

# *deeper*

word faith life

## Season 4

The Doctrine of the Church  
The Priesthood of Believers  
The Mission of the Church  
Church History  
The Reformation  
Calvinism and Arminianism

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## Episode 8 – Church History

### The Age of Reason and Revival (1648-1789)

With the spread The Enlightenment, a new school of thought filled the seventeenth century. It emphasised the use of reason to seek after and analyse beliefs. The age of skepticism, disagreement and new ideas had dawned. It asked, “Who needs God? Man can make it on his own.” Christians screamed their objections, but the idea spread until secularism filled the public life of western societies. The Catholic Church found itself at odds with the greatest minds of the time. Galileo Galilei was imprisoned by the Inquisition in 1633 for saying that the sun was at the centre of the universe. The Reformers were also struggling to keep abreast of the times and seemed to retreat.

### Enlightenment Figures

Rene Descartes - A French philosopher, mathematician and scientist “I think therefore I am”

John Locke - An English philosopher, he has been called the “father of British empiricism”.

Locke believed that every individual was born with a “tabula rasa”, a blank slate.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz - A German philosopher, mathematician and diplomat. “we are living in the best of all possible worlds”.

David Hume - A Scottish philosopher and historian and a follower of John Locke. Humes answer to the questions was a radical skepticism that questioned even the possibility of knowing something for certain. “If a rock is dropped, it is not reason that tells us the rock will fall, but rather custom and experience. Truths, like mathematical axioms, are true by definition, but to believe that an observed effect follows any cause by force of reason is folly.”

Voltaire - A French philosopher and writer, who’s work epitomised the Enlightenment. He was against dogma and tyranny and saw them as obstacles to progress. “If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.”

Jean-Jacques Rousseau - A Swiss-French philosopher who believed that man was born in a “natural state” of innocence and had no need of salvation. he believed that society is what corrupts men.

Blaise Pascal - A French theologian, scientist and mathematical prodigy, who founded the theory of probability and contributed to the development of differential calculus. “It is the heart which perceives God, and not the reason. That is what faith is: God perceived by the heart, not by the reason.” He did not discount the importance of thought, “Man is obviously made for thinking. Therein lies all his dignity and his merit; and his whole duty is to think as he ought.” He was a brilliant scientist but laid no faith in science as the hope of the world. “Knowledge of physical science will not console me for ignorance of morality in time of affliction, but knowledge of morality will always console me for ignorance of physical science.”

God remained, but only as a matter of personal choice. Christians could no longer appeal to the arm of power to suppress such heresies. The Reformation had become the new establishment. What was needed was the revival of the church. Many Christians turned to the way of the apostles, which was mission, characterised by prayer and preaching. The result was a series of evangelical revivals, most notably Pietism, Methodism, and the Great Awakening.

### Revivalist Figures

Jonathan Edwards - The son of a pastor, he was a brilliant student and was fast opening doors academically. He experienced a call to ministry and started to lead a Congregational church. He felt a desperate need for the church to be revived. His famous sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”, sparked off larger and larger crowds coming to hear him preach. The resulting revival, called The Great Awakening, spread all around the American colonies and news of it reached England.

John and Charles Wesley - 2 Anglican brothers born in Lincolnshire, England. They



grew up to be preachers, evangelists and Hymn writers. They travelled across England preaching the Gospel and saw many people come to Christ. Their success led to a problem, how could they care for their converts? Their answer was the formation of the Methodist Society. This was not an intended break away from the Anglican church. From 1778 the Methodist Societies grew nationwide, except Scotland which remained firmly Presbyterian. In 1795, the Methodists seceded from the Anglican Church.

Methodism was in many ways a step into a new era. The stoic days of the Enlightenment were quickly fading as the 18th century came to a close. There would soon be a recognition in philosophy, literature, theology, and art that Reason was no God after all.

#### The Age of Progress (1789-1914)

The Age of Progress saw Christians of all convictions wage a valiant struggle against the advance of secularism. Out of the evangelical awakenings came new efforts to carry the gospel of Christ to distant lands, and to begin a host of social cause ministries in industrialised Europe and North America. Believers were left with the problem we share today: How can Christians exert the gospel influence in pluralistic and totalitarian societies where Christian assumptions about reality no longer prevail? We'll take a quick look at the timeline.

1776 - Declaration of American independence from Britain.

1780 - The Industrial Revolution begins in Britain.

1789 - The French Revolution begins. The US constitution is established.

1793 - William Carey's mission to India.

