



# **WHAT KIND OF CHRISTIAN? EVANGELICALISM, CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM, AND FAITH IN PUBLIC LIFE**

Heath W. Carter

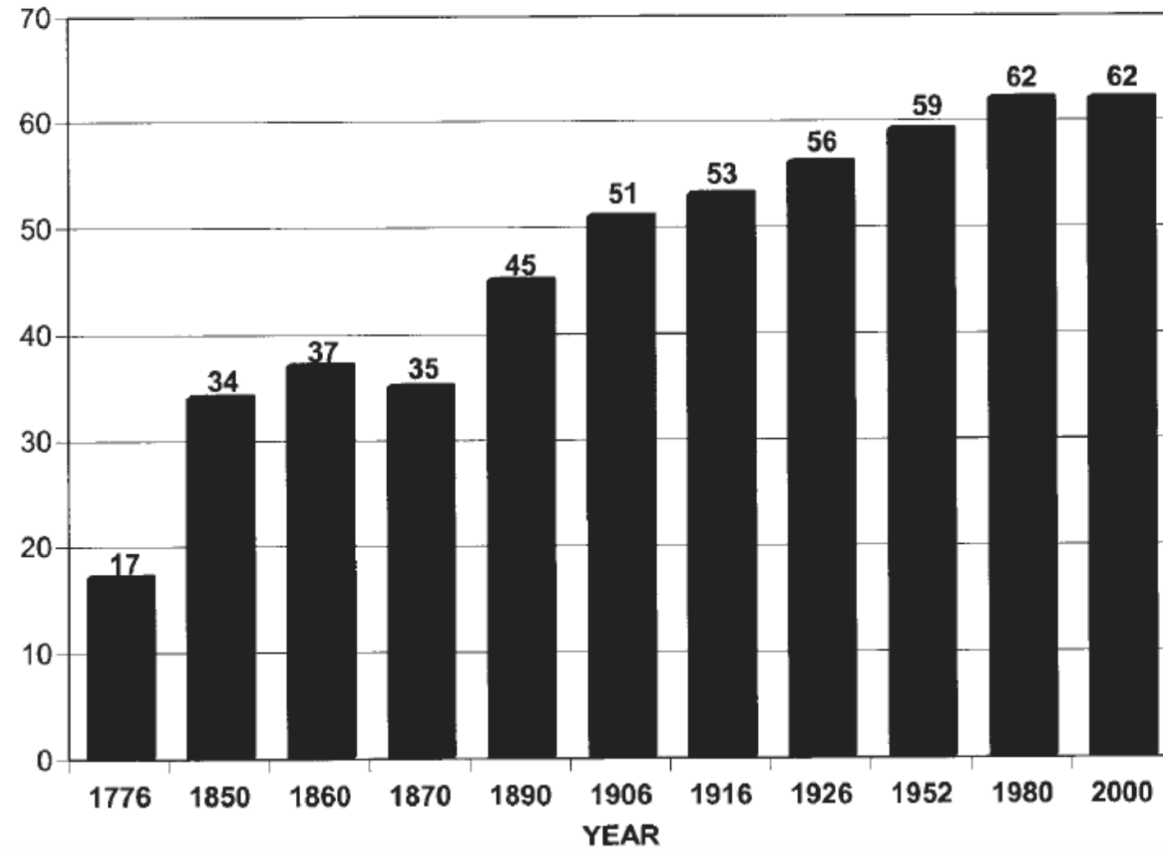
Associate Professor of American Christianity

