

# America's Roots

## Part I:

## The Great Awakening

Ron Peri



# Recent Headlines From the Campus

- A pro-Trump student tried to document his professor's bias against him. Now he's facing a criminal trial.
- A Scholar was forced to resign over a study that found police shootings were not biased against blacks
- Rutgers English Department to deemphasize traditional grammar 'in solidarity with Black Lives Matter'
- UConn student government leaders resign because they're white
- University of Pennsylvania will remove the statue of George Whitefield



# The Mayflower Compact

In ye name of God Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyall subjects of our dread sovereigne Lord King James, by ye grace of God, of Great Britaine, France, & Ireland King, defender of ye faith, &c.

Haveing undertaken, for ye glorie of God, and advancemente of ye Christian faith and honour of our King & countrie, a voyage to plant ye first colonie in ye Northerne parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly & mutually in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant, & combine ourselves together in a Civill body politick; for our better ordering, & preservati- & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof enacte, constitute and frame such just & equall Lawes, ordinances, Acts, constitutions & offices from time to time, shall be thought most meeete & convenient for ye generall ye colonie: unto which we promise all due submission & obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cap-Codd ye -11- of November, in ye fiftieth yeare of our sovereigne Lord King James of England ye eighteenth, and of Scotland ye fiftieth.

Richard W. Brown

## 1620

- Pilgrims sail to America to escape persecution by the Church of England
- Sailing off course, they use their church constitution as the basis of their governance – the “Mayflower Compact”. It began “In ye name of God, Amen...”
- The colony is run by the Elders as a Christian enclave
- Puritans stay in England to “purify” the church





# 1642 - 1660

- Civil war breaks out in England in 1642. The Monarchy is ultimately ejected and King Charles II executed.
- Oliver Cromwell, a Puritan, leads the government. Cromwell dies in 1658.
- His son, Richard, assumes the leadership, but fails.
- In 1660 Puritanism is rejected as the monarchy regains control of the Church of England
- The clergy moves into formalism

THIS WORLD,  
TO  
That which is to come:  
Delivered under the Similitude of a  
**DREAM**

Wherein is Discovered,  
the manner of his letting  
a dangerous Journey; And  
the Defect

## 1662: The Act of Uniformity and the “Great Ejection”

Nearly 2,000 ministers – all who would not submit to the Act of Uniformity – were ejected from their livings. Forbidden to preach and many imprisoned (John Bunyan was one so imprisoned), they prayed.



“Englishmen were given to believe that the life of unfettered licentiousness might be indulged in with impunity. In this assurance, much of the nation threw off restraint and plunged itself into a course of godlessness, drunkenness, immorality and gambling. (*Arnold Dallimore’s biography of George Whitfield; Vol.1, )*



# Deism Reigns in the Church

- Deism is not an organized sect
- A form of religious rationalism
- Teaches that God is nothing more than the first cause, a force that made the world as a clockmaker makes a clock.
- God makes the laws, winds the clock, and lets it run.
- Man's sole responsibility is to recognize God's existence.



**GOD GAVE US REASON,  
NOT RELIGION**  
**www.deism.com**

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## Culture War

Deism (Natural Religion)  
versus  
Biblical Christianity  
(Supernatural Religion)

- Claimed to be based on logic and reason
- Thought the Bible could not be a revelation of the Deity, since it was given through one tiny nation
- Therefore, fulfilled prophecy must have been written after the fact
- Miracles were unproved
- Jesus was merely a man, declared a savior by his deluded followers

# Deism Welcomed in the Church

Deism  
provides theological cover  
for immorality

- Man is not responsible for his actions
- There is neither judgment nor any absolutes
- Sin with impunity was the pattern of the people



# A Universal Fear of “Enthusiasm”

- Applied to anyone who practiced Christianity with any fervor
- Equivalent to “fanatic”
- Believed the wars of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century were caused by over-zealous religion
- Prayer and preaching were viewed as dangerous to the nation
- Empty formality was therefore the order of the day.



# The Gin Craze

- 1689 – England prohibits the importation of liquor, so Englishmen begin to brew their own.
- Within a generation, every sixth house is a gin mill and alcoholism is rampant
- “What must become of the infant who is conceived in gin, with the poisonous distillations of which it is nourished both in the womb and at the breast” Magistrate Fielding
- “Gin has made the English people what they never were before – cruel and inhuman” Bishop Benton

# 1732

## **The Weekly Miscellany:**

“The people are engulfed in voluptuousness and business, and a zeal for godliness looks as odd upon a man as would the antiquated dress of his great grand-father. Freethinkers are formed into clubs, to propagate their tenets, and to make the nation a race of profligates; atheism is scattered and broadcast throughout the kingdom...”