1799 - The Rosetta Stone is discovered in Egypt.

1807 - After an 18 year struggle, William Wilberforce and his Clapham Sect (Friends), finally succeed and the slave trade is abolished. It takes another 26 years before all slaves in the British Empire were freed. Wilberforce died 4 days later.

1811 - Disciples of Christ movement is founded.

1812 - The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sends Adoniram and Ann Judson on a mission to India.

1830 - First American missionaries reach Hawaii. Charles Finney, a lawyer turned preacher, begins to hold revivals in urban areas organised in a new way. He also dealt with the issues of slavery and temperance.

1833 - The Oxford Movement is established to reform the Anglican Church.

1852 - David Livingstone begins his missionary work in Africa. He called the slave trade of Central Africa the "open sore of the world."

1854 - Hudson Taylor extends missions to China. Charles Spurgeon begins his ministry in Cambridge, then London. The 6000 seater Metropolitan Tabernacle was built for his large audiences.

Pope Pius IX declared as dogma, the belief that Mary was conceived without original sin. This was done without any committee consent. It was "ex cathedra". There were hymns sung to him, and he was even called "the vice-God of humanity".

1859 - Charles Darwin publishes "On the Origin of Species" explaining his theory of evolution.

1860 - Andrew Murray is at the forefront of the South African Revival.

1861 - American Civil War begins and ends in 1865.

1865 - The Salvation Army is founded by William Booth.

1873 - DL Moody begins as a travelling evangelist. The typewriter is manufactured commercially.

#### The Age of Ideologies (1914-1999)

The depth of the problem was apparent in the Age of Ideologies, when new gods arose to claim the loyalties of secular people. Nazism exalted the state; Communism



worshiped the party; and American Democracy revered the individual's rights. So called enlightened, modern nations, waged two global wars in an attempt to establish the supremacy of these new deities. When no single ideology prevailed, a cold war of coexistence settled upon the once Christian nations. Through these troubled times denominations struggled over orthodox and liberal theologies, and reflected a new hunger for an authentic experience of God in their times.

We'll take a quick look at the timeline.

- 1906 - Pentecostalism begins, Joseph Seymour led the people of Azusa Street Mission, in Los Angeles, into an experience with the Holy Spirit.
- 1910 - The Fundamentalist Movement begins as a direct reaction to the liberal thinking and Biblical criticism of the 19th century. Ecumenical movements begin with the focus of spreading the gospel.
- 1913 - Albert Schweitzer carries the gospel to French Equatorial Africa.
- 1914 - The 1st World War begins, and ends in 1918.
- 1917 - The Russian Revolution.
- 1919 - Karl Barth and Neo-Orthodoxy.
- 1920 - United States women are given the right to vote.
- 1921 - The age of electronic ministries begins with the first Christian radio broadcast.
- 1923 - Hitler publishes his "Main Kampf".
- 1929 - The Great Depression begins.
- 1930 - Gandhi leads the Salt March against the British in India.
- 1939 - the 2nd World War begins, and ends in 1945.
- 1942 - CS Lewis publishes the "Screwtape Letters".
- 1945 - The first electronic computer is built at the University of Pennsylvania.
- 1947 - The Cold War begins.
- 1948 - The World Council of Churches is formed. Mother Theresa begins her ministry in Calcutta.
- 1949 - The Nationalist government of South Africa adopts Apartheid as an official policy.
- Billy Graham holds his Los Angeles crusade.
- 1956 - Elvis Presley introduces the world to his brand of rock and roll.
- 1960 - The Charismatic movement begins.
- 1961 - The Berlin Wall is built.
- 1963 - Social revolution of the 60's.
- 1969 - Woodstock Festival, New York State. Apollo 11 lands on the moon.
- 1970 - The Jesus People begin to minister into the counter-culture space.
- 1980 - AIDS is first recognised in the US. The Beginning of the "Silicon Valley" revolution.
- 1989 - The Berlin Wall gets pulled down.
- 1991 - The Cols War ends.

#### The 21st Century (1999 - the present)

In 2016, on the 499th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation, Pope Francis travelled to Sweden where the Lutheran Church is the national Church to commemorate the Reformation at Lund Cathedral, which serves as the seat for the Lutheran Bishop of Lund. An official press release from the Papacy stated:

"The Lutheran World Federation and Roman Catholic Church joint event will highlight the 50 years of continuous ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans and the joint gifts of this collaboration. The Catholic-Lutheran commemoration of 500 years of the Reformation is structured around the themes of thanksgiving, repentance and commitment to common witness. The aim is to express the gifts of the Reformation and ask forgiveness for division perpetuated by Christians from the two traditions."

