

**A BRIEF STORY  
OF  
THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
*Where Two or Three are Gathered Together*

by

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**The Photos on the cover are:**

Communion Table in a Cappadocia Cave Church  
The Church of St. Peter in Antioch  
Church of St. Sophia (Holy Wisdom) in Istanbul  
Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris  
Wesley Chapel in London (center)

**Dedicated**

**to**

**J.J. Hunt and Edward P. Thompson III**

JJ Hunt led me to accepting Jesus Christ at about 12:00 Midnight on September 1, 1958. Ed Thompson visited me and invited me to join the TNT Sunday School Class and the Methodist Church at the age of 23. TNT stood for “Twenty Not Thirty.”

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# INTRODUCTION

When nations do not take God's way,  
does their toil end in smoke? Inevitably.  
*E. Stanley Jones*<sup>1</sup>

## **Christian Social Ethics and Church History**

Although I have a great interest in history, my educational background is in Christian Social Ethics. I am interested in history because I do not believe that one can deal with Ethics outside of its historical context. This is particularly true of Social Ethics. While the Bible might be the primary source for developing Christian Social Ethics, history is a secondary source, where we see our predecessors applying Christian Social Ethics. We can and must learn from their successes and mistakes.

### **Written Sources**

If there is anything original in what I am attempting to do, it lies in the way in which I organize the historical material. Three works on Church History make up the bulk of my sources. They are: *Eerdman's Handbook to The History of Christianity* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, Michigan), 1977; Williston Walker, *A History of The Christian Church* (Charles Scribner's Sons: New York), 1959; and the two volume work, Roland H. Bainton, *Christendom* (Harper and Row, Publishers: New York), 1966. When I use material from these sources, I will only give credit when I make direct quotes, or follow the material literally.

### **Video Resources**

Since I believe in mixing the written word with something visual, I will be trying to follow along with the video *Christianity The First Thousand Years* and *Christianity the Second Thousand Years*. This excellent series was put out by A & E and produced by Filmroos, Inc. in 1998. I may well use some other visual resources as I proceed to write what I have chosen to call *A Brief Story of the Christian Faith*.

Some chapters are brief; others are long. The brief chapters are as important as the long ones, but I concluded that brevity on those chapters is sufficient. I have created a Study Guide that can be purchased separately, or downloaded from my Web Site. I would appreciate comments, positive or negative, and corrections where I have made mistakes.

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<sup>1</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *The Way* (Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1974), p. 196.



## **Church of St. Peter in Antioch**



## **PART ONE: THE EARLY CHURCH**



# 1. A FAITH ROOTED IN HISTORY

God does not grab history.  
God penetrates history.<sup>2</sup>  
*Kosuke Koyama*

## The Lessons of History

My purpose in writing this history of Christianity is to emphasize the most significant people, dates, and events. In one sense, writing a history of Christianity is a tremendous and complex task; but in another sense, taking all of human history into account, Christian history is but a drop of water in a vast ocean. “If we were to reduce the whole history of [humankind] to eight hours,” wrote Juan Luis Segundo, “then the twenty centuries of the Church would not come to more than a minute!”<sup>3</sup> Emphasizing the most significant people, dates, and events in twenty centuries of Christian history is still a monumental undertaking. What I hope to accomplish is to light up the main signposts along the way.

Why is this so important? When I visited the United States Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, I read George Santayana’s famous rationale for studying history: “Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are condemned to repeat them.” I believe this and if we want the current Church to guide us into the future, then we desperately need to understand our past. We will make mistakes just like they did in the past, but we might be able to mitigate those mistakes with our understanding of why they were made. The Venerable Bede, a talented historian from the Middle Ages, told us how to do it:

If history records good things of good men, the thoughtful hearer is encouraged to imitate what is good: or if it records evil of wicked men, the good religious listener or reader is encouraged to avoid all that is sinful and perverse, and to follow what he knows to be good and pleasing to God.<sup>4</sup>

Studying history is like using our rear view mirror as we drive forward. We need to look backward to see the dangers that might prevent us from

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<sup>2</sup> Kosuke Koyama, *No Handle on the Cross* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Juan Luis Segundo, *The Community Called Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in *Eerdman’s Handbook to The History of Christianity* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1977), p. 15.

moving safely forward. History frequently illustrates how broken-down civilizations were conquered by weaker external enemies only after those civilizations became so corrupt and divided that they were ready to fall from within. E. Stanley Jones, in his book, *The Way*, asks the question and gives a direct answer: “When nations do not take God’s way, does their toil end in smoke? Inevitably.”<sup>5</sup> The same holds for the Church. That is precisely why we want to study the history of Christianity. We want to take the *fire* and not the *ashes* from the altars of the past. History is the scene of God’s call and our own human willingness to take responsibility for the future. We may not be able to change the past, but we can learn from it.

I have suggested that we will focus on significant people, dates, and events. It is easier to see God at work in the lives of Jesus, Paul, Augustine of Hippo, Francis of Assisi, Martin Luther, John Wesley, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mother Theresa than it is in the Christian Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, the Jewish Holocaust, or the multitude of wars that have been fought through the centuries, many of them with Christians fighting Christians. We will, of course, look at the mistakes or the successes within significant historical events, but we will emphasize how God works through people to affect those events. Dates are important to us because they help us to remember. It is beyond the scope of this study to deal with all the dates in Christian history; that is why, we will only lift up the most significant ones. We do that in our own history too. Certain dates mean more than others, such as: July 4, 1776; December 7, 1941, and September 11, 2001, to name a few.

All of the above means we will have to be selective in our choice of people, dates, and events. We cannot include everyone and everything. In writing any history there is no such things as objectivity. One has to decide what to include and what to exclude. In taking on the history of Christianity, we are taking on a tremendous task. Christianity started out as a minority sect and grew to become the largest Faith in the world. Almost every nation on earth has a history impacted by Christianity, and to study the History of Christianity in detail would mean that we would have to include Christianity’s impact on every nation in the world. That task is too great and beyond the scope of my purpose.

### **Historical Beginnings**

If Christianity is historical, then there must be some historical beginnings. Our primary source for studying those beginnings is the New Testament, but the New Testament only covers a little more than one hundred years. After that we have to rely on traditions and writings that

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<sup>5</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *The Way* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), p. 196.

have been passed on to us, some of which originated in that first one hundred years. We may not always have a precise date to offer. Some of the historical events conflict with one another, and the precise date is frequently anyone's guess. What is amazing is that we can get as close as we can to many of these dates. The dates are important if we are to claim Christianity as a Faith rooted in history.

*The Birth of Jesus.* Let us now look at our first most important date, the birth of Jesus. According to the Gospel of Luke Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the City of David, during a census, which forced his parents, Mary and Joseph to return home for the enrollment. The Roman census was used for military service and taxation, but since Jews were exempt from military service, this one would have been for the purpose of taxation. The date of Jesus birth has been estimated to be between 6-5 B.C.E.<sup>6</sup> While Quirinius was the governor of Syria-Cilicia from 6-9 C.E., he was not the governor during Jesus' birth. The census took place nearly ten years earlier, and that is why Jesus birth has to be dated around 6 B.C.E. The census might have taken place in two stages. The enrollment stage would have begun under a different governor, such as Saturninius (9-6 B.C.E.), but the assessment stage would have been accomplished under Quirinius. Quirinius would have been *only* a viceroy at the time of the enrollment, but he would have become the governor by the time of the assessment.

Augustus Caesar (27 B.C.E. to 14 C.E.) would have been the Roman Emperor during both stages of the census. Caesar was a ruling title, such as King or Emperor, and Augustus was a title given to him by the Roman Senate in 27 C.E., after he assumed office. *Augustus* means: "exalted." His previous name was Gaius Octavius, and he was a nephew of Julius Caesar. Augustus was the first of the Roman emperors to expand the empire over the entire Mediterranean world and establish what was to be called the *Pax Romana*, ushering in the golden age of Roman literature and architecture. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in a cave, beneath an Inn, where the animals would have been stabled. Our purpose at this point is to place the birth of

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<sup>6</sup> B.C.E. refers to the time before Christ. It means "Before the Common Era." I will use C.E. to refer to the time after Christ. C.E. means "Common Era." These two designations are in common use today. They replace B.C. and A.D.

Jesus in its historical context.<sup>7</sup> His virgin birth is a theological issue. Our purpose is history.

*Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection.* The next significant dates for Jesus are the beginning of his ministry, his crucifixion, and his resurrection. These dates are more difficult to fix, mainly because it depends upon whether one believes Jesus ministry lasted for one year or three. If we accept the tradition that it lasted for three years, then he probably began his ministry around 27 C.E and faced his death on the cross around 30 C.E. What we do know is that Jesus was crucified on or near the Passover Feast. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, have him celebrating the Last Supper on the night of Passover, but the Gospel of John has him being crucified on or before Passover.<sup>8</sup> The time of the crucifixion is easier to fix, although there is a difference again with John. John has the Crucifixion beginning at Noon,<sup>9</sup> and the other Gospels fix the time at 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.<sup>10</sup> Jesus' death and resurrection are considered to be historical events; and it is nothing short of a miracle, that we can come so close to the actual dates.<sup>11</sup>

*The New Church and Its Leaders.* The birthday of the Church can then be dated fifty days later on Pentecost. The word *Pentecost* means "fifty." On that day Peter stood up and preached the first sermon, with 3,000 people responding.<sup>12</sup> At this point it seems as if Peter is or will be the

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<sup>7</sup> Christmas was not widely celebrated until the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the Eastern churches settled on January 6<sup>th</sup>, but the Western churches chose December 25<sup>th</sup>. It is not known for certain why these dates were chosen, but it is possible that they were chosen because they were already public holidays for pagan celebrations. By the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the Eastern and Western churches coordinated their practices, holding December 25<sup>th</sup> as the anniversary of Jesus' birth, while celebrating January 6<sup>th</sup> as the arrival of the Magi (wise men) from the East.

<sup>8</sup> See Matthew 26:19; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7-8; and John 18:39; 19:14.

<sup>9</sup> John 19:14

<sup>10</sup> Mark 15:25, 33; Matthew 27:45; and Luke 23:44

<sup>11</sup> Easter became the main annual feast of early Christianity. It was often called the Christian Passover and was celebrated as the anniversary of Jesus' resurrection. Many churches observed it as part of the Jewish calendar, but this practice died out in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Most churches celebrated Easter on the Sunday closest to the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the Jewish month Nisan. Because of problems with the calendar, there was a dispute over which of two Sundays was correct. Several methods of computing Easter were introduced, and agreement was not reached in the West until the Synod of Whitby (664 C.E).

<sup>12</sup> Acts 2:14-41

leader of the Church. This is certainly what Matthew 16:18 (NRSV) implies, where Jesus says to Peter, “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.” Peter, however, seems to have shared that responsibility with James, the brother of Jesus.<sup>13</sup> When Peter left Jerusalem, James took over the leadership. According to tradition, James was put to death around 62 C.E. He was cast down from the Temple, stoned, and clubbed to death, but he was not the first one to die for his faith. That dubious honor belongs to Stephen.

Stephen was one of the seven chosen to wait on tables, although the New Testament sees him more as an evangelist.<sup>14</sup> In fact Stephen gets arrested for preaching against the Torah (the Law) and the Temple. As they stoned him to death, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”<sup>15</sup>

In response to Jesus’ final words, which can be found in all four Gospels and the Book of Acts, the Church was busy fulfilling his Great Commission to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”<sup>16</sup> In obedience to Jesus’ Great Commission, all of the disciples left Jerusalem to carry his message of the Kingdom of God into all the world inviting people to become citizens of that Kingdom. This message was and is rooted in history.

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<sup>13</sup> See Acts 15:13 and Galatians 1:18-19. See also Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 for the listing of Jesus’ brothers, including James, who is listed first.

<sup>14</sup> Acts 6:1-7

<sup>15</sup> Acts 7, but see Acts 7:59-60 (NRSV) for the quotation of Stephen’s last words.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-18 (longer ending); Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21-23; and Acts 1:8



## 2. THE FIRST LEADERS

People can be divided into three groups:  
Those who make things happen.  
Those who watch things happen.  
And those who wonder what happened.

*Anonymous*

### **Peter**

Without question, Peter was considered the first of the Apostles. Most of what we know of Peter comes out of the four Gospels. He was probably born in the city of Bethsaida.<sup>17</sup> His father's name was Jonah or John,<sup>18</sup> and he had a brother named Andrew, who introduced him to Jesus.<sup>19</sup> Peter and Andrew's mother is not mentioned in the New Testament. We know that at some point Peter moved to Capernaum<sup>20</sup> where he took a wife.<sup>21</sup> Although his wife is mentioned, as is his mother-in-law, no one names them.

Peter was the first to profess publicly that Jesus was the Messiah (or Christ) at Caesarea Philippi, even though it is obvious that he did not understand his profession.<sup>22</sup> Although Peter denied Jesus three times, he was one of the first, if not the first one, to see Jesus following his resurrection.<sup>23</sup> It was Peter who, following the suicide of Judas, took the initiative to replace him with Matthias.<sup>24</sup> On the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, it was Peter who became the chief preacher to explain just what was happening; and it was Peter, who gave the invitation to repent and be baptized. More than 3,000 people joined the 120 who gathered together that day.<sup>25</sup>

Following a vision on a housetop in Joppa, Peter went to Cornelius in Caesarea, opening the new faith to a Roman centurion, his relatives, and friends.<sup>26</sup> Although Peter obediently took the Gospel to Gentiles, he was wary of his new venture and wavered under the criticism of strict Jewish

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<sup>17</sup> John 1:44

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 16:17 and John 1:42

<sup>19</sup> John 1:41-42

<sup>20</sup> Mark 1:21, 29

<sup>21</sup> Matthew 8:14; Mark 1:30; and Luke 4:38; and 1 Corinthians 9:5

<sup>22</sup> Mark 8:29 and parallels

<sup>23</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:5

<sup>24</sup> Acts 1:15-26

<sup>25</sup> Acts 2:38-41

<sup>26</sup> Acts 10

Christians in Antioch. Paul criticized him for this.<sup>27</sup> It was in Antioch, where both Peter and Paul labored, and where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians.<sup>28</sup> Eventually Peter supported the work among the Gentiles, and along with James, the brother of Jesus, he gave his full support in the first Apostolic Council of 49 C.E. That Council welcomed Gentile converts without imposing on them the rigors of the Jewish Law.<sup>29</sup>

Little more is known of Peter's ministry. He may have gone to Asia Minor and visited churches in Corinth. What we do know is that he ended up in Rome. Following a large fire, he was crucified upside down around 64 C.E. Nero, needing a scapegoat, accused the Christians of starting the fire. According to one tradition, Peter tried to run away, only to meet Jesus going towards Rome. Peter said, "Where are you going Lord?" Jesus answered, "To Rome, to be crucified again." When Peter heard that, he returned to Rome where he was arrested. When they condemned him to die on a cross, he asked them to crucify him upside down because he was not worthy to die like Jesus. While this story may well be embellished, we know that Peter was martyred in Rome. The site of Peter's martyrdom is believed to be that, which is now occupied by the Vatican basilica of St. Peter.

Two New Testament letters bear Peter's name, and he was probably the source of information for *The Gospel of Mark*. John Mark is believed to have been Peter's secretary. Other works have been attributed to Peter, but they are not believed to be authentic. They are, *The Gospel of Peter*, which was banned at Rhossus (near Antioch) in 190 C.E; *The Apocalypse of Peter*, which includes a graphic description of hell, and *The Acts of Peter*, which describes his martyrdom. While they might be interesting to read, they have not been accepted as authentic works of Peter.

## **Paul**

If Peter was the first leader, Paul was the most important. Paul was born into a Jewish family in Tarsus, but his parents were Roman citizens. That would help him tremendously as a leader beyond the confines of Jerusalem. Paul studied in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, an honored member of the Sanhedrin.<sup>30</sup> Gamaliel counseled moderation in the treatment of Peter and the other apostles.<sup>31</sup> Some scholars have questioned Gamaliel as

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<sup>27</sup> Galatians 2:11

<sup>28</sup> Acts 11:26

<sup>29</sup> Acts 15:1-29

<sup>30</sup> Acts 22:3

<sup>31</sup> Acts 5:34-39

Paul's teacher on the grounds that he was more moderate than Paul, but students do not always follow the lead of their teachers. Why Paul never met Jesus is not explained. Perhaps they just were not in Jerusalem at the same time. At any rate, Paul, a strict Pharisee, viewed Christianity as an enemy to Orthodox Judaism. He was present at the stoning of Stephen and was commissioned by the High Priest to arrest Christians in Damascus.

On the way to Damascus, Paul was converted through a vision of the risen Christ.<sup>32</sup> Temporarily blinded, he was healed and baptized by a reluctant Ananias.<sup>33</sup> He began preaching in Damascus, but when attempts were made on his life, he was forced to flee.<sup>34</sup> Tradition places him in Arabia for about two years, after which, he went to Jerusalem to meet the disciples, who were afraid of him. It was Barnabas who took him in and introduced him to the apostles.<sup>35</sup> More threats against his life forced him to return home to Tarsus, where he spent approximately ten years. He must have been preaching in Tarsus, for Barnabas invited him to join the work in Antioch, where the followers of the Way were first called Christians.<sup>36</sup>

In around 47 C.E, Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark initiated a mission to Cyprus and central Asia Minor (Galatia), visiting synagogues and forming Christian congregations. Upon returning to Antioch, Paul had a disagreement with Peter on how far Gentiles need to go in accepting Jewish customs before they could become Christians. The issues were finally settled in the first Apostolic Council of 49 C.E.<sup>37</sup> After the Council Paul initiated a second missionary journey to Asia Minor and a third missionary journey to Greece, visiting churches established by him along the way. Having had a falling out with John Mark and Barnabas, Paul made these missionary journeys with Silas and others, such as Timothy and Luke.

Having collected an offering for Christians in Jerusalem, Paul returned to Jerusalem, only to be seized by a Jewish mob. The prompt intervention of the Roman garrison saved him by taking him into custody. Because of the threat in Jerusalem, he was moved to Caesarea, where the Roman Governor, Felix, held him for two years.<sup>38</sup> When Festus replaced Felix, he inherited the problem. As a way of dealing with it, Festus suggested that

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<sup>32</sup> Acts 9:1-9

<sup>33</sup> Acts 9:10-19

<sup>34</sup> Acts 9:20-25

<sup>35</sup> Acts 9:26-27

<sup>36</sup> Acts 11:26

<sup>37</sup> Acts 15:1-29

<sup>38</sup> Acts 21:17—23:35

Paul be tried in Jerusalem. Paul, being a Roman citizen, refused and appealed to the Roman Emperor for a fair trial.<sup>39</sup> Paul was escorted to Rome and held in house arrest for two years.<sup>40</sup> This is where the account of the story in the Book of Acts ends.

Paul was probably released from his first Roman imprisonment around 62 C.E. No one came from Jerusalem to accuse him; therefore, he was free to leave. Paul may have made two more missionary journeys; at least, this was his intention. First, he intended to go to Spain; and second, he intended to visit churches in Ephesus and Colossae. We have no written accounts of these trips, but some of the early Christian leaders from these places imply that he made them.

Following a large fire in Rome, Nero accused the Christians of starting it. The main leaders were arrested, and Peter was the first to be killed. In spite of his Roman citizenship, Paul was also arrested in 64 C.E. His citizenship did make his death easier. Instead of facing a painful death on a cross, which could take two or three days, he was beheaded. The site is marked by, the Church of St. Paul, which is located outside the wall of Rome.

A second century account of Paul describes him as “a man small in size, with meeting eyebrows and a rather large nose, bald-headed, bow-legged, strongly built, full of grace; for at times he looked like a man, and at times he had the face of an angel.”<sup>41</sup> In spite of his looks, Paul became the most important Christian leader of the first century, perhaps of every century. His qualifications for leadership were many. He was steeped in Judaism as a Pharisee, he knew and spoke Greek, the universal language of the time, and he was a Roman citizen. These three things helped him to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in three different cultures.

His letters to the churches became highly valued and were quickly accepted as the first portions of the New Testament.

**Galatians** was probably written after the Council of Jerusalem.

**1 and 2 Thessalonians** date from Paul’s first journey to Greece.

**Romans** and **1 and 2 Corinthians** came from his last journey into Greece and before his arrest in Jerusalem

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<sup>39</sup> Acts 25:11

<sup>40</sup> Acts 28:16-31

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in *Eerdman’s Handbook to The History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), p. 64.

**Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians** and **Philemon** were probably written in Rome during Paul's first imprisonment, although some scholars date them from an earlier imprisonment in Ephesus.

**1 and 2 Timothy** and **Titus** were probably written after Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.

What can we say about the importance of Paul? Perhaps Professor Adolph Deissmann said it all when he concluded: "Paul may never have sat at the feet of the Master, but he may be the only one of the apostles who truly understood him."<sup>42</sup>

### **The Other Leaders**

There were more leaders in the early church than Peter and Paul, but they are not as important. It is more difficult to tell the stories of the other leaders, but we do need to make an attempt to tell where they went and what happened to them. These stories, even though they might be embellished, have historical roots. In many cases, present day churches see their beginnings in some of these early leaders. That is why even a brief mention of where they went and what they did is important. The same may be said of the rise of these leaders as was said about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Christian faith is rooted in their history. They have contributed greatly to our faith. I will list them alphabetically.

**Andrew** came from Bethsaida and was the brother of Peter. He went to Patrae in Achaia (North of Greece) where he was bound to a cross, from which he preached to his persecutors until he died.

**Barnabas** of the Gentiles was stoned to death at Salonica.

**Bartholomew (Nathanael)** went to Armenia or Albania, where he was flayed (skinned) alive.

**Luke** was a physician and one of Paul's most faithful companions. He joined Paul in Troas, but may have come from Philippi. He wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. We cannot be certain about his death. Tradition says that he was hanged upon an olive tree somewhere in Greece.

**Mark** served as Peter's secretary. He wrote the Gospel of Mark and was martyred in Alexandria, after being cruelly dragged through the streets of that city.

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted by James Sanders at the end of his video: *Paul: Apostle to the Nations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press).

**Matthew** was a tax collector from Capernaum. He wrote the first Gospel and went to minister to the Parthians/Medes. He suffered martyrdom by being slain with a sword in Ethiopia.

**Matthias** was first stoned and then beheaded.

**James** came from Capernaum. He was the older brother of John, and was the first of the twelve to be martyred. He was beheaded with a sword, in Jerusalem by Herod Agrippa I in 44 C.E.

**James**, the brother of Jesus, was put to death around 62 C.E. in Jerusalem (Josephus). Another account (Hegesippus) places the date around 66 C.E. and suggests that he was cast down from the temple, stoned, and clubbed to death.

**James**, the Less (Son of Alphaeus), went to minister to the Parthians/Medes and was martyred in Prussia or Persia.

**John** was put in a caldron of boiling oil, but escaped death in a miraculous manner. After ministering in Ephesus, John was exiled to Patmos, where according to tradition, he wrote the Book of Revelation.

**Jude (Thaddaeus or Judas)** became a missionary to the Near East, and was shot to death with arrows in Persia.

**Thomas** became a missionary to India. Near Madras, India, a lance was run through his body. The Church of St. Thomas in India claims Thomas as the founder of their Church.

The stories of the above disciples and leaders in the first century come from traditions that are not always reliable, but they do indicate the impact that Jesus' resurrection had on them. They were willing to die for what they believed, and what they believed was rooted in history.

### **The Destruction of Jerusalem**

One of the most significant historical dates in the first century marks the fall of Jerusalem. Following the death of Nero in June of 68 C.E. Vespasian rose to power. Upon being proclaimed Emperor in 69 C.E., Vespasian put his son Titus in charge of the Jewish war. A large-scale campaign in 70 C.E. resulted not only in the defeat of Jerusalem in September of that year, but also its destruction. Very little remains of the city that the early Christian leaders knew. The Arch of Titus still stands in the Roman Forum commemorating his victory. The center of Christianity would now shift from Jerusalem to Rome.

## John

We cannot leave our discussion of the first leaders without mentioning more about John, the brother of James. These two brothers, along with Peter, were Jesus' closest disciples. They lived with their parents, Zebedee and Salome<sup>43</sup> near Capernaum and along with Peter were fishermen on Lake Galilee. The family was probably well off. Because James is always mentioned first, we might conclude that John was his younger brother. James was the first of the disciples to be martyred. Herod Agrippa I had James executed with a sword.<sup>44</sup>

According to tradition, John and Mary, Jesus' mother, moved to Ephesus, where both of them lived for the rest of their lives. The key witness for John's residence in Ephesus was Irenaeus, who claimed that, as a boy, he had learned of John's ministry in Ephesus through Polycarp and Papias.<sup>45</sup> According to Tertullian, John made a trip to Rome, where he "was plunged unhurt, into burning oil, and then exiled on an island."<sup>46</sup> The island is of course Patmos, where John had his famous vision, which resulted in the Book of Revelation. Eusebius stated that following his exile, he returned to Ephesus, where he wrote his Gospel, three Letters, and the Book of Revelation. Tradition also indicates that John lived a very long time and died a natural death during the reign of Trajan (98-117 C.E.).<sup>47</sup> According to Jerome, when John became old and feeble, they used to carry him to Christian meetings, where he would say, "Little children, love one another."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Salome is identified as their mother by comparing Matthew 27:56 with Mark 15:40.

<sup>44</sup> Acts 12:2

<sup>45</sup> Eusebius. *History*, V. 20.5.

<sup>46</sup> Presc. Her. 36.

<sup>47</sup> *History III*. 18.1; 20:9; 23:4.

<sup>48</sup> Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*, 6:10.



### 3. THE CHURCH FATHERS

Faith of our fathers, we will strive  
To win all nations unto thee;  
And through the truth that comes from God,  
We all shall then be truly free.  
*Frederick W. Faber*

As we move into the second and third centuries, we discover a mixture of faithfulness and unfaithfulness under the pressure of persecution. Unfaithfulness cannot always be described in terms of heresy. Sometimes heresy emerged in an attempt make Christians live a more disciplined and faithful life. Let us look first at some of those leaders who struggled in the midst of persecution.

#### **Clement of Rome**

Clement is thought to have been a slave in a wealthy Roman household. After his own conversion to Christianity, he converted his master and mistress; they in turn granted him freedom. Thus his education was poor, as the quality of his prose testifies. Yet he was a man of moral stature, with a clear vision of how the Christian faith should be put into practice. As the new religion faced increasing persecution, these qualities made him ideally suited to be a leader. He was appointed Bishop around 90 C.E., and died about ten years later. Hearing of the internal divisions in Corinth, Clement was prompted to write to the leaders. Aware that Paul had tried a few decades earlier to heal these conflicts, Clement was robust and outspoken. He tempered his criticisms, however, with appeals to their spiritual feelings. Clement also showed how moral goodness is closely linked to a spiritual awareness of Christ's presence, with and among, his followers.

Remember that God's spirit is a candle which lights up our hidden parts. So let us always bear in mind how near God is to us, and how he can observe all our thoughts and feelings. Do not try to run away from God and his commands. Rather than opposing God, it would be better to oppose the folly and stupidity of those who in their arrogance think they can do without him. (*Epistle to the Corinthians*, Chapter 21)

By renouncing evil, and by conforming to God's will, dear friends, we shall find our salvation. We offer ourselves to Jesus Christ, our High Priest who helps us in our weakness. Through him we can look up to the highest heaven and see, as if through a window, the peerless perfection of the fact of God. Through him the eyes of our

hearts are opened, and our dim and foolish minds unfold like flowers to the light. (*Epistle to the Corinthians*, Chapters 35 and 36)

Apart from the books of the New Testament, 1 Clement is probably the earliest surviving Christian writing. It became popular because it was believed that Clement knew Peter and Paul personally and because he encouraged Christian humility and love. Clement of Rome died around 100 CE. Nothing is known about how he died.

### **Ignatius of Antioch**

Ignatius, the Bishop of the Church in Antioch, was arrested in 108 C.E. and taken to Rome for execution sometime between 110 and 115 C.E. The reason they took him to Rome was to make a public example of him. Along the route to Rome, he visited and wrote letters to churches. What we know about him comes from his seven letters to Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, Smyrna, and to Polycarp (Bishop of Smyrna). He looked forward to being martyred for Christ and asked the church in Rome to do nothing to prevent it. He expected to be thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheater, although nothing concerning his martyrdom has been recorded. Some scholars suggest that he either died prior to arriving in Rome or that he was spared a martyr's death.

Ignatius made two important contributions. First, he condemned Docetist ideas, which held that Jesus was not fully human. Secondly, Ignatius advocated the centralization of the house churches. He suggested that in each city a Bishop be put in charge to prevent splits and to ensure that correct beliefs and morals were followed.

### **Polycarp of Smyrna**

One of the Bishops to receive a letter from Ignatius was Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. Smyrna was one of two churches commended in the Book of Revelation.<sup>49</sup> No fault was found with this church. When Polycarp was 86 years old, he was taken before the governor to demonstrate his patriotism to Rome. All he had to do was to sacrifice to the emperor and call him Lord. As a Christian, Polycarp could not do this. The year was 156 C.E. Polycarp was given three chances to save his life by simply declaring, "Caesar is Lord." After he had been given the final chance, he replied, "Eighty and six years I have served him and he has done me no wrong, how can I revile my King that saved me?" The governor threatened, "I'll throw you to the beasts!" "Bring on your beasts," said Polycarp. "If you

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<sup>49</sup> Revelation 3:8-11. The other church commended was Philadelphia. Neither church was condemned.

scorn the beasts, I'll have you burned," replied the governor. Polycarp said, "You try to frighten me with the fire that burns for an hour and you forget the fire of hell that never goes out." At this, the crowd let loose and he was burned at the stake. As he was being burned, it is said that he prayed the following prayer:

Lord God Almighty, Father of Jesus Christ, I bless Thee that Thou didst deem me worthy of this hour that I shall take a part among the martyrs in the cup of Christ to rise again with the Holy Spirit. May I be an acceptable sacrifice. I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee through Jesus Christ.

A disciple of Polycarp's recorded the above conversation. Polycarp's martyrdom was celebrated annually in the church at Smyrna, and this became a pattern for the practice of venerating other martyrs' remains and commemorating their deaths. From this developed the belief that prayers addressed to God through the martyrs were especially effective.

### **Justin Martyr of Ephesus and Rome**

Justin was born in Flavia Neapolis (now Nablus) in Palestine around 100 C.E. to pagan parents. Highly educated, he spent his early years wandering from one philosopher to another in search of truth. One day, while meditating alone by the seashore near Ephesus, he met an old man who pointed him to the Jewish prophets, who bore witness to the Christ. Justin decided to investigate the Christian faith and was baptized at the age of thirty. Believing that he now possessed in Christ a more perfect philosophy, he took his new faith into the philosophical schools. He taught first in Ephesus and then in Rome, making Christianity a credible religion for educated people.

Around 150 C.E. Justin began to defend the Christian Faith. He argued against the Law that made it a criminal offense to call oneself a Christian, insisting that people should be judged by their conduct and not by their faith. Justin's *First Apology* was addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161 C.E.) and aimed at clearing away prejudice and misunderstanding about Christianity. He claimed that charges that Christians were atheists and immoral were false, and argued that Christian beliefs and behavior reflected a higher reason and morality. In his *Second Apology* he protested against the injustice of executing people simply for professing faith in Christ. The longest of Justin's surviving works is the *Dialogue with Trypho*, which describes an encounter he had with Trypho in Ephesus. Trypho was a Jew who objected to Christianity on the basis that Christians broke the Jewish law and worshipped a man. Arguing from the Scriptures, which Jews and Christians shared, the debate was conducted

with respect and courtesy on both sides. This debate is an example of how early Christians interpreted the Scriptures.

From Justin we have the oldest systematic description of Sunday worship, based on the practices of the Church in Rome.

At the end of the prayers, we greet one another with a kiss. Then the president of the brethren is brought bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he takes them, and offers up praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and gives thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their joyful assent by saying Amen. Then those whom we call deacons give to each of those present the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and carry away a portion to those who are absent.

We call this food “Eucharist”, which no one is allowed to share unless he or she believes that the things, which we teach are true, and has been washed with the washing that is for remission of sins and unto a second birth, and is living as Christ commanded. For we do not receive them as common bread and common drink; but as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation; similarly we have been taught that the food which is blessed by the word of prayer transmitted from him, and by which our blood and flesh are changed and nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs called Gospels composed by them, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, said, *This do in remembrance of me, this is my body*; and that, in a similar way, having taken the cup and given thanks, he said, *This is my blood*; and gave it to them alone.<sup>50</sup>

Although Justin presented Christian faith as both scriptural and reasonable before both pagans and Jews, his life was cut short by martyrdom in Rome in about 165 C.E. The method used in executing him is unknown.

### **Irenaeus of Lyons**

One of Polycarp’s students was Irenaeus, who was born in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). After studying under Polycarp, Irenaeus studied in Rome, and was then invited to serve in Gaul as a priest under the first

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<sup>50</sup> Justin, *Apology I*, 65-66: AD 150.

Bishop of Lyons. Around 177 C.E, he was appointed Bishop of Lyons, where he served until his death two decades later. Under constant threat of persecution, Irenaeus taught that the greatest danger to the church was not persecution, but heresy. To combat heresy, he wrote *Against Heresies* and *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*. Irenaeus stressed the basic Christian doctrines challenged by Gnosticism: (1) God created the world; (2) Jesus died to save humankind; and (3) there will be a resurrection of the body. Irenaeus also developed the idea that Christ was the Word of God and consequently, he was fully human and fully divine. Hence, Irenaeus was the first to record a clearly identifiable Rule of Faith, which preceded the more formal Creeds.

### **Tertullian of Carthage**

The first major Christian to write in Latin was Tertullian, who was born in Carthage, North Africa, in about 150 C.E. His father was a centurion in the Roman army. As a young man Tertullian went to Rome, where he became a successful lawyer. When he was about forty years of age, he was converted to Christianity, after which, he returned to Carthage. Although he was offered ordination, he rejected it, preferring instead to apply his intellect and wit, honed by the law, to write in defense of the Christian Faith. The underlying theme of everything he wrote was the relationship of the individual to the Holy Spirit. The books he wrote in Greek have all been lost, but thirty-one books written in Latin survive.

Tertullian's books reflect three simple concerns: the attitude of Christianity to the Roman state and society; the defense of correct beliefs against heresy (false beliefs); and the moral behavior of Christians. His own strict moral views led him to join the Montanists around 207 C.E. Tertullian's masterpiece was the *Apology*, where he argued that Christianity should be tolerated. His longest work consisted of the five books *Against Marcion*, where he defended the use of the Old Testament as Scripture. In *Against Praxeas*, Tertullian developed the doctrine of the Trinity. Since he wrote in Latin, he was the first theologian to use the Latin word *trinitas* (trinity). His intellectual ability made him one of the most powerful theologians of the time.

In Tertullian's work on the trinity, he stated that God was one being (substantia) but three concrete individuals (personae). The Son and the Spirit did not issue from the Father by a division of his being, but as extensions from his being, like rays from the sun. Tertullian explained the trinity as follows:

When a ray is projected from the sun it is a portion of the whole sun; but the sun will be in the ray because it is a ray of the sun; the substance is not separated but extended. So from spirit comes

spirit, and God from God, as light is kindled from light...This ray of God...glided down into a virgin, in her womb was fashioned as flesh, is born as man mixed with God. The flesh was built up by the spirit, was nourished, grew up, spoke, taught, worked, and was Christ.<sup>51</sup>

### **Pantaenus, Clement, and Origen of Alexandria**

While Tertullian was at work in Carthage, Pantaenus, Clement, and Origen were at work in Alexandria, another intellectual center for the Christian faith. It was in Alexandria that the Old Testament was first translated from Hebrew into Greek, and Alexandria boasted of having one of the greatest libraries in the entire world. By about 185 C.E, Pantaenus, a converted Stoic philosopher, began teaching new Christians in Alexandria. Clement and Origen succeeded him. The purpose of the school was to prepare new Christians for baptism.

In spite of intense persecution, the Christian School in Alexandria flourished and attracted converts. The primary achievement of both Clement and Origen is the way in which they taught the Gospel in terms which could be understood by people familiar with Greek culture. They established intellectual respectability for the Christian faith.

Origen, born in Alexandria in about 185 C.E, was the first major theologian to be born in a Christian family. After his father was martyred in 203 C.E, he had to be restrained by his mother<sup>52</sup> from leaving home to join others volunteering to be martyred. Taking Jesus' teaching on eunuchs literally,<sup>53</sup> Origen had himself castrated and lived a strict ascetic life.

Following Pantaenus and Clement, Origen taught new converts, but later more advanced students. Origen was one of the few scholars who took the trouble to learn Hebrew so that he could read the Old Testament in its original language. In doing this he made a tremendous contribution to biblical scholarship. Origen produced the *Hexapla*, the greatest piece of biblical scholarship in the early church. He put the Hebrew and Greek text in parallel columns and concluded with his sermons and biblical commentaries that there are three levels of meaning in every biblical text: (1) the literal sense, (2) the moral application, and (3) the allegorical or spiritual sense, referring to the mysteries of the Christian faith.

Forced to leave Alexandria because of the antagonism of Bishop Demetrius, he went to Caesarea, where he continued his teaching and

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<sup>51</sup> Tertullian, *Apology XXI*.

<sup>52</sup> She hid his clothes.

<sup>53</sup> See Matthew 19:12.

writing. Origin died in 254 C.E. as a result of injuries inflicted on him during the persecution under Emperor Decius.

### **Hippolytus of Rome**

As the third century began, Hippolytus contributed an account of baptism in Rome. When new converts were baptized, they were asked the following three questions:

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?

I believe.

Do you believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was dead and buried, and rose again the third day, alive from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the living and the dead?"

I believe.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, in the holy church, and the resurrection of the body?

I believe.

Hippolytus took baptism very seriously. A new convert's occupation and personal relations were carefully scrutinized. Prebaptismal instruction took at least three years in Rome, and even longer in Syria.

At first people were baptized in the name of Christ alone; but now, it became standard to be baptized in the name of the Trinity. Although Hippolytus's *Old Roman Creed* was in question and answer, it comes very close to the Apostles' Creed, which had no direct link to the apostles. The earliest text of the *Apostles' Creed* dates to approximately 400 C.E.

### **Cyprian of Carthage**

Cyprian was born into a rich and cultured pagan family in the first decade of the third century and became a celebrated orator. In 246 C.E., to the consternation of the entire city, he became a Christian, giving away most of his wealth to the poor. In defense of his conversion, he said, "A second birth created me a new man by means of the Spirit breathed from heaven." He then committed himself to celibacy, poverty, and the Bible.

Shortly after being ordained a priest he went on to serve as Bishop of Carthage (248-258 C.E.), just before the terrible persecution under Decius broke out in 250 C.E. Cyprian left the city and lost face. When the persecution ended, the Church was bitterly divided over whether to welcome back apostates—those who had denied their faith in order to

survive. Cyprian supported a more lenient view. The bitterness of the conflict taught him the importance of Church unity, and he became convinced that this could only be fostered and maintained through prayer. He urged every Christian to recite each day the Lord's Prayer; meditating on each phrase. To assist in this, he wrote a commentary on the Lord's Prayer, showing it to be the model for prayer.

When we pray, we should ensure that we understand the words we use. We should be humble, aware of our own weaknesses, and be eager to receive God's grace. Our bodily posture and our tone of voice should reflect the fact that through prayer we enter God's presence. To speak too loudly to God would be impudent; thus a quiet and modest manner is appropriate. The Lord has instructed us that we should usually pray in private, even in our own bedrooms. This reminds us that God is everywhere, that he hears and sees everything, and that he penetrates the deepest secrets of our hearts. (*On the Lord's Prayer*, Chapters 4 and 28)

In 255 C.E., Cyprian opposed Bishop Stephen of Rome over whether Christian baptism could be received outside the Catholic Church. Cyprian believed that salvation could only be obtained inside the Catholic Church, and so he demanded that members of separatist churches, upon reentering the Catholic Church, be baptized again. Another part of Cyprian's dispute with Stephen involved Stephen's claim to possess a special authority derived from Peter. Stephen appealed to Matthew 16:18-19. Cyprian regarded every Bishop's seat as "the see of Peter," although he admitted that the Roman Church had a special importance because it had been founded so early. Paul's position alongside of Peter's in the early Roman Church now began to fade. The controversy with Stephen ended with Stephen's death, but Cyprian contributed greatly to the concept of apostolic succession. In 258 C.E. Cyprian was arrested and beheaded.

## 4. THE PERSECUTIONS

Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the prize,  
And sailed through bloody seas?  
*Isaac Watts*

As long as the church was regarded as a Jewish sect, the Roman authorities tolerated it. For its first thirty years, Christianity enjoyed the protection of Roman law. This is why Paul called Christians to support and pray for the government, but once Judaism and Christianity went their separate ways, Christians lost their special privileges reserved only for the Jews. Jews were exempted from taking part in the cult of emperor-worship. Christians sought this exemption too, but once the church was composed primarily of Gentiles, they lost it. With their separation from Judaism, Christians were expected to demonstrate their patriotism by offering a pinch of incense on an altar to the divine Emperor—an act, which most people considered symbolic. Christians, however, found themselves unable to participate in Emperor worship. Because of this the official Roman attitude towards Christianity became less and less favorable. Despite the periods of persecution, the church continued to grow. The storms of opposition made the flame of the gospel burn brighter than ever. Tertullian wrote: “The blood of the martyrs is seed.”

### Reasons for the Persecutions

The legal grounds for persecuting Christians were numerous. William Barclay describes six reasons for the persecutions. They are as follows:

1. On the basis of the words of the Sacrament—This is my body, and this is my blood—the story went about that the Christians were cannibals.
2. Because the Christians called their common meal the *Agape*, the Love Feast, it was said that their gatherings were orgies of lust and immorality.
3. Because Christianity did, in fact, often split families, when some members of them became Christians and some did not, the Christians were accused of breaking up homes and “tampering with family relationships.”
4. The heathen accused the Christians of atheism because they could not understand a worship, which had no images of the gods, such as they themselves had.

5. The Christians were accused of being politically disloyal citizens and potential revolutionaries because they could not say: “Caesar is Lord.”

6. The Christians were accused of being incendiaries because they foretold the end of the world in flames and disintegration.

It was not difficult for maliciously minded people to disseminate dangerous rumors and slanders about the Christian Church.<sup>54</sup> Christian writers answered these charges, but, little notice was taken of their writings. Simply to bear the name Christian was a capital offense, probably because rejection of the Roman gods and goddesses was felt to threaten the peace and prosperity that the gods were believed to bring. Refusal to worship the Emperor was treason.

### **Deity of the Emperor**

The idea that the Emperor was divine was not mentioned in Nero’s time. The emperor succeeding Nero did not insist upon universal acknowledgment of the Emperor’s divine status. Vespasian made a joke of posthumous deification, and when asked on his deathbed about his condition, he replied that he felt as if he were about to become a god. At the end of the first century, Domitian went beyond all of his predecessors and referred to himself as *dominus et deus*, lord and god. Christians could not accept such pretensions and flatly rejected the emperor cult. Domitian struck back and Rome became “drunk with the blood of the saints.”<sup>55</sup>

### **Nero (64-68 C.E.)**

The persecutions began under Nero in July of 64 C.E. According to Tacitus, a Roman historian, Nero tried to shift the blame on to the Christians after a rumor arose that he had started a fire, which burned much of the city of Rome.

To kill the rumors, Nero charged and tortured some people hated for their evil practices—the group popularly known as “Christians.” The founder of this sect, Christ, had been put to death by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, when Tiberius was Emperor. Their deadly superstition had been suppressed temporarily, but was beginning to spring up again—not now just in Judea but even in Rome itself where all kinds of sordid and shameful activities are attracted and catch on.

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<sup>54</sup> William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, Volume 1 (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1962), p. 98.

<sup>55</sup> Revelation 17:6

First those who confessed to being Christians were arrested. Then, on information obtained from them, hundreds were convicted, more for their anti-social beliefs than for fire-raising. In their deaths they were made a mockery. They were covered in the skins of wild animals, torn to death by dogs, crucified or set on fire—so that when darkness fell they burned like torches in the night. Nero opened up his own gardens for this spectacle and gave a show in the arena, where he mixed with the crowd, or stood dressed as a charioteer on a chariot. As a result, although they were guilty of being Christians and deserved death, people began to feel sorry for them. For they realized that they were being massacred not for the public good but to satisfy one man's mania.<sup>56</sup>

Both Peter and Paul were executed under Nero. Peter was crucified upside down and Paul, being a Roman citizen, was beheaded. At this point in the persecutions, the charge was arson rather than the refusal to worship the Emperor. Declared a public enemy by the Senate, Nero committed suicide on June 9, 68 C.E. near Rome. With the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., the centers of Christianity became Antioch, Ephesus, and Rome.

### **Domitian (81-96 C.E.)**

The scale and length of the persecutions may have been exaggerated, but the Book of Revelation gives sufficient evidence of their intensity under the Emperor Domitian (81-96 C.E.).

Domitian took the title *dominus et deus* (Master and god), which angered the senators, who saw this as an attempt to dominate them. Everyone was to take the official oath: "By the genius of the Emperor." Such claims were not acceptable to Christians or Jews. On September 16, 96 C.E., Domitian was murdered at the instigation of court officials and his wife, the Empress Domitia.

### **Trajan (98-117 C.E.)**

Letters have survived between the Emperor Trajan and Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia in 111-113 C.E., which indicate that profession of Christianity was a capital offense. The policy, which Pliny followed, and which was recommended by the Emperor, did not involve seeking out Christians for special punishment. If a person was discovered to be a Christian, he or she was given ample opportunity to renounce their faith. Refusal to do so meant execution. This was probably the common policy of the time. Below is one of those letters written by Pliny:

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<sup>56</sup> Tacitus, *Annals* 15-44.

I have never been present at the trial of Christians, and I do not know what to ask or how to punish. I have been very much at a loss to know whether to make any distinction for age or strength, whether to excuse those who have renounced Christianity, whether the name itself, lacking other offense, or the crimes associated with the name should be punished. In the meantime this is what I have done. I have asked the accused whether they were Christians. If they confessed, I asked a second and a third time, threatening penalty. Those who persisted I ordered to be executed, for I did not doubt that, whatever it was they professed, they deserved to be punished for their inflexible obstinacy. There were others of equal madness who, because they were Roman citizens, I sent to Rome. Presently...more cases come to light. An anonymous document came in with many names. I dismissed those who said they were not or never have been Christians, and who in my presence supplicated the gods and placed wine and incense before your image, and especially cursed Christ, which I hear no true Christian will do.<sup>57</sup>

Trajan left Italy in 113 C.E. for his great expedition in the East, directed at the Parthians. As his health failed, he set sail for Italy, but died en route at Selinus in the Roman province of Cilicia (in present day Turkey). His nephew, Hadrian, succeeded him as emperor.

Seven letters of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, written on his way to Rome to be executed for being a Christian, survive. In the letters he mentions others who preceded him. One of his letters was addressed to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (Izmir), who in turn became a martyr at the age of eighty-six. Polycarp was martyred about 156-160 C.E.

### **Marcus Aurelius (161-180 C.E.)**

Although he was a Stoic philosopher, Marcus Aurelius took seriously the popular rites performed for the welfare of the state. As a propitiation to the gods, he compelled criminals sentenced to death to slaughter one another in the amphitheater. Before starting out to fight the Marcomanni, he called the priests of Rome to sacrifice oxen for the safety of his arms. Christians, who refused to take part in such practices, appeared to Marcus Aurelius as obstinate fanatics, dangerous to the public security.

In the middle of the second century, Bishop Telesphorus of Rome was executed during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, who thoroughly

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<sup>57</sup> Pliny, *Epistulae* 96, translated by R.H. Bainton.

disliked Christians. The executions did not only take place in Rome, but also in provinces as far away as Gaul and Africa.

The visible decline of the Roman Empire is generally thought to have begun with the death of Marcus Aurelius, who died of the plague on March 17, 180 C.E. He is remembered for his *Meditations*, twelve books of moral precepts written in Greek. He believed that the moral life led to tranquility and stressed the virtues of wisdom, justice, fortitude, and moderation.

### **Septimius Severus (193-211 C.E.)**

Septimius Severus was the first Emperor who was a native of Africa. He was born in Leptis Magna (near Al Khums, Libya). With his accession, the cult of the deified emperor was divested of all the restrictions, which had been imposed upon it by the Emperor Augustus. Christians and Jews simply could not accept this new reality. In 202 C.E. Septimius Severus sought to check the expansion of these two intransigent religions by prohibiting conversions to Judaism and to Christianity on pain of death.

There is a moving story of martyrdom in North Africa, which resulted from the Emperor's edict prohibiting conversions. Two women were involved, Perpetua, of the nobility, and Felicitas, a slave girl that accompanied her. Perpetua was twenty-two years old and was nursing a small child. Felicitas was pregnant and feared that she would not be able to die with the others because Rome did not execute pregnant women. As the day of execution drew near, Perpetua's father tried to save his daughter. "Daughter," he pleaded, "pity my white hairs! Pity your father, if I am worthy to be called your father.... Give me not over to the reproach of men! ... Consider your son, who cannot live without you. Lay aside your pride and do not ruin us all." Perpetua grieved for his sake. At the trial, the procurator echoing her father's concern, said, "Spare your father's white hairs. Spare the tender years of your child. Offer a sacrifice for the safety of the emperors." Perpetua answered, "No." When asked, "Are you a Christian?" she said, "I am."

The jailer was kindly disposed, and allowed friends to visit the prisoners. Perpetua expressed her grief: "Now when the games approached, my father came to me worn with trouble and began to pluck out his beard and to throw himself on his face and curse his years, and...I sorrowed for the unhappiness of his old age." The condemned prisoners prayed that Felicitas might not be left behind. When Felicitas cried out, the jailers said to her: "If you cry out at this, what will it be when you are thrown to the beasts?" She answered, "Now I suffer what I suffer, but then another will be in me who will suffer for me, because I, too, am to suffer for him." After giving birth to a girl, Felicitas gave her newborn daughter to one of her sisters, who raised the little girl as her own. When Perpetua, Felicitas, and

the others passed by the procurator's stand, they said, "You are judging us. God will judge you." They were then executed in the arena at Carthage.<sup>58</sup> The persecution under Emperor Septimius Severus did not last very long, and when it was over, the Church enjoyed an almost unbroken peace down to the persecution of Decius in 250 C.E.

### **Decius (249-251 C.E.)**

In 250 C.E., the most violent persecution the church had yet faced, was initiated by the Emperor Decius. Imperial edicts commanded all citizens of the Empire to sacrifice to the traditional Roman gods. Those who did so were given certificates (*libelli* in Latin) as evidence that they had obeyed the order. Those who refused and were unable (or unwilling) to obtain false *libelli* from sympathetic or corrupt officials were executed. Many Christians complied to save their lives. Others were able to obtain certificates without having sacrificed.

An unknown number of Christians were imprisoned or executed. Among them were Bishops Fabian of Rome and Babylas of Antioch. Even Pope Cronelius and his rival, Bishop Hippolytus, died in the mines in Sardinia. Cyprian, Bishop of Cathage, was forced into exile, and Origen, the church father, was imprisoned and tortured. The church was long divided over the issue of *lapsi*, what to do with those who publicly accepted the orders of Decius, but afterwards returned to the Church. The Church was split over whether or not they could ever be readmitted. For some Christians, *lapsi* or apostasy was an unforgivable sin. For others, it was forgivable, provided there was appropriate repentance.

In June of 251 C.E., Decius led an army against the Goths. Although surrounded, the Goths refused to surrender. In the final assault on them, Gallus killed Decius, and then became the Emperor.

### **Gallus (251-253 C.E.)**

The persecution of Decius lasted for approximately two years. Although his successor, the Emperor Gallus (251-253) kept the anti-Christian measures alive, persecution was not as widespread as it had been under Decius. In trying to put down an insurrection, Gallus was killed by one of his own soldiers.

### **Valerian (253-260 C.E.)**

A few years later, persecution was renewed with a fresh ferocity under the Emperor Valerian. Church leaders were singled out and ordered to

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<sup>58</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *Christendom*, Vol. I (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1996), pp. 73-74.

worship the old gods, under threat of exile and imprisonment. Christians were forbidden to hold church meetings or to visit cemeteries under threat of death. A severe edict prescribed death for church leaders, confiscation of property, and death for all Christians who would not desert the faith. It was during this persecution that Cyprian died in Carthage, Bishop Sixtus II and the Deacon Laurentius in Rome, and Bishop Fructuosus in Tarragona in Spain. It was a fearful period of time lasting, with some intermissions, from 250 to 259 C.E.

The persecution ended when the Persians destroyed the Roman army and took Valerian prisoner at Edessa (Urfa, Turkey) in 260 C.E. Valerian died in captivity, and his son Gallienus succeeded him. Gallienus, a weak and incompetent ruler, gave up the struggle against Christianity. Church property was returned and Christianity was tolerated. The toleration was not legalized, for the old laws against Christianity were not repealed. Gallienus' attitude was not that of a frontier general, but that of a cultured patron of philosophy. The peace with Christianity would last until 303 C.E. when Diocletian would initiate the fiercest persecution of them all. The Church, however, had and would come out of the persecutions stronger than ever.

### **Diocletian (284-305 C.E.)**

The fiercest persecution of all began in 303 C.E. under the Emperor Diocletian, a man of humble origins, probably born of slaves. Following a distinguished career in the army, Diocletian's fellow soldiers raised him to imperial dignity. In character he was a rude but firm supporter of heathenism, which might explain why his persecution of Christianity was so intense. To a man of his organizing abilities, the closely-knit, hierarchically ordered Church presented serious political problems. The Church must have seemed like a state within the state, over which, Diocletian had no control. Although the Church had never been involved in any uprising against the Empire, it was growing in numbers and strength. Two courses lay open for any emperor: (1) destroy it, or (2) make it the state religion and secure political control over it. Diocletian chose the former and Constantine the latter. Diocletian moved slowly, for Christianity had penetrated his immediate family. Many of Diocletian's slaves and servants, as well as his wife and daughter, were either believers or favorably disposed to Christianity.

In February of 303 C.E., Diocletian issued four edicts against Christianity, which were enforced with varying degrees of severity. The decrees of 303 C.E. ordered (1) the destruction of church buildings, (2) the confiscation of Christian books, (3) the dismissal of Christians from the government and army, and (4) the imprisonment of the clergy. A fifth edict,

issued in 304 C.E., ordered all Christians to offer sacrifices to the pagan gods. H.B. Workman in his *Persecution in the Early Church* describes the kinds of persecution Christians had to face.

Some...were shut up in a sack with snakes and thrown into the sea; others were tied to huge stones and cast into a river. For Christians the cross itself was not deemed sufficient agony; hanging on trees, they were beaten with rods until their bowels gushed out, while vinegar and salt were rubbed into their wounds. ...during the persecution of Diocletian, Christians were tied to catapults, and so wrenched limb from limb. Some, like Ignatius, were thrown to the beasts; other(s) tied to their horns. Women were stripped, enclosed in nets, and exposed to the attacks of furious bulls. Many were “made to lie on sharp shells,” and tortured with scrapers, claws and pincers before being delivered to the mercy of the flames.

In Asia Minor soldiers destroyed an entire town and its inhabitants, who were predominantly Christian. In Rome church property was confiscated and many Christians martyred. The violence was especially severe for Christians living in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt. As in the days of Decius, there were many martyrs and many who *lapsed*. Diocletian retired as Emperor to his country estate at Salona in Dalmatia in 305 C.E., but the persecutions continued in the East—spurred by Galerius, Maximinus Daza, and others until about 324 C.E.

### **What about Lapsed Christians?**

Many Christians were willing to suffer as martyrs rather than to betray their Lord. Some, however, renounced their faith under pressure of imprisonment, torture, and death. Others got pagan neighbors to sacrifice on their behalf, or obtained false certificates from sympathetic officials. At the opposite extreme, some Christians eagerly sought out martyrdom, even when it was not forced upon them. Origen, for example, as a boy in Alexandria had to be restrained forcibly by his mother from leaving home to volunteer for martyrdom. Volunteering for martyrdom, however, was strongly discouraged by Christian leaders.

Following each wave of persecution, the Church was faced with the problem of what to do with those Christians who buckled under the pressure of persecution. Could they be taken back into the church? Baptism was generally held to cover only the sins already committed. Post-baptismal lapses required special treatment. Some Christian leaders claimed that offenses such as idolatry after baptism were unpardonable, but others accepted those who repented. Callistus, Bishop of Rome (217-222 C.E.) was among the more moderate leaders. He appealed to Paul’s letters and the parables of the lost sheep and the prodigal son as proof that every

sin is forgivable. Sinners who turn from their sin should be forgiven. His views enjoyed wide acceptance in the Church, but not without strong opposition.

The opposition came from Novatian, a presbyter in the Church of Rome. Cornelius, a more liberal leader, was elected Bishop of Rome, but a strong minority voted for Novatian. The position of Novatian had been that those who had given up the faith under pressure should not be welcomed back into the Church. Novatian split the Church over the issue and other separatist Bishops were appointed in Africa, Asia Minor and elsewhere. The division continued until the seventh century when the Novatianist churches waned in influence and were reabsorbed back into the mainstream of Christianity.

A similar division took place in North Africa following the persecution under Diocletian. Bishop Felix of Apthungi, consecrated Caecilian in Carthage. This created a difficult situation. Bishop Felix had previously surrendered the Scriptures to the police. He was therefore regarded as tainted by the stricter members of the church, who elected a rival bishop. Donatus, from whom the Donatist movement derived its name, succeeded this new Bishop. This controversy led to the principle that baptism and ordination do not depend on the moral character of the person who performs them, but on Christ and the Spirit. It now became the practice to allow lapsed Christians back into the Church provided they gave evidence of repentance. The Donatists rejected this position and required anyone joining their churches to be rebaptized.

In the late third and early fourth centuries the practice of the veneration of the martyrs grew rapidly. The events of the last and most violent persecutions led to an exaggeration of the scale and extent of the earlier persecutions. The numbers of martyrs and their sufferings were greatly magnified. Some converts from paganism brought with them pre-Christian ideas so that in the Church the martyrs began to take on the role that the gods had played in the old religions. Relics of the martyrs were superstitiously cherished and their graves became sites of pilgrimages and prayer. Although not all church leaders approved of such things, the veneration of martyrs and other saints took on a greater and greater place in popular religion.

### **The Growth of Christianity**

With the threat of persecution, how did Christianity grow? There were two ways in which Christianity spread. The first was through preaching and philosophical argument. Paul began his preaching in the Synagogues, but after a time, the Synagogues were closed to him. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., Jews took even stronger action against Christian

preaching in Synagogues. The early Christians also resorted to philosophical argument, which can be traced back to the philosopher Socrates. For a period of time, Paul argued daily with the philosophers in the marketplace of Athens. He even hired the lecture-hall of Tyrannus at Ephesus to present the case for Christ.

As congregations were established, preaching within churches became popular. At first most of the people who attended worship were already Christians, but later the audience widened. NonChristians were welcomed to the first part of the service, where Christ was proclaimed; but they were not allowed to attend the Communion Service, which usually followed the preaching service. Even during the persecutions, teaching new converts was practiced. In Rome, Justin Martyr held classes for enquirers in a room over public baths. In Alexandria, Pantaenus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen headed a well-known "School of Instruction" for those desiring to become Christians. With the intensity of persecution and the threat of death, preaching and philosophical argument became very dangerous, and it was rarely mentioned as a method of evangelism in the second and third centuries.

The second, and most effective, way in which Christianity spread was through personal witness. Personal friendships formed the basis for winning many people to Christ. Justin Martyr became a Christian after talking with an old man at Ephesus. Cyprian was converted through talking to a church elder. Family influence was also a significant factor. Origen came from a Christian family, and he owed much to his parents for the development of his faith. Personal evangelism was frequently backed up by outstanding acts of kindness. The Christian life-style had a powerful influence in a society where kindness, honesty, and personal purity were rare. Christians who lived out these virtues attracted serious enquiry. Their personal witness in the midst of persecution had an enormous effect, even on those hostile to Christianity. The Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, admitted that Christian bravery in the face of death was praiseworthy. As a result of the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas in Carthage, it was reported that the prison governor was converted. Personal witness is the greatest reason for the growth of Christianity during the persecutions.

## 5. THE FIRST HERESIES

Our falsified and inauthentic ways of dealing with our fellow men  
are allied to our falsifications of the idea of God.  
Our unjust society and our perverted idea of God  
are in close and terrible alliance.

*Juan Luis Segundo*<sup>59</sup>

At the same time that the Church was struggling for its life under persecution, it was also forced to deal with heresies or false teachings.

### **The Ebionites**

At first all Christians were Jewish. This began to change with Paul's missionary journeys as he succeeded in winning Gentiles to Christ. Conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christians emerged on whether or not it was necessary for Gentiles to convert to Judaism before becoming Christians. During the Jewish wars, however, all Christians refused to involve themselves in the Jewish revolt, and this alienated them from Judaism. Following the destruction of Jerusalem, Christianity moved away from Judaism and very few Jews converted to Christianity.

There were, however, some Jews who insisted that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, who completely fulfilled the Jewish law, and was consequently chosen by God to be the Messiah. Jesus improved and added to the law, and promised to come again to found a Messianic Kingdom for the Jews. Those Jews who practiced this form of Christianity were called Ebionites. The Ebionites differed from the main stream of Christianity in that they rejected the divinity of Jesus and emphasized his humanness. He was an ordinary man who received divine power when he was baptized.

### **The Gnostics**

The Gnostics followed a number of religious movements, including Christianity, and they stressed a sharp dualism between the spiritual and the material, and that salvation came through a secret knowledge.<sup>60</sup>

Let us look first at their sharp dualism. All Gnostics considered the material creation of the world evil. Some of them taught that the creation of the world resulted from the fall of Sophia (Wisdom). The result of considering the material world evil took two forms. Some Gnostics indulged in immoral behavior, claiming that they were "pearls" which

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<sup>59</sup> Juan Luis Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, trans. by John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1978), pp. 7-8.

<sup>60</sup> The Greek word for *knowledge* is *gnosis*.

could not be stained by the external mud. Most Gnostics, however, took an ascetic path, rejecting sex and marriage. Human beings, they insisted, were originally unisex. The creation of woman was the source of evil, and the procreation of children multiplied the number of souls in bondage to the evil powers of darkness.

Salvation from the darkness of this evil material world came through knowledge (gnosis). It was believed that sparks of divinity lived within the bodies of certain spiritual individuals, destined for salvation. God revealed to them his secret knowledge (gnosis), awakening them so that they could escape from the prison of their evil material bodies. Ultimate salvation consisted of passing safely through the planetary regions controlled by demonic powers to the heavenly realm where persons would be reunited with God.

Gnosticism enjoyed great success because it offered explanations of evil and a way of escape to one's spiritual home. Most of what we know about Gnosticism comes from the early Church Fathers, such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Origen, Tertullian, and Epiphanius, all who described it in order to combat it. They considered Gnosticism heresy. Some of their accounts have been confirmed through recent discoveries of ancient Gnostic writings, such as the Nag Hammadi texts.

The Church had several problems with the Christian Gnostics. Most of them rejected the Hebrew Scriptures<sup>61</sup> claiming that the God described there justified war and was driven by anger rather than by love. This God, they insisted, was incompatible with the loving God described by Jesus. Even if one viewed the God of the Hebrew Scriptures as the Creator, he was viewed as creating an evil material world. Even those, who looked to the Christian Scriptures, ran into difficulty. They could not conceive of Jesus being a material being. He only appeared to be human. Christian Gnosticism concluded that Jesus was a spiritual being. Any idea that he had a material or physical body had to be rejected. This also meant that any idea of a physical resurrection could not be accepted. For the Church this was heresy.

### **The Marcionites**

Along with the Gnostics, the Marcionites presented a tremendous challenge to mainstream Christianity. Marcion, the son of a bishop, was born in Sinope, Pontus, on the Black Sea. In 140 C.E. he went to Rome, where he fell under the influence of the Gnostic teacher Cerdo, who believed that the God of the Hebrew Scriptures was essentially different

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<sup>61</sup> The Old Testament

from the God of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jewish God, he said, was unknowable; whereas, the Christian God is revealed. The God of the Hebrew Scriptures was sheer justice; whereas, the God of the Christian Scriptures is loving and gracious. Marcion developed Cerdo's division between the God of the Hebrew Scriptures and the God of Jesus Christ. He went on to say that Jesus Christ was not born of a woman; instead, he suddenly appeared in the synagogue at Capernaum as a grown man in 29 C.E. Although he accepted the necessity of Christ's life and crucifixion for salvation, he also believed that Christ's human experiences and sufferings were apparent and not real. Marcion also rejected the idea of the resurrection of the body.

