

Church History III: The Modern Period

- A. Introduction: Historical Overview – modernity begins in deism, humanism and reason as seen in the Renaissance and even the Reformation, which give a Christian perspective.
- B. Protestantism from the End of the Reformation through the Age of Reason.
1. Influences moving from Protestant Orthodoxy to the Age of Reason
 - a. Protestant Scholasticism - Faith = little more than an intellectual ascent.
 - b. Two movements reacting negatively to Protestant Orthodoxy
 - 1) Cambridge Platonists – reacted negatively to Puritanism as too abstract & extreme. Wanted to set forth Xty in beauty & simplicity (mysticism)
 - 2) Latitudinarians – Reason is a framework for religious understanding
 - c. Two men whose discoveries and thought contributed to the change.
 - 1) *Sir Isaac Newton* (late 17th c.) – provide mathematical explanation for laws of nature. God became a more distant architect (deism).
 - 2) *John Locke* (2nd ½ of 17th c.) – empiricist. Reduced Xty to bare essentials.
 2. The Church and the Age of Reason (Enlightenment)
 - a. Enlightenment – Spirit of Optimism, unbounded confidence in human understanding that it could dissipate the darkness.
Enlightenment Religion:
 - Belief in a supreme being (designer, architect) – aloof and distant
 - Morality – humans must exercise virtue to live life of enjoyment
 - Immortality of the Soul – there is something indestructible about reason (it is the locus of the soul). Also, there must be a system of rewards.
 - Christianity and Christ - Thought highly of Christ as teacher of Natural Religion and finest illustration of human morality.
 - Critical of Christians reliance on outside sources (Bible, church)
 - b. Little impact in England. Great impact in France with the skeptics and French Revolution. Germany developed German Idealism.
 - c. The Effects of the Enlightenment on the Church
 - 1) Theology – combined reason & revelation. Laid foundation for higher criticism.
 - 2) Separation of Church & State
- C. Pietism and the Pietistic Movements

Pietists

- Reacted a/g dead orthodoxy & formalism
- Goal to reform individual
- Escape from the world (indifference)
- Spiritual warmth; focus on conversion
- More formative in US today (liberalism and social gospel)

Puritans

- Reacted a/g remnants of the RCC in COE
- Reacted a/g public immorality
- Goal to reform the church in organization, worship, government.
- Enter into the arenas of life to shape culture
- Stoical, emotionally reserved. Faith is expressed communally.
- Background of Reformed movements

CRC is more balanced between the two

1. Pietism in Germany in the 17th c. - dead orthodoxy & formalism in the established Lutheran church led to concerns about spiritual growth. Conventicles sprung up. *von Zenzendorf* – donated land to followers of *Huss*... *Unitas Fratrum* (Moravian Brethren). Established colony called Herrnhut – missionary zeal. Influenced Methodism, Great Awakening, American Revivalism,

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2. Pietism in England in the 18th c.: Methodism – Glorious & Industrial Revolutions
Great Awakenings (*Whitfield, Wesley*)
John Wesley: started “Holy Club” at Oxford with brother Charles. After returning from mission work in Georgia he came under the influence of the Moravian Brethren. He was converted at one of their meetings. He became an itinerant preacher (40x/week). He organized a circuit of preachers, which eventually became the Methodist church (1795).
Evaluation: doctrinally weak, reflected individualism, subjectivism, no creedal or confessional basis made it susceptible to liberalism in 19th c.
- C. The RCC from the Counter Reformation to the Present
 1. The RCC was against modernity/Enlightenment. During the French Revolution Roman Catholics were persecuted and controlled by the government.
 2. Doctrinal Controversies and development in the Modern Period
 - a. *Pope Pius IX* (1846-1878) – highwater mark of conservatism
 - 1) Immaculate Conception 1854 – Modern science doubted virgin birth so pope took an extreme position. Mary was not H.Sp. conceived by kept from sin in her conception. Increase Mariology (further dividing RCC and Protestants)/
 - 2) Papal Infallibility 1869-1870 at First Vatican Council. *Ex cathedra* – councils were no longer necessary.
 - 3) Syllabus of Errors 1864 – condemned modernity
 - b. *Leo XIII* (1878-18xx) – less conservative “working man’s” pope
1891 Rerum Novarum (New Relationship) – advocated social reforms.
1879 Aeterni Patris Aquinas’ thought declared official RCC doctrine...to protect against modernism. Assumed future biblical studies irrelevant
 - c. Jansenism – rooted in 17th c. (Belgian bishop) – wanted a more spiritual church. Condemned by the pope and started the Old Catholic Church in Neth & Poland.
 - d. *Pius XII* – very conservative - Bodily assumption of Mary (1950)
 - e. *Pope John XXIII* – Vatican II (1962)...not an attempt to formulate dogma but to address the RCC’s relevance and deal with some conflicts.
“Declaration of Religious Freedom” – improved RCC image in the world arena
 - D. Anglican Church in the 19th c. – based on the Elizabethan Settlement (inclusive as possible)
 1. Evangelical Party (*Whitfield...Stott, J.I. Packer, George Carey*) - Not necessarily doctrinal concerns, more social affairs. Formed missionary & Bible societies.
 2. Broad or Liberal Party (*Arnold, Coleridge, Kingsley*) – Inclusivists, social Xty, higher critical.
 3. High Church or Anglo-Catholic or Oxford Movement or Tractarians – Fear of French Rev. caused return to high church claims. Emphasized church as divine institution
 - E. The Church in the 20th c. Ecumenical Mvt – Christians are more alienated from culture at the present than at any other time. Church has been ineffective in addressing social & political problems. “Global Village” – the world is getting smaller.
Historical Survey of Mvts culminating in the est. of the WCC in 1948
 1. World Christian Student Federation (1895) – cooperation of church would eliminate rivalry and competition, primarily in missions.
 2. Universal Church Council for Life & Work (1925) – unite churches for action on a political and social level.

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3. World Conference on Faith & Order (1927) - aimed at doctrinal differences & church order. Worked to draw churches out of isolation and bring unity.
4. World Council of Churches (WCC) (1948) – Life & Work and Faith & Order merged. A difficult union because some want dynamic unity, others organic.
 - WCC can't legislate, just discuss
 - Visual organization versus spiritual unity
 - Turned away from doctrine and focused on social unity
 - Vancouver – became a stress for unity of mankind (Chr & Non-Chr)
5. Int'l Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) formed to criticize WCC liberalism