

**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” (4)**

### III. The Age of Revolution and Missions

#### D. Revolution in Latin America

1. **the political consequences** - Spanish and Portuguese colonies in what became known as Latin America were affected by the American and French Revolution. The two main classes that ruled were the *peninsulares* (those directly from the mainland) and the *criollos* (descendants of earlier immigrants and the wealthy class from their exploitation of the Native Tribes and Black slaves). The *criollos* naturally thought they knew how to run things better than those from the mainland. But since the civil and ecclesiastical authorities were put in place by the pope and kings of Portugal and Spain, and thus held by *peninsulares*, the *criollos* resented this arrangement. When the *criollos* travelled to Europe and heard what was going on in America and France they felt that they too should have such freedoms.

Led by **San Martin (1778-1850)** in the South (what is today Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay) and **Simon Bolivar (1783-1830)** in the north (what is today Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia) the whole region became independent of Spain and eventually the above nations resulted. Bolivar had envisioned one nation encompassing much of the continent, but his hopes ended with the Panama Congress of 1826 as regional interests and those of the United States kept the nations from unifying. Five years later, a few days before his death, Bolivar said, *“America is ungovernable. Those who have served the revolution have plowed the sea.”*

Mexico took a bit of a different tract. The *criollos* were planning to take power from the *peninsulares* under the leadership of Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla. He declared Mexico independent on September 16, 1810, and found himself head of any army of 60,000 Indians and mestizos. However, he was captured and executed. Another mestizo priest, Father Jose Maria Morelos took over but eventually the *criollos* took power. These early trends continued as the Indian and mestizo populations would play an important role in the political and religious history of Mexico which led to a number of revolts and terrible armed conflicts.

In Brazil, the Portuguese court took refuge after Napoleon invaded their country in 1807. When Joao was restored to his throne in 1816, he left his son Pedro to reign. His son later refused to return and proclaimed Brazil independent. He, however, was not allowed to rule as he wished, and was forced to agree to a parliamentary system of government.

Economically and politically, the wealth and land of the above nations remained in the hands of a small minority – the criollo class. As time went on with the growth of cities and the effects of the industrial revolution, a small middle class of merchants and government employees emerged. However, the promise of social and economic improvement for the vast majority of poor never materialized in the 19th century. The higher classes could be divided into conservatives (inspired by the old country -Spain) and liberals (inspired by the US, Great Britain, and France). The conservatives found their strength from the aristocratic landowners while the liberals took root among merchants and intellectuals. Both were unwilling to alter the social order and as a result a long series of various

conservative or liberal dictatorships, palace revolutions, and violent upheavals became the norm in all these nations. Mexico even experienced a revolution in 1910 followed by a civil war because of the issues resulting in abusive and corrupt government by the wealthy class over the much larger poor classes.

**2. the religious reality** - What was the Church doing this time and what did it mean for the spread of the Gospel? From the time Spain and Portugal had conquered much of the New World in the 16th century until the time of the various revolutions of the early 19th century, the Roman Catholic Church had been governed by what was called Royal Patronage – *Patronato Real*. This meant that bishops were named by the kings and popes as mentioned above, while the lower clergy were criollos and mestizos who had grown up in the New World. Such tension came to a head during the wars for independence as most of the bishops condemned the rebellion against the mother lands of Spain and Portugal while many of the clergy supported the cause of “freedom.” In fact, sixteen of the twenty-five signers of Argentina’s Declaration of independence were signed by priests.

When the new national governments were formed and called on permission from the pope to name their own bishops, the Roman Catholic Church refused. Due to pressure from the Spanish King Ferdinand, Pius VII, in his encyclical *Etsi Longissimo* (1816) spoke of the grave evils of rebellion” and of our most beloved son in Jesus Christ, Ferdinand, your Catholic king. In 1824, Pope Leo XI reiterated the papacy’s opposition by calling the independence movements as “tares” and that Ferdinand as our beloved son. Finally, in 1827, Pope Leo XII named a bishop for Colombia which at that time included what is today Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador. When this happened Simon Bolivar said, “The successors of St. Peter have always been our father, but war had left us orphans, as a lamb calling in vain for its lost mother. Now the tender mother has sought him and returned him to the fold, and we are given shepherds worth of the church and of the Republic.”