One can see clearly the influence of Gnosticism on the Marcionites, and vice versa. Both rejected the Hebrew Scriptures and any idea of a God who might create material things. The world had to be rejected as evil. The body had to be denied and discarded since the spirit alone can be conceived of as being good. Some of the Church fathers fought the Marcionites. Justin Martyr, for example, accused Marcion of being aided by the devil to blaspheme and deny that God was the creator of the universe. Tertullian wrote *Against Marcion* about 207 C.E, and accused Marcion of being a foe of all true Christian beliefs.

The challenge of Marcion, however, did begin the slow process of developing a Christian canon or New Testament. Because Marcion believed that the God of the Hebrew Scriptures favored the Jews exclusively, Marcion rejected the Hebrew Scriptures and all those Christian writings that favorably quoted Hebrew texts, such as Matthew, Mark, Acts, and Hebrews. Marcion created the first list of Scripture. He did this by listing a mutilated version of the Gospel of Luke, cutting out all references to the nativity stories, and including ten letters of Paul. He rejected the Pastoral letters (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus). He believed that Paul was the only apostle that did not corrupt the Gospel of Jesus. As long as Marcion's heresy was such a threat, mainstream Christian teachers did not emphasize many of Paul's distinctive doctrines, such as law and grace. That had to wait for Augustine, who was the first to recognize the significance of Paul's theology.

### **The Montanists**

Around 172 C.E, a young Christian named Montanus began attracting attention in Phrygia, a region in western Asia Minor. Two prophetesses, Prisca and Maximilla joined him. They all claimed to be mouthpieces of

the Paraclete.<sup>62</sup> Believing that God spoke through them in the first person, just as he did in the Hebrew Scriptures, they proclaimed themselves as the “New Prophecy.” Through their teachings, they called upon Christians to relish persecution and martyrdom. Marital relations were to be abandoned in favor of chastity, and fasts were to be multiplied. Maximilla predicted: “After me there will be no prophecy, but the End.”

The Motanist emphasis on visions, speaking in tongues, and intense religious excitement soon attracted suspicion, and they were condemned as heretics. Some have viewed them as fanatics, but not heretics. One of their most famous converts was Tertullian of Carthage, who in his later life believed that the prophecies given by the Paraclete perfected the church’s discipline. Three of those disciplines had to do with forgiveness of serious sin after baptism, the banning of remarriage, and flight from persecution. The Montanists scolded the “unspiritual church” for rejecting their Paraclete.<sup>63</sup>

As the Church began to make lists, which eventually became the New Testament or the Christian Scriptures, the Montanists refused to do so. They wanted Christians to depend upon the Holy Spirit. In response to what the Church was doing, Tertullian concluded: “The Holy Spirit has been chased into a book.” The Church lost much by condemning the Montanists as heretics. In spite of their excesses, they stood for the conviction that the Holy Spirit was as active in their time as in the time of the apostles. They saw in the future visions of greater manifestations of the Spirit, which were promised by Joel for the last days.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Monarchians (Sabellians)**

In the late second and early third centuries Monarchianism emerged in Asia Minor and flourished in the West. Members of this movement were also called Sabellians, after one of the Monarchian leaders, Sabellius. They were anxious to emphasize the divine *unity* or *monarchy*<sup>65</sup> of God. To maintain that unity they taught that God existed in different modes. Because of this teaching, members of the Monarchians were sometimes called Modalists. God’s different names, they insisted, describe the different modes or roles he played at different times, but he could only exist in one mode or play one role at a time.

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<sup>62</sup> *Paraclete* is the Greek title used in John’s Gospel for the Holy Spirit. See John 16:12-14.

<sup>63</sup> Their Holy Spirit

<sup>64</sup> Joel 2:28-32

<sup>65</sup> In Greek *monarchy* means “single principle.”

To make things even more complicated, another name was given to the Monarchians, and that was *Patripassians*. This name came from the Latin word, *pater*, for Father and from the Latin word, *passus*, for Son. The combination of these two words, were given to the Monarchians because they could not believe in the unity of God and the divinity of Christ at the same time. The same might be said in regard to the Holy Spirit. That is why God's different names, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, had to be understood in the different modes or roles they played at different times. The Monarchians were attacked on all sides. In Rome Hippolytus and Novatian attacked them. In Africa they were attacked by Tertullian, and in Alexandria Origen attacked them. It was Tertullian, however, who gave the Latin West a theological vocabulary for the concept of the Trinity.

### **The Novatianists**

Having been defeated in an election for bishop in 251 C.E., Novatian set up a rival congregation. Members of his movement were called Novatianists. The main issue had to do with how to treat Christians who had renounced Christ during the persecutions. Novatian and his followers took a very rigid line and refused to receive them back into the Church. Novatian was a gifted theologian, and one of his most important writings supported the doctrine of the Trinity. It was not for their theology that they were called heretics, but for the way in which they practiced their faith. They set up a network of small congregations, calling themselves *Cathari* (pure ones) to distinguish themselves from the more lax churches. Those who joined their churches had to be baptized as if they were joining the only true church for the first time. Other rigid stands they took had to do with major sins committed after baptism and who could participate in the Lord's Supper. They insisted that there was no forgiveness for major sins after baptism, and those who had been married more than once could not participate in the Lord's Supper. Novatian was martyred during the persecution of Emperor Valerian in 258 C.E.

Although Novatian theology was orthodox, the Novatianists were considered heretics until the time of Constantine, when an edict in 326 C.E. granted them toleration and the right to own their own church buildings and burial places. A Novatianist bishop, Acesius, was even present at the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. Despite official toleration, Novatianists continued to be harassed by the official Church. The movement, however, with the passage of time, was finally reabsorbed into the mainstream churches.

### **The Manichaeans**

The founder of the Manichaeans was a Persian named, Mani (216-276 C.E.) who was born in Mesopotamia. Mani was brought up among a sect

of Jewish Christians, but left them after he received *revelations*. As a result of these revelations, Mani called himself “the apostle of Jesus Christ” and began a mission first to his own family and then to all the known world. An early source described Mani as a man with a book in one hand and a staff in the other. In addition to that, he always wore flamboyant clothing, a blue cloak and red and green trousers.

Being a gifted painter, Mani composed the *Ardahang*, a picture book, to proclaim his faith among the illiterate. Mani taught that there were two independent eternal principles, light and darkness, God and matter. In the first epoch, light and darkness were separate; in the second epoch, they were intermingled; and in the final epoch they were to be separated once more. Jesus came to release the souls of light from the prison of their bodies. The Manichaeans held to Gnostic beliefs, but claimed to be the final, universal religion. This motivated them to become zealous missionaries to Africa, to Europe, and even to China. They posed a serious threat to Christianity until the time of Augustine, who had been a Manichaean for nine years, but was converted to the Catholic Church and opposed the Manichaean movement on the grounds that it was impossible to demonstrate the truth by rational means. Augustine countered this Manichaean emphasis with his famous principle: “Believe in order to understand.”

Manichaean communities were sharply divided between what they called the *elect* and the *hearers*. The *hearers* were ordinary people, who were expected to offer daily gifts of fruit, cucumbers, and melons to the *elect*. These fruit were thought to possess a great deal of light. The *elect* were ascetics and vegetarians. At death the souls of the *hearers* were reborn in other people. Only the *elect*, distinguished by the white robes they wore, were eligible for offices and for the most sacred rites.

Mani died was beheaded in prison in 276 C.E. He was buried by his followers at Gundishapur in southwestern Persia. The movement to which he gave birth faced serious opposition in the fourth century by both the State and the Church and was in serious decline by the sixth century. Other movements took on some of its characteristics.

### **The Donatists**

The Donatists protested for a holy church, for purity of discipline, and defiance against godless rulers. They were named after Donatus, their bishop in Carthage from 313 to 355 C.E. This happened when Felix of

Apthungi, who had been guilty of *traditio*,<sup>66</sup> took part in the ordination of Caecilian, the new Catholic bishop. Felix had handed over the Scriptures during the Great Persecution. Surrender of biblical manuscripts to persecutors, was viewed by many as apostasy. Donatus' famous question was: "What has the Emperor to do with the church?" His answer was, "Nothing." The Donatists also believed that Christ was merely a temporary appearance of God, disguised as a human being. This was a denial of Jesus' humanity. They believed only in his divinity.

As a result the Donatists believed that they alone made up the true Church, and that the Catholics were the apostates. Continued persecution and martyrdom confirmed them in their convictions. Donatism actually became the dominant church in North Africa, but after Parmenian succeeded Donatus, it began to decline. Another reason for decline had to do with Donatist support of revolts against Roman rule. In the end Donatist leaders were no intellectual match for Aurelius and Augustine.

The controversy with the Donatists resulted in the principle that baptism and ordination do not depend on the moral character of the person who performs them, but on Christ and the Holy Spirit. The Donatists had insisted that baptism and ordination did depend on the moral character of those who performed them; hence, they fell into what the Church defined as heretical teachings.

### **The Arians**

The Arian controversy arose about 320 C.E. in Alexandria, Egypt, where an aged presbyter Arius taught that Christ the Son, although the highest of all creatures, was still only a creature. There was a beginning to his existence: "There was [a time] when he was not."<sup>67</sup> Because he was made out of nothing, he had changed and was subject to change. Arius was opposed by Athanasius, then only a deacon and secretary to Bishop Alexander (312-328 C.E.) of Alexandria, who argued that humanity's eternal salvation would be imperiled if the relation between the Son and Father, were not eternal and unchangeable. If the Son were a creature he would be a subordinate god, incapable of saving humanity. Only by a real Godhead coming into union with full humanity in Christ could the transformation of the human into the divine be accomplished in Him. As Athanasius said: "He [Christ] was made man that we might be made divine." In the mind of Athanasius, the great error of Arianism was that it gave no basis for a real salvation.

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<sup>66</sup> *Traditio* meant "handing over" or "betrayal." Being a people of the book, the handing over of Scripture to the authorities was considered a grave sin.

<sup>67</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, V.

It was difficult to settle the dispute between Arius and Athanasius by Scripture and Tradition because both parties could find support for their position. The Arians could appeal to the statement from the Epistle to the Colossians that Christ was “the first-born of all creation.” Did that not imply that Jesus was created? The Athanasians could in turn quote from the opening chapter of the Gospel of John, where Christ the Word was in the beginning with God. In the Tradition, the Arians could refer to Tertullian, who had given the Son a beginning in time; and the Athanasians could look to that part of Origen’s teaching that declared Christ’s existence to have been timeless.

When Scripture and Tradition could not find a consensus in the Church, Constantine summoned a council to meet in May of 325 C.E. at Nicaea to settle the matter. His intention was that Christianity should unify, not divide, the Empire. The council was called the First Ecumenical (or Universal) Council because it included bishops from the East and the West. While the Council did not accomplish everything Constantine desired, it did reject the Arian view of the subordination of the Son to the Father. The Greek word used to express their full equality was *homoousios*, meaning “of the same substance or being.” The English equivalent, derived from the Latin, is *consubstantial*. The Father and the Son were described as two persons sharing in one being or substance. With the Holy Spirit they constitute the Trinity. Both Arius and Athanasius experienced banishments, but in the end, Athanasius’ teaching endured. Arius was to be restored to church fellowship in 336 C.E., but on the evening before the formal ceremony was to take place, he suddenly died. He was an aged man, and the excitement may have been fatal.

### **The Pelagians**

Pelagius was a British, or perhaps an Irish monk. No one knows for certain. He was a man of excellent reputation, a great deal of education, and of great moral earnestness. Upon settling in Rome in about the year 400 C.E., Pelagius was shocked at the low tone of Roman morals and set about to secure more strenuous ethical standards. This eventually led to a conflict with a theologian with whom he was no match—Augustine.

The teaching of Pelagius was not complicated. He held to the freedom of the human will. “If I ought,” he insisted, “I can.” In saying this, however, he had to reject the teaching of “original sin,” which stated that sin is inherited from Adam. Pelagius taught that everyone has the power not to sin. Recognizing that the masses were quick to follow the example Adam set, Pelagius still believed that everyone had the power and duty to keep the divine laws of God.

In about 410 C.E., Pelagius and one of his followers, Coelestius, went to North Africa to call on Augustine, without finding him. Augustine soon heard of Pelagius and began to oppose him. Believing that he had been saved from his sins by irresistible divine grace, which he could never have overcome by his own strength, Augustine accused Pelagius of denying original sin, rejecting salvation by infused grace, and affirming human power to live without sin. Actually, Pelagius did not reject grace, but to him grace had to do with the remission of sins in baptism. To Augustine the main work of grace was that infusion of love by which one's character was gradually transformed. Although Pelagius found a great deal of support, his ideas were condemned in both the West and the East as heresy in 431 C.E. at the Third General Council in Ephesus. Pelagius did not live to see his ideas officially rejected, for he probably died around 420 C.E.

### **The Nestorians**

The primary leader of the Nestorians was Nestorius, who was born around 381 C.E. He was a native of Germanica in Euphratesian Syria. He was taught theology in Antioch by Theodore of Mopsuestia, whose views he faithfully followed. After becoming a famous preacher in Antioch, Theodosius II made him Bishop of Constantinople in 428 C.E. Upon becoming a bishop, he immediately began an offensive against Arian and Novatian heretics. His support of Anastasius, his chaplain, forced him to reveal his own views, which brought about his condemnation for heresy in the Council of Ephesus in 431 C.E. Anastasius objected to the designation of Mary as "bearer of God," and Nestorius defended him, saying, "God is not a baby two or three months old." In defending Anastasius, Nestorius rejected the word *theotokos*<sup>68</sup>, making it appear that he held Christ to be made up of two persons. He did not deny the deity of Christ, but in emphasizing his humanity, he pictured the relation between the two natures in terms of the merging of wills rather than that of an essential union. Although he never divided Christ into "two sons," Son of God and son of Mary, he refused to attribute to the divine nature the human acts and sufferings of the human Jesus. To call Mary the mother of God, he insisted, was tantamount to declaring that the divine nature could be born of a woman, or that God could be three days old. In the end, Nestorius was able to distinguish the two natures, but he could not describe how they came together in the person of Jesus Christ of the Gospels. "I hold the natures apart," he said, "but unite the worship."

Nestorius was condemned more for ecclesiastical than doctrinal reasons. He was the Emperor's nominee for Bishop of Constantinople,

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<sup>68</sup> *Theotokos* means "God-bearer, mother of God."

where he was soon hated for his assaults on Jews and heretics. One of his harshest opponents was Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria (412-444 C.E.). He was outraged when Nestorius listened to the complaints of some of the Alexandrian clergy whom he had deposed. Further disapproval of Nestorius came when he gave refuge to Pelagian exiles, who had been excommunicated in the West. Cyril accused Nestorius of being an adoptionist and slandered him to Rome, where Pope Celestine was upset about Nestorius' reception of the Pelagians. Celestine commissioned Cyril to carry out a Roman Synod's judgment against Nestorius, and Cyril demanded that Nestorius agree to twelve "anathemas" which condemned the dual nature of Christ and the teachings of the Antioch School, where Nestorius had studied. Nestorius countered with his own twelve "anathemas." All this came to a head at the Council of Ephesus in 431 C.E. Theodosius II who, up until then had been a supporter of Nestorius, called the Council. Cyril had Nestorius deposed before the late arrival of Nestorius' Syrian supporters. Nestorius was sent into Exile, where he wrote his apology under the pseudonym, *The Bazaar of Heraclides*. In his apology, Nestorius tried to justify his position and answer Cyril's criticisms. Around 451 C.E., still in Exile, Nestorius died in Upper Egypt.

## 6. THE CONSTANTINIAN ERA BEGINS

By this sign you will conquer.

*Vision of Constantine*

Diocletian divided the Empire into two parts, the East and the West, each with its own capital, chief ruler (Augustus) and sub-ruler (Caesar). In the East, the chief ruler was Diocletian himself. He dominated both East and West. In the West the chief ruler was Maximian. The sub rulers were Galerius in the East and Constantinus in the West. The plan was to create a situation in which there would be no more civil wars. Both chief rulers would retire at the same time, and the sub-rulers would be elevated to chief rulers. The whole Empire would also be divided into ninety-six provinces, and no provincial commander would have a large enough military force to revolt against the Eastern or Western Empires. In doing this, Diocletian laid the groundwork not only for a divided Empire, but also for a divided Church. He himself managed to retire to live as a gentleman farmer on his estate on the coast of Dalmatia (modern Yugoslavia). Maximian also retired, and so the two sub-rulers (Caesars), Galerius in the East and Constantinus in the West, replaced them as heads of the Eastern and Western Empires.

### **The Rise of Constantine**

A problem, however, arose when Constantinus died. His son Constantine took command of the army in Britain and Gaul and demanded recognition as his father's successor. Galerius in the East consented, but granted him only junior status. In the West, Maxentius, the son of Maximian, decided to replace his retired father as chief ruler of the West. Constantine then returned to Italy and marched upon Rome. Maxentius foolishly set forth to meet him and was defeated at the Milvian Bridge on October 28, 312 C.E. While Maxentius was crossing the bridge, he was attacked and drowned in the Tiber River. Had he stayed in Rome, he might have been able to withstand a lengthy siege. With his victory, Constantine became the sole ruler of the Western Empire. Meanwhile Licinius became the chief ruler in the East. Constantine and Licinius met in Milan in 313 C.E. to issue the Edict of Milan. This edict gave toleration and freedom to Christianity, but it stopped short of making Christianity the official religion. After a struggle with Licinius in 314 C.E., Constantine emerged as supreme ruler of the whole Empire, East and West. The struggle between East and West is very complicated, but the main point is that Constantine became the dominating ruler of the West. Christianity was at last free of persecution by its enemies, but it now came under the control of the Roman imperial throne.

Constantine's victory has been attributed to his conversion. On the night before the Battle at the Milvian Bridge, fearing Maxentius' mastery of magical arts, Constantine prayed to the "Supreme God" and then had a vision and a dream. In the vision he saw a cross in the noonday sky "above the sun," and with it the words, "By this sign you will conquer." That same night Constantine had a dream in which Christ commanded him to use the sign, Chi-Rho, the initial letters of the name of Christ, as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies. Constantine had the sign painted on his soldiers' helmets and shields, and entered the conflict with Maxentius as a Christian. Elements of the above story have been doubted, but Constantine's new allegiance to Christianity was genuine, even though his understanding of Christianity was less than accurate. For example, he did not distinguish clearly between the Father of Jesus Christ and the divine Sun. Constantine also retained the pagan high priest's title of *Pontifex Maximus* and for a decade his coins continued to feature some of the pagan gods, noticeably his own favorite, the Unconquered Sun. Retaining pagan symbols was a necessary compromise with his pagan subjects. His delay of baptism until he was near death, however, is understandable. This was a common practice of the time. Delaying baptism was a device for avoiding mortal sin.

### **The Influence of Constantine**

It is important to understand Constantine's previous religion to understand the influence of Constantine on Christianity. If the story of the cross in the sky is true, then Constantine may have interpreted the sign as coming from his own special deity, the Unconquered Sun, who was commanding him to rely on and to worship the Christian God. Constantine continued to identify the sun with the Christian God in many ways, which was made easier by Christian writers and artists who portrayed Christ as the source of light and salvation. A mosaic from a third century tomb found under St. Peter's in Rome, for example, portrays Jesus as the sun God in his chariot. In 321 C.E., Constantine made the first day of the week a holiday. He called it "the venerable day of the Sun" (Sunday). As the pagan symbols began to disappear, the Unconquered Sun was the last to go.

The Church took over many of those pagan ideas and images. The celebration of Christ's birth on December 25<sup>th</sup> had previously been observed as the birthday of the Sun. Saturnalia, the Roman winter festival of December 17-21 provided the merriment, gift-giving and candles used in later Christian observances of Christmas. Up to this time, the use of candles, incense, and garlands had been avoided because of their ties to paganism. The veneration of the Virgin Mary was stimulated by parallels in pagan religion, notably Artemis (Diana) of Ephesus and Isis of Egypt. Many people connected Mary with Isis, whose worshippers called her "the

Great Virgin” and “Mother of the God.” Many looked to Mary for comfort when paganism was outlawed and their temples destroyed. Surviving images of Isis holding Horus are very similar to images of the Christian Madonna and child. In many places the saints and martyrs took the place of pagan deities, and their shrines took the place of pagan temples. The Church never taught that saints were to be worshipped, but it did teach that saints were in a special position to hear petitions and present them to God. These pagan influences did not go unnoticed. Vigilantius, an obscure priest from Aquitaine, wrote:

We almost see the rites of the pagans introduced into the churches under the pretext of religion; ranks of candles are lit in full daylight; and everywhere people kiss and adore some bit of dust in a little pot, wrapped in precious fabric.

Constantine, however, did make some attempts to give direction to how Christians should express their piety, but he had to move slowly, for most of the Roman Empire was still pagan, particularly the army and the nobility, from whom he drew his officials. This is why his Edict of Milan in 313 C.E. proclaimed toleration for both pagans and Christians. He did, however, close those temples engaging in ritual prostitution, which was particularly offensive to Christians. He also stripped some pagan temples of their treasures to decorate his new capital city. In defense of many of his actions to the Donatists, who felt that the Emperor should have nothing to do with the Church, Constantine remarked:

I am going to make plain to them what kind of worship is to be offered to God... What higher duty have I as emperor than to destroy error and repress rash indiscretions, and so cause all to offer to Almighty God true religion, honest concord and due worship?

Even before Christianity gained favor with the Roman State, the Roman Emperor acted as head of the state religion, and as such, had responsibility for maintaining good relations between the people and their gods. Constantine saw himself in a similar role as a Christian Emperor. The only Biblical model for a Christian Emperor, however, was that of the Old Testament Kings. This model was followed in both the East and the West, but it was never effectively challenged in the Byzantine East.

### **The Need for a Creed**

When Constantine became master of the East in 324 C.E., a dispute was raging between Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and his presbyter, Arius. One thing Constantine did not want was division in the Church, for

what happened in the Church, would affect the unity of the Empire. He had accepted Christianity in order to unify, not divide the Empire.

During the persecutions, there was little time or opportunity to develop a common creed. Because of the many heresies, primarily Gnosticism, there was the need for one. From the very beginning Christians had to express what they believed as concisely as possible. The earliest attempts were known by different names, such as: the rule of faith, the tradition, the preaching, and the rule of truth. Irenaeus was the first to record a clearly identifiable Rule, the main content of which follows:

...this faith: in one God, the Father Almighty, who made the heaven and the earth and the seas and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who made known through the prophets the plan of salvation, and the coming, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his future appearing from heaven in the glory of the Father to sum up all things and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race....

Irenaeus directed his Rule at the Gnostics. Other versions of the Rule also reflect the battle not only with the Gnostics, but also with other heresies. The Rule of Faith, however, was not intended to be a creed with fixed wording. Creeds of fixed wording developed in the context of baptism, and were usually set in question and answer formats. At first new converts were baptized in the name of Jesus alone, soon, they were being baptized in the name of the Trinity. Hippolytus' account of baptism in Rome at the beginning of the third century was very important. As the new Christian was baptized, he or she was to be asked three questions, to which the acceptable answers were, "I believe." The three questions were as follows:

1. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?
2. Do you believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was dead and buried, and rose again the third day, alive from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the living and the dead?
3. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, in the holy church, and the resurrection of the body?

Creeds in statement form developed from the mid-third century by adaptation of the questions-and-answers. Hippolytus' "Old Roman Creed" is the closest parallel to the *Apostles' Creed*, which has no direct link to the apostles. The earliest text of the Apostles' Creed dates to about 400 C.E. The Old Roman Creed follows:

I believe in God almighty [the Father almighty]  
And in Christ Jesus, his only Son, our Lord  
Who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried  
And the third day rose from the dead  
Who ascended into heaven  
And sits on the right hand of the Father  
Whence he comes to judge the living and the dead.  
And in the Holy Ghost  
The holy church  
The remission of sins  
The resurrection of the flesh  
The life everlasting.

Compare the Old Roman Creed with The Apostles' Creed, which follows:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;  
  
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Here, in contradiction to Gnosticism, and other false teachings, the Creed affirmed God as the Creator of the physical world; that Christ was physically born; that he truly suffered; that this happened at a definite point in history (under Pontius Pilate); and that he died a real death.

The Creed developed at Nicaea under Constantine's leadership inaugurated a new era. The old creeds were for converts; the new creed was for the bishops. The old creeds had been local; the new one was to be universally binding. It took over from the Rule of Faith to become the test of orthodoxy.

The controversy between Arius and Bishop Alexander of Alexandria demonstrated the need for a universal creed that would define and unify Christianity. With the unity of Christianity, Constantine hoped that his Empire would also be unified. Arius introduced something new into Christianity when he suggested that the Son, though creator, was himself created; therefore, he could not be truly divine in the same sense as the Father. His bishop, Alexander, disagreed, calling his teaching heretical; and Arius was excommunicated from the Church. Arius, however, had strong support in the East, and so the controversy widened. Constantine tried to settle the matter by sending a letter to the two parties describing the dispute as “very trifling and indeed unworthy to be the cause of such a conflict.” When that did not work, Constantine called a council of the whole Church, which became known as the First Ecumenical (General) Council. It was held at Nicaea in 325 C.E. The Emperor himself presided over the critical session, and he proposed the reconciling word, *homoousios* (Greek for “of one essence”) to describe the relationship of Christ to the Father. It was probably one of Constantine’s advisers, Ossius of Cordova, who suggested it to him. It was a triumph for Constantine. Only two bishops stood with Arius. The First Ecumenical Council had created the Creed of Nicaea:

We believe in one God, the Father, Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance (*ousia*) of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, Very God from Very God, begotten not made, of **one substance (*homoousios*, *consubstantial*) with the Father**, through whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and is coming to judge the living and the dead;

And in the Holy Spirit.

And those who say: “There was a time when he was not,” and: “Before he was begotten he was not,” and: “He came into being from nothing,” or those who pretend that the Son of God is “Of another substance (*hypostasis*), or essence (*ousia*)” [than the Father] or “created” or “alterable” or “mutable,” the catholic and apostolic church places under a curse.

The Creed produced at Nicaea became one of the greatest Creeds of Western Christianity, but the conflict continued when Athanasius succeeded Alexander as Bishop of Alexandria. His work, *On the Incarnation*, set out the basic theological viewpoint that Christ was made

man that we might be made divine. This issue was of great importance to Athanasius' concept of salvation. If Christ was less than God, then he could not be our Savior. For this reason Athanasius defended Nicaea's definition of Christ as of the same substance with God. He rejected Arianism with such intensity that he also refused to receive back repentant Arians into the Church. Although Athanasius (296-373 C.E.) became one of the giants of Christian history, his fame did not come easily. Arius had many supporters, and Athanasius, due to the involvement of the Emperor in the affairs of the Church, was exiled five times.

Constantine died in 337 C.E., tolerant of the Arian sympathizers, with Athanasius still in exile. Although he failed to achieve his goal of unity, he managed to accomplish several significant things. He began the Christianization of the Empire, he founded Constantinople in 330 C.E., and he shifted the focus of the Empire eastward, contributing to the decline of the West and the independence of the Western Church. The effect of Nicaea and its Creed far outlived his own failure to solve the Arian controversy.

The Creed of Nicaea however needs to be distinguished from the Nicene Creed, which was finally established with little controversy at the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 C.E. The Nicene Creed is a refinement of the Creed of Nicaea:

We believe in one God the Father All-sovereign, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, **of one substance with the Father** (homoousios), through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens, and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens, and sits on the right hand of the Father, and comes again with glory to judge living and dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end:

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver, that proceeds from the Father, who with Father and Son is worshipped together and glorified together, who spoke through the prophets:

In one holy catholic and apostolic church:

We acknowledge one baptism unto remission of sins. We look for a resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come.

## The Need for a Book

Although the New Testament was not canonized<sup>69</sup> during the lifetime of Constantine, the need for it became apparent. Up to this time the Church viewed the Hebrew Scriptures or the Old Testament as their Book of Scriptures. Scripture used by Christians at this time was the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, which also included the Apocrypha. Christians did their best to make the Hebrew Scriptures into a Christian book, speaking everywhere about Christ and his Church. Their interpretations of Scripture followed the historical pattern of promise and fulfillment, which the New Testament writers also used. Jews resented the Christian claim that the Hebrew Scriptures belonged to them exclusively since they alone understood it aright.

The development of the New Testament began long before Constantine, but the struggle to define it was taking place in Constantine's lifetime. It began with the Creeds. The Creeds were based on Scripture, which at that time consisted of the Hebrew Scriptures, which affirmed God's creation of the world as good. Marcion, however, did not agree. He was convinced that if the world was bad, then the Hebrew Scriptures were not good. He set about collecting passages that illustrated his beliefs. The Hebrew Scriptures, he insisted, portray a vindictive God in contrast to Jesus' loving God. The ethics of the Hebrew Scriptures, he said, were not the ethics of Jesus. The Church Fathers thought Marcion had gone too far. The God of the Hebrew Scriptures is also "abundant in steadfast love," and Jesus promised at the Judgment to send sinners into everlasting fire. The Church Fathers could not deny that some elements in the Hebrew Scriptures were incompatible with Christianity, but they were not willing to throw out the Hebrew Scriptures.

Although the Hebrew Scriptures did support some Christian teachings, they did not support everything Jesus taught. This made a body of Christian literature, which we call the New Testament, necessary. Marcion was the first one to attempt to define such a body of literature. Around 140 C.E. he decisively rejected the Hebrew Scriptures on the basis of Paul's teachings against the Old Testament Law. Marcion included in his canon Paul's letters to the churches and the letter to Philemon, but not those to Timothy and Titus. As for the Gospels, he included only the Gospel of Luke. Why only Luke was included is a mystery. Perhaps it was because it was the most popular Gospel in his native Pontus. Marcion's list caused other Church Fathers, such as Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius, to draw up lists of acceptable books.

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<sup>69</sup> The Greek word *kanon* means "measuring rod."

<b>THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT</b>			
Muratorian Canon	Origen	Eusebius	Athanasius
Rome 200 C.E.	250 C.E.	300 C.E.	367 C.E.
Four Gospels	Four Gospels	Four Gospels	Four Gospels
Acts	Acts	Acts	Acts
Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans
1 & 2 Corinthians	1 & 2 Corinthians	1 & 2 Corinthians	1 & 2 Corinthians
Galatians	Galatians	Galatians	Galatians
Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians
Philippians	Philippians	Philippians	Philippians
Colossians	Colossians	Colossians	Colossians
1 & 2 Thessalonians	1 & 2 Thessalonians	1 & 2 Thessalonians	1 & 2 Thessalonians
1 & 2 Timothy	1 & 2 Timothy	1 & 2 Timothy	1 & 2 Timothy
Titus	Titus	Titus	Titus
Philemon	Philemon	Philemon	Philemon
			Hebrews
James			James
	1 Peter	1 Peter	1 & 2 Peter
1 & 2 John	1 John	1 John	1, 2 & 3 John
Jude			Jude
Ju Revelation of John de	Revelation of John	Revelation of John	Revelation of John

THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT			
Muratorian Canon	Origen	Eusebius	Athanasius
Revelation of Peter			
Wisdom of Solomon			

Muratorian Canon	Origen	Eusebius	Athanasius
<b>Allowed Reading:</b>	<b>Disputed:</b>	<b>Disputed:</b>	<b>Allowed Reading:</b>
Shepherd of Hermas: to be used in private devotions, but not in public worship.	Hebrews	James	Didache
	James	2 Peter	Shepherd of Hermas
	2 Peter	2 & 3 John	
	2 & 3 John	Jude	
	Shepard of Hermas	<b>Excluded:</b>	
	Letter of Barnabas	Shepherd of Hermas	
	Teaching of the 12 Apostles	Letter of Barnabas	
	Gospel of the Hebrews	Gospel of the Hebrews	
		Revelation of Peter	
		Acts of Peter	
		Didache	

It was not an easy task to create a body of Christian literature which would help to define what Christians believe and expose false teachings. Paul's letters were the first to be accepted, probably by the end of the first century. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were formed into a group by the middle of the second century, although they were written in the first century. John's Gospel was treated with skepticism and took longer to gain acceptance. John's Gospel, for example, had different dates than the others for Jesus' death and resurrection. In John's Gospel, Jesus died on the fourteenth of the Jewish month of Nisan, the day the Passover lamb was slain. He did not live to eat the Passover Supper, and his Gospel has no account of the Lord's Supper. In the other three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus did share with his disciples in the Passover Meal and was crucified on the following day, which was the fifteenth of Nisan. These differences raised the question as to whether the Crucifixion or the Resurrection should be celebrated. The churches of Asia Minor, guided by the Gospel of John, were called Quartodecimans (fourteenthers), because they celebrated the Crucifixion; and the Roman Church, following Matthew, Mark, and Luke, celebrated the Resurrection.

All four Gospels agreed that Jesus died on a Friday, and that he was raised on a Sunday, but should the day of the week or the date of the month be observed? Asians and Romans disagreed. The Roman Church established the practice of observing a fixed day of the week, Sunday, rather than a fixed day of the month. The Resurrection of Jesus was to be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox.<sup>70</sup> The Asians disputed this conclusion for some time, but the Roman practice prevailed. As the debate raged on, there was a movement in the Roman Church to reject the Gospel of John, but Irenaeus of Lyons, originally from Asia Minor, defended the Gospel. There must be four Gospels, he urged, just as there were four faces in the vision of Ezekiel, those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. This argument became the basis for the symbolic representation of the four evangelists: a winged man for Matthew, a winged lion for Mark, a winged ox for Luke, and an eagle for John.

The Book of Revelation was slowly accepted in the East, as was the Epistle to the Hebrews in the West. It was Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria, who lived in exile in Rome in the period following Constantine, and who enjoyed the support of the Roman Church, who acted as the mediator. His Easter Epistle of 367 C.E. defined twenty-seven books as the canon of the New Testament. The acceptance of these books

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<sup>70</sup> The vernal equinox is the time when the sun crosses the celestial equator and day and night are of equal length, marking the beginning of Spring.

meant the rejection of the others, which are now called the New Testament Apocrypha. They consist of several gospels of Jesus' childhood, an account of his descent into Hades to release the spirits imprisoned by Satan, accounts of the travels of Peter, Paul, and other apostles, and reports of contests in miracles between Simon Peter and Simon Magus. In the miracles, Simon Peter caused a dried sardine to swim and a child at the breast to pronounce a pompous anathema on Simon Magus. The New Testament Apocryphal stories were widely shared, but the discriminating judgment of the Church Fathers prevailed, and they were excluded from the New Testament canon.

The African Councils of Hippo (393 C.E.) and Carthage (397 C.E.) confirmed Athanasius' list. The criteria for accepting a book as canonical were complex. It had to be written or sponsored by an apostle, or someone close to an apostle; orthodox in its content; and publicly used by a prominent church or majority of churches. Known forgeries were rejected. The eventual content of the New Testament demonstrated that the early Church desired to submit fully to the teachings of the apostles. It had been created by their preaching and now grounded itself in their writings.

The Roman Empire now had one Emperor, one Creed, and one Book, the New Testament. To some Christians it must have looked like the Kingdom of God was being established on earth, but little did they know what loomed ahead in this new Constantinian era which would last for more than a thousand years. Some think it finally ended in the mid twentieth century when the State no longer supported Christianity, but that would depend upon which State, for some nations still have a State Church.

### **The Rise of Monasticism**

With the end of the persecutions and the reception back into the church of lapsed Christians, discipline became a problem. It was in Syria and Egypt that the earliest Christian monks appeared in the late third century. Christian hermits or anchorites (from a Greek word meaning "one who withdraws") forsook ordinary society for a disciplined life of prayer and solitude in the desert. One of the most famous of these early hermits was Antony of Egypt (about 251-356 C.E.). Antony gave away all of his earthly possessions at the age of twenty in order to serve Christ free from all worldly distractions. In spite of his desire to be alone, visitors constantly besieged him. He finally organized a cluster of hermit cells around him. Although physically withdrawn from the world, Antony influenced many Christians of his day and inspired many conversions to Christ.

## 7. THE ASCETICS AND MONKS

Monasticism became a living protest  
against the secularization of Christianity  
and the cheapening of grace.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*<sup>71</sup>

As the persecutions became less intense and finally came to an end, the level of Christian discipleship declined. While Christianity was threatened with persecution, congregations remained small and very high moral standards were maintained. Martyrdom was valued, not sought, as the supreme example of devotion to God. The decline in disciplined discipleship gave rise to Ascetic and Monastic Christianity, which in turn encouraged a double standard and the emergence of a new spiritual elite.

It began with the ascetics, individuals who chose to live an austere life of self-denial. This involved a variety of practices, such as celibacy and prayer. Ascetics and monks committed themselves to Christ by withdrawing entirely, or in part, from society to devote themselves to prayer, solitude, and contemplation. Those who wanted to practice these spiritual disciplines developed Monasteries, and later Convents, because they desired to practice these disciplines within community.

### **The Bible**

We find examples of individual and communal asceticism in the Jewish Scriptures. The Nazirite Vow, for example, involved temporarily abstaining from wine, with a number of other restrictions. In later Israelite history, we find prophets gathering together in groups for teaching and prayer. Elisha was a leader of such a group. There are also the Rechabites, who withdrew from normal Israelite life in order to develop and maintain a purer and more faithful devotion to God. One of the best-known religious communities, bridging both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, was the Essene community at Qumran. They focused on copying manuscripts and produced the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The New Testament also points to the possibility of ascetic and monastic life. John the Baptist seems to have lived an ascetic life in the Judean desert. In his discussion with the disciples about marriage and divorce, Jesus says in Matthew 19:12, “For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the

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<sup>71</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 49.

sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.” Jesus chose a celibate life, as did Paul. The reason Paul chose to remain single had to do with his belief that marriage might impede evangelism and Christ’s return was imminent. Many non-Christian Jews admired James, the brother of Jesus, for his constant prayers and fasting. None of the earliest Christians, however, lived as hermits or in ascetic communities.

### **Antony (About 256-356 C.E.)**

The late third and fourth centuries saw the beginnings of monastic asceticism. Toleration of Christianity, even before the conversion of Constantine, resulted in the lowering of standards to achieve numerical growth. The monks desired to live a full and pure Christian life, and they were convinced that living in the world hindered their spiritual goals. They desired a deep communion with God, which they found unattainable within nominal Christian churches. The only solution was to leave the world and practice their faith outside of society.

No one knows for sure whom the first one was to do this, nor do we know for sure where it happened. We do know that the first monks probably retreated to the Egyptian and Syrian deserts. Sometimes these retreats were temporary, prompted by the need to flee persecution; but frequently they became permanent. Some of them lived alone, while others lived in loosely associated groups. Although he may not have been the first, Antony became the most famous of these ascetic hermits. Antony was a Coptic peasant from Egypt, who inspired others to follow him to live the life of a hermit on the edge of the desert.

The main routine of these hermits was prayer and meditation, supplemented with scripture readings. Fasting was also an important spiritual discipline. The goal was spiritual awareness, but the loneliness and shortage of food and sleep often resulted in hallucinations. In describing the life of Antony, Athanasius wrote: “Antony would eat only once a day after sunset, and sometimes he did not taste food for two or frequently for four days. His food was bread and salt; he drank only water.” In addition to communion with God, conflicts with demons were frequent. Many of these visions have obvious psychological explanations. The appearance of the devil as a seductive woman, for example, might have been caused by repressed sexual feelings. Those who retreated to the desert abandoned family life and took up celibacy. Some married couples followed Antony’s example, but they too lived without sexual intercourse. Most of them lived fairly stationary lives, but some wandered, especially in the Syrian Desert.

Some of these hermits lived on the top of pillars, or walled themselves up in caves. They were largely lay people. Occasionally a priest, who had

taken up the ascetic life, would administer Communion to some of them; but the Sacrament of Communion had little place in the spiritual life of these early ascetic hermits.

### **Pachomius (320 C.E.)**

Communal monasticism was initiated by Pachomius in about 320 C.E. Pachomius was a converted soldier, and after he was discharged, he retreated to the desert to become an ascetic hermit, but after a time, he set up his first ascetic community at Tabennisi (near the Nile River in Egypt).

Pachomius insisted on regular meals and worship. He also aimed at making his communities self-supporting by developing industries such as the weaving of palm-mats and the growing of fruit and vegetables to sell. New members of his communities were required to contribute all their personal wealth to a common fund, and were only admitted as members after a period of probation. To prove their seriousness, they were required to stand outside the monastery door for several days. Part of their qualifications for full membership included memorizing parts of the Bible, and if they were illiterate, they were taught how to read and write.

Although Pachomius' first communities were for men only, before his death, he supervised the establishment of the first communities for women. Pachomius created the basic framework, which was followed by all later monastic communities.

Both Antony and Pachomius came out of the Eastern Church. It was Athanasius who first brought monasticism to the attention of the Western Church. While he was in exile in the West between 340 and 346 C.E., two Egyptian monks accompanied him. Athanasius spent part of his later exiles hiding among the hermits of the Egyptian Desert, where he learned of Antony and wrote a biography of the famous hermit. His biography of Antony provides all we know about him. It was quickly translated into Latin, and made available to the Western Church. In the West, monasticism gained the backing of such church leaders as Ambrose in Milan and Augustine in Hippo.

### **Basil the Great (330-379 C.E.)**

After Pachomius, Basil the Great made the most important contribution to Eastern monasticism. Basil was born about 330 C.E. into a distinguished and wealthy Christian family in Caesarea (Cappadocia). Upon finishing his education in Constantinople and Athens, he returned to his home in Cappadocia, determined to renounce the world and live an ascetic life. He said about wealth:

Why are you rich and that man poor? You make your own things given you to distribute. The coat which you preserve in your wardrobe belongs to the naked; the bread you keep belongs to the hungry. The gold you have hidden in the ground belongs to the needy.

After visiting many other ascetics, Basil set up his own monastic community in Pontus in 357 C.E. In 364 C.E. he was ordained a presbyter, and in 370 C.E. he became the Bishop of Caesarea. Being both an ascetic and a bishop, Basil integrated his monastic communities closely with the church. He insisted that the Bishop should have the ultimate authority over a monastery.

Basil disapproved of individualistic piety and laid down eight set times for prayer. Insisting that the monasteries look beyond themselves, Basil guided them in providing medical treatment for the sick, relief for the poor, and theological education. He was a gifted speaker with deep theological insight. He took a firm stand against the Arians and wrote several books to expose their errors. He also opposed those who denied that the Holy Spirit was truly divine. In talking about the Trinity, Basil paved the way for the work of the Council of Constantinople in 381 C.E. He was the first to fix the accepted formula for the Trinity: one substance (ousia) and three persons (hypostaseis). Basil understood the monastic life as the climax of Christian achievement, with its aim of freeing the soul from the entanglements of the body through discipline. He stressed the need for self-examination, but also believed that the commandments of God should be fulfilled. He died on the first day of 379 C.E.

### **Martin of Tours (397 C.E.)**

In the West Monasticism was stimulated by Martin of Tours, Martin took up the life of an ascetic hermit after military service, and he lived in a solitary cell near Ligugé, France. His example inspired many others to join him, and a form of community was set up. In 372 C.E., he was persuaded to become the Bishop of Tours; and for some time, he lived as a hermit in a cell next to the church. Because of the distraction of so many curious visitors, Martin retreated to Marmontier, where he set up a monastery. The purpose of his monastery was to evangelize the people in rural France. Because of the rigor and sanctity of Martin's example, many early churches were dedicated to him. He is probably the first non-martyr to be venerated as a saint.

### **Augustine of Hippo (354-430 C.E.)**

Perhaps the greatest of the monks was Augustine, who was born to African parents, Patricius and Monica, in Tagaste, Numidia (modern

Algeria) in 354 C.E. From childhood, Augustine learned about the Christian faith from his mother, but his baptism was delayed until 387 C.E. by a lengthy religious and philosophical pilgrimage described in his *Confessions*. Monica's pain was unbearable as she watched her son follow his father's example; and so, she sought the advice of her Bishop, who said: "Go thy way and God bless thee, for it is not possible for the son of these tears to perish."

Augustine excelled in the literary education of his time, and lectured in rhetoric at Carthage. In 373 C.E. a work of Cicero inspired him to the love of divine wisdom, but this did not include the Bible, which repelled Augustine because of its apparent barbarity. He turned toward Manichaeism, a dualistic religion that encouraged asceticism and intense devotion to Christ. He persisted with Manichaeism for nine years, although he gradually began to distrust its claims of demonstrating truth by rational means. Members of this religion also believed that the evil half dominated most men and that they had little choice in the matter. Augustine liked this philosophy because it gave him an excuse for his sinful ways, but eventually he discovered free will. In his *Confessions*, he wrote: "And just this was my incurable sin that I thought myself not to be a sinner. What raised me into light was that I knew that I had a free will, as I knew that I lived."

Disillusioned with Manichaeism, Augustine went to Rome, where he shared the scholar's despair of reaching any certainty. He was even tempted to taste the pleasures of Epicureanism.<sup>72</sup> In 384 C.E. Augustine was appointed imperial rhetorician in Milan and exposed to the preaching of Bishop Ambrose and Neoplatonism.<sup>73</sup> Together they undermined the obstacles, which had alienated Augustine from orthodox Christianity. From Ambrose he discovered that Christianity could be intellectually respectable and that the Hebrew Scriptures could be treated as allegories. From the Neoplatonists he learned about the spiritual perfection of God and how spiritual insights could be sought through inward contemplation. Augustine slowly came to realize that the cause of evil, which had preoccupied him all his life, lay in the absence of good, rather than being a power in itself, as taught by the Manicheans.

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<sup>72</sup> Epicureanism was devoted to sensual pleasures and luxury, especially to good food.

<sup>73</sup> Neoplatonism was a philosophical system, which combined mysticism and Judaic and Christian ideas. It concluded that there is only one source for all existence.

Augustine was now ready for conversion. He cried, “How long shall I go on saying ‘Tomorrow, tomorrow?’ Why not now? Why not make an end of my ugly sins at this moment?” The moment came one day while he had retired to a little garden in Milan. “I was asking myself these questions, weeping all the while with the most bitter sorrow in my heart, when all at once I heard the sing-song voice of a child in a nearby house. Whether it was a boy or a girl I cannot say, but again and again it repeated the chorus, ‘Take it and read, take it and read.’” Augustine picked up a New Testament and opened it to Romans 13:13-14 and read, “No orgies or drunkenness, no immorality or indecency, no fighting or jealousy. Take up the weapons of the Lord Jesus Christ; and stop giving attention to your sinful nature, to satisfy its desires.” He continued, “I had no wish to read more and no need to do so. For in an instant, as I came to the end of the sentence, it was as though the light of faith flooded into my heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled.”<sup>74</sup>

On returning to Africa in 388 C.E., after Monica’s death, Augustine formed a monastic community for study and contemplation at Tagaste. In 391 C.E. he was pressed into the priesthood in Hippo and by 396 C.E., he was made the Catholic Bishop. It was Augustine who introduced a new aspect to monasticism, the arrangement whereby a group of celibate clergy live together to serve a local church. The task was not easy, for Augustine had to contend not only with half-Christian Catholics, but the false teachings of the Manicheans, Donatists, Pelagians, and Arians. He moved from the confident humanism of a Christian Neoplatonist to a more biblical and pessimistic view of human nature, society, and history. The *Confessions* were an early work describing his new outlook. *The City of God* was his greatest work. He opposed the rationalism of the Manicheans, saying, “Believe in order to understand.” Against the Donatists he insisted that the Church was a mixed field of wheat and weeds, believers and unbelievers, growing together until the harvest. He undercut Donatist rebaptism by claiming that Christ was the chief minister of the Sacraments, so that they remained true Sacraments even when they were administered by unworthy and sinful priests. He attacked the Pelagians only after they challenged infant baptism, which Augustine helped to make a normal practice in Christianity. The Arian Vandal invaders were besieging Hippo when Augustine died in 430 C.E. Augustine had taught Christians to endure the world, where evil reigns, and to seek peace in the heavenly city. Augustine also justified the coercion of dissident Christians as being an act of loving correction. His theology was to dominate and inspire Christianity through the Protestant Reformation. Many of his theological insights are

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<sup>74</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* VIII, 12.

still quoted today, one of which is expressed in the prayer: “You made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in You.”

### **John Cassian (360-435 C.E.)**

John Cassian was trained as a monk in Bethlehem and Egypt, and after a period of time in Constantinople, he founded a monastery and a convent at Marseilles in France.

Cassian is the West’s great writer for monasticism. His instructions for monasteries promoted the monastic movement widely. He went into great detail, covering not only such things as clothing, but also the temptations against which monks had to fight.

Reacting against what he considered an over-emphasis on human weakness in the theology of Augustine, Cassian held that people are able to make responses to God in their own strength, even if they cannot totally fulfill all of God’s commandments. These views, which he probably got from his training in the East, became quite popular in the monastic communities of southern France. They were often associated with semi-Pelagianism, and in 529 C.E., the Synod of Orange condemned them.

### **Patrick (389-461 C.E.)**

The establishment of monasticism in Ireland has frequently been attributed to Patrick, but there is no certain evidence in his writings that he ever was a monk or founded monasteries. Patrick seems to have followed the more private type of asceticism common prior to 325 C.E.

Patrick was born in Roman Britain and was the son of a deacon and magistrate named Calpurnius. The details of Patrick’s life are overlaid with so many legends that it is difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction. The small amount of information that we know about him is found in his two writings: *The Confession* and *A Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus*, a chief in Northern Britain. At the age of sixteen, while living on his father’s farm, Patrick was seized by raiders and sold as a slave in Ireland. After six years of slavery, he escaped to Gaul (France), and eventually reached home again.

During his captivity, his Christian faith was actually deepened, and he became convinced that he must return to evangelize Ireland. In a dream he heard the voice of the Irish<sup>75</sup> calling, “We beseech you to come and walk

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<sup>75</sup> Roland Bainton indicates that it was “the unborn children of Ireland.” See Rolaind H. Bainton, *Christendom, Volume 1* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 144.

among us once more.” Patrick returned to Ireland as a Bishop in 432 C.E., and spent thirty years ministering there.

Although Patrick was not well educated, he encouraged learning, and probably because of his contact with monasteries in Gaul, emphasized the ascetic life. While Patrick may never have founded a monastery, he contributed to making the monastery the basic unit of the Irish Church. The Abbot, not the Bishop, led the monastery. One characteristic of the Irish monks was their tendency to wander. Since Patrick also communicated the priority of mission, these wandering monks evangelized not only Ireland but much of Western Europe during the sixth and seventh centuries.

### **Benedict of Nursia (480-547 C.E.)**

Little is known of Benedict of Nursia apart from the biography written by Gregory the Great. Benedict was born at Nursia, in Umbria (North-Central Italy), and studied at Rome prior to withdrawing to live as a hermit. He founded several small monasteries, but with little success, and then he moved to the monastery at Monte Cassino.

Benedict is known for his *Rule*, which he developed in his early years as a monk. After the Lombards destroyed the monastery at Monte Cassino, some of the monks fled to Rome. They took Benedict’s *Rule* with them, and brought it to the attention of Gregory the Great, who made Benedict’s *Rule* widely known.

The *Rule* of Benedict is based on the two activities of prayer and work. Two brief excerpts from the Rule should illustrate the balance sought between prayer and work.

As the prophet says, “Seven times in the day do I praise thee.” We will complete this sacred number seven if, at lauds, at the first, third, sixth, ninth hours, at vesper time and at compline we carry out the duties of our service.

In regard to work, the *Rule* states:

Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore, at fixed times, the brothers should be busy with manual work; and at other times in holy reading. We believe these ought to be arranged in this way: from Easter until 1 October, on coming out of Prime they shall do the work needing attention until the fourth hour. From the fourth hour until about the sixth, they should concentrate on reading.

The Rule of Benedict is still observed in monasteries today, although many copies of the *Rule* have been altered and enlarged to fit modern developments. Some historians believe that Benedict’s *Rule* owes a great

deal to another monastic *Rule* known as the *Regula Magistri* (Rule of the Master).

The emphasis on worship helped to keep up the spiritual and moral standards of the monks. Monks were expected to remain in the same monastery where they had taken their vows. The Abbot was their spiritual head and exercised all normal discipline; hence, the monasteries became stable, well-ordered communities focusing on worship and work. Thanks to the influence of Cassiodorus the Benedictine monasteries also became centers for learning.

### **Prayer and Celibacy**

**Prayer.** Within Christianity prayer has always been an important activity. Early in the second century the *Didache* encouraged Christians to pray three times a day. By the time of Tertullian, Christians began the practice of rising and praying at midnight. Morning and evening prayer became customary by the fourth century. The seven-times daily order of prayer evolved in the monasteries and was based on Psalm 119:164, which says, “Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws.” The order was made up from the three hours of prayer (9:00 a.m., 12:00 Noon, 3:00 p.m.), the morning and evening prayers, and two additional services, Prime and Compline. The complete cycle went as follows:

- Lauds (morning prayer)
- Prime
- Terce (9:00 a.m.)
- Sext (12:00 Noon)
- None (3:00 p.m.)
- Vespers (Evening prayer)
- Compline (prayer before bedtime)

The above prayers varied in content, but included prayers and intercessions, reciting of psalms, and Scripture reading. A certain amount of singing, mainly by a solo singer, was also included, with the congregation repeating a refrain. Occasionally there would be antiphonal singing, where the congregation was divided into two choirs and sang alternate halves of the verses of a psalm, but this only happened with trained singers.

**Celibacy.** The idea that the clergy should not marry developed slowly. The New Testament does not forbid marriage, even for the apostles. We know that Peter was married, for his mother-in-law is mentioned. It was Paul who first recognized the advantages of remaining single. With so many sexual excesses in the culture, it was natural for Christianity to view sex with some suspicion. Most Gnostic sects discouraged marriage on the

basis that it entangled the spiritual soul with the evil physical world. In many congregations, Christian women had difficulty finding suitable husbands. Frequently these women remained unmarried rather than to marry a pagan husband. Those who were free from family ties had more time to devote to church affairs, and were often the obvious choice for leadership.

By the third century, celibacy was beginning to be valued as a characteristic of holiness. Extremes were generally frowned upon. Origen, for example, made himself into a eunuch, believing this was commended in the Gospels. It was not, and Origen drew considerable criticism. As martyrdom declined, however, asceticism became the measure of spirituality. The leaders in the church that were viewed as being more spiritual were those who had adopted the ascetic way of life, and for the most part, the ascetics refrained from sexual relations. In the fourth century men began to seek ordination later in life, and in many cases, they were already married. In some cases they continued to live with their wives, but they abstained from sexual intercourse. Moves were made to restrict marriage after ordination.

As the fourth century proceeded, the pressure for the Christian leaders to be celibate increased. Jerome was the most enthusiastic advocate of celibacy, and was criticized because many of his statements seemed to degrade marriage. In spite of protests that celibacy was Manichean, supporters of celibacy persuaded the churches that celibacy and holiness were closely related.

The emphasis on celibacy resulted in two abuses. Many so-called celibate clergy lived with women who were not their wives, a practice condemned by the Church. Jerome was particularly critical of such disgraceful behavior. The second abuse was the practice of enthusiastic men who deserted their wives in order to follow the celibate life. A Roman Law in 420 C.E. made this practice illegal.

By the fifth century two practices evolved. In the Eastern Church presbyters and deacons were allowed to marry before ordination, but Bishops were always chosen from among the celibate clergy and very often they were monks. This practice is still in force today. In the Western Church there was strong pressure for complete clerical celibacy. Leo the Great wanted to forbid marriage even for sub-deacons. While some married men managed to become Bishops, the monasteries came to be regarded as the main centers of spirituality, which meant that the best Bishops were celibate. Celibacy of the clergy was not effectively and legally established until the time of Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085 C.E.).

## **What about Women?**

Thus far we have not mentioned a single woman as a leader, a heretic, or an ascetic. Why not? It is not because women did not lead in the early Christian congregations. They did. Prime examples of women who played an important role in New Testament times are Lydia in Philippi<sup>76</sup> and Phoebe in Cencreae and then Rome.<sup>77</sup> As long as congregations were made up of house churches, women played a significant role in leadership. The house was considered the domain of the woman, and consisted of the Lord's Supper, which was a full meal.

Christianity evolved from Judaism, which was patriarchal; but as it moved among the Gentiles, women played a significant role. That role began to decline first as Ignatius tried to organize all those house churches under a centralized leader. He did this by asking Christians to submit to a recognized Bishop. Ignatius believed that the Church had to organize if it was to survive the persecutions. The second thing that brought about the decline in the leadership of women was the replacement of all those house churches with church buildings. The first church buildings were modeled after Roman city government buildings; hence, the Bishop functioned like the city administrator and the church buildings resembled city government buildings. As congregations were organized and submitted to a centralized leader, the Bishop, worship moved outside of the house churches into larger buildings, and women lost their leadership roles.

As Christianity became the State Religion, women were actually demoted and prevented from taking on leadership roles. Rome was also patriarchal and women had to be demoted to accommodate its new status in society. Worship no longer took place in the home, but in the public arena of the newly built and state supported church buildings.

### **The Problem of a Double Standard**

The beginning of the Constantinian era not only demoted women from leadership in the Church, but it brought with it a cheapening of grace. It actually encouraged lukewarm or nominal Christianity. "Thus," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "monasticism became a living protest against the secularization of Christianity and the cheapening of grace."<sup>78</sup> "The fatal error of monasticism," continued Bonhoeffer, "lay not so much in its rigorism...as in the extent to which it departed from genuine Christianity by setting up itself as the individual achievement of a select few, and so

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<sup>76</sup> See Acts 16:14-15.

<sup>77</sup> See Romans 16:1-2.

<sup>78</sup> Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 49.

claiming a special merit of its own.”<sup>79</sup> Following Christ is not the achievement or merit of a select few, but the divine command to all Christians without distinction. Monasticism “transformed the humble work of discipleship into the meritorious activity of the saints, and the self-renunciation of discipleship into the flagrant spiritual self-assertion of the ‘religious.’”<sup>80</sup>

It was Martin Luther who returned from the monastery to the world. This was the worst blow the world had suffered since the days of early Christianity. The renunciation he made when he became a monk was child’s play compared to that which he had to make when he returned to the world. What he was saying when he left the monastery can be summed up in a sentence: “The only way to follow Jesus [is] by living in the world.”<sup>81</sup> We need to move away from a double standard in discipleship. We are all called to be fully Christian.

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

## 8. THE RISE OF CHRISTENDOM

The city which has taken the whole world  
is itself taken.

*Jerome*

It began with the conversion of Constantine in 312 C.E. and by the time of Pope Gregory I (590-604 C.E.) the Roman bishop was the real ruler of much of central Italy. The rise of Christendom was due to several Emperors as well as several strong church leaders.

### **The Emperors**

*Constantius.* With the death of Constantine in 337 C.E., his three sons, Constantine II, Constantius, and Constans, boldly attacked paganism and divided up what had come to be a united Empire. Constantius ruled in the East, where he supported those opposed to the Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.). The other two brothers ruled in the pro-Nicene West, where war broke out resulting in the death of Constantine II (340 C.E.) and the murder of Constans (350 C.E.) by Magnentius. Constantius defeated Magnentius two years later (353 C.E.), and again united the Empire.

Constantius, however, leaned toward Arian Christianity. When some of the bishops appealed to the canons of the Church, Constantius replied, "Whatever I will, shall be regarded as canon.... Either obey or go into exile." Ossius of Cordova, who had helped shape Constantine's policy towards the church, quoted Jesus against imperial interference:

Do not intrude yourself into church matters, nor give commands to us concerning them... God has put into your hands the kingdom; to us he has entrusted the affairs of his church.... It is written, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."

*Julian the Apostate.* If Constantius supported heretical Arian Christianity, Julian, upon becoming emperor in 361 C.E., revealed that he had been a secret pagan for years. Julian now tried to convert the Empire to a religion, which he called "Hellenism." The principal deity was Plato's "Supreme Being," whose visible representative was the life-giving Sun, identified with Helios and Mithras. Since Syncretism prevailed, it was possible to regard all the old and new gods with their cults and rituals as originating from the Sun. Thus all the world of Greek culture and mythology could be retained without giving up the lofty monotheism of the Sun.

Julian paid tribute to the Christian Church by incorporating into his Hellenistic Religion some of the successful features of Christianity. For example, he set up a hierarchy, like that of the Church, with metropolitans of provinces set over the local priesthoods, answerable to the Emperor as *Pontifex Maximus*. Julian did not want to see the “Hellenists” outdone in holiness and charity by the “Galileans (Christians).” He wrote a letter to one of his High Priests, Arsacius, in Galatia:

Why do we not notice that it is their kindness to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead and the pretended holiness of their lives that have done most to increase atheism [Christianity]? I believe that we ought really and truly to practice every one of these virtues. And it is not enough for you alone to practice them, but so must all the priests in Galatia, without exception.... In the second place admonish them that no priest may enter a theater or drink in a tavern or control any craft or trade that is base and not respectable....

Julian also attempted to imitate one of the successful features of Christianity by ordering Arsacius to set up hostels on the Christian model:

In every city establish frequent hostels in order that strangers may profit by our generosity; I do not mean for our own people only, but for others also who are in need of money.... For it is disgraceful that, when no Jew ever has to beg and the impious Galileans [Christians] support both their own poor and ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us....

Although Julian restored paganism throughout the Empire, taking away the special privileges, which had been enjoyed by the Christian clergy, toleration was kept intact for all religions, including Christianity. Pagans were, of course, favored in civil service and given special consideration when it came to meting out imperial justice.

Upon being ordered into exile by Julian, Athanasius told his weeping congregation, “Be of good courage; it is but a cloud which will quickly pass away.” Julian’s kind of paganism was failing. To keep it alive he tried to dominate classical education. Knowing that upper-class Christians would continue to send their children to the ordinary schools, which prepared them for public life, Julian prohibited Christians from teaching literature in those schools. He wanted to expose their children to Hellenism and paganism. Two Christian professors attempted to make Scripture acceptable in classical education by translating the Hebrew Scriptures into epic and tragedy and the New Testament into Platonic dialogue; but Julian died in 363 C.E. before it could be tried.

***Gratian (375-383 C.E.) and Theodosius I (379-395 C.E.)***. Emperors, who succeeded Julian, were Christians, who were generally tolerant of paganism. Two emperors, however, put an end to paganism. They were Gratian and Theodosius I.

Gratian became Emperor in the West, and then upon the death of the Eastern Emperor, ruled the East as well. Recognizing that he could not effectively govern the whole Empire, he chose an experienced soldier, Theodosius I, to rule in the East. Both Gratian and Theodosius I supported the orthodox Christian faith. The imperial policy of outlawing heresy and pagan religions was partly the work of Bishop Ambrose. Gratian at first tolerated other religions, but he soon changed his mind under Ambrose's influence. He removed the altar of Victory from the Senate House in Rome, confiscated the revenues of the Vestal Virgins and other Roman priesthods, and refused to take the title of *Pontifex Maximus* (High Priest). But Gratian, though talented in sports and nearly every other sphere of life, was unsuited for governing. Not able to win the loyalty of his armies led to his death during the rebellion of a Spanish officer, Magnus Maximus, in 383 C.E.

Magnus Maximus became the first Christian Emperor to inflict the death penalty on a heretic. The case against Priscillian, the leader of a Christian ascetic movement, began during Gratian's reign, but came to a conclusion under Magnus Maximus. Priscillian and six of his associates were condemned and executed for the civil crime of sorcery. The real charge, however, was unusual beliefs and religious practices. To Ambrose's credit, he refused to have fellowship with Priscillian's accusers. Though a few fanatical churchmen were willing to execute people for heresy, most Christian leaders refused to use the state as the Church's executioner. This case, however, foreshadows the later medieval practice of handing over heretics condemned by the Church to the state for execution.

In the Eastern Empire, Theodosius I subscribed to the faith brought by Peter to Rome and now held by the Pope. He prohibited sacrifices for divination (381 and 385 C.E.), which in turn put an end to all sacrifice (391 C.E.). Many of the pagan temples were either destroyed or turned into Christian churches. All public pagan worship was outlawed. In 392 C.E. Theodosius I forbid private pagan worship as well. The laws against pagan worship, however, were not strictly enforced, and public pagan worship persisted for several generations, and secretly for much longer.

