

A LOOK ACROSS THE CENTURIES

The Meaning of Universal History: God's Glory Revealed, Redemption Accomplished

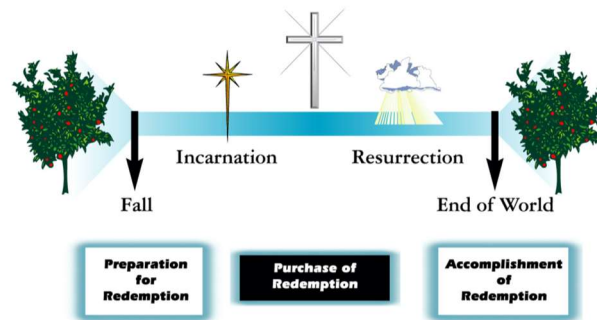


Chart 2

The divine purpose for history/time is to gather a people to experience His presence forever in a "New Garden." The ministry of Christ divides history into two grand periods, the age before Christ and the age after His Second Coming to conclude history.

The Divisions of History

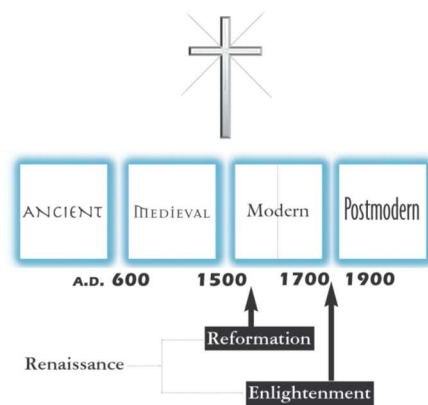


Chart 4

The period between the advents of Christ is divided by Christian historians into four periods. The Renaissance of the 14th century did not purpose to weaken the authority of the church, but posed a simply question, "how do we know?" It led to the decline of church authority to a within-human source of how we know. It led to the Reformation positively and the Enlightenment negatively and subsequently.

Christianity through the Centuries



Christianity was birthed in a world that was polytheistic and morally corrupt. The hegemony of paganism ended in the fourth century and Christianity triumphed as the predominate worldview for over a millennium before the inroads of the Enlightenment led eventually to a Post-Christian Era

A way of thinking about the centuries since the dominance of the Christian view of authority is to note the chart below (the dates reflect a non-European perspective in that the two changes came earlier in Europe).



Age of FAITH
(380-1750)



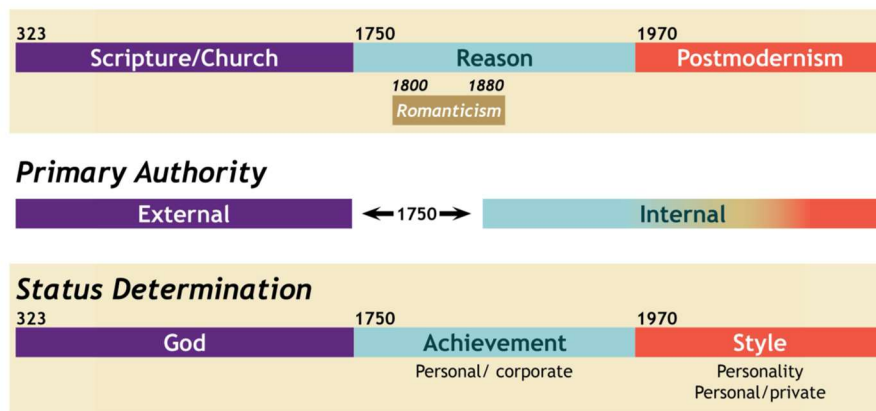
Age of SCIENCE
(1750-1970)



Age of INFORMATION
(1970-pres)

Worldviews are shaped by the issue of authority. What is embraced as the sources of knowledge determines the structure of knowledge or what people believe and shapes their values, lifestyles, and priorities. Authority has shifted over the centuries from an external authority to an internal authority (from the mind to the individual and private self). It shifted from the Church to the mind (reason buttressed by the sciences), to the subjective.

Authority Transitions



Christian assumptions predominated from the fourth through the seventeenth centuries and then were challenged by the Enlightenment assumption of the authority of reason and progress through technology. The movement fundamentally rejected the doctrine of human depravity and embraced faith in the rational exercises of the mind.