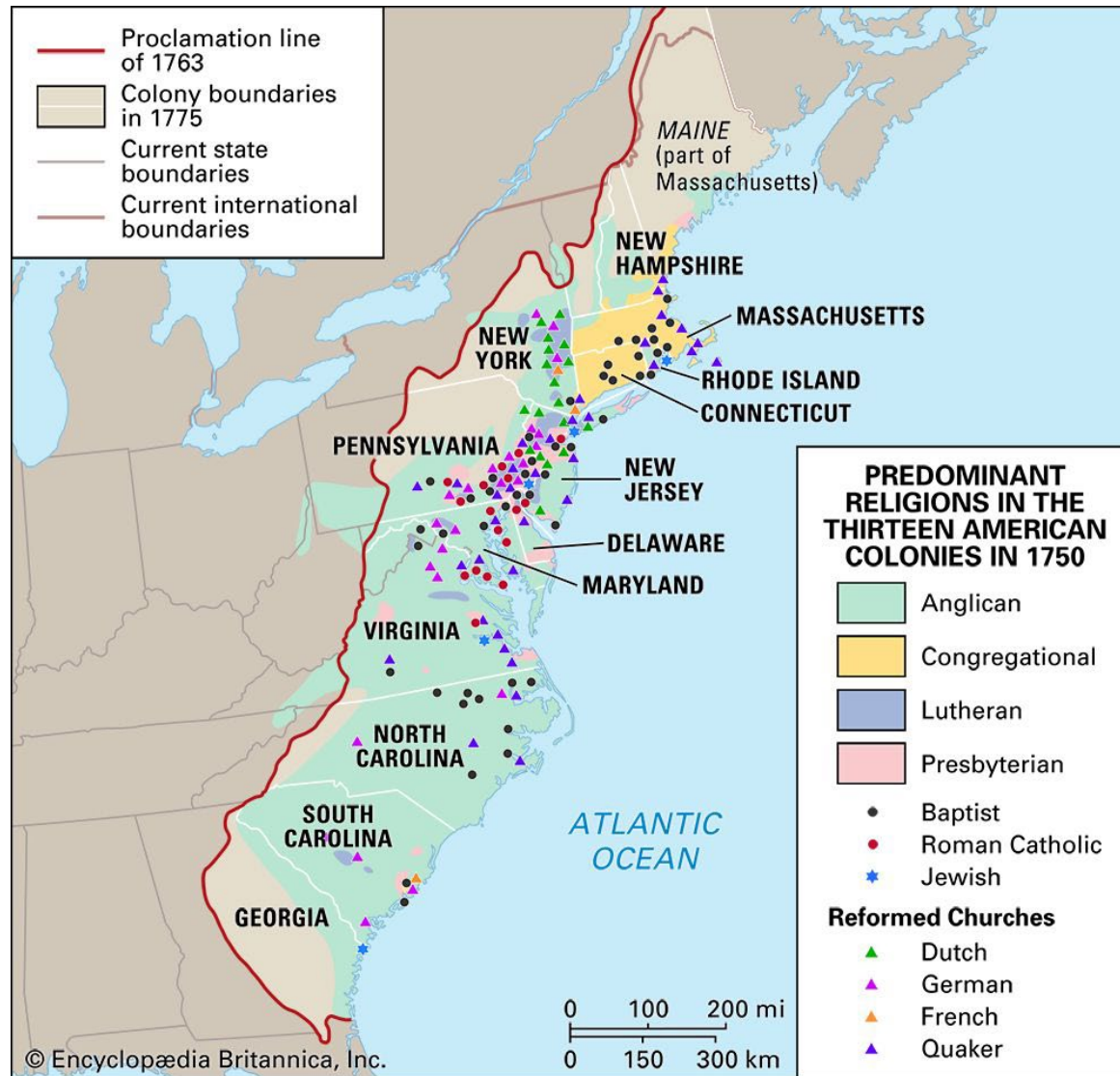
Princeton Theological Seminary



**“THE CHRISTIANITY OF THIS LAND AND THE  
CHRISTIANITY OF CHRIST”**

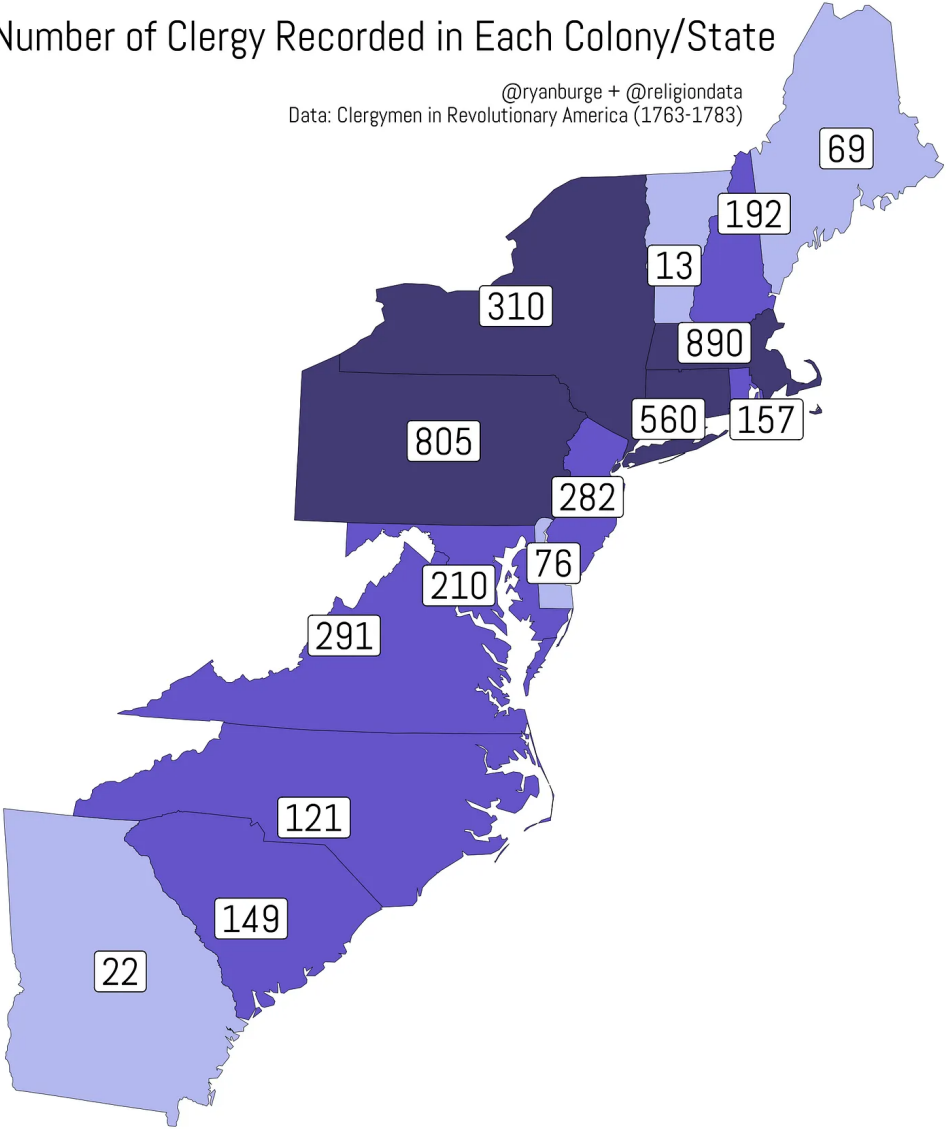
