

SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY 2

A.D. 1517-2000

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Second Edition. ISBN: 978-1-943953-54-7

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Directions for Class Leaders

This course provides an introductory survey of church history from A.D. 1517-2000.

Lesson Structure

(1) If studying as a group, take turns reading the material. You should stop periodically for any class discussion. As the class leader, you are responsible to keep discussion from wandering from the material being studied. It is helpful to have a time limit for each discussion period.

(2) Each time you come to the sign ►, let students discuss the question. It is important to show how the study of church history is relevant to the church of today. Most of the discussion questions for this course ask the students to relate what they have learned about history to their circumstances. Please take sufficient time for these discussions. Without this, students may fail to connect their study of the past to the needs of the church today.

(3) Students are assigned a course project. As class leader, you can help the students succeed in the course by ensuring that they work consistently on this project. Directions for the course project are at the end of the first lesson.

(4) In addition to the course project, there are six lesson assignments. Students should complete three of the six assignments. When the assignment is a presentation to the group, give time at the beginning of the next class meeting for oral presentations.

(5) Lessons 1-6 include test questions. At the end of each class, the leader should review these questions with the students. Dates and names are more important in a church history course than in many other courses. Take time to review the "Key Events" and "Key People" that are listed at the end of each chapter. The following class session should begin with a short test with these questions. This can be done orally or in written form.

(6) There are seven lessons for this course. Each lesson covers a large amount of material and will take a minimum of 3-4 hours. If you are meeting for shorter sessions, you should plan two sessions per lesson.

Key Events in Church History¹

1517 - 1648 The Reformation

1517 Martin Luther's *Ninety-five Theses*

1525 Bible translated into English from Greek by William Tyndale

1534 Anglican Church established by the *Act of Supremacy*

1536 John Calvin writes *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*

1545-1563 Roman Catholic Council of Trent (Counter-Reformation)

1563 *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* first published

1611 King James Version of the Bible

1648 - 1789 The Enlightenment

1648 Peace of Westphalia ends the Thirty Years War

1678 John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* published

1703-1791 Life of John Wesley

1720s - 1740s Great-Awakening in American colonies

1733 Beginning of Moravian missionary movement

1738 Wesley's Aldersgate experience, beginning of Methodist revival

1780 Sunday School movement is pioneered in England by Robert Raikes

1784 Methodist Conference formed

1789 - 1799 French Revolution

1789 - 2000 The Modern Age

1794 London Missionary Society founded in England - a non-denominational missionary society with missions in the islands of the South Pacific and Africa.

1790-1840 Second Great-Awakening

¹ Sources:

Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity through the Centuries* (MI: Zondervan, 1996), 28-29

"Timeline: Important Dates in A.D. Christian History," Crosswalk.com, October 22, 2014, <http://www.crosswalk.com/who-is-jesus/beginning-of-the-christian-church/timeline-important-dates-in-ad-christian-history-11542876.html> (Retrieved May 14, 2021).

1793-1834 William Carey in India

1801 Cane Ridge camp meeting

1833 Slavery is abolished in the British Empire

1854-1905 Hudson Taylor in China

1855 Conversion of D.L. Moody

1859 Charles Darwin publishes *Origin of Species*

1864 Samuel Ajayi Crowther is appointed as the first African Anglican bishop

1864 William Booth founded the Salvation Army

1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference

1934 Wycliffe Bible Translators founded by William Cameron Townsend with the goal of making a translation of the Bible in every living language in the world.

1941 Founding of National Association of Evangelicals

1947 Dead Sea Scrolls found

1949 First Billy Graham Crusade, held in Los Angeles, CA

1950 All missionaries are forced to leave China

1974 Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization

1978-1988 International Council on Biblical Inerrancy

Key People in Church History²

Asbury, Francis (1745-1816): Methodist bishop sent to America by John Wesley in 1771. After 1784, he and Thomas Coke became joint superintendents of the Methodist church in America.

Barth, Karl (1886-1968): Neo-orthodox theologian. He rejected liberal German theology, but accepted many of the principles of biblical higher criticism.

Calvin, John (1509-1564): French reformer and theologian who settled in Geneva and led the Calvinistic wing of the Reformation. Author of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Carey, William (1761-1834): English Baptist missionary pioneer who sparked the beginning of the Protestant missions movement. The "Father of Modern Missions."

Cranmer, Thomas (1489-1556): Archbishop of Canterbury, he attempted to promote Reformation principles in England. Led development of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Burned as a martyr under Queen Mary.

Crowther, Samuel Ajayi (1806-1891): First African to be appointed an Anglican bishop.

Edwards, Jonathan (1703-1758): American theologian and leader in the Great Awakening.

Erasmus of Rotterdam (c. 1469-1536): Influential Roman Catholic humanist and church critic. In 1516, he produced the first Greek New Testament. This text provided the Scripture for the Protestant reformers.

Graham, Billy (1918-2018): Most widely-known evangelical evangelist of the 20th century.

Gregory Nanzianzus (329-389): One of the "Great Cappadocians" who opposed Arianism.

Huss, John (c. 1372-1415): Pastor and professor in Prague who propagated John Wycliffe's teachings. He was burned at the stake as a heretic.

Ignatius Loyola (c. 1491-1556): Monk who founded the Jesuits (Society of Jesus) and led a "Counter-Reformation" in the Roman Catholic Church.

Latimer, Hugh (c. 1485-1555): English Protestant reformer and Bishop of Worcester. Burned at the stake under Queen Mary in 1555.

² Sources:

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, E. A. Livingstone, editor, 3rd edition (Oxford University Press, 1997)

Dictionary of Christianity in America, Daniel G. Reid, et al., editors. (InterVarsity Press, 1990).

This list is intended to provide a quick reference of people who will be studied in this course. There will be more details about these names later in the course. The class does not need to study this list.

Lewis, C.S. (1898-1963): Leading twentieth century apologist. He converted from atheism and became a voice for the gospel.

Luther, Martin (1483-1546): German monk who sparked the Protestant Reformation with his *Ninety-Five Theses*. He translated the New Testament into German and was a leader of the Reformation in Germany.

Newton, John (1725-1807): Evangelical English minister and hymn-writer who aided the campaign against slavery after his conversion from the slave trade.

Simons, Menno (1496-1561): Anabaptist and Mennonite leader. Roman Catholic priest who became convinced of Reformation doctrine but differed from the magisterial reformers on believer's baptism, pacificism, and the nature of the church.

Spener, Philip Jacob (1635-1705): German Lutheran whose book, *Pia Desideria*, became the foundation for the Pietist movement. Founded the University of Halle in 1694 as a center for Pietism and missionary training.

Taylor, Hudson (1832-1905): Founder of China Inland Mission. Led the spread of the gospel in the Chinese interior.

Townsend, Cameron (1896-1982): Founder of Wycliffe Bible translators.

Tyndale, William (c. 1494-1536): English reformer who translated the Bible into English (1525); after a short but productive career of translation and writing he was burnt at the stake near Brussels.

Wesley, Charles (1707-1788): Prolific English hymn-writer (over 6,000 hymns), including such favorites as "And Can It Be?" and "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing."

Wesley, John (1703-1791): Founder of the Methodist movement and leader of the English evangelical revival.

Whitefield, George (1714-1770): English Calvinist Methodist evangelist whose revivals brought spiritual renewal in both America and England.

Wilberforce, William (1759-1833): English philanthropist and member of Parliament who labored for over 30 years to pass legislation against the slave trade. The bill was finally passed in 1833.

Zinzendorf, Count Nicolaus Ludwig von (1700-1760): Leader of the Moravians at Herrnhut. He was concerned with a genuine religion of the heart and was influential in the worldwide missions movement.

Zwingli, Ulrich (1484-1531): Swiss Protestant reformer. He differed with Luther on the nature of the Lord's Supper.

Lesson 1

The Magisterial Reformers

A.D. 1517-1618

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Recognize the primary leaders of the Magisterial Reformation.
- (2) Understand the differing theological traditions that grew out of the Reformation.
- (3) Know the meaning of the "Reformation Solas."
- (4) Distinguish between Arminian and Reformed theology.

Introduction

Many historians date the beginning of the Middle Ages to the fall of Rome in 410 and the end of the Middle Ages to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. For more than 1,000 years, this city withstood repeated attacks by Muslims and even by fellow Christians during the Fourth Crusade of 1204. But in 1453, Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks.

As Greek monks fled to the west, they carried ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Desiderius Erasmus studied those manuscripts and published the first scholarly edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516. In the preface, Erasmus encouraged the translation of Scripture into the common tongues. This New Testament had a great impact on Martin Luther and other early Reformers. As the Bible was made available to the common man, the Roman Catholic Church could no longer prevent the spread of biblical truth. The Reformation was built on access to the Word of God.

Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin are called the "Magisterial Reformers" because they emphasized organizational structures and the power of the Christian governments to enforce Christian principles in society by law. In the next lesson, we will study other reform movements of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Date (A.D.)	Event
1516	Erasmus publishes the Greek New Testament
1517	Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses
1536	John Calvin's <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i>
1610	Five Articles of the Remonstrants (Arminians)
1618	Synod of Dort

Martin Luther and the Reformation

Although the roots of the Reformation extend back to the twelfth century, Martin Luther (1483-1546) was the spark that fanned these embers into a flame. As Luther studied the Greek New Testament, he discovered the true message of the gospel. Within a few years, the Reformation would sweep across Europe.

Four questions were central to the Reformation.³ Luther's answers to these questions show the primary emphases of the Reformation.

1. How is a person saved?
2. Where is spiritual authority based?
3. What is the church?
4. What is the essence of Christian living?

How is a Person Saved?

The Roman Catholic Church answered, "A person is saved by faith *and* good works." These works include faithfulness to church teachings and rituals.

After nearly dying from a lightning strike, Luther joined an Augustinian monastery at the age of twenty-two. He was faithful to every requirement of the monastery. He nearly destroyed his health with long fasts and ascetic practices. He later testified, "If anyone could have earned heaven by the life of a monk, it was I." Like Paul in Philippians 3:4-6, Luther knew that if there was any reason to have confidence in the flesh, he was secure.

However, while performing his first Mass Luther was struck by the conviction that he was "full of sin." In 1510, he made a pilgrimage to Rome hoping to find peace of soul. Instead, as he saw the hypocrisy of the church hierarchy, he wrote, "Rome, once the holiest city was now the worst."

Disillusioned, Luther began to seek an answer to the question, "How can a sinner be made right before a holy God?" He read in Romans, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"⁴ Here he found the astounding truth that "through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith." From this, Luther understood that the "righteousness of God" is not only the *requirement* of God; it is the *provision* of God.

The Reformers answered the question, "How is a person saved?" with, "**We are justified by grace through faith alone.**" The Reformers were known for the principles of *sola gratia* (grace alone) and *sola fide* (faith alone).

The doctrine of justification by grace through faith involves three terms:

³ From Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 3rd edition (USA: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 238.

⁴ Romans 1:17

Justification is the act of declaring a sinner who repents righteous before God. Through justification, we are pardoned for our sins.

By grace alone means that nothing we do merits salvation. Salvation is not by *grace plus works*, the teaching of the Judaizers of the first century. Salvation is not by *grace plus the church*, the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. Salvation comes through God's grace alone because Jesus took our place.

By faith alone means that we receive this gracious gift by believing God's promises. Nothing that we do earns salvation; it is the free gift of God. We accept it by faith in God's promises.⁵

The doctrine of justification by faith alone was the foundation of the Protestant Reformation. The Reformers insisted that nothing can be added to faith as a prerequisite to justification. Luther's last written essay ended with these words, "We are beggars. That's the truth." This was not a statement of despair; it was a joyful declaration that in grace, God hears and answers the beggar's cry.

► How would you explain justification by grace through faith to three types of people?

- A Roman Catholic who believes that she is justified through the Catholic church
- An unbeliever who believes that he will be justified by "living a good life and doing my best"
- A hungry seeker who believes that she is "not good enough" to deserve justification

"From depths of woe I cry to thee,
Lord, hear me, I implore thee.
Bend down thy gracious ear to me,
My prayer let come before thee.
If thou rememberest each misdeed,
If each should have its rightful meed,
Who may abide thy presence?"

"Thy love and grace alone avail
To blot out my transgression;
The best and holiest deeds must fail
To break sin's dread oppression.
Before thee none can boasting stand,
But all must fear thy strict demand
And live alone by mercy.

"Therefore my hope is in the Lord
And not in mine own merit;
It rests upon his faithful Word
To them of contrite spirit
That he is merciful and just;
This is my comfort and my trust.
His help I wait with patience.

"Though great our sins and sore our woes,
His grace much more aboundeth;
His helping love no limit knows,
Our utmost need it soundeth.
Our shepherd good and true is he,
Who will at last his Israel free
From all their sin and sorrow"

- Martin Luther's hymn on Psalm 130

Luther saw Psalm 130 as an Old Testament summary of the gospel. It shows our great sin ("If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand") and God's great grace ("For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption").

Two hundred years later, John Wesley heard Psalm 130 sung in worship on the afternoon of his "Aldersgate experience."

⁵ For more on the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, see the Shepherds Global Classroom course, *Romans*.

Where Is Spiritual Authority Based?

The Roman Catholic Church answered, "All spiritual authority lies with the Church of Rome, headed by the pope."

In 1513, Pope Leo X approved the sale of indulgences to raise money to complete St. Peter's Basilica. A German monk, Johann Tetzel, promised that a person who bought an indulgence was made "cleaner than Adam before the Fall." In response, Luther wrote his *Ninety-Five Theses* (propositions) to condemn this practice. Following the custom of the day, Luther nailed his proposal for public debate to the door of the Wittenberg church. Johann Eck, a Roman Catholic theologian, responded by accusing Luther of heresy.

Luther did not intend to leave the Roman Church; he sought to reform errors within the church. However, his study of Scripture gradually led Luther to reject Catholic dogma. Reading the Greek New Testament, Luther saw that Jesus' call to "repentance" did not mean "do penance," as it was translated in the Latin Vulgate. Instead, it meant a change of heart and mind. Luther objected to a teaching that lowered the demands of God's holiness to nothing more than ritual. He insisted that grace transforms our entire being.

Eventually, Luther realized that Scripture must hold authority above the church. In a debate with Eck, Luther stated the Reformation principle, "Neither the church nor the pope can establish articles of faith. These must come from Scripture." This principle, called *sola Scriptura*, means "Scripture alone." The Reformers did not mean that Christians have "no authority except the Bible." They meant that Christians accept "no authority over the Bible." Protestants were committed to the principle that no other authority stands over Scripture. Luther valued the writings of the church fathers and councils, but he saw that final **spiritual authority lies in Scripture, not the Roman Catholic Church.**

In 1521, Luther was called before an imperial court headed by Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. The "Diet of Worms" summoned Luther to recant his writings and confess mistakes in what he had written. In response, Luther restated his commitment to the authority of Scripture. "I am bound by the Scriptures, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God."⁶

► In his response to Luther, the imperial secretary at the Diet of Worms argued, "If it were granted that whoever contradicts the councils and the common understanding of the church must be (answered) by Scripture, we will have nothing in Christianity that is certain." Catholic officials insisted that individual Bible reading would lead to chaos. If every Christian can interpret Scripture, how do we avoid confusion?⁷

⁶ Quoted in Mark A. Noll, *Turning Points*, 3rd edition (MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 146.

⁷ Remember that while Luther recognized Scripture as the final authority of all of life, he did not teach that all people had equal authority in interpreting Scripture. Luther had great respect for the ancient creeds, and for the study of the Hebrew and Greek texts. The careful study of Scripture was important to Luther and the other Reformers.

What is the Church?

The Roman Catholic Church answered, "The only true church is Rome." The pope insisted that salvation was possible only through the Roman church.

When Luther visited Rome in 1510 and saw the sinful lifestyles of the bishops and cardinals, he began to recognize the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church. As he studied Scripture further, he came to understand that, through faith, the individual believer can approach God directly without priests and church rituals. In his writing titled *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, Luther argued that the Roman Church had deprived believers of access to God. The Reformers taught that **"all believers are priests called to offer spiritual sacrifices to God."** The church is composed of all true believers.

This view of the church affected many aspects of Luther's later teaching. He rejected the church's view of the sacraments, recognizing only Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He gave both the bread and the wine to laymen. Rather than the Mass as a reenactment of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the focus of Lutheran worship was the Word of God.

What is the Essence of Christian Living?

The Roman Catholic Church answered, "Monastic life is superior to the life of the laity." It was only monks and priests who truly fulfilled the model of the Sermon on the Mount.

Luther responded that **the Christian is called to serve God in any calling, sacred or secular.** All useful callings are equal in God's eyes. All Christians are called to live in full obedience to God. Because of this conviction, Luther encouraged ministers to marry, and in 1525, he married a former nun, Katherine von Bora.

Luther preached that good works are the fruit, not the source, of spiritual life. "Good works do not make a man good, but a good man does good works." For the Reformers, the Christian life was not about earning salvation through works, but about doing good works *in joyful response to salvation*.

"Many have taken the Christian faith to be a simple and easy matter... This is because they have not really experienced it."
- Martin Luther

Justification by faith is not the *end* of our Christian growth. Instead, the justified believer begins a process of discipleship that transforms all of life. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one of the most famous Lutherans of the twentieth century, warned against "cheap grace" that teaches forgiveness without repentance. It is "grace without discipleship, grace without the cross."

The ideal of Christian living is neither monastic withdrawal nor careless conformity to the world around us. Instead, Christians are called to live in obedience to God's Word in every place and in every time.

The Effects of Luther's Teaching

Luther's goal was reformation within the Roman Catholic Church, not a new church. However in 1521, the church excommunicated Luther as a "heretic." Soon the Reformation

spread through Germany and to other parts of Europe. In a ten-week period in 1521, Luther translated the entire New Testament into German, making Scripture available in the language of the people. In the following years, he translated the liturgy into German. He abolished the office of bishop and appointed pastors. Finally, he abandoned the emphasis on the Mass as a reenactment of Jesus' death and put the preaching and teaching of God's Word at the center of the worship service.

Martin Luther was not infallible. His doctrine was not fully developed in some areas. However, Luther's influence on the Christian church has been enormous. Through his writings, the Reformation spread across the continent and ultimately, around the globe.

The Reformation "Solas"	
<i>Sola Scriptura</i>	<i>Scripture alone</i> is the final authority for life and doctrine
<i>Sola Gratia</i>	<i>Grace alone</i> is the means of salvation
<i>Sola Fide</i>	<i>Faith alone</i> is the means of receiving salvation
<i>Solus Christus</i>	<i>Christ alone</i> provided our salvation
<i>Soli Deo Gloria</i>	As believers we live our entire lives to <i>the glory of God alone</i>

The Spread of the Gospel - The Gospel Comes to the Caribbean

As Protestants, we tend to assume that missions began only with the Reformation. However, we should not forget that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the most active missions were still Roman Catholic.

Many critics of Roman Catholic missions argue that they did little more than aid colonial expansion. This was sometimes true. However, there were many Roman Catholic missionaries who truly loved God and sought to spread the gospel. True spirituality was more widespread among Roman Catholic missionaries and local priests than among the officials in Rome.

An example of a Catholic missionary who loved God and who loved people was Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566). At the age of 18, he gave himself to missions and the spread of the gospel. He came to the island of Hispaniola in 1502.

It was customary for Spanish settlers to take Indians as slaves. They claimed to do this in order to instruct the natives in the Christian faith, but las Casas saw the cruelty and injustice of this system. He became an advocate for the Indians and was able to convince the Spanish government to pass laws protecting the natives. He was given the title, "Protector of the Indians."

His letters show that las Callas was inspired to this action by his Christian convictions. Like William Carey three centuries later, las Callas knew that to love God meant to love his neighbor. This love guided his view of social policy.

► How have your Christian convictions affected your view of your fellow man? Can you give specific examples of how your church shows its love for others through its actions in the community?

Ulrich Zwingli and the Swiss Reformation

Ulrich Zwingli⁸ (1484-1531) was a Swiss contemporary of Martin Luther. Zwingli was ordained at the age of twenty and pastored in Glarus for ten years. In 1518, he was called as pastor in Zurich. In Zurich, Zwingli led a reformation that paralleled Luther's reforms.

Zwingli promoted a new translation of the Bible and replaced the mass with a service in which Scripture was central. On January 1, 1519, Zwingli began a four-year series of sermons through the New Testament. People accustomed to hearing a Latin liturgy now heard God's Word expounded clearly. Bible exposition was important for the Reformers.

Zwingli differed from Luther in two important areas. The first regarded the **Lord's Supper**. While Luther rejected transubstantiation⁹, he believed that Christ was bodily present in the communion elements. Luther said that Christ is "in, with, and under" the bread and wine.¹⁰ Zwingli rejected both Roman Catholic and Lutheran views of communion. He saw the Lord's Supper as a memorial or symbol of Christ's death.

The second difference was the **application of Scripture**. Although both leaders were faithful to the principle of *Sola Scriptura*, this principle leaves many questions open for debate.

For instance, Luther believed that anything not forbidden in Scripture was allowed in worship. Zwingli believed that anything not expressly commanded by Scripture was forbidden. This led to significant differences in worship. Luther allowed a wide range of worship practices including pipe organs, choirs, and new hymns. By contrast, Zwingli removed the organ from the church because he could not find a text commanding its use in Christian worship. For the same reason, Zwingli did not allow candles, statues, or instrumental music in Swiss churches.¹¹

⁸ Zwingli's name is sometimes spelled Huldrych Zwingli.

⁹ *Transubstantiation* is the Roman Catholic doctrine that the bread and wine are changed into the actual body and blood of Christ. Laymen were not allowed to drink the wine; to spill the wine was believed to be spilling the actual blood of Jesus.

¹⁰ This is called "consubstantiation." This doctrine says that Christ is "with" the elements of the Lord's Supper.

¹¹ Luther's "normative principle" of worship says, "Whatever is not prohibited in Scripture is permitted in worship, as long as it is agreeable to the peace and unity of the Church." Zwingli and Calvin followed the "regulative principle" of worship. This principle says, "Whatever is not commanded Scripture is prohibited in worship."

The inability of the Reformers to resolve these issues led to the rise of denominations within Protestantism. Instead of a "Protestant Church," there would many "Protestant churches" with differing views on various doctrinal and practical issues.

John Calvin and Reformed Theology

John Calvin (1509-1564) was born a quarter century after Luther. He followed Luther's Reformation principles and would have agreed with Luther on the answer to each of the four questions we saw at the beginning of this lesson.

John Calvin was a brilliant student at the University of Paris, where he came into contact with Reformation ideas. His support of Protestant principles brought him into conflict with officials, and Calvin fled to Switzerland. In Switzerland, Calvin published the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, his most influential book. He continued to revise this work for nearly twenty-five years. He also wrote commentaries on most books of the Bible.

In 1536, Calvin settled in Geneva with the official title of "Professor of Sacred Scriptures." Geneva became a center for Protestants who traveled from all over Europe to learn Calvin's theology firsthand. Zwingli had the greatest influence in the German speaking parts of Switzerland; Calvin's influence was strongest in the French speaking areas of Switzerland. Presbyterian and Reformed Churches trace their heritage back to this French theologian.¹²

Calvin's emphasis on the absolute sovereignty of God guided all areas of his teaching. In relation to salvation, this meant that each individual is predestined by God to salvation or damnation. In relation to civil government, this meant that the church should attempt to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

"If Luther's ultimate text was
'The just shall live by faith,'
Calvin's ultimate text was,
'Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.'"
- Bruce Shelley,
Church History in Plain Language

Luther and Calvin differed on the relationship between the church and the state. Luther saw the state as supreme, with German princes deciding the religion for each region. Calvin insisted that the civil government has no authority over the church, but that the church should guide civil authorities in secular matters.

Calvin attempted to structure Geneva as a Christian society. Although at one point his enemies drove him out of the city for three years, Calvin eventually regained leadership of the city and ruled until his death. He required a profession of faith by every citizen; he provided for education for all; and he insisted on excommunication for those who did not live in obedience to Scripture.

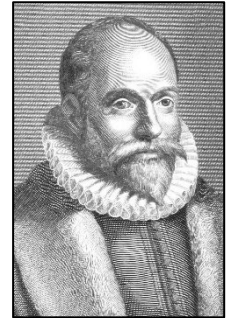
While Luther considered the state to be supreme, Calvin denied absolute power to earthly rulers. In the next generation, Calvinists would oppose Europe's absolute monarchs. In

¹² Confusion alert! "Reformed Churches" or "Reformed Theology" refers specifically to the churches that followed John Calvin's theology. "Reformation" is a broader term. So, Wesleyans are part of the Reformation tradition, but are not followers of "Reformed Theology." It would have been simpler if Calvin's successors had chosen a different term!

France, Calvinist Huguenots opposed the Catholic monarchy. In the Netherlands, Calvinist ministers rallied the nation to overthrow Catholic Spanish rule. And in Scotland, John Knox successfully prevented "Bloody Mary" from returning the nation to Catholicism.

Great Christians You Should Know: Jacobus Arminius

Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609)¹³ was a Dutch theologian who challenged some of the teachings of the "Belgic Confession," which was a summary of Reformed Calvinist doctrine. Calvin taught that God created some men for salvation and some for damnation. This doctrine of "double predestination" proposed that God decreed, even before the Fall, all who would be saved and all who would be damned.¹⁴



Arminius studied under Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor as the leader of the church in Geneva. However, while serving as a pastor in Amsterdam, Arminius began to question some important aspects of Calvinist theology.

As he studied Romans 7, Arminius became convinced that the believer can live free of willful sin **through the power of the Holy Spirit**. With the early church fathers, Arminius saw that Romans 7 gives a picture of an unregenerate man. This unbeliever has been convicted by the Holy Spirit and has "the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out."¹⁵ He tries to fulfill the law **in his own power**. Transformation occurs in Romans 8:1-2; "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

Then, as he studied Romans 9, Arminius began to question Calvin's teaching of unconditional election. Arminius rejected the idea that an all-loving God would refuse grace to anyone, a necessary presupposition for the doctrine of double predestination. Arminius saw that grace was free and that grace was for all mankind. He concluded, therefore, that a measure of preventing (or prevenient) grace is given to all through the death of Christ. This prevenient grace makes it possible for any person to repent and believe the gospel.

