

praise you, O God; we acknowledge you to be the Lord'). Also popular among Catholic composers was a long medieval Latin devotional poem that describes Mary's grief at the crucifixion and is known as the *Stabat Mater*. Here is a literal translation of two of its stanzas:

The mother stood sadly
By the cross, in tears
As her son hung there.
Have me truly weep with thee
To share the grief of the crucified one
As long as I live . . .

Protestant Music

In music Protestantism was much less austere than in the visual arts, often taking over the tunes of folk songs and dances for use in worship. Perhaps the most widely cherished Protestant hymn of all was composed by Martin Luther, and since the rapprochement of Protestants and Roman Catholics in the 1960s it has been widely used by Catholics as well. Here is the first stanza:

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.

Often tuneful and musically simple, Protestant hymns express a wide range of religious emotions, from praise of God as creator, to the longing for social justice and world peace, to hopes for individual strength and divine guidance.

In the sixteenth century, the Calvinists in Switzerland and Scotland produced a collection of musical settings of the biblical psalms known as the 'psalter'. The psalms were also the principal focus of congregational song in the Church of England following the Reformation.

From the middle of the eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century, many hymns evoke the personal experience of conversion. An example is 'Amazing Grace', which is usually sung to a familiar early American tune. The words date from 1779:

Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

INTERACTION AND ADAPTATION

The Enlightenment

By the end of the eighteenth century, Christianity was no longer at the centre of Western civilization and the ties between Church and state had been significantly loosened. The intellectual movement responsible for those changes is generally known as the Enlightenment. At the heart of the Enlightenment was a growing confidence in human reason.

The precise beginning of the Enlightenment is hard to identify, but a crucial early moment came in 1543, when the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus proposed that the universe revolved around the sun rather than the earth. Half a century later, the Italian mathematician Galileo Galilei confirmed that theory through observation. The Church responded by adding Copernicus' book to its list of prohibited writings and, in 1633, bringing Galileo to trial before the Inquisition. Found guilty of heresy, he was forced to 'abjure, curse, and detest' his supposed errors, and to live the remaining eight years of his life under house arrest. Three and a half centuries later, in 1992, the Church finally admitted the truth of Galileo's findings and retracted its condemnation.

Galileo on Scripture and Reason

In 1613, Galileo wrote to his former student Benedetto Castelli explaining his decision to pursue his scientific research even though his findings were not consistent with the Bible.

... I think it would be the part of wisdom not to allow any one to apply passages of Scripture in such a way as to force them to support, as true, conclusions concerning nature the contrary of which may afterwards be revealed by the evidence of our senses or by necessary demonstration. Who will set bounds to man's understanding? Who can assure us that everything that can be known in the world is already known? ...

I am inclined to think that the authority of Holy Scripture is intended to convince men of those truths which are necessary for their salvation, and which being far above man's understanding cannot be made credible by any learning, or any other means than revelation by the Holy Spirit. But that the same God has endowed us with senses, reason, and understanding, does not permit us to use them, and desires to acquaint us in any other way with such knowledge as we are in a position to acquire for ourselves by means of those faculties, *that it seems to me I am not bound to believe, especially concerning those sciences about which the Holy Scriptures contain only small fragments and varying conclusions.* ... (Von Gebler 1879).

Deism

The growing importance of science was reflected in the rise of Deism, a philosophical position that gained a considerable following in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Recognizing that the universe manifests regular patterns or 'laws of nature', the Deists were unable to accept the idea that those laws could be suspended by divine intervention. On the other hand, they were willing to think of the universe as the product of a divine intelligence. The creator God of the Deists was envisioned as a divine clockmaker, who assembles or shapes the universe and then leaves it to run on its own.

In his *Natural Theology*, published in 1802, the English philosopher William Paley offered the following example of the Deist position. If we found a watch on a desert island, we would not need to have seen any other watch in order to posit the existence of a maker; the watch would not even have to work perfectly, nor would we have to

understand the function of every part. The same is true of the universe as evidence for God: even if the creation is imperfect, or not fully comprehensible, humans can still reasonably posit the existence of a perfect creator deity.

For scientists in the eighteenth century, the 'clockmaker' analogy was persuasive. To see the universe as a mechanism that obeyed regular laws was not in itself antithetical to religious faith. Indeed, the religious climate of the eighteenth century was highly favourable to the investigation of natural mechanisms, as each new discovery was received as another example of the marvels of God's creation.

Philosophy

At the same time, the eighteenth century was a period of philosophical skepticism about claims for the transcendent. Particularly decisive were the critiques of the Scotsman David Hume and the German Immanuel Kant. Thomas Aquinas's argument

for God as the First Cause cannot be proved; as Kant argued, causality is not part of the data of the physical world but part of the framework of thought by which human minds interpret it.

But what Kant showed to be in principle unprovable is by the same token not disprovable. Whereas earlier thinkers sought to prove the existence of the divine or transcendent itself, many philosophers of religion since Kant have focused instead on experience and feeling—that is, the human response to the transcendent. In the early nineteenth century, the German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher characterized religion as an 'intuitive sense of absolute dependence': if we cannot prove the existence of what we intuitively feel that we depend on, at least we can describe that intuition. In the same vein, the twentieth-century German philosopher of religion Rudolf Otto coined the word 'numinous' for what people perceive as an overpowering mystery.

Schleiermacher also contributed to a 'subjective' understanding of Christ's atonement. In the traditional Christian understanding, it is through Christ's sacrifice that humanity is saved and restored to its proper relationship with God. For Schleiermacher, however, Jesus functions as a moral example, an embodiment of human awareness of God. For Schleiermacher, salvation comes first as a change in spiritual awareness and then atonement follows as a divine-human reconciliation.

Meanwhile, the nineteenth-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard pioneered the line of inquiry called existentialism. In existentialism, the focus shifts from knowledge, already limited by Kant's strictures, to commitment. It is no accident that many modern defenders of religion compare it with love, which likewise rests on commitment rather than argument.

Commitment-based theologies have been influential, but they do not rule out one powerful argument against religious faith, which is at least as ancient as the biblical book of *Job*. This argument is the problem of evil and suffering: how can

one regard as both powerful and good, and hence worthy of worship, a deity that would allow either the evil that results from some human actions or the suffering that results from accident or chaos in nature? Even in a mechanistic theory, where the deity merely creates the world and does not intervene in it thereafter, the creator does not escape responsibility. The modern world has clearly not eliminated evil and suffering as objections to theistic faith, nor has it come up with any striking new ways to resolve the problem. If anything, the modern world has only added new instances of human brutality to the inventory of grievances that those who would defend the goodness of God must answer.

Sociology

The nineteenth century brought a growing tendency to look at religious institutions and identities in a social context. The French philosopher Auguste Comte, who coined the term 'sociology', saw history as progressing from a theological stage, in which everything is governed by will, through a metaphysical stage that understands causes, to a 'positive' stage in which law-like generalizations constitute knowledge. Comte expected a scientific intellectual elite to replace institutional clergy.

Arguably the most influential contributor to the new field of sociology was Émile Durkheim, whose family had expected him to become a rabbi. Studying with a social historian of the classical world in Paris, he turned his interest to social rather than traditional explanations of religious faith and practice. In his mature work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, first published in 1912, he located the origin and essence of religion in the identity of the clan or tribal group: 'The god of the clan . . . can be nothing else than the clan itself, personified and represented to the imagination under the visible form of the animal or vegetable which serves as totem' (Durkheim 1915: 206).

Not all sociologists were as eager as Durkheim to reduce religion to social components. The

German Protestant Max Weber, mentioned earlier in connection with the Puritan ethic, chose to discuss the functions of religious leadership and motivation rather than to speculate on the essence and origin of religion itself.

