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INTRODUCTION

Curiosity concerning the past has long characterized man, from Nabonidus, who lived in Babylon in the sixth century before Christ, to the present-day archaeologist and historian. Christians have a special interest in history because the very foundations of the faith that they profess are rooted in history. God became man and lived in time and space in the person of Christ. Christianity has become the most global and universal of all the religions that have emerged in the past in the Near and Far East. In addition, it has become increasingly influential in the history of the human race. Church history is thus a matter of profound interest to the Christian who desires to be enlightened concerning his spiritual ancestry, to emulate the good examples of the past, and to avoid errors that the church has frequently made.

The German noun Geschichte, a form of the verb geschehen, which means to happen, refers to history as event rather than as a process or a product. Thus history may be defined first as an incident, an actual event or happening in time and space as the result of human action. Such an incident is absolute and objective and can be known only directly and fully by God. Such history cannot be exactly repeated later in another place. Parallels and patterns may appear to the historian because people may behave in similar fashion in different times and places and because they are people who can be affected by good and evil.

Information about an incident is a second meaning for the word history. This usually indirect information about the past may be in the form of a document or object relating to the incident. Unlike the scientist who can study his material objectively and directly, the historian is subjectively limited because he is a part of what he studies and has to take God’s actions in time and space into account, consider man’s role in history as a freewill agent, and realize his data is indirect. Saint Peter’s in Rome, the catacombs, a papal bull, and mosaics in Ravenna are examples of history as information.

The English word for history came from the Greek word historia, which is derived from the Greek verb histore[amo]. This word was used by the Attic Greeks and originally meant to learn by inquiry or investigation. The word was used by Paul in Galatians 1:18 to describe his interview with Peter in Jerusalem. This leads to a third meaning of history as inquiry or research to check as well as find data about the past. History is a distinct discipline with a process for research. This historian tests the authenticity, genuineness, and integrity of his information by careful study of the background and text of his material. Valid inductions can also be developed as the scholar sees patterns objectively appearing in his material.
The historian who thus far seeks answers to such questions as who or what and when and where must then consider the question why or the meaning of his data. The Greeks, who used the word *historikos* as another term for history, thought of history in this sense as the product of inquiry. This suggests *interpretation* as a fourth meaning for history. This is the subjective reconstruction of the past in the light of the data, the historian’s own biases as well as the “climate of opinion” of his time, and the element of freedom of the human will. Such reconstruction can never fully tell the past as it was but must be partial, subject to error and human bias. A consensus about the past will emerge, however, as historians check one another’s work. Students in classes usually study history of this type. Although absolute truth about the past may elude the historian, he will, as far as his information permits, present truth about the past objectively and impartially.

From this discussion the student will be aware that history may be event or incident, information, inquiry or process and product, or interpretation. History as event is absolute, occurring only once in time and space; but history as information, inquiry, and interpretation is relative and subject to change.

History may be defined as the interpreted record of the socially significant human past, based on organized data collected by the scientific method from archaeological, literary, or living sources. The church historian must be just as impartial in his collection of the data of history as the secular historian is, even though the church historian recognizes the fact that neither of them will be neutral to the data but each will approach the material with a framework of interpretation.

Church history, then, is the interpreted record of the origin, process, and impact of Christianity on human society, based on organized data gathered by scientific method from archaeological, documentary, or living sources. It is the interpreted, organized story of the redemption of mankind and the earth.

The work of the Holy Spirit in and through the church imparts a supernatural element to church history. God is transcendent in creation but immanent in history and in redemption.

Church history will have a scientific element in that the historian of the church uses the scientific method also. The historian uses the scientific work of the archaeologist, who makes available information from the material remains of the past that he has unearthed. Study of the art of the catacombs of Rome has taught us much about the early church. The writer of church history will also make use of the techniques of literary criticism to evaluate the documents of the history of the church. He will have a decided preference for original sources, whether they be those of the archaeologist, the document, or the living person who took part in the event. All this material and the evaluation of it will give him information concerning the important questions of historical method—who, what, when, and where. The last two questions are important to the historian because historical events are conditioned by time and place.

The historian’s work will be scientific in method but will not result in exact science because his information about the incidents of the past may be complete.
or false, biased by his own outlook and that of his time and affected by great men. He is also a freewill agent who is a part of his data. God as an actor in history will preclude the idea of history as an exact science.

