

Church History #6: 17th– 20th Century Missions & Modernism

16TH - 18TH ENLIGHTENMENT EPOCH

Epoch - a particular period of time marked by distinctive features, events, etc.

The Enlightenment was a European intellectual movement that exalted reason and science. It promoted ideas like liberty, tolerance, constitutional government, and separation of church and state.

1. A Century of War over Religion

- Thirty Years War
- Phillip II of Spain and Spanish Armada & Dutch Rebellion
- Persecution of the Huguenots in France
- Cromwell and English Civil War
- “Is religion worth killing for? Is religion worth dying for?”

2. Advances in Science & Philosophy

- Descartes - Rationalism
- Locke – Scientific Method and Political Theory
- Newton’s Laws of Motion and Gravity
- “Is this religion even believable?”

3. Exploration and Colonization

- Spanish and Portuguese Exploration
 - God & Gold
- Enslavement and Oppression
- Northern European Colonization of the Americas

4. Evangelical Revival (Britain) and Pietism (Germany)

- Movement away from formal, outward, established religion to a personal, inward, heart renewal with individual piety.
- Moravians & Count Zinzendorf
 - The Moravian movement was an outgrowth of Pietism. Its leader was Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf.
 - He provided a portion of his estate for refugees from Moravia (Czech Republic). There they built a community Herrnhut, or “The Lord’s Lodge.”

- The Moravians were the first Protestant body to take the Great Commission seriously. They established missions in Africa, Asia, Greenland, Lapland, and among the American Indians. The Moravians sent missionaries to 28 countries in 28 years.
- One of their converts was John Wesley, father of the Methodist movement.
 - John Wesley
 - Believed the Church of England was failing its mission.
 - Moving across Great Britain and Ireland he preached over 40,000 sermons and traveled over 250,000 miles on horseback.
 - He helped form and organize small Christian groups that developed intensive and personal accountability, discipleship and religious instruction – Methodism.
 - He appointed itinerant, un-ordained evangelists to travel and preach, as he did, and to care for these groups of people.

5. Effects of Enlightenment on Christianity

- General disillusionment with religion; distrust of all forms of ecclesiastical authority; intellectuals against the church
- Renewed confidence in science.
- New faith in natural law, scientific discovery, and human progress.
- Catholic & Protestant Missions trailing exploration
- Deism
 - Deism – belief in a transcendent God, the First Cause. He left His creation to operate under natural laws; hence there is no place for miracles, Christ – God/man, the Bible as revelation, prophecy, or providence. Deism surfaced because of optimism in man's ability to understand and control everything in the natural universe; however, he could not provide an explanation for the creation itself.

LATIN AMERICAN COLONIZATION & CATHOLIC MISSIONS

1. Explorers

- Columbus – Caribbean
- Cortez – Mexico, Aztecs
- Pizarro – Andes, Incas
- Magellan – Philippines

