

# From Authority to Individualism

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Intellectual Thought, Society, and  
Changes in Colonial Society

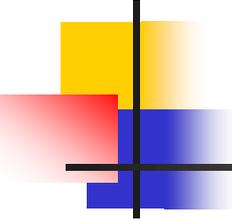


# 17<sup>th</sup> Century America

## Cultural/Intellectual Trends

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- “Puritan Tradition”
  - The Bible a model
  - Compact with God
  - Covenant Theology
    - “City upon a hill...”
  - Direct connections between Biblical events and their own lives
  - Writings: plain and explored connections to God.
    - Diaries and histories most common writings
  - Valued a literate citizenry
  - Communal responsibility vs. individual freedom



# Transition to 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Snapshot of Colonial Life

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- Regional societies had developed
- Economic development flourishing
- Colonists begin to move “west”
  - Pushing to the “frontier” lands
  - Bordered by Appalachian Mountains
- New social values being forged
  - Influx of new settlers bring new ideas
  - Moving westward brought new concerns to daily life.



# 18<sup>th</sup> Century America

## New Shift in Cultural/Intellectual Thought

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- The First Great Awakening

- A “revitalization of religious piety” that swept throughout the colonies—revivals

- An **evangelical** movement

- Christian belief in

- the sole authority and inerrancy of the Bible

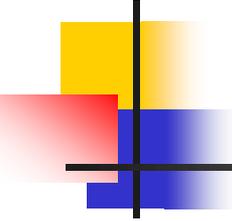
- salvation only through regeneration (re-birth)

- a spiritually transformed personal life

- A movement that tended away from New England

- “New Lights”

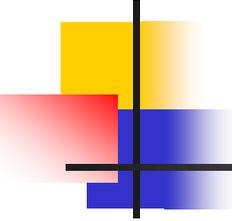
- People who had doctrinal differences with older, established religions, such as the Congregationalists (Puritans)



# A Sample

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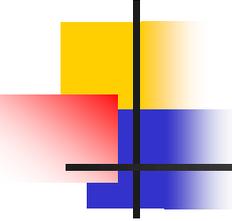
- Jonathan Edwards
  - “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXOOPsgvC94>



# Why Did it Happen?

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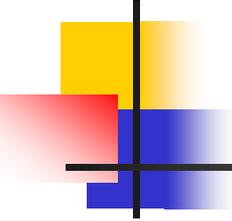
- **Why would these dramatic revivals happen?**
  - **Historians say:**
    - **Extraordinary upheaval and crisis for people**
      - **Many European homelands rocked by political instability**
        - **Drove people to British North America**
      - **Shift of population to South and West**
        - **Frontier**
        - **Harsh living conditions**
        - **Indian attacks**
        - **Families fragmented**
        - **Women forced into new “head” roles**
        - **Death constant**
    - **VO’s Historical Truism:**
      - **Social instability leads to “safe” behaviors**



# Discussion

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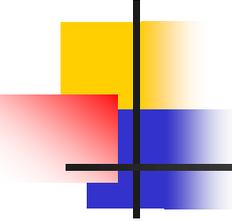
- **Some say that the Great Awakening “shaped the intellectual climate of the eighteenth century and created the values appropriate to the coming revolution and the establishment of a new nation.”**
  - **What do you say?**



So...

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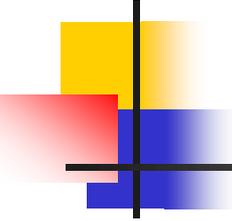
- Is the 1<sup>st</sup> G. A. a precursor to the Revolution?
- “THEY” say:
  - It cut across spectrum of society
  - Loosened dependence on church rituals for salvation
  - Created idea of equal access to salvation
  - Gave people a sense of belonging to society
  - Shows a willingness (New Lighters) to confront established authority
    - How would these things lead to political change?



# Finally, Enlightenment:

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- How does the Enlightenment relate to things like Leisler's Rebellion, reaction to Dominion of New England, or the First Great Awakening?
- Also called: Age of Rationalism
  - People arrive at truth by using reason
    - Not authority of the past or religion
  - God created universe, but does not interfere with workings
  - World operates according to God's rules (Natural Law)
    - Rules can be discovered through reason
  - Worship God best by helping other people to be happy (God wants us to be happy)
  - Society can be perfected.
  - Secular—focused on “this world;” not religious.
  - “Deism”



# Finally:

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- The title of your classwork was “From Authority to Individualism”
  - Why did the authors of the lesson give it that title?