

## V.2.e Continental Churches

The Continental Churches

The churches of Europe were virtually all "state churches"...there tended to be a religious monopoly with little diversity and the governments paid the clergy, provided funds for church growth, etc. These bodies were subject to periodic renewal and attacks of coldness... the renewal usually being the result of an awakening on the part of some committed Christian and the strengthening of the Holy Spirit. (The state churches in Scandinavia are good examples of this process) The degree of governmental "interference" in the ecclesiastical body was also a factor. With many governments, new schools, and demographic changes, it was possible for a territory to have a warm evangelical expression followed by a wave of liberal thinking...and both would pass almost unnoticed except when we come to the history books. The Germanic territories were galvanizing in this period into a single nation...the guiding hand was that of Bismarck, while the same thing was happening in Italy under the leadership of Garibaldi and Victor Immanuel. Ecclesiastical presence in these territories was often at odds with the government and sometimes survival was the big issue. In this course we mention only a few of the major factors that affected the church in this part of the Industrial Age.

## The German churches:

The German churches were locked in a struggle that grew from the enlightenment and the basic philosophical background for this period is found in this syllabus in the notes at the beginning of the 18th century. The great name in the enlightenment had been that of Wolff (d. 1754) and from him had spring the impression of rationalism that was the current problem. The big idea is that nothing is real that cannot be verified along mathematical/scientific lines. Events that are otherwise portrayed must be seen as fanciful and-or given an allegorization at best. The conflict in the state churches with Pietism gave an excellent opportunity for this sort of thinking to be applied to the religious world and soon the ideas were common to the whole of the German