

CONCERNING THE WAY

July 14, 2010

LESSON 106: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH - PART 2



For over a thousand years the authority of the institutional church had continued to develop to the point where Christian belief wasn't based on what the Bible said, but the tradition of the Roman Catholic church, and the authority of the papacy determined what the people were to believe. The Reformation changed all that for those who had the courage and conviction to break away from the established institution. What brought it about? Looking at it historically, there were actually more than just spiritual reasons:

1. **Political** – Islam had conquered Constantinople in 1453, causing the downfall of the Eastern church. Islam continued to move west, threatening the power of the papacy, and influencing the papacy through its literature, which flowed into Europe. Also, the creation of national states and free cities in Europe challenged the political authority of Rome. A strong nationalistic spirit arose through strong local political leaders, and they began to question the authority of the church and support the Reformers.
2. **Educational** – The Renaissance, which began in the 14th century, opened men's minds to the study of classical literature in addition to the Bible. Erasmus produced a Greek edition of the New Testament, which encouraged the study of the NT in the original language rather than the accepted Latin Vulgate. The invention of the printing press enabled more people to study the scriptures for themselves. The Renaissance also brought more of a focus on the centrality of man, which, apart from the problems that caused, did contribute to the Reformer's idea of individual faith and salvation.
3. **Social and Economic** – At the end of the Middle Ages there was a surge of economic development throughout the markets produced by the cities and developing colonies. A new middle class developed that resisted the flow of money to Rome.
4. **Spiritual** – Having more access to the New Testament, the Reformers and Christian humanists discovered discrepancies between the church in the NT and the practices of the Roman Catholic Church. There was much corruption from the priesthood all the way to the papacy, such as **simony** – the buying and selling of supposedly sacred objects in order to gain higher offices and power within the church. There was the sale of **indulgences**, the practice of paying for your sins beforehand and be assured of forgiveness. It was this practice that most angered Martin Luther and led to his break with the Roman church. Men like Luther in Germany, and Zwingli and Calvin in Switzerland preached a return to the authority of the Scriptures – the Bible alone was the final authority on what was to be believed and practiced. Because of this, people became aware that the Bible taught the doctrine of justification by faith alone, as well as other historic Christian doctrines that had been lost.

16th Century

1507 Martin Luther is ordained as priest and celebrates his first mass.

1512 Michelangelo completes the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel

1515 William Tyndale is ordained as priest but refuses to enter monastic orders

1517 On October 31 Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the church at Wittenburg, Germany (you can read them at <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/history/95theses.htm>). These

statements outlined his disagreements with the Catholic Church. Luther stressed the concept of “sola scriptura”, the Scriptures alone are the authority for people – not the church, its leaders and its councils. This is considered the beginning of the protestant reformation.

Luther left an enormous theological legacy: he taught that only the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s supper were legitimate; he provided the church with the some of the great hymns (such as “A Mighty Fortress”); he established an educational system, teaching the people to read the Bible.

Although we greatly respect Luther for his contributions in recovering many of the true doctrines of the church, he was strongly anti-Semitic. He accused the Jews of all sorts of atrocities and wrote against them often. Hitler used Luther’s anti-Jewish rhetoric to justify his systematic elimination of millions of Jewish people in the Holocaust of World War II.

1519 – Ulrich Zwingli begins preaching New Testament sermons and denouncing Catholic practices; this begins the Swiss Reformation. Zwingli was a Catholic priest from 1506-1518. Towards the end of this period Zwingli, while studying Erasmus’ Greek New Testament, became a believer in Christ and converted to Reformation views. His preaching converted most of the city of Zurich to Reformation views. Luther separated from Zwingli on the issue of the Lord’s Supper, who believed only in the memorial aspect of it. Zwingli was killed in 1531 in a war with a neighboring Roman Catholic province.

1520 – The pope publishes a bull giving Luther 60 days to recant or be excommunicated. Luther burns the document.

1521 Diet of Worms – Luther’s appearance before a general assembly of the Roman Church in the city of Worms. This is where, according to tradition, when asked to recant his “heretical” beliefs, Luther is said to have spoken the words, “Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me. Amen.”) According to the Weimar Edition of Luther's works, the full text of Luther's final speech is as follows: "*Unless I am convinced by the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures or evident reason (for I believe neither in the Pope nor councils alone, since it has been established that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures adduced by me, and my conscience has been taken captive by the Word of God, and I am neither able nor willing to recant, since it is neither safe nor right to act against conscience. God help me. Amen*". Luther fled before a decision by the assembly was reached, where he was declared a heretic and his writings were banned. The pope excommunicated Luther.

1521-23 – William Tyndale begins teaching and is arraigned on charges of heresy.

1525 Tyndale publishes portions of the New Testament in English before he is discovered and has to escape. He will complete the printing of it in 1526 in Worms, Germany. The English continue to try to capture Tyndale for the next five years, but he keeps moving from place to place, continuing to translate the Bible.

