

Vitality at the Periphery

- 20th & 21st C. marked time when Christianity ceased being mostly a Western religion
- While it was in crisis in Europe, Canada, and the US it was becoming vital, growing and creative in the rest of the world
- Christianity in former mission territories of Asia, Africa, and Latin America was more active and vibrant than ever before

Asia

- **India**, between two world wars struggled for independence; Gandhi (1869-1948)
- 1946 British offered full independence to India, years of unrest followed, subcontinent divided (mainly) on religious grounds to Pakistan and India, in 1950 Republic of India inaugurated
- Despite political unrest and various denominations mass conversions continued (particularly lower castes) through charismatic movement which reached India mid-20th c.
- Higher castes sought to combine traditional Hindu contemplation with Christianity without joining a church

- Former colonial Protestant churches sought new ways to express and live faith; developed indigenous leadership capable of meeting challenges. Important role in educational system for entire nation.
- Indian churches shone in ecumenism; promoting Christian unity. Before conference in 1901 churches of Reformed tradition organic union, by 1908 Reformed and Congregationalist formed United Church of South India, 1947 added Methodist and Anglicans to form Church of South India.

- **China**; 1st half of 20th c. both Protestant and Catholics enjoying and predicting great number of conversions. Then WWII, People's Republic of China, Cold War, and Cultural Revolution under Mao Tse Tung.
- Almost all foreign missionaries left. 1950 government forced churches to adopt a Christian manifesto. Government decided too many churches, so consolidated and closed with property confiscated. Then Cultural Revolution closed all churches.
- Resistance remained believers would walk in front of churches at former worship times and nod at each other then walk on. Small groups still met in homes in secret.

- 1970s, failure of Cultural Revolution, tension with Soviet Union, and economic necessities led government to allow Christians more freedom. It turned out Christianity had continued to grow: some 5 million in 1900, now 50 million.
- Churches reopened, seminaries opened with hundreds of students, Christian and theological books increased (published and translated), and Chinese Christian leaders traveling to ecumenical gatherings abroad.
- Ecumenical movement different due to forced unification for control. Churches reasserted differences. Many did not.

- ***Japan***; similar to China: lands open to foreign missionaries, WWII busted expectations, government forced churches to unite forming United Church of Japan (1941). Growth not as good as in China and largely came through work of Pentecostal and Charismatic groups.
- ***Korea***; Protestant Christianity experience most notable numeric growth. Late 19th c. missionaries followed Nevius missionary method (John L. Nevius) who argued missions should focus on lower classes and women/girls, development of native leadership, and church to have self-support: finances and personnel.
- Also revival in Presbyterian and Methodist churches early 20th c.

- Following WWII and expulsion of Japanese Korean Christians able to affirm their faith and much of their culture.
- Split of Korea into North and South difficult as majority of Christians lived in North — growth continued in both.
- Pentecostal missionaries came settled in South Korea founding new churches — membership running into the tens of thousands.
- Korean church started to send missionaries overseas to Japan, China (2 former oppressors), Africa, Latin America, and US.

Africa

- The Ethiopian Orthodox Church (founded 4th c.) played important role in resisting Italian imperialism during WWII. Later went through difficulties with inroads of Islam and rise of a hostile regime in 1970s. Yet, early 21st c. approx. 35 million members.
- By end of 20th c. RC growing in almost every nation of sub-Saharan Africa and African Catholics making significant contributions to larger church; providing priests for parts of the world where lack of priests, i.e. Ireland, Portugal and France.
- Among Protestants explosive growth took place.

- Independence (end of colonialism) allowed forms of Christianity connected to ancient traditions of the people and provided leadership in times of struggle.
- Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika mass conversions. In Nigeria, southern Sudan, etc. notable growth but also conflict with Islam who wanted Islamic law as law of the land and was opposed by Christians.
- In southern Africa (away from Islam) issues of colonial rule and then white supremacy. Most notable South Africa struggle against apartheid: Desmond Tutu (Anglican), Allan Boesak (Reformed), and Nelson Mandela (Methodist).

