Learning Targets

• To explore the early modern roots of tension between religion and science
• To examine the Reformation movements in Europe and their significance
• To investigate the global spread of Christianity and the extent to which it syncretized with native traditions
• To expand the discussion of religious change to include religious movements in China, India, and the Islamic world
• To explore the reasons behind the Scientific Revolution in Europe, and why that movement was limited in other parts of the world
• To explore the implications of the Scientific Revolution for world societies

Big Picture Questions

1. Why did Christianity take hold in some places more than in others?
2. In what ways was the missionary message of Christianity shaped by the cultures of Asian and American peoples?
3. In what ways did the spread of Christianity, Islam, and modern science give rise to culturally based conflicts?
4. To what extent did the cultural changes of the early modern world derive from cross-cultural interaction? And to what extent did they grow from within particular societies or civilizations?

Margin Review Questions

1. In what ways did the Protestant Reformation transform European society, culture, and politics?
2. How was European imperial expansion related to the spread of Christianity?
3. In what ways was European Christianity assimilated into the Native American cultures of Spanish America?
4. Why were missionary efforts to spread Christianity so much less successful in China than in Spanish America?
5. What accounts for the continued spread of Islam in the early modern era and for the emergence of reform or renewal movements within the Islamic world?
6. What kinds of cultural changes occurred in China and India during the early modern era?
7. Why did the Scientific Revolution occur in Europe rather than in China or the Islamic world?
8. What was revolutionary about the Scientific Revolution?
9. In what ways did the Enlightenment challenge older patterns of European thinking?
10. How did nineteenth-century developments in the sciences challenge the faith of the Enlightenment?
11. In what ways was European science received in the major civilizations of Asia in the early modern era?

Key Terms

Catholic Counter-Reformation: An internal reform of the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century; thanks especially to the work of the Council of Trent (1545–1563), Catholic leaders clarified doctrine, corrected abuses and corruption, and put a new emphasis on education and accountability.

Condorcet and the idea of progress: The Marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794) was a French philosopher and political scientist who argued that human affairs were moving into an era of near-infinite improbability, with slavery, racism, tyranny, and other human trials swept away by the triumph of reason. (pron. kahn-dor-SAY)

Nicolaus Copernicus: Polish mathematician and astronomer (1473–1543) who was the first to argue for the existence of a heliocentric cosmos.

European Enlightenment: European intellectual movement of the eighteenth century that applied the lessons of the Scientific Revolution to human affairs and was noted for its commitment to open-mindedness and inquiry and the belief that knowledge could transform human society.

Jesuits in China: Series of Jesuit missionaries in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who, inspired by the work of Matteo Ricci, made extraordinary efforts to understand and become a part of Chinese culture in their efforts to convert the Chinese elite, although with limited success.

kaozheng: Literally, "research based on evidence"; Chinese intellectual movement whose practitioners emphasized the importance of evidence and analysis, applied especially to historical documents. (pron. kow-jung)

Mirabai: One of India’s most beloved bhakti poets (1498–1547), she helped break down the barriers of caste and tradition. (pron. MIR-ah-bye)
Isaac Newton: English natural scientist (1643–1727) whose formulation of the laws of motion and mechanics is regarded as the culmination of the Scientific Revolution.

Protestant Reformation: Massive schism within Christianity that had its formal beginning in 1517 with the German priest Martin Luther; while the leaders of the movement claimed that they sought to “reform” a Church that had fallen from biblical practice, in reality the movement was radically innovative in its challenge to Church authority and its endorsement of salvation “by faith alone.”

Sikhism: Religious tradition of northern India founded by Guru Nanak ca. 1500; combines elements of Hinduism and Islam and proclaims the brotherhood of all humans and the equality of men and women. (pron. SEEK-ism)

Taki Onqoy: Literally, “dancing sickness”; a religious revival movement in central Peru in the 1560s whose members preached the imminent destruction of Christianity and of the Europeans in favor of a renewed Andean golden age. (pron. TAH-kee OHN-koy)

Úrsula de Jesús: Slave and later religious lay woman at the Peruvian Convent of Santa Clara (1606–1666), a lucky escape inspired her to pursue a pious life of mortification and good works gaining a reputation as a woman of extraordinary devotion and humility as well as a visionary and mystic.

Voltaire: Pen name of the French philosopher François-Marie Arouet (1694–1778), whose work is often taken as a model of Enlightenment questioning of traditional values and attitudes; noted for his deism and his criticism of traditional religion. (pron. vol-TARE)

Wahhabi Islam: Major Islamic movement led by the Muslim theologian Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792) that advocated an austere lifestyle and strict adherence to Islamic law. (pron. wah-HAB-ee)