

CHURCH HISTORY

A SURVEY

Church History

Introduction

Why would you want to study a bunch of old, dead people?

Well, why do you read and study the Bible? Doesn't it tell you the story of a bunch of old, dead people? True, its central character, Jesus Christ, is still alive, but everyone else has long since passed away. But we desire to learn all we can know about Peter, Paul, James, John, and Priscilla. Why not others?

Hebrews 12:1 (NKJV)

¹ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

There is this "great cloud of witnesses" watching us run our Christian race. Maybe, just maybe, if we look back upon the lives of some of these witnesses we can run a better race.

Christianity itself is deeply rooted in history. It involves two central groups of people – the Jewish nation and the body of Christ, the Church. The central figure of Christianity is Jesus Christ, God come to earth as a Man. The Person and Work of Jesus is a real-time historical event. The birth, sacrifice, burial, and resurrection of Jesus are historical events and form the cornerstone of your faith.

The entire story of the Bible is the unfolding of God's plan in history. The Gospel offers redemption for a hurting world. A study of church history is the study of God at work in the world carrying out His plan for mankind.

You are a member of God's church body. The history of the church is the story of your family. Studying the church over the ages helps the modern church understand controversies and heresies. Cults were present in A.D. 200. the same as they are present today. To understand Christian doctrine in its context of history helps us to separate fads and falsehoods from the truth of the Bible. The cults of today have already been dealt with in the distant past.

As a general comment, no two histories will view all events in the same fashion nor place emphasis in the same manner. What follows is a general survey of church history. Refer to the various sources, as well as many others that exist, for a more detailed study.

So, why study church history? Because it is the story of your family tree. All of these "great cloud of witnesses" are your distant brothers and sisters!

Jim Arthur
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Bibliography And Other Information

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Church History

Lesson 1 The Church Commences ■ to about AD 177

Acts 1:4-8 (NKJV)

⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 2:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

First, let’s make clear of that which we speak –

The Church is the universal, century spanning, “body of Christ” comprised of all believers of all ages between Pentecost of Acts 2:1 and the Rapture yet to come.

1 Corinthians 12:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

Ephesians 4:12 (NKJV)

¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

1 Corinthians 10:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

Romans 7:4 (NKJV)

⁴ Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

- When we speak, then, of church history, we are discussing the historical events and decisions that surround the people of Christ, those who are true believers or members of His church. We cannot judge if all members of this groups as defined by history were truly saved, but all of the events form the historical foundation of the church as it exists today.

For example, the Crusades were a series of events championed by the Church leaders of the day, but hindsight demonstrates the Crusades had little or nothing to do with the gospel of grace. Great cathedrals have been built with church funds adored by masterpieces of art, yet, where is the gospel of grace? Was God or money the force behind their creation? Again, we do not know the answer to this question, but the artwork exists for our pleasure, use and enjoyment. The chart below demonstrates one possible method of breaking down the centuries into manageable units of time for studying church history.

Periods of church history

- Ancient Apostolic 30-100
- Ante-Nicene 100-313
- Nicene 313-590
- Medieval 590-1517
- Age of Reformation 1517-1648
- Age of Reason and Revival 1648-1789
- Age of Progress 1789-1914
- Age of Ideologies 1914-

What we are about to study, then, involves the history of the church of Jesus Christ as it actually existed throughout the past twenty centuries. You will not agree with all of the theology expressed during this period nor will you approve of all the people involved. However, a clear understanding of these events will help you to understand how our doctrine developed, why we have denominations, why the Roman Catholic Church is both a cult and a major influence of church history, and many more similar questions.

So come along and join us on this exciting trip . . .

The Apostles

The enemies of their Master insulted all of the apostles. They were called to seal their doctrines with their blood and nobly did they bear the trial. Tradition says that:

- Matthew suffered martyrdom by being slain with a sword at a distant city of Ethiopia.
- Mark expired at Alexandria, after being cruelly dragged through the streets of that city.
- Luke was hanged upon an olive tree in the classic land of Greece.
- John was put in a caldron of boiling oil, but escaped death in a miraculous manner, and was afterward banished to Patmos.
- Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downward.
- James, the Greater, was beheaded at Jerusalem,
- James, the Less, was thrown from a lofty pinnacle of the temple, and then beaten to death with a fuller's club.
- Bartholomew was flayed alive.
- Andrew was bound to a cross, whence he preached to his persecutors until he died.
- Thomas was run through the body with a lance at Coromandel in the East Indies.
- Jude was shot to death with arrows.
- Matthias was first stoned and then beheaded.
- Barnabas of the Gentiles was stoned to death at Salonica.
- Paul, after various tortures and persecutions, was beheaded at Rome by the Emperor Nero.

The Apostles were not the only ones to move about the world with the Gospel message.

Acts 8:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Those "scattered" were the new believers. As they moved across the country-side, they took the Gospel message with them, delivering it to their neighbors and others they encountered along the way. One example of this spreading of the Gospel is found in the book of Acts with the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:5; 26ff). While it cannot be stated with certainty, it is likely that visitors to Jerusalem who were converted at Pentecost started the church at Rome. They took the Gospel message back home with them.

The pattern of the Apostles may be seen in the missionary journeys of Paul outlined in the book of Acts. While many of the Apostles appear to have settled and ministered in one location, others traveled from town-to-town, as did Paul, spreading the Gospel message. Indeed, it is possible that Paul undertook one final journey following the end of the Book of Acts.

Nothing is actually known about Paul's life after Acts 28 except for a few stray traditions that have survived and the wishes he expressed in his letters. It is reasonably clear that one cannot fit the events of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus into the events recorded in Acts.

Therefore, it appears Paul was released from prison after Acts 28, only to be later arrested. 1 Timothy and Titus were written during this period of release and 2 Timothy written after the apostle's second arrest. A comparison of Titus 3:12 and 2 Timothy 4:21 requires that at least two winters are involved in the time frame covered by the Pastoral Epistles. Assuming that Paul more or less kept to the itinerary laid forth in his letters, the 4th missionary journey would be approximately like this:

- Timothy is immediately sent to Philippi with news of Paul's release (Phil 2:19-23)
- He went to Crete, leaving Titus behind (Titus 1:5)
- From there, he went to Ephesus
- Then to Colosse to see Philemon (Philemon 22)
- He then probably returns to Ephesus
- Timothy joins him either at Ephesus or Colosse and Paul asks Timothy to stay in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3, 4)
- Then to Macedonia (1 Tim 1:3)
- This may have included Philippi (Phil 2:24), Nicopolis (Titus 3:12)
- The winter having passed, if Paul went to Spain as he wished (Rom 15:24, 28) it would have been in the spring. Clement of Rome, writing around 100, talks of Paul "come to the extreme limit of the west." This could mean Spain. Some commentators view this as meaning Britain. There is a tradition that says Titus accompanied Paul on this journey, wherever he went.
- He would then revisit Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim 3:14, 15).
- He would then have passed through the seaport of Miletus where he had to leave an ill Trophimus behind (2 Tim 4:20)
- Next to Troas where he stayed with Carpus and left his cloak and some books behind (2 Tim 4:13).
- From there to Corinth where Erastus left the party (2 Tim 4:20; cf Rom 16:23).
- And on to Rome from where he sits in prison and writes 2 Timothy.
- His arrest could have occurred anywhere along this route commencing perhaps at Miletus, although Troas is a better suggestion, explaining why the clothing and books were left with Carpus.
- A comparison of Acts and 2 Timothy shows the second imprisonment was not as comfortable as the first. Paul was restricted to a cell in chains (2 Timothy 1:16; 2:9) and Onesiphorus had to search him out with great difficulty (2 Timothy 1:17)

In addition, we may note in the Acts the pattern of dispute resolution used by the Church during the first several centuries of its existence. Acts 15 records the events of the Jerusalem Council, a meeting of church leaders to resolve the question of whether or not a new believer needed to be circumcised. Several times during the 400 years, the church would meet to hold councils to resolve major theological issues.

With the exception of the Apostle John, the first generation of church leaders had died by A.D. 70. The second generation includes Timothy, Titus and many others named in the epistles. These are the disciples or students of the Apostles. All of the Apostles would have had their Timothy's, even if we do not know their names. Those who preached in the First, Second, Third, and, perhaps, Fourth centuries earned the name "Church Fathers." To a great extent, these are the men who formed the "systematic doctrine" of the church as they fought for the Apostle's doctrines and clarified meanings of terms found in the Scriptures.

CHURCH PROBLEMS 100-313

EXTERNAL

INTERNAL

ROMAN STATE

PAGAN INTELLECTUALS

HERESIES—Gnostic
Monarchian

RESPONSE
OF
CHURCH

MARTYRS
APOLOGISTS
Justin Martyr (E)
Tertullian (W)

ANSWERED BY

CANON OF SCRIPTURE

LUCIAN
De Peregrinus

CELSUS
True Discourse
Answered by Origen in
Against Celsus

CONTROVERSY
OR
POLEMIC

Irenaeus vs. Gnostics
Tertullian vs. Monarchians

CONSTITUTION (POLITY)

1. Apostolic succession—
Clement of Rome
2. Episcopacy
 - a. Monepiscopate—
Ignatius
 - b. Primacy of Peter—
Cyprian

CREEDS
Rules of Faith—
Tertullian, Irenaeus

Church Fathers

In general, the references to church fathers are broken down based upon time periods and their method of protecting or defending the Gospel. The first group is the Apostolic or Post-Apostolic Fathers (c.95-150, Clement, Ignatius, Papias, Polycarp). The second group is the Apologists (c.140-200, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Tertulian), followed by the Polemicists (c. 180-225, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertulian, Cyprian), with the fourth group being the Scientific Theologians (c. 225-400, Augustine, Origen, Cyril, Athanasius, Jerome, Ambrose, Theodore, John Chrysostom). The Fathers are also referred to relative to their time relationship to the Nicene Council (A.D. 325), resulting in the Apostolic Fathers (second century), the Ante-Nicene Fathers (second, third centuries), the Nicene Fathers (fourth century), and the Post-Nicene Fathers (fifth century).

We know from Scriptures that the persecution of Acts 8 is Jewish in nature. Likewise, it is Herod who undertakes the persecution in Acts 12 that results in the death of the Apostle James, brother of John. Both of these persecutions send Christians out of Jerusalem.

It also appears that by A.D. 45, there were Christians along the Mediterranean coast in places like Antioch, but aside from Jerusalem the only other pocket of Christians appears to be in Rome. Paul's missionary journeys commence around A.D. 50. His letter to the Galatians was written around A.D. 49. At the same time that Paul moves Christianity along the Mediterranean coast into Asia Minor (Turkey) on across toward Greece and Rome, persecutions in Rome would move Christians outward in all directions from that city.

In the summer of A.D. 64 Rome burns. While many stories exist about this event, the citizens of Rome blamed Nero, who, in turn, blames the Christians and persecutes them. This is the first clear indication within the Roman Empire that Christianity is a separate religion from Judaism. Many Christians die, but many more flee the city. The Christians believed in only one God, while taking no note of social status. This belief excludes the emperor from being deity. This offended the Romans. As such, the emperors would view Christianity as an attack upon the existing social structure of Rome.

While Nero was busy attacking the Christians in Rome, the empire was also attacking the Jews in the Holy Lands, first through the office of the Roman ruler Florus (A.D. 64) and then through the offices of General Vespasian. Nero ordered the General to take full control of Galilee and Judea. At Nero's death, Vespasian returned to Rome to become Emperor, but sent an army back to Jerusalem to stop all of the revolts the Romans "discovered." The net result of this was the scattering of Jews and Christians alike. This also had a chilling effect upon relationships between the Jews and the Christians, with the Jews once again directly persecuting the Christians.

With Vespasian's son, Domitian, becoming emperor around A.D. 81, the empire once again persecuted the Christians. Domitian claimed the title "Lord and God," an obvious affront to the Christians. It should be noted that Domitian also persecuted the Jews. This persecution continued under Trajan.

The church fathers of the time took the approach of attempting to “prove” to the Romans that Christianity was not a threat to the empire. These scholars were called “apologists” from the Greek word *apologia*, meaning a formal justification or reply, that is, a reasoned argument. They did not attempt to convert the Romans, merely prove to them the Christians were not criminals and should not be persecuted. The best known of this group was Justin, who was beheaded in A.D. 165, earning him the name of Justin Martyr.

Ironically, while the apologists may have helped shape later doctrinal statements of the church, it was the attitudes of the Christians towards morals, the social standing of people (or, rather, the ignoring thereof), and the outward personal relationship with a caring God that won individual Romans over to Christ. Many Romans became disillusioned with the moral / social fabric of Roman and converted to Christianity during this period.

First Century Events

- The words and sayings of Jesus are collected and preserved. New Testament writings are completed.
- A new generation of leaders succeeds the apostles. Nevertheless, expectation still runs high that the Lord may return at any time. The end must be close.
- The Gospel taken through a great portion of the known world of the Roman empire and even to regions beyond.
- New churches at first usually begin in Jewish synagogues around the empire and Christianity is seen at first as a part of Judaism.
- The Church faces a major crisis in understanding itself as a universal faith and how it is to relate to its Jewish roots.
- Christianity begins to emerge from its Jewish womb. A key transition takes place at the time of Jewish Revolt against Roman authority. In 70 AD Christians do not take part in the revolt and relocate to Pella in Jordan.
- The Jews at Jamnia in 90 AD confirm the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures. The same books are recognized as authoritative by Christians.
- Persecutions test the church. Jewish historian Josephus seems to express surprise that they are still in existence in his Antiquities in latter part of first century.
- Key persecutions include Nero at Rome who blames Christians for a devastating fire that ravages the city in 64 AD He uses Christians as human torches to illumine his gardens.
- Emperor Domitian demands to be worshiped as "Lord and God." During his reign the book of Revelation is written and believers cannot miss the reference when it proclaims Christ as the one worthy of our worship.

AD 100 (TWO GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 0.6%
- Breakdown: 70% nonwhite, 30% white
- Evangelization: 28.0% of world
- Scriptures: 6 languages
- Total martyrs since AD 33: 25,000 (1.2% of all Christians ever; rate 370 per year)

Source: David Barrett.

Second Century Events

- The Lord has not returned as soon as expected, so organization is needed to continue the ministry, resist persecution, oppose heretical teachings, and spread the word. Thus the office and role of the bishop becomes stronger.

- While persecution continues intermittently from without, heresies pose major dangers from within and must be answered. Heresies include:

GNOSTICISM -- A kind of New Age movement that claimed special knowledge.

MARCIONISM -- An attempt to reduce the Scriptures--both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures -- to a few select books

MONTANISM -- A charismatic movement that got carried away with new revelations, prophecies, and judgmental attitudes toward other Christians.

- Apologists, or explainers of the faith, emerge to combat heresy and answer the church's opponents. Key apologists include Irenaeus and Justin Martyr.

- The churches are not legal and have no public forum or church buildings. Local persecution can break out at any time. A profound public witness emerges as Christians are put to death because they will not deny the faith at any cost. Examples: Martyrdom of 84-year-old bishop Polycarp (AD 155) and a whole group mercilessly tortured at Lyons in AD 177.

- The strongest centers of the Church are Asia Minor and North Africa. Rome is also a center of prestige.

- The church continues its amazing spread reaching all classes, particularly the lower. Callistus--a former slave--actually becomes bishop of Rome and makes claims for special importance of the Roman bishop.

AD 200 (SIX GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 3.5%
- Breakdown: 68% nonwhite, 32% white
- Evangelization: 32% of world
- Scriptures: 7 languages
- Total martyrs since AD 33: 80,000 (0.5% of all Christians ever; rate 48 per year)

Source: David Barrett.

One Hundred Key Events in Church History

Part 1: From Nero to the Battle of Tours



Details from the arch erected to honor Titus' triumph over the Jews

Year and event

64

Fire ravages Rome. Emperor Nero blames Christians and unleashes persecution.

70

Titus destroys Jerusalem and its temple. Separation deepens between Christianity and Judaism.

about 150

Justin Martyr writes his First Apology, advancing Christian efforts to address competing philosophies.

about 156

Polycarp, an eighty-six-year-old bishop, inspires Christians to stand firm under opposition.

177

Irenaeus becomes bishop of Lyons and combats developing heresies within the Church.

about 196

Colorful and cantankerous Tertullian begins writings that earn him the reputation of being the "Father of Latin Theology."

about 205

The gifted North African Origen begins writing. He headed a noted catechetical school in Alexandria.

251

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, publishes his influential work Unity of the Church. He was martyred in 258.

270

Antony gives away his possessions and begins life as a hermit, a key event in the development of Christian monasticism.

312

Constantine is converted after seeing a vision of the cross. He becomes a defender and advocate of the oppressed Christians.

325

The Council of Nicea addresses debates perplexing the Church and defines the doctrine of who Jesus really was.

367

Athanasius' Easter Letter recognizes the New Testament Canon, listing the same books we have now.

385

In Milan, Bishop Ambrose defies the Empress, helping establish the precedent of Church confrontation of the state when necessary to protect Christian teaching and oppose the state.

387

Augustine of Hippo is converted. His writings became bedrock for the Middle Ages. The Confessions and City of God are still read by many.

398

John Chrysostom, the "golden tongued" preacher is made bishop of Constantinople and leads from there amidst continuing controversies.

405

Jerome completes the Latin "Vulgate" version of the bible that becomes the standard for the next one thousand years.

432

Patrick goes as a missionary to Ireland--taken there as a teenager as a slave. He returns and leads multitudes of Irish people to the Christian faith.

451

The Council of Chalcedon confirms orthodox teaching that Jesus was truly God and truly man and existed in one person.

529

Benedict of Nursia establishes his monastic order. His "rule" becomes the most influential for centuries of monasticism in the West.

563

Columba goes as a missionary to Scotland. He establishes the legendary monastic mission center at Iona.

590

Gregory becomes Pope Gregory I, known as "the Great." His leadership significantly advances the development of the papacy and has enormous influence on Europe.

664

Synod of Whitby determines that the English church will come under the authority of Rome.

716

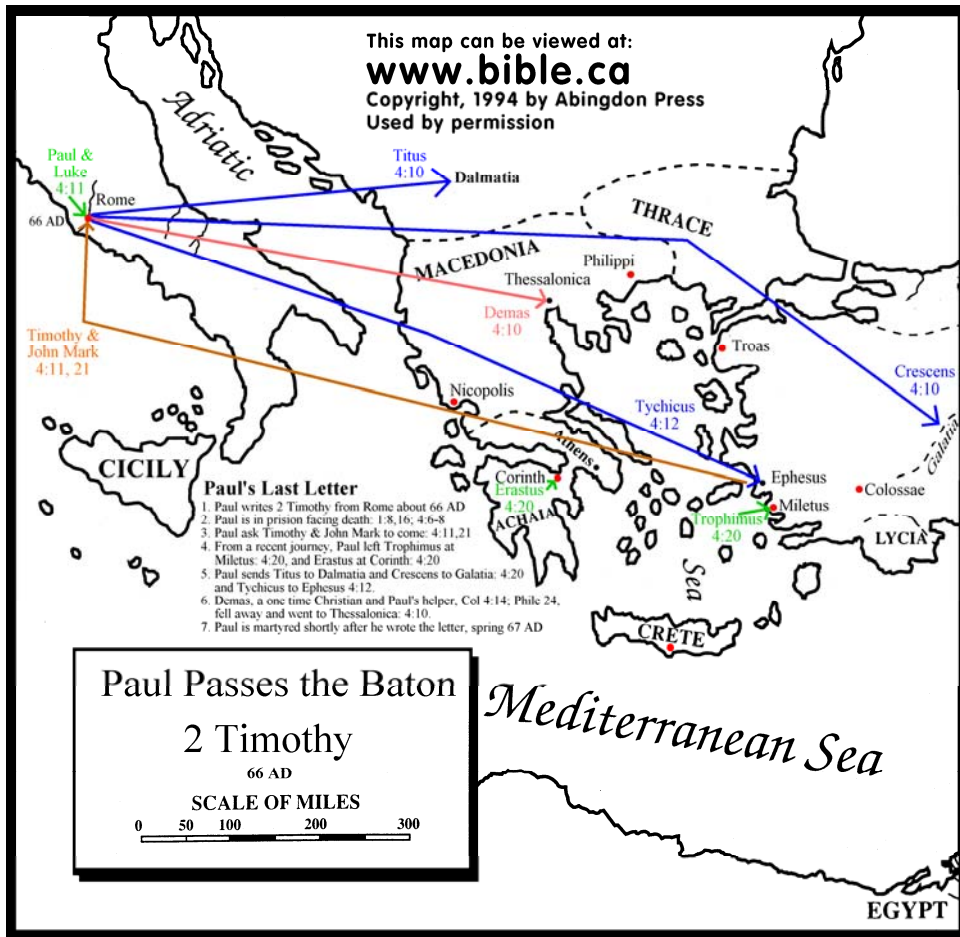
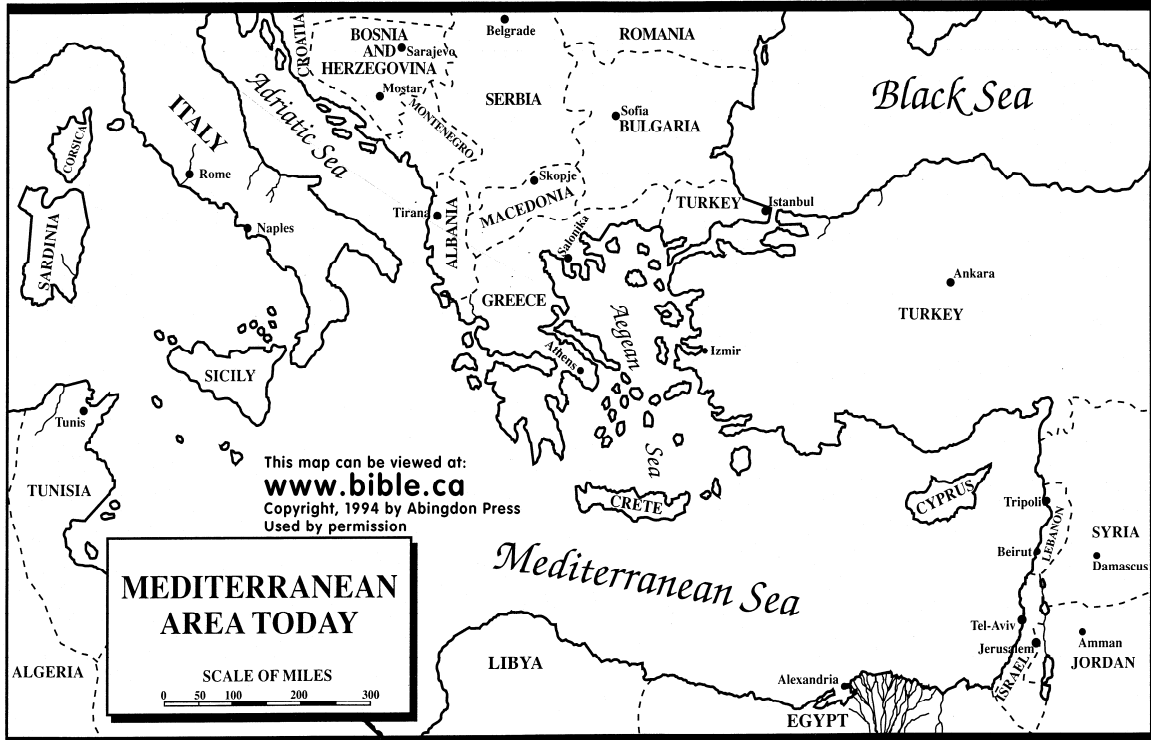
Boniface, the "Apostle of Germany," sets out as a missionary to bring the gospel to pagan lands.

731

The "Venerable" Bede completes his careful and influential Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation.

732

At the Battle of Tours, Charles Martel turns back the Muslim invasion of Europe.



Church History

Lesson 2

They Had Cults, Too!

■ AD 90 to AD 250

1 John 2:18-19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

Why a fish?

Why is a fish the early symbol of Christianity?

If you carefully review the letters of the New Testament, you will quickly discover that the major purpose of virtually all of them is to combat some type of false teaching that has invaded or is about to invade the church's teachings. The Bible is not a book written in the format of what we would call systematic theology. Rather, it is written as letters to existing churches, about existing problems of the time. The New Testament writers took the teachings of Christ and explained to the local churches how to uphold Christ's teachings within a given set of circumstances.

Systematic theology is a uniform statement of belief on a given topic. For example, nowhere within Scripture is the doctrine of the Trinity explained or defended. This task is the world of systematic theology. As we look at the first several hundred years of the church's life we will discover that systematic theology was born in response to the on-going problems of cults and false teachings that invaded the church. As false teachers produced false doctrine, the Church Fathers defended Christianity by providing a "correct" statement of the doctrine involved in the controversy. Thus, systematic theology was born in the cradle of false doctrines.

Terms to Remember

THEOLOGY is the study of God. This, in turn, has led man to define beliefs in God in general "catch-all" terms. There is some benefit to understanding these terms, at least in broad concepts. It will help us place religions together as to their overall worldviews of God.

ATHEISM, outright denial of the existence of God, is a position that many claim to hold. If you are an atheist, you believe that man is alone and life is meaningless. This is the Soviet cosmonaut's view of the universe ("I can't see God, so He must not exist."). It is contradicted by evidence in nature, the conscience, and the spiritual makeup of the individual, as well

as by biblical teaching. At heart, it is a rejection of the self-revelation of the personal God of the Bible, who has on innumerable occasions communicated with human beings for their benefit. Many people are practical atheists because they have not bothered to inquire about the existence and character of God.

AGNOSTICISM, the belief that one cannot know if God exists or not, amounts to a suspension of knowledge. As with atheism, it rejects the many self-disclosures of God. It is an affront to the God Who has spoken, is based on pride, and offers no hope for life now or after death. Both positions are contrary to the basic makeup of human beings, who desperately need contact with their Creator and have the spiritual capacity to interact with Him.

PANTHEISM is an often sophisticated but actually illogical view of God. It denies the existence of a personal God who interacts intelligently with human beings. Instead, God is the same thing as the universe, and, in turn, the universe of God. Of course, in this view we are part of God and He is part of us. If you are a pantheist, then you have to conclude that at any given moment you are sitting or standing on God! It actually sacrifices God's personhood for His infinity, and, in some forms of the view, makes God physical, although in some variations everything is supposedly nonmaterial and spiritual, including the universe. Pantheism is an attempt to reduce God to identity with His creation.

POLYTHEISM, the belief in a plurality of gods (equal or differing in rank) is prevalent throughout the world, as is pantheism. This view clearly contradicts the biblical teaching that there is only one deity and that He is unique in power and position. In polytheism in general, the adherent can never know if he has pleased the right god. We might call this the Alka-Seltzer view of God. Like a medicine that covers all the bases, polytheism, by encouraging placating all the gods to obtain favor, assuages the conscience, or at least it attempts to!

DEISM is the view that God exists and can interact with human beings, but has withdrawn from contact with them. In some forms it involves denial of the Trinity, the incarnation, miracles, and other orthodox doctrines.

MONOTHEISM is the belief in only one God, a God who is active in the universe. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are the only monotheistic religions.

MONISM is the belief of all-in-one. It is the unity of all reality, not the belief in a single God. It is similar in results to pantheism.

APOSTASY is generally defined as the determined, willful rejection of Christ and His teachings by a Christian believer (Heb. 10:26-29; John 15:22). This is different from false belief, or error, which is the result of ignorance. The problem is whether or not a true believer can reject Christ. A better view is that apostasy

involves long-time “members” of the “professing church,” those who declare with their mouths they are Christians, a position not supported by their hearts.

A **CULT**, then, is a perversion or distortion of biblical Christianity. It is a rejection of the historic teachings of the Christian church. A cult is a group of people based upon someone’s interpretation of the Bible and is characterized by major deviations from orthodox Christian beliefs. This deviation is particularly concerned with the Trinity and the Person of Jesus Christ.

The church cannot defend the faith unless it understands the faith. The history of the early church is the story of the church leaders and members coming to understand their statement of faith.

ORTHODOXY is the method of referring to the standard of beliefs held by the Church of Christ. It is the list of “doctrines” believed to be truth.

DOCTRINE is the body of beliefs about God, humankind, Christ, the church, and other related concepts considered authoritative and thus worthy of acceptance by all members of the community of faith. A copy of Calvary Road’s statement of faith, as found on the church website, is attached as an exhibit to this chapter.

“ORTHODOX” comes from two Greek words which mean “right” and “honor.” Thus, the term orthodox in Christian usage means to rightly honor God. It may be viewed as meaning that one should rightly accept and obey all of the foundational teachings of the Bible.

Those who corrupt the foundations of orthodoxy are called heretics. The Greek words from which we get “**HERESY**” and “**HERETIC**” simply mean to “act of choice” or “an attachment.” Thus, in Christian terms, a heresy is a false doctrine, but not just a false doctrine. Rather, it is a false doctrine so important to those who believe it, that it must be considered an abandonment of the faith.

The story of the early church may be viewed as the battle between God’s people who define and defend the proper statements of faith as against Satan’s people who would abandon the faith by changing the statements of belief.

The seeds of this battle are found in the New Testament letters. Galatians speaks to those who are called Judaizers. This group would impose a requirement of circumcision upon persons wishing to become Christians. The rite of circumcision comes from the Jewish rituals and was the covenant sign between God and Abraham. By requiring a person to be circumcised, the Jewish covenant was being placed upon the requirements of faith.

Paul writes against this imposing of Jewish rites in his letter to the Galatians. The Jerusalem Council, found in Acts 15, demonstrates the entire church leadership body resolving this conflict by rejecting the requirement.

As you read the New Testament letters, with the exception of the imposition of the rituals of Judaism, you will not find any definite, full-grown cults. Rather, the letters suggest the

seeds of cults who would grow to maturity in the following centuries. You will find many of these cult foundations still present with the modern church.

EBIONISM was the continuation of Judaism into the second century. It rejected the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, and the efficacy of His suffering. They taught Jesus was the natural child of Joseph and Mary. Their goal was to retain a true monotheism, thus, Jesus could not be God (teaching there was no Trinity). Jesus was Messiah as a reward for His adherence to the Law. The Ebionites rejected Paul as an apostle and venerated Peter. It disappeared by the Fifth Century and had no lasting effect upon the church.

GNOSTICISM: From the Greek *gnosis*, meaning “knowledge,” taught the belief that the physical world is evil and that only secret knowledge can free persons from the physical world. If this is so, Jesus as a human could not be God, for being human or physical, Jesus would have been evil. This leads most Gnostics, but not all, to be . . .

DOCETISTS, those who practice Docetism. This name comes from the Greek *docein* meaning “to seem.” Their teaching was that Jesus only seemed to possess a physical body, so He only seemed to be crucified.

Although the seeds of the Gnostic teachings will be found in the New Testament, the cult did not become truly functional until the second century. Christian Scientists are a modern version of the Gnostic movement. Mormonism also has Gnostic elements.

Montanist's, also called the New Prophets, existed from around 150 to about 220. They preached a return to the New Testament emphasis on the dynamic acts of the Spirit. They exhibited a series of harsh moral standards and issued many prophecies that did not come true. These two factors resulted in their rejection. Their teachings may be found in many of the fringe charismatic movements of today, such as the World Faith movement. Oddly enough, one of the major leaders of the Montanists was Prisca (died prox. AD 190). A review of the cult movements of the last two hundred years shows that many of our modern cults have female leaders. Prisca prophesized that Christ would return to Phrygia during her lifetime.

Along with fighting the cults, the leaders of this time period were faced with the need to organize the church. Like any entity, the larger it grows, the more difficult it becomes to manage. While one might not think God requires help running His church, there has always been the practical side of church life. This was found in Acts 6 where the Apostles had to appoint deacons to oversee some of the “practical” matters of the church.

Jude 3 (NKJV)

³ Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

During this period, “elder,” “overseer,” “presbyter,” and “bishop” all referred to the same role, one community preferring a given term to another. Christians met in homes and

ordained elders to oversee the local groups. Baptism occurred as people trusted in Christ, a pattern established within the New Testament.

As one moves into the third century, the church bodies within a city began to appoint an elder or bishop to oversee all of the churches within that community. Congregations, or groups of congregations, began to purchase property for their meeting halls. Two other changes occurred during this period.

First, some groups started to baptize infants. Second, baptism was postponed until the believer had been trained. These practices arose out of a deep-seated desire to properly defend the faith.

All of these changes arose as the means to defend the church against Gnosticism!

One of the prominent Gnostics of this time period was one Marcion. The son of an elder in charge of churches around the Black Sea's southern coast, the young Marcion forsook the church in favor of ship-owning and sailing. He returned home after developing a distaste for the world. After being unrepentant over an affair with a young member of his father's church, the young Marcion was excommunicated from the church.

Upon fleeing to Rome, Marcion became a member of the church at Rome, contributing some two million dollars to the church! Here, Marcion developed his own theology.

While not one to seek secret knowledge from the Scriptures, he preached that our loving God the Father would not resurrect a natural body from the grave nor was the New Testament Father connected with the wrathful God of the Old Testament. God the Father being spirit, Jesus was spirit and only seemed to be human (an early form of Docetism).

Viewing all physical things as evil, this group drank water with the Lord's Supper, thinking wine might lead to physical pleasures. In fact, the group banned all sexual relations, including those between spouses.

Marcion perceived that many of the writings of the Apostles contradicted his position, so he resolved this issue by defining the New Testament to his own liking. He accepted parts of Luke and ten of Paul's letters. From Luke, he removed the story of Jesus' birth and from Paul's letters he removed all mention of the Old Testament. By rejecting the Old Testament and purging Paul's writings the God of the Hebrews did not exist for Marcion!

Polycarp is the Church Father most responsible for dealing with Marcion. In the end, Marcion was removed from the church in Rome. He formed his own congregations in Italy and Asia Minor.

Although most Gnostics would eventually voluntarily withdraw from the local churches, forming their own groups, the Gnostic teachings had settled into Christianity and will surface in various forms over the centuries. Another Church Father, Origen, serves as an example.

From Alexandria, Egypt, Origen's major contribution to the church is an extensive study of the biblical manuscripts. He strongly preached against Gnosticism, but renounced all physical comforts himself. Believing Matthew 19:12 to be a literal command, Origen castrated himself. He drank only water and wore no shoes. He urged Christians to diligently search the Scriptures, suggesting they would find mystical messages within their pages.

The net result of those who followed Origen ultimately leads to a variety of groups who promoted physical discomforts and limited sexual lives as a means of following Christ. In addition, when faced with difficult passages, these leaders would explain them by looking for secret, hidden meanings. Consider the strong acceptance of the Bible codebooks and arguments in the last few years.

What does it mean to be a Christian?

This is the question that faced the leaders of this time period.

The answers came, ultimately, in three forms.

- A Rule of Faith, that is, the start of the formation of doctrines.
- A Priesthood of overseers to preserve the Statement of Faith.
- A "Canon" of Scripture, that is, a statement of the books of the Bible in response to Marcion and others.

While we will look at the Bible's history next week, it is important to remember that at this time, much of the teaching was by oral tradition. Letters, and copies of letters from the New Testament writers existed and were circulated, but not every church had copies of all the letters. Some placed more emphasis on the Gospels than on the letters. Others placed more emphasis on the letters. Some letters were accepted in some locations, but not others. By around AD 200-250 most churches accepted:

- Four Gospels
- Acts
- 13 Letters of Paul
- 1 Peter
- 1 John
- Revelation
- Revelation of Peter
- Shepherd of Hermas

It would take time before Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude are added and the Revelation of Peter and the Shepherd of Hermas are removed. The initial point to remember is that it was the dispute with Marcion that forced the church to focus on the issue of what books should be in the Bible.

In addition, because of these various groups offering false teachings, the approach to baptism was changed. The churches developed a Rule of Faith as a series of baptismal questions to be answered prior to being baptized. Some churches would take as long as

three years to teach the new converts these “rules” before allowing the convert to be baptized. Again, the rise of cults and false teachings made the church focus on assuring itself that its members understood the full impact of the question, “Have you trusted Jesus as your Lord and Savior?”

One version of the basic Rule of Faith reads:

Do you believe in God the Father, Ruler of all? Do you believe in Christ Jesus, God’s Son, who was born by the Holy Spirit through the virgin Mary, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried, and rose again on the third day, alive from the dead, and ascended into heaven, sat at the Father’s right hand, and will come again to judge the living and the dead? Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy church, and the resurrection of the flesh?
Apostolike Paradosis

These rules would “evolve” into widely used Creeds, such as the Apostles’ Creed, that would be used as a mechanism for teaching doctrine and the faith.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come to judge the living 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 life everlasting.
Amen.

