

## Notes on Puritans

The Puritans were a group of people who criticized (wanted to “purify”) the corruption and hierarchy in the Church of England. The Church of England was the official church in England that everyone automatically belonged to.

The Protestant Reformation, a massive movement in the 16th century to reform the Catholic Church. Many Protestant denominations came out of this movement, though Henry VIII’s decision to break from the Catholic Church was more political, and as a result the Church of England had many similarities to Catholicism].

Puritans believed that the final authority came from the Bible, not from church officials, and therefore, every individual had direct access to the word of God.

Some Puritans wanted to completely separate from the Church of England (they were called Separatists). The group of Pilgrims who went on the Mayflower in 1620 were Separatists.

10 years after the Mayflower, a group of Puritans, led by John Winthrop landed in New England and established the Massachusetts Bay Colony. They were still loyal to the Church of England, but believed they could purify the behavior of individuals (purify the Church from within).