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.


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Contents

List of illustrations and maps ix
List of contributors x
Acknowledgements xiv

Introduction 1
STEWART J. BROWN AND TIMOTHY TACKETT

PART I
CHURCH, STATE, AND SOCIETY IN THE EUROPEAN WORLD, 1660–1780

1 · Continental Catholic Europe 15
   NIGEL ASTON

2 · Continental Protestant Europe 33
   HARTMUT LEHMANN

3 · Great Britain and Ireland 54
   J. C. D. CLARK

4 · The church in economy and society 72
   PHILIP T. HOFFMAN
PART II
CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE EUROPEAN WORLD, 1660–1780

5 · The Catholic clergy in Europe 89
MARIO ROSA

6 · The Protestant clergies in the European world 109
ANDREW R. HOLMES

7 · Reaching audiences: Sermons and oratory in Europe 128
JORIS VAN EIJNATTEN

8 · Christian education 147
DOMINIQUE JULIA

9 · Christianity and gender 166
MERRY WIESNER-HANKS

10 · Popular religion 185
WILLEM FRIJHOFF

11 · Jewish–Christian relations 208
FRANCES MALINO

12 · Architecture and Christianity 226
JEAN-MICHEL LENIAUD

PART III
MOVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

13 · Christianity and the rise of science, 1660–1815 251
LOUIS CHATELLIER

14 · The Enlightenment critique of Christianity 265
MARGARET C. JACOB
## Contents

15 · The Christian Enlightenment 283  
**HELENA ROSENBLATT**

16 · Jansenism and the international suppression of the Jesuits 302  
**DALE K. VAN KLEY**

17 · Evangelical awakenings in the North Atlantic world 329  
**W. R. WARD**

18 · Toleration and movements of Christian reunion, 1660–1789 348  
**JAMES E. BRADLEY**

### PART IV

### CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NON-EUROPEAN WORLD

19 · Christianity in Iberian America 373  
**JAMES D. RILEY**

20 · British and French North America to 1765 392  
**MARK A. NOLL**

21 · Christianity in Africa 411  
**LAMIN SANNEH**

22 · Christianity in south and south-east Asia 433  
**CHARLES J. BORGES**

23 · Christianity in East Asia 451  
**R. G. TIEDEMANN**

24 · Christian encounters with other world religions 475  
**ANDREW C. ROSS**
Contents

PART V

REVOLUTION AND THE CHRISTIAN WORLD

25 · The American Revolution and religion, 1765–1815 497
MARTIN E. MARTY

26 · Christianity and the campaign against slavery and the slave trade 517
CHRISTOPHER LESLIE BROWN

27 · The French Revolution and religion to 1794 536
TIMOTHY TACKETT

28 · The French Revolution and religion, 1795–1815 556
SUZANNE DESAN

29 · Movements of Christian awakening in revolutionary Europe, 1790–1815 575
STEWART J. BROWN

Chronology 596
Bibliography 603
Index 652
## Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 St Peter's Basilica, Rome: the façade</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 St Paul’s Cathedral, London: frontispiece</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Val-de-Grâce, Paris</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Church of the Invalides, Paris, interior</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Einsiedeln Abbey (Benedictine), Switzerland, interior</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Church of Parinacota, Chile</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Crucifix from the Christian Kongolese Kingdom, South-western Africa</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 'Virgin and Child', fashioned in Goa, India, c. 1700: ivory statuette</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 'Mary as patroness of the Japanese martyrs': silk painting</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Confessional map of Europe c. 1700</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Central Europe in 1660</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Missions in India c. 1800</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 China c. 1696</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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