The History of the Christian Church

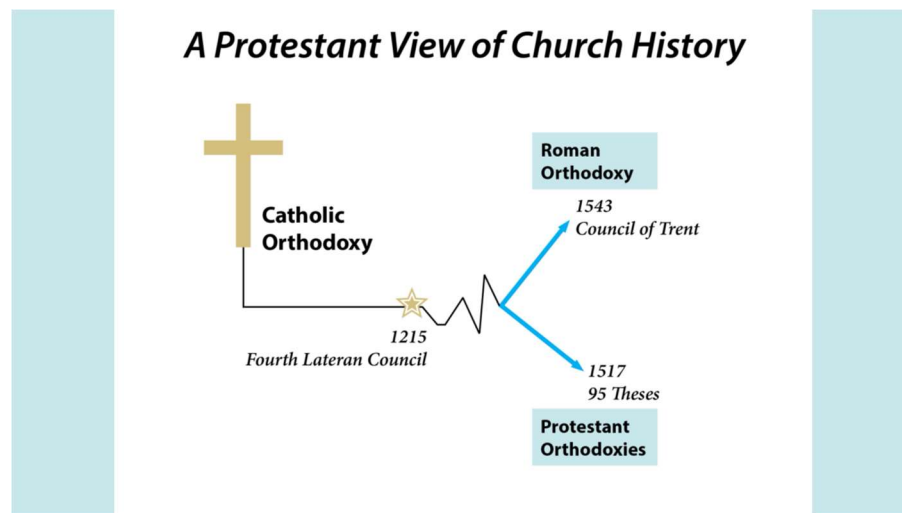
The Church Emergent The Church Triumphant The Church Diffuse

33 500 1500

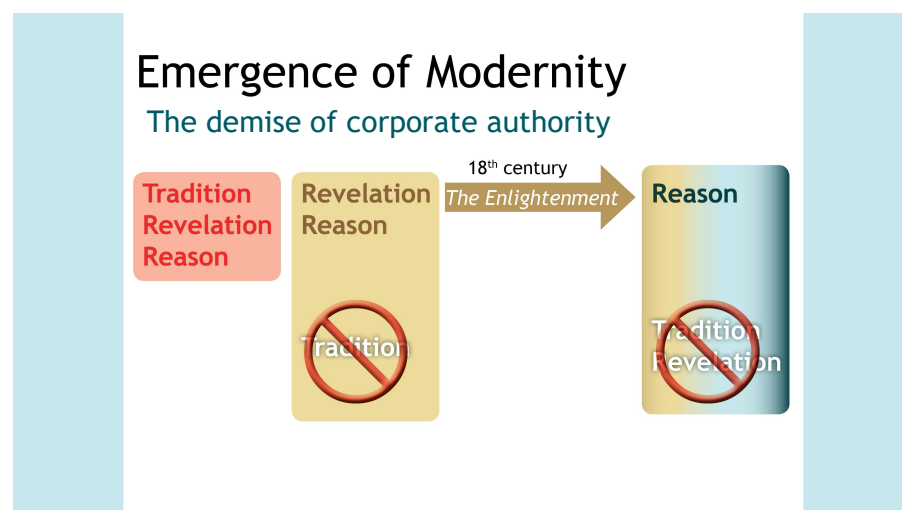


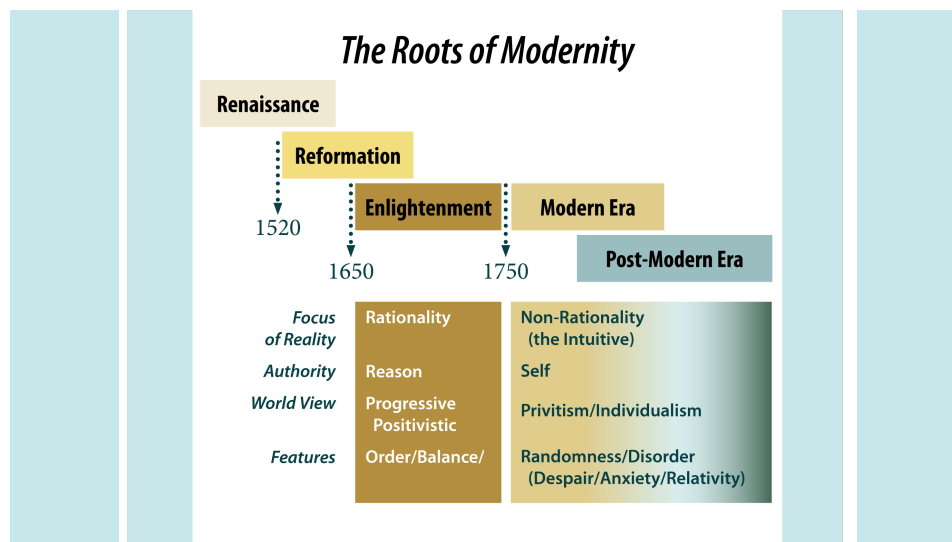
The Reformation, influenced by the Renaissance, had to address the issue of authority. The Roman Catholic Reform Movement stressed the supremacy of the church while the Protestants turn to the Scriptures for authority. The Protestants based the supremacy of Scripture on the inner witness of the Spirit in redemption. Conscience, the miracle of redemption, and the Bible

were intertwined. Luther stated, "My conscience is bound to the Word of God. It is neither right nor save to deny one's conscience..." The reformers turned inward claiming as the source redemption, justification through faith in the finished work of Christ.



