

XXI. The Church in the XVIII Century

A. The British Churches

1. Philanthropic enterprises

- a. Robert Raikes (fl. 1780) of Gloucester: Father of the Sunday School
- b. Foundling Hospital for abandoned infants, Magdalen Hospital for reclaiming prostitutes, asylums for the insane (“Bedlam”), orphanages, and attempts at prison reform
- c. Anti-slave trade efforts of William Wilberforce, John Newton, Granville Sharp, etc.
- d. “Clapham sect” meeting out of Holy Trinity Church (CoE) looking for social reforms
Wilberforce and Sharp were involved, and others endowed moral campaigns

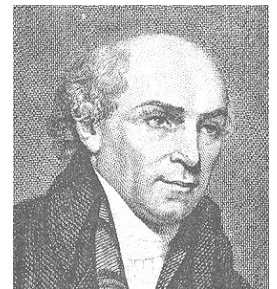
2. growing interest in missions

a. early attempts

- 1) Calvin & Coligny send missionaries to Brazil – 1560s
- 2) Synod of Dort calls for missionaries to Dutch colonies – 1618
- 3) English support of Christian outreach in America
 - a) Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge - 1698
 - b) Society for the Propagation to the Gospel – 1701
- 4) Scottish Church support for David Brainerd’s mission

* b. William Carey - Father of Modern Missions (1761-1834)

- 1) self-taught, natural linguist
- 2) zeal led to founding of Baptist Missionary Society, 1792
 - a) had preached on Isaiah 54:2 (“enlarge the place of thy tent...lengthen thy cords”)
 - b) motto: “Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God.”
- 3) labored in India from 1793 till his death
 - a) translated NT into Bengali, followed by Sanskrit and Punjabi versions
 - b) called for an end to “sati” pyres for new widows

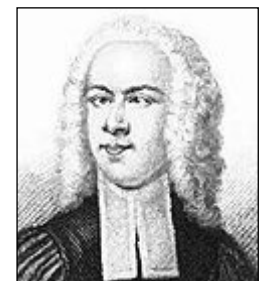


c. other societies soon follow

3. The Evangelical Revival

* a. early life of George Whitefield (1714-1770)

- 1) childhood
- 2) Oxford
 - a) “servitor”
 - b) “Holy Club”
 - pious Christian students meeting for fellowship
 - spiritual exercises followed Anglican liturgy
 - organized by Charles Wesley, later led by John: = beginning of Methodism



- 3) study of drama
- 4) conversion
 - a) read *Life of God in the Soul of Man* by Henry Scougal, martyr from the “Killing Times”
 - “a ray of light pierced my soul”
 - b) while sick, converted during 2nd reading of Scougal
- 5) after Oxford, appointed at age 21 as a deacon in Anglican Church; testimony of conversion from being a bartender gets him more speaking invitations
- 6) voyage to Georgia (first of seven trans-Atlantic trips)
 - a) at invitation of the Wesleys
 - b) to evangelize Indians; John Wesley later said, “I went to evangelize the Indians, but who would convert me?”
 - c) preached during ocean passage
 - d) impressed with Moravian orphanages
 - traveled along eastern seaboard raising orphanage monies
 - published his Journal in England to gain support
- 7) new developments in England
 - a) conversion of Wesley brothers
 - (1) calm piety of Moravians in a storm had some influence
 - (2) Charles read Luther’s *Commentary on Galatians*
 - “I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in the hope of loving Christ.”
 - (3) John heard a few days later the Preface to Luther’s *Commentary on Romans*
 - “I felt my heart strangely warmed, and then it pleased God to kindle a fire which, I trust, shall never be extinguished.”
 - b) open air preaching
 - (1) George becomes CoE priest upon short return to England
 - (2) Whitefield preaches outside at Bristol, altho illegal
 - (3) persisted in preaching in remote coal mining areas
 - (4) Wesleys carry on outdoors at return of George to Georgia

* b. The Great Awakening in America (1725-60)

