

Robert W. Strayer

**Ways of the World: A Brief Global
History with Sources**
Second Edition

Chapter 15
Cultural Transformations: Religion and Science,
1450–1750

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The Virgin of Guadalupe
National Palace Mexico City/Gianni Dagli Orti/The Art Archive
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1. Who are the figures in this painting?

At the center of this painting is the image of Virgin Mary; her holiness is highlighted by the beams of light emanating from her while her innocence and piety are highlighted by her folded hands and rosary beads. At the top of the image, angels look down on the scene. The male head above Mary looks like Jesus at first, but the fact that he is holding the fabric with the adorned image of the Virgin suggests that this may be the indigenous peasant Juan Diego, who had the apparition of the Virgin Mary in Guadalupe in 1531. To the left and the right of Mary's image sit two women; the one on the left seems to be making a cross on her chest. Both the woman in the lower-left corner and the man have notably darker skin.

2. Which elements of this image illustrate the blending of Spanish Catholicism with indigenous culture?

The woman in the bottom left seems to be wearing a traditional native dress and hat. Both shields of the women include references to the natural world of the Americas. The dark tone of the male figure's skin suggests he may be Juan Diego; the fact that he is positioned on top of the image with an expression of saintly grace is a clear illustration of the adaptation of Spanish Catholicism into native identity.

I. The Globalization of Christianity

A. Western Christendom Fragmented: The Protestant Reformation

1. Martin Luther
2. The power of the written word
3. Wars of Religion
4. Counter-Reformation

I. The Globalization of Christianity

A. Western Christendom Fragmented: The Protestant Reformation

1. Martin Luther: German priest who combined widespread criticism of Roman Catholic hierarchy and corruption with a theological message that faith—not works, acts, or rituals—was the path to salvation. Most Protestant movements offered little agency for women and in some cases even limited women's participation in the church.

2. The power of the written word: Luther and others emphasized common people reading the Scriptures in their own language, not priests interpreting the Latin texts for the masses. Combined with the new technology of the printing press, Luther's message spread throughout Europe in the form of pamphlets.

3. Wars of Religion: Intense popular religious disputes led to cases of popular unrest and mob violence in France and Germany. Many political actors (kings & other nobility) found common cause with Luther's theological revolt against Rome. As religious, political, and economic tensions became intertwined, peasant revolts broke out in the German lands in the 1520s, Catholic-Huguenot violence tore France apart from 1562 to 1598, and finally the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) pitted the Roman Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire against Protestant kings and princes throughout Europe who sought independence from Rome and the Emperor. While the Peace of Westphalia brought an end to the fighting and established the modern state system in Europe, it recognized the end of Catholic religious unity in the continent.

4. Counter-Reformation: Faced with widespread revolt, the Roman Catholic Church called the Council of Trent (1545–1563) to reaffirm its authority over doctrine and ritual. While there was an effort to end corrupt and abusive practices, the church took a hard line against heresy and dissent, approving militant orders such as the Society of Jesus.



1. Who are the figures in this painting, and what are they doing?

On the left are six men in plain and modest black robes carrying books; they are holding a giant quill, which they seem to be positioning on the door of a fairly modern-looking building. On the right we see five men, two in more elaborate dress. They stand below a figure in bed, probably with illness. The columns and arches of the building on the right suggest an antiquated legacy, and the scene within the structure seems to suggest the various abuses and ailing nature of the Roman Catholic Church.

2. Why do you think the men on the left are carrying a giant quill?

The giant quill is supposed to represent the large support for Martin Luther and the Ninety-five Theses he posted on a church door in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1517.

3. Why do you think the artist put a white swan at the center of the painting?

This might be the artist's effort to illustrate the origin of the giant quill and the broad support for religious reform, implying that the call for reformation has its roots in the grace of God's creation.

4. What seems to be happening in the background?

The sky in the background of the painting appears to be showing the light of heaven. This may imply that the painter believed that the Reformation sparked by Luther was supported and approved of by God.



Map 15.1 Reformation Europe in the Sixteenth Century
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I. The Globalization of Christianity

B. Christianity Outward Bound

1. “In search of Christians and spices”
2. Missionaries and pilgrims

I. The Globalization of Christianity

B. Christianity Outward Bound

1. “In search of Christians and spices”: This phrase was Vasco da Gama’s response to Hindu South Asian merchants and princes who asked why the Portuguese had sailed to India. The phrase indicates the close connection between Iberians’ imperial expansion (which was a combination of feudal, crusading, and merchant activity) and the spread of Christianity. In the sixteenth century, Catholicism became a world religion, but it was also an imperial religion.