Psychology

The twentieth century has revised our view of the way the self functions. The Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud assembled evidence of a domain of personality operating below the level of conscious thought and volition. Under Freud's influence, many people came to see the human self not as a static entity, but as an arena in which conscious intellect and choice are in battle with unconscious impulses, drives, fantasies, and emotions. From the Freudian perspective, a seemingly ordered and rational personality is only superficially stable, like the thin crust of the earth resting on a deep interior of churning molten rock.

In Freud's own life, the concrete instances of religion that he experienced ran counter to his instincts as a scientist. For fostering obscurantist mythology, moral injustice, and intergroup hostility, religion earned little respect from him. The shaping of Freud's attitudes began in a secular Jewish family, where about the only traditional observance was the annual Passover celebration. He encountered strident anti-Semitism in the society of late nineteenth-century Vienna.

But it was the expectations and inhibitions Freud observed in his patients that led him to see religion as infantile dependency and wishful thinking. Religion, for Freud, was simply a mechanism for tolerating infantile helplessness.

The Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung broke with Freud, in part over religion. The son of a Protestant pastor, Jung found rich meaning in religious symbolism, including magic and alchemy. Nevertheless, Jung agreed with Freud to the extent that he saw religion as a product of psychological processes. The challenge for modern religious

thought is to make a convincing case for the idea that something that meets profound psychic needs is not necessarily or merely the product of those needs.

Evolution

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, most biology in England was 'creationist'. Scientists held that every species on earth had been created by God with specific characteristics. This view was definitively overturned by Charles Darwin, whose theory of evolution proposed that new types of organisms were not created by a deity but developed over time through a process he called natural selection.

Darwin's epoch-making study, *On the Origin of Species*, was published in 1859, more than twenty years after he had worked out the basics of his theory. Refining his argument clearly took time, but Darwin may have been especially cautious because he had studied theology and was well aware of the resistance he would encounter. He needed not merely to make a credible case for evolution, but to refute the biological creationism. He also knew that natural selection was antithetical to the theological argument from design. If the natural world was completely self-regulating, there was no need for a supervising deity. Although, in the *Origin*, he referred to the laws of nature as 'secondary causes', established in the beginning by the Creator, he left the door open for readers to infer that the laws he described would operate on their own, without a creator. Darwin had said little in the *Origin* about the human species, but in *The Descent of Man* (1871) he stressed the continuities between humans and other animals. For Darwin, human intellectual activity, including language and social morality, was the adaptively advantageous product of natural selection.

Thanks to Darwin, modern Christian theologians assessing the place of human life in the universe have tended to locate human distinctiveness not in a special physical creation but in a unique

intellectual and spiritual capacity for transcendence. For religious thinkers persuaded by Darwin's discoveries, what matters is not so much where we came from as where we are going.

New American Denominations

With the Protestant emphasis on the individual's relationship with God came a bewildering diversity of expression, which was illustrated by the new denominations that emerged on the American scene in the nineteenth century. To explain this phenomenon, many historians point to the disorienting economic and social changes that were taking place at the time. This was particularly true of upstate New York, which—like California in the following century—became a hotbed of new movements.

Disciples of Christ

Following Presbyterian opposition to a revival in Kentucky in 1804, Barton Stone left the Presbyterians to become a 'Christian only', and gained a number of followers. Meanwhile, when Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian from Northern Ireland, became disaffected with the sectarian character of his church, he and his son Alexander joined Baptist associations, calling themselves Reformers. In 1832, the Stone and Campbell movements merged.

Stone's followers called themselves the Christian Church, while the Campbells preferred the name Disciples of Christ. The merged movement, which used both names as well as 'Churches of Christ', spread with the westward expansion of the United States. Although the generic names they chose suggest a protest against sectarianism, the movement itself soon became another denomination. An influential periodical called the *Christian Century*, created by the Disciples, continues to reflect a pan-Protestant vision today, as do educational institutions such as Texas Christian University.

Seventh-Day Adventists

In 1831, in upstate New York, a Baptist lay minister called William Miller began to preach that the second coming of Christ—the 'advent'—was imminent. Interpreting a reference to 2,300 days (in *Daniel* 8:14) as 2,300 years, he predicted that the apocalypse would take place in or around the year 1843. When that did not happen (a 'great disappointment'), Miller's followers revised their **millenarian** calculations several times, but eventually gave up trying to predict a specific date. The movement's name reflects both its emphasis on the 'advent' and its belief that the true Sabbath is the seventh day (Saturday) rather than Sunday.

From the 1840s until her death in 1915, the Adventists were guided by the 'gift of prophecy' of Ellen Gould Harmon White, whose husband James was an Adventist preacher. As early as 1866, the Adventists began to promote health cures, opening a sanatorium in Battle Creek, Michigan. In the 1880s, they began sending medical missionaries around the world, and in the twentieth century their ranks grew dramatically in the Third World. At the same time, Adventist intellectuals and scholars in the United States were becoming more willing to ask critical questions about biblical interpretation and the claims of Ellen White. By the late twentieth century, the Adventists had completed the transition from millenarian sect to established denomination.

Jehovah's Witnesses

The Witnesses are another millenarian group centred on the belief that the Advent is imminent. Their founder was Charles Taze Russell. Born in 1852 and raised near Pittsburgh, Russell was exposed from an early age to forecasts of the end of the world and the return of Christ. He became intensely interested in Bible study, but was largely self-taught. He formed a study group and in 1879 began publishing *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*. Initially Russell and his followers expected the world to end in 1914; when that

prediction proved false, they came to believe that 1914 was the year when Jehovah's Kingdom was inaugurated in anticipation of the end, which they subsequently predicted for 1918, 1920, 1925, 1941, and 1975.

Russell himself died in 1916. It was under his successor, J.F. Russell, that the movement adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses, using the version of the tetragrammaton 'YHWH' introduced by the translators of the King James Bible. Their principal activity is door-to-door missionary work distributing their publications *Awake!* and *The Watchtower*. They reject the doctrine of the Trinity and regard Jesus Christ as a created being (as Arius did), although they believe that in dying he gave humanity a second chance to choose righteousness and escape the punishment expected at the end. They also refuse to salute flags or serve in armies, not because they are pacifists but because they see themselves as citizens of another kingdom and therefore reject the authority of secular states.

Witnesses call their meeting places Kingdom Halls rather than churches. They have their own version of the Christian Eucharist or mass, which they call the Memorial of Christ's Death. Whereas most Christian churches celebrate this ritual regularly, Witnesses observe it only once a year. They reject holidays such as Christmas because of their 'pagan' origins, and they do not celebrate birthdays because there is no reference to them in the Bible.

Some countries have treated Witnesses harshly, but in the United States their demands for exemption from state allegiance and service have often been upheld in the courts. They also refuse blood transfusions and some medical treatments for their children, but on this issue the courts have tended to place the child's right to health ahead of the parents' right to religious expression.

Christian Science

The Church of Christ, Scientist, was founded in Boston in 1879 by Mary Baker Eddy, a New England woman who in 1862 had received help for a spinal condition from a mental healer named Phineas Quimby. Believing that Quimby's method

was the same one that Jesus had used, she began to write articles on non-medical healing. After Quimby died in 1866, her condition returned and she suffered a bad fall. But after reading the New Testament, she recovered and began to write about spiritual healing; her *Science and Health*, which was published in 1875, came to be regarded by her followers as an inspired text, second in authority only to the Bible.

Mary Baker Eddy had come from a New England Congregationalist background with Puritan affinities and a longing for spiritual presence in tune with the thought of Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening. But she departed from the standard Protestant view in several respects. She believed that the material world and its evils—sickness, suffering, even death—could be transcended, and that spiritual existence was possible in the here and now. The quest to live those beliefs has occupied most of Christian Scientists' energy, and although it is active in publishing activity, the Church has not played a conspicuous role in social projects.