Lastly, the professional priesthood was taking shape. Someone had to develop and protect the Rule of Faith. This was left to the elders of the church. During the second century, Gnostic teachers circulated tracts supposedly written by Thomas. To combat this influence, elders of the church began to trace both their teachings and their authority back to the Apostles.

As such overseers became the keepers of the faith. They were viewed as the official trustees of the Apostles’ teachings. In larger cities, their powers grew and their geographical sphere of influence grew as well. Since they exercised authority over large regions, they began calling one another “fathers.” The Latin for “fathers” is “*popes*.”

Before you apply your modern views to the above and arrive at conclusions that are not yet applicable, it is important to understand that the work done by the Church Fathers did protect the faith. Many controversies would arise over the years that would be

defended by the Church Fathers, men who were part of the this groups of overseers or popes. But, as with any office, power is always subject to abuse.

At this time in history, the authority of the overseers still rested solely within the spiritual walls of the church. Their teachings would influence the morals of their followers, thus, indirectly influencing society, but their power did not control governments. Theirs was the world of the church and nothing more.

Other controversial seeds were being planted during this time period. Marcion and Gnosticism were not the only issues.

Polycarp was the bishop of Smyrna. The churches in that region (“Eastern”) celebrated Easter during the Jewish Passover. However, the churches in the Roman area (the “West”) celebrated Easter the Sunday after the Passover. While in Rome debating with Marcion, Polycarp and the then bishop of Rome, Anicetus, debated the date of Easter without conclusions. They parted friends.

Some 30 years or so later, Victor became the overseer in Rome. At Victor’s request, churches around Jerusalem commenced observing Easter based upon the Roman reckoning. When other Eastern churches did not follow suit, Victor excluded them from Christian fellowship. While this action was widely protested, Victor did not relent and viewed the Eastern churches as cursed of God. Victor’s position was ignored following his death, but the wound remained infected, as we will observe later in our study.

Another issue facing the church involved the question of what held the local bodies together as a group. We have seen one answer already – the Rule of Faith, the Canon of Scripture and the body of overseers. In the Eastern churches, the Montanists arose who claimed that dynamic gifts of the Holy Spirit were also necessary. This group was ultimately excluded from the church because of a disproportional reliance upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their prophecies instead of reliance upon the Scriptures.

The Montanists’ position was determined, to a great extent, not upon the issue of the gifts of the Spirit, but upon the relative position of the individual believer verses the overseers of the church. Who did God talk to? The leaders or the laity?

Today, we know that the answer is that God speaks to all believers and that for a church to be in harmony, He will speak the same general message to all members. It is God who makes the Church holy and it is God who provides the path the church is to travel. The time period of the second and third centuries was a time when the church was attempting to learn this lesson. History will suggest that the church was only partially successfully in learning it.

Why a fish?

The early Christians spoke mostly Greek. The New Testament was written in Greek. The Greek word for FISH (ΙΧΘΥΣ) became an acrostic of the life of Christ.

Greek Letter	Greek Acrostic	English Acrostic
Ι	Iesous	Jesus
Χ	Christos	Christ
Θ	Theou	God's
Υ	'Uios	Son
Σ	Soter	Savior

Calvary Road Baptist Church
"What We Believe"
As Found on CRBC.ORG January 2004

We believe the Bible is God's Holy Word. It is unique from all other literature in that, without error, it is the final authority on truth. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21) We believe in only one living and true God. We believe that in the Godhead there are three personal distinctions: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. (1 Peter 1:2; Matthew 28:19)

We believe they are co-equal in power and glory, identical in their essential natures, characteristics, and perfection and that they are co-eternal. (Genesis 1:2; John 17:5)

We believe the Bible reveals Jesus Christ as "being the eternal Son of God, became man" (Hebrews 2:16; John 1:14; Luke 1:35)

We believe that Jesus reveals to us the nature of God and teaches us about our own nature, which is utterly sinful. Our sin separates us from God, who created us to have fellowship with Him. The Bible teaches us that no amount of "good works" will ever make us acceptable to God (Romans 5:6-8)

We believe the Bible teaches that God extends grace, though we do not deserve it, can not earn it, and can never repay it, through the death and resurrection of His Son (John 3:16)

We believe that Jesus Christ is God born a man. We believe that He lived a sinless life and died to pay the penalty for our sins. He rose bodily from the grave and gives eternal life to those who believe in Him. (Acts 16: 31; Romans 10:9,10)

As believers, we depend upon the Holy Spirit to do what we could never do before; bring glory to God and love and serve men. (Ephesians 5:23; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Third Century Events

- At beginning of century, Edessa (Urfa in modern Turkey) becomes first Christian state.
- Emperor Septimus Severus (202-211) persecutes; forbids conversion to Christianity. Then a generation of peace for the church. Amazing growth and spread of faith continues and church buildings begin to be built.
- North Africa a key Christian center. Egypt alone has a million Christians by the end of 3rd century. Carthage and Alexandria leading centers of Christian theological development with such figures as Origen, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria.
- AD 248 the 1,000th anniversary of Rome but all is not celebration as threats to the empire increase from neighboring populations on borders.
- The first empire-wide persecution instituted under Decius in AD 250. Everyone must offer pagan sacrifice and show certificate of proof.
- Church has to deal with the difficult problem of how to handle the "lapsed"--those who relented during the persecution and now want back into the church.
- Church problems not only political. Intellectual attacks must also be answered. Porphyry writes Against the Christians attacking apostles, church leaders, Gospels and Old Testament. Origen around 245 answers attack of Celsus written 70 years earlier and apparently still a threat to the church.
- The role of the bishop continues to grow in strength.
- Before 300 Anthony goes into desert as a hermit, an important early step in development of monasticism--which will be a kind of protest movement against worldly Christianity and an alternative approach to spiritual commitment.

AD 300 (NINE GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 10.4%
- Breakdown: 66.4% nonwhite, 33.6% white
- Evangelization: 35% of world
- Scriptures: 10 languages
- Total martyrs since AD 33: 410,000 (0.5% of all Christians ever; recent rate 1,540 per year)

Source: David Barrett

Church History

Lesson 3 The History of the Bible

Revelation 1:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

What is the Word of God?

How important is it to you personally?

Are the Scriptures the sole, ultimate authority for your faith and life?

While the Bible is the Word of God, it goes without saying that there are many different views of the Bible in today's world. It is my belief that for the Christian, there is only ONE proper view of Scripture. THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD!

The Bible represents the written revelation of God given to mankind as a means of learning about God, sin, mankind, creation, and a variety of other things ("doctrines") for which we all crave knowledge. Written by over 40 different authors over a 1600-year period, the Bible is written in varying literary styles and types. The Bible is a single work, unified in its story - and that story is the salvation of God to fallen, sinful man through His Son, Jesus. The entire Bible, at least from Genesis 3:15 through the end of the book of Revelation, is about Jesus Christ.

Our word Bible comes from the Greek *biblion*, meaning book or roll. The word "scripture(s)" comes from the Greek *graphie*, meaning writing. The original manuscripts were written in Hebrew (the common language of the Jewish people), Aramaic (the common language of the Near East until about B.C. 300 and the language of the Jewish exile), and Greek, the common world language during the first century.

I hold the view that the original manuscripts or autographs of the Holy Bible were without error ("inerrant"). I also believe that there are many good translations in circulation today. The original Old Testament was written almost entirely in Hebrew, although a few sections were written in Aramaic. The original New Testament was written in Greek.

Over the centuries, both the Old and New Testaments have been translated into numerous languages. And, in many languages, such as English, there is more than one good translation.

In discussing the application of the Bible to our lives, we must understand the differences in terms used to describe how the Bible originated and operates in our lives.

Revelation refers to the content of God's truth as it was revealed to the Old Testament and New Testament authors of Scripture.

Inspiration refers to the accurate transmission of that content to men, first verbally (as with the prophets) and then in written form (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21).

Canonization refers to the recognition and collection of those inspired books into an agreed upon collection, the "canon," the Bible.

Illumination refers to the understanding of the Bible's message. This is primarily an action that occurs only in the lives of believers. Unbelievers can only experience this work as it pertains to His convicting ministry in relation to the gospel message (John 16:8-11).

How did God produce the Bible?

God through the Holy Spirit caused the writers of Scripture to record exactly what God wanted recorded. He did not do this by dictation, but through the movement of thoughts and actions, to produce manuscripts written in the personality and language of the authors.

There are, of course, several theories presented as to how inspiration occurred.

The theory of "natural inspiration" says there is no supernatural element. Great men, who often erred, wrote the Bible.

Some believe in a theory of "partial inspiration." Here, the Bible contains God's words but man must sort through the verses, "demythologize them," to find those that have been inspired by God. The rest are man's creation and may be in error.

Some find the thoughts of Scripture to be inspired but do not find the actual words used are to be inspired. This is called "conceptual inspiration." The concepts are from God but there are factual and scientific errors in the bible.

Some believe in a theory of "dictation." The writers passively recorded God's words without any participation of their own styles or personalities. If so, God must be a Person of many personalities, for a simple reading of the Bible will demonstrate a wide range of styles and personalities.

The theory of **verbal, plenary** inspiration means that all of the actual words of the Bible are inspired and without error. This fits the Bible's own description.

What views or evidence may we put forth for the concept of verbal, plenary inspiration?

Well, first, the Bible claims it for itself.

- 2 Timothy 3:16
All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Second, this is the method described in/by the Bible.

- The writings are "God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16). "God-breathed" is the literal translation of the word the NKJV and KJV translate as "inspired."
- The writings are "spirit-enabled"
- 2 Peter 1:20, 21
20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (KJV)
- This verse also shows that God-superintended the writers as well as their writings

Third, Scripture shows the interaction of "God-Spirit-Man" in the preparation of Scripture. For example

- Zechariah 7:12
"Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the **words which the Lord** of hosts had *sent by His Spirit through the former prophets*. Thus great wrath came from the Lord of hosts. (NKJV)
- Acts 4:24-25
24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are **God**, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,25 **who** *by the mouth of Your servant David* have said (NKJV).

It is true that God used several methods in the inspiration of Scripture. These include direct dictation (Deut 9:10), human research (Ecclesiastes; Luke 1:1-4), and spoken revelation (Gal 1:12). These methods show that God was in control of the recording of His Word. Scripture also teaches that not only was He in control, but that the actual inspiration of Scripture is "verbal."

- 1 Corinthians 2:12-13
12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (NKJV)
- Galatians 3:16
Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He **does not say**, "And to seeds," as of many, **but as of one**, "And to your **Seed**," who is Christ. (NKJV)

The Bible comes from God. It is God's instruction book to us on how we re-create our relationship with God. Only God could provide this revelation to us.

We have already noted that the Bible was written by at least 40 authors over a period of some 1600 years. These authors came from different backgrounds and levels of learning. They performed a variety of different tasks while they lived. Yet, they all had

two things in common. They shared a deep love of God and they faithfully recorded His Words.

The original manuscripts of the Bible were written in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. None of the original manuscripts exist today. The Jewish nation so revered the Holy Writing that as the scrolls wore out, they were buried so the Nation would not desecrate God's Word. Further, God knows that man would turn the scrolls themselves into idols. So, God undertook to direct man's steps so that no original copies were preserved. God's Word even provides an example of this type of behavior.

The list of books included in the Bible is referred to as the "canon." Canon is a transliteration of a Greek word that means rule, rod, or straight line. In other words, the books of the Bible are the "straight line of God." Other works that might claim some divine origin are not part of this straight line. Being crooked, they do not represent God's truth.

The Canon, then, is the collection of 66 books properly recognized by the church as the complete authoritative scriptures not to be added to or subtracted from. In general, certain semi-specific tests could be used to determine the Canon.

- Does the work carry the concept of being authoritative ("Thus saith the Lord"?)
- Is the work prophetic, that is, does the author set forth the "claim" of being a "man of God" (2 Peter 1:20)? A book in the Bible must have the authority of a spiritual leader of Israel (Old Testament - prophet, king, judge, and scribe) or an apostle of the church (New Testament - an original apostle. This does not have to mean an Apostle actually wrote the book; merely that it is connected to an Apostle in some fashion. Likewise, the same may be said for the books of the Old Testament.).
- Is the book fully consistent with other revelation of truth?
- Does the book change lives?
- Has it been received, accepted and used by the nation of Israel and / or the Church? This test is not as simple as it may sound. Remember there were no copy machines in those days. All of the manuscripts were hand copied. And while for most of its life, the nation of Israel had the Tabernacle or the Temple as a storehouse for the Old Testament scrolls, much of the New Testament is a series of letters written to the early Church and circulated between cities.

How was the Canon actually formed? God the Holy Spirit formed the Canon (2 Peter 1:20-21). But, man being man, had to go through the motions of "forming" the Canon so as to ultimately accept which books God meant to have in Scripture. Here are but a few of the highlights:

- As far as the Old Testament goes, the books were probably collected by Ezra and appear to be intact by about 250 B.C. when they are translated into Greek.
- The New Testament refers to Old Testament books as "scripture" (Matt.21:42, as an example).
- The Council of Jamnia (A.D. 90) recognized our 39 Old Testament books.
- Josephus (A.D. 95) indicated that the 39 Old Testament books were recognized as authoritative.
- The early church determined the New Testament books (see below).

- The apostles claimed authority for their writings (1 Thess.5:27)
- The apostle's writings were equated with Old Testament Scriptures (2 Pet.3:2, 15, 16).
- We have seen that the controversy with Marcion forced the church to define its view of the Canon.
- The Council of Athanasius (A.D. 367) and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) recognized the 27 books in our New Testament today as inspired.

As we saw last week, by A.D. 200-250, the church generally accepted the following works as part of the New Testament:

- Four Gospels
- Acts
- 13 Letters of Paul
- 1 Peter
- 1 John
- Revelation
- Revelation of Peter
- Shepherd of Hermas

It became clear over time that the Revelation of Peter and the Shepherd of Hermas were frauds. The other letters were accepted in some areas but not in others. Differences mainly existed on books circulated in the "West" versus those circulated in the "East." The two church councils mentioned above concluded the matter as far as the New Testament is concerned.

From a practical viewpoint, six factors probably led to the actual development of the Canon by the Church.

By A.D. 100, the Apostles had all died and the oral tradition was becoming corrupt. The church needed and wanted a set of authoritative documents.

Custom was to read some portion of Scripture during the service. The church understood the need not to read unauthorized documents as though they were Holy.

Marcion forced them to consider what books should be in the Canon.

The Montanists claimed ongoing revelation. This tendency needed to be fought. The church fought the Montanists by claiming revelation had ceased. This meant the church needed to define what was that revelation.

New Testament apocryphal works were appearing. These needed to be set aside as not being part of the revelation.

Persecution also led to a need to define the Scriptures.

It should be noted that in 1546 the Roman Catholic Church accepted certain books generally referred to as the *apocrypha* as being part of the Bible. Protestants do not

accept these books as part of the Canon. Among the major reasons for not accepting these books is that they frequently contradict parts of the Old Testament. Further, there are other "gospels" and letters written after Christ. They claim to contain other knowledge about Jesus. They, too, are not part of the Canon, for they have no apostolic origin, nor are they consistent with the other books of Scripture, Old or New.

It should be noted that the *apocrypha* is never quoted as authoritative in scriptures. Further in Matthew 23:35, Jesus says that the close of Old Testament historical scripture was the death of Zechariah (400 B.C.). This excludes any books written after Malachi and before the New Testament.

The Catholic position came, at least in part, as a response to the Reformation. The move was relatively easy, for although not declaring them as inspired, Jerome included these books in his Latin translation, the Vulgate, which served as the prime Roman Catholic Bible until recently.

The books of the apocrypha are as follows:

- Letter of Jeremiah (317 B.C.)
- Tobit (250-175 B.C.)
- Baruch (200 B.C.-A.D. 70)
- Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) (190 B.C.)
- Additions to Esther (180-145 B.C.)
- Judith (175-110 B.C.)
- Song of the Three Children (167-163 B.C.)
- 1 Esdras (150 B.C.)
- Bel and the Dragon (150-100 B.C.)
- Prayer of Manasseh (150-50 B.C.)
- Wisdom of Solomon (150 B.C.-A.D. 40)
- 1 Maccabees (103-63 B.C.)
- 2 Maccabees (100 B.C.)
- Susanna (100 B.C.)
- 2 Esdras (A.D. 70-135)

The Hebrew Bible was written on stone, clay and leather. Most scrolls were leather (animal skins). Ezra the priest most likely was responsible for gathering and arranging all of the books of the Hebrew Bible around 450 BC. The Hebrew Scriptures were originally arranged in three groups, the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (or Psalms). When compared to our Old Testament, there were fewer books, for books such as 1 & 2 Kings were a single volume. The older arrangement was not as straightforward as might be expected. Daniel, for example, was part of the Writings, not part of the prophets. Over time, the order of the Hebrew Scriptures evolved to match that of our Old Testament.

The New Testament As It Gained Acceptance by the Early Church

A.D. 100	A.D. 200	A.D. 250	A.D. 300	A.D. 400
<p>Different parts of our New Testament were written by this time, but not yet collected and defined as 'Scripture'. Early Christian writers (for example Polycarp and Ignatius) quote from the Gospels and Paul's letters, as well as from other Christian writings and oral sources.</p> <p>Paul's letters were collected late in the first century. Matthew, Mark and Luke were brought together by AD 150.</p>	<p>New Testament used in the church at Rome (the 'Muratorian Canon')</p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>James 1 & 2 John Jude Revelation of John Revelation of Peter Wisdom of Solomon</p> <p>To be used in private, but not public, worship The Shepherd of Hermas</p>	<p>New Testament used by Origen</p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon 1 Peter 1 John</p> <p>Revelation of John</p> <p>Disputed Hebrews James 2 Peter 2 & 3 John Jude The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Teaching of Twelve Apostles Gospel of the Hebrews</p>	<p>New Testament used by Eusebius</p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>1 Peter 1 John</p> <p>Revelation of John Revelation of John (authorship in doubt)</p> <p>Disputed but well known James 2 Peter 2 & 3 John Jude</p>	<p>New Testament fixed for the West by the Council of Carthage</p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews James 1 & 2 Peter 1, 2 & 3 John Jude Revelation</p> <p>To be excluded The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Gospel of the Hebrews Revelation of Peter Acts of Peter Didache</p>

The Old Testament Scriptures were translated into Greek starting in 250 BC. Jewish Scholars imported from Jerusalem did this in Alexandria Egypt. The translation was brought about because of the large Jewish community in the region who spoke Greek or other languages but not Hebrew. The translation is called the Septuagint (Greek meaning "70"). Tradition says that 70 or 72 scholars did the translation in 70 days. Historical records suggest the translation was an on-going event taking, perhaps, a hundred years. The name is often abbreviated as LXX, the Roman numeral for seventy. This is the first known translation of the Bible.

During the time of Jesus papyrus became the preferred writing material. This is a plant that is cut into strips that are pressed into sheets of writing materials forming either scrolls or codex (books).

The earliest translations of the New Testament were into Latin, Coptic (Egypt), and Syriac (Syria), occurring between A.D. 200-300. The consistency of the use of the books is suggested by the fact that Origen lists 21 "approved" books while Eusebius lists 22. Constantine who legalizes Christianity in A.D. 313 spread the works throughout the Roman Empire. The Council of Carthage finally approves the standard of 27 books in A.D. 397.

Jerome's translation of the Scriptures into Latin was commenced in 410. It took Jerome 25 years to make the entire translation. As mentioned above, this translation is known as the Vulgate.

Starting about this period, the Jewish Rabbis form a group known as the Masoretes. This group was charged with developing a critical text of the Hebrew Scriptures to assure their accuracy. Working for the next 600 years, this group developed a meticulous system of counting the number of words and letters in each book of the Old Testament and on each copied page. This system allowed for accuracy checks on the copied works. Any copied work containing an error was buried.

The Hebrew written language to this point was composed of 22 letters of consonants only. This Masoretes added vowels to the language by "pointing" the text with dots and lines to symbolize the spoken vowels. The accuracy of their work was verified with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the late 1940's. Portions of all OT books but Esther have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The scrolls also help to verify the accuracy of the Septuagint.

As far as English translations are concerned, we must start with the history of England. Christianity appears to have reached England by A.D. 300, but the Anglo-Saxon pagans drove the Christians into Wales (450 -600). In 596, Augustine of Canterbury began to evangelize Britain again. In 676, an illiterate monk named Caedmon retold portions of the Scriptures in Old English poetry and song. Other translations of portions of Scripture were made by Aldhelm of Sherborne (709), Bebe (735), Alfred the Great (871-901), Aldred, Bishop of Durham (950), and Aelfric (955-1020).

In 1066, the Normans conquer England and French becomes the official language. No further English translations of the Scripture occur until the 1300s. The language we now call Middle English emerged in literary works in the early 1300s (such as Canterbury Tales).

In 1382 the first English Bible is translated from the Latin Vulgate by the Lollards. It is named in honor of the original leader of this group, John Wycliffe. The Bible included Wycliffe's criticisms of the then existing church practices. This Bible is banned in England and burned. Forty years after his death, Wycliffe's bones were exhumed and burned for heresy for his part in the translation effort.

England makes it illegal to translate or read the Bible in common English without the permission of a church bishop in 1408.

Gutenberg invents the printing press in 1455. The Gutenberg Bible is the first book to be printed. It is the Latin Vulgate version.

A Greek scholar, Erasmus, publishes a new Greek edition of the Bible and a more accurate Latin translation of the New Testament in 1516. This Greek text is underlying text on which the King James Version New Testament is translated. Erasmus had access to only a half dozen or so manuscripts, none of which were complete. In fact, in places, the combined manuscripts were incomplete, such as Revelation 22:19 or 1 John 5:7-8. So here, Erasmus turned to the Latin New Testament. He translated the Latin back into Greek which the translation committee formed under King James of England then translated into English.

In 1522 Martin Luther translates the New Testament into German. In 1525 William Tyndale translates the New Testament into English. He cannot get his work published in England and moves to Germany, where he published the Old Testament in English in 1535. The Bibles are smuggled into England. Tyndale's translations are from the original languages (Greek and Hebrew). Tyndale is burned at the stake in 1536. Much of his vocabulary and style will remain in all the following translations of the English Bible, earning him the nickname "Father of the English Bible." His translation forms the basis of the King James translation.

Other English translations are made:

The Coverdale Bible in 1535 – this is the first complete Bible to be printed in England

The Matthew's Bible in 1537 – this is the first Bible to be published with the king's permission. The New Testament is strongly based upon Tyndale's translation.

The Great Bible in 1539 – this version is placed in every church and is based upon Matthew's Bible by order of Thomas Crammer archbishop under King Henry VIII. These are chained to the church pillars to prevent their theft.

Mary ascends to the throne and in 1555 bans English translations and burns Thomas Crammer at the stake. Exiles from England flee to Switzerland and print the Geneva Bible in 1560. This is a complete revision of the Great Bible. This Bible contains theological notes from Protestant scholars John Calvin, Beza, Knox, and Whittingham making it the first study Bible. The 1640 edition of this Bible is the first to omit the Apocrypha.

The Bishops Bible in 1568 – this is translated under Queen Elizabeth by the Church of England as an answer to the Geneva Bible.

Rheims-Douai Bible in 1582-1609 is a translation into English from the Latin Vulgate.

The King James Version is published in 1611. It is called the authorized version although James 1 never authorized or placed his royal approval on the finished version.

Erasmus' text went through five editions. Others took up where he left off, but essentially kept the text virtually the same. One of the editions of Theodore Beza, done in the late 1500s, constituted the text behind the King James NT. By 1550 the third edition of Stephanus' Greek text included in the margin textual variants from several witnesses, but the text was still largely that of Erasmus. By 1633 this text had gone through some more minor changes, but was stable enough that the edition published by the Elzevirs was called in the preface the "the text now received by all," or the *Textus Receptus*. Interestingly, this was more publishers' hype than consensus, for many if not most New Testament scholars of the time had long noted the inherent weaknesses in this text.

It should be noted that the King James underwent some three published revisions. Erasmus' text as well as the text of the English translation contained scores of footnotes and marginal readings on possible alternative meanings and textual difficulties. Some of these were incorporated into subsequent revisions. The edition most used today was the 1769 revision.

The 1800s saw great discoveries of additional manuscripts. Today there exists over 24,000 New Testament manuscripts, of which over 5,300 are Greek. Compared to other ancient manuscripts, the weight of authority favors the accuracy and reliability of the Bible manuscripts. For example, only 643 copies of Homer's *Iliad* exist today. Homer wrote in about B.C. 900, but the most ancient manuscript dates only to B.C. 400. As will be noted below, the oldest New Testament manuscript is part of John's Gospel dating to A.D. 110-125. If one were to compare the manuscripts, noting differences, the Bible is 98-99% accurate, while the *Iliad* is only about 95% accurate.

Two British scholars, Westcott and Hort, undertook a study of these manuscripts and in 1881 published their own text of the Greek New Testament. Their critical text was based upon a long string of preunderstandings about the original of various manuscripts.

What Westcott and Hort's study did was to prove that there were, generally speaking, families of texts. If two copies were made in Jerusalem, one being sent to Antioch and the other to Alexandria, Egypt, one could assume that each was identical. But then scribes in both locations copied and copied and recopied these texts. Over time, human errors were made. But the scribes in Antioch made different errors than the ones in Alexandria. Subsequent copies reflect these errors. Over the 1400 years before the printing press eliminated some of these problems, new family lines were created, i.e. copies sent to Rome were recopied with new errors being introduced. Westcott and Hort analyzed the manuscripts and assigned them to families. Rather than following the majority of manuscripts (number wise), they "recreated" the ancestors. Using a variety

of assumptions as to how errors occurred, they created a set of rules for choosing between the variances in these ancestors. On this basis, it is clear that all of Erasmus' texts belonged to what Westcott and Hort called the Byzantine manuscript family or text. This text, according to the study, was itself probably a critical text created about 400 or 500 AD.

Today there are manuscripts of a much early age available for study to which Erasmus did not have access. One fragment of the gospel of John has been dated to 110-125 A.D. Since John wrote between 90-100 A.D., this is a very early copy, perhaps a first generation copy. Such close copies are unheard of when one looks at secular manuscripts. This just adds to the miracle of the survival and authentication of the Bible.

Which leads to the second important event, a discovery in 1885 by Adolf Deissman. His single volume, *Bible Studies*, revolutionized much critical thought. In this volume, Deissman discussed his reading of early Greek manuscripts - not biblical texts but letters, business contracts, receipts, marriage contracts. What Deissman conclude was that these papyri contained the common Greek language of the first century, the same vocabulary as is used in the New Testament! This is the first modern scholarly study of parallel language to the NT. It dispelled the view that the Greek of the NT was a language invented by the Holy Spirit. Since the NT is written in the language of the people, the people will be able to understand it.

For example, Christ's Words "It is finished" (John 19:30) is also found on receipts and means "paid in full!" The death on the Cross paid our sin debts in full. They were not just canceled or annulled but PAID IN FULL.

Also, words at which the KJV translators had merely guessed now had meaning. John 3:16's "only begotten" really means "one and only" or "unique."

These are the type of factors that have created an abundance of new translations of God's Holy Word. The modern critical texts used by most scholars for study are the result of pain staking work based, in the case of the NT, on the initial work of Westcott and Hort.

It should be noted that there are a group of scholars who would still use the "majority text," that is, the composite text prepared on nothing more than numbers. In the last decade a handful of scholars has risen in protest of textual criticism as normally practiced. In 1977 Pickering advocated that the wording of the New Testament autographs was faithfully represented in the *majority* of extant Greek manuscripts. This view had been argued in one form or another since John W. Burgon in 1883 sought to dismantle single-handedly the Westcott-Hort theory. To be sure, the *Majority Text* stands much closer to the Textus Receptus than it does to the critical text. According to one writer's count there are 6,577 differences between the *Majority Text* and the critical text. But that does not tell the whole story. Not by a long shot.

One might note the following when discussing "errors" in the various manuscripts. Out of the 150,000 variants, only 400 materially alter the sense. Among these no more than about 50 have real importance for any reason whatever; and even in the case of these 50, not one touches on any article of faith or any moral commandment not forcibly supported by other entirely clear passages, or by the teaching of the Bible as a whole.

The *Textus Receptus* (Received Text) of Stephanus, Beza and Elzevir and our present versions teach exactly the same Christianity as the oldest manuscripts."

So then, one might ask, why if all this is true, do we have differing interpretation of passages? Why do we have so many different Bible versions?

Does anyone here speak a foreign language? Does anyone here have a lot of contact with teenagers? For that matter, consider the problems of talking to someone in a completely differing line of work - "geeks" have a different set of slang phrases from medical doctors.

The problem of language lies in both the meaning of words and the use to which they are placed, their context. "To strike" means one thing in a fist fight, but something different in baseball or some other sports (strike the football with the foot, not with a bat), and yet "to strike" has still another meaning in a labor dispute.

If Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible as tradition holds, and if scholars' timelines are accurate, Moses wrote these books during the Exodus that occurred between approximately 1445 BC and 1405 BC, that is, almost 3500 years ago. What kinds of "slang" did they have then? Consider some of the archaic problems of the King James:

- charity in 1 Corinthians 13 means "love"
- bowels in Philippians 1:8; 2:1; Colossians 3:12 means tender mercies or tenderhearted affections

What about today's slang, how will it be viewed a thousand years from now (assuming Christ tarries that long)? As my daughter would say, *cool man*.

This is where historical, cultural, and ancient language studies play such an important role in our understanding of the Scriptures.

Formal versus Dynamic

So then, how do translators approach these problems? This is part of the issue that leads to multiple versions. Most people today, if asked what makes for a faithful translation of the Bible would say that it should be a word-for-word account. If the original has a noun, one would expect a noun. If the original had sixteen words, they expect to see sixteen words in the translated sentence. This is call "formal equivalence." The King James, the American Standard, and the New American Standard versions are the translations that come closest to this ideal.

At the other end of the spectrum is the dynamic equivalence or phrase-for-phrase translation. If my daughter wrote her phrase "cool man," a translator using the formal equivalence approach might translate it as a cool or cold man. But one using the dynamic approach would use words meaning neat or awesome or ok, depending upon the context. The dynamic equivalence approach is not so much concerned about the grammatical form of the original language as it is about the meaning of the original. This approach is, by nature, more interpretive, but it is easier to understand. To a great

extent the NIV is a dynamic equivalent translation, although the New English Bible is a better example.

In reality, no translation can be completely formal or dynamic. For example, in the King James, the Hebrew in places such as Psalm 76:7 and 1 Kings 11:96 and 17:18 literally reads "God's nostrils enlarged." KJV translates this phrase as "God became angry," an example of dynamic equivalence. Another example from the KJV is found in the New Testament, where in Matthew 1:18. Here the KJV tells us "Mary was found to be with child." The Greek actually reads "Mary was having it in the belly!" Paul writes in his letter (Romans 6:2; 7:7) "God forbid!" Literally the phrase in the Greek means "May it never be!" Neither the Greek for "God" or for "forbid" appears in any of the texts.

So these differences in interpretative philosophy help to dictate the manner in which a version is generally written. The formal equivalence translation lets the reader interpret for himself. Often the average reader does not have the background or tools to interpret accurately. This results in poor understanding of some passages. On the other hand, a dynamic translation is usually clear and understandable, but if the translators missed the point of the original, whether intentionally or unintentionally, a foreign or poor interpretation will result. In my opinion, the New English Bible is an example of this problem. Here the philosophy and theology of the Church of Scotland greatly influenced the views on many passages, although it is written in beautiful, poetic language. At the extreme, the New World Translation of the Jehovah Witnesses is an example of theological doctrine at work in a dynamic translation. They, rather than writing their own "addition" to God's Word like many other cults, simply reinterpreted passages to fit their incorrect views.

*This leads one to the ultimate question - **Which translation is best?***

The Holy Spirit is sovereign over even the worst translations. Even in extremely bias translations, all the major doctrines are present. The Spirit can use these threads to lead the sincere person to Jesus.

But, stay away from those prepared with an outright obvious sectarian viewpoint (The New World Translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses). There is a corruption of doctrine in such versions. And, as a Bible for serious study, stay away from those prepared by individuals, Moffatt's, Weymouth's, J.B. Phillips, The Living Bible, Kenneth Wuest's Expanded Translation, the Berkley New Testament, or the more recent translation by Peterson, The Message, and Fox's translations of Genesis through Deuteronomy. These may make wonderful devotional Bibles or comparative translations, but they are not generally good for serious study. No one person can truly understand all of the spiritual nuances intended in God's Word and, therefore, their own presuppositions and preunderstandings will encumber such translations.

So, there is no single answer. Each translation has something to convey and bring to the table. The truly serious Bible student should have one of a formal equivalence translation and one of a dynamic translation. Two dynamic equivalence translations would be even better. Read all of them for better understanding of the Scriptures intent. Pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit upon the passage.

THE TRANSLATIONS

King James -(KJV, 1611) - formal equivalence, but the original has undergone three major revisions incorporating more than 100,000 changes. By the count of some there are over 300 words in the KJV which no longer mean what they meant in 1611.

New King James - (NKJV, 1982) - formal equivalence, prepared from the same manuscripts as the King James.

New International Version - (NIV, 1978) - dynamic equivalence, based upon a new translation of the manuscripts, not a revision (as is the NKJV, the RSV, NASB). It was prepared by an international committee of more than one hundred scholars whose stated goal was to produce a translation midway between the literalness of a word-for-word and the looseness of a paraphrase. Most consider it the best phrase-for-phrase translation available today. The major flaw is that its language may be too simplistic. It is prepared from an "eclectic" manuscript, drawing upon several different manuscripts rather than a single critical text.

New American Standard - (NASB, 1971) - formal equivalence, probably the best word-for-word available today. This is also its biggest weakness in that in places it becomes stilted and wooden in its language. It uses the modern critical textual manuscripts as its basis.

American Standard Version - (ASV) - a formal equivalence, word-for-word translation, originally published by Goodspeed for the New Testament, with a small group of scholars publishing the Old Testament companion. When the New Testament portion was first published around 1923, it was highly criticized.

Revised Standard Version - (RSV) - formal equivalence, completed in 1952 and designed to be a revision of the KJV. It used the ancient manuscripts. The **New Revised Standard Version** (NRSV, 1990) follows the same principle but is "gender-inclusive" in its approach. It is to be noted that the English Standard Version was the fore runner of the American Standard Version. The Revised Standard was the initial revision of the English Standard Version. The NASB is the revision of the ASV and the NRSV is the further revision of the RSV. All, in the minds of the translating committees, were designed to be replacements for, and revisions of, the King James.

Note: The NASB exhibits three major differences from the RSV (and NRSV). First, its wording is less archaic. Second, its translators are more conservative theologically. Third, as mentioned, its language is wooden in places in an effort to adhere as closely to the wording of the original as possible.

New English Bible - (NEB) - completed in 1971 (the same general time frame as the NASB and slightly ahead of the NIV), this is a dynamic equivalence translation, but the biases of the translators (a joint committee, lead by the Church of Scotland) show in the text. The **Revised English Bible** (REB, 1989) follows the same pattern.

The Living Bible - (TLB, 1971) - the Living Bible is a paraphrase, not a translation. It represents the views of one person as to the meaning of the American Standard Version. It is, in essence, the work of one man paraphrasing the work of another sole

translator edition (at least as to the NT). The Living Bible is easy to read and is a wonderful tool for first learning the Bible. It is not a study Bible. The New Living Translation is much more of a translation, the translators referring to the original language manuscripts during its preparation. The translation basis of the New Living Translation is dynamic equivalence

Good News Bible: Today's English Version - (TEV, 1976) - dynamic equivalence, published by the American Bible Society in 1966. It attempts to present the Scriptures in idiomatic, modern, simple language.

The Jerusalem Bible (1966) is an English effort based upon a French translation. The Bible was translated from the original languages, while its study notes are translated from French. In many places the translations are freer than its counterparts, such as the Revised Standard. The Jerusalem Bible was revised by the New Jerusalem Bible.

The New American Bible is the first American Catholic Bible to be translated from the original manuscripts.

The Contemporary English Version - (CEV) - was first translated as a work for early youth. Its aim is to be a functional equivalence by determining the meanings of words and then expressing them in the most accurate and natural contemporary English.

The New Century Version - (NCV) - was originally published as the International Children's Bible. The adult version was originally called The Everyday Bible. Both versions emphasize simplicity and clarity of expression.

The Message - is a work by Eugene H. Peterson. This is an idiomatic English translation of the Scriptures and does not exist as a complete Bible.