FIGURE 1.2 Rates of Religious Adherence, 1776–2000





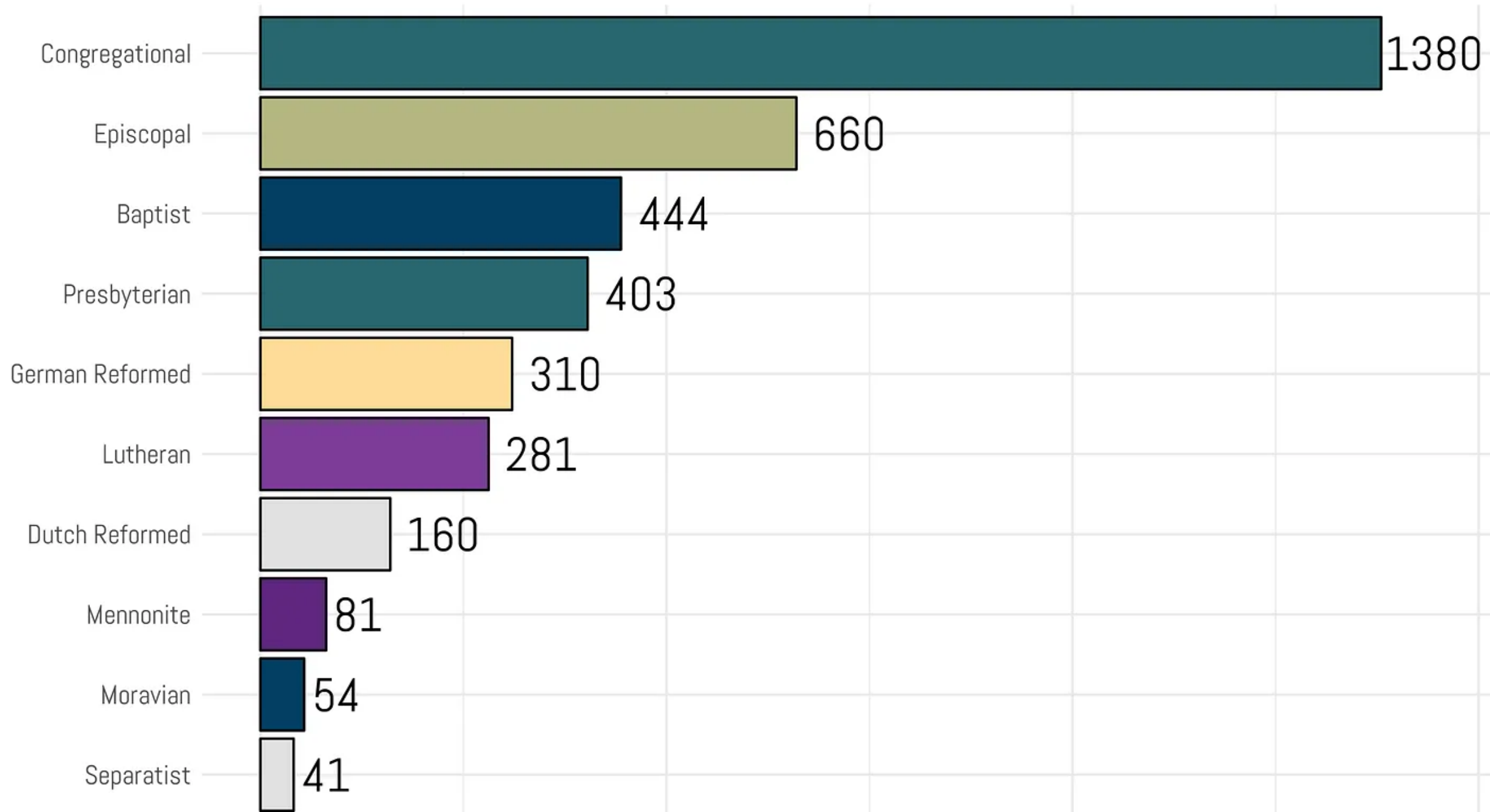
# Number of Clergy Recorded in Each Colony/State