Mrs Eddy founded the Massachusetts Metaphysical College in Boston in 1881 and taught there until it closed in 1889. From 1883 the Church published the *Christian Science Journal* and from 1898 the *Christian Science Sentinel*, but it is the Church's newspaper, the *Christian Science Monitor* (founded in 1908 and known for the integrity of its journalism) that has gained it the widest public respect. Apart from a religion page, the *Monitor* devotes little direct attention to the Church's teachings; but, perhaps in deference to its heritage, its coverage of world events is sometimes more hopeful in tone than comparable stories in the commercial press. For years, the *Monitor* refused to report that people had 'died'; instead, they had 'passed'.

Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded in 1830 by Joseph Smith, Jr, who claimed that in 1820, as a boy in upstate New York, he had

experienced a vision of God and Jesus in which he was told not to join any of the existing denominations. Subsequent visions persuaded him that he had been divinely chosen to restore the true Church of Christ.

The textual basis for Smith's new faith was an account of God's activity in the Western hemisphere, paralleling the Bible's account of events in the East, entitled *The Book of Mormon*, which Smith said he had translated from gold plates, inscribed in 'reformed Egyptian', that had been divinely entrusted to him. Under the leadership of one of his disciples, Brigham Young, the main branch of the Mormons settled in Utah, but smaller groups are found in Illinois and elsewhere.

Whether Mormonism is a new form of Christianity or a new religion, emerging out of Christianity, depends on one's perspective. For a more detailed discussion, see Chapter 7 of this volume.

Pentecostal Churches

Protestant congregations that cultivate the practice of 'speaking in tongues' call themselves Pentecostal, after the feast during which the apostles received the miraculous gift of speaking in foreign languages, which enabled them to communicate with people outside their own community. But the 'tongues' that modern Pentecostals speak are not intelligible human languages: rather, they are understood to represent the mystical language of heaven.

Charismatic tongue-speaking was promoted in London as early as the 1830s by a Scottish Presbyterian named Edward Irving, and in the United States in 1901 by Charles Fox Parham, who taught at a Bible college in Topeka, Kansas, but the modern Pentecostal movement is generally believed to have originated in a revival led by William J. Seymour at a church in Los Angeles in 1906. The son of former slaves, Seymour had been influenced by Parham's work in Topeka. Newspaper coverage described the sounds of Seymour's meetings as a 'weird babble'. At the outset Blacks and Whites worshipped together, but as Pentecostalism diversified, it developed segregated congregations.

With its emphasis on immediate personal experience rather than textual or doctrinal tradition, Pentecostalism can take a much greater range of forms than more established varieties of Christianity, and is more accessible to people with little formal education. It also has a strong cross-cultural appeal. Pentecostal missionaries have had remarkable success in Latin America and Africa, and Pentecostalism has been identified as the fastest-growing segment of Christianity today.

Protestant Missions

The colonial policies of the northern European nations and the missionary efforts of Protestants peaked in the second half of the nineteenth century. In Africa (one of their main objectives), the aims of Church and state went hand in hand. The British established themselves on large stretches of the African coastline, moving into the interior of the continent by river and road, and later by rail. Although formerly active in slave trading from West Africa to the New World, Britain outlawed slavery in 1834, and by mid-century its opposition to the ongoing slave trade in East Africa had become one of the arguments it used to justify its colonization efforts. Even the Scottish missionary David Livingstone made an explicit connection between evangelism and empire. On a return visit to Britain from East Africa in 1857, he told a Cambridge audience:

[Africa] is now open; do not let it be shut again! I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity. Do you carry on the work I have begun. I leave it with you (Livingstone 1858: 24).

Elsewhere in the world there were comparable opportunities. A missionary to the southwestern Pacific reported in 1837 that at least '150,000 persons, who a few years ago were unclothed savages, are now wearing articles of British manufacture.' And though an atheist himself, Sir Harry Johnston,

a British colonial administrator, considered missionaries essential to the colonial enterprise:

As their immediate object is not profit, they can afford to reside at places till they become profitable. They strengthen our hold over the country, they spread the use of the English language, they induct the natives into the best kind of civilization, and in fact each mission station is an essay in colonization (Oliver 1957: 297).

But missionaries sometimes opposed colonial policy; for that reason, the British East India Company excluded missionaries from its trading concessions in India until 1813, when Church pressure in Britain forced it to allow them into the country.

Opinion on the subject of missionaries remained mixed: even Rudyard Kipling, who has often been stereotyped as a supporter of British cultural domination in India, criticized the missionary enterprise in a letter to a clergyman:

... it seems to me cruel that white men ... should amaze and confound their fellow creatures with a doctrine of salvation imperfectly understood by themselves and a code of ethics foreign to the climate and instincts of those races whose most cherished customs they outrage and whose gods they insult (Faber 1966: 106–7).

Many Protestant missionaries from Canada and the United States likewise (if unconsciously) conveyed political and cultural messages along with the gospel. Even among the great Asian cultures, where missionaries attracted relatively few converts, Protestant medical and educational institutions served as channels for significant transfers of technology and culture. From the 1870s to at least the 1950s, colleges and universities founded by missionaries in China, India, and the Middle East had a visible influence: it has been said of the delegates at the founding conference of the United

Nations in 1945 that more had been educated at the American University of Beirut than at any other university in the world.

Missionaries often insisted that rejection of the old ways was a precondition for receiving the benefits of the new. By the 1930s, however, it was becoming clear that this approach was not particularly effective in Africa and Asia. Liberal Protestants began to move towards a view of missionary work as a low-key matter of sharing with the target community, rather than a high-pressure confrontation aimed at rescuing 'the other' from ignorance and damnation.

Contextualizing the Bible

Until the nineteenth century, most Christians believed that the Bible was the word of God, a factual account of the creation of the world, the origins of the human race, and the emergence of the Israelite nation; then a set of converging circumstances took the Bible off its special pedestal and turned it into a book like other books, the word of human beings.

A historical context for ancient Israel was pieced together. Until the nineteenth century, the only stories of the ancient world that Europeans knew, apart from the Greek epics, were the narratives of the Bible. The Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Hittites, the Canaanites or Phoenicians were the naughty neighbours of Israel, merely the supporting cast in the biblical drama.

In 1798, however, when Napoleon led a campaign to Egypt (to try to counter British influence in India), he took with him scientists who began to investigate the ancient Egyptians' own monuments and documents. Over the decades that followed, European archaeologists excavated the stratified city-mounds of Mesopotamia (now Iraq), on the trail of the Babylonians and Assyrians. By the end of the nineteenth century, historians were able to situate the Bible in a specific cultural context.

That context was not necessarily consistent with the Bible. The civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt were already ancient before the Hebrews appeared on the scene, and they had larger

populations than Israel. The Hebrews, it now appeared, were a minor group on the receiving end of ideas and technology from the major centres of empire. Mesopotamia and Egypt had had writing systems for nearly two thousand years before Moses. What's more, their literatures contained prototypes of stories told in the Bible.

The Mesopotamian epic *Gilgamesh*, for instance, tells of an ancient sage named Utnapishtim, who has survived a primeval flood. Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh how he built a boat and took pairs of animals aboard in order to survive the all-submerging deluge. When the flood waters receded, says Utnapishtim, he sent out birds to see whether there was dry land; at first they returned, but then they did not. The fact that the Mesopotamian narrative was clearly the source of the biblical account of Noah and his ark presented a challenge both to the originality of the Noah story and to the historicity of Noah himself. (If that weren't enough, a flood covering everything in sight was far more likely to have occurred on the flat plains of ancient Mesopotamia than in the hill country where the Hebrews lived.)