Election, Arminius taught, is "an eternal and gracious decree of God in Christ, by which he determines to justify and adopt believers, and to endow them with eternal life...." Election is not an unconditional choice to save a few and condemn all others. Instead, election is God's gracious choice to save "whosoever believes."¹⁶

¹³ Image: "British Library digitised image from page 512 of 'Algemeene geschiedenis der Vaderlands...'", retrieved from the British Library <https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/11018029026>, "No known copyright restrictions."

¹⁴ If you like big words, here is one for you. *Supralapsarianism* is the doctrine that God decreed the damnation of some men, prior to the Fall.

¹⁵ Romans 7:18

¹⁶ John 3:16

Many Calvinists accuse Arminius of semi-Pelagianism.¹⁷ They claim that Arminius' teaching denies the power of original sin and gives man the power to gain salvation. However, Arminius insisted that he taught only those things that could be proved from Scripture and that built up believers. Arminius did not deny original sin. Instead, he taught that God's grace is sufficient to overcome the power of original sin – and is available to all people.

After Arminius' death, his followers (known as the Dutch Remonstrants) issued a document summarizing their disagreements with Calvinism. Their *Five Articles* was answered by the Calvinist Synod of Dort. Calvinist doctrine was also represented in the English *Westminster Confession of Faith*. These two systems are compared in two charts below. The first chart lists the original *Five Articles* of the Remonstrants with responses from the *Synod of Dort* and *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The second chart uses modern terminology to compare the two systems more directly.

¹⁷ Pelagius was a fifth century monk who opposed Augustine. Pelagius denied that man was completely corrupted by the fall. As a result, he said that man has the power in himself to do good and gain salvation. The Council of Ephesus in 431 condemned Pelagius as a heretic.

Calvinism	Arminianism
The Synod of Dort (1618) and Westminster Confession (1646)	Five Articles of the Remonstrants (1610)
"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death." (Westminster Confession)	God's eternal purpose is to save all who have faith in Christ.
The death of Christ provided atonement for the sins of the elect alone.	Christ died "for all men."
Man is totally depraved and incapable of responding to the gospel. Regeneration is the work of God alone.	Man cannot in his own power exercise saving faith; the grace of God is necessary even for human effort.
God's saving grace is irresistible to the elect.	God's saving grace does not act irresistibly in man. God calls man to himself, but does not force man to respond.
Those who have been saved cannot "finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." (Westminster Confession)	Through faith in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, believers have "full power to strive against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh, and to win the victory."

Calvinism*	Arminianism
(T) Total Depravity. Man is totally depraved and unable to respond to God's grace until God has regenerated the sinner.	We are incapable of responding to God in our own power. However, God gives grace to everyone sufficient to respond to his call.
(U) Unconditional Election. God has chosen from eternity those who will be saved. God withheld his mercy from the rest of humanity, ordaining them to dishonor and wrath for their sin.	God's eternal purpose is to save all who have faith in Christ.
(L) Limited Atonement. The death of Christ provided atonement for the sins of the elect alone.	Christ died "for all men."
(I) Irresistible Grace. God's saving grace is irresistible to the elect.	God calls man to himself, but does not force man to respond.
(P) Perseverance of the Saints. Those who have been saved cannot finally fall from grace.	Perseverance is conditioned on continuing faith in Christ.
* Although these terms do not come directly from the original documents, modern writers have phrased the teachings of Calvin in a phrase that can be more easily remembered. In 1932, Loraine Boettner wrote <i>The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination</i> using the acronym TULIP to summarize the five points of Calvinism.	

► It is difficult for us to see the strengths in the views of our theological opponents. However, we can often gain new insights from thinking about doctrine from a different perspective. This exercise may help you better understand the doctrine of other denominations. Regardless of your denominational background, share two strengths and two dangers of Calvinist theology. Next, identify two strengths and two dangers of Arminian theology.

Conclusion: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Magisterial Reformation

Every evangelical owes a great debt of gratitude to the magisterial Reformers. From Martin Luther, we regained an appreciation for the biblical doctrine of justification by grace through faith. From Ulrich Zwingli, evangelicals have a respect for the careful exposition of Scripture. From John Calvin, we are reminded of the importance of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. God used the Reformers to revive his church after centuries of decline.

However, the Reformers also remind us that God used flawed servants. Martin Luther restored an emphasis on justification by grace through faith, but he failed to fully understand the transforming power of grace to make a believer holy. Zwingli's use of

military force to try to install Protestantism in Catholic cantons was based on a misunderstanding of how God's Kingdom is spread. While John Calvin should be rightly respected for his high view of God's majesty and power, he often fell short in expounding God's love for *all humankind*.

The lesson is this: we must always return to God's Word as our final authority. No human teacher is infallible. While we should learn from tradition and from great teachers of the past, our ultimate authority is the Bible. This is why the Reformers emphasized the principle of *sola Scriptura*. It is Scripture that must be our ultimate authority for doctrine and practice.

Lesson 1 Key Events in Church History

Date (A.D.)	Event
1517	Martin Luther's <i>Ninety-Five Theses</i> .
1536	John Calvin's <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> states the theological principles of the Reformed tradition.
1610	The Remonstrants summarize the doctrines of the Arminians.
1618	The principles of Calvinism are affirmed by the Synod of Dort.

Lesson 1 Key People in Church History

Calvin, John (1509-1564). French reformer and theologian who settled in Geneva and led the Calvinistic wing of the Reformation. Author of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Erasmus of Rotterdam (c. 1469-1536). Influential Roman Catholic humanist and church critic who produced the first Greek New Testament.

Luther, Martin (1483-1546). German monk who sparked the Protestant Reformation with his *Ninety-Five Theses*. He translated the New Testament into German.

Zwingli, Ulrich (1484-1531). Swiss Protestant reformer.

Lesson 1 Assignments

(1) Take a test on this lesson. The test will include dates from the "Key Events in Church History" timeline (1517-1618).

(2) Biographical Application: Give two specific lessons we can learn from the life of each of the following church leaders. You can share this in your next class session.

- Martin Luther
- Ulrich Zwingli
- Jacobus Arminius

Course Project

Within thirty days of completing the final lesson, you will submit a 6-8 page paper on the spread of Christianity in your nation or among your people group. This paper should include three parts:

1. The story of the arrival of the gospel to your people
2. An evaluation of the strength of the church today
3. A vision for the growth of the church in the next twenty years

If the class leader approves, you may work together with your classmates in preparing this paper.

Lesson 1 Test

- (1) The Reformation was sparked by Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* in _____ (date).
- (2) List the four questions that were central to the Reformation.
- (3) The imperial court where Luther testified was called the _____.
- (4) List the five Reformation "*solas*." Give a definition of each.
- (5) How did Luther and Zwingli differ regarding worship practices in the church?
- (6) The Dutch _____ (what group) taught that the atonement is universal in its scope. The _____ (what group) taught that God has chosen from eternity those who will be saved.

Lesson 2

Other Reform Movements

A.D. 1525-1648

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Understand the convictions of the Radical Reformers.
- (2) Trace the development of Protestant theology in England.
- (3) Understand the Counter-Reformation movement.
- (4) Recognize the roots of denominationalism in the Thirty Years War.

Introduction

While the Magisterial Reformers are the best known leaders of the Reformation movement, they are not the only Reformers active in the sixteen and seventeenth centuries. In this lesson, we will study some lesser known movements from this time period.

We will study the Radical Reformers who felt that the Magisterial Reformers did not go far enough in their rejection of Roman Catholic practices. We will see the beginnings of the English Reformation, a movement that took a much different route than the continental Reformation. We will also see the Roman Catholic response to the Reformation. While many of us are familiar with the Inquisition and Catholic persecution of Protestants, there was also an active reform movement within the church. Finally, we will see the rise of denominations within the Protestant movement.

Date (A.D.)	Event
1517	Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses
1525	Anabaptists driven from Zurich
1534	<i>Act of Supremacy</i> establishes the Church of England
1536	William Tyndale martyred for translating the Bible into English
1611	King James Version of the Bible
1648	Peace of Westphalia ends Thirty Years War

The Radical Reformers

In Lesson 1, we studied the Magisterial Reformers - Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. Zwingli went much further than Luther in his attempts to allow *only* worship practices that were commanded in Scripture. By rejecting any practices that are not prescribed in Scripture, Zwingli sought to restore New Testament Christianity in Zurich. However, two of Zwingli's closest followers, Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, believed that the Swiss church was still far removed from New Testament Christianity. They became known as "Radical Reformers."

There were many branches of Radical Reformers. Some put great emphasis on mysticism and rejected all church tradition. Some abandoned orthodox doctrine in their search for mystical revelations. However, in this lesson, we will study the Radical Reformers that developed from the Swiss church. They are the predecessors of the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition.

Although they are called Reformers, many in these groups felt that the Reformation did not go far enough. In fact, some of the Radical Reformers said that even the Lutheran church was just a new form of Roman Catholicism. Instead of reforming the church, these Reformers tried to restore the church of the first century. They saw themselves as "restorationists" rather than "reformers."

Principles that marked the Radical Reformers of the Swiss church include:

Separation of Church and State

One of the great differences between the Magisterial and Radical Reformers was the relationship between the church and state. The Magisterial Reformers believed in a Christian magistrate and close cooperation between the church and the state. They approved the concept of a state church (Lutheran in Germany; Zwinglian in Zurich; Calvinist in Geneva).

In Zurich, this issue arose when Felix Manz argued that the Lord's Supper should be conducted in the language of the people rather than in Latin. Zwingli took this question to the city government. Manz and his followers insisted that this was not a question for government; it was a question for Scripture.

Since the New Testament did not teach an alliance between the church and state, the Radical Reformers rejected the concept of a state church in which civil government enforced theological truths. Following this logic, the Radical Reformers opposed forced tithes and sought to establish self-governing churches. According to the Radical Reformers, the state's only responsibility in relation to the church was to allow freedom of conscience to each citizen. This opposition to a strong central authority continues in the "Free Church" tradition in Europe.

Believer's Baptism

As Grebel and Manz began to look to Scripture for answers, they discovered that the New Testament never commands infant baptism. Biblically, the Radical Reformers could find no basis for infant baptism. Practically, they believed that infant baptism encouraged false confidence in people who had no personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Because of this, the Radical Reformers rejected infant baptism and insisted on "believer's baptism" after profession of faith. Because of this, they became known as Anabaptists ("rebaptizers") because they baptized adult believers even if they had already been baptized as infants.

This issue became the primary point of contention between the Radical Reformers and Zwingli. In the sixteen century, baptism was more than a testimony of faith or a condition for church membership. Since the church and state were linked so closely, baptism was the way in which a new baby became part of the civil society. With believer's baptism, the Anabaptists separated membership in a church from membership in the community.

► Supporters of infant baptism argued that Acts 16:30-33 implied baptism for children apart from their personal profession of faith. Supporters of believers' baptism pointed to Acts 2:38 and similar scriptures to argue that baptism is meaningful only as an outward expression of inner faith. Read these scriptures and give your reasons for either believers' baptism or infant baptism.

Discipleship

The Radical Reformers insisted that Christianity is more than doctrine, membership in a state church, or even personal inward experience. They insisted that true discipleship affects all areas of life. Because of this, the Radical Reformers were known for their commitment to applying the Christian faith in areas of social need.

The local church was important to the Radical Reformers because this was the community in which disciples were formed. Through mutual support, the local church helped each believer grow in the image of Christ.

Congregationalism

This principle is related to the importance of the local church for discipleship. While Luther and Zwingli at first emphasized congregational authority, they later abandoned this principle. The Radical Reformers held firmly to congregationalism. Decisions were made by the entire church membership. For the Magisterial Reformers, an entire community might be considered Lutheran or Calvinist, regardless of the private beliefs of individuals. By contrast, the Radical Reformers insisted that the visible church consists of members who have voluntarily joined themselves to the church. For them, the church is not the entire community but a group of individual believers who are committed to a local congregation.

Pacifism

Anabaptists, like many of their descendants today, taught that Christian love prohibits Christians from any warfare. As part of their commitment to complete obedience to Jesus' commands, they determined to "resist not evil."¹⁸ When attacked, Anabaptists refused to defend themselves. While both Roman Catholics and Magisterial Protestants resorted to the sword to defend the church, the Reformed Reformers were committed to nonviolence.

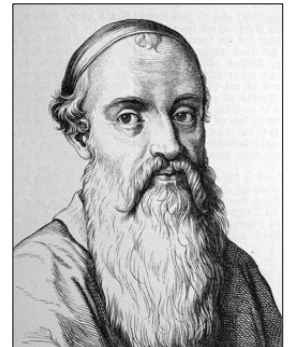
Sadly, the story of the Radical Reformers shows the divisions that arose between the Reformers. In 1525, Zwingli was still pastor in Zurich. The city was Protestant and every infant was baptized into the church.

When Felix Manz refused to have his new baby baptized, the City Council ordered him and his followers banished from the city. In January 1525, the first Anabaptist congregation was formed in the village of Zollikon, near Zurich. In March 1526, the Zurich council ruled that anyone found rebaptizing would be killed by drowning.

Manz was drowned as a martyr in January 1527. By 1600, nearly 10,000 Anabaptists had been martyred, *mostly by Protestants*. Eventually the Anabaptists migrated to Moravia, where they found princes who tolerated their convictions.

Great Christians You Should Know: Menno Simons

Menno Simons¹⁹ (1496-1561) became an Anabaptist leader at a critical time in the history of the Radical Reformation. Between 1525 when the Anabaptists were driven out of Zurich and 1535, several Anabaptist leaders had begun to teach heresy. Because they rejected church authority beyond the local congregation, it was easy for a false teacher to gain followers. Some leaders had even begun to preach a message of violent overthrow of the government. By 1535, the Radical Reformation was in danger of losing the truth. Menno Simons rescued the Anabaptists from heresy.



Menno Simons²⁰ was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest at the age of 28. Although he was a priest, he knew nothing of Scripture. He later said, "I feared that if I read them (the Scriptures), they would mislead me!" He served as a priest while spending his evenings drinking and gambling.

After two years as a priest, Simons began to study the Bible. After several years of study, he came to understand that his Catholic doctrine was wrong. After a true conversion, he

¹⁸ Matthew 5:39

¹⁹ Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 166–168

²⁰ Image: "Meno simonis", retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Meno_simonis.jpg, public domain.

began to preach Protestant doctrine from his Catholic pulpit. A year later, he left the Catholic church and associated with the Radical Reformers.

Simons knew that the Anabaptists were rejected by both Catholics and Protestants. He also knew that many Anabaptists were following heretical teachers. Simons began to teach orthodoxy to the Anabaptists. For twenty-five years, he published Anabaptist literature, preached throughout Germany and the Netherlands, and helped to organize the Anabaptist movement.

He spent much of his life in hiding. The Emperor offered a reward for his capture. One man was executed for allowing Simons to stay in his home. Simons accepted this as the natural result of following Christ. "If the Head had to suffer such torture, anguish, misery, and pain, how shall his servants, children, and members expect peace and freedom as to their flesh?"

Simons moved the Radical Reformation from dangerous heresies back to an orthodox Christian faith. His influence was so strong that the Anabaptists became known as Mennonites.

The Reformation and Puritanism in England

The Political Beginnings of the English Reformation

Unlike the Lutheran, Anabaptist, or Calvinist movements, the English Reformation was sparked initially by a political issue, not a doctrinal question. Rather than justification by faith, believer's baptism, or a particular view of divine sovereignty, Henry VIII separated from Rome over the issue of succession to the throne.

After eighteen years of attempting to father a male successor, Henry wanted to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. When, for political reasons, the pope refused to grant the annulment, Henry convinced an English church court to declare his marriage to Catherine void. He then married Anne, who soon gave birth – to a daughter.

After the pope excommunicated Henry, the king convinced Parliament to pass the 1534 *Act of Supremacy*, declaring the king to be the head of the Church of England. Henry gave religious authority (the power to consecrate bishops, determine doctrine, and organize the liturgy) to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. Under Henry VIII, the split with Rome was primarily political.

Great Christians You Should Know: William Tyndale

In Church History 1, we reviewed the life of John Wycliffe, who inspired the first translation of the Bible into English. His translation was copied by hand but never printed. William Tyndale (1494-1536)²¹ printed the first English Bible.²²



William Tyndale attended Oxford and later Cambridge. He was gifted with languages, speaking seven languages and reading ancient Hebrew and Greek. Like Luther, Zwingli and countless others, Tyndale was greatly influenced by Erasmus' Greek edition of the New Testament. As he read the New Testament, Tyndale discovered the doctrine of justification by faith.

Although Tyndale was highly educated, he knew that most Englishmen had no access to God's Word in their own language. He devoted his life to bringing the Bible to ordinary people.

After studying at Oxford and Cambridge, Tyndale requested permission to translate the New Testament into English. His bishop denied the request. Tyndale decided that there was no safe place for him in England; "Not only was there no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but there was no place to do it in all England."

Tyndale traveled to Europe to find a safe place in which he could work on the translation. He would never return to England. After traveling to several cities, Tyndale settled in Worms and completed the first English translation of the New Testament in 1525.

When this New Testament was smuggled into England, the archbishop of Canterbury ordered authorities to buy copies and destroy them. Tyndale used the money from selling these copies to print another edition of the New Testament in which he was able to correct some printing errors from the first edition!

Tyndale knew that he might be killed for translating the Bible without church approval. This mattered less to him than his calling to make Scripture available in the language of his people. He wrote, "...if God be on our side, what matter is it who be against us, be they bishops, cardinals, popes." From Germany, Tyndale moved to Antwerp where he spent nine years, improving the New Testament translation and beginning a translation of the Old Testament.

²¹ Image: "Gulielmus Tyndall", Rijksmuseum, retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portret_van_Engelse_priester_en_theoloog_William_Tyndale_Gulielmus_Tyndall_Martyr_tibi_causa_necis_\(titel_op_object\),_RP-P-OB-26.648.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portret_van_Engelse_priester_en_theoloog_William_Tyndale_Gulielmus_Tyndall_Martyr_tibi_causa_necis_(titel_op_object),_RP-P-OB-26.648.jpg), public domain.

²² Sources:

Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 349-350

John Woodbridge, *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 201-205

Tyndale's translation was important both because it was the first translation and because it was so carefully translated. When the King James Version of the Bible was translated 100 years later, about 90% of the translation used the words of William Tyndale. Even the English Standard Version in 2001 continued to use a majority of Tyndale's words. His influence continues almost 500 years after his translation.

In 1535, Tyndale was betrayed to the authorities and arrested for "heresy." In October 1536, he was brought to the town square where a cross stood. When he refused to recant from his teaching, he was bound to the cross, strangled, and then burned.

Tyndale's last words were a prayer, "Lord, open the eyes of the King of England." His prayer was answered within a few years. In 1539, Henry VIII ordered that every church make a copy of the English Bible available to its members. The approved translation was published by Miles Coverdale, the first complete printed edition of the English Bible. Because of the king's objections, Tyndale was not listed as a translator, but much of the translation was based on Tyndale's work. Just as Luther's translation of the Bible sparked the German Reformation, Tyndale's translation was crucial for the English Reformation.

Five Centuries of Bible Translation
Romans 12:1

William Tyndale (1526)

"I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercifulness of God, that ye make your bodies a quick sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service of God."

King James Version (1611)

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

English Standard Version (2001)

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

The Reformation and Puritanism in England (Continued)

The Spread of the English Reformation

Because his motivation was primarily political, Henry VIII approved only two significant changes in the Church of England: monasteries were banned and, after his early opposition to Tyndale's Bible, the English Bible was approved for use in the churches.

Following Henry's death in 1547, his ten-year-old son Edward VI took the throne.²³ During Edward's six-year reign, a group of advisers moved the English church in the direction of Protestantism. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, led in this reform. He

"Be of good comfort, Mr. Ridley, and play the man! We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out."
- Bishop Latimer to Bishop Ridley as they were burned at the stake

²³ After Anne Boleyn did not have a son, Henry VIII had her executed on charges of adultery and married Jane Seymour. Henry finally had a son with Seymour.

replaced the Latin services with the *Book of Common Prayer* in English. He wrote a summary of doctrinal beliefs for the Church of England that was based on Protestant principles.

Edward died in 1553 and Mary, the daughter of Catherine, Henry's first wife, took the throne. A devoted Roman Catholic, Mary was nicknamed "Bloody Mary" after she burned nearly 300 Protestants, including Archbishop Cranmer and Bishops Ridley and Latimer, at the stake.

After Queen Mary's death in 1557, Elizabeth I (daughter of Anne Boleyn) came to the throne. During her forty-five year reign, the Anglican Church moved towards Protestantism and the Bible was recognized as the final authority. The "Thirty-Nine Articles" defined the church's doctrine in a Protestant manner.²⁴ The Church of England retained many Catholic worship practices while maintaining Protestant doctrine. This became known as the *Via Media*, the "Middle Way."

Great Christians You Should Know: The Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer

The story of Thomas Cranmer is a fascinating story of God's grace and of faithfulness in difficult times. Bishop Cranmer was a leader in the English Reformation. However, when the Roman Catholic Mary took the throne, she threatened to kill Cranmer if he refused to recant his Protestant positions.

Cranmer was arrested and held in prison with the threat of being burned at the stake. Fearing for his life, Cranmer signed a statement recanting his earlier teaching. He was then required to read a statement at Oxford's University Church denying his evangelical beliefs. On March 21, 1556 Cranmer stood in front of a packed audience that was waiting for his statement. His enemies waited for him to deny his faith.

Cranmer began to read the speech that the officials had approved. Suddenly, to their shock, he stopped and said, "Now I come to the great thing which so much troubles my conscience, more than any thing that ever I did or said in my whole life...." Cranmer then renounced his earlier statement and affirmed his faith in the gospel.

Cranmer was seized by the officials and taken to the stake to be burned. Priests begged him to reaffirm his recantation, but he refused. Facing death, Cranmer said that since his right hand signed the false recantation, "my hand shall first be punished; for when I come to the fire it shall first be burned. And as for the pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy, and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine." Cranmer died after praying the words of Stephen from Acts 7, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. I see the heavens open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God."

In a moment of weakness, Thomas Cranmer's faith failed. Like Simon Peter at the trial of Jesus, Cranmer denied his master. However, like Simon Peter, God was faithful and brought

²⁴ The Thirty-Nine Articles were a revision of Thomas Cranmer's earlier Forty-Two Articles.

Cranmer back to faith. Finally, like Peter, Cranmer died as a martyr providing lasting testimony to the power of the gospel.

The Reformation and Puritanism in England (Continued)

The English Puritans

Between 1567 and 1660, the Puritans sought to transform society with a second English Reformation. The Puritans did not oppose the unity of state and church, nor did they seek to withdraw from the Church of England. Instead, they sought to purify the church from within. The Puritans believed that the Anglican Church retained too many practices from the Roman Catholic Church: formal liturgy, vestments for the minister, saints' days, the sign of the cross, and other Catholic practices.

The Puritan movement had three periods of influence.

Period 1

Under Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603), Puritans tried to purify the church from within. Elizabeth listened to Puritan complaints, but made no changes in the church structure. By 1593, the Puritans had gained enough influence that Elizabeth convinced Parliament to pass a law against the Puritans in order to weaken their power.

Period 2

Under James I and Charles I (1603-1642), the Puritans were opposed by the monarchs. After the death of Elizabeth in 1603, James I came to power. Because he was influenced by the Calvinists, the Puritans hoped that James would reform the Church of England to a presbyterian church government in which people selected their own ministers. The "Millenary Petition," signed by 1,000 ministers, asked James to "purify" the church. Instead, he rejected congregational control and the Puritans. He was committed to the "divine right" of the king to govern the church. He dissolved Parliament and ruled as an absolute monarch. James' successor, Charles I, was even less friendly to the Puritans.

While some Puritans continued to seek reform during the reigns of James and Charles, others left the Church of England and became known as the Separatists. Some of the Separatists settled in Amsterdam, became committed to adult baptism, and established the English Baptist church. Another group of Separatists settled for ten years in Leyden before traveling on a ship called the *Mayflower* to establish a colony in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Approximately 20,000 Puritans immigrated to America between 1630 and 1640.

Period 3

In 1637, Charles I appointed William Laud as the archbishop of Canterbury. Laud tried to impose the English Book of Common Prayer on the Church of Scotland, sparking a rebellion by the Scots. Ultimately, the conflict grew into a Civil War between the Royalists (who wanted to retain the English episcopacy) and the Puritans (who wanted presbyterian

control). The armies of the Puritans were led by Oliver Cromwell. The Puritans saw this war as a crusade for purity. They prayed before battles and sang hymns while fighting. Charles I surrendered to Cromwell in 1646 and was executed in 1649.

The Puritans controlled England until 1660. This was their period of greatest political power. They tried to set up England according to the model of Geneva under Calvin. However, divisions between the Puritans weakened their influence, and after Cromwell's death the English welcomed the return of the monarchy and an episcopal form of church government. Puritanism survived only as a dissenting movement.

From this point, English Christianity included three groups:

1. The Church of England

2. Dissenters, who agreed that the church and state should be linked, but who wanted to reform the church (Puritans and Catholic)

3. Nonconformists, who opposed the link between church and state (Independents, Separatists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers, and Baptists)

The Puritans who immigrated to America established the Massachusetts Bay Colony and had a powerful influence in the early days of the American colonies. Although they have often been mocked as extremists, the early Puritans sought to live in faithful obedience to God's Word.

The Counter-Reformation

The Roman Catholic Church responded to the Reformation both with condemnation of Protestants and with internal reforms. The Catholic response included three aspects:

Condemnation of Protestant Books

Pope Paul III attacked Protestant ideas by unleashing the Roman Inquisition to seek out and kill Protestants. In addition, he published an "Index" of prohibited books that no Catholic was allowed to read. This Index, which was maintained until 1959, included books by the Reformers as well as Protestant Bibles.

The "Society of Jesus"

Like Martin Luther, the Spanish soldier Ignatius of Loyola had a dramatic conversion experience. While recovering from a battle wound, he began to read about the life of Christ. At the age of thirty, Ignatius abandoned his career as a soldier, traveled to the Holy Land on a pilgrimage, and began to study for the priesthood. Ignatius made two contributions to reform in the Roman Catholic Church.

