

# **Spiritual Destiny of America and the West**

# **Webinar Outline**

## **Session One – January 21, 2018**

- **Examination of the historical role of Christian Faith (Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant) in the West and America**
- **Central Role of West and America in Achieving Christian and Universal Baha'i Principles of Oneness of Humanity, Nations and Peoples**

# Goal of the **Spiritual Destiny of America and the West** Webinar Series:

- **Examination of the historical role of Christian Faith (Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant) in the West and America**
- **Central Role of West and America in Achieving Christian and Universal Baha'i Principles of Oneness of Humanity, Nations and Peoples**
- **Deepen knowledge and understanding of common norms, socio-economic and institutional foundations of America and the West**
- **Achievement of shared Christian and Baha'i Faith Spiritual Principles and Universal Goals of Oneness of Mankind, Unity of Races, Commonwealth, World Society of Nations and World Peace.**

# **Overview: Christian Faith and Spiritual Destiny of America and the West**

- **Spread of Christianity from the East to the West**
- **Establishment of Christian Church after the collapse of Roman Empire**
- **Evolution of Christianity from Eastern Orthodox Church to Catholic Church in Europe**
- **Martin Luther and Protestant Reformation in Germany**
- **Evolution of Christianity and Western World through Creation of Protestant Anglican Church by King Henry 8<sup>th</sup> of England**

# **Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation**

## **2017 – 500<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary**

- **Martin Luther – Augustine Monk in Germany**
- **Publishes 95 Theses on Church Door October 1517**
- **Salvation requires individual relationship to God**
- **Spiritual and Intellectual Independence By Each Believer is Required**
- **Moral Conscience of Individual Believers – Not Clergy or Vatican is Path to Salvation**
- **Salvation cannot be bought and sold by clergy or the collection of money from believers**
- **Holy Scriptures must be provided to each believer in their native language – German not Latin**

# **Protestant Transformation of Western European Nations, Society, Economy and Rule of Law**

- **Reformation created division of theology in the Orthodox (Eastern), Catholic and Protestant Churches, Royal Monarchies, nations and communities in Europe**
- **Protestant German Princes embrace Martin Luther, enact government and society reforms across European nations and royal monarchies**
- **John (Jean) Calvin follows Martin Luther and creates new Protestant church movement in Switzerland**
- **Electorate of Hanover place Protestant Prussian (German Kings and Monarchy in England /Saxe- Cobourg – Royal House of Windsor (Queen Elizabeth today!!!)**

# **Emergence of America and the Americas – Transatlantic Expansion of the West**

- **Protestant Reformation and Response of Catholic Church Result in Trade and Military Conflict in Europe – France, Great Britain, Spain, Holy Roman Empire, The Netherlands, Portugal**
- **Scientific Exploration, Global Trade Competition and Territorial Expansion Creates American Colonies by Great Britain, France, Spain and Portugal – Competing Christian Faith Doctrines and Indigenous Faith Traditions Create the the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil and the other countries of the Americas**
- **Indigenous Native American tribes and nations, European colonial settlements and African peoples create the United States, Canada and the other nations of the Americas**

# **Spiritual Destiny of America and The Americas**

- **“The continent of America,” wrote ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in February, 1917, “is, in the eyes of the one true God, the land wherein the splendors of His light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled, where the righteous will abide, and the free assemble.”**
- **Establishment of universal norms for race, ethnic and national unity/ oneness of mankind**
- **Lead the world in achieving international agreement**
- **Establishment of Most Great Peace**

# **Baha'i Faith Writings on the Spiritual Destiny of the West**

## **Tablets of Baha'u'llah**

### **Bahá'u'lláh / 2. Lawḥ-i-Aqdas (The Most Holy Tablet)**

- “In the past, as in the present, the Spiritual Sun of Truth has always shone from the horizon of the East.

Abraham appeared in the East. In the East Moses arose to lead and teach the people. On the Eastern horizon arose the Lord Christ. Muḥammad was sent to an Eastern nation. The Báb arose in the Eastern land of Persia. Bahá'u'llah lived and taught in the East. All the great Spiritual Teachers arose in the Eastern world.”

- [God Passes By](#) – Shoghi Effendi
- The Báb had in His Qayyúmu'l-Asmá', almost a hundred years previously, sounded His specific summons to the “peoples of the **West**” to “issue forth” from their “cities” and aid His Cause.
- Bahá'u'lláh, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, had collectively addressed the Presidents of the Republics of the entire **Americas**, bidding them arise and “bind with the hands of justice the broken,” and “crush the oppressor” with the “rod of the commandments” of their Lord, and had, moreover, anticipated in His writings the appearance “in the **West**” of the “signs of His Dominion.”
- ‘Abdu'l-Bahá had, on His part, declared that the “illumination” shed by His Father’s Revelation upon the **West** would acquire an “extraordinary brilliancy,” and that the “light of the Kingdom” would “shed a still greater illumination upon the **West**” than upon the East.

- He had extolled the **American** continent in particular as “the land wherein the splendors of His Light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled,” and affirmed that “it will lead all nations spiritually.”
- More specifically still, He had singled out the Great Republic of the **West**, the leading nation of that continent, declaring that its people were “indeed worthy of being the first to build the Tabernacle of the Most Great Peace and proclaim the oneness of mankind,” that it was “equipped and empowered to accomplish that which will adorn the pages of history, to become the envy of the world, and be blest in both the East and the **West**.”

Shoghi Effendi / XXV. International Expansion of Teaching Activities

<http://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/search#query=america+and+the+west>

- **“For the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh—if we would faithfully appraise it—can never, and in no aspect of its teachings, be at variance, much less conflict, with the purpose animating, or the authority invested in, the Faith of Jesus Christ.**
- **“Know thou that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee.**
- **The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive and resplendent Spirit.**
- **We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Through Him the leper recovered from the leprosy of perversity and ignorance. Through Him the unchaste and wayward were healed. Through His power, born of Almighty God, the eyes of the blind were opened, and the soul of the sinner sanctified...”**

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- As to the position of Christianity, let it be stated without any hesitation or equivocation that its divine origin is unconditionally acknowledged, that the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted, that the divine inspiration of the Gospel is fully recognized, that the reality of the mystery of the Immaculacy of the Virgin Mary is confessed, and the primacy of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, is upheld and defended.**
- The Founder of the Christian Faith is designated by Bahá'u'lláh as the “Spirit of God,” is proclaimed as the One Who “appeared out of the breath of the Holy Ghost,” and is even extolled as the “Essence of the Spirit.”**

# Summary and Conclusions

- **Jesus Christ and the Christian Church establish universal norms and values of human family, society, community and nations - Christianity removes dependence on tribe and bloodline to establish universal community**
- **Reconciliation and unification of the Christian Church is now underway between the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Churches**
- **The teachings of Jesus Christ and Christianity spread across the World by disciples who were uneducated and poor but able to speak truth to power. Eventually Kings and Rulers in the East and West, North and South accept the teaching and universal principles**
- **Abdu'l Baha tells us “to be as the disciples” and to teach the Baha'i Faith through common and shared Christian prophecies and universal principles that link peoples, all races, faiths and nations**

## Next Session Two – Sunday, February 4, 2018

- **Deepening knowledge and understanding of common Christian and Baha'i norms, socio-economic values and institutional foundations of America, the West and Emerging World Society**