1525 The **Anabaptist** Movement Begins - Hated by Protestants and Catholics alike, these "radical reformers" wanted to not just reform the church but restore it to the purity and simplicity of the early church. They didn’t think the Reformation was going far enough. The Anabaptists could find no justification for elaborate church bureaucracies. They wanted to do away with infant baptism, institute democratic decision in the church, and they believed in separation of church and state. They wanted to do away with the tithe, usury, and military service. Some of these radicals wanted a totally self-governing church, free of government interference. They were the predecessors of the Brethren and Mennonite churches.

So why did the Protestants separate from them and persecute them? Many of their beliefs were right. However, not all of their beliefs were sound. Some practiced polygamy (citing Old Testament precedents), and claimed bizarre revelations from God.

1526 Protestant churches begin to appear in Sweden and Denmark

1529 King Henry VIII of England summons the “Reformation Parliament” and begins to cut ties with the Church of Rome. At the Diet of Speyer in Germany Luther’s followers are first called Protestants (the term becomes associated with Lutheranism, Zwinglianism, and Calvinism).

1530 The Diet of Augsburg, or Augsburg Confession - an announcement of the primary articles of faith of the Lutheran Church and one of the most important documents of the Lutheran reformation. This was an attempt to calm rising tension between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

1532 English clergy submits to Henry VIII, beginning the process of declaring the king, rather than the pope, supreme authority over spiritual matters.

1532 John Calvin, one of the most respected and influential theologians of the Reformation, starts his reformation in France. He is forced to leave France in 1534 and moves to Switzerland. He stays in Switzerland the rest of his life and, as pastor, spent his time preaching and lecturing daily. He also wrote commentaries on 27 books of the Old Testament and all the New Testament except Revelation. Calvin’s authority in Geneva was also political, prosecuting and sometimes executing people for heresy. The burning of Servetus for anti-Trinitarian heresy is viewed today as a serious blight on Calvin’s career, but it is difficult for us to understand those times from our perspective. In that day heretical teaching like this was considered to be more serious than murder and everyone knew it would result in capital punishment. Actually Calvin was against the execution of Servetus and tried different ways to spare him, but at last had to agree with the judgment against him. Calvin built a theology based on the sovereignty of God that directed the Reformed church in Europe and Scotland.

1533 The Church of England is declared the officially established Christian church in England. The next year King Henry VIII is made the head of the English Church, breaking away from Roman Catholic control.

1534 Luther completes his German translation of the Bible, 13 years after he started.

1534 Catholic priest Ignatius Loyola founds the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in Paris to spread a counter-reformation and evangelize for Catholicism. This is the Roman church’s reaction to the Protestant Reformation. The Catholic Church is reformed in many ways by cleaning up some of the abuses and redefining some doctrines, but most of their traditions are kept, including re-establishing the authority of the Pope.

1535 First complete Bible is printed in English, by Myles Coverdale, close friend of William Tyndale.

1536 Calvin publishes the first edition of his *magnum opus*, “The Institutes of the Christian Religion”, an apologetic which defended Protestantism.

1536 After 15 months in prison, William Tyndale is strangled and burned at the stake for heresy. The two main accusations against Tyndale are translation of the Bible into English and opposition to King Henry VIII’s divorce. Tyndale’s last words were, “Oh, Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.” In this same year, the King disbands 376 Roman Catholic monasteries and convents in England.

- 1537** The 2nd complete English Bible is printed by John Rogers, called the “Matthews Bible” – it was the first English Bible printed with the King’s permission. Rogers prints Tyndale’s initials in large letters on the last page of the Old Testament to honor him.
- 1539** King Henry VIII requests the publication of a large pulpit Bible, and Miles Coverdale is commissioned for the job. The Coverdale Bible is also called the Chained Bible, because it is chained to every pulpit. The King decrees that it should be in every pulpit, and that every church should have a reader so that even the illiterate can hear the Word of God. Three years after his martyrdom, Tyndale’s prayer is granted!
- 1540** Conference at Worms fails to reconcile Protestants and Catholics
- 1541** John Calvin establishes a theocracy in Geneva, Switzerland, in which the government leaders are also the religious leaders. John Knox starts the Calvinist Reformation in Scotland. Scottish Protestants become known as Presbyterians because the elders (presbyters) make decisions for the church, not one person.
- 1545** Council of Trent and Counter Reformation – The Roman Catholic Church condemns the selling of indulgences, the immorality of clergy, nepotism, and Protestantism.
- 1546** Martin Luther dies.
- 1554** Queen Mary Tudor, daughter of Henry VIII, restores Roman Catholicism to England, bans Protestant translations of the Bible, and persecutes Protestants. John Rogers is burned at the stake. Many protestants flee to Geneva, Switzerland, led by Myles Coverdale and John Foxe.
- 1555** Peace of Augsburg (Germany), a treaty between Charles V and Protestant princes, allows each ruler to determine the religion of his region. It establishes the first legal basis for the dual existence of Lutheranism and Catholicism in Germany.
- 1558** Queen Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England and head of the Church of England, she attempts a compromise between Protestants and Catholics.
- 1560** Publication of the Geneva Bible in Switzerland, the first Bible printed with verse divisions.
- 1562** The Heidelberg Catechism is formed, it is the most widely held Protestant doctrinal statement for centuries.
- 1563** John Foxe publishes “Acts and Monuments” (Foxe’s Book of Martyrs)