2. Franciscans and Jesuits followed evangelizing & mass baptisms

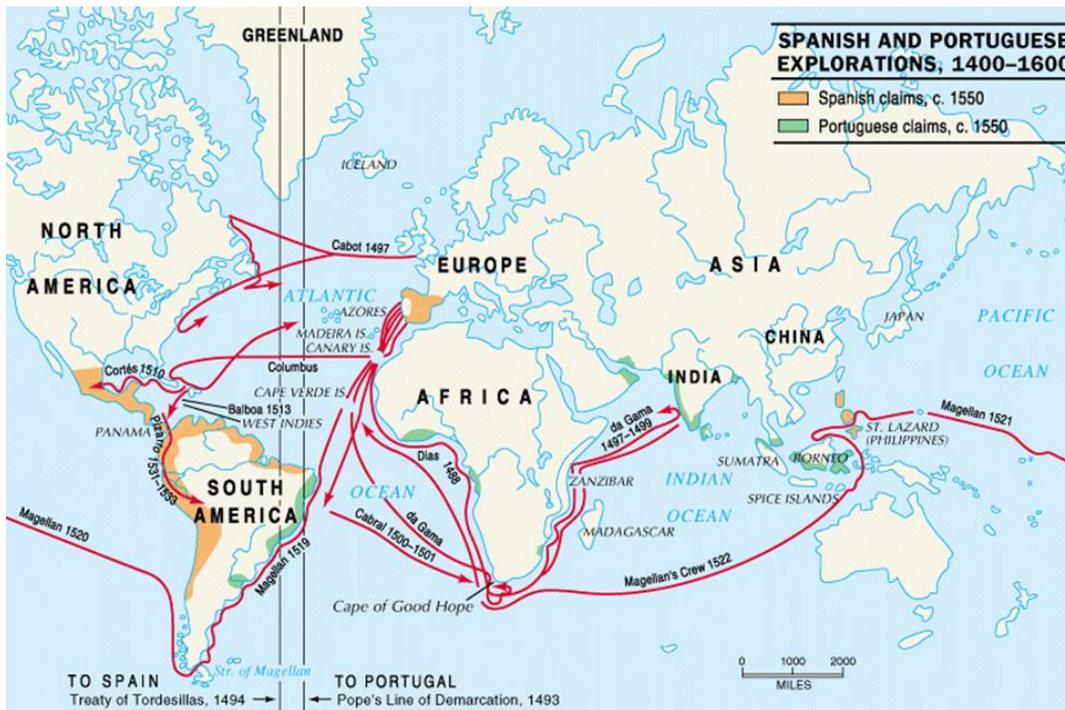
- Convert or Enslavement

3. Conquest and Disease

4. Latin Catholicism

- Catholic Saints were substituted for local gods.
- Religious festivals become catholic festivals.

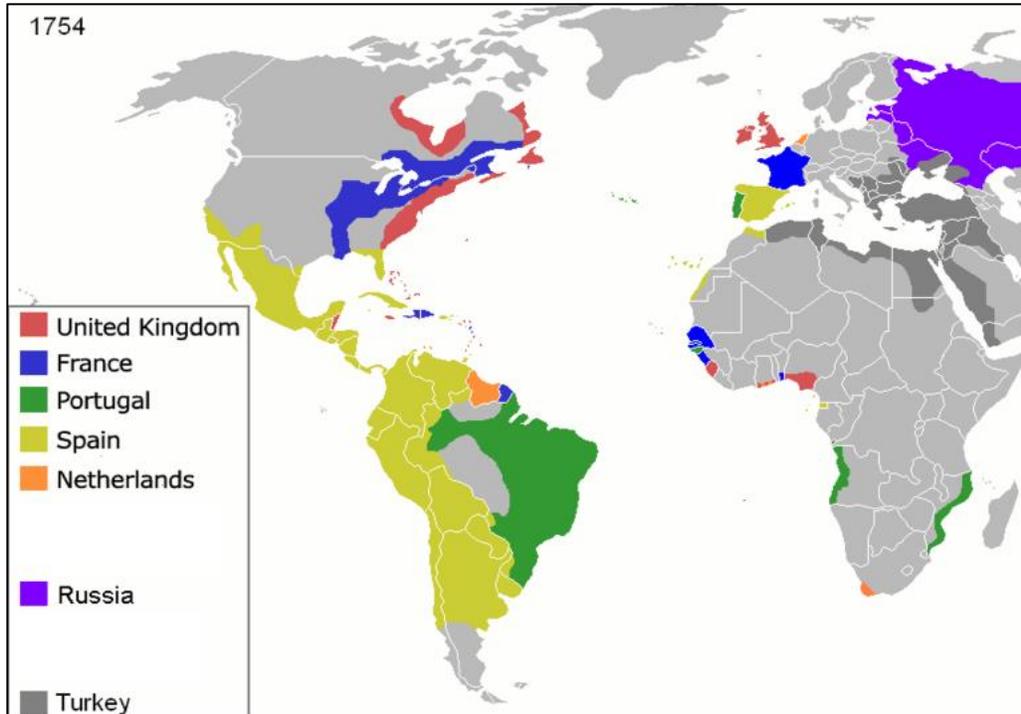
5. Francis Xavier (1506–1552) was the premier Jesuit missionary, with over 700,000 converts during ten years of labor. He started churches in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Japan, finally dying while trying to plant a church in China.



