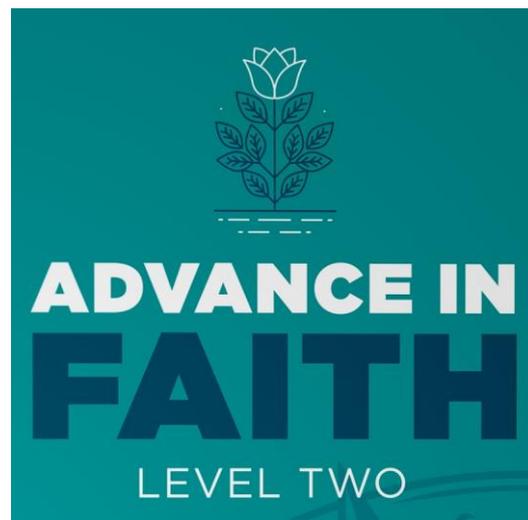


Towards Modernity

Church History Part 2 – Week 3

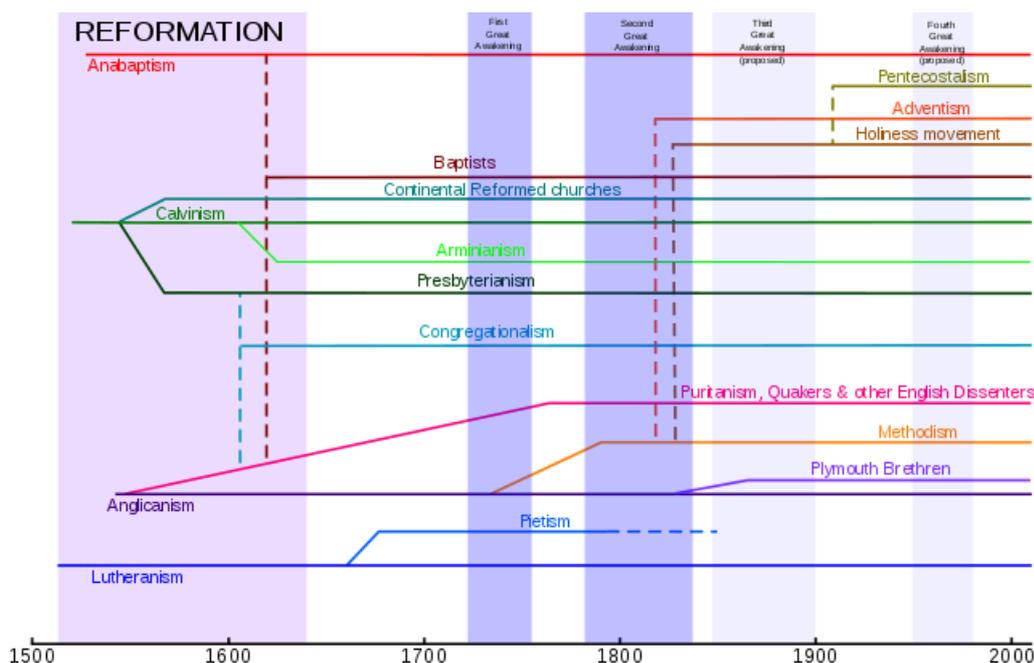
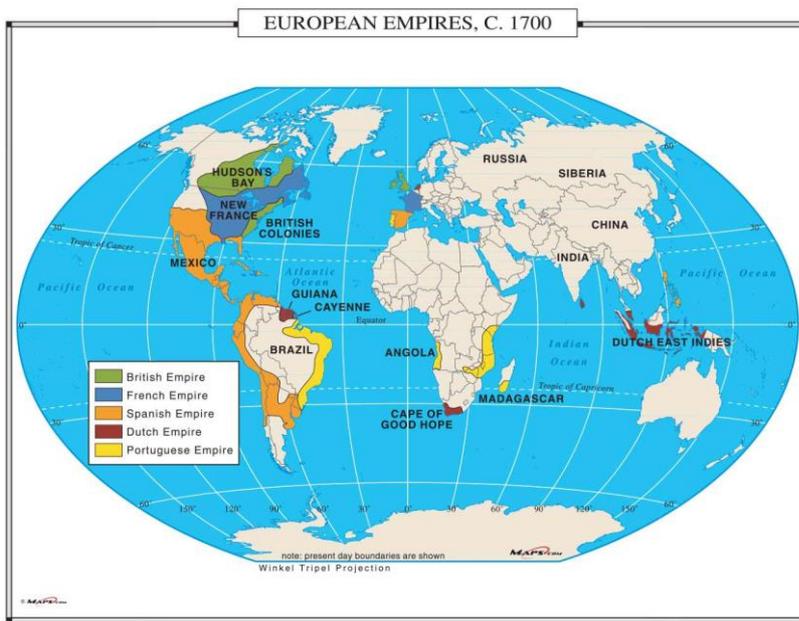