2. Missionaries and pilgrims: Christianity spread through the world via colonization, but the specific individuals who spread the faith were missionaries and religious dissenters seeking to build their own communities. While Catholic missionaries dominated the first group and found success in the New World and the Philippines, Protestant pilgrims fled to North America and established settler colonies in New England.



Map 15.2 The Globalization of Christianity
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I. The Globalization of Christianity

C. Conversion and Adaptation in Spanish America

1. Conquest and Conversion
2. Resistance and Revival
3. Gender in a changing culture
4. Syncretism: Huacas and Saints

I. The Globalization of Christianity

C. Conversion and Adaptation in Spanish America

1. Conquest and Conversion: The spectacular collapse of the Aztec and Incan empires led many Spanish and indigenous people to believe that the god of the Christians must be stronger than the traditional gods of the Americas. Millions converted and were baptized throughout the New World. While this was nothing new as conquest in the Americas had long been associated with the right to impose the conquerors' pantheon of gods, the intolerance of the monotheist Iberians (seen in their refusal to recognize the existence of pagan deities or allow local rituals) was a break with precedent.
2. Resistance and Revival: In response to foreign conquest, resistors often used the revival of pre-Hispanic religious tradition as a method of mobilization. In Peru in the 1560s, the Taki Onqoy (dancing sickness) movement including traveling teachers and performers who promised that the Andean gods would inflict illnesses upon the Spanish and restore the old order.
3. Gender in a changing culture: As the institutions of the Catholic church offered few opportunities for women to assume roles of leadership and authority, indigenous American women who had once served as priestesses found themselves forced out of spiritual roles in the new society. That said, the popular veneration of the Virgin Mary spread rapidly through the Americas as it resonated with notions of Divine Motherhood.
4. Huacas and Saints: Syncretism was the religious blending of Iberian and indigenous traditions. Throughout the Spanish colonies, aspects of Catholicism such as the cult of various saints fused with local traditions, rituals, and spiritual figures such as the Andean huacas or gods. The result was a Mexican or Andean variant of

Christianity that showed clear distinctions from Christian practices and patterns in Spain.

I. The Globalization of Christianity

D. An Asian Comparison: China and the Jesuits

1. Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912) prosperity
2. Matteo Ricci and the Chinese elite
3. Emperor Kangxi versus the Pope

I. The Globalization of Christianity

D. An Asian Comparison: China and the Jesuits

1. Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912) prosperity: Unlike the Americas, where powerful states collapsed with the arrival of Europeans, China had two strong and wealthy dynasties, and the nation was never in danger of being taken over by the West before 1800. China's political resilience was unparalleled in its cultural strength, including the socio-political philosophy of Confucianism, which arguably achieved a spiritual significance for some. Others found their spiritual needs satisfied by the centuries-old Buddhist and Daoist traditions and practices. Aside from a few hundred thousand converts in a population of three hundred million, Christianity did not find a way to get a foothold in China.

2. Matteo Ricci and the Chinese elite: Ricci and other Jesuits targeted the elites and the Chinese court. To convert the Chinese, they studied Chinese culture, literature, and traditions and made accommodations to make Christianity more palatable (something unthinkable in the Americas). The Chinese court found the technical skills, such as astronomy and mapmaking, of the Jesuits interesting and useful.

3. Emperor Kangxi versus the Pope: In the early 1700s, the Pope

sought to eliminate Jesuit concessions to Chinese ancestor veneration as “idolatry.” This attack on a central feature of the Chinese socio-political order angered Emperor Kangxi who put an end to the tolerance of Christian missionaries and the privileged place of Jesuits in the Chinese court.

II. Persistence and Change in Afro-Asian Cultural Traditions

A. Expansion and Renewal in the Islamic World

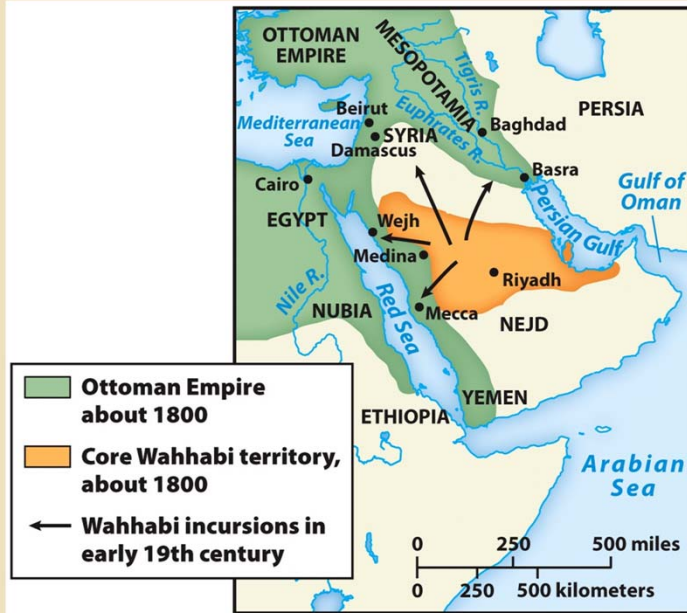
1. Sufi mystics, Koranic scholars, and Muslim merchants
2. Syncretism and diversity in South and Southeast Asia
3. Aurangzeb and Wahhabi Islam

