OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

LECTURE 31 - NINETEENTH CENTURY: (1) SOCIETIES, (2) PROTESTANT OVERSEAS MISSION, (3) DENOMINATIONS

We'll start with a prayer from the period to be studied.

I call upon you, O Lord.
In the morning you hear me;
in the morning I offer you my
prayer, watching and waiting.
(Psalm 5)

I lift my heart to you, O Lord,
to be strengthened for this day
be with me in all I do, my God
guide me in all my ways.

I will carry some burdens today;
some trials will be mine.
So I wait for your help, Lord,
lest I stumble and fall.

I will do my work, Father,
the work begun by your Son
He lives in me and I in him
may his work today be done.
Amen. Author unknown

The rest of this page is an outline of this lecture.

1. INTRODUCTION

2. NINETEENTH CENTURY 'VOLUNTARY RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES'

3 NINETEENTH CENTURY PROTESTANT OVERSEAS MISSION

TOPIC - DAVID LIVINGSTON

4 DENOMINATIONS

5 DISRUPTION IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, 1843

6. 'THE EVANGELICAL CENTURY' (THE NINETEENTH CENTURY)

In preparation, read Cairns, 409-414 (Protestant Mission; Disruption of 1843)
Lion, 557-62 (Protestant Mission) and 571-580 (Societies)
Vos, 119 (Protestant mission)
Hanks, 70 Great Christians, 254-8 (Chalmers and Disruption of 1843)
Hanks, 60 Great Founders - the story of sixty C19 and C20 Societies,
International, National, Literature, Youth, Community.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. There were many consequences of the C18/C19 revivals, both in Britain and in America; this lecture looks at three of them:

(1) new forms of cooperation, the 'Voluntary Society' (Bible/Missionary/Social)
(2) Protestant overseas mission
(3) multiplication of denominations.

2. NINETEENTH-CENTURY 'VOLUNTARY RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES'

2.1 Reasons for Societies

Like-minded believers, ministers and lay people, spiritually awakened by the revivals, wanting to do something to express their faith, looked around for similarly-motivated believers across the denominations. The preferred way of cooperating was to form a 'Voluntary Religious Society', for a specific purpose, for example for evangelism, for literature, for conferences for the deepening of spiritual life, for overseas mission, for social responsibility, and much else.

The idea was not new, but Societies 'took off' in the C19, and transformed the Church. We'll look in this Lecture at the two areas at (2) and (3) above and then, in the next Lecture, 32, at how Societies tackled social problems.

The second reason for the popularity of the C19 Religious Society was the novel idea, introduced by the Wesleys, popularised through the Sunday School Movement and the D L Moody Crusades, that laypeople could be active in religion - doing things that until then had been seen as the preserve of the clergy.

2.2 A sample of C19 Societies

Sunday School Union, 1803
Bible Societies, from 1804
Evangelical Alliance, 1846
Keswick Convention, 1875

Note that in the American list, there are 11 'Societies' and one denomination; in the chart of missionary bodies on the next page, ratio is 14 to 2.

1810 — American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
1818 — Baptist Convention founded to promote foreign missions
1816 — American Bible Society
1817 — American Colonization Society
1817 — United Foreign Missionary Society
1824 — American Sunday School Union
1825 — American Tract Society
1826 — American Home Missionary Society
1828 — American Peace Society
1833 — American Anti-slavery Society
1836 — American Temperance Union
1873 — Women's Christian Temperance Union

Regarding the first, the Sunday School Union, we'll see in the next Lecture how and why a layman, Robert Raikes, hired a hall and started a Sunday School in 1780. The idea caught on so, to provide teaching materials and guidance, they formed a Society, and called it the Sunday School Union.

Next on the list: Bible Societies. In 1802, a Welsh minister was concerned that there was no Bible in Welsh, so he translated it into Welsh and published it; others thought this was such a good idea that they came together to form the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804, a mixture of clergy and lay people, 15 Anglicans, 15 non-conformist, 6 foreign members, for the specific purpose of promoting Bible translation, and many similar Bible Societies followed.

The Evangelical Alliance, 1846. There were evangelicals in the Church of England, in Congregational Churches, in Baptist Churches and many other places. Denominational barriers were fairly rigid, as we'll see later, but evangelicals across the country wanted to present a united front, to be heard on public issues, so in 1846 they formed a Society. 800 leaders from 52 branches of the Christian Church came together in London to form the Evangelical Alliance, which is today the largest body serving evangelical Christians in the United Kingdom.

Next on the list is the Keswick Convention. It's perhaps the best-known continuing example of a C19 Society. An Anglican minister began, in 1875, to hold open-air meetings in the Cumbrian town of Keswick, which led to the annual 'Keswick Convention', supported by Christians from all denominations. It emphasized sanctification, defeating sin and living victoriously; it had (and still has) a deep impact on British evangelicals. It was (and is) pan-denominational - across the denominations - as the flag over the tent proclaims, 'All one in Christ Jesus'.

There are many other examples, of which sixty are described in the recommended book, *60 Great Founders*. Evangelicism across the denominations was cemented by the network of Societies it created, which often meant more to those actively involved in them than the churches of which they were members. Think back to your own experience ... was the Scripture Union, Christian Endeavour, a Christian Union, Navigators or some other 'society' more important for your spiritual development than the church you attended?

To emphasise the interdenominational nature of these Societies, glance down the list of American Societies on the previous page - only one of them, the second, is linked to a denomination - the others are all inter-denominational Societies.

2.3 Non-denominational 'Societies'

Some of these Societies stressed that they were not inter-denominational, they were non-denominational; they were deliberately outside the denominational structure.

The Salvation Army is our topic for the next Lecture, so I'll not say anything about it, but another prime example is the Christian Brethern, originally known as the Plymouth Brethern.

In 1827, four evangelicals in Dublin, in Ireland, who were friends but who belonged to different denominations, were concerned that none of them could attend Communion at the churches of the others, because you had to be a member to participate. They decided to meet together, to remember the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread, as the early Christians had done, without reference to denominational differences. Their first meeting was held in a home, and Christians from a variety of denominations joined them. They were dubbed 'Brethren' because of their practice of calling each other 'brother'.

The first meeting in England was in 1831 at Plymouth, so they became known as 'the brethren from Plymouth', and soon simply 'Plymouth Brethren'. Many within the movement refused to accept any name other than 'Christian', so they became generally known as 'Christian Brethren'. The idea of meeting in this informal way spread rapidly to France, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Italy and into Eastern Europe, where similarly minded people came together for a specific purpose. As a student, I was in Paris and I looked for their place of worship on Sunday morning. At the address which I had been given, the notice-board read: *ici on casse le pain* - 'here one breaks bread'.