Historians divide into schools of history and philosophies of history as they pursue meaning in history. The former claim to find objective, scientific causation in man, nature, or process in time; but the latter rationally seek to relate the data to a timeless ultimate or absolute.

Geographic and economic determinists and biographical interpreters constitute three of the more important schools of history. William W. Sweet, of the frontier school of interpretation of church history, in his books on American church history made geography in the form of the frontier the determinative factor. Carlyle’s work on Cromwell illustrates the biographical or “great man” school of history as he made the mid-sixteenth-century English Civil War the reflection of Cromwell. Max Weber’s *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, in which he claimed that Protestantism led to the rise of capitalism, is an example of the economic school of interpretation. Such interpreters of history look for the answers to history in man, nature, or process.

Philosophies of history can best be considered under three categories.

1. One group may be classed as pessimists. Seeing history only “under the sun,” they often adopt a materialistic approach to reality. They are obsessed with the failure of man in history. Oswald Spengler’s *Decline of the West* is an illustration of this approach to history. Spengler was concerned with civilizations rather than with nations. Each civilization, he maintained, goes through a cycle of birth, adolescence, maturity, decay, and death. Western civilization, the most recent of civilizations, is in its period of decay. It will soon die and along with it Christianity will die. Obsessed with man’s failure, men such as Spengler can see no progress in history. Their views may be symbolized by a series of identical circles, superimposed on one another, in which time is cyclical.

2. A second group may be called optimists. Their view of history can be symbolized by an ascending graph of successively rising levels of a spiral. Most optimistic interpreters are humanists: they see man as the main and determinative factor in history. They also usually accept biological and social evolution and see time as linear. The work of Arnold Toynbee, a great modern philosopher of history, serves to illustrate this philosophy of history. Toynbee agreed with Spengler that one should study the history of civilizations; but, unlike Spengler, he believed that each civilization makes progress toward its goal—the earth as a province of the kingdom of God. In spite of his more spiritual approach to history, he accepted modern biblical criticism and the theory of evolution.

Another optimist, Georg W. F. Hegel, the famous German philosopher of the nineteenth century, believed history to be the unfolding of the Absolute Spirit in the development of human freedom. Progress is by a process in which successive series of contradictions are reconciled in successive syntheses until the Absolute is fully manifested in history.

Karl Marx, another nineteenth-century thinker, also belonged to the optimistic school. Borrowing Hegel’s logic, he disavowed Hegel’s view of reality.
Marx taught that matter in flux is the only reality and that all human institutions, including religion, are determined by the economic processes of production. He maintained that a series of class struggles will end with the victory of the workers and the establishment of a classless society. Notice that Marx emphasized man’s power to redeem himself and his world in the same way that Toynbee and Hegel did.

3. The third group of interpreters, in which the writer places himself, may be described as *pessimistic optimists*. These historians agree with the pessimists in emphasizing the failure of unregenerate man; but in the light of divine revelation and grace, they are optimistic concerning man’s future. The pessimistic optimists approach history as biblical theists and seek to find the glory of God in the historic process. History becomes a process of conflict between good and evil, God and the devil, in which man is helpless apart from the grace of God. The work of Christ on the cross is the final guarantee of the eventual victory of the divine plan for man and the earth, when Christ returns.

*The City of God*, a defense and explanation of Christianity by Augustine, one of the church fathers, is an excellent illustration of this approach, though many Christians do not agree with Augustine’s equation of the Millennium with the present period of the church. The grandeur of Augustine’s conception grows out of its ascription of *creation* to the sovereign God. The *compass* or scope of Augustine’s view of history includes the whole of the human race in contrast with the favored German nation of Hegel or the favored working class of Marx. There is, however, a temporal dualism in history because sin divides men in the City of God and the City of Earth. Augustine argued that the *course* of human history proceeds to and from the Cross; and the grace flowing from it is seen as operative within the Christian church, the invisible body of Christ. Christians, with divine grace to strengthen them, engage on the side of God in the conflict with evil until history reaches its cataclysmic *consumation* at the return of Christ.

My book *God and Man in Time* is a contemporary attempt to set forth a Christian approach to history.

Finally, the maker of history as record must seek to be as artistic as possible in his presentation of the facts. Modern historians have not stressed an interesting literary presentation of history as they should have. Thus students often see history as an uninteresting recital of unrelated data.

