

MODERN CHURCH HISTORY (1700-2000)

A number of religious revivals renewed the Protestant churches of Western Europe and North America in the 18th century. These revivals drew their inspiration largely from the 16th century Reformation and the 17th century English Puritan and Dutch Reformed writings.

In Germany, **Philip Spener's** publication of *Pia Desideria* in 1675 can be seen as the beginning of **Pietism**. **Francke** made Halle a centre of Pietism (1692). **Zinzendorf** invited a group of **Moravians** to settle on his estate in 1722 (Herrnhut).

North America. From the 1720s the churches were powerfully revived through the preaching of **Frelinghuisen** (DR), **G. Tennent** (Presb), and **J. Edwards** (Cong). The Awakening reached its peak in 1740 through the ministry of the Anglican **G. Whitefield**.

Britain. The first stirrings of the **Evangelical Awakening** in Britain occurred in Wales in 1735. The ministry of G. Jones, H. Harris and D. Rowlands eventually bore fruit in Calvinistic Methodism. The Anglican Methodists (J. & C. **Wesley** and G. Whitefield) and Moravian preachers (Ingham and Cennick) were the chief instruments of the Evangelical Awakening in England, resulting in Methodism, Anglican Evangelicalism, and Moravianism. The Church of Scotland was also revived (Cambuslang 1742).

Missions. Catholics led the way in missions. Catholic missionaries worked in Vietnam (de Rhodes), India (de Nobili), China (Ricci), the Philippines and Latin America. The advanced methods of the **Jesuits** were sometimes opposed by **Franciscans** and **Dominicans** (e.g. the 'rites controversy' in China).

Early Protestant Missions. DEIC and BEIC chaplains engaged in some missionary work. By 1800 Dutch missionary work in the East Indies had resulted in a church of some 200 000 strong. **Mayhew** and **Eliot** pioneered outreach to some American Indian tribes. Anglicans founded the **SPCK** (1698) and the **SPG** (1701) to promote Christianity home and abroad. **D. Brainerd** was a SPCK missionary to the Indians.

In 1705 co-operation between the king of Denmark and the Pietists of Halle led to the **Danish Halle mission** sending Ziegenbalg and Plutshau to India.

From about 1731 the **Moravians** under Zinzendorf sent hundreds of missionaries to many lands.

The Enlightenment. The quest for a rational understanding of all things produced revolutionary developments in the fields of science, politics and religion. **Deism** reinterpreted the Christian faith in rational terms, eliminating the concepts of special revelation, miracle, mystery and dogma. The ideas of the French Deists, Rousseau and Voltaire paved the way for the **American Revolution** (1776) and the **French Revolution** (1789). In France the church was abolished and the goddess of Reason enthroned in the Notre Dame in 1793. Increasing chaos led to Napoleon seizing power in 1795. He established a concordat with the pope in 1801. Revolutionary excesses led to Catholic reaction. **Pius IX** opposed all liberal, democratic and rational trends. He proclaimed the **Immaculate Conception** of Mary in 1854; issued the **Syllabus of Errors** in 1864 and called the **First Vatican Council** in 1870, which promulgated papal infallibility.

19th century trends in Britain. From the 1830s **Brethren** Assemblies began forming without any centralised organisation or an ordained ministry. J N Darby's followers later

became exclusive. Also in the 1830s the **Oxford** (or Tractarian) movement promoted an **Anglo-Catholic** revival in the C of E, stressing the importance of the church, the sacraments and a clergy who were visibly within the apostolic succession. Newman, Keble, Pusey and Froude were foremost Anglo-Catholics. The **Salvation Army** was founded by **W. Booth** in 1878 and combined vigorous evangelism with extensive social action.

19th century **American Christianity** developed its own frontier-styled revivalist ethos. Methodists and Baptists flourished. Great progress was made in all fields, despite the tragedy of civil war (1861-65).

Missions. In 1792 the **Baptist Missionary Society** was formed and sent **William Carey** to India. This event was the catalyst for the 'Great Century of Protestant Missions.' Scores of voluntary societies were formed to promote missions (e.g. LMS 1795, CMS 1799, ABM 1810) transforming Christianity into a truly international religion. The formation of the **Bible Society** in 1804 led to a massive increase in the translation and production of the Holy Scriptures.

20th Century. The 1917 Communist Revolution led to the severe persecution of the church in Russia, especially under Stalin. Influenced by its fear of Communism, the Roman Catholic Church signed the Lateran Treaty with Mussolini's Fascist government in 1929 and a concordat with Hitler's Nazi government in 1933. The Catholic Church later condemned both Fascism and Nazism. Among Protestants the **German Christian** movement supported Hitler. The **Confessing Church** led by **Martin Niemöller** produced the **Barmen Declaration** (1934) which opposed Nazism.

The triumph of Communism in **China** in 1949 led to the expulsion of all missionaries and the persecution of Christians.

Growing liberalism in Western Protestantism (e.g. Von Harnack's 'Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man') was challenged by **Fundamentalism**, which later developed sectarian and obscurantist tendencies.

The **Azusa St. revival** (1906) in Los Angeles (**W. Seymour**) played a large part in launching the **Pentecostal movement**. C. Parham had taught that the gift of tongues was the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit at his Bible school at Topeka. In the 1960s neo-Pentecostalism began emerging in the mainline Protestant denominations. From 1967 Roman Catholics also became involved in the Charismatic renewal.

Ecumenical Movement. The **International Missionary Conference** at Edinburgh in 1910 represented both the culmination of the 19th century Protestant missionary movement and the beginning of the 20th century ecumenical movement. Following Edinburgh, the **International Missionary Council** was established (1921), the **Life and Work** Movement (1925), and the **Faith and Order** Movement (1927). In 1948 Life and Work and Faith and Order merged to form the **WCC** at Amsterdam. In 1961 the IMC was integrated into the WCC at New Delhi. The WCC is 'a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'

The election of Pope **John XXIII** in 1958 initiated the most profound change in the RC Church since the Reformation. He called the **Second Vatican Council** (1962-65) which took the church in a new ecumenical direction.