

# T W E N T I E T H   C E N T U R Y

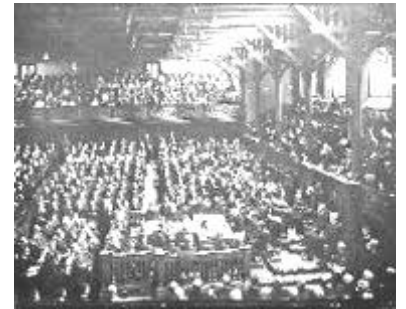
## I. Afterglow of the Golden Age of Missions

### A. Student Volunteer Movement

1. Formed by Moody and the YMCA in 1886 to recruit energetic, idealistic, and skilled laborers for the foreign fields; John Mott takes the helm in 1888
2. Themes: “Make Jesus King;” “The Evangelization of the World in Our Generation”
3. Declining by WWII and defunct by 1969, ultimately 20,000 of its members head for the mission field, e.g., William Borden of Yale

### B. Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 and the beginnings of the Ecumenical Movement

1. Called to address the challenges of modern missions through greater cooperation of missionary agencies and churches
2. Key leaders



#### a. John R. Mott

- 1) American Methodist layman and experienced ecumenical leader; had served as secretary of the Int’l Committee of the YMCA from age 23, as well as General Secretary of the World’s Student Christian Federation
- 2) Founded the International Missionary Council in 1921 after the war
- 3) Chairing the “Continuation Committee” of the Edinburgh Conference, Mott would spearhead the founding of the WCC

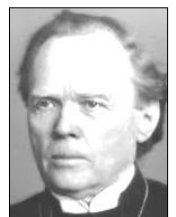


#### b. Charles Brent (d. 1929)

- 1) Canadian Anglican missionary to Philippines
- 2) With the support of N.American Anglicans, he called for a worldwide “Faith and Order” Conference to discuss closer cooperation (and possible merger) of church bodies
  - (a) WWI postponed the first conference till 1927, Lausanne, Switzerland
  - (b) As the conference name implies, Brent’s basis of unity would be through agreement in the broader areas of creed and practice which the churches held in common
  - (c) Significantly, the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization was also held in Lausanne

#### c. Nathan Söderblom (d. 1931)

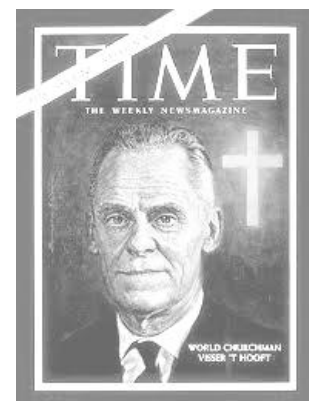
- 1) Swedish Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala
- 2) Rejected the dual natures of Christ as irrelevant to modern man. Religion is not what man believes, but what he is and what he does: = morality based on altruism
- 3) Convened the First Life and Work Conference in Stockholm, 1925



- (a) 500 delegates from 35 countries
- (b) Addressed the social ills of the modern world from a “Christian” perspective
- (c) “Life and Work” vs. “Faith and Order”
  - i) Söderblom and the Conference put more emphasis on ethics than theology and belief. Contrary to Brent’s efforts to find union in philosophical agreement.
  - ii) “Tolerance” was the essence of cooperation
- (d) This on-going ecumenical conference would help lay the foundation of the WCC. In 1937, the L&W and the F&O Conferences issued a call for this more inclusive organization.

d. Willem Visser’t Hooft, (b. 1900)

- 1) Though born too late for involvement in the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference, this Dutch ecumenist followed in Mott’s footsteps in various world ecumenical agencies
- 2) Served as the guiding light and organizer of the WCC from 1938 till its founding in 1948
- 3) First President of the World Council of Churches that was organized in Amsterdam, 1948
- 4) In 1961, Visser’t Hooft arranged for Soviet agents of the puppet Russian Orthodox Church to join the WCC
- 5) Sought and received \$1 million from J.D. Rockefeller, Jr., to fund a new Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland



## II. Reaction against Theological Liberalism out of the Romantic era

### A. Liberalism

- 1. In Review: Schleiermacher and Ritschl had rejected the supernatural element of biblical Christianity, reducing the faith to personal and community altruism.
  - a. Sinfulness and the need of salvation was diminished
  - b. Mankind was viewed as perfectible
  - c. Ideal of love was taught as the essence of Christianity

### 2. Social Gospel

#### a. Background

- 1) Roots in liberalism and in reaction against dualistic pietism
- 2) During a time of growing social consciousness, especially with regard to labor dealings at the crest of the industrial revolution

#### b. Essence

- 1) Salvation was not personal and spiritual, but rather social and political
- 2) Jesus’ central theme of the kingdom of God referred to the transformation of society, not the community of the redeemed

#### c. Walter Rauschenbusch, Father of the Social Gospel

1) North American Baptist from Rochester, NY

(a) *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 1917

(b) “The Social Gospel is the old message of salvation, but enlarged and intensified. The individualistic gospel has taught us to see the sinfulness of every human heart and has inspired us with faith in the willingness and power of God to save every soul that comes to him. But it has not given us an adequate understanding of the sinfulness of the social order and its share in the sins of all individuals within it. . . . The social gospel seeks to bring men under repentance for their collective sins and to create a more sensitive and more modern conscience.” Rauschenbusch in Shelley, 435.



2) The greatest sin in society was capitalism

d. Federal Council of Churches

“We deem it the duty of all Christian people to concern themselves directly with certain practical industrial problems. To us it seems that the churches must stand:  
\*\*\* For the gradual and reasonable reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practical point, and for that degree of leisure for all which is a condition of the highest human life. \*\*\* For a living wage as a minimum in every industry, and for the highest wage that industry can afford.” –*In Eerdman’s Handbook to Christianity in America*, p. 314

B. Wake-up call against liberalism: the brutality of World War I (1914-1918) and the shock of the modern world’s economic melt-down in the 1930s

1. Before the war

a. Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer

b.

1) argue that the kingdom of God (a central theme in Jesus’ teaching) is wholly of God’s doing as He “breaks into history,” not by human activity

(a) Schweitzer claims Jesus was a human with mere human activity

(b) Actually, Jesus was a misguided Jewish apocalypticist, acc. to Schweitzer

2) Promoted his ideas in *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*

c. American Conservatives mobilize

1) Growing Arminianism/humanism/liberalism in mainline churches

2) *The Fundamentals*, 1910-1915: 90 essays in defense of historic Protestantism distributed from BIOLA and sent to all American pastors



2. Karl Barth (1886-1968)

a. Swiss pastor influenced by Luther, Calvin, and Kierkegaard

1) Commentary On Romans protested the naïveté of liberalism regarding the



- perfectibility of man (ctr. Rom. 1-3)
- 2) themes stressed the transcendent sovereignty of God, grace (mediated by Christ) and revelation, and man's finiteness and sinfulness

b. \*Neo-orthodoxy

- 1) So-called for its apparent return to the themes of historic Christianity, although, according to Claus Runia, he also rejected the binding legitimacy of the historic Christian creeds (Reformation Today, p. 15).
- 2) Belief in revelation by God, yet a low view of the inspiration/inerrancy of Scripture
- 3) The Episcopal Church (USA) has honored Barth with a "feast day" on December 10

3. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)

- a. Trained at Tübingen and Union Seminary, NY, in the classic modernist tradition
- b. Personally reacted against the dead orthodoxy of the state church in Germany
- c. When the church was refined by the "Kirchenkampf" under the Nazis, he was a leader of the Confessing church and was active in the underground resistance, for which he would be later hanged
- d. In his *Cost of Discipleship* (1937), he called for Christians to show the grace of God in the world by sticking their necks out to make sacrifices in serving others



4. C.S. Lewis (1898-1963)

- a. Brilliant scholar of English medieval literature at Oxford and Cambridge
- b. Converted to orthodoxy in 1931 after a long intellectual struggle in his early years of atheism
- c. Lewis was the one (in *Mere Christianity*) to note the propositional truth of the Bible that we must respond to Jesus as "Lord, liar, or lunatic."



