, much of Pentecostalism, and many independent churches inherited these assumptions even where they no longer remember their seventeenth- or eighteenth-century origins (Bebbington, 1989).

The period also leaves unresolved problems still visible today. Protestant freedom can become denominational consumerism. Congregational autonomy can weaken accountability. Revivalism can privilege personality and measurable response over patient discipleship. Appeals to inward guidance can bypass scriptural testing. Holiness teaching can become legalistic or perfectionist. Voluntary association can produce powerful ministries that stand beside churches without clear ecclesial accountability. These are not reasons to return automatically to a coercive or centralized model. They are reasons to recover the apostolic balance of truth, holiness, accountable leadership, mutual responsibility, mission, and unity in Christ.

Table 8. Contemporary presence of major traditions and legacies.

Tradition / stream	Present form	Current official indication
Baptists	Global Baptist family	Baptist World Alliance reports 283 conventions/unions in 138 countries/territories, about 53 million baptized believers in 180,000 churches; many Baptists lie outside BWA membership (Baptist World Alliance, n.d.).
Methodist / Wesleyan	Global denominational family	World Methodist Council states 80 member Methodist, Wesleyan, United, and Uniting churches representing more than 80 million members in 138 countries (World Methodist Council, n.d.).
Friends / Quakers	Worldwide but numerically smaller	FWCC reported around 400,000 Quakers in more than 100 countries in its 2024 annual review (Friends World Committee for Consultation, 2024).
Moravian Church	Worldwide Unity / Unitas Fratrum	The Board of World Mission describes the Worldwide Unity as more than one million people in more than 40 countries (Board of World Mission, Moravian Church, n.d.).
Puritan / Pietist / Awakening legacies	Primarily influence rather than one denomination	Persist through Reformed, evangelical, small-group, revivalist, mission, and devotional traditions across many churches.

Note. Figures reproduce the cited organizations' own reported scope and should not be treated as a census of every adherent worldwide.

18. Genealogical Summary

Table 9. Genealogical summary of Chapter 8.

Field	Chapter-level synthesis
Parent tradition	Plural: Reformed Protestantism, Anglicanism, Lutheranism, English Separatism, older Unitas Fratrum, and the wider radical Protestant environment.

Field	Chapter-level synthesis
Approximate emergence	Puritanism pre-1600; Congregationalism matures 1600s; Baptists c. 1609 onward; Quakers late 1640s–1650s; Pietism programmatically 1675; Herrnhut 1722 / renewal 1727; awakenings 1730s–1740s; Methodism 1730s onward.
Principal geographical centers	England, Scotland, Netherlands, German-speaking lands, Saxony, British North America; mission extensions to South India, Caribbean, Greenland, southern Africa, Nova Scotia, Jamaica, and Sierra Leone.
Principal actors	Puritan divines and Westminster Assembly; Robinson, Goodwin, Owen; Smyth, Helwys, Jessey; Fox, Fell, Barclay; Spener, Francke; Zinzendorf and Moravian missionaries; Edwards, Whitefield; John and Charles Wesley; Black Baptist and Moravian evangelists including George Liele, David George, and Rebecca Protten.
Immediate triggers	Unfinished English Reformation; coercive uniformity; gathered-church debates; baptism controversy; revolutionary breakdown of ecclesiastical controls; concern over nominal confessionalism; revival and missionary opportunity.
Deeper causes	Sola Scriptura disputes over worship and polity; covenant and membership; predestination; regeneration and assurance; growing literacy and print; migration; toleration; voluntary association; empire, commerce, and global mobility.
Authority structures	Confessional and scriptural Protestantism; local congregational authority; associations and synods; Quaker corporate discernment and inward Light; Methodist conference / itinerancy; voluntary missionary societies.
Principal doctrinal distinctives	Gathered church, believer baptism, liberty of conscience, inward illumination, practical holiness, new birth, assurance, Arminian grace, entire sanctification, revivalist conversionism.
Immediate branches	Presbyterian and Congregational Puritan lines; General and Particular Baptists; Friends; Pietist and Moravian renewal networks; New / Old Light divisions; Wesleyan and Calvinistic Methodist streams.
Later descendants	Global Baptist, Congregational, Quaker, Moravian, Methodist, Wesleyan, and Holiness traditions; major influence on evangelicalism, global missions, and later Pentecostalism.
Present-day presence	Global and highly diverse, with major growth centers outside the European regions in which many of the movements began.
Major biblical questions raised	Who should be baptized? Where is church authority located? How should grace and human response be related? What constitutes regeneration and assurance? Can inward guidance or revival experience bind conscience? How complete is sanctification before glorification? May the state coerce religion? Are baptism and the Lord's Supper continuing commands?