An ecumenical service was presided over by Munib Younan, the president of the



Lutheran World Federation, and Pope Francis. Representatives from the Anglican Communion, Baptist World Alliance, Eastern Orthodox Church, and Salvation Army also participated in the predominantly Lutheran and Roman Catholic event. Pope Francis, in a joint statement with Munib Younan, stated, "With gratitude we acknowledge that the Reformation helped give a greater centrality to sacred Scripture in the Church's life".

### The Roman Catholic Church

In February 2013, Pope Benedict XVI resigned from his ministry as pope. Benedict's decision to step down as leader of the Catholic Church made him the first pope to relinquish the office since Gregory XII in 1415, who did so in order to end the Western Schism, the first to do so on his own initiative since Celestine V in 1294.

Since the election of Pope Francis in 2013, he has displayed a simpler and less formal approach to the office, choosing to reside in the Vatican guesthouse rather than the papal residence.

Following the resignation of Benedict, Francis became the first Jesuit pope, the first pope from the Americas, and the first from the Southern Hemisphere.

On 18 June 2015, Francis released his encyclical *Laudato si'*, in which he critiqued consumerism and irresponsible development, laments environmental degradation and global warming, and calls all people of the world to take "swift and unified global action."

### Eastern Orthodox Church

After the fall of Mosul, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant demanded that Assyrian Christians living in the city convert to Islam, pay tribute, or face execution by 19th July 2014. Al-Baghdadi, the ISIL leader, further noted that Christians who do not agree to follow those terms must "leave the borders of the Islamic Caliphate" within a specified deadline. This resulted in a complete Assyrian Christian exodus from Mosul, marking the end of 1600 years of continuous Christian presence. A church mass was not held in Mosul for the first time in 1800 years. On 9th July 2017, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi arrived in preparation to announce the full liberation of Mosul and reclaim the city after three years of ISIL control.

### The Rise of Megachurches and Ministries

The new Millennium saw many Christians growing dissatisfied with traditional denominational churches and began a move to more contemporary churches with a more modern upbeat feel. But even as early as the late 20th century, big churches with big impressive buildings began to emerge. But nothing was ever going to be as big and ostentatious as the "Megachurch".

People like Rick Warren from California, Brian Houston from Sydney, Australia, Andy Stanley from Georgia, Mark Driscoll from Washington, Bill Johnson from California, Bill Hybels from Chicago, among many others began to come to the fore.

Alongside this movement there was something else happening in the world, something less flashy and "seeker sensitive", something earthy and authentic. People like Terry Virgo of New Frontiers in the UK, Gerald Coates of Pioneer also in the UK, Dudley Daniel of New Covenant Ministries International in South Africa, and many others began to sense a call for the church to return to the mission Jesus gave her, to "go and make disciples of all nations". This caused a wave of passion filled church planting across the globe which is still happening today, even though most of these men have handed their teams over to the next generation.

Globally, megachurches are a significant development in Protestant Christianity. In the United States, the phenomenon has more than quadrupled in the past two decades. It has since spread worldwide. In 2007, five of the ten largest Protestant churches were in South Korea. The largest megachurch in the United States is Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church in Houston Texas, with more than 40,000 members every weekend. Currently the largest megachurch in the world is South Korea's Yoido Full Gospel Church, an Assemblies of



God church, with more than 830,000 members.

Some megachurches, including Lakewood and Yoido Full Gospel teach prosperity theology, a controversial doctrine seen as a heresy by many Christians. In 2007, U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley opened a probe into the finances of six televangelism ministries that promoted prosperity theology: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, Creflo Dollar Ministries, Benny Hinn Ministries, Bishop Eddie Long Ministries, Joyce Meyer Ministries, and Paula White Ministries. In January 2011, Grassley concluded his investigation stating that he believed self-regulation by religious organisations was preferable to government action. Only the ministries led by Meyer and Hinn cooperated with Grassley's investigation. The inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States in 2017 featured prayers from two preachers known for advocating prosperity theology. Paula White, one of Trump's spiritual advisers, gave the invocation.

There has been a lot of water under the bridge when it comes to Church History and we've only just brushed over it. Jesus is still building His church, and God will always have His way in the affairs of mankind. Much more is still to come, we need to trust God and position ourselves in such a way that we do not become the casualties of future history.