The Five Solas of the Reformation

Sola Scriptura	Scripture Alone
Soli Deo Gloria	For the Glory of God Alone
Solo Christo	By Christ’s Work Alone are We Saved
Sola Gratia	Salvation by Grace Alone
Sola Fide	Justification by Faith Alone

Branches of the Reformation

Reformation Leaders	Branch	Denominational Offshoots
Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon	Lutheran	Lutheran
Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, John Knox	Reformed Tradition	Reformed, Calvinist, Presbyterian, Puritan, Congregational, United Church of Christ, Baptist
Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, John Wesley	Anglican	Church of England, Episcopal (Anglican), Methodist
Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, Menno Simons, Jacob Huter, George Fox, Count Zinzendorf	Anabaptist	Swiss Brethren, Mennonites, Amish, Hutterites, Quakers, Moravian Brethren

The Post-Reformation Period (1564 – 1689)

1564 The term “Puritan” is first used for Protestants who want to “purify” the Church of England for ceremony and ritual not found in the Bible. John Calvin dies in this year.

1568 The **Bishops Bible**, a Church of England translation, is printed

1570 Queen Elizabeth I is excommunicated by the pope, and she in turn persecutes Catholics

1588 Defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English Navy – this is a huge event for Protestantism as Protestant England now becomes the great naval power of the world, freeing groups like the Pilgrims and Puritans to come to the New World and found colonies.

1598 Edict of Nantes, France, grants freedom of worship to French Protestants (Huguenots) after 30 years of persecution

17th Century

1601 Dutch Reformed theologian **Jacobus Arminius** sets forth doctrines emphasizing man’s ability to choose Christ and Christ’s death for all people (Arminianism). Arminius disagreed with Calvin’s view of predestination, which says that God’s will determines ahead of time what the destiny of groups and individuals will be.

Five points of Arminianism

1. Free will or human ability

Free will consists of our ability to choose good over evil; we have the power to cooperate with God’s grace or resist it.

2. Conditional Election

God’s choice (election) determined by knowledge of what man would do (foreseen faith). Our choice of God, not God’s choice of us, is cause of salvation.

3. Universal redemption or general atonement

Jesus’ death and resurrection made it possible for all to be saved, but is effective only for those who choose to accept it.

4. Resistible grace

Our free will limits the Holy Spirit's ability to draw us toward salvation; God's grace can be resisted.

5. Falling from grace

Salvation can be lost, as it requires our cooperation

1605 Gunpowder plot fails in London – Guy Fawkes and other Catholic conspirators attempt to kill King James I and blow up the houses of Parliament in order to seize the government. They wanted to start a total revolution and set up a Catholic king.

1607 Founding of Jamestown in current day Virginia

1611 King James Bible published – King James I of England commissions 54 scholars to create a new translation, which takes six years to complete. The scholars use the Bishops Bible and Tyndale's Bible as well available Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. After slow initial acceptance, this becomes the most popular Bible for the next 300 years.

1618 The Dutch Reformed **Synod of Dordt**, the Netherlands, denounces Arminianism, and responds to Arminius' five criticisms of Calvinism with five points of Calvinism.

Five points of Calvinism

1. Total depravity (inability)

Sin affects every part of human nature, resulting in our inability to choose good over evil. We must be regenerated by the Holy Spirit in order to believe.

2. Unconditional Election

God's choice (election) determined not by our foreseen response (faith), rather, faith and repentance are also gifts given by God. God's choice of us, not our choice of God, is the cause of salvation.

3. Limited Atonement

Jesus' death and resurrection actually saved the elect; it guarantees everything necessary for salvation. Including the gift of faith.

4. Irresistible grace

The Holy Spirit's call is irresistible; God's grace never fails to result in salvation for those to whom it is extended.

5. Perseverance of the saints

Salvation cannot be lost, as it is completely powered by God; thus the elect will persevere (be preserved) to the end.

1620 Separatists ("Pilgrims") reject the Church of England and sail to America on the Mayflower

1630 Puritan migration to New World begins. Instead of separating from the church, they want to cleanse it, but are unable to do so in England so they arrive in America and start colonies.

1636 Roger Williams founds Rhode Island – rejected by the Puritans, Williams starts his own colony

1638 Harvard College founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts by the Puritans. Many of its early

graduates became ministers in Puritan congregations throughout New England. An early brochure, published in 1643, justified the College's existence: "To advance Learning and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches."

1646 *Westminster Confession* is accepted as the statement of Presbyterianism in Scotland and England.

1647 Beginnings of the Quaker movement (the Society of Friends)

1648 The end of the 30 years war – Catholics and Protestants are given equal rights in most of the Holy Roman Empire

1654 Conversion of Blaise Pascal, French mathematician and theologian. He started collecting notes for an *Apology for the Christian Religion*. It was unfinished, but his notes were published posthumously as *Pensees*; it was meant to confound the followers of Descartes by emphasizing the inadequacy of reason.