NORTH AMERICAN COLONIZATION & CHRISTIANITY

Colonization of Latin America vs. North America

- Spanish Colonization vs. Northern European
- Religious Conversion vs. Religious Persecution
- Exploitation of population & Gold vs. Profit of fur, tobacco, cotton, and sugar
- Emigration for social status vs. Fresh start
- Easy life of an aristocrat vs. Hard life, but free
- Both utilized the Atlantic Slave Trade



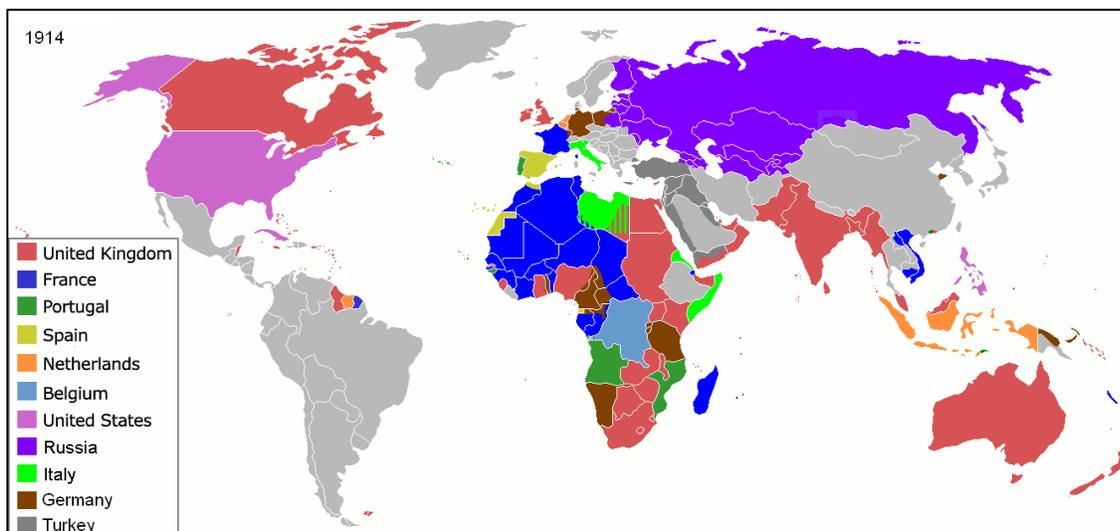
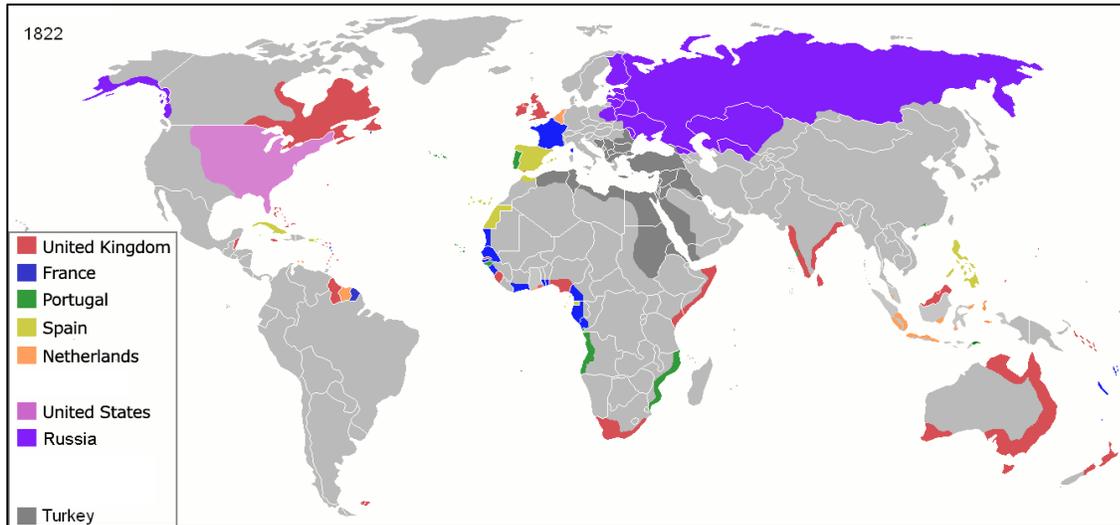
1. Religious Refugees

- Massachusetts Bay Colony
- Quakers
- Maryland
- South Africa (Dutch)

2. First Great Awakening

- The First Great Awakening refers to a period in American history from around 1735 to 1750 when the churches were stirred to life and many people were converted.
- As many as 50,000 people became new members of the New England churches.
- The Awakening produced missions among the Native Americans.
- Major changes in religious and political thought of the colonies including anti-slavery movement and the American Revolution.
- Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield tremendously influenced the colonies through preaching, writing, and evangelism.