“It is publicly avowed that vice is profitable for the state; and that polygamy, concubinage and even sodomy are not sinful.”





# Death of Queen Caroline

In 1737 Queen Caroline (King George II's Wife) was on her death bed...People wondered that the Queen did not have anyone to pray with her.

To stop these remarks, Prime Minister Robert Walpole suggested to Princess Emily that Archbishop Potter should be sent for. She hesitated. Then, Walpole added, "Pray, Madam, let this farce be played; the Archbishop will act it very well. You may bid him be as short as you will. It will do the Queen no harm, no more than any good; and it will satisfy all those who will call us atheists if we don't profess to be as great fools as they are."

*Funeral Procession of  
Queen Caroline*

# The Societies Movement

- 1673, Dr. Anthony Horneck preached “awakening sermons”
- Several young men began weekly meetings to build one another up, study the scriptures, help the poor, and show kindness to all.
- Small groups became known as Society Rooms
- By 1730, nearly 100 Societies were meeting in London
- Societies were the “cradle of revival”





# Christian Programs Failed to Change The Culture

- Built hospitals
- Publicized conditions in the prisons
- Legislated against the sale of gin
- Established “Charity” Schools
- Created “Society for Distribution of Christian Knowledge” – distributing Christian literature
- Unfortunately, things only got worse.