II. Persistence and Change in Afro-Asian Cultural Traditions

A. Expansion and Renewal in the Islamic World

1. Sufi mystics, Koranic scholars, and Muslim merchants: Rather than military conquest in this period, Sufis, scholars, and merchants played crucial roles in spreading Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central, South, and Southeast Asia. Flexible and tolerant Sufi mystics frequently blended Islam with local spiritual practices. Traveling scholars offered useful services for courts. Merchants provided connections to a wider world of commerce.
2. Syncretism and diversity in South and Southeast Asia: While Aceh in northern Sumatra saw an emphasis on Islamic legal orthodoxy from the seventeenth century on, Java was home to a peasant population with a much looser blending of Islamic practices with local animism. Javanese women also enjoyed much more agency, freedom, and opportunities in the realms of politics and business than their sisters in Aceh. Javanese merchants gravitated toward the orthodoxy of their Arab trading partners.
3. Aurangzeb and Wahhabi Islam: India's Mughal Dynasty had made various accommodations to Hindus, but the emperor Aurangzeb sought to purge the empire of this tolerance. In the Arabian Peninsula, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab launched a campaign to purge the region of what he saw as idolatrous

practices such as sacred tombs and sinful practices such as tobacco and hashish use. He received political backing from Muhammad ibn Saud. After 1800, Wahhabi Islam would be associated with resistance to Western penetration of the Dar al-Islam.



Map 15.3 The Expansion of Wahhabi Islam
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II. Persistence and Change in Afro-Asian Cultural Traditions

B. China: New Directions in an Old Tradition

1. Neo-Confucianism
2. Kaozheng
3. Urban popular culture: *The Dream of the Red Chamber*

II. Persistence and Change in Afro-Asian Cultural Traditions

B. China: New Directions in an Old Tradition

1. Neo-Confucianism: The anti-Mongol Ming and the Manchu Qing each sought support from the Chinese people by using Confucianism as the corner stone of their legitimacy. However, Neo-Confucianism incorporated insights from Buddhism and Daoism and encouraged lively debates from scholars such as Wang Yangming (who held that anyone could achieve a virtuous life by introspection and contemplation).
2. Kaozheng: Meaning “research based on facts” criticized the unfounded speculation of Confucianism and promoted detailed observation and accuracy in the material world and in historical documents.
3. Urban popular culture: *The Dream of the Red Chamber*: With economic growth came a middle- and lower-class urban population that desired entertainment on the stage and in literature. *The Dream of the Red Chamber* was a massive sprawling novel that dramatized the life of an elite eighteenth-century family. The Confucian elite looked at this popular culture with disdain.

II. Persistence and Change in Afro-Asian Cultural Traditions

C. India: Bridging the Hindu/Muslim Divide

1. Bhakti
2. Mirbai (1498–1547)
3. Guru Nanak (1469–1539) and Sikhism

II. Persistence and Change in Afro-Asian Cultural Traditions

C. India: Bridging the Hindu/Muslim Divide

1. **Bhakti:** This Hindu movement broke with the elite ceremonies of Brahmanism and encouraged lower castes to engage in rituals, dances, songs, and prayers that would allow union with the divine. Appealing especially to women, its followers disregarded caste and engaged in social criticism of inequality.
2. **Mirbai (1498–1547):** A popular bhakti poet, this high-caste northern Indian woman rejected caste privilege and distinction as well as rituals. She refused sati (widow burning) on her husband's death and took an untouchable shoemaker as a guru. Her poems focused on union with the divine in the form of Lord Krishna, a prominent Hindu deity.
3. **Guru Nanak (1469–1539) and Sikhism:** Coming out of the Bahkti movement, Guru Nanak rejected Hindu ritual and Islamic law, claiming that "there is no Hindu; there is no Muslim; only God." His monotheistic faith sought a union of all mankind and attracted peasants and merchants from both faiths, primarily in the Punjab. The Guru Granth ("teacher book") became the sacred text, and the Golden Temple at Amritsar became Sikhism's central site. Sikh men adopted distinct dress, including long hair and beards, a turban, and a short sword. Faced with attacks from the

Mughal Empire, the Sikh community developed a militant sect (later prized by the British empire as an elite fighting force).

