

h. Summary

I am sure I have overlooked someone in the recounting of the denominational beginnings but for the moment we press on. Our next period of American church history will show the development of these and other bodies (such as the Methodists) although we are pretty much restricted to the mainline bodies in that eventually there are more than 400 altogether! Hudson, RELIGION IN AMERICA, has an interesting comment on the colonial churches that fits in this spot:

"This account of denominational beginnings in America can be misleading. While there was a profusion of religious groups, most of the people belonged to no church at all. It was not until the Great Awakening when America experiences its "national conversion" that this situation began to change."

4. Factors shaping the lives of the colonial churches

a. The wars

- (1) colonial survival..reduction of cultures
- (2) the French/Indian wars
- (3) the war of Independence

In the section of materials on the growth of the colonial churches I have tried to indicate how the major bodies faced the revolution. It is important to remember that this war was not essentially a class revolt but a political economical affair. Feelings ran deep on both sides and some atrocities occurred...war is never nice..but the bloodthirstiness of the French Revolution was not experienced in America and it took relatively little time after the war for a complete resumption of pacific activities and social status. It is true that some parties left the new nation for territories more familiar to them: Canada, the Islands, etc. But many were able to simply live with the circumstance and so the churches had no great alienation...with the exception to some degree of the church of England...the Anglican communion which, due to the establishment in England found itself on difficult footing in the new government.

b. Theological developments:

(1) The Great Awakening: I will summarize it and its results orally. It found leadership in virtually every body and was, in the truest sense, the first great national religious accomodation. No part of the country was left totally untouched, some parts were effected in a giant manner.