Admittedly, archaeological work is unlikely either to confirm or to contradict biblical accounts, especially when it comes to miraculous events. In general, though, historians now operated on the assumption that biblical events could be understood in a human, historical context, without reference to divine intervention. Literary criticism of the Bible, which was centred in Protestant circles but eventually became influential in Catholic and Jewish circles as well, treated the text not as the gift of God but as the product of human beings. Though scholars continue to debate detail, the main outlines of nineteenth-century biblical criticism have stood the test of time and have been incorporated into contemporary Christians' understanding of their own tradition.

The Quest for the Historical Jesus

Before he became famous as a medical missionary to Africa, Albert Schweitzer was a theologian who

published a ground-breaking book entitled *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* in 1906. He was hardly the first to argue that the Jesus of history was not necessarily the same as the 'Christ' of Christian theology and belief. Thomas Jefferson had disputed the historicity of the miracles reported in the gospels, and in the 1700s the German philosopher H.S. Reimarus argued that most of the details of the gospels were forged by Jesus' followers, disappointed that the kingdom of God had not come during his lifetime, or soon afterwards.

During the nineteenth century many scholars had argued that Jesus was a great moral teacher. But Schweitzer's book raised the theological discussion to a new level by reviewing earlier studies and bringing all the issues together. He suggested that the Jesus presented in the gospel accounts was less a moral teacher than an apocalyptic fanatic who believed the current world order would come to a dramatic end within the lifetime of his listeners.

A 'New Quest' or 'Second Quest' began in the 1950s, initiated by German New Testament scholars who used literary criticism and related critical methods to distinguish the 'Jesus of history' from the 'Christ of faith'. Founded in 1985, the 'Jesus Seminar' brought together scholars in a collaborative effort to reach a consensus by reviewing all the stories about Jesus, and all the sayings attributed to him, in both canonical and non-canonical gospel material. Although criticized by fundamentalists and conservatives, the Seminar established important benchmarks and clear criteria for determining whether particular sayings and stories were historical or not. The Seminar was in general skeptical about the apocalyptic sayings ascribed to Jesus, but more sympathetic to the 'wisdom' material (parables, maxims, etc.).

Evangelicalism

Protestant evangelicalism is a multifaceted emphasis or movement cutting across the major denominations. It is not a denomination as such, although some denominations are solidly evangelical. It

draws on earlier themes, notably the assurance of God's grace and acceptance that characterized Reformation Pietism on the European continent and the revivalist movements of England and North America. Evangelicals refer to this assurance of grace as a spiritual rebirth, an experience of being 'born again'. As their name (from the Greek for the gospel or 'good news') indicates, evangelicals are typically active in spreading their message, and they often do so with the conviction that it, and no other, is valid.

Because the Reformation thinkers had put so many of their eggs in the basket of scriptural authority in their critique of the institutional Church, biblical criticism was bound to provoke a sharp reaction among evangelical Protestants. Committed to the literal authority of the Bible, evangelicals fought a rearguard battle against both modern

biblical criticism and the Darwinian theory of human evolution. By 1920, some were beginning to label the most deeply conservative advocates of the inerrancy of scripture 'fundamentalist'. (**Fundamentalism** will be discussed in our concluding chapter.)

In the twentieth century, a number of evangelical preachers—heirs to the revivalist tradition—became famous for their 'crusades', preaching to massive audiences and calling on them to make a 'decision for Christ': to convert from a lapsed or inactive form of the faith to a revitalized one.

Radio was the first medium to make it possible to preach to a widely dispersed, unseen audience. In the United States, the faith healer Aimee Semple McPherson was a pioneer in the use of radio in the 1920s. Charles E. Fuller conducted 'The Old Fashioned Revival Hour' on radio in the 1940s.



Gospel music evokes the personal experience of conversion (Getty Images North America).

the scattered 'congregation' of his listeners could make their offerings by mail. (Fulton J. Sheen pioneered Roman Catholic broadcasting in the same years.) Among the most successful evangelical preachers from 1949 on was the Southern Baptist Billy Graham. His pioneering use of television gave rise to a succession of 'televangelists' who made the electronic audience their primary 'congregation' and solicited contributions by mail and telephone. Several highly entrepreneurial preachers who operated outside established denominations built what amounted to personal empires. Financial and marital scandals brought a few of the most visible televangelists into disrepute in the late 1980s, but audience ratings remain high, particularly for the success-oriented *Hour of Power* broadcast from the Crystal Cathedral of Robert Schuller in southern California.

Modern Roman Catholicism

For Roman Catholics, modernity has posed challenges on various matters of faith and practice. These include (to name only a few) philosophical justifications for doctrine, the status of Mary and the saints, the theology of the sacraments, clerical celibacy, and the rules that lay Catholics are expected to follow in the area of sexuality and reproduction.

A focus in all these issues—arguably the heart of the matter for many committed Catholics—is the authority of the institutional church and, in particular, its head, the pope. Just as Protestants committed to the principle of scriptural authority saw that principle threatened by modern historical criticism, so Catholics committed to the infallibility of the *magisterium*—the Church's teaching authority—saw that principle threatened by the modern world. Historically, the Catholic Church has often traced its authority to Jesus' disciple Peter, even though the New Testament accounts show Peter as clearly fallible: after Jesus' arrest, he denies knowing him, and Jesus even calls him

Satan. But as the centuries passed, the Church came to see its connection to Peter as establishing absolute authority.

A central tenet of Christian faith is that God guides the Church through the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit. Catholics have held that such guidance includes the formulation and maintenance of its doctrines. It may follow that the Church's doctrines, having been formulated with divine guidance, must be infallibly true. Surprisingly, though, no formal claim of infallibility has ever been made on behalf of the Church itself, even though a council was convened at the Vatican to address the matter in 1869–70, during the papacy of Pius IX. We know that the council considered a draft statement asserting that the Church was enabled 'to conserve in its entirety and without alteration the already revealed Word of God contained in Scripture and Tradition', and that the keeping of Christ's revelation intact was the collective responsibility of the apostles and their successors, not the sole responsibility of the pope. But that document was never ratified before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War forced the council to close.

Instead, the First Vatican Council devoted its political energies to defining a monarchical role for the pope, in the context of which the doctrine of papal infallibility was extrapolated from ecclesiastical infallibility. The first to propose papal infallibility was a thirteenth-century Franciscan named Peter John Olivi, and his views were condemned as the work of the devil by Pope John XXII in 1324. Nor did the Council of Trent specify that the pope was infallible. The classic view was that individual heads of the Church might err from time to time, but the Church as a whole would not go astray. Thus Vatican I (the First Vatican Council) broke new ground when it announced that the pope 'when he speaks *ex cathedra* [i.e., when speaking officially, 'from the seat of authority'] on matters of faith and morals 'is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to be endowed . . . and therefore such

definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves and not from the consent of the Church'.

In this way the doctrine of papal infallibility, a disturbing innovation when Olivi proposed it six centuries earlier, became conservative tradition in 1870. A few years later, in 1879, the theological system of Thomas Aquinas, also a disturbing innovation six centuries earlier, was given official status by Pope Leo XIII. A small group of German, Austrian, and Swiss Catholics who refused to accept the new doctrine of papal authority broke away from Rome and came to be known as Old Catholics. But the Catholic Church as a whole had to wait nearly a century for the winds of reform and renewal to blow.

Vatican II

When the Italian cardinal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was elected pope in 1958, few had any inkling of the changes that lay in store for the Roman Catholic Church. Though already in his late seventies, John XXIII (the name he chose upon his election) proved to have a vision for his Church and a fearless openness to change, as well as great human warmth. Calling for *aggiornamento*, Italian for 'updating', John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council, which met from 1962 to 1965.

