



MOST PEOPLE DON'T think of it, but the 18th century in many ways spelled the beginning of the very last days. Humanism and the exaltation of the human spirit took great strides as “The Age of Reason,” or “The Enlightenment” continued into the middle of the century, affecting human philosophy to the present day. During the hundred years from 1650 to 1750, philosophers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Thomas Paine and Montesquieu argued for reason and individualism to replace tradition and, particularly, faith in God, placing the emphasis on science as the answer to man’s problems.

This gave rise to man’s advancement in technology and science which began to take quantum leaps with the start of the industrial revolution around 1760. Hand production started giving way to mechanical production, water power became more efficient, and coal took the place of wood for heating and generating an increase in steam power. Man began to throw off the shackles of drudgery and for those who had the means to take the initiative there was great wealth to be had.

One of the benefactors as well as beneficiaries of the emerging prosperity was Freemasonry. Although organized lodges of Freemasonry were formed during the Middle Ages, the most important transition from that time to the present occurred with the formation of the first Grand Lodge in London in 1717. Although the foundation of Freemasonry is based on integrity and good will toward men, as well as recognition of a divine origin for creation, its philosophical underpinnings are humanistic. To be a Freemason one must believe in some god, but not necessarily the God of the Bible. Thus there are Jewish, Muslim and other non-Christian Masonic lodges which display the “holy books” of the particular religions to which they are dedicated. Most, however, would be considered “Christian.”

Anti-Christ has used Freemasonry to oppose the truth of Scripture, albeit without understanding by most Freemasons. Roman Catholicism took a strong stance against Freemasonry after the London Grand Lodge was instituted. In his papal bull,

In eminenti apostolates specula, issued on April 28, 1738, Pope Clement XII banned Catholics from becoming Freemasons. Clement warned that Freemasonry was open to men of any religion or sect, and that they were sworn to secrecy. The Bull voiced concern of the danger that Freemasons “do not hold by either civil or canonical sanctions.” Regarding the secrecy of Freemasonry, it stated, “if they were not doing evil they would not have so great a hatred of the light.”

Secrecy outside the Vatican’s purview was held in great suspicion at the time, and still is. As late as 1983, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (present pope emeritus Benedict XVI) confirmed in his office of Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, that Catholics are still prohibited from joining Masonic organizations:

Therefore the Church’s negative judgment in regard to Masonic association(s) remains unchanged since their principles have always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church and therefore membership in them remains forbidden. The faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion. It is not within the competence of local ecclesiastical authorities to give a judgment on the nature of Masonic associations which would imply a derogation from what has been decided above...”

Some may wonder how Roman Catholicism can oppose Freemasonry when Roman Catholicism itself operates in many unscriptural ways. But it is not unusual for ungodly institutions to oppose one another. Satan’s kingdom is woefully fractured with a plethora of ungodly institutions that oppose one another.

Some historians speculate (for good reason) that the real reason for the papacy’s opposition to Freemasonry was more political. According to one Roman Catholic Freemason, Alec Mellor of the Grande Lodge Nationale Francaise:

As you know, the Old Pretender [James III of England] had finally found a refuge in Rome. He was under the protection of the Pope, and he represented the last card for the re-establishment of Catholicism in England. There was a war of double-agents between certain lodges composed of Jacobites and others of Hanoverian membership. The Old Pretender decided to put an end to this by closing the Jacobite lodge in Rome and, finally, to enter into the first condemnation. This leads us to understand why the motive was hidden. If the Holy See had discovered the hidden motive it would have been a terrible political blunder. The real reason was the politics of the day and the cause of the Stuarts.¹

The truth most probably lies between the two: 1) Roman Catholicism's suspicion of anything non-Catholic and secret; 2) the papacy's desire to strengthen Catholic influence in England and elsewhere that Protestantism posed a threat.

For those who single out Roman Catholicism as an ungodly institution, it may be said that at least that religious establishment does publicly oppose many anti-Christ movements such as Freemasonry, while many Protestant and other non-Catholic institutions welcome Freemasons and even anti-Christ religionists into their folds. This merely demonstrates that the Lord did not institute an institution; He called out from among the world (including the institutions) an elect group of people whose faith rests entirely on His person and not on any particular religious establishment.

And in spite of the Catholic Church's ban on Freemasonry, and although there have been periods of intense antagonism between Freemasonry and Roman Catholicism, there have also been Freemasons working within Roman Catholicism, many within the hierarchy of the church.