The Brethern never wanted to be a denomination - and today many 'Christian Brethren', or their currently-preferred description as an 'Evangelical Church', would protest if you called them a denomination. They are a prime example of a C19 'Society' which was not inter-denominational but non-denominational.

3. NINETEENTH CENTURY PROTESTANT OVERSEAS MISSION

3.1 Vision and opportunity

In the year 1800, it was uncertain whether Christianity could ever become a worldwide religion. Two Protestant groups had tried; remember the Pietists and Moravians (Lecture 28), who did missionary work out of all proportion to their membership, but the Protestant Church generally was for Europeans and their descendents in the New World and they had no vision, before the year 1800, to evangelise elsewhere.

The C19 brought two complementary new dimensions, which revolutionized Protestant mission - (a) missionary vision and (b) missionary opportunity; we'll look at these in turn, in 3.4 - the vision and then, in 3.6 - the opportunity. First, a word about:

3.2 'Missiology'

A new department of study has grown up over recent years, called 'Missiology', and the spiritual side of overseas mission is best covered there. I'll not say any more in this lecture about that; we'll look now at the historical background to C19 overseas mission.

3.3 The lack of vision before 1800

Why was there so little Protestant missionary vision between the Reformation in the 1500's and the year 1800?

(1) The Peace Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 - remember (Lecture 27) that this Treaty laid down that every State was to follow the religion chosen for it by its ruler, and it was not to interfere in the religion of its neighbours. That restrained the Lutheran Church, in the north of Europe, from missionary activity; only the Pietists and Moravians, who were unhappy at the dead orthodoxy of the Lutheran Church, saw the need to take the gospel overseas. For this enthusiasm for outreach, the Lutheran Church did not thank them - it disowned them. So, apart from Pietists and Moravians, there was no C18 Lutheran interest in taking the gospel to non-Christian countries and cultures.

(2) A second reason for the lack of vision is that extreme Calvinism had no place for mission. William Carey (1761-1834) is often described as 'the father of modern missions' for his work in Serampore, India, As mentioned in Lecture 28, when Carey, aged 26 in 1787, was trying to persuade his colleagues to form a Missionary Society, he gave them copies of the 'Periodical Accounts' (Reports) of the missions of the Moravian Church, and said: 'See what these Moravians have done! Cannot we follow their example and in obedience to our divine Master go into the world and preach the gospel to the heathen?'

William Carey translates the Bible into one of the Indian languages.

What happened next is well known. When Carey suggested sending missionaries to India, the father of the man who had led Carey to Christ, John Ryland, said: 'Young man, sit down

When it pleases God to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine.'

Extreme Calvinists - sometimes called Hyper-Calvinists - believed that God had 'elected' those who would be saved, and that he would save them in his way, and in his time, without help from human agents. Much of C18 Calvinism had become extreme - not what Calvin had taught, but which his C18 followers thought that he had taught - and the result was, no vision for mission.

William Carey did sit down, but three years later, aged 29, he stood up in another meeting of the same Association and this time he won them over. He himself went to India, to Serampore, where he and his colleagues completed six translations of the Bible and twenty-three complete New Testaments.

(3) Martin Luther's doctrine of vocation, which, you remember (Lecture 19), encouraged everyone to see his or her daily work in the world as a calling from God. He said that a conscientious housewife was as much in the Will of God as a nun. People therefore didn't think of stepping out of their appointed role and offering themselves as overseas missionaries.

(4) Many Christians in the C18 believed that the Great Commission, to preach the gospel throughout the world (Matthew 28.18-20) had been given by Jesus to the Apostles and to the Apostles only, and that the Apostles had fulfilled it in their generation - end of story.

Then two things changed:

3.4 The beginning of modern mission - (1) the vision

Before you say, 'the first names on the chart on the next page are in the 1790s', which is the end of the C18, remember our earlier definition of the C19 - starting with the French Revolution of 1789 - so most early Protestant overseas mission, under that definition, started as a C19 phenomenon.

Glance down the chart on the next page: Apart from the first - BMS - and the second last - the Assemblies of God - these are all Inter-denominational societies.

In the left-hand column, some have changed their names, to be accepted in the countries where they work. The fifth - Interserve - was formerly the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship; the word 'Bible' in their title became unacceptable in the later twentieth century in the areas where they worked. The China Inland Mission changed its name to the Overseas Missionary Fellowship when all missionaries were expelled from China, starting in 1948, and relocated in various Far Eastern countries. (Until then, most British missionary work was described as 'Foreign Mission', but that phrase fell out of favour in the 1950's and 1960's, and was replaced by 'Overseas Mission'.

3.5 Denominational missions

There were also many denominational missions; the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Methodists and many others sent missionaries under the umbrella of their own denomination. The C19 revivals inspired every Christian denomination in every European country and America to send missionaries to non-Christian countries and cultures - that was new.

Continued after the chart on the next page:

Some nineteenth-century Missionary Societies, with present-day names added:

