

# Church History II

## (Pre-Reformation to Modern Day)

### Week 9 – The Age of Ideologies

- I. Competing Ideologies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century
  1. “Roots of these twentieth-century ideologies and their totalitarian regimes emerged out of the blood-drenched soil of World War I.”<sup>1</sup> **PTQ**
  2. The First World War, which began with a Serbian Student assassinating Archduke Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary, quickly devolved into a worldwide event with nearly 27 countries involved, taking place across the European mainland.<sup>2</sup>
    - A. Russian Communism
      - i. During the First World War, the Communist Revolution occurred (1917), causing an overthrow of the Russian Czar by the Bolsheviks and the introduction of communism on a national level. **PTQ**
      - ii. The Bolsheviks ended up making peace with Germany and created their utopian society (many within the country did not see it that way).
    - B. German Nazism
      - i. Nazism ended up coming to the pass from the intensive punishment of Germany and the incredible difficulties on the German people.
      - ii. It caused disunity among the European nations as well as ample opportunity for a charismatic leader to come in and promise change when life looked bleak.
    - C. American Individualism
      - i. Upon the completion, Woodrow Wilson had made the idea of a League of Nations in hopes of minimizing the opportunity for war on such a large scale.
      - ii. Yet the American people did not desire to be a part of this group, worried it would have the opposite effect of dragging the US. into more foreign conflicts.
      - iii. This desire to avoid foreign conflict also explains why it took the U.S. so long to enter WWII.
  3. Christian difficulty in those days and through the Second World War.
    - A. Nazi Germany
      - i. “The Nazis taught the world the meaning of totalitarianism. They were a right-wing version of dictatorial rule. We call this fascism. Such governments counter personal frustration and alienation, as well as social and economic tensions, by stressing class unity and reaffirming traditional values. Fascist movements glorify the nation, defining it in terms of its mission, its racial uniqueness, or

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce L. Shelley, [Church History in Plain Language](#), ed. Marshall Shelley, 5th Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 491.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

the state itself. Fascist rulers permit private property and capitalist enterprise, but they tightly control them.”<sup>3</sup> **PTQ**

- 1) “Nazi theoreticians developed a barbaric doctrine of anti-Semitism.
  - a) To regain the lost innocence of the past, they argued, Germany had to purge the present of its impurities. The Jews served as scapegoats.
  - b) They were the source of all modern evils, the “culture-destroying race” that gave the world both capitalism and Marxism.
- 2) The effects
  - a) Hitler declared that even the Christian faith was a Jewish plot: “The heaviest blow that ever struck humanity was the coming of Christianity. Bolshevism is Christianity’s illegitimate child. Both are inventions of the Jew.”<sup>4</sup>
  - b) The ultimate end of this anti-Semitic rhetoric was forced emigration, abuse, experimentation, and genocide in camps like Auschwitz. At this time, 6 million Jews were killed. **PTQ**
  - c) However, they were only about half of the people the Nazis killed. Others would include those who were black, disabled, homosexual, and even those just racially different from the preferred blonde hair, blue-eyed, German-blooded Nazi ideal.
- ii. The Nazi’s used Christians gain power and later turned on them.
  - 1) Protestant churches and especially Lutherans, like German Fascism, had a strong national tie, which led many of them towards Nazism. Originally, there were some acceptances of Christianity, but this was later reversed.
  - 2) They united 28 regional protestant bodies under a fervent nazi bishop, specifically Ludwig Müller.
  - 3) In opposition to this group was a group of ministers known as the confessing church. Sadly, the Christians who were in between the two groups essentially went along quietly with Hitler. **PTQ**
  - 4) The confessing group worried about theological impurities in the new movement under Hitler, but were not necessarily anti-Nazi.
    - a) However, their faithfulness to seeing Christ as Lord and not necessarily the Führer caused Hitler to be anti-them.
    - b) In 1935 no fewer than seven hundred Confessing Church pastors were arrested.<sup>5</sup>
  - 5) “Catholics, who had been strong in the German republic during the 1920s, endorsed the new Nazi government and supported the agreement

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<sup>3</sup> Shelley, [\*Church History in Plain Language\*](#), 491–492.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 492.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 494.