Space does not allow for a full treatise on Freemasonry or a list of Catholic Freemasons. A little research on the part of the reader will yield that information. But it is proper to say that in spite of its high moral values which both originated in biblical ethics and influenced the founders of the United States of America, Freemasonry's universalist philosophy is contrary to God's Word. Its influence in world affairs continues to advance its anti-Christ enterprises through the exaltation of the human spirit, which resonates today as never before.

There developed two distinct yet closely related factions within Freemasonry—the rationalist Enlightenment-inspired members and those members who leaned toward mysticism and the occult.

Freemasonry was greatly influenced by the Enlightenment in all its disciplines. Even the music of the Freemason Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, considered revolutionary in its day, was inspired by the rationalist elements of the Enlightenment.

On February 6, 1748 was born one Johann Adam Weishaupt who, at the age of seven began his formal education at a Jesuit school. After his father's death, young Weishaupt came under the influence of his uncle, Johann Adam Freiherr

¹ Mellor, "The Roman Catholic Freemason Past, Present and Future," *The Royal Arch Mason* - Spring 1972.

von Ickstatt, a law professor at the University of Ingolstadt, and an adherent of the Enlightenment. Weishaupt came to be familiarly called by his middle name Adam. At the age of 20 he graduated from the University of Ingolstadt with a doctorate of law, later becoming a professor of law and, in 1772 a professor of canon law. Prior to Weishaupt, professorship of canon law was exclusive to the Jesuit order. But in 1773, Pope Clement XIV began his suppression of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) due to that order's meddling in the political affairs of several European states.²

On May 1, 1776, Adam Weishaupt founded a network of spies and counter-spies for the purpose of influencing the political affairs of Europe. That network began with an initial membership of five men, freethinkers whose philosophy was that nothing should be accepted as truth without recourse to knowledge and reason.

Weishaupt's Order of the Illuminati was formed to oppose what he considered superstition, prejudice and religious influence over public life, as well as abuses of state power. One platform for the Illuminati was gender equality and support for women's education.

The Order attained branches in most European countries and within ten years is said to have reached a membership of 2,000. But in March, 1785, Duke of Bavaria Karl Theodor, a proponent of Enlightened Absolutism (a form of democratic monarchy influenced by the Enlightenment) banned all secret societies including the Illuminati. By then the Illuminati had already been contending with internal conflict over succession to leadership. Weishaupt fled Bavaria, and the Illuminati's documents and internal correspondences were seized and made public by the government in 1787.

Today there exist a number of organizations that claim to be descended from Weishaupt's original Order of the Illuminati, and use the word "Illuminati" in their titles. But there is no empirical evidence that Weishaupt's Order of the Illuminati survived after Weishaupt, or even for the remainder of his life. But that doesn't stop some conspiracy theorists like Texe Marrs, Mark Dice, David Icke and others from insisting that Weishaupt's Illuminati continue to work behind the scenes to manipulate today's governments with nefarious plans for world domination and the enslavement of all mankind.

That isn't to say that there is no satanic element of behind-the-scenes conspirators working for a one-world government and the ultimate branding of humanity as their servants. All the evidence suggests that such a conspiracy does exist; there are too many "coincidences" to say otherwise. And it cannot be denied that today's "Illuminati" hold to and promote globalization. But there is no evidence of a direct link to Weishaupt. Rather, the

² In his papal brief, *Dominus ac Redemptor*, Clement expressed concern that the Jesuits were acting contrary to the nature of Jesus Christ as "Prince of Peace," and encouraged institutions to remove those who impede peace, specifically the Society of Jesus. The pope's sanctions against the Jesuits was received primarily in the Roman Catholic countries of France, Spain, Portugal, Poland and the Philippines. Some non-Catholic countries did not acquiesce to the sanctions, at least not immediately. In Russia the Jesuits were supported by Empress Catherine, so the order was not dissolved until 1820 when the Russian Orthodox Church persuaded Tsar Alexander I to exile the Jesuits.

ideals of the Enlightenment are what drive organizations today to work for globalization. And not all intentions are evil; no doubt there are many within those organizations that believe they are working for the betterment of mankind's state of being.

Originating in 17th-century Europe, the Enlightenment traveled the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas, and early in the 18th century became entrenched in the minds of many of the founders of the United States, most notably Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. The Enlightenment played a significant role in the American Revolution through its political ideals, and had great influence on the American Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights.