- 1) fanned by Whitefield as he travelled throughout the middle colonies and New England, being entertained by the Tennants and J. Edwards (and Ben Franklin)
- 2) results of the Great Awakening
 - a) church splits
 - (1) in New England Congregationalism, New Lights vs. Old Lights
 - (2) in Middle colony Presbyterianism, New Side vs. Old Side
 - b) increased church membership; Baptists begin to grow
 - c) higher moral consciousness and social reforms
 - d) renewed interest in Indian missions
 - e) more schools, basically for training of more ministers: Univ. of Penn. started by Whitefield; College of NJ
 - f) colonies drawn closer together by new spiritual bond and recognized inter-colonial leaders, e.g., Whitefield

c. Whitefield’s continuing work in England

- 1) large-scale preaching throughout the homeland; as many as 200,000 at a time

- 2) often, the Wesleys would move in afterwards and organize the converts
- 3) Selina Hastings = aristocratic Lady Huntingdon
 - a) patron of Whitefield's work
 - (1) sent \$ for Princeton and Dartmouth Colleges
 - (2) financed orphanages
 - (3) built 40 chapels for Calvinist, non-conformist preachers
 - b) gathered aristocrats in her parlor for preaching sessions

d. summary of Whitefield's accomplishments

- 1) not an organizer, yet direct influence on scores of 1000s
- 2) great fund raiser for schools and orphanages
- 3) got Wesleys involved in outdoor preaching and evangelism
- 4) established Welsh Methodists (Calvinistic) with the help of Selina Hastings

* e. early work of John (1703-91) and Charles Wesley (1707-88)

- 1) parentage
 - a) grandparents were Puritan leaders under Cromwell
 - b) Samuel and Susannah Wesley both were strict parents; loyal Anglicans; 19 children in all, 10 dying in infancy; Susannah held conventicles for neighbors
 - c) both sons earned scholarships to Oxford
- 2) Holy Club at Oxford; led to origin of derisive name, "Methodist"
- 3) conversions
 - a) after discouragements of Georgia
 - b) influence of Luther
 - (1) Charles by Commentary on Galatians
 - (2) John by Preface to Commentary on Romans



f. active ministry

- 1) 50 years of preaching by John Wesley
 - a) open air; early opposition
 - b) circuits developed
- 2) organizing
 - a) John's strength not nec. in preaching, but in organizing and administration
 - (1) circuits (societies) divided into classes with a local lay leader over each class
 - (2) designed as a movement to support and revive the CoE, reaching many of the unreached working class in the new industrial revolution; never intended to break from the CoE
 - b) dynamo of directed energy
 - (1) 18 hour days
 - (2) 200,000 miles on horseback
 - (3) Journal in 8 vols.; sermons in 2 vols.
- 3) Charles' gift in expression: 7,270 poems and hymns

g. Arminian/Calvinist controversy

- 1) Whitefield won by Gilbert Tennant while Wesleys steeped in Arminianism holding sway in CoE since Laud
- 2) Whitefield writes a pamphlet in defense of the Sovereignty of God in salvation (1740) after JWesley attacks Calvinism as an obstacle to the sinner's hope

- 3) the battle raged more hotly after Whitefield's death
 - Augustus Toplady (“Rock of Ages”) published books showing that the CoE was originally Calvinistic and he edited the “Gospel Magazine” in opposition to Wesley’s “The Arminian Quarterly”

h. Wesley’s relation to the CoE

- 1) Wesley’s attitude: “I will live and die in the CoE.”
 - a) conservative, holding to the divine right of Kings
 - b) early Methodist services never competed with CoE services
- 2) attitude of Bishops of CoE
 - a) worldly bishops opposed Wesley’s “enthusiast approach”
 - b) godly bishops opposed his informal, uneducated approach
- 3) Wesley’s struggle over providing ordained leadership
 - a) CoE opposes ordination of class leaders w/o formal theological training
 - b) after studying Scripture and the fathers, Wesley concludes that:
 - (1) the office of elder and bishop are the same; hence ministers do not need to be ordained by a hierarchical bishop
 - (2) necessity can dictate ordination of church leaders, even as the CoE originally began ordaining its own bishops after its break from Rome

i. Wesley’s relation to his wife, Mary (a.k.a. “Molly”)

Molly was a widow with four children who married John in 1751. Since he seldom was home due to ministry engagements, she first became lonely and then jealous of his time and of his communications with other women.

