

Church History, Lesson #24

(This Lesson is based on The Story of Christianity by Justo Gonzalez.)

The aftermath of the Reformation...

- We've mentioned this before... After all of the wars both in Europe and Britain, people were more than willing to doubt the validity of the "orthodoxy" that led to these wars.
- So... there are various reactions to these doubts:

Rationalism:

- The wars following the Reformation led to a fundamental doubt that "truth" could be understood through revelation.
 - Rene Descartes – value of reason
 - John Locke – value of empiricism
 - Deism – all we can know about God is that He is there
 - Voltaire – begins to doubt reason and ability to "know"
 - Immanuel Kant – what is "knowing"?

Spiritualism –

- George Fox (1624-1661) and the Quakers
- "Inner light"
- William Penn and Pennsylvania

Pietism –

- Philipp Jakob Spener (1635 – 1705)
 - Pastor in Frankfurt, Germany.
 - Took the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer (Luther) to mean that the laity should be involved in more intense devotion and study.
 - Started groups for Bible study and devotion called "colleges of piety".
 - In some ways, Spener was filling in the blanks that Luther left regarding sanctification.
 - personal relationship with God!
- 2 contributions of Pietism:
 - Because of the emphasis that one of Spener's followers (August Hermann Francke), pietism began to emphasize something like a "second blessing".
 - Pietism also pushed the heirs of the Reformation to pursue missions.
 - In 1707 the King of Denmark, who admired the pietists, decided to send missionaries to his colonies in India. The only ones who would go were pietists. In addition, the king started a school of missions in Denmark for sending missionaries to his other colonies.
- Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf and the Moravians:
 - Zinzendorf's god father was Spener.
 - He studied under August Hermann Francke, Spener's prize student.
 - He repeatedly clashed with orthodox Lutheran teachers.
 - He met a group of Moravians, Hussites who had been banished from their native Moravia by persecution.
 - He offered them protection on his ancestral lands. It was there that they founded the community of Herrnhut.
 - In 1731 Zinzendorf met a group of Eskimos who had been converted by a Lutheran missionary. This led to a lifelong interest in missions, which he spread to the Moravians at Herrnhut.
 - In 1732 the Moravians sent their first missionaries to the Caribbean, and within a few years they had sent out 100 missionaries to Africa, India, and North and South America.
 - This movement had started with only 200 refugees!
 - Some sold themselves as slaves to be able to minister to slaves!