"Teach us Lord, to serve as you deserve;
To give and not count the cost;
To fight and not heed the wounds;
To toil and not to seek for rest;
To labor and ask only the reward
of knowing that we do your will."
- Ignatius of Loyola

First, Ignatius developed a series of *Spiritual Exercises* for spiritual formation. Disciples spent four weeks in prayer and meditation. Each week focused on a different topic:

1. Man's sinfulness
2. The kingship of Christ
3. The passion of Christ
4. The risen life of Christ

Second, Ignatius formed the "Society of Jesus" (Jesuits) as "soldiers of Christ." The Jesuits restored the Roman Church's vision for missionary outreach. Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary, preached in India, Southeast Asia, and Japan.

The Council of Trent

Along with attacks on Protestantism, the church began to consider the need for reform from within. Pope Paul III called a council to meet at Trent, in northern Italy, to discuss problems in the church. The Council of Trent met in three sessions between 1545 and 1563.

The Council instituted reforms within the church. Because many priests were so poorly educated that they could not read the mass properly, the council provided seminaries to train priests. Since few worshipers knew Latin, the council called for priests to explain the mass in the language of the people. The council also reprimanded priests and musicians who did not treat the service with reverence.

The Council of Trent rejected the doctrines of the Reformers. The council reaffirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation. It rejected justification by faith alone as "a poison that destroys freedom."²⁵ It reaffirmed the Catholic teaching that the Roman church is the only interpreter of Scripture. It reaffirmed the medieval sacraments, the mass as a sacrifice, prayer through the saints, and confession to a priest.

The Spread of the Gospel - The Gospel Comes to Japan

Francis Xavier (1506-1552) was the first western missionary to many parts of India and Japan. Writing to his superiors in Europe, he called for others to follow him: "Tell the students to give up their small ambitions and go east to preach the gospel."

After preaching in India, he moved to Indonesia and Japan. Xavier was the first to bring the gospel to Japan. Although he died within three years of his arrival, his mission continued to prosper. By 1577, one missionary predicted, "In ten years all Japan will be Christian *if we have enough missionaries.*" By the end of the century, there were hundreds of Christian churches, two Christian colleges, and 300,000 Christians in Japan.

Then in 1596, the Japanese government set out to destroy this "foreign religion." In 1597, they crucified twenty-six Japanese Christians. During a fifty year period, at least 4,000 Christians were martyred. By the mid-seventeenth century, only a small group of Christians

²⁵ Quoted in Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 3rd edition (USA: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 277.

remained. In the 400 years since, Christians have struggled to reestablish a strong church. However, the success of Francis Xavier gives hope to those who once again seek to reach this nation with the gospel.

Xavier demonstrated a principle that became important in later Protestant missions. As long as a local custom did not violate biblical principles, he did not require converts to abandon their traditions. He understood that a Japanese Christian was Japanese, not Italian. He made a clear distinction between European culture and Christian faith.

"Within a lodge of broken bark
The tender Babe was found,
A ragged robe of rabbit skin
Enwrapped his beauty round."
- A Jesuit carol that contextualizes the
Christmas story for the Huron tribe

Although many missionaries failed to contextualize the gospel in this way, Hudson Taylor used this approach for Chinese evangelism in the nineteenth century. This became the model for twentieth century Protestant missions. Christianity does not require converts to abandon their culture.

The Thirty Years War and the Rise of Denominations

Who is a Christian? Most Christians today agree that the universal church is made up of all true believers. The body of Christ is larger than one denomination. However, this understanding is relatively new.

In the Middle Ages, Christians saw themselves as united into one catholic apostolic church, regardless of differences of doctrine and practice. During the Reformation, the identity of the church became confusing because many separate church denominations were formed. Some Christians did not know what to think about Christians in other denominations.

In some situations, the local government tried to control the church. In the Lutheran areas of Germany, everyone was required to become Lutheran. The government would not allow any other Protestant churches to worship and they took the property of Catholic bishops. Lutheranism became a state religion.

During the 1540s and 1550s, Lutheran princes fought Catholic armies in Germany. With the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, both sides agreed to the "territorial principle." The ruler of each region decided the faith of everyone in his territory. Europe was divided based on the religion of the leader of each territory.

During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, religious wars were fought between Catholics and Calvinists (Huguenots) in France, and between Dutch Calvinists and their Spanish Catholic rulers in the Netherlands. Like the medieval popes, the early Reformers attempted to use the power of the state to settle doctrinal disputes.

The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) was the most prolonged religious war of the period. This began as a religious conflict in Germany and ended as a political war. In 1618, the new Catholic king of Bohemia, Ferdinand II, attempted to impose Catholicism on his Protestant

subjects. The Bohemians revolted and offered the crown to Frederick V, the Calvinist ruler of a portion of Germany. This ignited a war between Catholics and Calvinists.²⁶

Within two years, the Bohemians were defeated by the Catholics. The Lutheran king of Denmark, Christian IV, then attacked Ferdinand and the Catholic armies. He too was defeated.

King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, a Lutheran, then entered Germany to lead the Protestant forces. He won many victories before being killed in battle in 1632. For the last fifteen years, the conflict was political more than religious. It became a battle for territorial control, not religion. During these years, French and Spanish Catholics fought against each other to gain further territory.

In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia ended the war. Instead of the territorial principle of the Peace of Augsburg, this treaty allowed princes to tolerate both Protestants and Catholics within their territories. The pope was forbidden from interfering in German affairs. The church and state was now treated separately in Germany.

Prior to 1648, most Christians insisted that only one group of believers (their church) represented the Christian faith. However, by 1648, the religious wars in Europe had exhausted people on either side. From this point, most Christians accepted the idea of denominations – separate faith communities within the universal church.

Between 1642 and 1649, the Westminster Assembly met to write the Westminster Confession of Faith. Some members of this Assembly (the Congregationalists) stated four principles that summarize the basis for denominations within the universal church:

1. Since man cannot always see truth clearly, there will always be differences of opinion about outward forms of the church.
2. These differences may not involve fundamentals of the faith, **but they are important**. They are important because every Christian should practice what he believes the Bible teaches.
3. Since no church has a complete understanding of divine truth, the universal church cannot be represented by any single church structure.
4. Separation does not require schism. It is possible to maintain differences as denominations while remaining united in Christ.

These principles became the basis for modern denominationalism. Rigid and extreme denominational loyalty can lead to division. However, properly understood, denominations allow individual Christians to worship according to their convictions while respecting the faith of fellow believers who hold different convictions.

²⁶ The Peace of Augsburg did not include Calvinists in the treaty, only Lutherans and Catholics.

► Conflicts between followers of Luther, Zwingli, the Radical Reformers, and Calvin show how quickly spiritual revival falls to personal, doctrinal, and political conflict. What areas of doctrine or practice bring division in the church today? How can we be faithful to our convictions while refusing to allow conflict to bring shame on the name of Christ?

Conclusion: Church History Speaks Today

While working on this lesson, I thought, "Writing about church history is discouraging! Catholics burning Protestants. Lutherans fighting wars against Catholics. Calvinists drowning Anabaptists. The history of the church doesn't look very impressive."

Then I remembered a motto that arose from the Reformation: "The church – reformed and always being reformed by the Word of God." As long as the earthly church is composed of fallible people, we must return to the Word of God to be reformed.

This should inspire both humility and joy. The study of church history should inspire humility; no one has a complete grasp of truth. Previous generations had blind spots; so do we. What are our blind spots? I don't know, but we should be humble enough to allow God to reform us through an ever-deepening knowledge of his Word.

The study of church history should inspire joy; just as God has worked through fallible Christians in the past, he will work through us today – in spite of our limitations. As we are faithful to God, he will accomplish his purposes in and through us.

The Roots of Protestant Denominations			
Lutheran	Reformed	Radical Reformed	Anglican
	• Presbyterian	• Anabaptist	• Methodist
	• Dutch and German Reformed	• Mennonite	• Holiness/Wesleyan Denominations
	• Some Baptists	• Some Baptists	• English Baptists

Lesson 2 Key Events in Church History

Date (A.D.)	Event
1525	The Anabaptists driven from Zurich.
1534	The <i>Act of Supremacy</i> establishes the Church of England.
1536	William Tyndale martyred for translating the Bible into English.
1545-1563	The Council of Trent meets to reform the Roman Catholic Church.
1611	The King James Version of the Bible shows the English Reformation commitment to Scripture in the language of the people.
1618-1648	Thirty Years War

Lesson 2 Key People in Church History

Cranmer, Thomas (1489-1556). Archbishop of Canterbury, he attempted to promote Reformation principles in England. Led development of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Burned as a martyr under Queen Mary.

Ignatius of Loyola (c. 1491-1556). Monk who founded the Jesuits (Society of Jesus) and led a "Counter-Reformation" in the Roman Catholic Church.

Latimer, Hugh (c. 1485-1555). English Protestant reformer and Bishop of Worcester. Burned at the stake under Queen Mary in 1555.

Ridley, Nicholas (c. 1500-1555). English Protestant reformer and Bishop of London. Burned at the stake under Queen Mary in 1555.

Simons, Menno (1496-1561). Anabaptist and Mennonite leader. Roman Catholic priest who became convinced of Reformation doctrine but differed from the magisterial reformers on believer's baptism, pacificism, and the nature of the church.

Tyndale, William (1494-1536). Published the first complete English Bible. Martyred by King Henry VIII.

Lesson 2 Assignments

(1) Take a test on this lesson. The test will include dates from the “Key Events in Church History” timeline (1517-1648).

(2) Prepare a biographical summary of one of the following Christian leaders: Nicholas Ridley, Ignatius of Loyola, or Francis Xavier. Your summary should include three parts:

- Biography: When did he live? Where did he live? When and where did he die?
- Events: What are the most important events in his life?
- Influence: What was his lasting influence on the Christian church?

You have two options for presenting this summary:

- Submit a 2 page written paper to your class leader.
- Give a 3-5 minute oral presentation to your class.

Lesson 2 Test

(1) Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin are called the _____ Reformers.

(2) Grebel, Manz, and the Anabaptists are called _____ Reformers.

(3) List any three of the five principles emphasized by the Anabaptists.

(4) _____ became a leader of the Anabaptists and rescued the Radical Reformation from heresy.

(5) The English Reformation began as a political movement over the issue of succession to the throne. It was led by King _____.

(6) _____ printed the first English Bible.

(7) Archbishop _____ led the Church of England to Protestantism. He replaced the Latin services with the _____.

(8) Between 1567 and 1660, the _____ led a second English Reformation.

(9) The Counter-Reformation was led by a Council that met in _____ between 1545 and 1563.

(10) _____ was the first western missionary to Japan.

(11) The Peace of _____ in 1648 ended the Thirty Years War.

Lesson 3

Rationalism and Revival

A.D. 1648-1789

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Understand how the Enlightenment replaced godly wisdom with human reason.
- (2) See the fruit of Enlightenment philosophy in the French Revolution.
- (3) Trace the strengths and weaknesses of the Pietistic response to Rationalism.
- (4) Appreciate the missionary influence of the Moravians.
- (5) Recognize the impact of the Methodist Revival and the Great Awakening in England and America.

Introduction

In this lesson, we will look at the period of history that begins with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and ends with the French Revolution in 1789. We will look at two contrasting developments.

First, man's reason was the final authority for many people. This period is often called the "Enlightenment" or the "Age of Reason." However, a more appropriate name is the "Age of Rationalism." Christians have always valued reason, but during the Enlightenment, reason became the *only* authority for many people.

The Age of Rationalism gave birth to secularization, a philosophy that denies God or, at least, assumes that his existence is unimportant. By substituting human reason for God's wisdom, Enlightenment philosophers laid the foundation for the social chaos that swept Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, for the totalitarian governments of the twentieth century, and for much of the despair that continues to affect the world of the twenty-first century.

Second, during these years, revival swept England and the American colonies. As a result of this revival, the modern missionary movement was born, British and American society was transformed, and personal spiritual vitality was renewed.

Date (A.D.)	Event
1648	End of Thirty Years War
18 th century	The Enlightenment
1720s-1740s	The Great Awakening
1738	John Wesley's Aldersgate Experience
1784	Methodist Conference Formed
1789	French Revolution

The Growth of Rationalism

Shortly before his death, Benjamin Franklin wrote a letter in which he described his religious beliefs. Franklin did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, but he concluded, "I see no harm in [Christian belief] if that belief has good consequences." For Franklin, the truth of Christianity was not important; as long as Christianity caused people to behave better, it was good.

Benjamin Franklin represents the spirit of rationalism and the Enlightenment. Many philosophers in the Enlightenment either denied God's existence (atheism) or assumed that God has no real involvement in our daily life (deism). Either belief made God unimportant in human life.

During the Middle Ages and Reformation, reason was important. However, revelation was the final authority. The Reformers showed that Scripture is God's authoritative revelation. Reason helped the Reformers understand God's truth; it did not contradict God's truth.

During the Enlightenment, this balance changed. Reason replaced faith as the final authority. Christianity is fine, Benjamin Franklin said, *because* it improves our behavior and quality of life. To Enlightenment thinkers, Christianity was not about a cross, discipleship, and submission to God's authority; Christianity was a tool for improving your quality of life in this world.

Roots in the Renaissance (1300-1700)

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, interest in the study of Scripture was paralleled by a new interest in the writings of the ancient Greeks. Erasmus, who reintroduced the Greek New Testament, also reintroduced the study of the Greek classics.

This period of history is called the "Renaissance." The name "Renaissance" means "rebirth." It does not refer to specific dates; it refers to a way of thinking or a philosophical movement. These centuries saw a rebirth of interest in ancient philosophy and literature.

The Renaissance and Reformation movements both occurred during the same period of time, but they had two very different views of man. The Reformers saw humanity as fallen;

his greatest need was God's grace. Renaissance philosophers saw humanity as full of unlimited potential; his greatest need was education.

For Renaissance thinkers, man is the final authority. Descartes (1596-1650) personifies this approach. In order to find what is undeniably true, Descartes decided to doubt everything. However, he could not doubt his own existence. Starting from that truth, he then reasoned to all other truths, including the existence of God.

Descartes arrived at the truth that God exists, but his way of arriving at this conclusion was much different than the Reformers. For the Reformers, God's Word was the final authority; for Descartes and other Renaissance thinkers, God's Word had to be confirmed by human reason. This marked a new view of authority. Man's reason, not God's revelation, became the final authority. This new understanding laid the foundation for later philosophers who denied God's Word.

The Enlightenment (1650-1800)

In the late seventeenth century, Isaac Newton published a treatise explaining gravity as the basic principle of motion in the universe. Newton's research unleashed a century of scientific progress. There were two responses to Newton's discoveries and this new world of science.

Believers responded to Newton's discoveries by trying to **harmonize reason and faith**. Christians understood that God has spoken in two ways: the Bible and nature. Nature is a source of God's revelation. The Psalmist wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." However, God's Word is the ultimate revelation. The Psalmist continued, "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul."²⁷

While Christians valued both faith and reason, skeptics **appealed to reason alone** as the source for truth. Skeptics decided, "If we can understand nature through human reason, we no longer need the Bible." For enlightenment thinkers, Scripture was no longer important; reason alone was sufficient for truth.

The earliest Enlightenment philosophers continued to profess Christian faith, but they accepted it *only* as far as it could be proven by human reason. For example, one of the most important Enlightenment thinkers was John Locke (1632-1704). Locke never denied Christianity; but since he limited Christianity to principles that could be proven by human reason apart from revelation, he laid the foundation for the next generation to deny Christianity itself.

By the eighteenth century, French *deists* taught that even if God exists, he is not the God revealed in Scripture. Deists portrayed God as a "watchmaker" who created the world and then left it to operate on its own. They claimed that the miracles recorded in Scripture

²⁷ Psalm 19:1, 7

(including the resurrection) were later distortions invented by human writers. Scripture was no longer seen as the revelation of God.

Led by Voltaire (1694-1778), deists sought to replace biblical revelation with human reason. After an earthquake destroyed most of Lisbon in 1755, Voltaire wrote *Candide*, a novel in which he mocked belief in the God that is revealed in the Bible. The deists insisted that God created the world and then left it to govern itself.

Enlightenment philosophers claimed to be seeking “truth.” However, they defined truth in a way that denied Christian doctrine from the start. They insisted that “truth” must be verified and proved *by human standards* apart from God.

For instance, the Scottish philosopher, David Hume (1711-1776) rejected belief in miracles. He claimed that since we cannot prove that the New Testament miracles happened, it is unreasonable to believe them. Scripture was no longer sufficient authority. Biblical revelation was denied as sufficient evidence for any belief; even historical support for the resurrection was ignored.

In effect, the Enlightenment assumed that Scripture was unreliable and then refused to consider any historical evidence in support of Scripture. They believed that a person’s religious beliefs were entirely personal. Faith was not allowed to affect one’s public actions. There was a strict wall between private faith and public “reason.”

...From Then to Now...

The ideas of the Enlightenment are still popular. Many people accept the Enlightenment principle that “private faith should not affect public behavior.” For example:

- In America, many professed Christians admit that their religious beliefs do not guide their business decisions.
- In China, a political official told me, “We allow complete religious freedom – as long as you don’t try to share your religious beliefs with others.”

► In your society, how much respect is given to the authority of the Bible? In your society, how are religious faith and public life separated? Are the ideas of the Enlightenment still affecting your culture? As Christians, how can you respond to these ideas?

The French Revolution (1789)

When man tries to operate his world apart from God, the result is chaos. In the Enlightenment, men like Voltaire and David Hume tried to create a world in which God had no place. They created a world in which mankind operates apart from God’s law.

What were the results of their philosophy? The fruits of the Enlightenment can be seen in the 1789 French Revolution. On July 14, 1789, a mob gathered outside the Bastille prison in Paris. The leaders of the Revolution told the mob that this prison held patriots who had been arrested for defending liberty.

Rather than risking losing the lives of his soldiers, the governor of the Bastille agreed to surrender the prison if he and his 110 soldiers were allowed to withdraw safely. Instead, the mob killed the governor and opened the doors to the dungeon. There they found the truth. The prison held seven prisoners; five ordinary criminals and two men who were insane. There were no patriots held in the Bastille.

The “storming of the Bastille” shows the failure of the French Revolution. Coming ten years after the American Revolution, many people hoped that the French Revolution would bring similar freedom to France. Instead, the Reign of Terror resulted in 40,000 deaths.

The leaders of the French Revolution were bitter opponents of Christianity. More than 30,000 priests were forced into hiding, a new calendar removed all religious references, churches were converted into “Temples of Reason,” and the altar of the Cathedral of Notre Dame was turned into a throne for an actress dressed as the “Goddess of Reason.”

In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte overthrew the Revolution and, in 1804, declared himself Emperor. The Revolution had failed.

What happened? One reason for the failure of the French Revolution is that it was grounded not on biblical respect for human rights, but on an Enlightenment philosophy that ignored God. The French Revolution was built on the glorification of man rather than of God; it shows the failure of Enlightenment rationalism.

Responses to Rationalism: Pietism

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Christians had to decide on their response to the challenges of rationalism. How would Christians maintain their faith in the face of philosophers and thinkers who insisted that Christianity was a myth?

The response of a group called the Pietists was to emphasize personal faith. They emphasized a “religion of the heart” more than organized church structures and intellectual questions. German Pietism developed in response to two problems:

1. By the seventeenth century, the life-transforming faith of the Reformation had been largely replaced with empty profession. Christianity was a matter of membership in the state church rather than a personal relationship with Christ. While the Lutheran church remained orthodox in doctrine, the vitality of the early Reformation was lost. As a result, for many people, seventeenth century Protestantism was little better than medieval Roman Catholicism. Both had become mere ritual forms. Pietists sought to revitalize Christian experience. It was not enough to belong to a church; each member of the church must come to a personal experience of faith.
2. Later, as the philosophy of the rationalists spread, Pietism allowed Christians to ignore intellectual challenges to the truth of Scripture by withdrawing into private faith. Pietists were determined to maintain a personal faith, while largely ignoring the intellectual attacks of deists and atheists.

Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705)

Philip Jacob Spener was a Lutheran pastor in Frankfort, Germany. When he found that few professed Christians in this city lived godly lives, he began to preach sermons on repentance and discipleship. As they listened to his messages on the Sermon on the Mount, many church members were converted for the first time. Although they had professed to be Christians, they had never known the reality of the new birth.

These new converts began to meet at Spener's home for weekly Bible study. People mocked these meetings as "gatherings of the pious," and called those who attended "Pietists." This was the beginnings of Pietism.

Spener proposed six areas for reform. These became the primary emphases of the Pietist movement. Spener proposed:

1. There should be a greater use of the Bible among Christians.
2. There should be a renewal of the "priesthood of all believers."
3. Christianity should be more than knowledge; Christian faith should be seen in daily practice.
4. Christians should show love when discussing doctrinal controversies.
5. Pastors should be trained for holy living, not just academic knowledge.
6. Pastors should preach sermons that addressed the needs of ordinary laymen.²⁸

As you can see, many of these concerns were a return to the earlier themes of Luther. The Pietists sought to bring Lutheranism back to an authentic spiritual emphasis.

August Hermann Francke (1663-1727)

As part of his reform efforts, Philip Spener helped found the University of Halle, near Berlin. This university was started to show how Pietism could be put into practice in the training of ministers.

In 1691, August Francke was appointed professor of Hebrew and theology at the University of Halle. Francke became a leader in the Pietist movement and continued to promote the message of personal conversion and discipleship that Philip Spener had preached. He taught at the University and pastored a church in the town, making the city of Halle a center of Pietism.

Like later evangelicals, Francke sought to live his faith in practical ways. He started a school for the poor, built an orphanage and hospital, built homes for widows, and organized a Bible

²⁸ This list is adapted from Mark Noll, *Turning Points*, (MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 224-225.

printing company. In 1705, one of Francke's followers, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, became the first Protestant missionary to India.

Count von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) and the Moravians

The Moravians trace their history to the Bohemian Brethren, followers of Jan Hus. The Moravians were often persecuted and had to flee from their homes in Bohemia. In 1732, a group of Moravians asked Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf for protection.

"I have only one passion.
It is he, none but he."
- Zinzendorf

Zinzendorf grew up in a Pietist family in Halle, under the influence of August Francke. He was expected to serve in government like his father, but soon left his position and bought an estate. This estate became the home of the Moravians. Zinzendorf soon became a leader in this community called Herrnhut, which means "The Lord's Watch."

The initial group of ten refugees at Herrnhut grew to more than 300 within a few years. These believers sought to live simple, godly lives. Like John Wesley in the next generation and Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the twentieth century, Zinzendorf insisted that holy lives must be lived in the context of other believers. He said, "There can be no Christianity without community." Similarly, John Wesley would later say, "All holiness is social holiness." Christians live as part of a body.

Several characteristics marked the Moravians:

The Moravians shared the Pietists' **commitment to true conversion of the heart**. Like the Pietists, Moravians valued personal experience over creedal statements.

The Moravians put great **emphasis on prayer**.

On May 12, 1727 the Moravians experienced an outpouring of the Holy Spirit during a Wednesday prayer meeting. In August, they began a twenty-four hour prayer vigil that continued *for more than one hundred years*. Within six months after this, twenty-six young Moravians had volunteered for missionary service – in a time when foreign missions were almost unknown among Protestants.

A Prayer Meeting That Lasted One Hundred Years

In 1727, the community at Herrnhut was in turmoil. There were conflicts over doctrine, lifestyle, and personalities.

However, in a prayer meeting on Wednesday, May 12 1727, God's Spirit came in a powerful way. In August of that year, forty-eight men and women covenanted to a 24 hour prayer vigil.

For the next 100 years, there were at least two Moravians in prayer every hour around the clock. During those 100 years:

- More than 300 Moravians volunteered for missionary service.
- The Methodist revival spread through England and the US.
- The Great Awakening revived the church in America.
- William Carey went to India and established the modern missionary movement

What would happen if today's church covenanted to earnest committed prayer?

As we study the spread of global missions during the late eighteenth century, remember that the Moravian prayer meeting was continuing throughout these years. World missions grew out of prayer.

The Moravians were the most **mission minded** Christians of the middle eighteenth century. Some of the earliest Protestant missions were sent by the Moravians.

The Spread of the Gospel - The Moravians and Missions

In 1731, Count Zinzendorf attended the coronation of King Christian VI of Denmark. There he met two native Greenlanders and an African slave from the West Indies. These converts told of hearing the name of Christ for the first time and asked for missionaries to their homelands. The following year, the Moravians sent two missionaries to the Virgin Islands.

This was the beginning of the first large-scale Protestant missionary effort. During the eighteenth century, Moravians sent more than 300 missionaries to the Caribbean, Greenland, Africa, Ceylon, Algeria, and South America.

Moravians were drawn largely from the working class, particularly tradesmen. (The first two missionaries to the Virgin Islands were Leonard Potter, a potter, and David Nitschmann, a carpenter.) Like the Apostle Paul, Moravian missionaries went as "tentmakers" who supported themselves. They then taught their trades to native converts. Moravian missionaries served both the spiritual and the economic needs of the people to whom they ministered.

Moravian missionary efforts include:

- 1733 – A mission to Greenland.
- 1736 – A mission among the Nenets people in northern Russia.
- 1738 – George Schmidt worked among the Khoikhoi people in South Africa.
- 1740 – David Zeisberger worked among the Creek people of Georgia in America.
- 1771 – Moravians established a mission to the Eskimos of Labrador.

The Moravians believed that every Christian was an evangelist; they did not limit evangelism to a special group. They made little distinction between those who witnessed at home and those who witnessed abroad. Every believer was expected to fulfill the Great Commission. One historian said that so many Moravians went to the mission field that it "never creates surprise."²⁹ Some studies estimate that one of every sixty Moravians served as a missionary.³⁰

The Moravian commitment to missions came at great cost. Nine of the first eighteen Moravian missionaries sent to St. Thomas died within six months. Seventy-five of 160

²⁹ A.C. Thompson, quoted in Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, editors, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 275

³⁰ Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 97-113

missionaries to Guyana died from tropical fever and poisoning. This pattern was not unusual. Moravians willingly gave their lives for the cause of the gospel.

Responses to Rationalism: Pietism (Continued)

The Impact of Pietism

Although it was a German movement, Pietism had a worldwide impact. Through John Wesley and George Whitefield, Pietism had an important influence on the later evangelical church. Among the contributions of the Pietists are:

- An emphasis on true conversion
- A return to the preaching of the Word as a focal point of the worship service
- An emphasis on spirituality among the laity, not just church leaders
- A passion for missions

Perhaps the greatest danger for Pietism was an emphasis on emotion to the exclusion of reason. Pietists rarely confronted the spread of secularism; instead, they focused on personal faith while ignoring the changing world around them. Later evangelicals sometimes followed the same tendency and failed to relate the message of the gospel to the world in which they lived.

At its best, the Pietistic emphasis on “religion of the heart” influenced John Wesley’s message of personal conversion and assurance. At its worst, the Pietistic emphasis on emotion separated rational understanding of doctrine from personal experience.

In the nineteenth century, the liberal German theologian Schleiermacher argued that religion is pure feeling, with no historical or theological basis. This became known as “romantic theology.” Schleiermacher used the arguments of the Pietists to support his teaching, although the Pietists would not have agreed with his conclusions. According to romantic theology, religion is not primarily a matter of doctrinal orthodoxy or right behavior. Instead, religion is primarily a “feeling” of dependence on God. According to the romantic theologians, it does not matter if the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is historically true; all that matters is the feelings that this story creates in the believer. This shows the danger of separating doctrine from experience.

► Earlier in this lesson, I asked you to discuss the impact of Enlightenment ideas on your culture. Now, discuss your response to these ideas. What are some benefits of the Pietist response to rationalism? What are some dangers?

Responses to Rationalism: Evangelical Revival

In the seventeenth century, Puritans attempted national reform through the political process. In England and in the American colonies, Puritans attempted to create a “holy commonwealth.” Eighteenth century evangelicals shared many of the doctrinal beliefs of the Puritans (the sinfulness of man, the atoning death of Christ, salvation by grace), but not their focus on political involvement. Evangelicals did not avoid politics to the degree of

the Pietists, but their primary focus was conversion of the lost. The birth of evangelicalism is seen in the Great Awakening in the colonies and the Methodist revival in England.

The Great Awakening in America

In the 1630s, approximately 20,000 Puritans emigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony from Europe. The Puritans sought to establish a Christian political system. Civil covenants established laws based on biblical principles. Only church members were allowed to vote.

Many second generation Puritans could not give testimony to a definite conversion. In 1662, the churches implemented a "Half-Way Covenant" that allowed partial membership to those who could not testify to conversion. This allowed the unconverted to participate in civic affairs. By 1691, church membership was no longer required for voters. There were now two types of Puritans: "spiritual Puritans" who served God faithfully and "worldly Puritans" who maintained civic and social order but did not testify to a spiritual experience.

In 1720, a Dutch Reformed minister, Theodore J. Frelinghuysen, began to preach revival messages in New Jersey. Churches in New Jersey began to experience a new move of the Holy Spirit. Soon, a small school in New Jersey (called a "Log College" by skeptical academics) started by William Tennent began to graduate preachers committed to revival.³¹ The revival soon spread to Presbyterian and Baptist congregations throughout Virginia and the Carolinas.

A few years later, in 1734, Northampton, Massachusetts, began to experience revival under the preaching of Jonathan Edwards. Though Edwards was not a powerful speaker, God used him to spread revival through New England. After a series of sermons in which Edwards warned about "spiritual dullness" among church members, God began to bring revival to New England.

In the months between John Wesley's Aldersgate experience and the beginnings of his field preaching, he read Jonathan Edwards' account of the New England revival. This report (*A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*) had a great influence on Wesley. He became hungry to see the same movement of God in England. The Great Awakening in America had an impact on the Methodist Revival in England.

Then in 1739, George Whitefield traveled to America where thousands heard his outdoor preaching. Whitefield preached from Georgia in the south to New York in the north. He preached in Jonathan Edwards' town of Northampton and inspired Edwards to visit other towns with the revival message. By 1741, much of New England was moved by revival.

The effects of the revival were remarkable. At least 30,000 members were added to churches in the colonies between 1740 and 1742. Nine colleges were established to train

³¹ "Log College" later became Princeton University.

ministers. The frontier was evangelized. The roots of nineteenth century missions were laid through early missionary outreaches to the Native Americans.

The Methodist Revival in England

The eighteenth century Church of England was a church in dire need of revival. By then, the Church of England had regained political power from the Puritans. Other churches (Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians) needed a special license to hold worship services. Only Anglicans could hold political office. Politically, the Church of England was strong; spiritually, it was empty.³²

The Anglican Church was divided into two parties. The **Calvinist wing** saw no need to preach the gospel outside the walls of the church since God had sovereignly elected those who would be saved. The **Arminian wing** had twisted the doctrine of Arminius into a Pelagian teaching of salvation through good works and moral effort.

Deism influenced the church until little or no gospel was preached in most Anglican churches. "Latitudinarians" stressed proper behavior and courteous conduct, but they expected no heart change. They denounced "enthusiasm," a term that meant fanaticism. Many Anglicans considered any emotional expression in worship or even personal assurance of salvation as fanaticism.

Although the Wesleys grew up in the Anglican church, attended Oxford, and were ordained in the Church of England, their assurance of faith in 1738 transformed their preaching. John and Charles, along with George Whitefield, another member of the Holy Club at Oxford, began to preach justification by faith and the assurance of salvation.

In 1739, Whitefield began preaching in the open fields near Bristol. He soon convinced John Wesley to follow him. Wesley, who at first believed that preaching should be done only in a proper church building, was astounded by the reaction of these coal miners who rarely entered a church building. For the rest of his life, John preached throughout the British Isles. He travelled an estimated 250,000 miles on horseback and preached 40,000 sermons (more than twice a day for fifty years).

"I look upon all the world as my parish."
John Wesley

Neither John nor Charles Wesley planned to start churches separate from the Church of England. However, their lower class converts found that they were unwelcome in their local Anglican parish churches. The Methodist societies became their spiritual home.

With increasing numbers of converts, John Wesley needed spiritual leaders for the societies. He began to appoint "lay preachers" to guide the societies. By 1744 (only five years after the beginning of the revival), there were enough societies that Wesley found it necessary

³² The terms Church of England and Anglican Church both refer to the state church of England.

to establish an Annual Conference to guide the movement. Like the Pietist movement within the German Lutheran Church, the Methodists became a “church within the Anglican Church.”

The separation between the British Methodists and the Anglican Church was speeded by the growth of Methodism in America. In 1771, Wesley asked the Annual Conference for volunteers to minister in America. Francis Asbury, a twenty-six year old Methodist preacher volunteered. When he arrived in Philadelphia, there were 600 Methodists in America. In 1784, with English bishops refusing to ordain ministers for American churches, Wesley appointed Thomas Coke as “Superintendent” of the American Methodists. With this, the Methodist Church in America became a new denomination.

The growth of the American Methodist church encouraged greater separation between the Church of England and the Methodists. By 1795, four years after the death of John Wesley, the Wesleyan Methodist church had separated from the Church of England.

By Wesley’s death in 1791, there were 79,000 Methodists in England and 40,000 in North America. By Asbury’s death in 1816, the American Methodist Church had grown to 200,000 members; in forty-five years, Asbury ordained 4,000 Methodist ministers. Today, approximately eighty million Christians trace their theological roots to the Methodist movement.

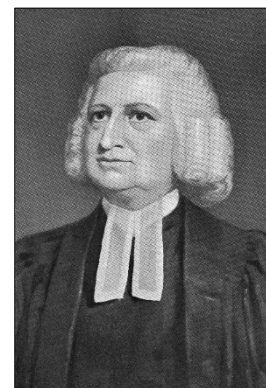
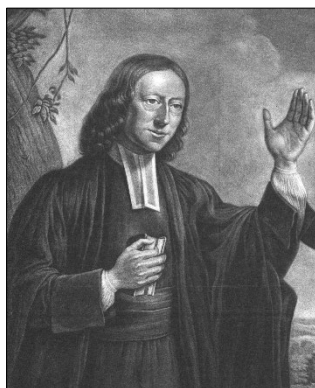
...From Then to Now...

► The field preaching of the Wesleys was based on their passion for evangelizing the lost. The Methodist societies were based on their conviction that only through careful discipleship would the fruit of evangelistic efforts be preserved. Evaluate your ministry today. Do you pay attention to both of these aspects? Are you winning the lost to Christ? Are you discipling new believers and bringing them to maturity? If either area is weak, discuss ways to strengthen your ministry.

Great Christians You Should Know: John and Charles Wesley

John (1703-1791)³³ and Charles (1707-1789)³⁴ Wesley were sons of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. Samuel was an Anglican minister; Susanna was a powerful spiritual influence on her ten children who survived infancy.

The brothers were educated at Oxford. As students, they organized a discipleship group for young men seeking spiritual growth. Because of their "methodical" pursuit of spiritual discipline, they were soon nicknamed the "Holy Club" or "Methodists."



In 1735, John and Charles crossed the Atlantic to minister in the new American colony of Georgia. Neither brother was successful in their mission efforts. Charles had been reluctant to come to Georgia and soon returned home. John stirred up opposition when he insisted on following Anglican liturgical practices in the informal colonial society and returned to England in 1737.

On his way to Georgia, John Wesley met a group of Moravians from Herrnhut. During a severe storm, the Moravians calmly sang hymns. When Wesley asked about their lack of fear, a Moravian assured him that they did not fear death because of their confidence of salvation. Upon his return to England, Wesley began to seek the assurance to which the Moravians testified. Like most eighteenth century Anglicans, the Wesleys assumed that no one could be sure of salvation until death.

Back in London, the brothers began to visit Peter Bohler, a Moravian. Bohler emphasized justification by faith as a personal experience, not simply a doctrinal statement. On Pentecost Sunday 1738, Charles testified to the assurance of faith. Three days later, at a chapel on Aldersgate Street, John "felt his heart strangely warmed." He testified that "an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

For the next fifty years, the brothers preached the gospel throughout the British Isles. When they were rejected in Anglican pulpits, they followed the example of their colleague George Whitfield and preached in the open air.

³³ Image: "Bildnis des John Wesley", by John Greenwood, retrieved from the Leipzig University Library <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ubleipzig/17059576182/>, public domain.

³⁴ Image: "Charles Wesley", Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru – The National Library of Wales, retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Charles_Wesley_\(5349088\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Charles_Wesley_(5349088).jpg), public domain.

Philip Watson summarized the message of the Methodist revival in four statements:³⁵

(1) All men need to be saved. – Original Sin.

Eighteenth century Anglicans assumed that man was basically good. The Wesleys taught that “all have sinned” and stand condemned before a holy God. This message shocked polite Anglican society. After hearing a Methodist sermon, the Duchess of Buckingham complained, “It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth.”

“And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Savior’s blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That thou, my God, should die for me?”
- Charles Wesley

(2) All men can be saved. – Unlimited Atonement. In response to Calvinists who taught that only the elect can be saved, the Wesleys taught that “whosoever believeth shall have eternal life.”

(3) All men can know they are saved. – Assurance. Eighteenth century Anglicans believed that few people know for certain that they are saved. The most startling aspect of the Wesleyan message may have been the news that a Christian can *know* they are in right relationship with God.

(4) All men can be saved to the uttermost. – Christian Perfection. To the assumption that God’s call to a holy life can never be achieved in this life, John responded that God’s commands are implied promises. The God who calls us to be holy will make us holy.

This was the core of the Wesleyan message. As this message spread through England, thousands were converted, and English society was transformed. This message was grounded in God’s free grace rather than human achievement, but it recognized man’s responsibility to respond in faith to God’s call.

John was the organizer. His “societies” provided structure for discipleship. Charles was the poet. He wrote more than 6,000 hymns. These hymns spread the Methodist message far beyond the Methodist societies. Christians of many denominations sang Wesley’s message of assurance (“Arise, my soul, arise; shake off thy guilty fears”) and the possibility of a pure heart (“O for a heart to praise my God, a heart from sin set free”).

The message that all men need to be saved, all men can be saved, all men can know they are saved, and all men can be saved to the uttermost is still a powerful revival message in the twenty-first century.

³⁵ Philip S. Watson, *Anatomy of a Conversion: The Message and Mission of John and Charles Wesley* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990).

Responses to Rationalism: Evangelical Revival (Continued)

Lessons from the Revivals in England and America

There are several important lessons that can be drawn from the Great Awakening in America and the Methodist revival in England. These lessons should inspire us as we seek revival in the twenty-first century.

First, these revivals show that God works in very different ways and through very different people to accomplish his purposes. George Whitefield was a powerful speaker who preached without amplification to as many as 30,000 people. He was a gifted orator who held audiences spellbound.

Jonathan Edwards, by contrast, was not a powerful speaker. He read his sermons from a manuscript and often read hesitantly and with little expression. His sermons are dramatic on paper; they were rarely dramatic in person. God used both of these evangelists to spark revival.

John and Charles Wesley were scholars trained at Oxford University; in contrast, graduates of William Tennent's "Log College" had less academic training. But God used both to spark revival. God worked through anyone who yielded themselves fully to his use.

Second, these revivals show the power of prayer. We have seen the impact of prayer on Moravian missions. This same impact is seen in the revivals in England and America. Whitefield, Edwards, and the Wesleys were men of prayer who sought God earnestly before entering the pulpit. Revival came in response to fervent prayer.

Third, these revivals show the lasting impact of true revival. The French Revolution was the culminating event of the Age of Rationalism. As we saw earlier in this lesson, the French Revolution was a bloodbath led by godless leaders who killed thousands in the name of "liberty." The result of the French Revolution was a dictatorship led by Napoleon.

The American Revolution, starting twenty-five years after the Great Awakening, took a much different road than the French Revolution. The American Revolution was led by men who either held a deep faith, or at the very least, respected the Christian faith. The result of the American Revolution was a constitution guaranteeing every citizen the freedom to worship without government opposition.

Both America and England avoided the horrors of the French Revolution. Many historians credit the difference to the Great Awakening and the Methodist Revival. These countries may have been spared the horrors of the French Revolution because of the remarkable move of God during the mid-eighteenth century.

Conclusion: Church History Speaks Today

While reading this lesson, did you think, "That sounds much like today"? The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have much in common with the 21st century. As in eighteenth

century France, twenty-first century “intellectuals” deny the truth of Scripture. They claim that we cannot trust the Bible. However, just as God worked through the Moravians, Methodists, and others to bring revival in the eighteenth century, God can bring revival in our day.

As in the eighteenth century, some Christians today withdraw from the world and seek to separate their personal Christian faith from daily life in the “secular” world. The example of the early Methodists offers a different path, the choice to be salt and light in our world. As the Methodists confronted their world with the gospel, British society was changed. As we confront our world with the gospel, God can change our society. I encourage you to do more than withdraw from your world. Be light; be salt; be a world-changer. In other words, be a disciple.

Lesson 3 Key Events in Church History

Date (A.D.)	Event
1648	The Treaty of Westphalia ends the Thirty Years War.
1720s-1740s	Great Awakening in the American Colonies.
1733	Moravian missionary movement begins.
1738	Beginning of the Methodist revival in England.
1784	The Methodist Conference is formed.
1789	The French Revolution begins.

Lesson 3 Key People in Church History

Asbury, Francis (1745-1816): Methodist bishop sent to America by John Wesley in 1771. After 1784, he and Thomas Coke became joint superintendents of the Methodist Church in America.

Edwards, Jonathan (1703-1758): American theologian and leader in the Great Awakening. He is considered America's greatest theologian.

Spener, Philip Jacob (1635-1705): German Lutheran whose book, *Pia Desideria*, became the foundation for the Pietist movement. Founded the University of Halle in 1694 as a center for Pietism and missionary training.

Wesley, Charles (1707-1788): Prolific English hymn-writer (over 6000 hymns), including such favorites as "And Can It Be" and "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing."

Wesley, John (1703-1791): Founder of the Methodist movement and leader of the English evangelical revival.

Whitefield, George (1714-1770): English Calvinist Methodist evangelist whose revivals brought spiritual renewal in both America and England.

Zinzendorf, Count Nicolaus Ludwig von (1700-1760): Leader of the Moravians at Herrnhut. He was concerned with a genuine religion of the heart and was influential in the worldwide missions movement.

Lesson 3 Assignments

(1) Take a test on this lesson. The test will include dates from the "Key Events in Church History" timeline (1648-1789).

(2) Biographical Application: Give two specific lessons we can learn from the life of each of the following church leaders. You can share this in your next class session.

- John Wesley
- Jonathan Edwards
- George Whitefield

Lesson 3 Test

(1) The period from 1684 to 1789 can be called the Age of Rationalism or the _____.

(2) _____ assumes that God created the world and then left it to operate on its own.

(3) The leader of the French Deists was _____.

(4) The culminating failure of the Age of Rationalism was the _____ in 1789.

(5) The _____ movement within German Lutheranism was a response to empty orthodoxy in the official Lutheran church.

(6) Count _____ became the leader of the Moravians in the eighteenth century.

(7) The Latitudinarians in the Church of England emphasized proper _____ and opposed "enthusiasm," or emotion in worship and preaching.

(8) The three leaders of the English Evangelical Revival were John and Charles Wesley and their friend _____.

(9) List the four statements that sum up the message of the Methodist revival.

(10) The leader of the Great Awakening in Northampton, Massachusetts, was _____.

Lesson 4

Revival and Missions

A.D. 1789-1914

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Appreciate the global growth of the church during the nineteenth century.
- (2) Understand the role of laymen and voluntary societies in the evangelical reforms of the nineteenth century.
- (3) Recognize the modern philosophy of missions inspired by William Carey and Hudson Taylor.
- (4) Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the nineteenth century missionary movement.
- (5) Appreciate the effects of revival movements during the nineteenth century.

Introduction

In previous lessons, we looked at the broad Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant traditions. However, in the final lessons, our study will focus primarily on the evangelical tradition. We will pay special attention to the rapid spread of world mission during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In 1800, Protestant Christianity was almost exclusively Western. Only 1% of Protestant Christians lived in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. By the end of the nineteenth century, 10% of Protestants lived in those parts of the world. Today, approximately 67% of Protestant Christians live in countries once considered "foreign mission fields."

Date (A.D.)	Event
1789	French Revolution
1790-1840	Second Great Awakening
1793	William Carey arrives in India
1854	Hudson Taylor arrives in China
1864	Samuel Crowther appointed as first African Anglican bishop
1905-1910	Worldwide revival begins from Wales
1914	Beginning of World War I

Today, the strongest Protestant areas of the world are Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In 1900, Africa was 9% Christian; in 2005, Africa was 46% Christian. In 1900, Asia was 2% Christian; in 2005, Asia was 9% Christian. The roots of this change are found in the nineteenth century missionary movement. In Lessons 4 and 6, we will see how Christianity traveled around the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³⁶

Evangelical Reform in England

The nineteenth century was the high point of the British Empire. London, the largest city in the world, was the commercial and financial center of Europe. The British navy supported worldwide commerce and colonization. By the end of the nineteenth century, England ruled the largest empire in history.

The nineteenth century was a time of evangelical reform in England. The eighteenth century evangelical revival emphasized the new birth, transformed lives, and a commitment to service. This revival resulted in ongoing reform during the nineteenth century.

The Methodist Movement in the Early Nineteenth Century

After the deaths of the Wesley brothers, the Methodist movement continued to spread in England and the United States. Two of the important leaders in the continuing growth of Methodism were Adam Clarke in England and Francis Asbury in America.

Adam Clarke was born in North Ireland in 1760. He was converted at the age of 19 under the ministry of a Methodist preacher and was preaching by the age of 22.

One of the most brilliant minds of the early nineteenth century, Adam Clarke was entirely self-educated. He taught himself at least ten languages and wrote a six volume commentary on the Bible. Adam Clarke's Commentary has remained a valuable resource for nearly 200 years since its first publication.

Clarke published twenty-two books in addition to his commentary, preached for more than fifty years on twenty-four Methodist circuits, and served as president of both the Irish Methodist and English Methodist Conferences. He also spent ten years editing state papers for the British government. In honor of his scholarly work, Clarke was awarded an honorary Doctoral degree by the University of Aberdeen.

"To be filled with God
is a great thing;
To be filled with the
fullness of God
is still greater;
To be filled with all
the fullness of God
is greatest of all."
- Adam Clarke

³⁶ Sources of these statistics are:

Todd M. Johnson, *Christianity in Global Context: Trends and Statistics*.

ChristianHistory.net <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-36/why-did-1800s-explode-with-missions.html>
(Accessed May 14, 2021)

Status of Global Mission, 2014.

Dr. Clarke was committed to evangelism. In 1818, he met two Buddhist priests who had traveled to England from Ceylon. He spent two years with these men and eventually baptized them and sent them home to take the gospel to Ceylon.

Dr. Clarke was also committed to the message of holiness. To the end of his life in 1832, he preached the possibility of having a heart that is "filled with all the fullness of God."³⁷

The Clapham Sect

Prior to the nineteenth century, most religious activity in England had occurred in traditional denominations – the Church of England, Baptist, Congregational, or Methodist. In the nineteenth century, change was led by individuals who joined religious societies formed for the purpose of social reformation, spiritual revival, or mission outreach.

A group of upper class evangelicals in the village of Clapham near London became known as the "Clapham Sect." This was not a denomination or even an official organization; it was an informal community of Christians committed to the social and spiritual reform of English society. Their spiritual leader was a Church of England minister, John Venn. Lay members included the Governor General of India; the Chairman of the East India Company; and most famously, William Wilberforce, a Member of Parliament.

Clapham members started numerous organizations including the Church Missionary Society, a Bible distribution society, as well as societies to serve the poor and improve prison conditions. Their greatest impact was seen in the fight against slavery. Although slavery was banned in most Christian nations during the Middle Ages, England resumed the African slave trade in 1562. By 1770, British ships carried 50,000 slaves a year from West Africa.

William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was convinced that God placed him in Parliament to oppose the slave trade. Beginning in 1789, he campaigned for decades against slavery. The Clapham community published antislavery literature and gave lectures on the evils of slavery.

After years of struggle, the slave trade was outlawed in 1809. Wilberforce immediately began to campaign against slavery itself. The Emancipation Act, freeing all slaves in the British Empire, was passed on July 25, 1833, four days before Wilberforce died. While Wilberforce was the leader of the fight, the entire Clapham Sect participated. They believed that the gospel is concerned not only for "spiritual" affairs, but for a society that reflects Christian justice.

William Booth and the Salvation Army

In the early nineteenth century, the Clapham community worked among the upper classes to reform English society. In the late nineteenth century, a Methodist minister, William

³⁷ Ephesians 3:19

Booth (1829-1912) began preaching on the streets of London to evangelize and serve the neediest members of society.

William Booth began this work in 1864; within 20 years, he had nearly 1,000 workers. Organized like a military unit, these volunteers were called the Salvation Army, led by General Booth. Once again, a new volunteer organization led in social reform. In the next lesson, we will study in more depth the ministry of the Salvation Army.

Christian Voluntary Societies

Both the Clapham Sect and the Salvation Army show the importance of the “voluntary society” in nineteenth century Christianity. Voluntary societies allowed Christians across a range of denominations to work together for a specific need. Voluntary societies sponsored mission outreach, Bible distribution, prison reform, relief for the poor, and the abolition of slavery.

The Sunday School movement is another example of lay Christians meeting a social need. In 1780, Robert Raikes, an Anglican newspaper publisher, began offering free education for poor children. England had no state school system; poor children grew up with little or no education. Since the children worked in factories all week, Raikes offered reading classes and religious instruction each Sunday. The crime rate dropped dramatically in Raikes’ city and officials began to encourage the spread of Sunday schools to other cities. By 1830, 1,250,000 children throughout England (about ¼ of the population) were attending Sunday schools.

Christian voluntary societies put into action Luther’s principle that all Christians are called to serve God, regardless of their career. Through these organizations, laymen came to the forefront of leadership.

Evangelical Outreach to the World

In 1800, Protestant Christianity was located almost entirely in Europe and North America. Eighteen centuries after Jesus’ Great Commission, most of the world had yet to hear the gospel. This does not mean that there were no missionary efforts before the nineteenth century. Moravian missionaries had been active in translating Scripture, establishing schools so that people could read Scripture, and even preparing national pastors.

However, mission was usually done on a small scale, raising up “tiny islands in the surrounding sea of heathenism.”³⁸ In the early nineteenth century, William Carey changed the church’s view of missions. He envisioned the transformation of entire societies. From this beginning, others spread the gospel around the world.

³⁸ Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 3rd edition (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2008), 374

William Carey, the “Father of Modern Missions”

“Expect great things from God;
Attempt great things for God.”
- William Carey’s motto

In 1783, William Carey was baptized and joined the English Baptist denomination. He became a schoolmaster, as well as the pastor of a local church. After reading Jonathan Edwards’ *Life of David Brainerd*, an account of Brainerd’s efforts to evangelize Native Americans, Carey became passionate about evangelism.

At the time, many English Baptists insisted that missions were unnecessary. God would save the elect; it was useless to preach to the non-elect. When William Carey suggested to a meeting of ministers that it was the duty of all Christians to spread the gospel, a respected pastor responded, “Young man, sit down; when God pleases to convert the heathen, he will do it without your help or mine.” A few years later, Carey published *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*, a call to world evangelization.

Carey was certainly not the first person to see the need for world evangelization. Many others shared his passion for reaching the world for Christ. In 1784, the Methodist leader Thomas Coke submitted a “Plan for the Society for the Establishment of Missions among the Heathen.” The same year, an Anglican pastor, Joseph White, preached at Oxford from Mark 16:15, “On the Duty of Attempting the Propagation of the Gospel among Our Mahometan and Gentoo Subjects in India.”

Carey understood that change in a society must come from within. He placed great emphasis on translation of Scripture into native languages, respect for the culture and traditions of the nation (as long as they did not conflict with biblical principles), and the development of local ministers.

The Spread of the Gospel - The Gospel Comes to India

William Carey was not the first man to bring the gospel to India. According to church tradition, the apostle Thomas preached in India around A.D. 52. In the fourth century, the church historian Eusebius reported the presence of a community of Christians in India.

In 1705, two German Pietists, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plätschau, arrived as Protestant missionaries to India. They translated the Bible into Tamil and Hindustani. However, the greatest modern mission effort in India was led by William Carey. Carey served in India from 1793 until his death in 1834. Since the British East India Company opposed missionary outreach to India, Carey settled in Serampore, controlled by the Dutch.

During his forty-one years in India, Carey laid the foundation for evangelism in India. Carey and his colleagues translated the Bible into Bengali, Sanskrit, and four other languages; they translated portions of Scripture into twenty-four other languages. Carey wrote gospel songs in the Bengali language. He started the first college in Asia (Serampore College) to train national pastors, as well as to provide a liberal arts education to people of any caste.