MISSION and DATE	FOUNDER(S)	MINISTRY
BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY 1792	* Group of Baptist ministers, at Kettering (Northamptonshire)	* India, Brazil, Caribbean
COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION 1795 formerly LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY	* Group of Congregationals, Anglicans, Presbyterians and Wesleyans	* Pacific Islands, India, South Africa, Hong Kong
CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY 1799	* Church of England, Independent and Presbyterian ministers	* Africa, Indian sub-continent, Middle and Far East
SOUTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY 1844	* Captain Allen Gardiner	* South America, Spain and Portugal * Evangelism, church planting, education. and medical work
INTERSERVE (formerly BMMF) 1852	* Offshoot of Zenana Bible and Medical Mission	* South Asia, Middle East and North Africa; also among Asians in Britain * Cooperation with national churches and other agencies to build up the Church
OVERSEAS MISSIONARY FELLOWSHIP (formerly CIM) 1865	* J Hudson Taylor	* Far East * Evangelism and church planting
ARAB WORLD MINISTRIES (formerly NAM) 1881	* George Pearse	* North Africa, Middle East and Europe * Friendship evangelism and caring ministry
QUA IBOE FELLOWSHIP 1887	* Samuel Bill	* Nigeria, plus - in partnership with Action Partners - Ghana and Chad * Evangelism, church planting, theological training, medical care
SIM INTERNATIONAL 1893	- Dr Rowland Bingham	* Sudan, West Africa; also South America, India and Asia * Evangelism, church planting and medical work
AIM INTERNATIONAL 1895	* Peter Cameron Scott	* Central Africa (12 countries), plus Comoro and Seychelle islands * Evangelism, Bible teaching, medical care, education, famine relief
OMS INTERNATIONAL 1901	* Charles Cowman	* Far East, South America * Evangelism, church planting, training national Christian leaders
JAPAN EVANGE LISTIC BAND 1903	* A Paget Wilkes and Rev Barclay Buxton	* Japan, some Commonwealth countries and USA * Evangelism and church planting
ACTION PARTNERS (formerly SUM) 1904	* Dr Karl Kumm	* Nigeria and Sudan; plus partner- ships with indigenous churches and missionary agencies in other countries * HQ at Bawtry Hall developed as centre for inter-mission cooperation
EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION 1904.	* G P Raud	* Western and Eastern Europe * Church planting in areas of little spiritual life; training church leaders, radio ministry
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD OVERSEAS MISSIONS 1909	* Assemblies of God	* Europe, Africa, Far East * Evangelism,church planting, training national leaders, medical and agricultural work
* WEC INTERNATIONAL (formerly World-wide Evangeliztion Crusade) 1913	* C T Studd	* Worldwide * Evangelism, church planting

3.6 The beginning of modern missions - (2) the opportunity

We saw at 3.4 that the C19 brought new vision for overseas mission, as a consequence of the C18/C19 revivals, but vision needs opportunity; the C19 brought opportunity through a change in government policy, a new policy which we now call 'colonialism'.

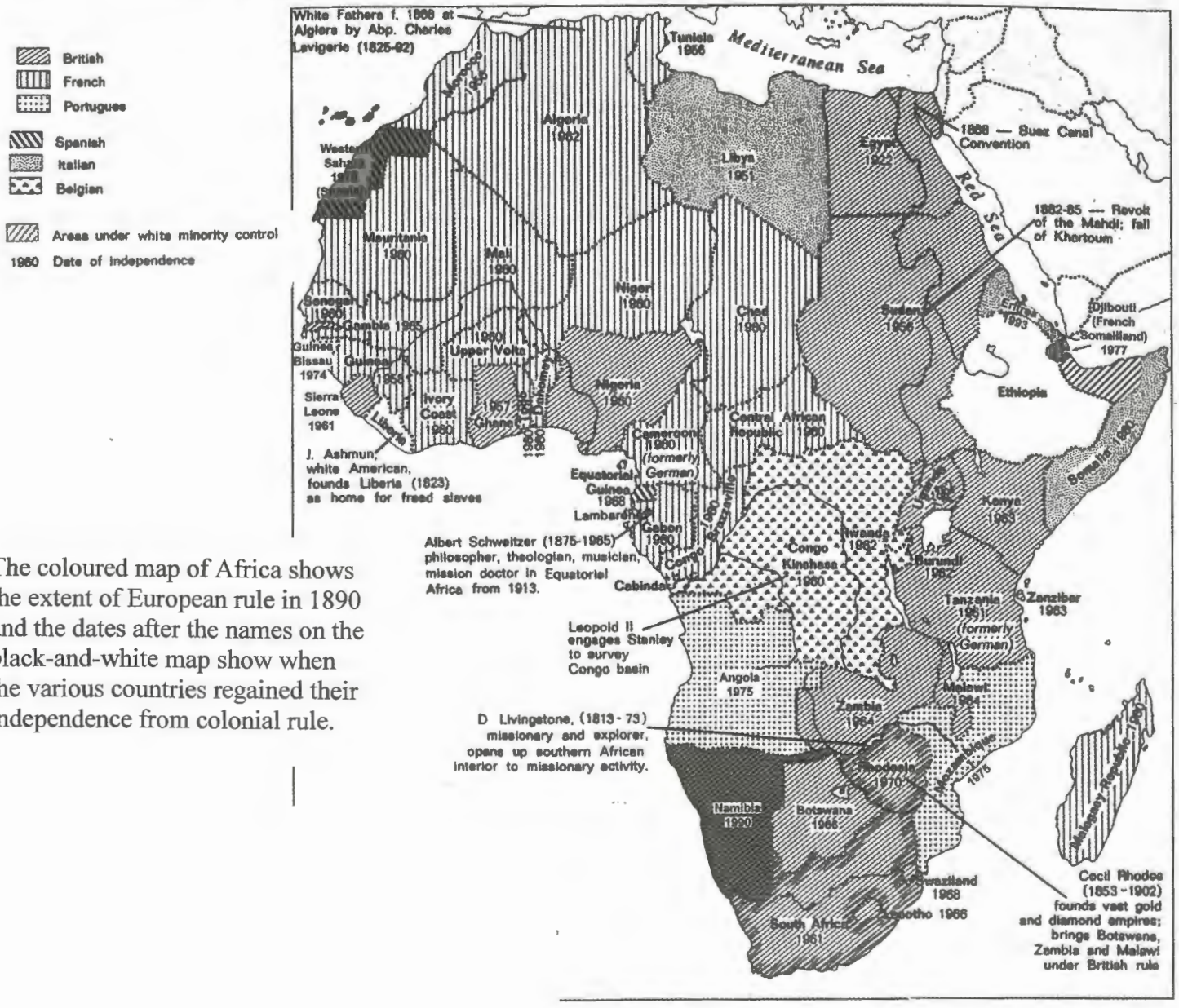
Apart from the Spanish conquistadors in South America, European explorers before the C19 had no intention of ruling the lands with which they traded. Even if they wanted to control territory, like the Portuguese in Goa or the British in Madras, their influence was limited, because basically they were traders. The C19 brought a new policy, 'colonialism'.

We're coming in the next Lecture to what is known as the 'Industrial Revolution' and that meant two things: (1) an insatiable demand for raw materials from new markets, and (2) building steamships to transport goods and people swiftly to and from the ends of the earth. To achieve this, Europeans imposed themselves on most of the inhabited world, establishing empires. Our generation is not proud of what European nations did

in the second half of the C19, but it is a fact of history, and Christian missionaries used the arteries of empire to spread Christianity - they followed the empire-builders to the ends of the earth. One illustration of 'colonialism' is European nations' C19 'scramble for Africa'.