5. \*Reinhold Niebuhr (1893-1971)

- a. Found liberalism and moral idealism inadequate during his 13 years in a Detroit industrial pastorate. Left in 1928 to teach at Union Seminary in NYC.
- b. Influenced by Barth and Kirkegaard, but put bigger emphasis on his form of Christian ethics than on theology
  - 1) *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 1932
  - 2) Pessimistic view of man: "man is neither damned nor perfectible, but able to transcend himself"
    - (a) Held no hope for social change through the optimistic social gospel. Liberalism's Christian love is not enough to overcome social evil. Rather, minority groups must be empowered to counterbalance oppressors.
    - (b) Borrowed some Marxist ideas; ran for Congress as a Socialist in 1930, although later disillusioned by WWII and the New Deal.
- c. Founded Fellowship of Socialist Christians; helped found Americans for Democratic Action and the NCC
- d. Favorite theologian of political liberals, Jimmy Carter and Hillary Clinton

6. \*Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976) of University of Marburg, Germany

- a. Probably had as much influence on 20th century theology and NT studies as any other thinker
- b. Taught “the mythological Jesus”
  - 1) the Bible was written before mankind had arrived at a scientific view of the world
    - (a) The biblical record is preaching and teaching, not an historical account
    - (b) Form criticism must be used effectively to separate fact (historie) from the disciples’ prejudiced interpretation of the elements of the faith (*heilgeschichte*)
  - 2) “We can now know almost nothing about the life and personality of Jesus” (from *Jesus and the Word*). Contrast Machen’s *What Is Faith?*
- c. Bultmannism was popularized by Anglican Bishop, John A.T. Robertson’s book, *Honest to God*, 1963

III. Middle to late 20<sup>th</sup> century Theological Experiments and Novelties

A. “God is Dead” movement: Climax of the Age of Reason before the onset of Post-modernism

1. Fueled by Darwinism, Freudianism, and Nietzsche’s nihilism
  - a. Scopes “Monkey Trial” of 1925 in Dayton, TN
  - b. Freud (d. 1939)
    - 1) Described religion as “the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity,” the conflict of different parts of the mind resulting in stress
    - 2) “God is a device conjured up from the mind to cope with its own inner tensions” (*Eerdman’s Handbook to the History of Christianity*, 602) “The face which smiled at us in the cradle, now magnified to infinity, smiles down upon us from heaven.” - Freud
2. Climaxed in the 60’s in the cultural revolution

Promoted by radical theologians like William Hamilton, who in his 1966 book, “Radical Theology and the Death of God,” stated “The death of God is a metaphor. We needed to redefine Christianity as a possibility without the presence of God.”  
Hamilton was declared dead at age 87 in early 2012.
3. Thorough-going naturalism has resulted in an anti-spiritual, material-only view of human life, as evidenced by Francis Crick’s 1994 book, *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul*. The Nobel laureate concludes this about the biological basis of human consciousness: “The Astonishing Hypothesis is that ‘You,’ your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.”

B. Paul Tillich (1886-1965)

1. German born and trained, he fled Nazi Germany for the States
  - a. As leader of the Religious Socialist movement, his version of socialism was opposed to that of Hitler.
  - b. Served on faculties of Union Theological Seminary and Columbia Univ. (’33-55), Harvard



(as Univ. Professor, '55-62), and the Univ. of Chicago Divinity School ('62-65).