Two encounters between Emperor Theodosius I and Bishop Ambrose illustrate the dramatic increase in the power of the Church. The first occurred in 388 C.E. following a riot in the town of Callinicum on the River Euphrates. The Christians had been led by the local Bishop to rob

and burn a Jewish synagogue. Theodosius I ordered the Christians to return the stolen property and to rebuild the synagogue at the Bishop's expense. But Ambrose sent Theodosius a letter insisting that forcing a Christian Bishop to rebuild a place of worship for the Jews, the enemies of Christ amounted to apostasy. "The maintenance of civil law is secondary to religious interests," wrote Ambrose. Theodosius I ignored Ambrose's letter and so the Bishop felt obliged to preach on the subject in the presence of the Emperor. Theodosius I, partly because he was weak in the West, rescinded the order.

The second encounter came in the summer of 390 C.E. This encounter shows Ambrose in a better light. The people of Thessalonica had murdered the military commander because he had refused to release a favorite charioteer. In spite of Ambrose's objection, Theodosius I avenged his death by a massacre of the inhabitants. The Emperor repented, but it was too late. More than 7,000 citizens, guilty and innocent, were slaughtered in the theater. Ambrose sent a letter, excommunicating the Emperor until he did public penance. Theodosius I gave in and, publicly in the Church, asked forgiveness for his sin. Ambrose had illustrated that the Emperor was in the Church, but he was not above it. By the late fifth century, the Bishop of Rome, Gelasius I, developed the view that the Emperor was subject to the head of the Church, the Bishop of Rome (the Pope). The Emperor's job was to rule the Empire for the good of God's people. Ambrose had shown the world how it might work in practice.

### **Church Leaders**

*Ambrose (339-397 C.E.).* When Auxentius, the Arian Bishop of Milan, died in 373 C.E., the new governor, Ambrose, feared that the Catholic-Arian controversy would become violent. When the people crowded into the cathedral to elect a new Bishop, Ambrose spoke a few words to calm the crowd. Suddenly a child's voice was heard, "Ambrose, bishop!" The congregation took up the cry, and Ambrose found himself elected Bishop against his will. Ambrose did not have any training in the Church and was not even a baptized Christian. He tried to flee, and hide, but was eventually persuaded that it was the will of God for him to become the Bishop of Milan.

Ambrose was thirty-four years old when he became the Bishop of Milan, a position he held for twenty-three years. He was particularly influential because Milan, rather than Rome, was the Emperor's residence in the West. Using his experience as a provincial governor in northern Italy, Ambrose became famous both as an administrator and as a preacher. He became the leading spokesman against having the altar of the goddess Victory restored to the Senate House in Rome.

Arianism was prevalent in Ambrose's time, and he took a strong stand against it. When Justina, the mother of Emperor Valentinian II tried to take over one of the churches in Milan for Arian worship, Ambrose organized a sit-in, preventing her from doing it.

Ambrose encouraged early monasticism, had considerable influence on Augustine, having baptized him at Milan in 387 C.E., and was the first to introduce community hymn-singing in the Church. He did this during the sit-in against Justina. He wrote at least four Latin hymns. Most of his writings address matters of Christian practice. Below is one of his hymns, still being sung today:

O splendor of God's glory bright,  
O thou that bringest light from light;  
O light of light, light's living spring,  
O day, all days illumining.

O thou true Sun, on us thy glance  
let fall in royal radiance;  
the Spirit's sanctifying beam  
upon our earthly senses stream.

The Father, too, our prayers implore,  
Father of glory evermore;  
the Father of all grace and might,  
to banish sin from our delight.

To guide whate'er we nobly do,  
with love all envy to subdue;  
to make ill fortune turn to fair,  
and give us grace our wrongs to bear.<sup>82</sup>

**Jerome (345-420 C.E.).** Although Jerome might have been placed with the ascetics and monks, we have decided to place him with the church leaders because of his work in Bible translation. Jerome was born in a small town in northeastern Italy. He studied the classical disciplines and was baptized in Rome. After he traveled through Gaul, he was converted to ascetic Christianity and joined an ascetic community near his home at Aquileia. Later at Antioch, in 374 C.E., Jerome had a vision criticizing his preoccupation with secular learning and accusing him of being a follower of Cicero rather than of Christ. This led him to withdraw into an ascetic life in the Syrian Desert, just southeast of Antioch. There in the desert, he mastered Hebrew and began to transcribe biblical manuscripts.

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<sup>82</sup> Ambrose, "O Splendor of God's Glory Bright," *United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), #679.

After he was ordained in Antioch, Jerome traveled to Constantinople, where he studied under the Eastern theologian Gregory of Nazianzus. He then went to Rome, where he acted as secretary to Pope Damasus. While at Rome, Jerome was commissioned by the pope to make an improved Latin translation of the Bible. Jerome wrote of the Latin Bible:

I am not so stupid as to think that any of the Lord's words either need correcting or are not divinely inspired; but the Latin manuscripts of the Scriptures are proved faulty by the variations, which are found in all of them. My aim has been to restore them to the form of the Greek original, from which my critics do not deny that they have been translated.<sup>83</sup>

Following the death of Pope Damasus, Jerome visited Antioch, Egypt, and the Holy Land. He finally settled down to monastic life in Bethlehem in 386 C.E., where he spent the rest of his life in seclusion finishing his translation of the Scriptures in Latin and writing commentaries on the books of the Bible.

In translating the Bible into Latin, Jerome went back first to the Greek version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) and the Greek New Testament. Later, convinced of the need to base his Old Testament translation on the Hebrew original rather than on the Greek of the Septuagint, he stated his purpose as being "to give my Latin readers the hidden treasures of Hebrew erudition." Jerome reworked his Latin translation to conform more closely to the Hebrew Bible. It took him twenty-three years to complete his revision of the Latin Scriptures, known today as the *Latin Vulgate*. The Council of Trent reaffirmed its supremacy in 1546 C.E.

Jerome introduced historical, symbolic, and spiritual interpretations of Scripture, which resulted in arbitrary and mystical explanations. Many of his commentaries were prepared quickly. Galatians, for example, was written at the rate of a thousand lines per day, and his commentary on Matthew was written within two weeks. Nevertheless, Jerome ranks with Origen and Augustine as an early biblical interpreter of the first order. It has been said of Jerome:

The great hermit of Bethlehem had less genius than Augustine, less purity and loftiness of character than Ambrose, less sovereign good sense and steadfastness than Chrysostom, less keenness of insight and consistency of courage than Theodore of Mopsuestia; but in learning and versatile talent he was superior to them all.

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<sup>83</sup> Jerome, *Letters XXVII*.

***John Chrysostom (350-407 C.E.).*** If Jerome was a scholar of the first rank, John Chrysostom was the greatest of the early preachers. He was born about 350 C.E. in Antioch, and was brought up by his devoted mother Anthusa, who at the age of twenty was left a widow with an infant son. John's teacher, the pagan orator Libanius, paid Anthusa the highest tribute when he said of her, "God, what women these Christians have!"

John was baptized at the age of eighteen and became a reader in the Church. His devotion to ascetic practices led him to live alone for two years in a mountain cave, which ruined his health. In 381 C.E., he was ordained a deacon, and in 386 C.E. he was ordained a presbyter. Following his ordination as a presbyter, he was appointed to preach in the principal church of Antioch, where he became known as the "Golden mouth," for he was a master at preaching. His insights into the meaning of the Greek Bible and his skill in applying it to daily life are the enduring contributions of his hundreds of surviving sermons. An example of why his sermons got him into trouble can be given from a simple statement he made on wealth:

The wealth is common to thee and to thy fellow servants, just as the sun is common, the earth, the air, and the rest. To grow rich without injustice is impossible. The only way to take "injustice" out of riches is by dedicating it to the needs of others, keeping only that which is necessary for our own needs.

In 397 C.E., against his will, Chrysostom was chosen to become Bishop of Constantinople, and he was consecrated to that position in 398 C.E. His efforts to raise the moral climate of the capital soon met with strong opposition from the Empress Eudoxia, the local clergy, and Theophilus the patriarch of Alexandria. They opposed him for his attacks on sin and for his strictness. They had him deposed at the Synod of the Oak in 403 C.E. Emperor Arcadius (383-408 C.E.) accepted the decision and had him exiled. The people of Constantinople, however, rioted in support of their Bishop, and the Emperor gave in and recalled John the next day.

John's brave, if tactless, preaching angered Empress Eudoxia again, and his enemies plotted against him once more. Emperor Arcadius ordered him to cease his official church duties, which he refused to do. While gathering catechumens for baptism in 404 C.E., soldiers drove him out of the church and into exile. This exile ended with his death in 407 C.E. His remains were brought back to Constantinople in 438 C.E. and buried in the Church of the Apostles.

## **The Fall of Rome (August 24, 410 C.E.)**

When we talk about the fall of the Roman Empire, we are only talking about the Roman Empire in the West. The Eastern Empire, based in Constantinople, survived for another thousand years. Although the immediate cause was the Germanic invasions of the fifth century, Germanic tribes had been threatening the Roman frontier for several centuries. Some of them, such as the Visigoths, had been influenced by and converted to Arian Christianity. The first hint of the ultimate disaster was the battle of Adrianople in 378 C.E., but the fall of the Western Roman Empire can be dated to the night of August 24, 410 C.E. when Alaric and his Visigoths stormed the walls of Rome in a surprise attack and pillaged the city for three days. The event had little effect on the Empire since Alaric soon abandoned the city, but the psychological blow was enormous. For the first time in 800 years, a foreign enemy had taken the city of Rome. Jerome, in far away Bethlehem, lamented: “The city which has taken the whole world is itself taken!”

The pagans complained that Rome fell because of the rejection of their ancestral gods. The complaint went as follows: “When we used to sacrifice to our gods, Rome was flourishing; but now when people sacrifice to your God everywhere, and our sacrifices are forbidden, see what is happening to Rome.” Augustine of Hippo countered this accusation in his book, *The City of God*. Augustine wrote that within the Roman Empire two cities were intertwined: the City of God, the community of Christians living according to God’s law, and the City of Man, pagan society following its own desires and seeking material gain. Such a community, he concluded, could only come to a disastrous end. Augustine did, however, appreciate the achievement of Rome. Rome provided the just government needed for an ordered society and the control over evil. God gave Rome this authority and Christians must obey such governments unless they do evil. Then, they must resist.

Pagan Rome and Augustine have not been the only ones to look for the cause of Rome’s fall. Numerous unsatisfactory explanations have been given—change in climate, soil exhaustion, race mixture, decline in morality, etc. The late Roman Empire, however, was probably no more immoral than any other period, except for the area of public administration, where corruption and brutality seem to have increased. Some would even say that Christianity contributed to the fall of the Empire. For many Christians it was thought to be next to impossible to live a Christian life in the world. Christians were frequently advised, for the sake of their souls, to leave public office; hence, the Church attracted the most creative minds and the most capable leaders of the day. Christians must thus share responsibility for the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Athanasius,

Ambrose, and Augustine himself might have staffed the imperial civil service, so badly in need of leadership. Even Ambrose left government service to become a Bishop.

There is, however, another reason for the fall of the Western Roman Empire that is not frequently raised. There were too many non-productive members of Roman society that had to be fed by too few productive laborers. Edward Gibbon put it this way in his *The Fall of the Roman Empire*:

A large part of public wealth was consecrated to the specious demands of charity and devotion; and the soldiers' pay was lavished on the useless multitudes of both sexes, who could only plead the merits of abstinence and chastity.

The point being made is that the army had doubled in size since the third century and the bureaucracy had expanded considerably, while the number of producers had shrunk. In addition to that the senatorial landowners, who possessed a disproportionate share of the wealth, frustrated imperial attempts to make them pay their fair share of taxes or to conscript their agricultural workers into the army. Monks and clergy also contributed to the problem. They were certainly among those non-producers who had to be fed from the diminishing resources of the Empire.

The fall of the Western Roman Empire was not a serious blow since the Visigoths returned to Gaul after Alaric's death. Rome also had ceased to be the administrative center of the West. The Emperor and his court were safe behind the marshes of the coastal city of Ravenna. By this time Rome had not only become incapable of dealing with the barbarians, but it also found itself unable to deal with its political, economic, and social problems as well. We may regret the passing of the glory of Greece and the grandeur of Rome, but the fall of the Western Roman Empire was offset by the conversion to Christianity of the barbarians of Western Europe.

In 451 C.E. at the Council of Chalcedon, because of stories about Leo's intercession with Attila the Hun, it was suggested that, "St. Peter has spoken through Leo!" The Council of Chalcedon rejected the Petrine basis for the Pope's supremacy and declared that a city's ecclesiastical status was to be determined by its civil status. That meant that the Church of the New Rome, Constantinople, had a legal position similar to that of the Old Rome. The Roman delegates, however, refused to sign and left in protest. Leo I then set out more clearly than ever the concept that the papacy was Peter's own office, not only as founder, but also as present ruler of the Church through his servant the Pope. Leo claimed, furthermore, that it did not matter how unworthy any Pope might be, as long as he was the successor of Peter and was acting according to canon law.

When Gregory became Pope in 590 C.E., Rome's situation had badly disintegrated. The Romans faced the Lombard threat with no hope of help from the Emperor in Ravenna. The population was also dealing with famine and plague throughout the land. Gregory took command without hesitation. He immediately obtained the needed provisions and provided for defense against an invasion. He sent orders to generals in the field and negotiated with the Lombards, finally obtaining peace without the Emperor's authorization. No Pope had ever dared to do such a thing. In the midst of all this Gregory was administering the affairs of the Church, caring for its spiritual needs, strengthening the churches in Gaul and Spain, sending missionaries to England, and defending the Church of Rome against the claims of Constantinople. Gregory's period as Pope, by its extension of papal authority, marks the transition from the ancient world of Imperial Rome to Medieval Christendom.

## **Notre Dame in Paris**



## **PART TWO: THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH**



## 9. THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Then we went on to Greece, and the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendour or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations.

*Vassals reporting to Vladimir on Orthodox Christianity*

### The New Rome

By 324 C.E. Constantine had defeated the Roman Emperor Licinius near the ancient city of Byzantium, ushering in a time of peace and prosperity. Around 330 C.E. Constantine decided to rebuild the city and establish his capital there on the Bosphorus Strait, where Europe and Asia meet. The new city was to be the Christian counterpart of Rome and was actually called *Nova Roma* (New Rome), but it also became known as Constantinople, the City of Constantine. With a population of about one million, it was by far the largest and richest city in the Christian world. It became the hub of the new Byzantine civilization, which lasted for more than a thousand years. It fell in 1453 C.E.

### The Church

In addition to the heresies that threatened both the Eastern and Western Churches new differences began to appear. These new differences had more to do with expressions of faith, styles of worship, and practical administration than with Christian doctrine. These were the differences that drove a wedge between Eastern and Western Christians. In the second century, they were both called *catholic*, which meant general or universal, as opposed to particular or local; but in the sixth century, the differences became more significant.

Many of those differences emerged within the time of the persecutions, but they became more acute after the persecutions were over. By the time of Constantine, many of the differences threatened the new unity gained by uniting the Eastern and Western halves of the Empire into one. Constantine found Christianity deeply divided over doctrines and practices. He believed that God would hold him personally responsible for these quarrels and divisions among the Christians. If Christianity was not united, how could it hold the Empire together? How could it be the right religion for the Empire?

## **The Ecumenical Councils**

To gain this unity, Constantine called the first ecumenical council at Nicaea in 325 C.E. to define and establish the correct Christian doctrines and practices. Over a period of years, Eastern Emperors called seven ecumenical councils. They were as follows:

1. Nicaea (325 C.E.)
2. Constantinople (381 C.E.)
3. Ephesus (431 and 449 C.E.)
4. Chalcedon (451 C.E.)
5. Constantinople (533 C.E.)
6. Constantinople (680-681 C.E.)
7. Nicaea (787 C.E.)

The Emperor not only called the councils, but he also presided over them, either personally or through one of his deputies. Eastern Christians still place great emphasis on these seven ecumenical councils and refer to themselves as “The Church of the Seven Councils.”

Since the whole Church was represented through its Bishops and leaders, whatever was agreed upon in an ecumenical council, the Emperor pronounced as law. Those who dissented from the beliefs and practices defined by a council were labeled “heretics” or “schismatics.” The government not only deprived them of their offices, but, sent them to some remote corner of the Empire, where they had little influence.

## **The Bishops**

One of the reasons why the Emperors could not achieve the unity they sought lies in the way in which Bishops were elected. In theory the Bishops were expected to uphold Scripture and the apostolic traditions, but neither the Emperor nor the Councils elected bishops. After being nominated by neighboring Bishops, they were then elected by their local synods and councils. The local synods and councils consisted of the Bishop, the local clergy of priests and deacons, and influential laymen, who could be monks or scholars.

At least two Bishops were required to ordain a new Bishop. Once consecrated, Bishops served for life. They could only be removed from office if charges against them were accepted by a synod of fellow Bishops in the same province. All Bishops were supposed to be equal, but Bishops from the larger cities exercised more influence than the Bishops who presided in the smaller cities. The Bishop in a capital city was called the Metropolitan Bishop. By Constantine’s time, the Chief Metropolitan Bishops were from Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, the chief cities in the

Empire. Eventually the Bishops of Constantinople and Jerusalem were added to make five Metropolitan Bishops.

In addition to the Metropolitan Bishops, there were also two Patriarchal Bishops. The first Patriarchal Bishop was located in Rome. At the Second Ecumenical Council (381 C.E.) the Patriarch of Constantinople was ranked second. Constantinople was considered to be the New Rome. It was the Patriarch of Constantinople, sometimes known as the Ecumenical Patriarch, who became the primary spokesman for Eastern Christianity.

### **The Emperors**

The Emperor's presence was always felt most keenly in Constantinople. It was the Emperor, the *living image of Christ*, who stood at the helm of the Church. This was in line with the title *chief priest*, which was given earlier to pagan Roman Emperors. As a part of their office, they were expected to carry out religious duties. Constantine, for example, was viewed as God's chosen deputy. As head of the Church, Constantine presided over certain local synods in Constantinople and, within his lifetime, over all the general ecumenical councils. He also had the right to approve all candidates for the post of Patriarch. The Patriarch of Constantinople, however, was not an imperial agent in charge of religious affairs. The Emperor was in charge.

Constantine began his religious duties by granting Priests and Bishops the same privileges as pagan religious leaders had enjoyed. He also granted funds for building and furnishing Churches. Later Christian Emperors continued the practice..The most famous of these Emperors was Justinian I (526-565 C.E.), who built hundreds of church buildings throughout the Empire. His most remarkable achievement was the rebuilding of Hagia Sophia [Saint Sophia] (537 C.E.) in Constantinople, the largest and most elaborate of more than twenty new Churches. This remarkable building became the model for many later buildings in the Eastern Church.

Justinian I (483-565 C.E.) was born Flavius Petrus Sabgatus Justinianus in Illyria and educated in Constantinople. He married Theodora (508-548 C.E.), in 523 C.E. She was probably born in Constantinople. Her father was a trainer of circus animals, and she became an actress and a prostitute or mistress before marrying Justinian. Four years later, upon becoming Emperor, Justinian made Theodora his joint ruler. She made many political decisions. In 532 C.E., as a result of high taxes and religious and political conflicts, an insurrection broke out in Constantinople. Theodora helped to save the throne by preventing Justinian from fleeing the city. Historians take issue with Procopius's description of Theodora as tyrannical and cruel, but they agree that she possessed gifts of intellect and beauty.

Since Theodora had sympathies with the emerging Monophysite controversy, Justinian tried his best to meet the Monophysites half way, but he failed. The controversy began with Eutyches, an aged monastic superior in Constantinople, who was dissatisfied with the definition of *the two natures of Christ* given by the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.) Eutyches suggested that Christ's humanity was absorbed by his divinity. It was like a drop of wine being absorbed by the sea. The controversy persisted through the fifth and sixth centuries. The Sixth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople (680-681 C.E.) finally condemned it as heresy. That Council decreed that in Christ "there are two natural wills and modes of operation without division, change, separation or confusion.... His human will follows, without any resistance or reluctance but in subjection, his divine and omnipotent will." This decree did not eliminate Monophysitism, which continues today in the Abyssinian Church, the Armenian Church, the Coptic Church, and the Jacobite Church. These are all Monophysite bodies, not part of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Upon his accession as Emperor, Justinian inaugurated a policy of beautifying Constantinople and recovering Roman territories, the western part of which had been in serious decline for years due to the barbarian invasions of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The eastern front of the Empire was secured in 532 C.E. with an eternal peace signed with Persia. In 533 C.E. an imperial army defeated the Vandal Kingdom in North Africa, reincorporating it into the Empire in 534 C.E. The following year another imperial army attacked the Ostrogoths in Italy, but it took twenty years to defeat them. A third campaign was taken against the Visigoths, which enabled the Empire to reconquer southeastern Spain. By the Emperor's death, most of the former Roman territory around the Mediterranean Sea, except for Northern Spain and Gaul was again part of a restored Roman Empire.

Justinian's centralized Empire required a uniform legal system; therefore, an imperial commission headed by the renowned jurist Trebonianus worked for ten years to collect and systematize existing Roman law. The result was the enormous *Corpus Juris Civilis* (Body of Civil Law), also called the *Justinian Code*, officially declared in 529 C.E. and kept up to date by the addition of new decrees, or *Novellae*. The Justinian Code formed the basis for modern law in many European countries.

### **Celibacy of the Clergy**

The idea that clergy should remain single developed slowly. Some of the Apostles were married; certainly, Peter was married, since his mother-in-law is mentioned in the New Testament. It was regarded as normal for an Apostle to take his wife with him on mission trips. Although Paul never

married, he did not forbid marriage. His reasons for remaining unmarried were theological and practical and because he believed that Christ would return soon. Following the first century, abstinence from marriage was left as a matter of personal choice, although some heretical groups, such as the Gnostics, rejected marriage on the grounds that it entangled the spiritual soul with the evil physical world. By the third century, celibacy was beginning to be valued as a mark of holiness. In the fourth century some men, after they had been married and had served in public life, sought ordination. In some cases they lived with their wives, but abstained from sexual intercourse. They obviously valued celibacy as an act of holiness. In the fourth century, moves were made to restrict marriage after ordination, and pressure for clergy to be celibate became great.

Celibacy of the clergy produced two abuses. Many so-called celibate clergy lived with women who were not their wives, a practice condemned by the Church. The second abuse involved men leaving their wives in order to follow the celibate life. A Roman Law in 420 C.E. forbade this practice. In the fifth century and after, two codes of practice evolved. In the Eastern Church, presbyters and deacons were allowed to marry before ordination, but Bishops were always chosen from the celibate clergy. Very often a celibate monk would be chosen. Justinian accepted this practice as the norm, and it remains in force in the Eastern Orthodox Church to this day. Celibacy of the Western clergy was portrayed as the ideal, but was not effectively and legally enforced until the time of Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085 C.E.).

### **Decline**

Dealing with controversies of faith and practice created divisions within the Church and the Empire. Within two hundred years of Justinian's death, the Empire was nearly obliterated, first by the Avars and Persians and then by the Arabs. The Arabs inspired by their new religion, Islam, conquered all of North Africa and a large part of Asia Minor. Twice their forces advanced right up to the walls of Constantinople, but failed to take the City. Emperors also had to deal with the expanding power of the Lombards in Italy, the various Slavic peoples in Greece, and the Bulgarians in the valley of the Danube River. The Empire survived, but with only a fraction of its former territory.

In the face of these new threats, large numbers of Orthodox Christians began to migrate to the West. These refugees included many monks and clergy who found new homes in the central and western part of the Empire. Many migrated as far as southern Italy and even close to Rome itself. By the year 800 C.E., four of the five Patriarchates of the Church were located outside of the boundaries of the Empire. Alexandria, Antioch, and

Jerusalem were all now under Muslim control; and Rome had nearly come under the influence of the Frankish Kingdom. The Patriarchs continued to communicate and cooperate with one another, but they gradually became more and more independent.

## 10. THE RISE OF ISLAM

There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.

*Muhammad*

### **Muhammad**

With the Christian Church split between the Orthodox Church in the East and the Catholic Church in the West, a new Religion emerged which would threaten both the East and the West as never before. It started in Mecca with the career of the remarkable religious leader, Muhammad (570-632 C.E.), who began his ministry at the age of forty (610 C.E.). Muhammad claimed that the archangel Gabriel had appeared to him in a vision, and so he confided in his family and close friends, whom he then converted to monotheism. Although there were monotheists in Mecca, the dominant religion advocated polytheism and idolatry. Muhammad's message was "submission to the will of [one] God," which is what the word *Islam* means. It took him nearly four years to gain forty converts, who were mostly from his family and friends.

Muhammad tried to preach his radical monotheism to the people of Mecca, but they were very resistant to his message. Ridiculed by the people of Mecca, Muhammad decided to go to Medina in June of 622 C.E. The flight from Mecca to Medina is referred to as the *Hegira* (flight) and makes up the beginning of the Muslim calendar. This would be year 1 AH (*anno hegirae*).

Recognized as a prophet and a lawgiver, Muhammad succeeded in Medina, and soon held both spiritual and temporal power. Idol worshippers had to accept Islam or the sword, but monotheists, such as Jews and Christians, enjoyed a special status. They were tolerated as long as they paid a special tax. There was some opposition to this from Arabs and Jews, but Muhammad overcame it, and led a war against Mecca, where he purified the city by removing the idols in the ancient Arab shrine, the Kaaba. Arab tribes declared their allegiance to him, and Mecca surrendered in 630 C.E. By his death in 632 C.E., Muhammad was the leader of an Arab State, which eventually dominated the entire Middle East and threatened both Catholic and Orthodox Christianity.

### **Basic Beliefs**

Muhammad's central teachings included elements from Judaism and Christianity, but the new religion also managed to absorb traditions and institutions from Arabic paganism, such as the pilgrimage and the Kaaba shrine. These institutions were not only absorbed; they were also reformed.

The new emphasis was on the unity, power, and goodness of God. In human affairs, the emphasis was on generosity and justice. An additional teaching focused on the impending judgment of the world, with reward and punishment for every individual's actions. Allah, who is the Creator, will also be the Judge.

The six major beliefs of Islam can be summarized as follows: (1) the absolute unity and oneness of Allah, (2) the acceptance of Allah's Prophets, with Muhammad being the final Prophet, (3) the affirmation of angels as Allah's messengers, (4) the acceptance of all the books that Allah has revealed, (5) the resurrection and judgment at the last day, and (6) predestination (everything happens according to Allah's divine decree). The main point in a Muslim's identity is not so much what he or she believes, but in how he or she lives. Law is more important to Muslims than theology.<sup>84</sup>

### **Scripture**

The message of Muhammad also imposed five obligations (pillars) upon Muslim believers. They are (1) the confession of faith,<sup>85</sup> (2) prayer five times a day, (3) charitable gifts of 2 & 1/2% of one's wealth, (4) fasting in the holy month of Ramadan,<sup>86</sup> and (5) the pilgrimage to Mecca.

A so-called sixth obligation (pillar) is known as Jihad or Holy War. Jihad means struggle, and its basic meaning refers to a person's struggle with evil tendencies within himself or herself. It also refers to the struggle between an Islamic state and an evil force that is set upon the destruction of Allah's community and Allah's word. When faced with such a situation, a Muslim is required to do everything in his or her power to prevent the victory of evil over Islam. War is required if all other steps fail. Jihad can be waged only by a true Islamic State and only after certain conditions have been met. It should be fought in as humane a way as possible. The problem is that many would-be Muslims use Jihad as an excuse for terrorism and war. Most Muslims are peace-loving; but they will not allow anyone to insult, threaten, or destroy their religion. Most Muslims see

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<sup>84</sup> *Religions: Encountering People of Other Faiths* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), p. 62.

<sup>85</sup> There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.

<sup>86</sup> Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim year. According to the Koran, the Fast of Ramadan was instituted so that believers might cultivate piety. The ninth month was designated because it was the month during which Muhammad received the first of the Koran's revelations.

Islam as a way of life rather than as a religion. They submit to Allah and discover their way of life in the Koran.<sup>87</sup>

The divine source of revelation was *the Koran*, which was collected and committed to writing by Othman, the second leader following Muhammad. Muslims regard the Koran as the speech of God, mediated by the angel Gabriel; therefore, the Koran is infallible. The passages in the Koran were revealed to Muhammad over a period of twenty-two years, and have been divided into 114 chapters of unequal length. The shortest chapter contains only three verses, and the longest 306 verses.

The second source of Islam is the *Example of the Prophet*. It is known through *Hadith*, the body of traditions based on what the Prophet said or did in regard to various issues. The transmission of Hadith was mostly verbal, and present collections date only to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike the Koran, the Hadith is not considered to be infallible.

The final source of Islam is the *Ijma*, which consists of the “accord of the faithful,” and forms the body of law followed by devout Muslims. Taken together, these three sources constitute the *Sunna* or “The Path.” A division within Islam between the Sunnites and the Shiites left the Sunna in dispute. This difference of opinion was caused by the problem of choosing a successor to Muhammad. The division still exists today.

### **Sects in Islam**

The Shiite sect emerged out of the dispute with the Sunnis (Orthodox Islam) over political succession to Muhammad. The Shiites claimed that leadership within Islam is the divine right of Muhammad’s descendants. This would mean that leaders would have to be descendants through Muhammad’s daughter Fatima and her husband Ali. Shiites believe that there have been a series of twelve infallible leaders beginning with Imam Ali, and these twelve are known as the *Twelvers*. The twelfth and last Imam disappeared in 880 C.E., and Shiites await his return, at which time the world will be filled with justice. Until that time, even the best ruler is only half legitimate. Shiites, in contrast to Sunnis, emphasize esoteric knowledge rather than consensus of the community.

Another sect was the mystical movement called Sufism, which originated in the eighth century when small circles of pious Muslims reacted against the growing worldliness of the Islamic community. They emphasized the inner life of the spirit and moral purification. During the ninth century, Sufism developed into a mystical doctrine, with direct communion or union with God as its ideal. This aspiration to mystical

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<sup>87</sup> *Religions: Encountering People of Other Faiths*, pp. 62-63.

union with God violated the orthodox Islamic commitment to monotheism, and in 922 C.E. al-Hallaj, who was accused of claiming identity with God, was executed in Baghdad. Sufis subsequently attempted to achieve a synthesis between moderate Sufism and orthodoxy, and in the eleventh century al-Ghazali succeeded in bringing Sufism within the orthodox framework. The movement became increasingly popular with the Sufi emphasis on intuitive knowledge and the love of God. The tremendous success of the movement can be attributed to the humanitarian efforts of its founders.

There are some other minor sects such as the Wahhabi or Ikhwan movement, usually described as being “Puritan.” This movement is strongly opposed to the Sufi movement and rejects ornaments, music, and amusements. Most of the adherents of this movement live in Saudi Arabia. Another sect consists of the Ismailis, an offshoot of the Shiite sect. Their adherents are considered extremists, and they are scattered throughout Northern Africa and Asia. One of the most successful offshoots of the Shiite sect is now a world religion in its own right—Baha’i. The origins of Baha’i date back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Followers of Baha’i are still persecuted in Iran today.<sup>88</sup>

### **The Spread of Islam**

Following the death of Muhammad, the caliphs, literally, “successors,” led Islam. Although many factors contributed to the rapid spread of Islam, the primary force was the extraordinary religious enthusiasm generated by Muhammad and his converts, the *Companions*. Within one century of Muhammad’s death, Islam had spread from the Atlantic (Morocco) to the River Indus (Pakistan). Within this vast area, there was created a theocratic empire led by the caliphs, who combined religious and political functions. Arab military commanders became the civil governors of the occupied areas, as representatives of the caliphs. This new world empire was soon divided into a series of caliphates based in Mecca, Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo.

The Islamic states shared a coherent and homogeneous civilization. Several factors contributed to this homogeneity. For one, the Koran was written in Arabic, and translations were not allowed. Thus, the Arabic language dominated not only the religion of Islam, but also the allied areas of law and education. There certainly were social and cultural pressures on people to convert to Islam, but contrary to popular opinions, forced conversions were the exception, rather than the rule.

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<sup>88</sup> *Religions: Encountering People of Other Faiths*, p. 63.

By the beginning of the eighth century, Islam had reached its northernmost limits of growth. In the East, a Muslim-Byzantine frontier was established following a series of sieges against Constantinople. In the West, Islam rapidly occupied Visigothic Spain and sent raiding parties into Frankish Gaul, but was finally defeated by the Carolingian leader, Charles Martel in 732 C.E. Although Islam was prevented from penetrating into the heart of Europe, it had gained control of most of the Mediterranean.

Catholic Europe was very concerned about the Muslim advance. This concern was expressed in unrelieved hostility. Islam, and its prophet, Muhammad, were identified with the Beast or the Antichrist in the book of Revelation. Muhammad was portrayed as an impostor and Islam as a religion of idolatry and violence. The Muslim community, on the other hand, believed that their civilization was superior to all others, since the revelation to Muhammad was the final one, replacing both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.



# 11. ICONOCLASM

Democracy has no monuments. It strikes no medals.  
It does not bear the head of a man on its coinage.  
It's true character is iconoclast.<sup>89</sup>

*John Quincy Adams*

## **Roman and Muslim Influences**

Inspired by their new religion, Islam, the Arabs attempted to conquer all of North Africa and a great part of Asia Minor. The Byzantine Empire survived these attacks, but was left with only a fraction of its former territory. Having laid to rest the Monophysite teachings at the Council of Constantinople in 681 C.E., another controversy emerged. Islam certainly influenced this controversy, which had to do with what might be considered holy and worthy of worship.

Islam condemned the use of all images, or icons, in worship. Icons had been accepted within Christianity. The making of icons had its precedents in ancient Rome. The icon of the Emperor was revered as if the Emperor himself were present. Even after the Emperors became Christian, the imperial icon continued to be seen in army camps, courthouses, and prominent places in the major cities. Constantine and his successors erected huge statues of themselves in Constantinople. The Emperor's image appeared on coins as a mark of authenticity. Justinian erected a huge statue of Christ over the main gate, the Bronze Gate, of the Imperial Palace. By the end of the sixth century, icons of Christ and Mary were replacing many of the imperial icons. Eventually an icon of Christ began to appear on the reverse side of coins.<sup>90</sup>

Both the church and the imperial government encouraged the making of icons to honor Christ, Mary, the Saints, and other Holy men and women. What they did not realize was that this uncontrolled multiplying of icons would cause people to confine their devotion to local shrines and figures. Ordinary Christians failed to make the distinction between the holy object and the spiritual reality that it signified. Consequently, many people fell into idolatry. Islam was clear on where it stood in regard to icons, but Christianity was not.

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<sup>89</sup> Quoted in Jurgen Moltmann, "The Cross and Civil Religion," *Religion and Political Society*, p. 39.

<sup>90</sup> This began to happen during the reign of Justinian II (685-695 and 705-711 C.E.)

## **The Iconoclast Emperors**

Emperor Leo III (717-741 C.E.) was the first one to launch an attack on the use of icons. Prior to becoming Emperor, Leo served as governor-general in Western Asia Minor, where several bishops had begun to preach against the use of icons. Leo was also reminded of the Christian teaching that God had punished the children of Israel because of their idolatrous ways. Perhaps their losses to the Muslims and an earthquake early in Leo's reign were signs of God's intention to bring God's new chosen people to their senses. After successfully repulsing the Muslim armies in their second major attack on Constantinople (717-718 C.E.), Leo openly declared his opposition to icons in 725-726 C.E.

An official was sent to replace the icon of Christ over the Bronze Gate with a cross. An angry mob murdered the official. The Patriarch of Constantinople disagreed with Leo, and so Leo had him replaced. In 730 C.E., Leo issued an edict calling for the removal or destruction of all religious icons in public places and in churches. The Patriarchal Bishop of Rome condemned iconoclasm, the destruction of icons; but Leo retaliated by removing Sicily, southern Italy and the entire western part of the Balkans and Greece from the Patriarchate of Rome and placed them under the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This move forced the Bishop of Rome to seek the support and protection of the Franks.

Under Leo III and his son Constantine V (741-751 C.E.), supporters of icons were persecuted. A synod of 338 Bishops met in Constantinople in 754 C.E. and condemned the use of icons as idolatry. All icons were to be destroyed. The Emperor also attempted to limit the cult of saint-worship by destroying relics and condemning prayers made to the saints. Those who resisted this new policy, were excommunicated, mutilated, and sent into exile. It has been estimated that 50,000 monks fled from the region surrounding Constantinople to escape persecution and humiliation.

The iconoclasts wanted to replace the religious icons with Christian symbols of the cross, the Book (Bible), and the elements of the Lord's Supper. Constantine V argued that the elements of the Lord's Supper were the true icon of Christ, since they alone were consecrated. The consecrated bread and wine were believed to be identical in substance with the flesh and blood of the divine and human Christ. A proper icon was to consist of the same substance as what it stood for.

### **In Defense of Icons**

The icon supporters consisted mostly of monks, ascetics, and their uneducated and superstitious followers. Although not all monks were in favor of icons, many monasteries made and sold them for a living. The

most rational defense for icons came from a distant source. John Mansour (730-760 C.E.), born in Damascus. He formulated the ideas that would eventually be used to justify religious icons. John became known as John of Damascus, and in the Eastern Orthodox Churches, he became regarded as the greatest theologian of the eighth century. He is also regarded as the last of the so-called Church Fathers.

John explained that an image was never of the same substance as its original, but merely imitated it. An icon's only significance is as a reminder of the original. His argument is based on Plato's idea that everything we sense in this world is only an imitation of its eternal, original form, which can only be known by the soul in the non-material world. To deny that an icon could depict Christ was to deny the incarnation itself. While it is wrong to worship the icon itself, the icon can instruct and assist the believer in the true worship of Christ. Icons can be honored and venerated in the same way as the Bible or the cross. Icons could also be made of Mary, the apostles, saints, and even angels; but it must be understood that they are only reminders to help us give proper respect and reverence.

Constantine V's son, Leo IV (775-780) was not an energetic iconoclast. His widow Irene, regent for their son Constantine VI (780-797) managed to overturn the dynasty's policy of iconoclasm, and with the help of Patriarch Tarasius (784-806), the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 350 Bishops assembled at Nicaea in 787 C.E. condemned the iconoclastic movement. The Council backed the position of John of Damascus. The official position was that icons must be paintings or sculptures in low relief. If the thumb and forefinger could be held on the nose of an image, it was unacceptable. This ruled out the statues that we find in Roman Catholic Churches.

### **A Brief Resurgence of Iconoclasm**

Almost immediately after the icons were restored, the period of military victories and steady prosperity, enjoyed under the Iconoclastic Emperors, ceased. A series of military disasters, diplomatic blunders, and economic problems followed for a quarter of a century. Leo V (813-820 C.E.) decided to reinstate iconoclasm as the official policy of his government.

This meant deposing the pro-icon Patriarch Nicephorus (806-815 C.E.) and replacing him with the anti-icon Patriarch Theodotus (815-821 C.E.) The new Patriarch assembled a synod, which reaffirmed the position taken by the anti-icon synod of 754 C.E. Those who resisted were deposed and imprisoned. This was the fate of Nicephorus, the former patriarch, and Theodore, an outspoken Abbot of the Studios monastery in Constantinople.

## **The End of the Controversy**

After the death of Leo VI, persecution of the pro-icon party ceased for seventeen years; but then, in 837 C.E. John Grammaticus became Patriarch of Constantinople. John persuaded Emperor Theophilus (829-842 C.E.) to take a strong iconoclast position. Those who opposed this policy were to be executed. For all practical purposes the iconoclastic movement died with Theophilus. Theodora, his widow and regent for their son, Michael III (842-867 C.E.) decided that her son must give up iconoclasm in order to gain the widest possible support for the dynasty. A synod called in 843 C.E. deposed John Grammaticus and elected Methodius as Patriarch. It also condemned all iconoclasts and confirmed the rulings of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Orthodox Churches celebrate the end of the Iconoclastic controversy on the first Sunday in Lent. This special day is called the "Feast of Orthodoxy."

## 12. THE WESTERN CHURCH

Listen! Dogmas are not the business of emperors but of pontiffs.

*Pope Gregory the Great*

### **The Power of the Papacy**

The division of the Western Church from the Eastern Church was well underway by the fourth century. The Western Bishops came to exercise power in Rome as a result of the decline and eventual disappearance of the Emperor in the West, and through the accumulation of extensive landholdings in and around Rome. Intense competition had arisen among the Bishops of the great imperial cities—Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople. The two chief rivals for pre-eminence were the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople. Although Constantinople had always been considered the junior of the two, it was associated with the imperial capital. This is why the Church of Constantinople rose so quickly to a place of prestige and influence. At the same time, the Bishops in the West did not have a powerful Emperor nearby, and so they began to involve themselves more and more in secular and political matters.

Pope Gregory the Great (590-604 C.E.) stands at the crossroads in the development of papal power in the Western Church. Without the Emperor in Rome, Gregory had to look elsewhere for protection. Gregory sought to develop ties with the pagan and Arian Christian Germanic kingdoms, but religious differences got in the way. One solution was to convert them to Catholic Christianity, which Gregory tried to do. Gregory supported the Lombard Queen Theodelinda, who was a Catholic Christian; and eventually, the Lombards were weaned away from Arian to Catholic Christianity. This did not solve the problem, but it pointed to a direction that the Western Church would continue to take. It would continue to look to the West for protection, not the East.

The Frankish kings in Gaul were the only Germanic tribes to enter the Roman Empire as pagans. About 500 C.E., Clovis, their first great ruler, married a Catholic princess and decided to accept Catholic baptism. Clovis agreed to accept Christ if the Christian God would give him victory over the Alemanni tribe. Clovis won the battle, and along with three thousand of his warriors, was baptized. This event points out the medieval pattern of conversion. The ruler's conversion decided the religion of his subjects. Clovis' conversion laid the foundation for an important alliance between the papacy and the Franks, but this did not mean that the Pope had much influence on royal policy. Gregory determined to revive the Church in the

West by launching reform in Gaul. The Merovingian<sup>91</sup> dynasty of Frankish rulers assumed that the Church was at their own disposal, and so they appointed laymen as Bishops and sold Church appointments. These practices were successfully challenged.

### **The Mission to England**

Gregory's relations with the Merovingian kings in Gaul had one positive result: the mission to England and the conversion of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. This mission illustrates Gregory's vision to convert the barbarians and make them members of a Christian commonwealth led by the Pope. Gregory's vision became a reality in medieval Europe. The story, told by a papal biographer, is probably apocryphal. While still a monk in Rome, Gregory saw some attractive children in the slave market. When he asked who they were, he was told that they were pagan *Angli* from England. No, he replied, they are not *Angles*, but *Angels*.

In 595 C.E. Pope Gregory sent his representative to Arles, in southern France, to purchase Anglo-Saxon slaves to be trained as clerics in Rome, and in 596 C.E. he assembled a team of forty monks under Augustine, the Prior of the Pope's own monastery in Rome. With Frankish priests as interpreters, the team went to England just prior to Easter Sunday in 597 C.E. The goal of this missionary endeavor was the Jutish kingdom of Kent. Its King, Ethelbert, was married to the Catholic Frankish Princess, Bertha. Ethelbert was converted to Catholicism, and since he was overlord of the neighboring Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Essex, and East Anglia, Catholic Christianity was accepted by three of the twelve Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. In late 597 C.E., the Pope appointed Augustine Archbishop of the Church in England. King Ethelbert gave the new Archbishop his own palace in Canterbury, which became the first Episcopal center in England.

Archbishop Augustine was concerned about the Celtic Church's attitude towards the Anglo-Saxon mission, and its practices, which differed from those of Rome. Augustine's attempt to move the Celtic Church closer to Rome failed on the following basic issues: (1) the date of Easter, (2) the Roman tradition of baptism, and (3) the mission to convert the Anglo-Saxons. Some of the problems were not theological. The Celtic Bishops, for example, took offense when the Archbishop refused to stand to greet them; and they in turn, refused to accept him as their Archbishop.

As the Anglo-Saxon mission succeeded, both Roman and Celtic-British churchmen participated. Aidan of Lindisfarne was the first Celtic

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<sup>91</sup> The Merovingian kings belonged to a dynasty of Frankish kings founded by Clovis. They reigned in Gaul and Germany from about 500 to 751 C.E.

churchman to take an active part in that mission. The Synod of Whitby in 664 C.E. finally confirmed the Romanization of British Christianity. Five years later Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek who served as Archbishop of Canterbury, and Hadrian from North Africa, was sent to England to complete the reordering of the Church in England. Drawing spiritual and intellectual vitality from Celtic Christianity, they built on the foundations laid by Pope Gregory and Archbishop Augustine. They are also considered to be the real founders of the Catholic Church in England.

### **The Evangelization of Europe**

After Gregory the Great, Catholicism went through a period of decline. The Papacy suffered at the hands of the Lombards in Italy and the Byzantine rulers. In Frankish Gaul the Merovingian kings become increasingly ineffective. The moral, spiritual, and intellectual quality of the clergy steadily declined. Effective church government was weakened by the constant interference of secular rulers.

The revival of religious life in Western Christendom came about in the eighth century led by Anglo-Saxon missionaries, a revitalized Papacy, and a new royal house in Frankish Gaul. Missionaries from the Irish-Celtic Church had engaged in missions from the late sixth century. Outstanding among them was Columban, who had been active in both Gaul and Italy. Although well intentioned, these missionaries paid little attention to consolidating their work. Celtic Christianity was characterized by constant movement, and for this reason, much of their work had to be done over again. Anglo-Saxon missionaries accomplished this by bringing, Roman Church organization with them. In addition, they had close ties with the Papacy. Outstanding among these missionaries was Wynfrith of Crediton (680-754 C.E.), better known as Boniface.

Boniface consulted with the Papacy and received papal consecration as “Bishop of the German Church.” He evangelized among the Hessians of Bavaria and Thuringia and established the famous Monastery of Fulda. Having brought Germany into Christian Europe under Papal leadership, he was named Archbishop of Mainz, and came to be known as the “Apostle to the Germans.”

Boniface also played a critical role in the Church in Gaul. Anglo-Saxon missionaries to Germany had received the support of Charles Martel, a member of the Carolingian family. He supported the mission to Germany because of his own desire to expand his rule into Bavaria. The Papacy was grateful for Martel’s support, for he had stopped the Muslim advance in Spain. Initially, the Church had agreed to Martel’s use of its lands and incomes to fight off the Muslim advance, but when he did not return those lands, the Papacy was upset. In addition to that, Martel refused a Papal

request to attack the Lombards in Italy. The Lombards had been his allies against the Muslims. A new era began with the death of Charles Martel. His heirs, Carloman and Pepin, who had been raised in the monastery of St. Denis near Paris, were helped by Boniface to carry out major reforms of the clergy and Church organization in the Frankish Church. These reforms made possible the educational revival associated with the greatest of the Carolingian rulers, Charlemagne.

### **Reviving the Western Empire**

Pope Stephen II appealed to Pepin, sole ruler of the Franks, for aid against the Lombards. In response to Pope Stephen's appeal for help, Pepin recovered territories in northeast and central Italy from the Lombards and gave them to the Pope. This became known as the "Donation of Pepin." It constituted the legal foundation of the Papal States. In turn, the Pope placed Rome under the protection of Pepin and recognized him and his sons as "Protectors of the Romans." This sequence of events, plus the coronation of Pepin's son, Charlemagne, as Emperor, gave the Pope the opportunity to loosen constitutional ties to the Eastern Empire and Constantinople. Religious developments in the East also contributed to freeing Rome from Constantinople. The Iconoclastic controversy engulfed the East when Leo III banned the use of icons in 726 C.E. Pope Gregory II not only rejected the edict banning icons, but went on to flaunt his disrespect for the Eastern Emperor's authority.

The Eastern and Western Churches followed a different line of thinking in regard to Church and State relationships. In the East the secular ruler played a leading role in Church affairs, but in the West the Papacy was trying to eliminate secular influence. Pope Gregory wrote: "Listen! Dogmas are not the business of emperors but of pontiffs." With the help of Charlemagne, the Western Church was finally able to break free of the Eastern Emperor. The Pope's claim to sovereign rule in Italy and independence from the Eastern Roman Empire was further reinforced by the appearance of one of the great forgeries of the Middle Ages, *the Donation of Constantine*. This document alleged that when Constantine moved his capital to the East, he gave Rome and the Western part of the Empire to the Bishop of Rome. The *Donation* was not exposed as a forgery until the fifteenth century.

The final act in the Papal attempt to free itself from Constantinople came on Christmas Day in 800 C.E. when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Emperor. Charlemagne was not comfortable with the idea that he owed his crown to the Pope; and, in the last fourteen years of his reign, he subordinated the Papacy to the Empire. The following advice

given to the Emperor by the Pope, helps us to understand Charlemagne's reaction to the Pope:

Always remember, my king, that you are the deputy of God, your King. You are set to guard and rule all his members, and you must render an account for them on the day of judgment. The bishop is on a secondary plane.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has set you up as the ruler of the Christian people, in power more excellent than the pope or the Emperor of Constantinople, in wisdom more distinguished, in the dignity of your rule more sublime. On you alone depends the whole safety of the church of Christ.<sup>92</sup>

Charlemagne continued the educational reforms begun by his father Pepin and Boniface, but his chief educational adviser was to be the Anglo-Saxon Alcuin of York. It was an age that desperately needed education, and in Alcuin it found its masterful teacher. A generation of Alcuin's students went throughout the Empire to head monastic and cathedral schools created by Charlemagne. This Carolingian Renaissance turned to classical antiquity and to early Christianity for its models. Because the Irishman John Scotus Erigena was the only accomplished Greek scholar in the Carolingian world, the emphasis was on Latin literature. The works of both pagan and Christian classical authors were copied in the copying rooms of Carolingian monasteries, and without this vigorous effort, we would not have access to much of this material. Many of the original texts have not survived, and all we have is what has been copied in these monasteries and passed down to us.

Carolingian theologians dealt with a number of theological issues, which would become prevalent in the later Middle Ages. In Spain there arose what was called the Adoptionist heresy. The Adoptionist heresy taught that Christ in his humanity was only God's adopted Son. Alcuin rejected this heresy in his famous work, *Against Felix*. Alcuin upheld the orthodox belief, which rejected this heresy. Other issues that Carolingian theologians struggled with include the perpetual virginity of Mary, double predestination<sup>93</sup>, and transubstantiation of the elements in the Lord's Supper. The Abbot of Corbie, Paschasius Radbertus, wrote a treatise *On the Body and Blood of the Lord*, which became the first clear statement of

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<sup>92</sup> *Epistolae Karolni Aevi*, ii, 503; 288.

<sup>93</sup> Double predestination was advocated by a monk named Gottschalk, who in his studies of Augustine, concluded that some people were predestined to salvation, while others were predestined to eternal judgment. His view of double predestination was rejected by two synods and he was imprisoned.

the *real presence* of Christ's body and blood in the elements of the Lord's Supper. The transformation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is called transubstantiation.

In addition to the clarification of theological issues, there were the reform synods. They insisted that priests must lead lives beyond reproach. Among the violations that were criticized was the rejection of celibacy, over-eating and drunkenness, unwise relationships with women, keeping of hunting-animals, carrying arms, and frequenting taverns. The spirit of reform was strongly supported by Pepin and Charlemagne themselves. Charlemagne was actually moving towards an imperial theocracy similar to the State Church in the Eastern Empire, but the Papacy continued to stress the superiority of the spiritual power over the secular. This was reinforced by the forged *Donation of Constantine* along with an emphasis on Papal pre-eminence in the governing of the Western Roman Empire. The Pope's crowning of Charlemagne was an illustration of the Pope's claim to decide who should wear the Imperial Crown.

### **The Decline of Church and Empire**

After Charlemagne, the Carolingian Empire was torn by civil wars. The political chaos threatened the independence of Bishops. Laymen controlled churches by means of the *proprietary system*. Since they provided the land and erected the church buildings, they felt free to choose clergymen to serve their churches. Associated with this system there arose the practice of *simony*, the sale of church posts with little or no regard to clerical qualifications. The Church was seriously compromised.

There was a serious effort to deal with these problems. It took place in the diocese of Rheims between 845 and 853 C.E. Clergymen produced another remarkable forgery, the *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals* or *False Decretals*. This document provided a law, which protected the rights of Bishops. In order to strengthen the argument, its authors invoked the principle of the supremacy of the Pope. This document of Church Law, which incorporated the *Donation of Constantine*, became a vital part of Canon Law. The two documents were useful in claiming the supremacy of the Church over secular authority. The first Pope to make use of these documents was Pope Nicholas I (858-867 C.E.), the most important Pope between Gregory the Great and Gregory VII. Nicholas saw clearly the danger of a Church dominated by civil rulers.

From the late ninth century until the mid-eleventh century, external and internal problems weakened Western Christendom. The Carolingian Empire was fragmented, and no major military power existed in the West. The Muslims from the South, the Magyars from central Asia, and the Vikings from Scandinavia all attacked introducing more chaos and

fragmentation. A chronicler from the time period lamented, “Once we had a king, now we have kinglets!” For the Pope this was truly an era of despair; the Pope no longer had Carolingian *Protectors* to come to his aid. There was almost total collapse of civil order and culture in the tenth century. As the year 1000 approached, many thought that the end of the world was at hand.

During this time the clergy became indifferent to their duties, and their ignorance and immorality increased. Many of the Popes were incompetent and immoral as well, but the Papal institution continued to operate and be respected throughout the West. Christians continued to visit their most important shrines, the tombs of Peter and Paul in Rome.

### **The Rescue and Decline of the Papacy**

At the lowest ebb of the tenth century, a major political change took place that directly affected the position of Popes. A strong, independent German monarchy emerged. The Saxon dynasty began with the election of Henry I and was continued in his son, Otto I (936-973 C.E.). Otto developed a very close relationship with the Church in Germany. Bishops and Abbots were granted the rights and dignity of Princes, and the Church was given generous land grants. By means of his alliance with the Church, Otto I offset the power of the rebellious hereditary nobles. The spiritual aristocracy created by the Saxon Kings was not hereditary, and so the loyalty of these men could be counted upon.

Otto the Great provided the desperately needed assistance to rescue the Papacy from the mire of Roman and Italian politics. Two events come to mind. The first was his decision to march south into Italy to help Adelaide of Burgundy, to marry her, and to declare himself King of the Lombards. A decade later, in 962 C.E., he was invited to Italy by Pope John XII to be crowned in St. Peter’s. The price to be paid by the Papacy for the support of the State was interference in the internal affairs of the Church. The events of 962-963 C.E. initiated a decisive phase in Church-State relations. From now on, each German ruler was to follow up his election as King by going to Rome to be crowned Emperor. There was, however, another side to this. Otto made the Romans promise not to elect a Pope without his or his son’s consent. Then he convened a synod, which tried Pope John XII, found him guilty of a list of crimes, and deposed him. Emperors could now decide who could become Pope, and they also had the power to depose the Pope. Otto I chose a layman, who received all of his ecclesiastical orders in one day, to become Pope Leo VIII.



## 13. THE NEW MONKS

Jesu, the very thought of thee  
With sweetness fills the breast;  
But sweeter far thy face to see,  
And in thy presence rest.

*Bernard of Clairvaux*

### Monastic Reform

As the Church moved through the ninth and tenth centuries, it experienced serious decline. Examples of the state of the Church during this time include an untrained clergy, simony<sup>94</sup>, sexual laxity, and lay investiture.<sup>95</sup> In 910 C.E. the Cluniac Order was founded in France.<sup>96</sup> This new Monastic Order reinvigorated monasticism and the Church. It helped the Church gain control over medieval Europe by developing a new method of organization. It maintained this control by connecting each new monastery to the Mother House. This meant that the monasteries were exempt from local control and were responsible only to the Pope. The Cluniac Order came to include 300 priories, which turned out a host of prominent leaders, including Hildebrand, who was to become Pope Gregory VII.

The reform of the eleventh century has been called the *Hildebrandine* or *Gregorian* reform. Pope Gregory VII was not the only reforming leader. Pope Leo IX (1048-1054 C.E.) and Emperor Henry III (1039-1056 C.E.) aided the reformers in gaining control of the Papacy. There were many leaders who desired the freedom of the Church and believed that the Church should only be subject to the commands of God as revealed through canon law and the Scriptures. These reformers claimed that they only wished to restore the ancient and true law of the Church, which had been neglected and perverted for so long. Choosing a Pope, they insisted, was the task of the clergy and the people, not the Emperor. They also rejected the practice of buying and selling of church offices (simony), and affirmed the practice of celibacy for monks and priests alike.

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<sup>94</sup> The purchase of church posts

<sup>95</sup> The control of the appointment and allegiance of Abbots, Bishops, and Popes

<sup>96</sup> Cluny's long-ruling Abbots were Odo, 927-942; Odilo, 994-1049; and Hugh the Great, 1049-1109. They became figures of spiritual and political importance in Europe.

The main controversy between the reformers and the Emperors was *lay investiture*. Pope Nicholas II laid out the reformed position in 1059 C.E. by insisting that all future Popes be elected by the vote of the College of Cardinals. Under Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085 C.E.) the conflict escalated into open warfare. In 1075 C.E. Pope Gregory VII drew up the *Dictatus Papae*, which was a declaration of clerical power. The declaration forbade lay investiture, simony, and clergy marriage; and, demanded that all secular forces submit to the Pope. This meant that the Pope had more power than the Emperor, and if necessary, could excommunicate him from the Church and depose him. The struggle, which followed between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV, was marked by a dramatic incident at Canossa. Because of rebellion in his Empire and his own excommunication from the Church, Henry IV went to Italy in 1077 C.E. to ask for the Pope's forgiveness. The Pope humiliated him by forcing him to stand in the snow in front of a fortress for three days. Although it was humiliating for Henry IV, it enabled him to carry on his fight against the reformers.

In 1122 C.E. a compromise was reached in the matter of lay investiture, which was called the *Concordate of Worms*. The Emperor agreed to cease the traditional investiture with the ring and staff (which symbolized the conferring of ecclesiastical power); and in exchange, the Pope recognized the Emperor's right to confer the regalia (temporal rights) by investiture with the scepter. For both Pope and Emperor, this compromise left each side feeling that the opportunity would come to gain the upper hand. Papal power reached its peak under Pope Innocent III (1198-1216 C.E.), who had been trained in both canon and civil law.

In 1215 C.E., Pope Innocent III called the Fourth Lateran Council, which symbolized the mastery of the Papacy over every feature of Latin Christendom. The Council demanded that every Archbishop hold a council each year to make certain that the Bishops were doing their jobs. Ignorance and heresy were to be crushed by the setting up of an efficient educational system. Lay people were to respect Church property, obey the Church courts, and to observe the Christian rules on marriage. The clergy were to abstain from sexual disorder, fighting and drunkenness, and procedures were established for the trial of erring clergy. Innocent's council also confirmed the shameful isolation of Jews from society at large, requiring that they wear a special badge. The Jews were increasingly confined to living in ghettos. Although the Church reached the height of its power, the seeds of its subsequent decline had also been sown.

The Fourth Lateran Council also followed the teaching of Peter Lombard's reduction of thirty Sacraments to seven. The seven sacraments are: (1) baptism, (2) confirmation, (3) the eucharist, (4) penance, (5) extreme unction, (6) ordination, and (7) matrimony. These were thought to

have been instituted by Christ himself and were considered outward signs of inward grace. Thomas Aquinas later taught that these Sacraments conferred grace simply by being performed (*ex opere operato*). People receiving them can, through unbelief, put up a barrier to grace, though this is impossible for an unconscious infant or a dying person. The Council also taught that the underlying permanent reality of the bread and wine are changed at consecration into the body and blood of Christ. This transformation of the elements is called transubstantiation. Because the lay people might spill the transubstantiated wine, it was withheld from them. Only the priest was to drink of the transubstantiated wine.

### **The Cistercian Monks**

As the Papacy grew more powerful, it took over the task of education, which now became centered in the Bishops' schools rather than in the monasteries. The non-monastic clergy and civil government guaranteed an order in society that made obsolete the role of the monasteries as an oasis of culture. New monastic orders emerged that emphasized the spirit of prophecy rather than the spirit of power.

The most influential of these new monastic groups was the Cistercians. Founded in 1097 C.E. at Cîteaux. This movement was an offshoot of a Benedictine house at Molesme. The rule of the Cistercians emphasized manual labor instead of scholarship, and private rather than corporate prayer. They built their community houses in the most desolate places and accepted no titles, gifts, or lay patrons. They sincerely believed that "to work is to pray," and they took up farming, cooking, weaving, carpentry, and many other activities in daily life. Their churches were plain, with no ornaments or treasures, and they owned no personal possessions. Gathering for communal prayer periodically, the brothers spent the rest of the day in manual work, meditation, reading and divine service. Their diet consisted mostly of fish and cheese, and this only once a day in summer, and twice a day in winter. Even on the coldest days, they only had a fire to warm themselves on Christmas day.

The strict rule of the Cistercians proved to be very successful, and by the end of the twelfth century, there were hundreds of Cistercian monastic houses. They were fortunate to have a remarkable leader in Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153 C.E.). Bernard was born near Dijon to a noble family, and was nurtured by the Gregorian and Cluniac reforms. Educated in the studies of the trivium (rhetoric, grammar, and logic), at the age of twenty-one, he entered the monastery of Cîteaux, the center of the Cistercian order. In 1115 C.E. he led a dozen Cistercians to found the new house of Clairvaux in the Champagne region. In the succeeding years Bernard founded more than sixty-five new monasteries, and as Abbot was

able to influence all of Europe. He was so persuasive in convincing men to enter his monasteries, that mothers hid their sons, and wives hid their husbands, when Bernard went fishing for the souls of men. Aggressively self-righteous, he did not hesitate to criticize and correct the most powerful men of his age. Bernard condemned the scholastic rationalism of Peter Abelard and preached the second crusade.

Having practiced the most rigorous self-denial humanely possible, he wore himself out by his strenuous asceticism and died in August of 1153 C.E. Despite Bernard's enormous success, by the end of the twelfth century the Cistercians became lax and ineffective. They had grown wealthy and had become known more for their agricultural skills than for their spiritual life. The decline of the Cistercian Order coincided with the passing of the importance of cloistered monasteries.

### **The Franciscan Friars**

The new monks would live together under a strict rule, but they would go out to work among the ordinary population. They would preach in the parishes and town squares, teach in the schools, and eventually, they dominated the universities. The Franciscans, developed from the teachings of Francis of Assisi (1182-1226 C.E.), the son of a wealthy cloth merchant. As a young person, Francis led a carefree life, and was destined for a career as a knight. Francis was converted through illness, a pilgrimage to Rome, a vision, and the words of Jesus found in Matthew 10:2-10. He interpreted the Gospel to mean that goods should be freely given to the poor. This angered his father, and prompted Francis to leave home in a ragged cloak and a rope-belt taken from a scarecrow. He wandered through the countryside with a few faithful followers, preaching, begging from the rich, and giving to the poor.

In 1210 C.E., Francis obtained approval from Pope Innocent III for his simple rule devoted to apostolic poverty. He began to call his associates the Friars Minor (Lesser Brothers). A society for women, the *Poor Clares*, began in 1209/1210 C.E. when Clare, an heiress of Assisi, was converted and commissioned.

To encourage missionary activities, Francis went to Syria in 1212 C.E., and to Morocco in 1213-1214 C.E., but was hindered by misfortune. In 1219 C.E. he traveled to the Middle East to convert the Sultan of Egypt, but he was unsuccessful. All this happened at about the same time that the Crusades were going on. At least Francis' approach was superior to the Crusades, even if both ended in failure.

As the Franciscan Order grew, it became more difficult to continue the life of poverty. In time, the order was permitted to own property, but some,

including Francis, wanted to continue in a life of poverty. Those who wanted to live, according to the teachings of Francis, became known as the Spiritual Franciscans (*Fraticelli*). Those who accepted the changes to the order became known as the *Conventuals*.

Francis held to his original ideals, laid down his leadership, and retired to a hermitage on Monte Alvernia, where he received the stigmata (bodily representations of the wounds of Christ). In spite of illness, pain, and blindness, he composed his *Canticle to the Sun*, his *Admonitions*, and his *Testament* before submitting gladly to “Brother Death” in 1226 C.E.

It has been said that Francis was one of the most noble, Christ-like figures who ever lived. Even birds and animals enjoyed his sermons. He viewed nature not as a refuge from the world, as did many other monks, but as objects of love that pointed to their Creator. Francis is also given credit for the famous prayer of peace:

Lord, make me an  
Instrument of thy peace.  
Where there is hatred,  
let me so love;  
Where there is injury;  
pardon;  
Where there is doubt,  
faith;  
Where there is despair,  
hope;  
Where there is darkness,  
light;  
Where there is sadness,  
joy.