The changes set in motion at the council ushered in a new era for Catholicism. Latin was replaced as the language of the mass by the vernacular, and the officiating priest now turned to face the congregation (although the doctrine of transubstantiation was retained). The dress of priests and nuns was modernized and in many cases secularized. In contrast to Vatican I, which had emphasized the monarchical aspect of the pope's role, Vatican II emphasized the more collegial nature of his role in council with the bishops (although the doctrine of papal infallibility was also retained). Efforts were made to improve relations with people of other religions, including Protestants, the Eastern Orthodox, and Jews. An institution that had barely assimilated

either the Reformation or the Enlightenment now had to try to swallow both in one gulp.

Nearly fifty years later, the council's agenda still has not been completed. The priesthood today is under serious threat, with declining numbers of recruits. Clearly, the requirement of celibacy, on which the Church has not budged, has reduced the appeal of the priesthood for modern Roman Catholics. Another problem may be that the traditional ritual activities of priests and ministers are no longer perceived to offer a sufficient intellectual challenge. A major breach developed in the Church shortly after the council, in 1968, when John's successor, Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* ('On human life') prohibited the use of artificial birth control by Catholics. The gap between the Church's official stand on sexuality and the actual practice of the faithful has only widened in the intervening decades. Many Catholics have ceased to follow some of the teachings they consider out of date.

But the matter had other implications as well. *Humanae Vitae* intensified the theological tension between the reform-minded and traditionalist wings in the Church's hierarchy. Progressive Catholics saw the encyclical—which did not have the status of an *ex cathedra* statement, but nonetheless came from the pope alone, without the consensus of bishops in council—as an attempt to turn the clock back to Vatican I. The Swiss theologian Hans Küng, who held a post in the Roman Catholic theological faculty of the University of Tübingen, Germany, responded by publishing a controversial book on the issue entitled *Infallible? An Inquiry* (1970). Nine years later, when a student of his published a doctoral thesis on the same subject with an introduction by Küng, the Church revoked his status as a theological teacher (though Küng remained a priest and continued in a professorship in the university). This move on the part of the Church reflected a 'fundamentalism' of ecclesiastical authority parallel to the Protestant fundamentalism of scriptural authority.

Ecumenism

The historical divisions within Euro-American Christianity made little sense when they were exported to Africa and Asia. What did it matter in India or China whether someone was Anglican or Presbyterian, Baptist or Congregationalist? From 1910 onward, the mainline Protestant denominations began to overcome four centuries of separation.

Part of the movement towards union was rooted in missionary collaboration. Denominational mission boards agreed to divide overseas territories among the various denominations to reduce redundant competition. Also significant was collaboration in youth work, through organizations such as the interdenominational Student Christian Movement. And in the United States, the Federal Council of Churches was particularly devoted to collaboration on economic and social issues.

By mid-century, a generation of Church leaders who had grown up with interdenominationalism had moved into positions of responsibility in their denominations. The time was ripe for worldwide collaboration, and in 1948 the World Council of Churches was formed with representation from most major Protestant and Orthodox bodies.

Ecumenism (from the Greek meaning 'inhabited world') offered a climate of mutual acceptance and common purpose, an emphasis on unity within diversity. Protestants agreed to continue disagreeing on many issues (such as Church discipline and Eucharistic theology) that had historically separated them. It was much easier to affirm one another's agendas regarding social justice (or, later, ecological concern) than to take communion together.

Nonetheless a number of denominational mergers did take place in the twentieth century. In 1925, Canadian Methodists, Congregationalists, and a majority of the country's Presbyterians formed the United Church of Canada. A similar group of churches joined to form the Uniting

Church in Australia in 1977. In England in 1972, the Presbyterians and Congregationalists merged to form the United Reformed Church. In the United States, a multiple merger in 1961 produced the United Church of Christ.

But more ambitious twentieth-century attempts at Church union remain unconsummated. Consultations in the United States and New Zealand involving Anglicans, Presbyterians, and others were unable to resolve differences over ordination and the Eucharist. And Anglicans hesitated to rush into union with Reformed Churches, partly because they wanted to conduct conversations also with Lutherans and with the Roman Catholic Church. However, the Church of South India was formed in 1947 by a variety of Protestant denominations, including Anglicans, and it was followed by a number of regionally defined unions in North India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. And Episcopalians and Lutherans in the United States moved part of the way towards union in 1999.

For years, the goal of ecumenism for Catholics had been what they termed the return of 'separated brethren' to the Roman Church. This frequently amounted to a unilateral stipulation of terms, but there were hints that concessions might be made. The Belgian cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier sponsored ground-breaking conversations with Anglicans in his city, Malines, from 1921 to 1926. Elsewhere as well, intellectual, spiritual, and personal contacts were replacing political confrontation.

Rome's twentieth-century move into ecumenism is associated primarily with the papacy of John XXIII (1958-63). A permanent Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity was established in 1960. An important item on the agenda of the Second Vatican Council was the drafting of documents and declarations that might bring about a rapprochement with other Christians.

The spirit of reunion was in the air. By the end of the 1960s, Protestant and Catholic institutions for the study of theology and the training of clergy

From the Vatican's Declaration on Relations with Non-Christian Religions, 1965

The statement entitled Nostra Aetate was proclaimed by Pope Paul VI in October 1965, shortly before the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council.

3. The Church regards with esteem . . . the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honour Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their desserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving, and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

4. As the sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ—Abraham's sons according to faith—are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself (NOSTRA AETATE 1965).

were entering into collaborative arrangements of all sorts, while their students were attending the same lectures and reading the same books. No matter how hard conservative Protestants or Catholics might try to reverse these trends, it would be impossible to unscramble the ecumenical omelet. A gulf that had separated Western Christendom for four centuries was being bridged.

Reforming Society

The denominations influenced by Puritanism emphasized personal morality, which they expected to bear fruit in society. To Quakers, English Congregationalists, and some Methodist-derived movements such as the Salvation Army (organized by William Booth in London after 1865), one test

of any renewal was whether it improved living conditions—food, clothing, shelter, education—of the population at large.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the United States was torn apart by the issue of slavery. When that issue erupted politically in the Civil War of 1861–5, its effects were felt in the Christian denominations. Some, such as the Presbyterians, separated into northern and southern churches that took a century to reunite. By and large, the Christian conscience was anti-slavery, but there were more interests to be offended in southern White constituencies than in their northern counterparts.

Political issues around race erupted again in the mid-twentieth century. When the civil-rights movement developed during the early 1960s, the Black community had few institutional structures other than churches, with the result that almost all the early Black leaders emerged from the ranks of the ministry. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference were the pivotal leaders in the movement, but the support of White religious leaders was also important.

Religion has been invoked on both sides of the race issue. Some conservative Protestants have argued that God created different races and clearly meant for them to remain separate; the Mormons in America long resisted even Black membership, let alone leadership. The Afrikaner population of South Africa, whose National Party came to power in 1948, had a Dutch Calvinist background, and they put forward theological as well as practical reasons for its policy of apartheid (segregation). Vehement condemnation of that policy by members of the United Nations and the British Commonwealth brought about South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961 and its expulsion from the UN. But within South Africa there was equally vocal opposition to the policy from both Black and White Christians, many of them Anglicans. By 1994, when Blacks first voted in South African elections, even

Reformed Church leaders had begun to repudiate apartheid.

Similarly, Christians have not been of one mind on economic policy. During the Industrial Revolution, for instance, the ownership and managerial classes in many parts of the English-speaking world were largely Protestant, while the industrial workers were largely Roman Catholic.

Many religious institutions were indebted to the philanthropy of wealthy families such as the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts in the United States or the Eatons in Canada. It was sometimes hard for churches to bite the hand that fed them, with the result that affinities between the political right and the religious right continued to be evident during the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush.

From the 1860s onward, socialism in Europe addressed the growing gulf between owners and workers. On the continent, socialism was largely anti-Church, but in Britain there was a significant Christian socialist movement, which was inspired by two Anglicans, the theologian Frederick Denison Maurice and the clergyman–novelist Charles Kingsley. The influence also spread across the Atlantic.