By the next decade Pope Gregory XVI officially recognized the new republics and named bishops for them. But the damage had been done. With no bishops, there could be no ordinations, with no ordinations, the sacramental ministry of the church suffered. As a result of this lack of leadership, three trends developed that would hamper the church in Latin America for the next 100 years. First, with stunted sacramental worship, special religious observances and celebrations that did not require a priest increased. Saint’s days, the praying of the rosary, prayers and promises to saints, written prayers with supposed magical powers as well as the religious practices of the native tribes and of those brought from Africa entered into church practice. Even communication with the dead (spiritism) and the idea of reincarnation could be found in some circles. Second, an anti-clerical (Church authority) stance among many liberals took root. With the Roman Catholic Church’s hostile stance against anything that was seen as changing the current political, religious, and economic structures as evil (see below) many viewed the church as the new enemy to progress. Third, all of the above led to an increased nominalism among Roman Catholics. Most people were nominally Roman Catholic but had neither a personal relationship with Christ nor could articulate what it meant.

During the second half of the 19th century new waves of immigrants came from Europe as well as Chinese to the Pacific coast. All were necessary for the further development of industry and commerce. Many of these immigrants were Protestants. This led to several nations to grant religious freedom to the immigrants and then eventually to all. Most of the new immigrants, however, were Roman Catholic. Due to the rigidity and shortsightedness of the Roman Catholic Church, Catholic nominalism continued. And yet, this combination of Protestant influence and Roman Catholic apathy led to the great Christian revival that would penetrate much of Latin America in the 20th century! (will discuss next study).

**E. The Papal Response** – the papacy had a hard time coping with all the changes going on in European governments and the greater freedoms that various revolutions had produced in the Americas. Monarchies were losing power and so too the Roman Catholic Church. The RCC had been part of the problem of oppression for too long and it was suffering the consequences. The first major blow to papal power came as the result of the French Revolution. With no king and the backlash against ecclesiastical power, the pope could no longer control or influence French politics or social life. The second blow came with the establishment of new nations in Latin America (as noted on previous page). Rather than take advantage of a newfound opportunity to influence the various groups and governments that arose, the Vatican dug in its heels and failed to support the churches in the New World with bishops and other clergy.

A third blow came in Italy, at the heart of papal power – Rome. As many in Italy were calling for new freedoms and a creation of a nation state, the Vatican found itself being pressed to give up its control of what were called the Papal States of Italy. **Pope Pius IX (1846-78)** first granted freedoms for these areas but then he reneged. Revolt followed, and Pius fled from Rome. He was then reinstated with help of the French Army. This led to the strengthening of Italian nationalism and when the French had to withdraw because of a war with Prussia in 1870, the Italians invaded and took over the Papal States. The Pope was relegated to Vatican City. He then ordered that true Roman Catholic Italians should not vote in their elections and threatened excommunication for those who did. However, he was ignored by most citizens.

Rather than adapting and reforming, the Papacy doubled down. At what was called the *First Vatican Council*, held from 1869-1870, the Cardinals declared the Pope to be *infallible*. In other words, his interpretation of doctrine was final. Like a monarch who had absolute authority in temporal matters, the pope had absolute authority in spiritual matters. Thus, Pope Pius's 1854 papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus* in which he declared that Mary herself was sinless (conceived without original sin -the *Immaculate Conception*) remained a dogma of the Church even though no such doctrine is found in Holy Scripture. In essence, the Pope was officially recognized as having the same authority as the Word of God. Declaring the pope infallible echoed the same arrogance of power found in Pope Innocent III's declaration in 1215 that the pope is the *Vicar of Christ* (above every man on earth and just below God).

In 1864, Pius went on to condemn socialism, rationalism, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, public schools, Bible societies, separation of church and state and other "demons of progress." Again, rather than trying to be flexible and respond to the rapid changes going on in the world, the Roman Catholic Church responded with a conservative reaction that sought to maintain its power and grip on the lives of its adherents. This reaction further alienated many in Europe, the United States, and Latin America and caused a superficiality of faith as well as a real resentment toward to Roman Catholic Church itself. Such resentment led to the anti-Catholic persecution in the United States during the immigration of millions of Catholics in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Mexico during its Revolution, Spain during its Civil War (1936-39), and Italy since its unification in 1870 until the rise of Mussolini in the 1920's.