2. Cut himself loose from historic Christianity and creeds to relate God to a secular world
  3. Experiencing the “Ultimate” is knowing God
    - a. *sola scriptura* principle. His theology is a mix of Platonism, medieval mysticism, German Idealism, and existentialism. His methodology utilized human philosophy to ask questions relating to human experience and used theology to answer those questions. Additionally, myth or symbolism are the only ways man can grasp cognitively the meaning and structure of reality—God, the “Ground of Being.”
    - b. Tillich’s idealistic existentialism completely depersonalizes God and leads to pantheism. God is understood as the “Ground of Being” whom man knows as “ultimate concern.” Man derives his own being by “participation” in the “Ground of Being.” Ultimate concern” means the courage to affirm oneself ultimately in the face of non-being. Jesus Christ is “The New Being.” In his sacrifice on the cross, he became “transparent” to the “Ground of Being” and so became “The Christ.”
- C. Process theology: there are no absolute statements of truth, but truth reveals itself in shifting forms to meet the need of the age
- a. Universe and man are in a process of evolution: primitive beginnings in polytheism to belief in one ethical God.
  - b. God himself is also in a process of change and development through his involvement in the universe.
    - 1) Classic theology cannot adequately explain the dynamic images of God found in the Bible.
    - 2) God is related to everything through an immediate, sympathetic participation.
- D. Liberation Theology
1. Marxism in theological dress. Salvation is seen in terms of political and economic liberation
    - a. Liberation theologians cite the prophets’ call for justice and Jesus’ call to live above the personal need of possessions
    - b. Against private property
  2. Most widely promoted and supported in Latin America, particularly by Mary Knoll Jesuits
- E. Pentecostalism
1. Part of the turn of the century “holiness movement” in several large American denominations
    - a. Particularly among Methodists, some were concerned that the church was getting away from

Wesley's teachings. They wanted to return to them, especially to the doctrine of perfectionism.

- b. Out of this renewal effort came several churches: the Wesleyan Methodists, the Free Methodists, the Church of the Nazarene, and the Church of God (Anderson, IN). To a lesser extent, the Christian Missionary Alliance, Primitive Methodist Church, and the Salvation Army also believe this. Originally, Pentecostals did not want to form new churches, they simply wanted to revive their own churches.
- c. The largest Pentecostal group, the Assembly of God, teaches [1] continuing revelation (through tongues and visions), [2] immediate total sanctification, [3] perfectionism, and [4] healing.

2. Kansas City revivals of 1903 and Azusa Street revival in L.A. in 1906

3. Neo-Pentecostalism invades mainline American denominations in the 1960s

- a. Getting its start among the Jesus People on the West Coast, the Charismatic movement centers on experience: you can literally believe anything and still be a Charismatic. The movement shares with the Pentecostals an emphasis upon continuing revelation through tongues and visions.
- b. The RC's got into the movement in 1967 at the Notre Dame conference, and the movement has spread throughout the world like wildfire, especially in third world countries.
- c. Newly-liberated countries from the Soviet bloc have been so inundated with Pentecostal missionaries that some of them have closed their doors to all missionary activity out of frustration.

F. Mysticism of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee

1. Watchman Nee (d. 1972)

- a. suffered at the hands of the Red Chinese, being imprisoned in 1952 for his Christian activities
- b. founder of the "Three Self\*" or "Little Flock" Movement in the Chinese underground church that eventually was co-opted by the communist government in allowing it to become the legal church in China

2. Witness Lee (1905-1997)

- a. early disciple of Watchman Nee, Lee fled to Taiwan in the late '40s and then migrated to L.A. in 1962 where he molded his "Little Flock" followers into a "Local Church" movement, where Christ's church can be depicted only by local congregations.
- b. Lee's study "Recovery Bible" is an attempt to recover apostolic Christianity that has been lost to modern, and even orthodox Christianity. He often takes figurative language of the Bible literally, thus allegorizing the plain sense meaning, like "our drinking God" in his *Life Study of John*

3. Aberrations

- a. Confusion of the Persons of the Trinity gives the appearance of a modalistic heresy
- b. Life Study of Romans, The Stream

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\* Self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating movement