(*concordat*) the Führer signed with the pope in 1933 guaranteeing the freedom to practice the Catholic religion.”<sup>6</sup>

- 6) It wasn't until the mid to late 1930s that the Catholics sought help from the Pope.
  - On May 14, 1937, with the assistance of Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, the papal secretary of state who was soon to be Pope Pius XII, Pius XI drafted the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (“With Deep Anxiety”). It was the first major church document to criticize Nazism. Smuggled into Germany, it was read on Palm Sunday from every Catholic pulpit—before a single copy had fallen into Nazi hands.<sup>7</sup>

iii. During WWII

- 1) German believers were in a dilemma. German church officials remained conciliatory toward the Nazi state but failed to relieve the suffering of Christians in Germany. Hitler's closest advisers, Bormann, Himmler, and Heydrich, systematically worked toward the “final settlement” of the church question. The churches were to be subordinated to the new order, the clergy stripped of all privileges, and Christianity left to suffer what Hitler called a natural death.
- 2) In the occupied areas of Eastern Europe, priests and pastors, along with devout laymen, were treated as common criminals. Thousands were executed or sent to concentration camps. Only the demands of the war and need for popular support prevented the Nazis from eradicating religion in Germany itself.
- 3) The German churches' resistance to Hitler was amazingly meager. They were exclusively concerned with individualistic personal faith, traditional submission to the state, and a conservative outlook that rejected all left-wing proposals for social and political reform and enabled them to accept the Nazis' claim to be the only alternative to Communism.<sup>8</sup> **PTQ**
- 4) A few well known but varied examples of Christian defiance of these intensive issues would be people Dietrich Bonhoeffer (a Lutheran pastor who attempted to assassinate Hitler and wrote one of the greatest treatises of Christian community and living from a Concentration Camp) and Corrie Ten Boom a Dutch watchmaker when tried to protect the Jews through providing passage and quarter as a safe house until she was thrown into a concentration camp herself. She is well known for her book the hiding place and forgiving her captors for their grave sins against her.

**B. Bolshevik Russia**

<sup>6</sup> Shelley, [Church History in Plain Language](#), 493.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 495.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 498.

- i. The Communist system had many of the same traits as Hitler's Germany: dictatorial leadership, a single centralized party, ruthless terror, propaganda, censorship, a controlled economy, and hostility to all organized religion.
- ii. The difference was that Communist ideology emphasized the working class, revolution as a means of social change, and the utopian ideal of a classless society.<sup>9</sup> **PTQ**
- iii. Just as Marx found the church to be a net negative a kind of distraction from true life and change so the Bolsheviks did as well.
  - 1) "For centuries before the Communist Revolution, the Russian Orthodox Church had been the state church. The czar was, in theory, the head of the church. But when the Bolsheviks took over, they confiscated church lands, canceled state subsidies for the church, decreed civil marriage, and prohibited religious education for the young."<sup>10</sup>
  - 2) In the first several years of Stalin's reign which began in 1927 the Bolsheviks had to deal with Riots from the Russian Christians and in response several bishops and thousands of priests died.
  - 3) Churches were further limited due to public laws like the State law on religious Associations strictly limited church activity and the glimmers of hope were not seen until 1936 when voting rights were returned to the clergy this however did not last long. **PTQ**
  - 4) By 1939 the orthodox church and other Protestant church movements like Lutherans, Baptists, and Pentecostals had been thoroughly ravaged.
  - 5) In the West, however, revulsion against the Soviet regime grew with the reports of persecution. The Roman Catholic Church expressed its alarm. In March 1937 Pius XI issued the encyclical *Divine Redemptoris* condemning the "errors of communism... which occurred four days after the encyclical writing which criticized Nazism."<sup>11</sup> **PTQ**
  - 6) "The situation in wartime Soviet Russia was a striking contrast. Stalin realized the value of the churches' contribution to public morale in the war and how they could help integrate the territories acquired during the war and promote later Soviet foreign policy.
  - 7) Stalin allowed the churches to set up their organizations again, collect funds, and give some private religious instruction to children. In 1945 the Orthodox Church and other religious groups regained status as legal corporations and with it the right to possess property and produce liturgical objects. While still closely supervised, the Orthodox Church enjoyed the most favorable position since the revolution."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Shelley, [Church History in Plain Language](#), 495.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 496.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 496–497.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 498.

8) Especially in Russia the Orthodox church was used to promote Communism and subjection to the Russian Orthodox church across the world. Though it did join the World Council of Churches in 1961. **PTQ**

## II. Protestantism and the Secularization of American Society

### 1. Pentecostalism

- A.** This movement of people across the World stemmed from a three-year revival focused on the work and outpouring of the spirit of God and speaking in tongues from 1906-1908 or so. **PTQ**
- i.** This reintroduction to the work of the Spirit in such a supernatural outpouring began at the Azusa Street Revival and made waves through many denominations of Christianity, both Protestant and Catholic.
  - ii.** A heavy focus of these was the empowering of the Holy Spirit for change, and it was a reaction to the heavily Cerebral Christianity movements like Liberalism.
  - iii.** The Azusa Street Revival was run by William Seymour, an African American Disciple of Charles Fox Parham. Seymour's movement was powerful in part because it broke with the social norms of the day and ignored segregation.<sup>13</sup>  
**PTQ**
  - iv.** Pentecostalism is currently the fastest-growing brand of Christianity in the Global South as it focuses well on the human condition, poverty, powerlessness, fear, and lack of agency in ways that resonate with others.