France occupied Algeria, Tunisia and the Sahara (yellow on map);
Italy took control of Libya (purple);
Morocco divided between France/Spain;
Britain took control of Egypt and large parts of sub-Sahara Africa (pink);
Germany came in later, and took Togoland, Cameroons, South-West Africa, and Tanganyika (dark green);
Belgium conquered a million square miles of Congo (also green).
By the end of the C19, the whole of Africa ceased to be independent, except for Ethiopia (light yellow), which resisted Italian attacks.

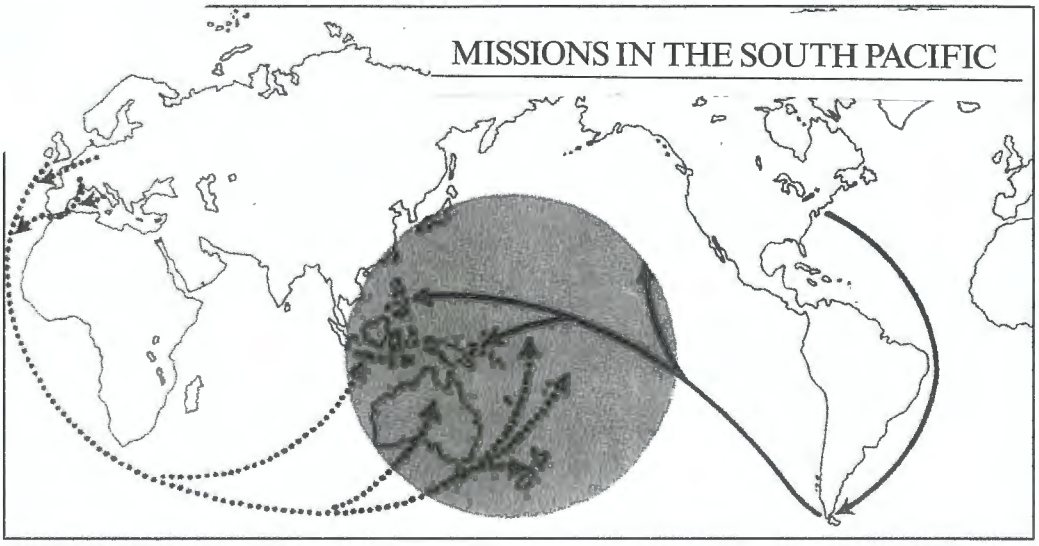
European powers competed with each other to control Africa. There were wars of resistance all over Africa, but people were helpless against troops armed with modern firearms. This map shows who ruled Africa in 1890.



The coloured map of Africa shows the extent of European rule in 1890 and the dates after the names on the black-and-white map show when the various countries regained their independence from colonial rule.

Another example of colonialism - the islands of the Pacific were divided among France, Britain and Germany; New Guinea was divided into Australian, Dutch, and German sections. Britain took charge of India, Burma, and Ceylon; France annexed Indo-China; Holland occupied Indonesia. Even the penguins were not left in peace, as colonizing powers set up their flags in Antarctica.

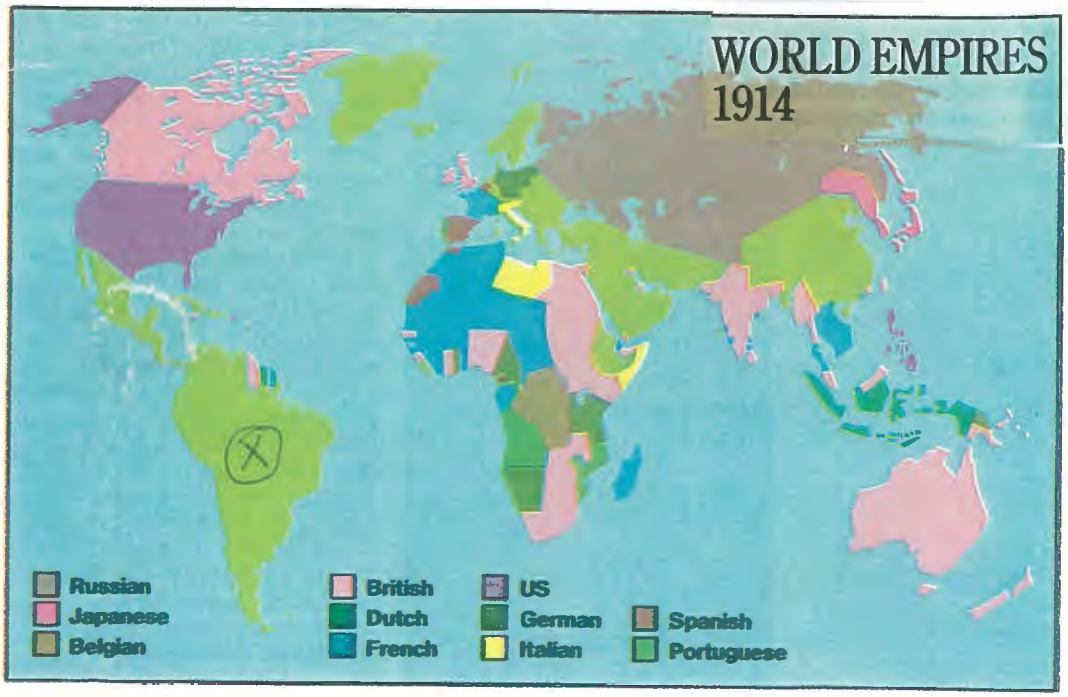
Until the Suez Canal opened in 1869, ships from Britain had to go to India and the Far East round the Cape of Good Hope; until the Panama Canal opened in 1914, ships from the east coast of America had to go to the Pacific round Cape Horn.



Empire-building was the vehicle for C19 Christian mission - not the cause of it; the cause was revival in the Churches, but imperialism was the vehicle for Christianity taking permanent root in non-Christian civilizations - missionaries followed empire-builders to the ends of the earth.

It's difficult to see how else Christianity could have become a world-wide religion by the end of the C19. Western Christianity spread all over the world, inseparably connected with the planting of European Empires. By the end of the C19, there were few regions in the world where the gospel had not been preached; only a few countries (such as Afghanistan, Nepal and Tibet) were closed to missionaries.

Correction: The map wrongly colours Central & South America green = Portuguese on the key. All except Brazil is Spanish.