Although the Enlightenment glorified man and rejected what it considered the superstition of religion, it could not divorce itself from the influences of Christianity which had become an apostate form of true faith in Christ. The philosophers of the Enlightenment could not entirely escape the biblical ethic which guided the high ideals of charity and good will among those who attempted to form a more just society. God's Word had by that time so permeated the thinking of Western Europeans through the Reformation, that humanistic philosophy melded with God's influences. Thus we find many appeals to "Providence," "God," "Divinity," "the Almighty," and other terms for the God of the Bible in the founding documents of this nation. When those men (a number of whom were deists, Masons and nominal Christians) spoke of "God" they did not have in mind any other god than the God of the Bible. They were not thinking of Allah, Krishna, or some nebulous figure.

And despite the shortcomings of its founders, and the greater shortcomings of its citizens over time, God has continued to bless the United States of America above all other nations until recently. Even so, it cannot be denied that the anti-Christ spirit has worked ceaselessly and incessantly to eradicate all vestiges of that biblical ethic from public discourse.

The greatest events of the 18th century over which the anti-Christ spirit exerted great influence were the conflicts between nations and the continuing dissolution of man's separation from man that persisted due to the sovereign nation states' self-interest.

A timeline of significant events in which the anti-Christ spirit had great influence follows:

1701-1713: The war of Spanish Succession results when many important European nations go to war to decide who would succeed to the throne after King Charles II of Spain dies. The first war of the 18th century that would pit Christians against Christians.

1715 & 1745: In the Jacobite Rebellions Scots rebel against the rule of George I of England, and support the exiled descendants of James II, James Stuart and his son, Charles Edward ("Bonnie Prince Charlie"). The Scots are defeated by British troops, and many are executed for treason. Another cause for Christians to shed the blood of other Christians over worldly conflicts.

1716: Christianity was banned in China by Emperor Ch'ien Lung;

1739: The Persian Conquests continue when Sunni Moslem Nadir Shah conquers western India and the Punjab, and captures Delhi, bringing Islam to bear.

1755: The Seven Years' War begins when Britain joins Prussia to battle France and Austria over control of North American and Indian colonies. The Peace of Paris gives Britain control of Canada and many Caribbean Islands. Yet another war among Christians.

1767: The Boston Massacre takes place when British soldiers kill five American protestors among a large group of Americans unhappy over high taxes without representation. More Christians killing Christians.

1770s: The slave trade reaches its pinnacle as hundreds of thousands of Black Africans per year are brought to the Americas.

1775: Americans declare war against Britain in a bid for independence. The war would last until 1783 as Christians rebel against God-ordained authority and kill one another for political reasons. Yet it cannot be denied that God used this rebellion for His own purposes in establishing a new nation that would become the greatest exporter of the Gospel in history. But it was birthed with the blood of Christians shed by other Christians.

1789: The French Revolution begins when angry citizens of Paris revolt against high taxes and the extravagant lifestyle of Louis XVI. Louis tries to escape, but he and his queen, Marie Antoinette are tried and executed by beheading. The Revolution gives rise to one of the greatest European conquerors, Napoleon Bonaparte, a brilliant young French general who leads the French army to conquer much of Italy in 1796, and Egypt in 1798. Still more Christians killing Christians.

1798: Irish patriot Wolfe Tone rebels against English rule with the aid of France. The rebellion is thwarted, and Wolfe commits suicide while in prison awaiting execution. Yet another occasion for Christians to war against Christians.

It will be argued that these wars were fought between those who were Christians in name only. But that would be too simplistic a reason for these great conflicts. More likely the conflicts involved many nominal Christians who persuaded many true believers in Christ to follow their fleshly instincts. They forgot (as many Christians today forget) that our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12).

This does not mean we war against human rulers in high places; otherwise we would not be told that we do not war against flesh and blood, which such rulers are. Our warfare is spiritual through prayer, godly living, adherence to the Word of God for our personal lives, and earnestly contending for the faith. We do not have a mandate to fight wars or engage in conflict against men regardless how ungodly they may be. We must resist the influence of the world, and even misguided brethren in Christ who wish to enlist our aid to "Change the world for Christ."

Anti-Christ is the winner in any scenario in which Christians bear arms against others, except possibly in the case of self-defense or defense of the innocent. And even then, we must be careful not to be overtaken by hatred or a sense of justified vengeance. Some true believers would even say that under no circumstance may a believer in Jesus use force, even to protect himself or another innocent. Let each be persuaded in his own heart; I will not judge in such circumstances.