Church history is only a dreary academic exercise in the remembering of facts unless some thought is given to the matter of its value to the Christian. The ancient historians had a much higher appreciation of the pragmatic, didactic, and moral values of history than many modern historians have. The student who is conscious of the values to be achieved in the study of the history of the Christian church has a powerful motivation to study this particular area of human history.

One of the primary values of church history is that it links the past factual data of the Christian gospel with the future proclamation and application of that gospel in a present synthesis that creates understanding of our great heritage and
B. Church History as an Aid to Understanding the Present

Church history has great value as an explanation of the present. We can understand the present much better if we have some knowledge of its roots in the past. The answer to the puzzling query concerning the presence of over several hundred religious groups in the United States is to be found in church history. The principle of separation found a place early in the history of the church, and the Reformation accentuated it. It is interesting to trace the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA back to England and to note the origin of the Anglican church in the struggle of the royal power with the papacy. The Methodist is interested in the beginnings of his church in the Wesleyan revival, which finally brought separation of Methodism from the Anglican church. Those of the Reformed or Presbyterian faith will take delight in tracing the origin of their church to Switzerland. Thus we become aware of our spiritual ancestry.

Different beliefs and liturgical practices become more understandable in the light of past history. Methodists kneel at the rail for Communion because for many years the Methodists constituted a church within the Anglican church and followed its liturgical customs. In contrast, Presbyterians are served the Communion in their seats. The difference in Methodist and Presbyterian theology becomes much plainer when one studies the views of Calvin and Arminius.

Present-day problems of the church are often illuminated by study of the past because patterns or parallels exist in history. The refusal of most modern dictatorial rulers to permit their people to have any private interests separate from their public life in the state is more easily understood if one remembers that the Roman emperors did not think that one could have a private religion without endangering the existence of the state. The relationship between the church and the state has again become a real problem in Russia and its satellite states; and it is to be expected that the state will persecute Christians just as Decius and Diocletian did in their day. The danger inherent in the union of the church and state through the state support for parochial schools and through the sending of envoys to the Vatican is illuminated by the slow decline of spirituality in the church and the interference with the church by the temporal power beginning with the control of the Council of Nicaea by Constantine in 325. Tennyson, in his poem *Ulysses*, reminds us that we are “a part of all that we have met.”

The correction of existing evils within the church or the avoidance of error and false practice is another value of the study of the past of the church. The present is usually the product of the past and the seed of the future. Paul reminded us in Romans 15:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 that the events of the past are to help us avoid the evil and emulate the good. Study of the hierarchical, medieval Roman Catholic church will point out the danger in the modern ecclesiasticism that seems to be creeping into Protestantism. New sects will often be revealed as old heresies.
in a new guise. Christian Science can be understood better after a study of Gnosticism in the early church and the ideas of the Cathari in medieval times. Ignorance of the Bible and the history of the church is a major reason why many advocate false theologies or bad practices.

Church history also offers edification, inspiration, or enthusiasm that will stimulate high spiritual life. Paul believed that knowledge of the past would give hope to the Christian life (Rom. 15:4). No one can study the brave stand of Ambrose of Milan—his refusing Emperor Theodosius the Communion until he repented of his massacre of the Thessalonian crowd—without being encouraged to stand for Christ against evil in high political or ecclesiastical circles. The industry and drive that enabled Wesley to preach over ten thousand sermons during his life and to travel thousands of miles on horseback is bound to be a rebuke and a challenge to Christians who have much better means for travel and study than Wesley had but who do not make adequate use of them. One may not agree with Rauschenbusch’s theology, but one cannot help but be inspired by his passion to apply the gospel to social problems. The story of Carey’s life was and is an inspiration to missionary service. The biographical aspect of church history is bound to bring inspiration and challenge to the student.

There is also edification in the process of becoming aware of one’s spiritual ancestry. There is as much need for the Christian to become aware of his spiritual genealogy as there is for the citizen to study the history of his land in order that he might become an intelligent citizen. In showing the genetic development of Christianity, church history is to the New Testament what the New Testament is to the Old Testament. The Christian ought to be as aware of the main outlines of the growth and development of Christianity as he is of biblical truth. Then he will have a sense of being a part of the body of Christ, which includes a Paul, a Bernard of Clairvaux, an Augustine, a Luther, a Wesley, and a Booth. The sense of unity that comes from a knowledge of the continuity of history will lead to spiritual enrichment.