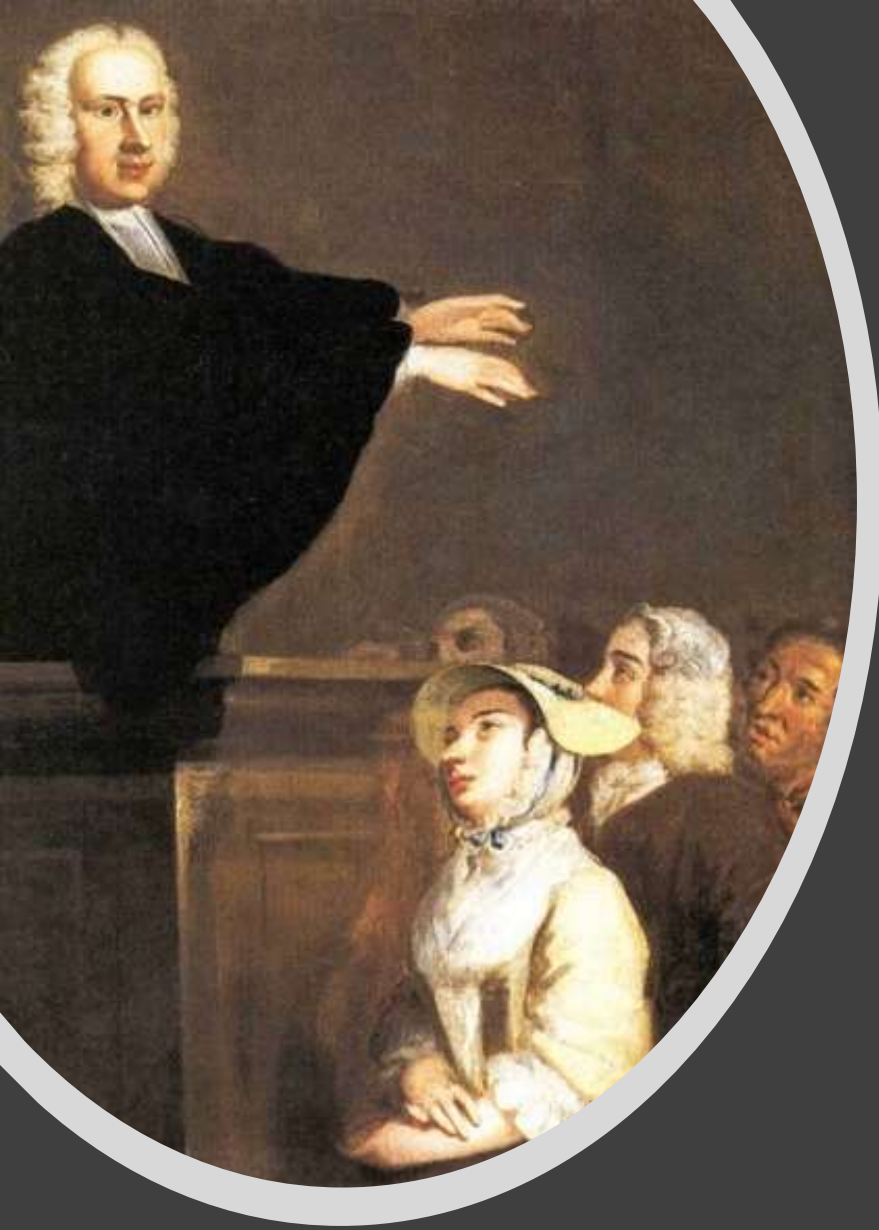




# Then God Sent a Man

- George Whitfield, 22 years old
- “declaring the gospel in the pulpits of London with such fervour and power, that no church could hold the multitudes flocking to hear”
- Whitefield was joined by John and Charles Wesley





# The Effect of Whitfield's Preaching

"...a religious revival burst forth... which changed in a few years the whole temper of English society. The Church was restored to life and activity. Religion carried to the hearts of the people a fresh spirit of moral zeal, while it purified our literature and our manners. A new philanthropy reformed our prisons, infused clemency and wisdom into our penal laws, abolished the slave trade, and gave the first impulse to popular education."



# Whitefield Preached The “New Birth”

- Presented a logical and biblical message
- Made no appeal for public profession
- He expected the Holy Spirit to arouse and overwhelm. He did not call this work *conversion*, but called it *awakening*.
- Encouraged seekers to go directly to the Lord.
- Refused to count decisions - “only the judgment morning will reveal who the converts really are.”
- Did not take collections





# Spiritual Decay in America

Cotton Mather wrote: “there is a general and horrible decay of Christianity... so notorious is this decay that whole books are written to inquire into it”



# 1737 Whitfield Sails Off to Georgia

- “Large offers were made me, if I would stay in London”.
- Sailed to Georgia anyway.
- He traveled to every settlement in the 5 year old Colony of Georgia
- Then he returned to England to even bigger crowds