New English Translation (or NET) - this is one "in the middle." It is brand new having been just completed (fall, 1998) and originally published solely on the Internet at www.bible.org. This site is one composed primarily of graduates of Dallas Theological Seminary. This Seminary has produced most of the critical studies on the manuscripts in the last half of this century. The NET is describe as more accurate than the NASB, more readable than the NIV, and more elegant than either. I personally have not yet read enough of it to have any opinion on the validity of this description.

The Amplified Bible – (1965) This is not really a translation or paraphrase, but a unique study tool. Based upon the KJV, RSV, and other similar manuscripts, The Amplified Bible has expanded on alternate word meanings, providing these alternate shades of difference right in the body of the text so that one does not have to resort to a lexicon or dictionary to find the various shades of difference in word usage.

English Standard Version (ESV) is published by Crossway Books and is considered a literal or "formal equivalence" translation. "that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. As such, its emphasis is on "word-for-word" correspondence, at the same time taking into account differences of grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages. Thus it seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and meaning of the original." I have read the

ESV cover-to-cover and find it to be good translation. The website for this is <http://www.gnpcb.org/home/esv/>.

The New Living Translation (NLT -- originally mentioned above with The Living Bible) is a dynamic equivalent translation, that is, a thought-for-thought translation. Its web site (www.newlivingtranslation.com) describes it as "In the New Living Translation, this is accomplished by translating entire thoughts (rather than just words) into natural, everyday English. The end result is a translation that is easy to read and understand and that accurately communicates the meaning of the original text." With the adverse publicity being captured by the Today's New International Version (see below), many churches who previously were using the NIV have switched to the NLT. I am currently reading through the NLT and find it to be a good translation that is easy to read. The concepts used in translation do not make this version acceptable as a primary study Bible, however, in my opinion.

Still an ongoing project is the **Holman Christian Standard Bible** (HCSB). Published by Broadman & Holman Publishers, this work currently exists in a complete New Testament. It is described as a "fresh rendering of God's Word is translated directly from the original biblical languages with a reader-friendly style geared to contemporary English usage. The approach of combining accuracy and clarity makes the HCSB a translation that any reader can enjoy" (from <http://www.broadmanholman.com/hcsb/default.asp>). I have read the New Testament and find it acceptable.

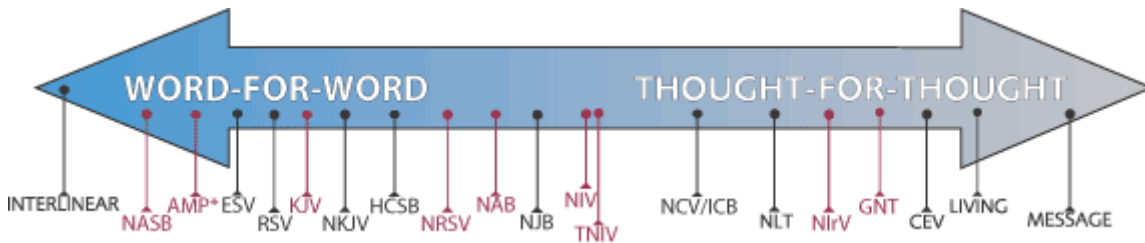
Last, and most controversial, on this list of new translations, is **Today's New International Version** (TNIV). Created by the International Bible Society, this translation is based upon the very popular NIV, but has been edited to make it, essentially, gender neutral in keeping with today's culture. The information site for this version is <http://www.tniv.info/>. The other side of this story may be found at the TNIV Response Center (<http://www.no-tniv.com/>), a site dedicated to convincing the world this is an unacceptable version. While there are sufficient materials on both sites for you to draw your own conclusions, I have great personal difficulty in reconciling the orthodox statement of belief used on this translation with the changing of important terms in the original languages from feminine or masculine to a gender-neutral term. This is not a true rendering of the original languages and therefore is contra to what I read as the statement of translation belief. The original Hebrew and Greek both have ample pronouns, and noun and verb endings whereby the original authors could have used gender neutral terms had they so desired. They chose, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit not to do so. It is not the place of culture to re-edit the writings because it better fits with someone's view of the ways the world should operate. I would vote NO on the TNIV.

I noted above a separate problem being raised by the TNIV. Many churches fearing, I believe, that many in their congregation with associate the NIV with the TNIV controversy, thus, concluding that the NIV is a poor translation as well. As a result, many churches are moving away from the NIV. The current recommendations by "those who know" are to move to either the NLT or the ESV. While there may be some merit to this concern, I believe that each pastor needs to access the knowledge and understanding of his own congregation. Further, care needs to be exercised in deciding which version to use.

It is interesting to note that after some 1500 years of use, the Catholic Church moved away from the Latin Vulgate as its Bible. **The New Jerusalem Bible** appeared in 1966 and was based upon a French translation. **The New American Bible** is the first American Catholic Bible translated from the original languages. Both of these are freer than a word-for-word translation, and in places reflect the theological views of the Roman Catholic Church.

As an aside, the major argument presented by that group known as the King James Only-ers is based upon changes to wording in places that "reduce" or eliminate the deity of Christ. While in the case of some individual passages this may appear to be true, on the whole, translations such as the NIV and NASB have made changes the other direction in many passages and, in the minds of many, have clearer language on Christ's deity than does the KJV. For anyone interested in pursuing this course of study, I might suggest *The King James Only Controversy*, by James R. White, Bethany House Publishers, 1995. A second, newer book is that written by Philip W. Comfort, Ph.D., who served on the translation committee for the New Living Translation. The book is entitled *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2000.

For those who advocate the KJV only position, one might ask, how could this be the only true translation when it had to be revised so extensively? And, what about all those other translations from Greek and Hebrew into Dutch, or German, or French or so on? Are they not accurate? White's work address many of the arguments put forth in publication that support KJV only.



From Zondervan Publishing Company, <http://www.zondervanbibles.com/translations.htm>

Church History

Lesson 4 Church And State

■- 247 to 420

Modern events and ancient persecutions have a peculiar way of intersecting in our lives. Consider,

The overseer of Terni was martyred in 269. The church designated his feast day as February 14. His name? Valentine!

Another overseer imprisoned during this time period was Nicolas of Myra – Saint Nicholas, better known as Santa Claus!

During this period the church survives, in part, by its union with the state. This helps the church in many aspects of its life, but it will ultimately weaken the church as the church and state merge into a single entity in the eyes of many during various periods of history.

At the same time, there were great periods of Roman persecution of the Christians. The combinations of these events create a difficult time for the church, a time where heresy mixes with state views.

For all practical purposes, there are only two truly key players in this chunk of history – one “good,” maybe, and the other truly bad. But, to get to them we need to review a couple of other steps.

The Roman Empire turned 1,000 in A.D. 247. An endless, great party mixed New Years, Mardi Gras, and every Super Bowl party into a single long feast. Living up to their moral standards, many Christians did not participate.

Irony follows. A great plague broke out in Rome following the party. The Romans blamed the Christians for angering the gods by not participating in the anniversary party. Emperor Decius started another round of persecution. The period was shortened by Decius’ death in 251, but many Christians died, including Origen. The period left behind an ongoing problem for the church.

While the majority of Christians had not participated in the feast, many Christians had participated. One of the events of the feast was sacrificing to the Roman gods, so these Christians had participated in the pagan sacrifices. The new issue was whether or not these Christians could re-enter their churches.

The basic church position was that if the believer repented, he could re-enter the church. Since not all of those trying to re-enter were repentant, the issue could be stated as one of discernment. How could you admit those who were sorry for their actions without admitting false believers who claimed repentance but were not sincere in this actions.

This battle would be fought, in all places, in Northern Africa by Cyprian of Carthage. Cyprian himself hid during the persecution, returning to a church in confusion. Cyprian felt that a believer could show his repentance by prayer and fasting. His opponents were known as Donatists. This group believed that anyone who had avoided martyrdom was a false believer. While they would not go so far as to exclude all of this group, they developed a position that said overseers who had cooperated with the Empire should not be allowed to confer the rites of the church – ordination, communion, baptism.

This battle would continue without a complete resolution until the next wave of Roman persecutions took Cyprian's life. This wave of persecution came under the reign of Diocletian who became emperor in A.D. 284. Under the hand of God's divine providence, Diocletian made a practical political decision that would influence the church for many centuries to come.

Diocletian understood the vastness of the empire and the inability of one person to properly maintain control. As such, he divided the empire into two parts. He appointed administrative assistants for each part, establishing a rule that upon the death of the emperor, the assistant would become emperor. Effectively there were two emperors, one in the East and one in the West.

Diocletian established his throne in the East and named Galerius as his assistant. Both of these men persecuted the Christian. Further, Galerius dreamed of ruling over both parts of the empire. To accomplish this he kidnapped the Western emperor's son. In 305, when the co-emperor became deathly ill, Galerius allowed the son to return to his father. The son was Constantine.

Upon his father's death, Constantine demanded, and received, co-emperor status. During Galerius' remaining lifetime, Constantine strengthened his position and became a great military leader.

Meanwhile, the dying Galerius came to his senses and realized his persecution against the Christians had not accomplished anything permanent, other than to drive the Christians to their God. Galerius issued a death bed decree that allowed Christianity so long as it did not disturb the public order.

Meanwhile, Constantine had met his opponent, another power hungry soldier named Maxentius. The winner would rule the empire. Maxentius retreated to Rome and Constantine approached for battle. The "miracle" came the night before the battle in A.D. 312.



Legend says that as Constantine prayed about the battle, he saw the above cross in the sky with the words "By this sign, you will win." The legend claims that Constantine dreamed that Jesus Christ commanded him to place a Christian symbol or Cross on his men's shields. The cross sign represents the first two Greek letters of the Greek word

Christ. In English these letters are x-p. The legend also claims that Constantine added this sign to his personal battle-flag.

Without worrying about the details of the battle, Maxentius drowned attempting to escape and Constantine marched into Rome under the sign of the Cross. The following year Constantine and his co-emperor, Licinius, issued the Edit of Milan whereby Christianity essentially became the state religion in the Roman Empire. Constantine claimed to be a Christian, although history does not completely support this claim. He did grant the church leaders widespread favors and powers.

Rather than unify the empire, Christianity created problems for Constantine. The Donatists called upon Constantine to settle the ongoing dispute over who could ordain an overseer or elder. Constantine decided against the Donatists, but the church was now tied to the state and would remain so for the next 1200 years! Constantine helped to preserve the church and spread the Gospel message, but was he good?

It should be noted that the Donatist controversy existed in Rome as well. A presbyter named Novatian also argued that those who had renounced their faith during the persecutions should not be allowed to re-enter the church. The result in Rome was the formation of a minority position that would last for many years. It appears in general terms that the Novatians ultimately merged with the Donatists.

Novatian did aid the church in fighting the Monarchians. This group denied the Trinity, claiming essentially that only God the Father was God. Novatian defend the orthodox position of the Trinity, but this heresy would arise again in the future.

Another minor heresy was that of Manicheism. This was Gnosticism with Oriental elements. As a religious movement it died under its own lack of structure, but in the process, it's levels of beings found followers who put the teachings to work in a different setting. It sounds vaguely similar to Mormonism. Manicheism's lasting effect was that it assisted the church to argue for the separation of clergy and laity.

Constantine also had his Marcion. His name was Arius, an elder in Alexandria Egypt. At issue was the issue of Jesus' divine state. To understand the issue, one must appreciate that the early church did not believe that God could experience emotions. However, if Jesus was fully divine and fully human then He did experience emotions. Thus, God the Father through the Son experienced these same emotions. While most of the church accepted this position, Arius went a different route.

Arius taught that Jesus was not God! Arius taught that Jesus was a created being.

If this sounds familiar, you will find a similar modern day teaching in the doctrine of Jehovah Witnesses and the Mormons.

Arius put his claim to music – "Once the Son did not exist." The church learned to play this same game. The Christian's wrote a chorus to offset the effect of Arius' song – we know the chorus today as the Gloria Patri.

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.”

Constantine did not rely solely upon the power of music. To maintain the unity of the church and peace in his empire, the Emperor invited all of the overseers in the known world to Nicaea, a village in northern Asia Minor (Izmir, Turkey). The date was July 4, 325. Constantine declared himself an overseer and apostle and oversaw the Council. More than 300 overseers and 2,000 elders and deacons attended.

The history of the council suggests that most in attendance did not understand the issue at hand. One small group attacked Arius while another small group defended Arius. This latter group made the mistake of explaining Arius' position in simple detail. When the collective body discovered that Arius truly meant that Jesus was not God, charges of Blasphemy filled the air.

A statement of faith, a Creed, was drawn up and signed by all but two of the overseers in attendance. While the phrase “of one essence with the Father” created concern for the Eastern churches, the overriding need to oust Arius carried the day. The Eastern churches were concerned that this phrase suggested that somehow the Father and the son were not distinct.

Constantine excluded Arius and anyone who refused to sign the Creed from the church.

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, the only-begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance [*ousias*] of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one substance [*homoousion*] with the Father, through whom all things came to be, those things that are in heaven and those things that are on earth, who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and was made man, suffered, rose the third day, ascended into the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead.

The key to the Creed is the *homoousion* stressing that Jesus is not merely like the Father but is of the identical substance as the Father. This term would create ongoing controversy for the next 50+ years.

In an effort to make peace, Constantine attempted to restore Arius to the church. His efforts were battled by Athanasius of Alexandria. Athanasius refused to restore Arius, clashing with the emperor. Ultimately, Constantine exiled Athanasius on the charge of treason.

Constantine died in 337. His body was baptized by a follower of Arius and the Roman Senate declared Constantine to be a God.

Constantine was followed by his nephew, Julian. Constantine's son had killed Julian's parents when he was a young child, creating a great deal of hatred in Julian for Christians. Julian cancelled all of the civil privileges of the Christian clergy and restored all of the exiled overseers in an effort to create chaos in the church. His plan backfired as the churches of the East and the West actually started to talk to each other.

Athanasius called a council at Alexandria to deal with Arius. All in attendance support the position of the Nicene Creed. The group further understood the concerns of the East and proclaimed that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were three separate Persons who shared the same essence. The controversy was not finally put to rest until 381 under the rule of Emperor Theodosius. The West favored Athanasius's view, whereas the East wanted a modified statement. At the Council of Constantinople the Nicene Creed was fully accepted by the church, reaffirming the *homoousian* clause.

Julian feared the power Athanasius had over the church and sought to kill him. The overseer fled to the desert where he was hid by desert monks until Julian's death. While the monks had formed over the early years of the church as a means to abstain from physical pleasures, the groups soon discerned that it was not correct for them to be alone. As a result communities were formed where monks could live together and still live a life of prayer and quiet service. These communities were called monasteries. The female versions were called covenants. The females were called nuns, from the feminine form of the Latin word for monks.

One of these monks was Jerome. His life of a monk was relatively short lived, as he returned to Rome realizing God had not meant that he live alone. He was one of the early defenders of the idea that Jesus' mother Mary remained a virgin throughout her lifetime. As we saw in the last lesson, he also translated the Scriptures into Latin.

Many people did not like the Latin language Jerome used. These people called his translation "vulgate," the Latin word for common or vulgar.

Clearly not all of Jerome's contributions were valuable, but this demonstrates the importance of the movement we call monks. One group located in Cappadocia (Turkey) was at the forefront of the fight to maintain and keep the Nicene Creed. This effort helped to unify Christian theology in both parts of the Roman Empire. Their leaders were Basil, his sister Macrina, his brother Gregory, and a family friend also named Gregory. While many monasteries lived quiet, austere lives, this group worked rather than meditating all day, sang songs, helped others, sold what they grew and gave the proceeds to help the poor, and banned fasting and self-punishment. They started more monasteries and covenants in the cities where their members taught doctrine to thousands.

In addition, many of these groups were responsible for making copies of the Holy Bible. It was there efforts that assured we have copies of God's Word today.

As a closing note, let's consider Julian one last time. Julian grew up in an extended family who claimed to be Christian. Yet, the Christians he knew were the ones who killed his parents, imprisoned him, and forced him to learn the Scriptures without providing him the reasons for doing so. This effort fueled his hatred of God and Christians. Christianity cannot be forced upon people who are not ready to receive God's Word. It cannot be ordained by the state nor can it be force-fed to children. Think about it!

Fourth Century Church Events

The fourth century, like the sixteenth, and perhaps our own twentieth, is one of those periods in church history when momentous changes take place that stand out as pivotal turning points in the history of God's people.

The century witnessed major changes and transitions in church relations with state and society. Here are six:

- Empire Persecutes Church -- At the beginning of the century the church went through the "Great Persecution"--the last and the worst. Instituted by emperor Diocletian in 305, it was intended to wipe out the church. It failed.
- Empire Tolerates Church -- Emperor Constantine professed Christianity and the church was given legal status. Often you will hear that Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the empire. He didn't. But he did restore its losses and gave it favored treatment as one among many tolerated religions.
- Empire Challenges Church -- Paganism didn't give up without a battle. Emperor Julian (361-363) attempted unsuccessfully to reestablish paganism.
- Empire Adopts Church --Christianity was officially made the state religion under emperor Theodosius IX in the year 381.
- Church Challenges Empire -- In a dramatic confrontation that foreshadowed centuries of church-state jockeying for position, Bishop Ambrose of Milan defied the emperor.
- Church Persecutes Opponents -- It started off the century as a persecuted minority. By the end of the century the persecuted church had turned into a persecuting church. Its motives made sense. It saw itself as combating heresy, false religion and evil forces. In many ways it was a different church and a different world at the end of this century.
- Canon of New Testament confirmed. In the 367 AD Easter letter of Athanasius, and at Councils in 382 and 397, final recognition was given. These do not create the Christian scriptures but confirm what was already generally recognized and accepted.
- Millions of new members pour in. Becoming a Christian is no longer a risk, but can even be politically and socially opportune, so the church has to deal with a new laxity in standards of belief and behavior.
- Persecuted Church turns into persecuting church. By the end of the century the church that had for so long endured persecution as a minority faith, now becomes a persecutor.
- Major Councils - Church now needs to clarify and define what it believes. Long time required to understand and explain person and nature of Christ. Under emperor Constantine the first major council of church held in Nicea (modern Turkey) in 325. Second major Council held at Constantinople in AD 381.

- Donatists Arise in 311 - No sooner does the church achieve toleration than a severe rupture occurs within the North African church that would continue for three hundred years. What had been one of the strongest early centers of the church is so weakened it was eventually lost to Christianity.
- Major Missionary Advance as Ufilias takes Gospel to the Barbarian Goths in mid-century.
- Church Buildings Flourish -- After legalization the church gets big into real estate. Often its great basilicas are built on the sites of what were formerly pagan temples.
- Capital of Empire moves to Constantinople -- In 324 city founded. City dedicated on May 11, 330. Rome no longer the center of power for the empire and church begins to fill in the gap at Rome.
- Eusebius' Church History --Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea becomes the first significant church historian and gives us invaluable documentation on the early church.
- Augustine converted in AD 386. He would become one of the most important theologians in all of church history.

AD 400 (TWELVE GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 18.6%
- Breakdown: 64% nonwhite, 36% white
- Evangelization: 39% of world
- Scriptures: 11 languages
- Total martyrs since AD 33: 1,950,000 (1.0 % of all Christians ever; recent rate 5,310 per year)

Source: David Barrett.

Church History

Lesson 5 More Councils ■ AD 376 to 664

Beginning around 400, monks and priests would have the crown of the heads shaved when they took their vows. For those with hair, this made their hair appear as a wreath around their heads. This became known as “tonsure.” Pope Paul VI abolished the practice in 1972.



We discussed in our last lesson the Council of Nicaea (325) and the Arian controversy. This period saw a series of church councils meet to resolve a series of heresies and attacks upon the fundamental teachings of the Church. It is during this period that the practice of systematic theology truly has its birth as the church leaders (overseers) met to reach agreement upon the meaning of various biblical passages.

This is also the period where the unification of church and state swings more to the side of the church. The Roman Empire continues to crumble as a political entity and Rome itself is saved, not by the Emperor, but by the Pope! Power comes to the church, and with that power comes corruption. Indeed, during this time the Middle or Dark Ages commence and one must marvel that God’s church survived. To read many of the stories of the period and to review the lives of the leaders, one is almost forced to conclude there were no Christians around! Yet, just as in the time of Elijah, God kept his remnant (1 Kings 19:1-18).

It was mentioned above that the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381 reaffirmed the Creed from the Council of Nicaea. It is at this point in time that the people start calling this creed the Nicene Creed. This council also dealt with the issue of Christ’s humanity, declaring that He was fully and completely human. This renounced those who taught that Jesus could not be sinless and still fully human. In particular, this council also offset the false teachings of Apollinarius who taught that Jesus had a human body but no human mind.

In the Western Church, Ambrose emerges as the hero of the moment. Ambrose supported the Nicene Creed but claimed never to have personally confessed a belief in

Jesus. Notwithstanding this lack of faith, he became overseer of Milan in a movement designed to remove tensions between the Arians and the supporters of the Creed. The people of Milan effectively appointed Ambrose overseer by unanimous proclamation! A week later Ambrose had been baptized and made overseer. History, at least, suggests he became a true convert somewhere in the process of his life.

Ambrose's claim to fame was his open antagonism with Emperor Theodosius. First, Ambrose stood up to the Emperor in a dispute over the church rebuilding or paying for the rebuilding of a burnt Jewish synagogue. Having won this battle, Ambrose then excluded Theodosius from the Lord's Supper after the Emperor allowed his troops to slaughter some 7,000 rioters. Ambrose required the Emperor to wear sackcloth and ashes for several weeks before allowing him to partake of communion.

For better or worse, the Emperor thereafter supported Christianity with his political might and power. The church and state grew even closer together and the church remained a strong partner in the Western Empire.

In the East, Theodosius found an opponent in Olympias, an extremely wealthy widow. She used her wealth to support the poor and to buy slaves so she could free them. She was ordained as a deaconess by the church. When she rejected the marital advances of the Emperor's cousin, he seized all of her property. Her response was to thank the Emperor from protecting her from backsliding into reliance upon material things! She is reported to have said "had I kept my property, I might have fallen prey to pride."

The Emperor returned her property. She gave it away. During this period she became the patron of one of the great Church Fathers, the overseer of Antioch, Syria, John. Because of his eloquent, flowery sermons, John earned the nickname "Chrysostom" which means Golden-Mouth.

Chrysostom focused his preaching upon the original intent of the biblical texts. You may recall this approach differs from those in Alexandria (Origen and Ambrose) who searched for secret spiritual truths ("spiritualism"). Chrysostom made waves with the empire demanding holiness in the church and society. During this period many of the clergy remained unmarried but lived with "spiritual sisters." One of Chrysostom's arguments was that there appeared to be too many "spiritual mothers" in the group! Since these sermons also were aimed at society, they were preaching against the sensual lifestyle of those in authority.

Ultimately John and Olympias were both exiled where they died.

Other figures become important during this time frame. Throughout the period, Barbarians moved toward or into the Roman Empire. The Barbarians as a general group were simply people who lived on the edges of the Empire. The Romans called them Barbarians because the Romans could not understand their speech and thought they were saying "bar-BAR-bar." This group included the Goths, the Vandals and the Huns (an oriental group who pushed the other two into the Empire).

The Roman's did not always deal in a logical manner with the Barbarians. For example in 408, Alaric the Goth asked for farmland for his people. His request also included 18 tons of gold and silver and a ton of pepper(!) The Emperor refused. The Goths attacked Rome and plundered the city for three days.

The Roman Empire had fallen and the Middle Ages had begun.

The fall of Rome created shockwaves throughout the Empire. From a theological perspective those in the East were impacted less than those in the West. Africa was still a large part of the West, however, and it is in this region where God raised up the next large voice of Christianity.

The son of a godly, praying mother, Monica, a teenage Augustine dismissed Christianity in favor of Manicheism. This group required that he reject sex, an impossible request for the young lad. To find the truth, Augustine moved to Milan. There he was exposed to Ambrose's preaching. Ambrose, as noted above, allegorized the Bible searching for spiritual truths. On a park bench, with children singing in the background, Augustine gave his heart and soul to Christ. He became the overseer or bishop of the church in Hippo North Africa.

One of the major controversies of the church has been that of how much man may contribute to his own salvation. At one extreme today are those who we refer to as super-Calvinists. They claim that man is so depraved he can do absolutely nothing. This is such a truth that God chose those to be saved prior to the formation of the world. At the other extreme are those who believe man saves himself. As might be gathered from this comment, there have been a variety of encounters between these groups over the years.

The first major encounter is that of Augustine and Pelagius. Pelagius preached that people naturally possess the power to be holy. This is because, according to Pelagius, people are not born sinful. Augustine argued that the first sin so corrupted men that no one naturally loves and, thus, cannot on their own find holiness. In this area, a full review of Augustine's arguments follows exactly the teachings of Paul.

On the other hand, Augustine has his shortcomings. He believed that sin was sexually transmitted. He also believed in infant baptism, finding that this purged primal sin and prepared a person to receive God's grace. And, Augustine followed Ambrose in using the allegorical method of interpretation.

Augustine avidly preached and wrote for the church. His efforts helped sustain the Western Church through the early period of Rome's fall. His work the City of God is still available to day and his teachings find their ways into the church theology for the next several hundred years, still being quoted by scholars today.

And, while the fires of the Barbarians continued to burn, the church faced other theological challenges.

The next controversy displays one of the more humorous series of circumstances in the history of the church, showing the church has adopted too much the ways of the world. The basic dispute is between Cyril, the overseer of Alexandria, and Nestorius who became the overseer of Constantinople in 428.

Nestorius earned himself the nickname "Fire-Brand" in his efforts to burn down an Arian chapel. He had hoped that without a chapel the Arians would leave town.

Unfortunately, the flames got out of hand and Nestorius destroyed an entire block of the town!

By this time in history, Mary the Mother of Jesus had acquired the common title of *Theotokos*, which means God-Bearer. Nestorius criticized this title. He thought he was preaching that Jesus was not only God, but also fully human. What people, including Cyril, thought he said was that Jesus was two persons, one divine and one human and that Mary only bore the human person.

In 431 a council was called at Ephesus. Cyril and his followers arrived, called a meeting, condemned Nestorius, and adjourned the Council. Later, Nestorius and his followers arrived, convened the council, condemned Cyril, and adjourned. Still later, the Roman church representatives arrived. They called the Council to order for a third time. This group sided with Cyril and Nestorius was exiled. But, the story continues.

The followers of Cyril became known as “One-Nature” thinkers. They were so eager to protect the fact that Jesus was not two separate people that they started teaching that Christ’s divine nature consumed his humanity. One-Nature theology became extremely popular, especially among the Egyptian Copts. Another council was called.

In 451, the council of Chalcedon was called. Over 500 overseers met. Leo, the Roman overseer had his hands full at home and did not attend. He sent a summary of his teachings, called a TOME. Leo, essentially like what Nestorius thought he had taught, believed that Jesus had two natures united in one person. The Council combined the Nicene Creed, Cyril’s writings and Leo’s Tome to produce a statement of Christ known as the “Two-Nature” view which recognized “Christ . . . [is] . . . recognized in two natures, without confusion, division, or separation . . . but not as if Christ were parted into two persons.”

The exiled Nestorius stated that the council confessed what he had always taught!

Many Christians in Egypt and Syria still followed the One-Nature view. These groups eventually divided from the West (Roman) and East Churches to form the Coptic and Syrian Orthodox Churches. They still follow the One-Nature view. Another group of Egyptian churches remained connected with the Eastern churches but followed the One-Nature view. These are known as the Melkite or Imperial Churches.

It might also be mentioned that although Arius is mostly noted for his position that Jesus was of a different essence than the Father, his teachings also claimed that the Holy Spirit was yet a third essence. Though this teaching was never of great controversy within the early church, the Council of Chalcedon made it clear that all three members of the Trinity shared the same essence.

As we mentioned above, Leo did not attend the Council of Chalcedon because he was otherwise occupied. Attila the Hun was on his way to Rome! Rome was without emperor, army, or defense. In 452, the Huns attacked Italy and marched toward Rome. In a move without historical details, Leo somehow convinced Attila to retreat from Rome!

The peace was short enjoyed. In 455 the Vandals marched on Rome. While Leo could not convince them to retreat, he did persuade the Vandals not to rape or kill. Oddly enough, the Vandals remained faithful to their agreement with Leo, although they did loot and vandalize the city.

In 476, Odovacer the Barbarian disposed the last Western emperor and the empire was truly dead.

Leo has one other note to his tenure. It starts with Matthew:

Matthew 16:13-19 (NKJV)

¹³ When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ¹⁴ So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

At some and sundry points in time the "church" has declared that its overseer traces his office back to Peter, using these verses, particularly verse 18 to support this position. Obviously, this is not a true statement, but today's Roman Catholic Church maintains this position, tracing the Pope's authority back to Peter.

Leo's claim to fame is that he is the first overseer of Rome who used or accepted the title of "Pope."

At some point in history, the Roman Church filled in the blanks of time and traced the pope-hood back to Peter. If you would like to review a list of popes, as well as a list of Christian history summaries from a Catholic perspective, visit Et Cum Spiritu Tuo, <http://www.cwo.com/~pentrack/catholic/chron.html>.

The other developments of this time period will help the true church survive the Middle Ages. As mentioned above, a review of the entire history of the church from here until the Reformation will make one wonder how the church survived at all. One answer to this question is that a few godly men and women established a mechanism that would allow the church to endure.

Two of these were Benedict and his twin sister Scholastica. Born in Italy, this pair established a monastery and convent near each other. In 520, in a remote region of Italy, Benedict destroyed a pagan hilltop idol and built his monastery. He created a Rule as the guide for his religious community. The Rule of Benedict had no extreme demands. The daily routine included Bible reading, prayer, and work. The covenant was operated under the same Rule.

Our friends the Barbarians destroyed the monastery in 589 and the monks fled to Rome.

Gregory of Rome was a powerful politician who encountered God in 573. Giving up his career plans, Gregory became a monk. When a plague ravaged Rome, Gregory left his monastery to minister to the sick. The people repaid his kindness by helping to have Gregory appointed the overseer (pope) of Rome. In this position, Gregory encountered Benedict's monks and their Rule. In A.D. 599, Gregory sent 41 reluctant Benedictine monks to England.

Although reluctant, God's hand was upon this group evangelizing the Anglo-Saxons. By Christmas 599 ten thousand English, including the King of Kent, had been converted and baptized. Canterbury, Kent's capital, became the center of English Christianity and one of the Benedictine monks became known as Augustine of Canterbury.

Meanwhile, Gregory, deeply influenced by the teachings of Augustine of Hippo, developed the doctrine of purgatory. This is the place between death and heaven where God removes any remaining sin that might prevent total enjoyment in God's presence. Gregory also taught that forgiveness requires works of penance. This doctrine would be expanded and greatly abused by later church leaders.

Gregory is most remembered by the people, however, for his music. Changing the nature of church music forever, Gregorian chants may still be heard today.

While I believe Leo is the first of the Roman overseer's to use the title Pope, Gregory is the first to clearly possess and exercise the powers normally associated with this office. He formed the structure that has led to the establishment of today's office of the Pope. As such, many histories call Gregory the first pope.

Until about 400, "Hadrian's Wall" kept the barbarians out of southern Britain. Eventually, the barbarians broke through this wall. The British battle-chief who won twelve battles against the invaders was known as "King Arthur."

The Celtic-Irish churches and communities were not reached by the Anglo-Saxons. After the invasions, this group was cut off from the churches of both the East and the West. There were no overseers and monks and nuns ran these churches. One of the long term consequences was that Easter was not celebrated on a consistent date with the other churches. This ultimately created a tension leading to a mini-council named in honor of Hilda of Whitby. Hilda had trained hundreds of monks who helped to lead the Celtic-Irish churches. At the council in 664, only Hilda and one of the overseers she trained supported the tradition of the Celtic-Irish churches. The effect of the council was to extend control of these churches to Rome.

Finishing tidbit:

In the 400s Irish pirates enslaved a young lad. He would later escape, returning to his home. Later, the lad returned to Ireland as a missionary. He is honored today as Patrick, the Saint of St. Patrick's day!

Fifth Century Events

- As the barbarians increasingly threatened the Empire, sacking the city of Rome, Augustine wrote City of God (413-426), showing that the true movement of history was the unseen conflict between sin and salvation, between the city of man and the kingdom of God.
- Nestorianism spreads in the eastern church, emphasizing a distinction between Christ's human and divine natures. Chalcedon creed describes Jesus Christ as fully human and fully divine, with the two natures existing together without confusion.
- As the emperor's power declines, the Bishop of Rome's increases. Pope Leo I (440-461) negotiates and saves Rome from Attila the Hun (452). He asserts authority over other bishops, claiming bishop of Rome is successor to Apostle Peter.
- Patrick (c. 390-460) sold as slave at age 16. He later escapes, goes to Ireland where he undertakes monumental mission.
- 496--Frankish King Clovis converted to Christianity and baptized. Conquers half of France and paves the way for Charlemagne's "Holy Roman Empire."
- Church calendar with the Christian year begins to be in place. Cult of martyrs and relics widespread, and glorification of Virgin Mary grows. Incense is first introduced into a Christian church service in the West.
- With upheavals and disintegration of secular society, church hierarchy becomes more established and influential.

AD 500 (SIXTEEN GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 22.4%
- Breakdown: 61.9% nonwhite, 38.1% white
- Evangelization: 42% of world
- Scriptures: 13 languages
- Total martyrs since AD 33: 2,540,000 (0.8 % of all Christians ever; recent rate 5,540 per year)

Source: David Barrett.

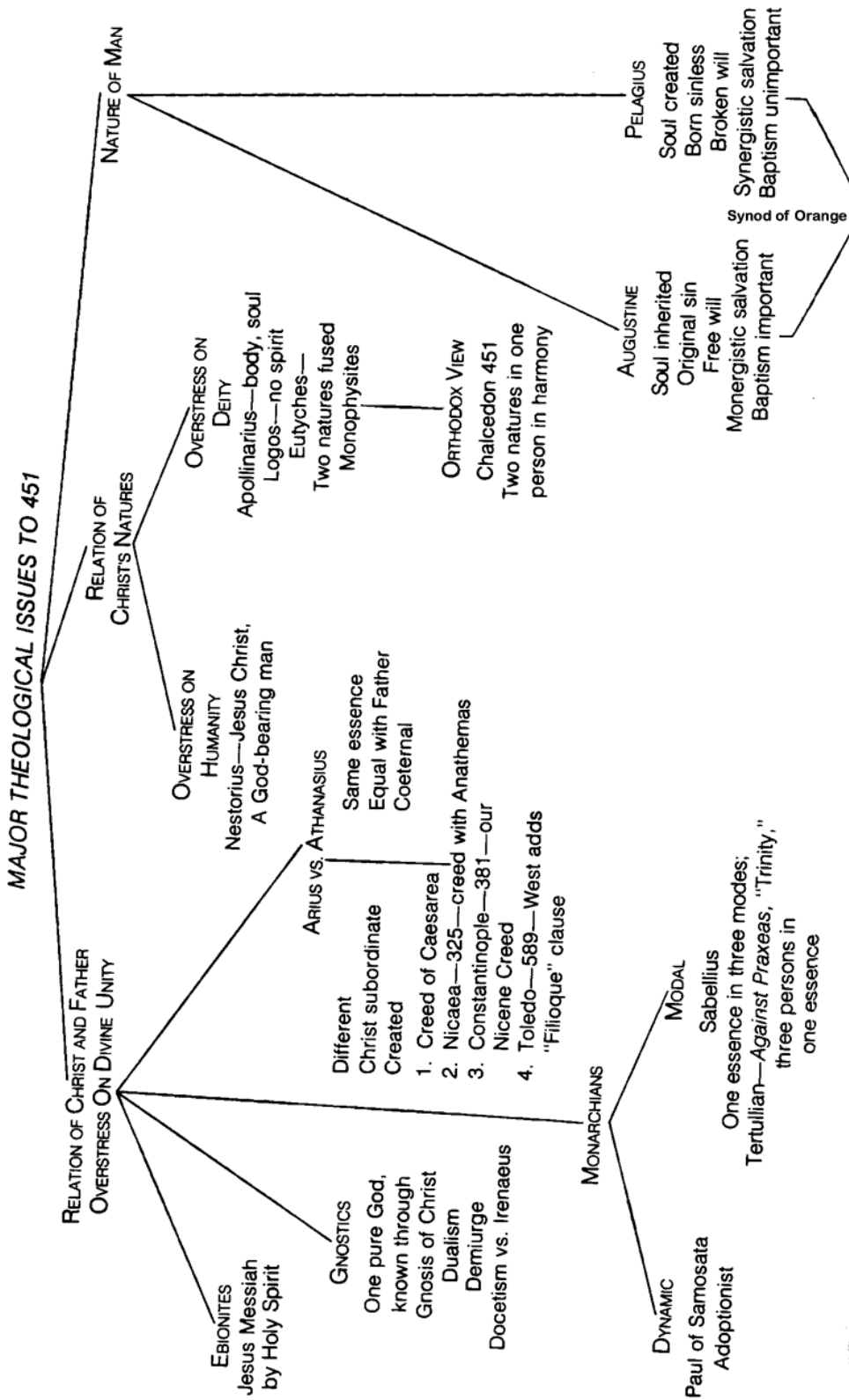
Sixth Century Events

- 529--Responding to growing secularization of the church, Benedict of Nursia establishes monastery of Monte Cassino and the Benedictine Order. Benedict's "Rule" for monks (c. 540) will become the most influential over future centuries.
- 530-532--Boniface II, first pope of Germanic ancestry
- Church and State are becoming more closely intertwined. Emperor Justinian (483-565) closes 1,000-year-old School of Philosophy in Athens 529, issues Code of Civil Laws reflecting Christian morals, sends missionaries as spies to China to smuggle out silkworms, reconquers N. Africa from the Vandals.
- Church buildings become more monumental. Justinian builds Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, dedicated to Christ as the "Holy Wisdom." Constructed 532-537.
- Dionysius Exiguus (d. c. 550), a monk in Rome, establishes modern system of dating, using events after Christ as "Anno Domini," in the year of our Lord. (He missed the date of Christ's birth by a few years.)
- Columba (c. 521-597) goes as missionary to Scotland. Mission headquarters at Iona.
- Conversion of barbarian groups continues. Recared, Visigoth King in Spain and an Arian, becomes Roman Catholic.
- By the end of century the Western church tolerates magic and other manifestations of pagan spirituality as diverse cultures are incorporated into the church.
- Pope Gregory the Great ((c.540-604) gives the mass much of the shape it has today.