1655 Waldensians break from Roman Catholicism and embrace Protestantism, and Catholics begin persecution of them

1678 *Pilgrim's Progress* published by John Bunyan, a Puritan who also wrote many other works of poetry and prose

1685 Bach and Handel born

1685 Revocation of Edict of Nantes (see 1598) – Protestantism outlawed again in France, Huguenots flee

1689 Tolerance in England – King James II suspends laws that punish religious dissenters

1698 First missionary societies formed by Protestants

18th Century

In late 17th Century England, fighting between religious and political groups ended with the Glorious Revolution of 1688 when the Church of England was established as the primary religion of the country. Other religions, such as Catholicism, Judaism, and Puritanism were then repressed.

From a political perspective, all was well because everyone practiced the same religion. But rather than being good for religion, this created complacency, or a sense of spiritual "dryness" among citizens. Religion became a boring and cold pastime for them. Eventually, a reaction against this complacency developed into a new spiritualism - or "revivalism" - where Christians would actually believe from the depths of their hearts during worship, rather than just go through the motions during services.

This new spiritual renewal began with people like the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield in England and crossed over to the American Colonies during the first half of the 18th Century.

1729 Jonathan Edwards becomes pastor at Northampton Congregational Church – Edwards, a Calvinist, is considered by many to be the greatest theologian America has ever produced. His sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”, is considered a classic of early American literature, which he delivered during a wave of revival in 1741, following George Whitefield's tour of the Thirteen Colonies. Edwards is known for his many books, which are still widely available.

As a youth, Edwards was unable to accept the Calvinist sovereignty of God. He once wrote, "From my childhood up my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty... It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me." However, in 1721 he came to the conviction, one he called a "delightful conviction." He was meditating on 1 Timothy 1:17, and later remarked, "As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before... I thought with myself, how excellent a Being that was, and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be rapt up to him in heaven; and be as it were swallowed up in him for ever!" From that point on, Edwards delighted in the sovereignty of God. Edwards later recognized this as his conversion to Christ.

1729 John Wesley, considered the founder of Methodism, along with his brother Charles, began meeting with a group at Oxford University for “prayer and religious exercises”. Because they were so serious and so methodical – meeting precisely on time, and systematically engaging in a strict regimen of prayer, fasting, Bible reading, and ministry, they soon came to be called “Methodists”. From this humble beginning would come a spiritual revolution – John preaching evangelistic sermons and Charles writing hymns. In 1738 at a Moravian church service in London he had a personal experience that would change the course of his life. While listening to a reading of Martin Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans:

“About a quarter to nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ; Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death”.

Wesley's religion was no longer just an intellectual faith but rather a personal relationship with God. He soon began to try to revitalize church life in England, and was rarely welcomed by the established Anglican churches. After some encouragement from George Whitefield, who was already drawing huge crowds in his outside “revival” meetings, Wesley began to also preach in the open air. The response to his preaching was very enthusiastic, and was a key, along with the preaching of Whitefield and Edwards, to the great revival going on at this time in England and in America.

Wesley's converts organized not into distinct churches but into “societies” that generally met in private homes. These societies did not merge into formal churches until 1784, when the Methodist Episcopal Church was officially founded in Baltimore, Maryland.

1735 The Great Awakening - Ministers from various evangelical Protestant denominations supported the Great Awakening. And actually, in an age of denominational strife and competition, the Awakening was amazingly ecumenical. Also, pastoral styles began to change. In the late colonial period, most pastors read their sermons, which were theologically dense and advanced a particular theological argument or interpretation. Leaders of the Awakening such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield had little interest in just appealing to parishioners' minds; they wanted far more to bring about an emotional response from their audience, one which might produce the evidence of saving grace. Some have argued that these new ministers avoided logical or rational sermons, but this was not true the vast majority of the time. Edwards, for instance, continued to preach a passionate and intellectual vision of Calvinism — his sermons contained “[both] transparent emotion, heartfelt

sincerity,...[and] inexorable logic," which along with a sustained theme, could create quite an impact.

The Great Awakening was a spiritual renewal that swept the American Colonies, particularly New England, during the first half of the 18th Century. It began in England before catching fire across the Atlantic. Unlike the somber, largely Puritan spirituality of the early 1700s, the revivalism ushered in by the Awakening brought people back to "spiritual life" as they felt a greater intimacy with God.

The Awakening's biggest significance was the way it prepared America for its War of Independence. In the decades before the war, revivalism taught people that they could be bold when confronting religious authority, and that when churches weren't living up to the believers' expectations, the people could break off and form new ones.

Through the Awakening, the Colonists realized that religious power resided in their own hands, rather than in the hands of the Church of England, or any other religious authority. After a generation or two passed with this kind of mindset, the Colonists came to realize that *political* power did not reside in the hands of the English monarch, but in their own will for self-governance (think about the wording of the Declaration of Independence). By 1775, even though the Colonists did not all share the same theological beliefs, they did share a common vision of freedom from British control. And so, the Great Awakening brought about a climate which made the American Revolution possible.

1739 George Whitefield begins his evangelistic tour of the 13 colonies - he preached nearly every day for months to large crowds of sometimes several thousand people. Whitefield was a minister in the Church of England and one of the leaders of the Methodist movement. In contemporary accounts, he, not John Wesley, is spoken of as the supreme figure and even as the founder of Methodism. He was famous for his preaching in America which was a significant part of the Great Awakening movement of Christian revivals. He parted company with Wesley over the doctrine of predestination; Whitefield was a follower of Calvin in this respect, while Wesley was Arminian.