William Carey asked, "What would India look like if Jesus were Lord of the nation?" Through this vision, Carey transformed the culture of the entire nation. Carey's vision of the kingdom of God as the model for society affected areas far beyond "spiritual" matters. The Christian faith touched all aspects of Indian society.

Against Hindu teaching that nature is an "illusion" to be shunned, Carey believed that nature is the good creation of a loving God. Because of this, he published the first science textbooks in India. He organized agricultural reforms to improve farm productivity.

Against the Hindu practice of burning lepers alive to "purify them," Carey believed that God loves the leper. Because of this, he campaigned for humane treatment of victims of leprosy.

Because he believed in economic justice, Carey introduced savings banks to loan money at reasonable interest rates. Because he believed that Christianity benefits from free discussion, he established the first newspaper ever printed in an Oriental language.

Because he believed that all people are created in the image of God, Carey fought the oppression of women. He started schools for girls, who rarely received any education in eighteenth century India. He battled polygamy, female infanticide, and widow burning – all of which were supported by the Hindu religion. He worked for twenty-five years to achieve a legal ban on the burning of widows (*sati*).

William Carey shows the lasting impact of a person with a vision for the Kingdom of God in our world. Through his influence, Protestant missions were changed forever.

Evangelical Outreach to the World (Continued)

Other Nineteenth Century Mission Activities

Hundreds of missionaries traveled around the world during the nineteenth century. For the first time, evangelical Protestants were at the forefront of missionary activity. During the first two decades of the nineteenth century:

- Henry Martyn went to India (1805).
- Robert Morrison was the first Protestant missionary to China (1807).
- Adoniram Judson went to Burma as the first American foreign missionary (1812).
- Samuel Marsden led a group of missionaries to New Zealand (1814).
- Robert Moffat went to Africa (1816).

By the middle of the century, a spirit of optimism combined with a passion for missions had inspired the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions to set a goal of the "evangelization of the world in this generation." The nineteenth century was an age of mission.

David Livingstone traveled to the heart of Africa, opening the continent to the gospel. His 1859 speech to students at Cambridge shows one of the characteristics of nineteenth century missions; "I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity. Do your best to carry out the work which I have begun. I leave it to you."

This does not mean that Livingstone saw missions as a means of opening Africa to exploitation by British commercial interests. Like Carey, Livingstone believed that the gospel should transform all areas of society. Livingstone recognized that in Africa the slave trade was a common path to wealth. He believed that opening the continent to legitimate commerce would end the immoral slave trade.

Protestant missionaries were not tools for British commerce. In fact, British companies often opposed missionaries, believing that the missionaries would defend natives against unfair practices by the British. The British East India Company prevented William Carey from settling in Calcutta and drove Adoniram Judson out of India. Contrary to the accusations of some modern historians, the nineteenth century mission movement was inspired by a love for God, not mammon.

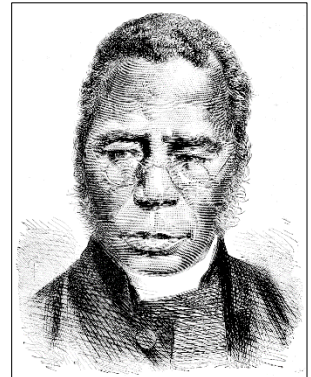
...From Then to Now...

► What would your country look like if Jesus were Lord of the nation? Discuss some practical ways in which the gospel can transform your society.

Great Christians You Should Know: Samuel Ajayi Crowther (ca. 1806-1891)

One of the heroes of the Nigerian church is Samuel Crowther,³⁹ the first African bishop in the Anglican Church. Crowther was born in Yorubaland (modern Western Nigeria). As a teen, he was captured by Muslim slave traders and sold to Portuguese traders.

Following the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, British evangelicals established the African colony of Sierra Leone as a haven for former slaves. In 1822, the British Navy intercepted the Portuguese ship carrying Ajayi and brought him to Sierra Leone. Ajayi was converted and took Samuel Crowther as his baptismal name.



Crowther was one of the first students at Fourah Bay College, established by the Church Missionary Society in 1827 to train African church leaders. Crowther proved to be a gifted linguist and was soon appointed to teach in other villages. In 1841, he was sent to England for further training. He was ordained and sent as a missionary to Yorubaland. In his home village, Crowther found his mother and sister after a separation of more than twenty years; they became his first converts.

Two of Crowther's contributions carried a lasting impact. He translated the Bible into Yoruba, the first African translation done by a native speaker. He also established mission stations led entirely by Africans among the Nupe and Hausa peoples.

In 1864, Henry Venn (a member of the Clapham community) won the appointment of Crowther as bishop of Western Africa. Samuel Crowther became the first indigenous church

³⁹ Image: "Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther", retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bishop_Samuel_Ajayi_Crowther.png, public domain.

leader in Africa. Sadly, a group of young English missionaries later undermined Crowther and removed him from his position. However, his memory shows the potential for indigenous African Christianity.

Evangelical Outreach to the World (Continued)

Evaluation of Nineteenth Century Missions

Were there weaknesses in the nineteenth century missionary movement? Of course. Some missionaries had little knowledge of the country to which they were called. Their methods were sometimes ineffective and left little lasting impact.

To many missionaries, Christianity and western culture were synonymous. Some missionaries assumed that a Chinese convert would dress like an Englishman, eat like an Englishman, and worship in a western church building.

However, in spite of these failings, the nineteenth century missionary movement demonstrates the strengths of evangelicalism. From Constantine through seventeenth century Roman Catholic missions to Latin America, Christianity was spread by compulsion. The evangelical missionary movement showed that the gospel alone, without state support or forced conversion, "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."⁴⁰

The nineteenth century missionary movement showed the power of lay Christianity. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, Danish Missionary Society, Berlin Missionary Society, and Paris Missionary Society were organized by lay Christians.

The nineteenth century missionary movement shows the impact of the gospel on the civic life of a nation. In many countries, hospitals and schools established by missionaries continue to serve their communities to this day. The missionary movement shows that the gospel, properly understood, transforms all of society.

⁴⁰ Romans 1:16, *English Standard Version*

The Growth of the Church in the Nineteenth Century*	
1750	1900
World is 22% Christian.	World is 34% Christian.
26% of people have heard the gospel.	51% of people have heard the gospel.
Less than 1% of Protestants live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.	10% of Protestants live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
60 languages have a printed Bible.	537 languages have a printed Bible.
* David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, <i>World Christian Encyclopedia</i> , 2 nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 27-29	

The Spread of the Gospel - The Gospel Comes to the Chinese Interior

Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) was not the first missionary to bring the gospel to China. Persian Christians reached China in the 7th century. A Roman Catholic, Matteo Ricci, preached to Chinese government officials in the 17th century.

In 1807, Robert Morrison became the first Protestant missionary to China. By the middle of the nineteenth century, many organizations had missionaries in China. However, because government policies limited foreign access to the interior, these missions were located only on the coast. In the early nineteenth century, it was illegal to evangelize or print Christian literature in China. Foreigners were not allowed to learn Chinese.

Protestants who were fluent in Chinese served as translators for government officials, and eventually influenced a change in government policy. William Martin, a Presbyterian missionary, was able to include a clause in the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin allowing missionaries to enter the interior of China. This opened the door for Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission.

Hudson Taylor's vision for the inland of China required a new approach to missions. While many nineteenth century missionaries assumed that "Christianity equals Western culture," Taylor showed that the gospel is free from cultural expectations. His respect for Chinese tradition removed barriers to the gospel.

In his first year in China, Taylor and a colleague, Joseph Edkins, traveled by boat along the Huangpu River, distributing Bibles and tracts. Taylor soon made the city of Ningbo his headquarters for reaching the inland of China.

Realizing the size of the task before him, Taylor determined to recruit twenty-four missionaries, two for each Chinese province and Mongolia. In *China: Its Spiritual Need and Claims*, Taylor asked, "Can all the Christians of England sit still with folded arms while these multitudes are perishing for lack of knowledge? ... We stay at home with the one sheep, and take no heed to the ninety and nine perishing ones!"

At the time Taylor began his effort, there were a total of ninety Protestant missionaries in all China. By Taylor's death in 1905, China Inland Mission alone had 205 stations staffed by 849 missionaries. More than 125,000 Chinese Christians were associated with the mission.

Taylor identified six principles for China Inland Mission:

1. The mission would be non-denominational
2. There would be no guaranteed salary
3. No appeals for funds would be made ("faith mission")
4. The work would be directed by leaders in China
5. The organization would press to the interior of China
6. Missionaries would wear Chinese clothes and worship in Chinese buildings

Though these principles do not apply to every mission organization, they show Taylor's passion for a national church, rather than a foreign transplant. Because of this approach, the impact of China Inland Mission continued even after the 1951 Communist revolution drove out all missionaries.

Perhaps Taylor's greatest innovation was his willingness to separate the gospel from western cultural practices. He believed that a missionary "must become all things to all people that by all means I might save some."⁴¹ Taylor's Chinese dress and queue symbolized his willingness to adopt Chinese standards of behavior, as long as the standards did not conflict with Christian principles.

The effort to evangelize China faced many setbacks. In 1900, the Boxers martyred 136 adult missionaries, 53 missionary children, and nearly 50,000 Chinese Christians. In 1926, nearly 8,000 Protestant missionaries fled during the Northern Expedition conflict. In 1953, all missionaries were forced out following the communist revolution. However, the seeds planted by missionaries continued to grow. When westerners returned to China in the 1980s, they found a thriving house church movement, a passion for evangelism, and one of the great revival stories in the history of Christianity.

⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 9:22, *English Standard Version*

Growth of the Chinese Church*					
Year	Amount	Year	Amount	Year	Amount
Protestant Missionaries					
1807	1	1930	6,346	1951	0
Population of China					
1812	362 million	1949	450 million	1996	1.2 billion
Baptized Protestants					
1834	10	1934	500,000	1996	33 million
Protestants per Chinese					
1850	1 in 1 million	1952	1 in 1,000	1996	1 in 36
* Statistics from Tony Lambert, OMF International.					

Evangelical Revival in America

In Lesson 3, we studied the Great Awakening in America. The effects of this revival faded during the years of the American Revolution. The struggles of wartime and the spread of Enlightenment ideas among the young led to spiritual decline. By the end of the eighteenth century, some colleges reported no professing Christians in their entire student body.

The spread of the American western frontier added to the challenges facing the church. Between 1792 and 1821, nine states were added to the original thirteen colonies. By 1850, half of the American people were west of the Appalachian Mountains. The major denominations were unable to keep up with the spread of the population. Backwoodsmen showed little interest in religion. Their energies were devoted to life in the rough frontier; when they were not working, they sought entertainment not worship. Out of a population of 5,000,000 people, the United States had an estimated 300,000 alcoholics at the end of the eighteenth century. Christianity appeared to be dying in the New World.

This was the setting at the end of the eighteenth century. According to Rodney Stark, only 17% of Americans were active Christians at the time of the American Revolution. However, in the nineteenth century, a series of revival movements brought this young nation back to the gospel. By the end of the nineteenth century, 50% of Americans were active Christians.

The Methodist Movement in America

In America, Francis Asbury led the Methodist Church much as the Wesleys led the Methodist movement in England. He was born in 1745 in Staffordshire, England. Asbury became a

Methodist lay preacher at the age of 18 and was appointed a traveling preacher by John Wesley at the age of 22.

In 1771, at the age of 26, Asbury responded when John Wesley asked for volunteers to preach in America. He spent the next forty-five years in America. When the Revolution broke out, Asbury and James Dempster were the only British Methodist preachers who stayed in America.

During his forty-five year ministry, Asbury traveled more than 300,000 miles by horseback and carriage in spite of almost constant illness. He preached more than 16,000 sermons. Some historians believe that Francis Asbury was the best known face in America – known to more people than George Washington. He was so well-known that letters addressed only to “Bishop Asbury, United States of America” were delivered to him.

When Asbury arrived in Philadelphia, there were approximately 600 Methodists in the entire American colonies. By his death, there were 200,000 Methodists in America, served by 4,000 Methodist preachers.

Asbury had a passion for evangelism. In the eighteenth century, most Americans lived outside the cities where there were many churches. Asbury planted churches in rural areas and appointed traveling preachers (called circuit riders) who would travel from church to church in each district. These circuit riders took the gospel to the frontier.

Asbury also had a passion for the social impact of the gospel. He started Sunday Schools to educate the poor; he battled slavery; and he fought the impact of alcoholism among the frontier people. Methodism in America owes its birth to this preacher who gave his life for the spread of the gospel.

The Second Great Awakening

Beginning in the early 1790s, a revival spirit spread through the nation in response to a “Concert of Prayer” for spiritual awakening. Churches in the east began to experience revival, followed by campus revivals at several major colleges.

From the east, revival spread to the western frontier. Like the coal-miners of Bristol, this revival reached a largely illiterate population. Unlike the Oxford-educated Wesleys who preached in Bristol, the preaching in this revival was done by uneducated, rough-hewn frontier preachers. There were few “big names” connected with the Second Great Awakening; this revival was led by local pastors.

James McGready, a Presbyterian minister, was one of the first to preach a revival message in the west. After being driven out of North Carolina for his fiery preaching, McGready settled in Kentucky. In 1800, people traveled as far as 100 miles to attend a “camp meeting” in Gaspar River, Kentucky.

Then in 1801, over 20,000 people (10% of Kentucky's population) attended a camp meeting at Cane Ridge, Kentucky. Since the building could not hold all the people, outdoor platforms were built and as many as five preachers preached simultaneously.

Effects of the Second Great Awakening included:⁴²

1. The colleges were revived.
2. Tens of thousands of members were added to the evangelical denominations.
3. Midweek prayer meetings and Sunday schools became common.
4. New colleges and seminaries were established to train ministers.
5. America developed an emphasis on missions similar to that of England.

The revival also had many lasting social effects. During the nineteenth century American evangelicals formed the American Bible Society to distribute Bibles, the American Temperance Union to oppose alcohol abuse, the Home Missionary Society to preach the gospel on the frontier, and societies to reform prisons and care for the disabled.

Nineteenth century teachers of holiness, particularly Charles Finney, Asa Mahan, and Phoebe Palmer believed that the Holy Spirit could give victory not only over personal sin, but also over the sins of society. These people sought to reform American society through the power of the gospel.

Later Evangelistic Movements

A few years after the Second Great Awakening, **Charles G. Finney** (1792-1875) began to preach in New York. Nearly 1,000 people were converted in Rochester, New York in 1830. Other parts of the country reported revival, with a total of nearly 100,000 converts.

Although he was an ordained Presbyterian, Finney rejected the Calvinist doctrine of limited atonement. He preached the possibility of a pure heart and a life free of willful sin. In addition to his evangelistic efforts, Finney wrote a systematic theology and served as president of Oberlin College.

"The impression of many seems to be that grace will pardon them in sin, if it cannot save them from sin.... Let no one expect to be saved from hell, unless grace saves him from sin."
- Charles G. Finney

From 1858-1859, a **Laymen's Revival** spread through the nation. This revival, which started in Canada, was led by businessmen who met for prayer during their lunch breaks. There were an estimated 1,000,000 conversions in the United States during these two years, including 100,000 slaves. From the United States, the revival spread to the British Isles, where another 1,000,000 people professed faith.

Following the Civil War, **D.L. Moody** and his associate **Ira Sankey** led evangelistic campaigns in major cities. Since life in the city had broken people's ties with the local church, Moody brought the gospel into this new social setting – much as Wesley and

⁴² Information from Howard F. Vos, *An Introduction to Church History* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 138-139.

Whitefield had done in Bristol. On a trip to London, he preached to more than 2,500,000 people.

From 1905-1910, a **Welsh Revival** that began under the ministry of a coal miner named Evan Roberts spread around the world. In America, Baylor University and Asbury College reported revival. In Indonesia, a seven year "Great Repentance" saw 200,000 conversions. In India, "Praying Hyde" led prayer meetings that resulted in mass conversions. A

"Korean Pentecost" in 1907 followed weeks of prayer for revival. Rees Howells started the "Bible College of South Wales" which sent workers throughout Africa. In Latin America, evangelical churches tripled from 132,000 members in 1903 to 369,000 in 1910.

"The effective cause of all true revivals is the life-giving, regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit – converting the hardened sinner and reclaiming the backslidden believer."
- Adapted from J. Wilbur Chapman

Conclusion: Church History Speaks Today

Many modern scholars criticize the nineteenth century revival and mission movements as naïve and misguided. Thousands of pages have been devoted to criticizing the "cultural imperialism" of the nineteenth century mission movement.

Were there problems in these missionary movements? Of course; they were led by fallible human beings. Did they fail to address some social issues? Yes; they had blind spots. However, the missionary movement contributed much to the Kingdom of God. Hundreds of missionaries gave their lives to spread the gospel. As a result, the worldwide church at the end of the nineteenth century was stronger than at the beginning of the century.

Millions of people heard the gospel through the efforts of the nineteenth century missionaries. Between 1800 and 1900, the number of professing Christians worldwide doubled, the number of Bible translations grew from fifty to 250, and the number of mission organizations multiplied from seven to 100.

Nations around the globe benefited from the social influence of missionaries. In a study published in *The American Political Science Review*, Robert Woodberry showed that Protestant missionaries had a greater impact on the rise of stable democracies in the non-Western world than any political factor. Woodberry found that "the greater the number of Protestant missionaries per local population in 1923, the higher the probability that by now a nation has achieved a stable democracy."⁴³

The power of the gospel continues to transform individuals, communities, and nations. The gospel, not the messenger, is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."

⁴³ Robert D. Woodberry, "The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy," *American Political Science Review* Volume 106, Number 2, May 2012

Lesson 4 Key Events in Church History

Date (A.D.)	Event
1790-1840	Second Great Awakening
1801	Cane Ridge camp meeting in Kentucky
1793-1834	William Carey in India
1833	Through the efforts of William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect, slavery is abolished in the British Empire.
1854-1905	Hudson Taylor in China
1864	Samuel Ajayi Crowther is appointed as the first African Anglican bishop.
1864	Beginning of William Booth's Salvation Army
1905-1910	Worldwide revival

Lesson 4 Key People in Church History

Carey, William (1761-1834): English Baptist missionary pioneer who sparked the Protestant missions movement. The "Father of Modern Missions."

Crowther, Samuel Ajayi (1806-1891): First African to be appointed an Anglican bishop.

Newton, John (1725-1807): Evangelical English minister and hymn-writer who aided the campaign against slavery after his conversion from the slave trade.

Taylor, Hudson (1832-1905): Founder of China Inland Mission. Led the spread of the gospel in the Chinese interior.

Wilberforce, William (1759-1833): English philanthropist and member of Parliament who labored for over thirty years to pass legislation against the slave trade. The bill was finally passed in 1833.

Lesson 4 Assignments

(1) Take a test on this lesson. The test will include dates from the “Key Events in Church History” timeline (1789-1914).

(2) Prepare a biographical summary of one of the following Christian leaders: Samuel Ajayi Crowther, Charles Finney or D.L. Moody. Your summary should include four parts:

- Biography: When did he live? Where did he live? When and where did he die?
- Events: What are the most important events in his life?
- Influence: What was his lasting influence on the Christian church?
- Application: What is one lesson for today’s church from this leader?

You have two options for presenting this summary:

- Submit a 2 page written paper to your class leader.
- Give a 3-5 minute oral presentation to your class

Lesson 4 Test

(1) The _____ was a community of upper class British evangelicals committed to social and spiritual reform.

(2) The Parliamentary leader of the British anti-slavery movement was _____.

(3) The founder of the Salvation Army was _____.

(4) The leader of the Methodist church in America during the early 19th century was _____.

(5) The “Father of Modern Missions” was _____.

(6) The first African bishop in the Church of England was _____.

(7) The first Protestant missionary to China was _____.

(8) The revival that spread through the American frontier between 1790 and 1840 was called the _____.

(9) List two of the five effects of the revival named in Question 8.

Lesson 5

The Pursuit of Holiness

A.D. 1835-Present

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Understand the causes for a loss of emphasis on holiness in the Methodist movement during the nineteenth century.
- (2) Appreciate the hunger for holiness that inspired the nineteenth century holiness denominations.
- (3) Recognize the importance of the camp meeting movement in the spread of the holiness message.
- (4) Be aware of dangers that may cause us to lose our passion for holiness in the church today.
- (5) Trace the birth and growth of the Salvation Army.
- (6) Understand that the pursuit of holiness includes both love for God and love for our neighbor.

Introduction

One of John Wesley's core beliefs was an emphasis on entire sanctification.⁴⁴ Wesley preached that through surrender to God and faith in his promises, the believer could be made pure in heart. He preached that Jesus' command in Matthew 5:48 implied a promise that could be received through faith. Through the evangelistic efforts of the Wesleys and the Methodist preachers, this message soon spread worldwide.

After the death of Francis Asbury in 1816, Methodism began to shift. The shifts were subtle, but eventually, Methodist churches no longer emphasized the doctrine of entire sanctification. Though Methodism did not deny the doctrine of Christian Perfection, few pastors preached it and few laymen lived it.

⁴⁴ The material in this lesson was developed by Reverend Robert Booth, editor of *God's Missionary Standard*.

Date (A.D.)	Event
1837	Timothy Merritt and Phoebe Palmer teach entire sanctification
1865	Founding of the Salvation Army
1867	First National Holiness Association camp meeting
1874	Robert and Hannah Smith preached holiness in England
1908	Founding of the Church of the Nazarene

Four factors led nineteenth century Methodists to put less emphasis on the doctrine of entire sanctification and on a holy separated life. The issues that undercut the message of holiness included:

- 1. Financial success.** By the mid-nineteenth century, many Methodists were comfortable financially. They lived as if they did not need to rely fully on God.
- 2. Respectability.** The Methodist churches wanted to be respectable. They discouraged emotional display and sought to be more dignified in the eyes of the community.
- 3. Liberal scholarship.** In the nineteenth century, many Methodist pastors and scholars were educated under the influence of liberal German scholars. With the emphasis on higher criticism, basic Scripture doctrines seemed to become less important.
- 4. Loss of vision.** As the Methodists dealt with internal issues, they began to flounder as a movement. No one seemed to provide a vision for the future of Methodism.

Added to these four issues, America was facing civil war. The states were divided on many issues including states rights and whether it was allowable to individuals to own slaves. The Methodist Episcopal Church became divided over this issue; and, in 1844, the denomination divided into separate churches, north and south.

In spite of these problems, the Spirit of God was moving as he always does on the hearts of men and women. From this, the flames of the Holiness Movement were ignited. In this lesson, we will study the pursuit of holiness among people who continued to hunger for a pure heart in spite of the difficulties faced in the Methodist denomination.

► Discuss the four reasons listed for the decline of emphasis on the doctrine of entire sanctification and a life of holiness among nineteenth century Methodists. Ask:

- Which of these issues are present in your society?
- How have these issues affected the church and its emphasis on a holy life?

The Spread of the Holiness Message in America (1835-1858)

Early Developments

On May 21, 1835, in New York City, Sarah Lankford testified to a pure heart. Lankford had been sponsoring prayer meetings at two Methodist Churches in New York. In August 1835, she transferred the prayer meetings to a room in her own home.

These prayer meetings became known as the Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness in New York City. While attending these meetings, Sarah's sister, Phoebe Palmer testified to an experience of entire sanctification in 1837.

Phoebe Palmer and her husband Walter, a medical doctor, were soon leading these meetings for hundreds of people who were hungry for a holy life. The Tuesday Meetings became the chief inspiration for the spread of the message of holiness in the mid-nineteenth century.

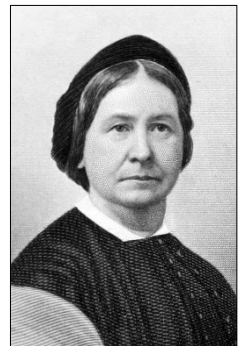
In July 1839, Rev. Timothy Merritt began publishing a magazine titled *Guide to Christian Perfection*. In the lead editorial, Merritt outlined the purpose for the magazine. He asked, "What Shall Be Done to Revive the Work of Holiness in the Church?"

The *Guide to Christian Perfection* became an important catalyst in the spread of the holiness message throughout the United States. In this monthly periodical, Merritt included testimonies about entire sanctification, had guest writers write about the message of holiness, and announced locations of holiness events. It was a holiness magazine designed to spread the message of holiness.

Great Christians You Should Know: Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874)

Phoebe Palmer⁴⁵ represents several trends in nineteenth century evangelicalism: an increased role for women in ministry, the Methodist emphasis on Christian perfection, a passion for evangelism, and a concern for social needs.

Although the Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness were started for women, men soon began attending the meetings. As many as 300 people attended each session. Hundreds of Methodist ministers testified to entire sanctification.



In 1842, Palmer published *The Way of Holiness*, which emphasized an instantaneous second work of grace. She also began serving as the editor of a periodical, *Guide to Holiness*, published by her husband, Walter Palmer. She preached revivals and campaigns in the United States and Great Britain. About 25,000 people were converted under her ministry.

⁴⁵ Image: "Mrs. Phoebe Palmer", *The Life and letters of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer* (1881), retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mrs._Phoebe_Palmer.jpg, public domain.

While Palmer is mostly remembered for her teaching on holiness, she had a passion for both social and evangelistic outreach. Among other things, Phoebe Palmer:

- Helped found Five Points Mission, the first permanent inner city mission in America.
- Engaged in prison ministry.
- Was a leading supporter of the first Methodist mission to China.
- Attempted to establish a mission to Palestine.
- Organized the Ladies Christian Association, a predecessor to the YWCA.

Palmer influenced other social reformers such as William and Catherine Booth. It was through Palmer's influence that Catherine Booth began preaching alongside William. In her book, *The Promise of the Father*, Phoebe Palmer argued that women should be involved in ministry alongside men. This book, as well as conversations with Phoebe Palmer, influenced Catherine Booth to public ministry.

Holiness teachers believed that the message of entire sanctification encouraged evangelism of the lost and service to the needy. They believed that a person with perfect love is sensitive to all areas of human need.

