

Church History



Church History

- *Introduction to Church History*
- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
- *The Age of Crusades* AD 11th-13th centuries
- *The Renaissance* AD 14th-15th centuries
- *Conquest and Reformation* AD 16th century
- *The Age of Enlightenment* AD 17th-18th centuries
- *The Age of Revolution* AD 19th century
- *The Modern Age* AD 20th century
- *The Postmodern Age* AD 21st century



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- *The Age of Crusades* AD 11th-13th centuries
- *The Renaissance* AD 14th-15th centuries
- *Conquest and Reformation* AD 16th century
- *The Age of Enlightenment* AD 17th-18th centuries
- *The Age of Revolution* AD 19th century
- *The Modern Age* AD 20th century
 - *Modern Empire-Building*
 - *Post-War Religion*



The Modern Age

- Everyone scrambled to figure out religion...
 - 1916 Father Divine founded the IPM movement
 - Born George Baker, or maybe Frederick Edwards (no one knows, because he never told anyone about his upbringing, and only went by the name “Father Divine”—or by his full name, “Reverend Major Jealous Divine”)



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- Everyone scrambled to figure out religion...
 - 1916 Father Divine founded the IPM movement
 - Born George Baker, or maybe Frederick Edwards, Divine began a ministry originally for African Americans in which he proclaimed himself to be God in the flesh
 - He preached a derivation of the “New Thought” doctrines of people like Phineas Quimby and Mary Baker Eddy—that the Divine is in everyone, and that our positive or negative thoughts affect and control the universe around us
 - He just took that a step or twelve further and declared that he simply WAS that Divine, and that it was thus proper to worship him as God (which was another reason why he never said anything about his past—as he reminded people, “God *has* no Mother”)



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 - In 1944, famous songwriter Johnny Mercer came to hear one of his sermons, wherein Divine preached, “You got to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative!”
 - Mercer was inspired, and wrote the hit song, “*Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive*,” which was nominated for an Academy Award when Bing Crosby sang it in the film, “*Here Come the Waves*”



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 - Preaching that world peace could only be gained by right thinking, Divine began the IPM with a clear set of “right-thinking” doctrines:
 - 1) Father Divine is God
 - 2) “Heaven” is a state of “right thinking”
 - 3) All religions ultimately point to God (see #1)
 - 4) “Family” is to be part of the church community (thus, genders are to be strictly segregated and celibacy is crucially important to maintain and children are to be raised by assigned guardians instead of biological “parents”)



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(well, except for Father Divine, who owned large estates, rode in a Cadillac, and once paid a \$5 fine with a \$500 bill)



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- 6) Children should thus be educated in a public, communal context, rather than privately
- 7) And all racial divisions should be eliminated
(in fact, after his first wife passed away
(though he never acknowledged that she died—or even that she’d been ill—so there’s no official record of when her death actually occurred))

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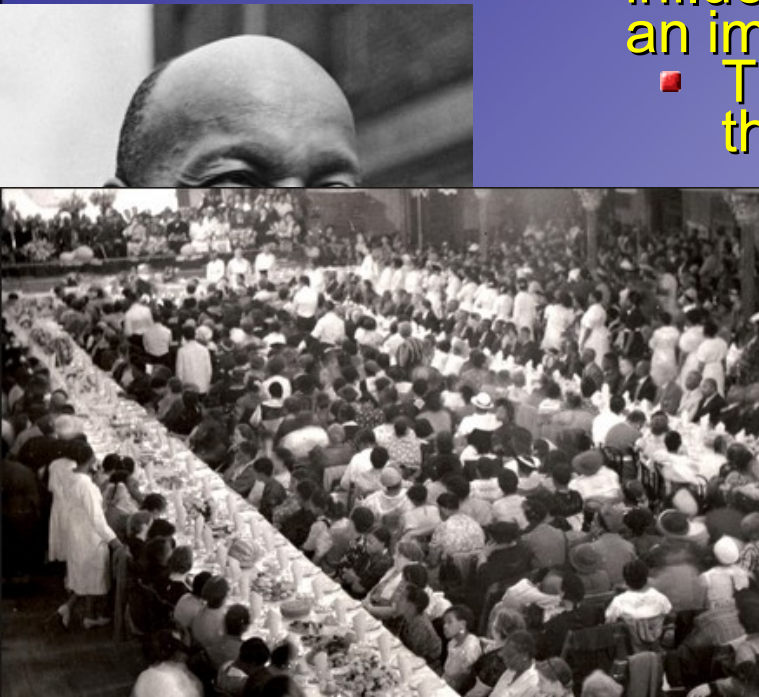
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 - All of this sounded like exactly the kind of controlling, socialist religion that young preacher Jim Jones was looking for, so he consciously emulated Father Divine, and even tried to name himself Divine’s spiritual heir when the older man finally died in 1965