1775 Revolutionary War begins – space prevents me from describing the many events during the war where the American armies were up against insurmountable odds and circumstances, but they were victorious through the intervention of God and the faith and perseverance of leaders like George Washington.

1776 Declaration of Independence

1789: French Revolution begins – it is important to understand that the French Revolution, while it was hoped that it was the same kind of event that had happened in America – it was nothing like it. The American Revolution was based on Biblical principles of freedom and human rights, and the French Revolution was not, and that is why it was such a horrific mess and a failure, ending with Napoleon taking power, with the French people ending up being worse off than when they started.

1789: Bill of Rights

1793 William Carey sails for India - English Baptist missionary and a Reformed Baptist minister, known as the "father of modern missions." Carey was one of the founders of the Baptist Missionary Society. As a missionary in the Danish colony Serampore, India, he translated the Bible into Bengali, Sanskrit, and numerous other languages and dialects.

19th Century

The 1800's produced many great theologians and preachers. The great thing is most of their writings are still available and relevant today.

1801 Cane Ridge revival – this revival is sometimes called the 2nd Great Awakening - *“Somewhere between 1800 and 1801, in the upper part of Kentucky, at a memorable place called “Cane Ridge,” there was appointed a sacramental meeting by some of the Presbyterian ministers, at which meeting, seemingly unexpected by ministers or people, the mighty power of God was displayed in a very extraordinary manner; many were moved to tears, and bitter and loud crying for mercy. The meeting was protracted for weeks. Ministers of almost all denominations flocked in from far and near. The meeting was kept up by night and day. Thousands heard of the mighty work, and came on foot, on horseback, in carriages and wagons. It was supposed that there were in attendance at times during the meeting from twelve to twenty-five thousand people. Hundreds fell prostrate under the mighty power of God, as men slain in battle. Stands were erected in the woods from which preachers of different Churches proclaimed repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and it was supposed, by eye and ear witnesses, that between one and two thousand souls were happily and powerfully converted to God during the meeting. It was not unusual for one, two, three, and four to seven preachers to be addressing the listening thousands at the same time from the different stands erected for the purpose. The heavenly fire spread in almost every direction. It was said, by truthful witnesses, that at times more than one thousand persons broke into loud shouting all at once, and that the shouts could be heard for miles around.*

From this camp-meeting, for so it ought to be called, the news spread through all the Churches, and through all the land, and it excited great wonder and surprise; but it kindled a religious flame that spread all over Kentucky and through many other states. And I may here be permitted to say, that this was the first camp-meeting ever held in the United States, and here our camp-meetings took their rise....” Peter Cartright – who was converted at this camp meeting and went on to become a Methodist circuit rider, introducing evangelical Protestantism to the new settlements of the West.

1807 Wilberforce and anti-slavery movement – William Wilberforce began his political career in 1780 and became the independent Member of Parliament for Yorkshire (1784–1812). In 1785, he underwent a conversion experience and became an evangelical Christian, resulting in major changes to his lifestyle and a lifelong concern for reform. In 1787, he came into contact with Thomas Clarkson and a group of anti-slave-trade activists, including Granville Sharp, Hannah More and Charles Middleton. They persuaded Wilberforce to take on the cause of abolition, and he soon became one of the leading English abolitionists. He headed the parliamentary campaign against the British slave trade for twenty-six years until the passage of the Slave Trade Act 1807, which abolished the slave trade in the British Empire.

1816 American Bible Society founded - by people who were committed to the word of God and to the end of slavery. The first President was Elias Boudinot, who was also President of the Continental Congress from 1782 to 1783 and later Director of the U.S. Mint. The society provided the first Bibles in hotels and the first pocket Bibles for soldiers (during the Civil War). The first translation by the Bible Society was in 1818 into a Native American language.

1817 Elizabeth Fry committee goes to Newgate Prison – Fry, an English prison reformer, social reformer and, as a Quaker, a Christian philanthropist. Fry was a major driving force behind new

legislation to make the treatment of prisoners more humane, and she was supported in her efforts by the reigning monarch. Since 2002, she has been depicted on the Bank of England £5 note.

1827 - Alexander Campbell founds Disciples of Christ - The early history of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is shared by two other groups, The Churches of Christ and the independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. They all emerged from the same roots. The Stone-Campbell movement began as two separate threads, each without knowledge of the other, during the Second Great Awakening in the early 19th century. The first, led by Barton W. Stone began at Cane Ridge, Bourbon County, Kentucky. The group called themselves simply Christians. The second, began in western Pennsylvania and Virginia (now West Virginia), led by Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander Campbell. Because the founders wanted to abandon all denominational labels, they used the biblical names for the followers of Jesus that they found in the Bible.