AD 600 (NINETEEN GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 24%
- Breakdown: 59% nonwhite, 41% white
- Evangelization: 39% of world
- Scriptures: 14 languages
- Total martyrs since AD 33: 2,700,000 (0.2 % of all Christians ever; recent rate 1,000 per year)

Source: David Barrett.



Church History

Lesson 6 Dark Times

■- A.D. 496 to 1291

Eastern Christians will frequently kiss icons as they enter their churches. They believe that the past saints are still surrounding them. They welcome these saints into their worship by kissing the icons.

Hebrews 12:1 (NKJV)

¹ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Y1K?

Is all of the hype over Y2K still fresh in your mind? Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes there is nothing new under the sun. In the late 990's, many Christians believed that the first year of the new millennium would bring the release of Satan from his prison, a position based upon Rev. 20:7-8. This release would be followed by a time of tribulation, after which Jesus would return to judge the world. When the year 1,000 came and went without few disasters, a wave of optimism and hope swept the churches.

This period is a continuing time of theological dispute and political unrest. The position of the clergy is solidified, while a new threat to Christianity is born – a threat ever present today.

The Middle Ages, Dark Ages, or Medieval times, is the period following the fall of the Roman Empire. During this period, much of Europe became the land of feudal kingdoms. Every man's home was a castle – at least if you owned the land. The landowners became "Lords" and their homes became "manors." Remember the pagan lands of Palestine in the Old Testament. Each city had a king? During the medieval times, each manor had a king!

The Lords hired knights to protect their lands. In some areas, several Lords would unit in forming this private army, appointing a "king" as head of the group. Peasants became servants or "vassals" of the Lords, for this was the only manner in which they could live. Priests were paid by the Lords to serve the manors. Obedience to Christ took second place to having a bed to sleep in and food on the table.

Since almost no one could read, the priests resorted to statues, stained glass windows and other icons as teaching tools. The churches became known as "Bibles in stone" as the written word was replaced with artwork. Over time, this would elevate the place of art in both society and the church.

The Eastern Empire did not turn to feudal systems such as those in Europe, but in the early 600's, the newest, and longest running threat to the church was born. That threat was Islam.

Just as the child of the promise, Isaac, brought forth the twelve tribes of Israel, so Abraham's son of the flesh, Ishmael, was a great father of nations. Although sitting here 4,000 years later it is difficult to be completely dogmatic about the facts, for all practical purposes, the entire world of the Arabs came from the loins of Ishmael.¹ Indeed, in conversations with Muslims, I have been personally told that it was Ishmael whom God directed Abraham to sacrifice, not Isaac (Gen 22)!

In the last fifty years, Islam has been the fastest growing religion in the world. As we recited in the opening chapters, Islam has the third largest presences of significant communities in the world. At the same time, with a total membership claim of close to a billion people, Islam is the world's second largest religion. Islam is a religion of nations and governments. It was the cause of the Crusades of ancient history. For many, it conjures up the thoughts of modern terrorism. It is clearly a religious force to be dealt with.

The early Arabs were polytheistic in religious orientation. They worshiped many gods, of whom the highest was Allah. The religion was very pagan in nature, including gods of nature and people, with the gods being both male and female. It is against these polytheistic gods that Mohammed revolted. Mecca was the center of polytheistic worship. The town boasted some 360 shrines as well as a small temple that housed the Black Stone. The stone was thought to have been given to Abraham by the Angel (*djinn*) Gabriel. Most likely, the stone is a meteorite.

As with the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and others, the Islamic religion owes its origins and its sacred book to one man -- Mohammed. Born in Mecca in about A.D. 570, Mohammed's birth name was Ubu'l Kassim. His father died shortly after his birth and his mother died when he was six. Ultimately, his uncle raised him. Mohammed became a camel driver on caravans, a profession resulting in contact with many peoples and religions. At the age of 25, Mohammed married his employer, a wealthy widow 15 years his senior. Although not particularly relevant to the development of the religion, none of the couples children survived to adulthood, with the exception of one daughter, Fatima.

As the husband of a wealthy entrepreneur, Mohammed no longer worked on the caravans and, thus, devoted himself to meditation on the meaning and purpose of life. Mohammed's reflections brought him to a dislike of the polytheistic nature of the Arab religion. Mohammed arrived at the conclusion Allah was the one true God. He spent much of his time meditating in caves; particularly one on Mount Hira located a few miles from Mecca.² Beginning in A.D. 610 and continuing to his death in 632, Mohammed "received" visions from Allah that were accompanied by violent seizures. At the urging of his wife, Mohammed submitted to the revelations and determined Gabriel was bringing them to him. The angel's instructions to Mohammed were to recite the words

¹The word *Arab* refers to nomads or Bedouins and may be connected with the word for desert or wilderness.

²Mecca is located on the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula, in what is now Saudi Arabia.

he received to others. After his death, his followers recorded these revelations in the Qur'an ("Recitation").³ Arguably, "next to the Bible, it is the most esteemed and most powerful book in the world."⁴

Mohammed's new religion did not quickly catch on. It was contrary to the entire social and moral order of Mecca, and, most likely, had an adverse effect upon the economics of the region. Persecution followed and many of Mohammed's followers moved to a nearby city called Yathrib. On July 16, 622, Mohammed barely managed to escape an assassination plot, and he, too, fled to Yathrib. This escape is called the Hegira (*Hijrah* or flight). This date is considered the official date of the formation of Islam.

Mohammed became the leader of Yathrib and the city's name was changed to Medina, meaning the "City of the Prophet." Mohammed established a theocracy in Median, developing his interrelationship between politics and religion. He also started a harem with some 10-to-12 wives. Mohammed attempted to win the Jewish population of Medina and upon failing in this effort, he turned to persecuting the Jews.

Mohammed helped to finance his government by attacking and plundering caravans going to or from Mecca. This led to continual warfare with Mecca, warfare Mohammed won. He entered Mecca and destroyed the idols, but kept the temple of Kaaba, which housed the Black Stone. Mohammed made Mecca the most holy city of Islam and the Black Stone became the focal point of worship. When the Muslims of today pray, they pray to the Kaaba.

The successors to Mohammed are called *caliph*. It is under the second, third, and fourth *caliphs* that Islam's reach was spread, via battles and conquests. During this time period, Islam spread to Syria, Jerusalem (638), Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia, India, north Africa, and a part of Europe – Portugal and Spain (711).

Islam's spread was helped not only by the sword. The Muslims did allow some religious freedoms. Christians were forced to wear special clothing and pay higher taxes but oddly enough all religions that had "holy writings" were protected by the early Muslims. Also, with the rejection of many of the North African Christians by the Eastern Church because of the One-nature theological position of these churches, there were a lot of dissatisfied people and empty church buildings that were easily converted to mosques.

The defeat of the Islamic armies by Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours in A.D. 732 stopped the spread of Islam in Europe.

Meanwhile, another battle brewed in the East. As mentioned above, the arts were invading Christianity. Icons, crosses, statues of the saints, and other symbols were prominent. Since many of these icons were used in the worship service, Muslims referred to the Christians as "idol-worshippers." The Muslims found an ally in the form of the new emperor of the Eastern Empire.

³A variant or English spelling is Koran. There are also variant spellings of Mohammed's name and of the word Muslim.

⁴John Ankerberg & John Weldon, *The Facts on Islam*, The Anker Series, Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1991, 1998, 5, quoting Dr. J. Christy Wilson of Princeton University.

When a volcano rocked Constantinople in 725, the new emperor feared this was God's wrath upon the church for the use of the icon/idols. He ordered that the icons be smashed. Those promoting the use of icons were known as "iconodules" or icon-kissers. The emperor earned the name iconoclast or "icon-smasher." A 61-year bloody battle followed.

In 780 Irene became Empress and called a council to resolve the icon issue. In 787, more than 350 overseers gathered in Nicene. This council clearly denounced the "smashers" but was equally clear about banning icon worship. They also banned three-dimensional depictions of Jesus and the saints. The council promoted "icon-reverence" an ill-defined term that allowed a high degree of personal affection for an icon so long as the affection did not turn to worship. A special family Bible might be an example of such an icon.

In the West, Europe remained an issue. The pagan Franks started the Dark Ages as the strongest Western power. In 496 Clovis, the Frankish battle-chief, accepted the Nicene Creed and led his people to accept the Christian God. The Franks received a great deal of support from the churches as they conquered Europe. The stronger, more powerful, and wealthier the Franks grew, the more support they gave to the Roman church.

In 754, Pepin III, king of the Franks, gave central Italy to the Roman church.

The Franks' version of evangelism continued. Pepin III's son, King Charles offered conquered countries the choice of converting to Christianity or death. It is not surprising that more than 90% of the conquered people professed Christianity. The story is told that when a group of Germans refused to be baptized, Charles killed 4,500 of them and then went off to celebrate Christmas. By the beginning of the 9th Century, Charles controlled what is now Germany and France.

Meanwhile, the Roman church was busy playing political games. The Donation of Constantine, a forged document, was used to bolster the church's possessions and lands. The relationship between the church and the Italian nobles was not calm.

When Leo III was elected Pope, the nobles hired thugs to cut out Leo's tongue. The injured Leo was brought to Charles. Charles welcomed Leo, even though he was in possession of letters from the nobles charging Leo with misuse of church funds. Leo found himself between a rock and a hard place. The West had no emperor to whom he could appeal. A woman, Irene, ruled the East and Leo would not allow himself to be judged by a woman.

Leo chose a unique solution to his problems. On December 23, 800, King Charles declared Leo innocent of all charges. Two days later, Leo crowned the King "Charles Augustus, crowned by God as supreme and peaceful Emperor." The church had created its own emperor! Charles is known in history as Charlemagne, a name that means "Charles the Great."

As the Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne viewed himself as guardian of Roman Christianity. He built monasteries and appointed bishops. Almost single-handedly

Charlemagne assured the church would control central Italy. The Holy Roman Empire would live on past the emperor's death.

As the years rolled past, the popes became worldlier. Between 880 and 980 corruption and evil lifestyles plagued the Roman church. Along with this evil leadership, the next major crack in church unity appeared. This was between the West and the East.

As noted earlier, there were always some differences between the two. During this period, a church in Spain added one Latin Word to the Nicene Creed ("*filoque*"). The change is biblical, but

Original: [The Spirit] proceeds from the Father

Revised: [The Spirit] proceeds from the Father **and the Son**.

The Roman church adopted this revision. In 867 Photius, the bishop of Constantinople denounced the phrase. The dispute continued for five years until the pope offered to drop the phrase (word) if the Eastern churches would accept the Roman pope as supreme over all the churches. The Eastern church declined.

Things continued in this tense state until around 1048. Bruno became Pope Leo IX. Concerned about the power the nobles had been exercising over the church, Leo IX banned the priests from marrying under the theory this would prevent the priests from passing their positions to their children. Bruno/Leo's thought was to free the church from outside influences.

This position was formed, to a great extent, by a sincere belief on the part of Bruno and his successors that God had given the pope authority over the entire worldwide church. The Eastern Church, led by its new bishop Michael, refused to recognize Bruno's position as pope. To prove his point, Michael closed every Constantinople church that was loyal to the Roman bishop.

Leo IX sent a delegation led by Humbert to Constantinople to restore the peace. Humbert arrived on July 16, 1054. He delivered a "BULL" (from the Latin we get the English word "bulletin") written in the pope's name. The notice provided the Eastern churches allowed their priests to marry (true), re-baptized Roman Christians (probably untrue), and had removed the words "and the Son" from the Nicene Creed (definitely untrue).

Humbert arrived during communion and the report is that he flung the papal bull across the communion table. Standing in the doorway, following Jewish tradition, he brushed the dirt from his sandals and exclaimed "Let God look and judge!" Even though one of the Eastern deacons requested Humbert take back the bull, the ambassador refused to do so.

It should be noted that the East and West had also disagreed over the date of Easter since early in the church's history. This, however, was only another peg in the crack. The final straw took over another hundred years to be shaped. The Eastern Church celebrated Easter during Passover. The Western church celebrated after Passover. Remember the Council at Nicaea. That group created a calendar of fixed dates that would keep Easter on a Sunday. The calendar dates were adjusted from time to time to account for Leap Year and other inaccuracies in the calendars used over the centuries.

The usual statement, that Easter Day is the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs next after the vernal equinox, is not a precise statement of the actual ecclesiastical rules. The full moon involved is not the astronomical Full Moon but an ecclesiastical moon (determined from tables) that keeps, more or less, in step with the astronomical Moon.

The ecclesiastical rules are:

- Easter falls on the first Sunday following the first ecclesiastical full moon that occurs on or after the day of the vernal equinox;
- this particular ecclesiastical full moon is the 14th day of a tabular lunation (new moon); and
- the vernal equinox is fixed as March 21.

resulting in that Easter can never occur before March 22 or later than April 25.

The final straw for the Eastern Church was the Crusades, the adventures of well-meaning Europeans to free the Holy Lands from the hands of the pagan Muslims. The Muslims had taken control of Jerusalem in 638. They had not, however, interfered with the “pilgrimages” of travelers to the local Jewish and Christian shrines. In the mid-to-late 1000s Turkish converts to Muslim began to collect tariffs from the Christian pilgrims. This did not sit well with the Church.

In 1095, Pope Urban II preached a sermon in which he urged the congregation to destroy the Turks and Arabs who had invaded the lands of the church’s Eastern brothers. The response must have amazed Urban. A cross section of society all agreed with the Pope. The war against the infidels was on. The plans were for the crusaders to meet in Constantinople.

Peter the Hermit led one group of crusaders. This monk raised an army of 20,000 European peasants. Upon arriving in Constantinople, the peasants were less than law abiding. Although the emperor knew the peasants were no match for the Muslims, he removed them from his city by ferrying them across the river. The peasants pillaged the country side for two months before marching into a Muslim ambush. Peter was the only survivor. He was back in Constantinople at the time of the ambush attempting to raise supplies! This is generally called the Peasants Crusade. It is not “counted” in the history books as one of the Crusades.

Peter the Hermit would join another army of Crusaders led by nobles of France, Belgium, and Norman Italy. This group marched through Antioch and captured Jerusalem on July 15, 1099. Reports from the conquest tell of Muslim blood flowing ankle deep on the Temple Mount. In the process, the Crusaders burnt a synagogue and committed wholesale slaughter of Muslim and Jew alike.

The Second Crusade in 1147 was completely unsuccessful. The Third Crusade (1189-1192) was the Crusade of the “Three Kings” – Richard I of England, Philip II of France, and Frederick I of Germany. Frederick was accidentally drowned and Philip had a quarrel with Richard and went home. This was successful in the sense that the group

secured the right of pilgrims to enter Jerusalem safely, although the Crusaders did not actually capture the City.

The Crusades would continue under the urging of Pope Innocent III who was elected to the position in 1198. Innocent wanted to destroy the Muslim army in Egypt. He convinced the merchants of Venice to supply the Crusaders at a cost of 84,000 silver coins. The Crusaders arrived in Venice in the summer of 1202 expecting to sail for Egypt. However, only about a third of the expected number were present, while the merchants only raised 50,000 silver coins. An Eastern prince living in the region offered to finance the balance of the campaign if the Crusaders would make a small detour through Constantinople and dethrone the Eastern emperor. This is the fourth Crusade.

Although Pope Innocent objected, no one listened and the Crusaders sailed for Constantinople, arriving July 5, 1203. Christianity has another of its dark moments in history.

The citizens of Constantinople did not like the intrusion of the outside Crusaders. They placed a new emperor on the throne who was against the Crusades. The Crusaders were essentially stranded in Constantinople. They retaliated by sacking the City. One priest is reported to have, essentially, offered penance to any Crusader who died conquering the Eastern Church.

On Good Friday, 1204, the Crusaders plundered Constantinople. They wore tunics with red crosses. For three days the Crusaders raped and killed the Christians of Constantinople. Other atrocities were committed. The Crusaders would rule the Eastern Empire for the next 60 years. The Eastern Emperor withdrew to Nicaea and ruled from there until 1261. Many of the Eastern Christians fled to Nicaea with the emperor.

There were at least two other crusades. The last of these is in 1212. Known as the Children's Crusade, it was mostly a group of young boys led by two pre-teens. Many of this group died before arriving in the Holy Lands. Most of the rest were captured and sold into slavery. By 1244 Jerusalem was in the hands of the Muslims and would remain so until freed by the British in 1917. The Crusade era ended when the Muslims captured Acre (near modern day Haifa) in 1291.

Thereafter Pope Innocent and those who followed him attempted to reunite East and West without success. The Eastern (Greek) Orthodox Church was born. Along with this birth, Innocent undertook steps that would shape what would become Roman Catholic theology for the next 300 years.

In 1215 Innocent convened the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome. This council approved the concept of transubstantiation. This concept holds that the bread and wine of the communion are the body and blood of Christ, even though the features of the bread and wine do not change. The official explanation of the council is "[Christ's] body and blood are contained in the sacraments under the outward forms of bread and wine; the bread being transubstantiated by God's power into the body, and the wine into the blood."

We believe that the bread and the wine are – bread and wine. The Lord's Supper is a memorial service in remembrance of what Christ did for us on the Cross. It is nothing more. Luther proposed an intermediate position, known as consubstantiation, whereby

the body and blood are “present” around the elements of the Lord’s Supper, but the bread and wine are not the body and blood of Christ.

Innocent’s Council also formed the groundwork for the Inquisition. Starting about 1231, the Inquisition was formed as a tool to destroy heretics. The first group to fall under its punishment was a Gnostic group known as the Albigensians. The Inquisition then spread to exterminating Muslims and Jews. Ultimately, it was a weapon of fear against all peoples.

Seventh Century Events

- 600-636--Isidore, Bishop of Seville. His writings provide invaluable and encyclopedic knowledge for the Middle Ages. He is known for important efforts to resist barbarism and heresy in Spain, found schools and convents and evangelize Jews.
- 609--Pagan pantheon in Rome consecrated as church of St. Maria Rotunda. As part of the dedication, Pope Boniface (609-610) confirmed All Saints' Day.
- Organs begin to be used in churches. Church bells are used to call people to worship and to give the hours to the monks in the monasteries.
- Learning flourishes in Anglo-Saxon monasteries
- 648--Emperor Constans II issues "The Typos" limiting Christian teachings to that defined in first five ecumenical councils. Pope Martin I (d. 655) refuses to sign Typos. Martin is seized and banished to Crimea and dies. He is last pope to be venerated as a martyr.
- 664--After conflict between the original Celtic church and the Roman missionaries, England adopts the Roman Catholic faith at the Synod of Whitby.
- Mohammed (c. 570-629) begins the religion of Islam, which begins to supplant Christianity across the Middle East and North Africa.
- 638--Islamic capture of Jerusalem
- 690--Two Anglo-Saxon bishops, Kilian and Willibrord, carry on extensive evangelistic mission on the continent among the Franks.

AD 700 (TWENTY-TWO GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 23.8%
- Breakdown: 55% nonwhite, 45% white
- Evangelization: 35% of world
- Scriptures: 14 languages
- Total martyrs since AD 33: 3,000,000 (0.4 % of all Christians ever; recent rate 1,000 per year)

Source: David Barrett.

Eighth Century Events

- 731--The "Venerable Bede" (c. 673-735) completes his Ecclesiastical History of the English People.
- Spain is invaded by the Moors, Moslems from North Africa; Charles Martel defeats them at the Battle of Tours in 732--a decisive juncture in Christian resistance to Moslem advance.
- Boniface of England is a missionary to the Germans for 40 years. Finally is murdered by pagans in 754.
- Iconoclastic controversy over the veneration of images divides the Byzantine Emperor and the Pope.
- Papacy asserts its earthly rule and establishes the papal states in Italy. Pope Leo III (d. 816) separates from the Eastern Empire and becomes supreme bishop in the West.
- Charlemagne becomes sole King of the Franks in 771; later is crowned "Holy Roman Emperor," establishing dream of a kingdom with a Christian king.
- Nestorian Christians in China develop missionary activities and build Christian monasteries.
- Schools for church music are established at Paris, Cologne, Soissin, and Metz.
- 781--Alcuin of York, England becomes advisor to Charlemagne and catalyzes the "Carolingian Renaissance."
- 793--The North Men invade Lindisfarne and invade Iona in 795.

AD 800 (TWENTY-SIX GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 22.5%
- Breakdown: 51% nonwhite, 49% white
- Evangelization: 31% of world
- Scriptures: 15 languages
- Total martyrs since AD 33: 3,300,000 (0.4 % of all Christians ever; recent rate 3,100 per year)

Source: David Barrett.

Ninth Century Events

- 800--On Christmas day Charlemagne (Charles the Great, c. 742-814) is crowned the first "Holy Roman Emperor" by Pope Leo at St. Peter's in Rome. Charlemagne noted for military conquests, strong central government, ecclesiastic reform and educational patronage.
- 831--Radbertus (c. 790-865) publishes first writing in the West on the Eucharist. It provokes controversy and anticipates later Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.
- John Scotus Erigena (c. 810-877), one of greatest theologians of early middle ages, helps pave way for scholasticism. Involved in eucharistic controversy with Radbertus and maintains in the supper we partake of the Lord "mentally not dentally."
- Anskar (801-865), "Apostle of the North," lays foundation for Christianity in Scandinavia.
- Significant missionary efforts make further inroads among heathen peoples of Europe. Cyril (826-869) and Methodius (c. 815-885), the "Apostles of the Slavs," work in Moravia and invent an alphabet for the Slavs.
- Photius (c. 820-895), a renowned scholar and layman, made Patriarch of Constantinople in 858. Later deposed and reinstated at least twice. Conflicts with pope and Rome over spiritual jurisdiction and doctrine ("filioque controversy") foreshadow deepening rift and eventual split between churches in East and West.
- Alfred the Great is King of Wessex in England. Translated Christian writings into the language of the common people. Set up a palace school and founded two monasteries. Devoted half his time and money to religious purposes.

AD 900 (TWENTY-NINE GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 20.8%
- Breakdown: 55% nonwhite, 45% white
- Evangelization: 28% of world
- Scriptures: 16 languages

Source: David Barrett.

Tenth Century Events

- To the east, Hungarians and Poles begin to convert to Christianity, and Christianity reaches Iceland and Greenland to the west.
- Ecclesiastical leaders were increasingly becoming embroiled in the political struggles of the European continent.
- Benedictine monastery established 909 at Cluny; becomes the center of a reform movement for the church to rid itself of the increasing secularization of its institutions and practices.
- Bohemian people embrace Christianity, but their "Good King Wenceslaus" is soon murdered c. 929 by opposing pagan rivals.
- 988--Vladimir, sole ruler of Kievan Rus is baptized. There people were baptized at Pentecost. That same year Vladimir married Princess Anna, sister of Basil II, Emperor of Byzantium.
- Otto the Great (emperor 936-973) revives Charlemagne's dream of a Holy Roman Empire among the German people. In some form Otto's empire continues until the time of Napoleon.
- 993--Saints begin to be officially canonized by the Roman church.
- Private confession develops from public confession in both Eastern and Western Churches. The Roman Church begins the concept of indulgences. (No sure evidence of this before the 11th century.)
- Papacy reaches a low point in morality.
- As the year 1000 approaches, many fear the end of the world and the Last Judgment.

AD 1000 (THIRTY-TWO GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 18.7%
- Breakdown: 39% nonwhite, 61% white
- Evangelization: 25% of world
- Scriptures: 17 languages
- Total martyrs since AD 33: 4,200,000 (0.4% of all Christians ever; recent rate 3,200 per year)

Source: David Barrett.

Eleventh Century Events

The expansion of Islam continues to occupy Christian thought and activities.

- 1009--Moslems sack Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.
- 1071--Seljuks conquer Armenia, ending the Byzantine Empire in Asia Minor.
- 1095--Pope Urban II proclaims the First Crusade to reclaim Jerusalem from the Moslems.
- 1099--Crusaders take Jerusalem.
- A century and a half of weak popes ends by the middle of the century, and papal authority begins to increase. Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), "Hildebrand," moves to reform the church with emphasis on priestly celibacy and complete freedom of the Church from the State.
- Renewal of church through new monastic orders
- 1098--The Reform-minded Cistercian order founded at Citeaux
- William of Normandy conquers England, appointing Lanfranc Archbishop of Canterbury in 1070. Lanfranc reorganizes and reforms the English church.
- Anselm succeeds Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. Wrote *Why Did God Become a Man?* explaining the reasons for Christ's death.
- Musical developments: In 1015 Pomposa Monastery near Ravenna introduces sight singing. By the middle of the century, polyphonic singing replaces Gregorian Chant, the harp arrives in Europe, and the first German Christmas carol is written.

AD 1100 (THIRTY-SIX GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 18.8%
- Breakdown: 37% nonwhite, 63% white
- Evangelization: 25.5% of world
- Scriptures: 19 languages

Source: David Barrett.

Twelfth Century Events

- Gothic architecture, with its pointed arches and high, vaulted ceilings prevails in church building.
- 1182--Notre Dame Cathedral consecrated
- 1194--Chartres Cathedral begun
- The medieval papacy, at the height of its power and influence, continues to encourage crusades to liberate the Holy Land from the Moslems.
- 1104--Acre taken by the Crusaders, fell to Moslems again in 1191
- 1147--Second Crusade (supported by Bernard of Clairvaux) fails, with most Crusaders dying in Asia Minor.
- 1187--Loss of Jerusalem by the Crusaders
- 1190--German Hospitalers founded (later becoming the Teutonic Order)
- Belief in immaculate conception of Mary spreads.
- 1170--Pope Alexander III established rules for the canonization of saints, the same year Thomas Becket is murdered in England. Becket is canonized in 1173.
- 1173--Waldensian movement begins in Lyons, seeking truth in Bible rather than medieval tradition. The church persecutes these devout believers sometimes seen as predecessors of Protestant reform.
- Monasticism continues to be main source of reforming church.
- 1115--St. Bernard establishes monastery at Clairvaux. He will become the "greatest churchman of the 12th century."
- 1155--Carmelite Order founded

AD 1200 (THIRTY-NINE GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 19.4%
- Breakdown: 35.7% nonwhite, 64.3% white
- Evangelization: 26% of world
- Scriptures: 22 languages

Source: David Barrett.

Preserving the Church

We have covered about half of the life of the church. In our various discussions, the question has been raised concerning the definition of the church relative to some of the historical discussion and events. The issue in question relates to what could be termed a distinction between the church and the “Church.” In other words, there is the “professing church” and there is the body of Christ. When Charlemagne killed 4500 protestors at Christmas time, should we view him as being a Christian and is this event part of the history of the Church? While I have attempted to explain this before, I want to take a moment to lay it out in more detail.

First, the true Church is the Body of Christ. We discussed this in lesson one. It is comprised of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture, so there will be future believers added to this group. It is only composed of believers. Members of the professing church, that is, people who attend church or have church membership but who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus will not be taken home in the Rapture and are not part of the Body of Christ.

Second, we are use to viewing terms and events from a twenty-first century perspective. The history of the Church over the past couple of hundred years makes it reasonably clear who are generally saved and who are not, thus, making it somewhat clear what the current history of the Church looks like. However, we need to revise our perspective to better understand the history of the church/Church until, at least, 1200 and, perhaps, as late as 1517.

I made a poor effort at explaining that the Church was part of the professing church and, so, the history of the professing church is the history of the Church. One can look at the Middle Ages and wonder how the Church survived. Constantine probably was unsaved. Augustine had both good and bad theology. Most of the leaders of Rome and Constantinople act unsaved. Charlemagne was almost certain unsaved. Yet, these were the leaders of the church. And, in God’s Providence, the Church survived and, at times, thrived.

What we, as humans of the twenty-first century, want are testimonies and stories of how the true Church survived amongst these pagan leaders. History does not provide this information. Part of the difficulty is that there were no, repeat NO, denominations or separate groups until the true split of East and West after 1000. Regardless of their differences, the Church of the first 1,000 years maintained a unity. Whether good or bad, they all belonged to the church. Leaders from the East would defend the Church against heretics in the West. Leaders from Africa would travel to both Rome and Constantinople to defend the Faith. There were no separate fundamental groups and liberal groups. There was only one group, albeit, a group with bad leaders, at least in some places.

The Old Testament story of Elijah and Ahab is a partial picture of this time in church history (1 Kings 19). Ahab was king of Israel. This means that he represent 5/6s of the Jewish nation. He was as bad as they come; yet, he was the leader. Elijah complains to God about being the only true believer left (1 Kings 19:14). God answers Elijah by saying there were 7,000 believers who had not bowed to Baal (1 Kings 19:18). Many of these belonged to the Israelites that Ahab ruled, for people from every tribe both went

into and returned from captivity. People of every tribe still exist and will be part of God's future salvation plans for Israel as shown in the book of Revelation.

In the midst of this story, Elijah encounters Obadiah, one of the key personnel in Ahab's government (1 Kings 18). Obadiah was one of those believers. He, in turn, had protected another 100 prophets (1 Kings 18:13). This is the picture of the church, at various times, during the first 1,000 years of history.

The leaders (like Charlemagne) were like Ahab. But not all of the priests or preachers were bad and evil. The basic theology of the church, as it developed during this period, is the same theology you follow today. Starting around 600-800 and continuing forward, parts of this theology will start to change, but the core was the same as you follow today. So these local priests taught and produced true believers. The Church was maintained.

But, there are no stories of these true believers breaking off into their own groups. They did not go "underground." They simply followed the teachings of Scripture and ignored most of the actions of the leaders. And, while we understand the political declaration that all citizens are Christians did not add to the Church, it did provide the means for the Gospel to be preached to the people and the Church grew and added members. These members were not interested in the political side of life; they only were concerned with spiritual matters. So, God maintained His Church, even while many of the leaders were evil.

So, from our perspective, the history of the church is the history of the Church. It explains how the Church was preserved in history, how it spread the Gospel, and how it "evolved" into the Church of today. There are not two or three separate histories. There is no single group of fundamental churches that preserved during this period. At times all of the local churches went through stages as found in Revelation. At any point in time, they all resembled CRBC.

We speak of CRBC as the church. Yet, on any given Sunday, we have both saved and unsaved sitting in Sunday School and the Sanctuary. Still, this is the "church." Such is the picture of the Church of the first 1,000 years. It was a mixed multitude of saved and unsaved. Many of the leaders who made the history were a mixed multitude themselves. We need to be careful not to read our knowledge of the modern church back into history. The pattern of the first 1,500 years of the church/Church is a completely different picture from what we see today.

Charlemagne is a true picture of the history of the Church, for as its leader, he helped to spread the Gospel, expand the borders and outreach of the Church and set the stage of the Church for events yet to come. All of this is true even if Charlemagne was unsaved. He is not truly a part of the Body of Christ, but his is a major part of the history of the Body of Christ.

Hard to believe, isn't it.

Church History

Lesson 7 Where's Waldo

■- A.D. 673 to 1453

The period we investigate this week overlaps last weeks. The events surrounding the Crusades were not the only changes affecting the church. We must remember that God's church is a body of spiritually united people who meet and worship in earthly groups who, at times, are united and, at other times, each others bitter enemies. A broad picture of this has been seen as we look at the Eastern and Western Empires and their churches. However, even within local communities, the same splits will arise. Today, there is a church on every corner. Sometimes the differences are close to trivial, but they are differences none-the-less. So, to study church history is to investigate events in more than one location.

At the same time, the church of Dark Ages viewed itself as strongly united, "one, holy, apostolic church." The language of the Creeds reflects this unity and while at the "top" the East and the West might feud, there was, generally speaking, a single unified church – or at worst, two unified churches. As a result, many of the customs of the times finds their ways into all groups and denominations today. So, to study the church of the Dark Ages is to look at individuals and groups and consider how their contributions has blossomed into the good and bad of today's churches.

For example, in 988 Czar Vladimir of Kiev sought religion. A "seeker" in today's terms, he went "shopping" for a church. Tradition holds that the Czar liked his food, so he rejected Islam and Judaism because of their dietary rules. This left him, essentially, with Christianity. He found the "beauty" of the Eastern rituals to be superior to those of Rome, so he chose the Eastern Church. This choice would make the Eastern Orthodox Church the church of Russia into modern day.

Several other tenth-century rulers including Stephen of Hungary, Miesko of Poland and Leif Ericson, the Viking king, all of whom turned to Christianity, followed this approach.

The time of the monasteries was already starting to die as leaders became corrupt and in regions in Britain, Ireland and along the northern European coast, the Vikings would attack and sack. Things picked up around 909 in Aquitaine, France. Duke William III started a new monastery, appointing Berno to be its leader. The monastery was built on the Duke's hunting grounds, Cluny, and the deed of conveyance provided that only the foremost monk, known as the "abbot," had control over the community.

In the days of the Middle Ages, only the richest men had hunting dogs and hunting grounds. To give these up was to give up one's status.

The rules at Cluny stressed obedience to the Scriptures and Benedict's Rule. Monks who did not abide by these two rules of obedience lost their place at the monastery. Soon, the neighboring communities began to assess their priests by the same standards, leading to a call for revival within the church.

Another prominent monk was John Damascus. A committed Christian despite the Muslim rule of Syria, John sided with the "icon-kissers" in the dispute over icons within the Eastern Church. John was one of the few church leaders who could preach on the difference between worship and reverence. He was tried by the Muslim's for treason, a charge based upon a fraudulent letter. He was exiled to a distant monastery and had his right hand chopped off.

At the monastery John and his fellow monks sold baskets they made to help the poor. John also wrote hundreds of hymns which became widely used in the churches of the time. His fellow monks became jealous and sent him back to Damascus where the one-handed monk spent his final days selling his baskets on the street corners.

Meanwhile, in Moravia (Czech Republic) Cyril became a missionary for the Eastern Church (862). Cyril was a Thessalonian Slav and quickly related to the people. Before commencing his missionary efforts, Cyril created a Slavic alphabet so he could translate the Bible into the Moravian language. This created a conflict with the church at Rome. The Roman church claimed the Scriptures should only be translated into "holy" languages, such as Latin.

Cyril and his brother Methodius made a special trip to Rome to appeal to the Roman bishop (the "pope"). The bishop agreed to allow Cyril to so translate the Scriptures into a common language so long as Cyril place his missionary efforts under the control of the pope. While Cyril agreed to this condition, he died before completing his missionary outreach. Methodius attempted to carry on Cyril's work, but soon discovered that the Moravians could not understand the translations. In 895 Hungarian invaders forced Methodius and his followers to flee to Bulgaria.

In Bulgaria, Boris, the Prince of the land, had accepted Christ, but it is only through the missionary work of Methodius that the Bulgarian people start to accept the Gospel message. Cyril's alphabet was adopted to the Bulgarian tongue and by 900 Cyrillic became the common method of writing in southeast Europe and Russia, while Bulgaria became the center of Slavic Christianity.