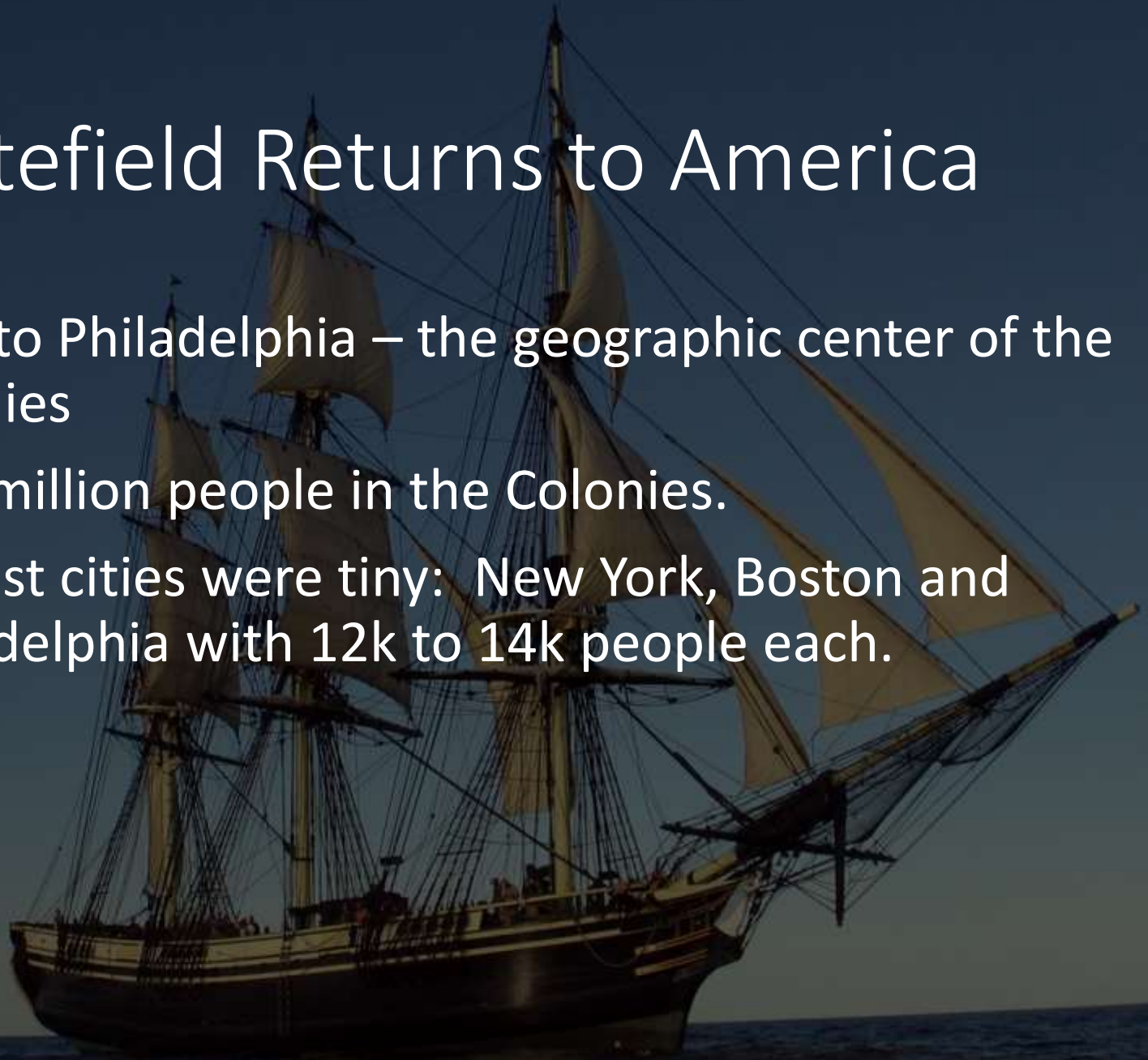


- Enfield, Connecticut, July 8, 1741 – preached  
“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”



# Whitefield Returns to America

- Sails to Philadelphia – the geographic center of the colonies
- One million people in the Colonies.
- Largest cities were tiny: New York, Boston and Philadelphia with 12k to 14k people each.



# Ben Franklin and George Whitefield

- “In 1739 there arrived among us the Rev Mr. Whitefield. He was at first permitted to preach in some of the churches; but the clergy, taking a dislike to him, soon refus’d him their pulpits and he was obliged to preach in the fields. The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermons were enormous...
- He had a loud and clear voice and could be understood at great distance... I computed that he could be heard by more than thirty thousand.
- Franklin became Whitefield's friend, publisher and frequent host.
- Again, Whitefield asked for no offerings