The Spread of the Holiness Message in America (1835-1858) (Continued)

Formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church

In 1833, a converted lumberjack, turned Methodist evangelist and pastor, experienced a turning point in his life. In a conversation with a fellow pastor, Orange Scott became aware that his church was ignoring the sin of American slavery. Scott realized that although the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, was an outspoken opponent of slavery, the Methodist church had now compromised on this matter.

Scott began to read about the abolition movement. He purchased subscriptions to the *Liberator*, an abolitionist newspaper edited by William Lloyd Garrison, and sent them to 100 Methodist pastors in New England. Other pastors joined Scott in his outcry against the Methodist church over the issue of slavery. Soon, bishops in the Methodist Church gave him a choice – he could oppose slavery or he could continue as a Methodist elder; he could not do both.

Orange Scott became convinced that holy hearts should be seen in holy lives and that holy men should seek to bring an end to social evils. On November 8, 1842, he and two other ministers withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Holy hearts should be seen in holy lives.

During the next few years, Scott published a periodical called *The True Wesleyan*. On May 31, 1843, Scott presided over a convention assembled at Utica, New York, to establish a new denomination called the Wesleyan Methodist Connection.

Scott died in 1847 at the age of 47. His final challenge was, "Let all our ministries and people keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of perfectness, and there is nothing to fear."

Formation of the Free Methodist Church

Tensions grew in the Methodist church between 1835 and 1858 over the issue of holiness. Until 1858, most of the effort focused on reforming the Methodist church. In 1859, the focus took a different turn.

Rev. Benjamin Titus Roberts was a prominent pastor in the Methodist Church. He and others began to protest what they called the "New School Methodists." They were concerned about several trends in the Methodist Church:

- The tendency to deny the importance of entire sanctification. Many Methodist pastors treated justification and entire sanctification as a single experience.
- The desire for elaborate churches and formal worship instead of the simplicity that had marked the early Methodists.
- The desire for financial success. Renting pews to church members gave wealthy people honored places and put the poor in seats this identified them as poor.
- The refusal to confront the sin of slavery.

In response to these issues, the Free Methodist Church was organized in 1860 at Pekin, New York. Some of their core beliefs were:

- 1. Freedom from sin.** They believed and taught holiness and separation from the world.
- 2. Freedom from slavery.** They believed that everyone should be treated as equal, and that no one should be enslaved.
- 3. Freedom from secrecy.** They did not allow their members to join secret groups such as the Masonic Lodge.
- 4. Freedom from church political power.** They believed that the Methodist church had forsaken her roots and was now controlling how local churches should operate.
- 5. Freedom from liturgical worship.** Believing that worship should not be as formal as it had become in the Methodist church, they promoted worship that was free of liturgy.

These five beliefs appealed to the common individual, and the Free Methodist Church soon spread far beyond New York. This denomination contributed much to the spread of the holiness message.

The Message of Holiness in Periodicals and Books

In addition to influential periodicals, such as *Guide to Holiness* and *The True Wesleyan*, many books on holiness were published during the 19th century. Randolph Foster wrote *Nature and Blessedness of Christian Purity* in 1851. Five years later, Jesse Peck wrote *The*

Central Idea of Christian Perfection. These books taught that every believer was called to live a holy life.

A Congregational preacher and educator by the name of Thomas Upham was encouraged by his wife to attend Phoebe Palmer's Tuesday Meeting in New York City. Through the Tuesday Meetings, Upham gave testimony to a deeper consecration and began to teach the message of holiness. He began to write articles in the *Palmer's Guide to Holiness*.

Upham was a deep thinker who appealed to individuals who were more educated, but who were interested in a holy life. His book titled *Principles of the Interior or Hidden Life: Designed Particularly for the Consideration of Those Who Are Seeking Assurance of Faith and Perfect Love* was widely accepted.

Another pastor who attended Palmer's Tuesday Meetings was a Presbyterian preacher named William Boardman. In 1858, he wrote a book titled *The Higher Christian Life*, based on his personal experiences and his longings for a higher level of Christianity. Boardman was not a scholar, but this book appealed to common readers. It became popular throughout the United States, Canada, and England.

Many of the early writers of Holiness periodicals and books were directly influenced by the Tuesday Meetings. Men like Thomas Upham, Matthew Simpson and John Inskip attended these meetings and experienced the work of entire sanctification. These men and others took the message of holiness back to their churches.

In the 1850s, the Palmers decided to take their teaching outside the Tuesday Meetings to larger audiences. William and Phoebe Palmer began to travel as evangelists, speaking at camp meetings and revivals on the beauty of holiness and a holy life. In 1857, they went to Canada and held a series of campaigns that helped spread the message of holiness in that nation.

The Spread of the Holiness Message in Europe and America

In 1861, the Civil War broke out in the United States. This slowed the spread of the holiness revival, but did not stop it. Walter and Phoebe Palmer spent much of this period in England and Scotland. The books of William Boardman and Thomas Upham had been widely accepted in England and prepared the way for the Palmers. During these years, Phoebe Palmer met William and Catherine Booth, the founders of the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army officially launched in 1865 and later became well-known throughout the world. William Booth stated that he believed in the doctrine and methods of the Wesleys.

The Holiness Revival of 1867

John Inskip, a Methodist pastor, was educated at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania. Even as a student at Dickinson, Inskip was interested in the doctrine of holiness, but believed that many who sought entire sanctification were deluded enthusiasts.

In 1864, Inskip's wife Martha attended a camp meeting in Sing Sing, New York. She attended with the express interest of satisfying a continuing spiritual hunger. At the camp meeting, she experienced the grace of entire sanctification. She went home and told her husband about it. Nine days later, while preaching a sermon on the need for holiness, John himself was sanctified.

Shortly after this, Inskip attended a Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness and invited the Palmers to hold special meetings at his church to teach and preach holiness. John soon led a series of widespread holiness revivals.

In 1866, a holiness preacher Rev. J. A. Wood and Mrs. Harriet Drake began to discuss ways to spread the message of holiness. Mrs. Drake offered to pay half of the expenses to organize a camp meeting that would focus on the message of holiness.

The National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness was organized and planned for Vineland, New Jersey. Critics derided the plans and suggested that it would fail. The camp meeting began on July 17, 1867, and as many as 10,000 people attended. At the close of the camp meeting, the decision was made to create an organization called the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness. Rev. John Inskip was chosen as the first president.

This organization decided to hold the next camp meeting in Pennsylvania, among the German speaking people, in order to reach them with the message of holiness. On July 14, 1868, the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness opened in Manheim, Pennsylvania. The evening service had a reported 10,000-15,000 in attendance. That crowd grew to as many as 25,000 people before the end of the meeting. Speakers included John S. Inskip, Alfred Cookman, J.A. Wood, William McDonald, George Hughes, Phoebe Palmer, and Matthew Simpson.

George Hughes described a sermon by Matthew Simpson: "His hands were uplifted. His voice in mighty tones swelled out upon the night air. The sounds of crying and groaning co-mingled. It seemed that Matthew Simpson literally pulled down the power. Hallelujahs, like the sound of many waters, rolled through the forest temple. How many plunged into the cleansing stream that night we shall never know."

As the camp closed, William McDonald reminded those gathered that "home will not be Manheim." Appealing for tolerance and even compassion for those who had not experienced full salvation, he asked his audience to avoid controversy and extreme austerity and suggested that one should show humility in professions of holiness. In

Descriptions of the Manheim Camp Meeting

"One simultaneous burst of agony and of glory was heard in all parts of the congregation; and for nearly an hour, the scene could not be described."
- Rev. John Inskip

"The scene was beyond all description. It was one of the most powerful manifestations of Divine power we have ever beheld. Several thousand people seemed to be prostrate under the mighty influence of supernatural power."
- Lancaster Daily Express newspaper

conclusion, he noted that “in the discharge of your religious duties, do not be governed by feeling, but by faith.”

The National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness continued to hold camp meetings in different locations in the United States. These camp meetings were attended by thousands. The camp meetings were attended by people from Canada, England, India, Germany and several other European countries.

The Founding of the Salvation Army

William Booth was converted under the preaching of James Caughey, a Methodist minister from America. When Walter and Phoebe Palmer traveled to England, they influenced both William and Catherine Booth. The Booths were committed to the message of holiness.

The Booths felt God’s call to reach the outcasts of society in East London. They believed that the gospel must serve both the spiritual and the physical needs of the poor. In 1865, William and Catherine Booth founded the Christian Revival Association, which was later called the East London Christian Mission.

After preaching outdoors for nearly two years, in 1867, the Booths bought a former bar and turned it into the People's Mission Hall for evangelism and social outreach. Within a few years, the mission became known as the Salvation Army and began to use military terminology. Members formed mission stations called “corps.” Salvation Army members wore uniforms and had ranks ranging from Cadet to General. Catherine Booth designed the first Salvation Army flag. By the end of 1878, the Salvation had 127 “officers.” Of these, 101 had been converted in Salvation Army meetings.

The Salvation Army was known throughout London for both evangelism and social ministry. They believed that the gospel should bring the poor to Jesus – and that the gospel should relieve the poverty of people who were freed from the bondage of alcohol and sin.

The Booths relied on donations and other humanitarian aid for the ministry of the Salvation Army. In 1890, Booth published *In Darkest England and the Way Out* to share the work of the Salvation Army with others. This book brought wide attention to William and Catherine Booth and the Salvation Army.

Great Christians You Should Know: William and Catherine Booth

William Booth⁴⁶ was born in poverty. His father died when William was thirteen, leaving the family in a terrible financial situation. As a teenager, William worked as a pawnbroker in Nottingham England to help the family. When he was fifteen, Booth was converted on his way home after attending service at Wesley Chapel. Soon after that, he testified to a pure heart after hearing the preaching of the evangelist James Caughey. Two years later, William Booth began preaching.



Booth began preaching to the outcasts and poor of Nottingham. One day he brought a group of poor boys from the streets into the Methodist church. The preacher was angry at Booth for bringing them to church. The founder of Methodism, John Wesley had been driven from Anglican Churches when he brought poor coal miners into the church; now upper class Methodist preachers were driving the poor from the Methodist churches.

Within a few years, God brought William Booth to London with a mission to bring revival to one of the great cities of the nineteenth century. In 1865, Booth began preaching in a tent in the slums. He declared that he finally was doing what God called him to do. Soon they were using an abandoned building called the East London Christian Mission.

Booth was soon preaching wherever people would listen. His listeners were often overwhelmed with a sense of the presence and power of God. By 1879, through the preaching of 127 officers, the Salvation Army held 75,000 services a year. In 1880, the Army expanded to the United States. In 1881, they went to France and a year later sent workers to India.

Though the Salvation Army began with preaching, it also became known for meeting the physical needs of the poor. By 1887, the Salvation Army was known for three core services: "soup, soap and salvation." Booth realized that the physical and social environment of the poor made it extremely difficult for them to appreciate the message of salvation and holiness. He began to work to address social issues so the way was clear for the gospel.

Booth's book *In Darkest England and the Way Out* proposed ways to end poverty in England. Booth showed that England was divided between the rich and poor. He believed that this divide harmed the nation both spiritually and economically. This book became a best-seller and showed England how to deal with social issues. Booth's ideas worked when they were applied. Thousands of people were lifted from poverty through the work of the Salvation Army.

⁴⁶ Image: "Mme Catherine Booth, Mm William Booth" by Elliott & Fry - Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, retrieved from https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/2024903/photography_ProvidedCHO_KU_Leuven_9983097240101488, public domain.

Booth's wife Catherine was as important to the Salvation Army as her husband. She worked as tirelessly as he did. Her charm helped win the support of the upper class. When she died in 1890, the streets of London were crowded with a funeral procession of more than four miles. For twenty-five years they had labored together for the Salvation Army. By 1890, the Army had 2,900 centers in thirty-four different countries.

By late in life, General Booth was praised by such diverse men as Charles Spurgeon, Winston Churchill, and Cardinal Manning. The Prince of Wales became a patron of the Salvation Army; and when the Prince was crowned as Edward VII in 1902, Booth was invited to the coronation.

In spite of his fame, General Booth never lost his passion for evangelism. During a visit to Buckingham Palace, the King asked Booth what he did for recreation. Booth replied, "Sir, some men have a passion for art, fame and gold. I have a passion for souls." Once in an outburst of concern for the lost, he exclaimed, "Oh, God, what can I say? Souls! Souls! Souls! My heart hungers for souls!"

When asked for the secret of his success, William Booth said:

I will tell you the secret. God has had all there was of me. There have been men with greater brains than I, men with greater opportunities. But from the day I got the poor of London on my heart and caught a vision of all Jesus Christ could do with them, on that day I made up my mind that God would have all of William Booth there was. And if there is anything of power in the Salvation Army today, it is because God has had all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influence of my life.

It is estimated Booth traveled 5 million miles and preached 60,000 sermons. The constant cry of William Booth was "Go for souls, and go for the worst!" God truly had all there was of William Booth.

The Spread of the Holiness Message in Europe and America (Continued)

The Salvation Army and the Message of Holiness

In 1877, William Booth said, "Holiness to the Lord is to us a fundamental truth; it stands at the forefront of our doctrines." Booth later wrote in an address to his soldiers, "Let me ask who saved you? The Living God, and he is going to sanctify you... He will do it." General Booth was committed to the message of holiness.

From the very beginning, the Salvation Army was based on Holiness teachings and principles. Salvation Army officers like Brigadier General Samuel Logan Brengle preached for holiness revivals and camp meetings for the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness. Brengle wrote many books on holiness that are still published today.

Like Orange Scott, William and Catherine Booth believed that holy hearts should result in holy lives and that holy men should seek to bring an end to social evils. This desire led the

Booths into the darkest parts of England. They established rescue shelters, homes to rehabilitate prostitutes, and fought against alcohol abuse.

Of course, not everyone was happy with the Booths and the Salvation Army. They attracted opponents for various reasons. Some attacked them for using women to preach. Others mocked them for their open-air preaching. Some claimed that the music of their bands was too loud. Often they had rotten food thrown at them. Some would try to disrupt their meetings. But in spite of the opposition, they gained many supporters. Charles Spurgeon once wrote that "five thousand policemen could not fill the Salvation Army's place in the repression of crime and disorder." The Salvation Army transformed entire communities with the power of the gospel.

In the north of England, a wealthy businessman, Frank Crossley became acquainted with the Booths and invited them to his home to hold meetings. In order to promote the message of holiness, he purchased an old music hall, Starr Hall, and built a mission in a needy area of Manchester. For many years, Starr Hall was a center of the holiness message in Manchester England.

Gradually, the Salvation Army began to send bands and corps internationally. Today there are over 15,000 corps in 126 countries.

► William Booth insisted that the gospel should speak to both spiritual and physical needs. Some Christians have preached a spiritual message while ignoring physical needs; other Christians have served physical needs while failing to proclaim the message of salvation from sin. Does your church address both needs? If your church is failing in one or the other area, discuss how you can do a better job of addressing this balance.

Other Holiness Groups in Europe

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, other holiness groups grew up in England throughout Europe. Reader Harris was one of the first attendees of the Star Hall Convention sponsored by Frank Crossley. Harris chose to work within existing churches rather than starting his own church. He formed the **Pentecostal League of Prayer** that encouraged church members of any denomination to seek a pure heart. The Pentecostal League of Prayer eventually had 13,000 members.

David Thomas was part of the Pentecostal League of Prayer. He feared that some who were entirely sanctified through the ministry of the Pentecostal League would return to their home churches and soon lose their fervor. In response to this, he formed the **International Holiness Mission**. He established twenty missions in England. One of his converts took the message to South Africa and opened a mission there.

Sometime later, Maynard James began one of the missions of the International Holiness Mission and was entirely sanctified. James and his **Calvary Holiness Church** promoted the ministry of holiness preachers such as Norman Grubb, Leonard Ravenhill, and Duncan Campbell. He often associated himself with the Church of the Nazarene, a holiness

denomination which we will discuss shortly. James also was involved with the **African Evangelist Band**, an interdenominational Holiness organization.

Along with the preaching of the Palmers and the Booths, a third husband and wife team that preached holiness in the late nineteenth century was Robert Pearsall and Hannah Whitall Smith. Their conventions became known as the **Keswick Movement**.

The Smiths were a Quaker couple from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They became prominent preachers of the holiness message in the United States and England. Hannah experienced entire sanctification after attending a Methodist Women's prayer meeting. When Robert saw the change in Hannah's life, he began seeking the same experience with God. He testified to entire sanctification at the Vineland camp meeting in 1867.

In 1874, the Smiths traveled to England to speak at holiness conventions. They became popular among English aristocrats and in the universities. Their teaching became known as the "Higher Life" or Keswick movement.

From England, the Smiths traveled to continental Europe, preaching in France, Germany, and Switzerland. The message of holiness appealed to the German Pietists and was widely accepted among them. Robert Smith preached the message of holiness in Lutheran and Reformed churches and saw many believers testify to a pure heart.

One of the German groups that grew out of Smith's revivals was called the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung* (the **Fellowship Movement**). This German holiness group had three main emphases: fellowship among Christians, evangelism, and promotion of the doctrine of holiness.

After Smith returned from the continent, he organized the Brighton Convention in England. Similar in style to the National Camp Meetings, this convention attracted over 8,000 people. The Higher Life movement drew preachers such as J. Hudson Taylor, D.L. Moody, Evan Hopkins, Charles Cullis, and many others. The Smiths and their associates also encouraged groups such as the Salvation Army and Pentecostal League to continue to proclaim the message of holiness.

The Founding of the Church of the Nazarene

By the early twentieth century, it was apparent that holiness preachers had failed in their attempts to reform the Methodist Church in the United States. In response, holiness leaders began to build denominations apart from the Methodist Church.

In October 1895, Phineas Bresee and approximately 100 others organized the Church of the Nazarene at Los Angeles. They believed entire sanctification was received through faith in Christ. They preached that Christians who are sanctified should follow Christ's example and preach to the poor.

In 1907, the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America and the Church of the Nazarene were brought into association. They united in 1908 and were known as the Pentecostal

Church of the Nazarene. A few years later, the denomination dropped the word Pentecostal and are known today as the Church of the Nazarene. Today, the Nazarenes have around 30,000 churches and over 2 million members worldwide.

The Wesleyan Message in the Twentieth Century

The early twentieth century was a turbulent time in Methodism as Wesleyans faced the attacks of German liberalism.⁴⁷ Though British Methodists often accepted the teachings of modernism, many American Methodists sought to restore the vitality of historic Methodism.

Seeking to return to their holiness roots, the Pilgrim Holiness Church and Church of the Nazarene separated from the Methodist Church. In the early twentieth century, a new National Holiness Association returned to the traditional Methodist emphases of revival and Christian holiness.

While the Methodist denomination followed other mainline denominations into liberalism and decline, advocates of holiness formed new congregations to preserve the values represented in the early Methodist revival. Holiness churches sent out missionaries, established publishing houses and periodicals, and founded Bible colleges to train pastors and Christian workers.

Throughout the twentieth century, many other holiness churches have continued to proclaim the message preached by the Wesleys – the possibility of a pure heart that is filled with perfect love towards God and towards our neighbor. They have continued to proclaim that Jesus' call to "Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect" implies a promise that God will make us holy as we seek him in faith.

Today, as in the early Methodist movement, conflicts arise between the desire for cultural relevance and the demands of biblical truth. Both in the United States and abroad, Methodists must learn to restate our historic message for the needs of today's world. The message that all men need to be saved; all men can be saved; all men can know they are saved; and all men can be saved to the uttermost is needed today just as it was in the eighteenth century. Most people who teach holiness today do not go under the Methodist, but they hold to the doctrines taught by the Wesleys. They continue to offer a message of hope in Christ to our world.

Holiness in Action: Loving God and Loving Our Neighbor

John Wesley defined "Christian Perfection" as perfect love for God and perfect love for one's neighbor. He understood that God's standard in 1 Peter 1:15-16 and Matthew 5:48 is not the absolute perfection of God, the perfection of angels, or the perfection of Adam before the fall. To be "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"⁴⁸ means to love as God loves.

⁴⁷ This section was adapted from William Snider, "Paper on Twentieth Century Methodism."

⁴⁸ Matthew 5:48

This standard of perfection is seen in the ministry of John and Charles Wesley. They truly loved God and sought to live careful, disciplined lives that reflected that love. They were committed to serving God, and they traveled incessantly to spread his Word.

The Wesleys loved God, and they loved their neighbor. They gave themselves to serving those who were hurting. Charles spent nights with condemned prisoners facing the gallows. John fought the social ills that created a class of people who could never rise above poverty. One of John's last letters encouraged William Wilberforce to continue the battle against slavery. The Wesleys believed and practiced holiness; they loved God and they loved their neighbor.

Phoebe Palmer was another teacher of holiness who understood that holiness means loving God *and* loving one's neighbor. Mrs. Palmer was passionate in her pursuit of a careful, holy life. She was also committed to serving the needs of the poor in places such as the slums of New York City, prisons, and other places where she found suffering humanity. Phoebe Palmer believed and practiced holiness; she loved God, and she loved her neighbor.

William and Catherine Booth loved God. They built an organization so disciplined in its pursuit of God that it could be called an "army." They also loved their neighbors. The Booths could not accept a gospel that promised a future heaven without addressing suffering in this world. They remembered Jesus' first public statement.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.⁴⁹

► At their best, holiness people were known both for their love for God and their love for other people. When people think of your church, do they think of a church that loves God *and* that loves people? How can you best communicate that love to your world?

Conclusion: The Holiness Message Today

Much has changed since the holiness revival of the nineteenth century. Some organizations that were the initial proponents of the doctrine of holiness no longer exist. The holiness movement has had its share of problems and divisions.

However, in spite of difficulties, there are more groups that proclaim the message of holiness than ever before. Although some early holiness groups have abandoned the pursuit of a holy life, other holiness denominations continue to proclaim the possibility of a pure heart and of victory over willful sin.

There appears to be a new awakening within many churches to the call to holiness. There is a desire to be like Jesus and to experience his indwelling power. There is a desire to seek a doctrine of holiness stated clearly and with honesty. The message of Orange Scott, the

⁴⁹ Luke 4:18

founder of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, is good for us to remember: holy hearts should be seen in holy lives.

Lesson 5 Key Events in Wesleyan History

Date (A.D.)	Event
1837	Timothy Merritt founds the Guide to Christian Perfection, later Guide to Holiness.
1837	Phoebe Worrall Palmer experiences entire sanctification.
1843	Orange Scott organizes the Wesleyan Methodist Connection.
1857	Walter and Phoebe Palmer travel to Canada to preach and teach Holiness. A transforming revival takes place in Canada.
1860	B.T. Roberts founds the Free Methodist Church.
1865	William and Catherine Booth found the Salvation Army.
1867	The first National Holiness Association (NHA) camp meeting is held in Vineland, New Jersey.
1868	The second NHA camp meeting attracts around 25,000 people to Manheim, Pennsylvania. It is called "Pentecost."
1874	Robert Pearsall Smith and his wife Hannah Whitall Smith travel to England to preach Holiness.
1908	The Church of the Nazarene is founded.

Lesson 5 Key People in the Wesleyan Tradition

Booth, William (1829-1912) **and Catherine** (1829-1890): Founders of the Salvation Army, a holiness organization dedicated to serving the poor.

Bresee, Phineas (1838-1915): Helped form the Church of the Nazarene with C. W. Ruth and others.

Inskip, John (1816-1883): A Methodist preacher and Northern Army Chaplain during the Civil War who became the first president of the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness. This organization helped promote the message of holiness in the late 19th century.

Merritt, Timothy (1775-1845): A Methodist pastor who started the *Guide to Christian Perfection*. The Palmers later purchased this magazine and renamed it the *Guide to Holiness*.

Palmer, Phoebe (1807-1874): Considered the mother of the Holiness Movement. She was influential through the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness, the *Guide to Holiness* and her books. She promoted women in public ministry and was influential in the ministry of Catherine Booth and Hannah Whitall Smith.

Roberts, Benjamin Titus (1823-1893): The founder of the Free Methodist Church. Resisting the formality of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he started a church that preached the doctrine of Holiness that still exists today.

Scott, Orange (1800-1847): Instrumental in the founding of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, which became the Wesleyan Methodist Church. He was appalled at the lack of emphasis on holiness and the toleration of slavery in the Methodist Church.

Smith, Robert (1827-1898) **and Hannah Whitall** (1832-1911): Helped spur the message of the Higher Life Movement in Europe. This became known as the Keswick Movement. Hannah is known for her bestseller, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*.

Lesson 5 Assignments

(1) Take a test on this lesson. The test will include dates from the "Key Events in Wesleyan History" timeline (1837-1908).

(2) Prepare a biographical summary of one of the following Christian leaders: Phoebe Palmer, William Booth, or Johan Inskip. Your summary should include four parts:

- Biography: When did he live? Where did he live? When and where did he die?
- Events: What are the most important events in his life?
- Influence: What was his lasting influence on the Christian church?
- Application: What is one lesson for today's church from this leader?

You have two options for presenting this summary:

- Submit a 2 page written paper to your class leader.
- Give a 3-5 minute oral presentation to your class

Lesson 5 Test

(1) List the four factors that led nineteenth century Methodists to put less emphasis on the doctrine of entire sanctification.

(2) Sarah Lankford and her sister _____ led the Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness.

(3) The founder of the Wesleyan Methodist Church was _____. He was inspired to start this church by a conviction that holy hearts should be seen in holy lives.

(4) The Free Methodist Church believed in

- Freedom from _____
- Freedom from _____
- Freedom from secrecy
- Freedom from church _____
- Freedom from liturgical _____

(5) _____ was the first president of the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness.

(6) _____ founded the Salvation Army, an organization committed to evangelism, the message of holiness, and serving the needs of the poor.

(7) Robert Pearsall and Hannah Whitall Smith established holiness conventions in England that became known as the _____.

(8) Phineas _____ helped organize the Church of the Nazarene.

Lesson 6

An Age of Change

The 20th Century

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Trace the impact of Darwinism and German biblical criticism on twentieth century liberalism.
- (2) Recognize the failure of modernist theologies to meet man's deepest needs.
- (3) Understand evangelical responses to modernism.
- (4) See the differences between liberal and evangelical approaches to church unity.
- (5) Appreciate the worldwide growth of the church during the twentieth century.

Introduction

People who have hyperopia (farsightedness) see far away objects more clearly than they see nearby objects. Things far away are clear, but nearby objects are blurry. A person with farsightedness can see the leaves on a distant tree more clearly than they can see the print on a book in their hands.

