

Puritans in the New World

An Online Professional Development Seminar



Christine Heyrman

Robert W. and Shirley P. Grimble
Professor of American History,
University of Delaware

National Humanities Center Fellow
1985-86

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FROM THE FORUM

- How were the Puritans different from the separatist Pilgrims?
- What motivated the two groups to come to the New World?
- Were the Puritans as grim as they are typically portrayed?
- What lasting impact did the Puritans have on American society?

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*Commerce and Culture: The Maritime Communities
of Colonial Massachusetts, 1690-1750*
(1986)

Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt
(1998)



GOALS

- How did the Puritans understand sin?
- Why did the Puritans put so much emphasis on the doctrine of the calling? What spiritual and social challenges were they addressing?
- What were Anne Bradstreet's besetting religious doubts?
- How did John Winthrop characterize the settlement that he wished to build in New England?
- On what grounds did Nathaniel Ward argue against religious toleration?

- The Protestant Reformation
- The Contributions of Martin Luther
- The Contributions of John Calvin
- The Five Points of Calvinism [TULIP]
 - Total Depravity
 - Unconditional Election
 - Limited Atonement
 - Irresistible Grace
 - Perseverance of the Saints
- The English Reformation: Separating and Non-Separating Congregationalists

“The one sees the history of sin, the other the nature of it; the one knows the relation of sin as it is mapped out and recorded, the other the poison, as by experience he hath found and proved it. It’s one thing to see a disease in the book or in a man’s body, another thing to find and feel it in a man’s self. There is the report of it, here the malignity and venom of it.”

(page 149)

Discussion Question

- **How did the Puritans understand sin?**

“Now herein lies the inconceivable heinousness of the hellish nature of sin: it would jostle the Almighty out of the throne of His glorious sovereignty, and indeed be above Him.”

(page 149)

Discussion Question

- How did the Puritans understand sin?

“The strongest Christian is never more foiled than when he goes forth in strength of gifts received and his own dexterity.”

(page 176)

Discussion Questions

- Why did the Puritans put so much emphasis on the doctrine of the calling?
- What spiritual and social challenges were they addressing?

“A man of his rank and breeding was not wonted to hired servile work, but the same faith that made him desirous to be in a calling made him stoop to any work his calling led him to; there is no work too hard or too homely for him for faith is conscious that it hath done the most base drudgery for Satan.”

(page 177)

Discussion Questions

- Why did the Puritans put so much emphasis on the doctrine of the calling?
- What spiritual and social challenges were they addressing?

“If at any time you are chastened of God, take it as thankfully and joyfully as in greatest mercies, for if ye be His, ye shall reap the greatest benefit by it. It hath been no small support to me in times of darkness when the Almighty hath hid His face from me that yet I have had abundance of sweetness and refreshment after affliction and more circumspection in my walking after I have been afflicted.”

(page 190)

Discussion Question

- What were Anne Bradstreet’s besetting religious doubts?

“...when I have been in darkness and seen no light, yet have I desired to stay myself upon the Lord, and when I have been in sickness and pain, I have thought if the Lord would but lift up the light of His countenance upon me, although He ground me to powder, it would be but light to me; yea, often have I thought were I in hell itself and could there find the love of God toward me, it would be a heaven. And could I have been in heaven without the love of God, it would have been a hell to me, for in truth it is the absence and presence of God that makes heaven and hell.”

(page 191)

Discussion Question

- **What were Anne Bradstreet’s besetting religious doubts?**

A MODELL HEREOF

“God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence hath soe disposed of the Condicion of mankind, as in all times some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subjection.”

(page 108)

Discussion Question

- How did John Winthrop characterize the settlement that he wished to build in New England?

“Thus stands the cause between God and us, wee are entered into Covenant with him for this worke, wee have taken out a Commission, the Lord hath given us leave to drawe our owne Articles wee have professed to enterprise these Accions upon these and these ends....”

(page 111)

Discussion Question

- How did John Winthrop characterize the settlement that he wished to build in New England?

“If the devil might have his free option, I believe he would ask nothing else but liberty to enfranchise all false religions and to embondage the truth; nor should he need. It is much to be feared that lax tolerations upon state pretenses and planting necessities will be the next subtle stratagem he will spread to dista[s]te the truth of God and supplant the peace of the churches. Tolerations in things tolerable, exquisitely drawn out by the lines of the scripture and pencil of the spirit, are the sacred favors of truth, the due latitudes of love, the fair compartments of Christian fraternity; but irregular dispensations, dealt forth by the facilities of men, are the frontiers of error, the redoubts of schism, the perilous irritaments of carnal and spiritual enmity.”

(page 97)

Discussion Question

- On what grounds did Nathaniel Ward argue against religious toleration?

“He that is willing to tolerate any religion or discrepant way of religion besides his own, unless it be in matters merely indifferent, either doubts his own or is not sincere in it.”

(page 100)

Discussion Question

- On what grounds did Nathaniel Ward argue against religious toleration?

What it is not:

- the foundation of American constitutionalism and liberal democracy
- the inspiration for prudes and kill-joys

What it is:

- one answer to the universal question of what men and women owe to society
- a religious sensibility that shaped evangelical Protestantism

Final Discussion Question

- What is the legacy of the Puritans?

Thank you

Final slide