

Puritan intellectual influence also shaped the literature of 17th-century England. Foremost among Puritan men of letters in the 17th century was John Milton, whose *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Paradise Regained* (1671) presented the story of humanity's fall and redemption in epic poetry. Milton also wrote *Areopagacita* (1644), an impassioned plea for freedom of expression in speech and print. The Baptist John Bunyan incorporated Puritan themes in his allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). Bunyan's exploration of the Christian's journey through this life to the celestial city was teeming with Puritan theological concepts and metaphors.

The North American Puritans' commitment to education was evident in their creation of catechetical statements for their congregations and founding of important centers for education. Puritans and their Congregationalist heirs were instrumental in the founding of Harvard University (1634–1646) and Yale University (1701) in the American colonies. The Puritan influence on American culture was profound and placed New England at the forefront of American cultural influence well into the mid-19th century.

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ENLIGHTENMENT PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

The Enlightenment is generally identified as the period from roughly 1600 to 1800, during which major developments in scientific, philosophical, political, and religious culture transformed European society. The emergence of Enlightenment thought is often connected to the rise of modernity and the general acceptance of scientific rationalism as the primary means of understanding the world. Enlightenment thinkers were often willing to discard traditional beliefs and practices in light of insights gleaned from the use of their rational faculties.

Foundations of the Enlightenment

The theological and philosophical currents of the Enlightenment should not be separated from the scientific and political advances that both supported and were supported by developments in philosophy and theology. Thinkers like René Descartes (1596–1650) applied the rationalist approach of scientific thinkers such as Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) and Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) to the question of how knowledge and understanding are gained. Descartes's writings on philosophical methodology and epistemology helped define the mode of thinking adopted by many Enlightenment rationalists. Among his noted works are *Discourse on the Method* (1637), in which he introduced the world to his famous dictum *Cogito ergo sum*. Descartes sought to establish the existence of God and the immortality of the soul using only evidence that could be established through reason in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641).

Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) began to dialogue with the writings of Descartes and constructed his own philosophy, which had a tremendous impact on the science of biblical interpretation. Spinoza was of Portuguese and Jewish descent. He lived for all 44 of his years in the Dutch Republic. Spinoza was expelled from his synagogue at the age of 23, possibly for questioning orthodox interpretations of the Hebrew scripture. Spinoza's most influential publication, *Ethics* (1677), was published shortly after his death. He engaged in literary dialogue with a number of philosophers, including Descartes, in *Ethics*. He proposed a concept of God in which God was closely identified with the universe itself, leading some readers to accuse him of Pantheism.

Religious views were deeply impacted by the new philosophical currents. John Locke's views on anthropology marked an important departure from the Reformed theology of his youth. Locke argued in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) that human beings are born as a tabula rasa or blank slate. He believed that human failings were the result of poor nurture and experience rather than an inherent sinful nature. His more optimistic appraisal of human nature tended to guide Enlightenment thought in the 18th century. Locke also discussed the veracity of scripture and the miraculous in *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1696). While attempting to defend Christianity properly interpreted as an eminently reasonable belief system, Locke raised serious questions about the veracity of the supernatural aspects of scripture. He also championed the cause of religious toleration in *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689). Though the religious settlement in England after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 did not live up to Locke's ideal, he proposed in his *Letter* the vision of a society in which people were free to practice their faith without legal coercion or penalty. Locke's political views grew organically from his

fundamental belief that human beings were capable of making sound choices, and that governments were tasked with the responsibility of protecting their goods and autonomy. He provided classic statements of the imperative for governments to protect life, liberty, and property in *Two Treatises of Government* (1689).

Eighteenth-Century Enlightenment Philosophy and Theology

Francois Marie Arouet (1694–1778) captured the imagination of European thinkers and became the witty voice of the 18th-century Enlightenment as “M. de Voltaire.” Voltaire was not of noble birth, but aspired to join those ranks. An altercation with a nobleman resulted in his being exiled to England, which inspired him to write *Philosophical Letters* or *Letters on the English Nation* (1733–1734). Voltaire expressed his admiration for English advances in the sciences, philosophy, politics, and religious toleration. He desired to see a similar situation in his native France. Voltaire produced works of literature in a variety of genres, including poetry, drama, history, satire, literary essays, political theory, and works of philosophy. He used the philosophical tale as one method of relaying a philosophical argument, by contextualizing it in a fictional tale. Despite his achievements in such a wide array of literary styles, *Candide* (1759) or *L’Optisme* is often considered his most enduring work. This short philosophical tale offered a scathing satirical critique of the philosophical optimism espoused by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751) was his most significant contribution to historical studies. Voltaire helped to shape historiography and historical methodologies through works such as “Essay on the Customs and on the Spirit of the Nations” (1756), in which he emphasized the importance of studying all aspects of a society in the pursuit of historical awareness.

Voltaire embodied several intellectual tendencies that became typical of the 18th-century Enlightenment. Among them was a critical distrust of organized religion and its dogmas. Voltaire pursued his early education at the College Louis-le-Grand in Paris under the tutelage of Jesuit instructors. These early experiences did not predispose him to support the church, nor did his later clashes with ecclesiastical censorship. Voltaire was a Deist who believed that the existence of God alone could be demonstrated rationally. He supported religious toleration and rejected the factual veracity of much of the Bible. In *The Sermon of Fifty* (1752), Voltaire proposed the adoption of a simple faith that recognized the existence of God and common brotherhood of his creatures, but rejected all dogmas of specific Christian or Jewish sects. Thomas Paine (1737–1809) argued for a Deism similar to Voltaire’s in *The Age of Reason* (1794).