A principal moral concern of late nineteenth-century Protestants had been alcoholism; thus temperance movements enlisted many of their energies. But as the twentieth century opened, broader issues of social and economic justice moved to the fore. For example, the Canadian Methodist board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Moral Reform was renamed Evangelism and Social Service.

In the decade before the First World War, Christian critics of the civic and corporate order in the United States called for the Christianization of the economy. The leading theologian of the 'social gospel' movement was Walter Rauschenbusch. While he was a Baptist pastor in New York City, he supported a radical candidate for mayor, and later, as a theology professor in Rochester, New York, he

From Martin Luther King, Jr, 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'

In the spring of 1963 the Baptist minister and civil-rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr, was arrested and imprisoned for leading a protest against racial segregation in Birmingham, Alabama. When eight fellow clergymen criticized him for taking part in the protest, King responded with an open letter that came to be known as the 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. . . . One may well ask: 'How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?' The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. . . . One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St Augustine that 'an unjust law is no law at all'. . . .

I have beheld the impressive outlines of [the South's] massive religious-education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: 'What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? . . . Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?'. . .

There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being 'disturbers of the peace' and 'outside agitators'. . . .

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust. . . .

I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. . . .

Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty (King 1964: 76–95).

campaigns to make the gas company, the transit system, and the public schools more responsive to people's needs. Another leader was Washington Gladden, a Congregational minister who served on the city council in Columbus, Ohio, coordinated social service agencies, mediated in labour disputes, and lobbied the US Congress to create a commission on industrial relations.

In Canada, the Nova Scotian Presbyterian George M. Grant (1835–1902), who became head of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, in 1877, was a spokesman for interdenominational and national unity as well as a social conscience in public affairs. A more dramatic voice was that of the Manitoba Methodist James S. Woodsworth, the son of a mission superintendent. For criticizing the use

of churches as recruiting centres during the First World War, he was ousted from his position with the Methodists' Bureau of Social Research. Later he left the ministry to become a Vancouver longshoreman and eventually one of the founders of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the forerunner of the New Democratic Party. Thus the roots of Canada's political left can be located not only in secular socialism but in Christian calls for economic justice, especially during the Depression of the 1930s. Christians have often been divided by issues of war, peace, and international justice. Pacifist refusal to participate in wars on grounds of conscience or ideology has generally been a minority position, more common among individualist denominations such as Quakers and Anabaptists than among the more 'establishment' Catholics, Lutherans, and Anglicans. When the justification for fighting seemed relatively simple, as in the two world wars, most served in the military when called; an American popular song about an artillery chaplain in the Second World War had the refrain, 'Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.'

After the Second World War, the Cold War between the West and the Soviet bloc often evoked simplistic responses. The communist world was portrayed as formally atheist, even if only debatably diabolical. Religious support of American national policy during the 1960s, however, was fragmented when the US found itself mired in an ambiguous war in Vietnam. On an unprecedented scale, American Christians opposed this particular war, if not all war, in the name of religion. But more than a few leaders who were 'doves' on Vietnam were 'hawks' when it came to Israel's conquests in 1967.

Christians spoke out in increasing numbers against Washington's encouragement of regimes around the world that they judged repressive. Such criticism could often be selective, one person's terrorist being another's freedom fighter. Attitudes also depended on personal affinities and the information available, often conditioned by the varying media coverage given to Latin America,

Africa, the Middle East, or Southeast Asia. Still, the Christian ideals for society continue to be peace, justice, and reconciliation.

Marxism in Theory and Practice

The thought of Karl Marx (1818–83), including his critique of traditional religion, remains a major intellectual development of the modern world. We may still be too close to the collapse of Soviet and eastern European communism in 1989 to judge the extent to which Marx's ideas remain in play. China remains officially communist, though popular sentiment there favours more democracy.

Marx was raised in Germany in a secular Jewish family. The prevailing climate was one of social emancipation and assimilation, so much so that Marx was baptized a Christian at the age of six. In the mid-1840s, after having written a doctoral dissertation on the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel, Marx came to know Friedrich Engels, the Calvinist son of a wealthy German industrialist who owned cotton mills in England. After the publication of Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, the two began collaborating in Brussels, and in 1848 they published *The Communist Manifesto*. As a result, Marx was no longer welcome in either Belgium or his Prussian homeland, and he spent the next three decades as an exile in London, where with Engels he pursued his writing and took part in the movement to organize industrial labourers.

Marx's atheism is evident in his conviction that the divine is a projection of human powers and attributes. The implication of this view, put forward by Ludwig Feuerbach in his 1841 work *Essence of Christianity*, was that humankind, rather than the divinity, had to come first if humanity was to be fulfilled.

Although Marx wrote as an atheist, his critique of religion is primarily social rather than philosophical. Popularizing a phrase describing religion as the 'opium of the people', he argued that the function of institutional religion is to numb people to the injustices they suffer, promising pie in the

sky after death instead of working for their material betterment in the here and now.

The Marxist criterion of success for any institution was whether it actually improved the conditions of human existence. By this criterion Marx found religion wanting. Before the twentieth century ended, many in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union found the socialist system wanting, by the same criterion. Marx judged religion by its achievements, not its ideals; and the world would judge Marxism similarly.

There are striking affinities between Marx's thought and the Judeo-Christian religious heritage. Both protest against social injustice. Both look forward to the end of the present world order and to a radical reshaping of things that will compensate those who currently suffer. This ideal has resonated in Latin America. The Latin American Council of [Catholic] Bishops, meeting in 1968 in Colombia, called for the Church to identify with the poor rather than the ruling élite.

Some South American churchmen, such as the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez and the Uruguayan Jesuit Juan Luis Segundo, are proponents of liberation theology, which makes use of Christian biblical and theological resources that parallel Marxist thought. Like Marxism, it asks on behalf of the rural peasantry and the urban working class for a share in the material benefits of economy and society. It offers a rationale for social action that addresses an enduring problem, and has attracted the attention of concerned Christians, Catholic and otherwise, outside Latin America as well.

Recent Theology

'I believe because it's absurd,' said the third-century Latin theologian Tertullian, but theologians in the Latin Middle Ages regarded faith and reason as mutually confirming.

In the twentieth century a number of Roman Catholic theologians and philosophers explored the Aristotelian principles and methods of Thomas Aquinas for modern purposes. One

of the most innovative and wide-ranging was the German Jesuit Karl Rahner. Another influential Jesuit concerned with the theory of knowledge was the Canadian Bernard Lonergan, who taught in Rome for half his career. Jacques Maritain was a French neo-Thomist with conservative views on many issues who converted to Catholicism while a student and taught in Paris, Toronto, and Princeton. Widowed at the age of 78, he joined the Dominicans in a French monastery for his last years.

Tradition-based theologies also continued to command adherents among Protestants. A commentary on Paul's New Testament letter to the Romans propelled the Swiss theologian Karl Barth into prominence at the end of the First World War—a time of disillusionment with the idea of inevitable human progress. Barth's theology is termed dialectical because it draws a sharp distinction between what humans can do or know by themselves and the gift of saving grace offered by God; the Barthian position has been popular in conservative Protestant circles.

For existentialist thought, the unprovability of religion is irrelevant: what matters is individual commitment and experience. Existentialism has been particularly important among theologians trained in Europe. The German Paul Tillich, who settled in the United States in the 1930s, characterized religious awareness as moving not from God downwards, as Barth did, but from the human experience upwards: in Tillich's words, religion is 'ultimate concern'. Tillich's formulations were widely influential during the second half of the century.