While the nobles had no control over the Cluny monastery, the success at Cluny caused a spread of Cluny-type monasteries. Every noble in France wanted to sponsor one, with the result that the communities became rich. By 1,000 gold and jewels spotted the walls and the poor were forgotten. In 1098 a small group of Cluny monks founded a new community at Cistercium France with the intention of returning to the original Cluny rules. The group was so strict that they did not dye their robes for fear of appearing wealthy.

The lifestyle was too strict and the group was on the verge of giving up. No one was joining the community and the Abbot was ready to close the doors. A knock on the door in 1122 changed things. There stood Bernard of Clairvaux with 31 men. Never a bishop, Bernard would lead the church for 30 years in the midst of confusion.

During this period a new group of followers arose. These are collectively known as the Mystics. Mystics arose in every region of the church. The “church” was sustained, in part, during this difficult period of human history by incorporating all of the rituals of worship within its framework. All encounters with God were channeled through the church. Such encounters included Scriptures, sermons, baptism, and communion. However, Christian faith cannot grow in this context alone. There must be a personal level where emotions play a role.

This is the field of the mystics. They leaned more on experience than the rituals and rights of organized religion. These persons and groups were not “outside” of the church, but they placed an emphasis on personal experiences beyond what they encountered within the church. At a positive level, loving God calls for loving Him with your entire being, including your emotions (Mark 12:30). It appears that both Paul and John had such mystical experiences (2 Cor 12:1-9; Rev 1:9-11; 4:1-11). On the other hand, many mystics placed their experiences on a level equal to (or above) the Scriptures and/or the traditions (doctrines) of the church.

As the Reformation develops, we will note the rise of mystic-like beliefs in the formation of the Quakers.

There is no doubt, however, that mystics helped to mold the modern church as well as helping the medieval church survive. Bernard of Clairvaux was a mystic. He was poor and his positions on God’s love endeared him to the peasants, providing him with what amounted to a large power base. Being poor, he was one of those who had been critical of Cluny’s lavish lifestyles. His teachings on the love of Jesus caused the people and the church to replace icons of Jesus as an angry judge with pictures of the Baby Jesus and the Crucified Christ.

Bernard’s power came from behind the throne. Anacletus II and Innocent II both claimed to be pope. Bernard declared Innocent to be the true pope, a declaration that lasted. Bernard became the power behind Innocent’s reign.

Another mystic of the period was Hildegard of Bingen. She claimed to have visions as a five year old. She spent most of her life in a religious community of which she eventually became the leader or abbess. She was a musician, artist and author. She preached and claimed to be a prophet. Her work, *Know the Way*, a book of visions was published in 1151. Although denounced by the Bishop of Mainz when she was 80, the Roman Catholic Church lists Hildegard among the saints.

Another mystic Catherine of Sienna will play an important role in the welfare of the during the late 1300s. Catherine believed she had visions of supporting the pope. She spent her life seeing to the needs of prisoners, even during the Black Death plague.

About this same time another group of mystics were formed in response to the uselessness of the “scholastics” within the church. This group was Dutch and formed in 1374 as the Common Life Movement. The group denounced corrupt church leaders, but never criticized the church. The group had both Sisters and Brothers. They focused on a personal devotion to Christ known as the Modern Devotion. Thomas A’Kempis was a member of this group. He wrote a devotional guide called *The Imitation of Christ*, a work still read today.

Joan of Arc was a mystic as well. Her death at the stake by fire was the result of England and France both desiring the church be on their side. This was in 1431. In 1456 her death by the Inquisition was declared unjust. In 1920 she became a saint.

To back up a bit in time, mysticism was not the only force influencing the church. In the late 1100s the local feudal system was giving way to larger political systems and a middle class of merchants was appearing, especially in the cities. A new class of preacher arose within the framework known as the “mendicant.” These preachers would travel from town to town preaching to the merchants and peasants of the area.

One of the most famous was Waldo, also known as Valdes. A French merchant, Waldo was struck by a street singer’s corner play about giving away one’s wealth, that Waldo followed suit. He committed himself to Christ, became a mendicant and financed a French translation of the Scriptures.

His study of the Scriptures led Waldo to reject both the doctrine of purgatory and the concept of the pope’s supreme power. His followers, the Waldensians, learned Scripture and preached in the common language as opposed to the Latin of the church. Ultimately, the church would condemn Waldo and his followers for failing to preach within the structure of the church. The church would excommunicate the Waldensians at the Fourth Lateran Council and they would become victims of the Inquisition. However, many of the teachings of Waldo would find root again in the Reformation.

Not all of the mendicants suffered condemnation as did Waldo. A Knight of Assisi had a vision during a march against a rival city. His vision was of the crucified Christ and the vision changed the life of Francis. In 1209 Francis applied to Pope Innocent III for approval of his movement. The “friars” (“brothers”) would own but two tunics apiece so as not to follow in the footsteps of the Clunys. The Franciscans would become the largest group within the church.

In 1214 Clare received approval from Innocent III to take up the Franciscan lifestyle. The friars would preach and Clare’s nuns would attend to the sick. Upon Francis’ death, the pope removed Clare’s rights to follow the friars. Clare essentially went on a hunger strike and won. The pope backed down and in 1247 while Clare was on her deathbed, Gregory IX approved her rules for the community to become known as the Poor Clares.

The Dominicans were formed in 1216 and the Augustinian Hermits in 1256. Martin Luther was a member of this latter group. The Dominicans were the group entrusted by the pope with leading the Inquisition.

There is still a third group who grows up during this period. This group is known as the Scholastics. Human reason was the basis of their investigations and they attempted to balance reason, Scripture and experience. In many ways they were successful and in others they failed miserably.

The first of these was Anselm, who became the archbishop of Canterbury, England in 1093. Anselm spent about a third of his career in exile for failing to play the “politically correct” agenda. However, his use of logic to prove the existence of God became the foundation for what is now known as the ontological argument or proof of God. He was a compassionate Christian, caring about the people, a trait that makes him unique among this group of thinkers.

The other truly important Scholastic is Thomas Aquinas. A Dominican monk (part of the mendicants), Thomas found himself at odds with his parents who actually kidnapped him away from the Dominicans. He eventually went to the University of Paris, where he eventually became a professor. Using the philosophy of Aristotle (a pure pagan) with the theology of Augustine, Thomas wrote the summation of Theology, a 4,000 page work that was not completed. In 1273, after attending a communion service, Thomas declared his writings “nothing but straw.” He never wrote another word, dying three months later. His summation became the basis of Roman Catholic theology. In 1567 the Roman Catholic Church declared him a “doctor” of the church.

Other scholastics included Abelard, Hugh of St. Victor, Peter Lombard, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockam.

Lastly, the church itself had issues beyond imagination.

Celestine V, a Franciscan monk, became pope in 1294. True to his position as a friar, Celestine walked into Rome barefoot. The friar could not play the political games of the administration in Rome and after five months, Celestine gave up his position as pope.

Boniface VIII replaced Celestine. Boniface’s belief was that the Roman bishop should rule Western society. He issued a Bull that declared the clergy could not be taxed by the secular authorities. Then, in a Bull entitled “One Holy Church,” the Pope claimed power over all of Europe’s kings. The king of France disagreed. He kidnapped Boniface who was dead within a month. His successor, Benedict XI, fled Rome and died of poisoned figs.

The next pope, Clement V, fled to Avignon, a village on the border of France and Italy. The popes would rule from Avignon for the next 72 years (7 popes) while friars sold indulgences and the bishops sold positions of leadership. This period becomes known as the Babylonian Captivity of the pope.

In 1337 Edward III of England, a nephew of the deceased French king, claimed the French throne starting the Hundred Years’ War. The War actually lasted 116 years. Ten years later, the plague of Black Death struck Europe and Asia Minor. The plague would last 4 years and claim nearly one-third of the population, almost 24 million people. It is during this period that Catherine of Sienna has her vision of wanting the pope back in Rome.

In 1377 Gregory XI returns the pope to Rome. His entry may have fulfilled Catherine’s vision, but the event starts the next great issue with the office of the pope. Upon Gregory’s death, the cardinals wanted a French pope while the people wanted a Roman. As a compromise, the cardinals elect Urban VI, an Italian (non-Roman) pope. Urban did not pay attention to politics, however. He failed to support the French cardinals. The French withdrew their decision and votes. Going back to Avignon, the French replaced Urban with a Frenchman, Clement VII. Urban refused to be deposed, so now there were two Popes. This period became known as the “Great Papal Schism.”

By 1409 all of the cardinals were fed up with having two popes. They met at the Council of Pisa. They declared that the unity of the church did not depend upon the pope. The Council rejected both claims and elected a new pope, Alexander V. Neither Urban nor

Clement relented. Now the church had three popes! All of the popes excommunicated each other! Enter some roots of the Reformation.

John Wycliffe was a professor of philosophy at Oxford. He taught that only the true church could understand the Scriptures. In the process, Wycliffe redefined church to mean every person called to faith in Christ, not those who belonged to the organized church. As such the church was not built upon the popes. In the eyes of some people, Wycliffe was a hero. The church called him a heretic. Although he was put on trial twice, he died without being convicted of heresy.

John Hus, a Bohemian preacher, embraced Wycliffe's teachings. After preaching Wycliffe's ideas from the pulpit, the church revoked Hus's right to preach. Hus ignored the revocation. A council was called at Constance, Germany. Hus was arrested by the cardinals, despite an offer of safety by the Holy Roman Emperor. The king's soldiers at the direction of the cardinals would kill Hus.

However, while they were meeting, the Council of Constance imprisoned Pope who had been appointed by the Council of Pisa. They also deposed the Pope in Rome, retired the Pope in Avignon, and elected Martin V as Pope. The year was 1450 and the Great Papal Schism was over.

One final group of events should be noted. In May 1453 the Ottoman Turks (Muslims) gathered to strike Constantinople. The citizens of the city gathered in the Church of the Holy Wisdom. Several Roman bishops joined their Eastern Orthodox brothers and sisters showing a true picture of the meaning of the church. The Lord's Supper was shared and the night spent in prayer.

The next day, May 29, Muslims overran the city and an Imam walked slowly through the Church of the Holy Wisdom declaring that Allah was the only god and Muhammad the true prophet. Overnight the church had become a mosque. It would remain so until 1930. Today the church is a museum, the Aya Sofya, Istanbul, Turkey.

Eastern scholars fled to the west, taking with them their prized Greek manuscripts. The Renaissance had started with a renewed interest in Greek rhetoric, art, and writing. This group became known as "humanists." Words became more important than logic. The focus was on human actions.

Christian humanists focused upon applying these humanist insights to the Scriptures. Their efforts were supported by the invention of the printing press by John Gutenberg in 1453. Greek and Roman classics and Bibles flooded the market at prices well below those ever before imaginable.

Pope Nicholas V (1447-1455) founded the Vatican Library
Pope Julius II (1503-1513) had Michelangelo paint the Sistine Chapel
Leo X (1513-1521) builds St. Peter's Basilica and makes other extravagant purchases for what we call the Vatican

The popes supported the Renaissance but missed the opportunity to focus on the Scriptures. Corruption ruled the day. Corruption grew worse. The church used the Inquisition to persecute everyone and the sale of indulgences became big business.

Thirteenth Century Events

- This century is often called the high point of the middle ages, with the papacy reaching its greatest power, scholastic philosophy reaching its zenith, and Gothic Cathedrals towering over the landscape. • Crusading cause and spirit continues.
- 1204--Europeans, with Vienna taking the lead, capture Constantinople.
- 1212--Children's crusade
- Mendicant orders of friars established, another effort at church reform. These reemphasize the importance of the sermon.
- 1209--Francis of Assisi establishes Franciscans (canonized 1228).
- 1220--Dominican Friars established as a teaching order, later entrusted by the Pope with the Inquisition. Some became missionaries to Central Asia, Persian Gulf, India, and China.
- Salisbury Cathedral built within one lifetime (1220-1258), a rarity for medieval cathedrals!
- With Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) the papacy was at the height of its powers. Affirmed all churches were under his control. Developed theory of papal power that allowed him to interfere in political affairs of nations. Approved 4th Crusade. Established Dominicans and Franciscans. Instituted Inquisition, joining powers of church and state to punish heretics.
- 1215--Fourth Lateran Council summarized and reinforced medieval doctrines and practices.
- Thomas Aquinas summarizes Scholastic Theology in his Summa Theologica, 1271, writing, intelligo ut credam "I understand, in order that I may believe."

AD 1300 (FORTY-TWO GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 23.9%
- Breakdown: 34% nonwhite, 66% white
- Evangelization: 27% of world
- Scriptures: 26 languages

Source: David Barrett.

Fourteenth Century Events

- The Papacy, having reached its high point with Innocent III (1160-1216), begins a decline under Boniface VIII (c. 1234-1303).
- 1302--Papal bull "Unam sanctum" pronounces the highest papal claims to supremacy
- 1309-1377--"Babylonian Captivity" of papacy. Pope resides in Avignon, France, strongly under the control of the French King.
- 1378-1417--Great Schism, with two or three popes claiming authority.
- The Black Death or bubonic plague ravages Europe; 25 million Europeans, over 1/4 of the population, dies.
- Mysticism flourishes in many areas, especially Germany and the Low Countries.
- Meister Eckhardt teaches the nature of God is unknowable except through the inner knowledge of Himself God has placed in each soul.
- Catherine of Siena has a vision joining her with Christ in a mystical marriage; spends her life in serving others, including trying to end the Great Schism of the papacy.
- Seeking forgiveness from sins, bands of "flagellants" roam the countryside beating themselves as penance.
- 1305-1314--Dante writes his Divine Comedy mirroring the heights and depths of the Christianity of the 13th and 14th centuries.
- John Wycliffe transforms Oxford into the spiritual center of England. Looks to the Scriptures for authority and truth.
- 1382--Wycliffe is expelled from Oxford, translates Bible into English, and trains lay preachers to spread the Scripture.
- 1398--John Hus begins lecturing on theology at Prague University and spreads Wycliffe's ideas.

AD 1400 (FORTY -SIX GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 24%
- Breakdown: 25% nonwhite, 75% white
- Evangelization: 27% of world
- Scriptures: 30 languages

Source: David Barrett.

Fifteenth Century Events

- 1414 -1417 - The Council of Constance seeks to end the Great Schism, the embarrassment of having two or three popes competing for authority and power. This same council burns Czech priest John Hus as a heretic and condemns John Wycliffe posthumously.
- Religious beliefs continue to be matters of political concern.
- Thomas a' Kempis' classic Imitation of Christ written.
- 1431 -- French peasant woman Joan of Arc is burned at Rouen as a witch.
- 1453 -- The Turks capture Constantinople and turn St. Sophia Basilica into a mosque. The many scholars fleeing west encourage a revival of classical learning - the Renaissance.
- 1453 -- Johann Gutenberg develops his printing press and prints the first Bible.
- 1479 -- The Inquisition against heresy in Spain set up by Ferdinand and Isabella with papal approval. Under Torquemada Jews are given 3 months to become Christians or leave the country.
- 1498 -- Savonarola burned. He was a great preacher of reform in Florence, Italy.
- Florence under the Medicis becomes the center of Renaissance humanism. Brunelleschi, Donatello, Michelangelo, Botticelli, and Leonardo da Vinci all create important works of art with Christian themes. At the same time the Medicis become supporters of a papacy more worldly than ever before.
- The Vatican Library is founded by Nicholas V.
- 1492 -- Columbus' voyage and a new age of exploration and Christian expansion begin.

AD 1500 (FORTY -NINE GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 19%
- Breakdown: 7.4% nonwhite, 92.6% white
- Evangelization: 21% of world
- Scriptures: 34 languages
- Total Martyrs since AD 33: 9,200,000 (0.3% of all Christians ever; recent rate 24,600 per year)

Source: David Barrett.

One Hundred Key Events in Church History

Part 2: From the Crowning of Charlemagne to Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy



Gutenberg with his first proof with movable type

Year and Event

800

Charlemagne crowned emperor by the pope on Christmas. He advances the church, education, and culture.

863

Cyril and Methodius, Greek brothers, evangelize the Serbs. Cyril develops the Cyrillic alphabet which remains the basis for the Slavonic used in the liturgy of the Russian church.

909

A monastery is established at Cluny and becomes a center for reform. By the mid-12th century, there were over 1,000 Clunaic houses.

988

Conversion of Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, who, after examining several religions, chooses Orthodoxy to unify and guide the Russian people.

1054

The East-West Schism. brewing for centuries, rupture finally comes to a head with the fissure that has lasted to this day.

1093

Anselm becomes Archbishop of Canterbury. A devoted monk and outstanding theologian, his *Cur Deus Homo?* (*Why Did God Become Man?*), explored the atonement.

1095

Pope Urban II launches the First Crusade. The crowd wildly shouts "God wills it!" There would be several crusades over the next centuries with many tragic results.

1115

Bernard founds the monastery at Clairvaux. He and the monastery become a major center of spiritual and political influence.

about 1150

Universities of Paris and Oxford are founded and become incubators for renaissance and reformation and precursors for modern educational patterns.

1173

Peter Waldo founds the Waldensians, a reform movement emphasizing poverty, preaching and the Bible. He and his followers are eventually condemned as heretics and the Waldensians suffer great persecution for centuries.

1206

Francis of Assisi renounces wealth and goes on to lead a band of poor friars preaching the simple life.

1215

The Fourth Lateran Council deals with heresy, reaffirms Roman Catholic doctrines and strengthens the authority of the popes.

1273

Thomas Aquinas completes work on *Summa Theologica*, the theological masterpiece of the Middle Ages.

1321

Dante completes *The Divine Comedy*, the greatest work of Christian literature to emerge from the Middle Ages.

1378

Catherine of Siena goes to Rome to help heal the "Great Papal Schism" which had resulted in multiple popes. Partly through her influence, the papacy moves back to Rome from Avignon.

about 1380

Wycliffe is exiled from Oxford but oversees a translation of the Bible into English. He is later hailed as the "Morning star of the Reformation."

1415

John Hus, who teaches Wycliffe's ideas in Bohemia, is condemned and burned at the stake by the Council of Constance.

1456

Johann Gutenberg produces the first printed Bible, and his press becomes a means for dissemination new ideas, catalyzing changes in politics and theology.

1478

The Spanish Inquisition is established under King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to oppose "heresy."

1498

Savonarola, the fiery Dominican reformer of Florence, in Italy, is executed.

1512

Michelangelo completes his notable artwork on the Sistine Chapel ceiling in Rome.

1517

Martin Luther posts his ninety-five theses, a simple invitation for scholarly debate that inadvertently becomes a "hinge of history."

1523

Zwingli leads the Swiss reformation from his base as lead pastor in Zurich.

1525

The Anabaptist movement begins. This "radical reformation" insists on baptism of adult believers and the almost unheard of notion of separation of church and state.

1534

Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy makes the king, not the pope, head of the Church of England.

Church History

Lesson 8 Reformation

■- A.D. 1450 to 1609

We need to define a term here – for we will refer to a couple of our characters as humanists, a term which carries a bad connotation in our day and age. As defined by the *American Humanist Association*

Humanism is a progressive life stance that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead meaningful, ethical lives capable of adding to the greater good of humanity.

However, in the sixteenth century, a humanist was a [Renaissance] Christian who focused upon the practical human actions and human-oriented arts (the “humanities”) instead of the Scholastic logic of Aquinas and others.

With this understanding in mind, we will encounter Erasmus in the context of history. We have already seen Erasmus’ contribution to the development of the modern Bible translations. How did Erasmus arrive at his place in history?

Julius II was pope in 1507. He was a great general and used his army and his power to conquer. In particular, he conquered Bologna, Italy, home of Erasmus. The son of an unwed teenager, Erasmus was a student of the Brethren of Common Life and became a priest because he had no funds to attend university. He was, however, such a promising student that his bishop gave him the education he sought. Erasmus became a great Greek scholar and gave the church a New Testament biblical text in the original tongue. If Wycliffe and Hus had set the gunpowder, Erasmus provided the fuse. The fuse would be ignited in 1517.

The humanist of the Renaissance placed a great deal of emphasis on the study of Greek and classical literature, especially the Greek text of the Bible. Literary humanists of this period included Zwingli, Calvin, Melancton, and Erasmus, all of whom played a vital role in the Reformation.

In 1505, while traveling down a dirt road in the middle of a thunderstorm, a German Saxon lawyer was struck by lightning. Born in 1483 into a family of adequate means, The lawyer as a student was another who studied under the Brethren of Common Life. Struggling to his feet, he pledged his life to God. The man was Martin Luther. Luther was deeply aware of his own sin. He struggled with how a righteous God could love him. Luther prayed long hours in an effort to resolve this question. His shortfall was his view of Christ as a stern judge. He joined an Augustinian monastery.

John Staupitz was professor of the Bible at Wittenberg University and vice-general of the monastery Luther joined. He thought he understood Luther’s struggles and appointed Luther as his successor in 1512. Luther accepted the position even though he still

struggled. The phrase that most bothered him was Romans 1:17 “the righteousness of God.” Luther found his answer in Erasmus’ Greek text where he discovered the shades of meaning in the Greek word we translate as “righteousness.” The Greek covers not only the condition of being righteous, but also the act of declaring someone to be righteous. Paul tells us in Romans that it is by faith that one is justified and declared to be righteous before God. The year was 1517 and Luther was at peace in his soul.

Meanwhile, the pope was building St. Peter’s Basilica and needed funds to complete the project. Pope Leo X turned to Prince Albert, the archbishop and ruling prince of Mainz, Germany. Leo and Albert made a deal. Leo allowed the German prince to sell indulgences so long as one-half the profits went to Leo. The deal suited Albert well for he had purchased his archbishop position from the papacy and was heavy in debt.

We have used the term indulgence before. When first used, the idea of the indulgence was the remission of punishment that might otherwise be imposed upon a person by the Church under the Bishop of Rome (the “pope”) when such person was guilty of a sin. The logic behind an indulgence was that the sinner could not do sufficient penance to expiate all of his sin. As such it was necessary for the sinner to draw upon the “treasury of merits” governed by the church. This treasury resulted from the contributions of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. It was under the power of the pope to distribute this treasure. Also, initially, one could obtain such indulgence by giving his life in the Crusades. Later, financial payments were accepted in lieu of giving a life. Over time, the indulgence came to provide for remission of guilt before God. Essentially, with the sale of indulgences, one could purchase forgiveness before committing the sin!

One of Albert’s indulgence peddlers was a Dominican friar named Tetzel. Tetzel so misused this power of the church that he infuriated the pastor of the village church in Mainz, Martin Luther. Luther’s goal was to debate Tetzel and “prove” proper theology. So, he wrote out 95 topics of debate. In English we would translate the German word for “topics” as “theses.” Luther’s point was to challenge Tetzel’s theology on the sale of the indulgences, not to take on the pope.

Saxony did not allow the sale of indulgences. Wittenburg was within Saxony, which is why Luther chose this chapel, viewing it as “neutral” ground. Luther was not out to start a revolution.

On October 31, 1517, Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the Wittenburg chapel door. The printing press allowed copies of Luther’s Theses to be spread far and wide. Luther even provided Albert with a copy. While popular support for Luther grew, the church ignored Luther and treated him as a drunk. Luther sent an explanation of his Theses to Leo X. After three years of waiting, Luther still maintained his position and the pope took action. Leo X issued a bull directed at the “wild pig.” Everyone understood the wild pig was Luther.

The Latin word for an imperial meeting is “diet.” A couple of months after the papal bull, the Holy Roman Emperor sent Luther an invitation to the Diet of Worms, Germany (1521). The last time such a command / promise was issued, John Hus died. Luther probably expected the same result.

When faced with a pile of his books and an offer to “repent,” Luther followed his Christian conscience. It is reasonably certain that the church would have killed Luther, but the ruler of Saxony kidnapped the priest and placed him in safekeeping for several months. During this period, Luther translated the New Testament into idiomatic German. The Reformation has started and Martin Luther caused the explosion.

Luther was not the only would-be reformer. It should be noted that the initial goal of all the early reformers was to change the actions of the church. At least until 1520, none wanted to separate from the church. There was only one church of Christ and everyone who believed belonged to it. Neither Luther nor others around him wanted to form a “new” church.

In Zurich, Switzerland, Ulrich [Hulbreich] Zwingli would become another reformer. He, too, studied Erasmus’ Greek New Testament to arrive at his theological position. During a Lenten study this church leader also defied the teachings of the bishop of Rome. He married and almost single-handedly is responsible for Switzerland becoming Protestant. Zwingli and Luther would meet in an effort to unite their two groups. After discussions, it became clear the two disagreed upon the meaning of the Lord’s Supper. Both disagreed with the transubstantiation position of the Roman Church, but they did not agree with each other. Luther agreed with Zwingli that the bread and wine did not change, but Luther maintained that Christ’s body was present with the elements and conveyed grace to those partaking who were at peace with God (“consubstantiation”). Zwingli taught that the elements merely symbolize the body of Christ, a “remembrance.”

After five days of debate, the two separated by mutual, “friendly” agreement. In 1530, Luther’s followers would publish their statement of faith, the Augsburg Confession.

During this period, the Diet of Speyer (1529) outlawed Lutheranism. A group of Lutheran’s protested so adamantly that they were given the name “Protestants.” This title was soon applied to describe both the Lutheran and Reformed (Calvinistic) churches, eventually coming to represent all who were not Catholic. The Protestant princes united in the Schmalkald League. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V would grant this group religious freedom in 1532.

There is yet another reformer helping to fan the flames of the period. A French lawyer, John Calvin, fled France. Another humanist, Calvin had helped to write a speech containing many quotes from Luther and Erasmus. The French government was not amused. Calvin became a Protestant Christian in 1533, fled to his hometown in Noyon, France and then onto Switzerland. He wrote the first systematic summary of Protestant theology, his *Institutes of Christian Religion* (1536). The *Institutes* were revised several times. The last edition in 1559 was four times the size of the original.

Once the *Institutes* had been published, Calvin moved onto to Geneva, intending to continue to Strasbourg, a clearly Protestant city. Calvin was convinced to remain in Geneva and started preaching. Within two years, Geneva was a Calvinistic Reformation city.

Along with being one of the great thinker/writers of his age, Calvin encountered one experience in his early career in Geneva that presents a lesson for all of us. About two years after Calvin’s arrival, the Geneva city council forced him to leave. At issue were a

series of political / religious quarrels. Calvin founded a refuge in Strasbourg to care for French Huguenots (next week's lesson). However, in 1539, Geneva's Protestants discovered they needed someone to debate a Roman Catholic thinker who had come to town. Calvin returned to his pulpit where he would remain until his death.

The lesson? This was Calvin's great opportunity to "get back" at the citizens of Geneva. Calvin issued no rebuke. In fact, he merely commenced preaching where he had left off two years before as though there had been no break. Calvin offered complete forgiveness to his enemies without spite or an "I told you so." Do you do the same?

Calvin's theology was the formation of the Reformed Churches. Much can be debated in today's church over his doctrine normally represented by the acronym "TULIP." (TULIP is discussed in the next lesson in more detail.) This is not the course to be debating this, but it should be noted that along with conveying an improper concept of man's depravity and God's predestination, Calvin had some practical faults as well. As indicated above, none of the reformers wanted to form new churches. As a result, much of their doctrine and application contained threads of the teachings of Aquinas and the Church at the time of the Reformation.

Calvin's practical fault lay in the existing Roman bishop concept that church and government could be commingled. Geneva became a city governed by Calvin's theology. In fact, in 1536, the Geneva council burned Michael Servetus because he denied the Trinity. This is clearly an Old Testament approach to enforcing proper theology.

Zwingli's Zurich church moved the opposite direction. Their position was that government had no right to enforce theology. The issue came to light when Felix Manz, one of Zwingli's students started offering the Lord's Supper in the people's language rather than Latin. They viewed this as a submission to the Scriptures. Manz and his followers, the "Swiss Brothers," started a weekly Bible study. In the process they came to the conclusion that the Scriptures did not authorize the baptism of infants. They not only publicly criticized but they moved a step farther.

In January 1525, the Swiss Brothers received believer's baptism, notwithstanding the fact that the Church had previously baptized each one. This earned them the name of "Again-Baptizers" or "Anabaptists." The night of the rebaptism, the city council of Zurich banished the Anabaptists. It must be remembered that within the church of this time, people believed that it was through the church's baptism that people became members of Christian society. The action of the Anabaptists had the effect of separating the community of faith from the community of the civil society.

Manz would become the first non-Catholic to be martyred by a Protestant. In 1526 the Zurich city council would condemn Manz to death. He was drowned in the icy river. The persecution of the Anabaptists would be wide spread. Much of the persecution was caused because the group developed into incorrect heresies without the firm leadership of Manz. In 1535, a Waco-type siege would occur against an Anabaptist compound in Westphalia, Germany. Both Protestant and Roman Catholic leaders would persecute the Anabaptists. Even Calvin would promote their death. Erasmus was the only early Reformer to defend them. By 1600 10,000 Anabaptists would be killed.

Menno Simons was a self-centered Dutch priest. After spending the first couple of years of his priesthood at the local bar, Simons commenced studying the Bible in an effort to impress his fellow pastors. The truth of Scripture crept into his soul and ten years later (prox 1536) Simons became an Anabaptist. Simons took two beliefs out of the mixed up Anabaptist heresies. First, only believers should be baptized. Second, no government should enforce religious beliefs. Menno Simons strictly attempted to observe the New Testament teachings, even performing foot washings.

Simons became the Empire's "most wanted criminal" in 1542. Simons would never be caught, dying a natural death in 1561, but in the process of remaining free, his wife and two of their children would die, while Menno would be crippled. The effects of Menno Simons upon the Anabaptist movement was so profound that the followers soon became known as Menno's people or "Mennonites."

In the 1700s Jakob Ammann would lead a group of conservative Mennonites to separate from their fellow Anabaptists. This group became popular in Germany, becoming known as the Amish. When they migrated to America they became known as the Pennsylvania Deutsch or Pennsylvania Germans.

We have considered a great deal about the place of William Tyndale in the development of the English Bible. However, it was not only the Bible that would cost Tyndale his life, but rather his relationship to the wives of Henry.

The Roman church leaders were against private translations of the Scripture because they feared personal prejudices creeping into the translations. The leaders felt that only "authorized" groups should make translations. Yet, Luther created a German translation and Calvin translated the Scriptures as well. In fact, throughout history, many individuals have created their own, good, translations. At the same time, many group translations contain theological slants. One must ask for great spiritual discernment in considering how to view various modern versions of the Scriptures.

Both from the perspective of the Reformation and the history of the American church, England becomes important. However, the introduction of the Reformation comes not for theological reasons but from an ego driven king. Henry VIII wanted a son!

England was a church of the Roman pope. In 1520, a tract bearing the name of Henry VIII, but probably written by Thomas More, attacked Luther. Leo X awarded Henry's zealotry by naming the King the "Defender of the Church." The Defender was more interested in his throne than he was in the church.

A little non-church history:

Henry's current wife was Catherine of Aragon, his former sister-in-law. She had not produced a son.

Henry was enchanted with Anne Boleyn.

Henry asked pope Clement VII to annul his marriage on the basis of Lev 20:21. It is 1529.

Clement was controlled by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Charles V was Catherine's nephew. He refused to annul the marriage.

Thomas Cranmer suggested the lawyers of Europe overturn the pope's decision not to annul the marriage.

Cranmer became Archbishop of England in 1533. He immediately annulled Henry's marriage to Catherine and married the King to Anne Boleyn.

Henry declared himself as head of the Church of England (Supremacy Act of 1534). Henry's theology was Catholic, not Protestant.

Henry's Chancellor, Sir Thomas More, refused to recognize Henry's declaration.

More resigned his position, to be beheaded at the direction of Thomas Cranmer.

William Tyndale issued a tract (1530) denouncing the annulment of Catherine's marriage. This led to his death as much as his Bible. His last prayer is reported to be a plea to have Henry's eyes opened by God. The prayer was answered, for Henry would approve the Matthew's Bible in 1538. This was a completed edition of Tyndale's Bible. It was revised as the Great Bible and Henry placed a copy of this edition in every English church, under an order that declared they must be chained to the pulpit so as not to be stolen! England became Protestant so the king could marry. It was not over yet.

Henry finally had a son in 1541 by Jane Seymour, his third queen. During this time, Thomas Cranmer edited and published the Book of Common Prayer, a blend of Lutheranism and Calvinism. This liturgy replaced the Latin of the Roman church and moved England away from Roman Catholicism. In 1543 Parliament approved reading the Scriptures in English and Scots rather than Latin.

Henry's son died as teenager and Mary Tudor, daughter of Catherine, would take the throne. She moved England back to Roman Catholicism, earning her nickname of Bloody Mary by executing more than 300 Protestants for their faith. Among those killed were Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and Bishop Hugh Latimer.

Elizabeth, Henry's daughter by Anne Boleyn, would move England on a middle ground course. She refused the title "Supreme Head of the Church" while rejecting the pope's power. She had the Book of Common Prayer revised. Elizabeth's approach is still found in the Church of England (the Anglican Church) today. Elizabeth liked the ornate and this shows in the style of the liturgy of the Church. Her influence on the Church probably arises because of her long reign as Queen – 45 years from 1558 to 1603.

There was a political side-benefit from Henry's fight with the pope and Elizabeth's reforms of the church. Both asked Parliament for support and approval of the changes. These requests helped to strengthen the position of Parliament and assisted in the ultimate creation of the new governing structure where the monarchy was without power.

Tyndale's efforts and New Testament also started the reformation movement of Scotland. His translation influenced John Knox. Knox moved the Scottish parliament to deny the pope's power in Scotland. Thereafter, elders, ("Presbyters") directed the Scottish church. Scottish Protestants became known as Presbyterians. Over time, they adopted the theology of Calvin.

Finally, we have noted above that the original intent of Luther was to reform the Roman driven church. It appears that Catholic leaders had been moving toward reformation for several years before Luther nailed the Theses to the Wittenberg Chapel. Following the split, groups still attempted a reuniting of the groups. In 1541, many Protestants met with Catholic leaders to create such a reunion. One member of this group was Philip Melancton, Luther's number one aide.

The breaking point of the meeting was the issue of the power of the pope and the interpretation of the Lord's Supper. The movement for reunion dissolved and the Roman Catholic Church was truly born. The church sought its own version of reformation.

Melancton was the organizer of Luther's church. He established primary and secondary schools, trained the Lutheran clergy, prepared a manual for the operation of the Lutheran church, wrote a systematic theology, commentaries on the New Testament, and helped to issue several statements of faith.

One of the leaders of this Catholic reform was a former soldier, Ignatius Loyola. Wounded in 1521, Loyola read Thomas A' Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* while he recovered. A' Kempis' teaching on a direct knowledge of Christ moved Loyola and six of his friends to take a vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience to the pope. In 1540, Pope Paul III approved Loyola's Society of Jesus, the Jesuits.

The Jesuits would become the Roman Church's greatest missionary force. For example, Francis Xavier would evangelize India and Japan 150 years before any Protestant group sent a missionary.

In 1538 Pope Paul III would call a council at Trent, Austria to reform the church. Meeting between 1545 and 1563 this council would reform the church. The marketing of indulgences and the selling of church offices ended. Priestly celibacy was enforced. The Apocrypha books were added as part of the biblical canon. This council also decided that only the bread would be given to the laity during the Lord's Supper.

Of equal, or more importance, this council also adopted the position that Scripture and church tradition were of equal importance. Faith and works have been united in Roman Catholic theology ever since. They define Roman Catholicism.

Europe ends the sixteenth century in a collection of fragmented groups. In Germany, the Peace of Augsburg would help the Lutherans and Catholics live together, but the same is not true of the other regions. Europe became fragmented.

The other item of interest is to understand that the root of denominations is not theology. The root is geographical based upon the various leaders of the Reformation period.

The position of the Reformation:

Sola fide – justification by faith alone
Sola gratia – salvation by grace alone
Sola scriptura – Scriptures alone as authority

Did Luther go far enough?

Luther promoted:

- Justification by faith alone
- Salvation by grace alone
- The Bible alone as authority for doctrine and practice
- The priesthood of believers
- Congregational singing – Luther wrote a hymnal

But he kept the crucifix, candles, parts of the Lord's Supper, and the basic format of the Mass as his order of service.

Lutheranism spread to Germany, Scandinavia, the Baltic States, England, and ultimately, the New World.

Calvinism would spread to Switzerland, Germany, Holland, England, France, Scotland, Hungary, and the New World. Calvin was probably the most influential of the early reformers. His teachings became the framework for the Protestants of France, the Reformed Church of Germany, the Church of Scotland, the Reformed Church of Holland, the Reformed Church of Hungary, and the Puritans of England and New England.

