

#### 4. Summary:

It is safe to say that nothing that happens fails to make some sort of impact on the church. In our discussion we have not gone into technological determinators although that would be an interesting and worthwhile part of the work (television, radio, various communicative strategies, etc.) Our concentration has been in the area of religious, economic and ideological factors...and that is about as far as we can go in this course. But there are many other factors that enter the picture including the development of third world churches, etc.

My observation is that the church, in development, etc., usually follows the world by about twenty years and the laity of the church usually follows the clergy by about the same time gap. This is not a critical note, just an observation. So the wise and aggressive Christian worker knows what is going on in the world round about and is prepared to meet it in the church in a few years.

### III. TROUBLED WATERS IN WHICH THE CHURCH SAILS

Precise: What we have done so far is to survey the broad history of the church in the United States including the foundation and development periods. We will now look at some of the difficulties faced in the body, particularly those introduced by theological liberalism of various types (I am using the term in a general sense). Following this we will note some of the developments of the church in response to this and summarize with a consideration of where we now are in church history. The notes are brief and I will attempt to keep them pointed...some gaps are to be filled in and some things we will rush by.

#### A. Development of Theological Liberalism

##### 1. In terms of definition:

Technically liberalism is the theoretical attempt to liberate the church and church thinking from the absolutist ideals that have bound it. In this classic defining of the ideal the moves are specifically against the authority of the Scripture and the sharp defining of doctrine. Modernism, on the other hand, is the attempt to refocus theological thought in terms of what society can take or in terms of its understanding. While they are two different aspects they eventually produce the same confusion: lack of authority and defiance of Deity in the ordering of life affairs. So for this course I rather lump them together and treat them as if it were all one and the same although we know, of course, that it is not. Keep the general ideas in mind, however, for once in awhile I deviate in the accepted usage!