The genealogy of this chapter is deliberately plural. No single parent tradition produced every movement. The Reformed branch supplied much of Puritanism and Congregationalism; English Separatism formed a major environment for early Baptists; continental Anabaptists influenced but did not institutionally generate the whole Baptist family; English revolutionary religion provided the immediate setting of Quakerism; Lutheran orthodoxy supplied the principal ecclesial setting for Pietism; the older Unity of the Brethren was renewed at Herrnhut under eighteenth-century Pietist conditions; and Anglicanism supplied the institutional parent of Methodism. The Great Awakening cut across several of these lines and accelerated evangelical identity as a network spanning denominations.

The dominant direction of change can be summarized as a movement from territorial confession toward voluntary and experiential forms of belonging, without implying that established churches disappeared. By 1800 European state churches still possessed enormous influence. What had changed was the range of viable alternatives. A Christian in the English-speaking Atlantic world could belong to an Anglican parish, Presbyterian congregation, Congregational church, Baptist meeting, Quaker meeting, Methodist society, Moravian community, or another dissenting body. A German-speaking Protestant might encounter Lutheran or Reformed orthodoxy, Pietist conventicles, Moravian influence, or awakening networks. The religious marketplace analogy can be overused, but the institutional reality was unmistakable: Christianity had acquired mechanisms for multiplication that no longer depended primarily on a prince changing the confession of a territory.

19. Conclusion and Transition: From Revival Protestantism to the Restorationist Century

Between 1600 and 1800 Protestant Christianity became more institutionally diverse, more voluntary, more experiential, and more missionary. The period began with confessional states still attempting to regulate worship and ended with a Protestant world in which independent congregations, dissenting denominations, revival movements, missionary societies, and transdenominational networks had become durable features. Puritans pressed Reformation principles into worship and discipline; Separatists and Congregationalists reimagined the visible church as a covenanted gathered body; Baptists joined gathered-church ecclesiology to believer's baptism and increasingly forceful arguments for religious liberty; Friends exposed the emptiness of formal religion while pressing inward illumination to a point that challenged the continuing authority of

outward ordinances; Pietists summoned confessional Protestants to regeneration and practical holiness; Moravians fused communal devotion with pioneering global mission; the Great Awakening created an evangelical public organized around the new birth; and Methodism transformed revival into a disciplined, reproducible movement of societies, itinerancy, assurance, and holiness.

The historical outcome was neither simple decay through fragmentation nor uncomplicated progress through reform. Some divisions arose because conscience could no longer submit to coercive or biblically questionable institutions. Others arose because competing interpretations of Scripture hardened into separate identities. Some movements recovered neglected apostolic emphases. Others overcorrected, absolutized experience, or institutionalized claims that remain biblically disputable. All remained vulnerable to moral contradiction, nowhere more painfully than in the accommodation of slavery and racial hierarchy by Christians who preached conversion and mission.

The most important genealogical development was structural. The denominational and revivalist mechanisms that would define modern Christianity were now in place. Christians could form a new congregation without controlling a state. They could organize a mission society without founding a church. A charismatic preacher could build a transregional following through itinerancy and print. A renewal society could grow inside a church and later become a denomination. A contested biblical doctrine could generate a voluntary network rather than an immediate territorial war. Experience could function as a powerful claim to authenticity, and restoration of "primitive Christianity" could become an intelligible religious project precisely because so many competing churches now claimed to represent biblical faithfulness.

That environment leads directly into the nineteenth century. The Second Great Awakening would expand revival methods across a rapidly growing United States. Democratic voluntarism, frontier mobility, print, prophetic expectation, anti-creedal restorationism, and confidence that the apostolic church could be recovered anew would generate the Stone-Campbell movement, the Plymouth Brethren, Millerism and Adventist trajectories, Christadelphians, and other restorationist bodies. The same religious freedom that permitted biblical reform also created space for founders who claimed new revelation, new scriptures, prophetic chronologies, or a restored church lost since antiquity. Some nineteenth-century movements remained within historic Nicene Christianity; others departed from it decisively. The next chapter therefore asks a more difficult genealogical question: when does Protestant reform become restorationism, and when does a Christian-derived movement cease to be simply another Protestant denomination and become a new religion?

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