History tends to be a hyperopic subject! It is easier to evaluate the distant past than the recent past. After 1,700 years, it is obvious that Constantine's Edict of Milan in A.D. 313 was a momentous event in church history. However, it may not have seemed as important in A.D. 315. It is only from a distance that we can fully evaluate the importance of events.

This makes the study of twentieth century church history more difficult than the study of earlier centuries. We do not know which twentieth century events will have the greatest long-term impact on the church. Some things that are important today may not seem important from the perspective of the twenty-third century.

Date (A.D.)	Event
1910	Edinburgh Missionary Conference
1934	Wycliffe Bible Translators established
1941	Founding of National Association of Evangelicals
1947	Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls
1949	Billy Graham's crusades begin
1978-1988	International Council on Biblical Inerrancy

Over time, our view of church history becomes clearer. For example, a history of the church in 1430 might have included something like this:

John Wycliffe attempted to make changes in the church in England. He translated the Bible into English, so the laity could read and interpret Scripture. He criticized the empty rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. However, Wycliffe failed in his efforts. He died before his Bible translation was complete. His writings were banned, and the Council of Constance declared him a heretic. Only a few wandering preachers continue to teach Wycliffe's doctrines. Wycliffe was a good man, but he failed to accomplish his purpose.

A history of the church written in 1500 would view Wycliffe differently. It would show Wycliffe's influence on William Tyndale:

John Wycliffe was an inspiring church leader. He died before completing his work, but men like the Lollards and William Tyndale have continued to spread the ideas that Wycliffe promoted. His influence is still present today.

A history of the church written in 1900 would view Wycliffe in light of the Reformation:

John Wycliffe was the "Morningstar of the Reformation." Although he died before completing his translation, his influence led William Tyndale to complete a modern English translation. Other reformers such as Martin Luther were inspired by Wycliffe's example. Few people have had a greater impact on the history of the church than John Wycliffe.

It takes time to evaluate history. In this lesson, we will look at a few topics that appear to be important in church history. I may overlook topics that will someday be seen as more important than the topics I have chosen, but the topics I have chosen show some of the trends in the contemporary church.

Perhaps the best way to summarize twentieth century church history is to call it an "Age of Change." Theologically, both modernism and fundamentalism brought changes to the church. In a time of secularization and doctrinal apostasy, evangelicals continued to have a

major influence in many parts of the world. The growth of the church in the Majority World changed the face of Christianity from a largely European/American church to a largely southern and eastern church.

The Impact of Liberal Theology on the Twentieth Century Church

After reading about the revivals and missionary outreach of the early nineteenth century, a student might think that the future of the church would have no dark spots. Unfortunately, in the mid-nineteenth century, two men launched attacks that undermined the faith of many believers. Charles Darwin, a scientist, and Julius Wellhausen, a Bible scholar, proposed theories that denied the truth of Scripture.

Darwin's theory of evolution and Wellhausen's "higher criticism" destroyed the faith of many people in the reliability of Scripture. This led to the modernism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The history of the twentieth century church shows the conflict between modernist theologies and evangelicalism. In this lesson, we will look at some of the major theological trends that influenced the twentieth century church.

Liberalism

In the late nineteenth century, two philosophical developments gave rise to liberalism in the church.

In 1859, Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* proposed the **theory of evolution**. Building on the Enlightenment assumptions that we saw in Lesson 3, this theory proposed a view of biological development in which God was unnecessary. Darwin and his followers argued that life arose from non-living forms through a process of natural selection occurring over millions of years. This theory denied the creation account in Genesis 1-2. For pastors who accepted this theory, Genesis was no longer an authoritative account of creation.

German "higher critics" such as Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) proposed that man's religious views evolved into the monotheism taught in the Bible. Wellhausen rejected Moses as the author of the Pentateuch. He argued that much of the Bible was written by later authors rather than the authors claimed in Scripture. **As with the theory of evolution, this undermined the authority of Scripture.** Eventually, liberal critics denied the biblical accounts of miracles, the necessity of the atoning death of Christ, and even the deity of Jesus Christ.

Pastors who accepted these theories could no longer point to the Bible as the inspired, infallible Word of God. Instead, they were left with a fallible book composed by fallible authors. Eventually, pastors trained in liberal seminaries spread these false ideas to laymen in many churches.

As Darwinism and German Higher Criticism spread through the seminaries that train pastors, liberal theologians abandoned an emphasis on biblical truth and proposed a "Social Gospel" dealing with the needs of society while ignoring spiritual issues. Social action

replaced the spiritual dimension of the gospel. Men like Walter Rauschenbusch taught that the kingdom of God meant the death of capitalism and the worldwide growth of socialism.

Many liberal pastors taught universalism, with God as the loving "Father of all mankind" who would never send people to hell. They taught humanism, with man as essentially good. Adolph von Harnack, a leading liberal theologian in the early twentieth century, defined the essence of Christianity as "the universal fatherhood of God, the universal brotherhood of man, and the infinite value of the soul." Liberal theology taught that man would continue to improve himself until the world was a perfect place.

In response, some conservative Christians such as D.L. Moody avoided theological debate. Moody wrote, "The world is a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said, 'Save all you can.'" He avoided all discussions of modern theology. Like some seventeenth century Pietist groups, those who followed this approach determined to preach the Bible and avoid conflict with liberal theologians.

Other conservative Christians sought to develop an academic response to liberalism. In the late nineteenth century, Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield organized a conference in Niagara, New York, to discuss the fundamentals of biblical orthodoxy. From this conference, a series of essays were published between 1910 and 1915 on five "fundamentals" of the faith:

1. The inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture
2. The deity of Jesus Christ
3. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ
4. The substitutionary death of Jesus Christ
5. The physical resurrection and bodily return of Christ to the earth

Conflict between these two parties (liberalism and fundamentalism) continued into the early twentieth century. By 1914, liberal theology had impacted every major Protestant denomination in some way.

A leading liberal pastor, Harry Emerson Fosdick, stated his goal: to make it possible "for a man to be both an intelligent modern and a serious Christian."⁵⁰ Fosdick preached a sermon attacking fundamentalist teaching. He insisted that the Bible contained errors, that the doctrine of the virgin birth was unnecessary, and that the doctrine of a bodily Second Coming was absurd. Fosdick defined preaching as "personal counseling for a group." Liberal theologians no longer expected the gospel to transform the life of a sinner into a saint.

Like the Gnostics in the early church and the heretics of later centuries, liberal theologians believed that they must change the gospel in order to make it "fit" the surrounding world. However, the gospel needs no apology.

Richard Niebuhr pointed to the failure of liberalism that preached "a God without wrath who brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through a Christ without a cross."⁵¹ This is far removed from the gospel of the New Testament. By 1914, the institutional church stood in need of revival.

"Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession...

grace without discipleship,
grace without the cross,
grace without Jesus Christ.

Costly grace is costly because
it calls us to follow,
and it is grace because
it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.

It is costly because
it costs a man his life,
and it is grace because
it gives a man the only true life.

It is costly because it condemns sin,
and grace because it justifies the sinner.

Above all, it is costly because
it cost God the life of his Son.

Above all, it is grace because
God did not count his Son
too high a price to pay."

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer,
responding to liberal theology

⁵⁰ Quoted in Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 3rd edition (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2008), 394-395.

⁵¹ Ibid, 395.

Liberal Theology	Evangelical Theology
The Bible is a fallible human record of religious development. It evolved over time.	The Bible is divinely inspired and is an authoritative revelation of God and his nature.
Man is basically good. He becomes a sinner only because he is influenced by his environment.	Man is a sinner by nature. Every human needs to be redeemed through the atoning death of Jesus Christ.
Jesus was a good man who provided a moral example for others.	Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for man's sin and who conquered death in the resurrection. He is the only answer to man's need for redemption.
The first job of the church is social justice and reformation of society.	The first job of the church is evangelism and transformation.

Neo-Orthodoxy

Orthodoxy is "right doctrine," doctrine that is faithful to Scripture. In response to the failure of liberalism, Karl Barth (1886-1968), Emil Brunner (1889-1966), and their followers proposed neo-orthodoxy, a "new orthodoxy." They believed that they could maintain faithfulness to the core teachings of Scripture while accepting the teachings of modern higher criticism.

Barth was committed to liberal theology until he became a pastor. He soon found that liberal theology did not meet the deep needs of the people in his local church. As a result, he turned from the teachings of liberalism and returned to orthodox theology. Unlike liberal theologians, Barth recognized man's sinfulness and God's transcendence.

However, Barth and his followers continued to accept liberal views that denied the inerrancy of Scripture. Neo-orthodox theologians argued that the biblical accounts of miracles were "myths" that were intended to teach spiritual truths, even though the historical facts were inaccurate. They tried to separate historical truth from spiritual truth.

Neo-orthodox theologians said that the Bible "contains" God's Word, but is not truly inspired until the Holy Spirit speaks it to the individual reader. Neo-orthodox theologians confused the Spirit's ministry of illumination to the reader with the Spirit's earlier ministry of inspiration of the author.

Liberation Theology

In the late twentieth century, radical theologians denied many essential tenets of the Christian faith. They insisted that God is no longer relevant to the needs of the modern world. Some said, "For modern man, God is dead."

The most influential radical theology was liberation theology. Liberation theology developed in response to the needs of the poor and oppressed. It was very popular in Latin America. Liberation theology focuses on human efforts, rather than God's transcendence. Liberation theology is Marxist in its view of human history. Like earlier liberal theology, liberation theology relies on human solutions to man's needs. Rather than salvation through faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ, liberation theology allowed humanity to attempt to "save" itself through human effort and social programs.

Secularization

Another factor that affected the church in the late nineteenth century was the growth of cities. The "Industrial Revolution" in Europe and America encouraged the growth of factories and large cities. Labor unions and government organizations took over functions that the parish church provided in rural communities. Sunday, the workers' only day off, was often given to recreation not worship. Some writers have argued that the factory was a more effective enemy of religion than Darwin. Materialism rather than science drove many people from worship.

By the twentieth century, much of the western world accepted a secular viewpoint that assumed that Christianity has no relevance to the modern world. Many people never asked, "Are the claims of Christianity true?" They simply ignored religion as irrelevant to daily life. We call this mindset the secularization of society.

The Enlightenment attacked the intellectual foundations of the Christian faith; secularization attacked its social foundation. The Enlightenment affected intellectuals; secularization affected the working classes. Because of secularization, most people in the west began to live as if Christianity did not matter. Since Constantine's conversion, Christianity had been the major influence on European culture. In the twentieth century, Christianity was no longer the center of European life. Today, Europe is called "post-Christian" Europe.

► Of the issues listed in this section (liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, liberation theology, and secularism), which are the most influential in your culture? Do these issues affect the churches in your society? If so, how can you respond as an evangelical leader?

Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century

In the early twentieth century, many people believed that evangelical Christianity would disappear. Between modernist theologians, an increasingly secular Europe, and the spread of humanistic ideas in America, it appeared that the day of orthodox Christianity was past.

However, the first half of the twentieth century revealed the weakness of liberal theology. Ten million deaths in World War I and a worldwide economic depression in the 1920s shattered the optimistic assumptions of liberalism. These wars showed that man is not basically good; the world is not "heaven on earth." By 1930, mainline liberalism was in decline.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 demonstrated the trustworthiness of Scripture. Contrary to liberal critics who claimed that our modern Bible is untrustworthy, the Dead Sea Scrolls showed that modern copies of the Hebrew Bible were almost identical to ancient copies. God had preserved his Word for his people.

Today, modernist theologies have been rejected. The fastest growing churches in the world are evangelical. There are differences between evangelical denominations, but they hold certain principles in common: the authority of Scripture, orthodox Christian doctrine, and the necessity of a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

Evangelicals in the 1940s began to seek a way to maintain respect for the authority of Scripture while also engaging with the modern world. This led to a period of renewal in which a respect for Scripture was combined with the historic evangelical focus on outreach to the world. In 1941, a group of conservative evangelicals met at Moody Bible Institute to organize the **National Association of Evangelicals**. This organization was intended to respond to the liberal National Council of Churches. The NAE pursued outreach through:

- *The National Religious Broadcasters* developed radio and television programs.
- *The Chaplains Commission* supported outreach to the military.
- *The World Relief Commission* provided emergency humanitarian assistance to areas that suffered disasters.
- *The Mission Exchange* encouraged cooperation between missionary organizations.

For much of the world, **Billy Graham** is the face of evangelical outreach. His evangelistic crusades reached around the world. Carl F. H. Henry, a colleague of Graham, attempted to communicate the historic message of Christianity to the modern world in a new magazine, *Christianity Today*.

"The evangelical task primarily is the preaching of the Gospel, in the interest of individual regeneration by the supernatural grace of God, in such a way that divine redemption can be recognized as the best solution of our problems, individual and social."
- Carl. F. H. Henry

Twentieth century evangelicals sought to relate Scripture to the spiritual, moral, and social needs of the modern world. Just as voluntary societies led social reform and missions outreach in the nineteenth century, **para-church organizations** led evangelical outreach in the late twentieth century.⁵² Along with the crusades of Billy Graham and other evangelists, groups were established to focus on particular types of outreach:

- *Campus Crusade* was organized by Bill Bright to reach university students.
- *Youth for Christ* focused on high school age students.

⁵² A parachurch organization is a religious organization established independently of church denominations.

- The *Navigators* organization was founded by Dawson Trotman to evangelize sailors during World War II.
- *Gideons International* distributed Bibles in schools, prisons, and hotels.
- Groups such as *World Vision International* and *Samaritan's Purse* spread the gospel through social action.

A primary area of disagreement between modernists and evangelicals was the inerrancy of Scripture. In 1978, 200 evangelical leaders met in Chicago, Illinois, and formed the **International Council on Biblical Inerrancy**. They drafted the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" to address the doctrine of Scripture. The Chicago Statement:

- Explains why the doctrine of inerrancy of Scripture is important for Christians.
- Affirms Scripture as the final authority over individual conscience, tradition, or church teachings.
- States that God worked through human writers without overriding their personalities.
- Shows that only the original manuscripts (not later copies) are without error. However, the Chicago Statement also affirms that no doctrines or elements of Christian belief are affected by the absence of the original manuscripts.
- Denies that Scripture contradicts itself.
- Provides guidelines for interpreting Scripture properly.
- Warns of the dangers to the church and individual believers if inerrancy is rejected.

The Chicago Statement helps pastors and teachers understand important principles of biblical interpretation and give guidance for defending the inerrancy of Scripture.⁵³

Great Christians You Should Know: C.S. Lewis (1898-1963)

C.S. Lewis shows the transforming power of the gospel. Lewis was born into a Christian family in Ireland. His great-grandfather was a Methodist minister, and his grandfather was an evangelical Anglican. However, Lewis renounced Christianity as a young boy. Like many other people, Lewis failed to reconcile a loving God with the presence of pain and suffering in this world. Lewis's mother died of cancer when he was only nine years old. Lewis decided that if God existed, he was a cruel God. Within three years, Lewis had declared himself an atheist.

⁵³ The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy is available online at <http://www.alliancenet.org/the-chicago-statement-on-biblical-inerrancy> (Accessed May 14, 2021)

Lewis became a brilliant student of literature at Oxford University. After he graduated, he was elected to a fellowship at Magdalen College and became one of the most popular lecturers at Oxford.

As Lewis continued to study English literature, he realized that Christian authors such as John Milton, Herbert Spenser, George MacDonald, and G.K. Chesterton had a depth that he missed in other literature. In addition, two of Lewis's best friends on the English faculty at Magdalen, Hugo Dyson and J.R.R. Tolkien, were Christians. Through discussions with these men and his own readings, Lewis was forced to recognize the intellectual emptiness of atheism. In 1929, Lewis admitted the reality of God's existence and became "the most reluctant convert in all England." At this point, Lewis confessed the truth of theism ("God is God"); he had not yet become a Christian.

Two years later, Lewis surrendered to Christ. This time, Lewis had a true change of heart, not just a mental assent to God's existence. Lewis was no longer a "reluctant convert"; now he was "surprised by joy."

After his conversion, Lewis poured his energies into his faith. As expected, Lewis' public profession of his Christian faith came at a cost. Although he was one of the university's most popular lecturers and the author of respected literary works, Oxford never offered Lewis a full professorship. This was due largely to the opposition of his disbelieving colleagues.

Lewis became one of the most influential Christian writers of the twentieth century. He wrote twenty-five books addressing many aspects of Christian belief. In an age of growing secularism, Lewis was a gifted defender of the Christian faith. Although he was a brilliant scholar, Lewis had the ability to speak to the common listener as effectively as he lectured to Oxford scholars. During World War II, Lewis recorded a series of radio broadcasts in which he explained the Christian faith for a broad non-academic audience. These broadcasts became the basis of *Mere Christianity*, one of the most influential books of the twentieth century.

Lewis also wrote for children. Sixty years after they were first published, the seven volume *Chronicles of Narnia* are still some of the best loved children's literature in the world. These children's books tell the story of a redeemer (portrayed as the great lion Aslan) who gives his life to rescue a world that is in bondage to the power of evil. Through a beautiful allegory, Lewis shows children the power of redemption.

Lewis's writing focused on the essential truths of Christianity. In a time when liberals wanted to abandon core doctrines in order to make Christianity appealing to intellectuals, Lewis laid an apologetic foundation by showing that Christian orthodoxy is intellectually defensible. *Mere Christianity* showed an ecumenism based on orthodoxy, not on the abandonment of biblical truth.

Finally, C.S. Lewis is another example of how true Christian faith is in our relationship to the world around us. Because of his writings, Lewis became quite wealthy. However, he refused to change his simple way of life. Instead, he devoted the royalties from his books to charity. He supported many poor families, provided education for orphans, and gave money to dozens of charities and church organizations. This former atheist was truly transformed by the power of the gospel.

Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century (Continued)

The Rise of Pentecostalism

One of the most controversial aspects of the twentieth century evangelical renewal is the rise of Pentecostalism. This movement began in 1906 with a revival at Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. Pentecostals claimed the ability to speak in “unknown tongues.” Christians from around the world visited Azusa Street.

Pentecostalism appealed to a broad range of social and economic classes. Pentecostalism attracted the poor and lower social classes with a message of deliverance. It also appealed to people of all economic classes who were drawn to its message of spiritual power.

The Assemblies of God, the Church of God in Christ, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church are just a few of the denominations that sprang up from this movement. In addition, Pentecostal or “charismatic” groups developed within denominations such as the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches.

During the late twentieth century, Pentecostal churches were the fastest growing churches in Africa and Asia. According to the *Atlas of Global Christianity*, as many as 614 million people are a part of the Pentecostal movement today.⁵⁴ This growth is based on a strong emphasis on evangelism and a message that testifies to the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lives.

Ecumenical Movements in the Twentieth Century

Prior to the Reformation, to be “Christian” meant to be either Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox. In the sixteenth century, to be Protestant meant to be Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, or Anglican. With the rise of denominations following the Peace of Augsburg and the Westminster Assembly, the Christian church divided into an ever-expanding number of groups.⁵⁵

By the early twentieth century, the United States alone had more than 200 Protestant denominations. In response, a series of ecumenical movements attempted to reunite

⁵⁴ While many American Christians relate Pentecostalism primarily with speaking in unknown tongues, this is not the primary identifier in other countries. In a study of Nigerian Pentecostals, Dr. Danny McCain from the University of Jos found that less than half of Pentecostals in Nigeria claimed to speak in tongues.

⁵⁵ If you have forgotten these terms, review the section in Lesson 2 on “The Thirty Years War and the Rise of Denominations.”

Christians. "Ecumenical" movements were efforts to bring better understanding and unity between different Christian groups. There were two major approaches to this effort: liberal and evangelical.

The Liberal Ecumenical Movement

Beginning in 1846, the Evangelical Alliance attempted to unite European churches. The American Federal Council of Churches, founded in 1908, united thirty-one, mostly liberal, American denominations. The Federal Council of Churches later became the National Council of Churches of Christ.

The largest ecumenical organization, the World Council of Churches grew out of the Edinburgh International Missionary Conference of 1910. Following this conference, four Christian leaders (John R. Mott from America, Charles H. Brent from Canada, Nathan Söderblom from Sweden, and Willem A. Visser't Hooft from Holland) organized a World Conference on Faith. This conference first met in 1927 and led to the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948.

The first World Council of Churches included 147 denominations from 44 countries. Today, there are 345 member denominations from 110 countries.

Unfortunately, from the beginning, the World Council of Churches was strongly influenced by liberal theology. The World Council was more interested in social, economic, and political causes than in biblical orthodoxy. For instance, at the 1973 World Council conference, "salvation" was defined as "the humanizing of society to free man from oppression and create a new society on earth." The 1975 World Council conference supported "nonmilitary guerilla revolutions and liberation theology."⁵⁶

Unity Among Evangelicals

Evangelicals agreed with liberals that Christians should seek unity. However, evangelicals recognized that true biblical unity must be grounded on the authority of Scripture. In the 1940s, the National Association of Evangelicals sought to unite believers who shared a commitment to biblical authority.

For evangelicals, the greatest impetus to church unity was world evangelism. Mass crusades by Billy Graham and Luis Palau continued the evangelistic approach of D.L. Moody. As churches cooperated to organize a crusade, they often gained a greater respect for each other.

Beyond individual evangelistic efforts, a series of conferences on evangelism brought together Christians from many different denominational backgrounds. The 1966 World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin drew 1,200 participants from more than 100 countries.

⁵⁶ Cited in Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 3rd edition (Michigan: Zondervan, 1996), 476.

The 1974 Lausanne International Congress on World Evangelization drew 2,500 participants from 150 countries. Led by an American evangelist, Billy Graham, and a British Anglican minister, John R.W. Stott, participants at the Congress signed the "Lausanne Covenant" affirming that "the church's visible unity in truth is God's purpose." The Covenant stated two purposes for church unity:

1. Theologically, the unity of the church reflects the unity of the Trinity. The church's unity is a gift of God through the Spirit, made possible by the cross of Christ.
2. Practically, the unity of the church enables effective world evangelization.⁵⁷

Unlike conferences of the World Council of Churches, the Lausanne Congress insisted that doctrine is essential for the task of world evangelization. The Congress affirmed the divine inspiration and infallibility of Scripture and dependence on Christ alone for salvation. The conference recognized that the gospel includes *both* social justice and evangelism.

In 1986, a follow-up conference in Amsterdam drew 8,200 evangelists, mostly from the Majority World. Again, the congress agreed that world evangelization and doctrinal integrity are essential to the unity of the church.

The Growth of the Worldwide Church

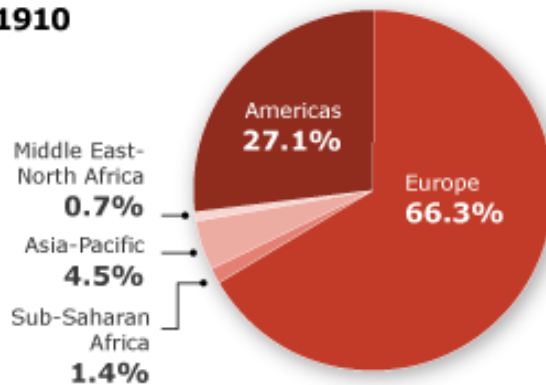
At the time of the 1910 International Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, there were 200 million Protestants worldwide. One hundred years later, there were approximately 800 million Protestants around the world. Approximately 300 million of these are evangelicals.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 3rd edition (USA: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 449

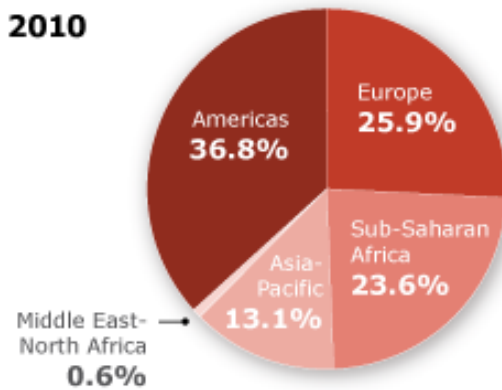
⁵⁸ Statistics in this lesson come from *World Christian Database* (2008 version) and Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity through the Centuries* (1996). In countries such as China, estimates vary widely. The information on the Chinese missionary movement comes from Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, (Zondervan, 2007).

Regional Distribution of Christians

1910



2010



Figures for 1910 are from a Pew Forum analysis of data from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life • *Global Christianity*, December 2011

Today,⁵⁹ more than 50,000 missionaries *from* Africa, Asia, and Latin America minister in other nations. Churches in Korea and China are sending thousands of missionaries to other countries. The "Back to Jerusalem" movement in China is committed to taking the gospel to Muslims in central Asia and north Africa. House church leaders have called for 100,000 missionaries to go from China, and predict that 10,000 of these will die as martyrs. By 2025, there may be more foreign missionaries from China than from any other nation in the world.

Meanwhile, Europe, the historic center of Christendom, has become a mission field. Less than 10% of UK citizens attend church on a weekly basis; more than 50% *never* attend church. In Denmark and Sweden, less than one person in 20 attends church. Twenty-first century Christianity is truly a "world faith," not a "white man's religion."

The following chart shows the change in global Christianity from 1900 to 2005. Six countries listed in the top ten nations in 2005 were not on the list in 1900. Five of the new nations are from Asia and Africa. From 10 million Christians in 1900, Africa now has nearly 500 million professing Christians. It is estimated that five new congregations *per day* are planted in Africa. Scholars predict that by 2050, eight of the top ten Christian nations will be in Asia and Africa.

⁵⁹ Image: "Regional Distribution of Christians" from "Global Christianity – A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population" Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (Dec. 19, 2011) retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>, free to use with attribution.