The Renaissance, the rise of the universities, produced the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment produced the Modern Era characterized by the rejection of church and biblical authority,





The Modern Era with its fundamental assumption that knowledge of the emerging, and later dominate sciences would end the blight of human dereliction through social progress, the hope of human engineering. After more than three centuries of “progress,” the twentieth century brought disillusion (the world, the family, and society as a whole seemed to be fracturing). The successes of the Enlightenment/Modern Era, while standards of living and health care improved it’s undoing.



Postmodernism finds its philosophical roots in Frederick Nietzsche (1844-1900), a German cultural critic, educator and writer (*Beyond Good and Evil*). The movement emerged in Europe in the late nineteen century and in the 1970 in the United States.

Postmodernism: what is it?

A prevailing intellectual mood consisting of the rejection of Enlightenment philosophical, historiographic, and scientific assumptions that shaped modernity, as well as certain cultural/moral conventions that had permeated the worldview of the Industrialized nations for the past 350 years.



photo credit: jeffkoons.com. Balloon Dog, by Jeff Koons

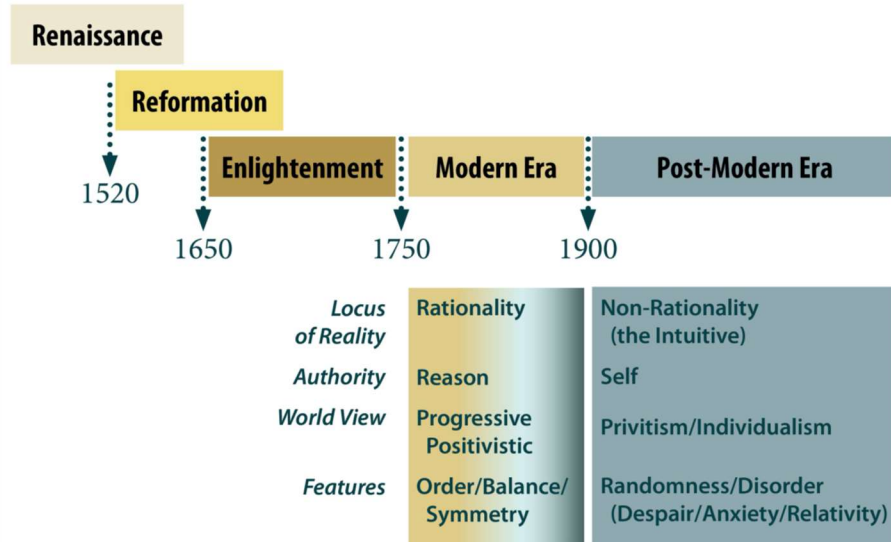


Age of INFORMATION (1970-pres) POSTMODERNITY

CHARACTERISTICS

- Intuition
- Emotions
- Contingency/ Flux/Relativity
- Dialogue/Conversation
- Knowledge
- (uncertain, subjective, private)

The Roots of Modernity and Post-Modernity



Postmodernism and Contemporary Culture Consensus

- Loss of corporate moral criteria in decision making
 - Reason replaced by emotion, intellect by will
- Knowledge fragmented and personal



Barbara Kruger, "Believe Anything," from *Barbara Kruger: Belief+Doubt* exhibit, Hirshhorn, Washington DC (2012)

In the context of our recent study, a question looms: Are we nearing the end of times as we are witnessing the devastation of civil culture as we have known it in the West? We have witnessed a gradual descent into darkness and chaos over the past four centuries into the now-discredited notion of human progress. For the first time in human history, God has been banished from human conversation (whether it be the gods, the biblical deity, or deified humanity).

Postmodernism: *Gains for the Extension of the Christian Faith*



Grace Jones in maternity dress designed by Jean-Paul Goude, 1979

- The collapse of the dominance of empiricism and objective science as the exclusive source of knowledge
- The increased value of subjective experience: the opening of knowledge beyond the material
- The awareness of corporate solidarity in society
- The emphasis on personal dignity, protection, and equality
- The priority of community, social interconnectedness

The Need of the Hour

- **The Need:** Not for revival, but for something more fundamental
- Revival has to do with the extension of the gospel.
- The greatest need in the contemporary church is to rediscover the gospel, its glory, and its power.
- **The Time:** It is time for a **reformation** in the church.