1827: John Nelson Darby founds the Plymouth Brethren church - From 1827 to 1833, Darby's ecclesiology and eschatology were formed. Disenchanted with the state-church religion, Darby addressed in his earliest writings the heavenly nature of the church and the need for it to be unencumbered with earthly things. He soon discovered a group of like-minded people meeting in Dublin for Bible study, worship, and breaking of bread without ecclesiastical ritual and hierarchy. By 1831, he had left the Church of England and joined others in Plymouth, England, who were opposed to denominationalism, one-man ministry, and church formalism. From this time on, Darby's life would be linked to the influential Plymouth Brethren movement. His innovations in eschatology and ecclesiology would be widely accepted throughout the Brethren movement, producing a new perspective and interpretation of Scripture that would be known as dispensationalism.

He preached fluently in both French and German. Even with his extensive teaching tours, he found time to translate the New Testament into English, French, and German, and he assisted in translating the Old Testament into both French and German. Acknowledged father of modern dispensational premillennialism, Darby is remembered especially for his recovering the early church's doctrine of expectancy for its rapture at the return of the Lord before Daniel's Seventieth Week. Although many important Biblical doctrines had been recovered during the Reformation, the allegorical method of interpreting prophetic portions of scripture, which had developed in the Catholic Church, was still taught in the majority of protestant denominations. There was an explosion of interest in prophecy in the early 1800's, and Darby was a big part of that. He recognized that many of the prophecies in the Bible were as yet unfulfilled and needed to be taken literally.

Other great theologians and authors came out of the Brethren movement, such as William Kelly, J. B. Stoney, C. H. Mackintosh, Sir Robert Anderson, F.F. Bruce, W.E. Vine, and H.A. Ironside.

1830 Finney revivals (Rochester) – Charles Finney was a Presbyterian and Congregationalist figure in the Second Great Awakening. His influence during this period was enough that he has been called The Father of Modern Revivalism. Finney was known for his innovations in preaching and religious meetings such as having women pray in public meetings of mixed gender, development of the "anxious seat" (a place where those considering becoming Christians could come to receive prayer) and public condemnation of individuals by name in sermons and prayers. He was also known for his use of extemporaneous preaching.

Finney did not believe in original sin, or in the security of the believer, and did believe in entire sanctification. His methods in revival were very successful in winning converts, which ultimately persuaded more orthodox clergymen to condone his methods. However the methods and results of

his revivals are still widely criticized:

“Finney was a man who taught quite definitely that, if one applied a given technique, one could have a revival at any time. This is the essence of Finney's teaching in his books on revivals. But history has surely proved that Finney was quite wrong.” Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

“Many have tried to plan revivals by using his technique and have done so honestly, sincerely, and thoroughly, but the desired revival has not come. One of Finney's cardinal errors was to confuse an “evangelistic campaign” and a revival, and to forget that the latter is always given in the sovereignty of God. It never results from the adoption of certain techniques, methods, or organization.” Jones

“Indeed, in copies of the Oberlin Evangelist containing articles by Finney (after his period as an evangelist and when he had become a professor of theology), there are indications that the writer himself had become somewhat suspicious of his own techniques. There are statements written by Finney such as the following: “If I had my time over again I would preach nothing but holiness. The converts of my revivals are a disgrace to Christianity!” “If I had the strength to go through the churches again, instead of preaching to convert sinners, I would preach to bring the churches to the spiritual standard of holy living.”

1843 William Miller and Adventism – Miller was an American Baptist preacher, whose followers have been termed Millerites. He is credited with the beginning of the Adventism movement of the 1830s and 1840s in North America. Among his direct spiritual heirs are several major religious denominations, including Seventh-day Adventists and Advent Christians. He predicted that Jesus Christ would return on October 22, 1843.

1853 Hudson Taylor to China – Taylor was a British Protestant Christian missionary to China, and founder of the China Inland Mission (CIM) (now OMF International). Taylor spent 51 years in China. The society that he began was responsible for bringing over 800 missionaries to the country who began 125 schools and directly resulted in 18,000 Christian conversions, as well as the establishment of more than 300 stations of work with more than 500 local helpers in all eighteen provinces.

1854 Charles Spurgeon becomes pastor of New Park St. Church – Spurgeon was a British Particular Baptist preacher who is still highly influential and beloved among Christians of different denominations, among whom he is still known as the “Prince of Preachers”. In his lifetime, Spurgeon preached to around 10,000,000 people, often up to 10 times each week at different places. His sermons have been translated into many languages. Spurgeon was the pastor of New Park St in London for 38 years.

Stenographers would take down his sermons as they were delivered; Spurgeon would then have opportunity to make revisions to the transcripts the following day for immediate publication. His weekly sermons, which sold for a penny each, were widely circulated and still remain one of the all-time best selling series of writings published in history. Besides sermons, Spurgeon also wrote several hymns and published a new collection of worship songs in 1866 called “Our Own Hymn Book”.

1857 Livingston's Missionary Travels published - Livingston was a Scottish Congregationalist pioneer medical missionary with the London Missionary Society and explorer in Africa. His meeting with H. M. Stanley gave rise to the popular quotation, “Dr. Livingston, I presume?”.

1872 Dwight Moody begins preaching - Raised on a farm in Massachusetts, Moody moved first to Boston, where he converted to evangelical Christianity in 1856, and then to Chicago, where he

prospered in business. He gave up business in 1860 and engaged in missionary work with the YMCA (1861 – 73). He founded Moody Church and preached in the slums, stressing literal interpretation of the Bible and the need to prepare for the Second Coming. In 1870 he teamed up with the hymn writer Ira D. Sankey (1840 – 1908), and they began a series of very popular revival tours in Britain and the U.S. Moody founded the Northfield School (1879), the Mount Hermon School (1881), and the Chicago Bible Institute (1889; now the Moody Bible Institute).