Introduction

The Reformation changed forever the idea of Church and State. It also had strong implications for the Catholic Church. Conflicts, now driven by different faith positions ranged across Europe while new lands were being discovered.

All of this set the stage for the development of modernity – the world view in which now dominates our culture.

Expansion Beyond Europe



The Scientific Revolution

The High Renaissance and the Reformation came almost simultaneously. A third phenomenon was also happening around the same time - the Scientific Revolution.

Examples:

- Nicholas Copernicus – the heliocentric solar system
- Johannes Kepler – orbital motion of the planets
- Galileo – the telescope
- Isaac Newton – Law of Gravity
- William Harvey – circulation of the blood

While the Renaissance played a part in the foundation of the Sc Rev it was the Christian basis that made the difference.

Several thoughts grow from the Christian world view;

- 1/ One can be expected to Know something about the universe.
- 2/ The world is worth finding out about
- 3/ There is order to the things we can study, a cause and effect universe

Pietism and Puritanism

English Puritanism

During the 17th century there developed a strong Reformed element within the Church of England. They wished to ‘purify’ the church of its ‘popish’ remnants, and their struggle took on an increasingly political character.

The Baptists

The most enduring of the Puritan separatist movements was that of the Baptists.

The development and adoption of the Westminster Confession as a Presbyterian statement of faith in 1647 led to a moderately pluralistic situation in England, with Presbyterians, Baptists, and Independents all being allowed.

German Pietism

This was a movement that arose in 17th century Germany to combat an era of stifling state religion. Pietism was a Bible centered moralism that emphasised personal conviction of sin, repentance, conversion and a new experience with Jesus. Pietism was a reaction against intellectualism, religious authorities and formalistic creeds.

Pietism Social Concern

Perhaps the most vital feature of pietism was its outward look.

Pietism's Historical Impact

It did 4 main things;

- Restored the primacy of personal decision in spiritual matters, thus contributing to the growth of human freedom.
- It combated the growth of spiritual mysticism and help the church as an institution to grow and become relevant.
- It renewed and strengthened the ideal of primitive Christianity as exemplary for the present life.
- Its emphasis on the uniqueness of the personal supremacy of feelings and emotions over the intellect helped pave the way for the rise of German romanticism and the rise of nationalism and theological intellectualism.

The Enlightenment - 1700s

Much more a product of Europe, not England, the Enlightenment period can be summed up in 5 words;

reason, nature, happiness, progress, liberty

Of the basic assumptions and beliefs common to philosophers and intellectuals of this period, perhaps the most important was an abiding faith in the power of human reason. People came to assume that through a judicious use of reason, an unending progress would be possible.

Although they saw the church—especially the Roman Catholic church—as the principal force that had enslaved the human mind in the past, most Enlightenment thinkers did not renounce religion altogether. They opted rather for a form of Deism, accepting the existence of God and of a hereafter, but rejecting the intricacies of Christian theology.

The Enlightenment ended with the opening of the French Revolution.

The Breakdown in Philosophy and Science

Three shifts came, in science, in philosophy and in theology.

In Science

A shift from an open system of the universe to a closed system of the universe. In closed system nothing is outside a total cosmic machine. We're all just another brick in the wall. Not only did God die in this system but so did man and so did love.

In Philosophy

Older philosophies held optimistically that all could be known by beginning with man alone and that there would be found a unifying model for all knowledge. By the end of the 18th century philosophers changed from optimism to pessimism.

In Theology

From Kierkegaard came the development of theological existentialism. The concept of man beginning with himself was expressed in theological language. There was a denial of the supernatural and a seeking to understand the Bible in historical context only.