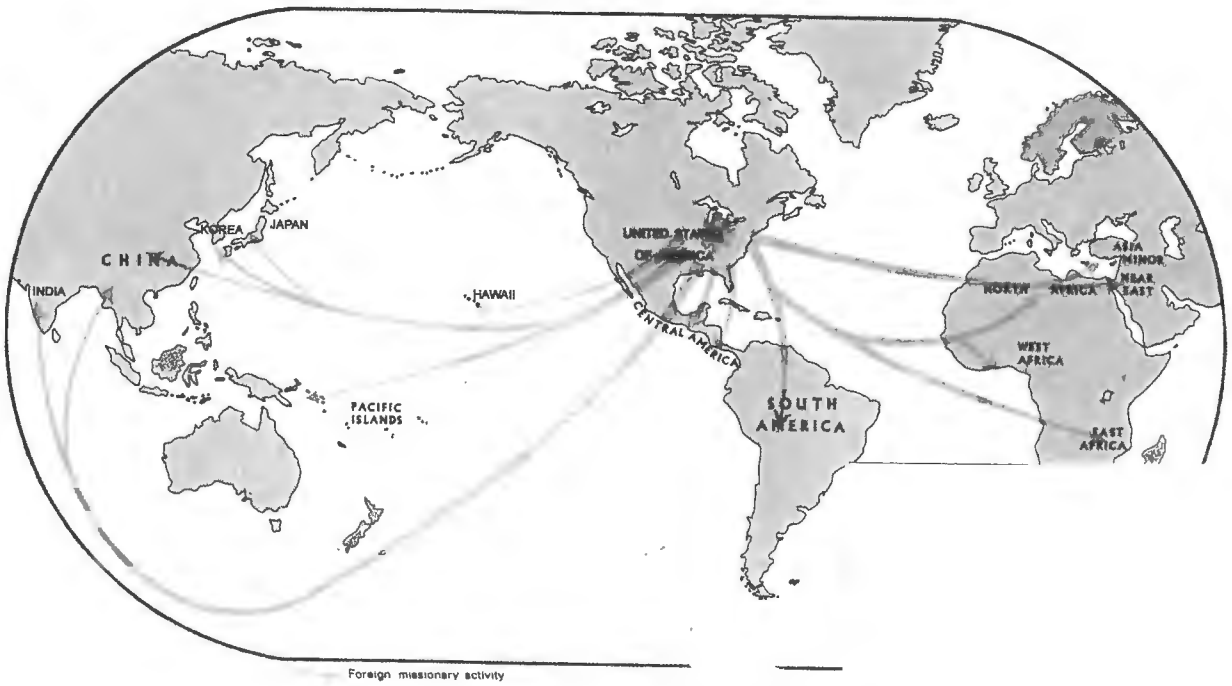


TOPIC - DAVID LIVINGSTONE - was taken at this point in the Lecture; here, it is printed at the end of the Notes for this Lecture.

3.7 American missions

North America too, challenged by revival of the Church at home, began its own worldwide mission activity.

MISSIONARY AWAKENING IN AMERICA



Under the sponsorship of the American Board of Foreign Missions, five young men were ordained at Salem, Massachusetts, in February, 1812, to be the first American foreign missionaires. They left soon thereafter for India.

3.8 The role of women

Another feature of C19 Protestant overseas mission was the role of single women - they had opportunities not open to them in the home countries, and they were the backbone of many missionary societies. One of the best-loved stories in Christian families was the biography of Mary Slessor.

Mary Slessor (1848-1915) with four adopted children, Jean, Alice, Maggie and May, picture taken when she brought them on a visit to Scotland.

Born in Aberdeen in 1848, into extreme poverty, her alcoholic father lost his job and when she was 11 they moved to one room in Dundee, no water, no inside toilet; she worked at the looms in a mill. Her mother took the children to church on Sundays, and in her teens she became a Christian. She was deeply impressed by a missionary on furlough from Calabar, now in south-east Nigeria, so after attending evening classes she was accepted at the age of 27 as a 'female agent'. The idea of single women being missionaries was novel.

In Calabar, she 'went native', dressing like the locals, eating native food and teaching people from The Book. She gained respect unheard of for a woman in the tribe. She founded schools and a hospital, which is still operational. She was there for nearly 40 years and died in Calabar, Nigeria, at the age of 66 in her mud hut, not only a pioneer missionary, but also a pioneer for women in mission.

Until the 1960s, Sunday was a special day in evangelical Christian homes in Scotland - the Sabbath was markedly different from weekdays, and that included not reading secular literature but only Christian books - we had jigsaws with biblical scenes for our children for Sundays. Mary Slessor's biography was one of the most popular 'Sunday books', and her pioneering work was greatly admired - and not just by evangelicals, because in 1998 she was commemorated by her picture on the back of Clydesdale Bank £10 banknotes, holding children in her arms.

3.9 'Exporting' Western Christianity

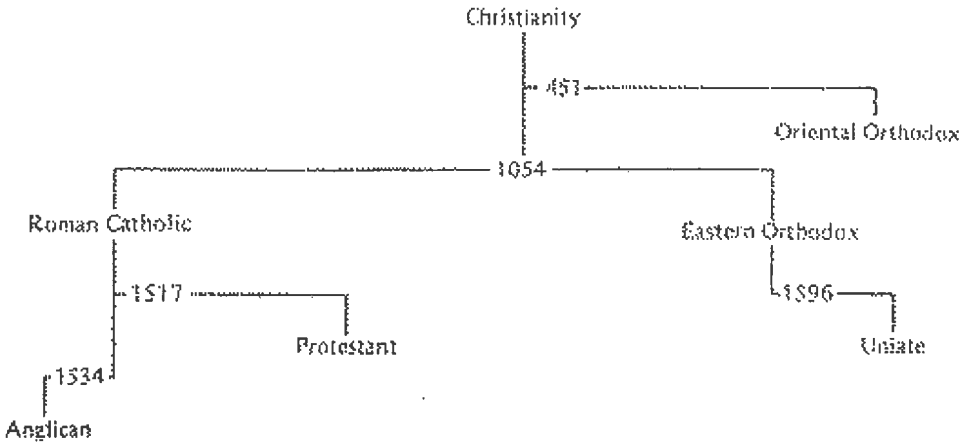
European governments didn't permit local people to rise above a fairly low level of responsibility in civic affairs, so that the country deliberately remained dependent on European leadership. It has to be said that many C19 missionaries who planted local churches had a similar paternalistic attitude, and remained firmly in control of the local church. It was 1910 (at a Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, which we don't have time to look at) before missionary societies began even to think about what we now accept as the norm, that indigenous churches should be 'self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating', and even then, it was another half-a-century before they began doing this.