1884 – George Peter’s “The Theocratic Kingdom” is published – Peters, one of the most mysterious and fascinating premillennial scholars of the nineteenth century, was a rare Lutheran who was premillennial and believed in a literal coming kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth.

In the introduction to his classic 3-volume work *The Theocratic Kingdom*, Peters writes that all things are "tending toward the kingdom to be hereafter established by Christ, that the dispensations from Adam, to the present are only preparatory stages for its coming manifestation." He adds "that we cannot properly comprehend the Divine economy. . . unless we . . . consider the manifestation of its ultimate result as exhibited in this [coming] kingdom." Peters believed that modern rationalists had given untrustworthy definitions to the kingdom and we must return "to accept of the old view of the kingdom as the one clearly taught by the prophets, Jesus, the disciples, the apostles." Finally, Peters writes, after long investigation he was compelled with a sense of duty to publish his work. He notes he tried to set forth "the Millenarian views of the ancient and modern believers, and [to be] paving the way for a more strict and consistent interpretation of the kingdom, this itself would already be sufficient justification for its publication."

The *Theocratic Kingdom* has gone through many printings and is still in print today. The books are divided into 206 propositions, each stating a point of importance with regard to the Kingdom of God, and then giving proof for that proposition, often using the texts of those writers that disagreed with him!

1886 Student Volunteer Movement founded - an organization founded in 1886 that sought to recruit college and university students in the United States for missionary service abroad. It also tried to publicize and encourage the missionary ministry in general.

20th Century

There have been victories in the church in the 20th century, including the church’s involvement in social issues such as women obtaining the right to vote and civil rights, and great church growth in parts of the world that have been hostile to the gospel, like China, parts of Africa, and other countries. But we also must mention the failures. There has been the failure to curb the murder of millions of babies in the United States, and the spread of pornography, the downward spiral of morality displayed in movies and television.

Then there is Christian liberalism: *By the 1930’s liberalism had triumphed over nearly every Christian denomination. So-called “higher criticism”, a reconstruction of biblical history based largely on German rationalism and British empiricism, took over denominational seminaries and from there influenced American pulpits. While most folks cherished the “old fashioned” moral standards (but increasingly violated them in daily living), they lost the foundation of those standards in the authority of biblical creation and revelation. Intellectually intimidated by Darwin, Marx, Freud, Dewey, and a host of others, they came to faith in naturalistic science with its reconstruction of biological and geological*

history. Charles Clough

In most major denominations, the Bible is not interpreted in its normal literal sense, the Bible stories are believed to be myths, the Church has replaced Israel, and there is no literal Kingdom of Christ coming in the future. The “Emerging Church” movement would have us return to many medieval rituals and mystical traditions in order to get closer to God, instead of studying the Bible.

1904 Azusa St. revival - an historic Pentecostal revival meeting that took place in Los Angeles, California, and was led by William J. Seymour, an African American preacher. It began with a meeting on April 14, 1906, and continued until roughly 1915. The revival was characterized by ecstatic spiritual experiences accompanied by speaking in tongues, dramatic worship services, and inter-racial mingling. They received criticism from secular media and Christian theologians for behaviors considered to be outrageous and unorthodox, especially at the time. Today, the revival is considered by historians to be the primary catalyst for the spread of Pentecostalism in the 20th century.

1909 Scofield's Bible published – C. I. Scofield was an American Congregational Presbyterian clergyman, writer, Bible conference speaker, defender of dispensational premillennialism, and editor of the Scofield Reference Bible. Revised in 1917, the Bible is one of the most influential theological works of the early 20th century and still very popular today. The contribution of C. I. Scofield to the development of the evangelical fundamentalist movement in the twentieth century has been enormous, particularly as it relates to premillennial dispensationalism.

Scofield was profoundly influential in the development of the Bible conference movement. He was centrally prominent in the creation of several schools, and founded a missionary organization and presided over its direction for nearly thirty years.

Scofield also created the extremely popular Scofield Bible Correspondence Course and Bible leaflets. They sold in the thousands, providing self-study training for many pastors and Christian workers. In 1888, Scofield wrote *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, which attempted in pamphlet form to practically explain the dispensational, pretribulational, premillennial interpretation of the Bible.

1914 World War I begins

1924: First Christian radio broadcasts

1930 IFCA founded – The Independent Fundamentalist Churches of America was founded as an association of Bible-believing churches and organizations whose goal was to safeguard fundamental doctrine. The founders – from various denominations, include such well known Christian personalities as J. Oliver Buswell and M.R. DeHaan. Members have included such influential leaders as Charles Ryrie, John Walvoord, J. Vernon McGee, and John MacArthur.

1931 C. S. Lewis comes to faith in Christ

1939 World War II begins

1940 Wycliffe Bible Translators founded

1940: First Christian TV broadcasts

1945 World War II ends - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor and theologian whose writings are still popular today, was executed by the Nazis for his involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler.