One who is fearful for the future of the church in countries where it is now persecuted will become more hopeful as he realizes the indestructible character of the church in past ages. Neither external persecution, internal unfaithful officialdom, nor false theology could stand against the perennial power of renewal that is revealed in the history of revival in the church. Even secular historians give credit to the Wesleyan revival as the agency that saved England from the equivalent of the French Revolution. The study of church history offers a stabilizing influence in an age of secularism, for one sees the power of God operating through the lives of people transformed by the gospel.

We should remember, though, that the church can be destroyed in a particular area by internal decay and unbearable external pressure. The fine church in old Carthage, the Nestorians in seventh-century China, and the Roman Catholic church in sixteenth-century Japan did disappear.

The reading of the history of the church has many practical values for the Christian worker, whether he or she is evangelist, pastor, or teacher. The writer has derived pleasure from seeing how much more intelligible systematic theology has
come to the student who has studied its historical development. The doctrines of
the Trinity, Christ, sin, and soteriology will never be properly understood unless
one is aware of the history of the period from the Council of Nicæa to the Council
of Constantinople in 680.

An abundance of illustrative material for his sermons also awaits the efforts
of the diligent student of church history who intends to preach. Is he seeking to
warn of the dangers of a blind mysticism that puts Christian illumination on a level
with the inspiration of the Bible? Then let him study the mystical movements of
the Middle Ages or early Quakerism. If he seeks to warn of the dangers of an
orthodoxy unaccompanied by a study and application of the teachings of the Bible,
then let him give attention to the period of cold orthodoxy in Lutheranism after
1648, which created a reaction known as Pietism, a movement that stressed earnest
study of the Bible and practical piety in daily life.

Finally, church history has a cultural value. The history of Western civi-
lization is incomplete and unintelligible without some understanding of the role
of Christian religion in the development of that civilization. The history of man
can never be divorced from the history of his religious life. The efforts of despots
throughout the ages to eliminate Christian religion have always resulted in the
substitution of some false religion. Both Hitler and Stalin gave their systems of
statism a religious element by their respective emphasis on race and class.

One who has studied the history of the church will never again be denomi-
nationally provincial. He will sense the unity of the true body of Christ throughout
the ages. He will also be humble as he encounters the giants of his spiritual past
and realizes how much he owes to them. He will become more tolerant of those
who differ with him on nonessentials but who, with him, accept the great basic
doctrines of the faith, such as the vicarious death and resurrection of Christ, which
were emphasized by Paul in Acts 17:2–3 and 1 Corinthians 15:3–4.

For the sake of convenience, church history can be organized under the fol-
lowing topics:

1. The political element involves the relations between the church and the
state and the secular environment of the church. No one can understand the reversal
of policy in France involved in the change from the situation created by the
Civil Constitution of the Clergy of 1790 to the situation created by the Concordat
of Napoleon in 1801 unless he has some knowledge of how Napoleon destroyed
the democratic element in the French Revolution and set up a new authoritarian
system in which only the Roman Catholic church was to play a part because it was
the religion of “the majority of Frenchmen.” An understanding of the political,
social, economic, and aesthetic forces at work in history is essential if one is going
to interpret church history properly. Such background will be provided at the
points where it is appropriate.

2. The propagation of the Christian faith cannot be ignored. This involves
the study of world missions, home missions, city missions, and the story of any
special technique by which the gospel has been carried to others. The story of mis-
sions has its heroes and martyrs and is an integral part of the story of the church.
The essential person-to-person nature of the spread of Christianity and the unlimited possibilities for a church faithful to its Lord is shown in a study of the propagation of the faith.

3. This propagation has many times brought persecution to the church. This persecution was begun by the political-ecclesiastical Jewish state, was organized on an imperial basis by Decius and Diocletian, was often made a part of Muslim policy, and has been revived by the modern secular totalitarian state. Study of persecution reveals the truth of Tertullian’s dictum that “the blood of Christians is seed” (of the church). This branch of church history, far from leading to discouragement, shows rather that the church has made its greatest advance in periods of persecution or immediately after.

