

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE TOWN OF TONAWANDA, NY
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“THY KINGDOM COME: THE WITNESS OF CHURCH HISTORY”

THE MODERN AGE: “Revival, Revolution, and to the Ends of the Earth” (1)

I. REVIEW of Previous Studies – the first 1700 years!

A. History’s Importance

B. Salvation History 2000 BC – 33 AD

1. The role of the covenants

- a. Abraham
- b. Moses and Israel
- c. King David
- d. The New Covenant – established by Jesus Christ

2. The Great Commission – “...make disciples of all the nations.”

3. A sign before Christ’s return

1. Mk. 13:10: *“The gospel must first be preached to all the nations.”*

2. Mt. 24:14: *“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”*

3. 2 Cor. 5:18-19: *“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”*

C. Church History (Pentecost – 1700)

1. A small Jewish sect to and Empire wide religion (33 – 400 AD)
2. The glue of a failing empire (400-700)
3. Rise of Islam and collapse of Eastern (Byzantine) empire (700-1000)
4. New center of Christian faith: Western Europe (1054)
5. Crusades and Corruption of Roman Catholic Church (1100-1500)

6. Reformation and Exploration (1500-1700)

A. Four Main Branches of Protestantism out the Reformation

1. Martin Luther – Lutheran Churches
2. John Calvin – Reformed and Presbyterian Churches
3. Menno Simmons – Anabaptist Churches
4. Thomas Cranmer – Anglican Church

B. The Five Main Nations (engaged in exploration)

1. Spain and Portugal (Roman Catholic)
2. France (Roman Catholic)
3. Great Britain (Anglican)
4. Dutch (Reformed)

7. Religious wars and the Age of Reason (1530-1750)

***As we now continue our study of the modern age, note that the two most important secular events that helped transform our world into its present reality and enabled the spread of the gospel were **the Industrial Revolution (1760-1840)** and **the American Revolution (1776-83)**. The first transformed manufacturing and transportation and led to the technological innovations of the 20th century. The second, transformed human government and political affairs. Both these and the push of secularism led to the elevation of the self, where the individual was given greater authority in life. And yet at the same time, both allowed the communication and spread of the gospel to take root the world over. What the Roman Empire had accomplished in the Mediterranean world was now being accomplished in the entire world.

II. The Age of Reason and Revival

The rise of science and human reason followed the tumults of the Protestant Reformation. Seeing the unrighteous fruits of a hypocritical Church many turned away from religion to science and reason. The way many Protestants responded to this radical change in worldviews was to emphasize experiential Christianity which could be emphasized through biblical preaching. With less state interference in matters of faith, the stage was set for true revival to take place in Europe and North America

A. The Renaissance – led to what was called the Age of Reason which led to secularism. Renaissance means “rebirth” and refers to the recovery of the values of Greek and Roman civilization expressed in literature, politics, and the arts. While the Reformation emphasized the sinful nature of man, those of the Renaissance viewed the nature of man as intrinsically good and so too the universe. Neither were “cursed.” Due to all the bloodshed, many believed religion to be part of the problem, not part of the solution to man’s ills. Scientific discoveries by Copernicus (1473-1543) who believed the sun and not the earth is the center of our universe, Kepler (1571-1630) who concluded that the sun emits a magnetic force that moves planets in their courses, and Galileo (1564-1642) who made a telescope to examine the planets and proved that the acceleration of falling bodies is constant. But who tied all these three together to show that the universe is a great machine operating according to unalterable laws? Isaac Newton (1642-1727).

While this did not take away the reality of a Supreme Being who governed the universe, it did refute many of the spiritual superstitions of the day that were in the Church - like that natural disasters and sicknesses were the result of demonic influences or belief in heresies. It led many to believe that mankind could “figure things out” by reason and use of our senses. Rather than the Augustine understanding of mankind that we are sinners in need of grace, the proponents of this new way of thinking believe that people just need knowledge and common sense. In the rationalist’s mind, God became more of a higher power who had laws and rules that were for our benefit and it was just a matter of following them in this life to the best of one’s ability.

