

# ***“Church History: Heroes, Heretics & Holy Wars”***

## ***Sunday School Notes***

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### **CLASS 19 – The 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

**1869 – Pope Pius IX called the First Vatican Council.** The world was becoming less uniformly Catholic, the papacy was losing political influence, and liberal philosophies were spreading. The church needed to speak out definitively. Vatican I established:

- 1) that the Pope has full, direct power over the entire church and its hierarchy;
- 2) when he speaks *ex cathedra* (“from the chair” in his capacity as Pope), he is infallible.

Though the liberals in the church disapproved, those things passed. People needed absolutism in an age of confusion and change.

1962 – Just under 100 years after Vatican I, the Catholic Church had to deal with a new tide of liberalism. **Pope John XXIII had become Pope in 1958** and he saw the need for the Catholic Church to address current issues, with an emphasis on pastoral care, so he called the Second Vatican Council. The 2,000 delegates certainly showed the diversity in the church – over 230 Americans, over 200 Africans, and over 300 Asians. Hallmarks of the Council:

- Mass in native tongue
- Vocations were dignified because all Christians have a Christian calling
- Encouraged study of the Bible and emphasized it as primary basis for truth (though tradition still just as important)
- Called Protestants “separated brethren,” other believers did not need to “return to Rome”

### **The Boxer Rebellion of 1900-1901**

In China, a secret society known as Boxers began. They opposed foreigners and especially Christians. So they decided to kill every Christian and missionary they could, so they set out burning down churches and homes and murdering thousands of Christians. America and Europe stepped in and crushed the rebellion, and forced the Chinese government to pay restitution to the Christian victims. Just like in the early church, though, the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. Thousands of missionaries came to replace the killed ones. Many Chinese unbelievers found Christ and churches flourished.

A similar thing happened in the 1960 & 70s. Mao Zedong came to power in China in 1949, setting up a Communist government that was atheistic, forcing missionaries out and gaining control of churches (the Three-Self Reform Movement). In 1966, all places of worship were closed and Bibles were burned. Ten years of silence from the church as it went underground during the “Cultural Revolution.” The House Church movement was born, and the numbers for Christians in China exploded.

### **Pentecostalism**

We’ve talked a lot about how various streams of Protestantism had focused on the emotions and the excitement of experience over doctrine. But it wasn’t until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the Pentecostal movement was really born. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a “holiness” movement that sprang up because many of the churches lacked spiritual energy. The “second blessing” for believers to be sanctified was sought. Combine this with the premillennialism that saw the coming 20<sup>th</sup> century as the “Christian century” when God would usher in His kingdom, many prophecy conferences at the end of

the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Speaking in tongues became a huge issue that was seen as the ultimate spiritual blessing by those in the movement, while newspapers mocked it and most churches rejected it. Revivals in Kansas and Texas in early 1900s were characterized by tongues and healings.

A building in Los Angeles on Azusa Street called the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission became the center of the Pentecostal movement starting in 1906. People would come and take home their experience. Since it was very anti-organizational (led by the Spirit) and had a bit of an anti-denominational bias, that resulted in tons of tiny Pentecostal organizations. The Assemblies of God emerged as the largest of these groups, birthed out of a meeting unifying them in April 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas (so we just celebrated the 100 year anniversary). 2.5 million members of the Assembly of God at beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Pentecostalism's emphasis on evangelism and missions has resulted in it being the fastest growing faith in Christianity in the past century.

**Dead Sea Scrolls** – 1947, discovered in caves in Palestine. The caves contained fragments of Old Testament manuscripts (Apocrypha & other Jewish writings too) older than any in existence at the time. The community that hid the scrolls there were 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews called Essenes. Before that, the oldest Hebrew texts were from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Very important!

### **Karl Barth (1886 – 1968)**

Liberalism exalted human beings and promised that the 20<sup>th</sup> century would be an age of progress. There would be no need for the miraculous and supernatural. Christianity was fine as long as it taught us good ethics. But the first World War smashed all of that nonsense.