4. Polity is another branch of church history. It is the study of the government of the church. It necessitates consideration of the government of the church by bishops (episcopacy), by elected elders (presbytery) who represent the congregation, or by the congregation in a system of direct rather than representative democracy (congregationalism), or modifications of these three systems. Consideration of the position of the minister and the growth of the distinction between clergy and laity is also a part of this topic. Discipline and forms of worship (liturgy) are related to polity.

5. Polemics, which concerns the struggle of the church to fight heresy and to think out its own position, is an important aspect of the development of the church. It involves study of the opposing heresies and of the formulation of dogma, creeds, and Christian literature in answer to heresies. The literature of the church fathers is a particularly rich field for the study of polemics—whether that literature be the writings of Justin Martyr, answering the contention that the state must be all in life, or of Irenaeus, exposing the heresies of the various types of Gnosticism. Most theological systems have been born in a period of struggle to meet existing needs. The eras between 325 and 451 and between 1517 and 1648 especially involve the problem of polemics. Calvin developed his system of theology in an attempt to provide a scriptural theology that would avoid the errors of Romanism.

6. Still another branch of our study may be called praxis. It is the consideration of the practical outworking in life of the Christian faith. The home life, charitable work, and influence of Christianity on the life of the day are parts of this branch of church history, which involves the lifestyle of the church.

7. Christianity could not continue to grow unless it gave attention to the problem of presentation of truth. Presentation involves study of the educational system of the church, its hymnology, liturgy, architecture, art, and preaching.

These branches will be discussed in the areas in which each is most important, but not all will be developed in detail in every one of the periods. Each can be the center of fascinating studies that the individual can carry on for himself once he has the necessary general background.

B. Periods of Church History

The student must remember that history is “a seamless garment.” By this Maitland meant that history is a continuous stream of events within the framework of time and space. For that reason periodization of church history is merely
an artificial device to cut the data of history into easily handled segments and to aid the student in remembering the essential facts. The people of the Roman Empire did not go to sleep one night in the ancient era and wake up the next morning in the Middle Ages. There is instead a gradual transition from a view of life and human activity that characterizes one era of history to a view that characterizes another. Because the division of history into periods does aid the memory, does help one to deal with one segment at a time, and does present the view of life in that period, it is worthwhile to organize history chronologically.

**Ancient Church History, 5 B.C.—A.D. 590**

The first period of church history reveals the growth of the apostolic church into the Old Catholic Imperial church and the beginning of the Roman Catholic system. The center of activity was the Mediterranean basin, which includes parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The church operated within the cultural environment of Greco-Roman civilization and the political environment of the Roman Empire.

**The Spread of Christianity in the Empire to 100**

In this section attention is given to the environment in which Christianity emerged. The foundation of the church in Christ’s life, death, and resurrection and its founding among the Jews is important to an understanding of the genesis of Christianity. The gradual growth of Christianity within the swaddling bands of Judaism and the bursting of those bands at the Council of Jerusalem preceded the carrying of the gospel to the Gentiles by Paul and others and the emergence of Christianity as a sect distinct from Judaism. Attention is also called to the leading role of the apostles in this period.

**The Struggle of the Old Catholic Imperial Church for Survival, 100–313**

In this period the church was concerned with continued existence in the face of opposition from without—persecution by the Roman state. Martyrs and apologists were the answer of the church to this external problem. The church also had to deal with the internal problem of heresy at the same time, and the polemical writers of the church provided the answers to heresy.

**The Supremacy of the Old Catholic Imperial Church, 313–590**

The church faced the problems that arose out of its reconciliation with the state under Constantine and its union with the state in the time of Theodosius. Soon it was dominated by the state. The Roman emperors demanded a unified dogma in order to have a unified state to save Greco-Roman culture. But the Christians had not had time to work out a body of dogma in the period of the persecution. There followed then a long period of creedal controversy. The writings of the more scientifically minded Greek and Latin church fathers were a natural outcome of the theological disputes. Monasticism arose, partly as a reaction from and partly as a protest against, the increasing worldliness of the organized church. During this period of institutional development, the office of bishop was strengthened.
and the Roman bishop grew in power. As the period ended, the Old Catholic Imperial church virtually became the Roman Catholic church.

**Medieval Church History, 590–1517**

The scene of action moved from southern Europe to northern and western Europe—the Atlantic seaboard. The medieval church sought to win the migrating hordes of Teutonic tribes to Christianity and to integrate Greco-Roman culture and Christianity with Teutonic institutions. In so doing, the medieval church still further centralized its organization under papal supremacy and developed the sacramental-hierarchical system characteristic of the Roman Catholic church.