@ryanburge + @religiondata  
Data: Clergymen in Revolutionary America (1763-1783)





# Most Popular Denominations Among Ministers, 1763-1783



## George Whitefield



# “RELIGION OF THE HEART”

from Christian faith  
defined as correct doctrine  
toward Christian faith  
defined as correct living;

from godly order as the  
heart of the church's  
concern toward godly  
fellowship as the principal  
goal;

from authoritative  
interpretation of Scripture  
originating with church  
elites toward lay and more  
democratic appropriation  
of the Bible;

from obedience toward  
expression;

from music as performed  
by well-trained specialists  
toward music as a shared  
expression of ordinary  
people;

from preaching as learned  
discourses about God  
toward preaching as  
impassioned appeals for  
“closing with Christ”

\*From Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism* (2003)



ALEXIS DE  
TOCQUEVILLE,  
1835

"Upon my arrival in the United States the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there, the more I perceived the great political consequences resulting from this new state of things. In France, I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions. But in America I found they were intimately united and that they reigned in common over the same country."

# **EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTISM 1.0**

## **THE BENEVOLENT EMPIRE (1800-1850S)**

- suspicion of authority and expertise**
- elevation of individual experience and “common sense”**  
**interpretations of scripture**

# JARENA LEE



“For as unseemly as it may appear now-a-days for a woman to preach, it should be remembered that nothing is impossible with God.”

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interpretations of scripture**
- voluntary societies, humanitarian aims, and post-millennial  
“improvers”; ecumenical, with Methodists and Baptists supplying  
many of the people, and Presbyterians and Congregationalists much  
of the organization**

# THE BEECHER FAMILY





# FREDERICK DOUGLASS

**“For, between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference”**



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- voluntary societies, humanitarian aims, and post-millennial “improvers”; ecumenical, with Methodists and Baptists supplying many of the people, and Presbyterians and Congregationalists much of the organization**
- torn asunder by rising conflict over slavery and the coming of Civil War**

# LINCOLN'S SECOND INAUGURAL



“Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword as was said three thousand years ago so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'”

# **“EVANGELICAL” CONTINUITIES**

- Populist theology & biblical interpretation**
- Suspicion of expertise & authority**
- Religion of the heart: personal piety**
- Sense of entwinement between destiny of church and nation**
- Conflict over race, gender, and authority**
- Entrepreneurial**

# **“EVANGELICAL” DISCONTINUITIES**

- Big-Tent**
- Postmillennial optimism**
- Eventually more institutional**