Born in Switzerland but studied in Germany, Karl Barth had been a liberal pastor, but as he studied Romans and started taking it seriously, it changed him. His commentary on Romans in 1919 has been called the “bombshell on the liberal theologians’ playground” because it took the fall of man, God’s sovereignty, and salvation through Christ as real and literal. Barth became a professor of theology in Germany. He opposed the Nazis and wrote large parts of the “Barmen Declaration” which called Christians to oppose Hitler. Preachers at the time were saying things like, “Christ has come to us through Adolph Hitler.” In 1935 he was expelled from Germany for not pledging allegiance to Hitler, so he went to teach in his native Switzerland, where he wrote his huge 13 volume *Church Dogmatics*. His theology is called neo-orthodoxy – it’s mostly orthodox, but it doesn’t necessarily accept the historicity of every Bible event, and he does not accept inerrancy or the infallibility of Scripture. But he did give serious scholarly credibility to taking the Bible seriously.

### **Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906 – 1945)**

Speaking of Christians who opposed Hitler, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a student of Karl Barth’s. He was a Lutheran pastor and lecturer in Berlin when Hitler came to power in 1933. Those who stood against the Nazis were called the Confessing Church and Bonhoeffer was forbidden to write or speak publicly because he was part of it; but he taught in an underground seminary, though it was discovered and closed. He could have moved to America, but wanted to stay in Germany – felt that he had to suffer with the German people if he was to have any credibility afterwards. His brother-in-law drew him into the resistance movement. He became a double agent actually joining the Secret Service, trying to get the British to accept a plot to kill Hitler. But he was arrested in 1943 for helping to smuggle Jews into Switzerland. He was hanged one month before Germany surrendered. His two big works are *The Cost of Discipleship* (a radical rebuke of comfortable Christianity) and *Life Together*.

### **Billy Sunday (1862 – 1935)**

Billy Sunday grew up in an Iowa log cabin, his father having died of pneumonia in the Civil War, so he spent his time in an Orphan Home. He played professional baseball (including with the Pirates) in the

1880s. He left baseball to preach for the YMCA, then began to preach at revivals and working as a travelling evangelist, with his wife acting as his agent and secretary. He would preach with his whole body, dancing, throwing chairs, whatever would keep people's attention; used mild profanity and direct language. Spoke out against cards, movies, alcohol, evolution, child labor, racism; but greatly supported WWI. His preaching probably contributed greatly to the Prohibition Amendment (18<sup>th</sup>). Saw an estimated 300,000 conversions during his ministry, over 100 million people heard him preach.

### **Billy Graham (1918 - ?)**

Billy Graham was born in 1918 in Charlotte, NC, came to Christ at a revival service of Mordecai Ham; walked the aisle to accept Christ the song "Just As I Am" playing. He moved from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church to the Southern Baptist Church, ordained by age 22. At first a pastor in Chicago, then he worked for Youth for Christ in 1945, and toured the US and much of Europe teaching churches how to organize youth rallies. Began Crusades in major cities like LA, Boston, & DC @1950. Months long, very successful Revivals in London in 1954 and New York in 1957. Founded *Christianity Today* in 1956 and had many movies made. Graham has met with every sitting President since the 50s, but declined to be part of the Religious Right in the 70s and 80s because he didn't want to mix religion and politics. He had amazing success in Soviet-controlled countries during the Cold War. Helped organize the 1966 World Congress on Evangelism and the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization. Graham preached the Gospel in person to more than 80 million people, with nearly 3 million people responding to his invitations.

He wrote up the *Modesto Manifesto*, rules to avoid scandal:

- 1) he would receive set salary no matter how large the offering,
- 2) he would never be alone with a woman,
- 3) he would use the attendance figures of the managers of the facilities,
- 4) he would not criticize other pastors or churches.

### **Richard Wurmbrand (1908 - 2001)**

A Romanian Christian of Jewish descent, Richard Wurmbrand was a Lutheran pastor in 1944 when the Soviet Union overran Romania and gathered all the pastors together to get them to declare that Christianity and communism could thrive together. Richard's wife Sabina told him to stand up for Christ. He said that she would lose her husband if he did, and she replied that she did not want a coward for a husband. Four years later he was jailed and tortured, though he told his persecutors that it was a joy to share in Christ's sufferings. A man named Grecu interrogated and tortured him, but became intrigued that Wurmbrand would say that he loved those who persecuted him. They ended up studying the Bible together and he confessed Christ. He secretly helped the prisoners, but was eventually caught and arrested. After 8 ½ years of arrest, he was freed and he returned to his family and worked with the underground church. He was taken to prison again for a 5 year term. Eventually he was persuaded to leave the country and took his family to America, where he founded the *Voice of the Martyrs* and wrote the book *Tortured for Christ*. After the communist government collapsed in Romania in 1989, the Wurmbrands returned and set up a Christian print shop and library.

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