

Enlightenment & Second Enlightenment

The British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper in "The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century, Religion, the Reformation, & Social Change," Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, IN., identifies the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which marked the end of the Thirty Years Wars of Religions in Europe, as the serious beginning of the Enlightenment Movement in Europe.

What was/is "enlightenment" about? A great flourishing of the arts and mercantile skills (The Renaissance) had developed throughout Europe, much of which came to be displayed in the courts and churches of the empire. The imperial culture of old Rome had come to be replaced by the imposed new culture of the "Holy Roman Empire" (c. 1000AD), which ruled by sovereign political and religious authority. The corruptions of city/states in the royally extravagant use of wealth by kings, popes, princes, cardinals, lords, episcopacies, monasteries and courts, fueled public rebellion and demands for the reformation of clerics and religious/political bureaucracies.

The competing parasitic appetites of the city/states destabilized the central political authority. Responsive to reformation demands of the Augustinian monk Martin Luther, multiple Christianities sprung up from within the Roman Catholic Church (c 1550). The rise of Renaissance-Humanism counteracted the controlling authority of the Holy Roman Empire. Arrogated authority, royal greed and structural rigidity against public accommodation came at a high and tragic price for all of Europe. These challenges ultimately left Europe in shambles after the competing factions eventually consumed resources and the will for war by 1648.

The "enlightenment" involved a new and formal acceptance of the fact that there would continue to be multiple Christian denominations; that there would be many political factions and structures coexisting; and, that the people, merchants and artisans, and the different churches, would have to work out diverse political-religious-economic arrangements under which they could co-exist.

The birth of a neo-political, religious and economic reality characterized the **1st Enlightenment** that grew from humanist, non-fideistic insights. In its bottom-line significance, the **1st Enlightenment** is for one thing a people-push toward greater democratic expression and away from authoritarian dominion. As a cultural movement that occurred in imperial Europe (c. 1500

to 1900), **1st Enlightenment** represents an intellectual, cultural shift of political consciousness away from the accustomed and exaggerated cult of imperial faith domination to a more rational and scientifically informed “humanism” that speaks to the equality of persons and value of reason.

In imperial Europe, Church and State together dominated in political control and in ideological belief; faith-culture was one with political culture that allowed no popular dissent or opposition, under threats of excommunication and violent death. Religious dissent increased with the awakening of reason and humanism, and eventually came to demand that the Church reform. The Thirty Years’ Wars of Religion (1618-1648) followed and had the political effect of setting faith and reason against each other and of creating a seemingly unsolvable schism between them.

Over time, and driven by the injustices of imperial state religion, popular dissent and scientific ascent together raised public consciousness to affirm the place of reason and to stand reason (science) against the irrationality and violence of suppressive imperialism. **1st Enlightenment** developed its following who insisted on reason and who eschewed faith-dominated religion, while imperial Church continued in its cult of hyped faith and dominion theology. The standoff of science (reason) and humanism against and fideistic religion continued up to the Second Vatican Council which sought an accommodation with Modernity (science).

Science and humanism (**1st Enlightenment**), not unlike imperial Church, fashioned its own dogmas and ideologies which meant to challenge Church and fideism and to discredit them. **1st Enlightenment** came to a mechanistic worldview which it claimed had no need for belief in God; it sought to discredit the metaphysical worldview of Scholasticism and its fixity on Earth as the cosmic center.

2nd Enlightenment is an evolved rationality that moves beyond the fractured, dualistic thinking of the **1st Enlightenment**. It is suggested here that the Third Millennium is giving birth to a **2nd Enlightenment** capable of finishing the unfinished business of the **1st**.

Like the **1st**, **2nd Enlightenment** is about a new, more democratic political-religious-economic consciousness whose impact isn't merely European, but global. Recognized is the need of a globally formulated and supported

world-consciousness, which motivates public engagement in greater global, political effort to meet the humanitarian needs and concerns of global people and the more equitable usage of global resources. This awareness is inspired by the experience of the destructive and unconscionable exploitation of feudal systems, including colonialism and transnational corporations. This unjust circumstance of politicized inequity has its origins and its justification in the expansionist designs of the imperial church/states of sixteenth century Europe.