Sixteenth Century Events

- The printing of books begun in the fifteenth century now develops swiftly, propelling the spread of the Reformation.
- Michelangelo, Albrecht Durer, Raphael, and Lucius Cranach create art with Biblical themes.
- 1517 Martin Luther posts his 95 theses at Wittenburg, which stir Germany and Europe in a matter of months.
- The Scriptures become more available for the common person as Luther translates into German and Tyndale into English in the 1520's.
- The Protestant Reformation spreads throughout Europe with Zwingli in Switzerland, the Anabaptists in central Europe, and John Knox in Scotland. Henry VIII's quest for dynastic security causes him to separate from Rome and establish himself as head of the Church of England. John Calvin's ministry in Geneva and his Institutes begin a Scriptural reexamination of theology and society.
- The Counter-Reformation defends traditional Catholicism against Reformation ideas. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) reaffirms Catholic doctrine. The Jesuit order becomes the defender of the Catholic faith and begins sending missionaries abroad.
- Religious convictions produce martyrs among both Catholics and Protestants -- Sir Thomas More, William Tyndale, and Thomas Cranmer among the many executed. Huguenots in France begin to be persecuted. Foxe's Book of Martyrs (actually titled Actes and Monuments) records the persecution believers in Christ have endured through the centuries.
- In England, Puritans begin to fashion a church more closely based upon the Scriptures.

AD 1600 (FIFTY-TWO GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 18.9%
- Breakdown: 14% nonwhite, 86% white
- Evangelization: 23% of world
- Scriptures: Printed scriptures available in 36 languages

Source: David Barrett.

Church History

Lesson 9 Not All Is Good

■- A.D. 1510 to 1767

The Reformation started out as a movement by Luther and others to revise the actions of the Church of God. Neither Luther nor anyone else involved planned on starting a new church. Theirs was not a movement toward forming a third church along with the Church at Rome and the Church in the East. The results were obviously different.

There is no doubt the church had drifted away from the doctrines of the Bible. Scripture teaches justification by faith alone. This was the battle cry of the Reformation. It is nothing but a simple statement of God's Word. It is equally clear that the Church of the sixteenth century had moved to a position whereby works had been added to faith. The Church at Rome would keep this dual salvation path, while the Protestants would follow their own battle cry.

However, the Reformers were not prepared for the results of their efforts. The need for change was clearly in the air as evidenced by the widespread witness of various local leaders all arriving at the same general point in faith at the same general time history. God's church needed change. At the same time, there was no game plan for the results. Luther and Zwingli's disagreement over the structural meaning of the Lord's Supper is but one example. Each of the major Reformers agreed in principle but not necessarily in practice.

As a result, unlike the split between East and West, this split created not two churches, but multiple churches, each labeled as a Protestant group. While each group followed the tenets of the Reformation, they did not unite. There was not even peace amongst the groups, as evidenced by Calvin's and other's persecution of the Anabaptists. At the end of the beginning, post-Reformation Europe had Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Catholics, Anabaptists, and a variety of smaller groups who loosely followed one or a combination of these larger groups.

So, post-Reform Europe is a period of trials.

The pope "sold" positions to the local leaders as a method of gaining power. For example, Francis I of France had the right to appoint 10 archbishops, 38 bishops, and 527 heads of religious houses (monasteries). Only about 10% of the priests were literate. Patronage was the game of the day. If the church fell, so did the political leaders. This helps to explain their persecution of the Protestants.

In France, the French Protestants were nicknamed "Huguenots." By 1561, the Huguenots had 2,150 churches organized in a Presbyterian form of church government. In 1572, the queen of France convinced her husband, the King, the Huguenots were plotting to overthrow his government. On St. Bartholomew's Day, the King's soldiers swept through Paris killing every Protestant they encountered. Approximately 10,000

were killed and Protestantism was not made legal in France until the Edit of Nantes in 1598, although by then eight European wars had been fought between Catholics and Protestants.

The Lutherans spent twenty years arguing over how depraved humans were. Calvinism maintained that humans were completely depraved. This leads to the Calvinistic teaching on predestination, a position that in Calvinism essentially means that God chose before the formation of the world those who would be saved because men were so depraved they could not come to God on their own.

This issue would also split Calvinism, although in a different form. In the late 1500s, a Dutch pastor preached against Calvin's position on predestination. Jacob Arminius, another Dutch pastor, agreed to debate the issue. Arminius began a study of Calvin's writings and Scripture. This study convinced Arminius Calvin was wrong and the opponent was correct! Arminius would die in 1609, but his followers would split Calvinism.

After Arminius' followers had published their position, Prince Maurice, a Dutch prince, attempted to end the conflict by calling a council or synod. The Synod of Dort met in 1618 to denounce Arminianism. This council drafted a balanced statement of Calvinism that still lives today as TULIP.

Arminius	Calvin	TULIP
On their own humans can do nothing good.	Humans are spiritually dead and no one will seek God	Total Depravity (absence of desire for Christ)
Before the foundation of the world, God chose to save everyone who would freely choose to trust Christ	If someone trusts Christ, it is because God chose to regenerate that person. God's choice is uncontrollable; it is not based on any human decision.	Unconditional election (unconditional choice by God)
Jesus died for everyone, but his death only redeems believers	Christ's death atoned only for those who would believe in him (chosen by God).	Limited Atonement (Cross only for God's elect)
People can choose to reject God's attempts to save them	When God regenerates someone, that person will neither resist nor reject God's grace.	Irresistible Grace (cannot fight God)
Scripture doesn't clearly state whether Christians can forfeit salvation	Every Christian will persevere in faith until the end	Perseverance of the saints (Christians will never forfeit their salvation)

Following the Synod of Dort, predestination became the symbol and center of Calvinistic theology. It is likely that most of us really have a view of theology that is a blend of these points. To a great extent, the debate is very similar to that of Augustine and Pelagius – with one major difference. Pelagius clearly taught man helped in his own salvation. Arminius's actual position was that men could reject God's grace rather than accept it. The ongoing issue between true Calvinists (sometimes today referred to as "super-Calvinists, i.e. RC Sproul) and others is whether acceptance of God's gift by faith is a "choice."

It is during this time period that the church also loses its position of explaining the puzzle of creation. In the mid-1500s Nicolas Copernicus of Poland concluded that the earth revolved around the Sun rather than all of the planets revolving around the earth. Copernicus was greatly concerned about the practical effects of his conclusions, so he did not release them until he was on his deathbed. His views, when they were published, were presented as speculations to simplify math rather than as scientific theories.

Galileo carried Copernicus' ideas into the world of science. Galileo was condemned by the Inquisition on the basis that Joshua 10:12-13 teaches that the Sun, not the earth, moves. Under this death penalty, Galileo partially repented, changing his statements from theories to speculations. Galileo would spend the balance of his life under house arrest. In 1992, the Church would determine that the Inquisition should not have convicted Galileo.

However, science was now a force in the world. People would forever view their world from the eyes of man rather than God.

Politics would also become a major force during this period. While the Holy Roman Emperor ruled little real geographical territory, the Church was still strongly involved in the ruling of societies. Then came Prague. In 1618, Bohemian Protestants and envoys of their Catholic king met to resolve complaints of the Protestants. The Catholics, essentially, refused to listen, so the Protestants threw the Catholics out the second story window. The envoys survived the fall by falling into a wagon of horse manure.

The Holy Roman Emperor immediately declared war on the Protestants. This is the start of the Thirty Years' War. The conflict began over religion but soon turned into political skirmishes. France, Denmark, and the entire Holy Roman Empire would be involved. In a sense there were three issues – Protestants versus Catholics in Germany, Emperor versus Princes in the Holy Roman Empire, and France versus the Hapsbergs for the control of Europe. In other words, most of Europe participated in this senseless battle. Ten million citizens would die.

The War would end with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The telling factor of this Peace was that the pope was not invited. The pope had lost his political power to the various country leaders. Europe was sickened by all of the religious conflict. Calvinism, Lutheranism, and Catholicism were recognized as legal religions. The princes had the right to determine the religion of their individual state. The political landscape had been greatly rearranged.

While War was on the horizon, in England the movement was to cleanse the church. This group became known as the "Puritans." The Puritans goal was to make the Scriptures vital in the life of the church and to cleanse the church of any practices that did not conform to Scriptures. Their preferred Bible was the Geneva Bible.

The Puritans themselves were different. The Puritans wore dull clothes for worship in order not to be distracted by bright colors. Their goal was to turn their thoughts away from one another and toward God. At the same time, the group enjoyed their beer, swam, skated, hunted, bowled, and clearly expected a fulfilling relationship with their spouses.

So, in 1604 the Puritans approached King James with a request to purify the Church of England. James disliked the fact the Geneva Bible had Calvin's study notes, so when the Puritans suggested a new translation, James agreed. It would take 47 scholars 33 months to produce what we call the King James Bible. The first KJV rolled off the press in 1611.

Some of the Puritans could not wait to see the results of this effort and separated from the Church of England. To avoid persecution, two of these "separatist" churches fled to Holland in 1607. One group would, in turn, sail to the New World. We know them as the Pilgrims. The other group remained in Holland and would radically change their understanding of the Church. John Smyth who settled in Amsterdam led the second group.

Smyth adopted the doctrine that only believer's baptism was valid. Since the entire group had been baptized as children, there were no baptized believers in the group. How could they be baptized? Smyth would, ultimately, "cast water on himself." This act of self-baptism spawned the congregation of the "Brothers of the Separation of the Second English Church in Amsterdam." That will not fit very well on the bulletin! Calvary Road Church of the Brothers of the Separation of the Second English Church in Amsterdam? No wonder people started calling them Baptists!

Smyth's Brothers of Separation embraced Arminian theology. Because this doctrinal approach includes an emphasis on universal or general atonement, the group became known as General Baptists. In 1612, Smyth had died and his best friend, Thomas Helwys took the group back to England, establishing the first English Baptist church near London.

In 1643, the British Parliament invited the Puritans to form their own church. The group met at Westminster Abbey and drafted the Westminster Catechism.

Meanwhile, in England, James' son Charles declared that every church in Britain was to follow the Anglican rituals. Dispute followed. Oliver Cromwell formed a pro-Puritan army. It took Cromwell about five years to control Britain. In the process, Cromwell's army beheaded King Charles and his archbishop. One of those drafted by Cromwell's army was 16-year-old John Bunyan.

In 1648 Bunyan married a young lady named Mary. While Bunyan built a thatched house, neither John nor Mary had any possessions other than two books owned by Mary. The books were Puritan writings. Apparently with nothing to do but read, Bunyan dove into these two works, as well as Foxe's Book of Martyrs. His life was changed. The experience of reading these works brought Christ into the life of John Bunyan.

In 1653, Bunyan was baptized by immersion by a Baptist pastor in Bedford. It appears that this church was one of the first to return to immersion as the mode of baptism. Bunyan became a traveling Baptist preacher.

Bunyan claims a unique position because in his travels he would share the Lord's Supper with all Christians, not just the Baptists. Most churches of the time practiced a form of closed communion.

During this stormy time, in 1643 the English parliament commissioned the Westminster Assembly to develop the creed of the Church of England. Church of England and English Puritan ministers met daily from 1643 to 1649. The Westminster Confession of Faith, completed in 1646, affirmed a strong Calvinistic position and disavowed “the errors of Arminianism, Roman Catholicism, and sectarianism.” The confession is still widely used in Anglican and Presbyterian circles.

Cromwell’s reign ended in 1660 and again, all non-Anglican churches were suppressed. Bunyan was jailed in Bedford for preaching without approval or authority of the Anglican Church. It was while in prison that Bunyan wrote *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

England returned to the “middle road” of Queen Elizabeth in 1688 when William of Orange and King James’ daughter Mary became the rulers of England. The Toleration Act was passed providing that so long as a group would conform to *The Thirty-Nine Articles* of doctrine the group would be allowed to worship without fear. In substance the Articles were much like the Westminster Confession. The Protestant fight in England was over.

We should make mention of one other group formed during this period of history. George Fox of Drayton, England became an itinerant preacher in 1646. His territory included Ireland, West Indies and North America. His message emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit via revelation or an “inner light.” These revelations were viewed as equal to the words of the Bible. By 1660, the movement had expanded to the European continent, Asia, and Africa. In America, William Penn provided a heaven for members of this group in Pennsylvania. This group is the Quakers.

We have come this far in history without much discussion of events away from the European continent. Perhaps we should remember that in 1492 Columbus landed in the Bahamas. Spain and Portugal were quick to send forces to America. The purpose of these groups was to “evangelize” the Native Americans. It appears the preferred method of evangelism was to read aloud, in Spanish, a summary of Christian beliefs, before each battle!

Sugar became the product driving the ship. It was illegal under Spanish law to enslave a native. The Spaniards created *encomienda* (en-KOM-ee EN-dah). Under this system, the natives were entrusted to settlers who were to teach the natives about Christ. These natives were actually treated worse than slaves for the settlers had no financial interest in the people whatsoever. Cruelties persisted, but the seeds of the future slave trade were in place.

The real killer of the native Americans was not, however, the actions of the settlers. The native Americans were not ready for the diseases of Europe. Just as AIDS from Africa has invaded an unsuspecting world today, the native Americans were devastated by the illness of the white settlers. It has been estimated that in Mexico 17 million, out of a population of 18 million, died during this period, the vast majority from imported illness. This problem struck at the life of the settlers, for without workers, there would be no profits. The solution was to import slaves from Africa. The justification, in part, was the curse of Canaan (Gen 9:25), a declaration that the curse was dark skin.

Priests came with the settlers. Bartolome de Las Casas performed the first Mass in the New World in 1510. Bartolome himself acquired an encomienda to help him live. Then for unexplained reasons, Bartolome had a rebirth. In 1514, he released all of his slaves, returned to Spain, and lobbied for protection for the Native Americans. His pleas were partially answered when, in 1519, the Holy Roman Emperor passed a law code that limited Spain's rights and power over the natives. But the settlers were a large ocean away. The code was mostly ignored.

The Jesuits attempted to save the day. Jesuits such as Pedro Claver built communities to help the slaves. Claver came to Columbia in 1622 declaring himself to be a "slave of the Africans" or, if you will, a "slave of the slaves." Claver convinced the Order to obtain Africans to teach him the language and help him in his work. As each boatload of slaves arrived, Claver would group the people by language, give them water, and give them the Gospel message.

Claver himself suffered a humiliating death. No one among his fellow settlers liked him. Disease crippled him. The settlers provided a slave to take care of him. The slave hated the white and, thus, left Claver alone. Near his death, the settlers, convinced that he would be made a saint, raided his hut and took all of his possessions, including his clothes, assuming they would become valuable. Claver died naked and alone in 1654, poisoned by his own filth. He was declared a saint, but not for 200 years!

Jesuits worked in many other regions as well. As indicated above, they would build settlements for the Native Americans to keep them from slavery. In 1628 the plantation owners attacked some of these missions and enslaved the natives. The Jesuits moved farther inland and rebuilt. The settlers followed so the Jesuits armed the natives in 1640. This strategy worked for a while. By 1731, 150,000 Native Americans were living in Jesuit communities. The slave owners' greed would eventually win the day. With superior weapons, they forced the Jesuits out of the New World in 1767. The missions were all destroyed by 1800 by slavery, disease, and greed.

Those who know me know that I basically believe the movies are the product of the devil. I go to very few movies and watch only a handful on DVD. I understand, however, that not all share my perspective. For those who like the movies, the movie *The Mission* is a fictional account of this period in the lives of the Jesuits.

In the 17th Century, an Aztec native claimed to have seen a vision of a Native American Virgin Mary. The politics of the time compelled a bishop to build a shrine at the site of the vision. This shrine is the Virgin of Guadalupe. It became the symbol of Mexican self-rule.

For informational purposes, other cults arose during this era.

Swedenborgianism, the New Jerusalem Church, claimed to be able to commune with spirits and angels, thus, learning the secrets of the universe. Swedenborg denied the Trinity, original sin, the atonement, and the bodily resurrection. There seems to be a great deal of emphasis upon "free love" in a sexual context. He spiritualized the Bible. While there are still followers of Swedenborg in today's society, his lasting effect upon the church are the assimilation of his doctrines into other groups.

Jansenism was a cult of the Roman Catholic Church. Pietism was a movement within the Lutheran church, while Socinianism was founded in Italy. This group taught that Christ was an exemplary man. The movement died but left behind seeds of liberal influence. Indeed, this is the issue with many of these cults. You will find remnants within these groups of false doctrines from the second and third centuries, just as today various cults have picked these remnants from groups of this period.

Other nationalities beside the English had influences upon American religion. The Spaniards land in St. Augustine, Florida about 1512. From there they would spread west to Texas, New Mexico and California, leaving beyond the teachings of Spanish and Portuguese priests. They also expanded into Latin America.

The French moved into Canada and the US, establishing a permanent colony in Quebec in 1608. They left little influence of any type except in Quebec and Louisiana.

The Germans landed mostly in Pennsylvania while the Dutch are responsible for Delaware.

Seventeenth Century Events

- The Protestant Reformation begun in the last century continues to affect the religious and political life of Europe.
- In England the Puritan Revolution removes King Charles and executes him while attempting to establish a Puritan Commonwealth.
- In France, the Protestant Huguenots rebel against King Louis XIII.
- 1618-1648 -- In central Europe, the Thirty Years' War brings destruction as Protestants and Catholics vie for power.
- England begins to establish colonies in North America, many with the purpose of spreading Christianity or establishing more Biblical Christian governments -- Jamestown begins in 1607, Pilgrims land in 1620, Massachusetts Bay Colony established by Puritans in 1630.
- "King James Version" translation of the English Bible released in 1611; will shape and mold the English language for over three centuries.
- 1633 - Galileo forced by the Inquisition to abjure Copernicus' theories. New scientific studies often pursued by men seeking to learn the ways of their Creator - Johann Kepler, Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon, Robert Boyle.
- 1634 -- the first Oberammergau Passion Play
- Classic works of Christian literature are written: 1667 - John Milton's Paradise Lost; 1670 - Blaise Pascal's Pensees; 1678 - John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.
- "Enlightenment" writers question Christianity and seek to base knowledge on human reason--Leibnitz, Hobbes, and Descartes.

AD 1700 (FIFTY-SIX GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 22.3%
- Breakdown: 15.9% nonwhite, 84.1% white
- Evangelization: 25.2% of world
- Scriptures: Printed scriptures available in 52 languages

Source: David Barrett.

One Hundred Key Events in Church History

Part 3: From Calvin to Adoniram Judson



Infamous medal struck to celebrate the St. Bartholomew Day massacre of Huguenots

Year and event

1536

John Calvin publishes *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the most substantial theological work of the Reformation.

1540

The Society of Jesus is approved by the Vatican. Founded by Ignatius Loyola, the Jesuit order places its services entirely at the disposal of the pope.

1545

The Council of Trent opens. Called by the Roman Catholic Church, it addresses abuses and serves the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

1549

Cranmer produces the beloved *Book of Common Prayer* for the Church of England.

1559

John Knox returns to Scotland to lead reformation there after a period of exile in Calvin's Geneva.

1572

The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France witnesses the killing of tens of thousands of Protestant Huguenots by Catholics.

1608-09

Anglican preacher turned Separatist, John Smith, baptizes the first "Baptists."

1611

Publication of the Authorized or King James translation of the Bible in the English language. Fifty-four scholars worked for four years on the project.

1620

Pilgrims coming to America sign the Mayflower Compact and commit themselves to seek the public good, uphold group solidarity and forsake self-seeking.

1628

Jan Amos Comenius is driven from his homeland in Moravia and wanders the rest of his life spreading educational reform and pleading for Christian reconciliation.

1646

The Westminster Confession is drafted in the Jerusalem Room at Westminster Abbey.

1648

George Fox founds the Society of Friends, more commonly known as "Quakers." Seeking to live simple lives, opposed to warfare and avoiding formal worship, they had an influence far exceeding their numbers.

1662

Rembrandt completes his masterful painting the Return of the Prodigal Son.

1675

German Lutheran minister Philip Jacob Spener publishes Pia Desideria which becomes a manifesto for "Pietism."

1678

John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress is published. It becomes second in international circulation, exceeded only by the Bible.

1685

Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederick Handel born. These two will go on to become musical giants illustrating the central place of Biblical subjects in the masterpieces of Western art.

1707

Publication of Isaac Watt's Hymns and Spiritual Songs marks a new development in the kind of music sung in churches.

1727

Awakening at Herrnhut launches Moravian Brethren as the forerunner of modern Protestant missionary movements.

1735

Great Awakening under Jonathan Edwards stirs the American colonies with many conversions and individual returns to heartfelt faith.

1738

John Wesley's conversion eventually leads to the founding of a branch of the Methodist Church although he had no intention of forming a separate denomination.

1780

Newspaperman Robert Raikes begins Sunday schools to reach poor and uneducated children in England. It rapidly becomes a vital international movement.

1793 William Carey sails as a missionary to India and oversees more Bible translations than had previously been produced in all Christian history.

1807

The British Parliament votes to abolish the slave trade. Its decision is owing in large part to the tireless efforts of the Christian politician William Wilberforce.

1811

The Campbells begin the Disciples of Christ, an element within what became known as the "Restoration Movement" of American Christianity.

1812

Adoniram and Ann Judson sail for India. These first missionaries to be sent from America evangelize Burma and translate the scriptures into Burmese.

Church History

Lesson 10 Revolutions

■- A.D. 1620 to 1814

In 1681, William Penn received a tract of land in the New World from King Charles II. Penn refused to link his new colony to any religious sect. He embraced everyone who believed in one God. His colony became known as “Penn’s Forrest”, that is, Pennsylvania.

America arrives late in the landscape of Church history, yet, like everything else, America will dominate views on Christianity. As we have already seen, most of the roots of American Christianity were formed in the blood of martyrs in Europe and England. While the balance of our lessons will focus more on the events related to America, there will still be events in the rest of the world to consider, for they are all a part of the history of Christ’s Body, the Church.

In an earlier lesson we noted that Separatists from the Anglican Church fled England for Holland and that one group boarded a ship for America. The ship was the Mayflower. The year was 1620. Although their goal was to land in Virginia, storms blew the group off course and they landed in Massachusetts, naming their landing point “Plymouth.” It must be noted that this group did not come to America to seek religious freedom in the sense we consider today. Rather, their goal was to establish a colony where they could live and worship as they chose without interference from the king. The group did not support individual freedom but a group freedom.

After several years, the Massachusetts Bay Colony would absorb the Plymouth colony. To become a citizen of the Bay Colony, one had to confirm salvation in Christ and agree to the voting structure and government established by the Colony. State and church were once again linked, at least for a short time.

The Puritan’s Church structure was Congregationalist. They offered a Separatist, Roger Williams, the position of pastor. He refused because he believed civil judges should not enforce religious beliefs. Williams became a missionary to the Native Americans and would have become a forgotten figure in history had he not openly declared, “The Natives are the true owners [of this land].”

Needless to say, this did not sit well with the Colony and Williams was banished by the Massachusetts Court in 1635. Leaving behind a two-year-old daughter and a pregnant wife, Williams walked the countryside for fourteen weeks until a Native American tribe gave him shelter. He would pay a fair price to the tribe for a small piece of ground south of Massachusetts. Williams named his patch of America “Providence.” He invited those of all religions to join him.

Providence, of course, is now known as Rhode Island. Williams' family would join him, as well as several others. Williams' original charter declared:

No person within said colony shall be called in question for any opinion in matters of religion. Persons may enjoy their own judgments in matters of religious concernment.

An example of the type of people who fled to Rhode Island may be found in Anne Hutchinson, a 44-year-old midwife living in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Each Wednesday night Anne and six other ladies would gather to discuss the previous Sunday's sermon. In the process, Anne became well versed in Scripture. While such meetings were common in the Colony, Anne's knowledge led her to make a claim that Christians were not bound to obey any human laws. Since she neglected some other truths of the Bible, including that of civil obedience (Rom 13:1-7), the Massachusetts's Bay Colony put Anne on trial for treason.

While it became clear during the trial that Anne knew the Bible better than her judges, she made the mistake of appealing to personal experience, namely, an encounter with God. The court did not consider personal experience to be equal to the word of Scripture. The court banished Anne, who, with her family, fled to Providence, where she was welcomed.

Williams became a Baptist, perhaps the first in the New World. He founded the first Baptist church in the colonies, only to renounce the denomination after eight months, making him the first former Baptist in the colonies!

There were many missionaries in the Americas providing instruction and evangelism to the Natives. Jacques Marquette and other French priests worked along the Mississippi River (late 1600s). In 1614, John Rolfe, a Puritan, married Pocahontas. Pocahontas eventually became a Christian and moved with her husband back to Europe.

All was not golden in Massachusetts. Like any group, each generation changes. The Puritans discovered that their children were less likely to profess a personal relationship with Christ than their parents' generation. The issue for the Colony was both religious and political. If not all of the members of the Colony were Christians, how could the Colony govern itself?

One solution was to perform more baptisms. This was known as the "Halfway Covenant." The practice had been to baptize only the children of Christians. Believing that infant baptism was of worth, the pastors commenced baptizing children of non-Christians as well, thinking this would ultimately lead more persons to Christ. It should come as no surprise that this did not work. Evil wandered the streets in the dark. In Salem, in 1692, the evil came out into the open.

A 12-year-old girl was caught practicing magic. The girl and her friends falsely accused several older women. Mass hysteria resulted. Fifty of the colonists admitted to having practiced magic. Oddly enough, all fifty were freed. Nineteen others were accused and refused to confess. These nineteen were all hanged. The Salem witch-hunt lasted only a year. Similar witch-hunts in Europe would last longer. These were bloodier and far more frequent. Evil was in the air.

This blot had its impact upon the Puritans. Spiritual stupor entered the Colony. The witch-hunt was replaced by political conflicts with England. In the Colony, the fire of faith originally found in the Puritans died to a low burning amber. The early 1700s started without God.

We discussed back in Lesson 3 on the Bible how different people bring different experiences and assumptions to their biblical interpretations. This is not a new phenomenon. Part of this process was the fruit of the Reformation. Prior to the Reformation, whether good or bad, the people viewed their Scriptures through the lens of the church and its tradition. The Reformation discarded most of this tradition. To this point in history, tradition helped to mold society and explain the internal power of the world. This tradition, even when it was wrong, was built upon the Scriptures.

In the 1600s and 1700s something had to replace the tradition the Reformers had abandoned. The people needed a method of understanding the world around them and the inter-workings and relationships of the humans who occupy planet earth. What replaced church tradition was human reason, "rationalism." The Age of Enlightenment arrived. Instead of looking to past traditions for guidance, people now looked to themselves.

Just as Darwin's theories have spawned error in the past hundred years, another scientist can be credited with having propelled the Age of Enlightenment. That man was Isaac Newton (1642-1727), the man who told the world that gravity could explain the mystery of the movement of the planets. A new vision was cast. This vision was not of an unseen God but of a self-maintaining system endowed by a Divine Creator who imposed upon this system forces that follow the laws of nature. John Locke (1632-1704) was the great promoter of this concept. During the Scholastic days of Aquinas philosophy and theology were united. As this age of reason developed, the two schools became enemies.

Descartes (1596-1650) taught that there was no truth except as could be explained by reason. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) is credited with introducing the inductive method of study into science. Personal observation became an element of scientific "proof." Knowledge became tied to the five senses and revelation was discarded.

If man could now explain nature, why did man need the Bible? This became the question of the skeptics. Reason and nature leads one to a new view of God known as Deism. In simple terms, the Deists rejected every belief that reason could not confirm. This includes miracles, providence, prayer, revelation, the Trinity, and the Messiah. The Christ of Christianity became a Christ of ethics. God was Creator, but He did nothing after this. And, of course, Jesus was only a man.

Deism became the god of the Masonic brotherhoods. Freemasonry arose in the 1100s to guard the secrets of building stone structures. They were the first labor union! Following the Renaissance, the Masonic Brotherhood became more like a club, dedicated to charity, peace, and education. This most likely is what led them to promote Deism. Their club structure greatly resembles the levels of Eastern religious levels to god. Voltaire (1694-1778) taught that society was governed by natural laws and these laws could be discovered. Society could be modified to fit these laws making society more reasonable. The church and "science" were at war.

In 1738, Pope Clement XII denounce Deism. He also forbade Catholics from becoming a Mason.

Deism remained popular and it is my belief that a close study of the country's founding fathers will reveal that many of them were Deists. Under the influence of deism and reason, many churches moved to "Unitarianism" perspective, the belief that God is not a Trinity. This group ultimately moved to a position of "any god," or "any practice."

A name that may be familiar to many of you became the center of the first great Christian awakening in America. An 18-year-old Jonathan Edwards wrote in his diary:

Resolved: That all men should live to the glory of God. Resolved, secondly: That whether or not anyone else does, I will.

Edwards was a strict Calvinist who read his sermons in a monotone. His sermons sometimes ran to two hours or more. Edwards was pastor at Northampton, Massachusetts. He had been pastor there for five years as we move into 1734.

That year the spirit of revival grasp hold of the Northampton church and 300 church members were saved. They moved to live out their new faith in their daily lives. Joy, as Edwards wrote, filled the town. This revival lasted but three years.

We must move back to Europe to catch the wave that grows into a revival flood. In the late 1600s, Jacob Spener wrote a booklet entitled *Pious Desires*. The point of the book was that each individual should pursue a personal relationship with Christ by means of intense meditation on the Scriptures. Those who adopted these principles became known as Pietists.

In Germany, Catholic princes still persecuted the Moravian Brethren, a small group of Bohemian Protestants generally called Moravians. Their doctrinal position was essentially Lutheran. In 1722 a Moravian refugee knocked on the estate door of Count Nikolaus Zinzendorf, a wealthy noble in Dresden. The refugee asked the Count to shelter the Moravians. Zinzendorf agreed and a community was built upon his land called "the Lord's watch" or "Herrnhut." By 1725 about 100 Moravians made Herrnhut home. Zinzendorf became a Moravian in 1727.

Zinzendorf was a Pietists and he instilled his Pietism into the Moravians. The group formed around the clock prayer meetings. The Moravians of Herrnhut would meet in 24-hour prayer meetings for more than 100 years.

In 1731, in an official capacity the Count traveled to Denmark for an imperial meeting. There he met a group of Eskimos who had been led to Christ by a Lutheran missionary. He also met a Christian African slave. These encounters placed a need for missionary work upon Zinzendorf's heart. Returning home, he turned his Moravians into a powerful missionary outreach. The pietistic Moravians would send missionaries to more than 300 countries and baptize more than 3,000 converts.

God's Providence is that characteristic whereby He causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him. He creates those "chance encounters" that lead to wonderful miracles. One such miracle involved a young Anglican priest named John.

On his way to Georgia (USA) to be a missionary to the Natives, a severe storm struck John's ship. Terror spread through the passengers. John was surprised to find a band of Moravians calmly singing psalms. The Moravians would corner John into considering whether or not he had a personal relationship with Jesus. After two fruitless years among the Natives, John Wesley would return home. He wrote:

I went to America to convert the Indians, but, oh, who shall convert me?

Wesley's mother, Susanna, was a godly woman who preached sermons in the family home. Neither John nor his brother Charles heeded the message. In 1738 Charles finally turned his heart over to Christ. Three days later, John was in Aldersgate Street, London. He heard someone preaching from Luther's commentary on Romans. John, too, had his salvation experience.

Before their salvation, John (1703-1791) and Charles (1708-1788) had formed Pietistic societies known as "Holy Clubs" within the Church of England. These clubs sought to find God's presence through intense meditation on Scripture, fasting, and frequent participation in the Lord's Supper. Because of the well-ordered methods employed by these clubs they became known as "Methodists." Wesley's goal, however, was not to start a new denomination.

Charles Wesley is the author of some 7,270 hymns!

Following his conversion, John and his Methodist followers began a campaign of outdoor crusades. One such evangelist was Sarah Crosby. Another was George Whitefield (1708-1788), the most effective of the Methodists evangelists. Whitefield came to America where it has been estimated that 8 out of every 10 colonists heard him preach. At Northampton Jonathan Edwards wept for joy. Great revival struck the land. The revival is known as the Great Awakening.

There were differences, even among the Methodists. Whitefield was a strong Calvinist. Wesley was somewhere in between, but closer to Arminianism than Calvinism. In the true Christian fashion, in 1749 the two agreed to forever disagree and they kept on preaching. At the same time, many criticized Whitefield because he did not condemn slavery. Whitefield did, however, spend a great deal of time preaching to the slaves.

Methodism proved to be a great answer to social ills. Their spiritual awakening countered Deism in England. Socially, the Methodist provided a large amount of help to relieve the plight of the poor and orphans. Methodists were also at the forefront of the fight against society.

This revival would last until the 1750s. Thousands would be saved. It is estimated that 10% of New England experienced salvation. Baptist and Methodist churches would flourish, especially in the frontier areas and among the lower classes. The revival spearheaded a rise in religious liberty and saw the establishment of many evangelical colleges. There was also an increased interest in missionary efforts. Whether the revival simply died a natural death or was killed by a political revolution is a point to forever argue.

Princeton University founded by the Presbyterians
Rutgers founded by the Dutch Reform
Brown founded by the Baptist
Dartmouth founded by the Congregationalists

The churches were heavily involved with the struggle for independence, though not always for it. Wesley, for example, opposed the independence movement. Anglicans, Mennonites, and Quakers also refused to support the war. The Presbyterians were heavily in favor of the war. John W. Wetherspoon, a Presbyterian minister, was the only clergy to sign the Declaration of Independence. The Lutherans and Baptist supported the war while the Roman Catholics were split, although more favored the war than were against it. Many were tarred and feathered for their “un-American” actions. Property and lives were lost. Yet, most church members supported the revolution. In the pulpits words of revival were replaced with words of revolution.

The summation of the period? Deistists and Christians agreed that religion was an individual matter, a personal issue. Roger Williams dream became the third article of the Bill of Rights.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

The United States was formed without any ties to any religious faith.

Regardless of how the clause is interpreted today, America was formed as a land where people could freely practice their religion.

Because of the split between the leaders of Methodism over slavery, many Methodist church leaders refused to ordain African-Americans as pastors and bishops. In 1816, Richard Allen formed the African Methodist Episcopal Church to give Blacks the freedom to serve as bishops and pastors.

Following the War for Independence, the Anglican Church in America changed its name. Surprised? Probably not. It became the Episcopal – “Bishop Guided” – Church. In recent years, its bishops have taken a few wrong turns. However, the split in this group and others was created by the war. Just as the war split America and England politically, so too, did it split American church groups from those in England and Europe.

Eighteenth Century Events

- Voltaire, one of many Deists, further develops the rationalism of the "Enlightenment," attacking Christianity and finding in man the center of all things. The French Revolution of 1789 overthrows the traditions of the Church and briefly establishes the goddess of Reason.
- An Evangelical Awakening spreads throughout England and America under the preaching of George Whitefield, the Wesley brothers, and Jonathan Edwards.
- Pietism brings new life to German Lutheranism, and Lutheran J. S. Bach writes his music "only for the glory of God."
- Count Zinzendorf establishes Herrnhut as a Moravian settlement in Saxony, from which the Moravian Brethren begin their missionary work.
- Christians Handel and Haydn write classical music, including masterpieces of religious art, while Isaac Watts and the Wesleys write hymns for congregational singing.
- Practical application of Christian truths found in classics written during the century: Philip Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul; William Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy; and William Wilberforce's Practical View of the Religious System. Cruden's Concordance published early in the century.
- Religious freedom gains grounds. In the United States, religious tests for government positions are abolished, and in Russia Czarina Catherine the Great grants freedom of religion.
- Christian Daniel Defoe begins writing novels reflecting man's spiritual struggles.
- The era of modern missions advances with the establishment of London's Baptist Missionary Society and the sending of William Carey to India.

AD 1800 (FIFTY-NINE GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 23.1%
- Breakdown: 13.5% nonwhite, 86.5% white
- Evangelization: 27.2% of world
- Scriptures: Printed scriptures available in 67 languages

Source: David Barrett.

Church History

Lesson 11

Modernism, Missions & Miscellaneous

■- A.D. 1780 to 1914

Philosophy: The Modern Age, depending upon who you talk to, lasted from the end of the Enlightenment in the late 1700s until the 1900s. Instead of reason, the modern age emphasized human potential, progress, and the material world. Reason did, however, still play a role during this period. In our post-Modern world, reason has been lost and it all rests on the shoulders of personal emotions and experiences.

Calvinist Baptists placed a great emphasis upon the limited or “particular” extent of Christ’s redemption (the “L” of Tulip). They became known as Particular Baptists. In the 1700s many of this group decided that if God had predestined those to be saved, there was no point to missionary work and evangelism. This brought about a decline in the size and number of Particular Baptist churches!

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

Eternity in their hearts . . .

