

that such instruction in “county schools,” as opposed to church schools, was to be nondenominational. The 1944 Education Act to some extent maintained earlier distinctions and legislated for “county schools” and “voluntary schools,” that is, those schools originally established and funded, for the most part, by the churches through their various societies. Voluntary schools were further distinguished into aided, controlled, and special agreement schools (with regard to religious education, nothing turns on the distinction between aided and special agreement schools). Under the terms of the act, “religious instruction” and religious observance in the form of “collective worship” (which according to the act together comprise *religious education*) were confirmed as compulsory elements of the school curriculum of all county and voluntary schools. The act further specified that religious instruction in both county and voluntary controlled schools was to be according to an “Agreed Syllabus.” By contrast, voluntary aided schools (chiefly Roman Catholic schools and some Anglican schools) could provide religious instruction in a form appropriate to the beliefs and interests of the founding church or body; in other words, they could provide denominational religious education.

The religious provisions of the 1944 Education Act remained in effect until the Education Reform Act of 1988. Section 8.3 of that act stated that any new agreed syllabus for religious education “shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.” Some influential commentators, including John Hull, maintain that no agreed syllabus in England and Wales meets the requirements of the law if it does not include study of the teachings and practices of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism, alongside Christianity. The act legislated for “multifaith” religious education in England and Wales, and this in fact gave legal support to what was already practiced in most schools. In 1971, Schools Council Working Paper 36 had drawn attention to the increasingly secular nature of British society and endorsed a phenomenological, “nondogmatic,” multifaith approach to religious education as opposed to a confessional approach, and in the following decades Christian nurture came to be completely abandoned in county schools, regarded not only as inappropriate but as indoctrinatory and incompatible with the principles of liberal education. In 1994, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) published two “model” syllabuses to exemplify good practice. It also became common in the 1990s to speak about “learning about religion” and “learning from religion” and to regard these as two distinctive assessment objectives. The SCAA model syllabuses have subsequently been superseded by a single

Non-Statutory National Framework (2004) which, while retaining the emphasis on the study of six major faiths, with the study of Christianity at each key stage, also “recommends” the study of a range of further traditions such as the Baha’i faith, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism and “secular philosophies” such as humanism. These recommendations have proved controversial, and a number of prominent religious educators have argued that secular worldviews should not be included within *religious education* and that a study of so many religions results in truncated teaching and superficial learning.

The common legislative character that English and Welsh religious education had previously shared was ended in 2008 with the publication of the Welsh Assembly government’s National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education. The Welsh Framework enumerates three core skills for RE: engaging with fundamental questions; exploring religious beliefs, teachings, and practice(s); and expressing personal responses.

Since the events of 11 September 2001 and the London bombings of 7 July 2007, increasingly critical questions have been asked about the capability of current British models of nonconfessional, multifaith religious education to challenge religious prejudice and intolerance and to contribute to effecting positive relationships between different communities and individuals with different commitments. Critics also claim that historically, multifaith religious education in England and Wales has failed to address the issue of religious truth claims and to attend to the controversial aspects of religion. Many religious educators are content to provide stereotypical, positive interpretations of the different religions, predicated on the assumption that they all find their origin in a common spiritual source. Such views are regarded by others as hopelessly naive and inadequate to the aim of equipping pupils to live respectfully and responsibly amid religious diversity.

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—L. PHILIP BARNES

ENGLISH PURITANISM AND SEPARATISM

English Puritanism was a movement that arose within the Church of England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth

I (1558–1603). The Puritans emerged in response to the continued acceptance within the Church of England of an episcopal structure and high church worship. The majority of Puritans tended to remain within the Church of England with the hope of encouraging further reform of the church from within. Other Puritans, known as Separatists, determined to break with the Church of England and form congregations organized according to their interpretation of scripture. The Puritan commitment to education produced many enduring works of theology and Reformed political theory. They founded or heavily influenced several important academic institutions, including Harvard University and Cambridge University.

Historical Overview

English Puritanism derived much of its early strength from the faculty and students at Cambridge University. Thomas Cartwright, one of the early leaders of the Puritan movement, was appointed Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, only to have his appointment revoked in 1571 by Archbishop and Vice-Chancellor John Whitgift. A number of Cambridge luminaries, such as Laurence Chaderton and William Perkins, were devoted to Puritan ideals of church order and worship. A number of future English Separatists, among them Francis Johnson and John Smyth, also studied or taught at Cambridge during the 1580s and 1590s. A strong Puritan presence continued to influence Cambridge throughout the period of the Civil Wars and Interregnum.

Separatist Puritanism originated with the exodus of Robert Browne's congregation in 1582. Browne's treatise, *A Reformation without Tarrying for Anie* (1582), advanced the view that Puritans should separate and form their own congregations if the Established Church refused to compromise. Browne moved with his congregation to the Netherlands, but eventually returned to the Church of England. Later Separatist leaders like Henry Barrow and John Greenwood refused to acknowledge Browne's influence on them, because they were disgusted by his betrayal. Barrow and Greenwood gathered a congregation in London, which settled in Amsterdam under the leadership of Francis Johnson in the late 1580s and early 1590s. A second wave of English Separatists migrated to Amsterdam after James I refused to make any strong concessions to Puritanism at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. The Separatists split into a number of different factions during the first two decades of the 17th century. One group of English Separatists from Scrooby, led by John Robinson, settled in Leiden. They became the nucleus of the Separatist group that crossed the Atlantic in 1620 and settled at Plymouth, Massachusetts. Another faction of this same group, led by John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, formed

the first Baptist congregations in 1609 at Amsterdam and in 1612 at London.