III. A New Way of Thinking: The Birth of Modern Science

A. The Question of Origins: Why Europe?

1. Autonomous universities
2. Madrassas and Confucian learning
3. Knowledge from other cultures

III. A New Way of Thinking: The Birth of Modern Science

A. The Question of Origins: Why Europe?

1. Autonomous universities: Coming out of the Middle Ages, Europe was a fragmented but reinvigorated civilization with many independent institutions. Society was organized into collective groups with various rights and privileges, as well as forms of self-regulation. European universities were autonomous, providing self-governance and freedom from church and state authorities.
2. Madrassas and Confucian learning: In contrast to autonomous European universities, the schools of the Islamic world were madrassas where the Quran might be viewed as the only source of wisdom and philosophy and natural science might be viewed with skepticism. As mastery of the Confucian canon was crucial for entry into the Chinese state bureaucracy, education consisted of preparation for the rigid civil service examinations and the state did not allow independent institutions of higher learning.
3. Knowledge from other cultures: Between 1000 and 1500, Europeans gained access to Greek, Arab, and other texts that offered knowledge from outside cultures. After 1500, Europeans gained insight from various overseas adventures to the New World and the Indian Ocean basin. Knowledge from outside of Europe shook up the existing bodies of knowledge and led to a critical

view of inherited certainties and traditions.

III. A New Way of Thinking: The Birth of Modern Science

B. Science as Cultural Revolution

1. Ptolemy's universe
2. Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo
3. Isaac Newton
4. Accommodating faith and tradition with science

III. A New Way of Thinking: The Birth of Modern Science

B. Science as Cultural Revolution

1. Ptolemy's universe: The Catholic church supported the classic model of the universe that put the Earth at the center. This second-century idea came from the work of Ptolemy.
2. Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo: In the sixteenth century, a series of Europeans took detailed measurements of the movement of the stars and planets and proved that the Earth was not at the center of the universe but rather one of many planets that revolved around the sun. The Church was extremely hostile to such revisionism as it challenged papal authority and implied that the Earth and humanity were not so special. Galileo was forced to recant his ideas, and Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake in 1600.
3. Isaac Newton: One of the greatest figures of the Scientific Revolution, Newton developed the concept of universal gravitation and showed that mathematics could describe all the forces of the natural world. His work promoted the idea that the world had certain governing laws and humans could discover these principles. The Newtonian universe was knowable and provable using mathematics.
4. Accommodating faith and tradition with science: Despite a few exceptions, traditional gender barriers to educating European women ensured that men dominated the Scientific Revolution. While the church did not like to see its authority undermined, many scientists such as Newton, were faithful Christians who saw the hand of God behind the making of the knowable universe. Importantly, none of the early scientists rejected Christianity or espoused

atheism.

III. A New Way of Thinking: The Birth of Modern Science

C. Science and Enlightenment

1. Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant, John Locke, and Voltaire
2. The persistence of gender inequality
3. Deism, Pantheism, and religious revivalism

III. A New Way of Thinking: The Birth of Modern Science

C. Science and Enlightenment

1. Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant, John Locke, and Voltaire: Each of these key Enlightenment figures saw the world as understandable and perfectible once humans figured out the rules that governed society, economics, and morality. With education and embracing reason, people could become “enlightened.”
2. The persistence of gender inequality: Despite various progressive ideas about social equality and a common rejection of aristocratic privilege, men dominated the Enlightenment, and the movement took a dim view of education for women. That said, there were women who played key roles in hosting Parisian salons, a few who published in the *Encyclopedie*, and intellectuals such as Mary Wollstonecraft who criticized the patriarchal and misogynistic ideas of Rousseau and others.
3. Deism, Pantheism, and religious revivalism: Deism, the belief in a god that created the world and then left it up to the world to run its course, was a common spiritual idea of the Enlightenment. Deism was not atheism but it specifically rejected the idea a god that intervened in human affairs and questioned the need for a institutionalized religion. Pantheism, which viewed God or gods as being one with nature, had even less use of rituals, sacred texts, and the clergy. Partially in reaction to a perceived godlessness in the Enlightenment, a Protestant religious awakening spread throughout northwest Europe and North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Romanticism also embodied a reaction to science as being cold and without feeling and deeper spiritual truths.