O Divine Master, grant that  
I may not so much seek  
To be consoled,  
as to console;  
Not so much to be understood,  
as to understand;  
Not so much to be loved  
as to love;  
For it is in giving  
that we receive;  
It is in pardoning  
that we are pardoned;

It is in dying  
that we awaken to eternal  
life.

### **The Dominican Friars**

Another new order of medieval friars was the Dominicans. Dominic de Guzman (1170-1221 C.E.) was their founder. Dominic was a studious cleric from Castile, who was sent to Provence to preach against the Albigensians.<sup>97</sup> This new order was founded and recognized in 1220 C.E. in order to create an educated clergy capable of communicating the Gospel to people through sermons. The friars who joined this order were called to teach and preach. The official title of the Dominicans was the *Order of Preachers*. They wore a white habit and a black cloak and became known as the Black Friars or the Watchdogs of the Lord. The latter name was a pun on the Latin name *Dominicanus=dominicanis*, which means to hunt down ignorance and heresy.

This Dominican academic emphasis contrasted sharply with Franciscan anti-intellectualism. The Dominican friar preachers established colleges and seminaries not only for their own members, but also for any clergy who wanted an education. They produced some of the greatest medieval theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas. They also influenced the Franciscan order, which found it necessary to train its own young friars; thus, the Franciscans also set up educational institutions. They could also boast of having trained famous scholars, such as Bonaventura, Alexander of Hales, William of Ockham, and Roger Bacon. Both orders of friars trained men to teach, preach, and involve themselves in missionary activity.

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<sup>97</sup> The Albigensians or Cathars believed in two gods, a good god who created the invisible spiritual world, and an evil god who created the visible material world. They rejected the incarnation and the sacraments since they integrated spirit and matter. The Albigensians separated spirit and matter. We shall look more closely at the Albigensians in a later chapter.

## 6. THE CRUSADES

The soldier may securely kill, kill for Christ and more securely die.  
He benefits himself if he dies and Christ if he kills.

*Bernard of Clairvaux*

### **The Causes of the Crusades**

There are many causes for the Christian crusades: economic, religious, and political. Between 970 and 1040 C.E., Europe experienced forty-eight years of famine. The economic conditions that resulted from these famines stimulated a deepening of religious feeling. There was a strong sense of “other-worldliness,” which contrasted the “misery on earth” to the “blessedness of heaven.” Islam had been threatening Europe for centuries. Jerusalem had been under Muslim possession since 638 C.E.; and, although Islam permitted Christians to visit sacred sites, Islam maintained political control over Jerusalem and much of Asia Minor. The Byzantine Empire had lost more than half of its realm to the expansionism of Islam.

Threatened on all sides by its enemies, the Eastern Emperors fought a series of wars, defeating in turn the Muslims, the Bulgars, and the Armenians. But, a new foe appeared in the form of the fierce Seljuk Turks, who defeated the Byzantium forces in the Battle of Manzikert (1071 C.E.). The Eastern Emperors appealed to the West for help. The Eastern Emperor Michael VII (1067-1078 C.E.) made the first appeal in 1071 C.E. to Pope Gregory (Hilderbrand), who replied that the Western Emperor Henry IV of Germany had fifty thousand men ready to help under the proper leadership. The outbreak of the investiture struggle frustrated the plans, and the troops were never sent.

In 1095 C.E., the Eastern Emperor Alexius Comnenus appealed to Pope Urban II for assistance, and this time help was given. The Pope responded in a sermon delivered at a Synod held in Clermont, France on Tuesday, November 27, 1095 C.E. The heart of that sermon is expressed in the following words:

From the confines of Jerusalem and from the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth...an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God...has invaded the lands of those Christians and depopulated them by the sword, plundering and fire.

After listing all the Turkish atrocities, mentioning the desecration of churches, the rape of Christian women, and the torture and murder of men, Pope Urban II appealed to French honor:

Recall the greatness of Charlemagne. O most valiant soldiers, descendants of invincible ancestors, be not degenerate. Let all hatred between you depart, all quarrels end, all wars cease. Start upon the road to the Holy Sepulchre, to tear that land from the wicked race and subject it to yourselves.

The response to that sermon was enormous. When Urban II finished, the crowd shouted, “Deus Vult! Deus Vult!” (God wills it). Pope Urban II made “Deus Vult” the battle cry of the Crusades, and suggested that every warrior wear the sign of the cross upon his clothing.

One might wonder how Christianity could have moved from Augustine’s theory of Just War to the Crusade. In extraordinary eloquence, one of the most respected theologians of the time, Bernard of Clairvaux, wrote to the crusading Knights Templars, saying:

The soldier may securely kill, kill for Christ and more securely die. He benefits himself if he dies and Christ if he kills. To kill a malefactor is not homicide but “malicide” [the killing of the bad]. In the death of the pagan the Christian is glorified because Christ is glorified.

The reasons why people joined the Crusaders vary. Some did so out of greed, others did so out of adventure, and others believed that their participation would guarantee their personal salvation. The Crusades offered rich commercial opportunities to the merchants of growing cities, particularly the Italian cities of Genoa, Pisa, and Venice; and without question, the Pope wanted control over the Holy Sites. Economics, Politics, and Religion all supported the Crusades. The Crusades, which can be dated from 1095-1270 C.E. joined together two themes which were developing strongly—holy war and pilgrimages to the holy sites.

The number of Crusades is usually given as seven or eight, but trying to calculate the number of Crusades can be misleading. This gives the idea that there were long gaps between the Crusades. The Crusades represent a continuous movement, featuring many smaller expeditions in addition to the larger ones. After 1130 C.E. there was a constant stream of soldiers, pilgrims, and merchants traveling from Europe to the Middle East. For the sake of studying about the Crusades, we will focus on the larger movements.

### **The First Crusade**

November 27, 1095 might be considered the beginning of the first Crusade. This is the date of the sermon preached by Pope Urban II; although, the Crusade did not begin until August of 1096 C.E. To prepare for this first Crusade, Pope Urban II sent representatives throughout

Europe enlisting recruits to go to the Holy Land to fight the Turks. Individual groups of Crusaders would begin their journey in August 1096 C.E. Each group would be self-financing and responsible to its own leader. The groups would make their separate ways to Constantinople, the Byzantine capital. The leaders represent some of the most well-known personalities of medieval Europe. They include Robert of Normandy, Raymond of Toulouse, Bohemond of Taranto, Robert of Flanders, Godfrey of Bouillon, Baldwin of Boulogne, and Stephen of Blois. Although led by the nobility, people from all walks of life joined the Crusaders. There were Knights, but they do not fit our images of Knights. The average Knight was about five feet three inches tall and wore a hauberk<sup>98</sup> and a leather coat protected by chain mail.

Peter the Hermit led the most popular of the Crusading armies. Although Peter's army was the largest, only a small minority survived to see the ultimate triumph of the Crusade in Jerusalem. When the Crusading armies gathered in Constantinople, The Emperor Alexius was frightened. He had imagined that Pope Urban II would help him to recruit mercenaries for his own armies, but now a religious horde of 50,000 men had descended on his city. He offered them provisions, surrounded them with guards, and demanded an oath of allegiance from their commanders. Only after he had their oath of allegiance was he willing to see them safely across the Bosphorus into Asia Minor.

Conflict between East and West began immediately. Emperor Alexius began making treaties with the Turks while they were fighting. This seemed like treachery to the Crusaders, and so they would carve out their own states in the Middle East. This would further alienate them from the Eastern Emperor, who demanded that the Crusaders turn over to him any former Byzantine territory that they captured.

The first Crusade took place at just the right time. Islam was divided between the caliphates of Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordova. In May of 1097 C.E., the Crusaders attacked Nicaea, but when the city fell in June of 1097, it surrendered to the Byzantines rather than to the Crusaders. This confirmed the Crusaders' suspicions that Emperor Alexius intended to use the Crusaders as pawns to achieve his own goals.

The next major city to fall to the Crusaders was Antioch. The Eastern Emperor Alexius wanted the city of Antioch restored to the Eastern Empire, but the Crusaders refused to offer it to him.. The Greek Bishop in Antioch, John of Antioch, who was in communion with the Patriarch of

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<sup>98</sup> A sleeveless tunic.

Constantinople, returned to Constantinople, but refused to resign. The Pope replaced him in Antioch with a Bishop loyal to himself.

The Crusaders began their siege of Antioch on July 1, 1097 C.E., but the city did not fall until June 3, 1098 C.E. Turkish reinforcements arrived too late to save the city of Antioch, and the Crusaders repulsed the relief force on June 28, 1098 C.E. The Crusaders rested in Antioch, for the summer and early fall; and then, in late November of 1098 C.E., they set out on the final leg of their journey to Jerusalem.

They avoided attacks on cities and fortified positions in order to conserve their forces for Jerusalem. In May of 1099 C.E., they reached the northern borders of Palestine; and on the evening of June 7, 1099 C.E., they made camp within sight of the walls of Jerusalem. The city was under Egyptian control and was prepared for a siege. The Crusaders, with the aid of reinforcements from Genoa and newly constructed siege machines, took Jerusalem by storm on July 15, 1099 C.E. They massacred nearly every inhabitant. In the Crusader's view, the city was purified in the blood of the defeated infidels.

A week after the capture of Jerusalem, Godfrey of Bouillon, duke of Lower Lorraine, was selected to rule the newly won city. Under his leadership the Crusaders fought the relieving Egyptian Army, defeating it on August 12, 1099 C.E. The first Crusade was a resounding success. The majority of the Crusaders returned to Europe, leaving Godfrey with a small remnant of the original force to organize a government and to establish Western control over the conquered territories. Godfrey died in July of 1100 C.E., and was succeeded by his brother, who took the title King Baldwin I (1100-1118 C.E.). In the wake of the First Crusade, four states were established: Antioch, Edessa, Tripoli, and Jerusalem. Edessa was populated mostly with Armenian Christians.

Two new religious orders emerged to defend the Holy Land. They were the Knights Templar (1119 C.E.)<sup>99</sup> and the Knights Hospitaller.<sup>100</sup> The men who formed these new orders served as soldier-monks, but despite their best efforts Edessa fell to the Muslims in 1144 C.E.

The victories of the Crusaders was due to the isolation, disunity, and relative weakness of the Muslim powers; but, that was about to change under the leadership of Imad ad-Din Zangi, ruler of Al Mawsil and Halab (Aleppo). Under Zangi the Muslim forces scored their first major victory

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<sup>99</sup> They received their name because they were located near the site of the Temple.

<sup>100</sup> Or Knights of St. John.

against the Crusaders by taking the city of Edessa and dismantling the Crusader state in that region.

## **The Second Crusade**

Pope Eugene III's response to the first major success of Islam in the taking of Edessa was to call for another Crusade in 1145 C.E. This Crusade was encouraged by the preaching of Bernard of Clairvaux, who was at the height of his popularity. The King of France, Louis VII (1137-1180 C.E.), and the Holy Roman Emperor, Conrad III (1138-1152 C.E.) led the Crusade. They attracted many recruits and the Crusade began in May of 1147 C.E. when King Conrad's German army set out for Jerusalem from Nuremberg. The French forces, under King Louis VII, followed a month later.

The Germans were ambushed in Asia Minor, and only a few of them escaped. Although the French army suffered many casualties, it moved on to Jerusalem in 1148 C.E. In consultation with King Baldwin III of Jerusalem, the Crusaders decided to attack Damascus in July of 1148 C.E. It was a mistake and they suffered a horrible defeat. The French King, and what was left of his army, returned home.

The reason for early successes had to do with the disunity of Islam, but that began to change under Zangi's successor, Nur ad-Din, who managed to expand his realm into a major power in the Middle East. In 1169 C.E., his forces, under the command of Saladin, took control of Egypt. When Nur ad-Din died five years later, Saladin succeeded him as ruler of a Muslim state that stretched from the Libyan Desert to the Tigris Valley. The Crusader states were surrounded on three fronts. Saladin invaded the Kingdom of Jerusalem in May of 1187 C.E. On July 4, 1187 C.E., he defeated the Latin army at Hittin in Galilee. In the aftermath of these victories, Saladin swept through most of the Crusader strongholds in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem surrendered to him on October 2, 1187 C.E. The only major city still in Crusader hands was Tyre in Lebanon.

The collapse of the Crusader armies resulted in bitterness toward the Eastern Empire, whose Princes the West blamed. Bernard of Clairvaux, the man with the greatest name for sanctity in all of Europe, suggested that a Crusade be mounted against Constantinople. He was to get his wish in 1204 C.E. with the Fourth Crusade, but first we must look at the Third Crusade.

## **The Third Crusade**

The news of the catastrophe of the Second Crusade sparked a Third Crusade. On October 29, 1187 C.E., Pope Gregory VIII proclaimed the

Third Crusade. Western enthusiasm was widespread, and no Crusade was better equipped. Three major monarchs led the charge. They were the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick I (1152-1190 C.E.); the French King, Philip II (1179-1223 C.E.); and the English King, Richard I (1189-1199 C.E.). Together the armies, of these three Kings, made up the largest Crusading force since 1095 C.E., but they faced unexpected difficulties. First, King Frederick I was accidentally drowned in Cilicia, leaving his army without adequate leadership. Secondly, quarrels emerged between King Philip II and King Richard I. Finally King Philip II went home to deal with his own political problems, almost putting an end to the Crusade.

The Crusaders did manage to reach the Holy Land, but their successes against a united Islam were meager. They only managed to recapture Acre and a small chain of cities along the Mediterranean coast. They could not take Jerusalem, which remained under Saladin's control. By October 1192 C.E., when King Richard left Palestine, the Latin Kingdom had been established, but it was much smaller than the original Kingdom and considerably weaker militarily and economically. This Kingdom was to last precariously for another century.

### **The Fourth Crusade**

Innocent III launched the fourth Crusade in 1202 C.E., and although it was small in numbers, it was important for its political and religious consequences. Convinced that the true route to recovering Jerusalem lay in the preliminary conquest of Egypt, the Crusaders bargained with the Venetians to cover the financial costs for transportation to Egypt. The Venetians agreed to cover the full cost, but insisted that the Crusaders stop on their way to conquer Zara from Hungary for Venice. This they did. A much greater proposal was also made to them that they should stop at Constantinople and overthrow the imperial usurper, Alexius III (1195-1203 C.E.). Alexius, son of the deposed Isaac II, promised a huge payment to the Crusaders. Venice saw prospects of increased trade and supported the proposal. Bernard of Clairvaux persuaded an expedition of knights to besiege and conquer the great Eastern city. Pope Innocent III did not agree with this diversion

Alexius III was easily driven from his throne, but the other Alexius was unable to keep his promises to the Crusaders. Along with the Venetians, the Crusaders captured Constantinople in 1204 C.E. and plundered its treasures. No booty was more eagerly sought than the relics in the churches, which were taken back to the West to enrich the Churches in the West. Baldwin of Flanders was made the Eastern Emperor, and much of the Eastern Empire was divided among Western knights. Venice obtained a considerable part and a monopoly of trade. A Latin patriarch

was appointed in Constantinople, and the Greek Church was subjugated to the Pope. The Eastern Empire continued, but was not able to regain Constantinople until 1261 C.E. The Fourth Crusade ended in disaster. The Eastern Empire was severely weakened, and the division and hatred between Eastern and Western Christianity increased. Whatever ties existed between the East and the West was now severed.

In 1208 C.E. Pope Innocent tried to initiate a Crusade against the Albigenses<sup>101</sup>, a religious sect in southern France. This was the first Crusade to be fought in Europe. The Crusade caused a great deal of bloodshed but it failed in its mission of eliminating the Albigensian heresy. The Crusade lasted from 1209 to 1229 C.E.

### **The Children's Crusade**

One can hardly call the Children's Crusade a Crusade, for it never had any official sanction. All responsible authorities, clergy and lay alike, deplored it, and it ended in disaster.

It started with two young boys. The first was a young French boy named Stephen, from Cloyes, near Vendôme. In June of 1212 C.E., Stephen claimed to have had a vision in which Jesus commanded him to raise up an army to aid the Holy Land. Stephen recruited both children and adults, and with his recruits, he marched to Paris to persuade the French King, Philip II, to authorize the Crusade. The King refused and convinced most of them to return home.

A much larger group of young Crusaders were assembled in the spring of 1212 C.E. by a German boy from Cologne, named Nicholas. He recruited his followers in the Rhineland and Lower Lorraine, and convinced them that God would help them take Jerusalem back from the Muslims. When the group reached Mainz, some of the children were persuaded to return home, but the remainder marched on through Marbach, near Colmar, and then across the Alps into Italy, where they separated. Some went to Venice, but the main group proceeded through Piacenza and arrived at Genoa on August 25, 1212 C.E.

A few may have actually succeeded in gaining passage on ships to the Holy Land; but a handful went to Rome, and another small group went to Marseille, France. The majority of them simply disappeared. It is often suggested that they were sold into slavery in Egypt.

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<sup>101</sup> A heretical Christian group, which believed that everything in the material world is evil.

## **The Fifth Crusade**

The Fifth Crusade, conducted by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II differed from all the others. Frederick vowed to lead a Crusade in 1215 C.E., and renewed his pledge in 1220 C.E. He kept postponing the Crusade for domestic and political reasons. Under pressure from Pope Gregory IX, Frederick and his army finally sailed from Italy in August of 1227 C.E., but returned to port within a few days. Frederick had fallen ill. The Pope, outraged at the delay, excommunicated the Emperor.

Undaunted by his excommunication, Frederick II embarked for the Holy Land in June of 1228 C.E., where he conducted his Crusade by entering into diplomatic negotiations with the Egyptian sultan Al-Kamil. The negotiations resulted in a peace treaty in which the Egyptians guaranteed a ten-year respite from hostilities and Jerusalem was restored to the Crusaders. In spite of this remarkable achievement, Frederick II was shunned by both clergy and laity. At the same time, the Pope proclaimed a Crusade against Frederick II, raised an army, and proceeded to attack the Emperor's Italian possessions. In May of 1229 C.E., Frederick II returned to the West to cope with the Papal threat.

## **The Sixth Crusade**

In 1244 the Muslims recaptured Jerusalem. In response, Louis IX (1226-1270 C.E.) of France spent four years planning his Crusade to recapture Jerusalem. In August of 1248 C.E., Louis IX and his army sailed for the island of Cyprus, where they spent the winter making final preparations. They landed in Egypt on June 5, 1249 C.E., and the following day, they captured Damietta. The next phase of their campaign was an attack on Cairo in the spring of 1250 C.E., but this proved to be a catastrophe. The Crusaders failed to guard their flanks, and the Egyptians simply opened the sluice gates, creating a flood, which trapped the whole Crusading army. The Crusaders were forced to surrender in April of 1250 C.E.

After paying an enormous ransom and surrendering Damietta, Louis IX sailed to Palestine, where he spent four years building fortifications and strengthening the defenses of those territories under Crusader control. In the spring of 1254 C.E., Louis and his army returned to France. King Louis IX tried to organize another Crusade in 1270 C.E., but the response from the French nobility was unenthusiastic. He did manage to recruit enough men to attack Tunisia, but the Crusade ended with the death of Louis IX in 1270 C.E. The final expedition was that of Prince Edward, soon to be Edward I of England (1272-1307) from 1271 to 1272 C.E. Nothing came of his efforts.

The Latin outposts in Syria and Palestine faced increasing pressure from Egyptian forces, and one by one, the cities and castles of the Crusader states fell to the armies of the vigorous Mamelike Dynasty. The last major stronghold, the city of Acco, was taken on May 18, 1291 C.E. The last of the Crusader holdings had been lost. Crusading settlers took refuge first on Cyprus and then on Rhodes, both of which they held until the sixteenth century. The Crusades for all practical purposes were over, even though men continued to talk about new Crusades for the next two centuries.

### **Practical Results of the Crusades**

Two centuries of Crusades left little mark on Syria and Palestine, except for the fortifications, castles, and churches left behind by the Crusaders. The Crusades were felt more in Europe than in the Middle East, for they bolstered commerce in the Italian cities such as Genoa, Pisa, and Venice. This led to an interest in exploring the Orient and establishing new trade routes. The experience of the Papacy and Monarchs in raising money to finance the Crusades, led to the development of taxation, which became part of European governments. Both of these, establishing trade routes and developing methods of taxation, contributed to colonizing new territories soon to be discovered by the explorers of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.



## 15. SCHOLASTICISM

I do not seek to understand that I may believe,  
But I believe that I may understand:  
For this I also believe, that unless I believe  
I will not understand.

*Anselm of Canterbury*

### **Education in Monasteries and Cathedrals**

At the height of the Middle Ages all education was in the hands of the Church, and the great scholars were all monks or clergy. Scholasticism gets its name from the medieval monastery and cathedral schools, and it covers the period from the ninth century to the end of the fourteenth century.

A learned monk was appointed to teach new monks, and when he became a famous scholar, monks from other monasteries would come to study under him. Men from wealthy families also desired to study under monastic tutors, even though they had no intention of joining the monastery. Their goal was to join the clergy or enter secular work.

Up to the eleventh century, education took place exclusively in the monasteries; but by the twelfth century, the cathedral schools surpassed the monastic schools. The chief dignitary after the Bishop and dean was the chancellor, who taught the seven liberal arts<sup>102</sup> and theology to advanced students. Other teachers instructed the younger scholars in Latin grammar. A license to teach, given by the chancellor was the predecessor of a university degree.

The leading cathedral schools in northern Europe were located in Laon, Paris, Chartres, and Cologne. The great scholars conducted debates at the cathedral schools. Two of the most significant debates had to do with the meaning of the Mass and the Cross. What did Jesus mean when he said, “This is my body; this is my blood.” Did the elements of bread and wine actually turn into the body and blood of Jesus, or were Jesus’ words meant to be symbolic? One position was that there was indeed a real and true change, taking place in these elements, but the change is spiritual. The bread and wine undergo a spiritual change, but the bread and wine remain bread and wine. The other position was that the bread and wine changed into Christ’s body and blood. The *accidents* (touch, taste, sight, and smell) of the bread and wine remain the same, but the *substance* of bread and

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<sup>102</sup> The *trivium* (three ways) included grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The *quadrivium* (four ways) included arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

wine actually are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. These two views were debated from 1045 to 1080 C.E. In the end, the term *transubstantiation* emerged to affirm the real change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. The view that the bread and wine were symbols was rejected.

The second debate had to do with the meaning of Christ's work on the cross. Origen (185-254 C.E.) had taught that sin subjected human beings to the devil. The mark of this subjection was death. God in his grace desired to free humankind, but he was unable to do so because of the devil's claim over humanity. To neutralize the devil's claim, a *ransom* had to be paid in the form of a valuable person over whom Satan had no power—a sinless man. The devil was tricked when Jesus was crucified, because Jesus was sinless. Anselm of Canterbury challenged this theory in *Cur Deus Hom* (Why did God become man)? Anselm believed that when people sin they violate the order of the universe and are alienated from God. Because God is just, God must be given a satisfaction for sin before he can forgive the sinner. Jesus was the sinless person, sent by the mercy of God. Jesus offered up to God the *satisfaction* owed by the human race. This latter theory, the *satisfaction* theory of the cross, won out over the *ransom* theory of the cross. Other theories were to emerge over time.

### **The Leading Scholars**

The leading scholars of the schools of Europe in the period prior to the founding of the great universities were Anselm and Peter Abelard.

Anselm (1033-1109 C.E.) was one of the great Archbishops of Canterbury. We remember him most for his work in theology and philosophy. He took his monastic vows in 1060 C.E., and thirty years later he became the Archbishop of Canterbury. As an Archbishop, he became known as a reformer, encouraging church synods, enforcing clerical celibacy, and suppressing the slave trade. It was Anselm who taught that faith must lead to the right use of reason. "I believe," he said, "in order that I may understand."

Exercising the right use of reason, Anselm put forth the *ontological* argument for the existence of God. The ontological argument for the existence of God was an attempt to prove God's existence by reason alone, starting with the idea of the most perfect being. "God," insisted Anselm, "is that than which no greater can be conceived." The non-existence of God, claimed Anselm, is inconceivable. Anselm's greatest work, however, was *Cur Deus Homo* (Why did God Become Man)? In this great work, Anselm offered a more acceptable theory of Christ's death on the cross, which has been called the *satisfaction* theory of the atonement. It meant that God gave salvation to humanity on the merits of Christ.

Another leading figure in the schools of Europe was one of Anselm's students, Peter Abelard (1079-1142). Born in Brittany in 1089 C.E., Abelard studied with some of the most respected theologians of his day, but he gradually came to the conclusion that he knew more than they did. After challenging them on a variety of subjects, Abelard withdrew to set up his own lectures. Large numbers of students flocked to hear this arrogant and rebellious upstart. "The first key to wisdom," insisted Abelard, "is this constant and frequent questioning.... For by doubting we are led to question, by question we arrive at the truth." Using this new approach, Abelard wrote *Sic et Non* (Yes and No) in which he demonstrated that tradition and authority alone were insufficient in dealing with questions of faith, such as:

Is God omnipotent?  
Do we sin without willing it?  
Is faith based on reason?

Abelard quoted authorities on both sides and left the contradictions unresolved. A student of Abelard's was Peter Lombard (1100-1160 C.E.), who used reason to answer the same questions in his book, *The Sentences*, which became a popular theological textbook of the Middle Ages. This method was also used later by Thomas Aquinas, the greatest Medieval theologian.

Peter Abelard was known as the brightest intellectual star in Paris, but his love affair with the beautiful and talented Héloïse shattered his academic career and cut short his intellectual influence. In 1115 C.E., at the age of 36, Abelard agreed to tutor the teenage Héloïse, who was the niece of Fulbert, a canon of the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. A close teacher-student relationship developed, which resulted in a son, whom they named Astrolabe. To pacify her angry uncle, Abelard agreed to marry Héloïse secretly. Ugly rumors spread quickly. Héloïse agreed to enter a local convent rather than to damage Abelard's academic career, but it was too late. Fulbert retaliated by hiring a band of thugs who broke into Abelard's chambers one night and castrated him.

Following this humiliation, Abelard entered a Benedictine monastery, where he resumed his teaching; but, once again, he became involved in a bitter controversy. He was condemned for his views on the Trinity without a hearing. For the next twenty years he lived a harassed existence and moved from place to place. Finally, around 1136 C.E. Abelard returned to Paris, where he enjoyed renewed popularity, but his popularity was not without its critics. Bernard of Clairvaux accused him of polluting the minds of his students with heretical ideas. In 1141 C.E., some of his teachings were condemned. He decided to appeal to the Pope, but he died

near Cluny in 1142 C.E. on his way to Rome. His book, *Sic et Non* (Yes and No) set the stage for discussing the relationship between faith and reason. This set the stage for the monumental work of Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century.

### **The Leading Universities**

The cathedral schools gave birth to the universities. The term *universitas* was used to describe a guild or corporation of teachers or scholars who banded together in self-defense against the town in which they were located, or to discipline lazy students or professors. A city with a well-known Cathedral might become the center for a number of schools. In the beginning, scholars would rent rooms and students would pay to listen to lectures. In Northern Europe guilds of professors organized the universities, while in Italy students formed the guilds, which made up the universities. The first universities obtained a charter from the Pope, but later universities applied to the secular rulers.

The gradual development of universities makes it difficult to date them, but it is easy to list the leading universities of the Middle Ages. Any list of the leading universities would have to include Bologna, Paris, Salerno, Oxford, Cambridge, Montpellier, Padua, Salamanca, and Toulouse. In Paris the most famous college was the Sorbonne, which was established in 1256 C.E. England modeled Oxford and Cambridge on the Sorbonne.

It was believed that any educated person must study the seven<sup>103</sup> liberal arts, which included (1) grammar, (2) logic, (3) rhetoric, (4) arithmetic, (5) geometry, (6) astronomy, and (7) music. Logic or philosophy tended to dominate the undergraduate curriculum, while (1) medicine, (2) law and (3) theology dominated the graduate studies.

The largest universities consisted of between 3,000 and 4,000 students. A boy of twelve could enter a university, but a man had to be at least thirty-five to gain the privilege of teaching theology. The knowledge of Latin was the only entrance requirement. In the first four years, a student was required to become proficient in the liberal arts. That would follow with more study, a teaching assistantship, and the defense of one's thesis. Those who managed to accomplish this would be given an MA degree. An MA degree entitled a person to teach the liberal arts. The MA degree was also required to move on to the study of law, medicine, and theology. If one chose to earn the DD (Doctor of Divinity), it meant six years of studying the Bible and Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (systematic theology). The final

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<sup>103</sup> The *trivium* (three ways) included grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The *quadrivium* (four ways) included arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

step, which would lead to the STD (Doctor of Sacred Theology), meant three years of studying the Bible and the early church theologians. The STD (Doctor of Sacred Theology) was required to teach students who were working towards their DD (Doctor of Divinity).

Students were required to pay their fees to each professor as they left his class. Since hand-copied books were rare and expensive, most students possessed only one or two books. Professors had to dictate their textbooks to the students. It took a year to copy the Bible, and few students had a copy of their very own.

### **Faith and Reason**

This new emphasis on education resulted in a conflict between revelation in the Christian faith and reason in Aristotle's philosophy. Aristotle's philosophy was being transmitted to Western Europe through the Muslims and Jews in Spain and southern Italy. Islam dealt with Aristotle before Christianity did. The most famous Muslim scholar who tried to come to terms with Aristotle was Ghazali, who died in 1111 C.E. Ghazali viewed reason as being antagonistic to faith, and wrote a book, which he entitled: *The Destruction of the Philosophers*. As one can see, Ghazali condemned Aristotle's theory of knowledge, which made no reference to a personal God. Another Muslim scholar, Averroes (1126-1198 C.E.) proposed a double truth, suggesting that philosophy is one category of truth and theology deals with another kind of truth. Some Christian scholars agreed with Ghazali and others with Averroes.

The most famous Christian scholar who tried to harmonize faith and reason was Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 C.E.). Born into a noble family in Aquino, Italy, Aquinas grew up to become the most famous scholastic theologian of the Middle Ages. Aquinas was a fat, slow, pious boy, who at the age of five entered the Abbey of Monte Cassino. He studied there until the age of fourteen, when he went to study at the University of Naples. Impressed with his Dominican teacher, Aquinas decided to join the Dominicans. His family was upset by his decision and tried to change his mind, first, by tempting him with a prostitute; and second, by kidnapping him and offering to purchase for him the position of Archbishop of Naples. All their attempts to change his mind ended in failure. Aquinas went to the University at Paris, the center of all theological learning.

Because of his bulk and slowness, Aquinas was nicknamed the "Dumb Ox," but Aquinas demonstrated his brilliance in public debate. After studying under Albert the Great in Paris and Cologne, Aquinas returned to Paris in 1252 C.E., and then to Italy, where he spent the rest of his life teaching. The works of Aquinas fill eighteen large volumes. They include a complete commentary on the Bible and on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.

There is also a written discussion of the thirteen works of Aristotle, not to mention his own sermons. Two of his most important works are the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Together, the works of Aquinas represent a summary of Christian thought.

Aristotelian thought was a challenge to Aquinas. Following Aristotle, Aquinas emphasized that all human knowledge originates in the senses. Philosophy is based on data accessible to all humankind; theology, on the other hand is based on revelation and logical deduction from revelation. In his famous *Five Ways*, Aquinas attempted to prove the existence of God by reasoning based on what can be known from the world. Aquinas developed one of the most consistent systems of thought ever devised, but it did not gain universal acceptance in his own day. The University of Paris condemned some of his ideas in 1277 C.E. One of the criticisms against him was that he did not recognize the contradiction between faith and reason. Within the Roman Catholic tradition, Aquinas stands as the greatest of their theologians. At the Council of Trent (1545-1563 C.E.) the Roman Catholic reformers used the works of Aquinas to draft their decrees; and, in 1879, the Pope declared the theology of Thomas Aquinas eternally valid. There were scholars who opposed the works of Aquinas, and they began to lay the groundwork for modern science in their experimental studies of the behavior of light, prisms, rainbows and mirrors. These scholars emphasized observation, experiment and the use of measurement for understanding the world.<sup>104</sup>

### **Scripture**

One of the results of the fall of the Roman Empire was widespread ignorance and illiteracy. In the absence of public education, all study of the Scriptures was restricted to the monasteries, and then, the Cathedral schools. For several reasons, Medieval theologians held that Scripture could only be interpreted by the learned few.

Scholars believed that they had an obligation to uphold the traditions and dogmas of the early Christian writers, and so they set out to collect and synthesize the traditional explanations of those earlier theologians. For a thousand years, many of these theologians used a fourfold scheme for biblical interpretation: (1) the *literal* teaches the events, (2) *allegory* teaches beliefs, (3) the *moral* sense dictates behavior, and (4) the *anagogical* (spiritual) provides the spiritual goal. Few biblical interpreters paid much attention to the historical and literal sense of the text, for most of them only had an elementary knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. The

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<sup>104</sup> This group of scholars was led by Roger Bacon (1214-1292 C.E.) and Robert Grosseteste (1168-1253 C.E.)

primary qualification for teaching Scripture was an unbridled sense of imagination. This can be illustrated from Thomas Aquinas' interpretation of Genesis 1:3:

Let there be light," thus: historically, it refers to the act of creation; allegorically, "Let Christ be love"; morally, "may we be mentally illuminated by Christ"; anagogically, "may we be led to glory by Christ."

It was assumed that the laity was not qualified to comprehend, much less interpret the Bible. It was not because they did not know Hebrew and Greek. Very few clergy or monks understood Hebrew and Greek. It was because the laity lacked imagination, one of the prime requirements for interpreting Scripture. Biblical literacy would have to wait for reformers such as John Wycliffe, who pointed out that "...the whole error in the knowledge of Scripture, and the source of its debasement and falsification by incompetent persons, was the ignorance of grammar and logic." For these reasons, and many more, the Bible would lay buried for centuries. It would take the Renaissance, with its study of the languages, to open not only the secrets of the Bible, but the literature of Greece and Rome as well. With the coming of the Renaissance, scholasticism would finally be toppled.

### **The Great Cathedrals**

William Durand remarked in the thirteenth century: "Pictures and ornaments in churches are the lessons and scripture of the laity." Pictures, statues, architecture, poetry, hymns, legends and the theater were all needed to teach those who could not read. The Cathedrals themselves communicated the Gospel to the laity, who were illiterate and owned no Bible. Everything had a meaning. Fire represented martyrdom or religious fervor; a lily stood for chastity; an owl, the bird of darkness, often represented Satan; and a lamb stood for Christ, the sacrifice for sin. The Cathedral was not just a house for God; it was also a house of the people. It was meant to mirror both the world below and heaven above.

Two building styles dominated the Middle Ages, the Romanesque and the Gothic. The Romanesque style, named after the Romans, reached its peak in 1150 C.E. but continued into the thirteenth century. In France alone, 1,587 Romanesque Cathedrals were built. They were massive buildings, first with a wooden roof, and then with a thick half-cylinder of stone (barrel vault) for a roof. The wooden roof proved to be a fire hazard; hence, they were forced to construct a roof that would not burn. This solution called for thick, heavy walls. Windows had to be few and small, and this left the inside of the Cathedral dark. In an attempt to brighten the interior, tapestries were hung and bright colors were introduced.

Freestanding stone sculptures were introduced to lighten the heavy effect of Romanesque construction. The desire to develop a free and less monotonous effect led architects to use cross-vaulting down the nave. This transferred the weight of the roof to a series of posts or pilasters. The Romanesque style emphasized horizontal lines and gave the worshipper a feeling of repose and solidity.

The Gothic building style began around 1137 C.E. and reached its climax about 1250 C.E. One of the first Cathedrals to be built with a Gothic style was the Church of St. Denis in Paris (1137-1144 C.E.). It was built under the direction of Abbot Suger, the adviser to King Louis VI and Louis VII of France. Characterized by delicacy, detail, and light, the Gothic style placed the support needed for the structure outside the walls, in the form of flying buttresses. The pointed arch was another innovation of Gothic construction. The Gothic style emphasized vertical instead of horizontal lines. This caused people as they entered the Cathedral to share a feeling of striving upwards towards heaven. When Suger finished work on St. Denis, he described his own reaction as follows:

I seemed to find myself, as it were, in some strange part of the universe which was neither wholly of the baseness of the earth, nor wholly of the serenity of heaven, but by the grace of God I seemed lifted in a mystic manner from this lower towards that upper sphere.

In the following century there was rivalry between cities to see who could build the highest Cathedral. Notre Dame soared to 114 feet, Chartres, to 123 feet, Amiens, to 138 feet. Beauvais tried to reach 157 feet, but the vault collapsed and the city ran out of money. The largest Cathedral in Germany, Cologne Cathedral, soared to 144 feet. These Cathedrals appeared to be light for two reasons. Because of the design, the stonework seemed to lose its massive weightiness, and the stained glass windows constituted a vast wall of color, dispelling the darkness.

Art in the Middle ages differed from modern art. Its purpose was to communicate Christianity to the illiterate. Medieval art expressed a coherent system of values and a religious view of the universe. Its purpose was to point to that spiritual reality beyond the material world. The Cathedral was meant to mirror both worlds. Medieval theology was expressed in the upward striving towards God; the cross-shape; and the altar situated in the east, facing Jerusalem. Every detail of the creed, from creation to the Trinity, from the passion of Christ to the Last Judgment, was present.

Technically, a Cathedral was merely a Church, which contained a bishop's cathedra (or chair). Cathedrals did not have to be massive

buildings such as we envision today. They could be humble buildings. To be a Cathedral only means that the Bishop and his household of priests celebrate Mass and sing the daily services there. As the Bishop became preoccupied with administrative tasks, he visited his Cathedral only on special occasions. The household of priests became the *chapter* of the Cathedral and took over its administrative tasks. Most Cathedrals became much larger than necessary; however, the Cathedrals were used for many purposes.

The Cathedral came to be a house of many rooms. There was the room known as the chancel or choir, containing the high altar, the Bishop's cathedra (chair), and stalls for the clergy, who sang the daily services. The other main room, known as the nave, provided for the spiritual needs of the people. In addition to what was called the nave, there was an altar for mass, a font for baptisms, and a pulpit for sermons. Side altars were set up where masses could be said for the dead. They were often endowed by wealthy individuals or by guilds of merchants and craftsmen. The decoration of a Cathedral reflected a unified view of the world. Kings and nobles had their place, but so did merchants, craftsmen, and peasants. In the windows of Chartres Cathedral, there are no less than forty-five trades represented.

While the Cathedrals were built primarily for religious purposes, They were not only used for religious purposes. Since the Cathedral was usually the largest building in the city, it was a natural meeting-place for social activities and even for trade. At Chartres, for example, the transepts of the Cathedral served as a labor exchange, and the crypt beneath the Cathedral was always open for the shelter of pilgrims and the sick. The sounds of services were often mingled with the greetings of friends and the haggling of traders.



## 16. THE INQUISITION

They go about in twos, barefoot, in woolen garments,  
owning nothing, holding all things in common,  
like the apostles.

*The Waldensians appear in Rome in 1179 C.E.*

### **Following the Royal Lead**

The Crusades were only one of the many ways in which European Christians responded to the heretics and non-Christians who surrounded them. At the beginning of the eleventh century in Spain, Christianity was confined to a narrow strip of states in the North. Islam ruled the rest of Spain. With the collapse of the Caliphate of Cordova in 1034 C.E., Muslim power in that region came to an end, and by the middle of the thirteenth century Muslims controlled only the small state of Granada in the far South. As Christianity took over in Spain, the Muslim minority found themselves treated the same way that they had treated the Christian minority. They were free to practice their own culture and religion, but there was a price to be paid for remaining Muslim. Islam was no longer supported by the State, and Muslims were forced to pay special tithes and taxes. Under these circumstances, many Muslims migrated to Africa, while a few became Christians. The Franciscans and Dominicans were particularly successful in winning Muslim converts to Christianity.

In Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, conversion to Christ occurred as a community affair, following the royal lead. King Olaf I Tryggvason of Norway (969-1000 C.E.), Olaf Skotkonung of Sweden (995-1021 C.E.), and Knut (Canute) of Denmark (1018-1035 C.E.), were responsible for introducing Christianity into their respective countries. This meant that Diocesan boundaries paralleled political boundaries, and by the end of the twelfth century each country had its own Archbishop. Christianity called for deep cultural changes, causing many Scandinavians to resist the changes. The new faith brought changes in marriage and dietary customs. The Scandinavians, for example, had to give up eating horsemeat, which was a Viking delicacy. Religious practices, such as fasting, doing penance, and tithing were considered too burdensome for the Scandinavians. In spite of the resistance, the old customs gradually disappeared. The Viking fleets ceased to terrorize Europe, and the descendants of the Norsemen were forced to accept more humane ways.

As in Scandinavia, it was the action of political rulers that gave the Gospel its opportunity in Eastern Europe. Encouraged by the German Church, Wenceslas of Bohemia (907-929 C.E.), Boleslaus I of Poland

(922-1025 C.E.), and Stephen of Hungary (975-1038 C.E.) based their rule on Christianity. Many of the native people under the rule of these leaders were oppressed farmers, who resented the Germans and their Christianity. They only accepted Christianity following decades of instruction for both the clergy and the laity. By the fourteenth century, most of Eastern Europe was nominally Christian, and if it hadn't been for war, Russia too might have been incorporated into the Catholic fold. By this time, however, the Russians, having been invaded by the Mongols, were cut off from the West.

Because of its vast size, the Mongol Empire provided an opportunity for many Franciscan friars. Two Franciscans, John of Planocarpini and William of Rubriques, traveled to the court of the Mongol Khan in China in about 1250 C.E. Others followed them, and they met with such success that by the fourteenth century, a chain of Christian missions extended from Constantinople to Peking. It seemed as if even the Mongol rulers might accept the Christian faith. This promising beginning did not meet with permanent results, for the western Mongols became Muslims and prevented the missionaries from traveling through their territories. Travel was made more difficult as the Mongol Empire broke up into quarrelling states, and Western Europe lost interest as a result of their own wars, not to mention renewed arguments between church and State.

### **Attempting to Reform Monasticism**

In the centuries after 600 C.E., Benedictine monasticism was gradually accepted throughout Western Europe. There were other monastic movements, but Benedictine monasticism dominated. By the eighth century, Benedictine monasticism underwent some changes. Increasingly, monks were drawn from the nobility. It became a common practice among the nobility to devote their sons and daughters to a monastery while they were still children. As a result of this practice, the monk's share of manual labor was gradually reduced and replaced by liturgical and cultural activities. The monasteries became closely linked with the society within which they existed. Their abbots and monks were related to local noble families. Kings granted them land, and they in turn achieved economic and political status. Instead of a group of men fleeing from the world to live the Christian life, the monastic community was becoming a religious corporation, which served a function within society. The monks in this religious corporation were being viewed as the counterparts of the feudal knights. This close connection with society caused a great deal of criticism.

In the tenth century, reform became associated with the abbey of Cluny in central France, which had been founded in 909 C.E. Cluny's long-ruling abbots, spiritual and political figures, led the movement. The Cluniac

reform contained both a religious and an organizational dimension. The religious task of the monks was viewed as the performance of the daily cycle of worship. In Cluny this was carried to the extreme. The whole of the monk's day was taken up with worship services. The Cluniac churches were highly decorated and adorned. The intention was to create a service as magnificent and solemn as possible. The second reform led to the creation of a complex and centralized organization. Earlier monasteries had operated independently from one another. They were linked only by a shared emphasis, such as the form of their observance, or their historical roots. The abbots of Cluny created a large chain of dependent houses. Instead of an abbot, these houses had a prior, who was appointed by the abbot of Cluny. The obedience of a monk to his abbot had been a central feature of the Rule of Benedict, but now, this was extended to all the monks of the dependent houses, who were considered monks of Cluny too. One of the advantages of being a Cluniac monk was that Cluniac monasteries were independent of the local bishop and the local lay nobility. Cluny had been founded on direct dependence of the Pope. This became extremely important in the eleventh century as Popes sought to free the Church from the control of secular powers.

The wealth of the Cluniac monasteries, their easy relations with the world, and their emphasis on the worship service led new reformers to seek a more austere and primitive path. The laxity of some of the great Cluniac houses led to the formation of several strict Benedictine orders around 1100 C.E. The most successful of the orders seeking to revive the primitive Benedictine life came from the Cistercians or "White Monks." Their Mother House was Cîteaux in Burgundy, founded in 1098 C.E. by Robert of Molesme, with Stephen Harding and a few other reforming monks. Under Stephen Harding's leadership, Cistercian houses spread throughout Western Europe. They aimed at making a complete break with their Cluniac past. Their churches and their worship services were simple and unadorned. Their abbeys were built in remote and desolate areas, recalling the idea of the earlier Christian monks who fled into the wilderness. They renewed their emphasis on silence, austerity, and manual labor. By 1300 C.E. there were more than 600 monasteries and nunneries.

The Cistercians soon came under criticism for unexpected reasons. Because their houses had been built in remote areas, due to their flight from the world, they had to develop techniques of survival. They quickly learned how to make the wilderness bloom. Their economic activities, especially sheep-farming, made them into a wealthy order. The monks withdrew from manual work, leaving this to the illiterate "lay brothers," who had joined the order. Because of their newfound wealth, the

Cistercians were accused of the sin of greed. Spoiled by worldly success, their aim of austerity was reversed.

There were many monastic movements that grew to wield political and economic power in the Middle Ages. There were, for example, a number of military orders, which intended to fight in the Holy Land. Their very purpose was to fight in the Crusades. The main crusading orders adopted forms of the Cistercian regulations. The Knights Templar (founded about 1118 C.E.), the Hospitallers (late eleventh century), and the Teutonic Knights (late twelfth century) all exposed themselves to the severest forms of criticism.

By 1200 C.E., monasticism had passed the peak of its appeal and influence. The new begging orders of friars, especially the Dominicans and Franciscans, had taken over. There were still attempts to reform monasticism, but medieval monasticism was no longer respected or attractive. There was growing criticism of monastic abuses and even the principle of monasticism itself, but this was nothing compared to the attack monasticism was about to experience in the Protestant Reformation.

### **Moving towards a New Rome**

In approximately 860 C.E., Rastislav, Prince of Moravia, invited the Byzantine Emperor Michael III to send missionaries to instruct his people in the ways of Christ. In response, Patriarch Photius sent two Greek brothers, who would prove to be the most influential of missionaries. The two brothers were Cyril and Methodius. They had grown up near Slavs, who had settled in Macedonia; and therefore, they were familiar with the Slavic language. Before taking up their mission to Moravia, they prepared an alphabet for the unwritten language so that their converts could have the Scriptures and liturgy in their native tongue. The script, they produced, became known as Glagolitic, and it was the forerunner of the form of writing now used in southeastern Europe and Russia. It was named Cyrillic, after Cyril, the younger brother. By this means, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and with it the Byzantine culture, was spread among the Slavic tribes. Cyril and Methodius earned the deserved title of “The Apostles of the Slavs.”

The Moravian mission of Cyril and Methodius met with success for three years, but all long-term results were lost when the Magyars invaded and destroyed the state of Moravia. The Church in this area eventually developed along Catholic lines, but the work of these two brothers was not entirely lost. Their followers took their message and Slavonic books southward to the Bulgarians, who became fervently attached to Byzantine Orthodoxy. From Bulgaria, the Old Church Slavonic liturgical language

and Byzantine Christianity were transplanted to Serbia, the third Slavic nation to be Christianized. The other two were Moravia and Bulgaria.

The most significant fruit of the missionary work carried on by Cyril and Methodius took place when the pagan Prince of Kiev, Vladimir, officially adopted Orthodoxy as the religion of his state. There is a legend that may or may not have any historical foundation, but it is recorded in the *Russian Chronicle*. According to the *Russian Chronicle*, in about 988 C.E., Vladimir decided that his realm required him to take up one of the major religions, and so he sent envoys to investigate Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. The first reports failed to impress Vladimir, but he was won over by the report of those who returned from Constantinople. They declared that when they attended the mass in the Church of St. Sophia, they could not tell whether they were on earth or in heaven. Vladimir then ordered the mass baptism of the Russians, and Orthodoxy became the state religion of Russia, which it was to remain until the Communist Revolution of 1917. It must be stated that in Russian Christianity the forms of worship have always been more important than theology and ethics. The primary appeal of Orthodoxy was *aesthetic* rather than *intellectual* or *moral*.

By the second half of the fifteenth century, conditions were right for Moscow to emerge as the world's leading Orthodox city. Late in the fourteenth century, the Ottoman Turks occupied Bulgaria and Serbia, placing these Orthodox states under Islamic control. In 1453, they captured Constantinople, killing the Byzantine Emperor and making the Ecumenical Patriarch a prisoner of the Muslim conquerors. Russian theologians saw a profound significance in these events. Moscow, they claimed, had become the Third Rome. The Church of Rome, they insisted, fell because of its heresy, and Constantinople succeeded it becoming, the Second Rome. But God was about to punish Constantinople, too, by means of the infidel Turks. The monk Philotheus wrote:

The church of Moscow, the new "third Rome," shines throughout the entire world more brightly than the sun...Two Romes have fallen, but the third stands and a fourth can never be.

The Russian Orthodox Church had claimed to be the protector of Eastern Christianity.

### **Increasing the Pressure to Conform**

When Christianity became the State Religion, it was faced with two questions: What should they do with pagans, and what should they do with heretics? By the fifth century, Augustine listed no less than eighty-eight different heresies. In the early Church the usual penalty for heresy was excommunication, but with the establishment of Christianity as the State

Religion, heretics came to be considered enemies of the State, especially when violence and the disturbance of the public order were involved. Augustine gave a reluctant approval to the State to take action against heretics, but the Church in general disapproved of coercion and physical penalties. This was possible because in the early Church heretics were individual intellectuals or idiosyncratic rabble-rousers. They did not represent any serious threat to the State, and so the response was localized and sporadic. From the twelfth century on, the problem of heresy became more serious and the Church's response became more rigorous. During the thirteenth century, the Papacy itself directed this response in the form of the Inquisition.

Two groups in particular were the object of a Papal Crusade and Inquisition. They were the Waldensians and the Cathars. The Waldensians emerged under the leadership of Peter Waldo, who was converted about 1175 or 1176 C.E. Waldo had been a wealthy merchant in Lyons, and following his conversion, he gave away his worldly goods and decided to follow the example of Christ by leading a life of poverty and preaching. He had translations of the Latin New Testament made into the vernacular, which formed the basis of his evangelism. At first, he gained the approval of Pope Alexander III at the Third Lateran Council (1179 C.E.), but the Pope placed two conditions upon Waldo's movement. They were to obtain permission and supervision of local church authorities before preaching, which apparently was not done. The preaching and example of the Waldensians became a living condemnation of the wealth and laxity of the established Church. Within a decade, what had begun as an enthusiastic movement within the Church, was branded as heresy. In 1215 C.E., at the Fourth Lateran Council, Pope Innocent III denounced the Waldensians as heretics. It was primarily the unauthorized preaching of the Bible and their rejection of the intermediary role of the clergy that branded the Waldensians as heretics. There were, of course, some other practices that contributed, such as their refusal to take oaths, their denial of purgatory, their refusal to pray to images of the saints, their rejection of all saints not named in the New Testament, and their preaching in the language of the people. Many of their practices entered the mainstream of the Protestant movement, but in their own time, they were considered heretical.

The Cathars did represent a heretical movement. In 1208 C.E. Pope Innocent III launched a successful Crusade against them in Southern France, destroying their political power by 1250 C.E. Following the Crusade, the Inquisition was established in 1231-1233 C.E. to root out heresy, and the newly established friars were responsible for their disappearance by the late fourteenth century. The Cathars were indeed heretical, and should not be regarded as medieval Protestants. The

*Katharoi*, Greek for Puritans, were more like the earlier Manicheans. They believed in two gods, a good god, who created the invisible spiritual world, and an evil god, who created the visible material world. They identified the evil god with the God of the Old Testament, and they claimed that he imprisoned the human soul in its earthly body. Salvation could be obtained only by breaking free from the material world. Christ, the Son of the good God, was sent to reveal this way of salvation to humanity. Christ was a life-giving Spirit, whose earthly body was only an appearance. The Cathars accepted the New Testament, but they rejected the Incarnation. The one Cathar sacrament, which enabled the soul to escape from the evil material world, was the *consolamentum*, or spiritual baptism, administered by the laying on of hands. This gave the Holy Spirit to the baptized person, removing original sin and enabling one to enter the pure world of the spirit. The Cathars were divided into two classes, the *Perfect*, who had received the *consolamentum*, and the *Believers*, who had not. The former lived in poverty as ascetics, involving chastity, fasting, vegetarianism, and the renunciation of marriage and oaths. *Believers*, unable to live such a demanding life, delayed receiving the *consolamentum* until they were in danger of death.

Both the Waldensians and the Cathars became objects of the Inquisition. As early as 1199 C.E., Pope Innocent III began to talk about heresy in terms of treason. He sent the Cistercians into France to eliminate the Cathars, but with little success. He then sent the Dominicans, who became the foremost order of the Inquisition. Pope Honorius III, Successor to Pope Innocent III, intensified the pressure on the Cathars.<sup>105</sup> In 1226 C.E., the French King Louis VIII issued an ordinance under which Bishops could judge and French law could punish heretics. Emperor Frederick II issued a similar decree in 1220 C.E., and in 1224 C.E. he ordered the burning of heretics. Pope Gregory IX, made the Inquisition papal policy in 1231 C.E. with the constitution *Excommunicamus*, officially making the Franciscans and especially the Dominicans papal agents of the Inquisition.<sup>106</sup> The finishing touches were supplied by Pope Innocent IV, who in the bull *Ad extirpanda* (1252 C.E.), incorporated all earlier papal statements concerning the Inquisition, and condoned the use of torture.

The Inquisition was a special court with power to judge intentions as well as actions. It was made up of two inquisitors with equal authority, bestowed upon them by the Pope. The inquisitors were in charge and were

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<sup>105</sup> Sometimes called the Crusade against the Albigensians, another name for the Cathars.

<sup>106</sup> These two orders were chosen because of their superior theology and their supposed freedom from worldly ambition.

aided by assistants, notaries, police, and counselors. Because they could excommunicate princes, they were formidable figures. The local Bishop could be represented, though there was not always cooperation between Bishops and inquisitors. Although some inquisitors were accused of cruelty, many of the inquisitors had a reputation for justice and mercy.

The inquisitors would suddenly arrive at a location, deliver a sermon to the townspeople, and call for reports of anyone suspected of heresy. Distinctions were made between heretics who denied orthodox beliefs and heretics who had additional beliefs. Persons were invited to come forth and confess. A period of grace of about one month was extended. This was called the general inquisition. Lesser penalties were imposed on those who came forward and confessed their heresy than upon those who had to be tried and convicted. When the period of grace expired, the special inquisition began. Suspected heretics were then detained until trial. If the inquisitors decided to try a person, the suspect's pastor was to deliver the summons. Inquisitorial police sought out those persons who refused to obey the summons, and the right of asylum did not apply to heretics. At the trial the inquisitors had complete control as judge, prosecutor and jury. The proceedings were not public, and evidence from two witnesses was considered sufficient. For some years the names of accusers were withheld from suspects, but Pope Boniface VIII put an end to that practice. The accused were compelled under oath to answer all charges against them, thus becoming their own accusers. The suspect was not allowed a defense lawyer, and even if they were allowed, lawyers quickly discovered that defending a suspected heretic might result in their own summons to the Holy Tribunal.

Trials could continue for years, during which time, the suspect would languish in prison. Torture, after 1252 C.E.,<sup>107</sup> was used as an effective means to secure repentance. Though torture could not be repeated, it could be continued. Torture used against children and the elderly was relatively light, and pregnant women were exempt from torture until after their delivery.

Sentences for those who confessed or were found guilty were pronounced in a public ceremony. This was called the *sermo generalis*. Penances might consist of something as light as hearing a number of masses, or more commonly, being scourged or going on pilgrimages. Confessed heretics or those who had made false accusations were sometimes required to wear symbols denoting their fallen state, such as crosses of special design and color. In serious cases the penalties involved

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<sup>107</sup> Pope Innocent IV made torture legal in 1252 C.E.

confiscation of property or imprisonment. For a final group of heretics, the *unreconciled*, classified as insubordinate, impenitent, or relapsed, a more terrible fate was in store. They were turned over to the civil authorities, which was tantamount to a death sentence, primarily burning at the stake. The Church could not carry out the death sentence, for the Church could not shed blood.

In the first dozen years or so, the activities of the Inquisition were relatively modest and were restricted almost exclusively to Italy, but it spread to France and Germany as well. In two countries, England and Bohemia, the Inquisition had little impact. This is not to say that heresy was not a problem in these countries. It is just to say that the political situation in these countries restricted the effectiveness of the Inquisition. The medieval Inquisition focused on heresies that resulted in the disturbance of public order. This caused the Papacy to focus on orthodoxy of an academic nature, especially as these heresies appeared in the writings of theologians and high churchmen. In 1555 C.E. Pope Paul IV pursued suspects of heretical writings and teachings, not even sparing Bishops and Cardinals. He urged the compiling of a list of books that offended faith and morals and approved and published the first Index of Forbidden books in 1559 C.E. Although later Popes tempered the zeal of the Roman Inquisition, they began to see it as the instrument of Papal government for regulating church order and doctrinal orthodoxy. One example of this was the trial and condemnation of Galileo in 1633 C.E. In 1965, Pope Paul VI, responding to many complaints, reorganized the Holy Office and renamed it the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

Although distinct from the medieval Inquisition, at the request of King Ferdinand V and Queen Isabella I, the Spanish Inquisition was established with Papal approval in 1478 C.E. This Inquisition was formed to deal with the problem of Marranos, Jews, who through coercion or social pressure, had insincerely converted to Christianity. After 1502 C.E., the Spanish Inquisition turned its attention to similar converts from Islam, and in the 1520s, it focused on persons suspected of Protestantism. Within a few years of the founding of the Spanish Inquisition, the Papacy relinquished all supervision of it to the monarchy. Although the Inquisition had become an instrument of the State, churchmen, mainly the Dominicans, still functioned as its officers. Although the Inquisition in some cases was introduced to deal with Protestantism, historians have noted that many Protestant lands had institutions as repressive as the Spanish Inquisition. One prime example would be the consistory in Geneva at the time of the French reformer John Calvin. The Inquisition was finally suppressed in Spain in about 1834 C.E.

The lesson to be learned is simple. Christianity, as a system of beliefs or as a system of morals, cannot be forced. It must be freely accepted in the heart, in the head, and expressed in one's behavior. It has taken Christianity a very long time to learn this simple truth.

## **Wesley Chapel in London**



## **PART THREE: THE RENEWING CHURCH**



## 17. THE DECLINE OF THE PAPACY

We ask God then of his supreme goodness to reform our church, as being entirely out of joint, to the perfectness of its first beginning.

*John Wycliffe*

### **Change**

Many changes occurred in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Among the most pronounced changes were the new political and economic realities. There was a decline in the importance of landed wealth. Agriculture became less profitable, forcing many to move into the towns and ports. The Black Death of 1348-1349 C.E. made things worse<sup>108</sup>

Politically there was a struggle between the Monarchs and the Popes. While the Church still dominated society, people were beginning to see themselves as citizens of nations. These changes caused unrest and disunity, pointing to the need for the Reformation.

### **The Struggle Between Pope and King**

Boniface VIII was the first Pope to be elected in the fourteenth century, and he immediately got himself into trouble with the French. Being a canon-lawyer, he set out to reform papal finances and tried to bring peace to the Papal States and Rome. His reforming program brought him into conflict with the monarchs of Europe. The prime example was his bull *clericis laicos* (1296 C.E.), which limited the power of kings to tax their clergy. Both the Kings of England and France taxed their clergy to help fund their war against one another. France retaliated to the papal bull by prohibiting the export of gold bullion and England threatened to remove royal protection from the clergy. This was only the beginning of many conflicts between papal and royal policies. Under pressure Boniface VIII agreed to disregard *clericis laicos*, but following a conflict in France over a bishop who had been arrested for treason, Boniface reactivated *clericis laicos* and issued another bull—*ausculta fili*—emphasizing papal superiority over secular rulers. The French King, Philip IV stirred up public opinion against the Pope, and the Pope excommunicated the King. In 1303 C.E., Philip IV's henchmen captured the Pope at his summer residence in Anagni, near Rome, and did such violence to him that he died shortly thereafter.

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<sup>108</sup> The Black Death wiped out nearly one-third of the population of Europe. Survivors were preoccupied with the theme of death.

The problems between Boniface VIII and the French overshadowed many of the positive accomplishments of his reign. Though he was arrogant and had other unfortunate traits, he made papal administration more efficient, helped to establish a university in Rome, and laid the foundations for an effective archives department. Boniface VIII paved the way for a future in which Popes would be very much involved in secular politics. When he died, the French were still determined to bring the papacy in line. French pressure was felt in the election of a new Pope, Benedict XI, who died within a year. By the time a new Pope was elected, the Cardinals were hopelessly divided into pro and anti-French factions.

### **The Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy (1309-1377 C.E.)**

*Clement V.* As a result of French pressure, the next Pope, Clement V, was elected. Clement V came from Gascony in southwest France, and was unwilling to leave his native country. This was partly due to French pressure, but Clement V also loved his beloved Gascony. He never went to Rome. Clement began to replace Italian Cardinals with French Cardinals to counter balance the earlier Italian domination of the College of Cardinals.

Finally, the Pope set up a residence in Avignon in southern France. For most of the fourteenth century, no Pope lived in Rome. Because the time period in Rome was close to the time period spent by the Jews in Babylonian Captivity, this became known as the Avignon Captivity of the Papacy. There were protests of course, for many viewed the move away from Rome as a great scandal. Peter and Paul had been buried in Rome, and Rome had been considered the center of Christianity. What right did the Pope have to move to Avignon? The reason, of course, was that he was French, and although he felt French pressure, he also loved his native Gascony, where he died in 1314 C.E.

Clement V is remembered not only for being the first of the Avignon Popes, but for carrying out the French plan to destroy the Order of the Knights of the Temple (the Templars). This military crusading order had an important role during the Crusades, but after the Crusades, and as a result of them, it became very influential and wealthy. By the fourteenth century it had practically become a European banking corporation. Charges of sacrilege, sodomy, and idolatry were hurled at the Templars, but the real purpose was to take away their property. Most of the property of the order was given to the Hospitallers, and the rest was given to other organizations. In France the greatest benefactor was the King, who opposed the Templars because they gave their first loyalty to the Pope.

*John XXII.* One of the most efficient and ruthless of the fourteenth century Popes was John XXII. He too was French, but was more independent than his predecessor. John was well versed in papal and

secular politics. Among his many schemes was a reform of papal administration. John was among the greatest of the papal financiers, and he sought better ways to increase papal income. He also sought to make his power felt throughout the Christian West. He was far more interested in administration than he was in spirituality.

***Benedict XII.*** The next Pope, Benedict XII, was French, a Cistercian, and a theologian. One of his interests was to deal with the ever-increasing problems of heresy. Benedict XII also wanted to make his influence felt among the religious orders of the Church, but they were not particularly interested. The Hundred Years War between France and England began during his papacy, and he did what he could. He also saw the beginning of the construction of the papal palace at Avignon, and saw to it that the papal archives were sent to him from Rome.

***Clement VI.*** A French Cardinal, once Archbishop of Rouen, succeeded Benedict XII. Being a Frenchman, he also supported France against England in the Hundred Years War. He even used his expertise to provide revenue for the French. It was during his papacy that the city of Avignon was officially purchased by the papacy in 1348 C.E. Clement was a forerunner of the Renaissance popes, and spent enormous amounts of money on pomp and ceremony. Observers, though impressed, were very much aware of the vast amounts of money spent on such display.

***Innocent VI.*** Avignon Pope, Innocent VI discontinued the waste of money. He set about to reform abuses within the Church and to regain papal control in Italy. With the Pope far away in Avignon, inter-family quarrels and battles for control of Italy grew worse. The pressure was on the Pope to return to Rome. Innocent VI did what he could to bring about such a return. As a result of the Hundred Years War, the situation around Avignon had become dangerous. Great walls were built around the city in 1357 C.E., and are still in place today. As part of a program to protect the Papal States in Rome, Pope Innocent VI sent Cardinal Albornoz to Italy, where he remained for thirteen years, re-organizing papal control. Albornoz also made preparations for the return of the Pope to Rome, however, the Pope died in Avignon. The move to Rome would be left to his successor.