### 2. Fundamentalism

- A.** Fundamentalism originally was created as a way to fend off Modernism in churches.
- i.** Remember modernism around this time was highly tied to Liberalism and the ideas of the Bible being understood in lieu of modern ideals and scientific thought.
- B.** The Original Tenets of Fundamentalism were...<sup>14</sup> **PTQ**
- i.** Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy  
The Bible is divinely inspired by God and therefore authoritative and without error in the original manuscripts. Scripture is the final authority for doctrine and life.
  - ii.** The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ  
Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. This doctrine safeguards Christ's divine nature and sinlessness.
  - iii.** The Substitutionary Atonement of Christ  
Jesus' death on the cross was a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners. He bore the penalty for sin so that believers could be reconciled to God.

<sup>13</sup> Alister McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution: A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (London: SPCK, 2007), 388–389,

<sup>14</sup> G. M. Marsden and J. D. Hankins Jr, "Fundamentalism," in *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*, ed. Martin Davie et al. (London; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press; InterVarsity Press, 2016), [357](#).

- iv. The Bodily Resurrection of Christ  
Jesus literally and physically rose from the dead on the third day. This affirms both the historical reliability of the gospel accounts and Christ's victory over death.
  - v. The Authenticity of Christ's Miracles  
The miracles recorded in the Gospels are real historical events demonstrating Christ's divine authority.
- C. Intention versus exclusion
- i. The ideal of this movement was to preserve the historic doctrines of the faith and to confirm them against a modernizing society.
  - ii. Later, the movement added other hot-button topics towards being a fundamentalist, extreme Biblical literalism, a few of the particulars would include young-earth creationism, premillennial eschatology, and an affinity towards the King James Bible. **PTQ**
  - iii. Often, churches today with this designation tend towards legalism in the hopes of fighting off modern thought and cultural norms. i.e., women shouldn't wear pants and Christians shouldn't go to the movies. **PTQ**
  - iv. The problem with the movement is that it became highly legalistic and schismatic, although it was initially a great movement, encouraging legitimate Christian faith focused on the fundamentals. It evolved into immense church splits over minor doctrinal differences or decisions. **PTQ**
3. The Scopes Trial
- A. This trial over the preaching of Evolution in a Dayton, Tennessee classroom exploded into a nationwide phenomenon.
  - B. William Jennings Bryan was a lawyer who was on the offensive against the case of evolution being taught in schools. He had been a faithful and focused man in his previous professions. **PTQ**
    - i. He had been on the cabinet of Woodrow Wilson, he had been a three-time candidate for president, he pushed for things like the women's right to vote and prohibition.
    - ii. He was, however, aging and more knowledgeable in his politics than in his faith. Not to mention there was not the same level of scientific discoveries available for him to compare and contend his position. Thus, he became the picture of "the stupidity of Bible Believing Christians."<sup>15</sup>
    - iii. And his primary concern was not for the truth of the theory but the implications it would bring into America. **PTQ**
    - iv. In this trial, high school Biology teacher John Scopes was on trial for potentially breaking the newly instituted Tennessee law, which had outlawed the teaching of Evolution.
    - v. Bryan won the case, but in making himself look close-minded, he ended up giving Fundamentalists a bad name and opening the nation back up to the decision to reinstitute the teachings of evolution. **PTQ**

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<sup>15</sup> Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 508.

**4. The Return of Old Time Religion**

- A.** After WWII, the swing back towards a religious society once again came to America through the evangelistic preaching of men like Billy Graham. **PTQ**
  - i.** He and other men who were convinced of the truth of God's word and the need for its application among the American people made a great impact in the personal professions of faith of many throughout the country.
  - ii.** The problem became even worse when "Christianity" became the majority position. America's morals and character seemed to be getting worse, not better.
  - iii.** The question becomes, did the church separate itself from the world and thus become ineffective, or is something else at play? **PTQ**

**III. Ecumenicalism**

- 1.** The ecumenical movement sought to unite churches and differing denominations for the sake of unity. These existed from the 1800's onward in varying degrees.
- 2.** These have looked different through time but the idea was to come together as Christians for the sake of different concerns or missions.
- 3.** However, one of the things that creates difficulty is ecumenicalism, in that people cannot even agree on what should cause the unity. **PTQ**
  - A.** Lutheran Archbishop Nathan Soderblom said it should be shared history.
  - B.** Charles H. Brent said it should be Doctrinal Agreement
  - C.** John R. Mott, who became the student secretary of the YMCA, believed it was the love of Christ that should bring about unity.
  - D.** The General Evangelical answer was that Evangelism summons us to unity.
- 4.** Sometimes the mergers were not so much between denominations but within denominations, causing united groups like United Methodists and Presbyterians.
- 5.** The focus of these meetings and attempts at ecumenicalism change over time as well, from the carrying out of the Gospel to Social concerns for life and work. **PTQ**
- 6.** Probably the most notable ecumenical moment comes from Something we will get into next week, Vatican II.

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