Stephen Tomkins’ blunt biography, *John Wesley: A Biography*, reveals a few episodes in their rocky relation that began within 3 months of marriage:

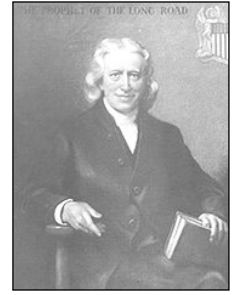
- [When Wesley left for a ministry tour in Ireland in 1758, Molly reported that her husband's parting words to her were:] “I hope I shall see your wicked face no more.” (p. 155)
- “Reunited in England, they clashed violently—Wesley refusing to change his writing habits [of sending affectionate letters to other women] and Molly accusing him of adultery and calling down on him, in her own words, ‘all the curses from Genesis to Revelation.’” (p. 155)
- “Almost the sole surviving record of this marriage from Molly’s side dates from December 1760, when she said Wesley left a meeting early with one Betty Disine and was seen still with her the following morning. She told him ‘in a loving manner to desist from running after strange women for your character is at stake.’” (p. 159)
- “In 1771, Molly announced that she was leaving John again. On 23 January, the Journal reports, ‘For what cause I know not to this day, [my wife] set out for Newcastle, purposing “never to return.” I did not leave her: I did not send her away: I will not call her back.’” (p. 174). [Wesley did not see his wife again and learned of her death after the fact.]

As Nathan Buznitz reminds his seminary students, “*you can lose your ministry and keep your marriage, but you cannot lose your marriage and keep your ministry.*”

j. American Methodism becomes independent of England when America gains independence

1) Francis Asbury, Wesley's deputy, remains in America to oversee growth of their church with fellow Methodist Bishop, Thomas Coke

2) rapid growth: in 60 years, Methodist preachers jumped from 200 to 4,000 and membership rose from 18,000 to 1,000,000



k. some visible results of the Evangelical Revival

- 1) establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, 1784
- 2) renewal of many denominations, especially dissenters like General and Particular Baptists
- 3) Social and moral reforms

a) penal reforms

*

b) Clapham Sect of England (fl. 1780-1830)

- (1) Basically aristocratic; evangelical yet conservative movement within the CoE
- (2) promoted Abolitionist movement, missionary enterprises, and broader educational opportunities; the English slave trade was abolished in 1807, and slavery in 1833
- (3) leading luminaries:
 - John Newton, William Wilberforce, Charles Simeon, Granville Sharp

Wikipedia: Historian Stephen Tompkins describes the sect as "a network of friends and families in England, with William Wilberforce as its centre of gravity, who were powerfully bound together by their shared moral and spiritual values, by their religious mission and social activism, by their love for each other, and by marriage." Wilberforce resided in Clapham of South London.

4. Churches in Scotland after the Glorious Revolution of 1688

a. small Anglican church retains its own bishop

b. Presbyterianism reconfirmed as state church while recognizing the re-newed Stuart dynasty

- 1) Scotland joins British Commonwealth in 1707: Parliaments merge
(in 1999, Scotland regained its autonomy with its own Parliament)
- 2) Queen Anne supports vexatious Lay Patronage policy of Scottish nobles: i.e., nobles had their own private chapels and were choosing personal chaplains, contrary to Presbyterianism

c. Secession Church of Scotland, 1733

1) "Associate Presbytery" was established by renowned preacher Ebenezer Erskine who was suspended from the state church for preaching against lay patronage, a privilege removed from noble land owners by the Glorious Revolution but returned to them by law in 1711.

2) 1747, Secession Church split itself into the Burghers and Anti-Burghers

a) "Is it lawful for citizens of certain towns to take an oath acknowledging that the true religion is held and preached by the CoScotland?" Those pursuing the office of a Burgher said "yes," causing grief to members of the Associate Presbytery who had separated from the state church of Scotland.

b) both groups again experienced splits within the next 50 years

d. Erskine and members of the Associate Synod were sympathetic to the teachings of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, a book whose evangelical thesis promoted individual Christian liberty as opposed to the alleged legalism of the Church of Scotland.