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 - Like Jim Jones later on, Divine's wealth, power, and influence across the social strata of his era made him an important figure
 - The church's various social programs truly did help the poor (for instance, their daily “communion” banquet to worship Divine—which the dwindling group still prepares every day today—helped feed the poor in New York during the Great Depression)



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 - Like Jim Jones later on, Divine's wealth, power, and influence across the social strata of his era made him an important figure
 - The church's various social programs truly did help the poor, so even white politicians courted his favor
 - Arguably, however, Divine ultimately picked the wrong bedfellows—he denounced FDR's welfare policies as mere handouts, and supported the American Communist Party instead
 - So when the Communists became *the* bad guys of the later Cold War era, Divine began to fall out of favor in public opinion
 - Nonetheless, Divine is often credited with beginning (or at least inspiring) both the later peace and civil rights movements...



The Modern Age

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 - The True Jesus Church founded in Beijing
 - The spread of Pentecostalism across the globe finally hit China in 1916, founding a church that would ultimately become a part of China's Three-Self Patriotic Movement
 - (the officially-sanctioned Protestant church in China, which emphasizes the three emphases of self-governance
 - (as opposed to governance by a foreign denominational structure)



True Jesus Church



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 - (with no financial support by any foreign denominational structure)



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(the officially-sanctioned Protestant church in China, which emphasizes the three emphases of self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation within a solidly—and *guaranteed*—patriotic support for the People's Republic of China)



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 - **Theologically, the church reflects what became known as "Oneness Pentecostalism"**



True Jesus Church



The Modern Age

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - In “Oneness” theology, God is clearly One—not an “unbiblical” Trinity
 - Most Christian churches (ours included) see God as definitely One, but expressed in three distinct Persons at the same time
(remember Patrick's famous “shamrock” explanation of the Trinity to King Lóegaire?)

ONENESS
THEOLOGY

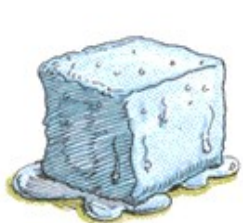


20th
CENTURY

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 - But Oneness theology follows a more Sabellian—or “modalist”—concept of God, where the singular Person of God has been expressed to (or at least *perceived by*) people in different modes in different contexts
 - The classic analogy of these modes is the idea of water—whose chemical composition doesn’t change, even as its form does
 - To the modalist, the Trinity seems at best like an ungainly conglomeration—and at worst like heresy
 - Instead, it makes far more sense to them to think of God as having one mind, one Person, operating on *multiple* levels, in *multiple* contexts (even, to some modalists, simultaneously)—but without any kind of actual division of His essential Self