The component of the new "religious" enlightenment also has dimensions beyond Europe; it is with respect to the legitimate, popular aspirations (Liberation Theologies) for religious expression by peoples of the world. In the course of the Reformation troubles, the Roman Catholic Church sought to stanch its internal hemorrhaging by clamping down on reasonable, public aspirations. The Church's rigid counter-reformation theology was enforced by torture, condemnations and stake-burnings, prosecuted by the Spanish and Roman Inquisitions.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) was a reactionary convention of the Catholic Church intent on confronting and suppressing the Reformation.

In 1869 the First Vatican Council was convened to expand on the work and discipline of the Council of Trent. By Church's insistence on an exclusionary hierarchy and clergy it meant to extend and tighten its control over the people. The Church proclaimed its dogma of institutional inerrancy and papal infallibility in matters of faith and morals. The Church continued its assertion of only "one" true Church and its intention to extend itself globally.

Its self-understood divine election, the one true Church, continues. The discipline of preserving a public face of institutional inerrancy became the obsession of the Church's hierarchy, even if it meant that cardinals, bishops and priests together acted diligently and collectively to hide from the public their dismal failures in official matters of faith and morals.

At this very time, the "uncovering" (apocalypse) of official conspiratorial cover-ups, on the part of cardinals, bishops and priests, in sexually deviant matters (faith and morals), is rocking the institutional church and is shocking the faithful. The façade of Church inerrancy is rapidly evaporating from the minds of many of the faithful. The continued ascendancy of lay influence within the Church is likely to increase, not because of any willful change of

heart on the part of Church and clergy, but because of public disclosures of clerical and hierarchical cover-ups, frauds and deceptions.

The collapse of ecclesial credibility is happening from within the Church and due to institutional failures of faith. Enlightenment did not happen with the Peace of Westphalia, but it may now make greater progress as the result of the uncovering of official Church wrongdoing — which uncovering may be but an introduction to a history of calculated deceit and misdirection.

2nd Enlightenment, cosmically informed in energy/ matter relationships and in the essential continuity of evolving energy/ matter, accepts nature's spontaneous unfolding, both in the physical (organic) evolution of structures (forms), and in the primacy of energy (spirituality) in the evolving processes (functions) of transformational substances, organisms.

Energy (spirituality) supposes forms (substance) even as changing forms suppose energy/ spirituality. All the varied forms and processes of joined spirituality/ materiality emerge from and are composed of/ by original cosmic energy, diffuse in the intelligence and working of living populations and disposed in human populations in an egalitarian manner.

Qualified cosmic energy (spirituality) is the “metaphysics” that characterizes Earthly material (physical) transformation. By understanding the identity of energy/ matter in the changing correlations of physical forms and functions, the animus between faith and reason, fideism and rationalism can be healed; and except it is healed, the schizophrenic voices between Church and Enlightenment will not be silenced and public insanity will flourish.

2nd Enlightenment pursues the healing of violence and division that have so ravished nature and the people through history; it seeks to do this by putting faith and reason in ongoing communication with each other, what is the way of symbiosis, of intentional thinking and living.

2nd Enlightenment admits to the physical/ metaphysical nature of reality, that is, that consciousness is a quality that “coheres” (holds together) substances and “inheres” (qualifies) in sustainable purposes specific to the forms and functions of transformational matter. In the “Sacrament of Natural Order”, consciousness is qualified in an ever ascending awareness that accommodates physical complexity and functional sustainability.

Enlightenment is used here in the meaning of insight, intelligence, understanding, what is evolved/evolving consciousness and self-reflectivity. In the holistic sense of enlightenment, **2nd Enlightenment** seeks to expose the Western history and culture of the radical schism of self-consciousness. The remedy of this psychic unsettling first requires recognition of its causes, namely, the breach of Faith and Reason, of religion and science, and of the female/male persona. The essential unity and mutuality of the spiritual/material persona, their co-dependency and evolution, are enlightened by the scientific insights of Albert Einstein into light energy, which is both the energy (soul) and substance (body) of organic life and consciousness.