B. Primitive Christianity in Russia under Catherine the Great (1762-1798)

1. The Russian Orthodox church had been a state church since Peter the Great (fl. 1700) had taken control of the “Holy See.”
2. Catherine ardently defended Russian orthodoxy, but as an enlightened ruler influenced by the rationalism of the French philosophes, she invited persecuted German Christian sects to settle in Ukraine.
 - a. Self-contained, pacifist Mennonites and Hutterites communities were settled.
 - b. Protestant chapels were not allowed.
3. Doukhobor (“spirit wrestler”) Christians developed from among Ukrainian peasant Christians just north of the Black Sea beginning in the 1740s
 - a. Lived by the golden rule and practiced Christian communism.
 - b. Thought they were in the last times.
 - c. Led by autocratic prophets who were given blind obedience.
 - d. Tolstoy aided their emigration to Canada (ca. 1900) after decades of suffering persecution.



C. Jesuit Ultramontanism: (“across the mountains” i.e., across from Rome) = Jesuit imperialism

1. asserted vs. Gallican Jansenism in France
2. 1759 - Jesuits expelled from Portugal because of their political threat
3. Louis XV expels them from France after popular backlash vs. Jesuit innovations:
 - a. dissolution of representative Estates General and,
 - b. denial of last rites to any rejecting the Bull “Unigenitas”
4. 1767, Spain (!) follows suit on charges of treason
5. Pope Clement XIV coerced into dissolving the order in 1773
6. Jesuits stay alive in Prussia & Russia to fight another day
7. Jesuits revived by Pius VII in 1814

D. Spread of Rationalism to Germany

1. Sacred writings and church dogma brought under scrutiny of human judgment; the Bible studied objectively as an historical and literary document.

* 2. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

- a. born into a pietistic German home
- b. set limits on the ability of human knowledge in his seminal work, *Critique of Pure Reason*

- 1) God cannot be known by rational proofs
- 2) Only knowledge of the physical world is possible; science is sure, but religion is not. Metaphysical knowledge is impossible, thus making faith necessary to know the unknowable God.



- a) While [non-rational] traditions of faith must be stripped away, Kant spoke of a “rational faith” that helps us work out our duties to the “highest good.”
- b) [A deistic] God was “the highest good we can conceive.” God is pragmatically necessary to make any meaning out of life and human activity. This sense of the highest good (his “Categorical Imperative”), justifies a universal morality.
 - i. Human reason is universally supreme in determining the “highest good.”
 - ii. Morality does not require religion, but implies it. Implied religion is not of transcendent grace to humanity, but one of self-help [based on human reason].
 - 1. Thus Kant divorces morality from the first table of the law and theism from the second table;
 - 2. Mankind becomes morally autonomous, although Kant claims that the ethic of the “golden rule” is universally acknowledged.
- c. continuing influences of Kant who paved the way for a secular Christianity.

*

1) Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Father of Liberalism

a) Schleiermacher reacted against Kant’s insistence on a “rational faith” coupled with pragmatic ethics. At the same time he reacted against the pietistic outlook and exercises of his family of origin.

He was a product of the Romantic period who emphasized the place of mystery and imagination over against Kant, and who emphasized sentimental feeling and altruism over against the spiritual hope of his chaplain father.

IMMANENCE

b) God can only be known intuitively through our awareness of self-consciousness; religion arises out of a sense of absolute human dependence, making feeling the essence of faith while aborting the necessity of objective knowledge (e.g., inscripturated truth).

Hence, theology became anthropology in his system. His anthropology stressed the idea of the basic goodness of mankind with God dwelling within.

- i. Religious “experience” is paramount, minimizing the need for supernatural revelation.
- ii. Jesus was a mere man, but Jesus’ “God consciousness” was not clouded like most men’s
- iii. Sin merely is the assertion of one’s personal freedom that violates our innate desire and need to be dependent upon God.

2) Karl Barth (1886-1968)

TRANSCENDENCE

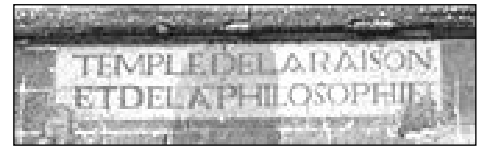
Barth’s “wholly other” transcendent God was shaped by Kant’s “unknowable God,” but was more in reaction against the shallow and positive God of liberalism (Schleiermacher) which was accommodating man.