ONENESS THEOLOGY



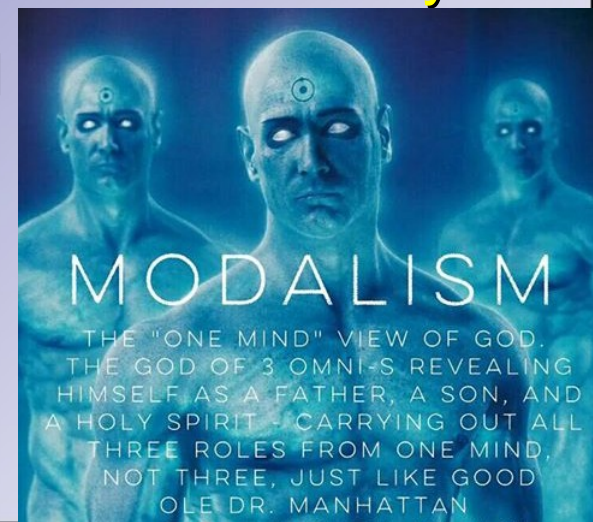
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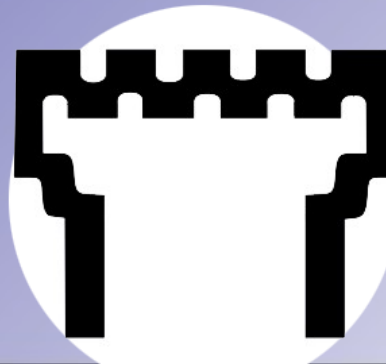


GAS



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 - Today, there are over 24 million adherents to Oneness Pentecostalism *alone*—not including all of the *other* churches around the world that teach the essential “Oneness” of God
(including the variations taught by the Unitarians, the Latter-day Saints, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Filipino Iglesia ni Cristo, who together comprise another 27 million)



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 - During the October Revolution, the Red Army confiscated all of the property and wealth of the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as massacring large numbers of Christians—justified with the (quite correct) claim that Christians had supported both the Tsar and the White Army



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- It was a time of great social and moral upheaval in the fledgling nation, and violence was everywhere
 - In 1918, the imprisoned Tsar and Tsaritsa—and their whole family—were executed

(NOTE: A worldwide urban myth emerged that the youngest daughter, the popular Anastasia, somehow survived the slaughter—even spawning a famous imposter named Anna Anderson, who claimed to her dying day that she was, in fact, Anastasia though DNA evidence has confirmed that she wasn't, and that all of the Tsar's family had in fact been executed during the Revolution)

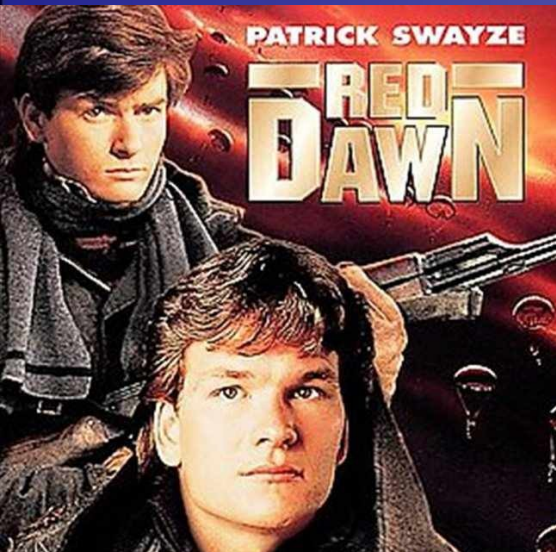


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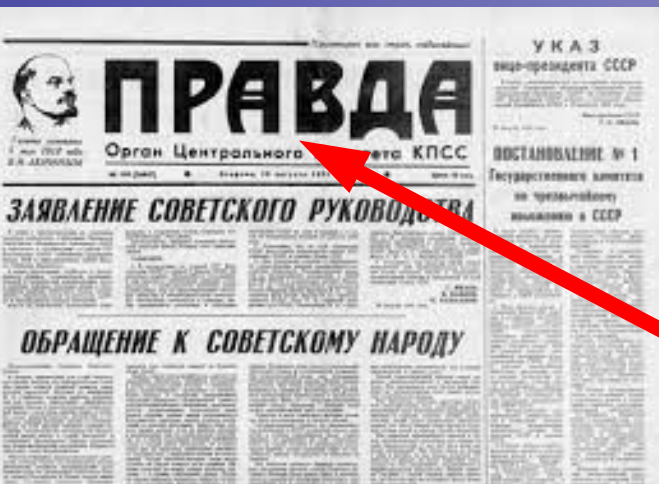
- In fact, the violence became so horrific that the United States Army invaded Russia to end the Civil War (and to protect Allied stockpiles from both the Germans and the Communists)