## G. Feminist theology

1. Anti-patriarchalism; logical end of unrestrained democracy as opposed to representative headship
2. Stresses the “feminine side” of God and Jesus. Introduction of new “gender-neutral” Bible versions to diminish patriarchalism.
3. WCC “Re-imagining” Conference in Minneapolis, 1993 and April 1998
  - a. Sponsors: NCC and apostate mainline churches. PCUSA paid \$66K in 1993, and posted a \$22/person head tax for the 1998 confab.
  - b. Notorious actions
    - 1) Denial of the trinity and the cross  
“I don’t think we need a theory of atonement at all. I think Jesus came to show us something about life... I don’t think we need folks hanging on crosses and blood dripping and weird stuff.” –Delores ‘williams, Prof. at Union Theological Seminary, NY. (cited in *Presbyterian Layman* 27:1:4)
    - 2) open prayer to mother “Sophia” before each public address  
“O Mother, Sophia, we are women in your image”      “Sophia is here, but not Jesus.”
    - 3) Milk and honey service
    - 4) Lesbianism openly proclaimed/promoted
4. “Openness of God Theology”
  - a. The future is open and unknown to God.  
God is sovereign, but also perfectly free. He loves freedom and has blessed his image bearers with freedom, making His own actions contingent on our free choices. This is God’s “Sovereign Risk.”
  - b. Noted proponents: Gregory Boyd of Bethel College and Clark Pinnock (for years at Fuller Seminary). See Boyd’s *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God*

## IV. Middle to late 20<sup>th</sup> century Church Movements

### A. World Council of Churches, (WCC) 1948

1. Origins found in the Faith and Order Conference and the Life and Work Conference
2. The danger of the lowest common denominator in church unions



B. International Council of Christian Churches, (ICCC) 1948

1. Founded in Amsterdam as conservative counter-weight to the WCC
2. Bible Presbyterian, Carl McIntire, served as its President from its inception



C. Vatican II, 1962-65

1. Called by Pope John XXIII to make pastoral and liturgical reforms
2. Unlike the First Vatican Council (1870) that affirmed the authority of the Pope and the monolithic structure of the Romanist church, Vatican II breathed more of a democratic spirit
  - a. 2,500+ delegates choose their own agenda and leaders in opposition to the papal Curia. Only 700 attended Vatican I, and only 200 set the image of the church at Trent
  - b. America sent the most delegates after Italy
3. Changes
  - a. reduced the number of saints and ended meatless Fridays
  - b. Priest closer to the people in worship
    - 1) Use of the vulgar language
    - 2) Faced the people
    - 3) People greet one another in peace instead of keeping silence at the end

D. International Congress on World Evangelization in 1974

1. Ecumenical effort
  - a. Like the earlier ecumenical Faith and Order Conference, it also was held in Lausanne, Switzerland
  - b. International New Evangelical leaders from 147 countries seeking church oneness in evangelizing the world
  - c. Billy Graham was honorary chairman
2. Lausanne Covenant
  - 1) "Evangelism summons us to unity"
  - 2) "The church's visible unity in truth is God's purpose," although organic unions are not always united in the truth

3. Current on-going efforts through Billy Graham schools of evangelism; Lausanne II was held in Manila in 1989

E. Evangelicalism's drift toward Rome

1. 1994: "Evangelicals and Catholics Together"

- a. Chuck Colson, J.I. Packer, and Bill Bright of Campus Crusade ("Catholics are not wrong, only different") call for cooperation with RCs
- b. In the face of the common enemies of social decay and irreligion, New Evangelicals and Charismatics lose sight of the message and cause of the Reformation, despite a monolithic, unchanging Roman Catholic Church
- c. The "ECT" document blurs the biblical meaning of justification to placate Roman Catholics who will not give up the teachings of Trent.

2. 1998: "EC2" document: "The Gift of Salvation."

- a. Drafted to placate Protestants over the earlier miscarried statement of justification
- b. While an improvement over ECT, it still neglected the important term of "imputation," leaving open an RC understanding of salvation by "infused" grace
- c. Conservative Protestants (R.C. Sproul, D.A. Carson, with Packer) responded (1999) with a more historic statement of justification to draw the sheep back into the fold: "The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration."

3. October 31, 1999. Leaders from the Lutheran World Federation and papal representatives sign a peace accord in Wittenberg, Germany

4. September 5, 2000. Vatican re-affirms Catholic primacy