

(d) community control of the churches made for a more resolved community standard than an ecclesiastical standard.

(e) distrust of association...the fear of being under an ecclesiastical bondage, while tending to develop a strong individualism, also isolated congregations from one another.

(3) Expressions of congregationalism in the pre-revolutionary period:

(a) The authority of the state over the church was affirmed in Massachusetts as a model government. (Other colonies differed in these expressions.) Magisterial authority over the churches was confirmed in 1636 and given further resolution in 1641. This was expanded, or made more definitive in 1668 and the town councils were instructed to guarantee ministers to the communities in 1692. (For fuller data see Olmstead: HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES, "The Puritan Adventure in New England.") There were challenges to the applications of these principles as in the Cambridge Platform of 1648. This enactment sought wider voting rights and church membership privileges and supported the acceptance of the newly given Westminster Confession as a creed of doctrinal centrality. But in general the overlordship of the state was accepted and laws against heresy (1646), etc., were abundant.

(b) The "Halfway Covenant" represented the turning of theological thinking. The idea was something like this: The children of godly parents were accepted as members of the covenant community from birth. In later years they might not confirm this position with godly living, profession, etc. Some then thought their children would be outside the covenant, others held they would be in it. The backslidden parents were thought of as "halfway covenanters." The question was: Could their children be received into the church (baptised, etc.) when the parental faith looked so weak. 1657 saw a ministerial group offer the opinion that such children could and should be baptized into the professing community. 1662 saw the legal resolution of this with this position being affirmed...although controversy on general grounds continued in New England at some length.

(c) The development of Education saw the founding of Harvard in 1638 and Yale in 1701. Both had ministerial goals as motives. Education was encouraged at all levels.

(d) The broadening of the church fellowship was further promoted by Stoddard (d. 1729) who argued for an open communion to all who wished to come regardless of profession or life style. Seeing grace conferred in the sacraments the argument was that the listless non-professors really needed this sort of help.