***Urban V.*** Moving the papacy to Rome proved to be a difficult task. Urban V began his papacy with some noble goals. He was a canon-lawyer who led a simple life and reduced expenditure on non-essentials. One of his goals was to reform the Church and to achieve union with the Greek Church. In 1367 C.E. Urban V did return to Rome, where he imposed his authority on the various factions. In spite of his noble goals and an encouraging beginning, Urban V failed to achieve his religious and

political goals. In 1368 C.E., he followed the tradition of the Avignon Popes by appointing several French Cardinals. In 1370 C.E., he gave up and returned to Avignon, where he died.

**Gregory XI.** The Pope who returned to Rome for good was Gregory XI. Influenced in part by the mystic Catherine of Siena, who urged him to return to Rome, Gregory XI, left Avignon in 1376 C.E. He was in Italy by late 1376 C.E., and entered Rome early in 1377 C.E. The Captivity of Papacy in Avignon was over. Gregory XI initiated peace with Florence and Milan, but before he could accomplish anything, he died. He did manage to make the move back to Rome. The papacy was now in the Eternal City for good.

Some significant things happened during the Avignon papacy. The papal court became more bureaucratic, and a more centralized effective papacy was developed. It was also more expensive. More than five hundred people were employed in the papal palace alone. The French, however, continued to dominate papal government for most of the fourteenth century. About 82 percent of all cardinals created in the Avignon period were French, 13 percent were Italian, and 5 percent were from other nationalities.

### **The Great Schism (1381-1417 C.E.)**

Following the death of Pope Gregory XI, angry crowds demanded a Roman, or at least an Italian Pope. The Cardinals went along with them and elected Urban VI, but Urban VI proved to be too much of a dictator for the Cardinals. Using his disorderly behavior as an excuse, the Cardinals met and elected another Pope, Clement VII. Now there were two Popes.

**Urban VI and Clement VII.** Following armed battles for control of Rome by the forces of the two Popes, Clement VII moved back to Avignon in 1381 C.E. Now, there were two Popes, Urban VI in Rome and Clement VII in Avignon. Italy, the greater part of Germany, the Scandinavian countries, England, and Portugal supported Urban VI. France, Spain, Scotland, Naples, Sicily, and part of Germany supported Clement VII. As one can see the Great Schism resulted in political as well as religious repercussions. The problem was serious because it originated within the papal court itself, among the Cardinals.

The embarrassment of what had happened was clear even to the King of France, who supported Clement VII. He attempted to heal the Schism, at the cost of abandoning the Avignon Pope, by suggesting three solutions: (1) One Pope must give way to the other Pope, (2) One Pope must conquer the other Pope, (3) Both Popes must compromise. None of these solutions

proved to heal the Great Schism, which continued on with the elections of Pope Gregory XII and Benedict XIII.

*Gregory XII, Benedict XIII, and Alexander V.* Meanwhile the rival colleges of Cardinals, one at Rome and the other at Avignon, began to compromise and discuss ways of ending the Schism. Since neither Pope would give way, some of their Cardinals called a council to meet in Pisa in 1409 C.E.

### **The Council of Pisa (1409 C.E.)**

Calling a Council at Pisa to resolve the problem was not a new innovation, but a revival of that system which had been used during the period of the great Ecumenical Councils of the fourth through the eighth centuries. All the great doctrinal decisions had been made by Councils, which had been ratified by the Popes. There is one example of a Council<sup>109</sup> declaring a Pope a heretic, but up to this time, no Council had gone so far as to depose a Pope or create one. In calling a Council to settle the Great Schism, the Church began to move towards constitutionalism. The authority of the Church would be lodged in a representative assembly. As the Councils met, however, it became clear that they had more on their agenda than deciding who was to be Pope. Although some of them tried to deal with the financial and moral abuses in the Church, they were unable to resolve them. The Conciliar movement, however, did have long-range consequences in the rise of Protestantism.

The Popes refused to attend the Council of Pisa, and so the Cardinals deposed both of them, and elected in their place Alexander V. Neither Gregory XII nor Benedict XIII would recognize Alexander V, and so now there were three Popes. Even though the Council of Pisa was not able to resolve the Great Schism, it raised an important question by even meeting. Is a council superior in power to the Pope? This was the first time that papal supremacy was officially called into question

### **The Council of Constance (1414-1418 C.E.)**

The next year John XXIII replaced Alexander V. There were still three Popes. Another Council was called in hopes of resolving the Schism. The Council of Constance attracted wide attention, and by 1415 C.E. scholars, church dignitaries, and even secular officials gathered with renewed optimism. Even the Greek Orthodox Church sent representatives. The Council held forty-five sessions, with scores of committee meetings,

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<sup>109</sup> The Sixth Ecumenical Council.

Eventually, following a trial in 1415 C.E., John XXIII<sup>110</sup> was deposed. In the same year Gregory XII resigned, leaving only one Pope, Benedict XIII. Following another trial, Benedict XIII was deposed in 1417 C.E. He went on living in Spain thinking that he was still Pope right up to the day of his death in 1424 C.E..

The way was now clear to elect one Pope who would represent all of Western Christianity. This was done in 1417 C.E. and the new Pope was Martin V. The question was again raised: Which is supreme, the Council or the Pope. After all, the Council had just elected the Pope.

The Council of Constance did not only meet to resolve the Great Schism. It also dealt with several other issues. One had to do with the administration of the Eucharist. The Hussites, after the execution of John Huss at the Council in 1415 C.E., held that all Christians should receive both the bread and the wine. The Council of Constance prohibited it. John Wycliffe was also condemned for heresy by the Council in 1415 C.E., and his body was disinterred from holy ground in 1427 C.E. The Council also dealt with some political issues and initiated what it perceived as being reforms. It suggested that changes be made in the College of Cardinals, in the bureaucracy of the papacy, and in the abuses of tithes and indulgencies. In 1417 and 1418 C.E., the Council of Constance decided that further councils needed to be held. The real issue underlining the Council of Constance was papal power. Which was supreme—the Council or the Pope?

Martin V, the newly elected Pope, returned to Rome in 1420 C.E., where he started a renovation scheme. The Papal States were reorganized under his direction, and he made good the use of his blood-ties with the Colonna family. Martin V was primarily interested in administrative reform, and as a result, he allowed religious reform to take second place. He died in 1431 C.E., having brought peace to the Papal States.

Succeeding Martin V, Eugene IV created discontent among the Cardinals, who wished to regain control of papal government. As a result of a decree issued by Martin V before his death, a Council met at Basel in 1431 C.E. The new pope was not interested in attending and ordered the Council to dissolve. The papal order was disregarded and the Council convened at Basel.

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<sup>110</sup> John XIII tried to gain control over the Council by creating a large number of new Italian bishops. The council thwarted him by organizing itself according to nations. The term was coming to have its modern meaning. The participants were Italians, Germans, French, and English. The Spaniards were listed among the French. The Italian bishops all together had only one vote.

### **Basel (1431 C.E.)**

Most of the College of Cardinals favored the Council and viewed it as a continuation of the spirit of Constance. One of the major differences is that it was more democratically organized. Every priest could vote. The major issue at Basel was the question of union with the Greek Orthodox Church, officially separated from Rome since the eleventh century. From 1433 C.E. envoys were exchanged between the Council and Constantinople.<sup>111</sup> In competition with the Council, the Pope sent his own representatives to Constantinople. The possibility of union was lost in the competition between the Council and the Pope. Both were seeking credit for achieving reunion with the East.

### **Ferrara (1438 C.E.)**

The Council in Basel was trying to initiate some reforms, but found it difficult in the face of papal hostility. The Pope got the Council transferred to Ferrara.

In Ferrara the Council again dealt with the union of East and West, but little interest was shown by the Western powers, and the Council was again moved, this time, back to Florence.

### **Florence (1439 C.E.)**

Ever since 1438 C.E. when the Pope transferred the Council to Florence, there was a contingent that continued to meet in Basel; hence, there were two rival Councils, one at Basel, and another at Ferrara and then at Florence. It looked as if schism would return, this time with Councils instead of Popes.

Those meeting at Basel deposed Eugene IV and elected Felix V. Once again there were two Popes. Upon Eugene IV's death in 1447 C.E., Nicholas V was elected. The crisis ended in 1449 C.E. after Felix V resigned under pressure. The Basel Council broke up putting an end to conciliarism.

In July of 1439 C.E. the Council at Florence arrived at a compromise formula<sup>112</sup> with Constantinople, but it was repudiated when the delegates

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<sup>111</sup> The Eastern Emperor, John VIII (1425-1448 C.E.), Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II (1416-1439 C.E.), and Archbishop of Nicaea, Bessarion (1395-1472 C.E.) made the appeal to the Pope and Council. They were willing to compromise for military help against the Ottoman Turks.

<sup>112</sup> They agreed on the primacy of the Pope, the rights of Eastern priests to marry, the uniqueness of Greek worship, and the acceptance of the Western Creed.

returned home. Military support from the West was negligible, and Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453 C.E.

The reform movement within a framework of Church Councils came to an end. Reform would have to come from another source. Meanwhile the papacy withdrew into itself, focusing its attention on Italian power with Italian interests. The age of the Renaissance was about to begin.

## 18. THE RENAISSANCE

We ask God then of his supreme goodness to reform our church,  
as being entirely out of joint, to the perfectness of its first beginning.

*John Wycliffe*

### **The Renaissance Popes**

Let us look first at what is meant by the Renaissance. Some historians use the term to describe a chronological period, such as 1300 C.E. (the time of Dante) to 1600 C.E. (the time of Shakespeare). Others would view the Renaissance as an attitude toward life, which valued earth more than heaven, the immortality of fame more than the immortality of the soul; self-cultivation more than self-effacement; the delights of the flesh more than asceticism; the striving for success more than justice; individual and intellectual freedom more than authority; and classical Humanism more than Christianity.<sup>113</sup>

At the outset, the Renaissance was Italian, urban, and aristocratic. Later, all of Europe sought to emulate the Italian example. The movement was everywhere aristocratic, subsidized by the wealthy and cultivated by artists<sup>114</sup> and humanists, because of their concern for the humanities. Skepticism did not exist among them in the sense of a denial of any of the great Christian affirmations.

They did take issue with two great Christian affirmations — the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Immortality. Neither of these were denied, but maintained to be philosophically indefensible. They reached the conclusion that there are two kinds of logic, the philosophical and the theological, which lead to irreconcilable conclusions. Since there are not two kinds of truth, the philosophical will have to yield to the theological, which is derived from revelation. One cannot call this skepticism because revelation was not called into question.

If the humanism that was so prevalent during the Renaissance threatened Christianity at all, it did so in two ways. First, it substituted a secular for a religious view of life. The term secular, however, can be used in a negative or a positive manner. It can be used to describe human beings

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<sup>113</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *Christendom*, Volume 1 (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966), p. 242.

<sup>114</sup> The art of the early Church stressed the Resurrection. The high Middle Ages stressed the Passion, and the Renaissance stressed the Incarnation of God in the infant Jesus.

as autonomous and self-sufficient, without any need for God; or, it can be used to describe cultivated human beings, whose ambitions are to round out their personality by the acquisition of many skills. Two examples of this would be the painter, sculptor, inventor, Leonardo da Vinci and the sculptor, painter, architect, and poet, Michelangelo Buonarroti. The early Christian Fathers understood the challenge and insisted that God became man in Christ in order to assist man to become God. The second more serious threat had to do with humanist thought that tended to discount the uniqueness of Christianity. Giovanni Boccaccio, for example, told the story of the father who called in each of his three sons separately and gave to each of them a ring, which should make them the heir. After the father's death the rings were discovered to be identical. These three rings, said Boccaccio, signified Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

**Nicholas V.** The first of the Renaissance Popes was Nicholas V. He was concerned with the architectural adornment of Rome and with the promotion of humanism. This aspect of scholarship was prominent following the fall of Constantinople in 1453 C.E. With the fall of Constantinople Byzantine refugees, including many scholars, fled to the West. The Vatican library was reorganized and many manuscripts were added.

**Calixtus III.** While a Crusade attracted the attention of Nicholas V, it was Calixtus III who actually engineered schemes leading to a Crusade. Although he spent a great deal of money on the plan, the results were not worth the effort. Calixtus III was, however, no friend of humanism.

**Pius II.** One of the most interesting Renaissance Popes was Pius II, who was also one of the greatest of the humanist churchmen. He traveled widely and was experienced in the affairs of the Empire, papal court, and councils. He worked conscientiously for a Crusade against the Turks, but it came to nothing. Pius II left many writings behind which describe the lifestyle of a Renaissance Pope.

**Paul II.** Interested in lavish professions and pompous display, Paul II was hostile to the humanists. He was also more interested in his own reputation than he was in the office and dignity of the papacy.

**Sixtus IV.** The papacy reached a new low with Sixtus IV. Although he was a Franciscan, he acted in a most un-Franciscan manner. Of the thirty-four Cardinals he elevated, six were his own nephews. Sixtus also got indirectly involved in two assassinations in the Medici<sup>115</sup> family in 1478

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<sup>115</sup> The Medici family ruled over Florence and Tuscany at this time.

C.E. As to Crusades, he expressed interest, but was unable to gain any support. This was even true after the Turks landed on Italian soil in Apulia.

The need for greater amounts of money motivated Sixtus IV to exploit the sale of offices and the peddling of indulgences. He needed the money to fund his humanistic studies, art, and architecture. He was the Pope who built the Sistine chapel. On the positive side, Sixtus IV established a hospital for deserted children, cancelled the decrees of the Council of Constance, reorganized the Vatican Library, and condemned the excesses of the Spanish Inquisition. There was talk of another General Council to bring him and his spending habits under control, but it came to nothing.

***Innocent VIII.*** Though weak and pliant, Innocent VIII was strong in the way in which he sought to advance the fortunes of his children. He supported his extravagant expenditures through the sale of church offices. He even received a pension from Sultan Bayazid II for keeping his brother and rival, Djem, a prisoner.

***Alexander VI.*** One of the most controversial Popes was Alexander VI. He was rich, well connected, a wily politician, and careless of morals. He was born in Spain, studied at Bologna, and went on to become a Cardinal and Vice-Chancellor in the Papal Court of his uncle Calixtus III. Before his election as Pope he fathered four illegitimate children, all of which were provided for from church revenues.

Alexander VI was a careful and efficient manager of the Papal States, trying to avoid foreign entanglements in Italy. He was not, however, above using Turkish help against the French. In the midst of these political skirmishes, Savonarola was executed at Florence for his friendship with the French and his opposition to the Pope.

Savonarola was born in Ferrara, Italy in 1452 C.E. In 1474 C.E. he became a Dominican, and after serving in several Italian cities, he became a popular preacher in Florence. In his sermons he warned of a great judgment coming on the city of Florence, after which a golden age would arrive, and Florence would unite all of Italy into a just commonwealth. These predictions appeared to be fulfilled when Charles VIII, King of France, invaded Italy and the Medici rulers of Florence fled. Under the new government, Savonarola rose to a position of power. He initiated tax reforms, aided the poor, reformed the courts, and changed the city from a corrupt, pleasure-loving place into a virtual monastery. During the carnival seasons of 1496 C.E. and 1497 C.E., masks, indecent books and pictures were burned. Having reformed Florence, he then denounced Pope Alexander VI and his corrupt papal court. The Pope simply excommunicated Savonarola and threatened Florence. This frightened the citizens of Florence and led to Savonarola's execution by hanging on May

23, 1498 C.E. His dead body was then burned. Although Savonarola became a hero to many of the early Protestants, he was an advocate of traditional Catholic theology. It was his opposition to the Pope that inspired the Protestants.

**Pius III.** Upon being installed as Pope on October 6, 1503 C.E., Pius III initiated the reform of the papal court, but he died on October 18, 1503.

**Julius II.** A noble patron of the Arts, Julius II was the discoverer of Bramante, Raphael, and Michelangelo. He was also a Pope who led his own troops to retain the estates of the Church, and he himself scaled the walls of Bologna. Erasmus was shocked by the image of a Pope in armor.

**Leo X.** “The papacy is ours,” said Leo X, “let us enjoy it.” Leo X’s chief distinction was his ability to make impromptu speeches in Latin. Otherwise, he spent more on gambling than on artists, loved hunting and disliked leaving his hunting lodge to come into Rome and have his toe kissed. He was Pope when Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the papacy grew in wealth and complexity. The integrity of the office was lowered by its political involvement, and increased bureaucracy. The tastes and morals of the Popes were much to be desired. Eventually the idea of national churches began to emerge, creating opposition to a universal papal church. In the midst of all of this there was the nagging problem of a divided Church. As we have seen, there were attempts to reunite East and West, but they failed.

### **East and West**

The Eastern and Western Churches were very different. In the East there had always been a special relationship between the Patriarch and the Emperor. Secular influence over spiritual power was far more acceptable in the East than in the West. In the West they referred to this special relationship as “Caesaropapism.” In addition to the political difference, there were also theological differences. Both Churches grew up within a cultural tradition of which they were proud. Greek was the language of the East and Latin of the West.

The Fourth Crusade added to the tension between the two Churches. In that Crusade the crusaders, transported by Venice, captured and looted Constantinople in 1204 C.E. For much of the thirteenth century the power of the Greek Emperor, was replaced by the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople. By 1261 C.E., the Greeks retook their capital and ousted the uncouth Westerners. With this background in mind, one can easily recognize why the thirteenth century was not a very promising time to improve relationships between the Eastern and Western Churches.

The first Avignonese Pope, Clement V (1305-1314 C.E.), renewed the call for a crusade to recapture Constantinople, but there was little response. The French King, Charles IV (1322-1328 C.E.), expressed some interest, but nothing came of it. A new development was about to take place in the East, which would change everything. This was the rise of the Ottoman Turks. By the middle of the fourteenth century the Ottoman Turks threatened not only the East, but the West as well. United in fear, East and West began to grow closer together for mutual protection.

Around 1339 C.E., faced with the threat of the Ottoman Turks, the Greeks expressed an interest in uniting with the West. Emperor John VI (1347-1354 C.E.) sent representatives to Avignon to discern the attitude of papal spokesmen. An Ecumenical Council was needed to pursue union between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Unfortunately the outbreak of the Great Schism and the subsequent rivalry between Popes and Councils ruined the possibility of union between Eastern and Western Christianity. Popes and Councils competed with one another to gain credit for uniting East and West. The response of the East was varied. The Byzantines had no desire to get disagreeably involved in Western religious politics, but at the same time, the Ottoman Turks were threatening Constantinople. They needed help from the West, which never materialized. Though this threat was referred to in the Council of Constance in 1415 C.E., it was pushed aside as a secondary issue.

In the Councils of Basel and Ferrara the Papacy was battling for independence. This led each side, Pope and Council, to appeal to the Eastern Emperor for political support. Pope and Council alike wanted to be recognized for working out union with the East. In 1439 C.E., the Pope scored a temporary victory, and a decree of union was agreed upon. The news was not well received in Constantinople. In fact, there was very little popular support, and the plan of union was not even published until 1452 C.E. By that time it was too late. In the very next year, 1453 C.E., the Ottoman Turks, who were Muslim, captured Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium, the stronghold of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The hope for union was over.

### **The Rise of Dissident Movements**

At the same time that there was a decline in the prestige and integrity of the papacy, there was also a rise in the number of dissident movements. There were many more than will be mentioned here. My purpose is to illustrate what was happening with the leadership of three individuals who called for reform. They attacked the very foundations of the medieval hierarchy, including the papacy itself.

**William of Ockham (1290-1349 C.E.)** Born around 1290 C.E. in the village of Ockham in Surrey, England, William of Ockham entered the Franciscan order and studied theology at Oxford around 1309 C.E. He completed the requirements for the status of Master with his lectures on Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences* between 1318-1319 C.E.

Denounced as a heretic by the university's former chancellor, William was summoned to defend himself to the Pope in Avignon in 1324 C.E. There he became embroiled in a controversy over apostolic poverty, which also made him critical of the papacy. He called for a College of Popes to rule the Church, and claimed that Christ alone was its head. These teachings looked forward to the Conciliar movement. William rejected completely any idea of papal authority in secular matters. This caused him to flee in 1328 C.E. to the service of the Emperor, Louis of Bavaria, who supported William in his struggles against the papacy.

William was also ahead of his time in the field of philosophy. He elaborated a new form of Nominalist theory, rejecting the prevailing view that *universals* really exist. He argued that they are simply artificial products of the human mind, necessary for communicating by means of language. Only individual or *particular* things have real existence. William's Nominalism became known as the modern way (*via moderna*) over against the old way (*via antiqua*) of Thomas Aquinas. Since knowledge was based upon experience of *particular* things, natural science took on a new significance.

In his many writings, William discussed with great skill the great themes of theology and philosophy. By the principle, which became known as "Ockham's Razor," he insisted that, "What can be done with fewer assumptions is done in vain with more." The mind, he insisted, should not multiply things without necessity. Although he had a strong, positive, theology, William criticized the prevailing philosophical proofs for the existence of God. He stressed that God was absolutely supreme, and that He was known by faith alone, not by reason or illumination. In this respect, William of Ockham paved the way for Reformation theology.

William also criticized John XXII over the duties of the clergy. He suggested that the clergy should confine themselves to reading, preaching, ordaining, and administering the Sacraments. Much more radical was William's theology of the Church, which he viewed as being made up of individual members. He did not view the Church as a corporate entity or Roman Catholic institution.

**John Wycliffe (1329-1384 C.E.)**. The most prominent English reformer of the later Middle Ages was John Wycliffe, who came from the north of England and became a leading philosopher at Oxford University.

Wycliffe offended the Church by backing the right of government to seize the property of corrupt clergymen. The Pope condemned his views in 1377 C.E., but Wycliffe's friends protected him. While Wycliffe's views were basically theological, there was also an element of English national feeling against foreign exploitation.

Wycliffe attacked some of the central doctrines of the Medieval Church. The first doctrine, which Wycliffe attacked, was the doctrine of the Church itself. He applied to the Church a philosophy of history resting upon the doctrine of predestination. The essence of this doctrine was that God elected some souls to bliss and he consigned others to perdition. Salvation came through grace, not by merit. Augustine held this view, but it had no bearing on the structure of the Church. Augustine saw no way of distinguishing between the elect and the non-elect. If a tangible test for identification could be found, then the sheep in the Church could be segregated from the goats, the wheat from the tares. Wycliffe found this test in ethical behavior and concluded that the Popes, whose lives were in glaring contradiction to those of the apostles, were not successors of the apostles. They were actually the antichrist.

Another of those doctrines was *transubstantiation*. Wycliffe claimed that Christ was spiritually present in the Eucharist, but the bread and wine did not change into the body and blood of Christ. Christ was there, in addition to and along with the bread and wine, whose substance remains. This was called the doctrine of *remanence*. It is similar, if not the same, as *consubstantiation*.

A third teaching of Wycliffe that was unacceptable to the Medieval Church was the idea that the Church consisted of God's chosen people, who did not need a priest to mediate between them and God. This led to a ministry of the Laity. The Franciscans had begun as a lay movement and ended as priests. The followers of Wycliffe began as priests, were deprived by the Church of their status, and ended as a lay movement.

Wycliffe's most significant work was the translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible into English (The Wycliffe Bible).<sup>116</sup> A group of followers gathered around him and tried to spread some of his ideas, including his English Bible. They became known as *Lollards*, which may mean "butterer" or "mumbler." By 1395 C.E. the Lollards had developed into an organized group, with popular support and their own ministers. The Lollards spread many of Wycliffe's ideas. They insisted that the main task of the priest is to preach, and the Bible should be available to everyone in

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<sup>116</sup> It has usually been thought that the New Testament came from Wycliffe's pen, but the Old Testament was the work of Nicholas of Hereford.

his or her own language. Wycliffe did not deal with who had the authority to interpret the Bible. He simply assumed that the Bible needed no interpreter, for its meaning was self-evident. Although the Church tried to suppress the Lollard movement, it continued to thrive and prepared the way for the coming of the Protestant Reformation.

As a reformer, Wycliffe did not make many friends, and in the end, many of his friends deserted him. The Church authorities managed to force him and his followers out of Oxford, and in 1382 C.E., he went to live at Lutterworth, where he died on the last day of 1384 C.E.

***John Huss (1374-1415 C.E.).*** Ordained a priest in 1401 C.E., John Huss achieved fame both as a Christian martyr in the cause of Church reform and for Czech nationalism. He spent most of his career at the Charles University in Prague and as a preacher in the Bethlehem Chapel, which was close to the University. In his preaching he emphasized personal piety and purity of life.

In 1383 CE Princess Anna of Bohemia and King Richard II of England were married. This resulted in student exchanges between the Universities of Oxford and Prague. Wycliffe's ideas were introduced, and John Huss advocated many of them.

Heavily indebted to the works of Wycliffe, Huss stressed the role of Scripture as an authority in the Church, and led a movement to preach in the vernacular, not to make people more Czech, but to make them more Christian. Huss also agreed with Wycliffe's view of the Church as the company of the predestined, recognizable in some measure by the quality of ethical behavior. This view was disruptive of the whole hierarchical structure of the Church, and got both Wycliffe and Huss into trouble. .

Huss, however, was less radical than Wycliffe, and did not hold to the doctrine of remanence, a denial of transubstantiation, which insisted that the bread and wine actually was transformed into the body and blood of Christ. Huss did restore to the laity the cup in the Mass. He and his followers pointed to the words of Christ, "Drink of it, all of you." The Church replied that these words were addressed to the apostles, and that the apostles were all priests. The Hussites denied this, and the chalice came to be the symbol of the Hussite movement. Related to this was the tendency to place the laity on an equal plane with the clergy. The Hussites also resisted the wearing of distinctive clerical garb.

Huss did not reject indulgences, as did Luther. He was outraged that indulgences should be used as a device for raising money, and even more that the money should be spent to pay for papal wars. The students at the University of Prague, however, burned the papal bull on indulgences.

Some of them were executed. Huss protested and was sent into retirement, where he wrote his greatest work *On the Church*.

In that work, Huss defined the Church as the Body of Christ, with Christ its only head. Although he defended the traditional authority of the clergy, he taught that only God could forgive sin. Huss taught that neither Popes nor Cardinals had the right to establish doctrine, which was contrary to Scripture, and Christians had no obligation to obey an order from them, which was clearly wrong. He condemned the corruptness of the clergy right on up to the Pope. In fact he drew a graphic contrast between Christ, riding on a donkey, and the Pope on a stallion with people crowding around him to kiss his feet. This, according to Huss, was a contrast between Christ and the Antichrist. Huss also criticized people for worshiping images, belief in false miracles, and undertaking superstitious pilgrimages.

All of this, put Huss at the center of controversy in Prague, and his case was referred to Rome for a resolution. In 1415 C.E. Huss attended the Council of Constance in order to defend his beliefs. Although he went to Constance under the Emperor's safe-conduct, he was tried and condemned, to be burnt at the stake. He never had an opportunity to explain his views. One of the reasons why Huss could not be tolerated is that his teachings on the Church tended to diminish the visible Roman Catholic Church.

On May 4, 1415, the Council of Constance condemned Wycliffe, and ordered his long-buried body burned, which did not take place until 1427 C.E. As an advocate of some of Wycliffe's ideas, Huss could obtain no favorable hearing. He was burned at the stake on July 6, 1415 C.E. Before he died, he uttered the following words: "O Christ, thou son of the living God, have mercy upon me. O thou, who wast born of the Virgin Mary." The earth was dug up around the stake and taken away so that his followers could not take any relics back to Bohemia.

The heroic death of Jan Hus aroused the nationalistic feelings of the Czech people, who established the Hussite Church in Bohemia. In 1620 C.E. the Hapsburgs conquered Bohemia and restored the Roman Catholic Church. In the end the Hussite reform was closely related to the resistance of the Czechs to German domination. When the Roman Catholic Church was restored, the Hussite movement was tolerated. One land now permitted two forms of the Christian Faith. This was the beginning of pluralism within Catholicism.

### **The Rise of Missionary Activity**

This chapter cannot be closed without mentioning the rise of missionary activity. The Franciscans and the Dominicans led the way.

Francis himself went to Egypt in a fruitless attempt to convert the Muslims. Further missions were carried on in North Africa, occasionally ending in martyrdom. Among the most important missionaries was Raymond Lull, who said, "Missionaries will convert the world by preaching, but also through the shedding of tears and blood and with great labour, and through a bitter death."

Missionaries were also sent to Central Asia. One of the motives behind this was to convert the Mongols and bring them into an alliance against the Muslims. The Franciscans established six mission fields or *vicariates*, three for the Mongols, one for North Africa, and two for Russia and southeastern Europe. The attempt to convert the Mongols to Christianity failed. Muslim missionaries managed to convert the Mongol Khan Uzbek to Islam, and his "Golden Horde" followed his example.

Eventually, all these missionary activities declined and died out by the middle of the fourteenth century. This was partly due to the Black Death, which came into Western Europe at this time. The Black Death disrupted both religious and secular life. The failure, however, was also due to the rapid growth of Muslim influence among the Mongol people. In China a change to the new Ming dynasty in 1368 C.E. brought with it hostility towards Christianity. At any rate, the eastward expansion of Christianity came to an end for some centuries.

By the end of the Middle Ages, Catholic Christianity had retreated from the Orient. During the fifteenth century in Portugal, a strong royal house came to power, with an interest in overseas exploration. As a result, Portuguese ships nosed south along the west coast of Africa in search of commerce and converts. Another new mission field was about to open up, and it would be the Portuguese, and also the Spaniards, who would take their religion and missionaries to the newly found lands of South and Central America, including Mexico. Ferdinand and Isabella united Spain and devoted themselves to the control of the Church and to the expansion of their temporal authority. Under their reign, the clergy would be educated, and the Spanish Inquisition put into full force. Jews and Muslims would either convert, or be forced to leave Spain. Large numbers of Jews and Muslims left Spain.

### **The Rise of Personal Religion**

At least two examples of the rise of personal religion can be cited. The first is the rise of private chantries, which represent a break with institutional, official, and distant meditation. Chantries satisfied the need for direct contact with one's own priest, who said one's own mass for one's own soul. Religion had become more personal. This was also true in art and liturgy. The suffering Christ replaced God, the stern judge. The pitiful

Virgin Mary became more human. There was a profound swing away from the institutional to the personal in religion.

Another example of personal religion can be seen in the rise of mysticism, which was the most personal form of expressed relationship between the individual and God. This tradition was especially strong in the Dominican order, and Germany was the foremost land of mysticism. An important representative of the mystical spirit was Meister Eckhart (1260-1327 C.E.) Eckhart taught that that which is real in all things is the divine. In the soul of every person there is a spark of God. That is the true reality for all persons. With God dominant, the soul is filled with love and righteousness. Churchly observances may be of some value, but the springs of the mystic life are far deeper and its union with God more direct. At the close of his life, Eckhart was on trial for heresy. His theology of God came too close to pantheism. Johann Tauler (1260-1327 C.E.), one of Eckhart's disciples, defined the chief end of humanity as being wholly enraptured by the love of God and the love of fellow human beings. Tauler placed the emphasis on union with the divine, on "God being born within," though he avoided extreme statements leaning toward Pantheism, which led to the condemnation of Eckhart's theology.

There were mystics elsewhere, such as Julian of Norwich (1342-1416 C.E.) in England. As Julian focused on an hazel-nut in the palm of her hand, she concluded: "In this Little Thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second that God loveth it, the third that God keepeth it."<sup>117</sup>The supreme example of mysticism, however, was Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471 C.E.), who wrote *The Imitation of Christ*. He placed the emphasis on walking in the steps of the Savior and sharing with him in the cup of his Passion. The Blessed Trinity, he suggested, is better pleased with adoration than with speculation. Few have understood, as did Thomas à Kempis, the language of simple, mystical devotion to Christ. No book in this period exceeded the circulation of *The Imitation of Christ*.

### **The Need for Reform**

The Renaissance may have started in Italy, but it spread all over Europe, including Germany. German students brought home from Italy a love for the classics, but they also brought with them the loose living that was so characteristic of the Italian Renaissance. German humanism was in general less pagan and more serious-minded than that of Italy. Many of its leaders were sincere churchmen, anxious to reform and purify religious life. This can be seen best in its two most famous representatives, Johann Reuchlin and Desiderius Erasmus.

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<sup>117</sup> Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, V.

***Johann Reuchlin.*** Born in humble circumstances in 1455 C.E., Johann Reuchlin studied Greek at the University of Paris. After receiving his Master's degree in Basel, he began to teach Greek. Reuchlin was regarded as the ablest Greek scholar in the closing years of the fifteenth century. With a Renaissance desire to return to the sources, Reuchlin prepared himself to study the Scriptures in their original languages. He was the first non-Jewish scholar in Germany to make a profound study of Hebrew that he might better understand the Old Testament. He published a Hebrew grammar and lexicon in 1506 C.E. He was able to read the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, and he unlocked their treasures to Christian students. Although Reuchlin never approved of the Protestant Reformation, he did a service of immense importance to Biblical scholarship, which fed the Protestant Reformation.

***Desiderius Erasmus.*** Born out of wedlock and in poverty in 1466 or 1469 C.E., Desiderius Erasmus entered an Augustinian Monastery, but since he had no taste for the monastic life, or for the priesthood for which he had been ordained in 1492 C.E., he left in order to become secretary of the Bishop of Cambrai. He was convinced that the Church was overlaid with superstition, corruption, and error, and that the monastic life was too ignorant and unworthy; yet, he had no desire to break with the Church he so freely criticized. He was too much of an intellectual to have any sympathy with the Lutheran Reformation, which repelled him. He was too clear-sighted not to see the evils of the Roman Catholic Church, and he was committed to reforming it. Erasmus believed that the path to reformation was that of education, a return to the sources of Christian truth, and a rejection of ignorance and immorality. These things would bring the Church to purity. Like Reuchlin, he became a Greek scholar, and in 1516 C.E., he published the first edition of his Greek Testament. This was followed by a series on the Church Fathers, including Jerome, Origen, Basil, Cyril, Chrysostom, Irenaeus, Ambrose, and Augustine. By introducing these primary resources, Erasmus also aided the Reformation.

To all religious-minded humanists, the path of reform seemed similar: sound learning, the study and preaching of the Bible and the Church Fathers, the correction of ignorance, the rejection of immorality, and taking care of the glaring administrative abuses so that the Church would become what it was meant to be. The humanists rendered an indispensable preparation for the Reformation. They led the way to studying the Christian sources afresh. They rejected old ways and introduced more natural methods of Biblical interpretation.

Bibles were translated into the language of the people. The New Testament was printed in French in 1477 C.E., the whole Bible two years later. In 1478 C.E., a Spanish translation was published, with the whole

Bible coming ten years later. In the Netherlands, one of the best of all translations was printed in 1477 C.E. The Scriptures were printed in Bohemian in 1488 C.E., and if no English Bible appeared before the Reformation, many manuscripts of John Wycliffe's translation were in circulation. All of this was made possible by the invention of the printing press in 1450 C.E. by Johannes Gutenberg. By the turn of the century in 1500 C.E., more than 30,000 publications were issued. The printing press had become the wings of the Renaissance, but also of the Bible itself.

The purpose of Bible translation was to aid the less educated priesthood. Efforts were made to restrict the reading of the Bible by the laity, since its use seemed to be the source of so many medieval heresies. The real question of the influence of the Bible was the problem of Biblical interpretation. The final authority of the Bible was never denied. Augustine and Aquinas regarded the Bible as the final authority. It needed to be interpreted by persons who knew how, such as the Church Fathers, scholars, and councils of the Church. Should the Church's right to interpret be denied, there remained only private interpretation. The mere reading of the Bible involved no denial of medieval ideals. In the end, the Bible was not so much the cause of the Protestant Reformation as was Protestantism the new interpretation of the Scriptures.



# 19. THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION

Good works do not make a man good,  
But a good man does good works.

*Martin Luther*

## **The Seeds of the Reformation**

*The Immorality*

Although the year 1517 C.E. is used to mark the beginning of the Reformation, the seeds of the Reformation go back a hundred years or more. Martin Luther indicated that things began to go badly for the Church as early as the eighth century.

Complaints against the Church centered around three major points: (1) the immorality of the clergy, (2) the severe financial demands imposed on the faithful, and (3) the neglect of the parishes. All three of these issues were related to one another and were seeds that grew into the Reformation.

The immorality among the clergy includes the papacy itself. The Pope was one of the most notorious offenders. When Luther went to Rome in 1510 C.E., he was shocked by what he saw. The Pope sanctioned the corruption that was going on and was deeply involved in it. The enforcement of celibacy had led to clerical concubinage, and the Pope promoted concubinage by example.

For all of its ideals in piety and art, the Roman Catholic Church differed radically from the New Testament Church in beliefs, morals, and administration. Most people of conscience knew this, but felt powerless to do anything about it. Some, like John Huss, refused to wait for Rome to reform itself, and separated from the Roman Catholic Church for the honor of Christ and his Gospel.

*The Events*

Around the middle of the fourteenth century, two major events threatened, the Church and all of Europe. These events were regarded by some as the scourge of God to punish the immorality found in Catholicism. The first of these events was the Bubonic plague that first struck Europe in 1347 C.E. This plague was known as the Black Death, and in three years, it killed one third of the population of the Roman Catholic West.

The second event was political. The Muslim Ottoman Turks became a political threat when they captured Gallipoli in 1354 C.E., and proceeded to advance into Europe. Under their Sultan, Mohammed II (1451-1481

C.E.), Islam made spectacular territorial gains. In 1453 C.E., Constantinople fell to him, and in 1480 C.E., his forces made a landing at Otranto on the heel of Italy. In the end, the Turks were as much of a threat as was the Black Death.

### *The Forerunners*

The Reformation did not happen without rumblings and warnings. There were several forerunners of the necessity for reform. Four of them deserve a comment or two because their writings either anticipated Luther or helped him to form his views.

Mesiter Eckhart (1260-1327 C.E.). Eckhart was a German Dominican mystic, whose teachings were condemned, after his death, by the Pope. He is now recognized as the most dynamic force in the religious life of Germany prior to the Reformation.

Johann Tauler (1300-1361 C.E.). Another mystic, and pupil of Eckhart, was Johann Tauler. He was also a German and Dominican. His sermons stressed human nothingness in the presence of God. They helped to mold Luther's thinking at a critical stage in his spiritual experience.

John of Wesel (1400-1481 C.E.). Foreshadowing the German Reformers was John of Wesel, who rejected many of the distinctive beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. He declared the Bible alone as the ultimate authority in matters of faith. In 1475 C.E., he wrote against indulgences, and in 1479 C.E., he was tried by the Inquisition and condemned to a lifetime of confinement in the Augustinian monastery at Mainz.

Desiderius Erasmus (1467-1536 C.E.) The last and most effective forerunner of the Reformation was Erasmus. It is frequently noted that he laid the egg that Luther hatched, and yet, Erasmus had little or no sympathy for Luther's revolt. Erasmus saw the evils of the Roman Catholic Church, but he was committed to reforming the Church from within. He believed that the path to Reformation was to be found in education, a return to the sources of Christian truth, and to the rejection of ignorance and immorality. These things, he insisted, would restore purity to the Church. His most significant contribution as a forerunner of the Reformation was his epoch-making edition of the Greek New Testament. Thanks to Johann Guttenberg's invention<sup>118</sup> of printing with the use of movable metal type at Mainz, Germany, Erasmus' Greek New Testament

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<sup>118</sup> Johann Guttenberg began to pioneer with movable metal type for printing in about 1445 C.E. The first complete book, known to be printed, in the Christian world was the Bible in 1456 C.E.

was the first to be printed and published. In Basel in 1516 C.E., one year before the Reformation was to begin. Erasmus expressed his feelings about the need for putting the Scriptures into the hands of everyone:

I wish that the Scriptures might be translated into all languages, so that not only the Scots and the Irish, but also the Turk and the Saracen might read and understand them. I long that the farm-laborer might sing them as he follows his plow, the weaver hum them to the tune of his shuttle, the traveler beguile the weariness of his journey with their stories.

### **Reformation in Germany**

By the time of Martin Luther, the question was not whether, but how and when the Church would be reformed. Like Erasmus, Luther desired to renew the Roman Catholic Church from within; but Luther lacked the patience and tolerance of Erasmus.

#### *Birth and Early Life of Martin Luther*

Martin Luther was born in Eisleben on November 10, 1483 C.E.<sup>119</sup> His mother and father, were people of simple, un-ecclesiastical piety. His father was a copper miner, who was more energetic and ambitious than most peasants. Within a few months of Martin's birth, he moved his family to Mansfeld, where he was motivated to give his son an education in Law. Following his preparatory schooling in Mansfeld, Magdeburg, and Eisenach, Luther entered the University of Erfurt in 1501 C.E. He became an earnest, companionable, and music-loving student. Following graduation as a Master of Arts in 1505 C.E., Luther prepared to study Law.

#### *Death of a Friend and the Thunderstorm*

The death of a friend and a thunderstorm in July of 1505 C.E. shattered all Luther's dreams of a career in Law. A lightning bolt knocked him to the ground. As he walked back to Erfurt from his home in Mansfeld, he prayed to Saint Ann, the patron saint of miners, for help. "I will become a monk," he cried.

True to his word, Luther joined the Augustinian Hermits Monastery in Erfurt on July 17, 1505 C.E. These particular monks were referred to as the Black Cloister, since they wore black. Of all the orders, they were also the strictest.

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<sup>119</sup> Some sources say that Luther was born on November 11, 1483 C.E.

## *Monastic Life*

Luther's decision to enter a monastery upset his father, who had dreams of Martin's return to Mansfeld, where he might some day become mayor of the city.

Luther entered the Black Cloister. The monks were called this because they wore black. The Monastery was the German Congregation of Augustinians, supervised by Johann von Staupitz, who enjoyed popular respect and represented monasticism at its best. While Staupitz represented a medieval theological position, he made much of preaching and included men who emphasized mystical piety and were sympathetic to the deep religious experiences of Augustine and Bernard. Luther owed much to Staupitz.

Once in the monastery, Luther threw himself into monastic life. Between the six worship services each day, which began at 2:00 a.m., Luther sandwiched prayer, meditation, and spiritual exercises. He subjected himself to long periods of fasting and self-flagellation. In addition to all this, he spent long sleepless nights in a stone cell without a blanket to protect him from the damp cold. All this contributed to the continual illness that plagued Luther for the rest of his life. "I almost fasted myself to death," he wrote, "for again and again I went for three days without taking a drop of water or a morsel of food. I was very serious about it."

Luther was so serious about achieving holiness and assurance, that in reflection, he said, "Sometimes my confessor said to me when I repeatedly discussed silly sins with him, 'You are a fool... God is not angry with you, but you are angry with God.'" This was true. Luther hated God. When we are faced with having to justify ourselves, two options remain open to us. The first is pride; the second is anger. Pride was not Luther's problem, but despair and anger were.

Luther was ordained to the priesthood in 1507 C.E., and in 1508 C.E., he was sent to Wittenberg<sup>120</sup> to prepare for a professorship in the University. The University had been established in 1502 C.E. by the Saxon Elector, Frederick III, sometimes called Frederick the Wise, (1486-1525 C.E.). Luther earned his Bachelor of Theology in 1509 C.E. In 1510 C.E., In spite of all his religious involvement, Luther found no peace. His own sense of sinfulness overwhelmed him. Staupitz helped him by pointing out that true penitence began not with the fear of a punishing God, but with the love of God.

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<sup>120</sup> In Luther's time Wittenberg had a population of about 2,000 people.

Luther was sent to Rome on business for the Monastic Order to which he belonged. He was there from November 1510 to April 1511 C.E.

### *University Life*

Upon returning home he pursued and received the Doctor of Theology in 1512 C.E. At once he began to lecture on the Bible, starting with the Psalms from 1513 to 1515 C.E., then Romans until late in 1516 C.E., and finally he took on Galatians, Hebrews, and Titus.

In the midst of Luther's lectures on the Psalms, he became convinced that salvation is a new relationship with God, based not on any work of merit, but on absolute trust in the divine promises. The redeemed person, while not ceasing to be a sinner, is freely and fully forgiven. In this new relationship, the person experiences a new life of willing conformity to God's will.

Luther recorded an experience he had in the Tower and defined faith in his preface to his commentary on Romans, a preface that inspired and led John Wesley to his famous Aldersgate Experience. The two quotations follow:

I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, "the righteousness of God," because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and deals righteously in punishing the unrighteous.... Night and day I pondered until...I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before "the righteousness of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway to heaven.<sup>121</sup>

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure that it would die a thousand times for it. Such confidence and such knowledge of God's grace makes a man joyous, gay, bold and merry toward God and all creatures. That is what the Holy Spirit does in faith. Thus, without being driven, a man begins willingly and gladly to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer all sorts and kinds of things, and to love and praise God, who has shown him such grace; so that it is as impossible to separate works

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<sup>121</sup> Luther's struggle with Romans 1:17.

of faith as it is impossible to separate light and heat from the fire.<sup>122</sup>

In the University of Wittenberg, Luther began to oppose Aristotelianism and Scholasticism, and at the same time he taught and preached his new faith. He did not have to stand alone. He found support in colleagues such as Andreas Bodenstein of Karlstadt (1480-1541 C.E.), and Nikolaus von Amsdorf (1483-1565 C.E.)

### *The Indulgences Controversy*

If Luther had worked only as a University professor, he might not have sparked the Reformation. It was his work in the parish that first made him aware of the Indulgences Controversy. Even though Albrecht of Brandenburg was not of canonical age to be a Bishop, he was already Bishop of Magdeburg and of Halberstadt. He now aspired to be made Archbishop of Mainz and primate of Germany. Pope Leo X decided in favor of the aspirations of Albrecht of Brandenburg to hold all these positions at the same time. There was a fee of ten thousand ducats. Albrecht borrowed the money from the banking house of Fugger in Augsburg and paid the Pope in full.

To enable Albrecht to reimburse the Fuggers, Pope Leo X permitted an indulgence to be sold throughout his territories for eight years. Half of he proceeds were to go through Albrecht to the Fuggers, and the other half were to go to the Pope, who was building a mausoleum for the bones of Peter and Paul, the great Basilica of St. Peter.

Commissioned for selling these indulgences was a Dominican monk of eloquence, John Tetzel<sup>123</sup>, whose intent was to make the largest returns possible. To do this he painted the benefits of indulgences in the crassest terms. He preached that indulgences would not only remit the penalties for

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<sup>122</sup> Quoted from Luther's Preface to the Book of Romans.

<sup>123</sup> Tetzel's routine was as follows: His advance men announced his arrival some weeks in advance. They compiled a special directory of the town that classified the financial resources of its citizens. When Tetzel arrived, it was with fanfare of trumpets and drums and a procession complete with flags and the symbols of the papacy. After preaching a vivid sermon in the town square on hell and its terrors, he would proceed to the largest church. He would deliver a vivid sermon on purgatory and the sufferings not only awaiting his hearers but also those that dear grandma and other loved ones were already enduring. Finally, he would preach a sermon picturing heaven. At this point his audience was sufficiently prepared and eager to buy indulgences. Tetzel had something for everyone. He also had a sliding scale of charges based on a person's financial resources.

sins, but also the sins themselves. They would also give preferential treatment to sins committed in the future. Those who secured indulgences on behalf of deceased relatives in purgatory need not be contrite for their own sins. Tetzel proclaimed their power to ensure immediate release from purgatory, using the jingle:

As soon as the coin in the coffer rings,  
The soul from purgatory springs.<sup>124</sup>

The whole blame for the misuse of indulgences cannot be placed upon Tetzel. The extraordinary success of the trade in indulgences was fueled as by the desires of believers and by the financial interests of the Church. Actually, Tetzel was not allowed in Wittenberg. Frederick the Wise had his own collection with indulgences, and did not want competition. The problem arose when Luther's parishioners went outside of the city to Tetzel. Luther was appalled when they returned and told him that they no longer needed to go to confession, do penance, or attend Mass. They had their ticket out of purgatory and into heaven. This was the immediate context for the Ninety-Five Theses.

#### *The Ninety-Five Theses*

The indulgences controversy was too much for Luther. He sparked the Lutheran Reformation by nailing Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church. The Ninety-Five Theses were intended for academic debate, but the news of them spread like wildfire. Luther did not deny the right of the Pope to grant indulgences. He only questioned the extension of indulgences to purgatory and to make clear the abuses of current teaching. He was sure that once the Pope understood him, he would do away with the abuses. In addition to nailing the Theses on the door of the Wittenberg Church, a copy was sent to Archbishop Albrecht in Mainz, who passed them on to Pope Leo X in the summer of 1518 C.E.

Upon reading Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, Pope Leo X referred to Luther as a drunken German who would soon be sober. When Luther continued, Pope Leo insisted that the Church consists in the Pope and the Cardinals, and those who disagree to what the Church does are heretics. Luther replied that the Church consists in Christ and representatively in a church Council, but that not even a Council, let alone a Pope, is infallible. The ground had shifted from indulgences to authority. Having rejected the authority of the Church, Luther was left only with private, subjective judgment. Luther never admitted this problem. In place of the authority of

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<sup>124</sup> Another translation runs as follows: As soon as the coin into the box rings, a soul from purgatory to heaven springs."

Popes and Councils, Luther substituted to the authority of the Scriptures, without realizing that Scriptures need to be interpreted. They too are subjective.

The response from the Pope was swift. Although Luther was charged with heresy, he had the backing of the entire university. In June, of 1518 C.E., Luther was summoned to appear in Rome for a hearing. Frederick the Wise, senior member among the seven electors of the Holy Roman Empire, territorial prince of Saxony, and Luther's lord, insisted that his professor should not be condemned without a proper hearing, and that his hearing should take place on German soil. Frederick realized that, because of Luther, student enrollment was up; and, he was not about to let his prize professor and academic drawing card go off to Rome to be burned at the stake. Arrangements were then made to have Luther interviewed by papal representatives in Augsburg, Germany.

### *The Hearing in Augsburg*

The hearing took place at Augsburg in 1518 C.E., with Cardinal Cajetan<sup>125</sup>, an upright and learned theologian of the school of St. Thomas. He confronted Luther with the papal bull *Unigenitus*, issued 175 years earlier by Clement VI, which set forth the doctrine of the treasury of the merits of the saints and the power of the Pope to issue indulgences drawn upon it. Luther hesitated to reject the bull because it had been incorporated into canon law; but when pressed, he responded with a flat denial of the doctrine. The Cardinal told him to leave and not to return until he was ready to retract his heretical teachings.

Meanwhile in Wittenberg a young scholar, the grand nephew of Reuchlin, was installed as professor of Greek. His name was Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560 C.E.) He was to work with Luther in the years to come, but never was there a greater contrast in personalities. In contrast to Luther's strong personality, Melanchthon was timid and retiring, Melanchthon, however, would represent Lutheran theology during Luther's life and after Luther's death.

### *The Leipzig Debate*

Luther's colleague, Andreas Bodenstein of Karlstadt (1480-1541 C.E.) had argued in opposition to Johann Eck, that the text of the Bible was to be preferred even to the authority of the whole Church. Eck demanded a public debate, to which Karlstadt agreed, and Luther soon found himself drawn into the combat.

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<sup>125</sup> Cajetan is sometimes Cajetanus. He is to be identified with Cardinal Thomas VIO (1469-1534 C.E.).

Luther's ideas were rapidly gaining adherents. In the July of 1519 C.E., along with Karlstadt, Luther was drawn into the debate at the Catholic University at Leipzig with the distinguished doctor Johann Eck, professor of theology at Ingolstadt. The debate centered not on indulgences, but on the antiquity, divine institution, and authority of Popes. Eck's skill drove Luther to admit that his positions were in some respects those of John Huss, and that in condemning Huss, the Council of Constance had erred. It was a momentous declaration into which Luther had been led. Not only had he rejected the final authority of the Pope, but now he had also affirmed the fallibility of councils. He had broken with the whole authoritative system of the Middle Ages, and he was left only with an appeal to the Scriptures. Hence, the initial issue of the Reformation had to do not with "justification by faith alone," but with the authority of popes and councils. Luther appealed to Scripture, which some called a "paper pope."

Back in Germany, nationalists rallied around Luther as the spokesman of their complaint against the Pope for treating Germany as his "milch cow." The Humanists saw in Luther another Johann Reuchlin, battling for freedom of scholarship. Erasmus insisted that Luther was a man of good life whose arguments should be met by reasoning.

Luther responded by writing three epoch-making tracts. The first was entitled, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*. It declared that three Roman walls were overthrown. The first was the pretended superiority of the spiritual to the temporal. All believers are priests. The truth of the universal priesthood casts down the second wall, that of the exclusive papal right to interpret the Scriptures. The third wall was the idea that only the Pope could call a reforming Council. A true, free Council for the reform of the Church, wrote Luther, should be summoned by the temporal authorities. Luther proceeded to lay down a program for reformation. His suggestions were practical rather than theological. One of the practical suggestions he made was to permit clerical marriage.

The second tract was put into Latin and entitled *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*. Guided by Scripture, Luther reduced the Sacraments to two, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Luther criticized the denial of the cup to the laity, doubted transubstantiation, and rejected the doctrine that the Supper was a sacrifice to God. When Erasmus read this tract, he replied, "The breach is irreparable." Erasmus was torn, because he himself had spiritualized the Mass even more than Luther, but he did not press his private view to the point of disrupting the Church. Erasmus was concerned for unity, Luther for truth.

The third work of Luther was *On Christian Liberty*. In this work he wrote, “A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all and subject to every one.” The essence of the Gospel for Luther was the forgiveness of sins, received by a faith, which is nothing less than a vital, personal transforming relationship of the soul with Christ. In this tract Luther prefaced a letter to Pope Leo X, offering goodwill to the Pope personally, but denouncing the papal court and its claims for papal authority. The Pope is described as “sitting like a lamb in the midst of wolves.”

### *The Papal Bull*

Johann Eck felt that the whole controversy might now be concluded with a papal bull of condemnation. The Papal Bull, *exsurge domine*, was issued from his hunting lodge on June 15<sup>126</sup>, 1520 C.E. It began and ended with the following words: “Arise, O Lord, and judge thine own cause.... A wild boar has invaded thy vineyard.” Luther was now considered to be a heretic and was given sixty days in which to reject his own beliefs under the authority of Popes and Councils.

Luther, however, did not receive the Bull for three months. When he did receive it on December 10, 1520, he replied by burning both the Papal Bull and a copy of Canon Law, in the presence and with the approval of the students and citizens of Wittenberg. There was no opposition from the civil authorities.

As a heretic, Luther was to be burned at the stake. A bull of excommunication, *decet romanum*, was published on January 3, 1521 C.E. Frederick the Wise, however, was not convinced that Luther had been given an adequate hearing. The result was that Luther was summoned to defend himself under the protection of an imperial safe-conduct.

### *The Diet of Worms*

Luther’s journey from Wittenberg to Worms was a popular ovation. The papal representative could not even find a comfortable room. When he arrived, people threatened him on the streets. The bookstores were full of Luther’s writings.

Luther’s friends warned him that John Huss had been granted safe conduct, but was then burned as a heretic. Luther decided to go anyway. He arrived on April 17, 1521. A row of his books was pointed out to him, and he was asked to reject them. Luther requested time for reflection. A day was given to him, and on the next afternoon he appeared before the

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<sup>126</sup> Some scholars date this bull to June 24, 1520 C.E.

assembly. He refused to reject any of his works unless he could be convinced of their errors by Scripture or argument. Luther replied as follows:

Since then Your Majesty and Your Lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by the Scriptures and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.

Tradition informs us that Luther also said, “I cannot do otherwise. Here I stand. God help me, Amen.” No one can be certain that Luther said these words, but they seem probable. They are consistent with Luther’s other responses.

An attempt was made to break Luther down in a committee meeting. He was asked whether he could not compromise on something. If he refused, there would be division, war, and insurrection. He replied that truth was not open to negotiation. Luther, who was still under a safe-conduct issued by the Emperor, then left Worms.

### *The Warburg Castle*

The Emperor, Charles V placed Luther under the ban of the Empire, which meant that he was to be seized for punishment and his books burned. Frederick the Wise, not convinced that Luther had been given a fair hearing, had Luther seized and secretly taken to his Wartburg Castle, near Eisenach. Hidden for nearly a year<sup>127</sup> in the castle, Luther took advantage of the time and translated the New Testament into popular German. He began the task in December of 1521 C.E. and finished in September of the following year. Luther was not the first person to translate the New Testament into German, but he was the first one to base his translation on the Greek, for which the labors of Erasmus must be given credit. Luther’s translation was idiomatic and readable. He felt that Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation were of inferior worth, but he translated them anyway.

As Luther translated the New Testament into German, Philip Melancthon published a small volume *loci communes* (Cardinal Points of Theology). It was the first systematic presentation of Lutheran theology. It would be enlarged, developed, and modified in later editions.

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<sup>127</sup> May 1521 to March 1522 C.E.

Another of Luther's colleagues in Wittenberg was Andreas Bodenstein, called Karlstadt<sup>128</sup>, who had conferred the Doctor's degree on Luther. On Christmas of 1521 C.E., Karlstadt celebrated the Lord's Supper without priestly garb, sacrificial offering, elevation of the host, and with the cup offered to the laity. Karlstadt taught that all ministers should marry, and in January of 1522 C.E., he took a wife. He soon opposed the use of pictures, organs, and Gregorian chanting in public worship.

### *Luther's Return to Wittenberg*

The town council finally asked Luther to return. Luther agreed if Frederick the Wise promised not to turn him over to the Emperor (Charles V), but if the Emperor came to take him, Frederick was not to resist. With that promise made, Luther returned to Wittenberg on March 6, 1522. C.E. Luther became the master of the situation. His very presence calmed the agitation, and Karlstadt lost all influence and had to leave the city.

In 1523 C.E., Luther issued his *Ordering of Worship*, in which he emphasized the central place of preaching in worship. Luther held that great freedom was permissible in details of worship, as long as the "Word of God" was kept central. Roman Catholic services continued in Wittenberg alongside the Lutheran until 1524 C.E. At that point the saying of the Roman Catholic Mass was abolished in all the churches in the city. In 1526 C.E. Luther issued a *German Mass*, and suggested that, "what is not contrary to Scripture is for Scripture and Scripture for it." He therefore retained the use of candles, the crucifix, and the use of pictures.

Some thought Luther was only a halfway reformer. Such a radical was his old associate Karlstadt, who, having lost standing in Wittenberg, went on to express radical views and practices elsewhere. He gathered together a large following and defied Luther and the Saxon government. Thomas Münzer (1488-1525 C.E.) was even more radical. He affirmed immediate revelation and attacked both Roman Catholics and Lutherans alike. He opposed Luther's reliance on Scripture and his teachings on justification by faith, arguing for a spiritualism that rendered the Bible subject to the test of religious experience. He believed that the Reformation should lead to the establishment of a Church of the elect, which would usher in a new social order of justice and love.

### *The Peasants Revolt*

In 1525 C.E. the peasants put forth the following articles demanding that...

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<sup>128</sup> He was called Karlstadt from his birthplace.

- each community have the right to choose and depose its pastor
- the great tithes (on grain) be used for the support of the pastor and other community expenses
- the small tithes be abolished
- serfdom be done away with
- reservations for hunting be restricted
- the use of the forest be allowed to the poor
- forced labor be regulated and duly paid
- just rents be fixed
- new laws no longer be enacted
- common lands be restored to communities from which they had been taken
- payments for inheritance to their masters be abolished.

Other peasant groups, one of which was led by Thomas Münzer, were even more radical. Luther did not take sides with the peasants. In fact, he wrote a pamphlet entitled, *Against the Murderous and Thieving Rabble of the Peasants*, demanding that the princes crush them with the sword. The peasant revolt was stamped out in a frightful bloodshed.

On May 5, 1525 C.E., in the dark days of the peasant revolt, Frederick the Wise died. He was succeeded by his brother John the Steadfast (1525-1532 C.E.). The change was favorable for Luther. The new Elector was an active Lutheran. By 1529 C.E., the Protestant territories included Saxony, Hesse, Brandenburg, Anhalt, and Luneburg. The Princes in these areas did not impose Lutheranism upon their subjects, but called in Lutheran ministers to instruct the people.

### *Luther's Marriage*

When the monks and nuns began leaving the monasteries and convents in large numbers, Luther said that they were free to marry, but he continued, "They'll never force a wife on me." In 1525 C.E., he was faced with a dilemma. A whole nunnery had escaped in a cart used to transport empty herring barrels. A whole wagonload of virgins had come to town. "God give them husbands," said one of the citizens of Wittenberg, "lest worse befall." Luther undertook the task of placing them in homes, until only one remained, Katharina von Bora. She suggested that she would consider Luther. He reasoned that marriage might please his father and displease the Pope; moreover, Christ would come soon, there might never be another opportunity.

While Luther did not combine romance with matrimony, he married Katharina and established a model of the Protestant family parsonage. He was tenderly affectionate towards his Herr Kathe (Lord Kätie). They gave birth to six children and lost two, Elizabeth and Magdalene. Erasmus

poked fun at Luther by suggesting that the Reformation, which had appeared a tragedy, was really a comedy, the end of which was a wedding.

### *The Augsburg Confession*

By 1530 C.E., Lutheranism had taken on a definitive shape and had achieved considerable territorial expansion. At the same time the Emperor demanded the enforcement of the Edict of Worms, but he was in Spain. The Diet of Speyer, in 1526 C.E. left the question of enforcement to each ruler. After all, each ruler would have to answer to God. The Diet, assembled at Speyer in 1529 C.E., took a different position. Lutheranism might be tolerated where it could not be suppressed without tumult, but Roman Catholic minorities must be allowed in Lutheran areas. Lutheran minorities, however, could not be tolerated in Catholic districts. This would have meant the practical abolition of the Lutheran territorial churches. Unable to defeat the legislation, the Lutheran Princes protested. Their formal protest took place on April 19, 1529 C.E. This protest, referred to as *protestatio*, was of great historic importance. It led to the designation of the party as “Protestant.”

In the year 1530 C.E., the Emperor was able to travel to Germany for the meeting of the Diet of Augsburg. His purpose was to try to reconcile Protestants to Roman Catholicism, and if that did not work, he was ready to use coercion. The Lutherans presented their statement of faith, the Augsburg Confession, drafted by Philip Melancthon, who headed the theologians. Luther could not attend because he was still under the ban. The Augsburg Confession was unacceptable to the Diet, and so the Emperor gave the reformers until the following April to return to their old faith.

In response, several of the Lutheran Princes and a number of the free cities organized at Schmalkalden a league for mutual defense. Faced by a new threat from the Turks, the Emperor agreed to a truce with the league. Lutheranism grew rapidly in the years that followed, and by 1555 C.E., it was in a position to reach a settlement with the Emperor. Territories adhering to the Augsburg Confession were granted toleration. Catholics could not become Lutheran, but any of their subjects who embraced the new faith could emigrate without loss of goods, and of course, the same rights were to be enjoyed by Catholic minorities in Lutheran lands. By this arrangement, Lutheranism acquired a legal status within the framework of the Empire.

### *Luther's Legacy*

The three watchwords of the Lutheran Reformation were: Scripture, Faith Alone, and the priesthood of all believers.

*Scripture.* Let's look first at Luther's understanding of Scripture. Luther insisted that the Bible is "the swaddling cloths and the manger in which Christ lies.... Simple and lowly are these swaddling cloths, but dear is the treasure, Christ, who lies in them." It is clear from this that Luther was no literalist when it came to interpreting the Bible. He placed the Lord's Supper right next to the Bible. The Lord's Supper, he said is the "visible Word" and therefore no less the Word of God than the Bible itself. Luther not only restored the Bible to the people by translating it into their own language, but he also restored the cup to the people in the Lord's Supper. One of his greatest achievements was the rediscovery of the Church as community. Both the Scriptures and the Lord's Supper nurtured that community.

*Faith Alone.* The second watchword was "justification by faith alone." This can be misleading. It meant that salvation came to human beings by the free and undeserved grace of Christ. Roman Catholics also believed that salvation came through Christ, but they laid good works parallel with faith and laid the emphasis on the merit of good works. It seemed to Luther that one had to earn his or her salvation. Luther did not disapprove of good works, but denied their value as a condition for justification. He saw them as the product and evidence of justification. Luther's own conversion occurred when he realized that he was not to think of the righteousness of God in the active sense (that we become righteous like God) but rather in the passive sense (that God gives us his righteousness). He summed all this up with the simple statement: "Good works do not make a man good, but a good man does good works."