- But once the White Army began to fall apart and the British withdrew their own forces, the U.S. troops retreated home as well—but the Russians still remember when America invaded their nation... (ironic, isn't it...?)



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 - But as part of the new Soviet Constitution, the right to practice religion was officially protected with a couple of caviats—
 - 1) It was to be practiced *privately*—which meant that no public schools could teach anything that supported any religious views whatsoever
 - 2) The state was still to be seen as the primary source of *Pravda* (truth)—which meant that all churches were monitored and heavily controlled to make sure that they never preached anything that would go contrary to the official party doctrine of the secular government (and yes, the state newspaper was called “*Pravda*”)



The Modern Age

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - That was the *official* position of the state, in order to placate the millions of Christians within the USSR but the practical applications were quite different
 - Priests were regularly killed—even crucified (in one famous example, a priest attempted to cross himself before he was killed, so a quick-acting soldier chopped off his arm before he could do so)



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 - Priests were regularly killed—even crucified—or forced to publicly humiliate themselves
 - Friars and an abbot were scalped, then beheaded
seven nuns were boiled to death in a large vat of tar
a priest was blinded and facially mutilated, paraded through the streets, then buried alive...
- (NOTE: All of this was technically legal, even within the “protections” afforded religion within the new Constitution)



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 - By the early 1920s, a “populist outcry” (orchestrated by the government) demanded that the state ban all religious holidays
 - The famous St. Volodymyr's Cathedral in Kiev was converted into a museum of religion and atheism (specifically, the evils of religion and the blessings of atheism in the history of man)
Regular, public lectures on atheism were mandated...
Party membership was refused to any “educated” religious persons—and any “uneducated” religious party members were to be “educated” in the proper, atheistic dogma of the party
 - And in the process, nearly 6,800 clergy members were executed, after being found guilty of “counter-revolutionary agitation”



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 - **In the later 1920s, the government instituted a purge of all colleges and universities, exiling or executing any intellectuals who engaged in such “counter-revolutionary agitations” as practicing religion**
 - In addition, a 1929 law forbade any public or open communication or teaching on the part of religious groups or organizations
(i.e.; Christians could only engage in religious activity within their church buildings themselves—and even then, only in carefully regulated services)



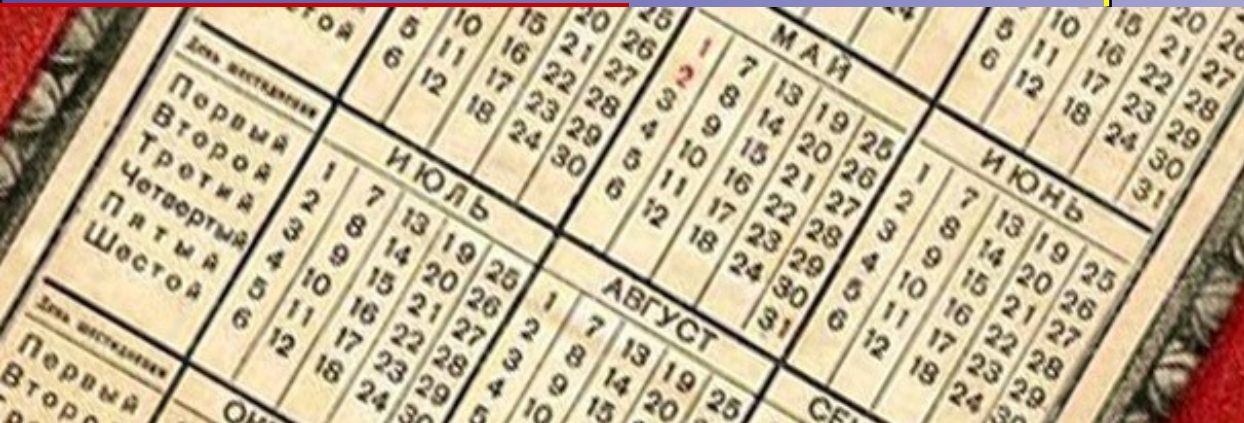
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 - Children were forbidden to take part in any religious activities whatsoever
 - Instead, they were required to join the Young Pioneers—ostensibly a “scouting” group that was, in fact, designed to indoctrinate them into loyal party members (i.e.; they were encouraged to inform on any of their family members who engaged in “counter-revolutionary agitations,” etc.)