III. A New Way of Thinking: The Birth of Modern Science

D. Looking Ahead: Science in the Nineteenth Century

1. Charles Darwin
2. Karl Marx
3. Sigmund Freud

III. A New Way of Thinking: The Birth of Modern Science

D. Looking Ahead: Science in the Nineteenth Century

1. Charles Darwin: This biologist argued that life was constantly changing, evolving. All forms of life were in constant struggle with each other over resources, and those that lost the struggle could go extinct. His books, *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Development of Man* (1871) were as revolutionary as Copernicus's work.
2. Karl Marx: Like Darwin, Marx saw human history as a constant struggle between classes. Marx saw his description of the evolution of human society as scientific because he based it upon research and observation. Both Darwin and Marx emphasized conflict and struggle as opposed to previous scholars who optimistically saw reason as leading to peace and progress.
3. Sigmund Freud: At the dawn of the twentieth century, Freud's unsettling work probed the human unconscious and noted that there were primal urges of sexuality and aggression that drove humans. This stood in sharp contrast to the Enlightenment's emphasis on rationality.

III. A New Way of Thinking: The Birth of Modern Science

E. European Science beyond the West

1. Diffusion of technology but not scientific thinking
2. China & Japan
3. The Ottoman Empire

III. A New Way of Thinking: The Birth of Modern Science

C. European Science beyond the West

1. Diffusion of technology but not scientific thinking: Example: The telescope was found to be a useful tool in China, Mughal India, and the Ottoman Empire, but it failed to become a “discovery machine” outside of Europe. As China, India, Japan, and the Ottoman Empire had strong states and cultural systems, there was relatively little interest in adopting foreign ways of thinking.
2. China & Japan: Chinese scholars found European astronomy and mapmaking useful. The kaozheng movement drew much knowledge of the natural world and mathematics from contact with Europeans. The Jesuits lost much face in China after 1760 when it was discovered that they had hid the Copernican model of the universe out of loyalty to church doctrine. In Japan, only the Dutch could visit the islands and they were limited to Nagasaki. Those Japanese scholars who did have contact with the Dutch learned from various European texts on medicine, astronomy, and geography.
3. The Ottoman Empire: While the revelations of the Copernican solar system did not disturb the rich tradition of Muslim astronomy, many works of western scholars were not translated.

While practical knowledge was welcome, there were various traditions, superstitions, and cultural prejudices that blocked the widespread acceptance of western science.

IV. Reflections: Cultural Borrowing and Its Hazards

- A. Early modern ideas today**
- B. Religious borrowing**
- C. Conflict and accommodation in cultural borrowing**

IV. Reflections: Cultural Borrowing and Its Hazards

A. Early modern ideas today: Survival of various ideas from the early modern era: Western Hemisphere solidly Christian and Wabbhi Islam dominates Saudi Arabia.

B. Religious borrowing: Christianity in the Philippines, Siberia, and Native American communities, Islam in Asia and Africa, and Sikhism's roots in Islam and Hinduism all illustrate the significance of religious borrowing. Yet, borrowing was not always absolute as some converts to Islam or Christianity did not adopt the absolute monotheism of these faiths.

C. Conflict and accommodation in cultural borrowing: Many cases of cultural borrowing could produce serious conflict such as moments of rejecting the outside influence as with the Taki Onquy in Peru and Chinese and Japanese intolerance of Christina missionaries. Sometimes conflict could arise when one power wanted to be sure the culture doing the borrowing did so in an orthodox manner. Yet also common are examples of borrowing where accommodations were made between existing and newly arrived traditions as seen in the Native American identification of Catholic saints with local gods.



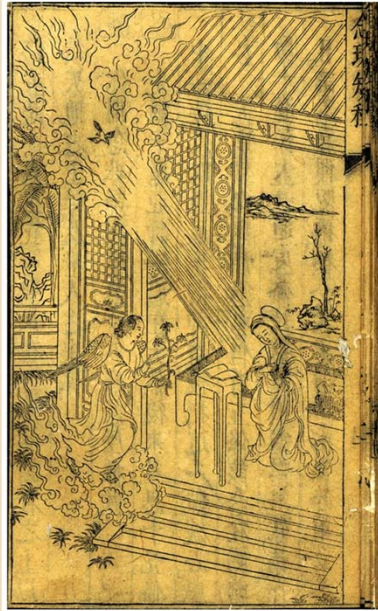
Visual Source 15.1 Pieter Saenredam, Interior of a Dutch Reformed Church
Rijksmuseum Museum
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Visual Source 15.2 Catholic Baroque: Interior of Pilgrimage Church, Marizell, Austria
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Visual Source 15.3 Cultural Blending in Andean Christianity
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Visual Source 15.4 Making Christianity Chinese
Courtesy, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome
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Visual Source 15.5 Christian Art at the Mughal Court
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