19TH CENTURY IMPERIALISM & MODERNISM EPOCH



1. European Colonization of Africa and Asia
2. Modernism is the reaction to traditional forms of art, literature, religion, society, and daily life considered outdated in the new economic, industrial, scientific world. It stresses the power of humans to create, improve, and reshape their lives with the aid of technology. It encouraged a reexamination of every aspect of existence with the goal of finding that which was “holding back” progress, and replacing it with new ways of reaching the same end. Included in all this is the underlying rejection of the supernatural. Religion is the problem of mankind.

3. Darwinism

Charles Darwin (1809-1882) provided a mechanism to explain the origin and complexity of life by natural forces. He argued that a struggle for survival characterized the natural world, that all organic beings adapted to the changing dynamics of their environment, and that natural selection eliminated unfavorable variations. Darwin's theory had adversarial implications for Christianity.

- Questioned the literal interpretations of the Bible, especially the book of Genesis.
- Removed the idea of purpose and design from nature.
- Destroyed the uniqueness of man. Man was now a product of time and chance. The image of God in mankind, the entrance of sin into the world, and the need for a Savior were all questioned.
- Darwin's theory eventually infiltrated every academic discipline and became one of the guiding principles of the twentieth century.

4. German Philosophy & Protestant Liberalism

- Liberal Theology was an attempt to merge the Bible with modern science and philosophy. It embraced the methodologies of Enlightenment science, including empirical evidence and the use of reason, as the basis for interpreting the Bible, life, faith and theology.
- Higher or Historical Criticism investigates the origins of ancient texts in order to understand "the world behind the text." The primary goal of historical criticism is to discover the text's primitive or original meaning in its original historical context and its literal sense. The secondary goal seeks to establish a reconstruction of the historical situation of the author and recipients of the text.
- Karl Marx – Attacked Christianity as sociologically justifying oppression – "Religion is the opium of the masses"
- Sigmund Freud – Attacked Christianity as psychologically self-justifying.
- Friedrich Nietzsche – Attacked Christianity as philosophically attempting to accrue power. "God is Dead" proclaimed that recent developments in modern science and the increasing secularization of the European society had effectively "killed" the Abrahamic God, who had served as the basis for meaning and value in the West for more than 1000 years.
- Feuerbach – "man made God in his own image"

EXPLOSION OF MISSIONS AND ADVANCEMENT OF CHRISTIANITY

1. Exploration and colonization

By the nineteenth century, England had become the dominant maritime power of the world. This expanded peoples' understanding of the world and their desire to travel.

2. Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Empire 1807 (Wilberforce et al.)

3. Missionary Societies

In 1792, William Carey sparked the creation of the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen. An explosion of mission agencies soon followed.

4. William Carey (1761–1834) was burdened by the desire to take the Gospel to the world as a young man. He is called the “Father of Modern Missions”

- Carey set out for India in 1793 with the backing of the mission society he established. His early years were extremely hard. His five-year-old son died of dysentery and his wife went insane.
- Carey founded 26 churches and 126 schools in India, translated Scripture into 44 languages, produced grammars and dictionaries, and organized India's first medical mission, savings bank, seminary, girls' school, and vernacular newspaper.
- He fought for social reform.
 - Sacrifice of children was abolished.
 - Began a full-scale attack to outlaw burning of widows (Sati).

5. Adoniram and Ann Judson left for Asia as missionaries thirteen days after their wedding.

- Relocated from India to Burma (Myanmar)
- Judson mastered the Burmese language and literature for the first six years. Through his efforts and the work of his successors, a community of almost 500,000 developed in Burma.
- They experienced much hardship in this new territory, but eventually translated the Bible, trained indigenous ministers, and established a significant work in the nation.

6. Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) founded the China Inland Mission.