From this came the belief known as Deism. God was not a personal being and but more like a “watchmaker” who created the world with all its parts to work as a whole but who then just lets it run with no interference. Thus, deists would reject the idea of miracles, the supernatural, and special revelation. They believed their religion was the original religion of mankind but all other religions were concoctions of priests and others used to enhance personal power. The most influential deist was Voltaire (1694-1778). He was sickened by the religious squabbles and bloodshed but didn’t disavow belief in God. The Roman Catholic response to such criticisms was to censor books and condemn their authors. In England, however, several individuals wrote argued against deism effectively. Most notable was Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752) whose book *The Analogy of Religion* ended the debate for thinking people. In his book, he did not try to prove the existence of God or miracles, nor did he reject reason. Rather, he challenged reason’s sovereignty. Reason can’t explain everything in nature but only come to conclusions based on probabilities that we experience. So, too with religion. We can know certain things by our experiences and yet we can never know everything. This therefore does not make supernatural religion irrational. Deism biggest weakness, however, was that it couldn’t adequately address the problems of evil and suffering in life. Its optimism in the mind of man failed and as a result, it faded into historical obscurity.

B. Revival – the seeds for spiritual revival after a century of bitter conflict began to be planted with the advent of pietism.

1. Pietism

a. Philipp Spener (1635-1705) – was a Lutheran greatly influenced by German mystic Johann Arndt, esp. his book *True Christianity* (1606), English Puritans Richard Baxter (1615-1691) and John Bunyan (1628-88), and the moving hymns of Philip Nicolai (1556-1608). While studying at the University of Strasbourg, he came to see that Luther’s teachings on justification by faith, should be taught not merely as a doctrine but as something that is reflected in personal experience. In other words, a true believer should be able to know and share what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. After ordination and three years as a pastor in Strasbourg, he accepted a call in Frankfort. Appalled by the spiritual condition of the city, he began to preach from the whole Bible, calling people to repentance and to be disciplined. For a few years little happened but in 1669 while preaching on the Sermon on the Mount, revival followed with many converted to Christ. He called on believers to set aside “glasses, cards, and dice”, and to meet for Bible study outside of Sunday church for mutual spiritual encouragement. He called it the *collegia pietatis* (pious assembly). Spener then gathered a small group of dedicated believers in his house twice a week for Bible readings and discussion on those readings. Those who looked unfavorably on such meetings called them “*gatherings of the pious*” or “*pietists*” for short. Thus, pietism was born.

From there, Spener promoted the formation of Bible Study groups for spiritual development, a strict plan for a spiritual disciplined life, and a focus on simpler and more spiritual preaching. He believed that small cells of believers who were truly “born again” could positively transform the rest of a congregation into a more kingdom-minded body of Christ. In 1675, he wrote *Pia Desideria* (The piety we desire). In it he examined the causes of spiritual decline in Protestant Germany and presented six main proposals for reform. They included 1) *more extensive use of the Bible/the Word of God in service and at home* 2) *renewal of the spiritual priesthood – the priesthood of all believers* 3) *faith should be authentically practiced not simply believed* 4) *restraint and charity in religious controversies/prayer for unbelievers* 5) *reform in the education of*

clergy – training in piety and devotion not just academic subjects 6) *clergy should preach edifying sermons understandable by the people.* Spener's book became an immediate sensation, sparking renewal and revival throughout Germany. In 1686, Spener accepted the call to be a court preacher in Dresden and then in 1692 was invited to minister in Berlin where he persuaded Frederick I, the future king of Prussia, to invite a fellow churchman, August Francke to become professor at the new University of Halle.