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 - Taking a nod from the French Revolution, the Soviets even changed the calendar into six-day weeks, so that people would be forced to work on Sundays
 - And traditional religious holidays were replaced by secular ones that required *mandatory* observation



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- Everyone scrambled to figure out religion...
 - 1916 Father Divine founded the IPM movement
The True Jesus Church founded in Beijing
 - 1917 The Soviet Union protected religion (sorta)
 - 1919 Prohibition began in America
 - After World War I, a disillusioned United States populace fell back into an even worse epidemic of alcoholism than it had suffered from in the past and the influx of post-war European immigrants grew U.S. urban centers beyond their capacities, leading to crime and political corruption
(largely conducted in local bars and saloons)



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 - **And then there was the suffrage movement...**
 - Women were finally beginning to develop a real political voice of their own in the United States and the vast majority of temperance advocates were women whose families were struggling due to their husbands' issues with alcoholism
(remember Carrie Nation?)



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- And then there was the suffrage movement...
- But the *main* instigation for Prohibition on a public level was the attempt by religious and social leaders to artificially re-create and maintain a pre-war emphasis on Christian life and practice
- Famous leaders such as Billy Sunday preached that "whiskey and beer are all right in their place, but their place is in hell!"
- Seeing what was beginning to go on in America religious leaders were terrified that our country would ultimately fall into the same irreligious society that Russia had become



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Ironically, though alcoholism did decrease during the years of Prohibition, crime sky-rocketed

- Bootlegging became a national obsession, and a new, "organized crime" syndicate arose to provide the public with the alcohol that they craved... which had to find new criminal activities to engage in once Prohibition was repealed...



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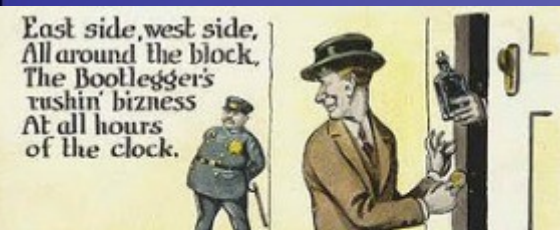
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- Thus, **legislating morality ultimately served to generate new and worse forms of immorality within the populace**



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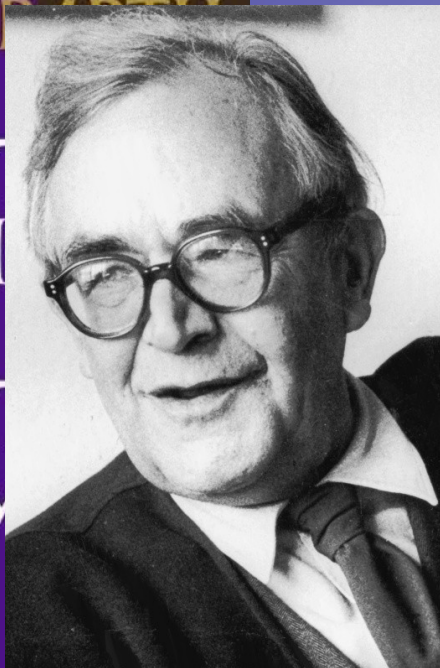
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Barth's *Commentary on Romans* published