A distinctly American movement is process theology. Drawing on the process thought of Alfred North Whitehead, it appeals to people who associate change with modernity. Whitehead was one of the century's relatively few English-speaking philosophers to make a substantial contribution to metaphysics (the branch of philosophy that speculates on the nature of ultimate reality). Whitehead saw reality as dynamic rather than as static:

It is as true to say that God is permanent and the world fluent, as that the World is permanent and God is fluent. . . . It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World (Whitehead 1929: 410–11).

For the principal process theologians, such as the American Charles Hartshorne, creation is unfinished and God is developing too. The idea of God is the idea of a dynamic power open to virtually unlimited possibility.

In recent decades, few systematic thinkers have had as significant an influence as Barth and Tillich had among Protestants at mid-century, or as Rahner had among Catholics at the time of Vatican II. With few exceptions, progressive theological thinkers have had little success in presenting the meaning of scripture, tradition, and religious experience to the public. Statements of Christianity's classic message have been less important than applications of it: theologies of social liberation, feminist empowerment, global ecology, and so on. In particular, recent liberal theology has seemed reactive in its relationship to modern life, shifting and rethinking its priorities in response to the demands of the culture.

By contrast, fundamentalism in both its Protestant and Catholic forms is a defensive reaction against modernity that promises a return to the basics of Christian faith. The two varieties differ in what they look to as the ultimate authority: scripture in one case and the tradition of the church itself in the other. But both offer systematic formulations that seem easy to pin down, solid rather than shifting. Thus a liberal stance can be considerably more demanding than a fundamentalist one, because it is more likely to require a rethinking of the priorities of faith and tradition.

Women and Gender

The twentieth century, particularly in its second half, brought dramatic changes in the cultural

expectations of women in society. The notion that females are subordinate to, or inferior to, or the property of, males has been discredited and is now in rapid retreat.

Liberal Protestant denominations in North America were ordaining women as clergy by the middle of the twentieth century, and the Anglican communion began doing so not long after that. Several American and Canadian denominations have had women as presiding officers. A Black woman, Barbara Harris, became an Episcopalian bishop in Massachusetts in 1989. Lois Wilson, a minister and also moderator of the United Church of Canada, served as one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches from 1983 to 1991, as did Madeleine Barot, from France, from 1954 to 1960.

The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, however, do not yet ordain women as priests, let alone admit women to the senior hierarchy. (The Old Catholics, who broke away from the Roman Catholic Church after Vatican I, began ordaining women in 1996.) Both the Greek and Latin Churches put special emphasis on historical precedent, and the tradition of women's subordination is so entrenched in them that it has proven particularly difficult to overturn. In the past, Rome did not allow women to take degrees in theology, and even though Catholic women, lay and religious, have made substantial contributions to the field as scholars in recent decades, they are still conspicuous as a minority.

Efforts to redress the patriarchal bias of two millennia of Christian tradition have run along several lines. First, attention has been given to the role of the feminine principle, along with female figures and symbols in the history and psychology of religion. Comparative studies have suggested parallels between the mother goddesses of various other religions and the function of Mary as archetypal mother in Roman Catholic piety.

Some theologians suggest that the real problem is the traditional conception of the Christian God as male. They see the deity as equally masculine

and feminine, and therefore they address their prayers to 'Our Father and Mother'. Others point out that a gender-balanced God is still anthropomorphic—a deity in human form—and argue that the God who transcends the world must necessarily transcend gender.

Second, there has been an effort to emphasize the contribution made by gifted women in the history of Christianity, particularly in devotional spirituality. Female mystics such as Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Ávila, and Marie de l'Incarnation have attracted significantly more research attention in recent years than male mystics have.

Third, critics have heaped both blame and praise on Christianity for Western culture's treatment of human sexuality. Some praise the Church for its ideals of fidelity and equal partnership in marriage, or point to the difference Christianity made to social mores in the Roman Empire, where the male head of a household would formerly have slept freely with the slave girls. Clearly, though, Christians too have sometimes fallen short of the ideal.

Others accuse Christianity of imposing psychologically repressive and socially restrictive standards of sexual behaviour. The Christian rejection of bodily appetites as sinful has been blamed for a 'pathologization of sex'. The standard teaching that the only purpose of sexuality is reproduction has undoubtedly caused many people, men and women alike, to feel intense guilt for enjoying what comes naturally. And the continuing rejection of birth control by the Roman Catholic Church may be not only unrealistic but irresponsible in the face of global population forecasts.

Finally, the movement towards 'inclusive language' since the early 1980s has caused a major shift in the popular understanding of biblical language. Formerly accustomed to thinking of phrases such as 'the salvation of man' as referring to humankind in general, many English-speaking Christians have come to feel that such expressions are not sufficiently inclusive. For this reason many efforts have been made to substitute gender-neutral

terms such as 'humanity'. The English texts of hymns have been revised, with non-rhyming but politically correct language sometimes prevailing over the original rhymes. Inclusive language is considered especially important in texts used in worship, so that women in the congregation can feel they have an equal share in the words that are spoken or sung.

Christianity and Pluralism

By the beginning of the third millennium, diversity had become part of the national fabric not only of societies built on immigration—like Canada, the United States, and Australia—but also, increasingly, of European societies where until recently the great majority of citizens shared a common cultural background, including the Christian faith. At the same time those societies have become more and more secular.

Many factors have contributed to the process of secularization. The most obvious is science, but there is good reason to think that Christianity itself has played a part. Certainly the first modern attempts to create secular states took place in Christian societies: England, France, the United States. The distinction between sacred and secular, which was fundamental to Christianity from the beginning, has been reflected in a general recognition of the right to freedom of religion.

Thus Christianity has largely ceased to play a significant official role in the public life of these secular societies. Many Christians remain convinced that the truth of their gospel leaves no room for other beliefs. Nevertheless, Christians have no choice today but to live as one faith group among many. And even if that were not the case, Jesus' commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves would demand full openness to the identities of our fellow human beings. The plural nature of religious life today is a fact that must be accepted. To see that fact as desirable is to embrace what has come to be known as pluralism.

Christianity and Change

In the past century, many denominations have formulated new statements of affirmation that can be used instead of the Apostles' Creed in worship. A particularly successful example—fresh, direct, and open to modern critical thought—was the statement introduced by the United Church of Canada in 1968:

Man is not alone, he lives in God's world. We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in the true man, Jesus, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by his spirit. We trust him. He calls us to be his church: to celebrate his presence, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

But time does not stand still. In only twenty years, it became necessary to revise the first sentence of this statement with the gender-neutral wording 'We are not alone, we live in God's world.'

What has modernity meant for the Christian tradition? It has opened new perspectives on the nature of thought and knowledge; brought new

insights into the physical universe, living creatures, and the structure of personality; stimulated new understandings of human culture, history, and society. Above all, it has meant change. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith, an eminent Canadian scholar of religion, put it:

We live, if I may coin a phrase, in a time of transition. The observation is a platitude; but the transitions themselves through which we are moving, the radical transformations in which we find ourselves involved, are far from hackneyed. Rather, there is excitement and at times almost terror in the newness to which all our cherished past is giving way. In area after area we are becoming conscious of being participants in a process, where we thought we were carriers of a pattern (Smith 1963: 115).

We have sampled the elaboration and differentiation of Christian traditions over 2,000 years. Their diversity is a reflection of the fact that they have been shaped by individuals in response to the new needs that have presented themselves in their own times. Some Christians may feel nostalgic for the comfortable, self-contained Christian world of an earlier era, but that world is no more. Change has been and will be a feature of Christian history in every age.

Sites

Bethlehem The traditional birthplace of Jesus.

Nazareth Jesus' home in youth and manhood.

Jerusalem The site of Jesus' crucifixion and centre of the earliest Jewish Christian community; capital of the Latin Christian Kingdom in the Holy Land from 1099 to 1187.