b. August Francke (1663-1727) - eventually became the new leader of the pietist movement in the final years of Spener's ministry. Francke, himself, had a life-changing conversion before coming to Halle. After two years of inner struggle and doubt, while writing a sermon on **Jn. 20:31**, Francke fell to his knees in great fear. He said, *"I implored the God whom I did not yet know and whom I did not believe, that, if there really is a God, he should save me from this wretched condition."* It was at that point that sadness left his heart and he was *"suddenly overwhelmed by a flood of joy."* From that moment on he knew he was saved and it was now *"easy to live righteously and joyfully in this world."* While at Halle, he began many spiritual and social ministries. He started a school for poor children (in his own home), an orphanage and built a hospital. His work continued with a Latin house for talented boys, a house for widows, a house for unmarried women, a medical dispensary, a book depot, a printing establishment, and a Bible house. It was the pietists of Halle who were the first to volunteer to go to India in 1705 to establish a Church mission upon the request of King Frederick IV of Denmark .

c. Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) – believed the mark of a true Christian is a simple, childlike faith in the blood of Jesus. He was grandson of an Austrian nobleman who had left his homeland due to religious convictions. Nikolaus' grandmother, who was influenced by the Halle pietists raised him in the faith. Though he went to the University of Wittenberg to study law, ministry was his primary concern. When Bohemian Brethren (remnant of the old Hussite movement – recall Jon Huss's day) who had been nearly crushed during the Thirty Years' War and were subject to continued persecution, were seeking refuge in Protestant lands, Zinzendorf opened his estates up to them. There they established a community known as *Hernhutt* or the "Lord's Watch." Count Nikolaus joined the community and soon others from various Christian backgrounds also joined. The goal was to create a real "communion of saints" set apart from the rest of the world. It would be a place for families and others where a monastic lifestyle without celibacy would be freely entered. Nikolaus greatly influenced the community and eventually was ordained in a reorganized Moravian Church (called United Brethren). From this body of believers would arise the first large-scale Protestant missionary movement in history!

During a visit to Copenhagen, capital of Denmark, for the coronation of King Christian VI in 1731, Zinzendorf met a black man from the Danish West Indies. He was impressed by the needs of the enslaved people. He also met a group of Eskimos converted by the Lutheran missionary Hans Egede. This ignited a passion in Zinzendorf for missions that would be with him the rest of his life. The next year in 1732, the Moravians sent the first of what eventually would be hundreds of missionaries to faraway places. Beginning with the Danish territories of St. Thomas, Greenland, Lapland and then moving on to a mission across the Atlantic to be among the Native Americans in Georgia eventually establishing the communities of Bethlehem and Nazareth in Pennsylvania and Salem in North Carolina. They also travelled to South America's Guyana, and journeyed south to Algeria and as far east as Ceylon. A new trend had been started that would change the course of Church and World history – the sending of missionaries in the name of Christ apart from a political agenda.

d. the Pietist impact on the Church

1. its purpose - Pietism arose in response to Lutheranism becoming stale spiritually as it became more about religious practice and church membership rather than a personal relationship with Christ. The two aims of Pietism were 1) to stress the importance of personal faith that can testify to the change that the grace of God in Christ has brought in one's life. Baptism and church attendance do not mean the person has been truly converted. 2) to shift the focus of ministry from Church membership of a state church and formal attendance to weekly fellowship of like-minded believers in small groups who were expected to spread to gospel to all classes of people.

2. its effects - the Pietist movement shifted emphasis in 18th century churches from doctrinal and political controversies to the care of souls. Preaching and pastoral visitation became the central concerns of Protestant ministry. Pietism as a movement greatly enriched Christian music, promoted spiritual lay ministry, small group Bible studies, and the devotional reading of God's Word. In small group meetings a passage of Scripture would be studied and a well-chosen hymn would reinforce the devotional message. Spiritual rebirth of an individual's heart was most important. This movement set the stage for all future revivals to come. Its emphasis on a spiritual emotional experience and the importance of the individual connecting with other in small groups provided the model for American evangelicalism and could be seen in the various evangelical movements that followed both in Europe and in America.