Most Christians in 1900	Most Christians in 2005	Most Christians in 2050 (Projected)
USA	USA	USA
Russia	Brazil	China
Germany	China	Brazil
France	Mexico	Congo-Zaire
Britain	Russia	India
Italy	Philippines	Mexico
Ukraine	India	Nigeria
Poland	Germany	Philippines
Spain	Nigeria	Ethiopia
Brazil	Congo-Zaire	Uganda


Factors that are important in the growth of the evangelical church worldwide include:

A Commitment to Biblical Authority

Mainline churches lost large percentages of their membership during the twentieth century. Between 1925 and 1985, the number of missionaries from liberal denominations decreased from 11,000 to 3,000. By contrast, between 1953 and 1985, the number of evangelical missionaries tripled from 10,000 to more than 35,000. A study of liberal denominations found a pattern like this:

1. Pastors teach that Scripture is not the inspired Word of God, biblical accounts of miracles are myths, and faith in Christ is one of many paths to salvation.
2. The line between belief and unbelief disappears. The church becomes no more than a social institution.
3. People are unwilling to devote their lives to a social organization devoted to a myth. The church shrinks and evangelistic/mission commitment dwindles.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ *Vanishing Boundaries*. Cited in Timothy Paul Jones, *Christian History Made Easy* (CA: Rose Publishing, 2009), 167

Downward Progression of Liberal Denominations	
	1. Denial of the inspiration of Scripture.
	2. The church becomes a social institution.
	3. Commitment to evangelism and mission dwindles.

In the same years that liberal denominations were dwindling, conservative denominations grew significantly. To show three examples of many, between 1965 and 1985:

- The Assemblies of God doubled.
- The Church of the Nazarene increased nearly 50 percent.
- The Southern Baptist Convention grew nearly 40 percent.

The church grows when the Bible is preached and applied in the lives of believers. When the authority of Scripture is denied, when pastors fail to preach biblical sermons, and when laymen live in willful disobedience to the principles of Scripture, the church suffers.

The Gospel Is Translated for the World: Wycliffe Bible Translators

It is good to promote the authority of Scripture, but what about people who do not have the Bible in their own language? In 1917, a missionary named Cameron Townsend traveled to Guatemala to minister. He took Spanish Bibles for the people, but discovered that the people in his village did not read Spanish. They spoke Cakchiquel, a language without a Bible.

In 1934, Townsend started a school to train people to translate the Bible. Then, in 1942, he founded Wycliffe Bible Translators for the purpose of providing a Bible translation in every language around the globe.

As of 2013, the entire Bible has been translated into more than 500 languages; the New Testament has been translated into more than 1,800 languages; and at least one book of the Bible is available in more than 2,800 languages. The availability of Scripture in local languages has supported the growth of indigenous churches worldwide.

However, much remains to be done. Approximately 1,900 languages still have no translation of the Bible. There are still millions of people waiting for God's Word to be spoken in their language. In the words of the evangelical leader, Carl F.H. Henry, "The gospel is good news only if it gets there in time." What can you do to take God's Word to new people groups?

The Growth of the Worldwide Church (Continued)

A Commitment to Indigenous Leadership

A commitment to indigenous church leadership is not new. In Acts, Paul planted churches that were self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. In the nineteenth century, Henry Venn encouraged the appointment of Samuel Crowther as Anglican bishop of Africa, and William Carey sought to develop an indigenous church in India.

The Chinese church has been a model of indigenous church leadership in the twentieth century. When foreign missionaries were forced out of China due to the Maoist Revolution in 1950, there were approximately 500,000 baptized Protestants in China. By 1996, this had grown to at least 33 million. Many estimates place the number of Chinese Christians today at nearly 100 million.

"This past Sunday it is possible that more Christian believers attended church in China than in all of so-called 'Christian Europe.' Yet in 1970 there were no legally functioning churches in all of China."
-Mark Noll

Another example of indigenous leadership and growth is seen in East Africa. In 1937, missionaries were forced by Mussolini's invasion to leave the Wallamo tribe in Ethiopia. When they left, there were forty-eight believers in the tribe; when missionaries returned in 1945, they found more than 10,000 believers.

A Passion for Revival

Throughout church history, periods of revival have been essential to the growth of the church. The early twentieth century revivals listed in Lesson 4 laid the foundation for the growth of the church in Korea and China.

A 1935 revival in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania brought thousands of new believers into the evangelical churches. Revival on the Indonesian island of Timor in the mid-sixties saw the churches triple from 100,000 members to more than 300,000. Students of the African church have estimated that 40% of Africans moved from traditional religions to Christianity during the twentieth century.⁶¹

Conclusion: Challenges for the Church Today

In many ways, the growth of indigenous churches has been one of the great successes of twentieth century Christianity. However, with growth comes new challenges. Challenges facing the global church today include:

Theological Integrity

In the twenty-first century as in the first century, false teachers threaten the truth of the gospel. Peter warned, "There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves

⁶¹ Peter Jenkins, *The Great and Holy War* (NY: Harper, 2014), 317

swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.”⁶² Peter’s warning is still valid today. In a time of rapid growth, churches must not abandon biblical truth. The global church today needs pastoral training to develop church leaders with biblical foundations, ethical integrity, and leadership ability.

The Relationship Between the Church and the World

The rise of indigenous churches has raised new challenges similar to those faced by the early church. The early church asked, “Which parts of Gentile culture are morally neutral and which parts are hostile to the gospel?” As the gospel is contextualized, each church must face this question anew. Which of a nation’s cultural practices, customs, holidays, and artistic and musical productions are morally neutral? Which aspects are linked to religious beliefs opposed to the Christian faith?

► What theological issues threaten the integrity of the church in your community? What issues of contextualization are a challenge for believers in your culture?

Lesson 6 Key Events in Church History

Date (A.D.)	Event
1910	Edinburgh Missionary Conference encourages world evangelization.
1934	Wycliffe Bible Translators is established to make Scripture available in all languages.
1941	National Association of Evangelicals seeks unity on the essentials of the Christian faith.
1947	The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provides support for the trustworthiness of Scripture.
1949	Billy Graham begins his worldwide evangelistic crusades.
1978-1988	The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy states an evangelical doctrine of Scripture.

Lesson 6 Key People in Church History

Barth, Karl (1886-1968): Neo-orthodox theologian. He rejected liberal German theology, but accepted many of the principles of biblical higher criticism.

Graham, Billy (1918-2018): Best known evangelical evangelist of the twentieth century.

Lewis, C.S. (1898-1963): Leading twentieth century apologist. He converted from atheism and became a voice for the gospel.

Townsend, Cameron (1896-1982): Founder of Wycliffe Bible translators.

⁶² 2 Peter 2:1-2

Lesson 6 Assignments

(1) Take a test on this lesson. The test will include dates from the “Key Events in Church History” timeline (Twentieth Century).

(2) Write a 1-2 page essay in which you respond to one of the challenges listed in this lesson. You may address a theological issue like liberalism or a practical issue like the need for indigenous leadership. Your essay should be in two parts:

- Why this issue is important to your church
- Some ideas for addressing the problem in your church

Lesson 6 Test

(1) Darwin’s _____ (book title) proposed the theory of biological evolution.

(2) In addition to Darwin, German _____ contributed to liberalism in the church.

(3) _____ was a response to liberalism which held to some aspects of orthodoxy, but did not teach the inerrancy of Scripture.

(4) The philosophy of _____ led people to assume that Christianity has no real importance in the modern world.

(5) Because of the decline of Christian influence, 21st century Europe is often called _____.

(6) The _____ was established in 1941 in response to the liberal National Council of Churches.

(7) The _____ on Biblical Inerrancy summarizes an evangelical doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy.

(8) The fastest growing churches in Africa and Asia during the twentieth century were _____ (what doctrine).

(9) C.S. Lewis’ book, _____, summarized the teachings of the Christian faith for a non-academic audience.

(10) The 1974 _____ on World Evangelization stated both a theological and a practical purpose for unity in the church.

(11) List two of the four factors important in the growth of evangelical churches worldwide.

(12) _____ has led in translating portions of the Bible into more than 2,800 languages.

Lesson 7

Lessons from Church History

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student should:

- (1) Recognize important lessons from church history.
- (2) Apply lessons from church history to your ministry today.

Introduction

In the Hebrew Bible, the “Historical Books” are called the “Former (or Early) Prophets.” This name shows the purpose for biblical history. The job of a prophet was to bring a message to God’s people. The purpose of the Historical Books was prophetic: to bring God’s message to God’s people.

The message is sometimes in the form of positive examples to be imitated. For example, David was a man after God’s own heart. When all Israel was afraid of Goliath, David faced the Philistine “in the name of the Lord of Hosts.”⁶³ David’s faithfulness to God provides an example for us today.

The message is sometimes in the form of negative examples to be avoided. For example, in spite of David’s successes, he sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah. The rest of David’s life showed the fruit of that sin. David’s sin provides a warning to us today.

Another example of history’s lessons is found in the New Testament book of Jude. Jude warns against “ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:4). Jude compares these people to other people from biblical history. He compares their behavior to the immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:7). Those sinful cities “serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.” The punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah serves as a warning to those who live like these false teachers. Later, Jude (1:11) points to other historical events that warn against rebellion and disobedience: Cain’s sacrifice, Balaam’s folly, and Korah’s rebellion.

Why did Jude include this history lesson? Because the lives of Cain, Balaam, and Korah serve as warning to the people of Jude’s day. History teaches lessons for today. It warns of dangers and points to positive examples. By learning the lessons of history, we can avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. In this lesson, we will review some lessons that we can gain from our study of church history.

⁶³ 1 Samuel 17:45

Lesson One: God Is Working His Purpose in Human History

Enemies of Christ have tried to destroy the church many times, but church history shows that God is stronger than any enemy. In spite of the enemies of the church, God is working his purpose in human history.

As we study biblical history, we see God's sovereignty. He accomplished his purposes in spite of the opposition of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar. God used Cyrus to bring the Jews back to Jerusalem; he used Caesar Augustus to bring Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. Biblical history shows that God is sovereign.

In the same way, we see God's sovereignty as we study church history. In the early fourth century, Diocletian tried to destroy the church by killing Christian leaders; within twenty years, Christianity was the official religion of the Roman Empire. In the seventh century, Muslims tried to drive Christianity out of Africa; today, we are seeing a massive turn to the gospel among Muslims. More Muslims have converted to Christ since 1990 than in the previous fourteen centuries combined. In the fifteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church tried to destroy the Protestant Reformation by killing its leaders. Instead, the Protestant revival spread around the world.

In the twentieth century, God worked in spite of the opposition of Mao Tse-Tung to spread the gospel throughout China. In 1966, a headline in the South China Morning Post announced, "CHRISTIANITY IN SHANGHAI COMES TO AN END." The article said, "The final page of the history of Christian religion in Shanghai was written on August 24."

Today, fifty years after this headline, there are dozens of churches and more than 100,000 Christians in the city of Shanghai. Church history shows that God is sovereign.

As twenty-first century Christians, we can trust in God's sovereignty and God's faithfulness. As we face the pressures of our society, we can know that the God who was faithful to Christians facing opposition and persecution in the second century will be faithful to us today. God is working his purpose in human history. This gives us confidence to face the future.

A Mighty Fortress is Our God

"A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper He amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
doth seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right Man on our side,
the Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His name,
from age to age the same,
and He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo, his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him."

- A hymn on God's sovereignty
by Martin Luther

Lesson Two: God Works Through People

Although a sovereign God *could* accomplish his purposes without using humankind, he graciously chooses to work through human vessels. As we study biblical history, we see that God worked through faithful men like Abraham; and he worked through flawed men like Jacob. He worked through the brilliant mind of the Apostle Paul, and he worked through the straightforward thinking of Simon Peter.

Let Your Heart Be Broken

"Let your heart be broken for a world in need:
Feed the mouths that hunger, soothe the wounds that bleed,
Give the cup of water and the loaf of bread
Be the hands of Jesus, serving in his stead.

Blest to be a blessing privileged to care,
Challenged by the need apparent everywhere.
Where mankind is wanting, fill the vacant place.
Be the means through which the Lord reveals his grace.

Let your heart be tender and your vision clear;
See mankind as God sees, serve him far and near.
Let your heart be broken by a brother's pain;
Share your rich resources, give and give again."

- A hymn on mission by Bryan Jeffrey Leech

As we study church history, we see this same principle. God works through people of many different personalities, abilities, and social classes. In the Reformation, God worked through a plain spoken German monk, Martin Luther – and through a scholar of the classics, Erasmus. In the Methodist revival, God worked through an Oxford trained scholar, John Wesley – and through an self-educated preacher like Francis Asbury.

As we study church history, we see that **God works through people of prayer**. In Lesson 4, we saw the great revival and mission movements of the nineteenth century. It is exciting to see how God worked through men like William Booth, William Carey, and Samuel Ajayi Crowther to accomplish his purposes. However, we must not forget the hundred-year prayer meeting started among a quiet group of Moravians in 1727. Although the names of the people in that prayer meeting are unknown, the fruit of their prayer may be seen in the revivals that spread during this century.

In 1906, a group of missionaries to Korea heard about revivals in Wales and India. Twenty missionaries began to pray daily for revival. In early 1907, during a week of daily prayer services at a church in Pyongyang, God began to move. An elder in one of the churches stood to confess hidden sin. This confession opened the way for God's Spirit. Until 2 a.m., dozens of people were confessing sin and seeking forgiveness. During the next two months, more than 2,000 people came to Christ in Pyongyang. Over the next three years, more than 80,000 converts were saved throughout Korea. God moves in response to prayer.

As we study church history, we see that **God works through people with a passion for mission**. In Lesson 5, we read of Booth's vision for the lost; "Souls! Souls! Souls! My heart hungers for souls." This passion is seen in many of the men and women that God has used to transform church history. God works through men and women who have a heart that loves people like God loves people. From the Apostle Thomas traveling to India in the first

century to Cameron Townsend devoting his life to Bible translation in the twentieth century, God has worked through men and women who had a passion for winning the lost.

As we study church history, we see that **God works through people who are surrendered fully to his will.** One of the great evangelists of the nineteenth century was Dwight L. Moody. Moody had little education, but he was committed to God. One day, his friend Henry Varley said, "The world has yet to see what God can do with, and for, and through, and in a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to him." Moody began to think about Varley's words. God wasn't asking for education, wealth, or great ability. He was asking for "a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to him." D.L. Moody resolved to be one of those men. Moody became one of the greatest evangelists in history. He founded a Bible college and a Christian publishing company, both of which are still operating more than 100 years after Moody's death. God works through people who are fully surrendered to his will.

Great Christians You Should Know: Frank Crossley - An Ordinary Christian

Frank Crossley (1839-1897), a businessman in Manchester England, shows how God uses an ordinary person who is surrendered fully to God. After hearing the testimony of a teenage girl at a Salvation Army, Crossley testified to the experience of entire sanctification. A short time later, Crossley contacted General William Booth to become a minister in the Salvation Army. Booth responded, "God made you a businessman. Use your business for God's Kingdom." Crossley accepted Booth's advice and served the kingdom of God in two ways.

First, Crossley used his wealth to support evangelism. During his lifetime, he gave over fifteen million pounds to the Salvation Army. His business provided an opportunity to support the spread of the gospel.

Second, and more importantly, Crossley followed Christian principles in his daily business. He moved his factory to the poorest area of Manchester and gave jobs to the needy. Later, he sold his country home to live among the people of this industrial city. He bought an old music hall, Star Hall, and turned it into a mission.

Even after Crossley's death, Star Hall continued as a Bible School, Christian publishing house, and the site of Salvation Army holiness conventions. Frank Crossley was never a preacher; he was never a foreign missionary; he was a Christian – and that was enough. He lived out Paul's calling to be "children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."⁶⁴ Thousands of lives were touched by the gospel through Frank Crossley's life; 20,000 people attended the funeral of this "ordinary Christian."

⁶⁴ Philippians 2:15, *English Standard Version*

Lesson Three: God Works Through His Church

The history of the church shows many dark days. There have been entire centuries when the institutional church showed little sign of spiritual life. Yet, God continued to work through the church to accomplish his purposes.

As we study biblical history, we see the importance of the church for God's purposes. God used the church at Antioch as the "home base" for the spread of the gospel through Asia Minor and the western world. God works through his church.

As we study church history, we see that God continues to work through his church. The church serves as a defense against false teaching. As we study church history, we are reminded of the core doctrines of the Christian faith, the doctrines that God's people have believed everywhere at all times. Paul placed great emphasis on this role for the church. He wrote that the church is "a pillar and buttress of the truth."⁶⁵

Because God works through his church, we should remember several truths regarding the church:

(1) The church must remain hungry for revival.

Church history shows the repeated need for revival. As we study church history, we find that persecution alone cannot destroy the church. Regardless of the opposition of the world, the church stands strong. In fact, the church has often flourished during times of persecution. Persecution alone will not destroy the church.

However, apathy and compromise can effectively destroy the church's witness. Because of this, we must maintain our fervor. We should remain hungry for spiritual renewal and revival.

Periods of revival such as the Reformation, the Wesley revival, the Great Awakening, and the worldwide revival at the beginning of the twentieth century brought new spiritual vitality and a passion for evangelism to the church. True revival within the church brings a new passion for evangelism of those outside the church. We must never accept lukewarmness as the norm for the church.

(2) The church must seek to maintain unity.

Church history shows the church's tendency to division. In his High Priestly Prayer, Jesus prayed for the church.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ 1 Timothy 3:15

⁶⁶ John 17:20-21

What a powerful prayer! Jesus prayed that the church would “be one.” Through this unity, he said, the world will “believe that you have sent me.” The unity of the church serves as a testimony to Christ. This is a powerful prayer. Sadly, Christians have not always sought the unity that Jesus expressed.

Because the unity of the church serves as a witness for Christ, Satan works hard to divide the church. Divisions and conflict in the church have sometimes served as a witness *against* the gospel. As we read of Christians killing other Christians in the days after the Reformation, we see an extreme example of church disunity. Through the centuries, churches have divided over many issues, some major and others very insignificant.

This does not mean that we should seek an artificial “unity” that ignores difference.

Difference in itself is not wrong. The rise of denominations in the Reformation period was partly a recognition that Christians have differing convictions on some important issues. There is benefit in worshiping together with other believers who share your convictions.

The danger is not difference; the danger is when we divide the essential unity of the church over these differences. As believers, we should value the theological convictions of our own faith traditions, while respecting the Christian testimony of those with whom we disagree. This maintains the unity of the church while respecting the variety that marks different parts of the body of Christ.

(3) The church must remain faithful to the truth of Scripture.

Repeatedly, the church has been confronted by false teachers. In every generation - from those who denied the deity of Jesus in the first century, through Arius in the fourth century, to some “prosperity gospel prophets” today who deny the doctrine of the Trinity - false teachers have tried to lead God’s people astray. Martin Luther said, “Whenever God builds a church, the devil builds a chapel right next door.” In other words, Satan always tries to attack the true church with a counterfeit.

There are three lessons we should remember about false teachers.

The Church’s One Foundation

“The church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
she is his new creation by water and the Word.
From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation, yet one o’er all the earth;
her charter of salvation: one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation of peace forevermore,
till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God the Three in One,
and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won:
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we
like them, the meek and lowly, may live eternally.”

- A hymn on the Church by Samuel Stone

False teachers are deceptive.

False teachers do not announce, "I am teaching heresy! I am trying to deceive the church." Instead, they act as angels of light. They often begin with orthodox teaching and then gradually move away from the truth.

As I am writing this section, I am flying from Virginia to Florida. If the pilot gets off course, just one degree, neither I nor any of the other passengers will notice a change. We will still look out the window and see familiar land. However, by the time we reach Florida, we will be in the ocean instead of at the airport. A small error can lead to fatal results.

Few false teachers deny all biblical truth. Instead, they distort parts of the gospel. The Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages distorted Paul's teaching on church authority in order to claim that the pope held the keys to heaven for every person. Prosperity gospel teachers today distort Jesus' teaching in order to claim that Christians have the right to demand that God heal every illness without submitting to his will. The words sound *close* to orthodoxy, but the teaching is deceptive.

False teachers appeal to people's desires.

False teachers appeal to fleshly desires instead of the truth. Paul warned, "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."⁶⁷ Paul foresaw a time when people would look for teachers who appealed to their fleshly desires.

False teachers do not ask, "What do my followers *need*?" They ask, "What do my followers *want*?" They try to satisfy the "itching ears" of their listeners. Instead, true pastors ask, "What does my church need to hear from God?"

Faithfulness to Scripture is the answer to false teachers.

The darkest days of church history have been periods when the church abandoned the authority of Scripture. In the Middle Ages, Roman Catholic bishops claimed authority equal to the Bible. In the twentieth century, liberal theologians abandoned the authority of Scripture. Each time, the church suffered as the authority of God's Word was ignored.

In the twentieth century, evangelical churches that are faithful to Scripture saw explosive growth. Mainline churches that abandoned Scripture in order to "fit in" with modern culture shrank both spiritually and numerically. God honors churches that honor his Word.

⁶⁷ 2 Timothy 4:3-4

(4) The church must confront the world with the truth of Scripture.

The temptation to withdraw from a sinful world can be appealing to committed Christians. In times of turmoil, it is easiest to withdraw within the walls of the church and leave the world to its own fate.

However, a study of biblical history shows that God raised up men like Daniel to confront a pagan ruler. God used Elijah to confront an apostate King Ahab. God called Paul to testify to the Roman Caesar. God calls his people to confront the world with his message.

A study of church history shows that God continues to call the church to confront the world with the message of Scripture. In *Survey of Church History 1*, we studied Athanasius who stood almost alone against false doctrine, "Athanasius *contra mundum*." Through Athanasius, orthodox doctrine was preserved against the attacks of the Arians. In the same way, William Wilberforce confronted his world with the message of the Bible condemning the slave trade. Repeatedly, God has raised up the church to speak his truth to our world. We cannot withdraw into a private faith; we must speak truth in the public square.

"I want to experience
the same pain and suffering
of Jesus on the cross;
the spear in his side,
the pain in his heart;

I'd rather feel
the pain of shackles on my feet,
than ride through Egypt
in Pharaoh's chariot."

- A hymn from prison
by Simon Zhao

(Quoted in Timothy C. Tennent,
*Theology in the Context of
World Christianity*)

Conclusion

As we study church history, we benefit in many ways. We learn positive lessons from the heroes of the past; we receive warnings from the mistakes of the past. As we study church history, we better understand where our local church and theological branch fits into the history of the church. As we study church history, we learn to distinguish between beliefs that are central to the Christian faith and beliefs that are secondary and are identified more with a particular tradition or time in history.

I hope that you will continue to read about the history of the church and to read biographies of great Christians. As you read, ask God to teach you lessons that will help you to be a more effective leader in the church today.

► Discuss the lessons you have learned from the study of church history. What are some positive lessons that will guide your ministry? What are some warnings that will keep you from failure? Find ways to apply the lessons of church history in your ministry.

Completion of Course Project

Submit your final course project within thirty days of completing this lesson. This is a 6-8 page paper on the spread of Christianity in your nation or among your people group. This paper should include three parts:

1. The story of the arrival of the gospel to your people
2. An evaluation of the strength of the church today
3. A vision for the growth of the church in the next twenty years

If the class leader approves, you may work together with your classmates in preparing this paper.

Recommended Resources

To Supplement the Whole Course

This course is an introductory level course. It will give you a basic outline of church history. The sources on this page will assist you in doing further study. In later lessons, I will list additional resources for more in-depth study of individual periods of history.

These are the primary sources for these lessons. These books are used extensively throughout these lessons. Except for specific quotes, I will not footnote these books.

Cairns, Earle E. *Christianity through the Centuries*. MI: Zondervan, 1996.

Christian History Institute. Magazines are available free online at:

<https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issues/>

Galli, Mark and Ted Olsen. *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*. TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000.

Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity*. MA: Prince Press, 1999.

Jones, Timothy Paul. *Christian History Made Easy*. CA: Rose Publishing, 2009.

Noll, Mark A. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. MI: Baker, 2012.

Shelley, Bruce L. *Church History in Plain Language, 3rd ed.* USA: Thomas Nelson, 2008.

Vos, Howard F. *Introduction to Church History*. IL: Moody Press, 1984.

Woodbridge, John D., (ed.) *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*. IL: Moody Press, 1988.

Lesson 2

To learn more about the Reformation, see the following resources.

Christian History Institute: *The Anabaptists*. Available at:

<https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/radical-reformation-the-anabaptists/>

Christian History Institute: *Zwingli, Father of the Swiss Reformation*. Available

at: <https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/zwingli-father-of-the-swiss-reformation/>

Christian History. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/byperiod/earlymodern>

Noll, Mark A. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. MI: Baker, 2012. Chapters on the Diet of Worms, the English Act of Supremacy, and the Founding of the Jesuits.

Lesson 3

To learn more about this era, see the following resources.

Pearse, Meic. *Baker History of the Church: The Age of Reason*. Baker Books, 2006.

Stark, Rodney. *For the Glory of God*. Princeton University Press, 2004. This is a definitive work on how Christianity laid the foundation for modern science and freedom.

Christian History Institute: *18th Century Hymns*. Available at:

<https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/golden-age-of-hymns/>

Christian History Institute: *Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening*. Available at:

<https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/jonathan-edwards-puritan-pastor-and-theologian/>

Christian History Institute: *The Wesleys*. Available at:

<https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/the-wesleys-founders-of-methodism/>

Lesson 4

To learn more about this era, see the following resources.

Christian History Institute: *African Apostles: Black Evangelists in Africa*. Available at:

<https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/african-apostles-black-evangelists-in-africa/>

Christian History Institute: *Hudson Taylor and Missions to China*. Available at:

<https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/hudson-taylor-and-missions-to-china/>

Christian History Institute: *David Livingstone*. Available at:

<https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/david-livingstone-missionary-explorer-in-africa/>

Christian History Institute: *William Carey and the Great Missions Century*. Available at:

<https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/william-carey-19th-c-missionary-to-india/>

Duewel, Wesley L. *Revival Fire*. MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Lesson 5

To learn more about the history of the Wesleyan tradition, see the following resources.

Bassett, Paul M. and William M. Greathouse. *Exploring Christian Holiness, Vol. 2: The Historical Development*. Beacon Hill Press, 1985.

Dieter, Melvin. *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*. Scarecrow Press, 1996.

Church History 2

Record of Assignments

Student Name _____

Initial when each assignment has been completed. The tests are considered "complete" when the student achieves a score of 70% or higher. All required assignments must be successfully completed to receive a certificate from Shepherds Global Classroom.

Lesson	Test	Assignment	
1		Complete a minimum of three assignments for Lessons 1-6.	
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
Course Project			

Request for Certificate from Shepherds Global Classroom

Application for a Certificate of Completion from Shepherds Global Classroom may be completed on our webpage at www.shepherdsglobal.org. Certificates will be digitally transmitted from the president of SGC to instructors and facilitators who complete the application on behalf of their student(s).