Rome The capital of the Roman Empire, where Peter introduced Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church eventually established its headquarters in Vatican City—the world's smallest independent country.

Anatolia A region (corresponding to modern-day Turkey), evangelized by Paul, that became an important centre of the early Church; the location of the famous councils of Chalcedon, Nicaea, and Constantinople.

Constantinople The capital of the Byzantine Empire and headquarters of the Orthodox Church; conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 and renamed Istanbul.

Wittenberg The German town where Martin Luther posted his 95 theses, beginning the Protestant Reformation.

Worms The German city where an imperial council ('diet') tried Luther for political subversion.

Trent (Trentino in Italian) Site of the Council of Trent (1545–63) and centre of the Catholic Church's response to Protestantism, known as the Counter-Reformation.

Geneva The city in which John Calvin attempted to translate his vision of Christianity into a practising community.

Münster A town in northwestern Germany that became a centre of the Anabaptist movement.

Valladolid City in Spain; the site of a great debate in 1550 in which Bartolomé de las Casas defended the rights of the indigenous peoples of the New World.

Salt Lake City, Utah Founded by the Mormons in 1847; the headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Glossary

Advent The beginning of the Christian liturgical year, a period including the four Sundays immediately preceding Christmas.

apocalypse, apocalyptic Cataclysmic events marking the transition from one era to another; a name of the last book of the New Testament, which describes such events.

apostles The first generation of Jesus' followers.

atonement Christ's restoration of humanity to a right relationship with God, variously interpreted as divine victory over demonic power, satisfaction of divine justice, or demonstration of a moral example.

baptism Sprinkling with or immersion in water; the ritual by which a person is initiated into membership in the Christian community. Baptism is considered a cleansing from sin.

bishop The supervising priest of an ecclesiastical district called a diocese.

canon A standard; a scriptural canon is the list of books acknowledged as scripture; the list of acknowledged saints is likewise a canon. Canon law is the accumulated body of Church regulations and discipline. Clergy subject to the rule of a particular cathedral or congregation are also sometimes termed canons.

charismatic Characterized by spiritual gifts such as **glossolalia**.

Christ From the Greek *Christos*, a translation of the Hebrew word for messiah, 'anointed'.

conversion Spiritual rebirth, accompanied by certainty of divine forgiveness and acceptance.

cosmological argument An argument that infers the existence of God from the

fact of creation, based on the assumption that every effect must have a cause and that there cannot be an infinite regress of causes.

creeds Brief formal statements of doctrinal belief, often recited in unison by congregations.

crucifix A cross with an image of the suffering Jesus mounted on it.

dogma A church doctrine defined as indisputable and necessary to the faith.

Eastern-rite Catholic churches Churches in the Eastern Orthodox world and farther east that are aligned with the Roman Catholic Church but retain many Orthodox elements, including married clergy.

ecumenism The movement for reunion or collaboration between previously separate branches of Christianity.

Eucharist The ritual re-enactment of Jesus' sacrifice of himself, patterned after his sharing of bread and wine as his body and blood at the final Passover meal with his disciples. Orthodox Christians term it the liturgy, Catholics the mass, and Protestants the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

Evangelical In Germany, a name for the Lutheran Church; in the English-speaking world, a description of conservative Protestants with a confident sense of the assurance of divine grace and the obligation to preach it.

excommunication Formal expulsion from the Church, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, for doctrinal error or moral misconduct.

friar A member of a Latin mendicant order such as the Dominicans, Franciscans, or Carmelites.

fundamentalism A twentieth-century reaction to modernity, originally among

Protestants who maintained the infallibility of scripture and doctrine.

glossolalia Speaking in 'tongues'; a distinguishing feature of **charismatic** movements.

Gnosticism An ancient movement that believed the material world to be the evil result of a fall from pure spiritual existence. Christian Gnostics viewed Jesus as the bearer of a secret, saving knowledge.

Good Friday The solemn holy day, two days before Easter, that commemorates the Passion or suffering and death of Jesus on the cross.

gospel 'Good news' (*evangelion* in Greek); the news of redemption that the Hebrew prophets had promised. The gospels are the accounts of Jesus' life attributed to his disciples Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John.

Holiness Churches Protestant churches that believe their members have already received 'holiness' (spiritual perfection) as a gift from God.

icon From the Greek for 'image'; a distinctive Byzantine form of portraiture used to depict Jesus, Mary, and the saints.

Immaculate Conception The doctrine that the virgin Mary was without sin from the moment she herself was conceived; defined as Roman Catholic dogma in 1854.

incarnation The embodiment of the divine in human form.

indulgences Releases from time in purgatory; the selling of indulgences was one of the abuses that led to the Protestant Reformation.

justification by faith alone The Lutheran belief that humans are saved not by 'works'—specifically, the Catholic

rituals of confession and penance—but only by faith.

Lent The period of forty days, not counting Sundays, leading up to Easter; the season for the most serious Christian spiritual reflection.

logos 'Word' in the sense of eternal divine intelligence and purpose.

Manichaeism An intensely dualistic religion, founded by Mani in the third century, that grew out of Syrian Christianity under the influence of Gnosticism.

mass The Roman Catholic name for the Eucharist.

mendicant orders Medieval religious orders operating in the cities and towns.

millenarianism The belief that the current world order will come to an end and be replaced by a new era.

Monophysites Fifth-century advocates of the view that Christ's nature was fully divine.

mysticism A tradition cultivating an intensely felt spiritual union with the divine.

Nestorians Fifth-century advocates of the view that the incarnate Christ was two separate persons, one divine and one human.

ontological argument The eleventh-century theologian Anselm's argument based on logic holding that God must necessarily exist.

original sin The sinfulness, or tendency towards sin, supposedly innate

in human beings as a consequence of Adam's Fall.

orthodoxy Literally, the 'straight way', meaning correct belief; in any church, the accepted doctrine.

parables Stories about everyday life told to illustrate a point.

Passion The suffering and death of Jesus on the cross.

patriarchs The five bishops who together represent supreme authority in the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

Pentecost The fiftieth day after Easter, commemorated as the dramatic occasion when Jesus' followers experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostal Churches Modern Protestant groups that emphasize speaking in 'tongues' as a mark of the Holy Spirit's presence and of the individual's holiness or spiritual perfection.

Pietism A movement that originated in late seventeenth-century Lutheran Germany, expressing a spontaneity of devotion and a confident certainty of forgiveness.

pope From *papa*, 'father'; the bishop of Rome, supreme authority in the Roman Catholic tradition.

predestination The notion that God anticipates or controls human actions and foreordains every individual to either salvation or damnation.

purgatory In Catholic doctrine, the realm to which the soul proceeds after death for some unspecified period in preparation for entering heaven.

Puritanism A Calvinist-inspired movement (1558–1660) that sought to 'purify' the Church of England of Catholic influences.

Reformed Churches Churches that are Calvinist in doctrine and often Presbyterian in governance; strong in the Netherlands and Scotland and also found in France, Switzerland, and Hungary.

rosary A string consisting of 58 beads and a small crucifix, used in Catholic devotion to keep count when repeating 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary' prayers.

sacrament A ritual action seen as signifying divine grace. The most widely accepted sacraments are baptism and the Eucharist, although the Catholic Church also recognizes five others.

Stations of the Cross Fourteen locations marked in the nave of some churches, recalling events along the route in Jerusalem from Jesus' trial to his crucifixion.

syncretism The combination of elements from more than one religious tradition.

teleological argument From Greek *telos*, 'end' or 'purpose'; an argument inferring the existence of God from the perception of purpose or design in the universe.

transubstantiation The Catholic doctrine that in the Eucharistic service, the bread and wine are miraculously transformed into the body and blood of Christ.

Trinity The concept of God as having three 'persons' or manifestations: as father, as son, and as Holy Spirit.

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