If Voltaire could be considered the father of the French Enlightenment, Denis Diderot (1713–1784) was its most gifted promoter and chronicler. Diderot is best known for his editorship of the *Encyclopédie* (1751–1772), a 28-volume compendium of Enlightenment thought that included contributions from the most influential thinkers in 18th-century Europe. Jean Le Rond d’Alembert assisted Diderot in the arduous task of compiling and editing the *Encyclopédie*. Diderot struggled to complete the work under threat from ecclesiastical and political authorities, who saw the collection as a bastion for their political opponents to air subversive views. Like Voltaire, Diderot was hostile to traditional religion. He originally embraced Deism, but he ultimately became an atheist by the late 1840s.

The Scottish scholar David Hume (1711–1776) represented for many the apex of skeptical empiricism. Hume explored the development of religion from ancient polytheism to 18th-century forms of popular religion in *The Natural History of Religion* (1757). His method of identifying natural rather than supernatural causes for religious developments cemented his place in the minds of many readers as an irreligious and possibly atheistic thinker. Hume also contributed the comprehensive *History of England* (1754–1761), which challenged many of the narrowly political and partisan methods of writing history that had dominated the scholarship of recent years.

The work of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) focused on critiquing the weaknesses of empiricism and rationalism by arguing that experience and emotional perception shaped reality alongside human reason. The *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) were among his classic statements of this perspective. Kant also provided an interesting analysis of the nature of enlightenment in *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* or *Answering the Question of What Is Enlightenment* (1784). In this essay, Kant described enlightenment as the human emergence from a self-imposed immaturity. He believed humans must discover the courage to use their minds and dare to be free. He prescribed a political structure that allows humans the freedom to explore intellectual and practical questions freely in order to facilitate enlightenment. Kant adopted a sort of progressive view of religion that recognized the validity of faith while arguing that the church of the present age has the right and responsibility to grow beyond the creeds and theological formulations of the past. He believed devotion to these forms could become another variety of self-imposed immaturity.

The Legacy of the Enlightenment

The legacy of Enlightenment philosophy was extensive, touching every area of human experience from scientific

theory and political life to theology. The creative tension between rationalist and empiricist schools of thought produced a culture of curiosity in which humans believed that God had endowed them with the tools to comprehend the nature of reality. While this belief could lead to a deification of reason and experience as ways of knowing, it also liberated thinkers to explore realms of knowledge that had previously been strictly controlled by traditional authorities. This opening of inquiry has shaped the nature of knowledge acquisition and educational philosophy since the Enlightenment, particularly in the West.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

With the publication in 1967 of his seminal article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," historian Lynn White Jr. effectively enlisted Christianity, albeit largely reluctantly, into assessing its role in the causes and solutions of environmental degradation. While White's article has been subsequently engaged by various Christian voices for its shortcomings and lack of nuance, it has functioned as an effective catalyst for Christians to address how they are to respond to the destruction of a world they hold to have been created by God. Sig-

nificant biblical and theological reflection has yielded several principles that lie at the foundation of a Christian environmental ethic: God is knowable in and through creation; creation is christologically centered; creation should be treated with care and reverence; and creation is itself the object of redemption. Education of Christians through institutions of higher education and local parishes is a significant element of the church's response to environmental degradation.

Environmental Ethics in Christian Higher Education

Broadly, environmental ethics in Christian higher education is evidenced in curricular programs, institutional initiatives, and extracurricular student activism. Renewal, a Christian creation care student network (www.renewingcreation.org), surveyed 60 schools in the United States and Canada to measure environmental sustainability efforts at these institutions in terms of institutional initiatives and academic offerings. Fifty-four schools surveyed offered academic courses related to environmental studies, 41 offered academic majors, 37 offered academic minors, and 34 offered research or internship opportunities (frequently in conjunction with such organizations as Au Sable in the United States, Costa Rica, and India, and the Creation Care Study Program in Belize and New Zealand). Virtually all of the institutions in the Renewal survey modeled environmental sustainability in some institutional program, such as chapel services, business and facility operations, and/or student organizations. A recent effort called the Green Seminary Initiative (www.greenseminaries.org) seeks to create a network through which seminaries can share resources, stories, and support in helping seminaries become examples of environmental sustainability in their operations as well as in their training of students to bring a creation care emphasis into their practices of parish ministry.

College students are often involved in extracurricular student activism. In addition to student organizations on campuses, groups such as Renewal, mentioned above, and Young Evangelicals for Climate Action (www.yecaction.org) engage students in efforts of national and international scope.

Environmental Ethics in Christian Education

Education in environmental ethics in local parishes is provided in two major areas: curriculum and liturgical resources. In addition to curriculum resources produced by denominations, several organizations provide such resources for the church at large. Examples include Web of Creation's (www.webofcreation.org) Green Congregation Program, which includes a congregational training manual in addition to curriculum resources; the Evangelical Environmental Network (www.creationcare.org), which