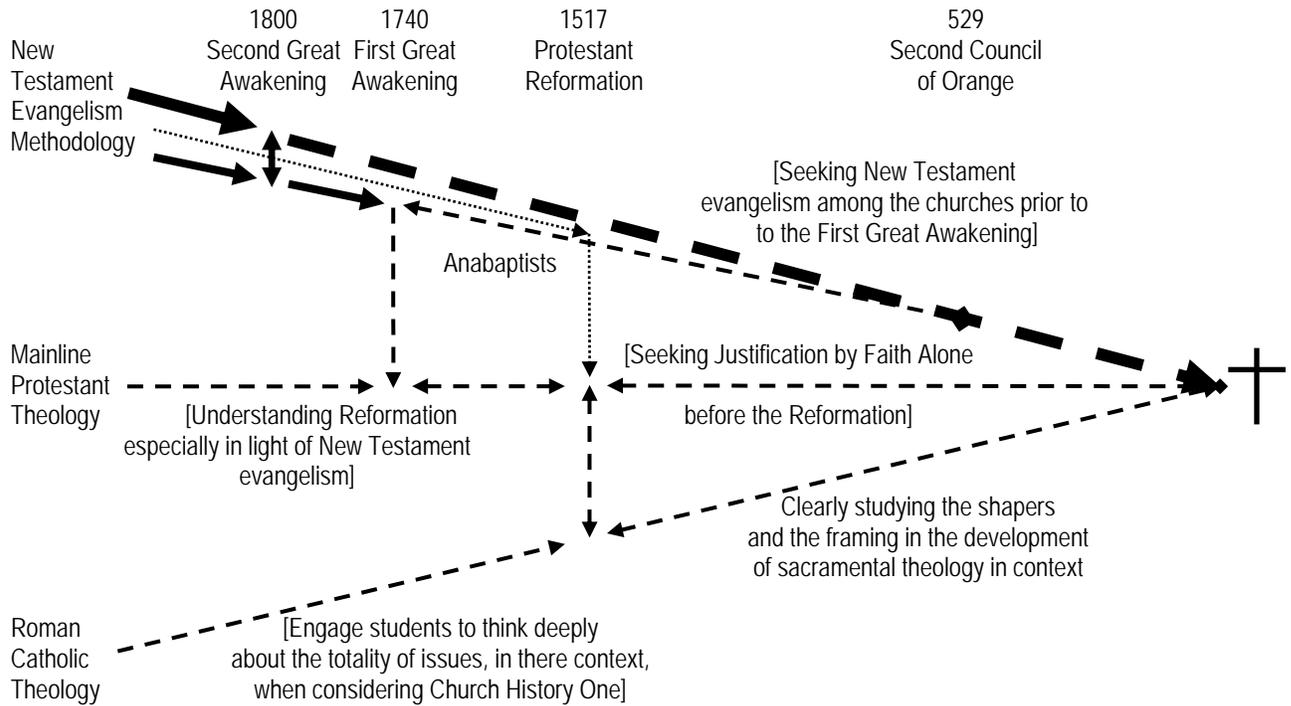


Reversing the Chronological Historical-Theological Tracks

A Proposed Solution



The proposed answer to this historiographic dilemma is to work back from the present, as delineated in the above chart. Avoiding false historical disjunctures and intense study of original texts may elicit some helpful material. It must be understood, however, that historical precedent never supercedes the biblical record as far as authority. Thus, the Bible stands head and shoulders above any interpretation of or findings in the history of the churches.

The additional complexity noted by the two heavy lines at the top of the chart represent the two supposed differences over which Baptists are splitting today: supposed First Great Awakening methodology (preaching without an invitation or sinner's prayer); and the supposed Second Great Awakening methodology (preaching with an invitation and a sinners prayer). The intensity of the debate over these issues and the shunning that id practiced as a result is almost comical were it not so serious in light of the other issues represented, which have much more stern consequences upon the eternal destiny of billions.

May God bless His people with unity around the biblical record!

Some histories that this author has found that seek to address the missing pieces in history are books such as:

- (1) Various Protestant or Baptist Martyrologies, such as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (unabridged edition) or Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror* (1660; Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2007)
- (2) Baptist histories, such as Henry Vedder's *A Short History of Baptists* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1907) and Thomas Armitage's *A History of Baptists* (New York: Taylor, 1886); and
- (3) James A. Wylie's *The History of Protestantism* (London: Cassell, 1889); Wylie, by the way, authored *The Papacy: Its History, Dogmas, Genius and Prospects*, which was awarded a prize by the [British] Evangelical Alliance in 1851. He joined the Free Church of Scotland in 1852, received an Honorary Doctorate from Aberdeen University in 1856, and was lecturer on Popery at the Protestant Institute from 1860-1890 [possibly at St. Andrews University].

One the other hand, it appears that if a book is broad-based to cover the entire history of the church, one of the taboos is to speak negatively of the development of sacramental theology within the remaining records passed down of history from the monks of the Church of Rome.