However, having said all that, I come back to the point that because C19 missionaries had no qualms about using their countries' Empires and Imperial attitudes to spread the gospel, Christianity became a world-wide religion by the end of the C19 - and could it have been otherwise?

4 DENOMINATIONS

4.1 Overview of the origin of denominations

The chart on the next page shows branches of the Church, and the explanation of the chart starts on page 12.



Anglican	*Protestant*	*Eastern Orthodox*	*Oriental Orthodox*
Church of England	Adventist		
Church of Wales	Baptist	Ancient Patriarchates	Syrian
Church of Ireland	Brethren	Constantinople	Coptic
Church of Scotland	Christian Scientist	Alexandria	Armenian
Church of Canada	Church of God	Antioch	Syro-Indian
Episcopal Church U.S.A.	Swedenborgian	Jerusalem	Ethiopian
Archbishopric of Jerusalem	Congregationalist		
Church of Australia/Tasmania	Disciples of Christ	Autocephalous*	*Uniate***
Church of New Zealand	Evangelical		
Church of South Africa	Friends	Russia	Poland
Church of East Africa	Jehovah's Witnesses	Romania	Ukraine
Church of West Africa	Mormon	Serbia	Antioch
Church of Central Africa	Lutheran	Greece	and so on
Church of West Indies	Mennonite	Bulgaria	
Nippon Sei Ko Kwai	Methodist	Georgia	
Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui	Moravian	Cyprus	
Church of Uganda-Ruanda-Urandi	Nazarene	Czechoslovakia	
Church of India, Pakistan,	Old Catholic	Poland	
Burma, Ceylon	Pentecostal	Albania	
	Presbyterian	Sinai	
	Reformed		
	Salvation Army	Autonomous	
	Spiritualist	Finland	
	Unitarian	China	
	Universalist	Japan	
	United Church		
	and so on		

(*) Greek 'self' + 'head' = links to others but have their own leaders.

(**) aligned with Rome but have own liturgy and practices, e.g. priests marry.

The first major division within the Christian Church followed the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (Lecture 10), when some of the Greek-speaking churches in the East of the Roman Empire broke away on the question of the relationship between the divine and human natures of Christ. The next major division was in 1054, when the churches which looked to Rome for leadership broke from the churches which looked to Constantinople (Lecture 14).

In the first half of the sixteenth century, various groups disowned the Roman Catholic Church, as we saw in Lectures 19 to 25. The chart on the previous page maps the origin and subsequent history of the Anglican Church, showing it leaving the Catholic Church at the English Reformation under Henry VIII (Lecture 24) and spawning the long list of Anglican Churches in the left-hand column. All the other Protestant denominations are grouped together in the next column - over two-dozen of them. Some, like the Brethren, might object to being called a 'denomination' but the word is used loosely. Some of the denominations listed in that column, for example Pentecostal (Lecture 35) are C20 movements.

4.2 What is a denomination?

A 'name' for a group of churches that accept one another. The 'theory' of denominations was hammered out by the Independents who made up the minority at the Westminster Assembly (1642-49) (Topic 24). They laid down four markers:

1. No one sees the whole truth, so different views about the outward form of the Church are inevitable.

2. Even if these differences are not fundamental to faith, they are not matters of indifference, and every Christian should practice his/her faith as he/she believes the Bible teaches.

3. No denomination has a full grasp of divine truth, so the true Church of Christ can never be identified with any one ecclesiastical structure.

4. Separation is not schism; it is possible to hold different views at many points and still be united in Christ.

We'll come in Lecture 35 to the World Council of Churches, formed in 1948; it now has 348 'denominations' affiliated to it, from 120 countries, in every continent of the world - and there are other denominations who don't want to affiliate.

4.3 Why the C19 multiplication of denominations?

There were at least a couple of reasons:

(a) People who were spiritually quickened in the revivals of the C18/C19, evangelicals, were often not welcome in the National Church (Church of England, Church of Scotland, etc), so they looked for new ways to express their faith; they banded together in new formats, according to their convictions and preferences; they looked around for like-minded believers, with whom to practice and to promulgate the evangelical faith, as they saw it. There were free to do this because of the second C19 phenomenon - 'Voluntarism'.

(b) 'Voluntarism'

This needs some explanation. Remember that in the Middle Ages, Church and State worked as a partnership, two sides of the same coin. The Reformation didn't challenge the basic model - Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, the English monarchs, all taught that Church and State should co-operate with one another for the common good of society. When Anabaptists and Mennonites and Quakers protested at this cosy relationship, both Catholics and Protestants persecuted them as dangerous troublemakers.

The C19 revivals changed this attitude, and like-minded people not only formed new Societies but they formed new churches. If you started a new church, unless you personally supported it, financially and by your attendance, it would die out - the State wouldn't step in to help. So the C19 saw a proliferation of new 'denominations' within the Protestant Church, as people exercised their right to choose how to worship.

There's some truth in the chestnut joke about the sailor who was marooned on a desert island. Years later, when a ship called at the island, they noted three buildings and asked what they were? The shipwrecked sailor explained that one was his house, one was his church, and one was the church where he used to worship.

Evangelical Protestants now think of the 'Church' as the invisible reality of all true believers and of visible 'churches' or 'denominations' as voluntary organisations which believers create and join according to their convictions and preferences.

4.4 A Protestant phenomenon

This was Protestant phenomenon. Although the Roman Catholic Church has 'reformed' itself in many ways (as we saw in Lecture 26), and although many new Catholic Orders came into being, there were no new 'denominations' as happened in Protestantism. The strong centralized authority of Roman Catholicism did not allow divisions within itself - one was either a loyal Roman Catholic or one left the Church (by choice or through excommunication).

4.5 Are denominations regrettable?

We looked at this briefly in Lecture 26, when we saw the consequences of the Reformation and the denominations which followed. As mentioned then, critics have called denominations 'a scandal', 'a blight', 'factionalism', and 'a caste system', but denominations remain the hallmark of vibrant modern Christianity. We saw then that we may disapprove of denominations, but they're not going to disappear because, as we saw then, the alternative is worse[1] - to be thirled to some 'official' interpretation of the Bible, laid down and enforced by a (remote) central ecclesiastical body, no matter what Scripture is saying to us. Denominations may not be ideal, but they are better than any alternative the years have offered.