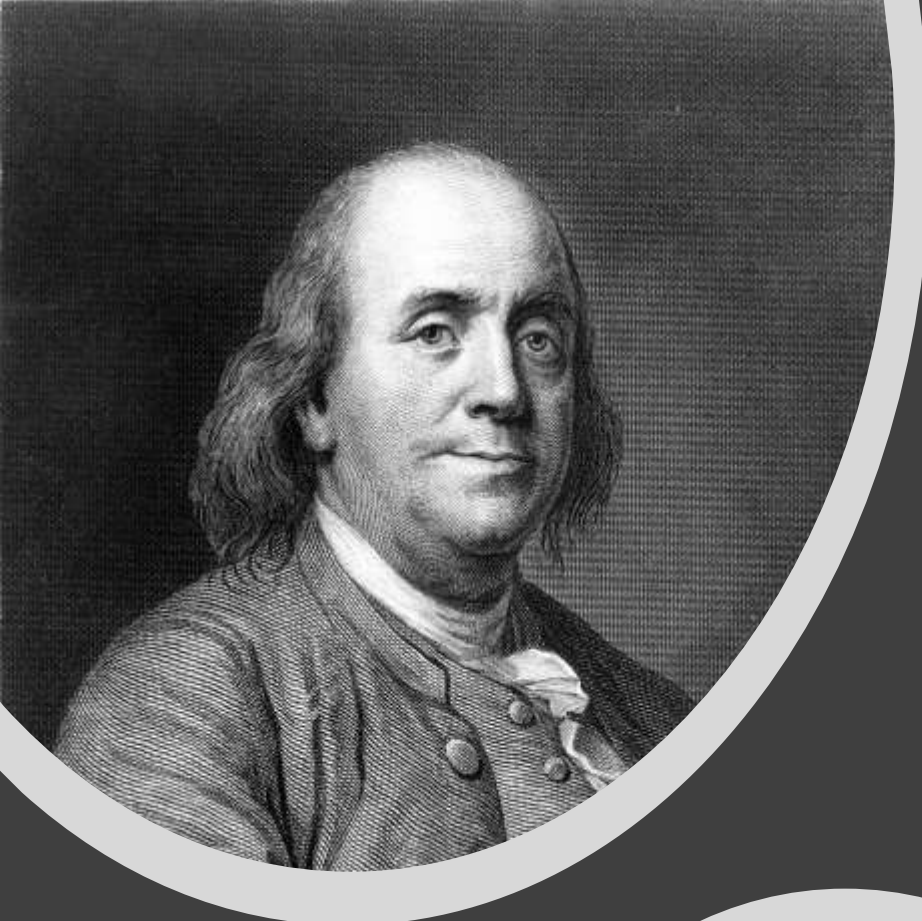




# Whitefield Travels South to Georgia

- Nov 29: Chester, PA – preached to 5,000
- Nov 30: Wilmington, DE – preached three times
- Dec 1: Newcastle, PA – preached to two thousand
- Dec 2: Whiteclay Creek, PA – rainy weather, ten thousand people were in the crowd
- Traveled from New York to Georgia in two months, preaching as he went.





# Whitefield's Effect on America

Benjamin Franklin: It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing religious, so that one could not walk thro' the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street.

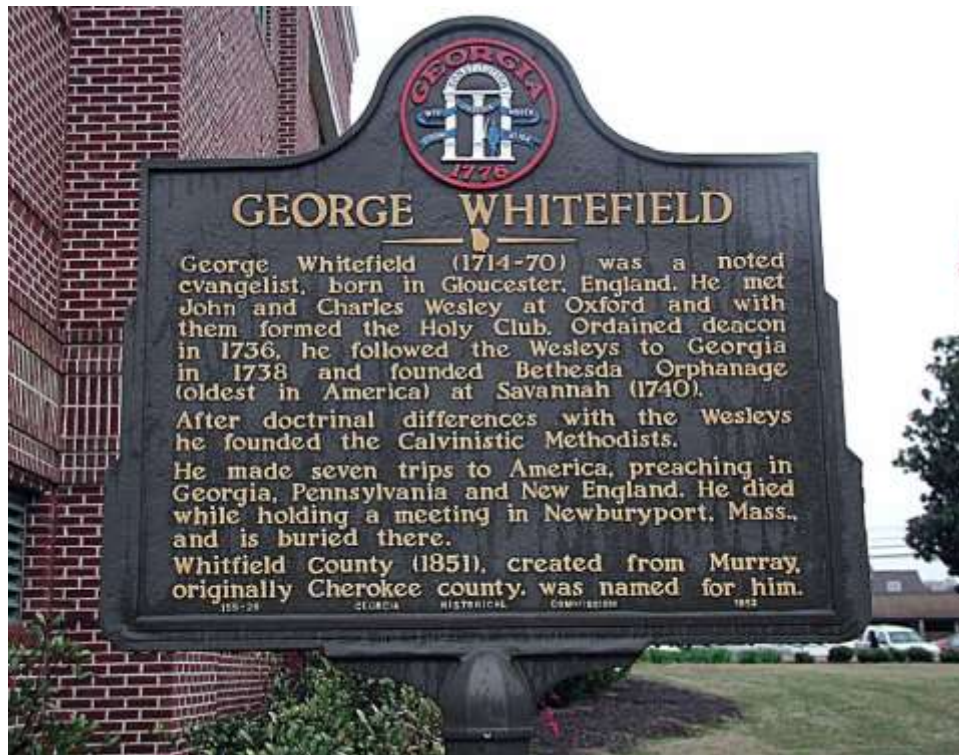


Sarah Edwards, wife of Jonathan: It is wonderful to see what a spell he casts over an audience by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible...Our mechanics shut up their shops and the day laborers throw down their tools to go and hear him preach, and few return unaffected.

# Whitfield's Message

- Never rest until you can say, “the Lord our Righteousness”. Who knows but the Lord may have mercy, nay, abundantly pardon you?
- Beg of God to give you faith; and if the Lord give you that, you will by it receive Christ, with his righteousness, and his all...
- None, none can tell but those happy souls who have experienced it with what demonstration of the Spirit this conviction comes... Oh how amiable, as well as all sufficient, does the blessed Jesus now appear! With what new eyes does the soul now see the Lord its righteousness. Brethren, it is unutterable!
- Those who live godly in Christ...hear, know and obey his voice...being born again in God they habitually live to and daily walk with God
- Whitefield believed that there were believers in every denomination

# 1770: the Eve of Revolution



- Whitefield dies in 1770 at age 56:  
“How willing I would ever live to preach Christ! But I die to be with him.”
- The Revolution is formed in the crucible of the Revival
- Quakers, Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics, and Anglicans – people who had separated from one another, joined together in common cause.