*The Priesthood of Believers.* Luther saw no precedent in the early Church for the priest as the only mediator, nor did he see anything in Scripture that supported the secular power of the clergy. He resisted the idea that there be two levels of Christian discipleship. There was but one status before God. He affirmed that God called people to different occupations—father or farmer, scholar or pastor, servant or soldier. In and through his or her calling, Christians served God, and every Christian was expected to take a responsible part in the government and public affairs of both Church and society. Luther equated the word *priest* with *Christian*. "It would please me very much," he said, "if this word 'Priest' were used as commonly as the term 'Christian' is applied to us. For priests, the baptized and Christians are all one and the same." Everyone is a priest, or as Luther liked to say, "a Christ to his neighbor." That is what it means to be a priest.

Luther did not want anyone to call him or herself a Lutheran. He insisted on this, saying:

I ask that men make no reference to my name; let them call themselves Christians, not Lutherans. What is Luther? After all, the teaching is not mine... Neither was I crucified for anyone.... St. Paul...would not allow the Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christian. How then should I—poor stinking maggot-fodder that I am—come to have men call the children of Christ by my wretched name? Not so, my dear friends; let us abolish all party names and call ourselves Christians, after him whose teaching we hold.... I neither am nor want to be anyone's master. I hold together with the universal church, the one universal master. I hold, together with the universal church, the one universal teaching of Christ, who is our only master [Matthew 23:8].

In order to aid persons in becoming true Christians, Luther wrote a Small and Large Catechism in 1529 C.E. In these works he dealt with the faith, as given in the Apostles Creed, with morality as given in the Ten Commandments, and with prayer as given in the Lord's Prayer. The Short Catechism became one of the noblest monuments of the Reformation.

In Eisleben in February 8, 1546 C.E., Martin Luther died. On his deathbed he was asked the question: "Will you stand firm in Christ and the doctrine which you have preached?" He replied with a resolute, "Yes."

## 20. THE REFORMED TRADITIONS

We are justified not without, and yet not by works.

*John Calvin*

Martin Luther was the lightning rod of the Reformation. Once it started, no one, including Luther, could control it. There are two ways to look at the spreading of the Reformation. One way would be to study the lives of those persons who spread the Reformation into other countries; another way, would be to look at the dynamics taking place within those countries. It must be admitted from the start that it will be very difficult to separate the leaders from those cultural dynamics.

### **Reformation In Switzerland**

The Reformation broke out in Switzerland at about the same time as it did in Germany, but it broke out independently of Luther. This was true because although Switzerland was nominally a part of the Empire, it had long been practically independent. Its thirteen cantons were united in a loose confederacy, each operating as a self-governing republic. The Swiss Reformation was to have its sources in humanism, self-government, hatred of ecclesiastical restraint, and in its resistance to the monastic movement, particularly where monasteries had become large landowners.

*Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531 C.E.)*

Huldreich Zwingli, the chief reformer in German speaking Switzerland, was born on January 1, 1484 C.E. in Wildhaus, where his father was the bailiff of the village. Zwingli was educated in Basel and Bern, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in 1504 C.E. from the University of Basel. Two years later he received his Master's Degree. At Basel he studied under the humanist Thomas Wyttenbach, whom he remembered as having taught him the sole authority of Scripture, the death of Christ as the only price for forgiveness, and the worthlessness of indulgences. Under such teaching, Zwingli became a humanist, eager to return to the earliest sources of Christian belief. He was always critical of what the humanists defined as superstition. Unlike Luther, Zwingli never passed through a deep spiritual experience of sin and forgiveness; hence, his religious attitude was more intellectual and radical than that of Luther.

Following Zwingli's second graduation, under the influence of his clerical uncle, he took a parish in Glarus. In Glarus he studied Greek, became an influential preacher, opposed the employment of Swiss

mercenaries, except by the Pope<sup>129</sup>, and received a pension from the Pope. He accompanied the young men of his parish as chaplain in several Italian campaigns. Zwingli was patriotically convinced of the moral evil of mercenary service, but the French, eager to enlist Swiss soldiers, caused a great deal of trouble for him in Glarus. Without resigning his post in Glarus, Zwingli transferred his activities in 1516 C.E. to Einsiedeln. The change brought him a great reputation as a student and preacher. His life at this time was not free from reproach, for in Einsiedeln, he broke his vow of chastity.<sup>130</sup>

In 1522 C.E., Zwingli was elected to the Minister chapter in Zürich as the people's priest. He began at once an orderly exposition of whole books of the Bible, beginning with the Gospel of Matthew. At this time he became acquainted with the writings of Luther. Although Zwingli had been moving for a long time in the same direction, he now did so with vigor. This new vigor did not begin, as it did with Luther, out of a concern to become acceptable to God, but out of the conviction that only the Bible is binding on Christians. Zwingli began to affirm the sole authority of Scripture in justification. Only that which the Bible commands, he insisted, or for which distinct authorization can be found in its pages, is binding or allowable. This understanding of Scripture moved Zwingli in a much more radical direction than Luther. Luther, on the other hand, allowed what the Bible did not prohibit.

Persuaded by Zwingli in January, of 1523 C.E., the cantonal government ordered a public debate on the subject. Zwingli prepared sixty-seven brief articles, affirming that salvation is by faith, good works have no value, the Mass is not a sacrifice, saints have little value, and there is no such thing as purgatory. He also declared Christ to be the sole head of the Church and advocated clerical marriage. The government declared Zwingli the victor in the public debate, publicly endorsing his teachings. Priests and nuns married. Fees for baptisms and burials were eliminated. In a second debate in October of 1523 C.E., Zwingli and his associate pastor, Leo Jud (1482-1542 C.E.) attacked the use of images and the sacrificial character of the Mass. In January of 1524 C.E. there was a third debate. This resulted in offering those who did not agree the choice of conformity or banishment. In June and July of 1524 C.E., images, relics, and organs were eliminated from public worship. In December monastic property was confiscated and new schools were established. On Holy Week of 1525 C.E., the Mass was abolished. The Reformation in Zürich was now complete. The older order

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<sup>129</sup> The Kings of France and the Popes sought Swiss mercenaries.

<sup>130</sup> Some would say the Zwingli secretly married Anna Meyer (Reinhard) in this year. The public wedding was to take place in 1524 C.E.

had been thrown out. The services were put into German and the sermon was made the central focus of worship.

On April 2, 1524 C.E., Zwingli publicly married Anna Reinhard, a widow, whom he and his friends had treated as his wife since 1522 C.E., not without unfriendly gossip.<sup>131</sup> Popes did not interfere in Zürich affairs, largely because of the political value of Switzerland in their wars. Bern, the greatest of the Swiss cantons, was won for reform in 1528 C.E., after a public debate in which Zwingli took part.

Zwingli and Luther agreed on almost everything but the nature of the Lord's Supper. The two reformers met in Marburg in 1529 C.E., but could not come to any agreement. For Zwingli, the Christian life was one of conformity to the will of God, as set forth in the Bible. Zwingli's nature was therefore more intellectual and critical. In 1521 C.E. a Dutch Lawyer, Cornelius Hoen, suggested that the proper interpretation of Jesus' words, "This is my body" to be "This signifies my body." Zwingli accepted this symbolic understanding of Jesus' words, denying any physical presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. He emphasized instead its memorial character and its significance as uniting the congregation of believers in a common loyalty to their Lord. This was unacceptable to Luther. To Luther Zwingli's interpretation was a sinful exaltation of reason above Scripture. To Zwingli Luther's affirmation of the physical presence of Christ was an unreasoning remnant of Catholic superstition. Luther declared Zwingli and his supporters to be unchristian, and Zwingli affirmed that Luther was worse than the Roman champion, John Eck. Zwingli's views were accepted not only by German-speaking Switzerland, but also by much of southwestern Germany. Roman Catholic leaders rejoiced at this division in the Reformation leaders.

Zwingli was the most gifted of any of the reformers politically, but even his plans proved in the end to be futile. All of Switzerland had not become Protestant. Hostilities began between the Roman and Evangelical cantons. Austrian help from the Roman party did not materialize, and on June 25, 1529 C.E. peace was made between the two parties at Kappel. The terms were favorable to Zwingli and his followers. Zürich was at the height of its power, and was regarded as the political head of the Evangelical cause. In 1531 C.E., Zürich tried to force Evangelical preaching on the Roman cantons by an embargo on shipment of food. War was certain. In spite of Zwingli's advice, Zürich was inadequately prepared for the struggle. The Roman cantons moved in quickly. On October 11, 1531 C.E., they defeated Zürich in the battle at Kappel. Among the dead was Zwingli

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<sup>131</sup> The couple gave birth to four children.

himself. Zürich was forced to abandon its alliances and each canton was given the right to regulate its own internal religious affairs. Where Protestantism had been established, it was permitted, but further expansion was prohibited. Protestant minorities in Catholic cantons were not to be tolerated.

The Swiss movement was to be developed further by the genius of John Calvin and the churches, which trace their lineage to him. Both Zwingli and Calvin stand in the *Reformed* Tradition, which distinguishes their work from the *Lutheran* Reformation.

*John Calvin (1509-1564 C.E.)*

Churches in the tradition of Zwingli and Calvin are commonly called the Reformed Churches. Calvinism emerged only after Lutheranism and Zwinglianism had grown rigid. John Calvin was born on July 10, 1509 C.E., at Noyon, Picardy in France. In contrast to Luther, Calvin was a quiet, sensitive man, but he inherited from his father an immovable will. In Paris, the young Calvin was introduced to the teachings of Luther. About 1533 C.E., he experienced a sudden conversion. He said about his conversion: “God subdued and brought my heart to docility. It was more hardened against such matters than was to be expected in such a young man.” Calvin began to formulate his theology, publishing the first brief edition of *The Institution of the Christian Religion* in Basel in 1536 C.E. This work was better known as *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and was a clear defense of Calvin’s Reformation beliefs. His education had been in the field of Law; although following his father’s death, he studied Greek and Hebrew.

Calvin’s *Institutes* began not with justification by faith, but with the knowledge of God. For Calvin, obedience of God’s will is our primal duty. Calvin followed the tradition of those who refused to make faith and knowledge mutually exclusive, insisting, instead, that they are simply different modes of apprehension. Faith, insisted Calvin, may be described as conviction, assurance, or certitude. His point was that the heathen philosophers were blinder than bats and moles. In dealing with the relationship between faith and works, Calvin said, “We are justified not without, and yet not by works.”

Calvin is best known for his teachings on predestination. His theory was more sharply drawn than that of Luther or Zwingli. God, insisted Calvin, punishes the majority according to their deserts to illustrate his justice, but some he saves according to his good pleasure to manifest his grace. Calvin and his early followers felt reasonably sure of their own salvation. This contrasts him sharply with Luther, who felt that the wheat would always have to grow in the midst of the weeds. Calvin suggested

three tests: profession of the true faith, an upright life, and attendance upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Those who could meet those tangible requirements could assume to be of the elect. Luther denied that there were any such tests and admitted that he could not form a community of the elect. Zwingli taught that a profession of faith identified the elect. The same was true for Calvin. Calvin added purity of life to the test, as did the Puritans. Calvin added to the tests of Zwingli the love of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and although he believed in the real presence, that presence was spiritual, not physical. For him the bread and wine were signs in which Christ was present. Calvin made it clear: "Christ, out of the substance of His flesh, breathes life into our souls, nay, diffuses His own life into us, though the real flesh of Christ does not enter us." In affirming these tests for the elect, Calvin opened the way for a social gospel to redeem society.

Calvin's followers expended enormous energies in ruling cities, converting kingdoms, beheading a king, and taming wildernesses. Because they believed themselves to be the elect of God, they were fearless. They worked with fury because they knew that, although history is long, life is short. Calvinism is given credit for giving motivation to the spirit of capitalism. More than Lutheranism, it motivated people to work in their callings for the glory of God, not diligently, but relentlessly. Calvinism was more hospitable to trade and investment than Lutheranism. Luther lived in a peasant community and had the economic outlook of a peasant. Geneva, the seat of Calvinism, was on the Rhone River and had trade connections with France. Calvin was faced with the problem of assisting thousands of refugees with funds to invest. Although he discouraged the pursuit of profit, as in the case of medieval monasticism, the industry and thrift of his followers produced wealth and put Calvinists into the prosperous middle class.

Calvin's program for a holy commonwealth found its realization in Geneva. The city had just thrown off the authority of the Bishop with the help of Protestant Bern, and was not yet a member of the Swiss Confederation. Evangelical ministers came in from France to help. One of them was a man named Guillaume (William) Farel, who had the population on the verge of civil war. For all his abilities, Farel felt unequal to completing the reform that had begun. When John Calvin visited the city in July of 1536 C.E., Farel called him into service with threats of hell if he declined. Calvin accepted.

Calvin's theory of Church and State relations soon led to friction. He believed that in a Christian community where Church, State, and the people were equally dedicated to the glory of God, they should sustain one another. Their functions, however, were not identical. The Church was to

be independent and was to determine the forms of the liturgy and to control excommunication. This demand was resisted by the magistrates, and Calvin, because of his insistence, was banished from Geneva on April 23, 1538 C.E. Farel went to Neuchatel, where he ministered for the rest of his life.

Calvin went to Strasbourg, where he met Martin Bucer, who encouraged him. While in Strasbourg, Calvin published his commentary on the *Book of Romans*. Many other commentaries followed. Calvin produced a new, and enlarged version of the *Institutes*. After having led the congregation of French refugees in Strasbourg, he was invited to return to Geneva on September 13, 1541 C.E. The town council accepted his revision of the city laws, but many bitter disputes followed. Calvin tried to bring every citizen under the moral discipline of the Church. After another conflict in 1553 C.E., the point was finally conceded that ecclesiastical discipline was the province of the Church. In that same year, Michael Servetus<sup>132</sup>, a critic of Calvin, and of the doctrine of the Trinity, was arrested and burnt on October 27, 1553 C.E. in Geneva. Calvin was building a visible “City of God.” Geneva as its starting point and heresy could not be tolerated.

Calvinism became more independent of the State than Lutheranism or Zwinglianism. Jurisdiction over heresy, however, remained with the magistrates. Calvin won because his constituency came to be as select as that of a monastery. Roman Catholics left the city, and thousands of refugees came to Geneva because they supported Calvin. Calvin succeeded in uniting the idea of the Church as equaling the community and of the Church as a voluntary society of visible saints.

Calvin believed that the Scriptures named four offices:<sup>133</sup> pastor, teacher, elder, and deacon. He considered teachers, who were not ordained, to be members of the ministry, as were all the other offices. Elders were not ordained, but were considered to be the heart of the ministry. He himself was never ordained. His views on the arts and music were more moderate than those of Zwingli. He allowed a cross, but not a crucifix. Music was permitted, but only the singing of the Psalms. Calvinism was to become the most international form of Protestantism. By the time of his death on May

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<sup>132</sup> Serevetus called the Trinity and infant baptism the chief sources of corruption in the Church. He also studied medicine and discovered the pulmonary circulation of the blood.

<sup>133</sup> Pastors were ordained. Teachers were responsible for religious education. Elders, together with pastors were charged with ecclesiastical discipline. Deacons were assigned the care of the poor and the supervision of the hospital.

27, 1564 C.E., Calvin was rightly known as the “only international reformer.” The Calvinists refused to respect the established territorial principles found among the Lutherans. Like the Anabaptists, they practiced their faith wherever they could; hence, they spread into France, the Netherlands, England, Scotland, New England, Lithuania, Poland and Hungary. They could not establish the Genevan pattern of Church, state, and community because in most of these countries they were a minority movement.

### *The Anabaptists*

The most radical of the reformed movements was the Anabaptists. They did not call themselves Anabaptists. This is what their critics called them. They simply called themselves Baptists. The term Anabaptist signifies “rebaptism,” but the Anabaptists never believed that they were involved in rebaptism. In their eyes infant baptism was no baptism at all. It was a mere “dipping in the Romish bath.” The only real Baptism was adult baptism.

The fundamental issue, however, was not baptism. It became an issue on January 17, 1525 C.E. in a public debate with Zwingli. The consequence of that debate was the order made by the authorities of Zürich to baptize all children. To the Anabaptists this order was counter to the Word of God. This radical movement believed that the Church was a voluntary society of convinced believers. Where religion was concerned, they insisted, force should not be used. This meant that the Church should be separate from the State; hence, they did not believe in waiting for the State to reform the Church. The Church would always be a minority within the State.

Their leaders were not as well known as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, but they were men of substance. Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz were among the first leaders, and they lived in Zürich. Others met with them for study, and discovered that the early Christian churches were not financially supported by tithes collected by the State, but rather by the voluntary contributions of convinced believers. The demands of the peasants to abolish State tithes had a biblical foundation as well as an economic justification.

The Anabaptists did not believe that the reform of the Church was the task of the State. Zwingli wished to win all Zürich by persuasion, and believed that the magistrate should initiate the reform. For two years Protestant and Catholic forms of worship continued in Zürich side by side. Zwingli was willing to associate with a half-and-half arrangement. He too wanted the people to accept the reform voluntarily. To the Anabaptists, no such compromise could be tolerated. No matter how active the State was in

religious affairs, the State was not Christian. Not only did they reject the State as Christian; they were pacifists, who took literally the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. They would take no oath and they would not resist evil, even to save their own lives.

Another complaint from the radical Anabaptists was that the conduct of those who confessed the reformed faith fell short of New Testament standards. Neither Luther nor Zwingli denied this, but neither of them was ready to pluck the weeds out of the wheat, reducing the Church to a handful of saints. This was precisely what the Anabaptists demanded. The unworthy must be cast out, and the doubting must never be forced to come in. The reason why they rejected infant baptism is because infant baptism tended to fill the Church with more weeds than wheat. Infants should not be baptized. Baptism was to follow conversion and moral regeneration.

At the Diet of Speyer in 1520 C.E., both the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans agreed to subject Anabaptists to the death penalty throughout the Holy Roman Empire. Luther was slow in giving consent, but by 1531 C.E., his fear of anarchy led him to agree to the death penalty, not for heresy, but for blasphemy and sedition. He considered their pacifism to be sedition because it would destroy the police power of the State.

The first Anabaptist congregation was formed in the little town of Zollikon, a suburb of Zürich. Here the members baptized one another, and became the first *free church* of modern times. The first move of the Zürich authorities was to banish the Anabaptists. Conrad Grebel died of the plague, but Felix Manz was drowned on June 5, 1527 C.E.<sup>134</sup> in mockery of adult baptism. The town council of Zürich justified the execution on the basis that Anabaptist believers were subversive to the State.

In spite of the persecution, the Anabaptists were sustained in their first decade by a marvelous hope. They believed the Lord Jesus was coming soon, and that the Kingdom of Antichrist would fall. In its place, the New Jerusalem would arrive and the saints would reign. As many of their saner leaders were executed, the less balanced leaders rose to the forefront. Some forsook their pacifism and justified the slaughter of the ungodly. One group even introduced polygamy in imitation of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Most of them, however, clung to their more biblical beliefs.

In 1527 C.E., there was an attempt to find a common set of beliefs by holding a meeting in Schleithem (on today's Swiss-German border); hence, the Anabaptists called the first *Synod* of the Protestant Reformation. The leading figure at this meeting was a former Benedictine prior, Michael

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<sup>134</sup> Some scholars suggest January, 1527 C.E.

Sattler, who was burned at the stake four months later. The “Brotherly Union” adopted at Schleithem became a highly significant document. Anabaptists in all parts of Europe gave consent to the beliefs that were laid down in Schleithem.

The core of the Anabaptists beliefs focused on what they called *Discipleship*. The Christian’s relationship to Jesus Christ, they insisted, must go beyond inner religious experience and acceptance or profession of doctrines. It must involve a daily walk with God, in which Christ’s teaching and example shape a transformation of life. To put it succinctly, “No one can truly know Christ except he follow him in life.”

The consequences of being a disciple were many. First, the Anabaptists rejected the swearing of oaths, because it was Jesus’ clear command in the Sermon on the Mount. For them there could be no gradation in the levels of truth telling. Disciples always told the truth. A second principle was the principle of love. They were not only to love one another, but also their enemies. Anabaptists could not go to war to defend themselves against their persecutors, nor could they take part in coercion by the State. They were pacifists. The love ethic also expressed itself within the Anabaptist communities in a third principle of mutual aid and the redistribution of wealth. Among the Moravian Anabaptists it led to Christian society. They sought to do no less than to pattern themselves after the early Christian community. A final and major conviction of the Anabaptist movement was the separation of Church and State. Christians, they claimed, were a “free, unforced, uncompelled people.” Faith is a free gift of God, and authorities exceed their competence when they “champion the Word of God with a fist.” The Anabaptists recognized the need for a State in an imperfect world, but the Christian was to have no part in it. They were not to bear arms, nor were they to take oaths. These ideas were to be adopted in various proportions by later Baptists, Congregationalists, and Quakers. They were also to have a profound influence upon religious development in both England and the Unites States.

Three groups emerged from the Anabaptists. The Swiss Anabaptists were the first, and they survived by retreating to the mountains. From this group emerged the Amish, who established American colonies in Pennsylvania and the Midwest. The second group found refuge in Holland. Their great leader was Menno Simons. Some of his followers, the Mennonites, migrated to Russia and to South and North America. Menno rejected polygamy, revolution, private inspiration through dreams and visions, and the setting of dates for the coming of the Lord. His was the simple Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount. He emphasized the need for discipline and insisted upon the separation of Church and State. The third branch of the Anabaptists was called Hutterite, after Jacob Hutter,

who established colonies of refugees in Moravia and Transylvania, where the old feudal lords provided asylum against the encroachments of the Emperor.

### **Other European Countries**

*France.* In France there was little support for the Reformation. The first Protestants suffered death or exile. Protestants were shamelessly massacred in cold blood on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572 C.E. When Henry IV, the Protestant King, succeeded to the French throne in 1589 C.E., Protestant hopes ran high, but French Catholics formed an alliance with the King of Spain and forced Henry IV to give up his throne. In 1589 C.E. under the terms of the *Edict of Nantes*, freedom was granted to practice Reformed Christianity, but in 1685 C.E., the *Edict of Nantes* was revoked under King Louis XIV.

*The Netherlands.* In the Netherlands reform was inspired by Luther, but later came under Calvin's influence. Since the Netherlands was ruled by Spain at the time, the reform movement was opposed by the Emperor, Charles V, as well as by his successor King Philip II of Spain. It was claimed that the Spanish Duke of Alva was responsible for the deaths of 100,000 Protestants between 1567 and 1573 C.E. After a long and bitter struggle, the Netherlands freed themselves from the Spanish crown and the Roman Catholic Church. The first Reformed Synod was held at Dort in 1574 C.E. The new Reformed Church adopted the *Heidelberg Confession* and the *Belgic Confession* as statements of belief, and drew up its own pattern of organization. The Dutch Church then went through a bitter theological debate, as Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609 C.E.) professor of theology at Leiden, rejected the doctrine that the elect were determined by the sovereign will of God alone. Arminius insisted that it was possible to believe in God's sovereignty and allow for the free will of human beings at the same time. God willed all men to be saved, he insisted, and not merely the chosen. His doctrines were condemned at the Synod of Dort (1618-19 C.E.), tolerated later in the century, and officially recognized in 1795 C.E.

*Central Europe.* In *Bohemia* the Reformation had early beginnings under John Huss. The followers of Huss, the Hussites, supported Luther, but most of them later became Calvinists. The cause of reform suffered severely during the Thirty Years' War, as well as under the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

In *Hungary*, students of Luther and Melanchthon took the Reformation back to their homeland in about 1524 C.E. As in Bohemia, Calvinist theology later took hold.

The Hussites, encouraged by Luther's writings, initiated the reform movement in *Poland*. King Sigismund Augustus (1548-1572 C.E.) was a friend of the Reformation and corresponded with Calvin. By 1570 C.E., a general understanding was arrived at between Lutherans and Calvinists, but reform was marred by internal dissensions created by Socinianism. This was a movement founded by Socinus, who denied the Trinity, the deity of Christ, his work on the cross, and that all persons are fallen. The Reformation was later hindered further by the zealous activities of the Jesuits.

*Scandinavia*. Two brothers, Olav and Lars Petri, both disciples of Luther, inaugurated the Reformation in *Sweden*. King Gustavus Vasa, who favored Protestantism, eventually delivered Sweden from the Danes in 1523 C.E. The whole country became Lutheran with Bishops of the old church incorporated into the new. The Reformation was established by Swedish law in 1527 C.E. *Denmark's* story is different, though the Danish Church also went over completely to Protestantism. Some Danes, such as Hans Tausen and Jorgen Sadolin, studied under Luther at Wittenberg. They began to preach effectively in Denmark. A Danish version of the New Testament was produced in 1524 C.E., and King Frederick I pressed strongly for reform by appointing reforming Bishops and preachers. There was an alarming defection of Roman Catholics. Following this period of disorder, King Christian III succeeded to the Danish throne in 1536 C.E. and the transition to Protestantism was complete. The Reformation spread from Denmark to *Norway* in 1536 C.E. The pattern was similar to that of Denmark. Most of the Bishops fled and as the older clergy died off, they were replaced with Reformed clergy.



## 21. THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

...we shall this day light such a candle,  
by God's grace, in England  
as I trust shall never be put out.

*Hugh Latimer*

The first signs of an English Reformation appeared with the evangelical protest movement led by John Wycliffe. This was strengthened in the early sixteenth century with Martin Luther's writings, which were smuggled into the country; hence, the reform movement had a Lutheran emphasis, supported by the Lollard movement. Though religious in origin, the English revolt became entangled in politics.

### **Henry VIII (1509-1547 C.E.)**

In England Kings had controlled Episcopal appointments for some time. Even though the Pope made the appointments, they were made on the basis of agreement with the King. Ability and usefulness in royal service was valued more than spiritual fitness. Such was the state of affairs when Henry VIII began his reign. In the beginning there was little indication that change in the ecclesiastical situation would take place, other than the developing national consciousness—the feeling of England for Englishmen.

In the early part of Henry VIII's reign, he had the support of Thomas Wolsey (1475-1530 C.E.), who had been made a Cardinal by Pope Leo X. When Luther's writings were smuggled into England, they were forbidden. In 1521 C.E., Henry VIII published his *Assertion of the Seven Sacraments* against Luther, which won him from Pope Leo X the title, *Defender of the Faith*.

Henry VIII had married a widow, Catherine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Six children were born in this union, but only one, Mary, survived infancy. By 1527 C.E., Henry was beginning to have religious scruples over the validity of his marriage. His reasons were not entirely honorable. A woman had never ruled England. The absence of a male heir, should Henry die, would probably have caused a civil war. Since it was unlikely that Catherine would have any more children, Henry simply needed another wife to produce a male heir.

At first Thomas Wolsey did his best to please the King, partly because he hoped that if the marriage was declared invalid, Henry would marry the French princess, Renée (duchess of Ferrara), drawing England away from Spain and closer to France and continental politics. Henry, however, had

different plans. He had fallen in love with Anne Boelyn, a lady of his court. A complicated negotiation followed in which Wolsey did his best to please Henry, while Catherine behaved with dignity and firmness, but was treated with cruelty. An annulment might have been possible had it not been for the course of European politics. Emperor Charles V had been victorious in war, which forced Pope Clement VII into submission to imperial policy. Catherine of Aragon was the aunt of Charles V, and he was determined that she would not be set aside. Angered at Wolsey's failure to secure the annulment, Henry turned on him; but Wolsey died on November 30, 1530 C.E. on his way to be tried for treason.

Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556 C.E.), teaching at Cambridge University, suggested that the opinions of universities be sought. This was done in 1530 C.E., but only with partial success. A friendship evolved between Cranmer and the King, which was to have enormous consequences. Unable to get a positive response from the Pope, Henry turned to the national feeling of hostility to foreign rule. Early in 1532 C.E., under great pressure from the King, Parliament passed an act forbidding the payment of all annates<sup>135</sup> to Rome without the King's consent. In the following May, the clergy agreed reluctantly not only to make no new ecclesiastical laws without the King's permission, but to submit to all existing statutes to a commission appointed by the King. On January 25, 1533 C.E., Henry secretly married Anne Boleyn. Henry used the conditional prohibition of annates to procure from Pope Clement VII confirmation of his appointment of Thomas Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury. Cranmer was consecrated on March 30, 1533. C.E. On May 23, 1533 C.E., Cranmer held court and formally pronounced Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon null and void. On September 7, 1533 C.E., Anne Boleyn gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, who was to become Queen.

On July 11, 1533 C.E., Pope Clement VII prepared a bull threatening excommunication against Henry. Henry replied with a series of statutes obtained from Parliament in 1534 C.E. indicating that all payments to the Pope be forbidden, all bishops to be elected on the King's nomination, and that all oaths of papal obedience, Roman licenses, and other recognitions of papal authority be eliminated. Papal supremacy was completely rejected. On November 3, 1534 C.E., Parliament passed the famous Supremacy Act, by which Henry and his successors were declared "the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England," without any qualifying clauses and

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<sup>135</sup> First fruits paid out of spiritual benefices to the pope, having, a value of one year's profit.

with full power to deal with “heresies” and “abuses.” This did not give the King spiritual rights, such as ordination or the administration of the Sacraments, but in everything else it put the King in place of the Pope. The break with Rome was now complete. The King meant business. In June and July the two most widely known subjects of the King, Bishop John Fisher and Sir Thomas More, distinguished for character and scholarship, were beheaded for denying the King’s supremacy.

Henry now found a new agent in Thomas Cromwell (1485-1540 C.E.), a man of humble origins, a soldier, merchant, and moneylender. By 1531 C.E., Cromwell was part of the Privy Council, in 1534 C.E. master of the rolls; and in 1536 C.E., though a lay person, vice-regent for the King in ecclesiastical affairs. Henry was hungry for ecclesiastical property, both to maintain his lavish court and to reward adherents. Since the Reformation everywhere was marked by confiscation of ecclesiastical property, Henry commissioned Cromwell in 1534 C.E. to have the monasteries visited and report on their condition. By February of 1536 C.E., it was decided that monastic establishments with less than two hundred pounds of income annually be taken over by the State. The number taken over was three hundred and twenty-six.

In January of 1536 C.E., Catherine of Aragon died. About the same time, Henry VIII tired of Anne Boleyn. In May of 1536 C.E., Anne was accused of adultery. On May 19<sup>th</sup> she was beheaded. Eleven days later Henry married Jane Seymour, who bore him a son, Edward, on October 12, 1537 C.E. she died twelve days later. Henry’s deeds, including the suppression of the monasteries, aroused a great deal of opposition, particularly in northern England.

The changes that occurred came out of ecclesiastical politics rather than religious conviction, but it gave an opportunity for Protestant reform, such as had been advocated by Wycliffe and Luther. Like Luther, Wycliffe had looked to the State to reform the Church and viewed the wealth of the Church as a hindrance to spirituality. Those advocating Reformation found little fault with Henry’s confiscations of ecclesiastical property. Like Wycliffe, they valued the circulation of an English Bible, and tested doctrine and ceremony by conformity to the Scriptures. One of the primary leaders was William Tyndale (1492-1536 C.E.). Tyndale was eager to translate the New Testament and to have it published in England. For this he faced stiff opposition and ended up a refugee on the Continent. In 1524 C.E., he visited Luther, and in 1526 C.E. he published an admirable translation of the New Testament from the Greek. Church and Civil authorities alike tried to suppress Tyndale’s New Testament, but it became a force in spreading knowledge of the Scriptures throughout England. Tyndale’s friend, John Frith (1503-1533), found refuge in Marburg, and

upon returning to England, was arrested and burned at the stake in London for denying the doctrines of purgatory and transubstantiation. They caught up with Tyndale in Vilvorde, near Brussels, and martyred him in 1536 C.E. Sympathetic with these Reformation ideas were Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Laitimer, and John Hooper. They all became Bishops and they were all to die by fire for their Reformation ideas.

As Henry's opposition to Rome developed, Protestant feeling spread, even to the Seymour family, from whom Henry took his third Queen. Henry's religious convictions were in tune with Roman Catholic orthodoxy, except for submission to the Pope. His only departure from Roman Catholic orthodoxy occurred when he felt threatened from abroad and compelled to seek political support from the German Protestants. In 1536 C.E. Henry drafted Ten Articles in which he made some concession to Protestantism. He agreed that the authoritative standards of faith were the Bible, the Apostle's, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds, and the "first four councils." In the Ten Articles, only three Sacraments were defined, baptism, penance, and the Lord's Supper. Justification by Faith in Christ alone was affirmed, but confession and absolution and works of charity were also affirmed as necessary. Christ was physically affirmed to be present in the Supper. Images were to be honored, but with moderation. The saints could be invoked, but not because they would hear believers sooner than Christ. Masses for the dead were desirable, but the idea that the "Bishop of Rome" could deliver believers out of purgatory was to be rejected.

Henry's work during these years was free from foreign interference because Charles V and Francis I were engaged in war. With the arrival of peace, danger increased. The Pope demanded that France and Spain attack England, forcing Henry VIII to submit. Henry was determined to show the world that he was an orthodox Roman Catholic, except in regard to Papal authority. In June of 1539 C.E., Parliament passed the Six Articles Act. It affirmed as the creed of England a strict doctrine of transubstantiation, denial of which was to be punished by fire. It repudiated Communion in both bread and wine, and priestly marriage. It ordered the permanent observation of the vows of chastity, enjoined private masses, and auricular confession. This statute remained in effect until Henry's death.

Cromwell did not think that it was enough for Henry VIII to declare himself an orthodox Roman Catholic. Henry was a widower, and Cromwell believed that he needed to strengthen his position by marrying someone who would please the German Protestants and unite him with those opposed to Emperor Charles V. Anne of Cleves, sister of the wife of John Frederick, the Saxon Elector, was selected. The marriage took place on January 6, 1540 C.E. German Protestants looked with suspicion on the Six

Articles, and since he no longer needed their aid, Henry decided to end his marriage. Henry insisted that his marriage to Anne of Cleves was a mere political expedient. An annulment was obtained in July of 1540 C.E. from the Bishops on the grounds that the King had never given his “inward consent.” Anne was taken care of, but Cromwell, who had suggested the marriage, was beheaded on July 28, 1540 C.E.

Henry’s Roman Catholic tendencies were in evidence when he married Catherine Howard, niece of the duke of Norfolk. The new Queen’s conduct was open to question, and in February of 1542 C.E., she was beheaded. In July of 1543 C.E., Henry married Catherine Parr, who survived him. On January 28, 1547, Henry Died. At Henry’s death England was divided into three parties. The largest of these parties stood with the King, desiring no considerable change in doctrine or worship, but rejecting foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction. There were also two smaller parties. The Roman Catholic wing desired to restore the power of the papacy, and the Protestant faction desired to introduce reform, as it was understood on the Continent. It was to be England’s fortune that these two smaller and unrepresentative parties would be successively in power during the next two reigns.

### **Edward VI (1547-1553 C.E.)**

Edward VI was nine years old when Henry VIII died. The government was administered in his name by a council, of which the Earl of Hertford, or, as he was immediately promoted, Duke of Somerset, with the title of Protector. Somerset was the brother of the young King’s mother, the short-lived Jane Seymour. Somerset was a man of Protestant sympathies and of excellent intentions. He believed in a degree of religious liberty and political questioning in contrast to Henry VIII. He was also a friend of the dispossessed, lower agricultural classes.

Under Somerset’s rule a number of innovations were made, many of which led to controversy. In 1547 C.E. Parliament ordered the administration of the cup for the laity. The Six Articles were also repealed, and early in 1548 C.E., images were ordered removed from the churches. The marriage of priests was made legal in 1549 C.E. On January 21, 1549 C.E., Parliament enacted the Act of Uniformity, which required the universal use of the Book of Common Prayer in English. This was the First Prayer Book of Edward VI, and it was largely the work of Thomas Cranmer. It was based on the older services in Latin.

Somerset faced a number of political difficulties. To counteract the growing power of France in Scotland, Somerset urged the union of the two countries by the ultimate marriage of King Edward with the Scottish Princess Mary (soon to be “Queen of Scots”). He also supported efforts to

invade Scotland, defeating the Scots on September 10, 1547 C.E. The angered Scottish leaders betrothed Mary to Francis II, the heir of France, an event of prime importance for the Scottish Reformation.

Somerset's fall came about in 1549 C.E. He was aware of the agrarian discontent, and took up some of their causes, which in turn angered the landowning classes. Uprisings took place in 1549 C.E. They were put down with difficulty by the Earl of Warwick, in favor of the propertied classes, Warwick, who became the Duke of Northumberland, led a conspiracy which thrust Somerset from his protectorate in October, of 1549 C.E.

Somerset had been a man of great moderation, anxious to reconcile all parties. Northumberland was without religious principles, but pushed forward the Protestant cause for political reasons. Though apparently reconciled with Somerset, he distrusted Somerset's popularity, and had him beheaded in 1552 C.E.

The Prayer Book of 1549 C.E. was not popular. Conservatives disliked it for its changes, and Protestants felt that it retained too much of the Roman Catholic usage. These criticisms were sustained by a number of prominent foreign theologians, and this led to the revision of the Prayer Book and its reissue under a new Act of Uniformity in 1552 C.E. At the same time, Thomas Cranmer had been preparing a creed, which was submitted by order of the Council of Government in 1552 C.E. to six theologians, of whom John Knox was one. The result was the Forty-Two Articles, which were authorized with King Edward's signature on June 12, 1553 C.E., less than one month before his death. Though moderate for the time, they were more Protestant in tone than the Prayer Book.

As Edward VI became frail, Northumberland feared for his own life should Mary succeed to the throne. He convinced Edward to settle the succession on Lady Jane Grey, wife of Northumberland's fourth son, Guilford Dudley and granddaughter of Henry VIII's sister, Mary. To this wild plan Cranmer gave reluctant consent. On July 6, 1553, Edward VI died. Northumberland's plan failed. His unpopularity was such that even the Protestant portions of England, such as the city of London, supported Mary. She was soon safely on the throne and Northumberland was beheaded, declaring on the scaffold that he was a true Roman Catholic.

### **Mary (1553-1558 C.E.)**

Mary proceeded with caution guided by her cousin the Emperor Charles V. Parliament declared her mother's (Catherine of Aragon) marriage to Henry VIII valid. The ecclesiastical legislation of Edward VI's reign was repealed, and public worship restored to the forms of the last

year of Henry VIII. Thomas Cranmer was imprisoned. The Emperor saw in Mary's probable marriage an opportunity to win England, and proposed his son Philip, soon to be Philip II of Spain, as her husband. The marriage took place on July 25, 1554 C.E., but was very unpopular, threatening foreign control.

Reconciliation with Rome had been delayed, though bishops and other clergy, who supported the Reformation, were removed and replaced. Many of the earnest Protestants fled to the Continent, where Calvin welcomed them. The Lutherans were suspicious of them over the question of the physical presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Parliament voted for the restoration of papal authority, and on November 30, 1554 C.E., the nation was absolved of heresy. Parliament now proceeded to re-enact the ancient laws against heresy. Severe persecution began at once. The first victim was John Rogers, who was burned in London on February 4, 1555 C.E. Before the end of the year, seventy-five had been executed by fire in various parts of England. The most notable were the former bishops, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, whose heroic fortitude at their deaths in Oxford, on October 16, created a profound popular impression.

Mary was determined to strike down the highest of the anti-Roman clergy. The most prominent victim was Thomas Cranmer. He was formally excommunicated by sentence at Rome on November 25, 1555 C.E. Cranmer now faced a serious dilemma. He had affirmed, since his appointment under Henry VIII, that the Monarch was the supreme authority in the English Church. His Protestantism was real, but the Queen was now a Roman Catholic. In distress he submitted to her, declaring that he recognized papal authority as established by Law. Mary, however, had no intention of sparing the man who had pronounced her mother's marriage invalid. Cranmer had to die. It was hoped that by the rejection of Protestantism at his death, he would discredit the Reformation. That hope was almost realized. Cranmer signed a recantation denying Protestantism, but on the day of his execution in Oxford, March 21, 1556 C.E., his courage returned. He repudiated his retractions, declaring his Protestant faith. He held his offending hand, which had signed the early submissions, in the flame till it was consumed. His dying day was the noblest of his life.

Philip II of Spain left England in 1555 C.E., and this absence, coupled with Mary's childless state, preyed on her mind, motivating her to feel that she had not done enough to satisfy the judgment of God. Persecution continued till her death on November 17, 1558 C.E. In all, approximately three hundred persons were burned. These martyrdoms did more to spread anti-Roman sentiment than all the previous governmental efforts combined. It was certain that with the new monarch there would be change or civil war.

## **Elizabeth (Queen: 1558-1603 C.E.)**

Although Elizabeth had been viewed as illegitimate, her place in succession had been secured by an act of Parliament in the lifetime of Henry VIII. Of all Henry's children, she was the only one who really resembled him in ability, insight, and personal popularity. Of religious feeling, she had none, but her birth and Roman denials of her mother's marriage (Anne Boleyn), made her necessarily a Protestant. Under Mary, when her life had been threatened, she conformed to the Roman ritual.

Elizabeth proceeded cautiously with her changes. Parliament passed the new Supremacy Act, with much opposition, on April 29, 1559 C.E. By it the authority of the Pope and all payments and appeals to him were rejected. By Elizabeth's own insistence, a significant change of title appeared. Instead of the old "Supreme Head," so obnoxious to the Roman Catholics, she took on the title "Supreme Governor" of the Church of England. Although the title was less objectionable, it did not change the meaning. No one doubted that Elizabeth put England first.

The tests of heresy were to be the Scriptures, the first four General Councils, and the decisions of Parliament. A commission was formed to revise the Prayer Book. The prayer against the Pope was omitted, as was the declaration that kneeling at the Lord's Supper did not imply adoration. The question of Christ's physical presence was left intentionally undetermined. These modifications were designed to render the new service more palatable to Roman Catholics. The Act of Uniformity now ordered all worship to be conducted after June 24, 1559 C.E., in accordance with this liturgy. The ornaments of the Church and the vestments of its ministers were to be those of the second year of Edward VI. The oath of supremacy was refused by all but two members of the high clergy. Among the lower clergy resistance was slight, amounting to fewer than two hundred. New bishops had to be provided, and Elizabeth directed the election of her mother's one-time chaplain, Matthew Parker as Archbishop of Canterbury, who was consecrated on December 17, 1559 C.E. A new Anglican episcopate was speedily established.

A definition of the creed, other than that implied in the Prayer Book, was postponed, but in 1563 C.E., the Forty-two Articles of 1553 C.E. were revised, producing the famous Thirty-nine Articles, which have become the statement of faith for the Church of England. Thus, by 1563 C.E. the Elizabethan settlement was accomplished. It was threatened from two sides: Rome and those earnest reformers who wished to take the Reformation further. They were soon to be nicknamed Puritans.

The remarkable feature of the English Reformation is that it produced no outstanding religious leader—no Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, or Knox. Nor

did it manifest any considerable spiritual awakening among the people. Its impulses were political and social. The revival of the religious life in England was yet to come.

## **Scotland**

Scotland experienced domination by England and France. Three grievous defeats by the English—Flodden (1513 C.E.), Solway Moss (1542 C.E.), and Pinkie (1547 C.E.) strengthened a feeling of antagonism. Although English superiority could not conquer Scotland, Scotland in an alliance with France was a threat to England. France and England both sought to build up parties and strengthen factions. The powerful family of Douglas was inclined towards England, while the family of Hamilton favored France.

Protestant beginnings were made early in Scotland. Patrick Hamilton (1504-1528 C.E.), who had visited Wittenberg and studied in Marburg, began preaching Lutheran doctrine. For this he was burned on February 29, 1528 C.E. The cause grew slowly, and more executions followed. George Wishart and John Knox continued Hamilton's work, but Wishart was burned on March 2, 1546 C.E. The French imprisoned Knox in 1547 C.E. The French forced Knox to serve for nineteen months as a galley slave. When he was released, he made his way to England during Edward VI's reign, where he became one of the royal chaplains. When Mary became Queen, he was compelled to flee in 1554 C.E., first to Frankfurt and then to Geneva, where he became an ardent disciple of John Calvin. In Geneva he worked on the Genevan version of the English Bible, later valued by the English Puritans.

Meanwhile the English had alienated Scotland more than ever by the defeat of Pinke in 1547 C.E. To many of the Scottish nobles and people, dependence on France seemed as hateful as any submission to England. Protestantism and national independence seemed to be bound together. It was in this double struggle that John Knox was to take leadership. In 1555 C.E. Knox returned to Scotland and preached for six months, but the situation was not yet ripe for revolt. Knox returned to Geneva to become the pastor of a church, of English-speaking refugees. As conflict grew over the marriage of Mary (Queen of Scots) to the French heir on April 24, 1558 C.E., Scotland seemed as if it were becoming a province of France. Before the end of 1558 C.E., Elizabeth was Queen of England, and Mary (Queen of Scots) denounced her as an illegitimate usurper. Advocates of Scottish independence and of Protestantism became more and more fused into one party. Knox saw that the time was right.

On May 2, 1559 C.E., Knox returned to Scotland. Nine days later he preached in Perth. A mob destroyed the monastic establishments of the

town. This was regarded as rebellion. French troops were called upon and both sides promptly armed themselves for combat. They proved relatively equal, and the result was undecided. French reinforcements were sent in, and things went badly for the reformers. At last, in January of 1560 C.E., the English help came. The contest dragged on. On July 6, a treaty was made between France and England by which French soldiers were withdrawn from Scotland, and Frenchmen were debarred from all the important posts in government. The revolution had triumphed through English aid, but without forfeiting Scottish national independence. Its inspirer had been John Knox. The victorious party now pushed its triumph in the Scottish Parliament. On August 17, 1560 C.E., a Calvinistic confession of faith, largely prepared by Knox, was adopted as the creed of the realm. One week later the same body abolished papal jurisdiction, and forbid the Mass under pain of death. Though the King and Queen of France refused to give their approval, the majority of the nation had spoken.

Knox proceeded to organize the Church of Scotland. All observances not having Scriptural authority were swept away. Sunday was the only remaining holy day. For the conduct of public worship, Knox prepared a *Book of Common Order*, sometimes called "Knox's Liturgy," which was approved by a General Assembly in 1564 C.E. It was based on that of the English congregation in Geneva, which in turn was modeled on that of Calvin. Meanwhile, Mary, Queen of Scots returned, and tried to restore Roman Catholicism. In defiance of Parliament, she had Mass said in her chapel. Knox was at the time minister of St. Giles in Edinburgh, and was furious with her. Mary also tried to gain recognition as Elizabeth's heir to the English throne, which Elizabeth had no mind to grant.

Even more alarming to the Protestant cause in Scotland and England was Mary's marriage on July 29, 1565 C.E. to her cousin, Henry Steward, Lord Darnley. Darnley's claim to the English throne stood next to that of Mary herself. The marriage increased Elizabeth's danger at home and strengthened the Catholic party in Scotland. On June 19, 1566 C.E., Mary and Darnley's son was born, the future James VI of Scotland and James I of England. Things never looked so bleak for Protestantism.

Scottish Protestantism, however, was to be saved by Mary's mistakes. Her marriage with Darnley was in trouble. Darnley, roused by jealousy over the favor Mary showed to an Italian David Riccio, plotted his murder. Mary never forgave him. Mary sought the help of a Protestant noble, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell. Bothwell led a conspiracy to rid Mary of Darnley, who was recovering from smallpox. Mary moved Darnley from Glasgow, to a house on the edge of Edinburgh, where Mary spent part of the last evening with him. Early in the morning of February 10, 1567 C.E., the house was blown up. Darnley's body was found near it. Public opinion

charged Bothwell with the murder, and it was widely believed that Mary was also guilty. At any rate, Bothwell was acquitted at the trial. On April 24, Bothwell met Mary on one of her journeys and made her captive by a show of force. It was believed that it was with her permission. Bothwell was married, but he was divorced from his wife for adultery on May 3, and on May 15, he and Mary were married in Protestant rites.

These shameful activities roused hostility in Scotland and they robbed Mary of Roman Catholic sympathy in England. Protestants and Catholics in Scotland joined forces against her. One month after the wedding, Mary was a prisoner, and on July 24, 1567 C.E., she was compelled to abdicate in favor of her year-old son. On July 29 John Knox preached the sermon at James VI's coronation. With Mary's fall came the triumph of Protestantism, which was now established by Parliament in December. Mary escaped to England, where she was eventually executed for conspiracy against Elizabeth's life. John Knox's fiery career was just about over as well. On November 24, 1572 C.E., he died, having influenced not only the religion, but also the character of a nation more than any other man in Scottish history. Scotland had a figure like Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. He stands as one of the Reformers in a park in Geneva.

## **Ireland**

Reformation ideas were imposed from the outside on Ireland, and as a result, the Reformation did not succeed. When Henry VIII rejected the papacy in England, he also compelled the Irish to do the same in 1537 C.E., but no change of doctrine was made. This was due to the low level of education, the absence of printed books, and the lack of Irish reformers. These things made change impossible.

Under King Edward VI, a reformed liturgy was introduced from England. The English Prayer Book, published in Dublin in 1551 C.E., was the first book printed in Ireland. Queen Mary, however, deposed the reforming bishops, punished married clergy, and re-established Roman Catholicism in Ireland.

Queen Elizabeth restored the English liturgy. In 1560 C.E., the Irish parliament repudiated the authority of the Pope and passed the Act of Uniformity, which set up Anglicanism as the national religion. By this act, Protestantism became inseparably linked with foreign rule. Under King James I many Presbyterian Scots settled in Northern Ireland (Ulster). Under Charles II and James II Church life in Ireland went from bad to worse, causing the Reformation to fail in Ireland.



## 22. THE CATHOLIC REFORMATION

Teach us, good Lord, to serve thee as thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to ask for rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward save knowing that we do thy will. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Ignatius of Loyola*

More than a generation before Luther published his ninety-five theses, the Roman Catholic Church was already experiencing a vigorous Reformation led by Queen Isabella and Cardinal Ximenes in Spain. It combined zeal for a more moral and intelligent clergy, the abolition of glaring abuses, Biblical studies for the clergy, an undying orthodoxy, and repression of heresy by the Inquisition. It was a movement that gave vigor and life to the Roman Catholic Church.

The response to the Protestant Reformation was called, incorrectly, the Counter-Reformation. We shall refer to this Catholic renewal movement as the Catholic Reformation. In its beginning it had very little influence outside of Spain, but as the Protestant Reformation took hold, the Catholic Reformation had influence around the world.

Although Pope Adrian VI (1522-1523 C.E.) exhibited some reformatory zeal during his brief and unhappy pontificate, neither his predecessor Leo X (1513-1521 C.E.), nor his successor Clement VII (1523-1534 C.E.), was, in any sense, a religious leader. Their political ambitions contributed to the spread of Protestantism.

### **Pope Leo X and Martin Luther**

Pope Leo X was a typical Renaissance pope, elegant, worldly, sophisticated, intelligent, and consumed with political and family ambition. He was more an administrator than “a servant of the servants of God.” He aimed to advance the fortunes of his own family—the Medicis of Florence—and to increase the political power of the Papal States. He reveled in Renaissance activities and spent a great deal of money on the arts and on gambling. These activities sapped his ability to give moral leadership to Christian Europe at its most critical time in history.

When Pope Leo X first saw a copy of Luther’s Ninety-five Theses in 1518 C.E., he is reported to have made two comments. The first was, “Luther is a drunken German. He will feel different when he is sober.” The second was, “Friar Martin is a brilliant chap. The whole row is due to the envy of the monks.” Scholars have doubted the authenticity of both

statements, but the Pope did believe that that the whole thing was “only a monk’s quarrel.”

Two important points emerge. First, the negative attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards Luther’s initial pronouncements helped to make the Wittenberg professor a major public figure, especially in Germany. Secondly, the negative attitude of Rome illustrated that the Church was unaware of the significance of the threat it was facing. Because of this the Pope was in no position to provide the kind of spiritual leadership necessary to head off Luther’s challenge.

Relations between Pope Leo X and Martin Luther deteriorated badly after 1519 C.E., as leaders of the Church began to realize just what Luther was indeed saying. When they realized that Luther was calling for a spiritual authority other than the one established and accepted by the Medieval Church, they regarded Luther as a “son of iniquity.” By 1520 C.E. the die was cast. After Erasmus read Luther’s *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, he sadly noted, “The breach is irreparable.” In 1521 C.E., the Diet of Worms confirmed Luther’s excommunication and declared him a political outlaw.

In spite of all this, there were those in the Roman Catholic Church who realized the necessity of renewal. Like Erasmus, they refused to leave the Church. They worked in many different ways to reform the Church from within. This fairly large number of devout Roman Catholics contributed to the long-term response to the Protestant challenge, known as the Catholic Reformation.

Among the various activities of the Catholic Reformation were the establishment of the Oratory of Divine Love; the reform of the papacy; the founding of the Society of Jesus; the meeting of an Ecumenical Council at Trent; the rejuvenation and reorganization of the Inquisition; and the issuing of an “index” of books which the faithful were not permitted to read. Each of these features helped to revitalize the Roman Catholic Church, so that by 1650 C.E., it stood on the threshold of a new era of expansion and spiritual vigor.

### **The Oratory of Divine Love**

In 1517 C.E., the Oratory of Divine Love appeared in Rome. It was an informal society of about fifty clergy and laypersons. The Oratory stressed reform along the liberal lines of Erasmus. The group met frequently in the Church of Saints Sylvester and Dorothea for prayer, meditation, mutual encouragement and discussions on reforming the Church through love and moral improvement. The group included within its ranks some of the most

influential churchmen in the Roman Catholic Church. Among those who identified with the Oratory were:

Jacopo Sadoletto  
Gian Matteo Giberti  
Gaetano da Thiene  
Reginald Pole  
Gian Pietro Caraffa (He became Pope Paul IV)  
Gasparo Contarini (He had sympathies with the Protestants)

Of the members of the Oratory of Divine Love, Contarini was the most deeply committed to reform along the lines of Erasmus' ideas, and he was also the most openly sympathetic with the Protestant point of view. In 1511 C.E., Contarini went through a religious conversion similar to that of Luther.

Although Contarini started out as a layperson, he later took holy orders and was made a Cardinal in 1535 C.E. In addition to being a Christian humanist, he was an experienced politician and diplomat. Contarini and Philip Melanchthon had similar personalities, having the temperament of peacemakers. Contarini also influenced Pope Paul III in the direction of reform. Presiding over a papal reform commission, he supported attempts at reconciliation with the Protestants and advocated a return to the faith of the apostles.

The most significant attempt to bring real and lasting reform to the Roman Catholic Church occurred in 1541 C.E., when Contarini was a delegate at the Colloquy of Regensburg. At this meeting a final attempt was made to work out a compromise statement of theology acceptable to both the Reformers and the Roman Catholic leaders. Basing their discussions upon twenty articles largely drawn up by Protestants, Contarini and Melanchthon hammered out a verbal statement on the doctrine of justification by faith acceptable to both men. They were not successful in reaching agreement on transubstantiation and the authority of the papacy; nevertheless, they returned to their respective parties, hoping to gain acceptance in the areas in which they had reached agreement. It was not to be the case. Both parties repudiated their work. Luther refused to accept the compromise formula on faith. When Contarini returned to Italy, he was accused of heresy and associating with the enemies of the Church. Before they could press charges against him, he died. The failure to work out a peaceful solution to the split within the Church opened the way for the militant program of the Catholic hardliners.

## **The Reform of the Papacy**

### *Clement VII*

The Popes most responsible for reforming the papacy were Clement VII (1523-1534 C.E.), Paul III (1534-1549 C.E.), and Paul VI (1555-1559 C.E.), but they faced tremendous problems. For example, there were serious differences of opinions among those who remained faithful to Rome over which course of action to take to meet the Protestant threat. Another major difficulty had to do with the complex political situation in Europe at the time. Rulers holding a common Roman Catholic faith were often military and diplomatic rivals. In addition to the Protestant threat and the complex political situation, those who had a vested interest in a corrupt Church refused to give a reform-minded Pope a free hand to clean up the abuses.

In spite of his sincere efforts, Clement VII accomplished little in the way of reform. The political maneuverings of the Emperor Charles V and King Francis I (1515-1547 C.E.) of France put Clement VII in an utterly hopeless situation. Each ruler exerted pressure on the Pope to side with him. In the end Clement VII suffered the wrath of both rulers. One example of a political difficulty in which Clement VII found himself was the dilemma he faced with Henry VIII of England. In 1527 C.E., Henry VIII requested an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. His request could not have arrived in Rome at a worse time. The city was surrounded by the troops of Charles V, who happened to be Catherine's nephew. No matter what Clement VII decided, he lost. As soon as he refused Henry's request for an annulment, the English Reformation began.

Perhaps Clement VII might have called an ecumenical Council to seek a solution. He did indeed seriously consider such a move, but he could not come up with a proposal that would satisfy both the Holy Roman Emperor and the King of France, who were both struggling for supremacy in Europe.

### *Paul III*

Perhaps the major contribution Clement VII made to the papacy was his recommendation that the gifted Alessandro Farnese succeed him. Farnese became Pope Paul III, the most sincere reformer in the sixteenth century. Under Pope Paul III many positive steps were taken to correct the abuses. The most outstanding of them were his appointment of reformers to the College of Cardinals, the setting up of a papal reform commission, and the calling of the Council of Trent in 1545 C.E.

Among those he made Cardinals were such dedicated reformers as Gasparo Contarini, Gian Pietro Caraffa, Reginald Pole, Sadoletto (all

former members of the Oratory of Divine Love)<sup>136</sup>, Pietro Bembo, and Jean du Bellay. Pope Paul III demonstrated his determination to rid the College of Cardinals of its moral laxity and to make it more international. Even more important was the appointment of the papal reform commission in 1536 C.E. The Pope named nine leading Cardinals to serve on the reform commission, and made Contarini its head. The task was to recommend reforms for the Church and to prepare the way for a Council. In February of 1537 C.E., the commission submitted the document, *Advice Concerning the Reform of the Church*, to the Pope.

The report analyzed the causes of the disorder in the Church and recommended immediate actions to correct the worst offenses and to remove the worst offenders. Some of the major problems were described in clear, but blunt terms. The papal office had become too secular. Both Popes and Cardinals needed to stop flirting with the world and give more attention to spiritual matters. Concrete examples were given, such as bribery in high places, abuses of papal power, the evasion of Church law, laxity in the monastic orders, the abuse of indulgences, and the high number of prostitutes operating in Rome itself.

In spite of the opposition of a number of powerful older Cardinals, Paul took action to end several of these problems. He reformed the papal bureaucracy, ordered an end to the taking of money for spiritual favors, and forbid the buying and selling of Church appointments. Unfortunately, he only put into practice a few of the commission's recommendations. When the Protestants obtained a copy of the commission's report, they published it as evidence of the corrupt state of the Roman Catholic Church.

### **The Council of Trent**

Pope Paul III's most significant action was to call an ecumenical Council to deal with reform and the growing threat of Protestantism. After intense negotiations with the Emperor and the French King, Pope Paul named Trent as the location for the Council, but it was a compromise location. Trent was located in present-day northern Italy, but at the time it was located just inside the area of the Italian peninsula ruled by the Emperor. The French were angered by this choice, and so only a handful of French delegates attended the Council.

Between the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. and Vatican II in 1962-1965 C.E., Trent was the most important Council. It faced monumental problems with the split in the Church, and although it failed to

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<sup>136</sup> The Oratory of Divine Love was disbanded in 1527 C.E.

achieve all of its goals, the Council managed to redefine and renew the Roman Catholic Church.

Trent was not one continuous meeting; rather, it met in three main sessions: 1545-1547; 1551-1552; and 1562-1563 C.E. For a meeting of such significance, attendance was scanty and irregular. The first session opened with only four Archbishops, twenty Bishops, four generals of monastic orders, and a few theologians. The largest number to attend the second session was fifty-nine; and the third session, largest of all, had 255 at one of its meetings. The Italians were best represented. Spain sent many delegates, but had difficulty agreeing to the conclusions of the Council. France was noticeably under-represented.

The most interesting of the sessions was the second one, when a number of Protestants were present. The Emperor held back the German Bishops from the session until the Pope gave his permission for them to attend. The Pope, however, refused to grant them permission to vote. Although three delegations of Protestants arrived late in 1551 C.E., no leading Lutheran theologian came, nor did any of the Calvinists show up. Nothing came of the Protestant presence. Informal talks were held, but nothing appeared on the formal agenda concerning the points they raised. So the Protestants left in May of 1552 C.E., convinced that there was nothing to be gained by remaining any longer.

The third session was the most productive of all. Medieval orthodoxy was reaffirmed. Transubstantiation, justification by faith and works, the seven sacraments, the celibacy of the clergy, the existence of purgatory, and the need for indulgences were all reaffirmed. The Council had clarified and reaffirmed most of the doctrines of the late Medieval Church. In addition to that, the Council increased papal authority by granting the Pope the authority to enforce the decrees of the Council. All Church officials had to promise to obey the Pope.

Protestants were disappointed, though not surprised. Most of them shared Luther's initial skepticism concerning the "irreformability of the Church." The definitions of Roman Catholic doctrine, together with accompanying curses on those who did not agree with them, killed any Protestant hopes of restoring unity. Nevertheless, by dealing with the most serious of the abuses pointed out by the Protestants and by clarifying Roman Catholic doctrine, the Council of Trent gave the Roman Catholic Church a clear position to uphold for the next four centuries.

### **The Society of Jesus**

Diego Laynez and Alfonso Salmeron, influential members of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), were present at the Ecumenical Council of Trent.

Pope Paul III had approved the Society of Jesus in 1540 C.E. Ignatius of Loyola, their founder and leader created the Society, which was to become the embodiment of the Roman Catholic Reformation. Ignatius, a Spanish nobleman, was born in 1491 or 1496 C.E. at the Castle of Loyola. Ignatius began his career as a professional soldier, but his career was cut short when he was seriously wounded in 1521 C.E.

During Ignatius' rehabilitation, he began reading the lives of Christ and the saints. He was challenged by their holiness and their achievements as "soldiers of Christ," and like the Knights of old, he resolved to become one of them. Dedicating his weapons and armor to God, he journeyed to Monserrat, hung his weapons on the Virgin's altar, and took up the cross of Christ. Seeking instruction from God, he spent a year (1522-1523 C.E.) at the Manresa Monastery, where he drafted his *Spiritual Exercises*.<sup>137</sup> Ignatius' period of waiting for God's guidance has been compared to Luther's monastic experience. While Luther found his peace by rejecting the traditions of the Medieval Church in favor of the Biblical basics of primitive Christianity, Ignatius found his peace by rededicating himself to the conventions of the Medieval Church. Ignatius emerged from his convalescence a mixture of soldier, mystic, and monk.

Between 1524 and 1534 C.E. Ignatius studied at Barcelona, Alcalá, Salamanca and Paris. He entered the University of Paris just as John Calvin was leaving. In Paris, he made no public demonstration, but gathered around himself a handful of devoted friends and disciples. They were:

Pierre Lefèvre  
Francis Xavier  
Diego Lainez  
Alfonso Salmeron  
Nicolas Bobadilla  
Simon Rodriguez

Ignatius and his six friends vowed to practice poverty and celibacy, to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem<sup>138</sup>, and to dedicate the rest of their lives to apostolic work. The Society of Jesus, later to be called Jesuits, was born. Jesuits were to become a new spiritual élite at the disposal of the Pope. The Jesuit dictum was to obey the Pope and the general of the order as

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<sup>137</sup> All Roman Catholic ordinands still go through Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises at least once. The exercises form a four-week retreat of devotional meditations and instructions. Week one is on sin, week two on Christ's kingship, week three on his passion, and week four on his risen life.

<sup>138</sup> Because of war, they never made it to Jerusalem.

unquestioningly “as a corpse.” They considered the Pope their Commander-in-chief, and Ignatius the general of the order. Ignatius was general until his death in 1556 C.E.

After some hesitation, Pope Paul III gave approval to the Society of Jesus in 1540 C.E. In addition to the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, a special oath of absolute obedience to the Pope was added. The purpose of the Society of Jesus was to proclaim the faith by every means possible. This end, for them, justified the means. Jesuits were to be of robust health, handsome in appearance, intelligent and eloquent in speech. Those of bad character or of the slightest hint of unorthodox belief were refused admittance. Ignatius wanted quality rather than numbers, but the order grew rapidly. By 1556 C.E., there were more than a thousand Jesuits. By 1626 C.E., there were 15,544. They reached their peak of 36,038 in 1964 C.E., but the unrest following Vatican II, saw their membership decline to 28,856 in 1975 C.E.