For much of the 1800s optimism was the call of the day. Man is made to seek God. As the Westminster Confession opens:

What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

That is why God has placed eternity in our hearts. The trouble is, we tend to replace eternity with other things.

Progress brought optimism to world society. Europe would go almost 100 years without a major war. Mass production allowed prices to drop and people to enjoy material items. Trains and steamships shortened distances. Farming improvements cut into hunger. Medical discoveries cured diseases. The American West was won.

Yet, there were storm clouds. People became commodities. Factory workers were, perhaps, no different than slaves. Slaves still existed. Americans and Europeans drove the white man into every corner of the world. Many may have despaired, but the

optimism of the day had people believing their efforts would change the world and calm man's restlessness. They ignored the eternity in their hearts and replaced it with things of their own making and reason.

God used this optimism to start an era of missionary work and evangelism. It may not really have started around William Carey (1761-1834), but if it didn't he is still the best example of God at his finest.

Carey was an English Particular Baptist. A skin disease as young child forced Carey inside where he eventually took up shoemaking. His skills were not great, but during this period he learned five languages. He attempted to spin this skill into teaching but that was a failure as well. God then called Carey to the pastorate. Yet, his sermon skills were no better than his language teaching skills and it would take him two years before his sermons were considered sufficient for ordination.

Carey then took on the task of challenging the Particular Baptist concept that evangelism was God's work. You have probably all heard, whether you remember it or not, the now famous quip made in response to Carey's dream of missionary work. "When God pleases to convert the heathen, he'll do it without consulting you or me!" Carey maintained his position that evangelism and Calvinism go hand-in-hand. Eventually Carey received sufficient pledges from a group of Particular Baptist pastors to undertake his missions trip.

Carey's circumstances did not change. Carey and a doctor headed for India. Carey took his wife and children. The doctor took off with all of their funds. Two of Carey's children died and his wife suffered from severe depression. Carey managed to convert one person in India in seven years.

Carey's comment? "I plod." He translated and published the New Testament in 24 of India's native languages. His work laid the foundations for those who followed. Carey died in 1834. Ann and Adoniram Judson and Robert Morrison continued his work. Morrison created a Chinese translation of the Bible. John Veniaminou, an Orthodox priest, went to Alaska. Damien, a Roman Catholic priest, cared for lepers in Hawaii, dying there from the disease. Allemand Lavigere campaigned against slavery in India. Henry Martyn and Alexander Duff also worked in India. Samuel Marsden worked in the South Pacific, Robert and Mary Moffat and David Livingstone were missionaries to Africa. Moffat translated a South Africa Bible.

In 1860, Hudson and Maria Taylor founded the China Inland Mission. Taylor allowed single women to be missionaries, opening the door for women such as Lottie Moon and Amy Carmichael. The Gospel was spread in China and India. A council of missionaries would meet in Edinburgh, England 76 years after Carey's death. His efforts were now proven as 1,200 missionaries from 160 missions boards participated in the conference. The number of Christians living outside of Europe and America had increased 1,000 percent.

In America, the West was the frontier. The optimism of the modern age produced a belief in universalism, the concept that God condemns no one. This optimism only produced spiritual darkness. People were forced to reconsider their faith. Presbyterians set aside days for prayer. The American answers came in 1801 in the form of camp meetings.

The picture of a camp meeting is one of tents on the church ground, two or three days of singing and speakers, with communion on Sunday. Only Christians were allowed to participate in the Lord's Supper. This was enforced by individual churches issuing tokens to their members. No token, no participation.

In Cane Ridge, Kentucky, the Rev. Barton W. Stone held a camp meeting that was struck by a force. 20,000-to-25,000 Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists showed up. It is reported that upwards of five preachers would be delivering messages at the same time, each preaching on a different part of the grounds. On Saturday, people began falling to the ground begging forgiveness. Reports indicate that others laughed and cried hysterically. The Holy Spirit moved on the crowd and the Second Great Awakening of America began. God was at work once more.

Stone himself may have gotten too much into the optimism of the modern world. He became convinced that believers could restore New Testament Christianity if they forsook everything but the Bible. He joined a band of former Baptists led by Alexander Campbell. This group became known as the Stone-Campbell Restorationists. The group called themselves only "Christians" or "Disciples," a slap at denominations. They followed what seems like a simple rule – Where the Scriptures speak, we speak. Where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.

If you consider this for a moment, it becomes unclear what was their real guidance. Every day we encounter situations where the Scriptures are silent. We must learn discernment and the application of "general" Scriptural guidelines by analogy. This is, apparently, not exactly what the Restorationists meant. Still, their goal was admirable.

They attempted to get all Christians from all walks of life to leave behind denomination loyalties and replace it with unity in the church. Their efforts had a dual effect. First, it weakened some of the denominations and traditions of American Christians. Second, it created a new group of denominations. From the Restorationists come the Churches of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, and the Christian Churches. Some of these groups have, in turn, split, and some of their doctrine is, at best, questionable.

But, Stone did help participate in the start of a revival. At its heart were traveling evangelists like Charles G. Finney. Finney was an upcoming lawyer when he met teenage girl, Lydia Andrews. Lydia perceived Finney was not saved and commenced to pray for his salvation. Finney was saved a year later. Three years after that he and Lydia were married.

Finney began to preach a day after being saved. He mixed reason, theology and high-pressure salesmanship to create a unique presentation. For him revival was not a miracle, rather revival consisted "entirely in the right exercise of the powers of nature." His "new measures" included pressuring people not to leave his gatherings until they were sure of salvation. Finney set up "anxious benches." People walked the aisle and sat on these benches for prayer and counseling.

Further, Finney kept his evangelism tied to social reform. If people were not changed and made better, there was not reason for Finney to evangelize. Finney would become president of Oberlin College. While there African-Americans and women attended the

same classes with their white male counterparts. The college would become one of the stops on the Underground Railroad.

Where Finney's methods valid? They were at least on the fringe of orthodox theology. Yet, God honored his efforts and many were saved during this great revival.

During this same period some Americans tired of the "older religious traditions." Around 1819, a teenager, Joseph Smith claims to have been visited by God. A few years later, an angel visited Smith and gave the young man gold plates on which was written the Book of Mormon. Smith and his followers would move from New York to Ohio to Illinois where Smith would be killed after declaring himself "King of God's Kingdom." The Book of Mormon claimed that America was the center of God's plans and the Native Americans were displaced Israelites (sort of). After Smith's murder, Brigham Young would led these "Latter-Day Saints" to Utah. The Church of the Latter Day Saints of Jesus Christ, better known as the Mormons, has a long history.

During 1858-1859, another revival struck Virginia and the Carolinas where over 100,000 slaves were saved. Joseph Lampheir started weekly businessmen prayer meetings in New York City. This led to prayer meetings in major metropolitan areas across the country, with over one million people coming to salvation.

While revival was in the air, so were the threads of problems. Immanuel Kant published the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This document essentially states that reason can grasp anything within time and space. If something is outside of time and space, reason is useless. Since God is outside of time and space, reason was unrelated to Christian faith. Kant's thesis would conclude that Christianity affects only what one feels and does, not what one thinks. (How does this compare to Romans 12:1-2?)

Friedrich Schleiermacher picked up Kant's premises. Schleiermacher argued that faith is not based upon the historic life of Christ but upon one's awareness of one's dependence upon God. This awareness leads one to imitate the good deeds of Jesus. This is Christianity. This concept of an "awareness" is a mixture of emotions and feelings. There is no factual basis or logical awareness of Jesus. God becomes a force similar to the Force of Star Wars. Schleiermacher is considered the father of "modern theology."

It is clear to see this idea of religion equaling feelings is still present in today's Christianity. In fact, it is present even more than you might think.

Remember the barbarians? The Goths moved into the Roman Empire in the early Middle Ages. The magnificent cathedrals of the late Middle Ages were called "Gothic" architecture because they blended barbarian ideals with classical Roman designs. A revival in the nineteenth century popularized Gothic designs again. This design structure poured into many American churches of the nineteenth century. In addition, the thoughts of the people turned "Gothic."

What made Christianity Gothic again was a desire of the body of believers to want feelings to drive their faith. Viewing the Middle Ages as romantic helped people pull out the designs and motifs of the Middle Ages. If you walk into such a church you feel the emotions of Schleiermacher. Further, the churches reflected the emotional backing.

Women were expected to be more religious than men because they were more emotional. This resulted in a double standard in religious views and in social morals.

The use of the theater, movies, and the arts as a tool to move people away from God is built around such theological views. One can trace this modern trend against God by studying the history of art over the past 1,000 years. There are certain godly pieces, but there are many more pagan pieces designed to create a sense of reason and enlightenment aimed at man and not God.

There was another outcome of Schleiermacher's theology. Higher Criticism is that field of theology that seeks the "sources" of the biblical authors. This process led to the critics questioning the Bible's accuracy. If faith was a matter feelings, then the Bible was simply a record of the ancient writers' feelings. The stories about Christ were myths and fables designed to explain how Jesus transformed the lives of the early Christians.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Tubingen and Wellhausen schools of Germany would use Schleiermacher's theology mixed with Darwinism to truly attack the Bible. This was accomplished by mixing faith and the new science. While many Christians ignored evolution, it is this mixture that has drawn many away from Christianity. Where the strict fundamentalist hurt people by completely separating from society, the Tubingen group created a field where future liberals would be free to question any and all parts of Scripture.

These critics focused on the divine love and social reform of God. This leads to the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The human soul becomes of infinite worth and God love's all of His creation. The Bible becomes a secondary document. This position leads to the liberal theology present at the turn of the twentieth century. Later in the twentieth century, it would lead a scholarly quest for the "historical Jesus." In the 1990s a group called the Jesus Seminar was formed. Their quest for the historical Jesus brought them to questioning all of the stories of the Gospels. They voted with colored marbles over which of the sayings of the Bible were actually made by Jesus!

In the late 1700s and 1800s most Christians were postmillennialists. This group believed that God's people would "initiate" God's ideal kingdom on earth and then Jesus would return. Apparently the very early church was pre-millennial, that is, Jesus would return prior to establishing the ideal earthly ("millennial") kingdom. Premillennialists faded with time and would not come back into prominence until the early 1900s.

To complete the group of beliefs about the Millennial Kingdom, amillennialists believe that the kingdom of God exists now, in the church age, and the return of Jesus is a spiritual, not a physical, event. Parts of amillennialism belief can be traced back to Augustine.

However, during the Industrial Revolution of the 1800s, many Christians began to ask how it would be possible to establish God's Kingdom in the midst of the exploitation of workers and slaves. This would lead to a quest on the part of some in the church to change society.

Robert Raikes started Sunday schools in England as a means to education urban children. The concept spread to the United States in the 1800s. American Christians began to be concerned about society. In the late 1800s, Charles Sheldon's book, *In His*

Steps, was aimed at urging Christians to use their faith to make changes in society. Wealthy British evangelicals led by George Williams started the YMCA and Catherine and William Booth created the Salvation Army. William Wilberforce, an evangelical Anglican and Member of Parliament worked toward outlawing slavery. Social change was in the air.

From the church's perspective, the problem with many of these fine efforts is that the "Social Gospel" over came the evangelical outreach. Many churches and groups became more focused on "positive changes" than on spreading the Gospel message. These traits would remain in some churches and some groups until the present day. The influence of the world upon the church was evident.

Not all of the pastors of the 1800s allowed social needs to overcome the Gospel. The leader of this group is Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892). Spurgeon became a pastor at age 17 and in 1854 he was called to the pastorate of the New Park Baptist Church in London. This church grew into the Metropolitan Tabernacle where Spurgeon preached to 6,000 people every Sunday. Spurgeon believed that social change was useless without the Gospel. In the process of saving souls, Spurgeon founded schools, orphanages, and nursing home, while denouncing slavery. Spurgeon was a great model of a Christian minister.

Four miscellaneous stories:

Isabella was an African-American Christian who was a slave. She gained her freedom around 1843. She was convinced that Christ called her to travel the country preaching for social reform by ending slavery. She changed her name to match her mission. She became Sojourner Truth.

About the same time, another pastor, William Miller of Vermont, made himself a self-proclaimed biblical scholar. He "determined" that Christ would return by March 21, 1844. When Christ did not return, Miller determined he had made a "mathematical" error and announced the new date as October 22, 1844. Of course, nothing happened. Eventually Miller withdrew from leadership of the Group and died shortly thereafter. The Millerites actually split into three distinct groups, each developing an emphasis in a different area, eventually, reuniting. Hiram Edson received revelation that Miller was right about events but was wrong about the place. Edson developed the theory of a return to a heavenly sanctuary. Joseph Bates taught the Saturday Sabbath as a perpetual ordinance of the church. The key group may have been that of Ellen G. White and her husband, the Reverend James White. E.G. White taught that the 1844 prediction was correct, but that it referred to the start of an Investigative Judgment. This is a time when Christ will judge the dead and the living on earth for righteousness. She predicted that the second coming of Jesus would soon follow this. Late in her career, the church voted her the credentials of an ordained minister. She is responsible for uniting the three groups into the Seventh Day Adventists in 1863.

One other follower of the Millerites was Charles Taze Russell. Russell undertook his own study and determined that Jesus returned in 1872. But Russell determined Christ's return was spiritual and not physical. Russell's followers grow into the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Lyman Beecher was a Congregational pastor. His method of fighting slavery was to send rifles to anti-slavery forces in the Midwest. The weapons were shipped in crates marked "Bibles." The rifles became known as "Beecher's Bibles." Beecher's daughter, Harriet Beecher Stowe, wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

1929 was not the only stock market crash in the US. One occurred in 1857, at least partially spurred by the issue of slavery. "Oddly" enough, along with the crash came the Third Great Awakening, a revival that began in Canada and spread to both the US and Britain. In the American northeast, prayer meetings were begun, especially at the urging of a Methodist laywoman, Phoebe Palmer. The prayer meetings spread across the country. The revival could not cure slavery. War was in the wind, and the tensions of the slavery issue and the split between the states would cause internal strife in several denominational groups. The Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians would all have fractures because of slavery. The Southern Baptist Convention was formed in 1845 in Georgia.

As far as the Civil War is concerned, both sides believed God was on their side. When the War ended, the Social Gospel continued on its way.

Liberalism: A theological attitude that enthrones human reason as the ultimate authority instead of the Bible. This view ignores the effect of the Fall on the mind. Liberal theologians vary in their conclusions and generally deny or redefine some or all of the essential doctrines of Christianity. As a movement liberalism can be said to be the theology of the period from 1850-to-1920.

Conservative Christians did not approve of the liberal social gospel, but could find few alternatives. One alternative was that of evangelists such as Dwight L. Moody. Moody's approach was, essentially, to resist and reject the modern world. Strangely enough, a similar approach came from none other than Pope Pius IX. A third approach was that of the scholars such as B.B. Warfield who attempted to express Christian views in a way the modern world could understand.

Moody was a shoe salesman turned evangelist. During the Civil War he worked as a chaplain. After the battles he would wander the battlefields tending to the wounded, whether Blue or Grey. Then, in 1871 fire destroyed Chicago, including Moody's home. Moody responded by going to Britain to preach. While there, Moody overheard another preacher exclaim, "The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him." These words would grab Moody's soul.

Moody would ignore modern scholarship and theological studies by preaching simple evangelist sermons aimed at the middle class. He pitched tents in the cities, aiming at the urban centers of the Industrial Revolution. He added a singer, Ira Sankey, for his revival tours. In Britain alone 4 million people would travel to the revivals. Moody threw away the post-millennial optimism of the past for a pessimistic view of the world in an effort to win souls. That was his sole focus.

Ira Sankey popularized the songs of blind poet-song writer Fanny Crosby.

Moody would found the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago in 1886. R.A. Torrey was the Institute's first president. This started a trend among the church leaders

toward establishing more Bible institutes. Many of these would become full-fledged colleges and seminaries.

We may have left the Catholic Church sitting in the background for a while, but we should bring it up to modern times. Remember all of those councils the church liked to call? Well, before the Reformation, the Council at Florentine (1439) adopted the seven sacraments:

- Eucharist (Lord's Supper)
- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Penance (the forgiveness of sins)
- Matrimony
- Holy Orders (ordaining of priests)
- Extreme Unction (the anointing of those in danger of death).

The Church had practiced most of these, in one form or another, since the 800s, but this council was the first to make them all "official." We have seen that in response to the events of the Reformation, the Council of Trent (1546) added the Apocrypha as official books of the Bible. Then, in 1863 the Roman Catholic Church declared that salvation was only available through the Roman Church.

Following the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church became a worldwide symbol of ancient powers. Time and energy sapped the power of the pope. Then came the liberalism of the 1800s. In 1854 Pius IX denounced the idea of harmonizing the church with civilization. The pope also denounced attempts to limit his authority in doctrinal matters. He declared the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, the tradition of the church that Mary was free from original sin.

Many Catholics questioned the new doctrine. More precisely, the people questioned the power of Pius to define this doctrine without a church council. In 1869 more than 500 bishops would gather for the First Vatican Council. The Council would meet for nearly a year. When it was all over the Council confirmed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and declared the Bishop of Rome was infallible, but only when he "defines a doctrine . . . by Divine assistance promised to him in the blessed Peter." Many believe the proper interpretation of this to be that a pope can only redefine the outward expressions of the Catholic Church's faith. No pope or council could change any essential doctrine of the church.

Pope Pius XII is the only pope to use the infallibility bestowed by the First Vatican Council. In 1950, this Pius declared, "When the course of [Mary's] life was finished, she was taken up body and soul into glory."

The history of the Vatican is a long discussion beyond the scope of this course. However, at various periods of time the bishop of Rome lived in or controlled the land known as the Vatican. At some points in time, the pope owned a considerable amount of real estate surrounding the Vatican, gained mostly by conquest and political maneuvering. Napoleon had provided protection to the Vatican by means of a French garrison. In 1870, Napoleon had to withdraw these troops because of the threat of the Franco-Prussian war. The new Italian monarchy almost immediately confiscated all of the

temporal holdings of the church. The pope was left with only the Vatican enclave. The government offered the pope a generous settlement that called for a substantial annual payment for the lost lands as well as self-rule for the Vatican. The pope essentially refused the offer and went into self-exile within the walls of the Vatican. There the popes would remain until an agreement was made with Mussolini's government in 1929.

The last person to consider is B.B. Warfield. He would be one of a group to participate in a Bible conference in Niagara, New York. This group approached the threat of modernism by adopting five fundamental truths that would define true Christianity. These truths would be published for the world to read, a modern version of the second century apologists. We will look at this group more closely in the next lesson.

Liberalism eroded the fringes of Christianity. This degrading of the place of Scripture resulted in much bad doctrine, initially about the truth and faithfulness of God and Christ, but ultimately about side issues so prevalent in today's society. Consider:

- Homosexuality in the church, including in the pulpit
- Homosexual marriages
- Females being ordained
- Sex outside of marriage
- Standards of right and wrong, indeed the lack of any absolute standards
- Political correctness as an interpretive tool
- Interfaith communion
- All roads leading to God, regardless of the starting point

The concepts of liberalism become the vehicles of "dialogue." As many of the seminaries turned liberal, conservatives would withdraw and establish their own schools. The inter-faith movement relies upon such an approach. By inter-faith I do not mean Presbyterians and Baptists, but Christians and Hindus. This movement will ultimately pave the path for the one-world religion of the Antichrist. By converting views of God from doctrine to philosophy, the Hindu can meet with the "Christian" and find a common ground.

Liberalism as theology is dead, but liberalism as a philosophical position lives on. Such are the tools of Satan!

During this period, we also add two more cults.

Spiritualism was formed in 1848. As a movement it, too, has died away, but its seeds are found in many other groups, including the New Age movement of today.

Mary Baker Eddy formed the Christian Scientists in 1876. It is still a powerful Gnostic cult force today.

Nineteenth Century Events

- The nineteenth century is sometimes called the Protestant Century. Protestants established missions throughout the world. Organizations such as the British and Foreign Bible Society, the American Bible Society, the Sunday School Union, and the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions lead in the spread of the Gospel message. Reform societies form to deal with abolition, temperance, prisons, and education.
- In America, many sects including Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian Science are established.
- New philosophies such as Darwin's evolution, Marx's communism, and Freud's psychology, attack the traditional Christian view of life and history. German "higher critics" attack the historical validity of the Scriptures.
- Revival leader Charles Finney establishes "new measures" in his revival meetings, believing conversions can be achieved if the right approaches and techniques are used.
- Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey hold large revival meetings on both sides of the Atlantic, while thousands hear Charles Spurgeon preach in London's Tabernacle.
- Fanny Crosby, Ira Sankey, Francis Havergal, and others poured out hymns of faith and devotion.
- David Livingstone and others open the African continent to missions, while workers with Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission spread throughout China.
- Pope Pius IX condemns liberalism, socialism, and rationalism; also proclaims the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. The First Vatican Council declares the Pope infallible in the year 1870.

AD 1900 (SIXTY-TWO GENERATIONS AFTER CHRIST)

- Percent Christian: 34.4%
- Breakdown: 19% nonwhite, 81% white
- Evangelization: 51.3% of world
- Scriptures: Printed scriptures available in 537 languages

Source: David Barrett.

One Hundred Key Events in Church History

Part 4: From Founding of the AME Church to Growth of Chinese Church



John Keble

Year and event

1816

Richard Allen, a former slave, founds the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

1817

Elizabeth Fry begins ministry to women in prison and becomes model for social compassion and involvement.

1830

Charles G. Finney's urban revivals begin and introduce techniques that decisively affect later mass evangelism in America.

about 1830

John Nelson Darby helps found the Plymouth Brethren, a group which spreads the dispensational view of Scriptural interpretation.

1833

John Keble's sermon "National Apostasy" initiates the Oxford movement in England.

1854

Hudson Taylor arrives as a missionary in China. His faith work has immense impact.

1854

Philosopher Soron Kierkegaard publishes Attacks on Christendom.

1854

Charles Haddon Spurgeon becomes pastor in London and will go on to be one of the most influential pastors ever.

1855

Dwight L. Moody is converted. He goes on to become one of the most effective American evangelists.

1857

David Livingstone publishes *Missionary Travels and his exploits in Africa* which attract world wide attention.

1865

William Booth founds the Salvation Army, vowing to bring the gospel into the streets to the most desperate and needy.

1870

Pope Pius IX proclaims the doctrine of Papal Infallibility.

1886

The Student Volunteer Movement begins as a major thrust of young people to bring the gospel to the world as missionaries.

1906

Asuza Street revival launches Pentecostalism, and paves the way for the development of the modern charismatic movement.

1910-15

The fundamentals are published and demonstrate the great divide in American Christianity known as the "Modernist-Fundamentalist" controversy.

1919

Karl Barth's *Commentary on Romans* is published, effectively critiquing modernistic theology.

1921

First Christian radio broadcast over KDKA in Pittsburgh.

1934

Cameron Townsend begins the Summer Institute of Linguistics that aspires with sister organization Wycliffe Bible translators to bring the Bible to every language group of the world.

1945

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is executed by the Nazis. The German pastor is killed just days before the Allies arrive to liberate that region. His theological writings remain influential.

1948

The World Council of Churches is formed as an interdenominational body promoting Christian unity and presence in society.

1949

Billy Graham's Los Angeles crusade thrusts the young evangelist into several decades of worldwide ministry and an impressive reputation.

1960

Charismatic renewal surges forward, crossing denominational lines and becoming more mainstream.

1962

Second Vatican Council begins, the most significant council since Trent. It will promote new attitudes and practices in Catholicism.

1963

Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist minister, leads a march on Washington espousing the teachings of Jesus in a civil rights movement that affects all American.

1966-76

The Chinese church grows despite the Cultural Revolution. Christianity did not die out under Communism, but experienced one of the most dramatic church growths ever.

Church History

Lesson 12 Liberalism to Post-Modernism

■- A.D. 1906 to 2003

The Twentieth Century has been a time of distress and revival for the church. Each of the three major groups claiming to be Christian (Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox) has seen major changes. While many numbers have increased, the state of Christ's body is questionable.

The Eastern Orthodox Church has split into geopolitical units over the years. Worldwide the Orthodox Church claims around 140 million members. And, while the Russian Orthodox Church survived Islam, Communism drove it deep into the ground. Lenin executed 28 patriarchs and 1,000 priests as Communism gained control of the Soviet Union. Persecutions under Stalin were worse.

To survive, the Russian Orthodox Church appointed leaders who would work with the Communist Government. This generally led to an atheist emptiness within this church group. Those in Russia claiming to be Christians but not being part of the Orthodox Church suffered greater personal persecution. Following the fall of Communism, these evangelical groups sprang to life and have found a renewed sense of purpose. The Orthodox Church is following on the heels of this growth, even though continuing changes in government policies make growth unstable.

Since most of the Orthodox congregations fall either within the borders of Communism or Islam, their general fate is similar to that of the Russian Orthodox Church.

While the Orthodox congregations hid or turned political, the West faced the growth and death of both liberalism and neo-orthodoxy. As a theology, the liberalism of the nineteenth century slowly died under its own weight. The process as a movement was morally bankrupt and did not explain much nor did it provide a method for discovering an explanation. For the church, the fear of liberalism would be founded, not in the philosophy as a religious movement, but in the "left-overs" that would pervade teachers and students and soon mix with the "anything goes" mentality of the 1960s.

However, as the religious community discovered the emptiness of liberalism, they sought a new solution to fill the void. The new theology comes from a Swiss minister, Karl Barth. Brought up in the liberal tradition, Barth had always read the Bible as a religious record. In his spiritual void, he commenced to read it as God's Word. In so doing, he arrived at a less than perfect conclusion. Barth's liberal background mixed with God's Word to produce the conclusion that nothing in creation could reveal God. God's power and grace were so overwhelming, nothing could display them. This was a slap on the face of liberalism that had argued for people to discover God in two places, creation and their own emotions. Barth did away with the first of these standards.

But, Barth also argued that the Bible could not adequately convey God because human words could not convey God. God was a living event, expressed in His finest form in Jesus Christ. Thus, Barth concluded that it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that man could discover God. The Bible only became the Word of God when the Holy Spirit revealed Jesus to the individual. Barth's ideas were labeled neo-Reformation or neo-orthodox.

In much of the world, Barth's neo-orthodoxy mixed with world events to kill both the world's optimism and theological liberalism. World War I took the lives of approximately ten million soldiers. Of course, America was different. The War affected American lives but it did not reach American shores. Fragments of the optimism of liberalism and modernism survived the end of the War. In fact, the optimism probably could be viewed as lasting until Black Friday, 1929, with the start of the Great Depression.

So, during the 1920s, America played. This is the era of jazz, flappers, short skirts, and speakeasies. Women and men commenced to outwardly display the same relaxed standards. Moral crusades over women's right to vote and banning alcoholism became the topic of the day. In 1920, America elected Warren G. Harding President even though contemporary evidence suggested he was one of America's most corrupt politicians.

Just as conservative Christians of today have grouped themselves in loose alliances to fight the evils present in modern society, those of the 1920s did the same. Their perceived battle was against liberalism and the liberal concepts such as evolution. This group became known as the Fundamentalists. The Fundamentalists agreed on five major beliefs as the basis of their attack:

- Jesus was uniquely divine
- Jesus was born of a virgin
- Jesus died as a sacrifice for sin
- Jesus will come again
- The Scriptures contain no errors; the Bible is "inerrant."

Several fundamental scholars and pastors, from all backgrounds and walks of life, wrote and published a series of articles attacking many of the characteristics of liberalism. These pamphlets became known as *The Fundamentals*. You can purchase a reprint set of this four-volume work today.

The Fundamentals are a powerful apologetic against liberal theology. But, in hindsight, it is difficult to estimate how influential the writings may have been from a theological perspective. From a human vantage point, interesting results occurred.

In 1925 fundamentalists in Tennessee were instrumental in the state legislature passing the Butler Act. This act prohibited "the teaching of the Evolution Theory in all public schools in Tennessee." Most of you will, at least, remember having studied the Scopes Monkey Trial in school. John Scopes was a small town football coach who occasionally taught biology in Dayton, Tennessee. Scopes stated (lied?) that he had taught that apes and humans had common ancestors. He was charged with a violation of the Butler Act and went to trial in 1925. The trial became the 1920s version of the OJ Trial.

Clarence Darrow, a well-known liberal lawyer became Scopes attorney. On the other side, three-time presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan, was the prosecutor. More than 1,000 spectators swelled the courtroom. In a made-for-TV move, Darrow called Bryan as a witness. Under oath, Bryan admitted that the Bible should be interpreted “as given there.” In other words, Bryan believed parts of the Bible were only figurative illustrations (“spiritual interpretations?”). Further, he testified that he did not believe that the days of Genesis chapter one meant 24-hour days. He thought they represented “periods” of time. Bryan and Darrow essentially got into a shouting match over whether Darrow was attempting to slur the Bible.

In a second brilliant legal maneuver, to prevent Bryan from delivering a closing argument, Darrow sudden pled his client guilty. The trial was over after five days of testimony. Scopes was fined \$100. Bryan offered to pay the fine.

Bryan cost the fundamentals dearly. Many conservative Christians abandoned him on the basis of their belief in literal 24-hour days. William Jennings Bryan would pass away five days after the trial ended. But, the fundamental tensions continued. Both the Northern Baptist Convention and the Northern Presbyterian Church split over these issues as new denominations were formed. Much of the reason was a desire on the part of the fundamentalists to truly separate and segregate from every notion of liberalism. As “liberal” elements were found within groups, those who were truly fundamental separated into new churches.

During the depression, American Pastor Richard Niebuhr used Barth’s neo-orthodoxy to mediate a middle position between liberalism and fundamentalism. His greatest contribution is the writing of the Serenity Prayer:

Lord, give us serenity to accept what cannot be changed, courage to change what should be changed, and wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

Also, following World War I, those following fundamental teachings added to the five fundamental beliefs. These additions included pre-millennialism and a strong rejection of evolution.

Like the other groups, fundamentalists soon would question their own position. By the 1940s, many fundamentalists were concerned with the strong emphasis on separation from the world. The result, in part, was the introduction of more confusing terms into the theological vocabulary. Those who believed in less separation became known as “new evangelicals” (“neo-evangelicals”). Eventually, they simply became evangelicals, as opposed to those who still followed the “true” fundamental route. The issue was the question of separation.

In October 1941, these new evangelicals formed the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). Held at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, the group promoted “positive” instead of “negative.” Essentially, the NAE admits any group who embraces salvation by grace through faith in Christ. In other words, they accept any group who generally believes in the original five fundamentals.

Historically the NAE has been a mixed denomination group. From this mixed group have arisen most of today’s interdenominational fellowships – Youth for Christ, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, and Campus Crusade. C.S. Lewis is the best known of

the early evangelical writers. The evangelical movement got its strongest push in 1949 when 31-year old William F. Graham held his first crusade. After 8-weeks, 11,000 people had attended the Los Angeles event and Billy Graham was a national celebrity.

Graham was criticized by some for being willing to work with Roman Catholics and liberal Protestants. Men like John R. Rice and Bob Jones left the evangelical movement. This tension over separation has continued into today's climate. A second wave of separation would occur within many of the conservative groups such as the Southern Baptist Convention as liberal tendencies increased within these groups. Large number of conservative, evangelical churches would withdraw from the convention to become "independent" or "Bible" churches. CRBC is an example. In Virginia, the conservative churches have formed the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. CRBC is a member of this group. The group's prime function is sponsoring new church plants.

We need to return to about 1900 to trace another characteristic of modern American church history. A branch of the Methodist church became known as the "holiness" branch since they emphasized a spiritual experience that would lead to Christian perfection. This experience was generally called a "second blessing." Charles Fox Parham was a holiness evangelist who had been miraculously healed. In 1900 he formed a Bible college in Topeka. Part of his teachings was that "speaking with other tongues" should be part of the second blessing, using Acts 2:1-20 as his Scriptural basis.

His students took Parham's instructions to heart. In 1901 one of his students began to speak in an unknown language. It was later identified as Mandarin Chinese. All of Parham's students would "receive" other languages and most, but not all, went onto the mission field. One who did not go onto the mission field was William Seymour.

Five years later, Seymour would preach the Pentecostal message at the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission on Azusa Street, Los Angeles. Many in Seymour's audience began to speak in other tongues. Hundreds flocked to Azusa Street to experience the "baptism with the Holy Ghost." They went home and the phenomena spread. In 1914 the Assemblies of God was formed.

Pentecostalism has grown every since, especially in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Several women, including Aimee Semple McPherson and Kathryn Kuhlman, earned prominent positions and pastorates within the Pentecostal movement. McPherson popularized what is known as the "Foursquare Gospel," namely that Jesus is Savior, Healer, Baptizer, and Bridegroom. Those from other denominations who display these "gifts of the Spirit" are known as "charismatics," from the Greek word for spiritual gifts.

The movement of the Pentecostals and charismatics has grown in this post-modern world because of the emphasis on the feelings of the gifts involved. This worship "transcends" mere words and institutions. It also fits with the post-modern philosophy most of us have been indoctrinated with as we grew up in the public school system.

Further, the miracle gifts were a worldwide phenomena. In Africa, Simon Kimbangu practiced the healing side of the movement. He began his ministry in 1915. He would die in prison, but his African Independent Church reached seven million followers in the 1990s. Watchman Nee Duosheng emphasized miraculous healings in his Chinese

ministry, while Sundar Singh's ministry in southern Asia featured a dazzling vision of Jesus in a ball of fire. The Hindu became a Christian. Unlike most Pentecostals, Singh lived his life like a Middle Age monk -- renouncing home, employment, marriage and family life to obey Jesus and tell others of God's love. Pentecostalism grew swiftly in Latin America as well with the two largest Latino congregations in the world being Pentecostal. The same is true in Korea.

All of these events combined to create another movement within the church. Spurred by the liberal philosophies of the time, Christian groups with differing theological positions commenced looking for common ground for dialogue. The ecumenical movement was being given birth.

Ecumenical is a big word that means worldwide or general in extent, influence, or application, thus of, relating to, or representing the whole of a body of churches, especially promoting or tending toward worldwide Christian unity or cooperation

The first efforts were in England around 1910. A small group worked toward inviting all churches that accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to join together. The call was to set doctrine aside. This movement was known as the Faith and Order Conference. In 1925 a variety of liberal groups held the Life and Work Conference. This conference focused on social reform. Then in 1938 these two groups merged to form the World Council of Churches. World War II interrupted all of the plans of the WCC, but their movement had a strong toehold.

With the power of hindsight it is wonderful to look back and exclaim, how could they have said that! In the 1930s the Baptist World Alliance said of young politician Adolph Hitler, "He gave to the temperance movement the prestige of his personal example since he neither uses intoxicants nor smokes." Oh well . . .

Few Christians would stand and fight Hitler. His control over the churches of Germany was almost unobstructed. It was a sad time for European Christians. A few names do stand out as protecting the Jews -- Corrie Ten Boom, Magda and Andre Trocme, even Pope Pius XI kept Jews in the Vatican. Pius indirectly criticized Hitler but the Vatican played a careful middle ground to avoid the War.

One Christian name that does stand out is that of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer was influenced by Barth's writings, but it was after a service at a Harlem African-American Church that Bonhoeffer found Christ. Bonhoeffer would return to Germany to help run an underground seminary (The Confessing Church) while writing *The Cost of Discipleship* in an effort to stir Christians to fight Hitler. Bonhoeffer would become involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler, an event that would lead to his capture and execution.

One might question the wisdom of Bonhoeffer becoming involved in an assassination plot. There is no doubt but what he was involved. He used a "runaway car" analogy to justify his actions. It goes like this . . . If you saw a driverless car speeding down a crowded street, shouldn't you jump onto the car and attempt to stop it? Hitler is the runaway car and the street is the world.

Following the War, the Confessing Church of Germany met with the fledgling World Council of Churches. Within a couple of years, the WCC was officially formed. Many

Eastern Orthodox Christians did not join, objecting to the fact the WCC did not require a belief in the Trinity. In 1961 the WCC redefined itself as “a fellowship of churches which . . . seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” This change allowed more than 30 million Orthodox Christians to join the WCC.

In the US, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ was formed in 1908. This group reorganized into the National Council of Churches in 1950. The NCC is essentially an American only version of the WCC. Most members of the NCC also belong to the WCC.

Remember the development of the Catholic Church we discussed last week? One of those changes was a declaration that salvation was only possible through the Roman Catholic Church. This prevented the Catholic Church from joining the ecumenical movement. Then came 1958 and Pope John XXIII. John was 76 when he became Pope and most believed he was simply holding the fort until a real pope could be found. The bet was that at 76 John would not live long. Well, it is true John did not live long.