**The Rise of the Empire and Latin-Teutonic Christianity, 590–800**

Gregory I worked hard at the task of evangelizing the hordes of Teutonic invaders within the Roman Empire. The Eastern church in this period faced the threat of Islam, a rival religion that took away much of its territory in Asia and Africa. Gradually the alliance between the pope and the Teutons took place in the organization of the Teutonic successor to the old Roman Empire, the Carolingian Empire of Charlemagne. This was a period of heavy losses.

**Ebb and Flow in Relationships Between Church and State, 800–1054**

The first great schism within the church occurred during this period. The Greek Orthodox church after 1054 went its own way with the theology created by John of Damascus in the eighth century. The Western church during this time became feudalized and tried without much success to work out a policy of relations between the Roman church and the state acceptable to the pope and the emperor. At the same time the Cluniac reformers aimed at the correction of evils within the Roman church.

**The Supremacy of the Papacy, 1054–1305**

The medieval Roman Catholic church reached the peak of its power under the leadership of Gregory VII (Hildebrand) and Innocent III and successfully enforced its claims to supremacy over the state by the humiliation of the most powerful sovereigns of Europe. The Crusades brought prestige to the pope; monks and friars spread the Roman Catholic faith and reclaimed dissenters. The Greek learning of Aristotle, brought to Europe by the Arabs of Spain, was integrated with Christianity by Thomas Aquinas in an intellectual cathedral that has become the authoritative expression of Roman Catholic theology. The Gothic cathedral expressed the supernatural, otherworldly outlook of the era and provided a “Bible in stone” for the faithful. The Roman Catholic church was to tumble from this peak of power in the next era.

**Medieval Sunset and Modern Sunrise, 1305–1517**

*Internal* attempts to reform a corrupt papacy were made by mystics, who sought to personalize a religion too institutionalized. Attempts at reform were also made by early Reformers, such as the mystics John Wycliffe and John Hus, reform
councils, and biblical humanists. An expanding geographical world, a new secular intellectual outlook in the Renaissance, the rising nation-states, and an emerging middle class were external forces that would not long brook a decadent and corrupt church. The refusal by the Roman Catholic church to accept internal reform made the Reformation a probability.

**Modern Church History, 1517 and After**

This era was ushered in by schisms that resulted in the origin of the Protestant state-churches and the world-wide spread of the Christian faith by the great missionary wave of the nineteenth century. The scene of action was no longer the Mediterranean Sea or the Atlantic Ocean but the world. Christianity became a universal and global religion by 1995.

**Reformation and Counter-Reformation, 1517–1648**

The forces of revolt held back by the Roman church in the previous period broke forth in this period, and new national and free Protestant churches emerged—Lutheran, Anglican, Calvinist, and Anabaptist. As a result, the papacy was forced to consider reformation. In the Counter-Reformation movements of the Council of Trent, the Jesuits, and the Inquisition, the papacy was able to halt the spread of Protestantism in Europe, to regain Poland and Belgium, and to make gains in Central and South America, in the Philippines, and in Vietnam and experience renewal. Only after the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) ended the bitter Thirty Years’ War did the two movements settle down to consolidate their gains.

**Rationalism, Revivalism, and Denominationalism, 1648–1789**

During this period the Calvinist views of the Reformation were brought to North America by the Puritans. England passed on to the Continent a rationalism that had its religious expression in Deism. On the other hand, Pietism on the Continent proved to be the answer to cold orthodoxy. It expressed itself in England in the Quaker and Wesleyan movements. While some movements preferred to remain as much as possible within state churches, others set themselves apart and developed into autonomous denominations.

**Revivalism, Missions, and Modernism, 1789–1914**

During the early part of the nineteenth century there was a revival of Catholicism. This was matched by a Protestant revival that created a surge of missionary endeavor abroad and that brought social reform at home in European countries. Women became a major source of missionaries. Later in the period the eroding forces of rationalism and evolution led to a “break with the Bible” that expressed itself in religious liberalism.

**Church and Society in Tension Since 1914**

The church in much of the world still faces the problem of the secular and totalitarian state and in some cases the democratic warfare-welfare state. Liberalism, a force from 1875 to 1929, has given way to neo-orthodoxy and its more rad-