- Karl Barth was a Swiss theologian who pastored a liberal Reformed church

- He increasingly became disillusioned by liberal theology—largely because of its shortcomings in dealing with the real-life horrors of war through its perceivably shallow, intellectualistic hermeneutic but also because he had studied other theologians and philosophers such as Søren Kierkegaard, who argued that the most rigorous intellectualism should actually yield an understanding of more real and vibrantly sovereign God



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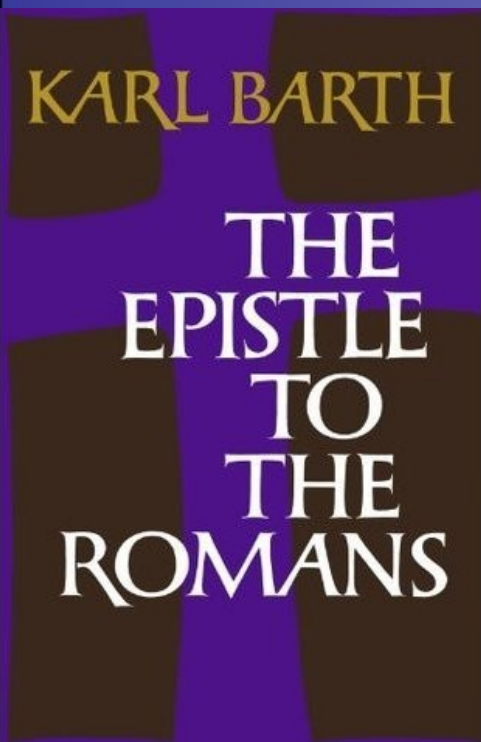
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- **Thus, he helped form what became known as “dialectical theology” (or “neo-orthodoxy”)**

- Basically, the argument was that liberals had come too much to depend on “natural theology”

(i.e.; looking at the Creation and extrapolating back about a Creator from that—which isn't *horrible*, but is inherently *limiting*, since you can't help but fall into twisted versions of Deism and anthropomorphism in the process, unless you counter-balance it)



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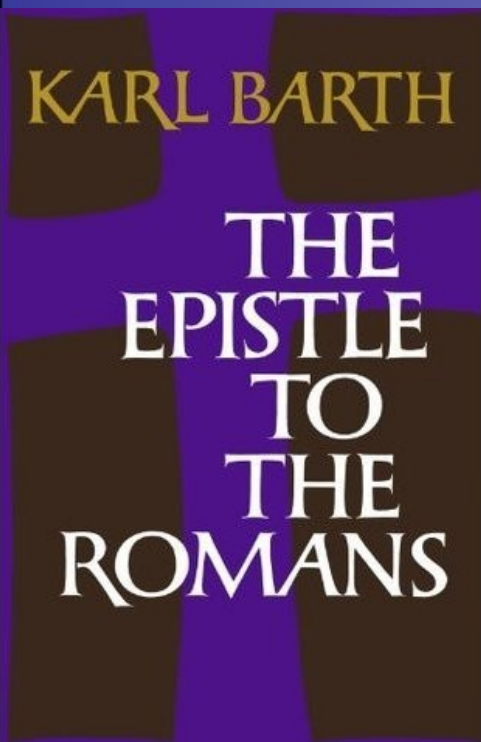
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- Basically, the argument was that liberals had come too much to depend on “natural theology” so what we really need to do is to return to a rigorous study of “revealed theology”

(i.e.; looking at what God has specifically and doctrinally revealed about Himself through His Word—the very thing that liberals were in the process of actively deconstructing)