# The First Constitutional Convention

Ben Franklin at 81, Thursday, June 28, 1787:

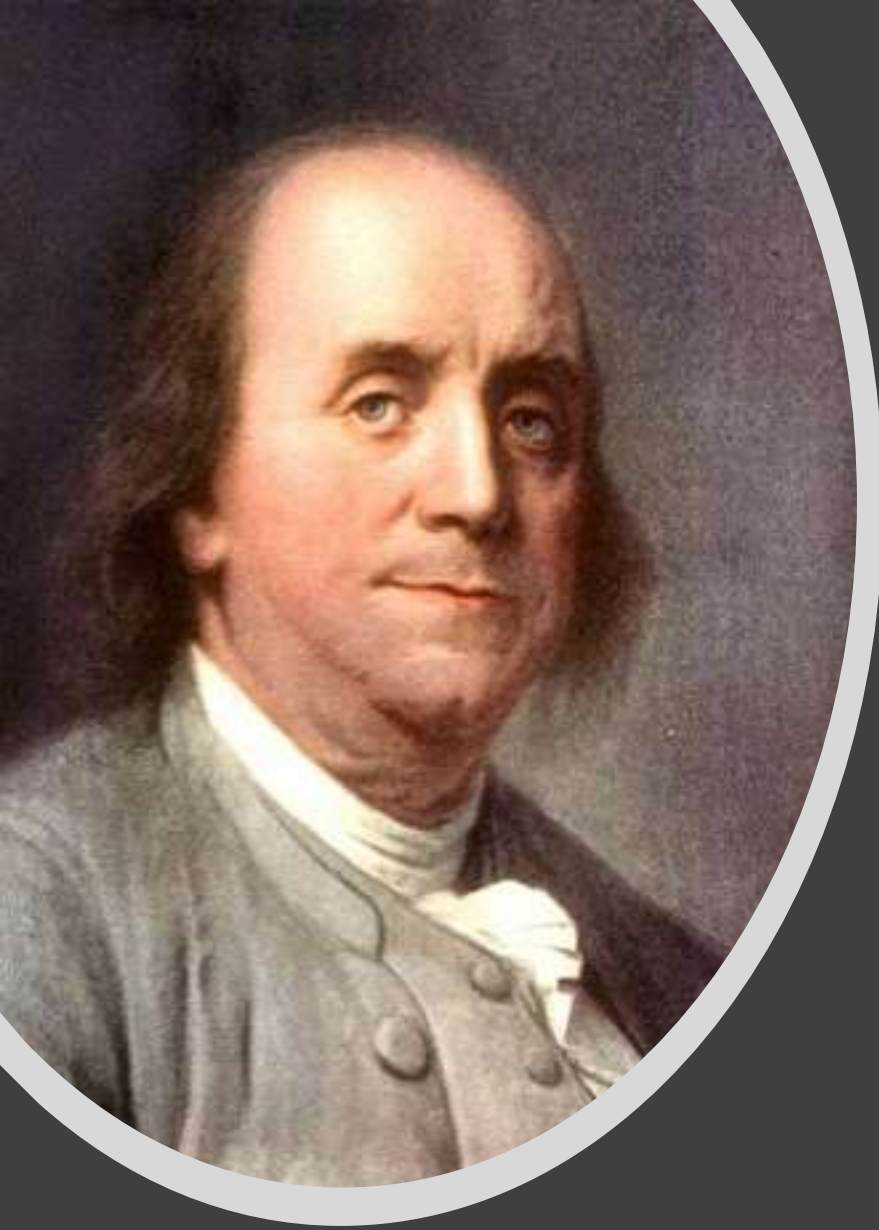
“Mr. President... I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth – that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His Aid?

We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that ‘except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that build it’. I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the Builders of Babel. We shall be divided by our partial local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and by word down to future generations.

And what is worse, mankind may hereafter despair of establishing Governments by Human Wisdom and leave it to chance, war and conquest

I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service.”

*Prayers opened all subsequent meetings of the convention and both houses of Congress ever since.*



# Whitefield Left a Different Country

Information to Those Who Would Remove to America (Ben Franklin)

“Serious religion, under its various denominations, is not only tolerated, but respected and practised.

Atheism is unknown there; infidelity rare and secret; so that persons may live to a great age in that country without having their piety shocked by meeting with either an Atheist or an infidel.

And the Divine Being seems to have manifested his approbation of the mutual forbearance and kindness with which the different sects treat each other; by the remarkable prosperity with which he has been pleased to favor the whole country.”