C. The Evangelical Awakening in Protestantism

1. the beginnings - by the 1700's with deism on the rise and the enlightenment taking hold, the established Anglican Church and even the nonconformist churches such as the Baptists and Congregationalists lost the fervor of the previous century. Moderation was the order of the day and certainly the violent religious conflicts were gladly a thing of the past. The most popular expression of this new moderation could be in a group known as the *Latitudarians*. John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury (1691-1694) argued against what he called "*religious enthusiasts*." Fiery preaching and emotional excitement in worship was frowned upon. Instead, proper behavior and formal worship was what was most important. Men and women should work to be generous, humane, and tolerant, avoiding bigotry and fanaticism. During this time a typical English sermon was like a dry dissertation. There was little mention of sin or the cross. Instead, God's goodness and the need to be respectful people in society were emphasized.

And yet, God raised up a number of fiery preachers in the British Isles and in the American colonies. Men like **Jonathan Edwards** (*Puritan/Congregational*) in Massachusetts, **Ebenezar** and **Ralph Erskine** (*Presbyterian*) in Scotland, **Howell Harris** (*Calvinist Methodist*) in **Wales**, and Anglicans **John and Charles Wesley**, and **George Whitefield** in England and later America. Much of this evangelistic fervor could be traced back to the rise of Puritanism in 17th century England and its emphasis on the sinfulness of the human heart, the atoning work of Christ on the cross, and the need for personal conversion to be expressed by faith in the grace of God through Christ. However, unlike the Puritans these new evangelists were not interested in establishing an official Christian government or Church run society. Rather, their primary

emphasis was to win souls for Christ and in so doing to impact society and government for the Kingdom of God.

2. John Wesley (1703 – 91) - was born to an Anglican clergyman and his mother's father was a Nonconformist minister in London. He was one of nineteen children. He was saved from a fire at the age of six. His mother instructed the children in the faith. At seventeen he attended Oxford University. While there he was impressed with the writings of the Church Fathers. He came to believe that one cannot be a half-Christians. He catalogued his weaknesses and looked to find ways to overcome them. In 1727 Wesley was elected fellow of Lincoln College. Two years later he was ordained an Anglican priest and served as his father's assistant. He returned to Oxford to find His brother Charles alarmed at the spread of deism among the students. Charles had begun a student devotional group for those who wanted to take their faith seriously. When his brother John joined, he put together a plan of study and rule of life that included daily prayers from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, readings of Scripture, and regular attendance at Holy Communion. Students who didn't appreciate their religious fervor called the Wesley's and their group, "*Enthusiasm*" at Oxford Holy Club, "*Bible moths*," "*Methodists*," and the "*Reforming Club*." However, it was the "Methodist" label that stuck. Not only were spiritual discipline and daily devotions important, but also reaching out to others - the poor, the lost, and the imprisoned. One of the many students that joined the club was a young man named George Whitefield who would one day become a great revivalist preacher.

Despite his religious enthusiasm, John Wesley still lacked inner peace. A new opportunity for ministry arose when a friend, Dr. John Burton invited John and his brother Charles to the new colony of Georgia led by General James Oglethorpe. Charles would be the general's secretary and John the colony's chaplain. John especially looked forward to being able to preach the gospel to the Native Americans. In the third month of their voyage enroute to America, late in January of 1736 on a voyage to Savannah Georgia, Wesley was moved by the faith of Moravians on board the ship *Simmonds*. During a storm they remained calm and said that they were not afraid to die because of their faith. This greatly impressed Wesley. His time in Georgia proved to be fruitless both personally as a woman he wanted to marry turned him down and he found the Natives to be a hopeless cause. On his way back to England he wrote, "*I went to America to convert the Indians, but, oh, who shall convert me?*"

Already impressed by the Moravians, upon his return to London he met with Peter Bohler, a young Moravian preacher who convinced Wesley of his need for a new birth and a strong personal faith in Christ, both of which he said were essential for overcoming sin and attaining true holiness. Again, to be justified by faith meant also having an experience to know what it meant personally. Wesley wondered how this could happen. The answer came on March 24, 1738 when Wesley was walking down Aldersgate Street to visit a Bible society meeting when he heard a person reading Luther's preface to Romans. As he shared Luther's words on the change that comes in a person's heart when one comes to faith in Christ, Wesley said he felt a strange warming and at that moment he knew he had trusted in Christ alone for his salvation and that he had been set free from the law of sin and death (God's judgment). It was only a week earlier that John's brother Charles had come to renewed faith as he read Luther's commentary on Galatians with a friend. Charles said, "*I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ.*"

Both men were now ready to be used by God in a mighty way. For at that point things changed for the Wesleys. Now they knew their purpose and had the motivation to fulfill it!