A quick word about the benefits of Protestant denominations before we look at a major event in Scottish church history, the Disruption which led to the formation of the Free Church of Scotland.

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[1] Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, Nashville, Nelson, 2nd ed, 1995, p.301.

4.6 The strength of denominations

In Morningside in Edinburgh, at the traffic lights where Colinton Road joins Morningside Road, there are four church buildings, one on every corner, so it's popularly known as Holy Corner. One is Scottish Episcopal, one was originally a Church of Scotland and is now the Eric Liddle Centre, one was built as a Free Church of Scotland and is now the Church of Scotland and the fourth was built as a Baptist Church and is now Pentecostal. From time to time, especially approaching Easter, they arrange joint services. I attended one such service, as a guest, when the Baptist church was host. It was a lively, informal service and I thought a very good one. Tea was served in the hall afterwards, during which I spoke with a member of the Episcopal church across the road. He said, discussing the service, 'I know that we should be ecumenical, but I find it very difficult to worship God in the way that you do here.' For all their faults, denominations give you choices.

Secondly, it allows Protestants to deal with social and cultural change, which otherwise might leave a church trapped in a time warp. If entrepreneurial pastors and other church leaders find that the church to which they belong no longer shares their vision, they can 'do their own thing' and form a new church to meet what they see as new needs.

Thirdly, Protestant churches can deal with situations in which the denominational leadership is out of touch with its membership - for example, where they pursue theological or cultural trends that are not accepted by some of their congregations. A congregation can, first, protest against their leaders; second, remove them, and third, failing all else, form another congregation elsewhere, while still remaining a Protestant Christian church.

5 DISRUPTION IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

5.1 Introduction

Scotland has had its fair share, probably more than most countries, of new denominations within the Presbyterian form of church government. Most people today have little interest in a fracas in the Church of Scotland 170 years ago, but it's worth noticing because, as we'll see when we come to 5.4, it had and still has consequences for the Church world-wide. So:

5.2 Patronage

Since the Reformation, Scottish Presbyterians have insisted that Christ is the sole Head of the Church of Scotland, in contrast to the Anglican system, where the sovereign is the Head of the Church of England and nominally appoints bishops and archbishops - as commented on in Lecture 25 about the Queen or her representative, the High Commissioner, sitting in the gallery at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. There was, however, one area of State interference in Scottish church polity, which led to spectacular protest in 1843.

By an Act of Parliament of 1712, the Laird, that is the local landowner, had the right to appoint the next minister in vacant churches, without consulting a local congregation and without regard to the views of the congregation - it was called patronage, because 'patrons' had the power of appointment. Some in the Church of Scotland, called the Moderates, approved of this, because they were generally friendly with the Lairds, and regarded the Church as more social than evangelistic. The evangelicals in the Church of Scotland were opposed to patronage, as it usually meant that non-evangelicals were preferred to evangelicals in vacant churches.

Control of the Church by the Moderates hindered the evangelicals work within the Church, both in preaching and in social work. The leader of the evangelicals was Thomas Chalmers, (1780-1847), minister of the Tron Church in Glasgow from 1815-19. (Photo of him on page 18 of this Lecture. He had tried to abolish patronage through Parliament, and he had wide support among ministers and members, but the Moderates blocked his efforts at the Westminster Parliament in 1833.

5.3 May 1843

The discontent, which had been brewing for ten years after 1833, came to a head in May 1843 during the annual General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in St Andrew's Church in George Street, Edinburgh. The retiring Moderator opened the Assembly by announcing that he and others could no longer accept the position. Instead of proposing a new Moderator, which was normally his first duty, he read a statement, then left the Chair and moved toward the door. 193 of the delegates to the Assembly followed, of whom 123 were ministers and 70 were elders.

As soon as the Moderator appeared at the door with Thomas Chalmers, there were loud cheers. 301 ministers, who were not delegates to the Assembly that year, but who had gathered in George Street in anticipation of the decision, joined them and 494 men walked in procession down Hanover Street to Tanfield Hall at Canonmills, where three thousand people were waiting.

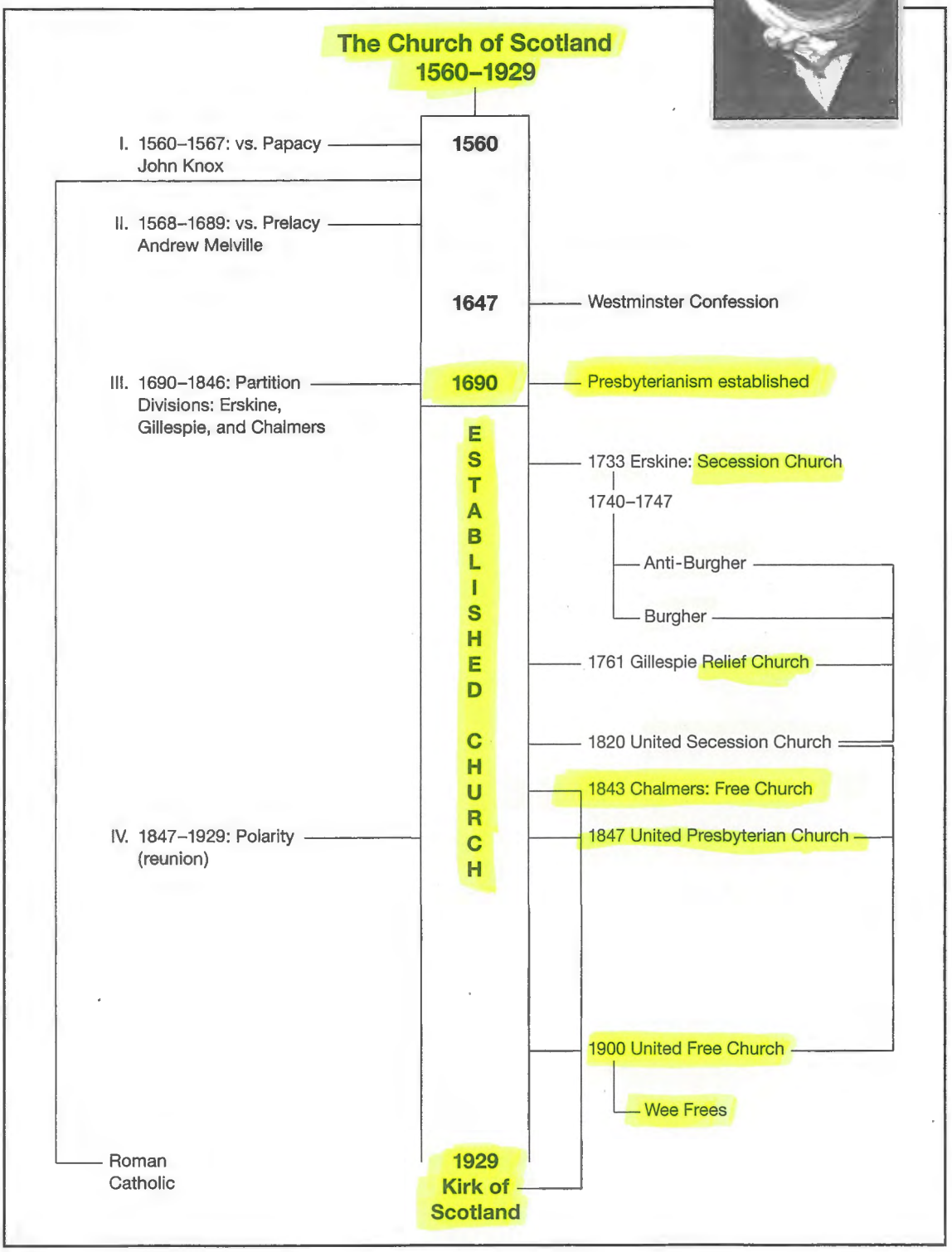
They formed themselves into the Free Church of Scotland, electing Chalmers as their first Moderator. Along with the sense of relief that a decision had been taken, 'there was much sadness and many a tear, many a grave face and fearful thought, for no one could doubt that it was with sore hearts that these ministers left the Church. For the principle of state patronage they forfeited their stipends, their manses, and their positions in the community.' They totalled over one-third of the 1200 ministers of the Church of Scotland. It was not a `Free Church' in the English sense, of Church and Chapel; Chalmers believed in a national Church for Scotland, but free from State interference.

