Christianity and United States History

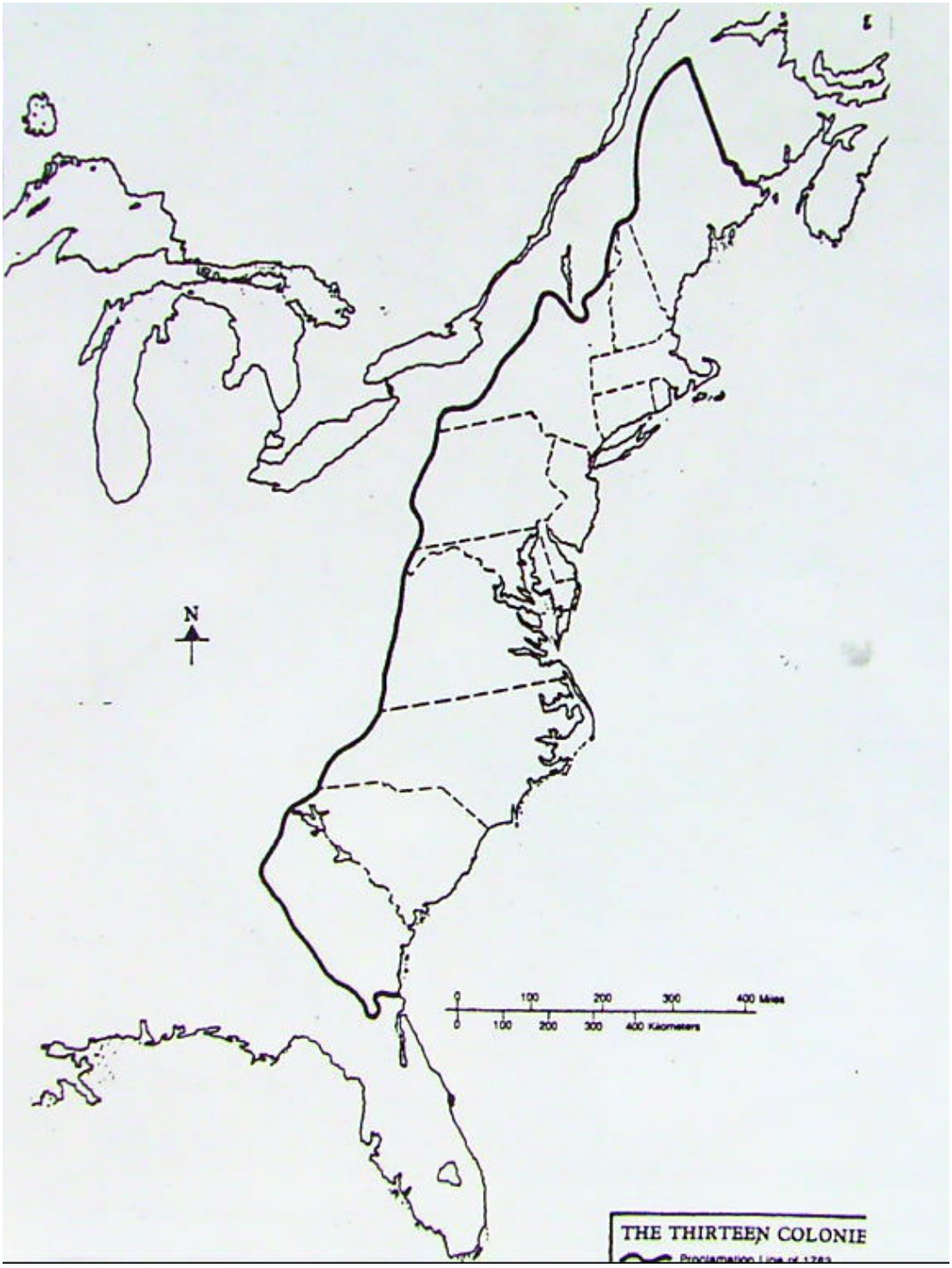
Week 1: Thirteen English Colonies

"…If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat." (1 Thessalonians 3:10b)

Class Overview

- Week 1 (8/1): "A City Set Upon a Hill"? English Settlers in North America
- Week 2 (8/8): "One Nation Under God"? The American Revolution and Constitution in Context
- Week 3 (8/15) "Millennialism" and Reform: America's Second Great Awakening
- Week 4 (8/22) "The Promised Land": Nonviolent Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement

Pre-Quiz!



Vocabulary:

- Calvinism – "a theological tradition named after the 16th century French reformer John Calvin that emphasizes the sovereignty of God in all things, man's inability to spiritual good before God, and the glory of God as the highest end of all that occurs"
- Arminianism – "a theological tradition that seeks to preserve the free choices of human beings and denies God's providential control over the details of all events"
- presbyterianism – "a form of church government in which elders govern their respective local churches, and some elders, through a presbytery and general assembly, govern churches in a region and the denomination as a whole"
- episcopalianism – "a hierarchical form of church government in which bishops have governing authority over groups of churches"

-- (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*)

Discussion:

1) "Pilgrims"?
   - *Mayflower Compact*
   - Significance?
   - "hijacking hypothesis"

2) "Puritans"?
   - John Winthrop ("city on a hill")
     - "authority in magistrates, liberty in people, purity in the church" (John Cotton)
     - "freemen"
   - Theocracy?
     - Roger Williams & Anne Hutchinson
   - Town Meeting

3) Significance of the Great Awakening in American history (1730s-1760s)
   - Pietism and "Revival"
   - Jonathon Edwards & George Whitefield
   - "Old Lights" vs. "New Lights"
     - priesthood of all Christians
     - "The poorest day-laborer…holds it his right to advance his opinion, in religious as well as political matters, with as much freedom as the gentleman."
   - Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists

Application:

- To what extent was America "settled" by Christians seeking to build a "city on a hill"?
- What do the topics we discussed today teach us about the merits as well as the pratfalls of establishing a "Christian nation"?
- Consider the "Puritan dilemma": Where do you stand on the Calvinist-Arminian scale? What are the scriptural bases for either theological view?

- What was the significance of the Great Awakening in the forging of a uniquely “American” culture and society?