1947 Dead Sea Scrolls discovered

1947 Lewis Sperry Chafer's Systematic Theology is published, and it is edited by John Walvoord. It is a classic work and is still widely used by pastors, laymen, and seminaries today. Chafer founded Dallas Theological Seminary and was its president until his death in 1952. Thousands of men studied under Chafer and then Walvoord, throughout the 1930s and into the early 1980s. Some of the well-known great pastors and theologians produced by this school include Dr. Mal Couch, David Jeremiah, J. Vernon McGee, Chuck Swindoll, and Tony Evans.

1948 Israel declares their statehood, is immediately attacked by several surrounding Arab countries. Israel miraculously wins their first war, even though they are greatly outmanned and outgunned. The United States recognizes Israel as a country the same day, as President Harry Truman decides against the advice of his cabinet.

1949 An eight-week crusade in Los Angeles catapults Billy Graham into the national spotlight. Billy Graham has preached the gospel of Christ in person to more than 80 million people and to countless millions more over the airwaves and in films. Nearly 3 million have responded to the invitation he offers at the end of his sermons. He was the first Christian, eastern or western, to preach in public behind the Iron Curtain after World War II, culminating in giant gatherings in Budapest (1989) and Moscow (1992) and complemented by unprecedented invitations to Pyongyang, North Korea (1992) and Beijing (1993). He has been a friend to the pope, the queen, several prime ministers, and every president from Dwight Eisenhower to George W. Bush.

1952 C.S. Lewis's "Mere Christianity" is published

1967 The Six Day War – Israel is attacked again by her Arab neighbors and Israel gains control of Jerusalem **for the first time since the 2nd century A.D.** I think that this event in 1967 is a good place to stop, as it brings us full circle. This event is direct fulfillment of prophecy and is a sign that other fulfillments will be forthcoming. How much more church history is left until the history written in advance by the Holy Spirit for the end of time will come to pass? 2,000 years seems like an awful long time to us, but it is nothing to God. I think we are very close to the end of church history. The signs of the end of the age are converging like never before.

I know there are many other events in church history and great men of God that I could have mentioned, but I've run out of time and space. There have been other great preachers and missionaries too numerous to mention. There have been many Christian men of science, like Nicolaus Copernicus, Blaise Pascal, Johannes Kepler, Isaac Newton, Gregor Mendel, George Washington Carver, and Louis Pasteur.

We haven't mentioned women like Amy Carmichael (1867-1951), who helped rescue young girls in India who otherwise would likely become temple prostitutes, and Irene Webster-Smith, who did the same in Japan in 1916. There's Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), who is known as the founder of nursing, and Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-96), who wrote a book that roused the country against slavery.

I want to wrap up this lesson by asking – now that you have seen this timeline, how do you feel the church has done since Jesus left the earth? We've seen examples of corruption in the church, false teachers, false doctrines, persecution of non-believers, and many splits and divisions, and these should not surprise us because the apostle Paul warned us that these things would come in after he left.

But we've also seen many victories – great revivals, great missionary efforts, great pastors and teachers. We've seen God step in and sovereignly bring revival to large areas of the United States. The world rarely acknowledges it, but many of the educational and scientific advancements, artistic achievements, music, acts of compassion, and freedom we take for granted have come from the influence of Christians over the centuries. Christians who have followed Jesus Christ's commands to love God and love their neighbors as themselves have made powerful contributions to our world. It is Christians who started most of our great schools, and Christians who built hospitals.

Many people complain that the Church is so divided. But I don't believe this is true. You see, people get confused because all they look at is the institutions of the church. But that's not really The Church. The Church is the Body of Christ. And the Body of Christ can never be divided. Let's look at a few verses, this is Jesus speaking to the disciples before He left the earth:

John 17:11 I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them safe in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are one.

John 17:20-23 "I am not praying only on their behalf, but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their testimony, (21) that they will all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. I pray that they will be in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. (22) The glory you gave to me I have given to them, that they may be one just as we are one – (23) I in them and you in me – that they may be completely one, so that the world will know that you sent me, and you have loved them just as you have loved me.

Jesus prayed to the Father that all believers would be one, just as the Father and Son are one. Wow! Don't you think the Father answered that prayer? Of course He did. All of us who are truly members of the Body of Christ ARE one – there is no division. Have you ever met someone for the first time but you KNEW in the Spirit that they were a believer? This is what I'm talking about.

What you have in the churches, the institutions, the denominations, is a bunch of goats among the sheep, or weeds among the wheat (Matthew 13:24-30). As Jesus says in this parable, at the end of the age the weeds will be collected and burned, and the wheat will be brought into the barn. And Jesus prophesied in Matthew 16:18 that the gates of Hades would not overpower the church, and that, again, is not talking about denominations or institutions, but the Body of Christ. This is a promise that death (Hades) has no hold on those who belong to Jesus Christ.

I hope that this has sparked an interest in some of these people and events, and will cause you to want to find out more about them. Church history is important, and we should know about the Christians who came before us.

Next lesson – we will begin our study on Paul's epistle to the Romans!

A Family Tree of Protestant Denominational Groups

Dusty Rhoad