- His single-minded purpose was to win to Christ every man, woman, and child in China.
- At 21, after a brief training in medicine, he left for China; he traveled to the interior of the country where there were no

missionaries and foreigners were unwelcome. In 1865, while home in England, he established the China Inland Mission. One year later he left for China with 15 other missionaries. By 1884, there were over seventy stations with ninety missionaries and a hundred national ministers.

- He decided to “become Chinese,” so his ministry would affect more people.
- When Taylor died, over 50% of the missionaries in China were with his organization. His pioneering work paved the way for the work of God taking place in China today.

7. David Livingstone (1813–1873) went to Africa as a medical missionary. He inspired generations of missionaries to reach Africa with the gospel.

- Livingstone was initially sent to Africa by the London Missionary Society. He spent six months cut off from all European society in order to learn the language, laws, and habits of the natives. He attached himself to the friendly Bakuena tribe whose chief, Sechele, became his only known convert. From this base, Livingstone reached out to other tribes, attending to people’s medical needs and holding gospel meetings.
- Livingstone’s three journeys into Central Africa opened the way for further outreach into such areas as Uganda and Zaire.

8. Second Great Awakening was a religious revival during the 19th century in the United States. The revivals enrolled millions of new members in existing evangelical denominations and led to the formation of new denominations.

- Methodist Circuit Rider was responsible for a circuit, 200 to 500 miles in circumference. He was expected to complete his circuit every four weeks. The itinerants made preaching appointments for nearly every day of the week, both morning and evening.
- Francis Asbury (1745–1816) was converted at 14, started preaching at 18, and left for America at 26. During his 45-year career, he rode 250,000 miles on horseback, ordained 4,000 ministers, and preached over 17,000 sermons. When Asbury came to America in 1771, there were about 300 Methodists. At the close of his career there were over 214,000.
- Charles Finney (1792–1875) is called the “father of modern revivalism.” He paved the way for later revivalists like D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and Billy Graham. He introduced new methods in evangelism, many of which are still practiced today. He instituted lay-witnessing from house to house, special prayer

meetings for evangelism, and protracted meetings lasting several days or weeks. Finney was a supporter of the reform movements of his day, especially women's rights and the antislavery movement.

20TH CENTURY POSTMODERNISM COLD WAR EPOCH

Postmodernism is a skeptical reaction to the assumed certainty of scientific, or objective, efforts to explain reality or promote human progress. It denies the existence of any ultimate principles, and it lacks the optimism of there being a scientific, philosophical, or religious truth which will explain everything for everybody. Postmodernism relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one's own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal.

- Disillusionment after WW2 with science and technology as means of human progress
- Austere moralistic punitive God of good/evil – reward/punishment was dead
- Subjective truth and relativism

CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD

1. Asia, Africa, & Latin America growth

- In 1800, around 1% of Protestant Christians lived in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. By 1900, this number had grown to 10%. Today, at least 67% of all Protestant Christians live in countries once considered foreign mission fields.
- Africa
 - 1900 – 10M Christians; 2000 – 360M; 2025 – 633M estimated
 - Apartheid & Rwandan Genocide healing by forgiveness and reconciliation
 - Christianity provides explanation of and power over evil
- Latin America
 - Unreached People groups
 - Liberation Theology out of poverty and oppression
 - Charismatic revival - 1/3 of the population; 50% Catholics
 - Francis - First pope from Latin America
- Asia
 - South Korea explosive growth; 30% Christian doubling every 10 years; Mega Churches; 2nd only to US in missionaries
 - China estimated 40M Christians; underground house church movement

2. North America

- Pentecostal Revival/Charismatic Movement
- Splitting & Decline in mainline denominations especially over liberal theology
- Christianity blending as a socio-political movement
- Therapeutic Moralistic Deism
 - A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
 - God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
 - The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
 - God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
 - Good people go to heaven when they die.

3. Europe

- WW1 & WW2 devastated European Christianity
- Post Christian culture with Christian window dressing

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION

1. How would you reconsider your presentation of the gospel in order to counter the popular moralistic, therapeutic deism?
2. From what you have learned about Latin America, what can missions focus on to be most beneficial?
3. What are some of the effects of Liberal Theology in this country?

HOMEWORK:

Review your notes for the test.