During the tumultuous period of world history from 1660 to 1815, three complex movements combined to bring a fundamental cultural reorientation to Europe and North America, and ultimately to the wider world. The Enlightenment transformed views of nature and of the human capacity to master nature. The religious reawakenings brought a revival of heart-felt, experiential Christianity. Finally revolution, the political and social upheavals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, challenged established ideas of divine-right monarchies and divinely ordained social hierarchies, and promoted more democratic government, notions of human rights, and religious toleration. A new religious climate emerged, in which people were more likely to look to their own feelings and experiences for the basis of their faith. During this same period, Christianity spread widely around the world as a result of colonialism and missions, and responded in diverse ways to its encounters with other cultures and religious traditions.


Timothy Tackett is Professor of History at the University of California, Irvine. His publications include Priest and Parish in Eighteenth-century France (1977); and Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture (1986).
The Cambridge History of Christianity offers a comprehensive chronological account of the development of Christianity in all its aspects— theological, intellectual, social, political, regional, global—from its beginnings to the present day. Each volume makes a substantial contribution in its own right to the scholarship of its period and the complete History constitutes a major work of academic reference. Far from being merely a history of Western European Christianity and its offshoots, the History aims to provide a global perspective. Eastern and Coptic Christianity are given full consideration from the early period onwards, and later, African, Far Eastern, New World, South Asian and other non-European developments in Christianity receive proper coverage. The volumes cover popular piety and non-formal expressions of Christian faith and treat the sociology of Christian formation, worship and devotion in a broad cultural context. The question of relations between Christianity and other major faiths is also kept in sight throughout. The History will provide an invaluable resource for scholars and students alike.

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Contributors

**Nigel Aston** is Reader in Early Modern European History at the University of Leicester. His books include *Religion and revolution in France* and *Christianity and revolutionary Europe c.1750–1830*.

**Fr Charles J. Borges S. J.** was a member of the Xavier Centre of Historical Research in Goa between 1981 and 2000, and served as director of the Centre for six years. He is currently Assistant Professor of History at Loyola College in Maryland. His books include *The economics of the Goa Jesuits 1542–1759: An explanation of their rise and fall* and eight edited volumes on Indo-Portuguese history.

**James E. Bradley** is the Geoffrey W. Bromiley Professor of Church History at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena California. His books include *Religion, revolution, and English radicalism: Non-conformity in eighteenth-century politics and society* and *Religion and politics in Enlightenment Europe* (with Dale K. Van Kley).

**Christopher Leslie Brown** is Associate Professor of History at Rutgers University. His books include *Moral capital: Foundations of British abolitionism*, and *Arming slaves: Classical times to the modern age* (with Philip Morgan).

**Stewart J. Brown** is Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Edinburgh. His books include *Thomas Chalmers and the godly commonwealth in Scotland* and *The national churches of England, Ireland and Scotland 1801–1846*.

**Louis Châtelier** is Directeur d'étude at the Ecole pratique des hautes études (Paris), Section des sciences religieuses. Among his books are *Les espaces infinis et le silence de Dieu: science et religion, XVIe–XIXe siècle; The Europe of the devout: The Catholic reformation and the formation of a new society;* and *The religion of the poor: Rural missions in Europe and the formation of modern Catholicism, c.1500–c.1800*.

**J. C. D. Clark** is Hall Distinguished Professor of British History at the University of Kansas. His books include *English society 1660–1832: Revolution and Rebellion* and *The language of liberty 1660–1832*. 
List of contributors

Suzanne Desan, Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has published books on Reclaiming the sacred: Lay religion and popular politics in revolutionary France; and The family on trial in revolutionary France.

Joris van Eijnatten is a member of the Department of History at the Free University of Amsterdam. His books include ‘God, Nederland en Oranje’: Dutch Calvinism and the search for the social centre and Liberty and concord in the United Provinces: Religious toleration and the public in the eighteenth-century Netherlands.

Willem Frijhoff is Professor of History at the Free University of Amsterdam. He has published numerous books on Dutch, French, and European history, including Embodied belief: Ten essays on religious culture in Dutch history; Dutch culture in a European perspective; and Prophètes et sorciers dans les Pays-Bas, XVIe–XVIIIe siècle (with Robert Muchembled and Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat).

Philip T. Hoffman holds the Richard and Barbara Rosenberg chair in History and Social Science at the California Institute of Technology. His books include Church and community in the diocese of Lyon, 1500–1789; and Growth in a traditional society: The French countryside, 1450–1815.