John shocked the world by disagreeing with his predecessors. Virtually all popes of “recent” history had condemned all Protestants. John called them “separated brothers.” He sent observers to the WCC. In 1962 John called the Second Vatican Council, an event attended by more than 2,500 cardinals, bishops, and abbots. More than 500 of these delegates were Africans and Asians. The goal was to “update the outward forms.” John XXIII would die after the first session but Paul VI continued the Council, which would meet four times between 1962 and 1965.

Several results came from Vatican II:

Session One allowed the Mass to be performed in native languages rather than Latin. The laypeople were urged to study the Bible. The Scriptures were declared to be the primary source of divine truth but the Bible interplays with tradition. All Christians, not just the priests, monks, and nuns, are said to be called by God to be God’s people. Congregational singing was added and both elements of the Lord’s Supper would once again be distributed to the people. Sounds an awful lot like Protestantism doesn’t it?

Session Two created a college of bishops to assist the pope.

Session Three had three good points. Praying to saints was discouraged and non-Catholics are not deprived of salvation significance. This sounds much like John XXIII “separated brothers statement.” This also session stated that Mary must “never take away from . . . Christ the One Mediator.” On paper this all sounds good.

Session Four provided that no government should force one to act contrary to one’s religious beliefs.

The final declaration of the council was a joint statement by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople (Greek/Eastern Orthodox Church). They two groups forgave each other for the schism of 1054. The ecumenical movement continues.

In 1978 John Paul II became, and as of the date of this writing still is, Pope. He is the first non-Italian Pope in 456 years. He declared himself universal pastor. He travels widely. In 1997 he apologized for the lack of moral leadership in the church during the Second World War.

But, things have not greatly changed in the Roman Catholic Church. The Church is outwardly more ecumenical, while still acting as though it is the only road to heaven. Most aspects of its teachings remain unchanged. There is still an emphasis on works as part of salvation, there is a ban on women priests, married priests and birth control. And, in the past couple of years there has been a terrible scandal within the American church over the homosexual actions of several priests.

The Roman Catholic Church remains as corrupt today as when Martin Luther nailed his Theses to the Wittenburg Chapel door. On the other hand, a clear review of the Catholic Church of 2000 suggests there is no single definition of the Catholic Church. There is a clear picture of the operating structure, but in practice the Church has saved and unsaved, charismatics and traditional, and a host of other groups. Indeed, I have read one study that suggests the Roman Catholic Church currently consists of nine distinct, almost separate groups.

And, the ecumenical movement continues. In 1953 Billy Graham sparked an idea to draw together English-speaking evangelicals throughout the world. This idea was the seed of the magazine *Christianity Today*. The magazine is fifty years old. The idea behind the magazine became a driving notion for Graham. In 1974 he chaired the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, Switzerland. The Lausanne Covenant affirmed that “evangelism . . . summons us to unity.” The Covenant also urged missionaries to respect the native cultures. As such, evangelicals continued to balance the Scriptures with an open mind for some of the things of culture.

This means that the fundamentalists and evangelicals focused on different ends of the spectrum. Evangelicals promoted new ideas such as easy-to-read new translations of the Bible, contemporary Christian music, and less emphasis on fashion. The modern fundamentalists fight all of these efforts and more. One of the major differences arose in the mid-1990s over whether or not there should be a dialogue with the Roman Catholics.

In 1994 Catholic and Evangelical leaders signed a statement entitled “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium.” Common doctrines and social issues were emphasized, while doctrinal differences were ignored. Three years later the group issued a statement on the issue of justification. The statement agreed that justification is not earned by any good works. Lutherans officially approved a Joint Declaration, which follows the same definition.

Evangelicals who supported the statement included Charles Colson, Bill Bright (founder of Campus Crusade for Christ), J.I. Packer (Anglican theologian and writer), Elizabeth Achtemeier (Union Theological Seminary professor and author who died in 2003), and Richard John Neuhaus (Lutheran theologian and author).

Those who criticized the statement included R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, and D. James Kennedy. Their major criticism was that agreement was needed on more doctrines than only justification by faith.

That such a movement to “unite” the church exists should surprise no one. The early church was “of one accord.” This is a noble goal and sounds worthy of our efforts. Yet, the basis of such union should be by faith in Christ based solely upon all biblical principles. Without getting into a long side trip, the final end times will bring a uniting of religions. A one-world religion will arise. Satan is getting the world ready for this event by slowly allowing man to remove the differences between diverse groups.

A new worldview has evolved over the past fifty years. This worldview places man and his feelings at the center of the universe. Post-modernism supports many possible viewpoints, personal experience and self in community with others. In addition, it is a gratification now view. Man’s religions and man’s views will mold to these thoughts for financial reasons. During the Middle Ages the church created rituals that would protect the clergy and keep them employed. Modern religious movements will follow the same path.

Post-modernism says that diverse groups, such as the Catholics and the Protestants can unite because each should ignore the shortcoming (i.e., doctrinal differences) of the other. What is more frightening is that this same view says that Catholics and Hindus can fellowship in the same fashion. Eventually such a movement will place Mohammed, Buddha and Jesus on the same level. Much of the modern day church is joining this bandwagon.

Major American Religious Bodies

1993

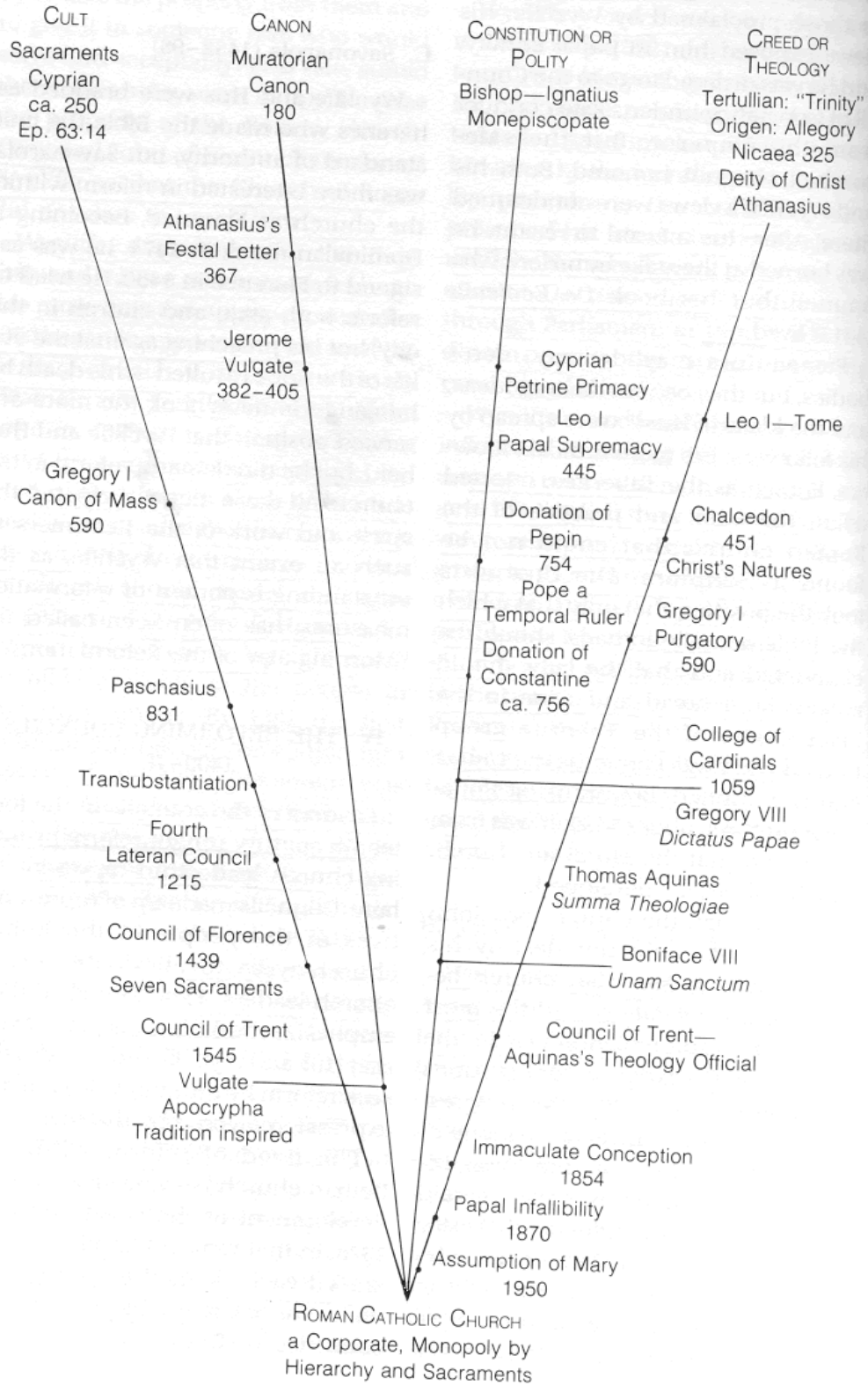
Over One Million in round numbers

African Methodist Episcopal Church	3,500,000
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	1,200,000
American Baptist Churches	1,527,000
Assemblies of God	2,235,000
Christian Church (Disciples)	1,022,000
Christian Churches & Churches of Christ	1,070,000
Church of God in Christ	5,500,000
Churches of Christ	1,690,000
Episcopal Church	2,472,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church	5,245,000
Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod	2,607,000
National Baptist Convention, U.S.A.	8,000,000
National Baptist Convention of America	3,500,000
National Missionary Bap. Conv. of America	2,500,000
Orthodox Church in America	1,030,000
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	3,778,000
Progressive National Baptist Convention	2,500,000
Roman Catholic Church	58,000,000
Southern Baptist Convention	15,232,000
United Church of Christ	1,583,000
United Methodist Church	8,785,000

Cults:

Mormons	8,000,000
Jehovah Witnesses	11,500,000
Christian Scientists	400,000

FROM NEW TESTAMENT TO ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
(Bible Plus History)



Twentieth Century Events

- World Wars pit nominally Christian nations of Europe against each other.
- Emergence of charismatic Christian sects.
- Rise of the ecumenical movement.
- Revision of the Roman Catholic liturgy.
- Missions reach virtually every region of the world.
- New translation methods put the Bible into the languages of 95% of mankind, but about 1,500 small tongues, representing 5% of mankind, lack scriptures.
- More Christians are said to have been martyred in the 20th century than in all earlier centuries combined.
- Decline of church attendance becomes marked in much of the Western world.
- Explosive growth of Chinese Christianity.
- Emergence and collapse of powerful atheistic states.
- Crises in Darwinism revive Christian attacks on evolutionary theory and development of scientific models from a Christian perspective.
- Rise of internet and mass media lead to wide dissemination of the gospel by new means.
- An overwhelming information explosion tends to bury truth.

1.9 billion "Christians," about 33% of world population

Non-white Christians, especially in China, Africa, and Latin America exceed white Christians.

Church History

Lesson 13 Where are we now?

■- A.D. Now until Tomorrow

1 Corinthians 16:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

Ephesians 6:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

2 Timothy 4:5 (NKJV)

⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

As we turn into the Twentieth Century, the continual warnings of Paul to be ever alert may seem distant. But, they remain vitally true. Jesus could return at any time. Or, God could easily “set back” the clock of progress and delay the Second Coming for many hundreds of years. We must be ready for either event.

The most amazing thing about Church History is how little it has really changed. The cults and false teachers may appear to be more sophisticated today than those of the early church years, but are they really?

Marcion edited the Bible to suit his own purposes. Today, groups edit the Bible either to make their own theological editions (Jehovah Witnesses) or they add books to the Bible (the Mormons and Christian Scientists do this, similar to adding the Apocrypha). So, the Bible remains a point of contention. Spiritual interpretations prevailed in the early church and many still interpret God’s Word in this fashion. The liberal criticism of the mid-1800s still remain as men professing to be Christians refuse to accept miracles and treat the word of God as a myth or legend.

Estimates about today’s church vary widely. It is estimated with reasonable accuracy that in 1991 there were between 1.76 and 1.79 billion Christians. This would be one-third of the world’s population. By comparison, it is estimated that Christianity’s statistical high point was 1900 when 34.4% of the population claimed to be Christian. While today’s percentage is smaller, the actual number of Christians is larger, due to a larger world population. Some estimate there are more Christians alive today than were alive throughout all of the preceding centuries.

On the other hand, others estimate that only 540 million of these Christians are true “Bible believers.” This would be about 10% of the population. Worldwide estimates are that on any given Sunday only between 4 and 6 percent of the world’s population will be in church. Even more disheartening is a recent Barna survey that found that only 4% of

born again Christians exercised a Christian worldview. If this is true, what is the point of claiming to be a Christian?

The church is certainly faced with persecution, problems, and division. Communism, nationalism, cults and world religions, and the pressures of society all assault the church. In this age of religious freedom, in many African nations as well as many Arab nations it is illegal to be a Christian. Penalties run from being sent out of the country to death. Evangelical radio was banned in Mexico in 1980. Persecutions abound in African nations, such as Mozambique, Chad, and Zaire. The church in Communist China has lived underground for decades.

We have considered the cults as we moved through this course. Like everything else today, there are more cults than ever before. Large and small, powerful and weak, you can almost find a cult on every corner. Yet, the invasion and growth of the Eastern religions (Hindu and Buddhism) and the growth of Islam would suggest a larger threat than the cults. What appears to be occurring, however, is that all of these groups are “mixing.” Each seems to adopt traits of the other. New Age forms an umbrella that captures each of these groups and provides a home for them to grow and change. The religious thoughts of the Native Americans has been added to the pot in the last 40-50 years, spawning even more changes to many groups. Just as Paul faced false teachings, so does the church of the twenty-first century.

John writes that we are to avoid loving the world.

1 John 2:15-17 (NKJV)

¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

The things of the world have always been a problem for God’s people. The issues are, to a great extent, no different today than during the biblical periods. Alcohol, drugs, and licentious lifestyles existed then and still exist today. Today we have added television, rock music, movies, and the Internet to the mixture. Much of yesterday’s sin is now out in the open. These are tremendous pressures upon church members. Our young people are bombarded by the world’s ways. God’s people are to be separated from the sin of the world. The Fundamentalists went too far in their separation, divorcing themselves so far from the world that they lost all influence and could not evangelize. However, it is such thin lines between being separated from sin yet close enough to the people to evangelize as opposed to actually becoming a part of the world.

So, the church will struggle with issues such as these and argue about how far to move away from sinful people. What sounds so simple on paper is so difficult to define in practice. Divisions will continue over these, as well as other matters.

According to the *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* (Ninth Edition, 1990), there are 220 denominations in existence. Because of the premise behind this book, some of these 220 are cults. I estimate that if you take out the cults, you are still left with over 190 denominations! This is clearly contrary to the ways of the early church, where they all met with “one accord.” However, the signs of splits appeared early in the history

of the church. The earliest sign was, you may recall, first seen in a disagreement between East and West over the date of Easter. Political tensions and geographical and language differences entered the picture at various points in time. Events such as the Civil War divided churches.

Today, and into the future, we should continue to expect divisions and new denominations. For example, one of the major issues of the modern church is the role of women. Scripture appears to provide that women cannot have authority over men (1 Tim 2:12). Throughout most of the life of the church this submission was maintained. Not until the missionary movement of the 1800s did women commence to “go it alone.” This required they have authority over men.

In the social world of the 1900s women obtained more political rights. This movement soon moved into the churches. Originally, the Pentecostal churches were the ones to embrace women in leadership roles but the liberal tendencies of the various denominations soon led to many groups embracing women. In many cases, there exist two groups within these denominations, one on each side of this question.

The extension of civil rights to previously shunned groups, such as homosexuals, has also invaded the church. Without getting into a lengthy discussion, we must for a moment continue to view the church as those organizations who profess to be Christians. Within these groups there will be cults, apostates, and believers. I am reminded of Lot. Never was a man more inclined to be viewed as “lost.” He went from arguing with Abraham to offering his daughters to the mob in Sodom. Yet, Peter writes of Lot:

2 Peter 2:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)—

So, there are modern day Lots within all of these groups. However, many of the liberal churches openly accept homosexual ministers. Without debating if they are lost or saved, the church groups to which these people belong will continue to argue over this theological question. The easy example is the Episcopal Church, which recently ordained a gay bishop. I personally would not be surprised to find enough resistance within this denomination that a split occurs in the next few years providing us with yet another new denomination.

There is another movement afoot that might, at first glance, appear to be “new.” You may recall that most, indeed, perhaps all, cults and false doctrines attack the Person of Jesus, either claiming He is not God or that He is not man. This new theology attacks not the Person of Jesus but the Person of the Father – or so it seems. This new movement is called neotheism or open theology.

This attack is on the sovereignty of God. At the heart of open theology is the issue of whether or not God is truly able to see and know all events (actual or possible) of all time. Can God really see the future? Essentially this group says no. God is limited in His finite ability to see the future, He is merely so wise that He is a good guesser of the future and is correct in His estimation of events almost all of the time. But He is not correct 100% of the time!

Two comments need to be made. First, most, but not all of this group are probably believers and will be in heaven with you and I. They have some bad theology, but then so have a lot of other groups along the path of the past 2,000 years.

Second, it is not really a new theology. Consider the book of Job, if you will. Job and his friends questioned the character and power of God when things went wrong. Job arrived at the proper conclusion –or rather, God brought Job to the proper conclusion! Just read the last few chapters starting at chapter 38. Open Theologians appear to be modern day Jobs. Most of them appear to have suffered a severe loss or emotional crisis in their lives and went in search of an answer to the age-old question of “why do bad things happen to good people.” Rather than taking the Bible’s teachings in a literal fashion, they sought a deeper meaning or basis for their loss. That foundation is founded on the premise that God cannot foresee all events. Therefore, He did not foresee their losses. Thus, they have an answer to why their loving God did not stop the tragedy from occurring.

There is another part to this answer as well. Liberal theology teaches that God is love and would not allow bad things to truly happen to anyone. Usually this means bad in an eternal sense, but if you attempted to move this premise into a worldly sense, you end up at about the same point in the road as those practicing open theology. There is nothing new under the sun!

The various false teachers we have encountered over the centuries have:

- ⊗ Claimed to have a deeper and truer view of Christianity
- ⊗ Rejected the inerrancy of the Holy Scripture
- ⊗ Belief in one’s self is belief in God
- ⊗ Christ delivers men by His coming and not by the atonement of the Cross
- ⊗ Rejection of the virgin birth
- ⊗ Salvation by illumination

These are all the teachings of centuries and are the teachings of liberalism. If these are true than modern man may continue to evolve and unite and become better. Yet, is the church prepared to handle the battle?

New theologies appear in the social context. You will find those who promote:

- Black Theology
- Liberation Theology
- Feminine Theology

These are but examples. Each one is designed to prove that God is on their side and supports there cause. Of course, both the North and the South thought God was on their side as well.

Another event of the last century has been the growth of groups outside of the church proper. Missionaries and missionary boards may be the model for these groups. We have encountered them before. They include:

- Promise Keepers
- World Vision
- Prison Fellowship
- Gideon's
- InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
- Campus Crusade

Others could be added to the list. Each plays an important role, but each operates outside of the bounds of any local church body. There are other groups within this para-umbrella as well. One is the Wycliffe Bible Translators. This group has translated the Bible (or a portion thereof) into more than 2100 languages. The group estimates there are more than 6,457 different dialects on planet earth. However, the 2100 languages that have the Scriptures represent the vast percentage of people who are alive. In other words, most of the world can hear or read the Bible in their own language.

It might be noted, however, that even with the miracle of TV, satellite, and Internet, as many as one billion people have not been evangelized. Further, over half of the world's population lives in areas where evangelism cannot take place. TV and radio are a powerful force in today's world, however. Groups such as Focus on the Family have made major impacts upon how Christians live. Their prime focus is the media of radio and television. Add to this music CDs, concerts, DVDs, and VHS tapes and Christianity has a variety of methods for exposing the world to the Gospel.

But, have you been to a contemporary Christian concert? We must compare the method with the methods of the world. Are they too close? And, the same could be said about TV and radio. Where do you draw the lines? And, did God envision the church doing all of the work? Or, does the Almighty want these para-church groups involved? Should they grow and the churches shrink?

These are difficult questions for the Christian community. How should the church respond to the issues of the day? Who should respond?

The other phenomenon is the mega-church. While Calvary Road may seem large, there are local churches that are 4-7 times larger than Calvary. At the same time, there may be over a hundred churches nation wide who have average weekly attendance in excess of 10,000 people! That many people will not fit into a house. Do small groups resolve the fellowship issues? Are mega-churches part of God's plan? How should mega-churches and small churches interact?

Look at the issues again:

- The roles of women in the church
- The place of new or more translations of Scriptures
- The place of gender-neutral terms in translations
- The split between pre-millennialists and post-millennialists.
- Calvinism (Sproul) verses moderate Calvinism (Geisler)
- Ecumenicalism

Yet, all is not tribulation. There have been spiritual awakenings in Eastern Europe as the Soviet block has fallen. Evangelicals have been able to make great inroads in

spreading the Gospel message in these countries, fighting both the social settings and the cults who are there spreading their messages as well.

The same is true in Africa and Latin America. Most Latin American countries have large Christian populations. This is the world of Luis Palau, an Argentina native who is the Billy Graham of South America. Interestingly enough, almost 80% of these converts are Pentecostal.

Notwithstanding the potential issues of the radio and television ministries, as more and more countries move into the modern era of technology, more ministries have an opportunity of reaching the lost. Estimates are that Christianity is growing at the same rate as the world's population. The actual numbers of Christians continues to grow.

But, the world is biblically illiterate. Not only has the unsaved world not been raised in a situation where the Bible is taught in any form, but many Christians have never read the Bible cover to cover. They simply do not know what God's Word says. This helps, at least in part, to explain the break down of values within society. If there is no biblical basis to rest upon, then morals and truth have no frame of reference. Man is left to create his own standards. This is the worldview concept. Barna's report that only 4% of born again Christians have a biblical worldview helps to explain why the modern church acts so worldly. This is the world of post-modernism. This is the world we live in.

The other issue that many struggle with is the problem of Job. For all of its modern advancements, the issues of suffering remain. Death, disease, natural disasters, terrorism, and accidents plague everyone. Men seek an answer to these issues and the church is not always there to help. The events after September 11 provide an excellent example of this.

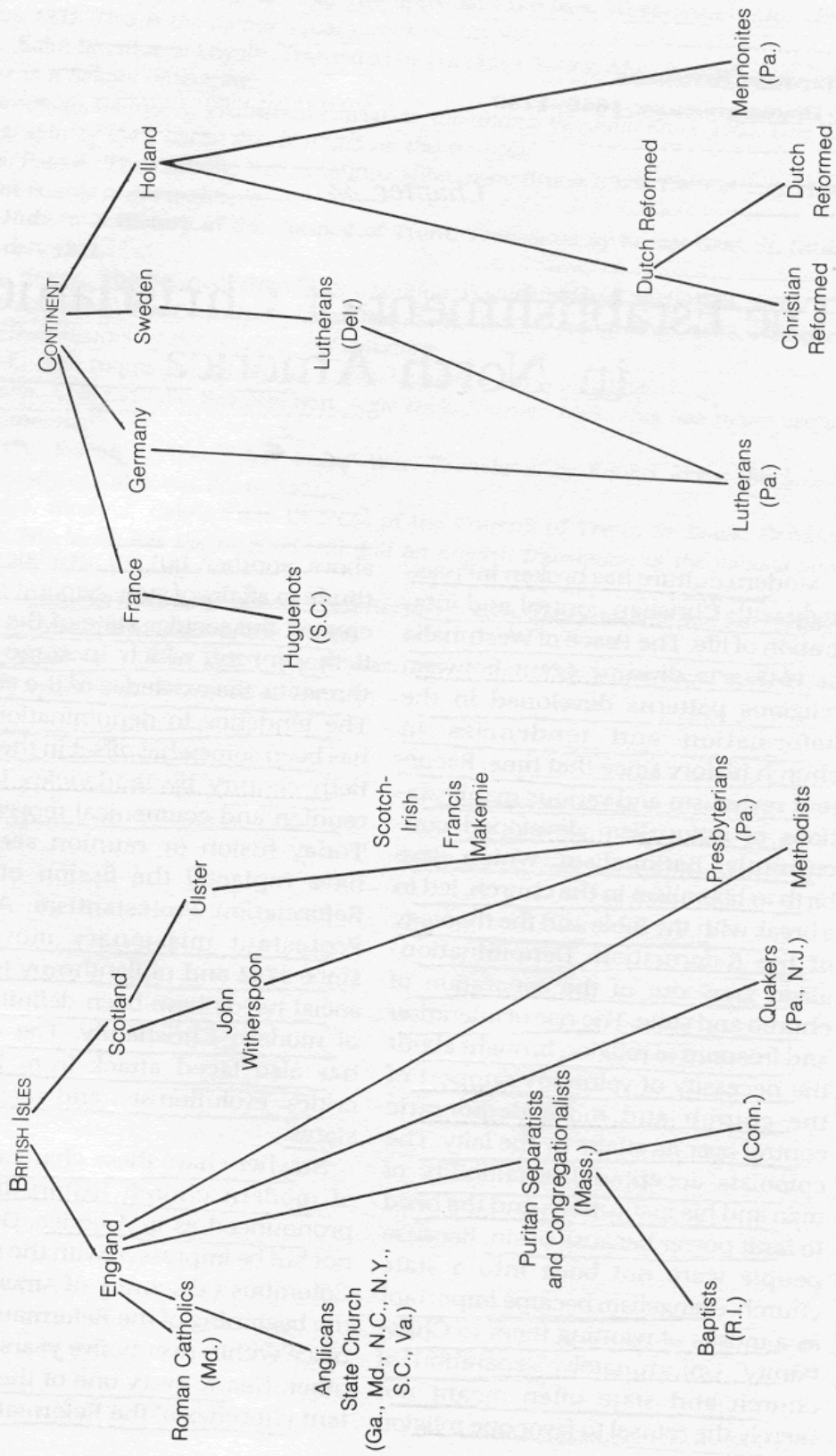
There was a great surge in church attendance in the months immediately after the terrorist attacks. However, many of these churches are liberal, non-God centered, or outright cultish. People did not find what they sought within the walls of the church. So they left. Barna represented that by January 2002, there were fewer regular attendees in the nation's churches than before the attack.

The church is 2,000 years old. The problems of the church are essentially the same now as when the Apostle's first preached. Solomon is right. Church history has taught us the power of God and the Gospel and the failures of men. Nothing has changed.

Ecclesiastes 1:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ All things *are* full of labor; Man cannot express *it*. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor the ear filled with hearing. ⁹ That which has been *is* what will be, That which *is* done is what will be done, And *there is* nothing new under the sun.

THE HERITAGE OF THE REFORMATION IN THE UNITED STATES



Appendix A

Baptism

There is nothing within the Church that may be as historically undocumented as the history of baptism. It is clear from Acts that each early convert was baptized. Indeed, this is the Lord's command as given in the Great Commission.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NKJV)

¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

The history of the very early Church demonstrates that this effort continued after the death the Apostles. In fact, it may safe to state that the concept of baptism was such an integral part of the early church that it is not mentioned in most historical records that we possess.

We noted in one of our early lessons that to fight heresy within the church, the church moved to a "new members" class to assure that people had truly accepted Christ. As part of that effort, the baptism appears to have been postponed, being moved from immediately after salvation to the end of the new members class, a process that varied greatly from one location to another. Some groups took just a few months to teach the Rule of Faith while others may have taken as much as three years.

The other issue that arose in the early church involved the baptism of infants. Again, it is unclear how widespread this process began, nor do we have any clear records of the pattern of its spread. The issue of baptizing infants may have been another result of the church attempting to protect itself from heresy and false doctrine. The theory behind infant baptism reaches back into the Old Testament and looks at the community of God rather than the individual.

The Old Testament teaches a community of God, the nation of Israel. As part of belonging to this community, God gave to Abraham the covenant of circumcision. Each male child was circumcised on the eighth day as "proof" of the child belonging to God's family nation.

Genesis 17:9-14 (NKJV)

⁹And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; ¹¹and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. ¹²He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. ¹³He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be

circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
¹⁴ And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

The early church viewed the baptism as the equivalent of the circumcision and deemed it should baptize infants as a sign that they were part of God’s family. This was viewed as placing a protective measure upon the child and as being a means of protecting the community. The belief or hope was that by being baptized, God would be more active in assisting the child to grow into Christianity.

That infant baptism was practiced in the early church is reasonably well documented. *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (the *Didache*, c.150), while not specifically speaking of infants, appears to support this practice. Origen (writing about 244) states, “according to the usage of the Church, baptism is given even to infants.” The Council of Carthage, in 253, condemned the opinion that baptism should be withheld from infants until the eighth day after birth. Augustine (writing in 408) is quoted as stating, “The custom of Mother Church in baptizing infants is certainly not to be scorned . . . nor is it to be believed that its tradition is anything except apostolic.”

It is during the Middle Ages that the Church moves to the current position of the Roman Catholic Church with regard to baptism, namely that it is a sacrament by which the soul is cleansed from sin. In other words, the Roman Catholics (as well as many protestant groups) teach that baptism is a necessary part of salvation. Baptism is necessary for the remission of sin, both original sin and actual sin. This being true, children should be baptized to wash away their original sin. This doctrine is then extended to provide that if a child dies in an unbaptized state he will not enter heaven because of the existence of original sin. Verses used to support this position include Acts 2:38-39; 22:16; and 1 Peter 3:21. Many of the reformers continued baptizing infants for similar reasons.

The problem with this position is that it assumes the community can save a person. This is clearly not the teaching of the Scriptures. Scriptures clearly teach that only an individual believing in Jesus may be saved. The analogy to the Old Testament community fails when it comes to salvation. Each individual must come to a saving knowledge of Jesus to be saved. In the case of infants who are too young to understand their sins, God does not hold this against them since they are incapable of making such a decision. If they die in their infancy, they enter heaven, baptized or not.

It should be noted that most of these groups take a reformed (Calvinistic) perspective on the translation of the Scriptures and view Israel and the Church as a single group. Thus, they “freely” substitute events and doctrines both from the church to Israel and from Israel to the church. It would be surprising if they did not view baptism as the equivalent to circumcision.

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles does appear to support the practice of pouring rather than immersion. “Now concerning baptism, baptize thus: Having first taught all these things, baptize ye into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in living water. And if thou has not living water, baptize into other water; and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm (water). But if thou has neither, pour water thrice upon the head in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The Council of Ravenna (1311) states that baptism is by “triple immersion or aspersion

(pouring).” However, all of the councils that address baptism, except for the one of 1311, only mention immersion!

The first actual case of sprinkling recorded in the literature is that of Eusebius in 253. He writes of the baptism of a man named Novation who was terminally ill. The church leaders fearing that immersion would kill him, sprinkled him.

The important point of the *Didache* is not that pouring was allowed, but that immersion (“in living water”) was preferred! Notice carefully the order given. It is clear there is an emphasis upon the need for baptism, but there is also a clear order given as to the preferred methods. Almost all of the Lexicons (Greek dictionary) give the definition of the Greek word translated baptize as being to immerse, to plunge, or to dip. There is no lexicon that provides sprinkling or pouring as a valid definition.

In Romans 6 (cf. Col 2:12), Paul uses the analogy of baptism to describe one’s death and burial to sin with Christ at the Cross and one’s rising to life with Christ’s resurrection. This picture only carries a valid analogy if the baptism is similar to death, that is, to being buried. Pouring or sprinkling does not accomplish this metaphor. Only immersion presents a valid picture of the analogy.

It might also be noted that most of the Reformation leaders are quoted as believing that immersion is the proper method of baptism: Calvin, Luther, Wesley, Wall (Episcopalian), Whitfield, MacKnight (Presbyterian), even Brenner a Catholic!

So, why would the early church switch to pouring? Frances Schaeffer who wrote and taught during the 1940s-1980s was a Lutheran. A godly man who has offered much to the spiritual growth of the church, nonetheless, Schaeffer supported the Lutheran practice of pouring. He does so mostly on the basis of the community argument used by the early church. However, he also offers historical support in the form of drawings found on the walls of the catacombs in Rome that appear to show pouring as the valid method of baptism.

There is no doubt that such pictures exist and that they strongly suggest that pouring was used in that setting. What most practitioners of the practice of pouring or sprinkling over look is the historical setting of both the catacombs and the inference of the language of the *Didache*. Re-read the language of the *Didache* again. Living or running water, that is a river or a stream was preferred and if not, the strong suggestion is that the same method as employed by John the Baptist and the Apostle’s, namely immersion, should be employed in non-living or non-running water. In modern terms, we might say the second choice of the *Didache* is to immerse in a bathtub or a baptismal pool. It is only when such an abundance of water is not available that the *Didache* suggests that pouring is acceptable.

When would such an alternative be acceptable? History suggests a couple of examples. At various times there have been areas of extreme draught. If water is non-existent or at a severe premium, then the need to be baptized is more important than the method. At times in history, without knowing why from a scientific perspective, people did not immerse to due plague or illnesses. Obviously those on their deathbed cannot be moved to the river and immersed either. Eusebius’ example of Novation cited early is an excellent illustration of this situation.

It appears to be clear from Scripture that believer's baptism must be undertaken after a confession of faith as a public means of identifying with Christ. This is the cumulative teaching of the Bible. At the same time, if a person finds himself in circumstances where this is totally impractical, a different means of baptism is probably acceptable. After all, the thief at the Cross went to heaven without being baptized at all (Luke 23:39-43). The point to remember is that baptism is a sign of submission and obedience. If you have not been baptized according to Scripture and later have the opportunity to correct this situation, obedience and submission would suggest that you do so!

Appendix B

Baptist History

At the risk of creating controversy, I feel the need to make a couple of comments about the history of the Baptists. Those who are older may disagree with some of what I have stated previously or state below. Be that as it may . . .

After having studied church history in a broad context, I believe the history of the Baptist movement as a “new denomination” is clearly set forth herein. Obviously, this course is not as in-depth as a more lengthy study could be. However, I believe the information accurately portrays the history of the Baptist movement within Protestantism.

I noted above the number of denominations within the United States. The Ninth Edition of the *Handbook of Denominations* lists 25 Baptist denominations. The Southern Baptist Convention is one of these. However, the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia are not listed nor are the independent Baptist churches listed as denominations.

Some of you may be wondering why I have added this section. During the 1800s several Baptist histories were written. In the context of these writings, the biggest threat of the time was viewed as the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, if you read the commentaries of the period, the pope is always identified as the antichrist. In this context, good Christians did not want to be identified with the enemy, so they were “creative” in their efforts to remove any links between the Baptists and the Catholics.

As we have seen, a true history of the church does not make such distinctions. In the early church, there were no denominations, just groups of churches, each with a bishop, some of whom were more powerful than others. As the church progressed through history, God preserved His remnant among a mixed multitude. The professing church has always been composed of believers and non-believers. Look at First Samuel. Hannah was saved, Eli, the High Priest, was probably saved but guilty of living a pagan worldview, while his two sons, also priests, were clearly not saved and lived in the world.

One such popular history is *The Trail of Blood* by J.M. Carroll. This history is a compilation of talks given by Carroll in the late 1800s. Carroll attempts to tie the Baptists to the martyrs and persecuted of all time. Thus, those martyred become “Baptists” while the persecutor becomes the Catholic Church. The problem with this approach is that a review of some groups Carroll considers to be Baptist are clearly cultic. An example is Carroll’s inclusion of the Montanist (see chapter 2) as being Baptist. Not all who have died in religious persecutions were truly saved. The trial of “martyrs” does not make a denomination or specific group.

In any event, there are a variety of Baptist histories and I would urge you to read them in the context of world and church history.

I have attached one such history. It comes from a website, The Hall of Church History, The Baptists, <http://www.gty.org/~phil/baptist.htm>. This site includes the attached as well as *The Trail of Blood* and other Baptist histories.

Baptists as a group view themselves as the keepers of the faith. This can lead to a prideful position whereby all who keep the faith become Baptist and those who don't keep the faith are a cult. This may be overly harsh, but it has led to some questionable histories. We need to learn to exercise mental or intellectual discernment as well as spiritual and emotional discernment.

Just as in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-20), God has His church. There have always been martyrs. There will always be those who give their lives for Christ. My point is that all who died are not Baptists, simple martyrs for God. Indeed, probably all who died were not saved. And, in many of the cultish groups are saved people. We will be surprised when we see who are our brothers and sisters in heaven. The Fundamentalists were right, at least in their purest form. The true measuring stick is a belief in Christ and believing the Bible is the Word of God. There will be such people in all of the "church" of all time. Probably some of these people even belonged to the cults. God is gracious. And, we are not God!