Jesuit work focused on three main tasks: education, counteracting the Protestants, and missionary expansion into new areas. The Jesuits provided high-quality education. Jesuit schools became famous for high standards and attainments. Many individuals from the élite were won to Catholicism. Many of them were the opinion-makers of society. Before long the now-familiar Jesuit saying was coined: “Give me a child until he is seven, and he will remain a Catholic the rest of his life.” The Society of Jesus was not formed to counteract the growing Protestant movement, but this became their second major preoccupation. They recaptured large areas of the Church for Catholicism. They earned the reputation as “the feared and formidable storm-troops of the Counter Reformation.” Only in England did their onslaught fail. The third task at which the Jesuits excelled was missionary activity in new lands. Jesuit priests traveled in the ships of Spain and Portugal as they sailed the seven seas in search of new colonies and new wealth. As the Jesuit priests accompanied them, they helped counterbalance the greedy imperialism of the European merchants and soldiers. They also produced scholarly accounts of the history and geography of the new places they visited. Most of all they left their converts with their brand of Catholicism.

The greatest of their missionaries was Francis Xavier (1506-1552 C.E.). He towered above all the rest as the “apostle to the Indies and to Japan.” Born into the Portuguese nobility, he was one of the original members of the Society of Jesus. Ignatius recognized his talents and believed that he would become a powerful servant of God. He became the most widely acclaimed Jesuit missionary of all time. Appointed as the Pope’s ambassador, Xavier went out to evangelize the East Indies in 1542 C.E. After spending three years there, he went to present-day Malaysia,

Vietnam, and Japan. Despite numerous periods of persecution, Xavier died of a fever when he was only forty-six years old, just as he was attempting to take the Christian message to China.

The Jesuits, together with the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians, led the Roman Catholic Church through a new period of rapid overseas expansion. By means of their ministries, nearly all of Mexico, Central America, and South American, along with a large population of the Philippines and smaller numbers of people in Africa, India, the East Indies, and the Far East became members of the Roman Catholic Church.

### **The Reorganization of the Inquisition**

In the traditionally Roman Catholic countries such as Italy, Spain, and France, the Inquisition became the major instrument of the Roman Catholic Reformation. The Inquisition, or the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, as it was formally called, was not an invention of the Catholic Reformation. Reorganized in 1542 C.E., it was the child and grandchild of the Medieval and Spanish Inquisitions, which had gone before it in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.

This reorganized Inquisition was largely the work of Cardinal Caraffa, who had been a theological moderate until the success of the Protestant Reformation. By 1542 C.E. he was an outspoken critic of those who sought reconciliation with the Protestants. Instead of reconciliation with them, Caraffa advocated battling against them with the weapons of coercion, censorship, and propaganda. It was at his urging that the Inquisition was reorganized. It was called the Roman Inquisition because it was to be controlled by the papacy in Rome.

Caraffa was one of six Cardinals appointed as Inquisitor Generals. Under these six Cardinals the Inquisition became an extremely effective means of dealing with heretics. Caraffa and his fellow inquisitors regarded heretics as traitors against God, and the foulest of criminals. They had to be dealt with so that they would not contaminate others. If they would not return to the Church, professing its beliefs, then they had to be eradicated before they contaminated other immortal souls with their spiritual disease. Hence, they were removed from Christian society in the same way that a surgeon would remove cancerous tissue from the human body. All this was done to save the immortal souls of God's people.

The Inquisition commonly used terror and tongue to obtain confessions. If the death penalty had to be carried out, the convicted heretic would be handed over to the State for execution. Canon law forbid

ecclesiastical leaders from shedding blood; besides, it was the legal and moral task of the State.

As has been pointed out, the Inquisition was very effective in Italy, Spain, and France; it was not widely used in Germany, where there had been no inquisitorial tradition. In England, common law excluded the practice. Where it was practiced, it had wide popular support, and it was a major deterrent to the further spread of the Protestant movement in Roman Catholic countries.

### **The Index of Prohibited Books**

Associated with the concept of coercion by the Inquisition was the idea of an index of prohibited books. The practice of maintaining a catalog of heretical books was an old one. It had been used in the Middle Ages with varying degrees of success. In the early sixteenth century, several theological faculties and the papacy itself circulated lists of books declared unfit for the eyes of the faithful. In 1559 C.E., Pope Paul IV issued the first papal index of prohibited books. It was a very comprehensive index, naming books, parts of books, authors, and even printers as violations of the index. The final session of the Council of Trent issued the most authoritative index of prohibited books of the period. Their list, the *Tridentine Index* (1559-1565 C.E) was handed over to Pope Pius IV to enforce

Pope Pius published the Index in 1564 C.E., and called upon Christians everywhere to observe it. The Index censored nearly three-quarters of all the books that had been printed in Europe. The only books that were permitted were Catholic devotional literature and the Latin Vulgate Bible. The Pope also appointed a Congregation of the Index to update the list periodically. The practice of keeping up the index lasted until 1966 C.E., when it was abolished. One reason why it was abolished is that it did not work. Both in the sixteenth century, and in all the centuries that followed, it was a dismal failure.

### **Results of the Catholic Reformation**

Following the failure of the Lutherans and Roman Catholics to achieve reconciliation at Regensburg in 1541 C.E., the Catholic Reformation set the stage for the wars of religion, which broke out in many parts of Europe. Major fighting between the Lutheran princes and the imperial forces in the 1540s and the 1550s finally came to an end with the compromise Peace of Augsburg in 1555 C.E. The Augsburg agreement provided for the co-existence of Lutheran and Roman Catholic Christianity in Germany on the basis of the religion of the ruler. In short, the Prince could decide the faith of his subjects.

In France, a series of civil wars involving both religious and political considerations raged from 1562 to 1598 C.E. The conflict was basically between Calvinist Protestants (Huguenots) and the Roman Catholics, with political issues complicating the picture. Finally, a third force appeared when the *politiques* (politically inspired) announced that it was immaterial which religion dominated France. All that mattered was the political wellbeing of the Nation.

After so much devastation all the parties were at the point of political exhaustion. A compromise was reached by partitioning the country. This settlement expressed in the royal Edict of Nantes in 1598 C.E. gave the Calvinist Protestants (Huguenots) religious freedom and political control of certain parts of the country, while Roman Catholicism remained the official religion of the Nation and retained by far the larger portion of the Nation. The compromise continued on a very precarious foundation until King Louis XIV (1643-1715 C.E.) revoked it. The Jesuits were partly responsible for its revocation, pressuring Protestants to reconvert to Catholicism, or flee. Hundreds reconverted, but thousands fled to Geneva, Germany, England, and America. Those who remained were persecuted, and many of them fled to the mountains of central France. Most of the Protestants who left France were professional people or skilled craftsmen.

The last of the wars of religion was the Thirty Year's War (1618-1648 C.E.). This conflict began as a religious struggle with political overtones, but it ended as a political struggle with religious overtones. The build up of tension between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics in Germany reflect the vitality of the Catholic Reformation. When Jesuit educated Ferdinand II became Emperor and King of Bohemia, the religious tensions reached a climax. Anti-Protestant religious violence broke out in 1618 C.E., and the Bohemian nobles, mostly Protestant, appealed to the Emperor for protection and a guarantee of their religious liberties. Receiving no satisfaction, they rose up in revolt. The war began as a conflict between Calvinists and Roman Catholics. Calvinism had not been recognized as a legal religion in the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555 C.E. This posed a problem for the German princes who became Calvinists after 1555 C.E. This became even more complicated in 1618 C.E. when the Bohemian nobles declared King Ferdinand II deposed, and offered the crown to a Calvinist ruler of one of the major German states. His acceptance of the crown of Bohemia touched off fighting between Calvinists and Roman Catholics all over Germany. Ultimately German Lutherans, Danes, Swedes, and even the French became involved in the warfare in Germany. The war dragged on for thirty years until a peace was finally hammered out in a series of conferences held in Westphalia in the years 1643-1648 C.E. The peace signaled the end of the religious wars in Europe. In essence the treaty

provided for a return to the religious situation of 1529 C.E., when certain German princes made their famous “protestation” on behalf of the Lutheran faith at the Diet of Worms. The religious lines were drawn much as they were in 1529 C.E., and much as they remain to this day.

In addition to being one of the causes of the religious wars, the Catholic Reformation also defined Roman Catholic orthodoxy. The beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church were now clear, even to the rank and file, and so were the differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. This clarity promoted a resurgence of Roman Catholicism, which prevented further losses to Protestantism

Although one might not be able to say that mysticism was a result of the Catholic Reformation, Catholic renewal was characterized by a large development of mystical piety, particularly in Spain. The Church did not welcome this movement. Mysticism made the institutional Church nervous because, carried to its logical extreme, it does away with the need for the priesthood and the Sacraments. The mystic emphasizes personal religion and his or her own direct union with God. Often this relationship with God is experienced in a blinding flash of supreme ecstasy. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582 C.E.) and John of the Cross (1542-1591 C.E.), revitalized a large part of the spiritual life of Spain, through their practical, mysticism.<sup>139</sup>

Teresa was a Carmelite nun, who in spite of ill health, managed to become a great reformer of the Carmelite Order. She traveled all over Spain founding new religious houses and introducing spiritual life into the old ones. She proved that mysticism could stimulate practical reform. After John had been ordained a priest, Teresa persuaded him to join in the reform of the Carmelites. Opposition arose against the austerity and simplicity of the new Carmelite movement. This led to John’s imprisonment at Toledo in 1578 C.E. After escaping from prison, John spent the rest of his life in monastic administration and teaching his mystical theology. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, helped many of the faithful to experience spiritual satisfaction. This filled a void, which in other parts of Europe formed the basis for the spread of Protestantism, with its emphasis on a personal, biblical faith.

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<sup>139</sup> The works of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross illustrate their mysticism. Teresa wrote the following: *The Book of Her Life, The Road to Perfection, Concepts of the Love of God, and The Interior Castle*. John wrote the following: *The Ascent of Mount Carmel, The Dark Night of the Soul, and The Living Flame of Love*.

To make up for losses of large areas in Europe, the Catholic Reformation began missionary expansion overseas. The Jesuits led in this highly successful endeavor, winning converts to Roman Catholicism in the Americas, Africa, India, Japan and Sri Lanka (Ceylon). The Catholic Reformation also helped France, Italy, and Spain to retain their Roman Catholic religious and cultural identities. The success of the Roman Catholic response to the Protestant Reformation led to a final end to the cultural and religious unity so cherished in Medieval Europe.



## 23. THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL

A group of ministers once asked John Wesley why his sermons attracted such large crowds. Wesley replied, “God has set me on fire and people come to watch me burn.”

*William Stringfellow*<sup>140</sup>

In the English speaking churches, the age of reason became the age of renewal. We shall examine three aspects of renewal, the Great Awakening, German Piety, and the Evangelical Revival<sup>141</sup>. These three aspects of renewal were taking place at the same time in Europe, England, and the United States. It has been said of the Reformation that it gave spiritual motivation to oppressed people to emigrate, and many of them migrated to the American continent.

### **The First American Protestants**

#### *The Anglican Church*

The earliest American Protestants were Anglican. In 1607 C.E., a community was set up in Jamestown, Virginia, with Robert Hunt acting as chaplain. The Anglican Church, however, was never very popular in the colonies, primarily because Church leaders in England failed to provide a Bishop in the colonies. Although the Anglican Church was the first to be established, the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches formed the largest groups in the English speaking colonies.

#### *The Congregational Church*

The Congregational Churches emerged from the merging of Separatists and Puritans. The Pilgrim Fathers, who arrived at Plymouth in 1620 C.E., were Independents who had left the Church of England to seek ecclesiastical asylum in Holland. The larger group, who migrated from 1628 C.E. onwards, were Puritans in the strictest sense of the term. In 1648 C.E., the Separatists and the Puritans joined forces, expressing their unity in the *Cambridge Platform*, the charter of American Congregationalism.

#### *The Presbyterian Church*

The Presbyterian Church first appeared in the Dutch Reformed Church. In 1626 C.E., the Dutch East India Company founded a colony on the Hudson River, renaming Manhattan Island *New Amsterdam*. Two years

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<sup>140</sup> William Stringfellow, *Free in Obedience* (Seabury Press, 1967).

<sup>141</sup> Sometimes the Evangelical Revival was called the Methodist Revival. The terms Methodist and Evangelical were used interchangeably.

later a pastor was appointed. The Dutch Reformed Church continued to flourish after the colony was handed over to England in 1664 C.E. By 1700 C.E., this Church held a strong position in New York. Hence, the form of Presbyterianism, which was to play such a prominent part in American Christianity, came from Britain. An Irish Presbytery commissioned Francis Makemie, to begin the work in the colonies. Churches were planted in Maryland as early as 1683 C.E. In 1706 C.E., the presbytery of Philadelphia was formed with Makemie as its moderator. He encouraged many Scottish and Irish Presbyterians to seek refuge from the Stuarts in America.

### The Baptist Church

The American Baptists trace their ancestry to a congregation in Providence, Rhode Island. Roger Williams, a Separatist from London gathered them together in 1639 C.E. He had been ejected from the Puritan colony in Massachusetts Bay. Most of those making up this first Baptist congregation were either English or Welsh Baptists, who shared William's beliefs. The Baptists grew slowly until the Great Awakening, when they experienced a surge of rapid growth.

### *The Quakers and Pietists*

Meanwhile the Quakers launched their "holy experiment" in Pennsylvania. Up to this time, most of the population was British, but European Protestants were beginning to trickle into the country, changing the makeup of the Protestant community. Up to this time the Protestant community had been made up of Calvinists (including Dutch Calvinists), Huguenots and Mennonites. A large-scale influx of German Protestants, mostly Lutheran, would change things. Most of these new refugees were fleeing persecution. When William Penn invited them into his colony, Pennsylvania, they crossed the Atlantic in the thousands. In addition to Lutherans, there were Moravians, Dunkers, and Schwenkfelders. Many of these German Churches had already been touched by the Pietist movement, which fed the fires not only of the Great Awakening in America, but also the Evangelical Revival in Britain.

### **The Need for Revival**

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the American churches stood in need of revival. They had been overtaken by a creeping paralysis. The reasons for this paralysis are clear. The development of commerce, and with it the increase of wealth, had bred a materialism which blunted the Protestant witness. Previously believers had to assent to a covenant to qualify for Church membership. This was seriously compromised. The notorious *Half Way Covenant* allowed the children of uncommitted parents

to be baptized. Previously, only those who could testify to a saving experience of Christ were admitted into full membership. Now, any one, not involved in a moral scandal, could be received. Moral respectability, rather than spiritual rebirth, became the criterion for membership.

The Protestant Churches had fallen asleep, and it would take nothing short of a miracle to awaken them. A Boston preacher of the times, said:

Alas, as though nothing but the most amazing thunders and lightnings, and the most terrible earthquakes could awaken us, we are at this time fallen into as dead a sleep as ever.

This is not to say that nothing was happening in the churches. There were scattered beginnings of revival, but they were like an oasis in the desert of an increasing spiritual indifference.

### **The Great Awakening**

One of those oases took place in Northampton, Massachusetts under the leadership of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758 C.E.). The ministry of Edwards was to have as profound an effect in Britain as in America. The events of the Great Awakening were circulated through Edward's account in the *Narrative*.

Edwards followed his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, as pastor of the Congregational Church in Northampton. Stoddard had been called the first great revivalist in New England. When Edwards took over, he found people very insensible of the things of religion. In 1733 C.E., Edwards perceived a change, which he felt would have widespread repercussions.

At the age of thirteen, Edwards became fluent in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. A native of Connecticut, he attended the Collegiate School of Connecticut (afterwards Yale), where in 1720 C.E., he graduated at the head of his class. Following a short period as a Presbyterian minister in New York, in 1724 C.E. he became a senior tutor at Yale. In that same year, Edwards had a spiritual experience, which gave him a new awareness of God's absolute sovereignty, and of his own dependence on God. He described his experience in his *Personal Narrative*. Edwards became the associate pastor of the Congregational Church in Northampton, Massachusetts, and in 1735 C.E., under his preaching, the Great Awakening began. Edwards spent thirteen or fourteen hours each day in his study describing and analyzing in minute detail what was happening.

The Great Awakening reached its peak in 1740 C.E. In addition to Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield made a major contribution. Converted in 1735 C.E. Whitefield proved to be a pioneer in the English revival. On his second trip to America, Whitefield arrived in New England

in September of 1740 C.E. He set out on a six-week tour which resulted in the most general awakening that the American colonies had yet experienced. In Boston the crowds grew too large to be accommodated in any of the churches, and so Whitefield took to the open air, as he had previously done in England. He preached his farewell sermon to a congregation of 20,000 people.

George Whitefield stirred up the clergy for or against him. On one occasion, Whitefield, defending himself, said, "The reason why congregations have been so dead is because dead men preach to them." Under Whitefield's preaching, dead men came alive and were used to revive the people. Renewed churches began to show a concern for evangelism and missionary activity. Denominational barriers were broken down and a new spirit of co-operation prevailed among those sympathetic to the Awakening. Higher education was encouraged, and major institutions, like Princeton College, opened as a result. Spiritual liberation also paved the way for political liberation and that contributed to the American Revolution.

In 1750 C.E., Jonathan Edwards ran into difficulty. The issue had to do with admitting unbelievers to the Lord's Supper. After he was dismissed from his pastoral duties, he went as a missionary to the Native Americans, and some settlers, in the frontier town of Stockbridge. It was at this time that he produced his most important work, *The Freedom of the Will* (1754 C.E.). In it he denied that we are free to choose. His viewpoint fit in perfectly with his Calvinistic doctrines of election, predestination, and the fallen nature of humanity.

In January of 1758 C.E. Jonathan Edwards was chosen to become the President of the College of New Jersey at Princeton, but after being inoculated against smallpox in February, he died in March. His legacy was that he managed to combine a powerful intellectual curiosity with a powerful evangelistic zeal. He and George Whitefield are the ones we remember most when we think of the Great Awakening in America.

### **German Piety**

In Europe the evangelical revival took root in Germany among the Lutherans. The vital insights of the Reformers had hardened into rigid formulas. The German Pietists re-emphasized the importance of the new birth, personal faith, and the warmth of Christian experience. The central figure of German Pietism was a Frankfurt pastor named Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705 C.E.). Desiring to recover Luther's appeal to the heart, he set up house meetings (*collegia pietatis*) in 1666 C.E. for prayer, Bible study, and the sharing of Christian experience.

When Spener was appointed to the Church in Halle in 1692 C.E., he made it a center of Pietist influence. In Halle he organized a school for the poor, an orphanage, and many other institutions. Spener shifted the focus of Christianity from doctrine to practice. He believed that the reason for the decay in Christianity was the absence of a true, living faith. Spener restored vitality to the German Church. Inspired by the pietist movement, many new hymns were written. This became one of the links between German Piety and the Evangelical Revival in England. Many of these new hymns were then translated by the Wesleys and used widely by the Methodists.

German Piety also stimulated missionary concern, which became a prominent feature of the revival in both Britain and America. It was through Spener's godson, Nikolaus Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf, that Pietism made its impact on the Moravian community, which spread to England and America. The Moravians were the spiritual descendants of John Huss, driven from their homeland during the Thirty Years' War. During this time they lost many members, but in 1722 C.E. a little company of them settled in Saxony, on Zinzendorf's estate. Christian David, a convert from the Roman Catholic Church, led the group. It was said that he "burned with zeal like an oven."

Zinzendorf's steward suggested a name for this small Moravian colony. Since the plot of land lay on the Hutberg or Watch Hill, it was called Herrnhut, which means "The Lord's Watch." It became a haven for Protestant refugees from all parts of Germany as well as from Moravia and Bohemia. The colony included Lutherans, Reformed, Separatists, Anabaptists, and Schwenkfelders. At first, it looked like it might be impossible for such a mixture of people to work together, but in 1727 C.E., the whole community agreed to accept an Apostolic Rule drawn up in forty-two statutes. The future of Herrnhut was decided. It would no longer be a hive of sectarians, but it would become a living congregation of Christ. The Moravians become the vital leaven of European Protestantism.

A London bookseller, James Hutton, became the first English member of the Moravian Church. He organized a religious society in his house, which was to inspire both the Moravian Church and the Methodist Societies. The Wesley brothers first met a group of Moravian missionaries on their way to Georgia, and were greatly impressed by their spirituality. Of more importance still was the fact that it was a Moravian leader, Peter Bohler, who steered John Wesley towards his dynamic spiritual experience in 1738 C.E. When Wesley wanted to consider the implications of his spiritual experience, it was to Herrnhut that he went. Many of the features of the Moravian community were taken up in the Methodist Societies, such as the love feast, the watch night service, and the class

meeting. Although Wesley separated from the London Moravians, he owed to them an incalculable debt. Wesley and Whitefield became the major personalities in the Evangelical Revival, but their inspiration can be traced back to these German Pietists, the Moravians.

### **The Evangelical Revival**

At the beginning of the eighteenth century religion was at a low ebb in England. Several causes had contributed to its decline. The Anglicans had a fear of extremes, both Roman Catholic and Puritan, which resulted in a moderation that frowned upon passionate convictions of any kind. Preaching lacked punch, since sermons tended to be moral essays. The political situation helped to stifle spirituality in England. King George I and his son were both indifferent to Christianity. The cynicism of the age was reflected in a rumor that there was a bill being considered to take the “not” out of the commandments and insert the new document into the creed. The collapse of personal faith led to a slide in moral standards. Permissiveness was the order of the day. “What is the present characteristic of the English nation?” asked John Wesley, only to answer, “It is ungodliness.... Ungodliness is our universal, our constant, our peculiar character.”

In spite of all that contributed to the demise of religion in England, there were some signs of revival. In 1678 C.E., a group of men in London formed the earliest of the Religious Societies for prayer, reading the Scriptures, the cultivation of a religious life, for frequent communion, and the encouragement of preaching to the poor, soldiers, sailors, and prisoners. By 1700 C.E. there were nearly a hundred Religious Societies in London alone, and they were to be found in many parts of England and Ireland. Samuel Wesley started one in Epworth in 1702 C.E. In many ways they resembled Spener’s *collegia pietatis*. Many of the clergy looked upon the growing movement as enthusiastic, or as we might say today, fanatical. After 1710 C.E. they began to decline, though some of these Religious Societies continued and contributed to the beginnings of Methodism.

Although the mass of people in England, were in spiritual lethargy, there were exceptions. A man by the name of Griffith Jones had been preaching the evangelical message for twenty years. He deserves to be given the title of the “morning star” of the Evangelical or the Methodist Revival. Another “morning star” of the Evangelical Revival was Howell Harris, a schoolmaster, who had been moved by reading books published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, with which Griffith had been associated. Harris was converted at a communion service on Whitsunday in 1735 C.E. His heart was filled with “the fire of the love of God.” He witnessed to his newfound faith and gathered together a little

society of fellow believers. They were the beginnings of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church.

It was in the Welsh Revival that George Whitefield was converted. The son of a Gloucester innkeeper, Whitefield hoped to become an actor. Instead, he was ordained as an Anglican clergyman. Whitefield became the pioneer of the Evangelical Revival. His converts in London and Bristol in 1737 C.E. were the first of the awakening in England. It was Whitefield who pioneered field-preaching, recruited lay preachers, and traveled to and fro as “one of God’s runabouts.” He was the first to make contact with both the American and Scottish awakenings. It was with him that the English Evangelical Revival really began.

### **The Methodist Revival in Britain**

The Evangelical Revival really took off under the leadership of John and Charles Wesley. John was the organizer and administrator of the rapidly expanding movement, and Charles was the “sweet singer” of Methodism. His hymns are still a legacy to the worldwide Church.

#### *The Births of John and Charles Wesley*

John and Charles were born at the rectory in Epworth, Lincolnshire, where their father, Samuel Wesley, was the pastor and staunch high churchman. Their mother, Susanna (Annesley) Wesley, was a remarkable woman whose influence on her sons was exceptionally strong. Both parents came from Non-conformist ancestry. Both grandfathers had been *ejected clergy* in 1662 C.E., but Samuel Wesley preferred the ministry of the established Church. John was born on July 17, 1703 C.E., and Charles was born four years later on December 18, 1707 C.E. In all there were nineteen children, but eight died in infancy.

When John and Charles were still children, there was a fire in the rectory. John was the last one to be pulled out of a second story window. Spectators formed a human ladder to save him. For the rest of his life, John believed that he had been saved for a purpose. He considered himself to be a “brand plucked from the burning.” Indeed, he did become the flame of the Evangelical Revival.

#### *Education*

John attended Charterhouse School in London, and Charles the Westminster School two years later. Both attended Oxford University. Charles entered Christ Church at Oxford in 1726 C.E., just as John was completing his course of study there. Upon completion of his studies, John was elected a fellow at Lincoln College. In order to become a candidate for that honor John had to seek holy orders. This gave John some income, but

it also required that he be ordained. On September 22, 1728 John Wesley was ordained a priest.

### *The Holy Club*

While John was away from Oxford serving as his father's assistant, Charles started the Holy Club in 1729 C.E. In Addition to Charles, the other two members were Robert Kirkham and William Morgan. On John's return to Oxford in November of 1729 C.E., he took over as leader. Under John's leadership, more students were attracted to the Club. Members pledged themselves to have regular private devotions and to meet each evening to read the Bible and pray. Under Morgan's influence, in August of 1730 C.E., they began visiting prisoners in the Oxford jail. One of the books that profoundly influenced John was William Law's, *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, which was written in 1728 C.E. The Holy Club sought to put that book into practice. John Wesley wrote of the influence of Law's book:

These convinced me, more than ever, of the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian; and I determined, through his grace, (the absolute necessity of which I was deeply sensible of), to be all-devoted to God, to give him all my soul, my body, and my substance.

Jeering students invented several labels for the Holy Club. They included Enthusiasts, Bible Moths, Sacramentarians, and Methodists. Wesley slowly accepted the term "Methodist" and traced the first rise of Methodism to these years at Oxford.

An important addition to the Holy Club early in 1735 C.E. was George Whitefield. Whitefield was born in Gloucester on December 16, 1714 C.E. A severe illness in the Spring of 1735 C.E. brought a crisis in his religious experience, from which emerged a joyous consciousness of peace with God. In June of 1736 C.E., Whitefield sought and received Episcopal ordination, beginning his marvelous career as a preacher. No English preacher in the eighteenth century demonstrated more power in the pulpit, not even John Wesley. A large part of his ministry took place in America. It was on his sixth visit to American that he died in Newburyport, Massachusetts on September 30, 1770 C.E.

### *The Mission to Georgia*

The second stage of Methodism took place in Georgia. The death of Samuel Wesley on April 25, 1735, whom John would gladly have succeeded, left the Wesleys some new freedom. Both sought employment as missionaries in the new colony of Georgia. They sailed for Georgia in October of 1735 C.E. to undertake a mission on behalf of the Society for

the Propagation of the Gospel. Charles acted as secretary to James Oglethorpe, the governor of the colony. During the voyage to America, and in Georgia itself, the Wesley brothers met some twenty-six Moravian missionaries, led by Bishop David Nitschmann. Their cheerful courage in a storm aboard ship convinced John that the Moravians had a trust in God that was not yet his. Soon after reaching Savannah, he met August Gottlieb Spangenberg, who asked him the embarrassing question: "Do you know Jesus Christ?" Wesley answered: "I know He is the Savior of the world." Spangenberg responded: "True, but do you know He has saved you?" The Wesleys labored in Georgia, but without success.

Charles returned home in disgust and ill health in 1736 C.E. John continued on, demonstrating his marvelous abilities by conducting services in German, French, and Italian. In 1736 C.E. he founded a little society in Savannah for cultivating the warmer religious life. He tried his best to set up the rudiments of the Holy Club, but it was little understood. He worked zealously with little peace of mind and was hardly any comfort to others.

John was a high-churchman without any tact. The most conspicuous case of this was his relationship with Sophie Hopkey, a woman suitable to become his wife. He gave her and her friends every reason to believe that his intentions were honorable, but he seesawed back and forth between clerical celibacy and possible matrimony. He made his decision by drawing lots. This aroused the resentment of the young woman and her relatives. Having been rejected, she hastily married another suitor. Her new husband objected to her attendance at Wesley's intimate religious discussions. Wesley thought she was not making proper preparation for communion, and so he refused to administer the Sacrament to her. Her friends charged that this was an act of a disgruntled suitor. Wesley's influence in Georgia was at an end. On February 1, 1738, John Wesley was back in England. In the bitterness of disappointment he could only say: "I have a fair summer religion." In commenting on what he had learned from the experience he said, "Why (what I least expected), that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God."

#### *Aldersgate*

Within a week of John's return, both he and Charles came under the influence of the Moravian Peter Böhler. Delayed in London from a trip to Georgia, Böhler taught a complete self-surrendering faith, an instantaneous spiritual experience, and a joy in believing. Böhler had organized a Religious Society, later called the Fetter-Lane Society, of which John Wesley was one of the original members.

The evangelical experience came first to Charles, then suffering from a serious illness. Peter Böhler went to Charles' bedside and asked him, "Do

you hope to be saved?" Charles replied to him. "Yes." Böhler then asked him, "For what reason do you hope it?" Charles answered, "Because I have used my best endeavors to serve God." Böhler walked out very disturbed, but on Whitsunday, May 21, 1738 C.E. Charles Wesley said from his sickbed with many tears, "I saw that by faith I stand."

On May 24, 1738 C.E., John went unwillingly to an Anglican Society on Aldersgate Street in London and heard Luther's preface to the *Commentary on Romans* read.

About a quarter before nine, while he [Luther] was describing the change, which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitely used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, "This cannot be faith; for where is thy joy?" Then was I taught, that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation: But that, as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of his own will.

This experience inspired John Wesley to learn more about the Moravians, who had led him into a spiritual experience. Less than three weeks after his Aldersgate experience, he was on his way to Germany. He met Zinzendorf in Marienborn, spent two weeks in Herrnhut, and by September of 1738 C.E., he was back in London.

### *The Love Feast*

John and Charles Wesley preached about their experiences, only to have pulpits closed to them because of their enthusiasm. They had no choice, but to speak in the Religious Societies. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1739 C.E., a remarkable love feast was held at Fetter-Lane in London. Both Moravian and Methodist leaders were welded into a fellowship of the Spirit in a way similar to what had happened at Herrnhut in 1727 C.E. John and Charles Wesley were present, along with George Whitefield and Benjamin Ingham, who was about to become an outstanding evangelist among the Moravians. John recorded the experience in his Journal:

About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His majesty, we broke out with one voice, “We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.”

It was like Pentecost on New Year’s Day. It confirmed that the Awakening had truly come and it launched a campaign of extensive evangelization unlike anything that had been known for a very long time, perhaps all the way back to the first Pentecost. Revival in England was truly the work of the Holy Spirit.

### *Field Preaching*

Early in 1739 C.E., George Whitefield was developing a great work in Bristol. In February, Whitfield began preaching in the open to the coal miners of Kingswood. He entered into friendly relations with Howel Harris, who had been working with great success as a lay preacher in Wales. Whitefield now invited John Wesley to Bristol. Wesley hesitated about field-preaching, and said, “I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way—having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in Church.” The opportunity to proclaim the Gospel, however, was irresistible to Wesley; and so, on April 2, 1739 C.E., Wesley began a practice that would last for more than fifty years. Charles soon followed his example.

### *The First Methodist Societies*

In Bristol in 1739 C.E., John founded the first Methodist Society, and began the erection of the first chapel on May 12, 1739 C.E. Later that same year, he purchased an unused cannon-foundry, which became the first Methodist chapel in London. This was to become the headquarters of Methodism until the opening of City Road Chapel in 1778 C.E.

Thus far the Methodists had also joined the Moravian Fetter-Lane Society, which Peter Böhler had founded. Wesley’s ideals, however, were leading him away from the Moravians. This separation increased when, in October of 1739 C.E., Philipp Heinrich Molther, who had just arrived in London from Herrnhut, insisted that those with doubts lacked true faith and should absent themselves from the Sacraments and prayer. They should wait in silence until God renews their faith. John disagreed and the Fetter-Lane Society was divided. John and his friends withdrew to organize a purely Methodist “United Society” in the Foundry on July 23, 1740 C.E.

The United Society followed the Moravian practice of voluntary bands and select groups of up to ten Christians supervised by a leader. The sole condition for prospective members was “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.” Existing Religious Societies in the Anglican Church restricted membership to those attached to the Anglican Church. Wesley refused to impose any such restrictions and opened his new society to nonconformists as well. Wesley defended this practice of openness, which was to become a mark of Methodism forever.

...do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions whatever. Let them hold particular or general redemption, absolute or conditional decrees; let them be churchmen, or dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents, it is no obstacle. Let them choose one mode of baptism or another, it is no bar to their admission. The Presbyterian may be a Presbyterian still; the Independent and Anabaptist use his own mode of worship. So may the Quaker; and none will contend with him about it. They think and let think. One condition and one only, is required—a real desire to save the soul. Where this is, it is enough: they desire no more; they lay stress upon nothing else; they only ask, “Is thy heart herein as my heart? If it be, give me thy hand.”

Wesley was criticized for proselytizing not only from the Anglican Church, which he never left, but also from many of the denominations existing in Britain at the time. Wesley’s defense was:

Our societies were formed from those who were wandering upon the dark mountains, that belonged to no Christian Church; but were awakened by the preaching of the Methodists, who had pursued them through the wilderness of this world to the Highways and the Hedges—to the Markets and the Fairs—to the Hills and the Dales—who set up the Standard of the Cross in the Streets and Lanes of the Cities, in the Villages, in the Barns, and Farmers’ Kitchens, etc.—and all this done in such a way, and to such an extent, as never had been done before since the Apostolic Age.

#### *The First Class Meetings and General Rules*

On February 15, 1742 C.E., the class meeting was introduced. This turned out to be of “unspeakable usefulness,” and Wesley called them the sinew (muscle) of Methodism. The name was simply the English form of the Latin *classsis*, which means division. It carried with it no overtones of school. The classes were larger than the bands and involved every member in the society. Their original purpose was to encourage Christian stewardship, but Wesley quickly realized that the leaders were “the persons who may not only receive the contributions, but also watch over the souls

of their brethren.” The class system secured discipline as well as providing fellowship and pastoral care.

Wesley took another step in 1743 C.E. He drew up a common set of rules for the United Societies. Methodism had by this time become a nation-wide organization. The General Rules were to be used in the classes to guide its members in the Christian Life.

### *The World was His Parish*

The Wesleys were convinced that they must proclaim the good news to the people of Britain. While others confined themselves to their parishes, the Wesleys believed that their call was to travel from place to place. They preached in churches whenever pulpits were open to them, but as opposition grew, the only possibility that remained was in the market place or in the fields. The result was that the working classes were drawn to Christianity as the industrial revolution approached. Wesley defended what he was doing by saying, “I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounded duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation.”

### *Lay Preachers*

Although Wesley preferred to have all preaching done by ordained clergy, few of the Anglican clergy were sympathetic with the movement. Joseph Humphreys, a layperson, began helping Wesley as early as 1738 C.E., but extensive use of laypersons did not begin until 1742 C.E. when Thomas Maxfield began to preach. At first Wesley’s mother had to talk Wesley into listening to his lay preachers, but finally Wesley himself defended the practice, saying: “Give me a hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergy or laymen, for such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth.”

### *The First Conference*

In 1744 C.E., Wesley called the first Conference, which was held to consider the best method of carrying on the work of God throughout the land. The Connexion was arranged in a series of circuits, or preachers’ rounds. The earliest printed list of circuits, published in 1746 C.E., included seven: London, Bristol, Cornwall, Evesham, Yorkshire, Newcastle, and Wales. With this new organization, Methodism spread rapidly across England, Ireland, and Wales. Only in Scotland did Methodism fail to gain much ground, although it left its mark on the Scottish Presbyterian Church.

Preachers and members alike were committed to what Wesley referred to as “our doctrines.” The basic theological conviction was “that justification by faith is the doctrine of the Church as well as of the Bible.” To this they added a specific emphasis that salvation is for all, and a stress on the assurance of the Holy Spirit and Scriptural holiness. George Whitefield, however, disagreed with Wesley that salvation is for all; nevertheless, the two men kept in touch with one another.

### *Christian Perfection*

Two disputes led to considerable controversy. The first one had to do with perfection. Wesley believed that it was possible for a Christian to attain right motives—love to God and to the neighbor.—and that such attainment would free us from sin. Wesley knew better than to claim such a condition, and taught that this was an aim rather than a completed achievement. When asked to define what he meant by Christian perfection, Wesley replied, “Entire sanctification, or Christian Perfection, is neither more nor less than pure love—love expelling sin and governing both the heart and life of a child of God.”

### *Predestination*

The second dispute was over the doctrine of predestination in Calvinistic theology, led by George Whitefield, who found strong support in Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. In 1769 C.E., the controversy on predestination broke out with great intensity. At the Conference of 1770 C.E., Wesley took a strong Arminian position and was defended by his devoted disciple, the Swiss John William Flecher, who had settled in England. The effect of the controversy was to confirm the Arminian character of Wesleyan Methodism.

Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, became the patroness of the Calvinistic Methodists, which must be viewed as a parallel rather than a hostile movement. Horace Walpole nicknamed her “St. Teresa of the Methodists.” When evangelical preachers were banned from the pulpits, she found them a place in her domestic chapels and drawing rooms. She made possible the proclamation of the Gospel to the aristocracy. In 1768 C.E. she founded a theological training college at Trevecca in South Wales. In 1779 C.E. she was compelled to register her chapels as “nonconformist meeting-houses.” They became known as “the Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion.”

### *Anglican Evangelicalism*

In addition to these strands of the Revival already mentioned, there was a movement within the Church of England, which gave rise to what is now known as Anglican Evangelicalism. At first, all who were caught up in the spiritual renewal were called either *Methodists* or *Evangelicals*,

irrespective of their church membership. Gradually, however, the Evangelicals were recognized as a party within the Church of England. Cornwall was the cradle of Anglican Evangelicalism. Samuel Walker of Truro emerged as the leader of that party until his death in 1763 C.E. There is a stained glass window of John Wesley in the Truro Cathedral.

### *Marriage*

In 1749 C.E. Charles Wesley married Sarah (Sally) Gwynee, the daughter of a Welsh magistrate, and they made their home in Bristol. For twenty years Charles supervised the work of the Methodist Society, which met in the New Room in Bristol. In 1771 C.E., Charles moved to London and shared the preaching at City Road Chapel until his death on March 29, 1788 C.E. A gifted and untiring hymn writer, Charles wrote more than 7,000 hymns. Hymn singing made an enormous contribution to the Evangelical Revival. His hymns not only expressed the joys of Christian experience, but they also taught the truths of Scripture. John Wesley called the *Methodist Hymn Book* of 1780 C.E. “a little body of experimental and practical divinity.”

Against Charles’ advice, John married a widow, Mrs. Mary Vazeille in 1751 C.E. Although the marriage was an unhappy one, there was no divorce. John simply devoted himself all the more to his work., much of which can be read in Wesley’s *Journal*, which is a classic. It records the journeys of a man who covered more than 250,000 miles proclaiming the Gospel. Wesley virtually invented the religious tract. He edited the *Christian Liberty*, which brought a rich selection of theological and devotional books within the reach on the average person. He also pioneered a new type of publication—the monthly magazine. His major printed sermons, along with his expository *Notes on the New Testament*, formed the distinctive doctrinal standard of the Methodist Church.

### *Effects of the Evangelical Revival*

*Transformation.* What were the effects of the Evangelical Revival? The most important effect is difficult to quantify. The Revival was the work of the Holy Spirit who turned nominal members of the Church into New Testament Christians. The clergy were also transformed. They set a new and higher standard for pastoral care.

*Missionary Activity.* The Evangelical Revival led to the creation of missionary activity among all denominations. In 1786 C.E., the Wesleyan Conference approved the plan of Thomas Coke to take the Gospel to India. In 1792 C.E. the Baptist Missionary Society was established, and in 1795 C.E., the London Missionary Society, an interdenominational venture, was established.

*Christian Education.* Christian Education was another effect of the Evangelical Revival. The Religious Tract Society (1799 C.E.), the United Society for Christian Literature (1799 C.E.), and the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804 C.E.), all sprang from the Evangelical Revival. Christian Education also gained a new dimension with the introduction of Sunday Schools. The first Sunday School was started in 1769 C.E. by a Methodist woman named Hannah Ball. Robert Raikes, an Anglican, developed them and made them popular. In 1786 C.E., William Richardson founded the Church of England Sunday School Society, and in 1803 C.E. the Sunday School Union was founded. The Sunday School movement in Britain marked a step towards free education for all. The Evangelical Revival produced this movement.

*Social Justice.* The Evangelical Revival also produced a passion for social justice. The campaign to banish slavery was led by men of evangelical convictions. Thomas Clarkson submitted a prize-winning essay on slavery in 1785 C.E., while still at St. John's College in Cambridge. It was Clarkson who persuaded William Wilberforce to take up the issue of slavery in Parliament. While on a tour of Europe, Wilberforce had been converted by the Evangelical Dr. Johnson, who became President of Queens' College in Cambridge. John Wesley published his *Thoughts on Slavery* in 1774 C.E.; and only four days before his death, he wrote a famous letter to Wilberforce urging him to "go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it."

The leaders of the Evangelical Revival made England aware of its social obligations. Wesley advocated prison reform and encouraged John Howard in his crusade for that reform. Wesley saw to it that through his societies clothing was distributed and food provided for the needy. Dispensaries were set up to treat the sick. In London one Methodist meeting-room was turned into a workshop for carding and spinning cotton. A lending bank was opened by Christians in 1746 C.E. Legal advice and aid was made available. Widows and orphans were housed. The list goes on and on, and in many cases, the State took on what rightfully was its responsibility. The Evangelical Revival had become a conscience and motivator of the State.

#### *Methodism in America becomes a Church*

Methodism in America owed its beginning to Irish immigrants. Robert Strawbridge, a Methodist local preacher from Drumsna, Ireland, settled at Sam's Creek in Maryland. He opened his log cabin for services and formed a society in 1760 C.E. Soon he began to evangelize the district and more societies were formed. About the same time another local preacher from

Ireland, Philip Embury, arrived in New York and joined the Lutheran Church. In 1765 C.E., his cousin, Barbara Heck, prodded him to preach again and start a Methodist Society. A British army officer, Thomas Webb, also lent a hand. He sent Wesley an account of what was happening and appealed for help. Volunteers were asked for at the Conference of 1769 C.E., and Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor volunteered to go.

The major figure in the founding of American Methodism was Francis Asbury. He came from Handsworth near Birmingham, and had been apprenticed to an iron smelter before joining the ranks of Wesley's itinerant preachers. In 1771 C.E., Asbury responded to another call for help from America, and upon arriving, he urged his colleagues to press to the frontiers in their evangelism. When the Revolutionary War began, most of the Anglican Priests returned to England, but Asbury remained in America.

After the War was over, Wesley sent Thomas Coke to America to ordain Francis Asbury. Asbury and Coke were to be superintendents for America. Contrary to Wesley's wishes, the title, Methodist Episcopal Church was adopted by the Christmas Conference in Baltimore. Asbury and Coke were made its first Bishops, much to Wesley's disgust. Both John and Charles had something to say about Coke and Asbury becoming Bishops. John criticized them, saying:

How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called Bishop? I shudder, I start, at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content: but they shall never by my consent call me Bishop! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake put a full end to this!

In his traditional manner, Charles resorted to poetry to criticize not only Coke and Asbury, but his brother John as well:

How easy now are Bishops made  
At man or woman's whim!  
Wesley his hands on Coke has laid,  
But who laid hands on him?

What happened at the Christmas Conference was nothing short of a declaration of independence on the part of American Methodism. It was now a separate body. American Methodism dates its origin to the Christmas Conference held at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore, Maryland on December 24, 1784 C.E.

*Methodism in England becomes a Church*

Wesley would not allow the Methodists to become a Church in England, even though the Welsh Methodist Church was organized in 1779

C.E. He did however agree to a legal *Deed of Declaration* in February 28, 1784 C.E., which ensured that upon Wesley's death his authority would pass to the Methodist Conference. In 1787 C.E., Methodist preaching-places were licensed under the *Toleration Act*. John Wesley died in London on March 2, 1791 C.E. His final words were, "The best of all, God is with us." In 1795 C.E., Methodism seceded from the Church of England. This was agreed upon in the *Plan of Pacification*. By the close of the century, the Methodist Church was ready to spread itself across the world.

Wesley insisted that if the Methodists left the Church of England that not only would he leave the Methodists, but so would God. In talking about the future of Methodism he said:

I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast...the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.

## 24. A GLOBAL VISION

The world mission of the Church is to make Jesus Christ known, loved, and obeyed.

*John R. Mott*

*Chair of the Edinburgh Conference in 1910 C.E.*

Although the movement towards a global vision began prior to the Evangelical Revival, the Revival was a powerful motivating force, causing newly awakened congregations to see the evangelization of the world as their unique responsibility. In the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20, the Church had a global vision. This vision included missionary activity, social awareness, and ecumenical relationships. In addition to looking at these three characteristics of the global vision, we shall also need to look at how new movements fit into this vision.

### **Missionary Activity**

Missionary activity did not start with the Evangelical Revival. The Church had always been aware of its mandate for missions, but certain events either motivated or hindered the Church in fulfilling its global vision.

#### *The Roman Catholic Churches*

The Protestant Reformation, for example, motivated the Roman Catholic Church to expand into the new world. The Jesuits and the Franciscans were the most active in this new missionary activity. In 1662 C.E., Pope Gregory XV founded the *Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith*, sometimes referred to as the *Propaganda*. As the Church expanded under the *Propaganda*, two strategies surfaced. The first strategy required new converts to make a complete break with their culture. The second strategy called for a study of local literature and beliefs and for the living out of those cultural characteristics, which did not conflict with Christianity. These two strategies clashed most sharply in China, but eventually, the latter method was used most extensively. Part of the instructions for missionary activity sent out by the *Propaganda* in 1659 C.E. included:

Do not regard it as your task, and do not bring any pressure to bear on the peoples to change their manners, customs and uses, unless they are evidently contrary to religion and sound morals. What could be more absurd than to transport France, Spain, Italy or some other European country to China? Do not introduce all

that to them, but only the faith, which does not despise or destroy the manners and customs of any people, always supposing they are not evil, but rather wishes to see them preserved unharmed....

Following these instructions, thousands of priests contributed to the almost complete, but some would say superficial, Christianization of people in foreign lands. In South America, for example, whole countries became Roman Catholic, but only superficially Christian.

Between 1650 and 1720 C.E., the Jesuits tried a new experiment in missionary methods in the un-colonized areas of Paraguay. Their purpose was to Christianize the Indians and to defend and protect them. To do this, they gathered them into self-contained and self-sustaining villages called *Reductions*, where they taught them the basics of Christianity. They organized their lives into times for prayer, work in the fields or trades, religious festivals, and even for recreation. At the peak, there were sixty *Reductions*, involving a total population of more than 100,000 people. The experiment collapsed in the eighteenth century when there arose Spanish-Portuguese boundary disputes and increased opposition to the Jesuit order.

### *The Protestant Churches*

The Protestant Churches expanded during this same period along two very different lines. The first approach rested upon the assumption that all the citizens of a particular country would be considered Christians and members of the State Church. This type of missionary activity operated through the national trading companies. The trading companies were expected to take chaplains along with them, although many of them resisted the idea or did not take the mission mandate very seriously. A slight variation to this approach had to do with following colonies of European immigrants. The Crown chartered both the trading companies and the colonies, and both assumed that everyone would be a member of the State Church.

The second Protestant approach to missionary activity involved voluntary societies and denominations which viewed missionary activity as their sacred duty. German Pietism and the Spiritual Awakenings in England and America fueled this vision. This missionary strategy emphasized the importance of personal conversion, holy living, and the need to share Christ's saving work with non-Christians. The hymns of Count Zinzendorf, Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, and John Newton illustrated and motivated this vision of missions.

The Moravians were clearly the best example of missionary activity, which involved voluntary societies. Wherever they went, their loving spirit, strong faith, and total commitment conveyed the true nature of the

Christian Faith. It has been said of them that they achieved more in this period than all the Protestant efforts before them.

In addition to the Moravians, three groups emerged from the Evangelical Revival. They were the Methodists, who separated from the Church of England following the death of John Wesley; the Calvinists, led by George Whitfield and supported by the Countess of Huntingdon; and the Evangelical Anglicans, of whom the key figures were Samuel Walker of Truro, Henry Venn of Huddersfield, and John Newton of Olney. All three groups were highly motivated to spread the Gospel to as many people as they could. Prior to Wesley's death, Thomas Coke<sup>142</sup> was sent out to evangelize in the West Indies, and Henry Venn proposed the idea of self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating, principles resisted by many of the early missionary societies.

Some of the motivating factors can be seen in the basic theologies of these three groups. The Methodists believed that Christ died for all and that some might attain Christian perfection in this life. The Calvinists believed that Christ died only for the elect and emphasized that human nature was fallen in every respect.<sup>143</sup> The Anglican Evangelicals believed that Christ died for the whole world, and while they also believed in total depravity, they shared with both the other groups the assurance that their sins were forgiven. They also believed that through Christian missions, the whole world would eventually come to faith in Christ.

Of the three groups, Methodism was best able to establish congregations on the frontier. For Anglicans, being the State Church, it took an act of Parliament to create a new parish; hence, the urban masses grew up beyond the care of the Church of England. Methodism, on the other hand, did not face the same difficulty. With its itinerant pastors and local preachers, it was designed to go where the established church was unable to go. In conclusion, instead of kings and trading companies, these voluntary societies organized themselves specifically for promoting Christianity where it did not exist.

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<sup>142</sup> Coke was also motivated to go to India. He died on the way.

<sup>143</sup> While it might be difficult to understand why the Calvinists would be motivated to spread the Gospel, George Whitefield, a Calvinist Methodist, traveled many times to the United States to participate in the Great Awakening. He was considered the most gifted of the preachers of that time. There must have been some evangelistic and missionary motivation within his Calvinist Methodism.

## *The Orthodox Churches*

The Eastern Orthodox Churches found themselves in an entirely different situation, which did not encourage missionary activity. They were intimidated and repressed by Islam. This does not mean that nothing was happening. Czar Peter the Great, whose reign began in 1682 C.E., contributed to missionary outreach when he encouraged the expansion of Christianity into his eastern territories as part of his over-all policy. In 1720 C.E., he campaigned to raise religious and moral standards among both the clergy and the people.

In the nineteenth century there was a great revival in the Russian Orthodox Church. It was accompanied by a number of church-backed educational institutions and by a new enthusiasm for missionary work, particularly in China, Japan, and North America. It was also in the nineteenth century when two of Russia's greatest original religious thinkers appeared. Alexis Khomiakov put forward a doctrine of Christian community, which suggested that religious authority rested in the entire body of the Church rather than in the papacy or the Bible. Vladimir Soloviev proclaimed the idea that God and human beings were united through spiritual participation in the incarnated Logos. Both men viewed Russia as God's appointed teacher for the world, pointing the way to the ecumenical unity of all Christians.

Under Communism everything changed. The unwritten rule in Soviet Church-State relations was that the right to a carefully limited freedom of worship extended only to groups, which could prove their loyalty to the Communist regime. Christians had freedom to worship, but that was all they had. The Church could not be involved in education or any social programs. That was the State's responsibility.

### **Social Awareness**

#### *The Working Class Poor*

The Church of England and the Orthodox Churches were State Churches; hence, the middle and upper classes felt more comfortable in them than did the working classes and the poor. Although the Methodists began among the poor, they, along with the Congregationalists, began to attract the middle classes. The Primitive Methodists and the Baptists were the most likely to have working class congregations.

William and Catherine Booth began as Methodists, but as Methodism began to attract the middle classes, they withdrew to establish the Salvation Army. "We can't get at the masses in the chapels," complained Catherine Booth in 1865 C.E., the year she and her husband opened their own mission in a tent in Whitechapel in East London. Their venture drew some

criticism. Lord Shaftesbury, for example, concluded that the Salvation Army was a trick of the devil, which was trying to make Christianity look ridiculous. In its beginning the Salvation Army was more concerned with spiritual than material conditions, but as the years rolled by, their focus began to change. They became aware of the interrelationships between the spiritual and the material, and they have to this day maintained their focus on helping the poor both spiritually and materially.

### *Unions*

The Primitive Methodists, with their strong focus on spiritual growth, contributed to the material well being of the working classes. Involvement in chapel affairs made them natural community leaders. They learned how to organize, to speak in public, and to deal with human interrelationships. The local lay preacher could step easily from the pulpit to the strike platform. As a result, the Primitive Methodists had a close connection with the Trade Union movement. One example of this is the story of John Wilson, who became the leader of the Durham miners. At the age of thirty-one, John was cornered in a Primitive Methodist Class Meeting. He describes what happened:

I took my seat, and when the class leader came to where I was sitting and asked me to tell him how I was getting on (meaning in a spiritual sense), I was speechless. The others, in response to his query, had replied readily but my eloquence was in my tears, which I am not ashamed to say flowed freely.... All was joy, and not the least joyous was myself, even while the tears were chasing down my cheeks. This change made, I began seriously to consider how I could be useful in life.

The conversion of John Wilson led him into a thirst for education, enrollment as a local preacher, holding an office in the Miner's Union, and election to Parliament in 1885 C.E.

### *Slavery*

Almost every Protestant denomination was aware of the social issues of the times. Prior to the American Civil War, those issues included women's rights, temperance, prison reform, public education, and the abolition of slavery. This does not mean that they all agreed on what to do about the social issues of the times, but there was certainly an awareness of them. In 1845 C.E., the Southern Methodists declared themselves independent, and in that same year the Southern Baptist Convention was organized. In spite of differences over slavery, most Black Americans joined Baptist and Methodist Churches because they were freer to express their emotions in those denominations. In addition to the Methodist and

Baptist divisions, the Presbyterians also split prior to the Civil War. The Methodists managed to reunite in 1939 C.E.

### *The Bible and Public Education*

From the very first missions were involved in education. Protestantism was a Religion of the Book. Christian nurture and growth without the Bible was unthinkable. For both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries, education was such a common method of missions that it became the door for most people to enter the Church. The mission, where the Bible was taught, was the door into the Church. It was believed that the Bible and Education would cause the collapse of both Hinduism and Buddhism. Neither collapsed and Islam managed to resist Christian missions completely. It was from the world's tribal peoples that most Christians were coming. They could identify with the world of the Bible

### *Evolution and Public Education*

In 1859 C.E., Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*. In this first work, he left room for belief in a Creator, but in the sequel, *The Descent of Man*, published in 1871 C.E., he was openly agnostic. Darwin's works created problems for most of Christianity. For centuries Christians had read the Creation Story in Genesis 1 as if it were a newspaper account of what had happened. Many Bibles were printed with notes stating that the world was created in 4004 B.C.E., the date worked out by Archbishop Ussher. It was inevitable that people would exchange an uncritical view of creation for an uncritical view of evolution. This issue had to be viewed in social terms. Decisions had to be made in regard to what would be taught in the public schools—evolution or creation?<sup>144</sup>

### *Biblical Criticism and Religious Education*

In addition to the threat of agnosticism presented by the theory of evolution, there were also new forms of philosophy, which presented alternative world-views intended to make belief in God obsolete. In Germany, the new science of Biblical criticism threatened to eliminate the supernatural and make Jesus into a human charismatic teacher. The central issue in Biblical criticism was the figure of the historical Jesus. What was Jesus really like? In the Gospels we have the Jesus of Faith. Is the Jesus of Faith different from the historical Jesus?

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<sup>144</sup> Today we can take a more objective view. For most Christians it is not a case of either/or, but of seeing God's creative action in the processes of evolution. To do this requires a right understanding of the Bible and a right understanding of modern science. We need to think anew of God against the background of a scientific view of the world.

On the positive side, scholars were busy reconstructing the biblical text from ancient manuscripts such as the Codex Sinaiticus, which was discovered in a monastery on Mount Sinai. The discovery of new texts and the development of the scientific study of those texts confirmed the essential accuracy of the manuscripts on which the older translations of the Bible, such as the King James Version of 1611 C.E., had been based. All this was very important because Christianity had been considered an historical religion; therefore, it had to be open to historical investigation. The science of Archaeology was confirming the accuracy of some of the historical information given in the Bible.

The theory of evolution, the agnostic philosophies, and Biblical criticism all threw the Church on the defensive. The Churches had to wrestle with these problems and give good answers. This is what religious education is all about, and every generation must give good answers to difficult questions.

### *War and Peace*

The American Civil War, World War I, and World War II presented Christianity with some very difficult problems. In all three of these wars Christians fought Christians. Having settled the slavery issue with the Civil War, there was the dream of evangelizing the world in one generation, but that dream was dampened with the beginning of World War I. If World War I dampened the dream, World War II destroyed it completely. While much could be said about the Civil War and World War I, World War II presented us with two examples of the struggle for peace.

The first example was the rise of the Confessing Church in Germany. Adolph Hitler became the chancellor of the German Republic on January 30, 1933 C.E. In September of that same year, Martin Niemöller formed a Pastor's Emergency League to combat German Christian ideas, which were supportive of Hitler. In May of 1934 C.E., the Confessing Church created the Barmen Declaration, which called the German Church back to the central truths of Christianity and rejected the totalitarian claims of the State in religious and political matters. It was not intended to be a political protest, nor was it intended to spearhead resistance to Nazism. It was directed squarely at the distortions of the German Christians, and it attempted to affirm loyalty to the State. The Confessing Church decided not to set itself up as a rival free Church, but to work within the Church, defending the orthodox Christian faith against distortions.

One of the members of the Confessing Church was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who had written *The Cost of Discipleship*, which suggested pacifism as the Christian response to violence. By serving as a double agent on Admiral Canaris' military intelligence staff, Bonhoeffer was able

to move feely. Using his ecumenical contacts, especially his friendship with Bishop George Bell of Chichester, England, Bonhoeffer sought British government support for the anti-Hitler conspirators. The plot to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944 C.E. failed, and many were arrested, including Bonhoeffer. His arrest in 1943 C.E. arose from his involvement in smuggling fourteen Jews into Switzerland, and on April 8, 1945 C.E., he was hanged at Flossenbug.

The war with Germany officially ended on May 8, 1945 C.E., and the surviving leaders of the Confessing Church declared their guilt for failing to speak out in the early years against the Nazi regime. In a famous quote, Niemoller said:

In Germany they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up.

The second example from World War II has to do with Pope Pius XII. During World War II, the Pope was silent. How can that silence be justified or explained? Did his silence not shatter the spiritual and moral value of his office? His critics argue that if he had spoken out and threatened to excommunicate all Catholics involved in carrying out Hitler's final solution, the Jewish Holocaust would have been avoided. This assumes, however, that the Pope would have had the allegiance of the German Catholics, which is doubtful. Hitler had the allegiance of the German Lutherans, and he probably had the allegiance of the German Catholics as well. Taking this strong line of action might have destroyed the Catholic Church in Germany. In addition, Pope Pius XII did not want to undermine the German struggle against Russia, for he regarded Communism as a greater evil than National Socialism.

The defenders of Pope Pius XII argue that he had to be neutral in order to be in a position to negotiate reconciliation and to avoid lending religious support to the conflict. He realized that most German Catholics supported Hitler and that anti-Semitism had infected them as well. It was doubtful that they would have responded positively to papal efforts to counteract Nazi Jewish policies. It is difficult to know who was right—the Pope's critics or his supporters.

### *Social Issues and the Theology of Liberation*

Christianity has had difficulty finding answers to the social issues of its time, including those of war and peace. In the middle of the twentieth century, theologies of liberation began to surface. Most of them questioned the starting point of theology. Is it the revealed truth of the Bible, or is it our own present experience of life? Traditional theology, including political theology, took the first path; but theologies of liberation took the second. Most, but not all, of these theologians have come from Latin America or the Third World. They point to the failure of traditional and political theologies located in the ivory towers of universities, to cope with the problems of poverty, racial discrimination, economic dependence, and institutionalized violence. Liberation theologians can be found in both Catholic and Protestant Churches.

One example of a Catholic liberation theologian was Dom Helder Camara, who opted for the non-violence, rooted in the Gospels, as an approach to dealing with pressing social issues. He believed that truth, justice, and love are greater than war, murder, and hatred. At the same time, he claimed that the institutionalized violence of the rich against the poor and the institutionalized violence of the developed nations against the under-developed nations of the world are more worthy of condemnation than the revolutionary violence they create.

Martin Luther King, Jr. might be considered one of the primary liberation theologians within the Protestant Church, even though much of his theological education took place in traditional universities and seminaries.<sup>145</sup> The key to King's success was his deep Christian commitment, which was nurtured in the black evangelical tradition and influenced by the social gospel movement. He saw Christianity as a force, which could transform both the individual and the whole of society. King drew on his personal experiences with racial discrimination and developed a theology of liberation for blacks and whites alike. He developed his theology of liberation from Jesus' command to love the enemy and from Gandhi's unique non-violent resistance. His message to his white opponents was: "We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will, and we shall continue to love you...." His message and method became world-famous and in 1964 C.E. he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

It must be stated, however, that not all liberation theologies are non-violent. Many of them have justified revolutionary violence to overcome

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<sup>145</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. earned his Ph.D. from Boston University.

the institutionalized violence of oppressive nations. When they look to Scripture for justification, they use the Exodus Event in the Old Testament. The Egyptians had to suffer military defeat in order for the Hebrew Slaves to experience liberation. Jesus is also interpreted as a revolutionary figure. After all, he took a whip and overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple.

Throughout the history of Christianity there has always been a debate concerning evangelism and social issues. Some Christians argue that the campaign for social justice is essential to evangelism. Others see social justice as little more than a device for securing a hearing for the Gospel from the poor. The Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple (1897-1944 C.E.) had deep insights into the nature of Christian worship and a commitment to evangelism. He constantly exercised prophetic judgment on the social situation, keeping both this world and the next in equal focus. If anyone in the twentieth century represented the best in evangelism it was Billy Graham, and if anyone represented the best in social action it was Martin Luther King, Jr. The balance William Temple illustrated in his life and preaching is not always equally balanced in everyone.

### **Ecumenical Relationships**

In addition to motivating missionary activity and social awareness, the Evangelical Revival also motivated ecumenical relationships. These relationships cannot be separated from missions, and so we must begin with the first World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 C.E.

#### *Edinburgh 1910 C.E.*

The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh was certainly not representative of a Global Mission. Out of the 1,200 representatives, only seventeen came from the younger churches.

8	India
4	Japan
3	China
1	Burma
1	Korea

Latin America was completely omitted from representation. Another negative characteristic about the representation is that it was not balanced. Members of the missionary societies had more representation than ordinary members of the Churches. All this would change. The Conference was significant because it marked the end of one era and the beginning of another. The Center of Christianity was about to change from Western Europe to Africa.

The Conference was, nevertheless, a movement for unity. John R. Mott, who chaired the Conference, clarified its task to survey the world mission of the non-Roman churches. When asked what the mission of the Church was, Mott replied: “to make Jesus Christ known, loved, and obeyed.”

Three main strands emerged out of the Edinburgh Conference. The first strand was the creation in 1921 C.E. of the *International Missionary Council* (IMC). The IMC met in Jerusalem in 1928 C.E. and in Madras in 1938 C.E. Although it was not directly involved in the formation of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 C.E., the IMC met in Ghana in 1958 C.E. and voted to merge with the World Council of Churches. The merger occurred in the New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961 C.E.

The second strand was the *Faith and Order Movement* led by Bishop Brent of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA. Bishop Brent, with a strong desire to face the doctrinal problems, had a vision for the union of Christian churches.

*Life and Work*, the third movement to emerge out of Edinburgh, took shape in the period following World War I when much reconstruction was needed. Archbishop Soderblom of Uppsala had a vision of Churches uniting together in service to the world. His initiative led to Conferences in Stockholm (1925 C.E.) and Oxford (1937 C.E.). At the Oxford Conference proposals were drawn up to unite with Faith and Order and become one with the World Council of Churches.

Neither the Eastern Orthodox nor the Roman Catholic Churches joined the World Council of Churches in 1948 C.E. Following Joseph Stalin’s death in 1953 C.E., the Eastern Orthodox Church began to participate in ecumenical affairs, and in 1961 C.E., they joined the World Council of Churches. The Roman Catholic Church did not join, but did send observers. Pope John XXIII announced that he would call a council, and Vatican II took place in 1962-1965 C.E. opening ecumenical relationships between the Roman Catholic Church and other denominations. The emergence of the Roman Catholic Church as a partner in ecumenical discussions, and the impact of the charismatic movements totally changed the nature of ecumenical relationships.