In the first year, they build 470 new churches and by year four, a total of 700. We looked in Lecture 30 at the 1851 Census, when statistics about church attendance were gathered; in Scotland; 32% attended a Church of Scotland and 32% attended a Free Church of Scotland. Patronage was abolished in 1874, after which Church of Scotland congregations appointed their own ministers.

To cut short a very long and complicated story, with reference to the chart on the next page, it was proposed in 1900 that the Free Church of Scotland ('Chalmers: Free Church' on the chart) should join with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (which had been formed in 1847 by the uniting of the Secession Church and the Relief Church, both of which had, separately, broken away from the Church of Scotland a hundred years earlier - see their origins on the chart) to form a United Free Church of Scotland.

A minority in the Free Church of Scotland were opposed to this union and continued to call themselves the Free Church of Scotland, popularly known (because they were a minority) as the 'Wee Frees'. In a Court case, they claimed that they were the 'authentic' Free Church of Scotland and that the majority had forfeited the name and all the assets of the Free Church when they departed from the Church by forming themselves into the United Free Church. After a protracted legal battle, the House of

Thomas Chalmers, the great Scots minister and thinker. He devised new means to care for his enormous industrial parish in Glasgow, and is regarded as one of the founders of modern sociology.



Lords found in favour of the minority and awarded them the right to keep the name Free Church of Scotland and all its assets. Negotiations followed, resulting in the majority being allowed to have all the properties which the 'Wee Frees' could not use, and shared out the financial resources.

In 1929, the United Free Church of Scotland joined the mainstream Church of Scotland, and the minority who opposed that were known as the United Free Church Continuing. (not on the chart), now the United Free Church of Scotland.

5.4 Consequences for the Church worldwide

Free Churches of Scotland spread far beyond Scotland in two main ways: (1) many Scots emigrated to North America and to New Zealand, taking their form of church government with them and establishing it there; (2) Free Church missionaries went all over the world. Many of the staff from the established Church of Scotland's India mission adhered to the Free Church of Scotland, which soon established itself also in Africa, Lebanon, Canada and China; her focus on mission resulted in one of the largest missionary organisations in the world.

6. 'THE EVANGELICAL CENTURY' (THE NINETEENTH CENTURY)

The activities which we have looked at in this Lecture mutually strengthened each other, and had an enormous impact on both Church and Society. In consequence, a social historian has written:

> Evangelicalism imposed on society, even on classes which were indifferent to its religious basis and unaffected by its economic appeal, its code of Sabbath observance, responsibility and philanthropy; of discipline in the home, regularity in affairs.'[2]

That's an interesting observation from an outsider. Someone else has described it as 'redemption and lift', not a happy phrase but meaning that conversion led to a new lifestyle, thrift, responsibility, respectability (which was deeply imprinted on Victorian Society) and generally that nineteenth-century evangelicals were good role models.

In the next Lecture, we'll continue to look at the consequence of the nineteenth-century revivals, especially in social reform, education, and much more.

Unfortunately, at the end of the nineteenth-century, evangelicals were faced with challenges which we'll come to in the next Lecture, including the 'Social Gospel', and, sadly, they didn't respond adequately. As far as their witness in Britain was concerned, they retreated into a ghetto mentality, although overseas mission remained a high priority. That's what makes nineteenth-century evangelicalism so important for us to understand. The emphasis in the twentieth century moved to ecumenism and church reunion.

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[2] G. M. Young, *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age,* (2nd edition, London, 1953), 5.

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

TOPIC FOR LECTURE 31 – DAVID LIVINGSTONE (1813-73)

Please tell us about the missionary and explorer David Livingstone, his early days in Scotland, his explorations in Africa, his discovery of the Victoria Falls, his 'disappearance' and his meeting with H.M. Stanley, which gave rise to the popular quotation, 'Dr. Livingstone, I presume?' and how he spent the rest of his life.

Is it true that 'he walked across Africa from west to east, and from Cape Town to Lake Victoria in the shape of a cross and died in the middle of it?'

Lion, 564-5; Hanks, Great Christians, 189-93; there is a brief mention of him in Cairns, 412, including a well-deserved mention of his wife.

STANLEY AND LIVINGSTONE

In 1869, Livingstone went missing. He had gone exploring in East Africa and no one had heard from him. Everone thought he had died. An American writer, Henry Stanley, went to look for Livingstone. He found him in the town of Ujiji, in Tanzania. He greeted him with the words: "Dr Livingstone, I presume?"

▶ *It took Henry Stanley eight months to find Dr Livingstone in Africa.*