Puritans in England continued to exist peacefully within the Church of England even after the disappointment they experienced at Hampton Court. Their position became more precarious during the reign of Charles I. Charles's appointment of the strict Arminian William Laud as archbishop of Canterbury in 1633 resulted in attempts by Laud to suppress Puritanism. Puritan opposition to Charles and Laud led them to back the Parliamentary cause when the English Civil Wars began in 1641/1642. Puritan interests provided strong support for the Parliamentary forces. The Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell (1653–1658) marked the zenith of Puritan political influence in England. With his death in 1658 and the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Puritans once again suffered legal restrictions along with other "nonconformists." The Puritan story merges with that of English nonconformity at this point. They experienced a lifting of most legal restrictions on their worship services in 1689, but nonconformists of all varieties continued to live under restrictions to their autonomy in the realms of education and public service.

Influence on Christian Education

The intellectual legacy left by the Puritans is significant. It is a reflection of the strong Puritan and Separatist emphasis on the reading of scripture and the preaching of the Gospel. In terms of academic administration, Puritan leaders were among the most respected college and university leaders of their day. Puritans such as Laurence Chaderton served in a variety of administrative capacities at Cambridge during the late 16th century. Walter Travers served as provost of Trinity College, Dublin, from 1594 to 1598, and John Owen served as vice-chancellor of Oxford University from 1651 to 1658.

Puritan leaders naturally excelled in the study of the scripture and the writing of theological treatises, many of which have been acknowledged as classic statements of Reformed theology. Puritans, both of the Presbyterian and Independent persuasions, were instrumental in the crafting of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), The Westminster Longer Catechism (1647), and the Westminster Shorter Catechism (1647). William Perkin's *A Golden Chaine* (1591) is still considered a classic work of early Puritan theology. The English Separatists contributed their own confession of faith in the form of *The True Confession* (1596 and 1604). John Owen produced classic theological treatises such as *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (1647) and *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers* (1656). The prolific Richard Baxter wrote a number of surviving sermons and treatises, including *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* (1650).

Puritan intellectual influence also shaped the literature of 17th-century England. Foremost among Puritan men of letters in the 17th century was John Milton, whose *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Paradise Regained* (1671) presented the story of humanity's fall and redemption in epic poetry. Milton also wrote *Areopagitica* (1644), an impassioned plea for freedom of expression in speech and print. The Baptist John Bunyan incorporated Puritan themes in his allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). Bunyan's exploration of the Christian's journey through this life to the celestial city was teeming with Puritan theological concepts and metaphors.

The North American Puritans' commitment to education was evident in their creation of catechetical statements for their congregations and founding of important centers for education. Puritans and their Congregationalist heirs were instrumental in the founding of Harvard University (1634–1646) and Yale University (1701) in the American colonies. The Puritan influence on American culture was profound and placed New England at the forefront of American cultural influence well into the mid-19th century.

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—SCOTT CULPEPPER

ENLIGHTENMENT PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

The Enlightenment is generally identified as the period from roughly 1600 to 1800, during which major developments in scientific, philosophical, political, and religious culture transformed European society. The emergence of Enlightenment thought is often connected to the rise of modernity and the general acceptance of scientific rationalism as the primary means of understanding the world. Enlightenment thinkers were often willing to discard traditional beliefs and practices in light of insights gleaned from the use of their rational faculties.

Foundations of the Enlightenment

The theological and philosophical currents of the Enlightenment should not be separated from the scientific and political advances that both supported and were supported by developments in philosophy and theology. Thinkers like René Descartes (1596–1650) applied the rationalist approach of scientific thinkers such as Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) and Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) to the question of how knowledge and understanding are gained. Descartes's writings on philosophical methodology and epistemology helped define the mode of thinking adopted by many Enlightenment rationalists. Among his noted works are *Discourse on the Method* (1637), in which he introduced the world to his famous dictum *Cogito ergo sum*. Descartes sought to establish the existence of God and the immortality of the soul using only evidence that could be established through reason in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641).

Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) began to dialogue with the writings of Descartes and constructed his own philosophy, which had a tremendous impact on the science of biblical interpretation. Spinoza was of Portuguese and Jewish descent. He lived for all 44 of his years in the Dutch Republic. Spinoza was expelled from his synagogue at the age of 23, possibly for questioning orthodox interpretations of the Hebrew scripture. Spinoza's most influential publication, *Ethics* (1677), was published shortly after his death. He engaged in literary dialogue with a number of philosophers, including Descartes, in *Ethics*. He proposed a concept of God in which God was closely identified with the universe itself, leading some readers to accuse him of Pantheism.

Religious views were deeply impacted by the new philosophical currents. John Locke's views on anthropology marked an important departure from the Reformed theology of his youth. Locke argued in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) that human beings are born as a tabula rasa or blank slate. He believed that human failings were the result of poor nurture and experience rather than an inherent sinful nature. His more optimistic appraisal of human nature tended to guide Enlightenment thought in the 18th century. Locke also discussed the veracity of scripture and the miraculous in *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1696). While attempting to defend Christianity properly interpreted as an eminently reasonable belief system, Locke raised serious questions about the veracity of the supernatural aspects of scripture. He also championed the cause of religious toleration in *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689). Though the religious settlement in England after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 did not live up to Locke's ideal, he proposed in his *Letter* the vision of a society in which people were free to practice their faith without legal coercion or penalty. Locke's political views grew organically from his