Later the summer of that year, John visited the Moravian community of *Herrnhut* where he observed their spiritual dynamics. He was impressed by their strong faith but also noted the spirit of self-righteousness among them. He also thought that a cult of personality had grown up around Count von Zinzendorf. For those reasons Wesley could not see himself a Moravian. However, he did think that note from their example that the importance of the need to be “born again” experientially and the need for small groups should be central to any Christian ministry. He then returned to London where he resumed his preaching duties as an Anglican priest.

Things were status quo for Wesley, but upon reading preacher Jonathan Edwards accounts of the revival that was going on in Massachusetts, it struck Wesley that this could happen in England, too. Shortly afterwards he received an invitation from George Whitefield, member of the Holy Club originally started by John’s brother Charles. Whitefield was now ordained but not having much success in the traditional churches. So, he began to preach in the open fields of Bristol to coal miners who rarely had set foot in a church. His dramatic preaching style and riveting content moved the miners to tears and repentance. A great move of God had begun. Whitefield challenged Wesley to move to open air preaching. Wesley who was much more formal in style and approach could not imagine doing so. Even his brother Charles opposed him. But he stepped out in faith and began preaching, first to 3000 souls. As a result, many of those who heard came to place their faith in Christ. The Methodist revival had begun. Wesley’s anxiety and insecurity left him. A firebrand for God was ignited! Edwards and Whitefield had shown Wesley that godly preaching produces godly fruit. He remembered the words of the Moravian preacher Bohler, *“preach faith till you have it and then because you have it, you will preach faith.”*

Wesley then took the gospel message to the poor. He then wrote, *“I look upon all the world as my parish; I judge it my bounden duty, to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation.”* He preached to those in jails, to those bound on vessels to Ireland, he preached everywhere. At one outdoor amphitheater he preached to 30,000. In his diary dated June 28, 1774, Wesley wrote that he had travelled on average 4500 miles per year – mostly on horseback! He faced rocks and stones, and hostile gangs in some quarters, but Wesley persisted and the British Isles were changed forever. By the time of his death, statuettes and mementos of his likeness were produced in large numbers to meet public demand. God had used John Wesley mightily in changed English and American society for the better.

While John had been writing and preaching thousands of sermons, Charles focused on writing hymns. He is considered to be the most prolific and well-known writer of hymns in the English language, writing over 6500. Some of his most popular still sung today include, *“And Can It Be”*, *“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”*, *“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”*, *“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”*, and *“Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending”*.

The Wesley’s preferred the Arminian approach to understanding how the grace of God works in the life of a believer rather than Calvin’s approach. Calvin believed that believers were chosen by God and believed because God’s grace had only touched them. Salvation was guaranteed but only truly knowable by God. It would be the views of Jacob Arminius (1560-1609), a Dutch professor who had tried to lessen the extremes of Calvinist doctrine by arguing that human free will still plays a role in the outcome of one’s salvation apart from God’s choice, to whom the Wesley brothers would appeal. Their friend and fellow revivalist, George Whitefield, however, remained a Calvinist. This put pressure on their friendship, but they agreed to disagree agreeably! Unfortunately, after their deaths, the Methodists divided into two camps – those who held to the Arminian position and those who believed in the Calvinist doctrine of unconditional election or what

is called double predestination – there is no free will in regard to salvation itself. God simply chooses those whom He saves. While both brothers never left the Anglican Church, the movement they began could not be contained by it. Methodism would go on to become a major part of the Christian Church worldwide.