Andrew R. Holmes is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen’s University, Belfast. He is the author of The shaping of Ulster Presbyterianism belief and practice 1770–1840: Tradition, reform and revival and of several articles on Irish Protestant history.

Margaret C. Jacob is Professor of History at the University of California, Los Angeles. Among her books are The Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689–1720; The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, freemasons and republicans; The cultural meaning of the scientific revolution; and Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and politics in eighteenth-century Europe.

Dominique Julia is Director of the Centre d’anthropologie religieuse européenne at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales (Paris) and Directeur de recherche with the Centre national de recherches scientifiques. Among his publications are Les trois couleurs du tableau noir: la Révolution; L’éducation en France du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle (with Roger Chartier and Marie-Madeleine Compère); and Pèlerins et pèlerinages dans l’Europe moderne (with Philippe Boulky).

Hartmut Lehmann is Director of the Max-Planck Institute for History at Göttingen and Honorary Professor at the Universities of Göttingen and Kiel. His books include Jansenismus, Quietismus, Pietismus and Pietismus und weltliche Ordnung in Württemberg. Vom 17. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert (with Heinz Schilling and Hans-Jürgen Schrader).

Jean-Michel Leniaud is Directeur d’étude at the Ecole pratique des hautes études (Paris), Section des sciences historiques et philologiques. His books include L’administration des cultes pendant la période concordataire; Viollet-le-Duc, ou, Les délires du système; and Jean-Baptiste Lassus, 1807–1857, ou, Le temps retrouvé des cathédrales.
List of contributors

Frances Malino is Sophia Moses Robison Professor of Jewish Studies and History at Wellesley College. Among her books are *The Sephardic Jews of Bordeaux: Assimilation and emancipation in revolutionary and Napoleonic France*; and *A Jew in the French Revolution: The life of Zalkind Hourwitz*.

Martin E. Marty is the Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of the History of Modern Christianity at the University of Chicago. He is the author of over fifty books, including *Religion, awakening and revolution* and the three-volume *Modern American religion*.

Mark A. Noll is the McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author or editor of over thirty books, including *A history of Christianity in the United States and Canada* and *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*.

James D. Riley is Associate Professor of History at the Catholic University of America. His works include *Hacendados Jesuitas en Mexico: La Administracion de los Bines Inmuebles del Colegio Maximo de San Pedro y San Pablo de la Ciudad de Mexico, 1687–1767*; and *Landholding and provincial society: The Labradores of Tlaxcala, 1640–1730*.

Mario Rosa is Professor of Modern History at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa. Among his books are *Settecento religioso: politica della ragione e religione del cuore; Politica e religione nel ’700 europeo*; and *Religione e societ`a nel Mezzogiorno tra Cinque e Seicento*.

Helena Rosenblatt is Associate Professor at Hunter College in New York City. She has published *Rousseau and Geneva: From the First Discourse to the social contract, 1749–1762*.

Andrew C. Ross, a former Senior Lecturer in the History and Theology of Missions, is currently an Honorary Fellow in the School of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh. His books include *A vision betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China 1542–1742* and *David Livingstone: Mission and empire*.

Lamin Sanneh is the D. Willis James Professor of Missions and World Christianity at Yale University. His books include *Encountering the West: Christianity and the global cultural process: The African dimension*, and *Abolitionists abroad: American blacks and the making of modern West Africa*.

Timothy Tackett is Professor of History at the University of California, Irvine. Among his books in religious history are *Priest and parish in eighteenth-century France*; *Religion, revolution, and regional culture in eighteenth-century France*; and *Atlas de la Révolution française*, vol. 9: *Religion* (with Claude Langlois and Michel Vovelle).

R. G. Tiedemann is currently a Lecturer in History at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, and is soon to take up a research position at the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History at the University of San Francisco. He is the
List of contributors

editor of and principal contributor to The handbook of Christianity in China, vol. 2: 1800 to the present and the author of a number of scholarly articles on Christianity in East Asia.

Dale K. Van Kley is Professor of History at Ohio State University. He has published three major monographs on The Jansenists and the expulsion of the Jesuits from France (1975), The Damiens affair and the unraveling of the ancien régime, 1750–1770, and The religious origins of the French Revolution; as well as numerous articles on church–state relations in ancien régime France and the impact of Jansenism on French culture and politics.

W. R. Ward is Professor Emeritus of Modern History at the University of Durham. Among his books are The Protestant Evangelical awakening and Christianity under the ancien régime 1648–1789.

Merry Wiesner-Hanks is Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She is author, editor, or co-editor of over a dozen books, including Christianity and sexuality in the early modern world: Regulating desire, reforming practice and Gender, church, and state in early modern Germany.
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