

Less & Less of a group coming together & establishing doctrine  
More & More of a group following a particular (prev. established) doctrine.

The  
Modern  
Period:

Overall  
Characteristics

History of Denominations  
Not Theology.

Big Doctrinal Q: Status  
of Scripture.

VI. The Modern Period...1700 to the present.

A. The Overall Characteristics

1. A fragmentation of the church.

Not only in the west but also in the east is there a continued dividing of the body. Divisions occur within Rome and the Protestant segment constantly renews itself in bodies of new sects and ideas. The division and growth idea does become a means of cleansing but it also is often seen as a method of personal development of cultic ideals. The fragmentation continues in the face of many suggested church unions. For often when two bodies merge, instead of getting one united body, we find three resultant groups...two continuing the older tradition and the new merged unit. Usually the remnant groups are not large but they are vocal and often become large.

2. The dominance of philosophical systems.

The market place of thought is very open and doing a lot of business. There possibly has never been an age so open to philosophical theorizing since the Golden Age of Athens. Mostly the world-thinkers are not church men but secular scholars and philosophers. But their ideas penetrate the church as they did in the first century and make a marked impact.

3. The interest in education.

Luther pushed for public education and his more remote disciple, Comenius, gave impetus to practical ways in which it could be accomplished. The new world will become a leader in teaching everyone the basic ideas and procedures. The emphasis on education in the industrial-technological age is such that the leadership in knowledge passes from the clergy and today the minister may be one of the least-learned in the congregation.

4. General humanism

A great feeling of freedom for man and his world exists and the liberties, pursuits, rights, and duties of man as a being of worth are everywhere discussed. Portions of the civilized world that lose this picture become victimized in anti-personal movements.

5. The Spirit of Investigation and criticism marks almost everything, including theology and almost nothing is "sacred" or above debunking.

The age of Opportunity  
⇒ The Crisis of Opportunity

Characteristics of Modern Period

Leisure:

Rationalism:

Reactionism: Old is no good.

Shrunk Word: