British Colonies in North America were founded by people who were fleeing religious prosecution in Britain.

Americans were very religious people.

Great Awakening was a religious revival period that occurred between 1735-1765.

New Light party told their congregations that men and women did not gain favor or forgiveness from God simply by learning or conforming to the man-made faith of a church or to the prevailing moral standards of their community. He demanded total submission to his will, complete repentance for sins and utter obedience to his commands.

Americans felt the need for such forgiveness and submission.

Very prosperous time – many normally decent people began to cut corners, abuse their offices or to slight their social responsibilities in order to engage in sharp dealing for private profit.

Time of many fights and accusations between rich and poor, congregation and priests.

Increasing social and economic tensions produced increasing feelings of guilt and stabs of conscience.

Tensions looked at as “growing pains” from living in the new world and separating from the old ways in Europe.

People began to stop believing in the authority of the church and state…the old system was breaking down.

Revival ministers emerged from the troubled times and preached immediate repentance from sin and immediate conversion to God.

This aroused an excessive amount attention from people who wanted to regain their standings in God’s good graces.

George Whitefield arrived from England in 1739. He was well known as a successful revivalist in England. His style of preaching was very different and upwards of 1000 people attended each of his talks. He would cast a spell over the audience and create such enthusiasm. He was seen as God’s messenger to arouse a sinful people from their wicked ways.

Whitefield told people that God doesn’t work through Kings, Bishops, educated clergy or the upper class but through the people themselves. He taught people equality.

When Parliament pressed for more control over the colonies, instead of turning on the American way of government, they turned on Britain. They projected their guilt outward toward a common enemy.

Religious and political regeneration merged in a triumphant effort to keep the new-found presence of God in America by keeping the British away.
• Americans saw themselves as the chosen people of God and saw it as their mission to serve Him.
• Americans could not effectively fulfill this mission as long as they were tied to a corrupt, oppressive and tyrannical monarch. American’s were convinced that God was trying to show them how much more important it was to adhere to His higher laws then to the man-made laws of Parliament. Americans needed to take their destiny into their own hands.
• American’s felt obliged to bring the blessings of liberty to the rest of the world.
• There were angry and violent out bursts between New Lights and those who still followed the Old Way. Old Way people were often thrown in jail.
• Decisions made by New Lights, thinking and acting on their own responsibility involved sacrifices made to their personal lives in order to separate from the British.
• All the events of early 1700’s fortified American’s to fight against the injustices of the Stamp Act, the Coercive Acts and the Townshend Act. Colonists learned to judge for themselves and act out of their own consciences. Supported “Disobedience to tyrants is obedience to God”.
• The Awakening helped a new kind of inter-colonial unity.
• The Awakening also fostered a new system of mass-communication in North America. Inter-colonial newspapers were so important because they spread word of republic ideology.
• Itinerants emerged. They were regular working class people who spread (not through power, because they had none) the message of free choice. They spread the word by speaking one on one with people
• Out of the awakening came an individualized, non-theological, voluntary and migratory religious order perfectly suited to the needs of the people who had to shake off the institutional restrictions of Old World in order to spread across the New World continent.
• Slavery was attacked as a result of Awakening.
• Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence that George III had forced slavery on Americans and wrote the Declaration based the idea of “natural right” and “unalienable freedom”.
• 2 types of people were created…
• Rationalists in America provided people with knowledge of political science and created government that stated that it must have balances and checks and deeply depended on its citizens.
• Pietists provided American with a religious ideology that stated that Americans were God’s chosen people and that without true commitment to God’s higher law as expressed in his holy word; no nation could save itself from corruption and tyranny.
• American Revolution can be described as a political revitalization of a people whose religious regeneration began in the Great Awakening. Regeneration or cultural re-birth was the key which unlocked the door to the new household of the republic.
• BASICALLY it created a colonial unity which helped Americans push forward to separate from Britain and become a nation of freedom and human rights.

**Glossary of Terms**

**Revival:** Renewal of attention to religious faith and service in a church or community, usually following a period of comparative inactivity and frequently marked by intense passion.

**Congregation:** A group of people gathered for religious worship.

**Republic:** A political order whose head of state is not a monarch and in modern times is usually a president.

**Ideology:** The body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture.

**Tyrant:** An absolute ruler who governs without restrictions. 2. A ruler who exercises power in a harsh, cruel manner

**Itinerant:** Traveling from place to place, especially to perform work or a duty.

**Theology:** The study of the nature of God and religious truth; rational inquiry into religious questions.

**Pietists:** person who stresses on the emotional and personal aspects of religion.

**Revitalization:** cultural re-birth

**All definition taken from GuruNet**