- Pentecostalism arrived in Africa shortly after Azusa Street revival and had impressive growth in latter half of 20th c. Leading to planting of independent churches so that by 2010 total membership estimated at 80 - 90 million.
- Eventually these churches began sending missionaries to other areas of the world such as Great Britain, English speaking Caribbean, and Haiti.

Latin America

- ***Argentina***; Juan Domingo Peron came to power in 1943 had support of Catholic hierarchy as best defence against Communism and secularism.

- Eventually he wanted control of the church expecting it to have a ceremonial role and to give his government religious sanction.
- 1955 rebellion overthrew him with support of many of the hierarchy. Eventually Argentina became a secular state and church had inspirational and ceremonial role.
- **Brazil**; under dictatorship of Getulio Vargas (1930s) laws were passed to support Catholic Church, not done by the hierarchy but not opposed by it until it went too far.
- Vargas abolished the constitution and sought to limit the Church to a spiritual role.

- In 1950 when elected (after being overthrown 1945) he refused to reestablish privileges to the Church or clergy. This was in line with Brazilian sentiment who saw them as economic exploitation and reduction of freedom.
- Big turning point in 1968 in Medellin, Colombia. Liberation theology made inroads to Catholic leadership and this conference saw the turning from inner issue and problems to needs of the people, especially oppressed and poor.
- The Church which formally preoccupied with its privilege and power now declared as champion for the poor.

- Due to immigration and missionary work Protestantism was also established in Latin America. Pentecostal movement led to most explosive growth. These had a focus on nationalistic feelings and a desire to be free from foreign missionary control.
- Similar events to Chile repeated elsewhere in Latin America having unprecedented growth. This to the point where some wondered if all of Latin America would become Pentecostal. By 2nd decade of 21st c.: Brazil 47%, Chile 36%, Mexico 13%.
- Different than Africa: shifting from one branch of Christianity (Catholic) to another (Pentecostal).

Ecumenical Movement

- By latter half of 19th c. movements were seeking collaboration between various churches in regions that would eventually lead to founding of World Council of Churches and other manifestations of unity.
- The focus was on all Christians to engage in a search for meaning of obedience to Christ in modern world. Two facets: 1) greater and more visible unity and 2) birth of worldwide church whose mission and self-understanding all would contribute.
- Came to be understood union between church and mission, so must dialogue on nature of the church

- Originally, no discussion on beliefs of churches or understanding of practice of ordination, sacraments, etc. Creation of conference on Faith and Order focused on frank and open discussion, drafting document that began with stressing agreement and clearly stating where differences remained. Agreement outweighed disagreement.
- Council sought to deal with issues confronting the world, i.e. the Cold War. Increased participation with Orthodox Church.
- By 1998 & 2006 clear WCC in crisis: dwindling financial support and people looking to other means to affirm and develop unity of the church.

- This global movement of unity was matched by regional and national levels; i.e. 1925 United Church of Canada formed housing 40 former denominations.

Third World & “Contextual” Theologies

- Good in that they are contextual, bad in that all are
- Liberation theology
- Black theology
- Feminist theology
- Womanist theology
- Mujerista Theology, etc.

Missions from the Ends of the Earth

- Ecumenical movement, end of colonialism, and growing self-assurance of younger churches has led to them posing questions and offering answers a challenge to traditional theology.
- While these theologies are leading to new order in the third world and their numbers are growing, it is evident the North is becoming de-Christianized. We can expect therefore in the 21st c. a missionary enterprise from South to North.

Epilogue: A Global History

- Because Christianity is vital in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the islands of the Pacific, and because of the crisis of the North Atlantic, the map of Christendom is no longer operational.
- Instead of Christianity being Western and expanding outwards, Christianity is a polycentric reality. Financial resources, education and other institutions are still concentrated in North Atlantic, but theological creativity is not limited there.
- The future of Christianity must be global and mission focused.

The Pilgrim's Progress

Week 11b

Pages 142-155

1. What is the purpose of fear in God's way of salvation?
2. What is the limits of fear and what must, ultimately, replace it?
3. What is the process of backsliding?
4. Why would the pilgrims become sick within sight of the city?
5. Why was Christian so affected by the river?
6. What is the significance that there is an entrance to hell at the gate of the city as well as in the city of destruction?