## IV. The Age of Ideology (The Challenges of Modernity)

### A. The Liberal Voice

#### 1. Two Germans

a. **Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)** – doctrine doesn't matter – Jesus is ultimate reality as the God-filled man and it is *our experience* with ultimate reality that really matters. Jesus had the full sense of God-consciousness. Ultimately, all religions are attempts to enter into this consciousness, but Jesus is the fullness of this.

**b. Albert Ritschl (1822-89)** - most influential of American liberals, he argued that the historical Jesus is what is most important. The “story” and the values conveyed are what is transformational not the miracles or Jesus’ death as a means of literally justification. Rather it is the love and values that flow from the love shown that matters. This may sound familiar for it is similar to what the Deists of the 1700’s believed! Scores of books were written during this time highlighting what was said to be the true historical Jesus. They often contradicted one another in their points but the common denominator to all was the removal of the miracles! Two of the most well-known were *The Life of Jesus* by David Strauss and *The Life of Jesus* by Ernest Renan (1863). Their conclusions included that Jesus never taught that He was the Messiah or the world was coming to an end or that he would return to set up the Kingdom of God.

**2. Charles Darwin and the *Origin of the Species* (1859)** – one of the most significant publications of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century it opened the door to further question the validity of God’s Word especially as it pertained to the Creation accounts of Genesis chapters one and two. It gave justification to those who argued against the supernatural realities espoused by Holy Scripture and the Church. It took the “mystery” out of the origin of life. And yet, it really raised more questions than answers scientifically. For it is one thing to craft a theory and then a hypothesis, it’s quite another to try to test it and prove it especially when one assumes the “luxury” of millions of years to support the theory. Darwin observed microevolution within species of birds and from there postulated the theory of macroevolution. Eventually, many in the Church accepted and still accept his findings. Theologically, the problem with Darwin’s theory is that it not only contradicts God’s Word that God made “*everything according to its kind*” but its premise is that life evolves based on survival of the fittest and that we evolved from animals. If so, then philosophically “*might makes right*” in human relationships and it lessens the truth that man is made in God’s image. Darwin’s theories of survival of the fittest were used by Adolf Hitler and others (even in the United States – Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) who founded what eventually became known as Planned Parenthood is one notable example) to suggest that certain races and ethnic groups were inferior to others.

**3. Higher Criticism** – influenced by the ideas of Schleiermacher and Ritschl, this method of analyzing the Bible took root in mainline Protestant Churches during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and well into the 20<sup>th</sup>. Spearheaded by German religious and secular scholars, it is the belief that the Bible was the work of religious men, not the product of divine revelation. Thus, the assumption is that the Bible contains numerous errors and contradictions. Furthermore, its books really are comprised of various cuts and pasted by many over the centuries (mainly the Old Testament – time before Christ) and the supernatural elements were more metaphor than reality. This thinking crept into churches worldwide.

**4. Mainline Protestantism** – the liberal trends that pervaded the major Protestant denominations originated in New England from traditional New England Calvinism and quickly spread throughout the Northeast. It could be found mainly among the elites of society. It led to what was literally called the “New Theology.” The proponents of this new theology believed that what is most important is the idea of charity being expressed in always maintaining an open mind and a giving heart as one seeks to address the social needs of society as well as develop a united community in Christian love. Right doctrine and belief are not important. This approach to Christian faith not only led to a watering down of the Lordship of Christ and the Word of God but also led to the beliefs of universalism (all will be saved) and works-righteousness (that we are judged on our “goodness”). We can see that these same trends are found in many churches today.

## **B. The Fundamentalist Response**

At the Niagara Bible Conference held in 1895 five fundamentals were affirmed for essential unity among Bible believing Christians: These were presented as the essentials of faith which all

Christians must accept. Briefly they were: **(1) the inerrancy of the Scriptures, (2) the deity of Christ, (3) His virgin birth, (4) His substitutionary atonement, and (5) His physical resurrection and future bodily return.** It would be these essentials that would motivate Christians in a number of denominations to refute the liberal trends that crept into mainline Protestant Churches and eventually took root in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.