

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS:
JAMES OGLETHORPE AND THE GEORGIA COLONY
ISAIAH 51:1-2

The Christian influence in the establishment of the Georgia Colony is certainly overlooked and needs to be discussed. Georgia was not established for purely religious reasons as was the New England Colony, but does have a Christian heritage that influenced the development of this great state.

I. JAMES OGLETHORPE.

A. His Motivation to Settle Georgia.

1. Was deeply moved by the death of a friend in debtor's prison and abuse that he saw in England's prisons of that day.
2. Originally planned to bring people released from debtor's prison to the new colony.

B. His Trips to Georgia.

1. First Voyage – 1734.
 - * The first group of 116 settlers including a minister, Herbert Henry, who led in prayers upon the group's arrival. The group included no released prisoners. *
2. Second Voyage – 1736. 2 ships and 300 settlers.
 - * He had persuaded John and Charles Wesley to come to Georgia on this voyage. *
3. Third Voyage – 1738.

C. His Fundamental Principles.

1. He was an Anglican in religious practice.
2. He had a simple philosophy that life is not about self, but about others.
3. He practiced religious tolerance allowing Lutherans, Moravians, Jews and other religious groups to settle in Georgia.
4. He had an enlightened policy toward the Indians respecting their customs, language and needs. He sought to protect them from unscrupulous traders.
5. He thought of America as a place of refuge for the unfortunate.
6. He banned slavery and rum from the Georgia colony.
 - * denouncing slavery as an 'abominable and destructive custom', and one which was against both the Gospel and the fundamental law of England. Sir Keith Thomas President of Corpus Christi College of Oxford England. 1996.

D. His Later Years.

1. Married later in life to a lady of wealth and lived in comfort.
2. Was sympathetic to the American cause in the Revolutionary War and took great pleasure in paying respects to John Adams when he visited England.
3. Was active and mentally alert until his death at 88.

II. MORAVIAN MISSIONARIES.

A. Their Purpose.

1. To evangelize to the Indians.
2. To establish institutions based on the principles of Christianity.
3. "Our end in leaving our native country is not to gain riches and honor, but singly this – to live wholly to the glory of God" (Benjamin Morris, 130).

B. Their Voyage. (Described by John Wesley).

1. 4:00 AM until 5:00 AM was devoted to private prayers.
2. 5:00 AM until 7:00 AM reading the Bible together and comparing it with writings of the church fathers.
3. 8:00 AM was the time for public prayers.
4. 4:00 PM evening prayer with Bible lesson for adults and catechism for children.
5. 5:00 PM until 6:00 PM was devoted to private prayers.
6. 6:00 PM until 8:00 was spent in public worship and exhortation.

C. Their Arrival.

* Upon their arrival in 1736 their first act was to kneel and return thanks to God for their safe arrival. *

D. Their Work.

1. Religious instruction to the settlers and Indians.
2. John Wesley began Sunday instruction to children and adults in the parish of Christ's Church in Savannah nearly fifty years before Robert Raikes originated such a plan in England and eighty years before a school based on Raikes plan was established in New York.

III. GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

A. His Arrival in 1738.

B. His Work in Georgia.

1. Eloquent Preacher.
2. Established Bethesda Home for Orphans in Savannah. The Oldest Extant Charity in America

Whitefield wanted the orphanage to be a place of strong Gospel influence with a wholesome atmosphere and strong discipline. The youngsters were to be taught trades so that on becoming adults they could earn their own living. Younger children learned spinning and carding and all of the boys were taught mechanics and agriculture. Whitefield hoped that the orphanage would eventually become the foundation of a university.

C. His Ministry in the Colonies.

* Preached throughout the colonies on following trip to America. Is said by some to be the father of the evangelical movement. *

D. His Recognition in Georgia.

* Whitfield County was named in his honor. *