E. The Fruit of Unchecked Rationalism in France: the French Revolution

1. Background

- a. King Louis XIV (d. 1715) had purged the Protestant Huguenots and suppressed the middle class in France while impoverishing and alienating the peasantry through his extravagances

- and imperialism.
 - b. French rationalist intellectuals of the mid-1700s repudiated *le ancien regime*. Besides challenging the absolute monarchy, the “Encyclopedists” were bitterly anti-clerical: note the Roman church’s alliance with Louis XIV (Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin), and the Roman church’s extensive land holdings while the peasants suffered without relief from established religion.
 - c. French losses to the English in the New World and in Asia sent shock waves through France and raised questions of the inferiority of the *le ancien regime* compared to the progress of “popular sovereignty” under the English system.
 - d. Finally, the success of the American revolution fueled a rising sentiment that opposed, not only the French establishment, but challenged all traditions and conventions.
2. Unchecked humanistic idealism rooted in French rationalism displayed in the French Revolution
- a. Man-centered ideals: “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”
 - b. Attack on religion
 - 1) Confiscation of [Roman Catholic] church lands
 - 2) Number of bishops reduced to number of French provinces, with popular elections of bishops
 - 3) Conversion of many churches to “Temples of Reason”: Notre Dame
 - 4) Cemetery crosses and statues were removed and the slogan “Death is an eternal sleep” was posted at cemetery entrances
 - 5) Climaxed when the Pope was overthrown (1798); he died the next year in French territory
 - c. Attack on Christian conventions
 - 1) A revolutionary calendar started over the clock of history. It was based on the decimal system, eliminating a day of rest on Sunday
 - 2) Ten day week to fit the new decimal system
 - d. Official establishment of the “Cult of Reason” in 1792
 - 1) Rooted in atheism, it encouraged regular congregational worship of the ideal of reason
 - 2) Annual “Festival of Reason” was described by contemporaries as a "lurid", "licentious" affair of scandalous "depravities"; shady opera dancer crowned as “goddess of reason”
 - 3) Cult of Reason was finally displaced by Robespierre’s deistic “Cult of the Supreme Being”
3. Napoleon re-established the Roman Catholic Church as the recognized majority church in 1801



For a contemporary analysis of the French Revolution compared to the American Revolution, see Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the French Revolution*.

F. The Fruit of the Reformation in colonial America: social order based on Christian ideals

- 1. America was settled by religious refugees and by entrepreneurs in the Protestant tradition
 - a. Dissidents: Puritans in New England, Baptists and Independents in Rhode Island, Quakers, German Lutherans, and Mennonites in Pennsylvania, Scotch-Irish in Virginia and the Carolinas, and Roman Catholics in Maryland

- b. Business settlers: Dutch in New Amsterdam, Swedes in Delaware, English in Virginia, etc.
 - c. All of these groups sought their own free exercise of religion, although they did not always grant freedom to opposing religions
2. The Great Awakening in America (ca. 1730-55): the historic trend that glued the colonies together based on Christian values and common interests in current events
- a. Evangelicalism
 - i. looked outward in concern for the lives of others
 - ii. promoted democratic ideals of the humbling equality of all sinners before God vs. the proud *egalite* of all citizens
 - b. Church membership increased and new churches mushroomed, expanding a network of interconnected Christian communities
 - c. “Voluntaryism” spreads the ideal of promoting the work of the church without state protection/support, thus encouraging the notion that the church can and should be separate from the state. This will lead to voluntary societies for Christian missions and charities.
 - d. Helped revive the “Puritan hope,” reinforcing a prevalent Christian worldview and ethos
 - i. Sense of “manifest destiny” in the new world
 - ii. French and Indian War viewed as a counterattack of the devil
 - iii. War for Independence for many was a war for a new Christian order to establish Christ’s kingdom on the last great continent

G. Liturgical mysticism in Sweden and beyond: Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772)

- 1. Rooted in Platonic philosophy of ideals
- 2. Spawned the Church of New Jerusalem (1788)
- 3. Beliefs
 - a) Heretical: denied trinity and substitutionary atonement
 - a) Liturgical worship while metaphysical communication with departed spirits through séances