

**The History of
Christianity 4:
Christianity in the
West
1750 to the
Present**

Christianity in the West, 1750 to the Present

Intellectual Movements that Influenced Western Christianity

Christianity in Europe: The French Revolution

Christianity in America: The “Great Awakening”
and the American Revolution

Development of Catholicism after 1800

Development of Protestantism after 1800

Intellectual Movements that Influenced Western Christianity

Rationalism (the “Enlightenment”)

Romanticism

Marxism

Rationalism (“The Enlightenment”)

questioned the intellectual credentials of
Christianity itself

criticism of Christianity based on

“omniscience” of human reason

- Christian beliefs rational
- therefore, basic ideas of Christianity should be derivable from reason itself: “Revelation” is only the rational reaffirmation of moral truths available to enlightened reason
- reason supreme source of revelation. Goddess of Reason enthroned Notre Dame 1793

Romanticism

reaction to rationalism; reason spiritually
enslaving, experientially and emotionally
deficient

appealed to human imagination rather than reason
individual human subjectivity and inwardness
mirrors of the infinite, revelations of a higher
order than any morality or philosophy

both reason and doctrines of Christianity fail to do
justice to the complexity and mystery of the
world

Marxism

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

the way human beings respond to their material needs determines everything else (ideas, values, belief-systems, religiosity)

human alienation is a result of:

- division of labor (alienation from product)
- private property (alienation from society)

Capitalism inherently unstable and doomed to collapse

Marx and Religion

religion is a direct response to social and economic conditions; it has no independent existence

“religion is just the imaginary sun which seems to man to revolve around him, until he realizes that he himself is the centre of his own revolution”

religion is the product of human alienation

“The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly a struggle against *the world* of which religion is the spiritual fragrance”

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The French Revolution

marks the high point of anti-religious feeling in Europe

pillars of French society:

- monarchy
- church

1789 - 1792: moderate reforms ongoing:

- agreed all church lands should be nationalized
- July 1790: Civil Constitution of the Clergy
rejected authority of the Pope

French Revolution

1792: more radical revolutionary faction launches

“Reign of Terror”

- Louis XVI publicly guillotined Jan 21, 1793

1793-1794: program of dechristianization

- cult of Goddess Reason officially sanctioned

- new republican calendar eliminated Sunday and Christian festivals

- priests pressured to renounce faith

- program of church closures begun

French Revolution

Nov 1792: French revolutionary armies began campaign of conquest

- six “satellite” republics established by 1799 in Netherlands, Switzerland, parts of Northern Italy, Germany
- 1798: Papal States occupied; Pope Pius VI deported to France (died in prison there 6 months later)

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Christianity in America

Christianity was brought to America largely by refugees seeking to escape religious persecution first settlers generally deeply committed to

Christian beliefs

most were English speaking Protestants

- exception: Maryland a Catholic enclave
- large number of Catholics would not arrive until emigrations in 1800's from Ireland and Italy

Christianity in America: The Great Awakening

by 1700, lack of interest in religion widespread in America

- religion reduced to morality
- large proportion of church membership “nominal” or “half-way”

1720: “Great Awakening” began

1734: blossomed in response to preaching of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

Spread under preaching of George Whitefield (1714-70)

Christianity in America: The Great Awakening. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

one of the most significant religious thinkers in the
history of United States

father local pastor in Connecticut

studied theology and tutor at Yale College

1726: became asst.pastor at church in

Northampton, Mass (his grandfather was
pastor); sole pastor after 1729

1734-5: great number of conversions described in
*A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of
God*

Christianity in America: The Great Awakening. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

Other works: sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an
Angry God”, *Freedom of Will*
1757: became president of the College of New
Jersey (now called Princeton University)

Christianity in America: The Great Awakening. George Whitefield (1714-1770)

educated at Oxford

member of the Wesley brother's Holy Club

1736: ordained Anglican deacon; later became
priest

1738: asked by John Wesley to go to Georgia as
missionary; made first of seven voyages to
America

traveled from Georgia to Maine

crowds of up to 8,000 came to hear him preach
everyday for weeks

Christianity in America: The Great Awakening. George Whitefield (1714-1770)

- Benjamin Franklin wrote of his amazement of the size of the crowd, quality of his voice
- detractors called him “Dr. Squintum” because of his cross-eyes
- established clergy refused to allow him to preach in their congregations because of Wesley association and his evangelical fervor

made a major contribution to growth of
Methodism in America

Christianity in America: The Great Awakening. The American Revolution

Church of England the established church by law in southern colonies

- after 1760, became increasingly viewed as religious dimension of English colonialism
- suspicions increased Quebec Act of 1774: Britain established Catholicism in French speaking Quebec

first Amendment “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or restricting the free exercise thereof”

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The Development of Catholicism since 1800

State of Catholicism at the end of the Napoleonic era 1814:

- Catholicism largely a European religion
- most European Catholics lived in the Habsburg Empire, Italy, France
- few missions in South America, Japan, India

Pope Pius VII returned to Rome May 1814 after 5 years in prison under Napoleon I and began renewal of the church

- 1814: Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs. Goal: rebuild Catholicism throughout Europe

The Development of Catholicism since 1800

Romanticism powerful effect on reawakening of interest in Catholicism

- Christianity felt to be major source of artistic inspiration and culture excellence

1850: Catholic hierarchy reestablished in Protestant England

Increased Influence of Catholicism in America

- Revolutionary America largely Protestant
- immigrants from Ireland and Italy altered America's religious landscape
- major Catholic educational institutions founded (Notre Dame 1842)

The Development of Catholicism since 1800

Increased respect for and influence of the Pope
Ultramontanism “beyond the mountains”

- extent to which pope had authority “beyond the Alps” (i.e. beyond Italy)
- decades prior to French revolution, pope largely ignored by Catholic faithful as isolated and distant
- Napoleon's vicious treatment of pope caused him to regain prestige
- Joseph de Maistre (1754-1821) Du pape ("On the Pope") 1819.