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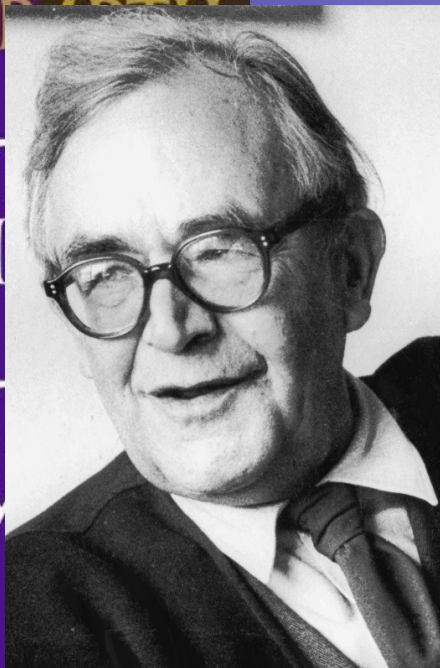
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- Basically, the argument was that liberals had come too much to depend on “natural theology” so what we really need to do is to return to a rigorous study of “revealed theology”

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The Modern Age

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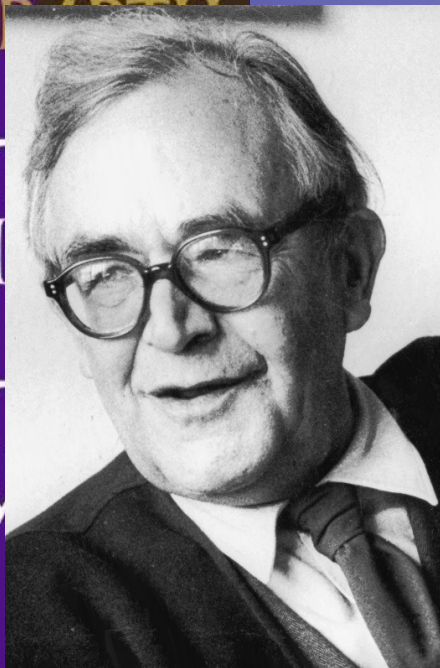
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 - So the neo-orthodox theologians wrote against liberal “higher criticism” as well as the artificial structures of “Christendom” to which liberal mainline denominations adhere
 - Instead, they radically emphasized the transcendence of God, and the need for pure, *propositional* doctrine



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 - Both of the movements have sought to take a strong, intelligent, Biblical stance against liberalism but while Evangelicals tend to be Biblical literalists, neo-orthodoxy tends to see the Bible as still flawed (the *truth* of it is solid, but pure, *propositional* expressions of it trump the messy, personal anecdotes of Scripture)



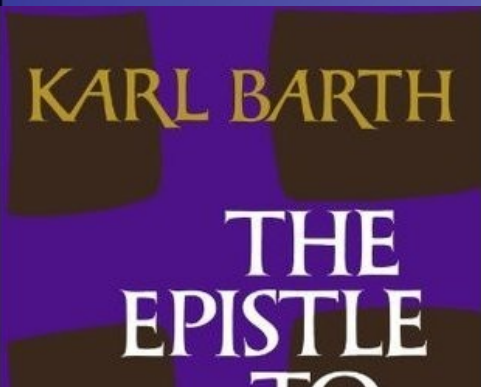
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 - So neo-orthodoxy see Evangelicalism as simple-minded, while Evangelicals see neo-orthodoxy as over-intellectual...



In the
Church of Jesus Christ
there can and should
be no non-theologians.
-Karl Barth



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- Thus, increasingly, the two movements grew apart
- Neo-orthodoxy tended to grow within mainline, non-confessional denominations such as United Church of Christ, Lutherans, Presbyterians, etc.
(where liberalism tends to take the form of empty traditionalism or social and/or a moral license that echoes liberal sociopolitical trends)



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(where liberalism tends to take the form of overly self-centered cosmologies such as prosperity doctrine, ecstatic services, individualized worship, etc.)



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