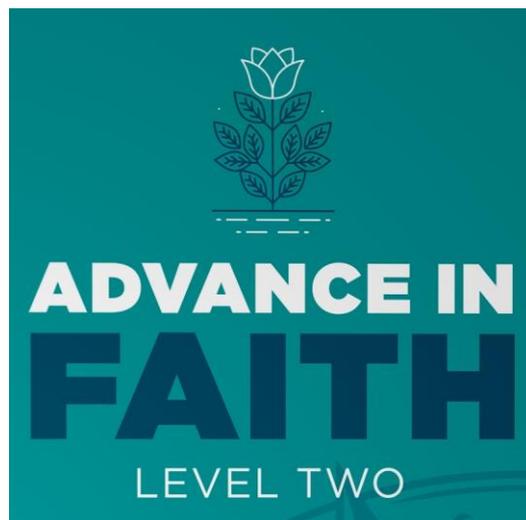


# Century of Modernity

Church History Part 2 – Week 5



## Introduction

The nineteenth century, 1800s, known as the great century of Modernity, saw more change to people's lives, in more areas of their life and in more places around the globe, than any century to that time.

Most prominent in these changes included;

- The American Civil war fought over the issue of slavery
- The rise in three major ideologies;
  - o Nationalism
  - o Liberalism vs Fundamentalism
  - o Socialism
- Global expansion through both colonialization and missionary work
- The entrenchment of industrialization and the social challenges this brought

## Ideology and the Church

Both the Enlightenment and the French revolution greatly affected the development of Christianity in the 19th century. Rooted in this period were the three major post-Christian ideologies of modern times – nationalism, liberalism and Marxist socialism.

### Romanticism and Nationalism

Romanticists, unlike their Enlightened counterparts who looked outward, looked inward to their own national origins and traditions. This interest contributed heavily to the rise of modern nationalism. The ultimate aim of a nationalist is to create a nation-state, a political order in which those of one's own nationality exercise power.

### Liberalism

Liberals believed that Christian theology had to come to terms with modern science if it ever hoped to claim and hold the allegiance of intelligent men of the day.

The result was a widening gap between the simple faith of the common believer, and the ever more sophisticated interpretations of scholars and theologians. It was as a reaction to these theological developments that fundamentalism arose.

### Fundamentalism

New discoveries often clashed with ancient interpretations of the faith during this period.

The most important result of the clash was fundamentalism, which took that name by reason of the five "fundamentals" of Christian faith proclaimed by a conference at Niagara Falls in 1895.

While Fundamentalism wished to maintain the authority of biblical revelation, it began to use the methods of science as the basis for its arguments, thus beginning the science vs religion model in which many Christians and non-Christians are caught up in today.

### **Marxist Socialism**

Marx was an atheist and saw the ultimate development of society in that of a communist society.

The resulting development of communist states around the globe has had a spectacular influence on the modern world and has been a significant challenge to Christians evangelism in places such as China and Russia.

## **The Church in an Industrial Age**

By 1850 Britain had become the workshop of the world, producing two-thirds of the world's coal and half of its iron and cotton cloth.

The social consequences of these developments were the greatest challenge the nineteenth century churches faced.

The population growth brought a rise in slums.

The family became more the nuclear family rather than the extended family of pre industrialisation.

## **Evangelical Humanitarianism**

The evangelicals chose the option of 'philanthropy' or voluntary charitable activity. This answer was rooted in their view of the gospel and the peoples need for salvation.

Examples of the type of work done were that of:

- Elizabeth Fry, who worked from 1813 to improve conditions in the prisons of the time.
- Hannah Bell and the Sunday School movement. Sunday schools were designed to teach poor children the rudiments of reading, writing and religion on the one day in the week they had off.

- The Clapham Sect was the outstanding example of social and political force put in favour of improving the social ills of the times.
- The greatest reformer of the time was Anthony Cooper, the 7th Earl of Shaftsbury. In 1833 he pushed through the Factory Act which restricted child labour in the mills and provided for inspectors to enforce it.
- Above all he established the doctrine of benevolent state intervention in the organisation of industry and commerce to protect the worker's interests.
- The development of the Salvation Army through the work of William Booth was very significant.