The Development of Catholicism since 1800: Pope Pius IX and the First Vatican Council

Pius IX: pope from 1846-1878

1869: called First Vatican Council

- 700 delegates and visitors
- liberal Catholics versus Ultramontanism
- where was the location of supreme authority in the church. Pope? Great Councils of the church?

The Development of Catholicism since 1800: Pope Pius IX and the First Vatican Council

Council decisive victory for Ultramontanism

- July 13, 1869: dogma of papal infallibility approved after heated debate and much opposition
- pope *ex cathedra* (in his formal capacity as teacher and defender of the faith) is infallible

The Development of Catholicism since 1800: The Rise of Catholic Modernism

modernist: school of Catholic theologians

operating late 1800's who adopted a critical and skeptical attitude towards traditional Christian doctrines

- radical biblical criticism

- stressed ethical rather than theological dimensions of faith

- wanted to integrate Christian thought with the spirit of the Enlightenment

The Development of Catholicism since 1800: The Second Vatican Council

John XXIII: pope from 1958-63

summoned second Vatican Council

- Oct 1962 to 1965

- 2,450 bishops

after Vatican II:

- church a community of believers (vs. a divinely ordained and hierarchically ordered society)

- importance of laity

- importance of ecumenism

- social justice, human rights, race relations

- “collegiality:” authority also in bishops

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The Development of Protestantism since 1800

Liberal Protestantism

Neo-Orthodoxy

The Rise of Fundamentalism

The Emergence of Evangelicalism

The Rise of Charismatic and Pentecostal
Movements

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: Liberal Protestantism

begin Early 1800's, associated with German writer
F.D.E. Schleiermacher

desired to:

- relate Christian faith to the human experience
and modern culture
- relate Christian faith to modern science.
Darwin's theory made the seven days of
creation untenable
- reconstruct Christian beliefs
- restate Christian faith in forms acceptable
within contemporary culture

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: Liberal Protestantism

had vision of humanity as ascending upward into
new realms of progress and prosperity
purpose of religion:

- spiritual needs of modern humanity
- ethical guidance to society

Liberalism reached zenith in North America late
1970's and early 1980's

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: Liberal Protestantism

Albrecht Benjamin Ritschl (1822-1889)

“kingdom of God” a static realm of ethical values
history in process of being divinely guided towards
perfection

had enormous and unbounded optimism in human
ability and potential

Criticism:

- hopelessly optimistic view of human nature

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: Liberal Protestantism

Paul Tillich (1886-1965)

most developed and influential presentation of
Protestant liberalism; widely regarded as most
influential US theologian since Jonathan
Edwards

task of modern theology is to establish
“conversation” between modern human culture
and Christian faith

- existential questions = “ultimate questions”
are revealed by human culture
- gospel must speak to the culture

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: Neo- Orthodoxy

disillusionment with liberal theology after World
War I

- human nature had produced an atrocity
- liberalism had reduced Christianity to
religious experience, hence was "human"
centered

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: Neo- Orthodoxy

Karl Barth (1886-1968)

Swiss theologian

Church Dogmatics (1936-1969)

theology not a response to human

situation/questions; it is a response to the word
of God

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: Rise of Fundamentalism

“fundamentalism”

- 1910: series of 12 books by small American publishing house entitled "The Fundamentals"

arose as a religious reaction with American Protestantism to the secular culture 1920 to 1940

counter-cultural movement, with separatist attitude to culture

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: Rise of Fundamentalism

believed in:

- absolute literal authority of Scripture
- premillennial return of Christ

siege mentality “oppositionalism,” “walled cities,”
demand to separate from "corrupt" mainstream
denominations

1922: caused painful schism in Presbyterian
Church in US: “unbelieving liberals” vs.
“reactionary fundamentalism”

lost credibility in mainline churches with Scopes
Trial 1925

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: The Emergence of Evangelicalism

evangelical

- original usage: 1500's: Catholic writers wishing to revert to more biblical beliefs and practices than those associated with late medieval church
- now: transdenominational trend laying particular emphasis place of scripture in Christian life

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: The Emergence of Evangelicalism

Characteristics of Evangelicals

- Scripture ultimate authority
- death of Jesus Christ the source of redemption and hope
- emphasis on conversion or "new birth" as a life-changing religious experience
- concern on sharing faith

Billy Graham

- most publicly visible member of new evangelical style

The Development of Protestantism since 1800: Rise of Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements

strongly experiential type of Christianity
emphasis on the presence and power and the Holy
Spirit

three “waves” of charismatic movements:

1. classic Pentecostalism: emphasis on speaking in tongues
2. 1960's and 1970's: spiritual healing and other charismatic practices
3. “signs and wonders” -- supernatural power unleashed on churches