Although Bishop Brent had declared an interest in facing squarely the doctrinal problems, the World Council of Churches treaded softly with doctrine, but assumed a growing political role. One particular cause of tension was the special fund connected with the Program to Combat Racism, which supported black freedom fighters and guerrilla movements

in Southern Africa. While the fund was never used for supplying arms, it did free up resources so that arms could be purchased with other resources.

*Bangkok 1973 C.E. and Lausanne 1974 C.E.*

In January of 1973 C.E. the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches at its assembly in Bangkok recommended that mission agencies consider the cessation of funds and personnel to particular churches for a limited period of time. This was to be a strategy for making churches self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. This moratorium on mission resources and personnel resulted in a great deal of controversy. Some saw it as a step forward, while others viewed it as a step backwards.

In August of 1974 C.E., the International Congress on World Evangelism met in Lausanne and supported the idea of a moratorium. It proposed a Covenant that a reduction of foreign missionaries may sometimes be necessary to facilitate the national church's growth in self-reliance and the release of resources for un-evangelized areas. The Lausanne Covenant claimed that a new missionary era had dawned, and that a growing partnership of Churches would develop. The movement from missionary paternalism to partnership was painfully slow, but it had become clear that the process was irreversible. The challenge before global Christianity was to apply faith to practical life in a world plagued by poverty, racial discrimination, economic injustice, and ridden by secularism and materialism.

### **New Movements**

The Evangelical Revival also contributed to the spread of numerous denominations. Whatever these denominations meant in Europe and America, they meant little or nothing in the Third World. This does not mean that new denominations did not begin in the Third World. The younger churches of Africa, Asia, and Latin America have produced their own divisions, frequently brought about by individualistic leaders with little or no concern for the unity of the Body of Christ. Independent and Nondenominational Churches around the world are examples of new denominations, even if they claim to be nondenominational. Another movement that has turned the Church upside down in the past century is the Pentecostal Movement, which has cut across all denominational lines. Some would view Pentecostal along side of Catholic (universal), Orthodox, and Protestant. They see Pentecostal as one of the foundational characteristics of the Christian Church.

## *The Pentecostal Movement*

While the Roman Catholic Church has channeled the Holy Spirit through the Sacraments, and while the Reformation Churches have channeled the Holy Spirit through the Bible, the Pentecostal Movement has stressed the importance of a personal experience of the Holy Spirit. The most significant person to emphasize a personal spiritual experience was the primary leader of the Evangelical Revival, John Wesley, who felt his heart strangely warmed in a society meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. With this spiritual experience behind him, he began to emphasize the inner witness of the Spirit and taught that sanctification was a second work of grace distinct from and following justification. These teachings put into motion the holiness movement, which proclaimed the second blessing of sanctification as a cleansing of the heart from all sin. Beyond this blessing was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Because of Wesley's emphasis on sanctification, he is sometimes referred to as the grandfather or stepfather of the Pentecostal Movement.

As opposition to the emphasis on holiness increased within Methodism, several holiness churches were formed. Belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire as a third blessing became widespread, and in addition to that, there was a renewed interest in spiritual gifts. One of those gifts was spiritual healing.

The decisive step was taken at Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas. Charles Fox Parham, one of the ministers influenced by the Holiness movement, believed that the complacent, worldly, and coldly formalistic Church needed to be revived by another outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He instructed his students to pray, fast, study the Scriptures, and like the first Apostles, wait for the blessings of the Holy Spirit. On January 1, 1901, Agnes Oznam became the first of Parham's students to speak in an unknown tongue. Others soon had the same experience. Parham went on to explain, that speaking in tongues, was the initial evidence that one had been truly baptized with the Holy Spirit.

It was, however, the revival that began in 1906 C.E. at the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles that forged the link between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues. Its leader, William Seymour, a Holiness pastor and former member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, had been exposed to Parham's teachings at a Bible School in Houston, Texas. Under Seymour's leadership, the old frame building on Azusa Street became a great spiritual center for many years. The revival attracted rich and poor, blacks and whites, Anglos and Latinos. This three year long revival became the launching pad of the Pentecostal Movement. Hundreds of Christians from

all over the world visited Azusa Street and took the message home and proclaimed it. Most of the Holiness Churches were influenced by this message. They either split over it, or became Pentecostal in doctrine.

Most Pentecostal Churches are orthodox in their beliefs. The one exception is the “Jesus Only”<sup>146</sup> movement, which holds a Unitarian view of God and baptize in the name of Jesus only. This movement was begun by R.E. McAlister in 1913 C.E. Following the formula for baptism found in the Acts of the Apostles, rather than in the Gospel of Matthew<sup>147</sup>, McAlister taught that water baptism was not administered using the Trinitarian formula, but in the name of Jesus only. McAlister’s teaching led to the emergence of the Apostolic or Jesus Only movement. About twenty-five percent of Pentecostals in the United States follow McAlister’s teachings and are Unitarian.

Another major split among Pentecostals had to do with whether the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a second or third work of grace. The pioneers of the Pentecostal Movement believed that justification was the first work, sanctification was the second work, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit was the third work of grace. Around 1910 C.E., there was increasing support for the idea that sanctification was part of Christ’s finished work on the cross, and so the baptism of the Holy Spirit would be a second work of grace. The Pentecostal Movement is split about fifty-fifty on this issue. For those who view the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace, speaking in tongues, is also the initial sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostals tend to view Christ in four roles: as Savior, Baptizer of the Holy Spirit, Healer, and the coming King. Healing evangelists have played a significant role in the expansion of the Pentecostal Movement. Healing is one of those very special spiritual gifts. Belief in demon possession has led to the regular practice of exorcism.

Worship among the Pentecostals is patterned on the model given in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. Exercising one’s spiritual gift is expected, and speaking in tongues is usually understood to be prophecy or words of wisdom. Although worship is spontaneous, it is not without structure, and there is usually a leader or pastor up front.

The Pentecostal Movement has drawn most of its support from the poorer classes of society, and blacks have played a significant role. It has been noted that Pentecostal Churches are among the most inter-racial

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<sup>146</sup> Acts 2:38; 8:16; and 19:5

<sup>147</sup> Matthew 29:19-20

organizations in the United States. The Pentecostal Churches have made the impact in the twentieth century that Methodism made in the eighteenth, and the Salvation Army in the nineteenth centuries.

Their phenomenal growth has been due to the enthusiastic vitality of their experience of the Holy Spirit, the appeal of their spontaneous worship, the absence of a priestly hierarchy, and the insistence that all members must share their faith. In the third world they have not had to labor under Church structures and forms imposed from North America and Europe. This has made it possible for an indigenous growth, which cannot be rivaled in the history of Christian missions. In Europe Pentecostalism is strongest in Scandinavia and in Italy. In Asia Pentecostalism has made significant advances in Indonesia, but its most striking influence has been in Latin America and Africa.

The Assemblies of God, an organization of independent Trinitarian and Arminian Pentecostals, was founded in Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1914 C.E. They organized out of a need for better relationships between Pentecostal Churches. They have a worldwide membership of more than 25 million members, with congregations in more than 150 countries. They are the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world.

Few denominations have had so many splits. In response to the loss of fervor, revitalization efforts periodically appeared that led to the creation of new Pentecostal denominations. Currently, there are more than one hundred Pentecostal denominations. Attempts to limit the multiplication of Pentecostal denominations and to heal the divisions within the movement began with the Pentecostal World Conference, first held in Zurich, Switzerland in 1947 C.E. The initial gathering highlighted the need for a similar meeting in North America, and this led to the formation of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) in 1948 C.E. The PFNA represented mostly white Pentecostal Churches, and so efforts were made in the 1990s to build relationships with the major African American Pentecostal Churches. In 1994 C.E., the PFNA was dissolved and replaced with a new interracial organization, the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America.

In the 1950s the World Council of Churches began to recognize Pentecostalism as genuinely Christian—a third<sup>148</sup> force within Christianity. This recognition was largely due to the work of David du Plessis, then Secretary of the Pentecostal World Conference. He believed that God was

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<sup>148</sup> The other two forces would be Catholic (universal) and Protestant (reforming), but I believe that Orthodox should also be included. This would make the Pentecostal movement a fourth force.

calling him to make contact with the World Council of Churches. His work contributed much to the acceptance of the Pentecostal Movement within the mainstream of Christianity.

In the early 1960s Pentecostal teaching and experiences began to penetrate into the Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant denominations. At first this caused serious strains within many congregations, but those touched by the Pentecostal Movement remained loyal to their Churches and minimized the conflicts. In recent years many religious leaders have moved from a cautious “No comment” to the view that the Pentecostal Movement is the best hope for a renewal of the Church.

### *Independent or Nondenominational Churches*

Whatever mainline denominations meant in Europe and America, they meant little or nothing in the Third World. This does not mean that new denominations did not begin in the Third World. The younger churches of Africa, Asia, and Latin America have produced their own divisions, frequently brought about by individualistic leaders with little or no concern for the unity of the Body of Christ. Independent and Nondenominational Churches have emerged around the world and the United States is not an exception. Many of them have become mega-churches.

The characteristics of the Independent and Nondenominational Churches vary widely, and so they are nearly impossible to describe. A few things, however, can be said about them. They all are Bible centered with charismatic leadership. They prefer self-government at the local level and resist any kind of hierarchal organization. They may indeed have their own hierarchy of apostles and prophets, but they are charismatic leaders who have earned their place in the hierarchy. They also prefer spontaneity and emotion to ritual and liturgy. In the third world, many who join these Independent Churches also maintain their membership in mainline Churches out of respectability. They go to the Independent Churches to fulfill their deepest spiritual and emotional needs. These Churches have indigenous roots and have little or no dependence on foreign personnel and finances. It has been suggested that these Independent and Nondenominational Churches be compared to the Anabaptists. They are a place where people feel at home and they witness to the fact that there is no abiding city in this world. These Independent and Nondenominational Churches can be found all over the world.

Just as the Pentecostal movement sought to cooperate instead of compete, these new conservative, evangelical, and independent churches did the same thing. The movement to work together followed a number of public embarrassments that they suffered in the 1920s, including the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925. The Reverend J. Elwin Wright, disheartened

by how these independent churches were acting like rivals instead of colleagues, transformed a Pentecostal ministry called the First Fruits Harvesters Association into the New England Fellowship. The purpose of this fellowship was to inspire and bring together evangelicals of all stripes throughout New England. In 1934 Wright became a Congregationalist by joining Park Street Church in Boston. His new ecclesiastical commitment enhanced Wright's relationship with a number of emerging evangelical leaders, including Reverend Harold John Ockenga.

The New England Fellowship struck a responsive chord in a part of the country many considered lost to the evangelical cause. But the fellowship did more than bring New Englanders together. It also hosted such prominent personalities as William B. Riley of Minneapolis, Will Houghton of New York, Charles Fuller of Los Angeles and Walter Maier of St. Louis. Wright expanded the horizons of New Englanders to an emerging network of evangelical Christians nationwide. By the end of the 1930s, Wright's idea took off, and he found himself traveling across the country. At the same time, the Reverend Ralph T. Davis of Africa Inland Mission had the same idea, sensing the need for greater cooperation in the missionary enterprise. As a result, the Reverend Will Houghton, president of Moody Bible Institute, called for an exploratory meeting in October of 1941 in Chicago. At that meeting, a temporary Committee for United Action Among Evangelicals was created and Wright was named chairman. A national conference was placed on the calendar for April 7-9, 1942 in St. Louis.

In St. Louis, Reverend Harold J. Ockenga challenged participants in his address, "The Unvoiced Multitudes," to put aside denominational differences for the sake of a more consolidated witness for Christ. The only source of tension came from a fundamentalist from New Jersey, Carl McIntire, who pleaded with participants to join the American Council of Christian Churches, an organization he had founded as a declaration of war against the Federal Council of Churches.<sup>149</sup> Participants declined McIntire's invitation, believing that a more positive testimony to the Gospel was needed. Some very practical issues were drawing evangelicals together, particularly, access to radio. The Federal Council of Churches had persuaded CBS and NBC not to sell time to religious broadcasters, but to allot free time to "recognized" faith communities. Since evangelicals were unorganized, and therefore unrecognized, the new radio policy posed a threat to evangelical broadcasting. The next step was the constitutional Convention in Chicago in 1943. More than one thousand participants took

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<sup>149</sup> The Federal Council of Churches was the predecessor to the National Council of Churches in the USA.

their seats, representing fifty denominations with a potential constituency of fifteen million Christians. After amending the proposed constitution and doctrinal statement, they shortened the name of the organization to the National Association of Evangelicals.

Following the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals, an office was opened in Washington D.C. in 1943. Its purpose was to support evangelical chaplains, assist mission agencies dealing with the State Department, champion the cause of religious broadcasting, and to defend religious liberty. Continued concern over radio prompted the organization to form the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), the first of many related service agencies. The NRB eventually persuaded the networks to reverse their policies of not selling time for religious broadcasting. Other service agencies included a Chaplains Commission and a War Relief Commission, which eventually became known as World Relief. An Evangelical Foreign Missions Association was formed, which eventually became the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies, the largest missionary association in the world.

Growth for the National Association of Evangelicals was slow at first, but by the end of the 1950s, thirty-two denominations, representing 1.5 million members had joined. By this time evangelist Billy Graham, who was identified with the National Association of Evangelicals, had become a national figure. In 1958, Life Magazine called attention to an emerging “Third Force” in Christianity alongside Protestantism and Catholicism as “the most extraordinary religious phenomenon of our time.” It identified five denominations, which comprised two-thirds of the membership of the National Association of Evangelicals. Those denominations were the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, the Pentecostal Church of God, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church. While these represent Pentecostal Churches, membership in the National Association of Evangelicals would soon include non-Pentecostal Churches, such as the nondenominational and community churches.

In the 1950s there was also conflict with the mainline churches. The National Association of Evangelicals established a policy of no dual membership, thus prohibiting some mainline churches from joining. Their competition on the right was McIntire’s American Council of Christian Churches and on the left the National Council of Churches. It was difficult for the organization not to denounce the National Council of Churches, but they did their best to move away from criticism to the promotion of the evangelical cause in positive terms. Seeing the need for a National Association of Evangelicals on the international level, the World

Evangelical Fellowship was formed in 1951.<sup>150</sup> It would become a counterpart to the World Council of Churches formed in 1948.

Following the introduction by the National Council of Churches of the Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible, which was not very popular among Evangelicals, the National Association of Evangelicals cooperated with The New York Bible Society<sup>151</sup> to produce the New International Version (NIV) in 1978. In the first ten years, fifty million copies were distributed throughout the English-speaking world.

The turning point for involvement in politics was the Supreme Court decision of *Roe v. Wade*, granting women an unrestricted right to abortion. This decision, more than anything else, awakened evangelical Christians to the world of politics. While Jimmy Carter distanced his administration from the expanded office of the National Association of Evangelicals, Ronald Reagan courted evangelicals for support by speaking at the 1983 and 1984 conventions of the National Association of Evangelicals. It was the first time a U.S. president had ever visited a function of the National Association of Evangelicals. This caused another growth spurt. By 1990, fifteen new denominations joined the National Association of Evangelicals, which now had a combined communicant membership of its constituent denominations of 4.5 million, a 75% increase since 1980.

In the United States churches belonging to the National Association of Evangelicals represent the fastest growing churches. They are Independent, conservative and evangelical stating clearly what they believe. Their statement of faith is as follows:

*Evangelical Statement of Faith*

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration

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<sup>150</sup> This organization was formed in the Netherlands in August of 1951. Ninety-one leaders from twenty-one countries attended.

<sup>151</sup> Now the International Bible Society

by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

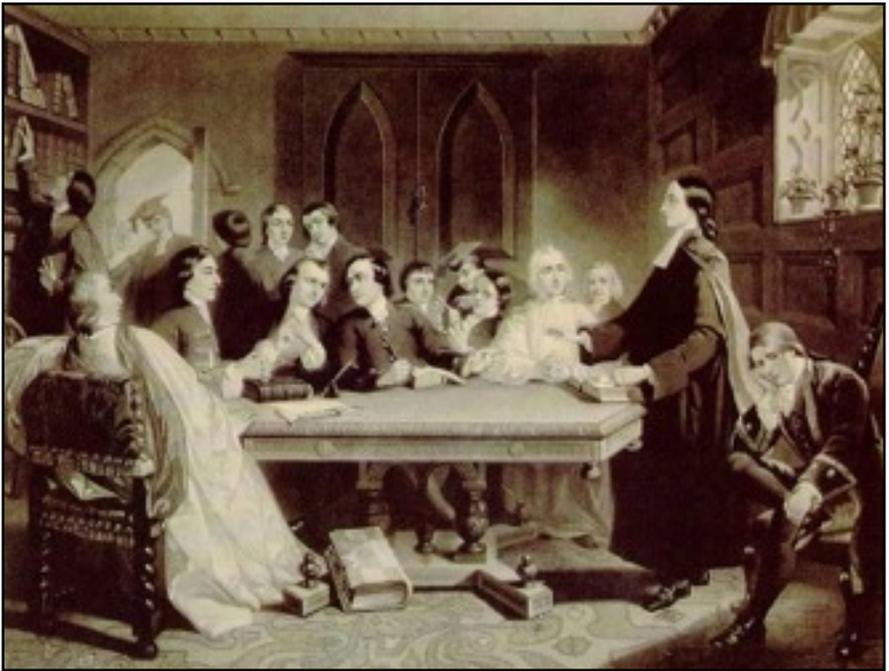
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

What the future holds for Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Mainline Protestant, and the new Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches is anyone's guess; but one thing is for sure, the newer Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches are here to stay. Perhaps all these Churches can learn something from one another. Christianity will have a great future if churches can learn to communicate and cooperate with one another. If they simply compete with one another, or worse yet, criticize one another, then their future will be bleak. Jesus never stopped anyone who was truly proclaiming his message, even if they were not part of the twelve.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> See Mark 9:38-40 and Luke 9:46-50.

## **The Holy Club in London**



## **APPENDICES**



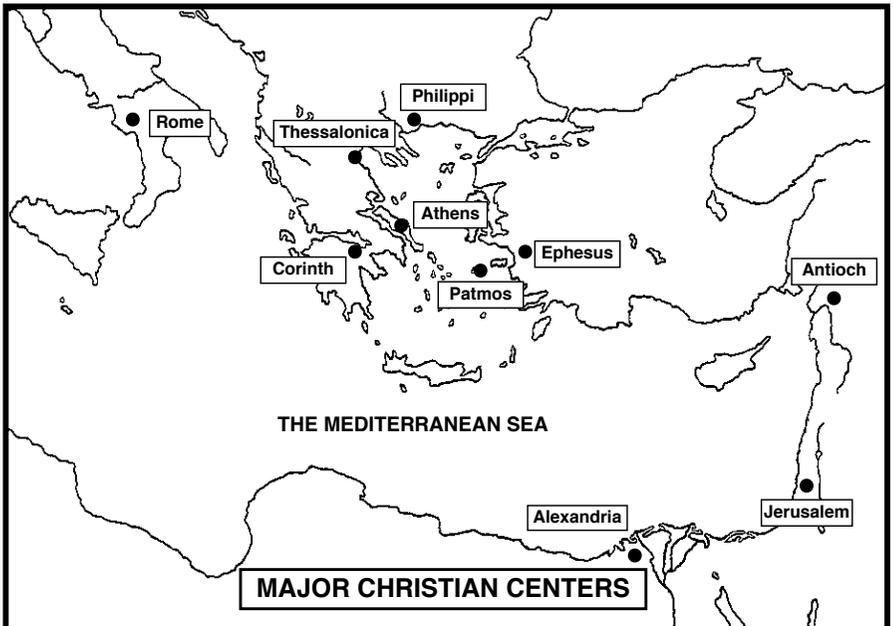
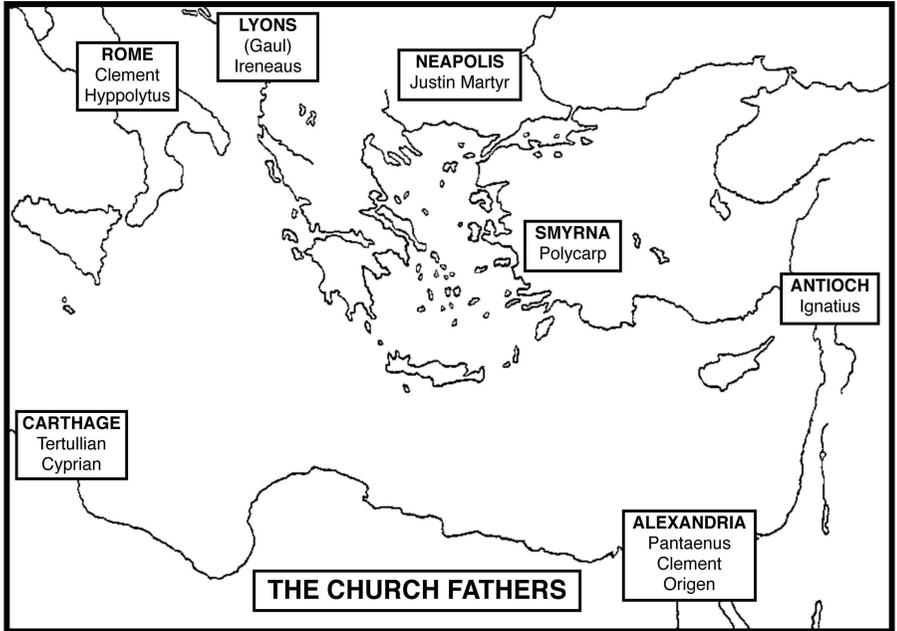
# 1. THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

THE TWELVE DISCIPLES					
NAME	HOME	ATTRIBUTE	VOCATION	CONTRIBUTION	MARTYRED
<b>Andrew</b>	Bethsaida Capernaum	Strength	Fisherman	Introduced Peter to Jesus	Patrae in Achaia North of Greece
<b>Bartholomew</b> Nathanael		Imagination			Armenia (?) or Albania
<b>James</b> The Brother of John	Capernaum	Wisdom	Fisherman	First Martyred by Herod (Agrippa I)	Jerusalem 44 A.D.
<b>James</b> The Less, Son of Alphaeus		Order		Went to Parthians/Medes	Prussia (?) Persia
<b>John</b>	Capernaum	Love	Fisherman	Pastor in Ephesus	Not Martyred Burned in Oil (?)
<b>Judas</b> Iscariot	Kerioth	Life	Treasurer	He betrayed Jesus	Hung Himself in Jerusalem
<b>Jude</b> Thaddaeus or Judas		Renunciation		Missionary to Near East (?)	Persia (?) Berito Mesopotamia
<b>Matthew</b> Levi	Capernaum	Will	Tax Collector	Wrote the first Gospel Went to Parthians/Medes	Ethiopia (?)
<b>Peter</b> Simon	Bethsaida Capernaum	Faith	Fisherman	Apostle to the Jews	Rome 64 A.D.
<b>Philip</b>	Bethsaida	Power		Missionary to Scytha (?) or Persia	Hieropolis (?)
<b>Simon</b> The Zealot/Cananaean		Zeal		Missionary to Africa Asia Minor	Persia or Egypt (?)
<b>Thomas</b>	Antioch (?)	Understanding	Fisherman (?)	Missionary to India	Near Madras, India Malapore
<b>Matthias</b>				Chosen to Replace Judas	
<b>Saul/Paul</b>	Tarsus		Tent Maker	Apostle to the Gentiles	Rome 64 A.D.

## 2. THE TWELVE DISCIPLES COMPARED

<b>NAMES OF THE TWELVE DISCIPLES COMPARED</b>			
<b>MARK</b>	<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>LUKE</b>	<b>ACTS</b>
(Mark 3:16-19)	(Matthew 10:2-4)	(Luke 6:14-16)	(Acts 1:13)
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter
James	James	James	James
John	John	John	John
Andrew	Andrew	Andrew	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew
Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
James Son of Alphaeus	James Son of Alphaeus	James Son of Alphaeus	James Son of Alphaeus
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Judas Son of James	Judas Son of James
Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

### 3. MAPS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS



## 4. THE HERETICS AND HERESIES

**The Ebionites:** They taught that Jesus was only human.

Jesus fulfilled the Jewish Law

God chose Jesus to be the Messiah (Anointed King)

He received his divine powers at his baptism

**The Gnostics:** Jesus was not human, material is evil, the spiritual is good.

Dualism between the spiritual and material

Secret Knowledge

Most Gnostics rejected the Hebrew Scriptures

They could not conceive of the Incarnation

**The Marcionites:** Rejection of the Hebrew Scriptures and denial of Jesus' humanity.

OT God is not the same as the NT God (of Jesus Christ)

Jesus suddenly appeared in the Temple (not born of woman)

Marcion started the process of a Christian Canon

Luke, (except for the Nativity), 10 Letters of Paul

**The Monarchians (Sabellians):** They rejected the Orthodox Trinity.

They wanted to emphasize the unity or monarchy (single principle) of God

God appeared in different modes as Son and Holy Spirit

God could only exist in one mode at a time

**The Novationists:** They were orthodox, but became too strict.

They refused to accept those who had renounced Christ

They called themselves Cathari (pure ones)

Everyone joining them had to be baptized or re-baptized

The movement was reabsorbed into the mainstream

**The Manichaeans:** Jesus came to release the souls of light from the prince of darkness.

This movement took on Gnostic characteristics

There are two independent eternal principles: Light and darkness, God and matter.

First Epoch: They were separated

Second Epoch: They were intermingled

Final Epoch: They will be separated

Two groups of People: Elect and Hearers

Believed their religion to be the final universal religion

**The Donatists:** They denied Jesus' humanity and claimed to be the only true Church  
 Christ was a temporary appearance of God disguised as a human being  
 Catholics were the heretics  
 Baptism and Ordination depend upon the moral character of the Bishop

HERESY	Leader	World	Divinity	Humanity	Trinity	Holy Spirit	Scripture	Salvation	Discipline
Ebionites			Denied Divinity	Emphasized Humanity			Fulfills OT	Continues in the Law	
Gnostics		Dualistic		Denied Humanity			Rejects OT	Gnosis	
Marcionites	Marcion Pontus/Rome (140)	Dualistic: Material Evil		Jesus not born of a Woman			Part of Luke 10 Letters of Paul		
Montanists	Montanus Phrygia (140)					Emphasize Holy Spirit (Tongues)	Lament rise of NT		
Monarchians Patripassians Modalists	Sabellius (Sabellians)		Mode of Deity (Passus)		Unity of Godhead (Pater)	Mode of Deity			
Novatianists	Novatian (251)				Supported Trinity			Cathari (Pure Ones)	Bishop must be pure to ordain/baptize
Manichaeans	Mani Hearers and Elect (216-76)	Dualistic	Emphasized Divinity	Denied Humanity				Claimed to be final Universal Religion	
Donatists	Donatus (Carthage) (315-355)		Emphasized Divinity	Denied Humanity				Only True Church (7th Century)	Bishop must be pure to ordain/baptize
Arians	Arius (Alexandria) (320)		Subordinate to the Father	Born not Begotten	Questions the Trinity			Lacks basis for Salvation	
Pelagians	Pelagius (Britain or Ireland) (400)							Accepts Freedom & rejects Original Sin	
Nestorians	Nestorius (428) (Syria)		Accepts Two Natures	Accepts Two Natures	Merges Will not Essential Union				

## 5. LESSONS LEARNED FROM HERESY

“The Holy Spirit has been chased into a book.”

*Tertullian*

“God is not a baby two or three months old.”

*Nestorius*

Our falsified and inauthentic ways of dealing with our fellow men  
are allied to our falsifications of the idea of God.  
Our unjust society and our perverted idea of God  
are in close and terrible alliance.

*Juan Luis Segundo*<sup>153</sup>

### THE LESSONS WE MUST LEARN

1. We need a body of literature to define our faith and morals.
2. We need to be open to the Holy Spirit, who reveals more of God’s truth in our own time.
3. We need to make clear the belief that we are saved by grace through faith. Two ways are open to us: John Calvin or Jacob Arminius

John Wesley suggested (1) prevenient grace, (2) justifying grace, and (3) sanctifying grace.

4. We need to use four sources of authority in the development of our faith and morals

Scripture  
Tradition  
Reason  
Experience

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<sup>153</sup> Juan Luis Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, trans. by John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1978), pp. 7-8.

## **6. THE CREEDS**

### **IRENAEUS' RULE OF FAITH**

...this faith: in one God, the Father Almighty, who made the heaven and the earth and the seas and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who made known through the prophets the plan of salvation, and the coming, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his future appearing from heaven in the glory of the Father to sum up all things and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race...

### **HIPPOLYTUS' OLD BAPTISMAL CREED**

1. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?
2. Do you believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was dead and buried, and rose again the third day, alive from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the living and the dead?
3. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, in the holy church, and the resurrection of the body?

### **THE OLD ROMAN CREED**

I believe in God almighty [the Father almighty]  
And in Christ Jesus, his only Son, our Lord  
Who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried  
And the third day rose from the dead  
Who ascended into heaven  
And sits on the right hand of the Father  
Whence he comes to judge the living and the dead.  
And in the Holy Ghost  
The holy church  
The remission of sins  
The resurrection of the flesh  
The life everlasting.

## **THE APOSTLES CREED (400 CE)**

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified. Dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

## **THE CREED OF NICAEA (Nicaea 325 CE)**

We believe in one God, the Father, Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance (ousia) of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, Very God from Very God, begotten not made, of **one substance (homoousios, consubstantial) with the Father**, through whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and is coming to judge the living and the dead;

And in the Holy Spirit.

And those who say: "There was a time when he was not," and: "Before he was begotten he was not," and: "He came into being from nothing," or those who pretend that the Son of God is "Of another substance (hypostasis), or essence (ousia)" [than the Father] or "created" or "alterable" or "mutable," the catholic and apostolic church places under a curse.

**THE NICENE CREED**  
**(Chalcedon 451 CE)**

We believe in one God the Father All-sovereign, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, **of one substance with the Father** (homoousios), through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens, and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens, and sits on the right hand of the Father, and comes again with glory to judge living and dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end:

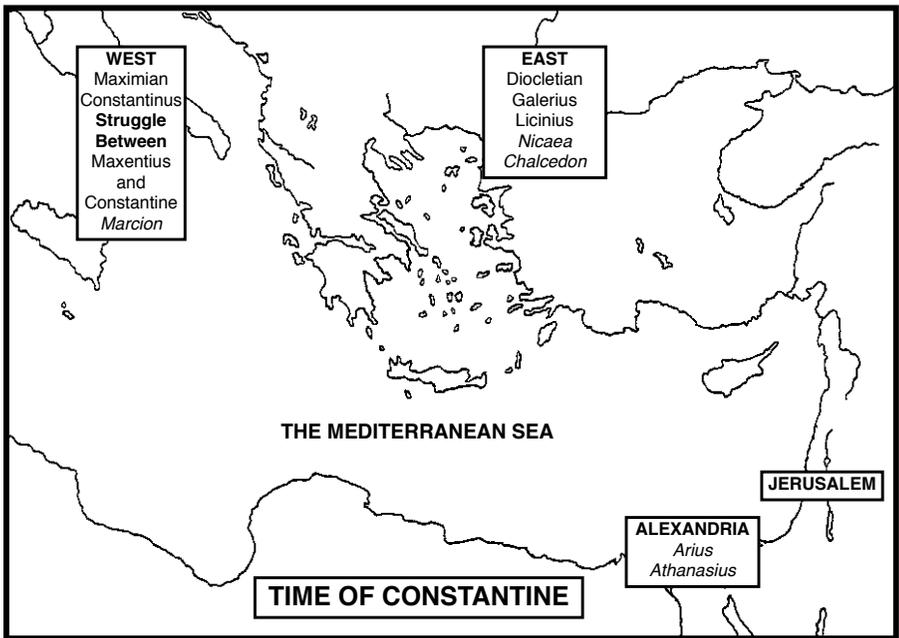
And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver, that proceeds from the Father, who with Father and Son is worshipped together and glorified together, who spoke through the prophets: In one holy catholic and apostolic church:

We acknowledge one baptism unto remission of sins. We look for a resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come.

## 7. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

<b>THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT</b>			
<b>Muratorian Canon</b>	<b>Origen</b>	<b>Eusebius</b>	<b>Athanasius</b>
<b>Rome: 200 C.E.</b>	<b>250 C.E.</b>	<b>300 C.E.</b>	<b>367 C.E.</b>
Four Gospels	Four Gospels	Four Gospels	Four Gospels
Acts	Acts	Acts	Acts
Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans
1 & 2 Corinthians	1& 2 Corinthians	1 & 2 Corinthians	1 & 2 Corinthians
Galatians	Galatians	Galatians	Galatians
Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians
Philippians	Philippians	Philippians	Philippians
Colossians	Colossians	Colossians	Colossians
1 & 2 Thessalonians	1 & 2 Thessalonians	1 & 2 Thessalonians	1 & 2 Thessalonians
1 & 2 Timothy	1 & 2 Timothy	1 & 2 timothy	1 & 2 timothy
Titus	Titus	Titus	Titus
Philemon	Philemon	Philemon	Philemon
			Hebrews
James			James
	1 Peter	1 Peter	1 & 2 Peter
1 & 2 John	1 John	1 John	1, 2 & 3 John
Jude			Jude
Revelation of John	Revelation of John	Revelation of John	Revelation of John
Revelation of Peter			
Wisdom of Solomon			

## 8. THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE



## 9. THE SEVEN ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

1. The First Ecumenical Council (325 C.E.) was held in Nicaea. It condemned the teaching of Arius and approved a creed containing the *homoousious*<sup>154</sup> clause.
2. The Second Ecumenical Council (381 C.E.) was held in Constantinople. It approved an expanded version of the Creed of Nicaea. Today, this creed is called the Nicene Creed.
3. The Third Ecumenical Council (431 C.E.) was held in Ephesus. It condemned Nestorius and his Christology. It also emphasized the unity of Christ and that Mary is *theotokos* (mother of God), that the union of divine and human in Christ is *hypostatic*<sup>155</sup> and that Christ's body is lifegiving flesh.
4. The Fourth Ecumenical Council (451 C.E.) was held in Chalcedon. It held that in Christ there are two natures, divine and human, which remain distinct in the unity of one person.
5. The Fifth Ecumenical Council (553 B.C.) was held in Chalcedon. It interpreted the teaching of Chalcedon, reemphasizing the unity of Christ's person.
6. The Sixth Ecumenical Council (681 C.E.) was held in Constantinople. It rejected *monothelism*, the teaching that there is only one will in Christ, in favor of *Dyothelism*, the teaching that he has both a divine will and a human will.
7. The Seventh Ecumenical Council (787 C.E.) was held in Nicaea. It rejected *iconoclasm* and taught that *icons* are to be venerated, but not worshipped.<sup>156</sup>

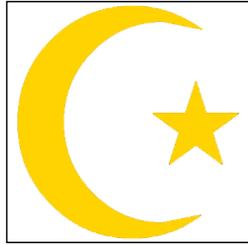
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<sup>154</sup> A term used to describe the relationship of the Son to the Father. In English the word would mean "of one substance," "of one essence," or "of one being." It means that the Son has the same divine essence as the Father.

<sup>155</sup> A technical term describing the unique unity between the two natures, divine and human, in the one person or *hypostasis* of Christ.

<sup>156</sup> Philip Cary, *The History of Christian Theology* (Chantilly, Virginia: The Great Courses, 2008), pp. 136-137.

## 10. THE SYMBOL OF ISLAM



The crescent moon and star is an internationally-recognized symbol of the faith of Islam. The symbol is featured on the flags of several Muslim countries, and is even part of the official emblem for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Christians have the cross, the Jews have the star of David, and the Muslims have the crescent moon, right?

What is the history behind the crescent moon symbol? What does it symbolize or mean? How and when did it become associated with the faith of Islam? Is it a valid symbol for the faith?

The crescent moon and star symbol actually pre-dates Islam by several thousand years. Information on the origins of the symbol are difficult to ascertain, but most sources agree that these ancient celestial symbols were in use by the peoples of Central Asia and Siberia in their worship of sun, moon, and sky gods. There are also reports that the crescent moon and star were used to represent the Carthaginian goddess Tanit or the Greek goddess Diana.

The city of Byzantium (later known as Constantinople and Istanbul) adopted the crescent moon symbol. According to some reports, they chose it in honor of the goddess Diana. Others indicate that it dates back to a battle in which the Romans defeated the Goths on the first day of a lunar month. In any event, the crescent moon was featured on the city's flag even before the birth of Christ.

The early Muslim community did not really have a symbol. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad, Islamic armies and caravans flew simple solid-colored flags (generally black, green, or white) for identification purposes. In later generations, the Muslim leaders continued to use a simple black, white, or green flag with no markings, writing, or symbolism on it.

It wasn't until the Ottoman Empire that the crescent moon and star became affiliated with the Muslim world. When the Turks conquered Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453, they adopted the city's existing flag and symbol. Legend holds that the founder of the Ottoman Empire, Osman, had a dream in which the crescent moon stretched from one end of the earth to the other. Taking this as a good omen, he chose to keep the crescent and make it the symbol of his dynasty. There is speculation that the five points on the star represent the five pillars of Islam, but this is pure conjecture. The five points were not standard on the Ottoman flags, and, it is still not standard on flags used in the Muslim world today.

For hundreds of years, the Ottoman Empire ruled over the Muslim world. After centuries of battle with Christian Europe, it is understandable how the symbols of this empire became linked in people's minds with the faith of Islam as a whole.

Based on this history, many Muslims reject using the crescent moon as a symbol of Islam. The faith of Islam has historically had no symbol, and many refuse to accept what is essentially an ancient pagan icon. It is certainly not in uniform use among Muslims.

This leads to the question of alternatives. What other “symbol” represents the faith? Is it necessary to even have a symbol?

# 11. BASIC MUSLIM BELIEFS

## 1. The Unity of God

- a. Our total focus should be on God
- b. With the Unity of God, there should be one people

## 2. Social Justice

- a. All persons are equal
- b. Wealth should be shared
- c. All persons should surrender to God (Allah)
- d. Those who surrender are *Muslim*

## 3. The Koran

- a. The Koran is the Word of God
- b. The Koran is God's (Allah's) Revelation of Spiritual Teaching
  - i. to give ethical and social guidance
  - ii. to keep us from making God (Allah) in our own image
- c. The Koran itself is a Miracle

## 4. Life After Death

- a. Confession of Faith
- b. Pray Times a Day
- c. Give 2.5% of Your Wealth
- d. Fast during the Month of Ramadan<sup>157</sup>
- e. Make a Pilgrimage to Mecca
- f. Jiad (Holy War): Internal and External Struggles with Evil

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<sup>157</sup> Ramadan was designated because it was the month during which Muhammad received the first of the Koran's revelations.

## 12. THOUGHTS ON IDOLATRY

Where you hang your heart, there is your God.

*Martin Luther*

The heart of man is an idol factory.

*John Calvin*

Whenever men stop believing in God, they straightaway deify man.

*Dostoevski*

It is just as much idolatry to worship God according to a false mental image as by means of a false metal image.

*William Temple*

Democracy has no monuments. It strikes no medals.

It does not bear the head of a man on its coinage.

Its true character is iconoclast.

*John Quincy Adams, fourth president of the United States*

In a variety of forms, a new religion is vying for allegiance, and it is winning converts left and right. It stands in diametrical opposition to biblical faith, even though it still uses the terminology of Scriptures. It is a religion that has ascribed the name of Jesus to its deity, even though there is little resemblance between the historical Jesus and the new one created in the image of a contemporary personality who reflects our cultural values. This new Jesus propagates a *prosperity theology* that promises the faithful if they seek first the kingdom of this reconstructed deity and do all the things the pop religious books say will guarantee success, then all these things (the ones described in the ads) will be added unto them. This is a new religion that is functional, fit for these new believers who hunger for consumer goods. It has, as they say, *user-friendly churches* that are just right for people whose God is a super-genie who can be at our beck and call through prayer and who will help us succeed in life...which of course means to get all the things we don't need, so as to gratify our media-created hungers.

From time to time, a Mother Teresa comes along and reminds us of the other Jesus. We admire her and Him. But then we hurry back to that real Jesus who doesn't demand sacrifices for the poor and the oppressed but

simply promises to be there to help us to be, as the ad for the army suggests, all that we can be.

*Tony Campollo*

The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
And worship only Thee.

*William Cowper*

The Book of Genesis says that God created man to His image and likeness. It seems that the most pursuing heresy in all of Christian history has been this--that man has reversed Genesis--man has made God to his image and likeness.

John Powell, *Why Am I Afraid to Love?* pp. 26-27.

Sin is the violation of the image of God within us. Be yourself! means living in the image of God.

Do you not know that you are God's temple  
and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

—1 Corinthians 3:16

Which God motivates Christian faith: the crucified God or the gods of religion, race and class?

Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, P. 201.

Technology is the enemy of reverence. Deliberately or inadvertently, technology puts out sacred fires because technology is the celebration of what man can do. In the Bible, idol-worship is not a matter of praying to stones and statues. Idol-worship is the celebration of the man-made as the highest achievement in the world.

Harold Kushner, *Who Needs God*, p. 54.

In the bible, the sin of idolatry is not just a matter of bowing down to statues. Idol worship is treating the work of your own hands as if it were divine, worshipping yourself as the highest source of value and creativity. When the Second Commandment reads, "You shall not make yourself a grave image," one commentator takes that to mean not "You shall not make an idol for yourself," but "You shall not make an idol of yourself." Do not make yourself into an object of worship by believing that you have

enough power to control the world in which you live and the other people who live in it.

Kushner, *When All You've Ever Wanted Isn't Enough*, p. 53.

Christendom has done away with Christianity, without being aware of it. Therefore, if anything is to be done about it, one must try again to introduce Christianity into Christendom.

For long the tactics have been to induce as many as possible, everybody if possible, to enter Christianity. Do not be too curious whether what they enter is Christianity. My tactics will be, with the help of God, to make clear what the Christian demand really is if no one entered it.<sup>158</sup>

*Soren Kierkegaard*

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<sup>158</sup> These quotations come from the *Interpreter's Bible*, Volume 12, p. 62 and from Samuel M. Shoemaker, *Revive Thy Church Beginning with Me* (Word, 1948), p. 8.

## 13. MARTIN LUTHER'S 95 THESES

Out of love and concern for the truth, and with the object of eliciting it, the following heads will be the subject of a public discussion at Wittenberg under the presidency of the reverend father, Martin Luther, Augustinian, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, and duly appointed Lecturer on these subjects in that place. He requests that whoever cannot be present personally to debate the matter orally will do so in absence in writing.

1. When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said "Repent", He called for the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.
2. The word cannot be properly understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, i.e. confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.
3. Yet its meaning is not restricted to repentance in one's heart; for such repentance is null unless it produces outward signs in various mortifications of the flesh.
4. As long as hatred of self abides (i.e. true inward repentance) the penalty of sin abides, viz., until we enter the kingdom of heaven.
5. The pope has neither the will nor the power to remit any penalties beyond those imposed either at his own discretion or by canon law.
6. The pope himself cannot remit guilt, but only declare and confirm that it has been remitted by God; or, at most, he can remit it in cases reserved to his discretion. Except for these cases, the guilt remains untouched.
7. God never remits guilt to anyone without, at the same time, making him humbly submissive to the priest, His representative.
8. The penitential canons apply only to men who are still alive, and, according to the canons themselves, none applies to the dead.
9. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit, acting in the person of the pope, manifests grace to us, by the fact that the papal regulations always cease to apply at death, or in any hard case.
10. It is a wrongful act, due to ignorance, when priests retain the canonical penalties on the dead in purgatory.
11. When canonical penalties were changed and made to apply to purgatory, surely it would seem that tares were sown while the bishops were asleep.

12. In former days, the canonical penalties were imposed, not after, but before absolution was pronounced; and were intended to be tests of true contrition.
13. Death puts an end to all the claims of the Church; even the dying are already dead to the canon laws, and are no longer bound by them.
14. Defective piety or love in a dying person is necessarily accompanied by great fear, which is greatest where the piety or love is least.
15. This fear or horror is sufficient in itself, whatever else might be said, to constitute the pain of purgatory, since it approaches very closely to the horror of despair.
16. There seems to be the same difference between hell, purgatory, and heaven as between despair, uncertainty, and assurance.
17. Of a truth, the pains of souls in purgatory ought to be abated, and charity ought to be proportionately increased.
18. Moreover, it does not seem proved, on any grounds of reason or Scripture, that these souls are outside the state of merit, or unable to grow in grace.
19. Nor does it seem proved to be always the case that they are certain and assured of salvation, even if we are very certain ourselves.
20. Therefore the pope, in speaking of the plenary remission of all penalties, does not mean "all" in the strict sense, but only those imposed by himself.
21. Hence those who preach indulgences are in error when they say that a man is absolved and saved from every penalty by the pope's indulgences.
22. Indeed, he cannot remit to souls in purgatory any penalty which canon law declares should be suffered in the present life.
23. If plenary remission could be granted to anyone at all, it would be only in the cases of the most perfect, i.e. to very few.
24. It must therefore be the case that the major part of the people are deceived by that indiscriminate and high-sounding promise of relief from penalty.
25. The same power as the pope exercises in general over purgatory is exercised in particular by every single bishop in his bishopric and priest in his parish.

26. The pope does excellently when he grants remission to the souls in purgatory on account of intercessions made on their behalf, and not by the power of the keys (which he cannot exercise for them).
27. There is no divine authority for preaching that the soul flies out of the purgatory immediately the money clinks in the bottom of the chest.
28. It is certainly possible that when the money clinks in the bottom of the chest avarice and greed increase; but when the church offers intercession, all depends in the will of God.
29. Who knows whether all souls in purgatory wish to be redeemed in view of what is said of St. Severinus and St. Pascal? (Note: Paschal I, pope 817-24. The legend is that he and Severinus were willing to endure the pains of purgatory for the benefit of the faithful).
30. No one is sure of the reality of his own contrition, much less of receiving plenary forgiveness.
31. One who bona fide buys indulgence is a rare as a bona fide penitent man, i.e. very rare indeed.
32. All those who believe themselves certain of their own salvation by means of letters of indulgence, will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.
33. We should be most carefully on our guard against those who say that the papal indulgences are an inestimable divine gift, and that a man is reconciled to God by them.
34. For the grace conveyed by these indulgences relates simply to the penalties of the sacramental "satisfactions" decreed merely by man.
35. It is not in accordance with Christian doctrines to preach and teach that those who buy off souls, or purchase confessional licenses, have no need to repent of their own sins.
36. Any Christian whatsoever, who is truly repentant, enjoys plenary remission from penalty and guilt, and this is given him without letters of indulgence.
37. Any true Christian whatsoever, living or dead, participates in all the benefits of Christ and the Church; and this participation is granted to him by God without letters of indulgence.

38. Yet the pope's remission and dispensation are in no way to be despised, for, as already said, they proclaim the divine remission.
39. It is very difficult, even for the most learned theologians, to extol to the people the great bounty contained in the indulgences, while, at the same time, praising contrition as a virtue.
40. A truly contrite sinner seeks out, and loves to pay, the penalties of his sins; whereas the very multitude of indulgences dulls men's consciences, and tends to make them hate the penalties.
41. Papal indulgences should only be preached with caution, lest people gain a wrong understanding, and think that they are preferable to other good works: those of love.
42. Christians should be taught that the pope does not at all intend that the purchase of indulgences should be understood as at all comparable with the works of mercy.
43. Christians should be taught that one who gives to the poor, or lends to the needy, does a better action than if he purchases indulgences.
44. Because, by works of love, love grows and a man becomes a better man; whereas, by indulgences, he does not become a better man, but only escapes certain penalties.
45. Christians should be taught that he who sees a needy person, but passes him by although he gives money for indulgences, gains no benefit from the pope's pardon, but only incurs the wrath of God.
46. Christians should be taught that, unless they have more than they need, they are bound to retain what is only necessary for the upkeep of their home, and should in no way squander it on indulgences.
47. Christians should be taught that they purchase indulgences voluntarily, and are not under obligation to do so.
48. Christians should be taught that, in granting indulgences, the pope has more need, and more desire, for devout prayer on his own behalf than for ready money.
49. Christians should be taught that the pope's indulgences are useful only if one does not rely on them, but most harmful if one loses the fear of God through them.
50. Christians should be taught that, if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence-preachers, he would rather the church of St. Peter

were reduced to ashes than be built with the skin, flesh, and bones of the sheep.

51. Christians should be taught that the pope would be willing, as he ought if necessity should arise, to sell the church of St. Peter, and give, too, his own money to many of those from whom the pardon-merchants conjure money.
52. It is vain to rely on salvation by letters of indulgence, even if the commissary, or indeed the pope himself, were to pledge his own soul for their validity.
53. Those are enemies of Christ and the pope who forbid the word of God to be preached at all in some churches, in order that indulgences may be preached in others.
54. The word of God suffers injury if, in the same sermon, an equal or longer time is devoted to indulgences than to that word.
55. The pope cannot help taking the view that if indulgences (very small matters) are celebrated by one bell, one pageant, or one ceremony, the gospel (a very great matter) should be preached to the accompaniment of a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies.
56. The treasures of the church, out of which the pope dispenses indulgences, are not sufficiently spoken of or known among the people of Christ.
57. That these treasures are not temporal are clear from the fact that many of the merchants do not grant them freely, but only collect them.
58. Nor are they the merits of Christ and the saints, because, even apart from the pope, these merits are always working grace in the inner man, and working the cross, death, and hell in the outer man.
59. St. Laurence said that the poor were the treasures of the church, but he used the term in accordance with the custom of his own time.
60. We do not speak rashly in saying that the treasures of the church are the keys of the church, and are bestowed by the merits of Christ.
61. For it is clear that the power of the pope suffices, by itself, for the remission of penalties and reserved cases.

62. The true treasure of the church is the Holy gospel of the glory and the grace of God.
63. It is right to regard this treasure as most odious, for it makes the first to be the last.
64. On the other hand, the treasure of indulgences is most acceptable, for it makes the last to be the first.
65. Therefore the treasures of the gospel are nets which, in former times, they used to fish for men of wealth.
66. The treasures of the indulgences are the nets which to-day they use to fish for the wealth of men.
67. The indulgences, which the merchants extol as the greatest of favours, are seen to be, in fact, a favourite means for money-getting.
68. Nevertheless, they are not to be compared with the grace of God and the compassion shown in the Cross.
69. Bishops and curates, in duty bound, must receive the commissaries of the papal indulgences with all reverence.
70. But they are under a much greater obligation to watch closely and attend carefully lest these men preach their own fancies instead of what the pope commissioned.
71. Let him be anathema and accursed who denies the apostolic character of the indulgences.
72. On the other hand, let him be blessed who is on his guard against the wantonness and license of the pardon-merchant's words.
73. In the same way, the pope rightly excommunicates those who make any plans to the detriment of the trade in indulgences.
74. It is much more in keeping with his views to excommunicate those who use the pretext of indulgences to plot anything to the detriment of holy love and truth.
75. It is foolish to think that papal indulgences have so much power that they can absolve a man even if he has done the impossible and violated the mother of God.
76. We assert the contrary, and say that the pope's pardons are not able to remove the least venial of sins as far as their guilt is concerned.

77. When it is said that not even St. Peter, if he were now pope, could grant a greater grace, it is blasphemy against St. Peter and the pope.
78. We assert the contrary, and say that he, and any pope whatever, possesses greater graces, viz., the gospel, spiritual powers, gifts of healing, etc., as is declared in I Corinthians 12 [:28].
79. It is blasphemy to say that the insignia of the cross with the papal arms are of equal value to the cross on which Christ died.
80. The bishops, curates, and theologians, who permit assertions of that kind to be made to the people without let or hindrance, will have to answer for it.
81. This unbridled preaching of indulgences makes it difficult for learned men to guard the respect due to the pope against false accusations, or at least from the keen criticisms of the laity.
82. They ask, e.g.: Why does not the pope liberate everyone from purgatory for the sake of love (a most holy thing) and because of the supreme necessity of their souls? This would be morally the best of all reasons. Meanwhile he redeems innumerable souls for money, a most perishable thing, with which to build St. Peter's church, a very minor purpose.
83. Again: Why should funeral and anniversary masses for the dead continue to be said? And why does not the pope repay, or permit to be repaid, the benefactions instituted for these purposes, since it is wrong to pray for those souls who are now redeemed?
84. Again: Surely this is a new sort of compassion, on the part of God and the pope, when an impious man, an enemy of God, is allowed to pay money to redeem a devout soul, a friend of God; while yet that devout and beloved soul is not allowed to be redeemed without payment, for love's sake, and just because of its need of redemption.
85. Again: Why are the penitential canon laws, which in fact, if not in practice, have long been obsolete and dead in themselves,—why are they, to-day, still used in imposing fines in money, through the granting of indulgences, as if all the penitential canons were fully operative?
86. Again: since the pope's income to-day is larger than that of the wealthiest of wealthy men, why does he not build this one church of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with the money of indigent believers?

87. Again: What does the pope remit or dispense to people who, by their perfect repentance, have a right to plenary remission or dispensation?
88. Again: Surely a greater good could be done to the church if the pope were to bestow these remissions and dispensations, not once, as now, but a hundred times a day, for the benefit of any believer whatever.
89. What the pope seeks by indulgences is not money, but rather the salvation of souls; why then does he suspend the letters and indulgences formerly conceded, and still as efficacious as ever?
90. These questions are serious matters of conscience to the laity. To suppress them by force alone, and not to refute them by giving reasons, is to expose the church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies, and to make Christian people unhappy.
91. If therefore, indulgences were preached in accordance with the spirit and mind of the pope, all these difficulties would be easily overcome, and indeed, cease to exist.
92. Away, then, with those prophets who say to Christ's people, "Peace, peace," where in there is no peace.
93. Hail, hail to all those prophets who say to Christ's people, "The cross, the cross," where there is no cross.
94. Christians should be exhorted to be zealous to follow Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, and hells.
95. And let them thus be more confident of entering heaven through many tribulations rather than through a false assurance of peace.

## **14. LUTHER'S DEFINITION OF FAITH**

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure that it would die a thousand times for it. Such confidence and such knowledge of God's grace makes a man joyous, gay, bold and merry toward God and all creatures. That is what the Holy Spirit does in faith. Thus, without being driven, a man begins willingly and gladly to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer all sorts and kinds of things, and to love and praise God, who has shown him such grace; so that it is as impossible to separate works of faith as it is impossible to separate light and heat from the fire.

Faith is living and unshakeable confidence, a belief in the grace of God so assured that a man would die a thousand deaths for its sake. This kind of confidence in God's grace, this sort of knowledge of it, makes us joyful, high spirited, and eager in our relations with God and with all mankind. That is what the Holy Spirit effects through faith. Hence, the man of faith, without being driven, willingly and gladly seeks to do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of hardships, for the sake of the love and glory of the God who has shown him such grace. It is impossible, indeed to separate works from faith, just as it is impossible to separate heat and light from fire.<sup>159</sup>

## **15. MARTIN LUTHER'S TOWER EXPERIENCE**

At last, by the mercy of God, I began to understand the justice of God as that by which God makes us just in his mercy and through faith...and at this I felt as though I had been born again, and had gone through open gates into paradise.<sup>160</sup>

I felt as if born again, and it seemed to me as though heaven's gates stood full open before me and that I was joyfully entering therein.

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<sup>159</sup> Martin Luther, *Introduction to the Book of Romans*. I have placed two different English translations of the German.

<sup>160</sup> *Western Civilizations*, p. 469.

## **16. JONATHAN EDWARDS' GREAT AWAKENING**

The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in sun, moon and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers and trees; in the water and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. And scarce anything, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning; formerly nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunderstorm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoices me.<sup>161</sup>

## **17. JOHN WESLEY'S ALDERSGATE EXPERIENCE**

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, "This cannot be faith; for where is thy joy?" Then was I taught, that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation: But that, as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of his own will.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Tony Campollo, *Carpe Diem*, p. 143.

<sup>162</sup> *The Journal of John Wesley*, May 4, 1738.

## 18. THE GENERAL RULES OF METHODISM

### The Nature, Design, and General Rules of Our United Societies

In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, as did two or three more the next day, that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them, and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

This was the rise of the **United Society**, first in Europe, and then in America. Such a society is no other than "a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

That it may the more easily be discerned whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called **classes**, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in a class, one of whom is styled the **leader**. It is his duty:

1. To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order: (1) to inquire how their souls prosper; (2) to advise, reprove, comfort or exhort, as occasion may require; (3) to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the preachers, church, and poor.
2. To meet the ministers and the stewards of the society once a week, in order: (1) to inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly and will not be reproved; (2) to pay the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.

There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies: "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits.

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

**First: By doing no harm**, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as:

The taking of the name of God in vain.

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein or by buying or selling.

Drunkenness: buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.

Slaveholding; buying or selling slaves.

Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling.

The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty.

The giving or taking things on usury—i.e., unlawful interest.

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers.

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as:

The putting on of gold and costly apparel.

The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.

Softness and needless self-indulgence.

Laying up treasure upon earth.

Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

It is expected of all who continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

**Secondly: By doing good**; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men:

To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.

To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that "we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it."

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another, helping each other in business, and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only.

By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord's sake.

It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

**Thirdly: By attending upon all the ordinances of God;** such are:  
The public worship of God.

The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.<sup>297</sup>

The Supper of the Lord.

Family and private prayer.

Searching the Scriptures.

Fasting or abstinence.

These are the General Rules of our societies; all of which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be known unto them who watch over that soul as they who must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways. We will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> *From The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church - 2008.*  
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## 19. EVANGELICAL STATEMENTS OF FAITH

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people,<sup>1</sup> regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>164</sup>

### We believe

...in the **Holy Scriptures** as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy; and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct...

One **God** , eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...

Our **Lord Jesus Christ** , God manifest in the flesh, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His vicarious and atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His mediatorial work, and His Personal return in power and glory...

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<sup>164</sup> National Association of Evangelicals

The **Salvation** of lost and sinful man through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith apart from works, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit...

The **Holy Spirit** , by whose indwelling the believer is enabled to live a holy life, to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ...

The **Unity** of the Spirit of all true believers, the Church, the Body of Christ...

The **Resurrection** of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.<sup>165\</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> World Evangelical Alliance

## 20. CHRISTIANITY

### The First Two Thousand Years<sup>166</sup>

#### The First Thousand Years

1. The Apostles	00:00:00
2. The First Leaders	00:08:40
3. Controversy	00:12:00
4. Paul of Tarsus	00:14:26
5. Seeds of Faith	00:28:19
6. Struggle for Survival	00:38:10
7. Constantine's Rule	00:48:11
8. The Gnostics	00:58:08
9. New Testament	01:06:50
10. Monastic Life	01:10:00
11. Augustine of Hippo	01:15:40
12. Fall of Rome	01:21:37
13. St. Patrick	01:31:35
14. The Irish Church	01:40:12
15. Byzantine Empire	01:45:31
16. Theodora	01:53:27
17. Birth of Islam	02:05:52
18. Iconoclasts	02:11:50
19. King Charlemagne	02:16:45
20. Church and State	02:25:56
21. King Louis	02:35:05
22. The Vikings	02:38:28
23. Otto the Great	02:46:00
24. Otto the Second	02:52:48
25. The End	03:02:33

#### The Second Thousand Years

1. The New Sect	00:00:00
2. The Dark Ages	00:12:37
3. Reformation	00:21:08
4. The Crusades	00:25:48
5. Constantinople Falls	00:36:25
6. St. Dominic	00:38:48
7. Birth of Spain	00:49:26
8. The Protestants	00:53:27
9. Martin Luther	01:03:15
10. The Eastern Church	01:09:16
11. The Renaissance	01:14:07
12. Henry the VIII	01:20:26
13. The New World	01:33:32
14. Slavery	01:39:17
15. The Methodists	01:47:32
16. Christianity in America	01:56:21
17. Napoleon	02:05:36
18. Doctrine of Faith	02:11:22
19. The Modern Age	02:17:44
20. Missionaries	02:22:20
21. The Mormons	02:26:13
22. Evangelists	02:31:22
23. The Black Church	02:39:06
24. The Church Today	02:49:26
25. The End	03:03:45

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<sup>166</sup> Produced by Filmroos, Inc. for A&E Television Networks, 1998 and 2000..

# 20. A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

Diarmaid MacCulloch<sup>167</sup>

## A. The First Christianity

1. The First Christianity 00:00:00
2. The Christian Edessa 00:11:08
3. Constantine's Capital 00:21:26
4. Syriac Orthodox Church 00:32:06
5. The Church of the East 00:42:27
6. The Religion of Light 00:51:23

## B. Catholicism and Rome

1. Catholicism 00:00:00
2. A New Jerusalem 00:10:12
3. At a Crossroads 00:18:33
4. Sellig Michael Monastery 00:32:07
5. Central Control 00:39:45
6. Religious Structure 00:49:45

## C. From Empire to Empire

1. Orthodoxy 00:00:00
2. Icons 00:11:26
3. Cyril and Methodius 00:20:48
4. The Third Rome 00:31:43
5. Ivan the Terrible 00:36:12
6. Communism 00:46:39

## D. Reformation: The Individual

1. Reformation 00:00:00
2. Zurich and Zwingli 00:10:54
3. John Calvin 00:21:51
4. Church of England 00:28:58
5. The New World 00:40:54
6. Bohemia and Beyond 00:49:06

## E. Evangelical Explosion

1. Protestantism 00:00:00
2. John Wesley 00:08:42
3. American Diversity 00:17:49
4. Slavery and Religion 00:29:31
5. African Missionaries 00:39:08
6. Korean Pentecostals 00:47:31

## F. God in the Dock

1. God in the Dock 00:00:00
2. Natural Philosophy 00:09:39
3. French Revolution 00:19:25
4. Modernism of War 00:30:32
5. Scientific Socialism 00:37:01
6. Questions 00:48:42

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<sup>167</sup> Produced by Ambrose Video, 2010. ([www.ambrosevideo.com](http://www.ambrosevideo.com))



# THE AFTERWORD

The subjects that have most interested me are history, theology, and ethics. History provides a context out of which we do theology, and theology provides a context out of which we do ethics. In the midst of all this is my interest in biblical studies and Christian experience.

Below is a list of books I have written. They are all available through Amazon.com, but they are also available for download. All of them have been written to encourage small group study.

## Religious Experience

Faith is a Choice  
Ignited for Mission  
The Ordinary Christian Experience  
Our Spiritual Senses  
Our Spiritual Disciplines  
Reformulating the Mission of the Church

## Bible Study Guides

The Bible as Sacred History (Survey of the Bible)  
The Struggle with God (Genesis through Deuteronomy)  
The Sacred Story (Under Construction)  
Time is Running Out (The Literary Prophets)  
Between the Testaments (The Apocrypha)  
The Messengers (The Four Gospels)  
An Explosion of Faith (The Book of Acts and Revelation)  
The First E-Letters (Letters to the Churches and Leaders)  
The Second Creation (The Book of Revelation)

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# OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

## BIBLE STUDY GUIDES

1. **The Bible as Sacred History:**  
Survey of the Bible
2. **The Struggle with God:**  
Genesis through Deuteronomy
3. **Sacred Stories:**  
Joshua through Esther
4. **The Search for Wisdom:**  
Job through Ecclesiastes
5. **Time is Running Out:**  
Major and Minor Prophets
6. **Between the Testaments:**  
Books of the Apocrypha
7. **The Messengers:**  
The Four Gospels
8. **An Explosion of Faith:**  
Acts and Revelation
9. **The First E-Letters:**  
All of the Letters
10. **The Second Creation:**  
Revelation (Formatted: 6x9)
11. **A Vision of Hope:**  
Revelation: (Formatted 8.5x11)
12. **New Testament Photos 1**
13. **New Testament Photos 2**

## BOOKS

1. **Ignited for Mission:**  
A Call to Missions
2. **Reformulating the Mission of the Church:**  
A Theology of Missions
3. **Our Spiritual Senses:**  
Five Spiritual Senses
4. **Our Spiritual Disciplines:**  
Six Spiritual Disciplines
5. **The Ordinary Christian Experience:**  
Fourteen Common Experiences
6. **Faith is a Choice:**  
Choosing Faith and Morality
7. **A Brief Story of the Christian Church:**  
A Survey of the Church
8. **The Heart of Methodism:**  
Renewing the Church

## EDITED BY THE AUTHOR

1. **Foundational Documents:**  
Basic Methodist Documents
2. **Instructions for Children:**  
by John Wesley
3. **Speaking Iban:**  
by Burr Baughman
4. **The Essentials of Methodism:**  
Basic Methodist Beliefs

